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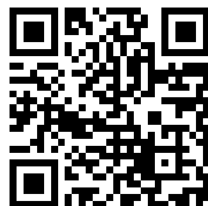

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THE

STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly

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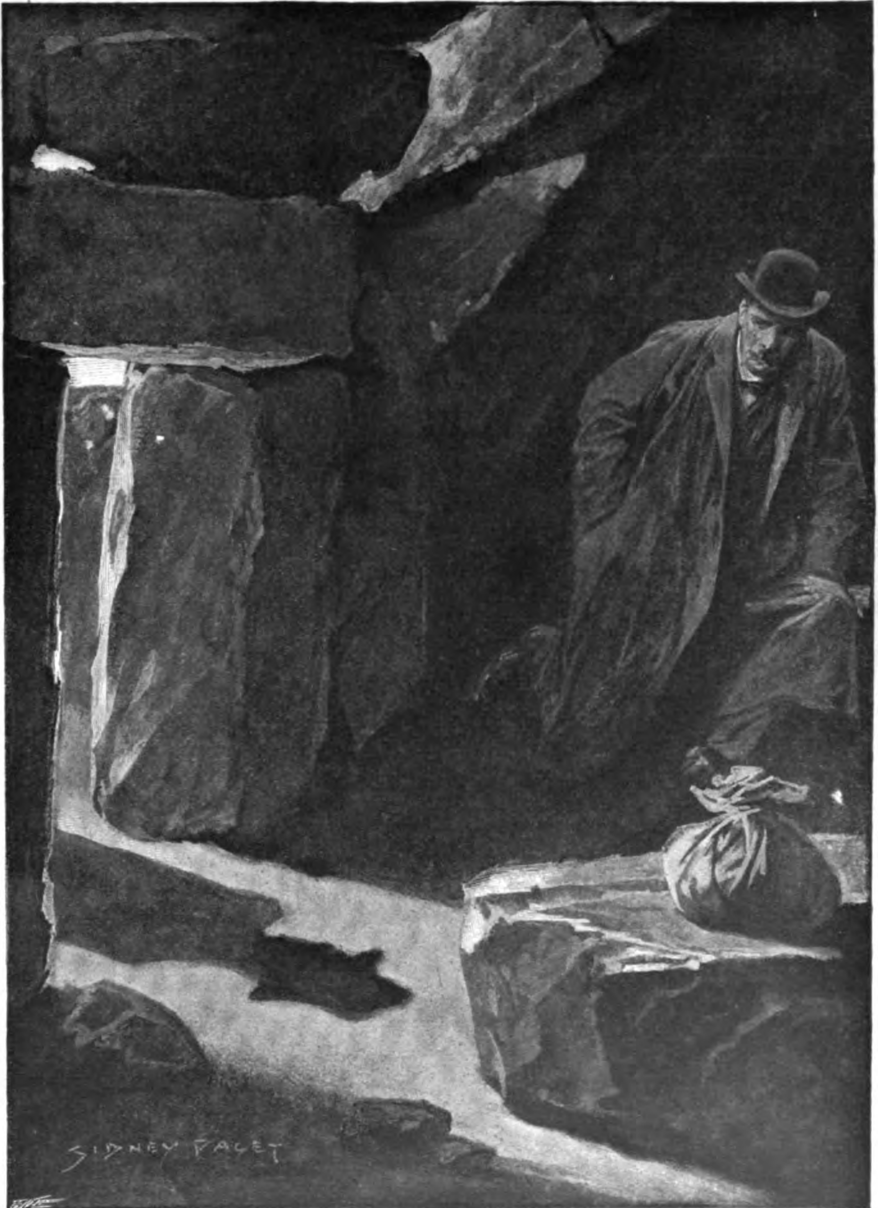

THE SHADOW OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiii. FEBRUARY, 1902. No. 133.

The Hound of the Baskervilles.

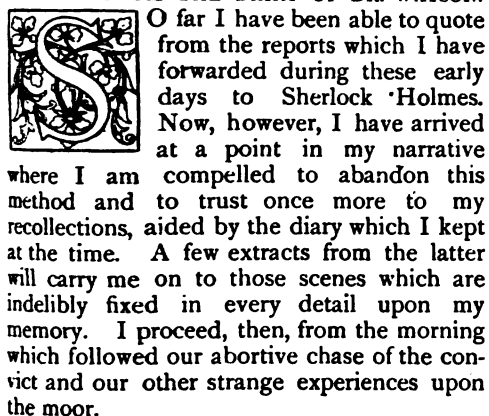
ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF

SHERLOCK HOLMES.

By CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER X.

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF DR. WATSON.



SO far I have been able to quote from the reports which I have forwarded during these early days to Sherlock Holmes. Now, however, I have arrived at a point in my narrative where I am compelled to abandon this method and to trust once more to my recollections, aided by the diary which I kept at the time. A few extracts from the latter will carry me on to those scenes which are indelibly fixed in every detail upon my memory. I proceed, then, from the morning which followed our abortive chase of the convict and our other strange experiences upon the moor.

October 16th.—A dull and foggy day, with a drizzle of rain. The house is banked in with rolling clouds, which rise now and then to show the dreary curves of the moor, with thin, silver veins upon the sides of the hills, and the distant boulders gleaming where the light strikes upon their wet faces. It is melancholy outside and in. The baronet is in a black reaction after the excitements of the night. I am conscious myself of a weight at my heart and a feeling of impending danger —ever-present danger, which is the more terrible because I am unable to define it.

And have I not cause for such a feeling? Consider the long sequence of incidents which have all pointed to some sinister influence which is at work around us. There is the death of the last occupant of the Hall, fulfilling so exactly the conditions of the family legend, and there is the repeated reports from peasants of the appearance of a strange creature upon the moor. Twice I have with my own ears heard the sound which resembled the distant baying of a hound. It is incredible, impossible, that it should really be outside the ordinary laws of Nature. A spectral hound which leaves material footmarks and fills the air with its howling is surely not to be thought of. Stapleton may fall in with such a superstition, and Mortimer also; but if I have one quality upon earth it is common sense, and nothing will persuade me to believe in such a thing. To do so would be to descend to the level of these poor peasants who are not content with a mere fiend dog, but must needs describe him with hell-fire shooting from his mouth and eyes. Holmes would not listen to such fancies, and I am his agent. But facts are facts, and I have twice heard this crying upon the moor. Suppose that there were really some huge hound loose upon it; that would go far to explain everything. But where could such a hound lie concealed, where did it get its food, where did it come from, how was it that no one saw it by day? It must be confessed that the natural explanation offers almost as many difficulties as the other. And always, apart from the hound, there was the fact of the human agency in London, the man in the cab, and the letter which warned Sir Henry against the moor. This at least was real, but it might have been the work of a protecting friend as easily as an enemy. Where was that friend or enemy now? Had he remained in London, or had he followed us down here? Could he—could he be the stranger whom I had seen upon the Tor?

It is true that I have had only the one glance at him, and yet there are some things to which I am ready to swear. He is no one whom I have seen down here, and I have now met all the neighbours. The

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figure was far taller than that of Stapleton, far thinner than that of Frankland. Barrymore it might possibly have been, but we had left him behind us, and I am certain that he could not have followed us. A stranger then is still dogging us, just as a stranger had dogged us in London. We have never shaken him off. If I could lay my hands upon that man, then at last we might find ourselves at the end of all our difficulties. To this one purpose I must now devote all my energies.

My first impulse was to tell Sir Henry all my plans. My second and wisest one is to play my own game and speak as little as possible to anyone. He is silent and distrait. His nerves have been strangely shaken by that sound upon the moor. I will say nothing to add to his anxieties, but I will take my own steps to attain my own end.

We had a small scene this morning after breakfast. Barrymore asked leave to speak with Sir Henry, and they were closeted in his study some little time. Sitting in the billiard-room I more than once heard the sound of voices raised, and I had a pretty good idea what the point was which was under discussion. After a time the baronet opened his door and called for me.

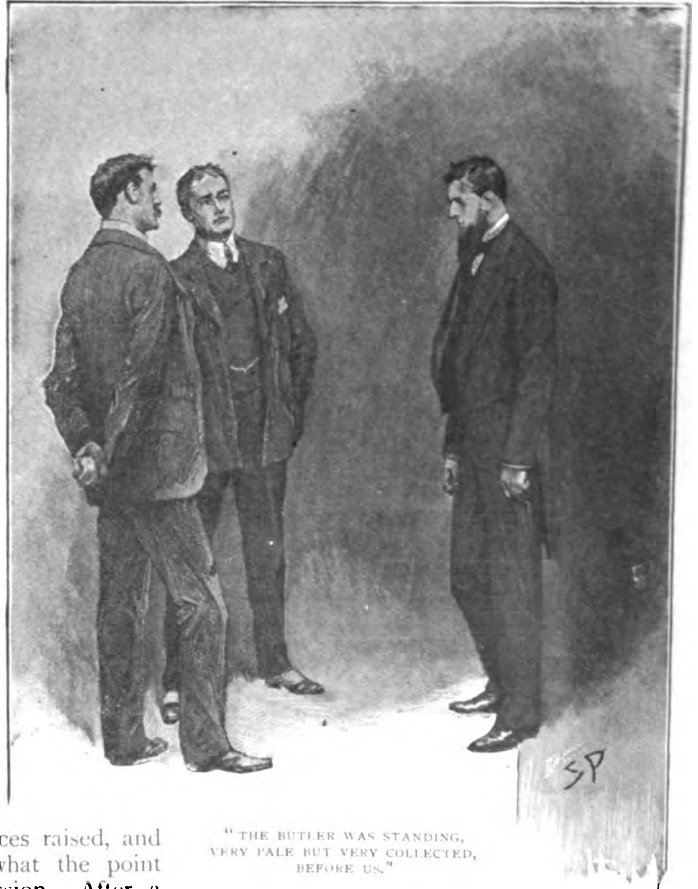
"Barrymore considers that he has a grievance," he said. "He thinks that it was unfair on our part to hunt his brother-in-law down when he, of his own free will, had told us the secret."

The butler was standing, very pale but very collected, before us.

"I may have spoken too warmly, sir," said he, "and if I have I am sure that I beg your pardon. At the same time, I was very much surprised when I heard you two gentlemen come back this morning and learned that you had been chasing Selden. The poor fellow has enough to fight against without my putting more upon his track."

"If you had told us of your own free will it would have been a different thing," said the baronet. "You only told us, or rather your wife only told us, when it was forced from you and you could not help yourself."

"I didn't think you would have taken



"THE BUTLER WAS STANDING, VERY PALE BUT VERY COLLECTED, BEFORE US."

advantage of it, Sir Henry—indeed I didn't."

"The man is a public danger. There are lonely houses scattered over the moor, and he is a fellow who would stick at nothing. You only want to get a glimpse of his face to see that. Look at Mr. Stapleton's house, for example, with no one but himself to defend it. There's no safety for anyone until he is under lock and key."

"He'll break into no house, sir. I give you my solemn word upon that. But he will never trouble anyone in this country again. I assure you, Sir Henry, that in a very few days the necessary arrangements will have been made and he will be on his way to South America. For God's sake, sir, I beg

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of you not to let the police know that he is still on the moor. They have given up the chase there, and he can lie quiet until the ship is ready for him. You can't tell on him without getting my wife and me into trouble. I beg you, sir, to say nothing to the police."

"What do you say, Watson?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "If he were safely out of the country it would relieve the taxpayer of a burden."

"But how about the chance of his holding someone up before he goes?"

"He would not do anything so mad, sir. We have provided him with all that he can want. To commit a crime would be to show where he was hiding."

"That is true," said Sir Henry. "Well, Barrymore——"

"God bless you, sir, and thank you from my heart! It would have killed my poor wife had he been taken again."

"I guess we are aiding and abetting a felony, Watson? But, after what we have heard, I don't feel as if I could give the man up, so there is an end of it. All right, Barrymore, you can go."

With a few broken words of gratitude the man turned, but he hesitated and then came back.

"You've been so kind to us, sir, that I should like to do the best I can for you in return. I know something, Sir Henry, and perhaps I should have said it before, but it was long after the inquest that I found it out. I've never breathed a word about it yet to mortal man. It's about poor Sir Charles's death."

The baronet and I were both upon our feet. "Do you know how he died?"

"No, sir, I don't know that."

"What, then?"

"I know why he was at the gate at that hour. It was to meet a woman."

"To meet a woman! He?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the woman's name?"

"I can't give you the name, sir, but I can give you the initials. Her initials were L. L."

"How do you know this, Barrymore?"

"Well, Sir Henry, your uncle had a letter that morning. He had usually a great many letters, for he was a public man and well known for his kind heart, so that everyone who was in trouble was glad to turn to him. But that morning, as it chanced, there was only this one letter, so I took the more notice of it. It was from Coombe Tracey, and it was addressed in a woman's hand."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, I thought no more of the matter, and never would have done had it not been for my wife. Only a few weeks ago she was cleaning out Sir Charles's study—it had never been touched since his death—and she found the ashes of a burned letter in the back of the grate. The greater part of it was charred to pieces, but one little slip, the end of a page, hung together, and the writing could still be read, though it was grey on a black ground. It seemed to us to be a postscript at the end of the letter, and it said: 'Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock.' Beneath it were signed the initials L. L."

"Have you got that slip?"

"No, sir, it crumbled all to bits after we moved it."

"Had Sir Charles received any other letters in the same writing?"

"Well, sir, I took no particular notice of his letters. I should not have noticed this one only it happened to come alone."

"And you have no idea who L. L. is?"

"No, sir. No more than you have. But I expect if we could lay our hands upon that lady we should know mote about Sir Charles's death."

"I cannot understand, Barrymore, how you came to conceal this important information."

"Well, sir, it was immediately after that our own trouble came to us. And then again, sir, we were both of us very fond of Sir Charles, as we well might be considering all that he has done for us. To rake this up couldn't help our poor master, and it's well to go carefully when there's a lady in the case. Even the best of us——"

"You thought it might injure his reputation?"

"Well, sir, I thought no good could come of it. But now you have been kind to us, and I feel as if it would be treating you unfairly not to tell you all that I know about the matter."

"Very good, Barrymore; you can go." When the butler had left us Sir Henry turned to me. "Well, Watson, what do you think of this new light?"

"It seems to leave the darkness rather blacker than before."

"So I think. But if we can only trace L. L. it should clear up the whole business. We have gained that much. We know that there is someone who has the facts if we can only find her. What do you think we should do?"

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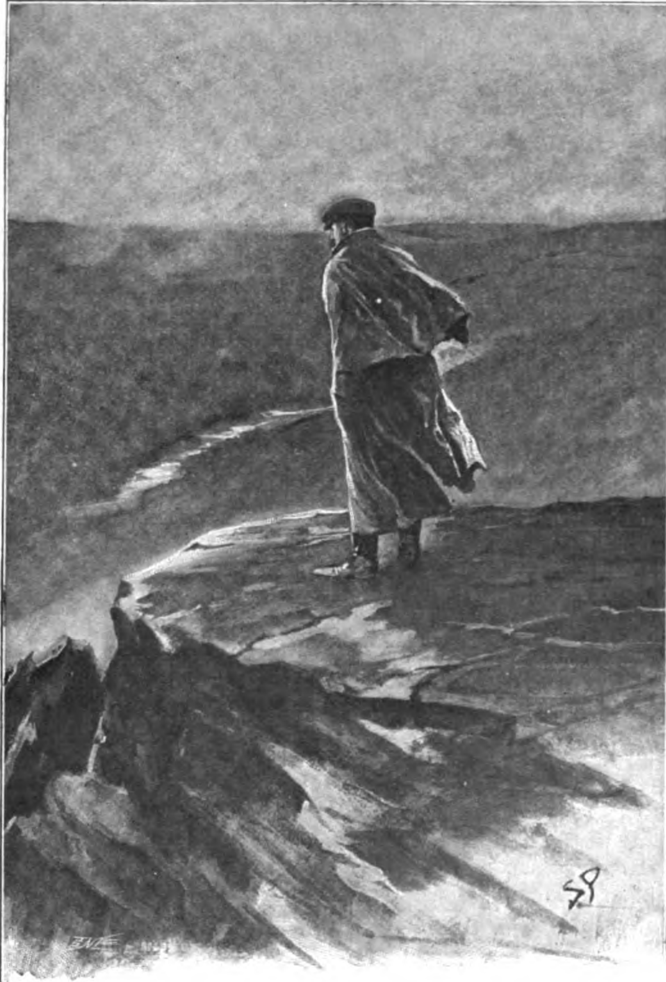
"Let Holmes know all about it at once. It will give him the clue for which he has been seeking. I am much mistaken if it does not bring him down."

I went at once to my room and drew up my report of the morning's conversation for Holmes. It was evident to me that he had been very busy of late, for the notes which I had from Baker Street were few and short, with no comments upon the information which I had supplied, and hardly any reference to my mission. No doubt his blackmailing case is absorbing all his faculties. And yet this new factor must surely arrest his attention and renew his interest. I wish that he were here.



"FROM ITS CRAGGY SUMMIT I LOOKED OUT MYSELF ACROSS THE MELANCHOLY DOWNS."

October 17th.—All day to-day the rain poured down, rustling on the ivy and dripping from the eaves. I thought of the convict out upon the bleak, cold, shelterless moor. Poor fellow! Whatever his crimes, he has suffered something to atone for them. And then I thought of that other one—the face in the cab, the figure against the moon. Was he also out in that deluge—the unseen watcher, the man of darkness? In the evening I put on my waterproof and I walked far upon the sodden moor, full of dark imaginings, the rain beating upon my face and the wind whistling about my ears. God help those who wander into the Great Mire now, for even the firm uplands are becoming a morass. I found the black Tor upon which I had seen the solitary watcher, and from its craggy summit I looked out myself across the melancholy downs. Rain

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squalls drifted across their russet face, and the heavy, slate-coloured clouds hung low over the landscape, trailing in grey wreaths down the sides of the fantastic hills. In the distant hollow on the left, half hidden by the mist, the two thin towers of Baskerville Hall rose above the trees. They were the only signs of human life which I could see, save only those prehistoric huts which lay thickly upon the slopes of the hills. Nowhere was there any trace of that lonely man whom I had seen on the same spot two nights before.

As I walked back I was overtaken by Dr. Mortimer driving in his dog-cart over a rough moorland track, which led from the outlying farmhouse of Foulmire. He has been very attentive to us, and hardly a day has passed that he has not called at the Hall to see how we were getting on. He insisted upon my climbing into his dog-cart and he gave me a lift homewards. I found him much troubled over the disappearance of his little spaniel. It had wandered on to the moor and had never come back. I gave him such consolation as I might, but I thought of the pony on the Grimpen Mire, and I do not fancy that he will see his little dog again.

"By the way, Mortimer," said I, as we jolted along the rough road, "I suppose there are few people living within driving distance of this whom you do not know?"

"Hardly any, I think."

"Can you, then, tell me the name of any woman whose initials are L. L.?"

He thought for a few minutes.

"No," said he. "There are a few gipsies and labouring folk for whom I can't answer, but among the farmers or gentry there is no one whose initials are those. Wait a bit, though," he added, after a pause. "There is Laura Lyons—her initials are L. L.—but she lives in Coombe Tracey."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"She is Frankland's daughter."

"What? Old Frankland the crank?"

"Exactly. She married an artist named Lyons, who came sketching on the moor. He proved to be a blackguard and deserted her. The fault from what I hear may not have been entirely on one side. Her father refused to have anything to do with her, because she had married without his consent, and perhaps for one or two other reasons as well. So, between the old sinner and the young one the girl has had a pretty bad time."

"How does she live?"

"I fancy old Frankland allows her a pittance, but it cannot be more, for his own affairs are considerably involved. Whatever she may have deserved one could not allow her to go hopelessly to the bad. Her story got about, and several of the people here did something to enable her to earn an honest living. Stapleton did for one, and Sir Charles for another. I gave a trifle myself. It was to set her up in a type-writing business."

He wanted to know the object of my inquiries, but I managed to satisfy his curiosity without telling him too much, for there is no reason why we should take anyone into our confidence. To-morrow morning I shall find my way to Coombe Tracey, and if I can see this Mrs. Laura Lyons, of equivocal reputation, a long step will have been made towards clearing one incident in this chain of mysteries. I am certainly developing the wisdom of the serpent, for when Mortimer pressed his questions to an inconvenient extent I asked him casually to what type Frankland's skull belonged, and so heard nothing but craniology for the rest of our drive. I have not lived for years with Sherlock Holmes for nothing.

I have only one other incident to record upon this tempestuous and melancholy day. This was my conversation with Barrymore just now, which gives me one more strong card which I can play in due time.

Mortimer had stayed to dinner, and he and the baronet played écarté afterwards. The butler brought me my coffee into the library, and I took the chance to ask him a few questions.

"Well," said I, "has this precious relation of yours departed, or is he still lurking out yonder?"

"I don't know, sir. I hope to Heaven that he has gone, for he has brought nothing but trouble here! I've not heard of him since I left out food for him last, and that was three days ago."

"Did you see him then?"

"No, sir, but the food was gone when next I went that way."

"Then he was certainly there?"

"So you would think, sir, unless it was the other man who took it."

I sat with my coffee-cup half-way to my lips and stared at Barrymore.

"You know that there is another man, then?"

"Yes, sir; there is another man upon the moor."

"Have you seen him?"

"No, sir."

"How do you know of him, then?"

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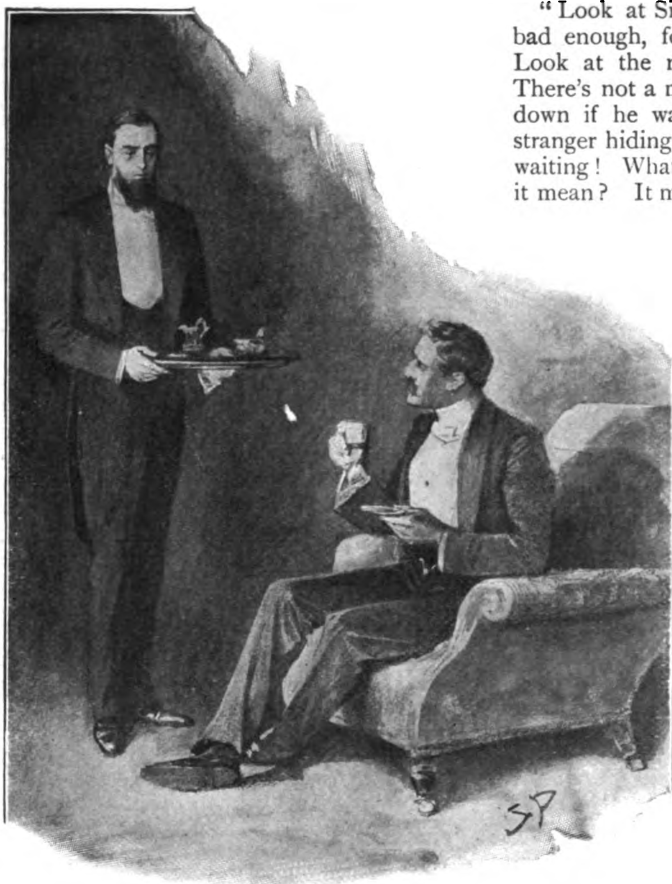
"YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS ANOTHER MAN, THEN?"

"Selden told me of him, sir, a week ago or more. He's in hiding, too, but he's not a convict so far as I can make out. I don't like it, Dr. Watson—I tell you straight, sir, that I don't like it." He spoke with a sudden passion of earnestness.

"Now, listen to me, Barrymore! I have no interest in this matter but that of your master. I have come here with no object except to help him. Tell me, frankly, what it is that you don't like."

Barrymore hesitated for a moment, as if he regretted his outburst, or found it difficult to express his own feelings in words.

"It's all these goings-on, sir," he cried, at last, waving his hand towards the rain-lashed window which faced the moor. "There's foul play somewhere, and there's black villainy brewing, to that I'll swear! Very glad I should be, sir, to see Sir Henry on his way back to London again!"

"But what is it that alarms you?"

"Look at Sir Charles's death! That was bad enough, for all that the coroner said. Look at the noises on the moor at night. There's not a man would cross it after sundown if he was paid for it. Look at this stranger hiding out yonder, and watching and waiting! What's he waiting for? What does it mean? It means no good to anyone of the name of Baskerville, and very glad I shall be to be quit of it all on the day that Sir Henry's new servants are ready to take over the Hall."

"But about this stranger," said I. "Can you tell me anything about him? What did Selden say? Did he find out where he hid, or what he was doing?"

"He saw him once or twice, but he is a deep one, and gives nothing away. At first he thought that he was the police, but soon he found that he had some lay of his own. A kind of gentleman he was, as far as he could see, but what he was doing he could not make out."

"And where did he say that he lived?"

"Among the old houses on the hillside—the stone huts where the old folk used to live."

"But how about his food?"

"Selden found out that he has got a lad who works for him and brings him all he needs. I daresay he goes to Coombe Tracey for what he wants."

"Very good, Barrymore. We may talk further of this some other time." When the butler had gone I walked over to the black window, and I looked through a blurred pane at the driving clouds and at the tossing outline of the wind-swept trees. It is a wild night indoors, and what must it be in a stone hut upon the moor? What passion of hatred can it be which leads a man to lurk in such a place at such a time? And what deep and earnest purpose can he have which calls for such a trial? There, in that hut upon the moor, seems to lie the very centre of that problem which has vexed me so sorely. I swear that another day shall not have passed before I have done all that man can do to reach the heart of the mystery.

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CHAPTER XI.

THE MAN ON THE TOR.

THE extract from my private diary which forms the last chapter has brought my narrative up to the 18th of October, a time when these strange events began to move swiftly towards their terrible conclusion. The incidents of the next few days are indelibly graven upon my recollection, and I can tell them without reference to the notes made at the time. I start, then, from the day which succeeded that upon which I had established two facts of great importance, the one that Mrs. Laura Lyons of Coombe Tracey had written to Sir Charles Baskerville and made an appointment with him at the very place and hour that he met his death, the other that the lurking man upon the moor was to be found among the stone huts upon the hill-side. With these two facts in my possession I felt that either my intelligence or my courage must be deficient if I could not throw some further light upon these dark places.

I had no opportunity to tell the baronet what I had learned about Mrs. Lyons upon the evening before, for Dr. Mortimer remained with him at cards until it was very late. At breakfast, however, I informed him about my discovery, and asked him whether he would care to accompany me to Coombe Tracey. At first he was very eager to come, but on second thoughts it seemed to both of us that if I went alone the results might be better. The more formal we made the visit the less information we might obtain. I left Sir Henry behind, therefore, not without some prickings of conscience, and drove off upon my new quest.

When I reached Coombe Tracey I told Perkins to put up the horses, and I made inquiries for the lady whom I had come to interrogate. I had no difficulty in finding her rooms, which were central and well appointed. A maid showed me in without ceremony, and as I entered the sitting-room a lady, who was sitting before a Remington typewriter, sprang up with a pleasant smile of welcome. Her face fell, however, when she saw that I was a stranger, and she sat down again and asked me the object of my visit.

The first impression left by Mrs. Lyons was one of extreme beauty. Her eyes and hair were of the same rich hazel colour, and her cheeks, though considerably freckled, were flushed with the exquisite bloom of the brunette, the dainty pink which lurks at the heart of the sulphur rose. Admiration was, I repeat, the first impression. But the second was criticism. There was something subtly wrong with the face, some coarseness of expression, some hardness, perhaps, of eye, some looseness of lip which marred its perfect beauty. But these, of course, are afterthoughts. At the moment I was simply conscious that I was in the presence of a very handsome woman, and that she was asking me the reasons for my visit. I had not quite understood until that instant how delicate my mission was.

"I have the pleasure," said I, "of knowing your father."

It was a clumsy introduction, and the lady made me feel it.

"There is nothing in common between my father and me," she said. "I owe him nothing, and his friends are not mine. If it were not for the late Sir Charles Baskerville and some other kind hearts I might have starved for all that my father cared."

"It was about the late Sir Charles Baskerville that I have come here to see you."

The freckles started out on the lady's face.

"What can I tell you about him?" she asked, and her fingers played nervously over the stops of her typewriter.

"You knew him, did you not?"

"I have already said that I owe a great deal to his kindness. If I am able to support myself it is largely due to the interest which he took in my unhappy situation."

"Did you correspond with him?"

The lady looked quickly up, with an angry gleam in her hazel eyes.

"What is the object of these questions?" she asked, sharply.

"The object is to avoid a public scandal. It is better that I should ask them here than that the matter should pass outside our control."

She was silent and her face was very pale. At last she looked up with something reckless and defiant in her manner.

"Well, I'll answer," she said. "What are your questions?"

"Did you correspond with Sir Charles?"

"I certainly wrote to him once or twice to acknowledge his delicacy and his generosity."

"Have you the dates of those letters?"

"No."

"Have you ever met him?"

"Yes, once or twice, when he came into Coombe Tracey. He was a very retiring man, and he preferred to do good by stealth."

"But if you saw him so seldom and wrote so seldom, how did he know enough about your affairs to be able to help you, as you say that he has done?"

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She met my difficulty with the utmost readiness.

"There were several gentlemen who knew my sad history and united to help me. One was Mr. Stapleton, a neighbour and intimate friend of Sir Charles. He was exceedingly kind, and it was through him that Sir Charles learned about my affairs."

I knew already that Sir Charles Baskerville had made Stapleton his almoner upon several occasions, so the lady's statement bore the impress of truth upon it.

"Did you ever write to Sir Charles asking him to meet you?" I continued.

The flush had faded in an instant, and a deathly face was before me. Her dry lips could not speak the "No" which I saw rather than heard.

"Surely your memory deceives you," said I. "I could even quote a passage of your letter. It ran, 'Please, please, as you are a gentleman, burn this letter, and be at the gate by ten o'clock.'"

I thought that she had fainted, but she recovered herself by a supreme effort.

"Is there no such thing as a gentleman?" she gasped.

"You do Sir Charles an injustice. He

"REALLY, SIR, THIS IS A VERY EXTRAORDINARY QUESTION."

Mrs. Lyons flushed with anger again.

"Really, sir, this is a very extraordinary question."

"I am sorry, madam, but I must repeat it."

"Then I answer—certainly not."

"Not on the very day of Sir Charles's death?"

did burn the letter. But sometimes a letter may be legible even when burned. You acknowledge now that you wrote it?"

"Yes, I did write it," she cried, pouring out her soul in a torrent of words. "I did write it. Why should I deny it? I have no reason to be ashamed of it. I wished him to help me. I believed that if I had an

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interview I could gain his help, so I asked him to meet me."

"But why at such an hour?"

"Because I had only just learned that he was going to London next day and might be away for months. There were reasons why I could not get there earlier."

"But why a rendezvous in the garden instead of a visit to the house?"

"Do you think a woman could go alone at that hour to a bachelor's house?"

"Well, what happened when you did get there?"

"I never went."

"Mrs. Lyons!"

"No, I swear it to you on all I hold sacred. I never went. Something intervened to prevent my going."

"What was that?"

"That is a private matter. I cannot tell it."

"You acknowledge, then, that you made an appointment with Sir Charles at the very hour and place at which he met his death, but you deny that you kept the appointment?"

"That is the truth."

Again and again I cross-questioned her, but I could never get past that point.

"Mrs. Lyons," said I, as I rose from this long and inconclusive interview, "you are taking a very great responsibility and putting yourself in a very false position by not making an absolutely clean breast of all that you know. If I have to call in the aid of the police you will find how seriously you are compromised. If your position is innocent, why did you in the first instance deny having written to Sir Charles upon that date?"

"Because I feared that some false conclusion might be drawn from it, and that I might find myself involved in a scandal."

"And why were you so pressing that Sir Charles should destroy your letter?"

"If you have read the letter you will know."

"I did not say that I had read all the letter."

"You quoted some of it."

"I quoted the postscript. The letter had, as I said, been burned, and it was not all legible. I ask you once again why it was that you were so pressing that Sir Charles should destroy this letter which he received on the day of his death."

"The matter is a very private one."

"The more reason why you should avoid a public investigation."

"I will tell you, then. If you have heard anything of my unhappy history you will know that I made a rash marriage and had reason to regret it."

"I have heard so much."

"My life has been one incessant persecution from a husband whom I abhor. The law is upon his side, and every day I am faced by the possibility that he may force me to live with him. At the time that I wrote this letter to Sir Charles I had learned that there was a prospect of my regaining my freedom if certain expenses could be met. It meant everything to me—peace of mind, happiness, self-respect—everything. I knew Sir Charles's generosity, and I thought that if he heard the story from my own lips he would help me."

"Then how is it that you did not go?"

"Because I received help in the interval from another source."

"Why, then, did you not write to Sir Charles and explain this?"

"So I should have done had I not seen his death in the paper next morning."

The woman's story hung coherently together, and all my questions were unable to shake it. I could only check it by finding if she had, indeed, instituted divorce proceedings against her husband at or about the time of the tragedy.

It was unlikely that she would dare to say that she had not been to Baskerville Hall if she really had been, for a trap would be necessary to take her there, and could not have returned to Coombe Tracey until the early hours of the morning. Such an excursion could not be kept secret. The probability was, therefore, that she was telling the truth, or, at least, a part of the truth. I came away baffled and disheartened. Once again I had reached that dead wall which seemed to be built across every path by which I tried to get at the object of my mission. And yet the more I thought of the lady's face and of her manner the more I felt that something was being held back from me. Why should she turn so pale? Why should she fight against every admission until it was forced from her? Why should she have been so reticent at the time of the tragedy? Surely the explanation of all this could not be as innocent as she would have me believe. For the moment I could proceed no farther in that direction, but must turn back to that other clue which was to be sought for among the stone huts upon the moor.

And that was a most vague direction. I realized it as I drove back and noted how hill

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after hill showed traces of the ancient people. Barrymore's only indication had been that the stranger lived in one of these abandoned huts, and many hundreds of them are scattered throughout the length and breadth of the moor. But I had my own experience for a guide, since it had shown me the man himself standing upon the summit of the Black Tor. That, then, should be the centre of my search. From there I should explore every hut upon the moor until I lighted upon the right one. If this man were inside it I should find out from his own lips, at the point of my revolver if necessary, who he was and why he had dogged us so long. He might slip away from us in the crowd of Regent Street, but it would puzzle him to do so upon the lonely moor. On the other hand, if I should find the hut and its tenant should not be within it I must remain there, however long the vigil, until he returned. Holmes had missed him in London. It would indeed be a triumph for me if I could run him to earth where my master had failed.

Luck had been against us again and again in this inquiry, but now at last it came to my aid. And the messenger of good fortune was none other than Mr. Frankland, who was standing, grey-whiskered and red-faced, outside the gate of his garden, which opened on to the high road along which I travelled.

"Good-day, Dr. Watson," cried he, with unwonted good humour, "you must really give your horses a rest, and come in to have a glass of wine and to congratulate me."

My feelings towards him were far from being friendly after what I had heard of his treatment of his daughter, but I was anxious to send Perkins and the wagonette home, and the opportunity was a good one. I alighted and sent a message to Sir Henry that I should walk over in time for dinner. Then I followed Frankland into his dining-room.

"It is a great day for me, sir—one of the red-letter days of my life," he cried, with many chuckles. "I have brought off a double event. I mean to teach them in these parts that law is law, and that there is a man here who does not fear to invoke it. I have established a right of way through the centre of old Middleton's park, slap across it, sir, within a hundred yards of his own front door. What do you think of that? We'll teach these magnates that they cannot ride rough-shod over the rights of the commoners, confound them! And I've closed the wood where the Fernworthy folk used to picnic. These infernal people seem to think that there are no rights of property, and that they can swarm where they like with their papers and their bottles. Both cases decided, Dr.

"'GOOD-DAY, DR. WATSON,' HE CRIED."

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Watson, and both in my favour. I haven't had such a day since I had Sir John Morland for trespass, because he shot in his own warren."

"How on earth did you do that?"

"Look it up in the books, sir. It will repay reading—Frankland *v.* Morland, Court of Queen's Bench. It cost me £200, but I got my verdict."

"Did it do you any good?"

"None, sir, none. I am proud to say that I had no interest in the matter. I act entirely from a sense of public duty. I have no doubt, for example, that the Fernworthy people will burn me in effigy to-night. I told the police last time they did it that they should stop these disgraceful exhibitions. The county constabulary is in a scandalous state, sir, and it has not afforded me the protection to which I am entitled. The case of Frankland *v.* Regina will bring the matter before the attention of the public. I told them that they would have occasion to regret their treatment of me, and already my words have come true."

"How so?" I asked.

The old man put on a very knowing expression.

"Because I could tell them what they are dying to know; but nothing would induce me to help the rascals in any way."

I had been casting round for some excuse by which I could get away from his gossip, but now I began to wish to hear more of it. I had seen enough of the contrary nature of the old sinner to understand that any strong sign of interest would be the surest way to stop his confidences.

"Some poaching case, no doubt?" said I, with an indifferent manner.

"Ha, ha, my boy, a very much more important matter than that! What about the convict on the moor?"

I started. "You don't mean that you know where he is?" said I.

"I may not know exactly where he is, but I am quite sure that I could help the police to lay their hands on him. Has it never struck you that the way to catch that man was to find out where he got his food, and so trace it to him?"

He certainly seemed to be getting uncomfortably near the truth. "No doubt," said I; "but how do you know that he is anywhere upon the moor?"

"I know it because I have seen with my own eyes the messenger who takes him his food."

My heart sank for Barrymore. It was a serious thing to be in the power of this spiteful old busybody. But his next remark took a weight from my mind.

"You'll be surprised to hear that his food is taken to him by a child. I see him every day through my telescope upon the roof. He passes along the same path at the same hour, and to whom should he be going except to the convict?"

Here was luck indeed! And yet I suppressed all appearance of interest. A child! Barrymore had said that our unknown was supplied by a boy. It was on his track, and not upon the convict's, that Frankland had stumbled. If I could get his knowledge it might save me a long and weary hunt. But incredulity and indifference were evidently my strongest cards.

"I should say that it was much more likely that it was the son of one of the moorland shepherds taking out his father's dinner."

The least appearance of opposition struck fire out of the old autocrat. His eyes looked malignantly at me, and his grey whiskers bristled like those of an angry cat.

"Indeed, sir!" said he, pointing out over the wide-stretching moor. "Do you see that Black Tor over yonder? Well, do you see the low hill beyond with the thorn-bush upon it? It is the stoniest part of the whole moor. Is that a place where a shepherd would be likely to take his station? Your suggestion, sir, is a most absurd one."

I meekly answered that I had spoken without knowing all the facts. My submission pleased him and led him to further confidences.

"You may be sure, sir, that I have very good grounds before I come to an opinion. I have seen the boy again and again with his bundle. Every day, and sometimes twice a day, I have been able—but wait a moment, Dr. Watson. Do my eyes deceive me, or is there at the present moment something moving upon that hillside?"

It was several miles off, but I could distinctly see a small dark dot against the dull green and grey.

"Come, sir, come!" cried Frankland, rushing upstairs. "You will see with your own eyes and judge for yourself."

The telescope, a formidable instrument mounted upon a tripod, stood upon the flat leads of the house. Frankland clapped his eye to it and gave a cry of satisfaction.

"Quick, Dr. Watson, quick, before he passes over the hill!"

There he was, sure enough, a small urchin with a little bundle upon his shoulder, toiling

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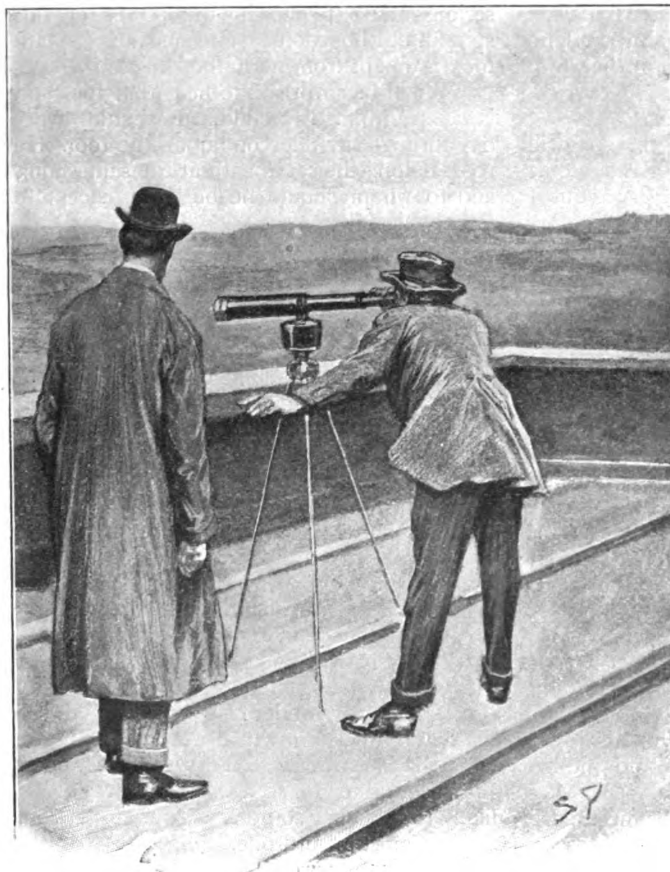

"FRANKLAND CLAPPED HIS EYE TO IT AND GAVE A CRY OF SATISFACTION."

slowly up the hill. When he reached the crest I saw the ragged, uncouth figure outlined for an instant against the cold blue sky. He looked round him, with a furtive and stealthy air, as one who dreads pursuit. Then he vanished over the hill.

"Well! Am I right?"

"Certainly, there is a boy who seems to have some secret errand."

"And what the errand is even a county constable could guess. But not one word shall they have from me, and I bind you to secrecy also, Dr. Watson. Not a word! You understand?"

"Just as you wish."

"They have treated me shamefully—shamefully. When the facts come out in Frankland *v.* Regina I venture to think that a thrill of indignation will run through the country. Nothing would induce me to help the police in any way. For all they cared it might have been me, instead of my effigy, which these rascals burned at the stake. Surely you are not going! You will help me to empty the decanter in honour of this great occasion!"

But I resisted all his solicitations and succeeded in dissuading him from his announced intention of walking home with me. I kept the road as long as his eye was on me, and then I struck off across the moor and made for the stony hill over which the boy had disappeared. Everything was working in my favour, and I swore that it should not be through lack of energy or perseverance that I should miss the chance which Fortune had thrown in my way.

The sun was already sinking when I reached the summit of the hill, and the long slopes beneath me were all golden-green on one side and grey shadow on the other. A haze lay low upon the farthest sky-line, out of which jutted the fantastic shapes of Belliver and Vixen Tor. Over the wide expanse there was no sound and no movement. One great grey bird, a gull or curlew, soared aloft in the blue heaven. He and I seemed to be the only living things between the huge arch of the sky and the desert beneath it. The barren scene, the sense of loneliness, and the mystery and urgency of my task all struck a chill into my heart. The boy was nowhere to be seen. But down beneath me in a cleft of the hills there was a circle of the old stone huts, and in the middle of them there was one which retained sufficient roof to act as a screen against the weather. My heart leaped within me as I saw it. This must be the burrow where the stranger lurked. At last my foot was on the threshold of his hiding-place—his secret was within my grasp.

As I approached the hut, walking as warily as Stapleton would do when with poised net he drew near the settled butterfly, I satisfied myself that the place had indeed been used

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as a habitation. A vague pathway among the boulders led to the dilapidated opening which served as a door. All was silent within. The unknown might be lurking there, or he might be prowling on the moor. My nerves tingled with the sense of adventure. Throwing aside my cigarette I closed my hand upon the butt of my revolver and, walking swiftly up to the door, I looked in. The place was empty.

But there were ample signs that I had not come upon a false scent. This was certainly where the man lived. Some blankets rolled in a waterproof lay upon that very stone slab upon which neolithic man had once slumbered. The ashes of a fire were heaped in a rude grate. Beside it lay some cooking utensils and a bucket half-full of water. A litter of empty tins showed that the place had been occupied for some time, and I saw, as my eyes became accustomed to the chequered light, a pannikin and a half-full bottle of spirits standing in the corner. In the middle of the hut a flat stone served the purpose of a table, and upon this stood a small cloth bundle—the same, no doubt, which I had seen through the telescope upon the shoulder of the boy. It contained a loaf of bread, a tinned tongue, and two tins of preserved peaches. As I set it down again, after having examined it, my heart leaped to see that beneath it there lay a sheet of paper with writing upon it. I raised it, and this was what I read, roughly scrawled in pencil:—

"Dr. Watson has gone to Coombe Tracey."

For a minute I stood there with the paper in my hands thinking out the meaning of this curt message. It was I, then, and not Sir Henry, who was being dogged by this secret man. He had not followed me himself, but he had set an agent—the boy, perhaps—upon my track, and this was his report. Possibly I had taken no step since I had been upon the moor which had not been observed and repeated. Always there was this feeling of an unseen force, a fine net drawn round us with infinite skill and delicacy, holding us so lightly that it was only at some supreme moment that one realized that one was indeed entangled in its meshes.

If there was one report there might be others, so I looked round the hut in search of them. There was no trace, however, of anything of the kind, nor could I discover any sign which might indicate the character or intentions of the man who lived in this singular place, save that he must be of Spartan habits, and cared little for the comforts of life. When I thought of the heavy rains and looked at the gaping roof I understood how strong and immutable must be the purpose which had kept him in that inhospitable abode. Was he our malignant enemy, or was he by chance our guardian angel? I swore that I would not leave the hut until I knew.

Outside the sun was sinking low and the west was blazing with scarlet and gold. Its reflection was shot back in ruddy patches by the distant pools which lay amid the Great Grimpen Mire. There were the two towers of Baskerville Hall, and there a distant blur of smoke which marked the village of Grimpen. Between the two, behind the hill, was the house of the Stapletons. All was sweet and mellow and peaceful in the golden evening light, and yet as I looked at them my soul shared none of the peace of Nature, but quivered at the vagueness and the terror of that interview which every instant was bringing nearer. With tingling nerves, but a fixed purpose, I sat in the dark recess of the hut and waited with sombre patience for the coming of its tenant.

And then at last I heard him. Far away came the sharp clink of a boot striking upon a stone. Then another and yet another, coming nearer and nearer. I shrank back into the darkest corner, and cocked the pistol in my pocket, determined not to discover myself until I had an opportunity of seeing something of the stranger. There was a long pause which showed that he had stopped. Then once more the footsteps approached and a shadow fell across the opening of the hut.

"It is a lovely evening, my dear Watson," said a well-known voice. "I really think that you will be more comfortable outside than in."

(*To be continued.*)

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A King's Gallery of Beauty.

By S. K. Ludovic.

KING LUDWIG I. OF BAVARIA, who died in 1868, and to whom the renowned collection of the Gallery of Beauties at the Royal Castle at Munich is due, was a man of exquisite gifts. Being a great connoisseur, his influence was of the utmost importance on the development of art in Germany. One of his first acts when he came to the throne was to restore what was left, in the quaint old Bavarian towns, of moated walls, towers, and abbeys which French vandalism had so gravely injured in 1813. His greatest interest was centred in the study of history, and his love of art was the outcome of his thorough knowledge of the classics. By artists he was truly loved. They appreciated his fine understanding and his critical opinion even more than his kindness. Ludwig Schwanthaler, the celebrated pupil of Thorwaldsen, owes his whole career to King Ludwig's encouragement and help. It is said that Schwanthaler's figures above the portal of the "Walhalla" at Ratisbon are the finest sculptures since the antique. When Ludwig was Crown Prince he was much in the society of artists, and was often seen at the Café Greco, the chief place of meeting among the Munich painters. He was one of the gayest among them. In the new Pinakothek is a picture in which the artist-Prince is depicted sitting with his friends at a Weinkneipe and partaking of a hearty breakfast.

KING LUDWIG I. OF BAVARIA.

The collection of portraits of beautiful women was not suggested with a view to pay compliments to the bearers of great names, though it is to a great extent a highly aristocratic bevy of beauties which has been immortalized by the subtle brush of Joseph von Stieler, the Court painter. The King desired to collect these portraits independent of rank and position. During his lonely walks he succeeded in discovering many a subject for his collection. Wherever he saw a lovely woman's face he sent his faithful Stieler with a request for the necessary sittings to secure a portrait. No woman resisted such a compliment paid to her beauty, and thus it came about that in the same room with the portrait of Queen Marie of Bavaria we find one of a girl who served the foaming Bavarian beer to the guests at her father's inn. These two pictures are, perhaps, among the most beautiful of the collection; but individual taste has always more to do with the decision of the question of beauty than all the rules of art.

We will now proceed to reproduce, we believe for the first time in this country, a selection from the portraits in this unique gallery.

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QUEEN MARIE OF BAVARIA.

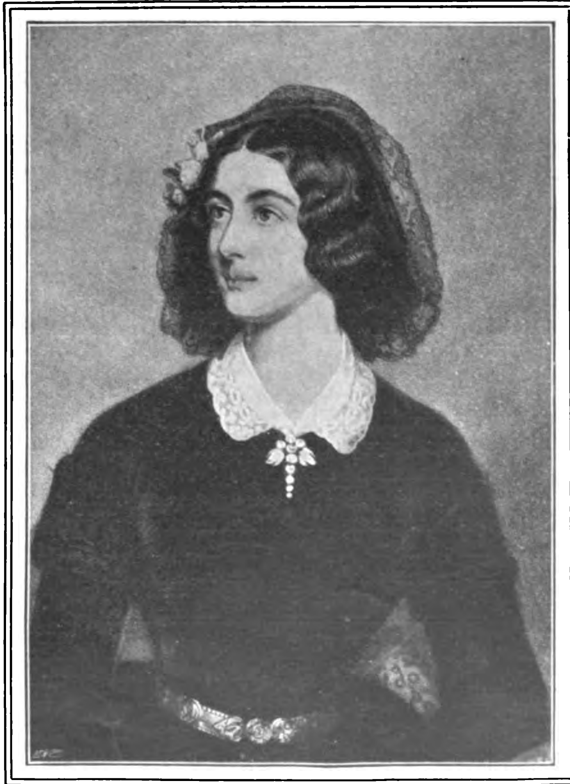
QUEEN MARIE OF BAVARIA was a Prussian Princess and the wife of King Maximilian II., the son of Ludwig I. She was the mother of Ludwig II. and Otto I., the two young Bavarian Kings so sadly afflicted with insanity. Ludwig II. was of chief interest to the world through his great influence on the life of Wagner. During the sad years of 1870–71 she occupied herself most zealously with the comfort of the wounded. Every day during many weeks she went to the Odéon—a large building where the famous Court concerts take place—and helped the ladies of the town to sew garments and make bandages and lint for the wounded. From that time dates an amusing little anecdote, which goes to show that even Queens may sometimes say things which one would rather have left unsaid. One lady whose portrait was painted for the Gallery of Beauties about the same time as Queen Marie's also came to these charitable meetings. On being presented to the Queen the latter looked puzzled, as if trying to fix some recollection. Then she remembered and said, with one of her sweet smiles: "Are you not the beautiful Fräulein Vetterlein whose portrait is in the Gallery of Beauties?" The lady, much flattered, replied in the affirmative. The Queen, looking at her with an absent air, pensively remarked: "It is astonishing! One would hardly have believed it." No one knew whether she was ever aware of having expressed aloud her innermost thoughts about the elderly beauty. Possibly the little story was merely owing to the poor lady's former beauty having roused the jealousy of rivals.

ANNA KAULA.

ANNA KAULA, known in her family circle as Nannie or Nanette, was remarkable for her great beauty. She was a gentle, sweet woman, not very brilliant, and seemed hardly aware of her loveliness. Her father was a banker in Vienna, but it is believed that he left her no particular fortune. She and her sister were brought up in Munich by an aunt. She was seventeen years old when the King desired her portrait, and on becoming more widely known, as was always the case when a girl was beautiful enough to be painted for the celebrated collection, she had a great many suitors. She seemed not to care for marriage. At last, when her family believed that she had decided to remain single, she chose a man, much her senior, who could not offer her any worldly advantages and was in no way remarkable. "*L'amour, ou va-t-il se nicher!*"

LOLA MONTEZ.

To those who still remember the freaks and escapades of this strangely-fascinating woman her presence among the noble dames of the Royal House may seem to be, to say the least, a little strange. The younger generation, who may have but a dim idea as to who Lola Montez really was, may be interested in the following sketch of the career of that remarkable adventuress. Lola was born at Limerick, Ireland, in 1818, her mother being a Creole of notable beauty. After having passed the early years of her life in an English boarding-school at Bath, her beauty and vivacity of spirit attracted a young Anglo-Indian officer, Captain James, who married her and took her with him to the Far East. But Lola found Eastern life rather dull and, secretly leaving her husband, she embarked for Europe. Struggling poverty assailed the adventuress in London, and after a most chequered career as a street singer Lola went to Madrid. She obtained an engagement in the ballet at the Porte St. Martin Théâtre, in Paris, in 1839, but the director found himself bound to dismiss the irrepressible ballerina. We hear of her again in Berlin, where, mounted on a spirited thoroughbred, she assisted at some grand military manœuvres, at which the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia were present. The firing of the cannon frightened the animal, which bolted among the suite of the Emperor of Russia. A zealous policeman caught hold of the horse's head just in time to stop its mad flight, but, not content with having done his duty, he felt called upon to administer a rebuke to the fair rider. Immediately the hot-blooded Lola belaboured the astonished guardian of the law with such a shower of blows from her whip that he had to call for assistance. She escaped imprisonment on the plea of severe provocation, but had to leave Berlin. Paris, the scene of her former exploits, was of course her goal. Press and public received her with acclamation, and Pillet engaged her as *première danseuse* at the Opéra. Soon, however, the old spirit of recklessness broke loose, and when in a fit of daring she threw one of her satin slippers among the public she got hissed off the stage. She returned to Germany. Ludwig II. of Bavaria, meeting her apparently by chance at the house of a courtier, expressed a wish to see her dance a fandango. Completely fascinated by her feline grace and witty repartees, the Royal enthusiast presented her to his Court as "my best friend." She was made Baroness von Rosenthal and Countess Landsfeld. A pension of 20,000 florins and a magnificent villa gave suitable atmosphere to the newly-created titles. But when he proposed that Queen Therese should invest her with the dignity of a *Chanoinesse* of the Theresian Order all the King's Ministers sent in their resignations and were replaced by new ones chosen by Lola herself. The student corps Allemania saw in Lola a sort of goddess of liberty and espoused her cause. This led to such riots that all lectures at the University had to be suspended. Lola, with her usual dare-devil temperament, ventured to walk right through the excited street mob. She was greeted with hisses and groans, and only escaped violent treatment thanks to the



LOLA MONTEZ.

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King's protection. He had seen from one of the windows of the Royal castle what happened, and leaving the assembled company came to Lola's rescue, leading her on his arm to a place of safety. Incensed by the violent manifestations of his hitherto faithful burghers the King ordered the University of Munich to be closed for one year. But this was the last straw: at first a mere riot, matters now assumed the proportions of a revolution to demand the expulsion of the foreign adventuress. At last the King yielded and a decree of expulsion was signed. Returning to England, she married an officer in the Guards—a Mr. Head, a gentleman of large fortune. The charge of bigamy brought forward by his family she dodged by giving bail for £1,000 and going to Spain. There she separated from her husband, and two years afterwards he was found drowned near Lisbon. The artist Mauclerc was said to have been her third husband, but he denied the charge. In America she married finally the editor of a San Francisco journal, only to separate from him again. She died in 1861 in New York, where "she led an exemplary life and died as a good Christian." The portrait of Lola Montez is supposed to be the best of the collection. After King Ludwig's death it was expelled from the gallery and put into the lumber-room of the New Pinakothek, whence Herr Eugen von Stieler, after an assiduous search for it, restored it to the gallery once more.

AMALIE VON SCHINTLING.

MAXIMILIANA BORZAGA.

MAXIMILIANA BORZAGA came to Germany through King Otto I. of Greece. King Otto was King Ludwig I.'s second son, and during his lifetime a continual influx of Greeks took place into Munich, where they found sympathy and congenial surroundings.

AMALIE VON SCHINTLING belonged to an old aristocratic family, and was one of Queen Therese's ladies-in-waiting.

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LADY JANE ERSKINE.

very original conversations sometimes took place. When he saw the pretty Fräulein Vetterlein he approached her: "Are you from Munich, my pretty child? You should not wear a veil. It is a pity." Whilst he spoke the elderly aunt was struggling hard with the flimsy net which covered her faded visage. The King turned to her and said, with his politest bow: "Pray do not trouble; such a veil is a good thing." History is silent about the friendly relations between aunt and niece after this little incident. But when Herr von Stieler appeared after a few days with the well-known request from the King, Cornelia's parents were by no means surprised. Ludwig I. sometimes came in during these sittings to give his opinion and to have a friendly chat with the artist and his subject, but if the chosen chaperon was more than usually plain he could not always conceal his outraged sense of beauty.

LADY JANE ERSKINE.

In all probability the portrait bearing the name of Lady Jane Erskine represents really the wife of Lord Edward Morris Erskine, C.B., who was Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the King of the Hellenes from 1864 till 1872. She was married in 1817, and probably known to King Ludwig through the Grecian Court.

CORNELIA VETTERLEIN

was a young girl of good family, and well brought up. Her parents lived in a neighbouring town, and one day when she went to Munich with her elderly maiden aunt the King saw her in the Ludwig-Strasse, where he often took his walks alone. It was then customary for ladies to stand still, lift their veils, and when the King passed to make a deep curtsy, which he always most politely acknowledged. It often happened that he addressed the people in the street, and some

CORNELIA VETTERLEIN.

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LADY ELLENBOROUGH.

There is nothing known about Ianthe, Lady Ellenborough, *née* Lady Digby. The peerage gives no such name, but it is possible that, through the carelessness of the officials, a wrong or misspelled name was put under the picture.

HELENE SEDLMAYER.

It is interesting to observe the difference in the dress of Regina Daxenberger and Helene Sedlmayer. Both wear the pretty and becoming "Riegelhäubehen," but the dress of Regina is that of a fashionable lady of the time, whilst Helene wears the exact Bavarian national costume, which is unfortunately no longer seen in Munich. A German beer-house is hardly the soil for a flower of beauty and purity to grow. Nevertheless, Helene Sedlmayer, with her sweet, girlish face and the expression of a saint, grew up in her father's inn. Near the old Isaarthor in the "Thal," where Munich still preserves its mediæval aspect, in one of the small side-streets, was Helene's humble home. She helped in the house, which means that she worked like a servant-girl, and served beer to her father's guests in the evening. Every three years a quaint old custom, "the Schefflertanz," takes place in this part of the town. The butchers and coopers dance in quaint mediæval costume round the fountain in the "Thal"; this festivity lasts three days and provides much amusement and gaiety for the working classes. King Ludwig, who was wont to mix among his subjects and whose kind-heartedness rejoiced in seeing their mirth, was there in the midst of the crowd and saw the beautiful Helene craning her pretty neck to see what was going on round the fountain. He sent his aide-de-camp to find the pretty maid a better place of vantage and to

LADY ELLENBOROUGH.

HELENE SEDLMAYER.

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help her out of the crowd, and the next day her father was asked to let her go in her best finery to Stieler's studio, where she would be painted for the King's collection. At one of the sittings the King, according to his wont, dropped in and chatted with the painter and Helene. He soon found out that the poor little girl had a sweetheart, who was now going to give her up because he thought she would be too great a lady for him, as he was so poor. "Do you love him, little Helene? Would you not rather become a lady? I think I could find you a husband among my Court officials who would make you a lady. I might give you a little dowry, because you are not only a pretty but also a good girl." No consideration for her pose, no fear to incur the displeasure of the painter, could keep the girl back; she knelt at the King's feet and kissed his hand, with tears in her gazelle-like eyes: "Oh, would your Majesty let me marry Hans? I don't want any-one else." King Ludwig kept his promise, and sent his private secretary to Hans with the command to marry Helene as soon as the picture was finished. Hans did not want much persuasion, and on their wedding-day Ludwig I. sent the bride a handsome present and the deed which made Hans the proprietor of a lucrative little hostelry. The little hostelry soon changed into a well-kept hotel, through the careful management of the young couple and the interest which the Royal family bore them. Helene's son, a godchild of the King, has not remained in the humble rank of life of his parents. A scholar and a good soldier, he is now in the front rank among Bavarian officers.

REGINA DAXENBERGER.

This beauty was also discovered by the King during one of his walks. She was the daughter of a rich Munich burgher and master coppersmith. The lovely Regina was born in 1811. She must have been about nineteen when her portrait was painted for the King's collection. Through this event she made the acquaintance of her future husband, who was King Ludwig's confidential secretary. Heinrich Fahrenbacher was nearly seventeen years older than his beautiful *fiancée*, but his splendid career and great intellectual gifts formed a fit equivalent to his wife's great beauty and fortune. The King loved children and young people, and would sometimes appear suddenly at some harmless little social gathering. Frau Regina Fahrenbacher often related to her grandchildren how gaily he played "blind-man's buff" with her and her friends. She was married in 1832, and became the mother of three sons and two daughters. Her children are all in good positions, and one of her brothers is still the proprietor of the now famous old business in Munich. Frau Fahrenbacher died in her native town at the age of seventy.

REGINA DAXENBERGER.

JULIE BARONESS VON KRÜDENER

attracted much attention in her day, not only on account of her beauty and charm, but particularly through the great influence she exercised for some time over the Czar Alexander II. Books have been written about her, and Governments have been in terror of her influence. Hers was a restless, ardent nature whose whole life seemed to

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pass in a storm of excitement. She was born in Riga, 1764, and died also in Russia in 1824. She came of a rich and distinguished family, and married, in 1783, Baron von Krüdener, who took her to Venice, where he was Russian Ambassador. About 1777 Julie's principal attraction lay in the fact that she was one of the richest heiresses of Livonia—for she was still an overgrown, undeveloped, silent girl, with a rather long nose and uncertain complexion, but with ample promises of future beauty in her large blue eyes and chestnut hair, and in her singularly well-shaped hands and arms. When sixteen she had many suitors, and at eighteen she married Baron Krüdener, who was twenty years her senior. The Baron was a clever diplomatist, a refined man of the world, but by no means a hero of romance. The brilliant young Ambassadress soon formed the centre of attraction. When Baron Krüdener became Russian Ambassador in Denmark she changed from a romantic girl into a brilliant society woman. Alexander de Stakieff, her husband's adjutant, killed himself for love of her. The remembrance of this romance in her own life inspired her to write the romance "Valérie." Under pretext of health considerations she went to France, and cultivated there the society of writers. In 1802 she became a widow; then she published "Valérie"—a book which is worth reading. She wrote several other novels with more or less success. Her veritable mission did not show itself until later. When her youth and beauty vanished her ardent heart turned to religion and to the good of her fellow-creatures. Her courage and her eloquence made her an apostle of her convictions. After some years of sojourn in Livonia, where she was noted for her benevolence, she thought herself called on to regenerate the world. She provoked persecution by preaching humanitarian and socialistic doctrines. After 1814 her tendencies turned to prophecy. She foretold that Napoleon would return from Elba and take the throne again. The success of this prediction made the Czar Alexander II., who was much addicted to religious exaltation, wish to see her. He received her in 1815, and was quite subjugated by her enthusiasm. He desired her to follow him to France. Installed at the Hotel Montchenu near the Palais d'Elysée, where he lived, she was for several months, so to speak, his prophetess. But the favour of the Czar began to decline. She went to Switzerland and there preached her socialistic doctrines. She had crowds of listeners, partly owing to her eloquence and partly to her liberality. She was expelled from Switzerland, and, being banished for three years from Russia, she died at Karasou Bazar, where she had gone for her health.

JULIE BARONESS VON KRÜDENER.

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A NEW YEAR'S GIFT

BY WINIFRED GRAHAM.

I.

LORNA woke with a start and, springing out of bed, ran to her brother's room. She bent over the sleeping face, flushed and chubby on the pillow.

"Wake up!" she whispered, and her small fingers pulled at his curls. "Wake up, Jack!"

He stirred, rubbing his eyes.

Lorna skipped to the window and drew aside the blind; the bright morning light streamed into the room.

Jack collected his thoughts.

"It's New Year's Eve," he said.

"Oh! it's something better than that," cried Lorna, dancing about in her excitement. "It's Daddy's day! You surely hadn't forgotten?"

"Rather not!"

He was fully awake now and his eyes sparkled.

"Can you believe it?" said Lorna, perching herself on the foot of the bed and looking straight at Jack; "can you believe Daddy is really coming home to-day?"

"It seems as if we must be dreaming," Jack replied.

Both were silent for a moment, and a thoughtful expression crept over their faces. The six months Captain Hamilton had been away at the war appeared like a six years' absence to the two waiting children, who worshipped the ground he trod on. The very name of South Africa filled them with vague, uncontrollable fears. Jack drew a very crumpled piece of paper from under his pillow and smoothed it out tenderly on his knee, the telegram his father sent him from Southampton — last thing before starting. During all those weary months of separation the treasured telegram had never left Jack for a single moment.

"I don't know how we shall get through the morning," he said. "Daddy won't come till this afternoon. But we had better dress quickly now, because I want to talk to Bowler. We must meet Daddy in the dog-cart; he likes it so much better than the carriage."

Jack scrambled into his clothes and ran to the stables, singing and shouting as he skipped along. He could hardly feel the ground under his feet, so buoyant were his spirits.

"Bowler," he cried, seizing the fat, elderly coachman, "look! I've got a piece of ribbon to put on our whip to-day, red, white, and blue, for the Captain. And, oh! please meet him with Benedict, because, you know,

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he loves Benedict more than any of the other horses, and, coming from so far, he'll like to see an old friend."

Bowler fell in with all the young master's wishes, for it was Bowler who had found six months ago a sobbing, tear-stained child huddled up at the back of the hay-loft, dazed with grief, and half dead from the violence of his emotions.

"You will be round at the door for us very early, won't you?" said Jack. "We should like to get to the station a long time before the train comes in. Lorna and I are both going—girls do look on things funnily, don't they, Bowler? Lorna says she shall 'insist'—yes, that was the word she used—insist on being dressed in all her best clothes. As if clothes mattered; but I ought to get my breakfast soon, the bell rang a long time ago. I suppose you know there is a mystery going on indoors?"

Bowler shook his head; his ignorance fairly staggered Jack.

"I ain't heard of nothing of the kind, sir," answered the stolid voice.

"Why, mother is preparing a New Year's surprise for Daddy and for us—we may not go into the West Wing. We can't think what it can be, because we have had our Christmas-tree, and we don't know of anything like that which might happen at New Year."

Bowler could throw no light upon the subject, so Jack, his heart beating faster at the thought of the wonderful day before him, fled back to the house, the wind ruffling his hair. He and Lorna talked a great deal about the mystery as they breakfasted together in the nursery.

"I hope it is something Daddy will like," Lorna said. "I don't mind for myself. Daddy alone will be quite New Year's treat enough for me."

She heaved a pensive little sigh, adding, proudly: "He has not seen my winter coat—the blue velvet one—with the ermine collar. Both the coat and hat are new since he went away, and the hat matches! I could not meet him in old clothes—on such a great day! Nurse says the tenants are going to hang flags out of their windows, and the village will be decorated. We must take our presents to the station with us, to give him at once; I expect he will like to get them directly."

She slipped off her chair and ran to a drawer; Jack followed. Together they opened it and peered in. Two small parcels tied with red ribbons fully satisfied the children's eager gaze.

"I'll put our presents on my velvet hat, so we can't forget!" said Lorna. "I expect mother's surprise for him will have cost a lot more money, but I daresay he'll like ours a little too."

"He will like ours very, very much," Jack assured her, confident of having made a wise choice.

II.

BOWLER declared afterwards he should never forget that drive to the station; it was all he could do to hold the children in the cart, and yet he enjoyed their hilarious excitement, listening amused to a torrent of innocent prattle.

"This telegram," said Jack, feeling in his pocket, "has always stayed in every suit I happened to be wearing since the day Daddy went away. Now it won't be wanted any more (but I never mean to part with it). Have you ever had a telegram that seemed to comfort you to hear it scrunch when you put your hands in your pockets?"

"I don't know that I have," replied Bowler. "Now I come to think of it, telegrams generally bring me bad news."

"Oh! poor Bowler," sighed Lorna—"like the telegram that came from the War Office to say Daddy was wounded! We didn't think then what good news it really was, because it is bringing him home, and he says he is not very ill—only a foot wound; and Daddy doesn't mind pain, because he is a soldier and has learnt to bear it very bravely."

Lorna peeped up so sweetly into Bowler's face that he was inclined to believe every word she said. She looked like a little princess with her hands in her big white muff and her dainty face and round blue eyes beaming at him.

"You see what we are taking Daddy," she continued, displaying the beribboned parcels. "We have each got him a little packet of chocolates; we think he must want that more than anything, because it has always been sent out to him. It was Jack's idea."

Bowler smiled—a smile that came near to a chuckle.

"Look, Lorna, look!" cried Jack, as they approached the village. "The big 'Welcome' is hanging up over the road, which only comes out for weddings; won't Daddy be pleased? Oh, I can see lots of people on the station all waiting for his train." The nearness of this longed-for joy seemed to get into the children's blood and sent them crazy—decorum went to the winds. Jack, hanging half out of the cart, produced from under the seat a large patriotic handker-

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chief, which he waved to everyone he knew as they passed, shouting, "The Captain's coming—the Captain's coming in the train."

As the entire village appeared to be comprised of Jack's acquaintances this kept him well occupied till Bowler drew up, and the irresponsible little couple tumbled out, making a dash for the platform.

Bowler caught glimpses of them shaking hands with the station-master and porters, while joining in animated conversation with an

"BOWLER CAUGHT GLIMPSES OF THEM SHAKING HANDS WITH THE STATION-MASTER."

interested crowd. Jack had his torn and faded telegram out, which he showed to a sympathetic circle, while Lorna explained about the chocolate.

"Everyone seems to know it's Daddy's day!" she whispered to her brother; "isn't it nice of them not to have forgotten him, as he's been away such a very, very long time? Of course, we shouldn't forget, but that's different, because nobody could love him like we do!"

They thought the train would never come, and at last a certain breathless silence fell upon them, in strange contrast to their previous mood. Instinctively they stood hand in hand—Jack's fingers felt hot and feverish, despite the frosty bite in the clear winter air. Every nerve was strained to highest tension, as they stared down the blank line, hearts beating furiously under cosy garments.

Suddenly the flood-gates of their eager expectations opened wide. In the dim distance a thin curl of smoke heralded the coming train. Jack had his cap off and was waving at the engine long before he could see the familiar figure of the loved one leaning through the window.

As Captain Hamilton limped out he was greeted with the gifts simultaneously forced upon him.

"See, we've both got a present for you, Daddy!" they cried together, in breathless voices.

His merry laugh rang clear as of old. Then he caught the children in his arms. "How is mother?" he asked, kissing the upturned faces lovingly.

"Mother is quite well," replied Lorna, "but very busy to-day. I don't know if you will be allowed to go into the West

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Wing, but we mustn't yet—not till the surprise is ready. She is settling something for New Year."

Jack eagerly untied the chocolate, as friends flocked round to shake Captain Hamilton's hand.

There was nothing for it but he must eat a piece at once out of each packet. The proceeding apparently created much amusement amongst the bystanders, who had already been favoured with a private view of the little packets, representing so much forethought on the part of the happy givers.

To the sound of ringing cheers Captain Hamilton drove away, Lorna nestling at his side and Jack standing up at the back of the cart with both arms round his father's neck. Even Bowler, usually so stolid and immovable of feature, caught the infection—his red face resembled a beaming sun! Benedict went like the wind; it was the merriest, maddest drive the countryside had ever witnessed.

Lorna imparted news in her innocent, childish fashion; she thought he must want to hear all they were going to do for the New Year.

"We begged mother to let us sit up to see the Old Year out—we've never done it before, and she promised we might."

"A splendid idea," said Captain Hamilton. Lorna fancied from his tone his thoughts had travelled elsewhere. So she kept quite still, but let her little velvet - clad shoulders lean heavily against his arm. He was not a bit changed, she told herself; just the same dear, sweet Daddy who had left them ages ago, the Daddy who always smiled, who appreciated their love. Jack's happiness kindled still in jubilant excitement, his blood coursed like quicksilver through his veins. Captain Hamilton fancied he could hear the beating of the boy's heart, as he retained his standing attitude, unable to tear his arms from that fond embrace.

As Benedict turned in at the drive, and the old house loomed before the traveller's eyes, a sigh of deep relief escaped him. He looked first at Lorna, then back at Jack, and though they could not tell what he was thinking, they guessed it must be something exquisitely tender. Perhaps it was the cold, but the children fancied they detected a moisture under Daddy's eyelashes. Such a bronzed, manly face could not, of course, be guilty of a tear.

The little people jumped down, bounding up the steps. Then they turned, and noticed, with a sense of shock, that Captain Hamilton alighted very slowly, the effort apparently causing him pain. He reached for his stick before entering the house.

"I was so excited at the station I never saw his limp," whispered Lorna.

"Nor I," answered Jack, in an undertone. Lorna bent down to touch the foot.

"Does it hurt, Daddy?" she asked, a little tremor in her voice.

"No, pet."

For the first time in her life Lorna did not quite believe him.

They watched him mount the stairs and turn towards the West Wing. "May we come, too?" they asked, hardly able to bear the thought of letting him out of their sight.

"No," he replied, in a very decided voice, which chilled their spirits by its unexpected solemnity. "Run away and play, but let it

"'IT'S VERY ODD,' SAID LORNA."

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be quiet play. Mind, you are not to make any noise."

Lorna and Jack exchanged glances, as they nodded their heads in assent. Not to make any noise—not to make any noise when Daddy had come home and all the world should be ringing with the news! They walked away to a corner of the hall and sat down on an old oak seat.

"It's very odd," said Lorna, the corners of her mouth drooping. "I never thought mother would let Daddy come back without being at the door to meet him." Jack sighed deeply, and ran his fingers through his thick, curly hair.

"There is a funny hush about the house. Didn't you feel it, Lorna, directly you got inside? I would much rather give up the surprise for New Year. I thought we should all have such good times together on Daddy's day; it seems to have spoilt everything, mother stopping upstairs. I can't think how she could!" Jack spoke vehemently, and his little face grew red. A sudden painful reaction crept over him. Lorna looked as if she were going to cry.

Certainly Jack was right, the house felt strangely depressing. The absence of their pretty, bright-faced mother became more marked as time crept on; everybody appeared influenced by it, for the servants were flurried and talked in whispers, while even nurse neglected her charges. Lorna had to take off her own coat and hat and ask Jack to brush her hair. When they went down to look for Daddy they could not find him.

"It's a very disappointing evening," said Lorna, with a little sniffle.

"Let us sit on the stairs and wait for Daddy," said Jack, trying to conceal his feelings. "We won't talk."

They sat like two small images, staring through the big window, against which a hurrying snowstorm flung whirling atoms of feathery whiteness.

When at last Captain Hamilton came by he only just waited to pat them on the head, and hurried past looking terribly grave and anxious.

"You saw his face," whispered Jack. "What did you think of it?"

"I don't know, but it seemed to me a sad face, as if he were unhappy about something. He has been to the West Wing, and the surprise has not pleased him. Oh! Jack, what can we do for Daddy? It's dreadful he should come home and look like that! He only ate a very little of our chocolate and left the rest on the hall-table. I expect the chocolate disappointed him. He may have thought there was something inside he would have liked much better."

"Perhaps he wanted it to be tobacco," said Jack. "Mother sent out tobacco just as often as she sent chocolate, but we never thought of it, and I know there isn't any in the house. You may be sure that is making him unhappy! He is looking for just enough to fill one pipe, and can't find a bit. It's New Year's Eve, and—and we've given him the wrong present!"

Jack's voice broke as he made the sorrowful statement; he stood up as if bracing himself to a deed of heroism.

"Lorna," he said, "this can't go on! I must fetch him some tobacco from the village before the Old Year's out. Nurse knows we are sitting up; she won't miss us—she, too, is busy about the surprise."

Lorna glanced fearfully at the ever-thickening snowstorm. It was quite dark outside: a wild, terrible night. In the house were great fires, hot-water pipes ran through the walls, all was snug; King Frost and Queen Snow could find no entrance, but the world, the other side of the front door, was a place of chill desolation! Lorna clutched Jack's arm. "People are sometimes lost in the snow," she told him. "I shouldn't like anything to happen to you, Jack, even for Daddy's sake!"

"I don't mind the snow," he said, though his heart sank a little at the sight. "I shall be sure to find my way all right. Isn't it worth going out, to please Daddy? Why, Lorna, you know it is."

His eyes glowed with enthusiasm. Lorna caught the infection of his unselfish desire.

"I shall come, too," she said. "It's awful lonesome for one person to be out of doors in the dark; and if you got buried in the snow I should be there to scrape it away."

"Perhaps I ought not to take you, Lorna," he murmured.

"I'm coming," she replied, gathering her courage together and forcing a faint smile. "You are not taking me. I've got twopence upstairs. Will that be enough to pay for the tobacco?"

"I expect so. I'll owe you a penny; we must go shares. Isn't it wonderful I should just have thought what Daddy wanted? We will get our things on at once."

It was easy to talk of that long, lonely walk in the snow, with the hearth fire crackling within earshot and the warm light filling the house. The children had yet to realize the difference of being actually exposed to the

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biting storm, with darkness all round them and wind-driven flakes blinding their eyes.

Unseen they opened the big front door and staggered out, fighting the elements breathlessly.

"I didn't think it would be so cold," Lorna confessed, clutching Jack's arm. "I can feel the snow tumbling into my boots; I seem to slip such a long way down at every step."

"That is only because you are so short," said Jack, cheerily. "It isn't so very deep, really."

He knew in his heart the night was dangerous, for the wind blew the snow into great drifts, and darkness hung over the earth like a pall. Lorna leaned so heavily upon him that he stumbled a good deal and had some difficulty in keeping to the path.

"It doesn't matter," he kept saying, half to himself. "It's for Daddy we are going."

"IT'S FOR DADDY WE ARE GOING."

The words had a marvellous effect upon Lorna's chilled spirits. No sacrifice for Daddy could be too great! So they battled on manfully, their faces cut by the wind and their little figures covered from head to foot in a thick coating of heavy whiteness.

On the verge of exhaustion they reached the village, and a gasp of horror escaped the boy.

"Lorna, the shop is shut!"

She leant against the wet door, thrusting both knuckles in her eyes.

Jack pulled them sharply down. "Don't cry," he said; "there must be some way of getting it. Look," pointing across the road, "at those lights in the Bull and Horn! A man is singing a song; lots of people are laughing. Come, Lorna, they are sure to sell tobacco there!"

"Oh! but I mustn't go into a public-house; mother wouldn't like it," said Lorna, drawing back.

"You can stay in the porch; I'll go and ask. Give me the twopence." A queer little figure came suddenly into the light of the Bull and Horn. At first the proprietor failed to recognise the youthful pilgrim under his weight of snow.

Jack put down the money on the counter, and looked up hopefully.

"Please," he said, "can you give me some tobacco for that? My Daddy has come home from South Africa, and we forgot about his perhaps wanting to smoke. We never thought of it till we saw him looking very sad. My sister is waiting on the door-step, and she's rather damp, so perhaps you could oblige me with the tobacco quickly."

"Lor'!" murmured the proprietor, "it's the little master from the Manor, and the young lady outside such a night as this! Did anyone ever hear the like?"

A silence fell on the assembly. All eyes were turned to the small, weather-beaten wanderer.

"I should just think I could let you have some tobacco for the Captain!" continued the kindly voice; "the best my house affords, and long may he live to enjoy a pipe of peace!"

The landlord went to his own private drawer, and presented Jack with a goodly sized bundle, which set the boy's heart beating quickly with delight. All the terrors of the storm faded under the soothing influence of success.

Stoutly declining the offer of an escort home, Jack rejoined Lorna, finding her

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"'LOR'!' MURMURED THE PROPRIETOR, 'IT'S THE LITTLE MASTER FROM THE MANOR.'"

seated on the doorstep, half asleep, in the snow. It took so much shaking to wake her, and she seemed so tired and numbed, that the long road ahead filled Jack with fresh pangs.

The path home led up-hill—a weary white journey, under starless skies. What matter the cold creeping into their systems; what matter the weariness and the pain, since between them they carried that precious parcel containing the whole love of two fond hearts?

The snow blew up from the ground into their faces. Jack found Lorna very heavy to pull along; it seemed an unending walk! Jack thought surely the morning would come before they reached the familiar old garden.

At last they saw the bright lights of home twinkling in the windows. A carriage stood in the drive; the front door was set open.

"Let us slip in and hide behind the big curtains," whispered Jack. "We don't want anyone to see us like this. I wonder who the visitor can be?" peering curiously into the hall. "Richard is helping him on with his coat—now's our chance!"

Well-skilled in the game of hide-and-seek, the truants reached the shelter of the window-curtains unobserved. A white-haired gentleman in a fur-coat passed out, and Richard fastened the door again.

III.

"ARE you ready, Lorna?" said a voice from the passage.

"Yes—come in, Jack."

The boy entered the nursery on tiptoe. Lorna in dry clothing stood before him, warm, smiling, contented in the firelight. "Got over the hot-ache?" he asked, touching her hands.

She nodded reassuringly. "See, I can move my fingers quite well now. What have you done, Jack?"

"I persuaded Richard to take our parcel to Daddy. Richard said he wouldn't at first, the Captain was in the West Wing, and must not be disturbed, but I got round him. The New Year will be here very soon, and we are to listen for the bells. Come downstairs and let us see if we can find Daddy."

Jack had changed into a white sailor suit he wore for parties. He felt sure the surprise would be ready with the New Year.

On their way to the hall they suddenly paused and peeped through the banisters. A thrill of excitement shook Lorna. She pinched Jack's arm violently.

There below stood the Captain, his whole manner changed, his face radiant, his eyes alight with a new joy, and in his hand the packet of tobacco they had risked so much to gain!

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"We were right! we were right!" gasped Jack, and started running down the stairs.

"Oh! Daddy," he cried, "we guessed what you wanted, and we're so glad you are happy again!"

The Captain looked at their present, knowing nothing of the journey to the village, and, laughing light-heartedly, thanked them with much warmth and fervour for their kindly thought.

"It was the very thing I needed to cheer me up," he said, with a little twinkle, and, despite his lameness, he tossed Jack on to his shoulders.

"Will you take us to the West Wing now?" they asked, breathlessly.

"Yes, but you must still be very quiet."

As Lorna followed in wondering expectation she pictured the passing of the Old Year. She wished she could have shaken hands with him. It seemed sad he should be obliged to go out like a candle at bedtime, when she fancied perhaps he had a soul. The New Year, for sure, must be something very young and small, something you wanted to kiss and cuddle and make much of!

Captain Hamilton led the way to one of the many spare rooms in the West Wing.

"Look!" he said. "This is a New Year's gift to me."

His voice had a strange, sweet note in it, which set the children's pulses beating faster. They stared in speechless surprise at a white berceaunette.

Lorna was the first to peep curiously between the muslin curtains.

"Why, Jack," she whispered, "there's the New Year inside!"

"'WHY, JACK,' SHE WHISPERED, 'THERE'S THE NEW YEAR INSIDE!'"

As she spoke the joyous pealing of bells rang out across the country. "Listen, they are ringing a welcome!" said the sun-bronzed warrior, bending over the cot to kiss the tiny atom of humanity.

"The bells are chiming for us—for us!" gasped Jack, excitedly, "for we've got the New Year here in our house!"

"And the white-haired gentleman in the fur coat must have been the Old Year going out at the hall-door," replied Lorna, softly.

Captain Hamilton nodded and smiled. He would not for the world have disturbed the pretty idea.

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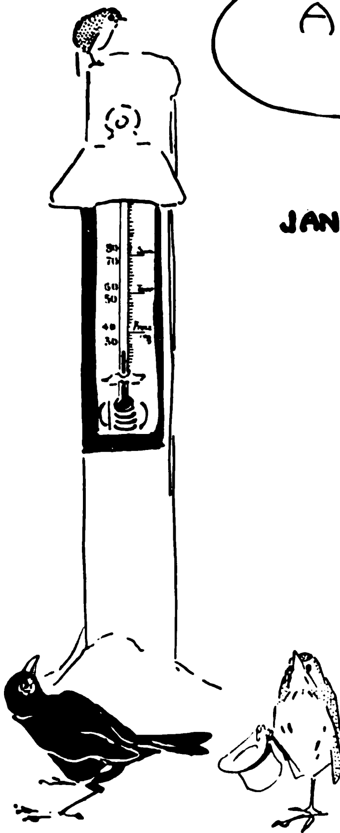
By E. D. Cuming

and J. A. Shepherd.



JANUARY

A FOOT of snow on the ground and 10deg. of frost. Wild birds are become tame birds: blackbirds, song-thrushes, starlings, chaffinches, tits, hedge-sparrows, and half-a-dozen more stand outside on the snow-bound lawn, mute applicants for outdoor relief. None of them speak; hungry they are and very cold, as you may see by the way they fluff out their feathers like overcoats, but they will not beg aloud. You might imagine that they were "on the rates" and ashamed of it, or had fear of the police regulations concerning beggars before them, so silent are they. A pied wagtail, smallest of our walking birds, swaggers about restlessly; many of his kind go abroad for the winter, and those that remain with us seem sorry they didn't go, too, in weather like this. Three or four rooks and jackdaws blot the snow in the background, making shallow pretence of being here merely out of curiosity. The robin, self-appointed spokesman of the crowd, is on the window-sill: there is no false shame about the robin, hungry or satisfied, and he taps on the window as impatiently as if he had ordered breakfast over-night and paid for it in advance. He won't trouble you to throw out crumbs for *him*, thanks; if you will just open the window he will come in and help himself from the table.

The curiosity of the rooks and jackdaws becomes uncontrollable when they see the other birds busy with the crumbs, and they stalk resolutely forward with the air of guests who haven't been asked, but feel sure the omission was an oversight. One song-thrush swallows his breakfast in rather more of a hurry than the rest, pounces on a big scrap a rook had his eye on, and flies away with it to the shrubbery, leaving the rook surprised and angry. The conduct of the thrush needs explanation: the fact is he and his wife fell into a mistake which is often made by birds who are guided by weather and not by the almanac. It was so mild up to Christmas that that pair of thrushes concluded winter had somehow slipped out of the calendar

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"TAKING CARE OF THEIR THROATS."

altogether, so they nested, and there is the unfortunate thrush shivering on five eggs and wondering how in the snow-bound world she is going to provide for a family ten days hence. Probably the eggs will catch cold in the meantime; or, what is equally likely, the magpies, who love eggs for breakfast and are not particular about their being new-laid, will relieve the anxious parent of all responsibility. Some authorities believe that a proportion of the thrushes go south for the cold weather. If they take care of their throats, as such professional singers ought, it would be wise of them to winter at Torquay or Eastbourne or some other south coast resort.

Breakfast is over, but the birds hang about the lawn waiting for something. Like the poor, they are always with us in winter; but they can't possibly be waiting for a distribution of coals, blankets, and flannel petticoats. It sounds bad, but the truth is they want a drink. The pump in the stable-yard is frozen, and so are the pond and the horse-trough. A pan of water will make you as many friends as there are birds. And having slaked their thirst they disperse to go and sit in the sun as little boys cuddle down over a baker's grating. The wiser among the brethren seek the chimney-stacks. A barn owl one cold January night frightened a respectable family into fits by hooting down the chimney: it was so nice and warm, he thought it was a whiff of summer coming up from the dying

"THE PUMP IN THE STABLE-YARD IS FROZEN."

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"A WHIFF OF SUMMER."

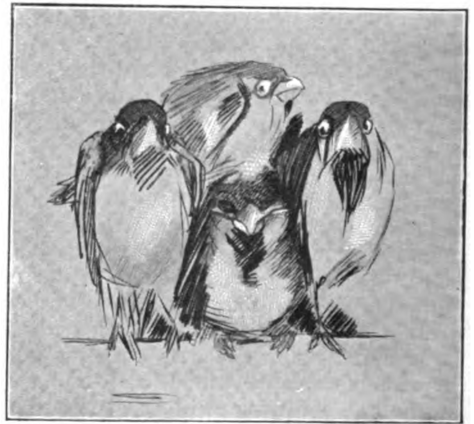
ashes below, and welcomed it after the manner of his kind.

The high bodily temperature of birds goes far to enable them to dispense with the extra clothes we chillier creatures wear in winter. A bird's temperature read by the human standard would suggest that the patient was in a dangerously high fever, for 104deg. to 108deg. is the avine normal — it varies in different species — but they suffer cruelly at night. It is cold work perching alone on one leg, so the birds make up sleeping parties: great tits have been seen hopping one after the other into a favourite bedroom, where they slept all together and kept one another warm. The sparrows go around about sunset and invite their friends to "come and stay the night" in the ivy against the kitchen chimney:—

On a very cold night it's a very good plan
To give "dinner and sleep" invitations
To friends, who at bedtime you put, if you can,
In judiciously picked situations.

With an intimate friend on each side and behind,
And a fourth on your back, if he'll stop.
It is snug in the middle, you're certain to find
It so warm that you sleep like a top.

The host's thoughtful arrangement for his own comfort is marred by the circumstance that each of his guests wants an inside place: whence the screaming and scolding you may hear after dark and the spectacle of abusive sparrows tumbling out of the ivy in bunches.



"DINNER AND SLEEP."

Other birds other methods—and manners too, in the social sense.

"COLD WORK!"

The sheep, in their well-fleeced persons, advertise "Good Beds," and the starlings, whose welcome labours to relieve the sheep of ticks promotes good feeling between them, are in the habit of roosting among the flock. Sometimes the bird wakes in the morning to find his feet entangled in his host's wool; then there is unpleasantness: the starling scolds volubly, declaring the sheep caught him on purpose. The sheep looks at him in mild reproach, and other sheep crowd round to see the fun. Moorhens and such shy fowl will seek shelter in a rabbit - hole when the

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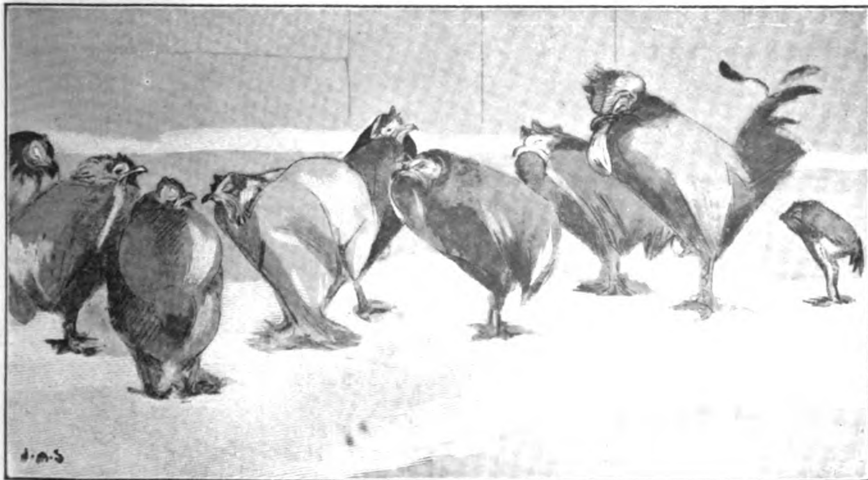
weather is very bad: they don't go right indoors and disturb the family; they step into the hall as it were and sit down quietly, as if they had come with a message and were waiting for the answer.

"THE SHEEP ADVERTISE 'GOOD BEDS.'"

The idle, melancholy hens gather in groups and comment in querulous undertones upon the weather. They are out on strike: give them warm food, and you shall have eggs; no warm food, no eggs. This is the established rule in the egg-producing industry, and must be upheld.



"EGGS IS HOFF."

Happy the creatures whom Nature orders to bed for the whole winter. The common bats are sound asleep, hanging from the roof in the darkest corner of the loft or inside some hollow tree. On a fine, mild day the bat may come out for a bit, but there is nothing much for him to do if he does come out in winter, so he does not stay long abroad. The long-eared bat is thorough in his hibernation: he folds his vast ears, nearly as long as himself, back along his sides, gives his heart a rest, and becomes cold and torpid. So profound is his slumber that it takes him about a quarter of an hour to wake up properly.

The lizards, slow-worm, common snake, and viper are all abed underground. The snake and viper must find it hard to get to sleep as they can't shut their eyes, having no movable eyelids. That is where the slow-worm has the pull over them: he is more nearly related to the lizard family, and ability to shut his eyes and wink betrays the fact that he is highly connected, quite apart from his elementary limbs. The frogs are comfortably asleep in the mud at the bottom of the horse-pond, indifferent to the cold; the robust frog can withstand the most Arctic weather; he makes nothing of being frozen. stiff for a few days; he thaws out again and smiles. Yes! hibernation has advantages:—

You solve the weighty secret of avoiding winter ills,
The flights to the Riviera, the colds in chest and head,
The chilblains, bursting water-pipes, the waits, and Christmas bills,
By getting fat in autumn and just stepping into bed!

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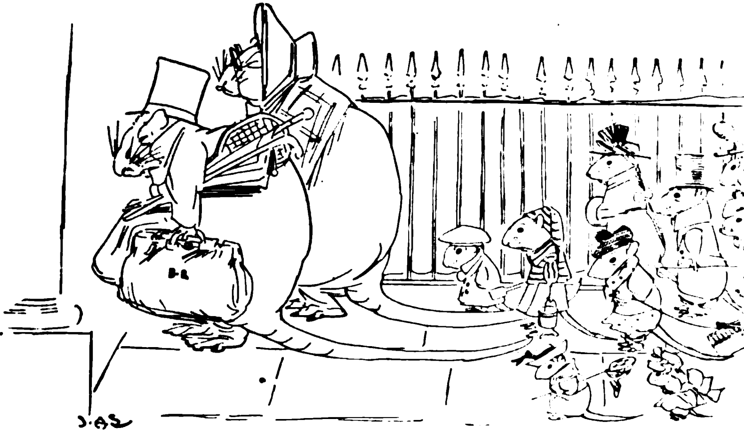

"MR. AND MRS. BROWN-RAT AND FAMILY COME TO TOWN."

The rat doesn't go to bed in winter; he is a highly civilized creature, the rat, and when the cold weather comes on shuts up his pleasant country-house in ditch, bank, or hedgerow to take up quarters in his town-

"NO MUSIC TO-DAY.

house. Sewer and cellar are not ideal dwellings, but they compare favourably with an establishment which may be flooded by rain-water or blocked by snow; then, again, the near propinquity of corn-stack, larder, and store-room offers large facilities for earning that dishonest livelihood which has such charms for the rat. He takes pride in his profession as a thief, as witness the ingenuity with which he uses his tail to get the contents of an oil-bottle. The seasons make no difference to the mouse: winter and summer alike he pursues his joyous way, marrying and giving in marriage and rearing at your expense large families of children which you don't want.

There is little music in these days: the robin in mild weather perches on some naked bough, depresses his tail, and pipes up mournfully. The song of the robin is the song of the sorrowful, but there is no reason to suppose this bird is more harassed with care than his neighbours; on the contrary, pugnacity and impudence combined rarely suffer from want, and the robin has more than his share of both. The hedge-sparrow, who, by the way, is not a sparrow at all, sings also on a fine day, but feebly; the blackbird gets out his music on occasion, and the thrush practises now and again; so does the skylark towards the end of the month; but wind and rain, or a fall of snow, reminds them that the concert season is a long way off yet, and they stop singing with an abruptness that suggests they were only waiting for an excuse. The only bird who really sings in earnest at this season is the song-thrush's cousin, the missel-thrush: his spirits rise with the wind; when other birds, so to speak, are hurriedly put-

"THE MISSEL-THRUSH'S TURN."

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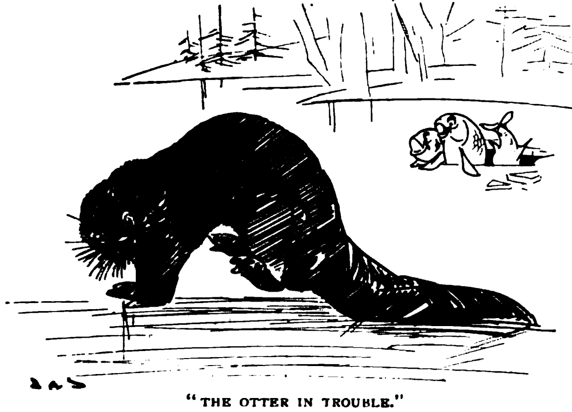
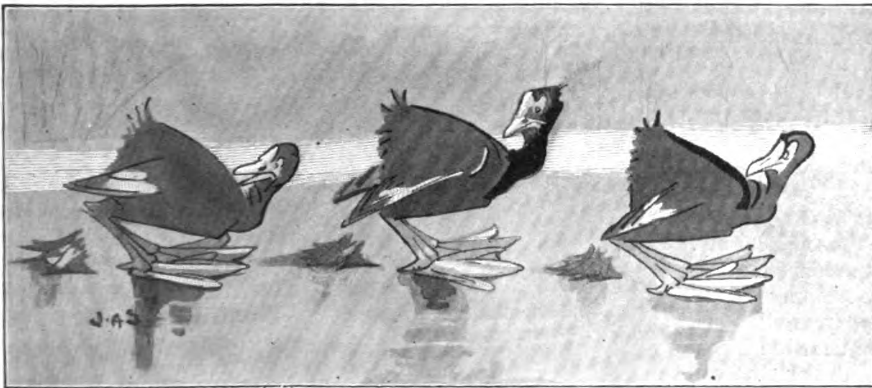
ting up their umbrellas and winding mufflers round their throats and running under cover, the missel-thrush takes his stand on some high and exposed bough and sings with all the power of his voice, the howling wind as his accompaniment; no wonder they call him the storm-cock.



"THE OTTER IN TROUBLE."

on a stone rick-post discovered quite a number of new and original tumbles before he was released from the ice which his warm feet had melted and which froze again while he stood there. Sparrows and other small birds sitting still too long on iron gates, stones, or lumps of snow are trap-



"THEY LEFT THEIR TAILS BEHIND THEM."

The winter for me! On the top of a tree,
While the north wind is playing at driving the sleet
So briskly and free. I should just like to see
The north wind who'd manage to whistle down me!
A fig for the spring! For a delicate thing
Like the blackcap or nightingale sunshine is meet;
But the bird who *can* sing and make echoes to ring,
Dons sou'-wester and oilskins and now has his fling.

He is the only professional vocalist who does not mind bad weather; all the others are very particular about the conditions under which they sing.

Incautious birds and beasts get into dangerous scrapes in severe weather. The snipe affecting marshy ground wakes to find himself frozen to the earth; a tumbler pigeon who perched

"WHAT A FOOT FOR A CHILBLAIN!"

ped in the same way. An otter fishing one very cold day from the edge of the ice on the Irfon, in Wales, grew so absorbed in his sport, or in hopes of it, he never noticed that his tail was frozen fast to the ice—a misfortune which wrought that sportsman's undoing at the hands of a passing labourer. You would think that the coot could keep his apology for a tail out of such difficulties; but a flock of some two hundred once sat thinking on the ice, regardless of possible chilblains, till their tails froze to it, and when frightened into getting up every bird left his tail behind him. Less common is the curious fate which once cost numerous wood-pigeons their lives: they went to bed wet—a rash thing for anybody to do—and during

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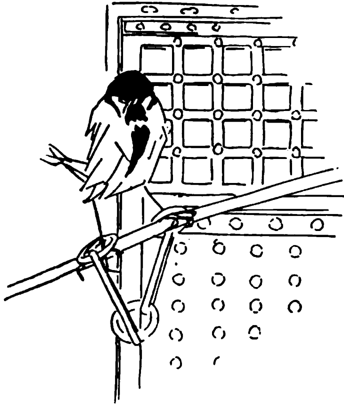

"THE FELON TIT.

the night the rain gave way to hard frost, whereby when those unhappy wood-pigeons woke in the morning their wings were frozen over their tails, and they fell in a shower on the head of an astounded passer-by, who made the most of the opportunity. The inexperienced moorhen who ventures upon the ice apparently labours under the delusion that if he seek with haste he will find open water; he finds reason to regret that he never learned to skate. But in much worse case is the misguided heron who alights on smooth black ice under the impression that it is water; he offers an object-lesson in the unwisdom of trying to slide on stilts.

"I'M NOT THE BLUEBOTTLE I WAS."

The sprightly great tit joins the other birds on the lawn at breakfast-time, but finds nothing to please him on the *menu* unless there be a scrap of fat. What he loves above all things is a bit of suet hung by a string to a bough, in which situation he is almost the only bird who can get at it. It speaks volumes for his digestion that he should be able to dine standing upside down. The carrion crow is the only bird who is likely to dispute the great tit's right to his meal. You may see him sometimes perch on a convenient branch puzzling over the problem.

"Look," says he to the tit, "at that beautiful bit
  Of fat, where the humans have set it.
It is safe from the cat, but the trouble is that
  I cannot make out how to get it."

Says the tit to the crow: "Why, there's nothing I know
  So easy as getting at suet.
You just perch upside down, like a gymnast or clown;
  The veriest nestling can do it."

Gymnastics are not in the crow's line at all, but he has brains: he is the cleverest of a clever family. Give him time and he will discover how to pull up the suet by the string with beak and claw. The engaging manners of the great tit mask a disreputable character. If the King's writ ran in the bird-world he would be indicted and hanged as murderer and cannibal. He kills smaller birds than himself in order to eat their brains; the wren is a frequent victim.

Gnats and other insects on fine days come out of the crannies where they have been hiding to play on the sunny side of the hedge. They don't put much life into the game, but one can hardly be surprised at that. Indoors, a weak-minded bluebottle, deceived by the warmth, comes out of his crack in the wall to look round and ascertain if it is time to get up for the summer. He is not half awake, and his bearing is so subdued and awkward that you hardly recognise in him the loud and joyful insect of July. He totters in his walk; his wings are dusty, and one is bent as if he had gone to sleep with it doubled under him. He blunders round the room and settles

"THE BLUEBOTTLE IN SUMMER."

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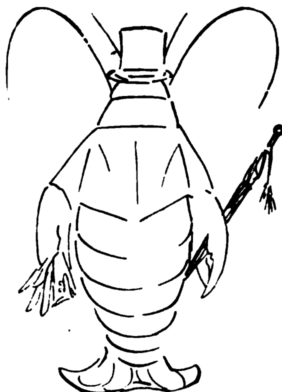
on your hand; rubs his head doubtfully; and, strolling off your knuckles, is surprised to find that he can't walk on air. After a while it dawns upon him that he must have made a mistake in getting up so soon, and he staggers across the carpet, wondering if he can possibly find his way back to bed. The spider appears, too, and practises throwing his web, but he seems rheumatic and uncertain of aim.

The lobster is in season now. The lobster's attractions on the table are great, but it is in its domestic capacity, as father, mother, or child, that the lobster best repays study. No crustacean is more carefully brought up by its mother than the young lobster, who is kept at home until he reaches months of discretion, under the eye of an affectionate parent. The angry eye of the paternal lobster, set as it is on a stalk, must, by the way, be an awful thing for his erring son to face; but these be matters pertaining to the future, as are the private affairs of the prawn, now also in season, and everywhere held in esteem—particularly in curry.



"WELL BROUGHT UP."

"TEN DEGREES OF FROST."

The fox ought to enjoy severe weather. Can't you imagine him scanning the "Hunting Appointments" in *The Field* and chuckling over the fact that this frost is going to cancel them all as it did last week? Hounds are in kennel and won't come out, except for road exercise; and if he likes he can go and drive the whole pack to frenzy by grinning at them through the bars. Then, too, he can spend the night out, as his habit is, without finding his front door "stopped" against him in the interests of hunting, when he comes home in the small hours. It is maddening to find the door locked at four in the morning.

The stoat is alert and active in winter; famine among birds means high carnival for him, and he and his cousins the marten weasel and polecat enjoy themselves and grow fat. The stoat must regard his cousins as poor relations: he changes his summer coat for a white one in winter, retaining only the black tip to his tail, while they wear the same clothes all the year round. It is not worth the stoat's while to make the change in the comparatively mild winter of the south of England, so he doesn't generally go to the expense; in the north he does it as a matter of course, even as do the mountain hare and the ptarmigan.

"BEAU STOAT."

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The House Under the Sea.

By Max Pemberton.

CHAPTER V.

STRANGE SIGHTS ASHORE, AND WHAT WE SAW OF THEM.

OW, when Seth Barker cried out that a ship was ashore on the dangerous reefs to the northward of the main island, it is not necessary to tell you what we, a crew of British seamen, were called upon to do. The words were scarcely spoken before I had given the order, "Stand by the boats," and sent every man to his station. Excited the hands were, that I will not deny; excited and willing enough to tell you about it if you'd asked them; but no man among them opened his lips, and while they stood there, anxious and ready, I had my glass to my eye and tried to make out the steamer and what had befallen her. Nor was Mister Jacob behind me, but he and Peter Bligh at my side, we soon knew the truth and made up our minds about it.

"There's a ship on the reef, sure enough, and by the cut of her she's the *Santa Cruz* we spoke this afternoon," said Mister Jacob, and added, "a dangerous shore, sir, a dangerous shore."

"But full of kind-hearted people that fire their guns at poor shipwrecked mariners," put in Peter Bligh. I wouldn't believe him at first, but there was no denying it, awful truth that it was, when a few minutes had passed.

"Good heavens," cried I, "it can't be so, Peter, and yet that's a rifle's tongue, or I've lost my hearing."

Well, we all stood together and listened as men listen for some poor creature's death-cry, or the sounds which come in the stillness of the night to affright and unnerve us. Sure enough, you couldn't have counted ten before the report of guns was heard distinctly above the distant roar of breakers, while flashes of crimson light playing about the reef seemed to tell the whole story without another word from me.

"Those demons ashore are shooting the crew," cried I; "did man ever hear such bloody work? I'll have a reckoning for this, if it takes me twenty years. Lower away the boats, lads; I'm going to dance to that music."

They swung the two longboats out on the davits, and the port crew were in their seats, when Mister Jacob touched my arm and questioned my order, a thing I haven't known him do twice in ten years.

"Beg pardon, sir," said he, "but there's no boat that will help the *Santa Cruz* to-night."

"And why, Mister Jacob—why do you say that?"

"Because she's gone where neither you nor me wish to go yet awhile, Mister Begg."

I stood as though he had shot me, and clapping my glass to my eye I took another look towards the northern reef and the ship that was stranded there. But no ship was to be seen. She had disappeared in a twinkling; the sea had swallowed her up. And over the water, as an eerie wail, lasting and doleful, came the death-cries of those who perished with her.

"God rest their poor souls and punish them that sent them there," said Peter Bligh; but Mister Jacob was still full of his prudent talk.

"We're four miles out, and the moon will be gone in ten minutes, sir. You couldn't make the reef if you tried, and if you could, you'd find none living. This sea would best the biggest boat that ever a ship carried—it will blow harder in an hour, and what then? We've friends of our own to serve, and the door that Providence opens we've no right to shut. I say nothing against humanity, Captain Begg, but I wouldn't hunt the dead in the water when I could help the living ashore."

I saw his point in a moment, and had nothing to say against it. No small boat could have lived in the reefs about the northern end of the island with the sea that was running that night. If the demons who fired down upon the poor fellows of the *Santa Cruz* were still watching like vultures for human meat, like as not the main island would be free of them for us to go ashore as we pleased. A better opportunity might not be found for a score of months. I never blame myself, least of all now, when I know Ruth Bellenden's story, that I listened to the clear-headed wisdom of Anthony Jacob.

"You're right, as always, Mister Jacob.

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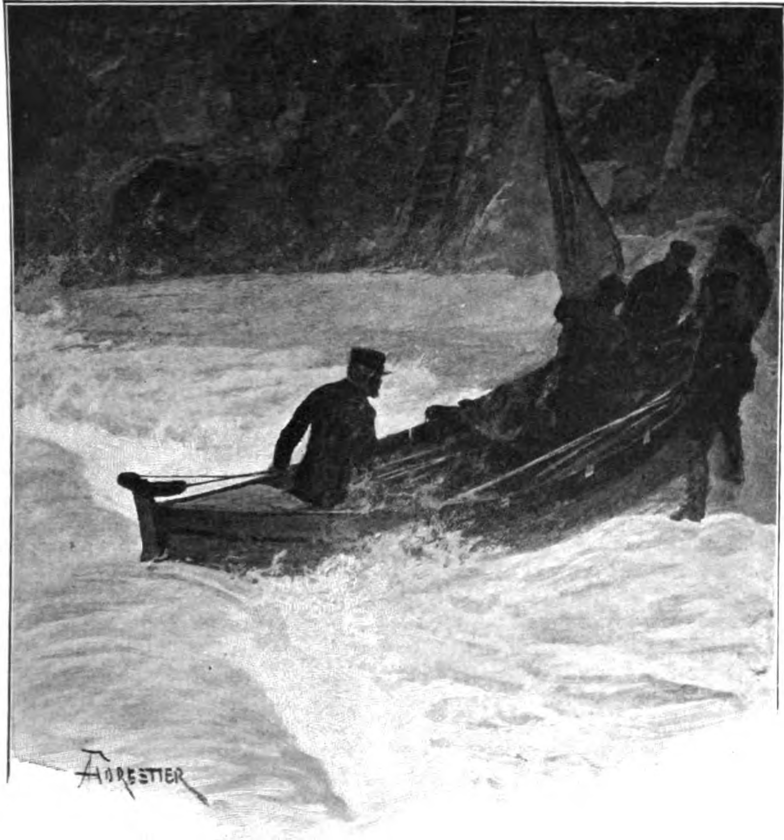

"I HAVE ALWAYS ACCOUNTED IT MORE GOOD LUCK THAN GOOD SEAMANSHIP THAT BROUGHT US TO THE COVE AT LAST."

I've no call to take these good fellows on a fool's errand. And it's going to blow hard, as you say. We'll take in one of the boats, and those that are for the shore will make haste to get aboard the other."

This I said to him, but to the men I put it in a few seaman's words.

"Lads," I said, "no boat that Southampton ever built could swim in yor ler tide where it makes between the reefs. We'd like to help shipmates, but the chance is not ours. There's another little shipmate ashore there that needs our help pretty badly. I'm going in for her sake, and there's not a man of you that will not do his duty by the ship when I'm gone. Aye, you'll stand by Mister Jacob, lads, I may tell him that?"

They gave me a rousing cheer, which was a pretty foolish thing to have done, and it took all my voice to silence them. Lucky for us, there was a cloud over the moon now, and darkness like a black vapour upon the sea. Not a lamp burned on the *Southern Cross;* not a cabin window but wasn't curtained. What glow came from her funnel was not more than a hazy red light over the waters; and when five of us (for we took Harry Doe to stand by ashore) stepped into the longboat, and set her head due west for the land, we lost the steamer in five minutes —and, God knows, we were never to see her again on the high seas or off.

Now, I have said that the wind had begun to blow fresh since sunset, and at two bells in the first watch, the time we left the ship, the sea ran high, and it was not over safe even in the longboat to be cruising for a shore we knew so little about. I have always accounted it more good luck than good seamanship that brought us to the cove at last, and set us all, wet but cheerful, on the dry, white sand about the ladder's foot. There was shelter in the bay both for man and ship, and when we'd dragged the longboat up on the beach we gave Harry Doe his orders and left him to his duty.

"If there's danger fire your gun," said I— "once, if you wish to call us; twice, if you think we should stand off. But you won't do that unless things are at the worst, and I'm hoping for the best, when you won't do it at all."

He answered, "Aye, aye," in a whisper which was like a bear's growl; and we four, Peter Bligh, Seth Barker, and the lad Dolly, besides myself, climbed the ladder like cats and stood at the cliff's head. To say that our hearts were in our mouths would not be strict truth, for I never feared any man,

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beast, or demon yet; and I wasn't going to begin that night—nor were the others more ready, that I will answer for them. But remembering the things we had seen on the reef, the words which Ruth Bellenden had spoken to me, and that which happened to the lad and myself last time we came ashore; remembering this, it's not to be wondered at that our hearts beat a bit quicker, and that our hands went now and again to the pistols we carried. For, just think of it—there we were at nine o'clock of a dark night, in a thick wood, with the trees making ghosts about us, and the path as narrow as a ship's plank, and no knowledge of who walked the woods with us nor any true reckoning of what was to follow down below. What man wouldn't have held his tongue at such a time, or argued with himself that it might end badly, and he never see the sun again? Not Jasper Begg, as I bear witness. Not he, by all that's truthful.

Now, I put myself at the head of our fellows and, the better to find the track, I went down on my hands and my knees like a four-footed thing, and signalling to those behind with a bosun's whistle, I led them well enough through the wood to the wicker-basket bridge; and would have gone on from there straight down to the house but for something which happened at the clearing of the thicket, just as I stood up to bid the men go over. Startling it was, to be sure, and enough to give any man a turn; nor did I wonder that Peter Bligh should have cried out as he did when first he clapped eyes upon it.

"Holy Mother of Music," says he, "'tis the angels singing, or I'm a dirty nigger!"

"Hold your tongue," says I, in a whisper; "are you afraid of two young women, then?"

"Of three," says he, "which being odd is lucky. When my poor father——"

"Confound your father," says I; "hold your tongue and wait."

He lay low at this, and the rest of us gaped, open-mouthed, as though we were staring at a fairy-book. There, before us, coming down from the black rocks above, leaping from step to step of the stone, were three young girls; but, aye, the queerest sort that ever tantalized a man with their prettiness. You may well ask, the night being inky dark, how we managed to see them at all; but let me tell you that they carried good resin torches in their hands, and the wild light, all gold and crimson against the rocks, shone as bright as a ship's flare and as far. Never have I seen such a thing, I say, and never shall. There were the three of them, like young deer on a bleak hillside, singing and laughing and leaping down, and, what's more, speaking to each other in an odd lingo, with here a word of French and there a word of German, and after that something that was beyond me and foreign to my understanding.

"God be good to me—saw man ever such a sight? And the dress of 'em, the dress of 'em," whispers Peter Bligh. But I clapped my hand upon his mouth and stopped him that time.

"The dress is all right," said I; "what I'm wondering is how three of that sort came in such a place as this. And well born too, well born, or I don't know the meaning of the term!"

They were pretty creatures, and their dress was like the rest of them. Short skirts all looped and frilled with flowers, toggery above cut out of some white skin, with caps to match and their hair falling in big romping curls about it—they were for all the world like the dancers you see at a stage play and just as active. And to hear their voices, sweet and musical, floating from ravine to ravine like a choir singing in a place of echoes, aye, that was something you might not soon forget. But what they were doing in such a place, or how they came there, the Lord above alone knew, and not a plain seaman like Jasper Begg.

"What are they saying, Peter—what do you make of it?" I asked him, under my breath.

"'Tis the French lingo," says he, foolish-like, "and if it's not that, 'tis the German—leastwise no Christian man that I know of could distinguish between 'em."

"Peter," says I, "that's what you learn in the asylum. 'Tis no more the French lingo than your own. Why, hearken to it."

Well, he listened, and soon we heard a pretty echo from the valley, for they'd gone down toward the gardens now; and one word repeated often had as nice a touch of music as I remember hearing. It was just this: "Rosamunda—munda—munda," and you can't think how fresh the young voice sounded in that lonely place, or what a chill it gave a man when he remembered the demons over at the reef and what they'd done to the crew of the *Santa Cruz*. As far as that goes, I do believe to this day that our fellows believed they'd seen nothing more nor less than an apparition out of the black rocks above them,

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"THEY WERE FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE THE DANCERS YOU SEE AT A STAGE PLAY."

lads, right down ashamed of you!"

They plucked up at this, and Peter he made haste to excuse himself.

"If they was Christian men with knives in their hands," says he, "I'd put up a bit of a prayer, and trust to the Lord to shoot 'em; but them three's agen all reason, at this time of night in such a lone place."

"Go on with you, Peter," chimes in Dolly Venn; "three ripping little girls, and don't I wish they'd ask me in to tea! Why, look, they're down by the house now, and somebody with them, though whether it's a man or a woman I really don't pretend to say."

"I'm derned if I don't think it's a lion," says Seth Barker, asking my pardon for the liberty.

We all stood still at this, for we were on the hillside just above the house now, and down on the fair grass-way below us we espied the three little girls with their torches still burning, and they as deep in talk with a stranger as a man might have been with his own mother. A more remarkable human being than the one these little ladies had happened upon I don't look to see again the world around. Man or lion—God forgive me if I know what to call him. He'd hair enough, shaggy hair curling about his shoulders, to have stuffed a feather bed. His dress was half man's, half woman's. He'd a tattered petticoat about his legs, a seaman's blouse for his body, and a lady's shawl above that upon his shoulders—his legs were bare as a barked tree, and what boots he had should have been in the rag-shop. What was more wonderful still was to see the manner of the young ladies towards him—for I shall always call them that—they petted him and fondled him, and one put a mock crown of roses on his head. Then, with that pretty song of theirs, "Rosamunda—munda—munda," they

and it wasn't until I'd spoken to them in good honest English that I got them to go on again.

"Flesh or spirit, that's not a lot to whiten a man's gills," cried I; "why, thunder, Peter Bligh, you're big enough to put 'em all in your pocket, and soft enough they'd lie when they got there. Do you mean to tell me," said I, "that four hale and strong men are to be frightened out of their wits by three pretty girls?—and you a religious man, too, Peter! Why, I'm ashamed of you, that I am,

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all ran off together toward the northern shore and left us in the darkness, as surprised a party of men as you'll readily meet with.

"Well," says Peter Bligh, and he was the first among us to speak, "yon's a nice shipmate to speak on a quiet road. So help me thunder, but I wouldn't pass round the tin for him in a beauty show, no, not much! Did ye see the hair of him, captain—did ye see the hair?"

"And the girls kissing him as though he were Apollo," cries Dolly Venn, who, I don't doubt, would have done the kissing willingly himself. But I hushed their talk, and without more ado I went straight down to Ruth Bellenden's house. All the strange things we'd seen and heard, the uncanny sights, the firing on the reef, the wild man ashore, the little girls from the hills—all these, I say, began to tell me my mistress's story as a written book might never have done. "She's need of me," I said, "sore need; and by God's help I'll bring her out of this place before to-morrow's sun."

For how should I know what long days must pass before I was to leave Ken's Island again?

CHAPTER VI.

JASPER BEGG MEETS HIS OLD MISTRESS, AND IS WATCHED.

I HAD made up my mind to take every due precaution before going up to the house where my mistress lived; and with caution in my head I left Seth Barker, the carpenter, a little way up on the hill path, while I set Peter Bligh at the gate of the garden, and posted Dolly Venn round at the northern side, where the men who had looted the *Santa Cruz* might be looked for with any others that I had no knowledge of. When this was done, and they understood that they were to fire a gun if the need arose, I opened the wicket-gate and crept up the grass path for all the world like an ill-visaged fellow who had no true business there. Not a sound could I hear in all that place; not a dog barked, nor a human voice spoke. Even the wind came fitful and gusty about the sheltered house, and so quiet was it between the squalls that my own footfall almost could scare me. For, you see, a whisper spoken at the wrong time might have undone all—a clumsy step have cost us more than a man cared to think. We were but four, and, for all I knew, there might have been four hundred on Ken's Island. You don't wonder, therefore, if I asked myself at times whether to-morrow's sun would find us living, or what our misfortune might spell for one I had come so far to serve.

It was very dark in the garden, as I have told you, but two of the windows in the house were lighted up and two golden rings of light thrown out upon the soft grass I trod. I stood a long time debating which window to knock upon—for it was a fearful lottery, I must say—and when I'd turned it over and over in my head, and now made out that it was this window and now plumped for the other, I took up a pebble at last and cast it upon the pane nearest to the door—for that seemed to me the more likely room, and I'd nothing else but common sense to guide me. You may judge of my feelings when no notice was taken of my signal except by a dog, which began to yap like a pup and to make such a scare that I thought every window and every door must be opened that very instant and as many men out on top of me. I said, surely, that it was all up with Jasper Begg that journey; but odd to to tell it, the dog gave over at last, and no one showed himself, neither was there any whistle from my company; and I was just making ready to throw another stone when the second light was turned out all of a sudden and, the long window being opened, Ruth Bellenden—or, to be more correct, Madame Czerny—herself came out into the garden, and stood looking round about as though she knew that I was there and had been waiting for me. When at last she saw me she didn't speak or make any sign, but going about to the house again she held the window open for me, and I passed into the dark room with her, and there held her hand in mine, I do believe as though I would never let it go again.

"Jasper," says she, in a whisper that was pretty as the south wind in springtime; "Jasper Begg! How could it be anyone else? Oh, we must light a candle, Jasper Begg," says she, "or we shall lose ourselves in the dark."

"Miss Ruth," said I, "light or dark, I'm here according to my orders, and the ship's here, and as I said to you before the yellow boy to-day, we're waiting for our mistress to go aboard."

She had her back to me when I said this, and was busy enough drawing the curtains and lighting the lamp again. The light showed me that she wore a rich black gown with fluffy stuff over it, and a bit of a sparkle in the way of diamonds like a band across her parted hair. The face was deceiving,

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now lighted up by one of the old smiles, now hard set as one who had suffered much for her years. But there was nothing over-womanish in her talk, and we two thrashed it out there just the same as if Ken's Island wasn't full of demons, and the lives of me and my men worth what a spin of the coin might buy them at.

"You mustn't call me Miss Ruth," says she, when she turned from the lamp and tidied up her writing on the table; "of course you know that, Jasper Begg. And you at my wedding, too—is it really not more than twelve long months ago?"

A sigh passed her lips, such a sigh as tells a woman's story better than all the books; and in that moment the new look came upon her face, the look I had seen when the yellow man changed words with her in the morning.

"It's thirteen months three weeks since you went up with Mr. Czerny to the cathedral at Nice," was my next word; "the days go slow on this out-of-the-way shore, I'll be bound—until our friends come, Miss Ruth, until we're sure they haven't forgotten us."

I had a meaning in this, and be sure she took it. Not that she answered me out and away as I wished; for she put on the pretty air of wife and mistress who wouldn't tell any of her husband's secrets.

"Why, yes," she said, very slowly, "the days are long and the nights longer, and, of course, my husband is much away from here."

I nodded my head and drew the chair she'd offered me close to the table. On her part she was looking at the clock as though she wished that the hands of it might stand still. I read it that we hadn't much time to lose, and what we had was no time for fair words.

"Miss Ruth," says I, without more parley, "from what I've seen to-night I don't doubt that any honest man would be glad to get as far as he could from Ken's Island and its people. You'll pardon what a plain seaman is going to say, and count him none the less a friend for saying it. When you left money in the banker's hands to commission a ship and bring her to this port, your words to me were, 'I may have need of you.' Miss Ruth, you have need of me—I should be no more than a fool if I couldn't see that. You have sore need of me, lady, and if you won't say so for yourself, I take leave to say it for you."

She raised a hand as though she would not hear me—but I was on a clear course now, and I held to it in spite of her.

"Yes," I said, "you've need of your friends to-night, and it's a lucky wind that brought them to this shore. What has passed, Miss Ruth, in these months you speak of, it's not for me to ask or inquire. I have eyes in my head, and they show me what I would give my fortune not to see. You're unhappy here—you're not treated well."

"HER LITTLE HEAD WENT DOWN ON THE TABLE AND SHE BEGAN TO SOB."

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I waited for her to speak; but not a word would she say. White she was, as a flower from her own garden, and once or twice she shivered as though the cold had struck her. I was just going on to speak again, when what should happen but that her little head went down on the table and she began to sob as though her heart would break.

"Oh, Jasper Begg, how I have suffered, how I have suffered!" said she, between her sobs; and what could I do, what could any man do who would kiss the ground a woman walks upon but has no right or title to? Why, hold his tongue, of course, though it hurt him cruelly to do any such thing.

"Miss Ruth," said I, very foolish, "please don't think of that now. I'm here to help you, the ship's here, we're waiting for you to go aboard."

She dried her tears and tried to look up at me with a smile.

"Oh, I'm just a child, just a child again, Jasper," cries she; "a year ago I thought myself a woman, but that's all passed. And I shall never go away on your ship, Jasper Begg—never, never. I shall die on Ken's Island as so many have died."

I stood up at this and pointed to the clock.

"Little friend," I said, "if you'll put a cloak about your shoulders and leave this house with me I'll have you safe aboard the *Southern Cross* in twenty minutes by that clock, as God is my witness."

It was no boast—for that I could have done as any seaman knows; and you may well imagine that I stood as a man struck dumb when I had her answer.

"Why, yes," she said, "you could put me on board your boat, Captain Jasper, if every step I took was not watched; if every crag had not its sentinel; if there were not a hundred to say 'Go back—go back to your home.' Oh, how can you know, how can you guess the things I fear and dread in this awful place? You, perhaps, because the ship is waiting will be allowed to return to it again. But I, never, never again to my life's end."

A terrible look crossed her face as she said this, and with one swift movement she opened a drawer in the locker where she did her writing, and took from it a little book which she thrust, like a packet, into my hands.

"Read," she said, with startling earnestness, "read that when you are at sea again. I never thought that any other eyes but mine would see it; but you, Jasper, you shall read it. It will tell you what I myself could never tell. Read it as you sail away from here, and then say how you will come back to help the woman who needs your help so sorely."

I thrust the book into my pocket, but was not to be put off like that.

"Read it I will, every line," said I; "but you don't suppose that Jasper Begg is about to sail away and leave you in this plight, Miss Ruth! He'd be a pretty sort of Englishman to do that, and it's not in his constitution, I do assure you!"

She laughed at my earnestness, but recollecting how we stood and what had befallen since sunset, she would hear no more of it.

"You don't understand; oh, you don't understand!" she cried, very earnestly. "There's danger here, danger even now while you and I are talking. Those who have gone out to the wreck will be coming home again; they must not find you in this house, Jasper Begg, must not, must not! For my sake, go as you came. Tell all that thought of me how I thank them. Some day, perhaps, you will learn how to help me. I am grateful to you, Jasper—you know that I am grateful."

She held out both her hands to me, and they lay in mine, and I was trying to speak a real word from my heart to her when there came a low, shrill whistle from the garden-gate, and I knew that Peter Bligh had seen something and was calling me.

"Miss Ruth," says I, "that's old Peter Bligh and his danger signal. There'll be someone about, or he wouldn't do it."

Well, she never said a word. I saw a shadow cross her face, and believed she was about to faint. Nor will anyone be surprised at that when I say that the door behind us had been opened while we talked, and there stood Kess Denton, the yellow man, watching us like a hound that would bite presently.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH HELP COMES FROM THE LAST QUARTER WE HAD EXPECTED IT.

Now, no sooner did I see the yellow man than my mind was fully made up, and I determined what harbour to make for. "If you're there, my lad," said I to myself, "the others are not far behind you. You've seen me come in, and it's your intention to prevent me going out again. To be caught like a rat in a trap won't serve Ruth Bellenden, and it won't serve me. I'm for the open, Kess Denton," said I, "and no long while about it, either."

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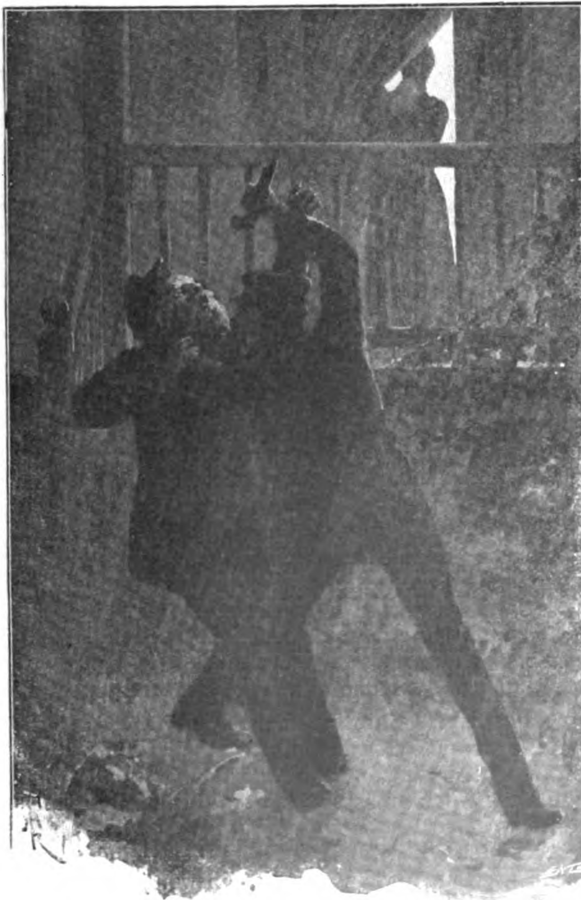
This I said, but I didn't mean to play the startled kitten, and without any token of surprise or such-like I turned round to Miss Ruth and gave her "good evening."

"I'm sorry you're not coming aboard, Madame Czerny," says I; "we weigh in an hour, and it will be a month or more before I call in again. But you sha'n't wait long for the news if I can help it; and as for your brother, Mr. Kenrick, I'll trust to hear from him at 'Frisco and to tell you what he thinks on my return. Good-night, madam," said I, "and the best of health and prosperity."

I held out my hand, and she shook it like one who didn't know what she was doing. The yellow man came a step nearer and said, "Halloa, my hearty." I nodded my head to him and he put his hand on my shoulder. Poor fool, he thought I was a child, perhaps, and to be treated as one; but I'd learnt a thing or two about taking care of myself in Japan, and you couldn't have counted two before I had his arm twisted under mine, and he gave a yell they must have heard up in the hills.



"I WRENCHED THE PISTOL FROM HIS GRASP."

"If you cry out like that you'll ruin your beautiful voice," said I; "hasn't anyone ever asked you to sing hymns in a choir? Well, I'm surprised. Good-night, my boy; I shall be coming back for your picture before many days have passed."

Upon this I stepped toward the door, and thought that I had done with him; but no sooner was I out in the garden than something went singing by my ear, and upon that a second dose with two reports that echoed in the hills like rolling thunder. No written music was necessary to tell me what sort of a tune that was, and I swung round on my heel and gripped the man by the throat almost before the echoes of the shot had died away.

"Kess Denton," said I, "if you will have it, you shall!" and with that I wrenched the pistol from his grasp and struck him a blow over the head that sent him down without a word.

"One," said I, to myself, "one that helped to make little Ruth Bellenden suffer"; and with that I set off running and never looked to the right of me or to the left until I saw Peter Bligh at the gate and heard his honest voice.

"Is it you—is it you yourself, Mr. Begg? Thank God for that!" cries he, and it was no longer in a whisper; "there's men in the hills, and Seth Barker whistling fit to crack his lips. Is the young lady coming aboard, sir? No?—well I'm not surprised neither, though this shore do seem a queerish sort of place——"

I cut him short, and Dolly Venn running round from his place in the garden I asked him for his news. The thing now was to find a road to the sea. What could be done for Ruth Bellenden that night was over and passed. Our chance lay on the deck of the *Southern Cross*, and after that at 'Frisco.

"What have you seen, Dolly Venn? Be

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quick, lad, for we can't linger," was my question to him so soon as he was within hail, and for his answer he pointed to the trees which bordered the garden on the eastward side.

"The wood is full of armed men, sir. Two of them nearly trod upon me while I was lying there. They carry rifles, and seem to be Germans—I couldn't be sure of that, sir."

"Germans or chimpanzees, we're going by them this night. Where's Seth Barker—why doesn't he come down? Does he think we can pass by the hill-road?—the wooden block! Call him, one of you."

They were about to do this when Seth Barker himself came panting down the hill-path, and, what was more remarkable, he carried an uncouth sort of bludgeon in his hand. I could see he'd had a bit of a rough and tumble on the way, but that wasn't the time for particulars.

"Come aboard, sir," says he, breathing heavy; "the gangway's blocked, but I give one of 'em a bit of a knock with his own shillelagh, and that's all right."

"Is there any more up there?" I asked, quickly.

"May be a dozen, may be more. They're up on the heights looking for you to go up, captain."

"Aye," said I, "pleasant company, no doubt. Well, we must strike eastward somehow, lads, and the sooner the better. We'll hold to the valley a bit and see where that leads us. Do you, Seth Barker, keep that bit of a shillelagh ready, and, if anyone asks you a question, don't you wait to answer it."

Now, I had resolved to try and get down to the sea by the valley road and, once upon the shore, to signal Harry Doe, if possible; and, if not him, then the ship herself as a last resource. Any road seemed to me better than this trap of a house with armed men all about it and a pistol bullet ready for any stranger that lingered. "Aboard the ship," said I, "we'll show them a clean pair of heels to 'Frisco and, after that, ask the American Government what it can do for Ruth Bellenden and for her husband." We were four against a hundred, perhaps, and desperate men against us. If we got out of the scrape with our skins we should be as lucky a lot as ever sailed the Northern Pacific Ocean. But should we—could we? Why, it was a thousand to one against it!

I said this when we plunged into the wood; and yet I will bear witness that I got more excitement than anything else out of that venture, and I don't believe the others got less. There we were, the four of us, trampling through the brushwood, crushing down the bushes, now lying low, now up a-running—and not a man that wouldn't have gone through it twice for Ruth Bellenden's sake. If so be that the night was to cost us our lives, well, crying wouldn't help it—and those that were against us were flesh and blood, all said and done, and no spirits to scare a man. To that I set it down that we went on headlong and desperate. As for the thicket itself, it was full of men—I could see their figures between the trees; and we must have passed twenty of them in the darkness before one came out plump on our path and cried out to us to halt.

"Hold, hold," shouts he; "is it you, Bob Williams?"

"It's Bob Williams, right enough," says I, and with that I gave him one between the eyes and down he went like a felled ox. The man who was with him, stumbling up against Seth Barker, had a touch of the shillelagh which was like a rock falling upon a fly. He just gave one shuddering groan and fell backwards, clutching the branches. Little Dolly Venn laughed aloud in his excitement; and Peter Bligh gave a real Irish "hurrugh"; but the darkness had swallowed it all up in a minute, and we were on again, heading for the shore like those that run a race for their very lives.

"Do you see any road, Peter Bligh?" asked I, for my breath was coming short now; "do you see any road, man?"

"The deuce a one, sir, and me weighing fourteen stone!"

"You'll weigh less when we get down, Peter."

"And drink more, the saints be praised!"

"Was that a rifle-shot or a stone from the hills?" I asked them a moment later. Dolly Venn answered me this time.

"A rifle-shot, captain. They'll be shooting one another, then—it's ripping, ripping!"

"Look out, lad, or it'll be dripping!" cried I: "don't you see there's water ahead?"

I cried the warning to him and stood stock-still upon the borders of as black a pool as I remember to have seen in any country. The road had carried us to the foot of the hills, almost to the chasm which the wicker-bridge spanned; and we could make out that same bridge far above us like a black rope in the twilight. The water itself was covered with some clinging plants, and full of ugly, winding snakes

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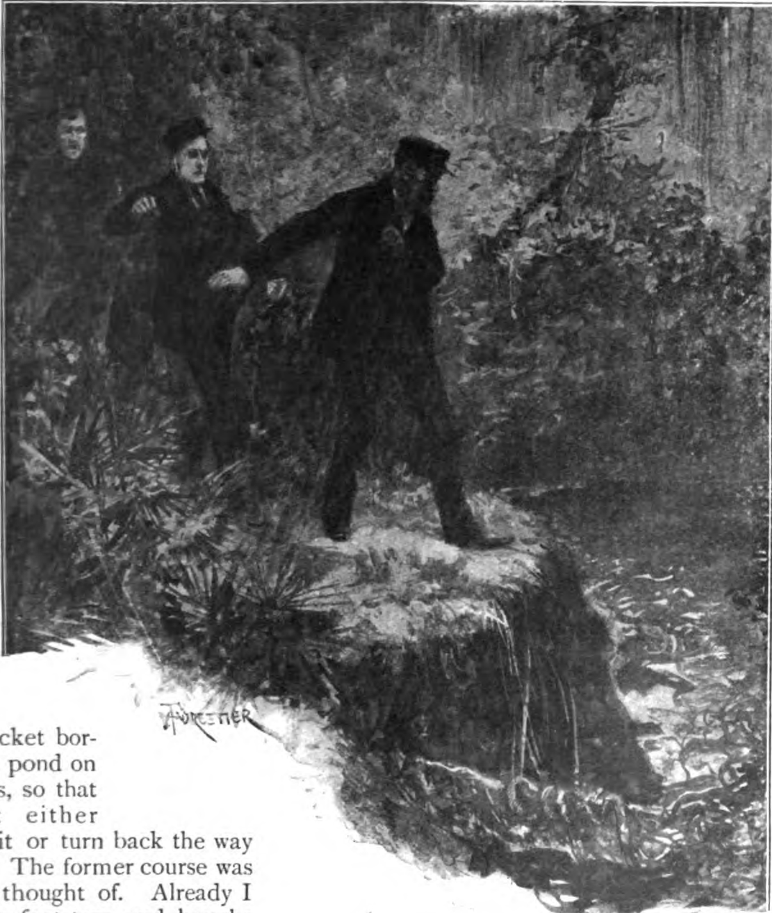
which caused the whole pool to shine with a kind of uncanny light; while an overpowering odour, deadly and stifling, steamed up from it, and threatened to choke a man. What was worse than this was or if I have spoken of it with moderation. A night as black as ink, mind you; my company in the heart of a wood with big teak trees all round us, and cliffs on our right towering up to the sky like mountains.



"THE WATER WAS FULL OF UGLY, WINDING SNAKES."

Before us a pool of inky water, all worming with odd lights and lines of blue fire, like flakes of phosphorus on a bath, and alive with the hissing of hundreds of snakes. Upon our left hand a scrubby thicket and a marsh beneath it, I make sure; Czerny's demons, who had shot the poor folks on the *Santa Cruz*, at our heels, and we but four against the lot of them. Would any man, I ask, have believed that he could walk into such a trap and get out of it unharmed? If so, it wasn't Jasper Begg, nor Peter Bligh, nor little Dolly Venn, nor Seth Barker with the bludgeon in his hand. They'd as good as given it up when we came to the pool and a close thicket bordering the pond on three sides, so that we must either swim for it or turn back the way we came. The former course was not to be thought of. Already I could hear footsteps, and boughs snapping and breaking not many yards from where we stood. To cross the pond might have struck the bravest man alive with terror. I'd have sooner forfeited my life time over than have touched one of those slimy snakes I could see wriggling over the leaves to the bottom of the still water. What else to do I had no more notion than the dead. "It's the end, Jasper Begg," said I to myself, "the end of you and your venture." But of Ruth Bellenden I wouldn't think. How could I, when I knew the folks that were abroad on Ken's Island?

I will just ask any traveller to stand with me where I stood that night and to say if these words are overmuch for the plight,

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stood there like hunting men that have lost all hope.

"Done, by all that's holy!" says Peter Bligh, drawing back from the pond as from some horrid pit. "Snakes I have seen, nateral and unnateral, but them yonder give me the creeps——"

"Creeps or no creeps, the others will be up here in five minutes, and what are you going to do then, Peter Bligh, what then?" asks I, for as I'm a living man I didn't know which way to turn from it.

Seth Barker was the one that answered me.

"I'm going to knock some nails in, by your leave," says he, and with that he stood very still and bade us listen. The whole wood was full of the sound of "halloaing" now. Far and wide I heard question and answer, and a lingering yodle such as the Swiss boys make on the mountains. It couldn't be many minutes, I said, before the first man was out on our trail, and there I was right, for one of them came leaping out of the wood straight into Peter Bligh's arms before I'd spoken another word. Poor fellow—it was the last good-night for him in this world—for Peter passes him on, so to speak, and he went headlong into the pond without anyone knowing how he got there. A more awful end I hope I may never hear of, and yet, God knows, he brought it on himself. As for Peter Bligh, the shock set him sobbing like a woman. It was all my work to get him on again.

"No fault of ours," said I; "we're here for a woman's sake, and if there's man's work to do, we'll do it, lads. Take my advice and you'll turn straight back and run for it. Better a tap on the head than a cry in yonder pool."

They replied fearsomely—the strain was telling upon them badly. That much I learnt from their husky voices and the way they kept close to me, as though I could protect them. Seth Barker, especially, big man that he was, began to mutter to himself in the wildest manner possible, while little Dolly burst into whistling from time to time in a way that made me crazy.

"That's right, lad," cried I, "tell them you're here, and ask after the health of their women-folk. You've done with this world, I see, and made it straight for the next. If you've a match in your pocket, strike it to keep up their spirits."

Well, he stopped short, and I was ashamed of myself a minute after for speaking so to a mere lad whose life was before him and who'd every right to be afraid.

"Come," said I, more kindly, "keep close to me, Dolly, and if you don't know where I am, why, put out your hand and touch me. I've been in worse scrapes than this, my boy, and I'll lead you out of it somehow. After all, we've the ship over yonder, and Mister Jacob isn't done with yet. Keep up your heart, then, and put your best leg forward."

Now, this was spoken to put courage into him—not that I believed what I said, but because he and the others counted upon me, and my own feelings had to go under somehow. For the matter of that, it looked all Lombard Street to a China orange against us when we took the woodland path again, and so I believe it would have been but for something which came upon us like a thunder-flash, and which Peter Bligh was the first to call our attention to.

"Is it fireflies or lanterns?" cries he all at once, bringing out the words like a pump might have done; "yonder on the hill-side, shipmates—is it fireflies or lanterns?"

I stood to look, and while I stood Seth Barker named the thing.

"It's lanterns," cries he; "lanterns, sure and certain, captain."

"And the three ripping little girls carrying them," puts in Dolly Venn.

"'Tis no woman ever born that would hunt down four poor sailor-men," cries Peter Bligh.

"To say nothing of the he-lion they was a-fondling of," from Seth Barker.

"Lads," said I, in my turn, "this is the unlooked for, and I, for one, don't mean to pass it by. I'm going to ask those young ladies for a short road to the hills—and not lose any time about it either."

They all said "Aye, aye," and we ran forward together. The halloaing in the wood was closing in about us now; you could hear voices wherever you turned an ear. As for the lanterns, they darted from bush to bush like glow-worms on a summer's night, so that I made certain they would dodge us after all. My heart was low down enough, be sure of it, when I lost view of those guiding stars altogether, and found myself face to face with the last figure I might have asked for if you'd given me the choice of a hundred.

For what should happen but that the weird being whom Seth Barker had called the "he-lion," the old fellow in petticoats, whom the little girls made such a fuss of, he, I say, appeared of a sudden right in the path before us, and, holding up a lantern warningly, he hailed us with a word which told us that he was our friend—the very last I would have named for that in all the island.

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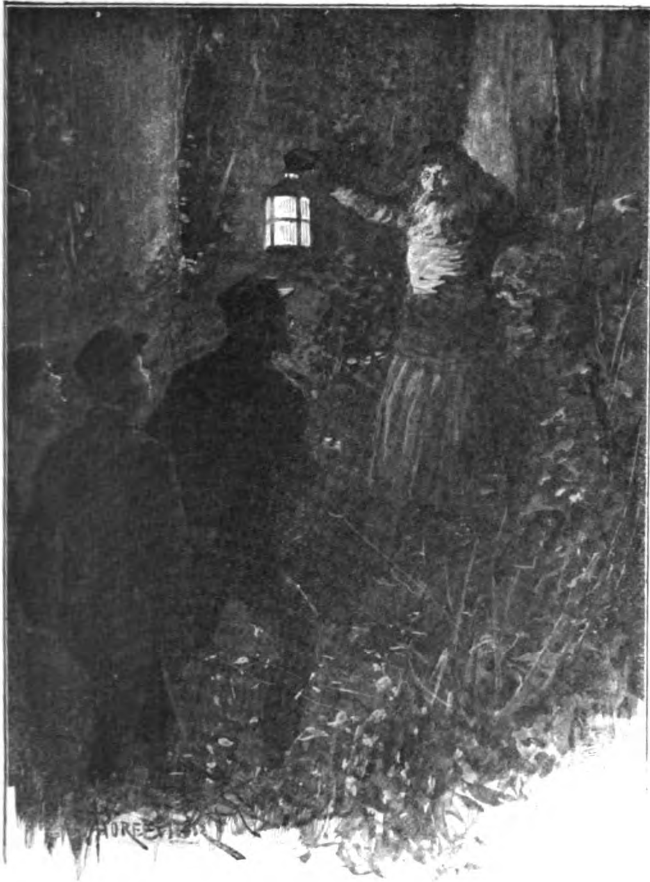

"'JASPER BEGG,' CRIED HE, 'FOLLOW CLAIR-DE-LUNE.'"

"Jasper Begg," cried he, in a voice that I'd have known for a Frenchman's anywhere, "follow Clair-de-Lune—follow—follow!"

He turned to the bushes behind him, and, seeming to dive between them, we found him when we followed flat on his stomach, the lantern out, and he running like a dog up a winding path before him. He was leading us to the heights, and when I looked up to the great bare peaks and steeple-like rocks, up-standing black and gloomy under the starry sky, I began to believe that this wild man was right and that in the hills our safety lay.

But of that we had yet to learn, and for all we knew to the contrary it might have been a trap.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIRD'S NEST IN THE HILLS.

THERE had been a great sound of "hallooing" and firing in the woods when we raced through them for our lives; but it was all still and cold on the mountain-side, and you could hear even a stone falling or the drip of water as it oozed from the black rocks to the silent pools below. What light there was came down through the craggy gorge, and it was not until we had climbed up and up for a good half-hour or more that we began to hear the sea-breeze whistling among the higher peaks like wild music which the spirits might have made. As for the path itself, it was oftentimes but a ledge against the wall of some sheer height, and none, I think, but seamen could have followed it, surely. Even I remembered where I was, and feared to look down sometimes; but danger bridges many a perilous road, and what with the silence and the fresh breezes and the thought that we might live through the night, after all, I believe I could have hugged the wild old man who led us upward so unflinchingly.

I say that he went on unflinchingly, and surely no goat could have climbed quicker than he did. Now standing over an abyss which made you silly to look down into; now pulling himself up by bush or branch; at other times scrambling over loose shale as though he had neither hands nor knees to cut, he might well have scared the coolest who had met him without warning on such a road. As for the four men he had saved from the fiends in the thickets below, I don't believe there was one of them who didn't trust him from the first. The sea is a sure school for knowing men and their humours. If this old Frenchman chose to put a petticoat about his legs, and to wear a lion's mane down his back, we liked him all the better for that. What we had seen of the young girls' behaviour toward him made up for that which we did not know about him. He must have had a tender place somewhere in his heart, or three young women wouldn't fondle him like a dog. Like a ship out of the night had he crossed our path; and his port must be our port, since

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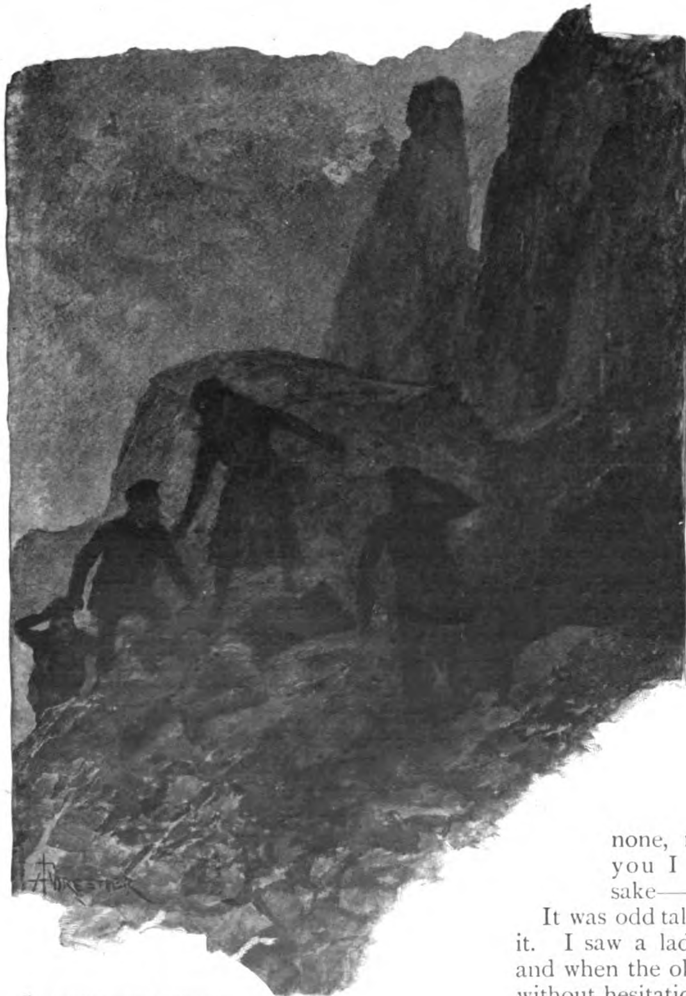
we knew no other. That's why, I say, we followed him over the dangerous road like children follow a master. He was leading us to some good haven—I had no doubt of it. The thing that remained to tell was, had we the strength and the breath to reach it?

You may imagine that it was no light thing to run such a race as we had run, and to be asked to climb a mountain on the top of it. For my part, I was so dead tired that every step up the hill-side was like a knife in my side; and as for Peter Bligh, I wonder he didn't go rolling down to the rocks, so hard did he breathe and so heavy he was. But men will do wonders to save their necks, and that is how it is that we went up and still up, through the black ravine, to the blue peaks above. Aye, a fearsome place we had come to now, with terrible gorges, and wild shapes of rocks, like dead men's faces leering out of the darkness. The wind howled with a human voice, the desolation of all the earth seemed here. And yet the old man must push on—up, up, as though he would touch the very sky.

"The Lord be good to me," cried Peter Bligh, at last; "I can go no farther if it's a million a mile! Oh, Mister Begg, for the love of Heaven, clap a rope about the wild man's legs."

I pushed him on over a sloping peak of shale, and told him to hold his tongue.

"Will you lie in the pool, then? Where's your courage, man? Another hundred yards and you shall stop to breathe. There's the old lion himself waiting for us, and a big bill of thanks he has against us, to be sure."



"I CLIMBED THE STEEP TO THE FRENCHMAN'S SIDE."

I said no more, but climbed the steep to the Frenchman's side, and found him waiting on the bank of that which seemed to be a great cup-like hole, black and bottomless, and the last place you'd have picked for a camp on all the hillside. Dolly Venn was already there, and Seth Barker, lying on the stones and panting like a great dog. Old Clair-de-Lune alone was fresh and ready, and able in his broken English to tell us what he wished.

"Messieurs," he said, "speak not long but go down. I myself am shipmate too. Ah, messieurs, you do wise to follow me. Down there no dog bark. I show you the ladder, and all be well. To-morrow you speak your ship—go home. For me, never again—I die here with the children, messieurs; none shall come for old Clair-de-Lune, none, never at no time—but you, you I save for the shipmates' sake——"

It was odd talk, but no time to argue about it. I saw a ladder thrust up out of the pit, and when the old man went down I followed without hesitation. A lantern lighted in the darkness showed me a hollow nest 20ft. deep,

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perhaps, and carpeted over with big brown leaves and rugs spread out, and in one corner that which was not unlike a bed. Moreover, there was a little stove in the place and upon one side an awning stretched against the rain, while cooking pots and pans and other little things made it plain at a glance that this was the man's own refuge in the mountains, and that here, at least, some part of his life was spent. No further witness to his honesty could be asked for. He had brought us to his own home. It was time to speak of thanks.

"What you've done for us neither me nor mine will ever forget," said I, warmly. "Here's a seaman's hand and a seaman's thanks. Should the day come when we can do a like turn to you, be sure I'll be glad to hear of it; and if it came that you had the mind to go aboard with us—aye, and the young ladies, too—why, you'll find no one more willing than Jasper Begg."

We shook hands, and he set the lantern down upon the floor. Peter Bligh was lying on his back now, crying to a calendar of saints to help him; Seth Barker breathed like a winded horse; little Dolly Venn stood against the wall of the pit with his head upon his arm, like a runner after a race; the old Frenchman drew the ladder down and made all snug as a ship is made for the night.

"No one come here," he said, "no one find the way. You sleep, and to-morrow you signal ship to go down where I show. For me and mine, not so. This is my home; I am stranger in my own country. No one remember Clair-de-Lune. Twelve years I live here—five times I sleep the dreadful sleep which the island make—five times I live where others die. Why go home, messieurs, if you not have any? I not go; but you, you hasten because of the sleep."

We all pricked up our ears at this curious saying, and Dolly Venn, he out with a question before I could—indeed, he spoke the French tongue very prettily, and for about five minutes the two of them went at it hammer and tongs like two old women at charing.

"What does he mean by sleep-time, lad? Why shouldn't a man sleep on Ken's Island? What nonsense will he talk next?"

I'd forgotten that the old man spoke English too, but he turned upon me quickly to remind me of the fact.

"No nonsense, monsieur, as many a one has found—no nonsense at all, but very dreadful thing. Three, four time by the year it come; three, four time it go. All men sleep if they not go away—you sleep if you not go away. Ah, the good God send you to the ship before that day."

He did his best to put it clearly, but he might as well have talked Chinese. Dolly, who understood his lingo, made a brave attempt, but did not get much farther.

"He says that this island is called by the Japanese the Island of Sleep. Two or three times every year there comes up from the marshes a poisonous fog which sends you into a trance from which you don't recover, sometimes for months. It can't be true, sir, and yet that's what he says."

"True or untrue, Dolly," said I, in a low voice, "we'll not give it the chance. It's a fairy tale, of course, though it doesn't sound very pretty when you hear it."

"Nor is that music any more to my liking," exclaimed Peter Bligh, at this point, meaning that we should listen to a couple of gun-shots fired, not in the woods far down below us, but somewhere, as it seemed, on the sea-beach we had failed to make.

"That would be Harry Doe warning us," cried I.

"And meaning that it was dangerous for us to go down."

"He'll have put off and saved the long-boat, anyway. We'll hail him at dawn, and see where the ship is."

They heard me in silence. The tempest roaring in the peaks above that weird, wild place, our knowledge of the men on the island below, the old Frenchman's strange talk—no wonder that our eyes were wide open and sleep far from them. Dawn, indeed, we waited for as those who are passing through the terrible night. I think sometimes that, if we had known what was in store for us, we should have prayed to God that we might not see the day.

(To be continued.)

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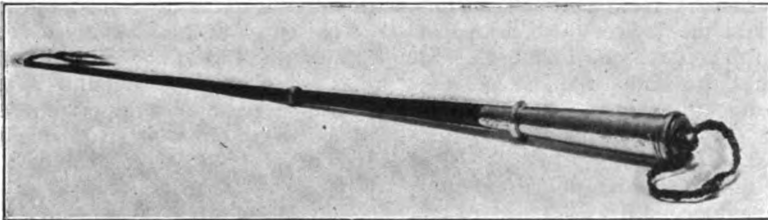
Sporting and Athletic Trophies.

By Hugh B. Philpott.

THE gentle art of "pot-hunting" is held in somewhat low esteem among sportsmen and athletes of the better sort. And rightly so; for nothing—except the spirit of gambling—is so inimical to the best interests of sport. I say nothing against those who openly and avowedly make some form of sport a means of livelihood; but whenever among amateurs the prize is the first consideration, it is a sure sign that the healthiest and most vital elements have departed from their sport. The ambition, however, to possess some tangible object as a symbol and memento of a sporting victory is a perfectly legitimate thing, and the interest we take in these trophies is as healthy in its way as the interest in a collection of war medals or of tattered flags.



THE NEWMARKET WHIP—THE OLDEST SPORTING TROPHY IN EXISTENCE.
From a Photo. by Henry Irving, Bromley.

Athletic trophies are as old as athletic contests. The victors at the Olympic games were rewarded with a garland of wild olive, and this was valued as one of the highest distinctions a man could obtain. Modern custom favours something more durable; but still the idea survives—and long may it remain, for it is one of the life principles of genuine sport — that the prize should be regarded, not as payment for the effort put forth, but as a certificate of achievement or a memorial of a worthy contest.

Speaking generally, then, a collection of sporting and athletic trophies is interesting by reason of what the trophies represent rather than of what they are. Here and there one may demand attention on account of its exceptional beauty, or curious form, or intrinsic value; but, as a rule, it is as the silent memorials of sporting or athletic contests that they interest us; and obviously the gorgeous and glittering cup that has only just been presented for competition must yield in interest to the much humbler-looking trophy that can speak of a long succession of exciting contests.

The interest of antiquity belongs emphatically to the two most famous racing trophies, the Newmarket Whip and the Newmarket Cup. The Whip is undoubtedly the most ancient sporting trophy in existence. So old is it that we have no record of its foundation, nor of its history for the first hundred years of its existence. On the handle, however, is a silver plate bearing a coat-of-arms which has been identified as that of Lord Dacre, who was created Earl of Sussex in 1674. Probably, therefore, Lord Dacre was the donor of the Whip, and it is quite likely that among the spectators of the earliest contests for its possession would be his sacred and sportive Majesty, King Charles II. The first race for the whip of which the *Racing Calendar* contains any mention took place in 1764, when the trophy was won by the Duke of Cumberland's Dumpling. Shortly

THE NEWMARKET CUP.
From a Photo. by Henry Irving, Bromley.

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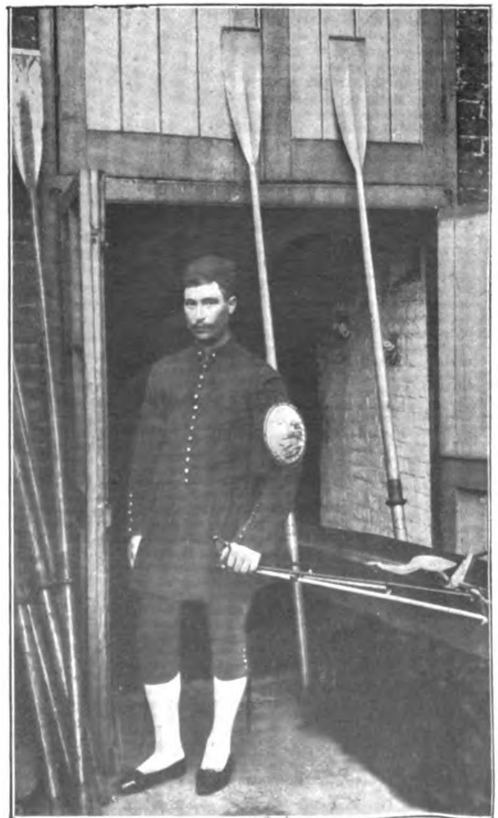
WEST NORFOLK HUNT STEEPLECHASE CUP—PRESENTED BY HIS MAJESTY THE KING.
From a] [*Photo*

after this time the sporting world was excited by the doings of an extraordinary horse named Eclipse. Our ancestors had a pleasant, easy way of recording sporting events in round numbers, knocking off odd seconds and stretching seven furlongs into a mile, so that we are not obliged to believe—what the records of its performances would imply—that never before or since was there a horse that could compare with Eclipse. There is no doubt, however, that he was by far the best horse of his day, and it was a happy thought on the part of someone—very likely the Duke of Cumberland himself—to perpetuate the fame of this admirable animal by attaching a lock of hair from his tail to the handle of the Newmarket Whip, where it remains until this day.

Of the origin of the Newmarket Cup a more precise account can be given. It was purchased in 1768 by subscription amongst members of the Jockey Club and of the Jockey Club Rooms at Newmarket. It is a handsome cup, and, apart from the interest of its history, would be valuable as a good specimen of eighteenth century silversmiths' work. A condition attaching to both these ancient trophies is that they may not leave this country. In each case the holder keeps the trophy until it is challenged for. The Cup has only been the occasion of eight races during the whole period of its existence, but the challengers for the Whip have been more numerous. The Cup is at present held by Lord Durham and the Whip by Sir Ernest Cassel.

From the very old we turn to the very new. The West Norfolk Hunt Club's steeplechasing cup is an example in the style known as *l'art nouveau*, and has been carried out by Messrs. Mappin Brothers. It was presented to the Club by His Majesty the King in April last, and is specially interesting as being the first public presentation made by His Majesty since his accession.

The oldest trophy that has been competed for year after year without intermission is to be found in the domain of aquatic sport. This is Doggett's Coat and Badge, which was instituted by one Thomas Doggett, an actor, in the year 1716, and has been competed for every 1st of August—unless that day happened to be Sunday, when the race was held on the following day—down to the present time. The "coat" is, in fact, a complete uniform of the style in vogue among watermen in Doggett's day, and the "badge" is of silver and is worn on the arm; it bears an impression of a wild horse—the coat of arms of the House of Hanover—and an inscription.



DOGGETT'S COAT AND BADGE.
From a Photo. by Henry Irving, Bromley

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What, it may be asked, had an actor to do with watermen, or the House of Hanover with either? The connection is closer than might at first sight appear. In Doggett's time, and long before, the Thames watermen were a very numerous and important class. The Thames was in those days much more generally used as a highway for passengers, and the waterman discharged most of the functions of the modern "cabby." A large portion of his business consisted in conveying passengers to and from the riverside theatres, and it is not surprising that Doggett and many another actor regarded the watermen, who brought them their audiences, as their very good friends.

The demise of Queen Anne is one of the few events in English history with which everyone is familiar, but not everyone, perhaps, fully realizes the significance of that event. One result of it was that the House of Hanover, in the person of George I., ascended the throne of England, much to the gratification of Thomas Doggett, who was a keen politician. To signalize the auspicious event, and at the same time do the watermen a friendly turn, Doggett offered a substantial prize for competition amongst them. "This being the day," ran his proclamation, which was set up on London Bridge on August 1st, 1716, "of His Majesty's happy accession to the Throne, there will be given by Mr. Doggett an orange-coloured livery with a badge representing Liberty, to be rowed for by six watermen that are out of their time within the year past. They are to row from London Bridge to Chelsea. It will be continued annually on the same day for ever." These conditions of the competition are still faithfully adhered to, and the Fishmongers' Company, who have the management of the race, still announce it as "in memory of the accession of the family of his present Majesty to the Throne of Great Britain."

THE AMERICA CUP.
From a Photo. by West & Son, Southsea.

Interesting though the race for Doggett's Coat and Badge is from an historical point of view, it excites but little public attention nowadays. Undoubtedly the factor which more than any other arouses popular interest in athletic contests is the presence of foreign competitors. Several of our great sporting contests have become international events, and where this is the case there is never any lack of popular interest. Thousands who concern themselves very little with athletic contests in a general way—business and professional men who declare they have something more important to do than trouble about sports, ladies who don't know whether a mile ought to be run in three minutes or in ten—all find themselves, on the occasion of an international contest, drawn into the vortex of popular excitement and fervently hoping for the victory of the Englishman, the English team, or the English boat.

When Sir Thomas Lipton set out on his gallant though unsuccessful attempt to "lift"—as the current phrase has it—the America Cup we all felt that he and Captain Sycamore and his gallant crew were as really the representatives of England—though in quite a friendly and sporting sense—as if they had been an army going to fight our battles. And whatever the degree of our ignorance about yachting matters, we did not fail to scan eagerly the long cablegrams reporting all the details of the famous struggle. Never, it may safely be said, in the whole history of sport has such widespread interest been taken in a sporting contest. Everybody felt a personal interest in the result, from His Majesty the King, who visited the *Shamrock* before she left these shores, down to the little Board school boy who wrote the following essay on the race: "Sir Thomas Lipton who has a shop in Angel Lane and another at Forest Gate is going to try and win the cup with his yot, it is called the *Shamrock*, and is painted

green. If Sir Thomas Lipton wins I shall ask mother to buy her grocery off him all except jam."

But apart from the international aspect of the affair there were in truth many other features about this race well calculated to

CUP FOR YACHTING DESIGNED BY THE GERMAN EMPEROR.
From a Photo.

strike the imagination and rouse sympathetic interest. It was exactly fifty years since the cup, first given by an English yachting club, had been carried across the Atlantic by the yacht *America*, and all attempts to win it back had hitherto failed. The competing yachts were beyond question the finest examples of scientific yacht building the world had seen. The contestants were prepared, in Sir Thomas Lipton's phrase, "to shovel on the £5 notes" if, by so doing, they could add ever so little to the speed of their crafts. It has been calculated that the attempt to win this £100 silver cup has cost Sir Thomas Lipton £100,000, and that the Americans have had to expend £150,000 in order to retain it. It was, in truth, a case of Greek meeting Greek. Another thing which aroused popular sympathy was the friendly and sportsmanlike spirit which prevailed, in happy contrast with the wretched bickerings that marred a former contest for the cup. The attitude of Sir Thomas Lipton throughout the whole of the contest was in accord with his first letter of challenge sent in 1899, in which he wrote: "I have too high an opinion of our American cousins to seek to make any terms; what they may propose I shall accept as generous measure of our rights." It is pleasant to know that this friendly spirit was fully reciprocated by the other side. What wonder, then, that the two great sport-loving nations of the world watched the great struggle with sympathetic and admiring eyes? Another specially interesting yachting trophy is the cup which was presented by the German Emperor to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen

THE GRAND CHALLENGE CUP—THE CHIEF CONTEST AT HENLEY REGATTA.
From a Photo. by Henry Irving, Bromley.

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Victoria. The cup was designed by the Emperor himself.

The international element also appeared last year in the contest for the Grand Challenge Cup, the principal race at Henley Regatta. There are those who hold that the presence of foreign crews at Henley is to be deprecated, as tending to alter the character which Henley has so long held as the favourite meeting-place for British rowing men and a delightful social function into the bargain. Our crews, it is said, will have to train more seriously and to devote their whole attention to one race in order to hold their own against the best foreign crews. In short, they will have to make more of a business of what has hitherto been a pleasant recreation. Others hold that it is more sportsmanlike to welcome competition from any quarter, and look to the presence of foreign crews to raise the standard of British oarsmanship. Whichever of these views be the more reasonable, there can be no doubt that the great event of last year's Henley Regatta was the exciting struggle in the final for the Grand Challenge Cup between our premier rowing club, Leander, and the crew from Pennsylvania University. After a keenly contested struggle, which aroused immense interest among the large crowd of spectators, many of whom were Americans, Leander won by a good length, thus retaining the fine challenge cup which they have won several times before.

There was quite an invasion of American athletes last summer, and if they had been successful in all the contests in which they took part the number of notable trophies remaining in this country would have been considerably reduced. Not only at Henley Regatta, but at the Tennis Championship meetings at Wimbledon and at the Amateur Athletic Association Championships at Huddersfield our American cousins were very much to the fore. At the last-named meeting they carried off the challenge cups for the 100 yards, the 120 yards hurdles, and the high jump, with the championship title for those events. In the pole jump the American representative, J. K. Baxter, tied with his opponent, and would probably have won outright had he not omitted to provide himself with a jumping-pole. As the English champion, in a very churlish and unsportsmanlike spirit, declined to lend his pole, Baxter had to improvise one from a flag-pole on the ground. In the quarter-mile the American champion was defeated, and in the longer distances the Americans did not even challenge our men. In the race for the mile championship—won by F. G. Cockshott, of Cambridge University—it is interesting to note that a Frenchman finished third.

From a Photo. by] THE TENNIS AND CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS. *[Messrs. Elkington.*

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In the lawn-tennis world the American visitors, Messrs. J. D. Davis and H. Ward, made a bold bid for the championship cups. They succeeded in defeating all their opponents until they came to the final round, when they were matched against the English champion pair, Messrs. R. F. Doherty and H. L. Doherty. The game was keenly contested, and some fine play was seen on both sides; but in the end the Englishmen won by three sets to one, and the names of the Brothers Doherty were engraved for the fifth year in succession on the doubles championship cup.

THE ONE MILE AMATEUR RUNNING CHAMPIONSHIP.
Form a Photo. by G. Fox, Huddersfield.

The net result, then, of the American invasion, so far as the sports of the past year are concerned, is that the Yankees have beaten us in yachting, sprinting, and jumping, but we have held our own in long-distance running, in rowing, and and in lawn-tennis, though not until we had fallen back on our last lines of defence — to wit, the Leander Club and the Brothers Doherty. These are not results which make for national complacency, for, although we may fairly pride ourselves still on being the premier athletic people of the world, recent events have shown that our sportsmen and athletes will have their work cut out during the next few years if we are not to see the America Cup and the sprinting and jumping championship cups followed across the Atlantic by a procession of our most highly-cherished trophies.

THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CUP.
From a Photo. by J. Pettingall, Chingford.

Apart from those events which have an international character, there is no doubt that the most interesting event of the year to the majority of the sport-loving public is the final match for the English Association Football Cup. Last season the excitement attending this contest was greater than it has ever been before; indeed, it may be doubted whether any sporting contest, except the race for the America Cup, has ever in this country caused so much interest. The fact that the first match resulted in a draw and had to be re-played tended to enhance the excitement, and for Londoners there was a special element of interest in the speculation whether the cup would or would not, after its long wandering in the North, return to the Metropolis. The victory of the Tottenham Hotspurs settled that question, for a year at any rate, to the complete satisfaction of Metropolitan football devotees.

There is another football trophy that deserves a place in our collection, because it was given, and is annually competed for, in the sacred cause of charity. The Dewar Shield, as it is called, was presented by Mr. T. R. Dewar, M.P., as a perpetual trophy to be competed for by amateur and professional football teams, the

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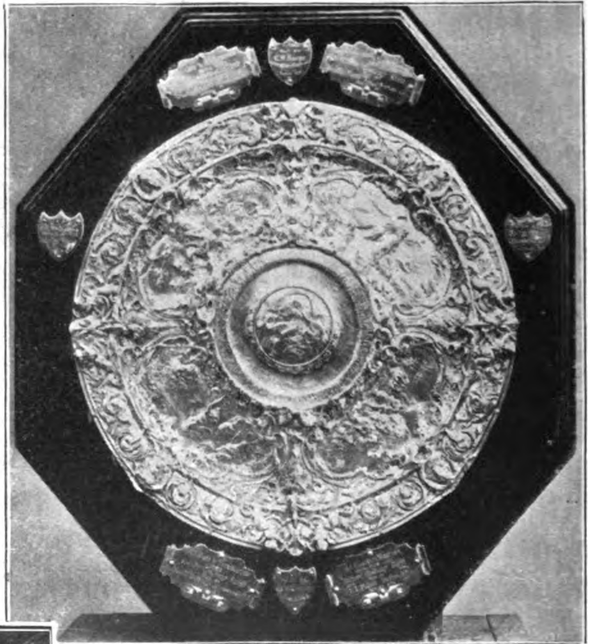
THE DEWAR FOOTBALL SHIELD—PROCEEDS GO TO LONDON CHARITIES.
From a Photo.

proceeds of the matches to be devoted entirely to charities. The matches are played at the Crystal Palace, and Metropolitan charities receive the greatest benefit from them, but a certain portion of the proceeds is given to hospitals, etc., in the district from which the visiting team comes.

While public interest in football has been decidedly increasing of late years, the interest in cycle races has quite as decidedly been decreasing. One reason for this is the practice, which has become prevalent, of refusing to take the lead, so that races have often degenerated into a leisurely procession with a desperate spurt at the end. There is still, however, some good sport to be seen on the cycle-track, and there is no lack of trophies to be competed for. The highest honour obtainable in amateur cycling is the possession of one of the National Cyclists' Union's championship medals. The mile championship, held this year by C. Pease, of Dublin, is generally regarded as the "blue riband" of the cycling track.

Of the more elaborate trophies none is more interesting than the Dibble Shield, formerly known as the Anchor Shield, which perpetuates the name of a very good friend of thousands of cyclists, the late Mrs. Dibble, of the picturesque old Anchor Inn at Ripley. Mrs. Dibble gave the shield in 1886 for competition at the Southern Cyclists' Camp. When the Camp ceased to be held the shield was returned, after the donor's death, to the Misses Dibble, by whom it was presented to the London County Club, and it is now held as a challenge trophy by the winner of the twelve hours' path race held annually at Herne Hill.

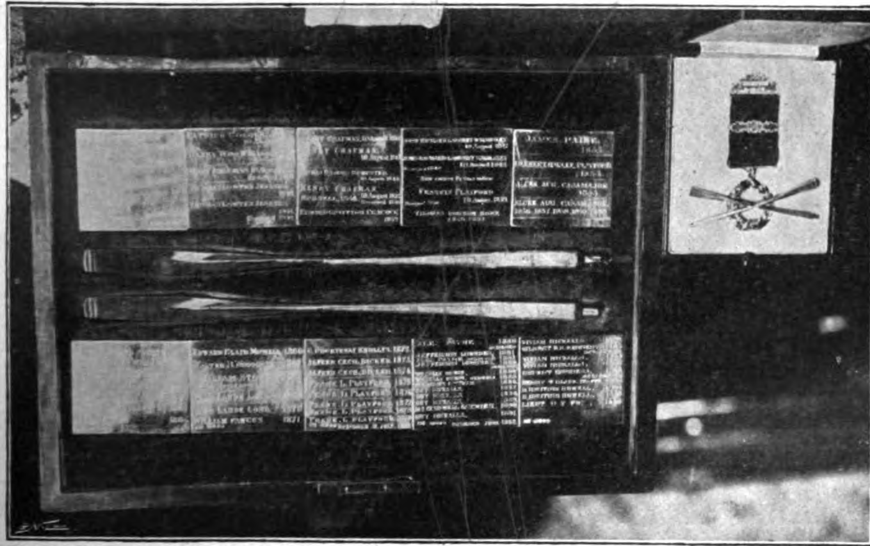


THE DIBBLE SHIELD—A FAMOUS CYCLING TROPHY.
From a Photo. by R. W. Thomas.

CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL—THE "BLUE RIBAND" OF THE CYCLING TRACK.
From a Photo. by G. W. Austen, Highbury.

One sometimes wonders, in looking at a collection of sporting trophies, that the designers have shown so little inventiveness

and resource in giving them a distinctive character. The same stereotyped forms reappear again and again, and often there is little to suggest the nature of the sport for which the trophy is awarded. Such a criticism certainly cannot be urged against the Wingfield Sculls, the trophy that carries with it the title of Amateur Sculling Champion of the Thames. This trophy takes the very appropriate form of a pair of silver sculls, about 9in. long, placed in a box adorned with silver plates on which the names of the winners are engraved. These names include those of most of the greatest amateur scullers of the past seventy years, and to be numbered amongst them is an honour indeed. There is also a smaller pair of crossed sculls fastened with a laurel wreath and a clasp, on which the word "champion" is engraved.



From a Photo. by] THE WINGFIELD SCULLS—AMATEUR SCULLING CHAMPIONSHIP. [B. F. Hunt, Windsor.

The trophy is held this year by that fine oarsman, H. T. Blackstaffe, who won it with the greatest ease by twelve lengths. A very different sort of race was the fierce struggle for the Wingfields in 1898, when Blackstaffe was just beaten by B. H. Howell. The race was one of the keenest ever seen on the Thames; so desperate were the efforts put forth by each of the competitors that they both stopped, completely rowed out, some fifty yards from the winning-post, and the boats simply drifted over the line. Howell managed to get in one last stroke which gave him the victory. Both men were lifted out of their boats thoroughly exhausted.

Some of the most interesting of trophies are those awarded in the College boat-races at Oxford and Cambridge. True to that genuine amateur spirit of which the great Universities have always been the foremost exponents, the spirit which "counts the game above the prize," the custom begun in some remote past (no one quite knows how long ago) of awarding pewter pots as prizes has been continued down to the present day. Every member of the winning crew gets a pot, which, of course, is of very little intrinsic value, and he has to get it engraved at his own expense.

"PEWTER POTS"—AWARDED IN OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE BOATRACES—AN OLD CUSTOM.
From a Photo. by G. W. Austen, Highbury.

The most noteworthy point about the trophies of the Amateur Swimming Association is that a large proportion of them are

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A.S.A. 500 YARDS' SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP OF ENGLAND.
From a Photo. by Lafayette.

held, and have been for several years, by one great swimmer, J. A. Jarvis. A few years ago J. H. Tyers was enjoying a similar run of almost uniform success. The 500 yards championship cup, which we illustrate, is notable from the fact that it was in this race that the spell of Tyers's invincibility was broken by J. H. Derbyshire. This cup was presented to the Amateur Swimming Association in 1896 by the secretary of the Association, Mr. George Pragnell. All the challenge prizes of the A.S.A., it is worthy of note, are perpetual trophies, the Association holding that it is contrary to the true amateur spirit for a trophy of great intrinsic value to be won outright.

CUP AWARDED TO LONDON CLUBS FOR ATHLETIC PRE-EMINENCE.
From a Photo. by R. W. Thomas, Cheapside.

Quite unique in character is the fine trophy presented by Sir Reginald Hanson for "athletic pre-eminence." The cup is competed for by clubs affiliated with the City of London Athletic and Swimming Associations, which practically means all the clubs connected with the great business houses in the City. The "pre-eminence" is determined by a series of inter-club contests in cricket, football, swimming, life-saving, athletics, and tennis. The first team in each class of sport scores one point, the second two, and so on. Obviously, therefore, the club with the lowest total, taking all the competitions together, is the best all-round club. This distinction has belonged for the past three years to the Ravensbourne Club, which is connected

NATIONAL PHYSICAL RECREATION SOCIETY'S SHIELD FOR CHAMPION GYMNASTIC TEAM.
From a Photo.

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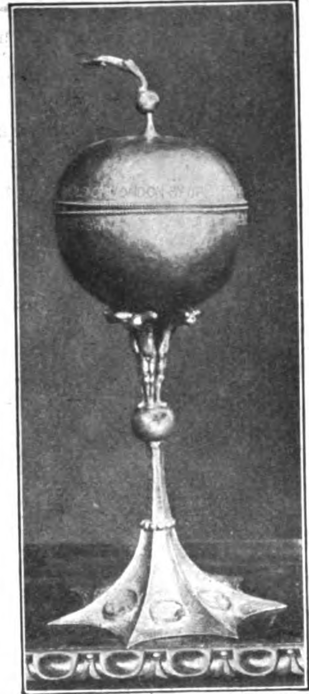
"DAILY CHRONICLE" SHIELD—PRESENTED TO LONDON SCHOOLS.
From a Photo. by A. W. Wilson & Co., Stoke Newington.

with the great house of Cook, Son, and Co., in St. Paul's Churchyard.

In the gymnastic world the chief prize is a large silver shield valued at 200 guineas, which is presented by the National Physical Recreation Society. The shield is competed for by teams of eight gymnasts, and the competitions are so arranged that each member of the team must exhibit a high degree of all-round excellence.

There are no better sportsmen than the boys in our public schools, and there is no pleasanter sight to those who value and would perpetuate the best elements in our British sports than (say) the Stamford Bridge ground when one of the schools has taken possession of it for its annual sports, or a public swimming bath when the London Schools Swimming Association is holding a competition.



THE ASHBEE CUP FOR BEST BOY SWIMMER UNDER 15.
From a Photo. by A. W. Wilson & Co., Stoke Newington.

The association just named does an admirable work in encouraging swimming and life-saving drill in elementary schools, and its trophies deserve notice, if for no other reason, on account of their genuine artistic merit. The shield presented by the proprietors of the *Daily Chronicle*, and awarded to the school which shows the greatest success in the teaching of swimming, was designed by Mr. Walter Crane. The Ashbee Cup, awarded to the best boy-swimmer under fifteen, and the Fabian Shield, awarded to the team of boys which shows the greatest proficiency in life-saving drill, have both been designed by Mr. C. R. Ashbee, and are admirable examples of what athletic trophies should be. Artistically they are immeasurably superior to many of the more costly and pretentious trophies.

Beauty and appropriateness, rather than a high intrinsic value, are the qualities to be sought in an athletic trophy, whether it be for a schoolboy or for the greatest athlete in the world.

THE FABIAN SHIELD FOR LIFE-SAVING DRILL IN SCHOOLS.
From a Photo. by A. W. Wilson & Co., Stoke Newington.

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By Robert Barr.

NO fast train stopped at Stumpville, so Tom Fenton changed cars at Tenstrike City and took the slow local which followed the express. When at last he reached Stumpville he stood on the planks which formed the railway platform and looked about him with a sinking of the heart. Here was a come-down for a young man who had been telegraph operator in a large city, holding one of the best positions in a numerous company of light-fingered gentlemen manipulating the electric keys. Stumpville presented an unattractive appearance. The chief building, some distance from the depôt, was an unpainted two-story board structure whose signboard bore the high-sounding title, "The Star of Empire Hotel," which had evidently taken its way this far westward. To the left of the tavern stood a big saw-mill, whose sides were open to the winds of heaven and whose roof was composed of sawn slabs with the bark on. Up from this roof rose a tall iron smoke-stack. All down the side-track leading from the single line of railway to the mill huge square piles of sweet-smelling lumber had been built, and several flat cars were being laden with the boards. From the mill itself came the ripping roar of a great circular saw tearing its way through a log, and this deep bass note was accompanied by the shriller scream of a vicious little edging-saw trimming the planks. Grouped around mill and hotel lay a rude assemblage of shanties, each shanty seemingly made from the refuse of the saw-mill: shaky, knot-filled boards and shaggy slabs with the bark on.

To the east the flat lands had been denuded of pine timber, and hideous stumps showed where the trees had stood. To the west the primeval forest still seemed intact, except where the railway made a bee-line through it, straight as an arrow's flight, extending so far that the trees seemed to come together as young shrubs at the distant end. Down this level canyon with its dark green sides of tall timber the despised local was rapidly lessening, and its departure gave Tom a sudden pang of loneliness which he would not have believed possible when he boarded the train two hours before in bustling Tenstrike City. "Call you this backing of your friends? A plague on such backing!" said Falstaff to Prince Hal, and, reversing the Shakespearean saying, so thought Tom Fenton. He had backed his friends, and Stumpville was the result. Practically all telegraphic America had gone out on strike. The young man had never believed in the possibility of success, but when his comrades quitted their work he quitted with them. He was the last to go out and was the last in attempting a

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return. His employers, illogical enough, resented his action more than they did that of the loud-mouthed demagogues who had led the telegraphers into a hopeless contest. Tom found his place taken and himself out of employment. The friends he had backed found their situations again—he had the privilege of looking for a new one. Railroading and telegraphing were the only things he knew, and the fact that he had been one of the army of strikers proved less efficient as a recommendation than a line or two written by a train-dispatcher who had last given him employment. The line or two from the train-dispatcher he did not possess; the fact that he had been one of the strikers he could not deny; so it was five months before he was offered the mean situation of operator at Stumpville, on the newly-opened branch of the C. K. & G. His resources were at an end, and he had been very glad to accept the position tendered him; but now, face to face with the reality, he could not help contrasting it with the berth he had lost. However, he possessed the grit typical of the young American, and with one final sigh for opportunity forfeited, he set his teeth with determination and resolved to do the best he could at the foot of the ladder once more.

The station-master, who seemed to be switchman, yardman, and everything else, had kicked a clutch out from the iron-toothed wheel to the west of the platform, which caused a momentary rattle of chains and the uplifting of the red arm of a signal behind the departing train. He now approached the lone passenger with a friendly expression of inquiry on his face.

"My name is Fenton," said the young man, before the other had time to address him. "I'm the new operator."

"All right," growled the station-master. "My name's Sam Sloan, and I do pretty much everything that's required round this shanty except telegraphing. Jim Mason has been working the keys here this while back, and I guess he'll be mighty glad to slope. He says he's been expecting you these last two or three days. He's got a raise, has Jim, and he's going to Tenstrike City. He says he's had enough of the excitement of Stumpville to last him all his life, and I think he's just yearning to give us the shake."

"I don't blame him," said Fenton, with a momentary lack of diplomacy. The station-master shrugged his shoulders, laughing good-naturedly, and his reply had a touch of that optimism with which every citizen regards his own town no matter how backward it may appear to a stranger's eye.

"Oh, well, I guess there's worse outfits than Stumpville. Two years ago there wasn't a house in the place, and last week they staked out a planing-mill, and they're talking of puttin' up a new hotel."

"You are going ahead," commented Tom.

"You bet your life," said Sam Sloan, complacently. "Come on in and I'll introduce you to Jim, then you can take over the ticker."

Jim departed, joyously, on the returning local that evening, and Tom found himself master of a plasterless room of pine-boards with a little window projecting out over the platform, which gave him a view up and down the line when he stood within it. The telegraph instrument was on a bench near this window, and there was one wooden chair beside it. The door opening from the waiting-room was ornamented by a big card labelled, "No Admittance," to which injunction no one in the locality paid the slightest heed. Against the wall was a ticket-case, the product of some city cabinet shop, whose polished walnut was in striking contrast to the rough pine that surrounded it. Between the telegraph office and the waiting-room was cut, breast high, a rounded opening which had a little shelf at the bottom, and through this aperture it was part of Tom's duty to sell tickets to any inquirer twice a day: in the morning when the local went west and in the evening when it returned east.

Fenton took over Jim's abandoned room in The Star of Empire Hotel, and found the fare in that place of entertainment not nearly so bad as he had expected. The pumpkin-pie was particularly good and the doughnuts a lesson to Delmonico's.

Tom settled down to his work, and he soon found that the task required of him was anything but a severe one. Stumpville was an unimportant station, and the amount of telegraphing to be done there at any time was not extensive, so a man was more apt to die of *ennui* than overwork at that post. Luckily he had brought some books with him, and by-and-by made an arrangement with the conductor of the local whereby he received a morning paper each day, and this sheet kept him from imagining that all the world was standing still just because he was.

Sam, the man-of-all-work of the station, was a good-natured employé, who spent most of his time at the bar-room of the Star, except when the locals came or there were

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some cars of lumber to be attached to an eastern-bound freight. Tom always knew where to find him in case of emergency, but emergencies never happened.

As the bar-room had no attractions for Tom he got more and more into the habit of spending nearly all his time in the telegraph office, coming there even on Sundays when there was nothing to do; liking the place for its quietness and freedom from interruption. Now and then he gave himself some quiet amusement and a little practice in his own line of business by sending messages along the line at the rate of speed to which he had formerly been accustomed. On these occasions he was pleased to find there was not a man on the branch who could take his messages. He was delighted once, when answering an inquiry from the train-dispatcher's office at Tenstrike, to find that even the city operator had to break in on him three times during his discourse and beg him to go slower. On the third interruption Tom surmised that the train-dispatcher himself took off the message, because he got a curt command to "Go ahead," which he did, and there was no further appeal for a more moderate pace until he had finished what he had to say. After a pause there came to him a message almost as fast as the one he had sent in.

"I WAS MERELY SENDING ALONG MY COMPLIMENTS."

"Say, young fellow, are you qualifying as the demon operator of this line? You must remember you are only a branch, and although we have some express trains going over the rails you have all the time there is during the rest of the day. Don't throw us into a fever so far away from a doctor."

"Thanks," replied Tom, over the wires. "I am glad to know there is at least one man in Tenstrike who knows how to handle a key."

Fenton was pleased with this incident. "There," he said to himself, "they'll know at head-quarters where to get a good operator if they want one, and in order to keep my hand in, I think I'll wake up my next-door neighbour." So he began rattling on the machine the letters "Cy—Cy," which was the call for Corderoy, seventeen miles farther west, and presumably still deeper in the woods than Stumpville. When the call was answered he poured forth a stream of chattering letters calculated to make the hair of the other operator stand on end. In a moment or two there came the expected break:—

"I haven't the remotest idea what you are talking about," remarked the bewildered operator at Corderoy; "but if it's anything important, I beg you to telegraph slowly."

"All right," replied Fenton, "that was merely my fancy speed. I practise it now and then so that people along the line won't fall into the idea that Stumpville is a slow place. I was merely sending along my compliments and asking you what sort of a settlement Corderoy is."

"Oh, you're the new man at Stumpville, are you? I heard there was going to be a change. How do you like it?"

"Not very well; still, it isn't as bad as it looked when I came here the other day. How about Corderoy? Have you a saw-mill there or any modern improvements?"

"No, we are just a little neck of the woods. Four or five shanties and a blacksmith shop for the lumbermen."

"What, haven't you even a tavern?"

"No."

"Oh, we're away ahead of you. I'm boarding at The Star of Empire Hotel. Where do you stay?"

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"In one of the shanties, of course. Did you think I camped out?"

"I didn't know. That's why I asked."

After a few moments' pause Corderoy inquired:—

"Was that real telegraphing you were doing a moment ago, or were you only trying to shatter the instrument?"

"Couldn't you tell it was real?"

"No. You frightened the life out of me. I thought there was a disaster of some kind impending, or that the lightning had struck the wires."

"Well, Corderoy, you are farther in the woods than I thought. Listen to this. I'll repeat it again and again and see if you can make head or tail of it."

The key flew up and down for a few seconds, then paused.

"How's that, umpire?" he said.

"I couldn't make you out. You were saying what——"

"I was asking, what's your name? Give me an introduction."

"Jack Moran. What's yours?"

"Tom Fenton."

"Well, Tom Fenton, how is it that so good an operator is cooped up in a place like Stumpville? Drink?"

"No; strike. I went out on that strike six months ago and didn't get in again; that's all."

"Let me condole with you. Had you a good situation before?"

"First-rate, but didn't know enough to hang on to it."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-three. How old are you?"

"Oh, if you're only twenty-three, then the world's before you. I shouldn't get discouraged if I were you."

"I'm not. I've just been shaking up the train-dispatcher's office, and they broke in on me three times."

"Good. You'll make those people in the city have some respect for this backwoods settlement."

"That was my intention. But you haven't answered my question, which was—how old are you?"

"Me? Oh, I'm only seventeen."

"Good gracious! Do they put a kid like you in such an important position as Corderoy?"

"Now you are sneering, Mr. Thomas. Corderoy, of course, is only a kind of section-house, with a long switch where we side-track freight trains. There isn't much doing here."

"How do you pass your time?"

"Oh, just grin and bear it, that's all."

"Say, I can send you along some books if you would like to read, and I can give you a newspaper the day after."

"Thanks. I'll be very much obliged."

"I say, Jack, seeing you're a youngster, will you take some good advice?"

"Send it along, and if I don't like it I'll return it."

"All right. You ought to brush up your telegraphing a little. You are pretty slow, you know."

"Yes, I know I am. Will you send over the wire something at a good speed now and then, so that I may practise?"

"I shall be delighted. You see, now's your time to pitch in and learn; then, when you get the offer of a better situation, you are ready for it."

"Thank you ever so much."

This ended their first conversation, for a freight train came in, but they had many another. Tom grew to be very fond of his western neighbour, who seemed so anxious to learn. There was a downy innocence about the youth that pleased the elder man, and under instruction the boy became a creditable operator. Fenton invited Jack to come and have dinner with him some day when he could get away, but the westerner never seemed able to quit his post, for, of course, there was no one who could act as substitute. Fenton sent him books and the newspaper, which were gratefully received, and told him story after story of the town and all its fascinations. "I must brighten up the kid's intellect," he said to himself; and indeed the kid proved an apt pupil. He had an alert sense of humour and keenly appreciated the good things that were sent over the wire to him. This companionship between two persons who had never seen each other made a dull life more interesting for both of them, and Tom saw with pleasure that Jack's telegraphic style was improving greatly by the practice he was getting.

One Sunday, however, an unexpected incident occurred which, as the novelists say, changed the tenor of Tom Fenton's life for him. Sunday was a drowsy, lazy day in Stumpville, with nothing going on, and Tom was spending it as usual in his telegraph-room, seated on the wooden chair tilted back against the wall, with his feet elevated to the bench on which the silent instrument rested. A text-book on electricity had been thrown aside, and Tom was absorbed in a ten-cent novel. The door, slightly ajar, was quietly

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pushed open, and the young man, glancing up, was amazed to see standing in the vacancy a strikingly handsome young woman, dressed in the dainty fashion that betokened the city.

"I beg your pardon," she said, hesitatingly.

Tom's feet came down to the floor with a crash, and he arose in some confusion.

"THE YOUNG MAN, GLANCING UP, WAS AMAZED TO SEE STANDING IN THE VACANCY A STRIKINGLY HANDSOME YOUNG WOMAN."

"I wanted to know," she continued, "when there is a train for Tenstrike?"

"For Tenstrike? Bless my soul, there's no train until to-morrow evening!"

The girl made what seemed to be a gesture of despair.

"Till to-morrow evening," she echoed. "Is there no way of getting to the city before then?"

"Not unless you walk along the track," said Tom.

"Aren't there any freight trains that would take a passenger who was in a hurry?"

The young man shook his head.

"Sunday's a day off on the branch," he explained. "We have rarely any Sunday freights except in the autumn when the wheat is moving."

The young lady was evidently troubled at this lack of enterprise on the part of the branch, and her smooth brow wrinkled in perplexity. "If I walked down the line to Ross," she said at last, "could I get a train there? Ross is the next point east, is it not?"

"Yes, but you would be no better off there. There is nothing from Ross going east which you could take before to-morrow evening. So you see there is no help for it but to wait where you are, Miss——"

He hesitated at the word "Miss," and looked up inquiringly with a semi-smile hovering about the corners of his lips. The girl blushed very prettily, then said:—

"Miss De Forest is my name."

"A good name for this locality," rejoined Tom, easily.

"Oh, but I don't live in this locality," replied the girl, drawing herself up with some touch of scorn in her tone for the neighbourhood, which her auditor so sympathized with that he did not resent it.

"I knew you didn't," he answered, hastily. "Will you come in and sit down, Miss De Forest?" and seeing she was in some doubt about accepting the invitation, he continued: "If you knew how lonesome it was for a person to live here, who sees nobody he cares to speak to from one week's end to another, you would have compassion, and, by the way, my name is Fenton. I shall be glad if you will consider us formally introduced."

The girl smiled, made no objection, and took the chair he offered her.

"Are you the station-master here?" she asked.

"Oh, occasionally. I'm telegraph operator always; ticket-seller when anyone wants to buy; signalman and switch-tender in an emergency; and general Pooh-Bah of the woods."

"It must keep you busy," she ventured.

"No; it doesn't. Really the situation

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sometimes fills me with despair, Miss De Forest. I dare not leave this machine for fear something important might come over the wire, and yet nothing important ever does come. I see no one but a lot of ignorant freight-train brakemen and the conductor of the local twice a day. Then society is varied by communion with the mill-hands at meal-times. It seems rather hopeless to a man who has been accustomed to the bustle and importance of a city office. If it wasn't for Jack Moran I don't know what I would do."

"Oh! Who is Jack Moran?"

"He is the operator at the next station farther west. He is only a boy, but an awful nice fellow, and I've kind of taken him under my wing, teaching him rapid telegraphy. He is getting on splendidly, and will be one of the best operators on the line before long."

"Always excepting yourself, I suppose?" said Miss De Forest, looking up archly at him as he sat on the telegraph-table, swinging his foot to and fro, gazing down with much interest at her.

"Yes, always excepting myself," replied Tom, with honest confidence. "If I ever get again into as good a position as I held before I'm going to have Jack as my assistant."

"Perhaps that is why he is so industrious," said the young woman.

"Oh, no, there's nothing self-seeking about Jack. Besides, he has no notion of my intention. I am not going to put ideas into the youngster's head that I may not be able to fulfil."

"He is a lucky boy," said the girl, musingly, "to have such a good friend and never suspect it. What sort of a looking fellow is he?"

"I have never seen him."

"Then how did you two get acquainted?"

"Oh, over the wires. We chatter to each other when the line isn't working on official business, which is most of the time."

Tom's visitor proved deeply interested in telegraphing, and he explained the workings of the instrument, the grounding of wires, the care of batteries, and other electrical particulars. Never had teaching been such an absorbing, fascinating pursuit before. At last the girl jumped up in a panic.

"I must be going," she said.

Fenton looked at his watch and saw how time had fled.

"I'll tell you what you must do, Miss De Forest," he said; "you're coming with me to the hotel for dinner."

"Oh no, no, no," cried the girl, visibly terrified by the proposal.

"Why, yes, you are. It's all right. It looks rough on the outside, but I tell you the cook's pie is worth coming to Stumpville to get a slice of. I'm afraid our dried pumpkin is all gone and the fresh fruit hasn't come into season yet, but we are promised to-day a strawberry shortcake that will be a dream of delight. You must come."

"I really couldn't think of it. I have no desire to meet your employés of the saw-mill."

"That's so," said Tom, taken aback. "Still, though they're rough chaps, they're a good lot. I'll tell you what we'll do. You stay here and I'll go over to the hotel and bring a meal for us both, and we'll enjoy it here in comfort and alone."

The girl was about to protest when he continued, impetuously enamoured of his new scheme:—

"You see, the folks with whom you are staying think you are gone; in fact, I am amazed that there is anyone in Stumpville who doesn't know there are no trains from here on Sunday. Where are you staying, by the way?"

Either this question or the proposal to lunch together had so perturbed Miss de Forest that she answered hastily, and rather inconsequently:—

"But what if someone should come here when you were gone?"

"Oh, there is no danger of that," cried Tom. "No one ever comes here."

"You are sure it won't be too much trouble?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Trouble? No trouble at all—a delight. Then that's settled," he added, hurriedly, fearing she might change her mind. "What will you drink, tea or milk?"

"Milk, if you please."

Next instant he was gone. The young woman moved quickly to the window and looked up and down the track with alarm in her eyes as if she contemplated flight. Then she went to the door, but stopped on the threshold; with some effort recovered her composure and sat down again.

Presently the amateur waiter came in jubilantly with a broad tray carrying all the components of a substantial meal. They had a jolly lunch together, and at the end of it she rose and said that now she must surely go.

"Well, if you must, you must," he murmured, with a sigh. "I'll walk down town with you, if I may."

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She stood opposite him and held out her hand, with an appealing look in her liquid black eyes.

"I wish you wouldn't," she pleaded. "You have been very kind to a stranger, so please do not embarrass me by coming with me. I'd much rather you wouldn't."

He was holding her hand and said, with a trace of disappointment in his tone:—

"I shall do exactly what you wish, but I will see you to-morrow when you go east on the local."

"You will see me when I go east on the local," she repeated after him.

"Won't you give me your address?" he pleaded.

"I'll give it to you to-morrow; and if I forget it then I will send it to you. Good-bye, and many, many thanks!"

She was gone, and the day seemed to darken with her departure. He made a motion to follow her, but arrested himself and sat down in the wooden chair.

The girl walked hurriedly through the village until she was out of sight of the station, then she turned eastward into the forest. After tramping for two miles or more with a directness which showed an intimate acquaintance with the wood she came upon the railway at a point where a light hand-car had been lifted from the track. She took a wooden lever that lay on the car and with an expertness that would have amazed her new acquaintance she prised the wheels on to the rail. She pushed the car towards the west, sprang on board, and sped away toward the declining sun, working the walking beam with all the skill of an old railway hand. As she approached the long switch of Corderoy she stopped, unlocked it, and side-tracked her little car. She went direct into the telegraph office, perched herself on the stool there, placed her capable hand on the key, and rattled forth the letters, "St—St—St—St," the call for Stumpville.

"SHE SPED AWAY TOWARD THE DECLINING SUN."

Tom quickly answered.

"Is that you, Jack? I was trying to call you up a while ago. What are you doing there on Sunday?"

"Oh, I just happened in. I thought you might be there and thought I would call you up. I have nothing at all to say except to wish you good-day."

"Oh, but I have heaps to tell," answered Tom. "I beg to inform you, Jack, that I have had a visit from an angel. Imagine the existence of a girl in the universe who thought trains left Stumpville on Sunday! However, it was very lucky for me, and we've had the most charming conversation, which, now that it is ended, makes this place seem duller than ever. She was the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"Really. How was she dressed?"

"Dressed! What a question for a kid like you to ask! What do you know about dress? I don't remember how she was dressed, but the effect was stunning. Dressed? Why she looked like a girl from Paris."

"What is her name?"

"Miss De Forest. A rattling fine girl. How in the world she ever drifted to this abandoned spot I don't know. She is going east to-morrow on the local. I shall merely

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exist until the local comes in. I hope it will be two hours late, and that she will be here an hour too soon."

"Did you fascinate her, Tom?"

"See here, kid, that's not the way for an infant to talk. You don't understand anything about these things. Wait till your time comes, and then you won't try to say cynical things. Be a good boy, and some time a nice girl will come to see you; or, what's the same thing, you'll go to see her."

"Where does she live? In Tenstrike?"

"I don't know yet, but I'll find out to-morrow. I rather think she does, and if that is so I'm going to move heaven and earth and the railway company to get promoted to Tenstrike. I flatter myself the young lady won't object to seeing me there."

"Tom, don't get conceited."

"Kid, don't be impertinent. If Miss De Forest comes early to-morrow I'll be conceited in spite of all you can say. If she comes just in the nick of time I'll be in despair, and so will ask for whatever consolation you can give."

"All right, Tom; I'll stand by you, whatever happens. Remember, if the girl ignores you, you have me to fall back upon."

"That's very comforting, Jack, but it doesn't quite make up, you know."

"ALL RIGHT TOM; I'LL STAND BY YOU, WHATEVER HAPPENS."

The young woman laughed at this answer as it was ticked off to her.

"Oh, doesn't it?" she said to herself, and then bade good-bye to Stumpville.

When the local came in next evening Tom tried to hold it on one pretence or another, looking down the sandy street, but no Miss De Forest comforted his anxious eyes, and from that day on she disappeared as completely from his cognizance as if she had been a spirit of the forest. In vain he made inquiry. No one in Stumpville had ever seen anyone resembling her. He put an advertisement in the Tenstrike morning paper: "Will the young lady who called upon the telegrapher kindly send him her address?" But this stood for a week unnoticed; Tom rubbing his eyes and wondering if he had fallen asleep that Sunday and dreamt it all. Then happened a series of events which had an important bearing on his future, and almost drove the remembrance of the lady of mystery from his mind.

No. 6, the west-bound express, sped through Stumpville each day about noon. At some siding to the west, whose situation was determined by the train-dispatcher, based upon a mathematical calculation depending upon the lateness of either or both trains, the express passed No. 11, a fast freight going east. One day the problem was complicated by the intervention of a special, presumably carrying some of the officers over the road, and, as usual, in a great hurry. The express was late, and the fast freight ridiculously on time. Hazily Fenton gathered from the chattering of the instrument that the special was to run ahead of the express, but that no one of the three trains was to stop at Stumpville, so the young man paid but little attention to the message not intended for him.

Presently the nervous call, "St—St—St—St," woke him from his reverie and he sprang to the instrument. There was something insistent in the sharp click of the sounder. The message that hurriedly followed was sufficiently amazing, and he knew by the rapidity of it, if for no other reason, that it was Jack Moran who was telegraphing.

"Stop everything east and west of Stumpville. Set the signals at once and return instanter."

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"Sloan!" shouted the young man, making the station ring with his stentorian call. "Set the signals against east and west."

But there was no reply. Sloan was not within hearing, so Fenton himself ran out on the platform, saw at a glance that the line was open both ways, and kicked away the clutches that allowed the semaphores to swing out over the line in each direction a prohibitive red arm. He calmed down as he saw no trains in sight and returned to the telegraph-office. The call for his station was vibrating impatiently in the air. He checked the chatter and listened.

"Telegraph instantly to Ross and tell them to hold No. 6 until you release her. Use the train-dispatcher's signature."

"Hold on, Jack," replied Fenton. "I can't do *that*, you know. I'm not running the line."

"In God's name," came the appeal, "do as I tell you at once. I will explain later. Every moment is vital. There will be a smash if you delay."

Now, for an ordinary operator to make Ross or anyone else think that a train-dispatcher was communicating with him when he wasn't, is an offence in railway circles that is unforgivable. Forgery outside that circle is of little matter compared with what Fenton at once set himself to do. He ordered the express stopped at Ross, and used the cabalistic letters which signified that the order came from the train-dispatcher, then he turned to Corderoy for explanation, rattling out his knowledge of the crime he had committed.

"Why didn't you telegraph to Ross yourself?" he asked Moran.

"You have a firm touch on the key, and I haven't," was the answer. "There would have been inquiries, and then it would have been too late. Here is what has happened. The train-dispatcher ordered me to hold 11 until the special passes. No. 11 had just gone out of the station as the message began to come. I knew that the special had left Ross, so I told you to hold both trains at Stumpville, but the special thinks it has a clear right-of-way, and No. 6 is to follow it. If your telegram wasn't in time to stop No. 6 at Ross you must look out she does not telescope the special at Stumpville. There is just one more thing I want to say. I want you to take the responsibility of everything that has been done, as if you did it yourself."

"That's rather a large order," said Fenton. "You cause me to break every rule of the road, and then calmly ask me to take all responsibility."

"I beg you to do it," pleaded Corderoy. "You see, I'm only seventeen; you are a grown man and accustomed to the railroad business."

"All right, Jack, don't worry. I'll stand the brunt of it. If the lay-out is as you say, they can't make very much fuss, unless about the train-dispatcher's signature, but I'll stand the racket." Tom said to himself, as he turned away, "I got bounced once before for sticking by my comrades, and if it happens again, well, Stumpville won't be a big loss."

There was now little time for meditation. Away to the east an angry engine was swearing. The short toot, toot said as plainly as words:—

"What the dickens are you stopping us here for? Do you know who we are?"

Fenton strode out to the platform and saw dimly in the distance to the west the fast freight coming on, while the special, slowed down, was breaking all regulations by passing the eastern semaphore, very cautiously, however, and approaching the station for an explanation. This was exactly what Fenton wanted, for the still standing signal would arrest the express if she had passed Ross before his telegram reached there. Sloan came puffing up from the tavern, having heard the indignant whistle of the special, and therefore knew that something was wrong.

"Here, you confirmed loafer!" cried Fenton. "Get a move on you. Open the upper switch and side-track No. 11."

"All right, Mr. Fenton," said the culprit, as he trotted down the track toward the west.

The short special came cautiously up alongside the platform, and a stout man with red face and white side-whiskers, and no very pleased expression on his countenance, stepped off.

"Who is in charge here?" he demanded.

"I am, sir."

"Why have you stopped this special?"

"That's the reason, sir," said Fenton, waving his hand towards the approaching freight. "The order to side-track No. 11 at Corderoy arrived too late. I therefore had to stop you until I could side-track No. 11. You won't be delayed two minutes, sir."

"Oh," said the stout gentleman, as he glanced toward the west, where he saw the fast freight swing in like a serpent to the

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switch. The situation needed no explaining to a railway man.

"I also took the liberty of telegraphing to Ross, and I used the train-dispatcher's code-word."

"The deuce you did," growled the stout man, glancing keenly at him.

"Yes, sir; I had to hold No. 6 at Ross, or there was a danger of her telescoping your car."

"Couldn't you have done that without pretending to be the train-dispatcher?"

"COULDN'T YOU HAVE DONE THAT WITHOUT PRETENDING TO BE THE TRAIN-DISPATCHER?"

"I could, sir, but it would have been a risk, and there was no time to lose."

"What's your name?"

"Thomas Fenton."

"You have a good deal of confidence in yourself for a backwoodsman."

"I was not always in the backwoods, sir; I was in the train-dispatcher's office on one of the Vanderbilt lines. You have a clear right-of-way now, sir."

"All right. I hope you haven't smashed anything somewhere else."

"I hope not, sir."

"Good-day."

The stout man mounted his car without a word of either thanks or censure, and the special sped to the west. Fenton released No. 6, holding No. 11 on the side-track until the express had passed.

Three days later Jim Mason swung off the morning local. He glanced around at Stumpville with an expression of unmodified disgust, and he greeted Fenton with boisterous familiarity.

"Here's a couple of letters for you, old man. I believe there's a chin-chin ahead of you at the governor's office, so I don't envy you; but keep a stiff upper lip, and get back here as quick as you can, for I have to take your place meanwhile, and I tell you I don't want to be held up at Stumpville any longer than is necessary."

One letter was from the general manager, who curtly ordered Fenton to report at the head office, Tenstrike City, next day at ten o'clock. The other note was marked private, and Fenton saw with amazement that it was from the train-dispatcher, who asked Tom to call on him that evening as soon as he reached the city, and say nothing to anybody in the interval. Fenton saw at once that the train-dispatcher was trembling for his position, and he expected an appeal from that official because it must have been through his neglect that the tangle of the three trains had arisen. This reasonable surmise, however, proved utterly erroneous. He found the train-dispatcher an alert, capable man, who received him with abrupt good nature.

"I know all the details of this matter," he said, "and I thought I would give you a point or two before you see the old man. You imagine, I suppose, that I was to blame for the tardy dispatch to Corderoy? That is not the case. It was the fault of my assistant, who was on duty at the time. My position has been made very difficult by the fact that my assistant is the old man's nephew. Everybody in the general offices knows that the nephew isn't worth his salt except the old man, and I guess this has shaken him up a

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bit, because he has removed his nephew to the accountant's department, so he won't smash anything but figures. That leaves the office of assistant vacant, and, at the moment, I haven't anybody that I care to put into the place. Now, you're the man I call the demon telegrapher. Have you had any experience in train office work?"

"Yes, I was assistant to Galloway."

"You don't tell me! How did you come to quit?"

"The strike."

"Ah, I see. Well, I'm to meet the old man to-night, and I'll ask him to let you come on as assistant. He's a rather crusty old gentleman, but a first-rate railway man, except where his nephew is concerned. Now, I want to give you a word or two of advice. Don't drop a hint about the mistake, or who caused it, or anything of that kind. Just hold to it that you were resolved to save the special and the express, and that you *did* save them."

Fenton knew, of course, that by "the old man" the train-dispatcher referred to the general manager, and he asked if that was the gentleman who was in the special.

"Yes. He was taking a turn over the road, and he had his wife and two daughters with him, so he didn't want a wreck. You've got things all your own way if you work it right and keep your temper."

"I'll try," said Tom, "for I'm tired of Stumpville."

Next morning's interview was brief and to the point.

"Well, young man," said the general manager, "I suppose you've discussed this affair with various friends? What conclusion have you come to?"

"I have no friends, sir, along this line."

"But I understand you operators communicate with each other over the wires. Have you told them up and down how near we came to having an accident?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't you telegraph to Ross and apologize for using the train-dispatcher's signal?"

"No, sir. I owed whatever explanation there was to be made to you or to the train-dispatcher, and to no one else."

"Quite right," said the old man. "I like to meet a person now and then who can keep his mouth shut. Spencer tells me you have been in Galloway's office. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you understand the work?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Report at once to Spencer, and I think he'll have no difficulty in finding a place for you."

"Thank you, sir."

"I may add that no disaster occurred through your quite unwarranted use of Spencer's signature."

"I am very glad to hear it, sir."

"Good-day," snapped the general manager, and Fenton went to find Spencer.

Fenton's first pleasure after the conclusive interview with the train-dispatcher was to write a long letter to Jack Moran. He detailed all that had taken place, then said: "So you see, Jack, I am in a position that by rights belongs to you. If you understood the work of this office as I do I would at once tell the whole truth and have you put here in my place; but, even if I were deposed now, you are not qualified to accept the position if it were offered you. So here's what I'm going to do. I shall fit in here and make friends. I don't want to ask any favours of Mr. Spencer until I show him I'm a person to be trusted; then I shall tell him the progress you have made in telegraphing in the past two months, and I shall ask him to give you the best place he has vacant in the office."

To this he received a somewhat unexpected answer: "I implore you not to do anything in the line of getting me a situation in the city," wrote Jack, "where, even if you succeeded in getting me promotion, I would not accept it. I am perfectly contented where I am and refuse to be removed. This is why I asked you to take the responsibility of my order. I knew that if there was any sense at head-quarters the saving of these two trains would lead to your promotion, and, strange as it may seem to you, promotion is the one thing I wish to avoid, and I suppose I am the only operator on the line of whom that can be said. My attitude, however, will be easy to understand when I tell you that my father, who lives at Corderoy, owns about a thousand acres of pine-timbered land in this district, which we expect some day will be valuable. The work here is not difficult, and I live at home and help him. So, you see, I have no wish to move, and I beg of you not to speak on my behalf to the train-dispatcher, or to anyone else. If I change my mind I will write to you."

So it came about that the first favour Fenton asked from Spencer was a day off, getting which, he boarded the local in the morning with a pass in his pocket for

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Corderoy and return. He wanted to see Jack anyway, and expected very speedily to show the foolish young fellow that the real way to help his father was to come to town on a much better salary than he was getting.

As he stepped off at the platform of Corderoy he could scarcely resist a shout as he recognised, standing in the doorway, the young woman who had so mysteriously disappeared from his view at Stumpville that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday. She saw him at the same moment and instantly whipped out of sight.

"Oh, you don't do that a second time," cried Tom, springing forward.

The waiting-room was empty, but the door of the telegraph-office had closed with a bang, so Tom precipitated himself against it and it gave way before his impetuosity.

The girl he had so long sought in vain stood with her back against the telegraph table, facing him resolutely but with flaming cheeks.

"Why, Miss De Forest," he said, "what are you doing in Corderoy?"

"Why shouldn't I be here? This is my home," gasped the girl.

"Your home? I thought you lived in Tenstrike!"

"I never said so."

"Do you mean to tell me that you—that you—you are Jack Moran?"

"Jacqueline De Forest Moran, if you will have the whole name, Mr. Fenton," said the girl, with a nervous little laugh. "It seems rather an imposing title for such a place as this, doesn't it? So my friends all call me Jack. You see," she exclaimed, breathlessly, "we are of French extraction, and that perhaps accounts for it, as well as for my boldness in daring to visit you uninvited."

"Well, now I'm visiting you uninvited, and I can tell you, Miss Jack, I'm very glad I came. Won't you say you're not sorry?"

"I certainly wanted to see you again. You understand now," she continued, hurriedly, "why it was of no use to speak to the train-dispatcher about me. You selfish men don't allow girls to have a good situation in your city offices."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Tom, slowly. "I'm glad, though, I didn't speak to Mr. Spencer, because I'm going to offer you a situation myself. You heard what I said, Jacqueline? I told you when you visited me that I was resolved to have Jack Moran for my assistant. If I was fixed in that purpose then, I am ten times more so now. Are you resolved never to leave Corderoy, Jacqueline?"

The girl turned her burning face away from him, her fingers nervously agitating the key, and quite unconsciously repeating the call: "St—St—St."

"It depends altogether on who sends the message—Tom," she said, at last.

"'IT DEPENDS ALTOGETHER ON WHO SENDS THE MESSAGE—TOM,' SHE SAID, AT LAST."

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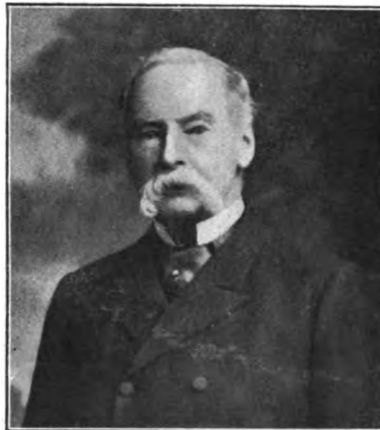
Our Graphic Humorists.

THEIR FUNNIEST PICTURES AS CHOSEN BY THEMSELVES.

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.

IT is related of Sir John Tenniel that when in his early manhood he was offered a place on the staff of *Punch* his first feeling was one of indignation. "Do they suppose there is anything funny about me?" he is said to have inquired of his nearest and dearest friends. On second thoughts, however, the artist, whose aspirations were for classic painting, saw that the work for *Punch* had its serious dignity; and now at the close of his long career Sir John Tenniel must feel that his early ambition has been by no means altogether frustrated. Has he not on innumerable occasions given to the cartoon the classic power of national feeling expressed in lines of severe accuracy and restraint?

At the same time, the sequel has shown that Mark Lemon, the then Editor of *Punch*, must have known young Tenniel better than he knew himself. In a graphic humorist no technical ability can take the place of a sense of humour, and in that meaning there must have been "something funny" about the artist chosen to succeed the celebrated Richard Doyle. Sir John Tenniel has always denied that he was a caricaturist, but he confesses to a very keen sense of humour, and to a belief that his drawings are sometimes really funny. The words of this confession suggest an interesting question as to the relationship between the artist's and his public's sense of humour. With this question upon my lips I have been making a round of calls upon our leading graphic humorists, asking each artist to mention his most successful effort, as it seems to him, for reproduction in THE STRAND MAGAZINE.



SIR JOHN TENNIEL.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

I first saw Sir John Tenniel himself at his Maida Vale house, in a room which, it is of significance to note, is adorned by engravings from the works of Van Dyck, Rubens, Reynolds, and other of the great masters. In answering my question Sir John consulted a volume of his cartoons recently issued from the office of *Punch*. This volume of selections covers the whole period of his connection with the paper, beginning with the opening of the Great Exhibition on May Day, 1851, and ending with "Time's Appeal" on New Year's Day, 1901—Sir John's last *Punch* cartoon.

Sir John went through the volume in a way which surprised me when I remembered that he was a man of eighty-one who many years ago had lost the sight of an eye as the result of a fencing accident; only once or twice did he ask for my assistance with the smaller print.

The cartoon which appears in these pages as the choice of its author was the result, it will be observed, of one of Sir John's rare digressions from the world of *la haute politique*. What it was which led him from his usual path he did not seem to remember — perhaps it was the too-sonorous voice of a passing costermonger, perhaps the activity of the L.C.C. in a less difficult region than that of street noises. Be that as it may, the cartoon in its comic spirit had two competitors in the sphere of Imperial statesmanship. One of these was the memorable "Mosé in Egetto," which appeared in December, 1875, about the time when Lord Beaconsfield had bought for this country the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal Company. Lord Beaconsfield is drawn standing

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OUR MASTERS' MASTERS.—NEWSPAPER HAWKER: "Shout away, Bill! We're safe enough as long as we votes 'Progressive'!!"
By permission of the] BY SIR JOHN TENNIEL. [*Proprietors of "Punch."*

on the Egyptian desert, with his finger at the side of his nose, looking at the Sphinx, on whose features there is a delightfully expressive wink. In the second cartoon, which was published in August, 1878, after the Berlin Conference, we have Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury dancing a "*pas de deux*," from "the Scène de Triomphe in the Grand Anglo-Turkish Ballet d'Action." But without much hesitation Sir John rejects both these efforts of his sense of humour in favour of "Our Masters' Masters."

Mr. Harry Furniss had the greatest possible difficulty in complying with my request. This arose, of course, from the fact that for more than twenty years his pencil has been as versatile in its humour as it has been prolific. Mr. Furniss made a calculation of the number of his contributions to *Punch* during his twelve years' membership of its staff, and it ran into several thousands, and since then he has made innumerable drawings for *Lika Joko*, the *New Budget*, *Fair Game*, and other periodicals, alive and extinct.

I spent an hour or so with Mr. Furniss one evening in his studio at Regent's Park, observing, but not assisting in — I was very careful about that—the process of selection. We were surrounded by volumes of these publications, as well as by not a few of the originals, and, if prolonged, the task was an entertaining one—at any rate for me. Mr. Furniss's first choice was rather in favour of a caricature of Gladstone, which had indirectly received high praise from Mr. John Morley. Then it leaned for a few moments to a memorable *Punch* picture on the subject of Sir William Harcourt; it was entitled "Harcourts All," and was suggested by a speech of Lord Randolph Churchill, who had banteringly alluded to the possibility of the House of Lords consisting entirely of Sir William Harcourts.

"But the drawing of the picture is so bad," Mr. Furniss protested, as I laughed over the humour of its idea. "It was done rather in a hurry, I remember, at Felixstowe, where I was recuperating. Lucy wired the subject down to me there, and the picture was done in the midst of a match at golf."

Mrs. Furniss, Miss Furniss, and even Master Furniss were called into council. Miss Furniss, who is herself an art student at Heatherley's, strongly urged the claims of one of her father's "Swelled Heads" series, the original drawing of which had been given to her as a birthday present, and it certainly embodied, I thought, one of the artist's funniest conceptions. But Mr. Furniss was not to be "rushed" by the young lady's enthusiasm.

Quite suddenly, when we were all reduced to despair, Mr. Furniss had his inspiration.

"Other artists," he exclaimed, "may think fit to choose one of their most elaborate cartoons. But for my part, I will stand or fall in your STRAND MAGAZINE article by my little 'Black Beetle.'"

Mr. Furniss's "Black Beetle" was famous in the pages of *Punch* during a considerable

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part of his connection with the paper, making its first appearance in "The Essence of Parliament" on March 19th, 1881.

MR. HARRY FURNISS.
From a Photo. by See & Epler, New York.

"One day," said the caricaturist in explaining the birth of the creature, "I watched Captain Gosset, the Serjeant-at-Arms, from the Press Gallery walk up the floor of the House in Court dress, his knee-breeches showing off his rather bandy legs, elbows akimbo, and curious gait; his back view at once suggested the beetle, and as 'The Black Beetle' he became known."

THE BLACK BEETLE.—BY MR. HARRY FURNISS.
By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

It was said that the caricature gave great offence to the official, but Mr. Furniss assures me that he has reason to know that this was not the case. An M.P. one day introduced him to Captain Gosset in the Serjeant-at-Arms' private room, and there on the wall among many portraits of Parliamentary leaders was a row of "Black Beetles" cut out from *Punch*.

Mr. A. S. Boyd, who is now so well known by the humorous drawings which he contributes to *Punch*, was at the beginning of his career a painter of landscape and *genre* subjects, and afterwards under the pseudonym of "Twym" was the author of comic illustrations in *Quiz* and *The Bailie*, of Glasgow.

It was with Mr. Boyd I spent a most agreeable time at his "Hut" in the Boundary Road, St. John's Wood, whilst he cross-examined himself on the question submitted to him and rummaged through a large collection of *Punch* and other drawings. Mr. Boyd was busy at his drawing-board—with some book illustration, I believe—but he turned gaily aside from a half-finished sketch and entered heartily into the spirit of my inquiry. After much turning over of proofs and originals the artist's choice was eventually reduced to three.

In the first the joke was concerned with a little Scotch lassie and her mother. As a Scotsman Mr. Boyd evidently preferred it, but the artist and the humorist asserted themselves in him, and it was reluctantly discarded. The second candidate had a testi-

A SURPRISED PARTY.—"Why the d-d-doose don't you ring your bell?"—BY MR. A. S. BOYD.
By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

MR. A. S. BOYD.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

monial from Mr. W. W. Jacobs, who was strongly of opinion that it was the funniest thing he had done—a small drummer-boy walking by the side of his inamorata, a big, buxom 'Arriett, whom he is solemnly scolding for disrespect to the etiquette of the Army. The third drawing, which is here reproduced, was favoured by Mrs. Boyd, and on reflection the artist found

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that his matured opinion agreed with that of his wife.

"Mrs. Boyd," he remarks, "may be prejudiced in favour of this subject because it was originally suggested by her, although the treatment of it, arrangement of the figures and so forth, are my own. As a rule, the ideas for my humorous pictures arise out of my own personal experiences. Yes, this was the case with the drawing you were laughing at just now."

This was a little *Punch* picture which many readers will doubtless remember as well as I did. An old gentleman suddenly turning a corner and coming into collision with a little girl's hoop, with the result that—with the cycling fiend in his mind — he impulsively exclaims, "Why the deuce didn't you ring your bell?" A day or two before this drawing was made Mr. Boyd had been walking in St. John's Wood and had a child's hoop driven up against him in much the same way. It was typical of the way in which he can turn the little incidents of daily life to humorous pictorial account.

"Blush! Me blush! Garn! I couldn't if I tried. Blush yourself if yer wants to."
BY F. C. GOULD.
From the Westminster Gazette.

Although Mr. Boyd is forty-seven, it is only ten years since he made his home in London, and it was in 1894 that he was admitted into the pages of *Punch*. Even now, with all the success which London has given him, I should say that he had the strongest "Auld Lang Syne" feeling for Glasgow and Glasgow life. Whilst Mr. Boyd is absent for a few minutes from the studio at "The Hut" I put my hand upon a mass of papers and magazines, and the first which it brings forth is the last-published number of *The Bailie*, the little Glasgow weekly on which his spurs were won as a humorous draughtsman.

As a caricaturist Mr. F. C. Gould's fame is now indissolubly associated with the personality of Mr. Chamberlain. I was not surprised, therefore, on calling at the *Westminster Gazette* office to find that his choice had fallen on one of his inimitable presentments of that right hon. gentleman. It wavered for a moment, however, on a recent cartoon, wherein the Colonial Secretary figured in company with the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, and the Duke of Devonshire, in the guise of "Our Pierrots" performing on "the sands of history."

The cartoon reproduced on this page, as "F.C.G." reminded me, is one of a series which had its origin in a remark which was made by Mr. Chamberlain when speaking to a Staffordshire audience at Lichfield during the General Election of 1900: "If it were really true that I was responsible for the war I should say that it was a feather in my cap." Mr. Chamberlain as a Red Indian was followed by Mr. Chamberlain as a coster-girl.

MR. F. C. GOULD.
From a Photo. by Fradelle & Young.

It is characteristic of Mr. Gould's work, I may add, that this caricature should have been suggested by a speech. He is a close

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student of speeches both in and out of Parliament, and I remember his once telling me that he considered a careful study of politics to be as necessary to the cartoonist as to the leader-writer. At the same time his happiest efforts in the general estimation are the result of a flash of inspiration rather than of a train of thought. In the case of "Unblushing," as usually, "F.C.G." at once "spotted" the passage in the speech which became the text to the picture.

MR. E. T. REED.
From a Photo. by Henry Van der Weyde.

As is well known, the originals of Mr. Gould's cartoons find a ready sale, and in the course of our conversation I asked him who were the most frequent purchasers, but he replied that as they were very often Conservative readers of the *Westminster Gazette* they might not care to have their identity disclosed.

Mr. Gould is, of course, well known to every reader of this Magazine, as his drawings have illustrated Mr. Lucy's papers "From Behind the Speaker's Chair" for many years.

Mr. E. T. Reed"s telegraphic address, I observed on his notepaper, is "Prehistoric." Although he is now installed in Mr. Furniss's place as *Punch's* Parliamentary artist, I quite expected, as I wended my way to Mr. Reed's West Kensington flat, that his choice would be made from those "Prehistoric Peeps" for which Mr. Reed has become famous. The choice of "Prehistoric Mixed Bathing" was not at once made, however, Mr. Reed sending it by post a few days subsequent to my call. The drawing, which was one of a series of three called "The Stone Age Revisited," appeared only last summer in "*Punch's* Holiday Book."

"There is no particular story about it," Mr. Reed assures me. The first of the "Prehistoric Peeps" appeared in the Christmas number of 1893, three years after his appointment on the staff of *Punch*: this was "The First Hansom." The original idea seems to have arisen in Mr. Reed's mind from visiting museums and examining their evidences of prehistoric life. Of prehistoric

MIXED BATHING IN PREHISTORIC TIMES.—BY MR. E. T. REED.
By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

animals Mr. Reed made a careful study in the South Kensington Museum, as well as in books, but, of course, much imagination has entered into his presentments of extinct monsters and their relationship to man.

his selection is made. As regards "The Desperate Householder," reproduced here, he states that there is nothing to be told—adding: "I rather think—though I am not sure—that the idea was not my own." Mr.

Desperate Householder Writes out Advertisement: "To be disposed of, a Monkey. Very comical and playful Lively companion; full of fun. Would exchange for Gold Fish, or anything useful."
By permission of the] BY MR. BERNARD PARTRIDGE. [*Proprietors of "Punch."*

Partridge, who, I may remind my readers, is a successful actor as well as artist under the name of "Bernard Gould," confesses that, generally speaking, what may be called the literary ideas in his drawings are furnished by the Editor of *Punch* or others. "I can hardly ever invent a joke," he will frankly tell you.

Mr. Reed's first *Punch* picture, it may be of interest to recall, had for its subject the three judges of the Parnell Commission enjoying themselves up the river. But his first caricature he cannot quite remember. At Harrow he had shown a sense of humour in his pencil, and Mr. Reed tells a story how one day a master—as a punishment for caricaturing himself—ordered him to furnish caricatures of all the other masters in the school.

Mr. Bernard Partridge is perhaps most favourably known in the pages of *Punch* as the illustrator of Mr. Anstey's "Voces Populi" and "Jabberjee," but it is from neither of these most amusing series that

MR. BERNARD PARTRIDGE.
From a Photo. by Russell & Sons.

This being so, the pictorial humour of such pictures as "The Desperate Householder" is the more remarkable. Mr. Dudley Hardy had just told me—and his experience is usual in his profession—that however funny a story sounded to him in the telling, it was seldom that much could be made of it in the pictorial form. The idea had

to spring from his own consciousness—the incident had to be seen with his own eyes.

Mr. Linley Sambourne, who has taken Sir John Tenniel's place, has on his door-front at Kensington a brass tablet, "Not at Home," to warn away visitors on Thursday and Friday when he is in the throes of the principal cartoon for *Punch*, as arranged at the staff dinner on Wednesday evening. Calling another morning, however, I find Mr. Sambourne quite at leisure for a chat.

From a Photo. by] MR. LINLEY SAMBOURNE. [*Elliott & Fry.*

At the outset the artist mentions "In the Parrot-House" as his best-remembered example of the comic spirit, although he has to go through the *Punch* volume for the first half of 1899 before he can fix the date of the cartoon. And before "In the Parrot-House" is finally decided upon several other volumes are run through. Mr. Sambourne's fancy lingers for a few moments upon an earlier picture relating to the German Emperor, but it is dismissed on the reflection that its humour is now out of harmony with English feeling towards that monarch.

"Yes, the idea of 'The Parrot-House,'" Mr. Sambourne says, in reply to my interrogation, "was entirely my own, and if I remember rightly it was at once accepted at the *Punch* dinner. I know I took a lot of trouble over the drawing, first going to the Zoo to make some studies of the birds. I had many offers for the original, and it was sold to one of the Canons of Winchester whose offer arrived first."

After much Continental wandering Mr. Dudley Hardy has once more found an abiding-place in London, his house in Gloucester Road, Kensington, being but a few minutes' walk from Mr. Linley Sambourne's, in Stafford Terrace.

Mr. Hardy's face, when I asked him for his funniest drawing, was a picture of perplexity. "I forget my work as soon as it appears," he

A ROW IN THE PARROT-HOUSE.—THE C-MPB-LL-B-NN-RM-N BIRD: "What a noise they're making! I can hardly hear myself shriek!"

By permission of the] BY MR. LINLEY SAMBOURNE. [*Proprietors of "Punch."*

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exclaims; "it comes out in so many different places, and I have never taken the trouble to file my pictures. I often wish I had, because it would sometimes save

"BARGAINING FOR THE LAST FISH—VENICE."—BY MR. DUDLEY HARDY.
From the "Sketch."

me a lot of trouble. But wait a moment; let me think as to which is the most humorous thing I can recall."

To assist his reflection Mr. Hardy takes a cup of coffee and a cigarette, and slowly in the little clouds of smoke is evolved the reminiscence of a *Sketch* drawing in its "Light Side of Nature," the drawing of two Venetian fishermen quarrelling as to the proprietorship of the last fish in a great haul they had just landed.

"It appeared," said Mr. Hardy, "some time in 1894, when I was rambling about the South of Europe picking up little out-of-the-way subjects for the *Sketch* and other papers. I drew this incident as I actually saw it on the quayside at Venice, and, slight as the drawing is, I think it contains as much real humour as anything I've ever done.

"Wherever I find myself," Mr. Hardy said, a little later in our conversation, "I am always on the look-out for such incidents. Only yesterday, for instance, going to Notting Hill Gate Station I passed two urchins carrying a big basket of linen, and I heard one say to the other, 'And she nearly broke my 'art.' This revelation of the poor little chap's love affairs struck me at the time as being irresistibly funny, and I daresay I may make something of it. I put these suggestions into my sketch-book, and I have scores of them always at hand. It is the one thing, perhaps, that I am methodical about."

As I left Mr. Hardy at the gate he gave me an actual example of the quickness of his eye for "the light side of Nature." On the opposite pavement a respectable-looking young woman was making pictures for the entertainment of the passers-by. She had taken up her position there an hour or two before, and Mr. Hardy had already interviewed her.

"She calls herself," he remarks, "the first

MR. DUDLEY HARDY.
From a Photo.

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woman pavement-artist, and when I told her that I was in the same line of business she simply replied, 'On canvas, I suppose?' So I dropped a couple of shillings into her bag, and I think I must now make a sketch of her."

MR. J. A. SHEPHERD.
From a Photo. by Fradelle & Young.

Mr. J. A. Shepherd, whose "Zigzags at the Zoo," "Fables," and other works have formed memorable features of THE STRAND MAGAZINE, rusticates at Horley, in Surrey. As admirers of his work will suppose, Mr. Shepherd has spent a good deal of his time in the farmyard, and it is by a travesty of feathered life that he has chosen to be represented in this article.

"I had been making studies of chickens all day at a poultry show," Mr. Shepherd tells me, not in illustration of the fidelity of his artistic method, but in explanation of the origin of this picture. "In the evening I was at a dance. Looking on at the company and being full of my work I began seeing resemblances in my work to my late models (my amusement and business at all times), and when the barn dance struck up—there was the notion!"

"The Barn Dance," I believe, like all Mr. Shepherd's work, was very rapidly drawn. In fact, with a reputation made at twenty-five, and such a record of work as he now has at thirty-five for THE STRAND, *Punch*, and other publications, the artist has clearly never wasted much time. First at Bromley, Kent, and now at Horley, Surrey, Mr. Shepherd has collected quite a menagerie of models for his distinctive "line" of work, including a number of bulldogs, the rearing of which has been a very successful hobby with him.

By permission of the] THE BARN DANCE.—BY MR. J. A. SHEPHERD. *[Proprietors of "Punch."*

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FUN AT HENLEY REGATTA.—BERTIE ATTEMPTS TO EXTRICATE HIS PUNT FROM THE CROWD.

By permission of the] BY MR. TOM BROWNE. [*Proprietors of "Punch."*

Mr. Tom Browne, R.I., sent me his pen and ink drawing, "Henley," from the *Punch Almanack* of 1900. This picture may be said to be the outcome of much boating experience on the Upper Thames, for Mr. Browne, who now lives at Blackheath, has been in his time an enthusiastic oarsman. His time has been only seven years—that is as far as London is concerned, for it was only in 1894 that he left his native Nottingham to win fame as a black and white artist.

The career of Tom Browne is quite a little romance of art, and as it is not yet generally known I should like to tell it here. Born in 1872, educated at a National school, employed for three years as an errand-boy in the Nottingham Lace Market—that is the first chapter. Apprenticed to a firm of lithographic printers, his artistic talent excited in this somewhat favourable atmosphere, drawing at night for obscure comic papers, attending the Nottingham School of Art—second chapter. End of his apprenticeship at the age of twenty-one, a bold descent upon London, a hard struggle to obtain a foothold in London illustrated journalism, decisive success with the *Graphic*, *Sketch*, *Punch*, *The King*, and other leading periodicals—third chapter. Mr. Browne, who has been elected a member of both the Royal Institute and the Royal Society of British Artists, may at the age of thirty confidently look forward to the further chapters in his brilliant career. He has travelled a good deal in France, Spain, and Holland. Indeed, the rustic Hollander, with his balloon-like trousers and huge wooden clogs, is one of his favourite subjects.

MR. TOM BROWNE.
From a Photo. by Morgan & Kidd, Greenwich, S.E.

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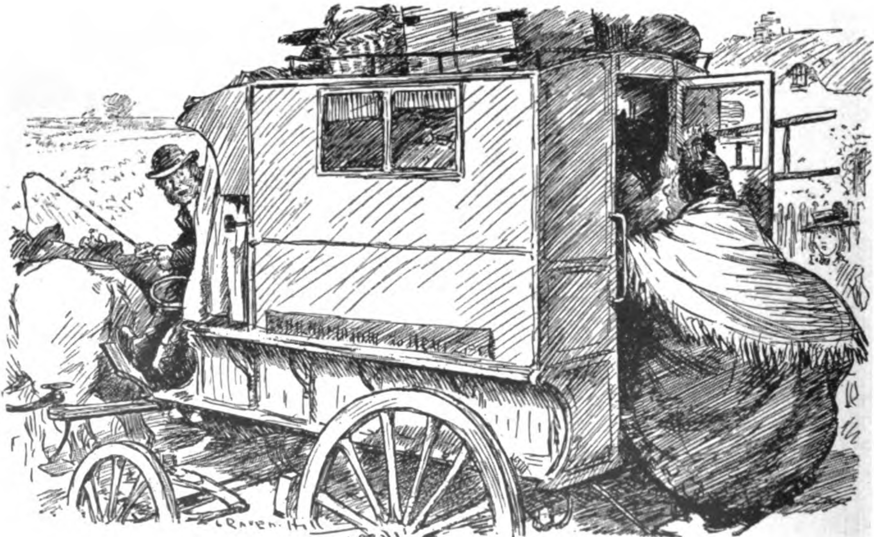
Mr. L. Raven-Hill, who combines the cultivation of art with the practice of agriculture on his estate in Wiltshire, sent me the following reply :—

"As good a thing as any of mine came out about a year ago last August or September. Fat old woman getting into 'bus. Driver says: 'Try zideways.' She says: 'Lar' bless 'ee, I ain't got no zideways.' Actually overheard in the market-place."

From a] MR. RAVEN-HILL. [*Photo.*

The market-place, I presume, was Devizes, near which town Mr. Raven-Hill dwells in a house where Napier wrote his history of the Peninsular War. In thus being based upon fact this picture resembles nearly all those pictorial jests with which this artist unfailingly sustains the gaiety of the nation.



CARRIER: "Try zideways, Mrs. Jones, try zideways!" MRS. JONES: "Lar' bless 'ee, John, I ain't got no zideways!"
By permission of the] BY MR. RAVEN-HILL. [*Proprietors of "Punch."*

He received his artistic training at first in London and afterwards in Paris, where he learned his art from Bougereau and Morot, the battle painter. Morot's great lesson was to apply generally the method which he applied specially to horses. His system was to close the eyes until the retina became a blank and then to take a flash glimpse—a rapid opening and shutting of the lids—and in this way an impression of action can be retained for several seconds. Mr. Raven-Hill aims for that instantaneous record of all he sees. But it was not for some time that he had an opportunity of making his gifts known. He returned from Paris, and, to use his own words, painted acres of pictures that didn't sell. He did all kinds of work, and used to go round to the newspaper offices with a portfolio of drawings; and the editors kindly told him how to draw, and what art meant, and gave him hints about design, and were hurt when he said that he could carry out

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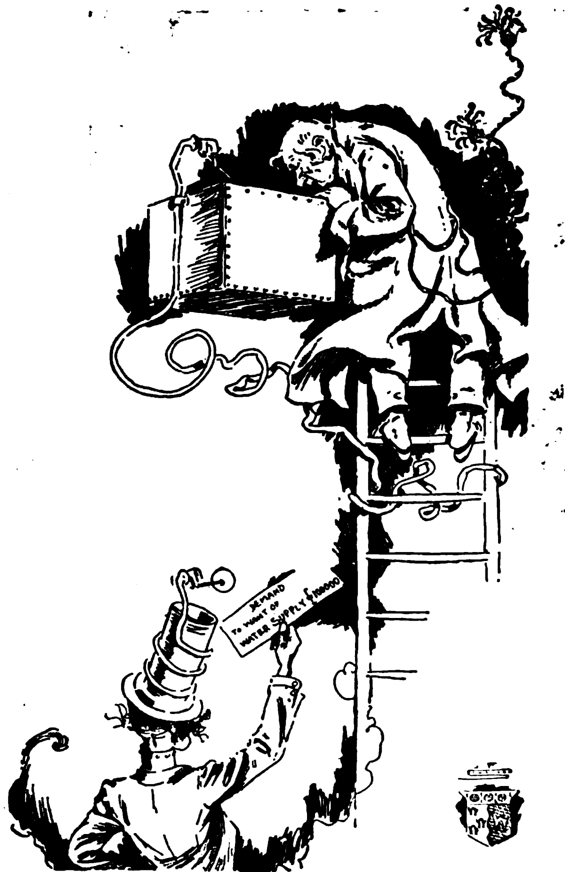
their ideas with a fork and a pat of butter. But success was bound to come; and few men have been more successful than the present genial member of Mr. Punch's staff. Mr. Raven-Hill generally invents his own jokes, but sometimes, as in the case of the drawing he has here selected, he takes a hint from life. He is one of the best living observers of rustic character and rural types, and his humour has a touch of subtlety and refinement all his own.



"THE GREAT WATER JOKE."—BY MR. J. F. SULLIVAN.
By permission of Messrs. Downey & Co.

I found Mr. James F. Sullivan in the throes of removal from one Wimbledon villa to another, and was disappointed therefore of the quiet little chat I had pleasantly anticipated with the delineator of "The Queer Side of Things"—that most amusing series of papers which originally appeared in the pages of this Magazine. I hope to get some consolation when Mr. Sullivan gives us his sketch of the pantechnicon men at work, for it was in his troubles as a householder, I find, that Mr. Sullivan found inspiration for what he himself considers to be about his funniest picture.

"The vagaries of the water companies," Mr. Sullivan tells me, "in charging for water not supplied in consequence of drought or frost, or for other reasons, first gave me the idea for 'The Great Water Joke'; also their contention that a bath is not for domestic purposes and must be paid for extra."

MR. J. F. SULLIVAN.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"The Great Water Joke" was both written and illustrated by Mr. Sullivan, who quaintly signs himself, by the way, "Jassef Sullivan." It appeared in a Christmas number of *Pearson's Magazine*, and has been republished in book form by Messrs. Downey.

The incident which Mr. Sullivan has chosen to represent his most humorous work is described in the following lines taken from his book just mentioned:—

"I'm sorry!" said the Company; "I'm perfectly distraught
To think you haven't water, but it happens there's a drought."

"I'm sorry!" said the Company; "my grief is very great:
The Winter's frozen up the mains; but kindly pay the rate."

In the course of talk over the *Punch* volumes Mr. Linley Sambourne had spoken of Mr. Phil May's drawing in the number for August 21st, 1897, "The Fisherman and the Lunatic," as that which he would personally select as representative of his colleague's rich humour.

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MR. PHIL MAY.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

Curiously enough, when I called upon Phil May, in St. John's Wood, a day or two later, this was the picture he selected after a minute's consideration.

"I had been to Wakefield just before," he remarked, "and noticed a lunatic asylum there which overlooks a river where there are generally a number of people fishing, especially on Saturday afternoon. They never catch anything—the river is probably too dirty to contain any fish. This is how I got the idea, and I may say that most of my jokes arise in this way from things that I see."

Phil May finds most of his subjects in the East-end of London among the coster girls, guttersnipes, and other types which he has rendered immortal. But all his models have not belonged to the lower orders, and once he even had a Bishop sitting to him. "The Bishop had a splendid head and shoulders," says the artist, "but the lower part of his body and his legs were 'a bit off,' so I made a prize-fighter sit for the body and legs, to the huge satisfaction of the Bishop and his friends."

Another of his jokes came to him in this way. He went into an oyster saloon and ordered a dozen natives, when another man entered and gave a similar order, inquiring anxiously of the proprietor if the oysters were fresh. "Fresh!" echoed the bivalve merchant. "Fresh! Why"—indicating Phil May with a wave of his hand—"the first oyster that gentleman took up bit his lip!"

LUNATIC (suddenly popping his head over wall): "**What are you doing there?**" BROWN: "**Fishing.**" LUNATIC: "**Caught anything?**" BROWN: "No." LUNATIC: "How long have you been there?" BROWN: "Six hours." LUNATIC: "*Come inside!*"

BY MR. PHIL MAY.

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

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The Stroh Violin.

BY D. DONOVAN.

HEN, about three hundred years ago, some daring spirit cut down a treble viol and converted it into a "violino," or little viol, he probably never dreamed that he was giving to the world an instrument that should ever afterwards rule as king in the vast domain of music. The potentialities of the transformed viol were at once perceived, and the construction of fiddles became an art. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries there were masters whose names were mint-marks of excellence, and a genuine instrument by one of these makers is at the present day worth an almost fabulous sum.

When it is remembered, however, that in those times of long ago the old makers of violins knew nothing of the scientific laws of sound, the wonder is they were able to produce such marvellous results. And with the dawn of the twentieth century a new instrument, constructed on purely scientific lines and called the "Stroh Violin," after the name of its inventor, is added to the great string family. As a mere mechanical invention it deserves more than a passing notice; while for power and quality of tone it is safe to predict that it will take a high place.

From a] THE STROH VIOLIN BEING PLAYED. [*Photo.*

The inventor, Mr. A. Stroh, a gentleman eminent in the world of science and an expert in all matters of acoustics, conceived the idea that he could produce a stringed instrument of the violin class which should be dependent for its tone and quality on an entirely new arrangement. He worked out his theory in a series of experiments, and ultimately gave it practical shape. His beautiful instrument is quite a new departure; and although the technique and method of fingering are exactly the same, the Stroh violin, as will be seen by the illustrations, bears little resemblance to its predecessors.

The new fiddle differs as much from the ordinary violin as a cornet differs from a trumpet. The scroll, neck, and finger-board are alike, but having said that one has said all, as in every other essential the Stroh is different. The inventor began by discarding the usual box as unnecessary, and here he was confronted with the problem — How were the vibrations of the four strings to be conducted *viâ* the bridge to a resonator, without devices that must necessarily interfere with the quality of tone, and more or less destroy the timbre of the strings? In solving this problem he never lost sight of well-recognised laws of musical sound. The slightest check to perfectly free vibration would be detrimental to the quality of tone, a very important factor in connection with the violin; and if the enormous pressure of the strings — something like 62lb. when tuned to pitch—were allowed to rest upon a bridge that was in direct contact with the device which he decided should take the place of the belly of the violin, the vibration would certainly be interfered with. His knowledge of repeating and recording instruments in connection with telegraphy induced him to try a diaphragm, or disc, and he was soon convinced that he had solved the problem. The result of this research was the production of a corrugated aluminium diaphragm, of which we give an illustration.

The vibrations of the strings are conducted by means of an ordinary violin-bridge, which rests upon a rocking lever, to this diaphragm and resonator.

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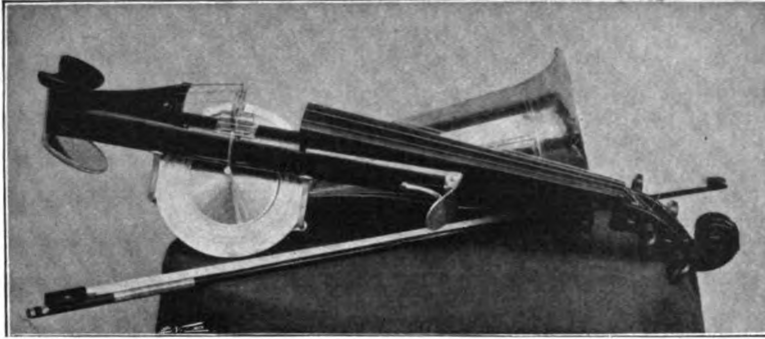
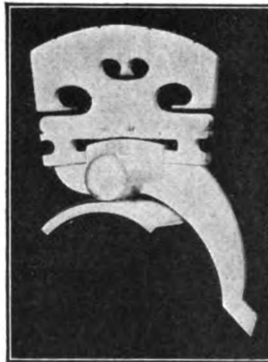


From a] THE STROH VIOLIN. [Photo.

The rich, mellow tones, hitherto supposed to require a century to mature and perfect them, are very noticeable in the Stroh. The slightest contact with the bow will produce them, and with such ease and fluency do they flow that the player, whether he be professional or amateur, can hardly fail to appreciate this very distinctive characteristic.

Much has been written about what is termed the "reserve" force of a Joseph Guarnerius. As a matter of fact a Stroh has the reserve power of three "Josephs," and is as loud as four ordinary violins. The G-string is a dream. It possesses the deep, rich quality of a fine 'cello A, but there is no unevenness in the strings. The harmonics are loud and pure, and what is of great importance is an entire absence of "scrape." This is a point that solo-players will value highly. Of course, the idea of a new violin that can be played upon immediately it is finished, and that will produce marvellous tone and quality of sound, will possibly come as a shock to old-fashioned people, to whom the original violin has been a cherished idol; but the spirit of invention respects no one's prejudices. And it may

The lever supporting the bridge oscillates laterally upon the body of the instrument, the end being attached to the aluminium disc by a small connecting link. The diaphragm is held in position between two indiarubber cushions by means of a specially designed holder, fixed also upon the body of the violin by two brackets. Attached to this holder is a trumpet or resonator, which augments the sound.

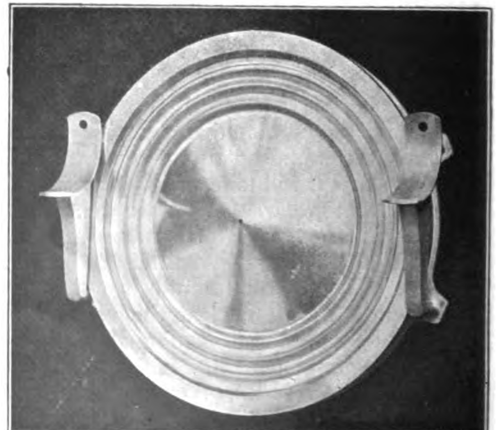


THE ROCKING BRIDGE AND LEVER.
From a Photo.

The body or cylinder of the instrument is in no way employed for sound purposes. Its main object is to hold the various parts of the violin together, and to sustain the enormous pressure of the strings when tuned. The disc, which represents the belly of an ordinary violin, is perfectly free to vibrate, so that when the strings are set in motion by the bow the bridge and rocking-lever vibrate in unison, and every vibration is transmitted to the diaphragm. The diaphragm sets in motion the air contained in the resonator, this resonator acting as a distributor of the sound waves. The disc is of peculiar construction, and its possible application to the phonograph may lead to very important results in the future.

The mechanism of the Stroh violin is marvellously simple, as will be seen from the illustrations, and cannot easily get out of order.

Each part can be seen at a glance, and in the manufacture of the instrument a standard gauge will be observed, so that in the event of accident the damaged part can be easily procured. Although the diaphragm is made from aluminium there is an absolute absence of metallic sound, even to ears long accustomed to the tones of the wooden violin.



From a] THE VIBRATING DIAPHRAGM. [Photo.

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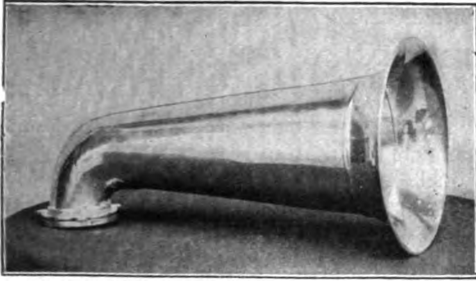

From a] THE TRUMPET OR RESONATOR. *[Photo.*

not be out of place here to quote the well-known writer, Mr. Pain, who in "Grove's Dictionary of Music" says:—

"A good deal of enthusiasm has been lavished by connoisseurs on the beauty of design and varnish of the old Cremona violins, and even in some useful and reputable works on the subject this enthusiasm has been carried to a point where it can only be described as silly and grotesque. A fiddle, after all, even a Stradivarius, is not a work of pure art like a piece of painting or sculpture: it is as merely a machine as a watch, a gun, or a plough. Its main excellencies are purely mechanical, and though most good fiddles are also well designed and handsome, not a few are decidedly ugly."

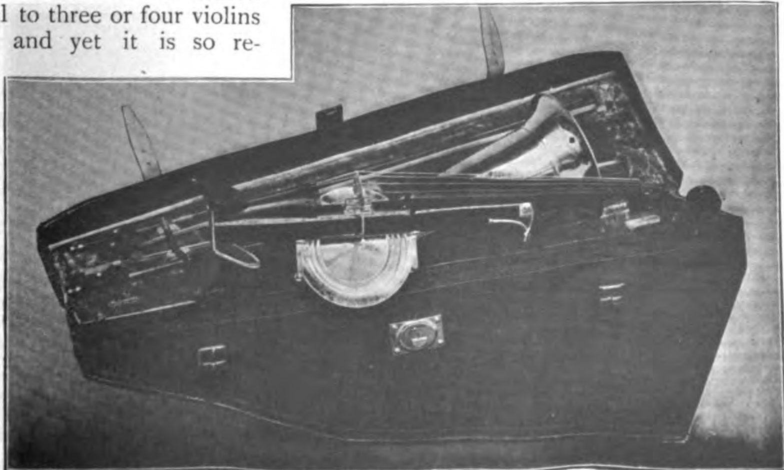
No one who examines the Stroh, however critically, can fail to admit, if he be honest, that it is a wonderful piece of mechanism, which in the hands of a trained player is capable of great things; while for the mere amateur or the beginner it possesses advantages which are peculiar to itself and cannot be overrated.

In weight it is only a few ounces heavier than the ordinary violin. Its increased power makes it equal to three or four violins of the old pattern, and yet it is so remarkably sensitive that it can be played so as to produce delicate *pp* and *ppp* passages with scarcely any pressure on the bow. As a solo instrument it fulfils all the requirements of the most exacting virtuoso; at the same time it will be of great value in small orchestras. Two Stroh violins and one Stroh viola would be equal to eight or nine wooden fiddles.

The Stroh has already received the approval of some very eminent musicians. And at a recent concert in London a distinguished and critical audience pronounced it an unqualified success; while competent authorities predict a great future for it.

But even if the merits of the instrument, merely as a violin, were less conspicuous than they are, it must, as an exponent of certain principles of acoustics, be regarded with wonder. In loudness, pitch, and timbre, or, as the Germans term it, *Klang-farbe*, it is without an equal in its class. Tyndall most expressively terms this *Klang-farbe* "clang-tint," and nothing could better convey the true meaning of the word, for timbre is, if the expression is allowable, the very soul and colour of sound. It is quite distinct from loudness and pitch, which, in order to convert them into musical sound, must be associated with timbre. In a very eminent degree these three qualities are represented in the new invention; and Mr. Stroh has succeeded in blending them with such delicacy and artistic effect that one is almost led to believe he has reached the ultimate limit in this respect, and that further improvement is impossible.

The Stroh violin is certainly the creation of a man of genius and the result of long study of the laws by which we obtain the true poetry of sound. And it will, I venture to predict, in spite of prejudice, ultimately be recognised not only as a triumph of creative skill, but as worthy of taking its place with those instruments which depend for their effect upon attuned strings.


From a] THE VIOLIN IN ITS CASE. *[Photo.*

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Some Wonders from the West.

By E. Leslie Gilliams.

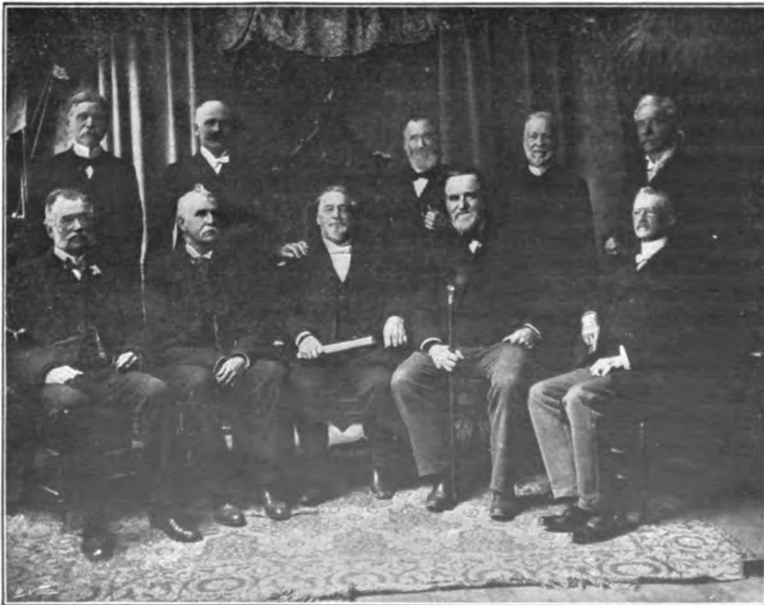
XXXVII.—AN "OLD MEN'S SINGING CLUB."

ONE of the most remarkable clubs of modern times has its head-quarters in Almeda, California, U.S.A. It is known as the "Old Men's Singing Club," no one being admitted to it who has not the gift of song and who has not passed at least his sixty-fifth birthday. The club has 101 members with an aggregate age of 6,666 years.

It has been a source of regret to those who love classical music and the tuneful melody of old-time ballads that "coon-songs" and nigger ditties are the only style of music popular with the younger generation. To this want of appreciation of old-fashioned tunes may be traced the birth of the "Old Men's Singing Club."

This club has been in existence for about one year, and has been entirely successful, the membership list increasing each week. It has a president and officers and a musical director—Herr Theodore Vogt. The members of the club believe in the old adage that "A woman is as old as she looks; a man as old as he feels." And they say that they feel no older than they did forty years ago; and they believe that they can sing as well now as they did in the days of "Auld Lang Syne." Herr Theodore Vogt, who was connected with the Royal Conservatory at Stockholm, after a year's experience with these hoary-headed vocalists says that they possess voices of remarkable quality and strength.

The "Old Men's Singing Club" was formed when Fritz Boehmer celebrated his seventieth birthday. Mr. Boehmer is a prominent member of the Almeda German Colony, and, as all the Germans in Almeda would be ashamed not to be musical, he decided to organize a singing club. He made some inquiry among his friends, and, to his horror, he found that nearly all the musicians who were on his calling list were of the nigger-song variety. He noticed that most of them wore open-work socks and fancy waistcoats and played comic opera songs on banjos and mandolines. There was no room in their repertoire for the old-time melodies of the younger days of Mr. Boehmer. The old man swore a mighty oath that if he could not find the music of the old days in the soul of the young men of the city he would turn for what he sought to his companions in years—and so the "Old Men's Singing Club" came to be. No one was eligible who parted his hair in the middle, or who had any parting at all, or any hair on the top of his head to part; or who wore low patent leather shoes and gaudy hosiery, or gay neckties or fancy waistcoats.



From a] OFFICERS AND ORGANIZERS OF THE "OLD MEN'S SINGING CLUB." [*Photo.*

Having organized the club a set of rules was next in order. It was decided that no one younger than sixty-five years could become a member. Fortunately, the greater number who have applied for entrance have been nearly seventy. The sole exception

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was made in favour of the Hon. E. K. Taylor, secretary of the organization, who is barely forty.

For nearly a year they met and practised, gaining steadily in numbers and in excellence; then they announced their intention of giving a concert for the benefit of the poor of Almeda. The only lady artist was the Señora Benina Barone, aged 103 years, who danced and sang "La Tolla."

This old Spanish woman was born in Mexico in 1798; she danced in the Spanish City of Mexico while in the first blush of maidenhood, and the picturesque cavaliers of those times pelted her with roses. To the tinkling accompaniment of a guitar they sang love-songs underneath her window. Those, she says, were merry days. The weary feet, which at their owner's request danced once more in order that a few extra dollars might be added to the fund for the poor, were as light as in the bygone days, and if the aged voice quavered, no one noticed it. She was accompanied on the guitar by a Spanish youth—Señor Joseph Balderamos.

SEÑORA BENINA BARONE, WHO AT 103 IS A CHARMING DANCER AND SINGER
From a] —SHE IS THE ONLY FEMALE MEMBER OF THE CLUB. [Photo.

The old men were in splendid voice. Their tones rang out in sonorous cadence, and long before the evening was over the jingling airs of music-hall and vaudeville were voted as soulless as the blasts from a tin trumpet. Fritz Boehmer hailed himself as the musical saviour of the city on the bay.

"The people can't love what they don't know," he said. "If you would have citizens who like and appreciate good music, let them grow up with a knowledge of it. In order to do this melody must be breathed in with the air. It must be lived. The children must be brought up with music. In order to be musical one must be born of a town and State and nation where music is not only an honoured profession, but a matter of course. The Germans are a musical race, and to that potent influence I lay much of the love of home, the sweetness of domestic relations, that are so much a part of its people. If we of America were to gather oftener in our homes, and together raise our voices in song, it would be better for us."

This concert brought this remarkable club before the public, and it gained fame in a single night. Several of the leading musical organizations in both San Francisco and Oakland have sought to absorb it, but it declines to be taken into any glee club, or sangerfest, or other such frivolous crowd. It will continue as it began, an organization for old men and old songs, but it is ambitious to grow to a club of five hundred members. Fancy it! Five hundred old men, each one with a voice that, had he chosen, might have made him rich and famous—for none but those with fine voices are welcomed by the old men, who claim that to the balmy climate of California they owe their gift of song.

The officers of the club are as follows: President, Fritz Boehmer, aged 71; secretary, Hon. E. K. Taylor, aged 40; treasurer, F. W. Greeley, aged 79; vice-presidents, David Martin, aged 78; E. B. Dunning, aged 66; Henry Epstein, aged 72; Judge E. A. Swasey, aged 79; L. W. Downs, aged 67; J. E. Blanding, aged 70.

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XXXVIII.—A TRAIN-LOAD OF TWO MILLION EGGS.

THE most remarkable cargo in the world—a train composed of twelve refrigerator cars containing about 2,000,000 eggs—was recently gathered by one firm in the vicinity of Newton, Kansas, and shipped to San Francisco, California, U.S.A. The express went as a special over the Sante Fé road, and was the first instance of a train with a cargo consisting exclusively of eggs passing into the State of California.

The twelve cars composing the train in which was this fragile cargo were constructed in a manner best calculated to preserve the entirety of the breakable and delicate freight. They were built upon a plan which enabled the shippers to pack great numbers of crates so that every available bit of space in the cars was utilized. The story concerning the method of bringing this enormous quantity of eggs to one firm for shipment and the care exercised in conveying them thousands of miles through desert and mountain is most interesting.

This section of country, which is called the Middle West, is prosperous, for the egg industry is a most important factor in the business of the vicinity, and employment is given to hundreds of farmers who make their livelihood by raising chickens. For miles surrounding the town of Newton, Kansas, are heard the cackling of hens and the fluttering of the barnyard fowl. Hens, hens, everywhere, until the traveller is disposed to believe himself in Bedlam, and wonders how many miles he will have to drive in order to find peace and quiet. It is estimated that about 90 per cent. of the farmers within a radius of twenty miles from the town raise hens for laying purposes and ship their products to Newton. In order to make the work of distribution as systematic as possible, the firm has divided the country into sections, each portion bringing in its weekly supply at a stated period, thus preventing confusion. But every day in the early morning droves of farmers with large, lumbering waggons slowly make their way into town toward the storehouse, and to the observer, unacquainted with local customs, the question immediately arises, "What is the meaning of this cavalcade—is a population moving?"

The storehouse is a large brick building, oblong in shape, several stories high, and capable of housing three millions of eggs at one time. A valuable feature which distinguishes it from all other storage places is the inclined plane, connecting floor with floor, that does away with the jerking and jolting of elevators, thus preventing mishaps in moving the eggs to different sections of the building. At this terminus, or egg-depôt, about fifty alert clerks are ready to receive consignments of eggs from the husbandmen. In order to preserve harmony and prevent confusion each farmer must report to the clerk representing his section of the country; in this way knowledge of the condition of eggs shipped can easily be traced if certain lots are not up to the standard.

From a] THE TRAIN WHICH CARRIES A CARGO OF TWO MILLION EGGS. [Photo.

The eggs are then placed in pasteboard boxes, containing compartments for each one, and these boxes are placed in crates ready for shipment. After the problem of finding a suitable home for the storage of eggs had been solved the difficulty arose as to the method of transporting them safely. Ingenious minds, after much trouble and delay, devised what is now the most complete and easiest-going storage car in America. These cars were especially constructed for carrying their fragile cargo, and are divided into compartments so that the proper amount of cold air is distributed evenly to each crate. Beneath every car are springs that enable it to proceed over the ties with as little jolting as is afforded the luxurious passenger of the Pullman. The value of the shipment aggregated about £5,000, including freight charges, which amounted to over £1,000.

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XXXIX.—A LADY'S GLASS DRESS.

THE most marvellous and beautiful dress in the world is owned by Miss Ellene Jaqua, a famous singer and well-known society belle of Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A. It is a costume made of spun glass, and its shimmering folds dazzle the eyes and bewilder the brain of all who gaze upon the creation.

The material for this valuable and wonderful gown took five months to spin—or, more correctly speaking, to blow—and was made in Dresden, Germany; the gown was cut in Paris, and does credit to the designer.

The colour effects of the dress under a strong light are wonderful. Delicate shades of pale green, blue, and silver-white blend into each other with bewildering rapidity as the light falls upon the folds, presenting an aspect of unusual charm, lustre, and richness. Although the gown does not sparkle, the indescribable sheen which it throws out dazzles the eye for the moment. The entire effect is of rays of moonlight cast upon a satiny silver surface. The cloth or body and the trimmings of the dress consist of millions of extremely fine and delicate strands of pure spun glass, and it is only upon careful examination that an adequate idea of the great amount of labour put into the weaving of the material can be gained. It was a most delicate and difficult task to blow the glass until the strands or threads were strong and yet pliable enough to be woven into a cloth which would be serviceable and permit of being cut and handled.

At the Chicago Exposition in 1893 there was a glass dress exhibited, which became the property of the Infanta Eulalie, but this gown was only for show, and could not be worn, for so fragile were the strands of glass that the slightest effort to bend them would cause them to snap and splinter into a thousand pieces.

Miss Ellene Jaqua is therefore the first person to possess a glass-gown which can actually be worn, and not once only. It possesses a constitution which will enable it to live the usual space of time allotted to the ball-gown of a lady.

MISS ELLENE JAQUA, WEARING HER GLASS DRESS.
From a Photo. by Stacy, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The style of this dainty dress was designed after the latest Parisian fashion. The skirt, being of a demi-train, hangs like a soft richness of brocade, cut in simple fashion with full gathers at the back and chaste and simple in the front, outlining the figure in graceful folds. The bodice, cut low, clings to the figure with all the pliancy of silk. About the neck is a full ruching, finished by fringe of spun glass; the full fringe of glass which finishes the corsage is repeated in effect about the skirt in a flounce with three bands of glass braid, which scintillates in the light.

It may also be interesting to know that it took over fourteen yards of extra wide glass cloth, thirty-five yards of spun glass braid, and twenty-five yards of glass fringe — in all, seventy-four yards of material—to make up this garment. Many would suppose that this great quantity of cloth, braid, and fringe would make it a rather heavy article of wearing apparel, but it does not weigh any more than an ordinary evening gown of the softest material. Its minute strands are so artistically woven and interwoven that it is perfectly

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THE ENTIRE DRESS AND ITS TRIMMINGS ARE OF PURE SPUN GLASS.
From a Photo. by Stacy, Brooklyn, N.Y.

flexible and pliable, and can be worn with as perfect comfort and freedom as any evening gown.

The process by which the glass is spun remains a secret with the spinner, but some idea is given in saying that specially prepared glass was melted and made into tube forms of various lengths and colours. These tubes were run through flames to a concentrated point of intense heat, reducing them to a semi-melted state in order to make them pliable before coming in contact with the large spinning-wheel, which is several feet in circumference, having numerous small grooves around the outside band, and revolving several thousand feet a minute. The machine was turned and operated by hand. The tubes when in the required state were then placed on the wheel, where the grooves, catching the ends of the tubes, spin them into strands of great fineness until they lose their brittleness, coming from the wheel even finer than a hair and as soft as silk. These strands are hollow and so minute that it requires a microscope to detect the holes in the ends.

After this process of spinning was completed the threads were gathered and placed in a hand-loom and woven into glass cloth several yards in length, in the same manner as any other material.

Miss Jaqua, who is the proud owner of this wonderful dress, is an eminent artiste, having a wide reputation as a singer not only in her own city, but throughout the Eastern States.

THE DAZZLING DRESS AS IT APPEARS IN A STRONG LIGHT, SHOWING THE BEAUTIFUL MOONLIGHT EFFECT.
From a Photo. by] [Stacy, Brooklyn, N.Y.

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At Sunwich Port.

BY W. W. JACOBS.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE two ladies received Mr. Hardy's information with something akin to consternation, the idea of the autocrat of Equator Lodge as a stowaway on board the ship of his ancient enemy proving too serious for ordinary comment. Mrs. Kingdom's usual expressions of surprise, "Well, I never did!" and "Good gracious alive!" died on her lips, and she sat gazing helpless and round-eyed at her niece.

"I wonder what he said," she gasped, at last.

Miss Nugent, who was trying to imagine her father in his new *rôle* aboard the *Conqueror*, paid no heed. It was not a pleasant idea, and her eyes flashed with temper as she thought of it. Sooner or later the whole affair would be public property.

"I had an idea all along that he wasn't in London," murmured Mrs. Kingdom. "Fancy that Nathan Smith standing in Sam's room telling us falsehoods like that! He never even blushed."

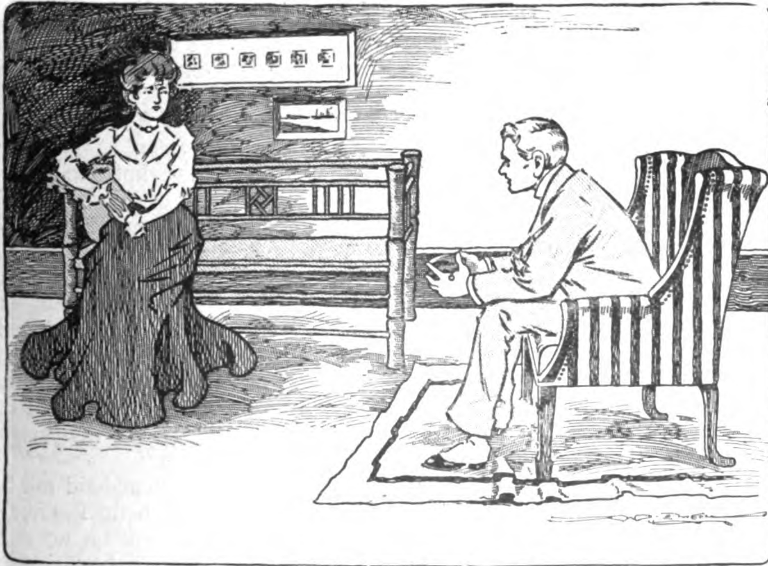
"But you said that you kept picturing father walking about the streets of London, wrestling with his pride and trying to make up his mind to come home again," said her niece, maliciously.

Mrs. Kingdom fidgeted, but before she could think of a satisfactory reply Bella came to the door and asked to speak to her for a moment. Profiting by her absence, Mr. Hardy leaned towards Miss Nugent, and in a low voice expressed his sorrow at the mishap to her father and his firm conviction that everything that could be thought of for that unfortunate mariner's comfort would be done. "Our fathers will probably come back good friends," he concluded. "There is nothing would give me more pleasure than that, and I think that we had better begin and set them a good example."

"It is no good setting an example to people who are hundreds of miles away," said the matter-of-fact Miss Nugent. "Besides, if they have made friends, they don't want an example set them."

"But in that case they have set us an example which we ought to follow," urged Hardy.

Miss Nugent raised her eyes to his.



"'WHY DO YOU WISH TO BE ON FRIENDLY TERMS?' SHE ASKED."

"Why do you wish to be on friendly terms?" she asked, with disconcerting composure.

"I should like to know your father," returned Hardy, with perfect gravity; "and Mrs. Kingdom—and you."

He eyed her steadily as he spoke, and Miss Nugent, despite her utmost efforts, realized with some indignation that a faint tinge of colour was creeping into her cheeks.

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She remembered his covert challenge at their last interview at Mr. Wilks's, and the necessity of reading this persistent young man a stern lesson came to her with all the force of a public duty.

"Why?" she inquired, softly, as she lowered her eyes and assumed a pensive expression.

"I admire him, for one thing, as a fine seaman," said Hardy.

"Yes," said Miss Nugent, "and——"

"And I've always had a great liking for Mrs. Kingdom," he continued; "she was very good-natured to me when I was a very small boy, I remember. She is very kind and amiable."

The baffled Miss Nugent stole a glance at him. "And——" she said again, very softly.

"And very motherly," said Hardy, without moving a muscle.

Miss Nugent pondered and stole another glance at him. The expression of his face was ingenuous, not to say simple. She resolved to risk it. So far he had always won in their brief encounters, and monotony was always distasteful to her, especially monotony of that kind.

"And what about me?" she said, with a friendly smile.

"You," said Hardy, with a gravity of voice belied by the amusement in his eye; "you are the daughter of the fine seaman and the niece of the good-natured and motherly Mrs. Kingdom."

Miss Nugent looked down again hastily, and all the shrew within her clamoured for vengeance. It was the same masterful Jem Hardy that had forced his way into their seat at church as a boy. If he went on in this way he would become unbearable; she resolved, at the cost of much personal inconvenience, to give him a much-needed fall. But she realized quite clearly that it would be a matter of time.

"Of course, you and Jack are already good friends?" she said, softly.

"Very," assented Hardy. "Such good friends that I have been devoting a lot of time lately to considering ways and means of getting him out of the snares of the Kybirds."

"I should have thought that that was his affair," said Miss Nugent, haughtily.

"Mine, too," said Hardy. "I don't want him to marry Miss Kybird."

For the first time since the engagement Miss Nugent almost approved of it. "Why not let him know your wishes?" she said, gently. "Surely that would be sufficient."

"But you don't want them to marry?" said Hardy, ignoring the remark.

"I don't want my brother to do anything shabby," replied the girl; "but I shouldn't be sorry, of course, if they did not."

"Very good," said Hardy. "Armed with your consent I shall leave no stone unturned. Nugent was let in for this, and I am going to get him out if I can. All's fair in love and war. You don't mind *my* doing anything shabby?"

"Not in the least," replied Miss Nugent, promptly.

The reappearance of Mrs. Kingdom at this moment saved Mr. Hardy the necessity of a reply. Conversation reverted to the missing captain, and Hardy and Mrs. Kingdom together drew such a picture of the two captains fraternizing that Miss Nugent felt that the millennium itself could have no surprises for her.

"He has improved very much," said Mrs. Kingdom, after the door had closed behind their visitor; "so thoughtful."

"He's thoughtful enough," agreed her niece.

"He is what I call extremely considerate," pursued the elder lady, "but I'm afraid he is weak; anybody could turn him round their little finger."

"I believe they could," said Miss Nugent, gazing at her with admiration, "if he wanted to be turned."

The ice thus broken, Mr. Hardy spent the following day or two in devising plausible reasons for another visit. He found one in the person of Mr. Wilks, who, having been unsuccessful in finding his beloved master at a small tavern down by the London docks, had returned to Sunwich, by no means benefited by his change of air, to learn the terrible truth as to his disappearance from Hardy.

"I wish they'd Shanghaid me instead," he said to that sympathetic listener, "or Mrs. Silk."

"Eh?" said the other, staring.

"Wot'll be the end of it I don't know," said Mr. Wilks, laying a hand, which still trembled, on the other's knee. "It's got about that she saved my life by 'er careful nussing, and the way she shakes 'er 'ead at me for risking my valuable life, as she calls it, going up to London, gives me the shivers."

"Nonsense," said Hardy; "she can't marry you against your will. Just be distantly civil to her."

"'Ow can you be distantly civil when she lives just opposite?" inquired the steward,

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querulously. "She sent Teddy over at ten o'clock last night to rub my chest with a bottle o' liniment, and it's no good me saying I'm all right when she's been spending eighteen-pence o' good money over the stuff."

"She can't marry you unless you ask her," said the comforter.

Mr. Wilks shook his head. "People in the alley are beginning to talk," he said, dolefully. "Just as I came in this afternoon old George Lee screwed up one eye at two or three women wot was gossiping near, and when I asked 'im wot 'e'd got to wink about he said that a bit o' wedding-cake 'ad blowed in his eye as I passed. It sent them silly creeturs into fits a'most."

"They'll soon get tired of it," said Hardy.

Mr. Wilks, still gloomy, ventured to doubt it, but cheered up and became almost bright when his visitor announced his intention of trying to smooth over matters for him at Equator Lodge. He became quite voluble in his defence, and attached much importance to the fact that he had nursed Miss Nugent when she was in long clothes and had taught her to whistle like an angel at the age of five.

"I've felt being cut adrift by her more than anything," he said, brokenly. "Nine-an'-twenty years I sailed with the cap'n and served 'im faithful, and this is my reward."

Hardy pleaded his case next day. Miss Nugent was alone when he called, and, moved by the vivid picture he drew of the old man's loneliness, accorded her full forgiveness, and decided to pay him a visit at once. The fact that Hardy had not been in the house five minutes she appeared to have overlooked.

"I'll go upstairs and put my hat and jacket on and go now," she said, brightly.

"That's very kind of you," said Hardy. His voice expressed admiring gratitude; but he made no sign of leaving his seat.

"You don't mind?" said Miss Nugent, pausing in front of him and slightly extending her hand.

"HE SAID A BIT O' WEDDING-CAKE 'AD BLOWED IN HIS EYE."

"Not in the least," was the reply; "but I want to see Wilks myself. Perhaps you'll let me walk down with you?"

The request was so unexpected that the girl had no refusal ready. She hesitated and was lost. Finally, she expressed a fear that she might keep him waiting too long while she got ready—a fear which he politely declined to consider.

"Well, we'll see," said the marvelling Miss Nugent to herself as she went slowly upstairs. "He's got impudence enough for forty."

She commenced her preparations for

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seeing Mr. Wilks by wrapping a shawl round her shoulders and reclining in an easy-chair with a novel. It was a good story, but the room was very cold, and even the pleasure of snubbing an intrusive young man did not make amends for the lack of warmth. She read and shivered for an hour, and then with chilled fingers lit the gas and proceeded to array herself for the journey.

Her temper was not improved by seeing Mr. Hardy sitting in the dark over a good fire when she got downstairs.

"I'm afraid I've kept you waiting," she said, crisply.

"Not at all," said Hardy. "I've been very comfortable."

Miss Nugent repressed a shiver and, crossing to the fire, thoughtlessly extended her fingers over the blaze.

"I'm afraid you're cold," said Hardy.

The girl looked round sharply. His face, or as much of it as she could see in the firelight, bore a look of honest concern somewhat at variance with the quality of his voice. If it had not been for the absurdity of altering her plans on his account she would have postponed her visit to the steward until another day.

The walk to Fullalove Alley was all too short for Jem Hardy. Miss Nugent stepped along with the air of a martyr anxious to get to the stake and have it over, and she answered in monosyllables when her companion pointed out the beauties of the night. A bitter east wind blew up the road and set her yearning for the joys of Mr. Wilks's best room.

"It's very cold," she said, shivering.

Hardy assented, and reluctantly quickened his pace to keep step with hers. Miss Nugent with her chin sunk in a fur boa looked neither to the right nor the left, and turning briskly into the alley, turned the handle of Mr. Wilks's door and walked in, leaving her companion to follow.

The steward, who was smoking a long pipe over the fire, looked round in alarm. Then his expression changed, and he rose and stammered out a welcome. Two minutes later Miss Nugent, enthroned in the best chair with her toes on the fender, gave her faithful subject a free pardon and full permission to make hot coffee.

"And don't you ever try and deceive me again, Sam," she said, as she sipped the comforting beverage.

"No, miss," said the steward, humbly. "I've 'ad a lesson. I'll never try and Shanghai anybody else agin as long as I live."

After this virtuous sentiment he sat and smoked placidly, with occasional curious glances divided between his two visitors. An idle and ridiculous idea, which occurred to him in connection with them, was dismissed at once as too preposterous for a sensible steward to entertain.

"Mrs. Kingdom well?" he inquired.

"Quite well," said the girl. "If you take me home, Sam, you shall see her, and be forgiven by her, too."

"Thankee, miss," said the gratified steward.

"And what about your foot, Wilks?" said Hardy, somewhat taken aback by this arrangement.

"Foot, sir?" said the unconscious Mr. Wilks; "wot foot?"

"Why, the bad one," said Hardy, with a significant glance.

"Ho, that one?" said Mr. Wilks, beating time and waiting further revelations.

"Do you think you ought to use it much?" inquired Hardy.

Mr. Wilks looked at it, or, to be more exact, looked at both of them, and smiled weakly. His previous idea recurred to him with renewed force now, and several things in the young man's behaviour, hitherto disregarded, became suddenly charged with significance. Miss Nugent looked on with an air of cynical interest.

"Better not run any risk," said Hardy, gravely. "I shall be very pleased to see Miss Nugent home, if she will allow me."

"What is the matter with it?" inquired Miss Nugent, looking him full in the face.

Hardy hesitated. Diplomacy, he told himself, was one thing; lying another. He passed the question on to the rather badly-used Mr. Wilks.

"Matter with it?" repeated that gentleman, glaring at him reproachfully. "It's got shootin' pains right up it. I suppose it was walking miles and miles every day in London, looking for the cap'n, was too much for it."

"Is it too bad for you to take me home, Sam?" inquired Miss Nugent, softly.

The perturbed Mr. Wilks looked from one to the other. As a sportsman his sympathies were with Hardy, but his duty lay with the girl.

"I'll do my best, miss," he said; and got up and limped, very well indeed for a first attempt, round the room.

Then Miss Nugent did a thing which was a puzzle to herself for some time afterwards. Having won the victory she deliberately threw away the fruits of it, and declining to

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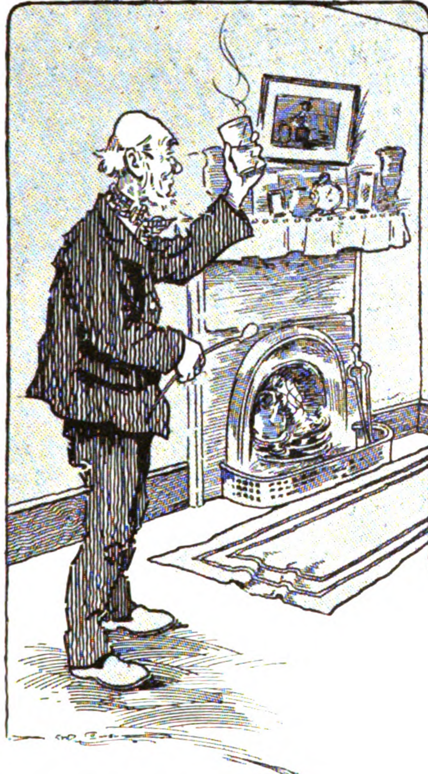
allow the steward to run any risks, accepted Hardy's escort home. Mr. Wilks watched them from the door, and with his head in a whirl caused by the night's proceedings mixed himself a stiff glass of grog to set it right, and drank to the health of both of them.

The wind had abated somewhat in violence as they walked home, and, moreover, they had their backs to it. The walk was slower and more enjoyable in many respects than the walk out. In an unusually soft mood she replied to his remarks and stole little critical glances up at him. When they reached the house she stood a little while at the gate gazing at the starry sky and listening to the crash of the sea on the beach.

"It is a fine night," she said, as she shook hands.

"The best I have ever known," said Hardy. "Good-bye."



"MR. WILKS DRANK TO THE HEALTH OF BOTH OF THEM."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE weeks passed all too quickly for James Hardy. He saw Kate Nugent at her own home; met her, thanks to the able and hearty assistance of Mr. Wilks, at Fullalove Alley, and on several occasions had the agreeable task of escorting her back home.

He cabled to his father for news of the illustrious stowaway immediately the *Conqueror* was notified as having reached Port Elizabeth. The reply—"*Left ship*"—confirmed his worst fears, but he cheerfully accepted Mrs. Kingdom's view that the captain, in order to relieve the natural anxiety of his family, had secured a passage on the first vessel homeward bound.

Captain Hardy was the first to reach home. In the early hours of a fine April morning the *Conqueror* steamed slowly into Sunwich Harbour, and in a very short time the town was revelling in a description of Captain Nugent's first voyage before the mast from lips which were never tired of repeating it. Down by the waterside Mr. Nathan Smith found that he had suddenly attained the rank of a popular hero, and his modesty took alarm at the publicity afforded to his action. It was extremely distasteful to a man who ran a quiet business on old-fashioned lines and disbelieved in advertisement. He lost three lodgers the same day.

Jem Hardy was one of the few people in Sunwich for whom the joke had no charms, and he betrayed such an utter lack of sympathy with his father's recital that the latter accused him at last of wanting a sense of humour.

"I don't see anything amusing in it," said his son, stiffly.

Captain Hardy recapitulated one or two choice points, and was even at some pains to explain them.

"I can't see any fun in it," repeated his son. "Your behaviour seems to me to have been deplorable."

"What?" shouted the captain, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Captain Nugent was your guest," pursued the other; "he got on your ship by accident, and he should have been treated decently as a saloon passenger."

"And been apologized to for coming on board, I suppose?" suggested the captain.

"It wouldn't have been amiss," was the reply.

The captain leaned back in his chair and regarded him thoughtfully. "I can't think what's the matter with you, Jem," he said.

"Ordinary decent ideas, that's all," said his son, scathingly.

"There's something more in it than that," said the other, positively. "I don't like to see this love-your-enemy business with you,

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"A POPULAR HERO."

Jem; it ain't natural to you. Has your health been all right while I've been away?"

"Of course it has," said his son, curtly. "If you didn't want Captain Nugent aboard with you why didn't you put him ashore? It wouldn't have delayed you long. Think of the worry and anxiety you've caused poor Mrs. Kingdom."

"A holiday for her," growled the captain.

"It has affected her health," continued his son; "and besides, think of his daughter. She's a high-spirited girl, and all Sunwich is laughing over her father's mishap."

"Nugent fell into his own trap," exclaimed the captain, impatiently. "And it won't do that girl of his any harm to be taken down a peg or two. Do her good. Knock some of the nonsense out of her."

"That's not the way to speak of a lady," said Jem, hotly.

The offended captain regarded him somewhat sourly; then his face changed, and he got up from his chair and stood before his son with consternation depicted on every feature.

"You don't mean to tell me," he said, slowly; "you don't mean to tell me that you're thinking anything of Kate Nugent?"

"Why not?" demanded the other, defiantly; "why shouldn't I?"

Captain Hardy, whistling softly, made no reply, but still stood eyeing him.

"I thought there was some other reason for your consideration besides 'ordinary decent ideas,'" he said, at last. "When did it come on? How long have you had it?"

Mr. Hardy, jun., in a studiously unfilial speech, intimated that these pleasantries were not to his taste.

"No, of course not," said the captain, resuming his seat. "Well, I'm sorry if it's serious, Jem, but I never dreamt you had any ideas in that quarter. If I had I'd have given old Nugent the best bunk on the ship and sung him to sleep myself. Has she given you any encouragement?"

"Don't know," said Jem, who found the conversation awkward.

"Extraordinary thing," said the captain, shaking his head, "extraordinary. Like a play."

"Play?" said his son, sharply.

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"Play," repeated his father, firmly. "What is the name of it? I saw it once at Newcastle. The lovers take poison and die across each other's chests because their people won't let 'em marry. And that reminds me. I saw some phosphor-paste in the kitchen, Jem. Whose is it?"

"I'm glad to be the means of affording you amusement," said Jem, grinding his teeth.

Captain Hardy regarded him affectionately. "Go easy, my lad," he said, equably; "go easy. If I'd known it before, things would have been different; as I didn't, we must make the best of it. She's a pretty girl, and a good one, too, for all her airs, but I'm afraid she's too fond of her father to overlook this."

"That's where you've made such a mess of things," broke in his son. "Why on earth you two old men couldn't——"

"Easy," said the startled captain. "When you are in the early fifties, my lad, your ideas about age will be more accurate. Besides, Nugent is seven or eight years older than I am."

"HE MET THESE ANNOYANCES WITH A SET FACE."

"What became of him?" inquired Jem.

"He was off the moment we berthed," said his father, suppressing a smile. "I don't mean that he bolted—he'd got enough starch left in him not to do that—but he didn't trespass on our hospitality a moment longer than was necessary. I heard that he got a passage home on the *Columbus*. He knew the master. She sailed some time before us for London. I thought he'd have been home by this."

It was not until two days later, however, that the gossip in Sunwich received a pleasant fillip by the arrival of the injured captain. He came down from London by the midday train, and, disdaining the privacy of a cab, prepared to run the gauntlet of his fellow-townsmen.

A weaker man would have made a détour, but he held a direct course, and with a curt nod to acquaintances who would have stopped him walked swiftly in the direction of home. Tradesmen ran to their shop-doors to see him, and smoking amphibians lounging at street corners broke out into sunny smiles as he passed. He met these annoyances with a set face and a cold eye, but his views concerning children were not improved by the crowd of small creatures which fluttered along the road ahead of him and, hopeful of developments, clustered round the gate as he passed in.

It is the pride and privilege of most returned wanderers to hold forth at great length concerning their adventures, but Captain Nugent was commendably brief. At first he could hardly be induced to speak of them at all, but the necessity of contradicting stories which Bella had gleaned for Mrs. Kingdom from friends in town proved too strong for him. He ground his teeth with suppressed fury as he listened to some of them. The truth was bad enough, and his daughter, sitting by his side with her

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hand in his, was trembling with indignation.

"Poor father," she said, tenderly; "what a time you must have had."

"It won't bear thinking of," said Mrs. Kingdom, not to be outdone in sympathy.

"Well, don't think of it," said the captain, shortly.

Mrs. Kingdom sighed as though to indicate that her feelings were not to be suppressed in that simple fashion.

"The anxiety has been very great," she said, shaking her head, "but everybody's been very kind. I'm sure all our friends have been most sympathetic. I couldn't go outside the house without somebody stopping me and asking whether there was any news of you. I'd no idea you were so popular; even the milkman——"

"I'd like some tea," interrupted the captain, roughly; "that is, when you have finished your very interesting information."

Mrs. Kingdom pursed her lips together to suppress the words she was afraid to utter, and rang the bell.

"Your master would like some tea," she said, primly, as Bella appeared. "He has had a long journey."

The captain started and eyed her fiercely; Mrs. Kingdom, her good temper quite restored by this little retort, folded her hands in her lap and gazed at him with renewed sympathy.

"We all missed you very much," said Kate, softly. "But we had no fears once we knew that you were at sea."

"And I suppose some of the sailors were kind to you?" suggested the unfortunate Mrs. Kingdom. "They are rough fellows, but I suppose some of them have got their hearts in the right place. I daresay they were sorry to see you in such a position."

The captain's reply was of a nature known to Mrs. Kingdom and her circle as "snapping one's head off." He drew his chair to the table as Bella brought in the tray and, accepting a cup of tea, began to discuss with his daughter the events which had transpired in his absence.

"There is no news," interposed Mrs. Kingdom, during an interval. "Mr. Hall's aunt died the other day."

"Never heard of her," said the captain.

"Neither had I, till then," said his sister. "What a lot of people there are one never hears of, John."

The captain stared at her offensively and went on with his meal. A long silence ensued.

"I suppose you didn't get to hear of the cable that was sent?" said Mrs. Kingdom, making another effort to arouse interest.

"What cable?" inquired her brother.

"The one Mr. Hardy sent to his father about you," replied Mrs. Kingdom.

The captain pushed his chair back and stared her full in the face. "What do you mean?" he demanded.

His sister explained.

"Do you mean to tell me that you've been speaking to young Hardy?" exclaimed the captain.

"I could hardly help doing so, when he came here," returned his sister, with dignity. "He has been very anxious about you."

Captain Nugent rose and strode up and down the room. Then he stopped and glanced sharply at his daughter.

"Were you here when he called?" he demanded.

"Yes," was the reply.

"And you—you spoke to him?" roared the captain.

"I had to be civil," said Miss Nugent, calmly; "I'm not a sea-captain."

Her father walked up and down the room again. Mrs. Kingdom, terrified at the storm she had evoked, gazed helplessly at her niece.

"What did he come here for?" said the captain.

Miss Nugent glanced down at her plate. "I can't imagine," she said, demurely. "The first time he came to tell us what had become of you."

The captain stopped in his walk and eyed her sternly. "I am very fortunate in my children," he said, slowly. "One is engaged to marry the daughter of the shadiest rascal in Sunwich, and the other——"

"And the other?" said his daughter, proudly, as he paused.

"The other," said the captain, as he came round the table and put his hand on her shoulder, "is my dear and obedient daughter."

"Yes," said Miss Nugent; "but that isn't what you were going to say. You need not worry about me; I shall not do anything that would displease you."

(To be continued.)

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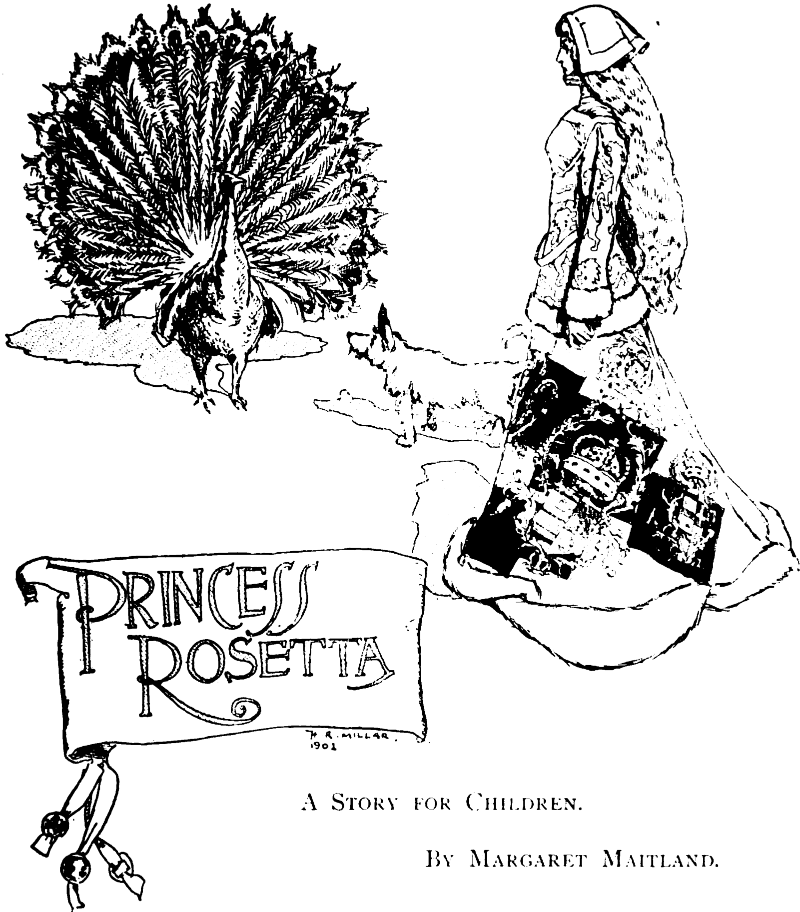

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

BY MARGARET MAITLAND.

ONCE upon a time a King, on his death-bed, sent for his two sons and said to them: "My sons, promise me one thing before I die. Your sister, whom you have never seen, is shut up in a tower, and you must promise never to let her out of it. The day she was born your mother and I put her there, because we were warned she would bring trouble on her brothers."

But, having said this, the King died so quickly that his sons had no time to promise him anything. And directly he died all the great men in the kingdom assembled round the new King and put the crown on his head, and clothed him in the Royal purple mantle sparkling with diamond stars and moons and suns, and cried, "Long live our King."

No sooner was this ceremony ended than the two brothers, who were in the greatest hurry to see their sister, ran to the tower, which had neither door nor stairs, so they jumped into the big basket fastened to a pulley, in which provisions were hoisted up, and went straight to the Princess Rosetta's chamber. She and her little dog Fretillo were sitting there, and the Princess was embroidering a beautiful brocade, but she threw down her work the moment she saw the King in his Royal robes and crown, and, falling at his feet, besought him to let her out of her prison.

"That's just what we've come here for," cried both the brothers together. "We are going to take you away with us and find you a husband and make you happy for ever."

And though there was very little room in the big basket for a King in his Royal mantle and a Prince and Princess and a little dog as well, they all loved each other too much already to bear parting, even for a few minutes, so somehow or other they squeezed in and went down all together.

The tower was in a fine garden, and when

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the Princess saw flowers and fruit and fountains, for the first time in her life, she was delighted, and ran hither and thither picking things and playing with Fretillo, who barked and frisked round her as happy as she was. He was a very odd-looking little dog, for he was green and had only one ear, but he was so clever and good-tempered that no one could help loving him.

Presently he ran ahead of his mistress into a wood, and she went after him, and there she saw a peacock with his tail spread out in a huge circle behind him. And he was so handsome that she stood stock-still looking at him until her brothers found her, and then she pointed at the peacock and said:—

"What is it?"

"A peacock," they answered; "a bird that is served at Royal tables on great feast days."

"What," cried Rosetta, "people are wicked enough to kill—to eat such a creature? I for my part vow that I will have no husband but the King of the Peacocks, and he shall pass a law that he who kills or eats a peacock shall die!"

"But, dearest sister," said her brothers, "where shall we go to find you such a husband? We know neither who he is nor where he lives."

The Princess did not know either; so she said: "All that kind of thing I leave entirely to your Majesty. But I will marry no one else."

Then the Princes and their sister and Fretillo and the peacock (whom Rosetta refused to leave) all went to the palace, and the peacock and Fretillo had quarters in the Princess's own room.

All the Court came, of course, to pay her their respects, and the great ladies brought her sugar-plums and tarts and gowns and ribbons, and shoes embroidered with precious stones; and her manners to everyone were so gracious, and she curtsied so politely when thanking people, that the whole kingdom rang with her praises.

But all this time her poor brothers were in great trouble, not knowing in the very least where to turn their steps to find the King of the Peacocks. But they agreed that the first thing to do was to have Rosetta's portrait painted to take with them, and the artist made such a perfect picture of her, that could it but have talked it would have been the Princess herself.

"Good-bye, sister," they said to her; "since you will have no husband but the King of the Peacocks, we will travel all over the world to look for him. If we find him it will make us very glad, and meantime you must govern the kingdom well."

Rosetta thanked them and promised to do what they asked, and said that her only pleasure, while they were away, would be in looking at her peacock and playing with Fretillo.

The two Princes asked everyone they met the same question: "Can you tell us where His Majesty the King of the Peacocks lives?" And everyone answered "No, no." So on and on they travelled until, at last, they got so far away that never had anyone been so far before.

And one fine day they came to the kingdom of cockchafers, where there were shoals and shoals of cockchafers, all buzzing, and buzzing, and making such a noise that the poor King nearly went deaf. But one cockchafer looked rather wiser than the rest, and him the King asked if he could tell him where to find the King of the Peacocks.

"Sire," said the cockchafer, "his kingdom is thirty thousand miles from here, and you have, unfortunately, come a roundabout way to look for it."

"And how do you know that?" asked His Majesty.

"Because we know your Majesty very well indeed," said the cockchafer. "Every year we pay your gardens a visit, and spend three or four months there."

On hearing this the King and his brother felt, at once, that they were among old friends, and they made themselves quite at home with the company and visited all the sights of the kingdom. The smallest little leaf is a curiosity there and worth a great deal of money.

The two Princes now knew the direction to take, so they started on their travels again in much better spirits, and it was not so very long before they found the country they were looking for. They knew, at once, that it was the right place, because on every branch of every tree was perched a peacock, and for miles round they could be heard calling and screaming to one another.

"What shall we do, brother," said the King, "if His Majesty turns out to be a peacock himself? Our sister cannot possibly marry him in that case!"

The Prince was quite as much troubled as his brother by this dreadful idea.

"It is most unfortunate," he replied, "that she ever took this strange fancy into her head. I can't imagine how she could ever have guessed that there was any such a King in the world."

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But when they arrived at the chief town in the kingdom they found the inhabitants were real men and women, just like other people, but all dressed in peacock feathers, and wherever peacock feathers could be stuck for ornament, there they were.

The King himself the Princes met, driving in his golden chariot studded with brilliants, and drawn by twelve magnificent and very fleet peacocks; and he was so handsome that they were delighted with him. His hair was fair and curly and his complexion like white marble, and on his head he wore a crown of woven peacock feathers.

He saw the Princes, and knowing by their dress that they were strangers he stopped his chariot and beckoned to them to come and talk to him.

"Sire," said the brothers, "we have travelled far to show your Majesty a picture."

And with that they took Rosetta's portrait out of their carpet-bag.

The King looked at it for a good long time, then said: "I don't believe there is a girl so beautiful in the whole world."

"Ah, your Majesty," they answered, "she is a hundred times lovelier than this picture."

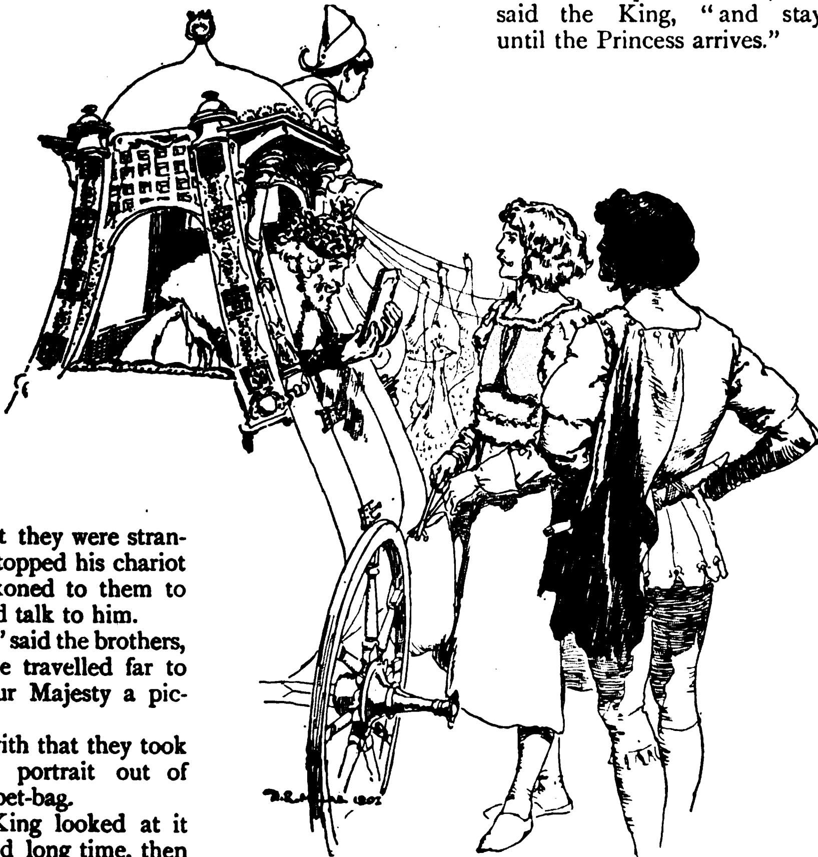
"You are making fun of me," said the King of the Peacocks.

"Sire," said the Prince, "my brother here is a King like you, and I a Prince. This picture is the portrait of our sister, the Princess Rosetta. We have travelled all the way to your kingdom to ask you if you would like to marry her. She is good as well as beautiful, and we will give her a sack full of gold for her dowry."

"Very well," said the King of the Peacocks. "I am quite willing to marry her. I love her very much, indeed, and will give her everything she wants. But I am determined you shall not cheat me about her beauty, and I warn you that, if in the very least thing she is less beautiful than her portrait, I will have you both put to death. Do you agree?"

"Oh, yes," said the Princes, "we gladly agree."

"Go to prison, then, at once," said the King, "and stay there until the Princess arrives."



"THE KING THEN SAID: 'I DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS A GIRL SO BEAUTIFUL IN THE WHOLE WORLD.'"

The two Princes didn't mind this in the least, because they knew for certain that Rosetta was far more beautiful than any picture, and every day the King came to visit them and sent them all they wanted, and they were waited on as became their high rank.

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They wrote to Rosetta and told her to pack her things and come at once, because the husband she had chosen was waiting for her. Only they said nothing to her about being themselves in prison for fear of alarming her.

Rosetta was in great delight when she got this letter, and lost no time in announcing to all the King's subjects that the King of the Peacocks was found and was very anxious to marry her.

There were great rejoicings all over the kingdom at this good news, and for a few days there was nothing but feasting and dancing and firing of cannons; and at the palace itself, by order of the Princess, the most delicious drinks and sweetmeats were given to all comers. And as she was going to be married, and wouldn't want her dolls and playthings any longer herself, she gave them all away in the most generous manner.

Besides which she handed the government of the country over to the six wisest men in it, charging them to take great care of it and spend as little and save as much as they could, for her brother when he came back. She also left her peacock in their care and took only Fretillo and the sack of gold and her old nurse and the nurse's only daughter and enough dresses for two changes every day for ten years.

The journey was made in a ship, and the Princess enjoyed it very much, laughing and talking and amusing herself all the day long.

But every morning the nurse used to say to the boatman, "Are we nearly there?"

And he always answered, "Not yet, not yet."

Till, at last, one day he said, "Yes, soon now, soon."

And then the nurse put her mouth close to his ear and said, "Do you wish to be rich?"

"Yes," said he.

"There's money to earn," said she.

"I'm the man for that," said he.

"Then to-night," said she, "we will throw the Princess overboard, and when she is drowned I will dress my daughter in her fine clothes and take her to the King of the Peacocks to be his bride. And for your reward you shall have as many diamonds as you can carry away on your back."

The boatman was not quite so wicked as she was, however, and he answered that it would be a pity to drown such a pretty Princess; and he certainly never would have consented to such a thing if the cruel nurse hadn't given him a drink of some kind that had a very good taste, but made him feel so queer that at last he didn't know when he was saying yes and when he was saying no.

And then she led him to where the Princess lay asleep in her bed, and Fretillo curled up at her feet, sound asleep, too. And the cruel pair lifted up the feather-bed, the mattress, the sheets, the quilt, the pillows, Rosetta, and Fretillo so softly that neither the Princess nor her little dog woke, and threw the whole thing overboard.

But, most fortunately, the bed was stuffed with Phœnix feathers, which are very rare, indeed, and never sink; so the bed floated, and Rosetta and Fretillo were as safe as if they still were on the ship.

The only thing was that the spray of the waves kept dashing over them and at last woke them up, and then they couldn't imagine what made them so wet, nor where they were, nor what had happened to them. Fretillo, whose nose was very sharp, smelt soles and cod, and he barked so loud that he disturbed all the fishes in the sea, and they kept tumbling up against the bed, sending it twisting and turning this way and that, in such an extraordinary manner, that Rosetta thought she had never spent such a queer night in her life, for being dark she didn't see the sea.

The cruel nurse heard the barking too and said: "He's wishing us good luck. Let us hasten to go and be Queens and Princes."

Soon after that the boat landed at the kingdom of peacocks, where fine preparations had been made for the bride's arrival.

A hundred carriages were waiting on the beach drawn by lions, bears, wolves, oxen, asses, eagles, peacocks, and horses. The Princess's own carriage was drawn by six blue monkeys in crimson and gold harness, and dancing all the time on tight-ropes, besides many other wonderful tricks. Round this carriage stood sixty lovely young ladies, chosen by the King himself to wait on his Queen, and dressed in every colour of the rainbow, not to speak of gold and silver.

The wicked nurse had spared no pains in dressing up her daughter. She had Rosetta's diamonds on her head and all over her, and wore the very finest of all Rosetta's seven thousand three hundred dresses. But her finery only made her look uglier than ever. Her hair was dull and coarse, she squinted terribly; she had bandy legs and was hump-backed, and had a nasty cross expression, and never stopped grumbling.

When the King of the Peacocks' people saw her land from the ship they were struck dumb with amazement, and they were still more astonished (if that were possible) when

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"NEITHER THE PRINCESS NOR HER LITTLE DOG WOKE."

the first thing they heard her say, screaming as loud as she could, was this :—

"What does this kind of thing mean? What does it mean? Have you all lost your senses? Here, wretches, bring me something to eat or I'll have everyone of you hanged."

"Oh, oh, oh," cried everybody, "what a horrid creature, as wicked too as she is ugly! Never will our King marry a horrid thing of this sort! It was worth while to send to the end of the world for her, indeed!"

And everything they said made her angrier and angrier, and everyone within reach of her arm she hit at with her fist, as hard as she could, lolling back all the time in her carriage and making believe she was accustomed to one.

It moved along rather slowly, as orders had been given by the King that the people were all to have time to see the bride. But when it passed under the trees, covered with peacocks, waiting to cry, "Long live our beautiful Queen Rosetta!" instead of crying what they intended, they all began to hiss: "Oh! the ugly, ugly thing!"

"Kill them," shrieked the false Princess. "Kill them! Wring their necks, the beasts! They insult me, insult me!"

At which the peacocks flew away as quick as they could, laughing at her.

Meantime the wicked boatman whispered to the nurse: "I say, mother, we haven't managed this affair so cleverly as we should. You ought to have had a prettier daughter for it!"

"Hush, hush, you fool," she answered. "Hold your tongue if you don't want to get us all into trouble."

Messengers had run on ahead of the procession to warn the King that his bride was coming, and the first thing he said to them was: "Did her brothers speak the truth? Is she more beautiful than her picture?"

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"EVERYONE WITHIN REACH OF HER ARM SHE HIT AT."

"What! what!" he cried, "those two scoundrels that I have locked safe up in prison have dared to play me a trick? They had the impertinence to invite me to marry a horror of this kind? I'll have their necks wrung, and this wretch's, too, and her nurse's, and the old fellow's who came with them! Clap every one of them into the darkest dungeon at the foot of the tower this moment," he said, turning to his soldiers.

"Sire," was the reply, "to be as beautiful, is to be beautiful enough."

"That is true," said the King; "I will be satisfied with that. But I hear a noise in the courtyard. The Princess has no doubt arrived; let us go and welcome her."

There was plenty of shouting and talking. The King could hear the people saying: "Oh, the ugly thing," and words of that sort, but he only thought they were laughing at the Princess's dwarf, or some other queer creature she had brought with her; for, of course, he never dreamt that it was the Princess herself they meant.

The Princess Rosetta's portrait, mounted on a long gold stick and carried like a banner, was borne in front of the King, and he marched in a dignified manner after it, followed by all his barons, all his peacocks, and all the Ambassadors from foreign lands. He was very impatient, indeed, to see his beloved Rosetta; but when he saw the creature that was there in her place he nearly died of grief and rage. He tore his clothes, he stamped his feet, he would not go near her, and she was frightened out of her senses at seeing him in such a passion.

Meantime, the real Princess's two brothers in prison, having heard that their sister had come, were waiting, dressed in their very best, to be released. But instead of letting them out their gaoler came with a troop of armed soldiers and thrust them down into a dark cellar, full of noisome reptiles and with water in it up to their necks.

The poor Princes were terribly astonished at this cruel treatment.

"Alas!" they said to each other, "what a wedding feast we are celebrating. What can be the reason we are treated so ill?"

But all the talking in the world didn't explain anything. On the third day, however, the King of the Peacocks came and called out very insulting things at them through a hole.

"Wretches!" he cried. "Impostors! King and Prince indeed! Beggars is really what you are! You thought you'd trick me into marrying your sister, did you? You will be hanged

for it—the rope is being spun to do it with. Your trial won't take long with the judges I mean to give you!"

"King of the Peacocks," said the other King, very angry in his turn, "take care what you do to us, or you'll live to repent. I'm as good a King as you are, and have as good a crown and kingdom and clothes and money. Hang us, indeed! What for, if you please? Have we stolen anything from you?"

But in spite of all they could say the trial took place next day, and the King and his brother were sentenced to be hanged for telling the King of the Peacocks a lie. But when this sentence was read out to them they said so convincingly that they had told no lie, and begged so earnestly for a short delay to give them time to prove their innocence, that at last the King of the Peacocks consented to a week's respite.

To return now to the Princess Rosetta. When daylight came she and her little dog were one as much surprised as the other to find that they were afloat on the wide sea, but it was the Princess who was the most frightened, for Fretillo always had a plan or two up his sleeve.

"Alas! alas!" cried Rosetta. "The King of the Peacocks must have sent orders that I should be drowned. He has changed his mind, and doesn't want to marry me now. But what a pity! what a pity! I should have been a good wife to him, I promise him."

Two whole days they floated on the sea, hungry and drenched to the skin, and so cold that the Princess must have died if Fretillo had not lain in her arms and warmed her as best he could. The only food they had were oysters, which Fretillo particularly disliked.

All night the Princess kept saying to him, "Bark, bark, my little dog, to keep the big fish away, or else they will come and swallow us up."

So all night long Fretillo barked, until at last an old fisherman in his cottage by the sea-shore heard him, and put his head out to see what it was, for no one ever passed that way and he never heard dogs barking. And when he saw the bed floating near the shore he got his long boat-hook and drew it up on the beach high and dry.

"Good man," said the Princess, "we have been two days floating hither and thither on the ocean, cold, and hungry, and wet. Can you give us something to eat and let us dry ourselves by your fire?"

And he took them into his cottage and, being a kind old man, did the best he could for them. And when he began to dry the mattress and feather-bed he saw that the sheets were the finest lawn and the coverlids made of gold and silver thread, and he knew that Rosetta must be some great lady by that and her manners, so he begged her to tell him her history. And when, with many tears, she had told him, he said to her:—

"Princess, you are accustomed to delicate food and beautiful clothes, and can't live in this poor hut with a rough old man like me. With your permission I will go and tell the King of the Peacocks that you are here, and he will hasten to come for you and marry you."

"No, no," said Rosetta, "he will kill me rather. And, as for food, all we need do is to tie a basket to my little dog's neck and he will be sure to bring it back full."

And the old man gave her a basket, and, tying it to her little dog's neck, she said:—

"Go to the best kitchen in the city, Fretillo, and bring me what you find there."

Now, in all the city there was no kitchen so good as the King's, so Fretillo hastened there, lifted the lid off the pot, and slipped all that was in it into his basket, and hurried home again.

And his mistress said to him: "You are a good dog, Fretillo. But hurry back now to the store-room and bring me the best you find there."

So off went Fretillo, and brought home some white bread, some muscat wine, and such a load of sweet things that he could hardly carry his basket.

But when the King's dinner hour arrived there was no dinner in his kitchen and nothing in his store-room, and he fell into a great rage.

"If I can have no dinner," he said, "I will have a good supper at any rate, so put plenty of joints on the spit." That night, however, Rosetta said to her little dog: "Go to the best kitchen in the city and bring me all the roast meat you find there."

And again Fretillo went to the King's kitchen, and when the cooks were not looking that way, he snatched the roast meat off the spits and ran off with it. It smelt so good it was enough to make anyone hungry. And, as before, the Princess sent him straight back to the store-room, and he brought her all the preserves and sugar-plums he found there.

So that day the King of the Peacocks got neither dinner nor supper, and the same thing happened three days running, until at

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last his best friend thought, if that sort of thing went on much longer, the King would die, so he went himself to watch in the kitchen what became of all his Royal master's dinners and suppers. What was his astonishment to see a little green one-eared dog softly steal in and lift the lid of the pot, take out what was in it, and run off with it in a basket! He followed him as fast as he could to see where he took it, and on and on he went, away out of the town to the fisherman's hut on the beach. And after that he went and told the King all he had seen.

And the King commanded him to take soldiers and go at once and seize the old man whose dog stole his dinners and suppers and robbed his store-room. And when the courtier and the soldiers came to the hut and found the fisherman, Rosetta, and Fretillo eating up the King's soup, they laid hold of them, bound them with cords, and dragged them away.

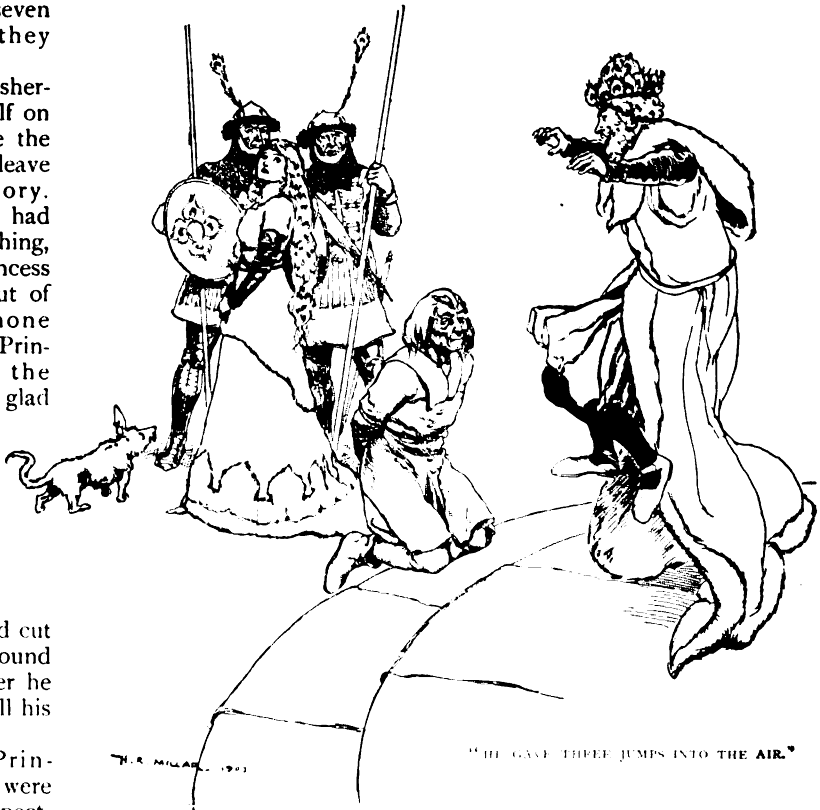
"They shall all be put to death to-morrow," said the King, "together with the two impostors who have not proved their innocence in the seven days' respite they begged for."

But the old fisherman cast himself on his knees before the King and asked leave to tell his story. And when he had told him everything, and that the Princess he had fished out of the sea was none other than the Princess Rosetta, the King was so glad that, weak as he was after his three days' fast, he gave three jumps into the air, and then ran to kiss Rosetta and cut the cords that bound her, and told her he loved her with all his heart.

Then the Princess's brothers were sent for, and, expecting to be hanged, they came looking very miserable. The nurse, the boatman, and the daughter were sent for. And everyone recognised one another, of course.

The Princess embraced her dear brothers. The nurse, her daughter, and the boatman fell on their knees and begged to be forgiven, and in honour of the joyful occasion their lives were spared at Rosetta's request. As to the kind old fisherman, he spent the rest of his days in peace and happiness in the palace.

And for the Princess's brothers, the King seemed as if he didn't know how to do enough to make up to them for his former unkindness. Of course, the Princess got back the sack of gold and the seven thousand three hundred dresses that the nurse had stolen; and the wedding festivities took place with great rejoicing and lasted a whole fortnight, and everyone was happy ever after, not forgetting Fretillo, who had roast partridge wings and breast for his dinner every day all the rest of his life.



"HE GAVE THREE JUMPS INTO THE AIR."

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Nearly Roasted Alive in the Great Chandelier of Drury Lane.

By Rudolph de Cordova.

A RING of flaring gas beneath his feet; a ring of flaring gas above his head; and between the two, a boy holding on to the framework of the great chandelier in the centre of the ceiling of Drury Lane Theatre! Into his nostrils he breathed the fumes of noxious gas; in his hands the iron rods by which he supported himself grew hotter and hotter; and between him and the floor of the pit beneath lay a sheer drop of seventy feet of darkness! No melodramatist seeking for a blood-curdling situation ever devised such a scene. No novelist ever imagined the possibility of placing a character in such a position. Yet it is true, absolutely true; evolved by circumstances in the simplest and most direct manner in the world.

As every great sensation scene should, it had a happy ending, for Mr. Frank Parker, Equestrian and Stage Director of the London Hippodrome, was once the hero—or should I say the victim?—of this situation which seemed to have only one possible termination—death.

To-day the great auditorium of Drury Lane is lighted, like the stage, by means of electricity, and the turning of a switch makes the whole building ablaze with light or plunges it into complete darkness. Under the early régime of the late Sir Augustus Harris, however, things were quite different, for electricity had not been introduced, and gas was the only means of illumination. Even then, however, instead of having a pilot light by means of which all the burners were lighted rapidly, the work was done by hand, each burner having to be lighted separately.

In those days Mr. Frank Parker, then a mere lad, was made gas-boy, and part of his duty was to light the great chandelier in the middle of the ceiling. The audience naturally paid no heed to the massive structure of iron and glass which illuminated the building, and it will probably surprise those who recall its appearance, through the illustration, to know that even in his most expert days it took Mr. Parker no less than an hour and three-quarters to light it.

MR. FRANK PARKER—PRESENT DAY.
From a Photo.

In order that the situation may be the better understood, let me first, like a dramatist, describe the scene in which the great sensation is to be performed.

Suspended from strong steel chains was the chandelier, some 12ft. or 14ft. long, with a diameter at the widest part near the bottom of 16ft. or 18ft. At the top near the point of suspension there was a narrow opening, perhaps 2ft. across, through which the pipes for conveying the gas to the burners passed.

Even to reach the chandelier was a task not unattended with danger. The way was up through the flies, over the "gridiron" of the stage, a narrow trellis-work of iron. There, until the gas was lighted, it was always pitch dark, and the boy had to feel rather than see his way, for the only light he had was a spirit torch he carried. This threw a ghostly glimmer rather than a light around him, and revealed the masks of hideous demons which had been used in previous pantomimes, and were stored along the path by which he had to go.

"Very ghostly and rather terrifying did those masks often appear to my childish imagination as in the dead silence of the theatre I slowly made my way along the gridiron, the green light of my spirit torch just serving to bring out the suggestion of horrible, grinning faces and demoniacal expressions," said Mr. Parker to me as he recounted his adventure one day.

Arrived over the chandelier there was first a sort of well to go down. This was placed above the cowl for ventilating purposes, and there was an opening some 6ft. in diameter

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down a Jacob's ladder to a grating shaped like a gigantic H. On this the boy, armed with a rod 23ft. long, used to take his stand night after night. At the end of the rod was a sponge, which was dipped in methylated spirit, and by the slow process of touching each burner with the flaming spirit the chandelier was gradually lighted.

"If ever when you're lighting the chandelier, Frank, a piece of the glass festoon should happen to break," said the gas-man, giving the boy instructions when he first took up the work, "you have got to break it off somehow and let it drop into the pit. That must be done at any cost, for if you don't, and the heat makes the copper wire that joins the bits of glass break, the broken swag will fall on the people sitting in the pit and it may kill somebody."

MR. FRANK PARKER AS HE WAS WHEN THE ADVENTURE OCCURRED.
From a Photo.

One night, after lighting all the thirteen or fourteen baskets around the widest diameter of the chandelier, the rod got caught in one of the longest swags of glass, and, in trying to get it clear, the force the boy used broke one of the connecting pieces of copper wire, and in another moment the lower end attached to a point at the extreme circumference of the chandelier was hanging suspended over the pit.

Remembering his instructions, the boy set to work with a will to break it off. Try as he would, however, he could not succeed.

"If ever a piece of the glass breaks you've got to get it off somehow," were the words which ran through his mind. That was his duty; that was the thing he had to do. Without another thought he made up his mind how to do the thing. He must climb down into the chandelier, supporting himself against the framework and the pipes until he reached the broken chain, twist it off, and let it drop into the pit, then climb back and set to work again in order that the chandelier might be lighted by the time the doors were opened.

No sooner was the plan conceived than he began to put it into execution. He pulled up the long pole, set it on one side, and started to climb down into the chandelier. A broad-shouldered lad, he had to squeeze himself through the upper opening of the chandelier, round which was set a circle of burners in order to produce the upward draught to carry off the noxious fumes produced by the burning gas. He had his little lighted hand-torch in his hand, and, not thinking for the moment what he was doing, he, inadvertently, in climbing through the aperture, turned on the cock which allowed the gas to escape into the sun-burner. As he went through, his torch lighted the gas of one of the tubes. In another moment the flame had run round the rest, and there was a circle of lighted gas that effectually barred the possibility of return.

Intent on what he had to do, however, the boy did not notice this.

Slowly, carefully, gradually, without a thought of the danger he was running, he made his way from stay to stay, from bar to bar, until he came to the bottom of the chandelier. The hot air from the flaring burners beat up into his face; the noxious fumes of the consumed gas he breathed into his nostrils. He took no heed of them. He had his work to do.

Slowly, carefully, gradually, he made his way across the whole diameter of the chandelier. Steadying himself on two stays with his feet, and holding on to one bar with his left hand, he twisted round the long festoon of glass until at last he broke the connecting copper wire and the swag dropped down. There was a pause, and up through the silence came the clatter of the glass as it fell on to the floor beneath.

"It's all right," said the boy to himself, and he turned to retrace his steps.

Slowly, carefully, gradually, without a thought except for the work he had to do, he began to climb back to the grated platform from which he had descended. The hot air from the flaring burners beat up into his face; the noxious fumes of the consumed gas he breathed into his nostrils. He took no heed of them. He had his work to do.

As he climbed, he felt the iron bars get hot beneath his hands. He looked down and saw the blazing ring of fire beneath his feet. He looked up and saw the blazing ring of fire above his head.

In an instant he realized his position. He was trapped. To attempt to escape through the narrow circle of fire was impossible, for even when the gas was not alight he had had a difficulty in getting through. The flare did its duty well. The ventilation was perfect, and a continuous stream of hot, vitiated air swept past the boy to make its escape through

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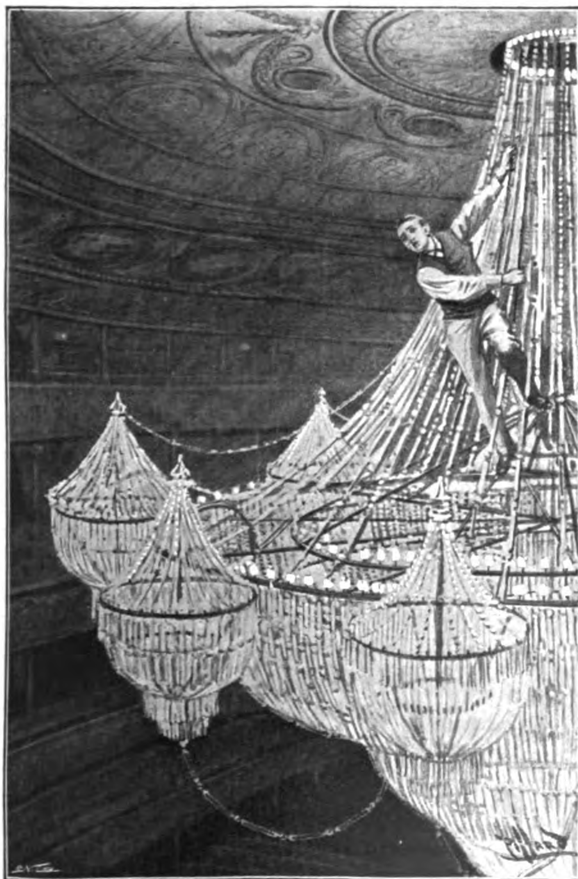
the little ring of flame. Each breath he drew took fresh poison into his lungs, each second he remained his position became more unbearable. The fumes of the gas began to overpower him. There was a choking sensation in his throat. There was a bursting sensation in his head. Unless help came, and quickly, there was only one way out of the chandelier—the drop through the darkness into the pit 70ft. beneath. And then——

"Help, help, help!" the boy screamed, with all his might, holding on with a grim tenacity of purpose to the iron stays around.

Luckily for him the master gas-man was on the stage beneath, looking every now and then through a hole in the wall of the proscenium to see how the lighting of the theatre was progressing. Suddenly he noticed that though the baskets were lighted the greater part of the chandelier was unlit. There must be something wrong with the boy, he thought, and the next instant through the silence came the cry of "Help, help, help!" Without a moment's hesitation the gas-man left the stage to see what was the matter. A shout to the boy that he was coming, and he began to climb from the stage to the flies. He had to grope his way across the gridiron through the pitch darkness of the corridor with its hideous goblin masks until he reached the well above the cowl. Another moment he was on the H-shaped gridiron looking through the opening into the body of the chandelier. "Hold hard, Frank, I am here," he called. The boy, half-suffocated, half-roasted, heard the cheering words and understood them.



"HELP, HELP!"

Another moment still, the man had turned out the sun-burner. "Up you come, lad," said the man. The boy tried to make an effort, but his strength was almost gone. The deadly fumes he had been breathing for so many minutes had almost done their work.

Quick as a flash the man took in the situation. He lay flat down and, stretching out his arms through the opening, he grasped the boy tightly with both his hands. Slowly, steadily, he began to pull. The grip of those strong hands stimulated the boy, and, thus supported, he began to climb. From stay to stay, from pipe to pipe, he moved, still held by those strong hands, until at last his head was once more through the narrow circle of the sun-burner Partly pushing, partly dragged, he got his shoulders through, and then once more he stood upon the H-shaped iron grid, which was to him as firm ground.

If in moments of great peril people live through years, what must have been the experience of the youth who lived through that ordeal which was reckoned not by seconds but by minutes with a ring of fire over his head, a ring of fire beneath his feet, suffocating fumes of gas overcoming his senses, pipes growing hotter in his grasp, and in his brain the single thought that if he lost his hold for a moment he would fall to certain death?

"Even to-day," said Mr. Parker, "I can't think of that episode without a shudder."

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

ANOTHER CURIOUS POST-CARD.

"I have noticed in your 'Curiosity' pages several curious post-cards. The inclosed, I am sure, is rather a novelty. It was delivered to me in the ordinary course. If suitable to appear in your Magazine, I thought it would interest several of your readers."—Mr. Edward B. Lee, 1, Ingham Street, Bury, Lancs.

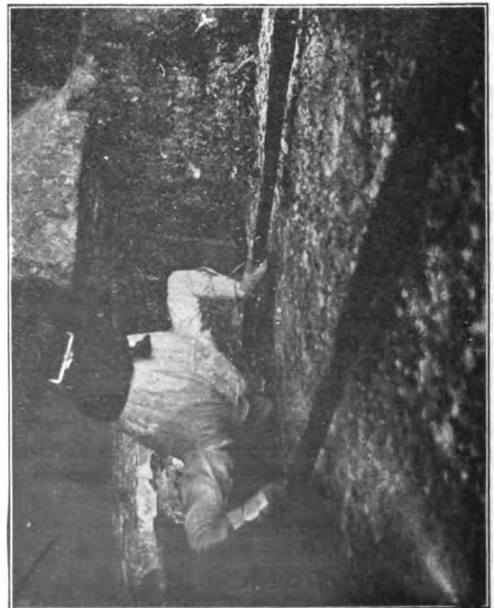
AN OLD HEAD ON YOUNG SHOULDERS.

"I send you a photograph for your 'Curiosities.' It shows the body of a little boy aged three and the head of an old man aged sixty. I do not remember ever seeing such a striking combination before, and your readers may amuse themselves by arranging such combinations

by substituting portraits of their friends—or enemies!"—Mr. H. C. Hall, 8, Second Avenue, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham.

"KISSING THE BLARNEY STONE."

"The photo. I send you may be of interest to your readers. It was taken last Bank Holiday, and represents kissing the Blarney Stone— by lying on your back, catching the two rails, and bending down while someone holds your feet. The illustration represents this process being performed by a lady, a Miss Williams, of London."—Mr. Frank Scanwell, 14, Douglas Street, Cork.



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A NOVEL USE FOR POPPY-SEEDS.

"I send you a comic figure made of poppy-seed heads and their stalks. I also send a teapot, small drinking cup, and epergne made of the seed heads. I trust you may deem these sufficiently interesting to reproduce in your high-class periodical. My daughter, aged fourteen, cut out the basket, etc., and suggested the idea. They are made from the seed vessels of the Shirley poppy, and were cut out when thoroughly dry, but a night's rain softened the remainder in the garden, or we should have made other articles." — Mrs. Beatrice Hay, The Grange, Upminster, Essex.

A VERY REMARKABLE DOG.

"The photograph I send you is of a cross-bred Scotch terrier, having a record of 185 miles in thirty-two hours. My family and I left the ranch sixteen miles west of Rock Springs, Texas, to spend the winter in San Antonio. To reach the railroad we had to make a trip by road of 110 miles in a hack. At Sabinal, seventy miles west of San Antonio, we took the train and the dog was put in the luggage-van. From the station up town he rode in a cab at our feet. On arrival at the hotel I handed him over to the negro porter, who shut him up in a room for the night. Not liking his separation from Jim, my eldest boy, and his sleeping companion on the trip down, he howled most wofully, and was let out. The rest of the night he spent in searching through the hotel to find us, and was seen about 4 a.m. next morning. About that time the cooks came and must have left the doors open, as he was not seen again. This was Friday morning, and about a week later a letter arrived from Mr. F. J. Richardson, my father-in-law, to say that the dog had arrived at the ranch at twelve o'clock noon, Saturday." —Mr. C. S. Green, Rock Spring, Edward's Co., Texas.

SIX PHOTOS. AT ONE EXPOSURE!

"This curious photo. of myself was taken at one exposure by standing between two mirrors. It will be noticed that there are six reflections in perspective." — Mr. A. M. Stephen, 132, Sabine Road, Lavender Hill, S.W.

A BOGUS PUBLIC-HOUSE.

"The public-house shown in the accompanying photograph is an impromptu production made for the purpose of playing a joke. The men in the picture were on their holidays, and were staying near a town in which a friend of theirs had recently had bequeathed to him a public-house called the Cross Keys. This friend had never seen the hostelry in question, although he drew the rent, and he asked the holiday-makers—one of whom was an amateur photographer—to photograph it for him. They converted a barn in the back

garden of the place where they lodged into a public-house, as shown in the picture, and presented it to the owner of the real 'house' as a photograph of his property. The joke was a huge success."—Mr. A. H. Goldsmith, 69, Maury Road, Stoke Newington, N.

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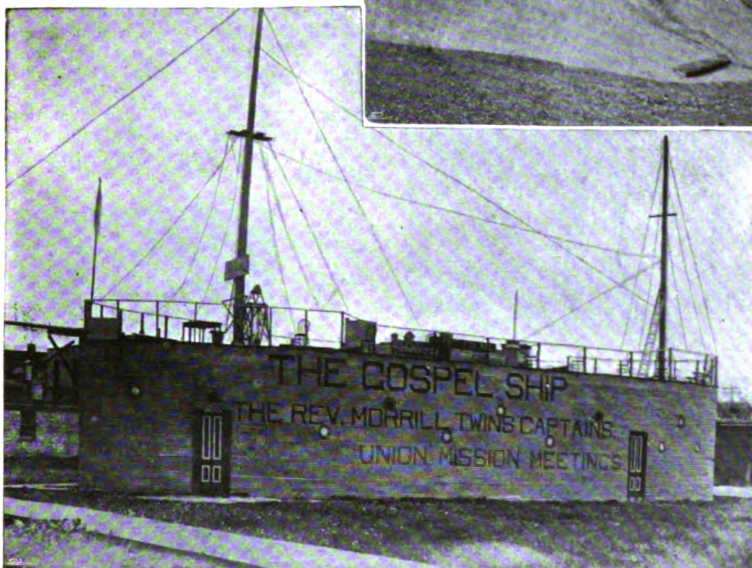
A FOSSILIZED TREE-STUMP.

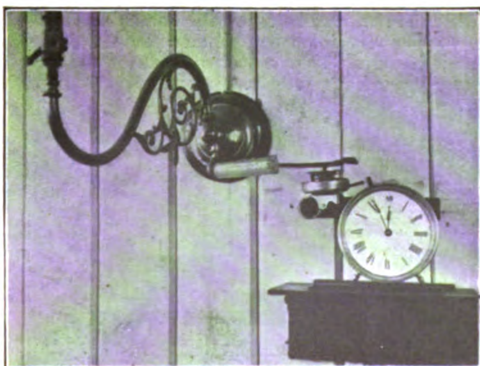
"I send you a photo. I took of a fossilized tree-stump found in a quarry near here, and now in Lister Park, Manningham. I hope it will be taken as a 'Curiosity.' Its resemblance to an octopus is truly remarkable."—Mr. J. Fulda, Stoneleigh, Bradford.

A SHIP THAT IS NOT A SHIP.

"This curious building, which looks like a stranded vessel, was built in the



form of a ship, and is really a church. It is located in the suburbs of Chicago and holds about 1,000 people. It was constructed by two clergymen, who call themselves the Rev. Morrill Twins, and is intended principally for sailors and the lower classes. In connection with the religious services, meals are also served."—Mr. D. Allen Willey, Baltimore.



"ECONOMY" IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.

"I send you a photo. of an ingenious little invention made by a friend, which I think might be suitable for your 'Curiosity' pages. As it is necessary, in his cycle shop, to have a light burning all night, my friend thought out this idea and put it to practical use, to cut off the light at sunrise, thus saving a considerable quantity of gas. It will be seen in the photo. that the striker of the alarm clock plays on the handle of a cycle bell which is worked by a spring, causing a cogwheel in it to revolve together with part of a rim brake which is attached; this in turn presses against a wooden lever fixed to the gas-tap, thus extinguishing the light at any time the alarm may be set for. Considering the very rough and ready materials used, and the most satisfactory way in which it answers its purpose, this contrivance does great credit to the ingenuity of the maker."—Mr. Sydney Hore, 91, Barcombe Avenue, Streatham Hill, S.W.

WATER FROM A TREE.

"This is a photograph of rather an extraordinary spring. It comes straight up from the ground through the tree, which, at the time of taking, was in full leaf. It is situate in a small village called Gunten, on the Lake of Thun, Switzerland."—Miss. E. Tew, Gunfield, Dartmouth.

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WANTED—THE RIGHTFUL OWNER OF THIS CURIOSITY.

"Would you care to try to discover any possible descendants of the original owners of this quaintly-inscribed silver sheath for pair of scissors? If so, you can hand this relic over to them, as it should be of more value to them than to a stranger. It came into my possession about twenty years ago, and was found amongst some old silver bought for re-melting by my father, Thomas Johnson, then of 32, John Street, Bedford Row, W.C. The inscription on the sheath runs as follows: 'These scissors were for more than 40 years used by J. Williams, Esq., Comptroller of Customs, who died Oct. 27, 1827. His third son, Capt. W. J. Williams, R.N., constantly carried them from this date till the date of his death, Feb. 11, 1873, when they passed to his third son, E. Williams, who used them till——' "—Mr. Alfred Laurie, Wandsbeck, Westville, near Pinetown, Natal. **We have pleasure in acceding to our contributor's request, and hope that the publication of the above may lead to the discovery of the rightful owner of this strange sheath.**

THIS SOVEREIGN SAVED A LIFE.

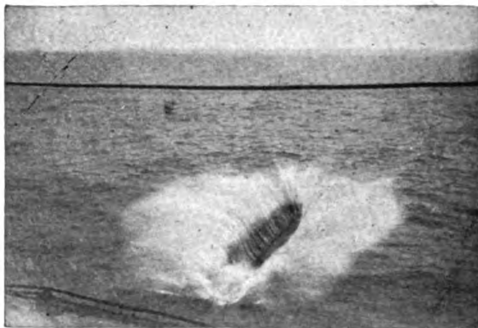
"I'm sending by this mail a photo. of a sovereign which I thought you would like for your 'Curiosity' pages. I was wearing it around my ankle in a little leather money-belt when I was wounded at Warmbad, about seventy or eighty miles north of Pretoria. The bullet (a Mauser) cut the piece clean out and left the sovereign sticking in the wound. Lieutenant Wylly rescued me and gained the V.C."—Corporal E. S. Brown, Tasmanian Imperial Bushman, Penguin, Tasmania.

WHO FIRED THAT SHOT?

"I inclose a photograph of a pipe broken under the most extraordinary circumstances. It happened a few weeks ago in a garden at Newton Abbot. I was innocently smoking it, when my friends and I were startled to hear the report of a rifle, fired at no great distance. Simultaneously my pipe was knocked out of my mouth and broken into two pieces, which fell to the ground, there being some 7ft. between them. The photo., which represents the two pieces, was taken by my friend Mr. A. S. Brookes, of Clifton."—Mr. H. N. Wyman, Caius College, Cambridge.

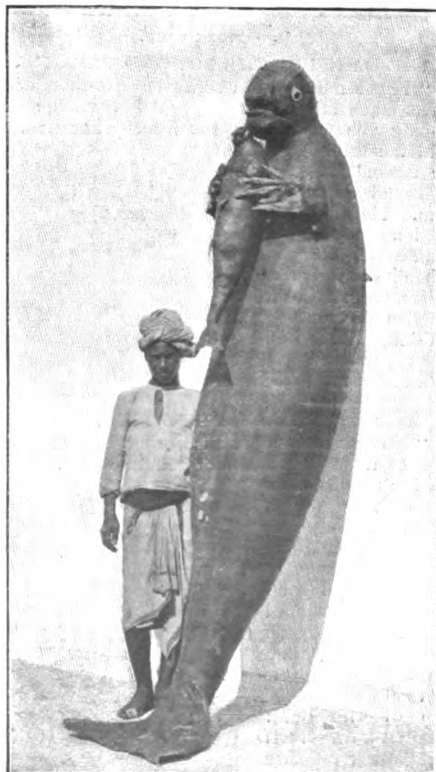
SNAP-SHOTTING A TORPEDO!

"I inclose a photo. I took of an 18in. torpedo just taking the water, fired from this torpedo-boat destroyer, safe on the upper deck. The ship was steaming at the time fifteen knots. It also shows a modern torpedo taking the water horizontally instead of diving as in the earlier types. Many people who have not seen a torpedo fired might wonder what it was, as the ship is not seen in the photo. at all."—Sub.-Lieutenant Arthur L. Blackwood, R.N., H.M.S. *Otter*, China Station.



A MERMAID AND HER BABY.

"Here is a dugong, taken by some native fishermen in their nets near Aden. I photographed it with its young baby in its arms. The Arab standing beside it was about 5ft. 6in. in height, which will show the relatively large size of the dugong. They are usually called 'mermaids' locally, and possibly gave rise to the belief in those fabled beings."—Lieut.-Col. H. J. Barnes, R.A.M.C., 112, Military Road, Colchester.



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1.—BOY AND STORK.

2.—"CAN YOU DANCE?"

3.—STORK TRIES.

4.—BOY FLIES.

THE DANCE OF THE BOY AND THE STORK.

"I am sending you a series of snap-shots which I have taken of my pet stork and a small nephew, hoping you will accept them for publication. We told the little boy that if he danced to the stork it would dance back to him. He was quite brave as long as the stork remained on one leg, but when it suddenly roused itself and began to dance too, he fled precipitately and, I think, rather wisely!"—Miss Mildred Olivier, Wilton Rectory, Wiltshire.

A MESMERIZED BIRD.

"No animal is more susceptible to mesmeric influence than the common or domestic cock. Catch a bird as quietly as possible, so as to avoid alarming him. Place him on a bare floor or a broad slab of wood, and bend his head down until his beak touches the wood. Then with a piece of chalk draw a broad line from the tip of the beak straight forward. If he has been properly handled he will remain as though paralyzed for several minutes. Another method is to tuck the bird's head under his wing and then, holding him at arms' length in both hands, to swing him gently in a circle a few times. The induced unconsciousness is so complete that he may be stood in shallow water a considerable time before he discovers his position. The awakening is extremely comic."—Mr. A. Williams, 7, New Road, Reading.

SLATE v. STONE.

"This window-sill is situated in the boys' playground at St. Thomas's Church Day Schools, Birmingham, and being at a convenient height from the ground has been used by the scholars for over sixty years for sharpening their slate-pencils on. The result is that the stone in many places has been worn away until almost flush with the brickwork, as is clearly shown in the photo. The managers have now forbidden it to be used, as they want to retain it as a curiosity."—Mr. Herbert J. Mason, Carlton House, Edgbaston.

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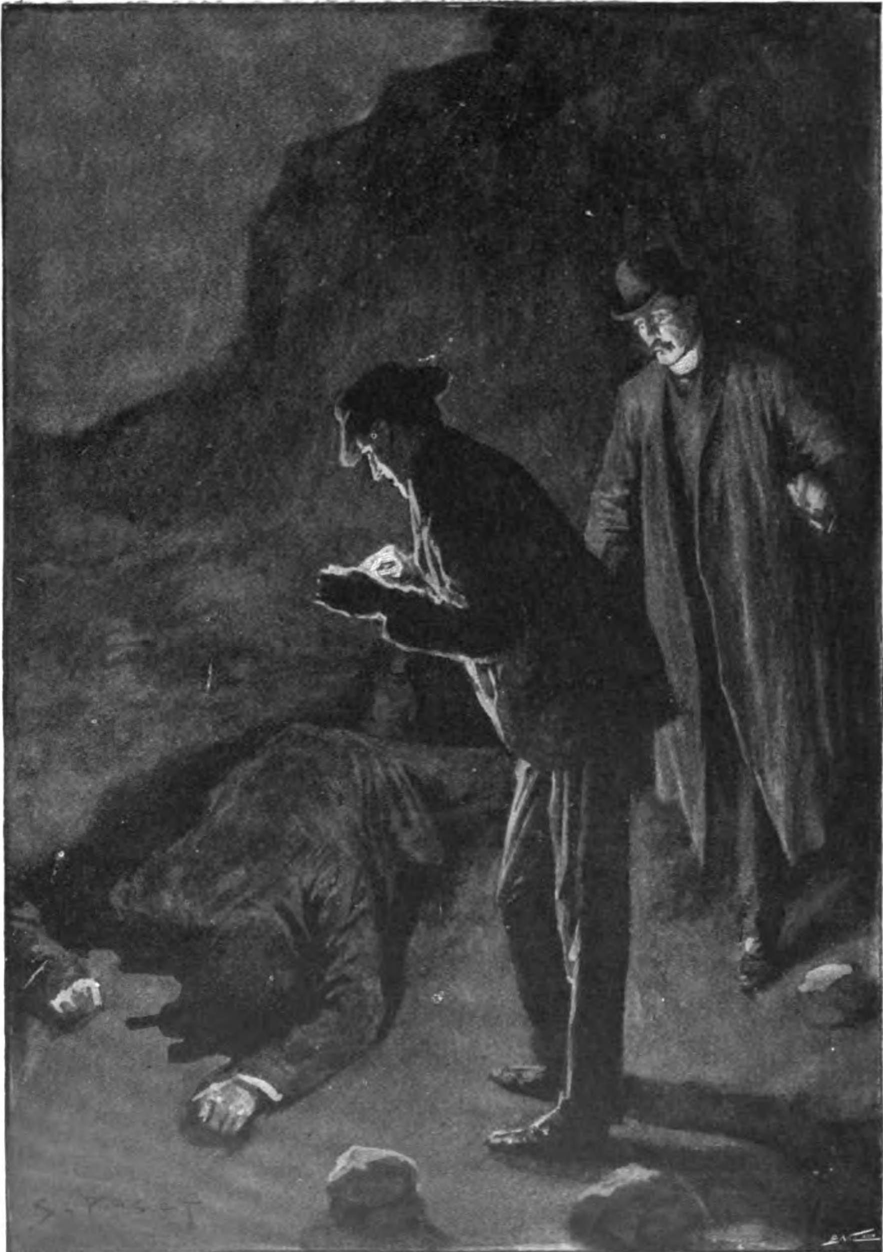

"IT WAS A PROSTRATE MAN FACE DOWNWARDS UPON THE GROUND."

(SEE PAGE 126.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiii. MARCH, 1902. No. 134.

The Hound of the Baskervilles.

ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF

SHERLOCK HOLMES.

By CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER XII.

DEATH ON THE MOOR.

FOR a moment or two I sat breathless, hardly able to believe my ears. Then my senses and my voice came back to me, while a crushing weight of responsibility seemed in an instant to be lifted from my soul. That cold, incisive, ironical voice could belong to but one man in all the world.

"Holmes!" I cried—"Holmes!"

"Come out," said he, "and please be careful with the revolver."

I stooped under the rude lintel, and there he sat upon a stone outside, his grey eyes dancing with amusement as they fell upon my astonished features. He was thin and worn, but clear and alert, his keen face bronzed by the sun and roughened by the wind. In his tweed suit and cloth cap he looked like any other tourist upon the moor, and he had contrived, with that cat-like love of personal cleanliness which was one of his characteristics, that his chin should be as smooth and his linen as perfect as if he were in Baker Street.

"I never was more glad to see anyone in my life," said I, as I wrung him by the hand.

"Or more astonished, eh?"

"Well, I must confess to it."

"The surprise was not all on one side, I assure you. I had no idea that you had found my occasional retreat, still less that you were inside it, until I was within twenty paces of the door."

"My footprint, I presume?"

"No, Watson; I fear that I could not undertake to recognise your footprint amid all the footprints of the world. If you seriously desire to deceive me you must change your tobacconist; for when I see the stub of a cigarette marked Bradley, Oxford Street, I know that my friend Watson is in the neighbourhood. You will see it there beside the path. You threw it down, no doubt, at that supreme moment when you charged into the empty hut."

"Exactly."

"I thought as much—and knowing your admirable tenacity I was convinced that you were sitting in ambush, a weapon within reach, waiting for the tenant to return. So you actually thought that I was the criminal?"

"I did not know who you were, but I was determined to find out."

"Excellent, Watson! And how did you localize me? You saw me, perhaps, on the night of the convict hunt, when I was so imprudent as to allow the moon to rise behind me?"

"Yes, I saw you then."

"And have, no doubt, searched all the huts until you came to this one?"

"No, your boy had been observed, and that gave me a guide where to look."

"The old gentleman with the telescope, no doubt. I could not make it out when first I saw the light flashing upon the lens." He rose and peeped into the hut. "Ha, I see that Cartwright has brought up some supplies. What's this paper? So you have been to Coombe Tracey, have you?"

"Yes."

"To see Mrs. Laura Lyons?"

"Exactly."

"Well done! Our researches have

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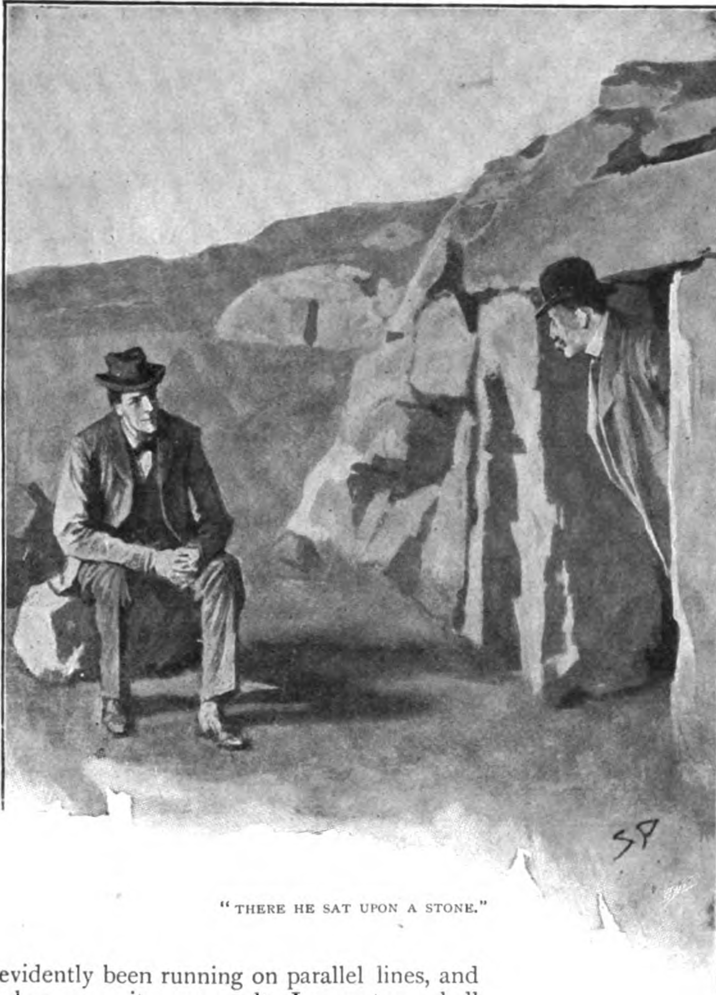

"THERE HE SAT UPON A STONE."

which you ran which led me to come down and examine the matter for myself. Had I been with Sir Henry and you it is evident that my point of view would have been the same as yours, and my presence would have warned our very formidable opponents to be on their guard. As it is, I have been able to get about as I could not possibly have done had I been living at the Hall, and I remain an unknown factor in the business, ready to throw in all my weight at a critical moment."

"But why keep me in the dark?"

"For you to know could not have helped us, and might possibly have led to my discovery. You would have wished to tell me something, or in your kindness you would have brought me out some comfort or other, and so an unnecessary risk would be run. I brought Cartwright down with me—you remember the little chap at the Express office—and he has seen after my simple wants: a loaf of bread and a clean collar. What does man want more? He has given me an extra pair of eyes upon a very active pair of feet, and both have been invaluable."

"Then my reports have all been wasted!" My voice trembled as I recalled the pains and the pride with which I had composed them.

Holmes took a bundle of papers from his pocket.

"Here are your reports, my dear fellow, and very well thumbed, I assure you. I made excellent arrangements, and they are only delayed one day upon their way. I must compliment you exceedingly upon the zeal and the intelligence which you have shown over an extraordinarily difficult case."

I was still rather raw over the deception

evidently been running on parallel lines, and when we unite our results I expect we shall have a fairly full knowledge of the case."

"Well, I am glad from my heart that you are here, for indeed the responsibility and the mystery were both becoming too much for my nerves. But how in the name of wonder did you come here, and what have you been doing? I thought that you were in Baker Street working out that case of blackmailing."

"That was what I wished you to think."

"Then you use me, and yet do not trust me!" I cried, with some bitterness. "I think that I have deserved better at your hands, Holmes."

"My dear fellow, you have been invaluable to me in this as in many other cases, and I beg that you will forgive me if I have seemed to play a trick upon you. In truth, it was partly for your own sake that I did it, and it was my appreciation of the danger

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which had been practised upon me, but the warmth of Holmes's praise drove my anger from my mind. I felt also in my heart that he was right in what he said, and that it was really best for our purpose that I should not have known that he was upon the moor.

"That's better," said he, seeing the shadow rise from my face. "And now tell me the result of your visit to Mrs. Laura Lyons—it was not difficult for me to guess that it was to see her that you had gone, for I am already aware that she is the one person in Coombe Tracey who might be of service to us in the matter. In fact, if you had not gone to-day it is exceedingly probable that I should have gone to-morrow."

The sun had set and dusk was settling over the moor. The air had turned chill, and we withdrew into the hut for warmth. There, sitting together in the twilight, I told Holmes of my conversation with the lady. So interested was he that I had to repeat some of it twice before he was satisfied.

"This is most important," said he, when I had concluded. "It fills up a gap which I had been unable to bridge, in this most complex affair. You are aware, perhaps, that a close intimacy exists between this lady and the man Stapleton?"

"I did not know of a close intimacy."

"There can be no doubt about the matter. They meet, they write, there is a complete understanding between them. Now, this puts a very powerful weapon into our hands. If I could only use it to detach his wife——"

"His wife?"

"I am giving you some information now, in return for all that you have given me. The lady who has passed here as Miss Stapleton is in reality his wife."

"Good heavens, Holmes! Are you sure of what you say? How could he have permitted Sir Henry to fall in love with her?"

"Sir Henry's falling in love could do no harm to anyone except Sir Henry. He took particular care that Sir Henry did not *make* love to her, as you have yourself observed. I repeat that the lady is his wife and not his sister."

"But why this elaborate deception?"

"Because he foresaw that she would be very much more useful to him in the character of a free woman."

All my unspoken instincts, my vague suspicions, suddenly took shape and centred upon the naturalist. In that impassive, colourless man, with his straw hat and his butterfly-net, I seemed to see something terrible—a creature of infinite patience and craft, with a smiling face and a murderous heart.

"It is he, then, who is our enemy—it is he who dogged us in London?"

"So I read the riddle."

"And the warning—it must have come from her!"

"Exactly."

The shape of some monstrous villainy, half seen, half guessed, loomed through the darkness which had girt me so long.

"But are you sure of this, Holmes? How do you know that the woman is his wife?"

"Because he so far forgot himself as to tell you a true piece of autobiography upon the occasion when he first met you, and I daresay he has many a time regretted it since. He *was* once a schoolmaster in the North of England. Now, there is no one more easy to trace than a schoolmaster. There are scholastic agencies by which one may identify any man who has been in the profession. A little investigation showed me that a school had come to grief under atrocious circumstances, and that the man who had owned it—the name was different—had disappeared with his wife. The descriptions agreed. When I learned that the missing man was devoted to entomology the identification was complete."

The darkness was rising, but much was still hidden by the shadows.

"If this woman is in truth his wife, where does Mrs. Laura Lyons come in?" I asked.

"That is one of the points upon which your own researches have shed a light. Your interview with the lady has cleared the situation very much. I did not know about a projected divorce between herself and her husband. In that case, regarding Stapleton as an unmarried man, she counted no doubt upon becoming his wife."

"And when she is undeceived?"

"Why, then we may find the lady of service. It must be our first duty to see her—both of us—to-morrow. Don't you think, Watson, that you are away from your charge rather long? Your place should be at Baskerville Hall."

The last red streaks had faded away in the west and night had settled upon the moor. A few faint stars were gleaming in a violet sky.

"One last question, Holmes," I said, as I rose. "Surely there is no need of secrecy between you and me. What is the meaning of it all? What is he after?"

Holmes's voice sank as he answered:—

"It is murder, Watson—refined, cold-blooded, deliberate murder. Do not ask me for particulars. My nets are closing upon

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him, even as his are upon Sir Henry, and with your help he is already almost at my mercy. There is but one danger which can threaten us. It is that he should strike before we are ready to do so. Another day —two at the most—and I have my case complete, but until then guard your charge as closely as ever a fond mother watched her ailing child. Your mission to-day has justified itself, and yet I could almost wish that you had not left his side—Hark!"

A terrible scream—a prolonged yell of horror and anguish burst out of the silence of the moor. That frightful cry turned the blood to ice in my veins.

"Oh, my God!" I gasped. "What is it? What does it mean?"

Holmes had sprung to his feet, and I saw his dark, athletic outline at the door of the hut, his shoulders stooping, his head thrust forward, his face peering into the darkness.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Hush!"

The cry had been loud on account of its vehemence, but it had pealed out from somewhere far off on the shadowy plain. Now it burst upon our ears, nearer, louder, more urgent than before.

"Where is it?" Holmes whispered; and I knew from the thrill of his voice that he, the man of iron, was shaken to the soul. "Where is it, Watson?"

"There, I think." I pointed into the darkness.

"No, there!"

Again the agonized cry swept through the silent night, louder and much nearer than ever. And a new sound mingled with it, a deep, muttered rumble, musical and yet menacing, rising and falling like the low, constant murmur of the sea.

"The hound!" cried Holmes. "Come, Watson, come! Great heavens, if we are too late!"

He had started running swiftly over the moor, and I had followed at his heels. But now from somewhere among the broken ground immediately in front of us there came one last despairing yell, and then a dull, heavy thud. We halted and listened. Not another sound broke the heavy silence of the windless night.

I saw Holmes put his hand to his forehead like a man distracted. He stamped his feet upon the ground.

"He has beaten us, Watson. We are too late."

"No, no, surely not!"

"Fool that I was to hold my hand. And you, Watson, see what comes of abandoning your charge! But, by Heaven, if the worst has happened, we'll avenge him!"

Blindly we ran through the gloom, blundering against boulders, forcing our way through gorse bushes, panting up hills and rushing down slopes, heading always in the direction whence those dreadful sounds had come. At every rise Holmes looked eagerly round him, but the shadows were thick upon the moor and nothing moved upon its dreary face.

"Can you see anything?"

"Nothing."

"But, hark, what is that?"

A low moan had fallen upon our ears. There it was again upon our left! On that side a ridge of rocks ended in a sheer cliff which overlooked a stone-strewn slope. On its jagged face was spread-eagled some dark, irregular object. As we ran towards it the vague outline hardened into a definite shape. It was a prostrate man face downwards upon the ground, the head doubled under him at a horrible angle, the shoulders rounded and the body hunched together as if in the act of throwing a somersault. So grotesque was the attitude that I could not for the instant realize that that moan had been the passing of his soul. Not a whisper, not a rustle, rose now from the dark figure over which we stooped. Holmes laid his hand upon him, and held it up again, with an exclamation of horror. The gleam of the match which he struck shone upon his clotted fingers and upon the ghastly pool which widened slowly from the crushed skull of the victim. And it shone upon something else which turned our hearts sick and faint within us—the body of Sir Henry Baskerville!

There was no chance of either of us forgetting that peculiar ruddy tweed suit—the very one which he had worn on the first morning that we had seen him in Baker Street. We caught the one clear glimpse of it, and then the match flickered and went out, even as the hope had gone out of our souls. Holmes groaned, and his face glimmered white through the darkness.

"The brute! the brute!" I cried, with clenched hands. "Oh, Holmes, I shall never forgive myself for having left him to his fate."

"I am more to blame than you, Watson. In order to have my case well rounded and complete, I have thrown away the life of my client. It is the greatest blow which has befallen me in my career. But how could I know—how *could* I know—that he

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would risk his life alone upon the moor in the face of all my warnings?"

"That we should have heard his screams—my God, those screams!—and yet have been unable to save him! Where is this brute of a hound which drove him to his death? It may be lurking among these rocks at this instant. And Stapleton, where is he? He shall answer for this deed."

"He shall. I will see to that. Uncle and nephew have been murdered—the one frightened to death by the very sight of a beast which he thought to be supernatural, the other driven to his end in his wild flight to escape from it. But now we have to prove the connection between the man and the beast. Save from what we heard, we cannot even swear to the existence of the latter, since Sir Henry has evidently died from the fall. But, by heavens, cunning as he is, the fellow shall be in my power before another day is past!"

We stood with bitter hearts on either side of the mangled body, overwhelmed by this sudden and irrevocable disaster which had brought all our long and weary labours to so piteous an end. Then, as the moon rose, we climbed to the top of the rocks over which our poor friend had fallen, and from the summit we gazed out over the shadowy moor, half silver and half gloom. Far away, miles off, in the direction of Grimpen, a single steady yellow light was shining. It could only come from the lonely abode of the Stapletons. With a bitter curse I shook my fist at it as I gazed.

"Why should we not seize him at once?"

"Our case is not complete. The fellow is wary and cunning to the last degree. It is not what we know, but what we can prove. If we make one false move the villain may escape us yet."

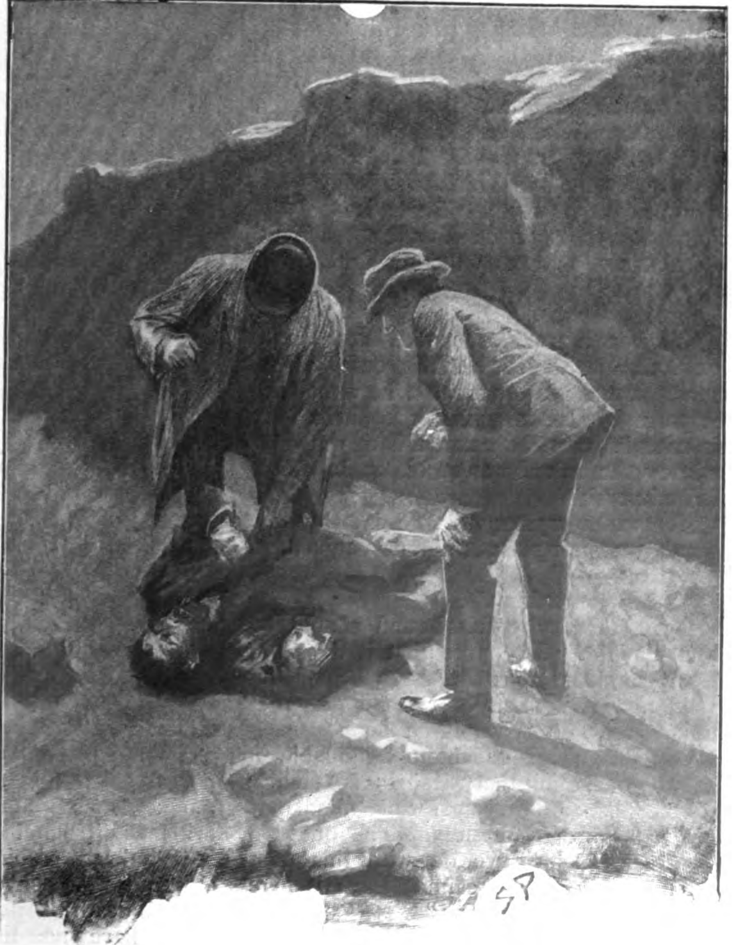
"What can we do?"

"There will be plenty for us to do to-morrow. To-night we can only perform the last offices to our poor friend."

Together we made our way down the precipitous slope and approached the body, black and clear against the silvered stones. The agony of those contorted limbs struck me with a spasm of pain and blurred my eyes with tears.

"We must send for help, Holmes! We cannot carry him all the way to the Hall. Good heavens, are you mad?"

He had uttered a cry and bent over the body. Now he was dancing and laughing and wringing my hand. Could this be my stern, self-contained friend? These were hidden fires, indeed!



"IT WAS THE FACE OF SELDEN, THE CRIMINAL."

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"A beard! A beard! The man has a beard!"

"A beard?"

"It is not the Baronet—it is—why, it is my neighbour, the convict!"

With feverish haste we had turned the body over, and that dripping beard was pointing up to the cold, clear moon. There could be no doubt about the beetling forehead, the sunken animal eyes. It was, indeed, the same face which had glared upon me in the light of the candle from over the rock—the face of Selden, the criminal.

Then in an instant it was all clear to me. I remembered how the Baronet had told me that he had handed his old wardrobe to Barrymore. Barrymore had passed it on in order to help Selden in his escape. Boots, shirt, cap—it was all Sir Henry's. The tragedy was still black enough, but this man had at least deserved death by the laws of his country. I told Holmes how the matter stood, my heart bubbling over with thankfulness and joy.

"Then the clothes have been the poor fellow's death," said he. "It is clear enough that the hound has been laid on from some article of Sir Henry's—the boot which was abstracted in the hotel, in all probability—and so ran this man down. There is one very singular thing, however: How came Selden, in the darkness, to know that the hound was on his trail?"

"He heard him."

"To hear a hound upon the moor would not work a hard man like this convict into such a paroxysm of terror that he would risk recapture by screaming wildly for help. By his cries he must have run a long way after he knew the animal was on his track. How did he know?"

"A greater mystery to me is why this hound, presuming that all our conjectures are correct ——"

"I presume nothing."

"Well, then, why this hound should be loose to-night. I suppose that it does not always run loose upon the moor. Stapleton would not let it go unless he had reason to think that Sir Henry would be there."

"My difficulty is the more formidable of the two, for I think that we shall very shortly get an explanation of yours, while mine may remain for ever a mystery. The question now is, what shall we do with this poor wretch's body? We cannot leave it here to the foxes and the ravens."

"I suggest that we put it in one of the huts until we can communicate with the police."

"Exactly. I have no doubt that you and I could carry it so far. Halloa, Watson, what's this? It's the man himself, by all that's wonderful and audacious! Not a word to show your suspicions—not a word, or my plans crumble to the ground."

A figure was approaching us over the moor, and I saw the dull red glow of a cigar. The moon shone upon him, and I could distinguish the dapper shape and jaunty walk of the naturalist. He stopped when he saw us, and then came on again.

"Why, Dr. Watson, that's not you, is it? You are the last man that I should have expected to see out on the moor at this time of night. But, dear me, what's this? Somebody hurt? Not—don't tell me that it is our friend Sir Henry!" He hurried past me and stooped over the dead man. I heard a sharp intake of his breath and the cigar fell from his fingers.

"Who—who's this?" he stammered.

"It is Selden, the man who escaped from Princetown."

Stapleton turned a ghastly face upon us, but by a supreme effort he had overcome his amazement and his disappointment. He looked sharply from Holmes to me.

"Dear me! What a very shocking affair! How did he die?"

"He appears to have broken his neck by falling over these rocks. My friend and I were strolling on the moor when we heard a cry."

"I heard a cry also. That was what brought me out. I was uneasy about Sir Henry."

"Why about Sir Henry in particular?" I could not help asking.

"Because I had suggested that he should come over. When he did not come I was surprised, and I naturally became alarmed for his safety when I heard cries upon the moor. By the way"—his eyes darted again from my face to Holmes's—"did you hear anything else besides a cry?"

"No," said Holmes; "did you?"

"No."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Oh, you know the stories that the peasants tell about a phantom hound, and so on. It is said to be heard at night upon the moor. I was wondering if there were any evidence of such a sound to-night."

"We heard nothing of the kind," said I.

"And what is your theory of this poor fellow's death?"

"I have no doubt that anxiety and exposure have driven him off his head. He

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"'WHO—WHO'S THIS?' HE STAMMERED."

has rushed about the moor in a crazy state and eventually fallen over here and broken his neck."

"That seems the most reasonable theory," said Stapleton, and he gave a sigh which I took to indicate his relief. "What do you think about it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

My friend bowed his compliments.

"You are quick at identification," said he.

"We have been expecting you in these parts since Dr. Watson came down. You are in time to see a tragedy."

"Yes, indeed. I have no doubt that my friend's explanation will cover the facts. I will take an unpleasant remembrance back to London with me to-morrow."

"Oh, you return to-morrow?"

"That is my intention."

"I hope your visit has cast some light

upon those occurrences which have puzzled us?"

Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"One cannot always have the success for which one hopes. An investigator needs facts, and not legends or rumours. It has not been a satisfactory case."

My friend spoke in his frankest and most unconcerned manner. Stapleton still looked hard at him. Then he turned to me.

"I would suggest carrying this poor fellow to my house, but it would give my sister such a fright that I do not feel justified in doing it. I think that if we put something over his face he will be safe until morning."

And so it was arranged. Resisting Stapleton's offer of hospitality, Holmes and I set off to Baskerville Hall, leaving the naturalist to return alone. Looking back

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we saw the figure moving slowly away over the broad moor, and behind him that one black smudge on the silvered slope which showed where the man was lying who had come so horribly to his end.

"We're at close grips at last," said Holmes, as we walked together across the moor. "What a nerve the fellow has! How he pulled himself together in the face of what must have been a paralyzing shock when he found that the wrong man had fallen a victim to his plot. I told you in London, Watson, and I tell you now again, that we have never had a foeman more worthy of our steel."

"I am sorry that he has seen you."

"And so was I at first. But there was no getting out of it."

"What effect do you think it will have upon his plans, now that he knows you are here?"

"It may cause him to be more cautious, or it may drive him to desperate measures at once. Like most clever criminals, he may be too confident in his own cleverness and imagine that he has completely deceived us."

"Why should we not arrest him at once?"

"My dear Watson, you were born to be a man of action. Your instinct is always to do something energetic. But supposing, for argument's sake, that we had him arrested to-night, what on earth the better off should we be for that? We could prove nothing against him. There's the devilish cunning of it! If he were acting through a human agent we could get some evidence, but if we were to drag this great dog to the light of day it would not help us in putting a rope round the neck of its master."

"Surely we have a case."

"Not a shadow of one—only surmise and conjecture. We should be laughed out of court if we came with such a story and such evidence."

"There is Sir Charles's death."

"Found dead without a mark upon him. You and I know that he died of sheer fright, and we know also what frightened him; but how are we to get twelve stolid jurymen to know it? What signs are there of a hound? Where are the marks of its fangs? Of course, we know that a hound does not bite a dead body, and that Sir Charles was dead before ever the brute overtook him. But we have to *prove* all this, and we are not in a position to do it."

"Well, then, to-night?"

"We are not much better off to-night. Again, there was no direct connection between the hound and the man's death. We never saw the hound. We heard it; but we could not prove that it was running upon this man's trail. There is a complete absence of motive. No, my dear fellow; we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that we have no case at present, and that it is worth our while to run any risk in order to establish one."

"And how do you propose to do so?"

"I have great hopes of what Mrs. Laura Lyons may do for us when the position of affairs is made clear to her. And I have my own plan as well. Sufficient for to-morrow is the evil thereof; but I hope before the day is past to have the upper hand at last."

I could draw nothing farther from him, and he walked, lost in thought, as far as the Baskerville gates.

"Are you coming up?"

"Yes; I see no reason for further concealment. But one last word, Watson. Say nothing of the hound to Sir Henry. Let him think that Selden's death was as Stapleton would have us believe. He will have a better nerve for the ordeal which he will have to undergo to-morrow, when he is engaged, if I remember your report aright, to dine with these people."

"And so am I."

"Then you must excuse yourself and he must go alone. That will be easily arranged. And now, if we are too late for dinner, I think that we are both ready for our suppers."

(*To be continued.*)

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THE ROMANCE OF BRITANNIA.

By Beckles Willson.

It is related that when Carlyle first came to London he visited the Mint in the company of a young German, who, gazing at the design for the new pence, halfpence, and farthings, observed that Britannia having acquired a helmet might now pass readily for Minerva's twin sister.

"That may weel be," retorted the cynical philosopher, who did not entertain a very high opinion of the wisdom of his countrymen, "but *no when you hear them talk!*"

THE FIRST BRITANNIA, REIGN OF HADRIAN, A.D. 122.

Is it not curious that just such an unflattering remark was passed on the beauteous lady who first posed in this kingdom for the figure of Britannia, and whose likeness long represented Britannia on our coinage? "No woman," wrote one chronicler, ungallantly enough, "could have less wit and more beauty." Yet it is by no means certain that the character of the handsome Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond, has not been greatly maligned, or that one who was capable of inspiring so great a passion in so many bosoms was not really the possessor of admirable traits of mind as well as of person.

But the romance of Britannia begins long before the days of the Merrie Monarch and his Court. We must indeed go back to ancient Rome. When the Emperor Hadrian returned from his expedition to Britain, A.D. 121, in his train were several British maidens meet to grace his triumph. One of these, hailing from Wintona (Winchester), named Margia, so affected the managers of the ceremonies by her grace and beauty that she was properly chosen to symbolize the new Roman province in the far north. The story runs that the lovely Margia sat for her statue to the sculptor Critonius, who afterwards married her. But, although the statue has perished, during the same year a female figure appeared on a Roman coin bearing the legend "Britannia." This figure is very similar, so far as pose and apparel go, with that on our copper coinage to-day. Such was the first Britannia. She appeared again on a coin of Antoninus

BRITANNIA OF ANTONINUS PIUS, A.D. 140.

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Pius and on a medal of Commodus. It was a custom among the Romans to represent outlying portions of the Empire and even Rome itself by symbolical female figures. One of the most familiar of the Roman coins relating to Britain represents Britannia seated on a rock, in an attitude of dejection; before her rests a large oval shield and a military standard. This coin is often found in England, and was coined under an Antoninus in the second century.

FRANCES STUART, THE ORIGINAL OF THE MODERN FIGURE OF BRITANNIA.

Britannia as a national prototype had appeared in Rome; but only to disappear. Probably she died with the lovely Margia; for after the fine medal of Commodus nothing more is heard of her until King James I. exchanged his palace of Holyrood for that of Whitehall, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The spirit of Margia slept, in fact, for more than fourteen centuries, and was rudely waked to life by an obscure bard's crying in her ear: "Awake, Brittania; rise, O maid, and sing!" Had the maid known of this spelling of her name she might perhaps have been less inclined to obey the poet's mandate; although two t's and a single n really do occur on the Commodus medal, a proof that Britain was being less thought of and cared about at Rome.

As to the stirring ode itself, it was in celebration of the accession of a British Emperor—James, to wit. For it is not very surprising to find on an accession piece of 1603 this legend: "James I., Emperor of the whole Island of Britain and King of France and Ireland." Such a title was, of course, quite in accordance with James's idea of the boundless power and exalted position of his throne.

Here and there, after the virtual union of the two Crowns in a single monarch during this and the succeeding reign, we come across chance references to Britannia; but she is yet a nebulous, uncertain figure. The renaissance of the symbol now so familiar is delayed until the coming from France to the Court of Charles II. of a beautiful young damsel named Frances Stuart. This was in 1662, and Miss Stuart was only seventeen years old. She was the daughter of Walter Stuart, a younger son of the Baron of Blantyre and a distant relation of the King's. Personally recommended by the Queen Dowager Henrietta Maria, she came to Whitehall, and was immediately appointed

From a Painting] FRANCES STUART. [*by Gascar.*

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Maid of Honour to Queen Katherine. Her beauty soon created a sensation: everybody at Court, from monarch to serving-man, fell under its spell. Indeed, it has been said that Frances Stuart was the only woman with whom Charles was ever really in love. But steadfastly did she resist all the Royal allurements, attaching herself loyally to the person of the Queen, denying herself to suitors, and leading a blameless, though far from prosaic or austere, life.

FRANCES STUART, WHEN DUCHESS OF RICHMOND.
From a Painting by Lely.

It appears to have been at some charades in the winter of 1663-4 that Miss Stuart first appeared in the character of Britannia, a character in which she was afterwards painted by Lely and Gascar, and in which she appeared on a medallion by John Roettier, when that artist was appointed designer to the Mint. To whom the idea of Miss Stuart's personation of Britannia is due is not known; it has been said to have been Charles himself; whilst others ascribe it to the talented medallist whose classical studies and familiarity with the ancient Roman coinage would naturally suggest a revival of Britannia. All we know is that Roettier, in the course of several sittings from His Majesty for the purpose of making a medallion in commemoration of the Restoration, frequently met Miss Stuart, as well as Lady Castlemaine and other ladies of the Court, that he plainly expressed his admiration, and requested to be permitted to execute a bust in relief of her also. The idea greatly charmed the King, who laughingly declared that his "fair cousin's" face should serve as the reverse of the proposed medal. This must have shocked even the levity of the Court; for few were aware that Charles really had thoughts, in case his Queen's illness had a fatal termination, of leading the beautiful Frances Stuart to the altar. Roettier happily proposed a literal fulfilment of the King's idea. His invention, although it offended some at first, was, a few years later, when it came to appear on the coinage, greatly approved of by the nation.

KING CHARLES II.'S RESTORATION MEDAL.

Pepys, in his diary, under date of February 25th, 1667, observes: "At my goldsmith's did observe the King's new medal, where in little there is Miss Stuart's face, as well done as ever I saw anything in my whole life, I think; and a pretty thing it is," he adds, "that he should choose her

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face to represent Britannia by." Which was literally true!

In this first design Justice, Hercules, and Pallas are seen presenting an olive branch to Britannia, who is seated under a cliff near the seashore holding a spear and shield. Generally well executed as the next large national medal in which Miss Stuart figured was, the lady was by no means satisfied with the posture of herself as Britannia. One morning the surprised artist received a call at the Mint from the object of his adoration, who coolly informed him that her right leg was awkwardly placed on the medal, and so gave her great displeasure! This objectionable medal had been struck to commemorate the Peace of Breda, 1667. There

BRITANNIA CONTEMPLATING HER NAVIES—PEACE OF BREDA MEDAL, 1667.

was another in honour of Britain's naval victories owning the same imperfection. In deference to the lady's prejudices the inelegant Britannias were recalled and the desired improvement made by the artist.

That Miss Stuart's likeness appeared on the coinage in 1672 was probably due to Roettier's rather than to the King's initiative. In the intervening years the original Britannia had experienced some thrilling history, which is duly recorded in the memoirs of that reign. One dark, stormy night, while the Breda medal was the talk of the kingdom, she eloped from her room at Whitehall and joined her lover, the Duke of Richmond, who had quarrelled with his liege lord. They met at the Bear Inn, by London Bridge, and escaped into Kent, where they were privately married. Her husband, the Duke, was afterwards banished, dying abroad in the very year that his Duchess's portrait, in the character of Britannia, was being newly passed from hand to hand amongst the yeoman and petty tradesfolk of the realm. At his decease the little gold medallion of the Duchess which he wore was given by her to Roettier. It may now be seen by the curious in the British Museum. That the medallist

THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND AS BRITANNIA—THE NAVAL VICTORIES MEDAL, 1667.

was himself in love with his Britannia was generally believed. Amongst others, it is mentioned by Evelyn and Horace Walpole.

THE FIRST BRITANNIA ON AN ENGLISH COIN, 1672.

So much, then, for the first Britannia on our British coins. It is interesting to know that she survived, in a likeness readily recognisable throughout the reigns of James II. and William III. When Queen Anne ascended the throne it was another matter. The Duchess was, however, spared the pangs of seeing herself displaced on the currency, even by her Queen: she died in the very year of Anne's accession. The new copper and small silver coinage, after some delay, appeared, and Anne herself was found to occupy the position so long held by her deceased subject. The figure of Britannia is the same, even to the bared knee on the farthings: there is the shield with the Union Jack, the extended olive branch, and the spear; but the face is not the face of Frances Stuart, but of Queen Anne.

In the meantime Britannia had seized hold of the popular imagination. She was generally accepted as the ideal human symbol of the greatness of Britain; and our painters and sculptors sought to present her in all her ideal attributes of majesty

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THE FINEST BRITANNIA IN MARBLE.
From Bacon's Monument to Chatham in Westminster Abbey—Modelled from the Sculptor's Wife.

and beauty. But the engravers at the Mint were too eager to curry favour with Royalty, wherefore we have, during the reigns of the early Georges, occasionally an attempt to convey a likeness of the Royal consort rather than an ideal Britannia.

It is not until 1797 that Britannia on our coins grasps the rident instead of the spear, an allusion to British naval activity of that day. She still holds out the olive branch, however reluctant the rest of Europe is to receive that token of peace.

A full generation before a new model had been given to the world of a lovely and dignified Britannia. In his monument to Chatham in Westminster Abbey, John Bacon introduced what is still regarded as the finest Britannia extant in marble. Perhaps a close second is that by Nollekens in his monument to the "Three Captains of Rodney," as it is called, which occupies an adjacent site in our national temple of fame. The romantic circumstance connected with both these statues of Britannia is that they are each said to have been taken from the respective wives of the sculptors. The story of John Bacon and his model is especially interesting. In early life Bacon was apprenticed to a potter, with whose step-daughter, Martha Holland, he fell in love. The couple became engaged, but misunderstandings arose and they separated, not meeting for many years. Bacon, thinking Mistress Holland had forgotten him, allowed himself at length to be drawn into a matrimonial alliance with a woman he did not love, only to discover, a few months after marriage, that the fair Martha was on his account slowly breaking her heart. This discovery of their mutual feelings was also made by the wife, who, dying of mortification, left the lovers free to fly into each other's arms. One of the first pieces of work Bacon executed after this second marriage was a model of his handsome wife as Britannia. It afterwards served as the pattern for his Westminster Abbey masterpiece.

NOLLEKENS' STATUE OF BRITANNIA IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, ALSO MODELLED FROM THE SCULPTOR'S WIFE.

The success justly attained by this statue stirred the celebrated Nollekens to jealous emulation. His biographer declares that his monument to the three captains was done in avowed imitation of Bacon's work. Mrs. Nollekens, who laid claims to being a great beauty in her youth, insisted, it is said, in posing as Britannia; and her admirer, Dr. Johnson, was ready to declare that the likeness was by no means too flattering. But there were, be it said, malicious wits about town who averred that "Little Nolley" had viewed his spouse through a special lens of the fancy, and had derived his inspiration for Britannia to a greater degree from the comely proportion of Miss Coleman, a Covent Garden dancer.

It was this same Mrs. Nollekens whose joint

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reputation with her husband for parsimony at a later date set all London in roars of laughter. Once Lord Londonderry sat for his bust on a bitterly cold day, and during the sculptor's momentary absence from the studio got up and put some more coals on the small fire.

"My lord, my lord," cried the sculptor's wife, in deep concern, "I don't know what Mr. Nollekens will say."

"Never mind," said his lordship, calmly. "Tell him to put 'em all in the bill."

In pictorial art, and especially in the satirical designs of the day, Britannia had also now grown to be a familiar figure. Rowlandson and Gillray invoke her presence freely in their satires, although John Bull, as a generic type, is much oftener portrayed.

When the Frenchman Droz came to be designer at the Mint towards the end of the eighteenth century he had the effrontery to execute an undraped Britannia with a distinct French cast of features, but Pitt would have none of it, and so the device was abandoned. It is curious how the figure of Britannia on the coins was jealously watched by imaginative partisans during the reigns of the Georges. One Whig charged the sculptor with giving her coiffure a Jacobite turn, while Horace Walpole in his "Letters" declares that one faction distinctly saw a Hanoverian rat gnawing at Britannia's bared knee on the farthing!

The honour of helmeting Britannia, and so making her more like Minerva than ever, belongs to Pistrucchi in 1821, which engraver, it is said, greatly offended George IV. by making him appear too corpulent!

Four years later the long-borne olive branch was dropped—not suddenly, for the curious will note that Britannia's arm had drooped to her side in the previous issue of 1823.

In 1840 appeared Mulready's design of Britannia on the new postage-envelope, which grew to be, and is yet, to philatelists, one of the most familiar of all the figures of the national goddess.

About this time Mr. Punch, too, made his bow to the world. In his pages the first Britannia, drawn by Herring, was by no means as graceful or engaging as she was afterwards to become under the pencils of Leech, Tenniel, and Sambourne, and especially of the two last-named, whose stately Britannia embodies much more the poetical idea than even the fair Frances Stuart herself. Of the lovely Margia of Winchester, the original Britannia of the legend, there remains unluckily little to aid us in forming a just conception.

THE LATEST BRITANNIA—DESIGN OF KING EDWARD VII.'S CORONATION MEDAL.
(By permission of Messrs. Elkington & Co.)

Among the very latest of the Britannias is that on the Coronation Medal which has recently been executed under the eye of King Edward and approved of by His Majesty. It can hardly escape attention that Herr Fuchs's conception of Britannia displays many of the traits and attributes which marked Roettier's original design nearly two and a half centuries ago, and which have not since recurred on the coinage.

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Breaking the Ice.

By Richard Marsh.

SHORTLY after my seventeenth birthday Mr. Sanford and I had a serious difference of opinion which almost amounted to a quarrel. I do not say that the fault was entirely his. But that is not the point. The point is whether, every time you happen to be not quite exactly right, you are to be treated as if you were a mere worm, and have your age thrown in your face.

It was not my fault that I was only seventeen. As Mr. Pitt said—I remember reading about it at Mrs. Sawyer's—being young is a crime one grows out of. Rome was not built in a day. You cannot do everything at once. It is quite certain that you cannot be ninety in five minutes. I was perfectly aware that Mr. Sanford was twenty-five. It is not a time of life against which I have a word to say. I feel sure that it is a delightful age. But I cannot understand why persons who are twenty-five should consider themselves so immensely superior to persons who are only seventeen. Or if they are superior, and are known to be, that is no reason why they should show it.

On my birthday Mr. Sanford gave me a box of gloves. Now, I am 5ft. 5½in. high. I know I am, because when Dick made me stand up against the wall with my hair down and a book on my head, he said he never should have thought it from the look of me. Which was not a nice thing to say. But, then, brothers have manners of their own. I want to know what size hand a person who is nearly 5ft. 6in. high ought to have. Because, directly I opened the box, I saw that they were lovely gloves, but that they were all six and a half.

"Oh, what a pity!" I cried. "They'll be like boats on me! I take six and a quarter!"

Of course, I am conscious that it was not precisely a civil remark to make; and had I reflected I might not have made it. But it was out before I even guessed it was coming. As it was out, it was. And, anyhow, it was simply the truth. At the time Mr. Sanford was as nice as possible. He expressed his regret for the mistake which had occurred, and volunteered to change them.

He did change them. Four or five days afterwards he came with another box. It was the 16th of November, a Thursday. As it turned out to be a memorable day to me I have the best of reasons for keeping the exact date in my mind. I shall never forget it—never. Not if I live long enough to lose my memory. It was very cold. All the week it had been freezing—that is, off and on. Because I admit that it might occasionally have risen above freezing-point. But it certainly had been freezing all the day before and all that morning—hard. Ice was everywhere. I had made up my mind to try it; and had just finished cleaning my skates when Mr. Sanford came in.

"Why," he exclaimed, when he saw them, "what are you going to do with those?"

"I'm going to skate with them. What is one generally supposed to do with skates?"

"But, my dear Miss Boyes, it's impossible. After two or three days' more frost, perhaps. But at present the ice won't bear."

Now, there was just that something about his tone which nettled me. It was the way he had of taking it for granted that, because he said a thing, the matter was necessarily at an end, since it was impossible to imagine that anyone would venture on remonstrance.

"I daresay it will be strong enough to bear me."

"I very much doubt it."

"Do you—do you skate?"

"A little."

"Then, since that sister and those brothers of mine have gone off they alone know where, may I venture to suggest that you should come with me?"

"I shall be delighted—as far as the ice. I'm sure you'll find that it won't bear. And, anyhow, I've no skates."

"There are a pair of Dick's. They're not very rusty. And I don't suppose you'll find them very much too small."

He took them up and smiled.

"As you say, they're not very rusty, and I daresay my feet are not very much more gigantic than Dick's; but——"

"But what?"

"I shall be very glad to come with you to examine the ice. But when you get to it you'll find that skating is out of the question."

"If I get to the ice I promise you that I'll go on it. I am passionately fond of skating, and, as we so seldom get any, I like to take advantage of every chance I get. Besides, I am not afraid of a little cold water, even if it does happen to be a degree or two under the usual temperature."

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He laughed. He had a way of laughing when I said things which were not meant to be comical which puzzled me; and annoyed me, too. Fortunately for himself he changed the subject—handing me the box he had been carrying.

"I've brought the gloves. This time I hope you will find that they are not like boats. I am credibly informed that they are six and a quarter."

"Thank you so much. I really am ashamed of myself for giving you so much trouble—it's so sweet of you. Oh, what lovely gloves. Just the shades I like. As I have brought none down with me I think I'll put a pair on now."

I ought to have known better. I had, as I have said, just finished cleaning my skates, and had been washing my hands, and, in consequence, they were cold. It is not, at any time, the work of only a moment to put on a brand-new pair of properly-fitting gloves. Everybody knows that—who knows anything at all. They require coaxing. Especially is this the case when your hands are cold. And certainly the task is not rendered easier by the knowledge that you are being observed by critical, supercilious eyes, towards whose owner you entertain a touch of resentment. Those gloves would not go on. The consciousness that Mr. Sanford was staring at me with obvious amusement made me, perhaps, more awkward than I should have been. But, whatever the cause, I do not think I ever had so much trouble with a pair of gloves either before or since.

"RATHER TIGHT, AREN'T THEY?"

Presently he spoke:—

"Rather tight, aren't they?"

"Tight! What do you mean? I suppose they're six and a quarter?"

"Oh, yes; they're six and a quarter. But don't you think it might have been better to have kept the original six and a half for the sake of the additional ease?"

"Ease? You don't want ease in a glove."

"No? That's rather a novel point of view. Do you want it to be uneasy, then?"

"A properly-fitting glove never is uneasy. You are possibly not aware that a new glove always is a little difficult to get on the first time."

"Yes; so it seems."

Something in his tone annoyed me, particularly the impertinent suggestion which I felt sure it was intended to convey. I gave an angry tug at the glove and, behold! it split. I know I went crimson all over. Mr. Sanford laughed outright.

"When you try to cram a quart into a pint pot something is bound to go."

A ruder remark I had never had addressed to me. My own brothers could not have been more vulgar. Even they had never compared my hand with either a quart or a pint pot. An observation of the kind it was impossible that I should condescend to notice. Removing the glove, with all the

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dignity at my command, I replaced it in the box.

"I think that I had better wear a pair of gloves which have become adapted to the unfortunate conformation of my hands."

"But, Molly——"

"I don't know who has given you permission to use my Christian name, Mr. Sanford. I have noticed that you have done so two or three times recently. I am not a relative of yours."

His eyes twinkled. Although I did not look at him, I knew they did, because of the peculiar way in which he spoke. When they twinkled there was always something in his voice which, to the trained ear, was unmistakable. Not that I wish it to be inferred that I had paid any attention to Mr. Sanford's oddities. It was the mere result of my tendency to notice trifles.

"But, Miss Boyes, I never could understand why a woman of reasonable, and proper, and delightful proportions should show a desire to be the possessor of a hand which, as regards dimensions, would be only suited to a dwarf."

"Is it I you are calling a monster, or only my hand?"

"Neither. I should not presume to call you anything. But I would take leave to observe that you have as dainty, as well shaped, as capable, and, I may add, as characteristic a pair of hands as I have ever seen."

"Personal remarks are not in the best of taste, are they? I believe I have had occasion to point that out to you before."

I took that box of gloves upstairs and I banged them on the dressing-table. When I looked into the glass I saw that my cheeks were glowing and my eyes too. It was plain that I was in a perfect passion. The most exasperating part of it was that I knew what a fright bad temper made of me. It always does of your black sort of people.

Never did I meet anyone with a greater capacity for rubbing you the wrong way than Mr. Sanford. And so autocratic! I suppose that if he is of opinion that I ought to wear six and three-quarters I shall have to. But I will give him clearly to understand that, whatever size my hands may be, I shall wear sixes if I like. I do not propose to allow him to lay down the law to me, even on the question of gloves.

I kept him waiting as long as ever I could; though, up in my bedroom, where there was no fire, it was positively freezing; and every moment I grew colder and colder, till I felt I must be congealing. But I knew that he hated waiting; so, while I dawdled, I wondered if everybody was crushed by everybody else as some people crushed me; or, at least, as they tried to. When I got down he was standing at the window, staring out into the grounds.

"Are you still there? I thought you would have gone. I trust that you have not remained on my account. I didn't hurry.

"WHEN I LOOKED INTO THE GLASS I SAW THAT MY CHEEKS WERE GLOWING AND MY EYES TOO."

Even an old pair of gloves cannot be put on in half a second."

"So it would appear."

"As you are not going to skate, and I am, I won't keep you."

"You were good enough to ask me to come with you to see if the ice would bear."

"I'm sure it will bear enough for me; though probably not enough for you. And as you're nervous it's hardly worth while to

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put you to any further trouble. You would hardly find it amusing to stand on the bank and watch me skating."

"Well, I can fancy more objectionable occupations."

"Can you? There is no accounting for people's fancies."

"There certainly isn't."

"So, as I am already later than I intended, I will wish you good-day. And thank you so much for the gloves."

"Good-day; and pray don't mention the gloves ever again. But I'm going with you all the same. I'll borrow Dick's skates on the off-chance, and ask his permission afterwards."

"Oh, I've no doubt that Dick will have no objection to your taking them; but as you're not going to skate, really, Mr. Sanford, it's not the slightest use your coming."

"No use, but a great deal of pleasure for me. Let me carry your skates."

"Thank you, but I prefer to carry them myself."

He planted himself in front of me; looked me in the face; stretched out his arm, and took the skates from my hand — the astonishing part of it being that I did not offer the slightest resistance.

"I do declare, Mr. Sanford, that you're the most dictatorial person I ever met. You appear to be under the impression that people are not entitled to have opinions of their own on any subject whatever. I suppose I may carry my own skates if I want to?"

"Quite so. Suppose we start."

We did start; though I was more than half inclined—since he was evidently bent on accompanying me—not to go at all. From the way we were beginning I foresaw what would be the end, or, at least, I imagined I did. Because, of course, what actually did happen never entered my head even as a remote possibility.

The lake was more than a mile away from the house, amid the pine trees in Mr. Glennon's wood; a lovely walk, particularly in that sort of weather. But, as the poet does not say, no prospect pleases when your temper is vile. The mere fact that I yearned to beg Mr. Sanford's pardon for being so disagreeable made me nastier than ever. It may sound incredible; it is true. Such conversation as there was suggested that horrid game called "Snap," played ill-naturedly.

"I always think a woman looks so graceful on the ice."

"You won't think so any longer after you have seen me."

"I think I shall. I cannot conceive you as looking anything but graceful, anywhere, in any position."

"I don't think you need sneer."

"Miss Boyes?"

"Mr. Sanford?"

"I beg your pardon."

"You beg my pardon? What for?"

"I don't quite know, but I feel you feel that it would be more becoming on my part. So I do so. Please will you forgive me?"

"If you have no objection I should prefer to turn back. I do not care to skate to-day."

"You need not skate. As I have already remarked, I am convinced that the ice will not bear. But we can at least continue our walk."

"I shall skate if we do go on. On that I am determined."

"You are not always so aggressive."

"Nor are you always so domineering, though I admit that as a rule you are. At home they must find you unbearable."

"I hope not. I am sorry you find me domineering, particularly as you are yourself so—plastic."

"I am not plastic. I don't know what you mean; but I am sure I am nothing of the kind."

"Molly!"

We had reached the stile over which you have to climb to get into the wood. He had crossed first and I was standing on the top step; he was holding my hand in his to help me over.

"Yes?"

"I wish you would be pleasant to me sometimes. You don't know what a difference it would make to me."

"What nonsense! I am perfectly convinced that, under any circumstances, nothing I might say or do could be of the slightest consequence to you."

"Couldn't it? You try!"

"I am much too young."

"Too young! Too young!"

There was all at once something in his voice and manner which gave me quite a start. I snatched my hand away and jumped down to the ground.

"We can't stop here all day if we mean to do any skating; and I for one certainly do."

I marched off at about five miles an hour. He wore an air of meekness which was so little in keeping with his general character that, at the bottom of my heart, it rather appalled me.

"I would sooner be snubbed by you than flattered by another woman."

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"HE WAS HOLDING MY HAND IN HIS TO HELP ME OVER."

"I don't in the least understand you. And I would have you to know that I feel that it is high time that I should put childish things behind me, and I should like other people to recognise that I have done so."

"Childish things? What are childish things? Oh, Molly, I wish that you could always be a child. And the pity is that one of these days you'll be wishing it, too."

"I'm sure I sha'n't. It's horrid to be a child."

"Is it?"

"You are always being snubbed."

"Are you?"

"No one treats you with the least respect, or imagines that you can possibly ever be in earnest. As for opinions of your own, it's considered an absurdity that you should ever have them. Look at you. You're laughing at me at this very moment."

"Don't you know why I am laughing at you, Molly?"

Again there was something in the way in which he asked the question which gave me the oddest feeling—as if I was half afraid. Ever since we had left the stile I had been conscious of the most ridiculous sense of nervousness — a thing with which, as a rule, I am never troubled. I was suddenly filled with a wild desire to divert the conversation from ourselves — no matter how — so I made a desperate plunge.

"Have you seen anything of Hetty lately?"

He was still for a moment, as if the sudden reference to his cousin occasioned him surprise, and that not altogether of a pleasant kind. Though I did not see why it should have done.

"I was not speaking of Hetty. Nor am I anxious to, just now."

"Aren't you? Have you quarrelled with her—as well?"

"As well? Why do you say 'as well'?"

"Oh, I don't know. You're always quarrelling."

"That's not true."

"Thank you. Is that a snub, or merely a compliment?"

"Snubbed by me! Considering how you are always snubbing me, that's amusing."

"I never mean to snub you."

"You never mean to? Then you must be singularly unfortunate in having to so constantly act in direct opposition to your intentions. To begin with: you hardly ever treat me as if I were a woman at all."

"Well, you are not a woman—are you?—quite."

"Mr. Sanford! When you talk like that I feel!——Pray what sort of remark do you call that?"

"You are standing at the stepping-stones."

"At the stepping-stones?"

"Happy is the man who is to lead you across them."

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"Molly, why will you treat me like this? It's you who treat me like a child, not I you."

"There's the lake at last, thank goodness!"

I did not care if it was rude or not. I was delighted to see it; so I said so plainly. What is more, I tore off towards it as hard as I could. My rush was so unexpected that I was clean away before he knew it. All the same, he reached the lake as soon as I did. He could run; just as he could do everything else. The ice looked splendid; smooth as a sheet of glass. All about were the pines with their frosted branches. They seemed to stand in rows, so that they looked like the pillars in the aisles of some great cathedral. And, then, pine trees always are so solemn—and so still.

"Give me my skates, please; I want to get them on at once. Doesn't the ice look too lovely for anything?"

"It's not a question of what it looks like, but of what it will bear." He stepped on to the edge. It gave an ominous crack. I daresay if he had waited long enough it would have given way beneath him. But he did not. He hopped back on to the solid ground. "You see!"

"Excuse me, but that is exactly what I do not do. Here it is under the shadow of the trees. Besides, the water is so shallow that it is practically cat's ice. I'm sure it's all right a little farther round; and in the middle. It's often cracky near the edge."

"I am sure it is not safe anywhere."

"Will you please give me my skates, Mr. Sanford?"

He looked at me. So as to let him see that I had no intention of being cowed, I looked back at him.

"I hope that, this once, you will be advised. I assure you it is unsafe."

"Please give me my skates."

He laughed—in that queer way he had of laughing at unexpected moments, when there certainly seemed nothing to laugh at.

"Good. Then it is decided. We will both go skating."

"Both? It is not necessary that we should do anything of the kind. I wish you would let me do as I like—without criticism. Who appointed you to have authority over me? Who suggested that because I choose to do a thing you should do it too? I prefer not to have you attached to my apron-strings. Give me my skates. You can go home. I would rather you did."

"If you skate, I skate also."

"As you please; if you can get over your timidity. There is room on the lake for two. If you will choose one end I will have the other."

"I shall skate where you do."

"Mr. Sanford! You are intolerable!"

"Indeed, I am disposed to act on your courteous suggestion, and go home, and take your skates with me."

"If you do I will never speak to you again."

"Don't pledge yourself too deeply. You spoke of having put childish things behind you. I did not suspect you of having been such a mistress of irony."

"Will you give me my skates?"

"Certainly. I will put them on for you. Where do you think the ice is—strongest?"

We were walking along the bank, I with my nose in the air, he white with rage. It wasn't easy to make him lose his temper, but when you did succeed he was wicked.

"This will do. I won't trouble you for your assistance. I prefer to put on my own skates, thank you."

He dug his heel right through the ice.

"Do you call this strong?"

"I wish you would not do that. You forget that I am not quite so heavy as you." We went on a little farther. Then I stood on the edge. "You perceive that it will bear me. Now—for about the dozenth time—will you give me my skates?"

"I will put them on for you."

"I have already told you that I will do that for myself."

"Don't be absurd. Sit down on the bank." He spoke to me as if I were a slave. As it was evidently useless to remonstrate I obeyed, placing myself on the sloping bank. "There is a condition I must make. If I put your skates on first you must promise not to start till I am ready."

"I shall promise nothing of the kind."

"Then in that case I am afraid I shall have to keep you waiting till I am equipped."

He actually did, too. And, as Dick's skates were in rather a muddle, or he did not understand them, or something, it took him a tremendous time to get them properly attached to his boots; while I sat on the bank and froze. But I tried to keep myself as warm as I could by an occasional genial remark.

"You understand, Mr. Sanford, that when we do get home I will never speak to you again. I never want to see you again, either."

"The betting is that we never shall get

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home again, since it is probable that we shall both of us be drowned in the lake. That is, if there is a sufficient depth of water to drown us."

"Sufficient depth! Why, I'm told that in places there are twenty feet. I imagine that that is enough to drown even you, big though you seem to think yourself. Though I totally fail to see why we should both of us be drowned. Why can't I drown by myself?"

"IT TOOK HIM A TREMENDOUS TIME TO GET THEM PROPERLY ATTACHED TO HIS BOOTS."

"If you drown, I drown."

"That is really too ridiculous. Pray, who is talking like a child now? I quite fail to see how it can matter to you what becomes of me."

"You do know."

"I do not know. I have not the faintest shadow of a notion."

"Don't you know?"

He twisted himself round, and glared at me in such a fashion that I was alarmed.

"Mr. Sanford! Don't look at me like that!"

"Then kindly remember that there are limits even to my patience."

"I should think that your patience was like the jam in the tart: the first bite you don't get to it, and the second bite you go clean over it."

"I am glad to be able to afford you so favourable an opportunity for the exercise of your extremely pretty wit. Please give me your foot."

He took it—without waiting for any giving. Then immediately proceeded to comment on it, as if it had not belonged to me or as if I had not been there.

"A dainty foot it is; and reasonably shod in decently fitting boots — not six and a quarter."

"You still seem not to understand that my size in gloves is six and a quarter."

"I'm so dull."

"You are. And something else besides."

He simply ignored my hint. I hate people not to notice when I intend to sting them. It makes you feel so helpless. He went on calmly discussing my foot.

"It's worth while allowing you to flesh the arrows of your malice in one's hide for the privilege of holding this between one's fingers."

"Do you think so?"

"I do."

It was strange how excessively odd an effect his touch had on me. It made me thrill from top to toe. I could scarcely speak. When I stood, to my amazement I found that I was trembling.

"Are your skates comfortable?"

"They seem all right."

"Molly, let us understand each other. Are you bent on skating?"

"I am. Though there is not the slightest reason why you should."

"The ice may be sufficiently thick in places, but it certainly is not all over, and as you don't know where the weak points are it will be at the risk of your life if you venture on it."

"It is strong enough to bear me, though it is very possible that it may not be strong enough to bear you also. So if you do not

desire to add to the risk on which you are so insistent, you will not force on me your company."

"If you go, I go also."

"Then don't talk so much, and come."

He had been holding my hand. I snatched it from him and was on the ice. In an instant he was at my side. I was filled with a curious excitement. Something had got into my blood—microbes, perhaps, of a fever-generating kind. The various passages of arms which we had had together seemed, all at once, to have reached their climax. I was seized with a sudden frenzy of resolve to show him, once for all, that what it was my pleasure to do that I would do. I craved for motion; yearned for movement; if only as a means of relief for my pent-up feelings. Longed for a flight through the air; to rush through it; to race. Especially to race that man—or to escape from him. I did not care much which.

I struck out for all that I was worth. As I had surmised, the ice was in perfect condition as regards its surface. Sufficiently elastic to enable the blade of one's skates to bite on to it; smooth enough to offer no impediment to their onward glide. One skimmed over it almost without conscious effort. The ecstasy of doing something, the sense of freedom which it gave, the delight of tearing through the keen, clear atmosphere; of feeling it upon one's cheeks—ruffling one's hair, exhilarating one's whole being, breathing it in great gulps into one's lungs; these were the things needed. And I had hardly been enjoying them half-a-dozen seconds when the bonds which had seemed to bind me parted, proving themselves to be but the phantasmal creations of a crooked mood. And I laughed—in my turn.

"Isn't it glorious?"

"While it lasts."

"Why the reservation? Isn't it glorious—now?"

We had gone right across the lake. We swung round at a right angle.

"I thought it wasn't safe."

"What's that?"

Just my luck! Scarcely were the words out of my lips than there was an ominous sound.

"That's nothing. I thought everybody knew that virgin ice makes eccentric noises; we're the first to test its quality. That shows how safe it is."

"Does it? I think there may be something in your theory about the middle being best. Suppose we cross to the other side again."

The sound did go on.

"It's because we're skirting the shore. If you'll admit that I am right for once in a way I'll concede that you may be."

"I'll concede anything if you'll come away from this."

"Then I'll race you to our starting-point!"

We had been keeping within, perhaps, a dozen feet of the land. Sharply turning I made for the centre. I had not taken half-a-dozen strides when the cracking noise increased to a distinctly uncomfortable degree. I felt the ice heaving beneath my feet. He was at my side—it was preposterous to talk about racing him level. He could have given me seventy-five yards out of a hundred.

"We have struck a bad place. Don't stop; go as fast as you can."

"I'm going as fast as I can. I shall be all right. You go in front."

"Give me your hand!"

"No!"

"Give me your hand!"

I did not give him my hand—he snatched it. As he did so something went. We did not stop to see what. How he managed I did not, and do not, understand. But I know he gripped my hand as in an iron vice, started off at about seventy miles an hour, and made me keep up with him.

"Don't!" I cried, as well as I could, while I gasped for breath.

"Come!" he said.

And I had to come. And before I knew it we were standing on the shore, and I was half beside myself with rage.

"How dare you? Do you suppose that I am an idiot, and that you can haul me about as if you were my keeper? What did you do it for?"

"I fancy I saved your life."

"Saved my life! Saved your own, you mean! You are an elephant, not I; and if you would only relieve the ice of the weight of your huge bulk everything would be all right. But you are so grossly selfish that you hate the idea of anyone engaging in a pleasure which you cannot share—and spoil! I'll trouble you to stay where you are—or better still, go home—and let me amuse myself exactly as I choose."

"Molly! You're not going on again!"

"I am going on again—I am! And you dare to try and stop me. You dare!"

I imagine that the expression of my countenance startled him. He had planted himself directly in front of me. But when he saw me looking like black murder he moved aside. In an instant I had passed

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him and was off towards the centre of the lake.

Whether the double burden which the ice had had to bear had been too severe a strain for its as yet still delicate constitution, I cannot say. I only know that as soon as I was clear off the shore, in spite of my blind fury, I realized that I really was an idiot, and one, too, who was badly in need of a keeper. It groaned and creaked and heaved in every direction, seeming to emit an increasingly loud crack with every forward stride I took. Mr. Sanford shouted:—

"Molly! for God's sake, come back!"

I recognised—too late — the reason that was on his side. But the very vigour of his appeal served as a climax. I lost my head. I did not know what to do, where to go, turning this way and that, only to find the threats of danger greater. The question was settled for me. For the second time something went—the ice disappeared from beneath my feet—and I went in.

I felt—when I felt anything—almost as much surprise as consternation. Fortunately, I did not appear to have hit on a spot where the depth was twenty feet, or anything like it. For, instead of being drowned, the water did not come up to my arm-pits.

"Can you feel the bottom?"

The agony of fear which was in Philip Sanford's voice as he asked the question calmed me as if by magic.

"I think so. I seem to be standing in what feels like mud."

"Can you get your arms on to the ice and raise yourself? If you do it carefully it will probably bear you."

"I am afraid not. I seem to be too deep in to get a proper purchase."

"Where can I get a rope?"

"Jennings's farm is the nearest house; and that's the other side of the stile."

"Do you very much mind waiting there? I'll be back inside five minutes."

"HE STARTED OFF AT ABOUT SEVENTY MILES AN HOUR."

My heart sank at the prospect of being left alone, even for an instant.

"I'd rather—I'd rather you did something now. I'm afraid—I'm afraid I'm sinking deeper. And it's so cold!—Can't you do anything at all?"

"I'll do my best."

He did his best, while I watched. How I watched! He selected a part where the ice had not as yet been subjected to any strain, and carefully advanced towards me. It bore him better than I—and, perhaps, he—had expected.

"It's all right," he cried. "I shall get to you. Cheer up; and keep as still as you can."

Then it cracked; and I feared for him. If he should have chanced on a spot where the depth was twenty feet, and should be drowned before my eyes! The cracking noise grew more instead of less.

"I fancy I shall do better by lying down and taking to my hands and knees. It will be spreading my weight over a larger surface."

He lay flat on the ice, wriggling towards me somehow, like a snake. It was a pretty slow process, especially as the icy water was wrapping my draperies about me and freezing the blood in my veins; and I was either sinking lower and lower, or else imagined that I was, which was just as bad. At last he came within three feet of me—within two—within reach. When I got my hands in his I burst out crying.

"Will you ever forgive me?" I sobbed.

"My darling!"

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"THE CRACKING NOISE GREW MORE INSTEAD OF LESS."

been somewhere else that it was twenty feet.

"Do you think you can run?" Philip asked, when we stood on dry ground at the end.

"I can, and will, do anything you tell me to; anything on earth!"

He laughed.

"It occurs to me that it was perhaps as well you had that little attack of eccentricity just now, otherwise it might have been ages before we arrived at an understanding."

"I'll always do as you wish me to in the future—always—if I'm not drowned!"

"My sweet!"

I did not notice what he was saying to me, nor, for the matter of that, what I was saying to him. Though I should not have cared if I had. I was too far gone. He put his hands underneath my arms; but directly he began raising me the ice on which he was lying gave way, and, in another second, he was standing beside me in the water. Just as I was thinking of starting screaming, for I made sure that it was all over with both of us, he lifted me as if I were a baby, and I found that the water scarcely came above his waist, and he kissed me.

And I never was so happy; although, for all I knew, at that very moment we might be drowning.

But we did not drown. We reached the shore; though it took us a tremendous time to do it, because Philip had to break every bit of ice in front of us; and, though none of it was strong enough to bear, it was not easy to break. Luckily, the water grew shallower as we advanced. So it must have

I was entirely of his opinion. I knew he was right; but, then, he always is.

We ran all the way home, except when we stopped at intervals to say things; though it was frightfully difficult, because, of course, all my clothes were sopping. But I was never the least bit ill. Nor was Philip. I changed directly I got in, and Philip changed into a suit of Dick's. It did not fit him, but he looked awfully handsome, and so like a great overgrown boy. So it did not matter if I did behave like a child.

When Nora and the boys came home they opened their eyes when we told them of our adventures. And what amazed me was that they seemed to take it quite for granted that Philip and I should be on the terms we were. Dick offered his congratulations—if they could be called congratulations—in the most extraordinary form.

"Well, old man, you've escaped one funeral, but you're booked for another—that's a cert!"

The opinions which brothers allow themselves to utter of their sisters are astonishing. Fancy Dick calling me a funeral!

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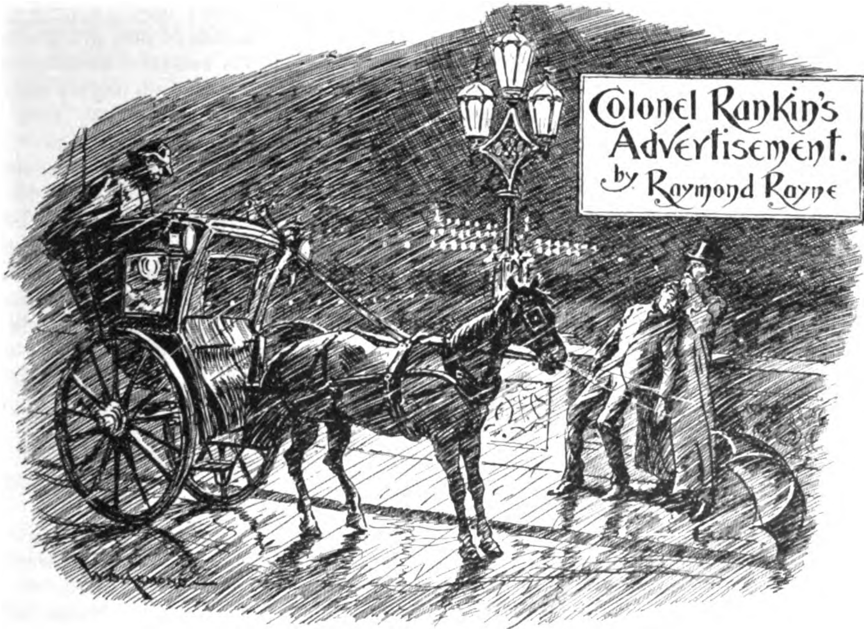

HE rain was coming down with a steady persistence that brought joy to the heart of the London cabman, but scarcely to any other class in the big Metropolis. The wet streets reflected like so many rivers the lights from the shop-windows and from the high lamps standing sentinel along the footways. Hansoms splashed and rattled homeward from the theatres and music-halls, while belated omnibuses plodded doggedly along their accustomed routes. The few foot-passengers whom necessity compelled to face the pitiless downpour hurried on their way seeking what shelter the eaves of houses and shop-fronts might afford. Even the stolid policemen in their shining black capes watched for the coming of the sergeant beneath the cover of some friendly doorway.

Near the middle of Westminster Bridge a man was leaning on the low parapet and gazing down fixedly at the dark river as it ebbed out Citywards. The rain had long since soaked through his threadbare clothing and wetted him to the skin. An occasional passer-by, hurrying across the shelterless bridge, would cast a glance at this solitary loiterer who seemed so indifferent to the inclemency of the weather, and then vanish quickly into the murky night.

The hands of Big Ben's clock were creeping together on the stroke of midnight when a hansom, driven at hardly more than walking pace, passed over from the Surrey side. The occupant, a tall man of unmistakably American appearance, peered through the side-windows of the cab with an amount of interest which seemed little warranted by the outlook. The figure of the lonely watcher seemed to arrest his attention, for he pushed up the little trap-door communicating with the driver and ejaculated the trans-Atlantic monosyllable :—

"Say!"

The cabman drew his reins to one side and applied his face to the loop-hole with an inquiring "Yes, sir?"

"I guess you can put me down at the Senate House," said the American.

"Where did you say, sir?"

"I calculate I'll get down right here."

The cab drew up sharply near the clock-tower and the passenger alighted. He paid the cabman. That worthy looked at the money in a manner expressive of mild and, on the whole, pitying surprise; he appeared about to say something, but a glance at his "fare" decided him to refrain, and contenting himself with a slight upward jerk of the chin, he drove off.

The American listened to the clatter of the departing vehicle as he opened a large

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and heavy umbrella. When the sounds had died away he crossed the road and walked back towards the middle of the bridge. The solitary watcher was still there, motionless as a statue. The new-comer touched him on the shoulder and addressed him in the matter-of-fact drawl under which the typical American, the modern stoic, conceals his emotions and his interests.

"Stranger, I suspicion you are on the look-out for employment," he observed; "the market seems a trifle dull at the moment."

The stranger turned slowly from his contemplation of the river and became aware of the other's presence.

"I beg your pardon," he replied; "but I fear I have not the pleasure of knowing you."

The words were spoken in the unmistakable accents of education and refinement. They contrasted strikingly with the worn and tattered clothing, soaked and soddened by the rain, which clung to the limbs of the speaker. The American exhibited no surprise, but struck out a new line with perfect composure.

"I was remarking that it rains a considerable few," he observed.

"The weather is decidedly unfavourable," assented the other, with polite indifference.

"That is so," said the American. He paused for a moment, and then continued with a certain change of manner: "Hear me, sir! My name is Cornelius P. Rankin, and when I talk, I talk business. I am prospecting for a man to do some work for me, which is just a shade off the track. I took you on sight for a man with some spare time on your hands. If we can make a deal the dollars will be paid. If I'm weeping over the wrong grave say the word and I vamose—no offence on either side."

A very faint smile passed over the features of the unknown.

"Your method of opening negotiations is perhaps rather irregular," he said, "but the prevailing economic conditions incline me to overlook the informality. At the present time I happen to be disengaged. The question of remunerative employment is one which I am prepared to discuss."

"Now you talk," responded Cornelius P. Rankin; "but I reckon this is not the place to discuss anything. I am located at the Third Avenue Hotel. Let us get up there out of this almighty deluge; a cocktail will run down pretty smooth just now."

His companion made no reply, but reeled back against the parapet and would have fallen to the pavement had not the American seized him under the arm and supported him. He had fainted.

"This is a queer start," Cornelius Rankin muttered to himself; "he's not drunk, and he looks as if it was ten years since he had eaten anything. I don't feel mighty sure he's my man either. Well, I'll see him through, anyway."

In pursuance of this benevolent determination he placed his open umbrella on the ground and with the hand thus freed drew from his pocket a cab-whistle and blew sharply through it. The summons had to be repeated several times before a hansom drove up from the stand on the Middlesex shore. The tall American lifted his helpless companion in as easily as if he had been an infant. He returned for the large umbrella, which he carefully folded up.

"My friend is a bit overcome," he explained to the driver; "take us to the nearest bar."

The cab drew up before a refulgent saloon at the corner of Parliament Street. The American obtained a glass of brandy, shouted the order "Third Avenue Hotel," and again took his place beside his insensible companion. Under the influence of the neat spirit the latter had returned to a dazed kind of consciousness by the time the hotel was reached. Here the American was received with the deference due to a resident in the house. Under the style of "the Colonel" he was known to the servants as a customer whose tips were worth the earning. In response to his orders supper was quickly laid out in his sitting-room, and the two strangely assorted companions were left alone in front of a cheerful fire.

"Well, how do you sagaciate by this time?" inquired the host; "I opined you had gone out altogether before I got the liquor into you."

His guest replied in a weak voice, but with the same quiet incisiveness which had marked his conversation on the bridge:—

"I confess to feeling some uncertainty which side of the Styx I inhabit."

The Colonel was slightly puzzled.

"We are on the Middlesex side," he answered, at a venture; "this is the Third Avenue Hotel. Try one of these cutlets and some more of the fluid; you'll feel better afterwards."

Thus urged, the stranger commenced to eat. At first he evinced more distaste than appetite; soon his exhaustion gave way under the influence of the food, and he

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began to do justice to the good victuals with a voracity that spoke of long deprivation. His host watched him with quiet satisfaction, only breaking the silence to urge him to further efforts or to recommend some dish which he had overlooked. At length appetite had to succumb to repletion. The wayfarer sank back into his chair with a long-drawn sigh of satisfaction.

"A feast worthy of Lucullus," he said, courteously; "allow me, sir, to express my deep sense of your hospitality."

"It is not hospitality, it's business," objected Colonel Rankin; "we have only just begun. You have got to come in here and take off those wet clothes; they are beginning to steam, and that spells rheumatics. I can fix you up with some pyjamas and a dressing-gown."

Turning a deaf ear to all protestations, the Colonel half-pushed and half-persuaded his charge into his bedroom, where he speedily provided him with the garments he had named. Returning to the outer room he pressed a button and the waiter entered.

"You can clear away, Parsons, and set out the whisky and cigars. My friend will very likely sleep on the couch. This is a late job for you, and we'll call it overtime." He took a half-crown from his pocket and gave it to Parsons.

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," said the assiduous Parsons.

The Colonel lighted a cigar and smoked thoughtfully while his instructions were being carried out. As the waiter was finally leaving the room he took the cigar from his mouth and called him back.

"Oh, by the way, Parsons, I don't want my friend to leave the hotel without my knowing of it—you take me?"

"Yes, sir," replied Parsons, with a look of intelligence. "Good-night, sir."

"Good-night."

When the Colonel's guest emerged from the inner room his appearance was much changed for the better. The dressing-gown was too long for him, and he had turned up the cuffs to free his hands. But the general look of destitution and of being "down on his luck" had departed from him. As he sank into an arm-chair opposite to his entertainer his bearing was that of a man not unused to the luxuries and comforts which belong to easy circumstances. He accepted, with an air of habitude, the cigar and the whisky-and-soda tendered by his host.

"I find myself in much better quarters to-night that I had anticipated," he remarked, as he lighted the cigar. He puffed out the smoke with an air of satisfaction. "This is a Cabana, if I do not mistake, and a very good one."

"You aré right all the time," said the Colonel, "and I like a man who knows his leaf. I guess wę shall just suit. Let me give you my card for a start."

The guest took the card and read:—

COLONEL CORNELIUS P. RANKIN.
THE GREAT AMERICAN KINETOGRAPH.

"You have seen the Kinetograph at the Empress Theatre of Varieties, of course?'

"LET ME GIVE YOU MY CARD FOR A START."

There was ill-concealed pride in the Colonel's tone.

"I cannot say I have seen it, but I have heard of it."

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"Heard of it," echoed the Colonel, with some irritation. "I swan you *have* heard of it. I have planted Kinetographs over the surface of the habitable globe. Hear me? I do not permit the orb of day to set on the great American Kinetograph. But this one at the Empress is a peach, a daisy. It will show you, sir, the events of to-day or any other day precisely as in real life. I will say better than real life, for you can sit quiet on your chair and enjoy them without worry. Where else can you see in one evening the Battle of Colenso; the Chutes at Earl's Court; the Siege of Pekin; the Finish of the Derby; Sir Alfred Milner paring his finger-nails; and a hundred other historical and interesting events?"

"I really do not know," answered the stranger, quietly.

The Colonel became calm.

"This brings me to business," he said; "you know who I am, but on the other hand——"

"On the other hand you do not know who I am," interposed the stranger, with complete self-possession; "you will excuse me, I hope, for not giving you my card. That is due either to the remissness of my engraver or to my having failed to give him the order. My name you may take to be Walter Heslop. I will not pretend that it is the name given to me by my sponsors in baptism. I have exercised the privilege of an adult and chosen it for myself, therefore any obligations undertaken in that name will be fulfilled by me."

"Well, that's the longest piece you've said, Mr. Heslop," replied the Colonel, "and it sounds straight. What might be your line now?"

"I presume you refer to my occupation. Until quite recently I was engaged in altering the position of wool at the London Docks. To be frank with you, I should prefer something more remunerative even if it should involve increased responsibility."

The Colonel smoked for some time in silence. At length he appeared to have made up his mind. He rose and stood with his back to the fire and his hands behind him.

"I like your style, Mr. Heslop," he said, "and I guess I can fit you out. But first I want your word that whether you accept my offer or not you will keep it to yourself."

"I agree to that," replied Heslop, without hesitating.

"Very well. The King goes in procession to open Parliament on Wednesday next at three o'clock. The German Emperor will be in the procession. I want you to stand at a window in Parliament Street, which I will provide, and fire at him with a six-shooter."

This unexpected proposition startled the listener well-nigh out of his self-possession. He recovered it by an effort.

"At what amount do you fix the remuneration?" he inquired.

"The figure I have in my mind is two hundred and fifty pounds."

"So far as I am concerned you may just as well make it two hundred and fifty millions," said Heslop.

"You refuse, then?"

"I not only refuse," replied Heslop, speaking slowly and distinctly, "but I intend to give you into custody as soon as a constable can be fetched."

He moved towards the electric button. The Colonel's hand instinctively sought his hip-pocket. The action was only the outcome of an old habit, for he carried no

"HE MOVED TOWARDS THE ELECTRIC BUTTON."

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weapon, and he suddenly burst into a loud laugh.

"Your promise," he said; "you have soon forgotten it."

The other paused—he felt that there was something in the situation he did not understand.

"Let me explain things to you, Mr. Heslop," the Colonel went on. "I don't want that shooter to have any bullets in it; advertisement is what I am after, not murder. You see, my Kinetograph will be buzzing right opposite you, and I shall get the champion record of the wide, wide world. Think of it, sir! 'Attempted Assassination of the Kaiser: the Scene Reproduced Nightly by the Great American Kinetograph.' We shall get it on that very same night; the entire island will rush to see it; it will draw like the North Pole—it will run all over the world like horseshoes. What do you think of it? Isn't it beautiful?"

The Colonel's zeal did not arouse any corresponding enthusiasm in his auditor.

"You appear to overlook the fact that I should be torn to pieces in the meantime," he remarked.

"Not at all," said the Colonel, eagerly, "though really it would be almost worth it. However, you will run hardly any risk. The windows and rooms will be hired out separately for the show. I have hired a whole room for you without appearing in the business myself. Everybody will be on the stare. When you have fired you can slip out the back way and mix with the crowd. Not a soul will be any the wiser or any the worse. The people in your house won't even see it. The people in the street will see it and make a deuce of a row; and the Kinetograph will see it, you bet, and take it all down in black and white." The Colonel said these last words with indescribable unction.

"It looks more feasible than I should have considered possible," said Heslop, thoughtfully, "and after all it is a sporting venture."

"That's just it, my dear sir," assented the Colonel, enthusiastically. "It's a sporting venture with all the odds on our side."

"And the remuneration—the two hundred and fifty pounds — when will that become payable?"

"Look at me, Mr. Heslop," the Colonel said; "when I meet a white man I know him. Pass me your word to see this thing through, and you shall have the dollars before you leave this hotel, and I'll tell you what—I'll make it three hundred."

Walter Heslop considered for several moments before he spoke.

"I will undertake it, Colonel Rankin," he said, at length. "I do not conceal from you that shooting at Emperors, even with blank cartridge, is not the occupation I should have chosen, but some men have foolishness thrust upon them. I accept your terms—there is my hand on it."

He held out his hand. The Colonel shook it warmly.

"I am delighted to have met you, Mr. Heslop," he ejaculated; "and now I reckon some sleep won't do you any serious harm. I have only one bed here, but you will find that sofa a good substitute and there are plenty of rugs."

"I have slept well on worse beds," said Heslop. They exchanged "good-nights" and the Colonel retired towards his room. He stopped with his hand on the door-knob and turned round.

"I hope you will not be offended, Mr. Heslop," he said, with some hesitancy; "but we Americans are an inquisitive people. Would you mind telling me what you were doing to-night on that bridge?"

Heslop, sitting on the sofa, looked quietly towards him.

"Certainly not," he answered. "I was considering Bergk's interpolation in the Fayum fragment of Sappho. Does it seem to you that his reference to Chrysippus gives sufficient authority for the reading?"

"I pass," said the Colonel.

The day appointed for the opening of Parliament by the Sovereign in person came in with a promise of "King's weather," in spite of the early season of the year. As the morning mists rolled away it became evident that only blue sky and the sunlight lay behind them. By ten o'clock streams of sightseers from every suburb had begun to flow towards Westminster. Already policemen mounted and on foot were in possession. The broad space fronting the entrance to the Houses of Parliament was kept clear by a compact line of troopers, who barred the way to all but officials and the privileged holders of passes. When Big Ben struck out the hour of noon the roadways were cleared along the whole of the route which the procession was to take. The pavements became so crowded as to be almost impassable, so that the possessors of seats in the windows of the houses made their way with difficulty to these dearly-bought positions.

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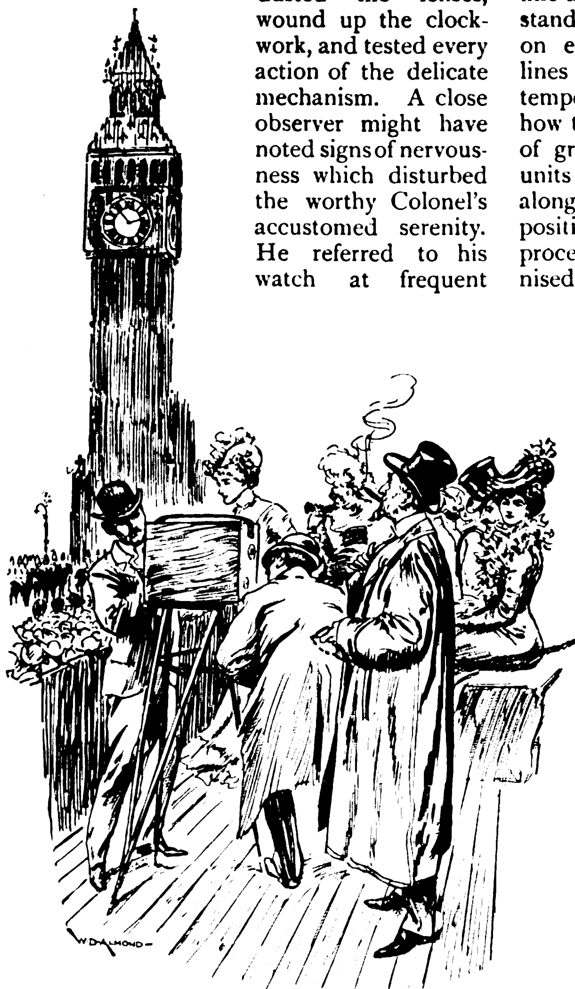
At the Westminster end of Parliament Street, and on the side farthest from the river, stands a large open space inclosed by a builder's hoarding. The houses which formerly stood on this vacant land have been removed to allow an extension of the Government buildings. Behind the hoarding, and on a level with the heads of the spectators in the street, a long platform had been erected for the accommodation of some hundreds of sightseers. Here, in a space roped off to avoid the too-curious, Colonel Cornelius P. Rankin stood by his beloved Kinetograph. Under his direction the operator carefully dusted the lenses, wound up the clockwork, and tested every action of the delicate mechanism. A close observer might have noted signs of nervousness which disturbed the worthy Colonel's accustomed serenity. He referred to his watch at frequent intervals and each time compared its record with that of the large clock of the Houses of Parliament. He lighted numerous cigars and threw them away after drawing two or three whiffs of smoke through them. From time to time he glanced anxiously at a first-floor window in the house which faced him on the opposite side of the street. The window was open, but no one appeared at it. As the hour of three drew near the façade of house-fronts became a wall of faces. At each window appeared rows of heads piled one above the other. The more adventurous found a foothold on abutments, on roofs, and even on the chimney-stacks. Still the window to which the Colonel's gaze was directed remained vacant.



"HE REFERRED TO HIS WATCH AT FREQUENT INTERVALS."

The long vista of Parliament Street looked like a river between the two rows of soldiers standing smartly to attention who guarded it on either side. Behind these uniformed lines surged the crowd, motley and good-tempered as only a London crowd knows how to be. From time to time personages of greater or less importance, in detached units or in small groups, would appear riding along the vacant roadway to take up their positions for the reception of the King's procession. As each new-comer was recognised by the crowd he received a welcome varying in character and noisiness according to the nature of his office or his personal popularity.

In the rearmost row of the crowd occupying the footway beneath the Kinetograph was a man who seemed more interested in the sightseers than in the spectacle they had come to see. His dress and appearance presented nothing to distinguish him from the hundreds of nondescript individuals of the middle class who pass everywhere unnoticed. His gaze, however, had a peculiarly concentrated and penetrating quality. He contrived to move among the masses of people with a smoothness and celerity that suggested long practice. Without attracting notice to himself his eyes searched the crowd as if he wished to identify every unit which composed it. The police, who were shepherding the surging masses with much impartiality, made an exception of this man. They affected not to see him. He was very well known to them, nevertheless, as Inspector Sangster, of the Criminal Investigation Department. In his close survey of his surroundings the detective had not failed to notice the vacant window, which seemed to oppose a kind of indifference to the general

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interest and excitement. As he worked his way gradually towards the Westminster end of the street he passed a thick-set man of foreign appearance, who made a slight sign of recognition. He motioned to this man to follow him and preceded him round the corner towards Storey's Gate, where the crowd became gradually thinner and, finally, ceased altogether.

"Well, Klein," he said, as the other came up to him, "are we going to have any fun, or have you got all your foreign demons shadowed?"

The other detective answered in very good English, but with a strong German accent.

"Yes, Mr. Sangster, I have got one man to watch each of them except one, and that is the worst one of all."

"Who is he?"

"It is Brescia, the Italian. He is the most dangerous Anarchist in Europe. We were warned that he came to London soon after the Kaiser, and he has been watched. But since three days he has disappeared, vanished. I do not like it."

"I don't think there is anything in it," said Sangster; "we never have Anarchist outrages in England. The villains come here to live, you know, and they do not spoil their nest. Besides," he added, with a grim smile, "the English crowd likes its Anarchist in small pieces."

"You do not know this Brescia," returned the German; "he would risk anything."

"'YOU DO NOT KNOW THIS BRESCIA,' RETURNED THE GERMAN."

The English detective became more serious.

"Well, he would have no chance in the street," he said, thoughtfully; "but it has occurred to me that if a man had a house or even a room to himself he might throw a bomb or get in a shot and even escape afterwards."

"Donnerwetter! that is so," ejaculated Klein.

"It was an empty window in Parliament Street that put it into my head," continued Sangster, "and if I had got your job on my hands I would just send a man round to the house to make sure."

"I thank you, my friend," replied the German, eagerly. "I shall do so immediately. Which is the house?"

"Come back with me and I will show you. We have very little time — the procession will be here in less than five minutes. You would hardly get across the road now without me. However, I can manage it for you."

The two detectives quickly retraced their steps and disappeared in the crowd.

Colonel Rankin waxed more and more nervous, and even doubtful, as the hour of three approached. Another man would have counted the risks entailed by his scheme, and wished himself well out of it. Not so the Colonel. His one anxiety was lest anything should prevent him from bearing off the precious record. His operators were already wait-

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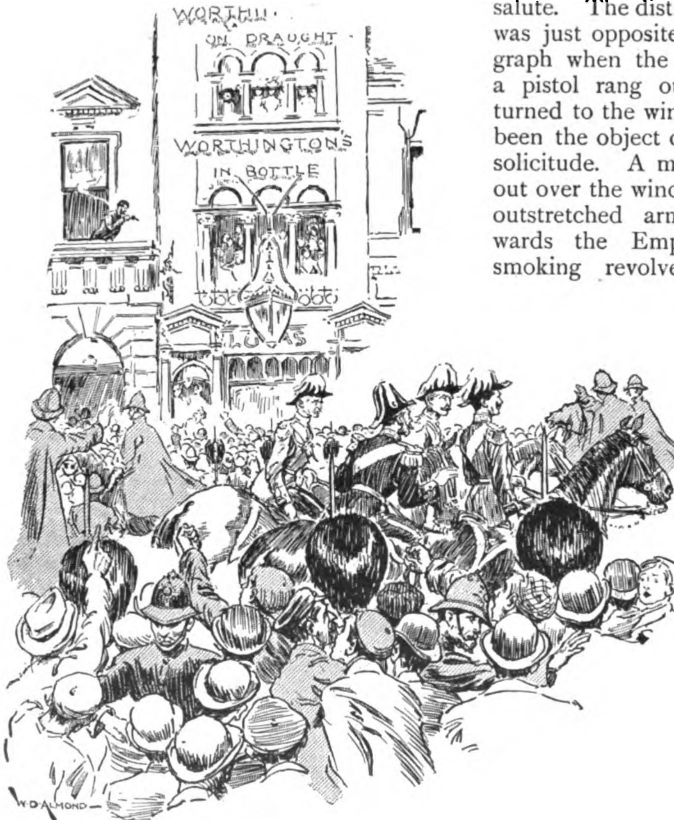
ing to develop the film and make the myriad of little photographs which would reproduce the scene to admiring audiences. Punctually at three o'clock a burst of cheering announced that the Cuirassiers who headed the King's procession were in sight. At the same moment the Colonel, looking anxiously towards the window, was able to discern that it was no longer unoccupied. From within the room a man was looking down into the street, but so far withdrawn from the light that his features were not recognisable. The Colonel gave a sigh of relief.

"He is a white man, after all," he murmured to himself; "I thought I could not have gone wrong on that. What an almighty ruction we are going to have here inside three minutes!"

By this time the mounted men were within twenty yards of the Kinetograph. The operator started the clockwork, which began to buzz and click industriously. A short interval elapsed after the passage of the advance-guard, and then a universal shout and raising of hats proclaimed the approach of the King and Queen. Preceded by a shining array of guards, they moved slowly by in their gilded State-coach, acknowledging with repeated bows the loyal salutes which greeted them. The coach passed on, followed by another detachment of guards. Even the stolid pulse of Colonel Rankin beat faster as the next group approached. The noble and kingly form of the Kaiser attracted every eye as he sat erect on his magnificent charger. With him were several members of the Royal House. The reception given to the nation's guest was scarcely less hearty than that which had greeted the Sovereign. The Emperor responded by repeatedly making the military salute. The distinguished group was just opposite to the Kinetograph when the loud report of a pistol rang out. Every eye turned to the window which had been the object of the Colonel's solicitude. A man was leaning out over the window-sill with his outstretched arm pointing towards the Emperor and the smoking revolver still in his hand. He appeared to be in the act of firing a second shot when he was seen to look sharply over his shoulder, and then suddenly withdraw into the room. Immediately another report was heard, and smoke began to issue from the window.



"A MAN WAS LEANING OUT OVER THE WINDOW-SILL."

A scene of indescribable confusion fol-

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lowed. The Kaiser had not even turned his head when the report was heard. To the anxious inquiries of those who crowded round him he replied: "It is nothing. Let us go on, or His Majesty will be made to wait."

But the mob did not take the outrage with the same calmness. The efforts of the military and the police were powerless to check them. The house from which the pistol had been fired was besieged by an ever-increasing multitude roaring for vengeance. Shouts of "Down with the assassin," "Throw him out to us," "Lynch him," were heard from every quarter. Sticks and stones were showered against the windows. The front doors had been closed and locked from within, and they withstood stoutly the kicks and blows of their unarmed assailants. Several of the more athletic endeavoured to climb up to the open window, but the projections from the house-front did not offer sufficient foothold, and they fell back baffled among the crowd.

The most astonished and the most enraged person present was Colonel Cornelius P. Rankin. He had anticipated the report of the pistol and the uproar which had followed. But he had not counted on the unexpected which always happens. The cause of the worthy Colonel's astonishment and rage was this—*the pistol had contained a bullet, and that bullet had struck the lens of the Kinetograph, smashing it into a thousand fragments!* The erring lead had completed its work of destruction by lodging itself in a very flattened condition among the wheels and springs which furnished the interior economy of that masterpiece of science. The effect was disastrous. With a noise like a clock of which the escapement is suddenly removed the mechanism shot forth into the sunlight a long, narrow strip of yellowish film.

The operator gave vent to a cry of professional horror. The precious "record" was ruined. Every photographer knows the black smudge which takes the place of the clear image when a mere ray of light has shone on the sensitive surface. Exposure to the broad daylight means a black patch instead of a picture.

When the Colonel realized fully that his cherished scheme had absolutely and completely failed his rage took full possession of him. With a bound he leaped down over the hoarding into the street. Elbowing his way through the crowd with remorseless and irresistible violence, he made for the road which leads into Cannon Row. He thus gained the back of the house which the mob in front were vainly trying to enter. The door was unsecured. He dashed up the stairs and reached the landing at the same moment as the occupants of the upper rooms, who had tardily become aware that they were in the house from which the shot had been fired. The foremost of them stood doubtfully opposite the door of the first-floor room, while those above on the stairs and out of immediate danger shouted courageous and bloodthirsty instructions.

"Where is the tarnation skunk? Let me only get my hands on him," shouted the Colonel, as without a moment's hesitation he flung open the door. The others poured in after him.

There were three men in the room. On the floor one lay motionless. In the middle of his forehead was a circular patch, blackened and scorched, from the centre of which welled a dark-red stream. A revolver had fallen from the grasp of his outstretched hand and lay beside it. Bending over him with one knee on the carpet was the German detective, Klein. The other man was Inspector Sangster, of the Criminal Investigation Department. He restrained the new-comers with uplifted hands.

"Order! in the King's name," he cried, in an authoritative voice; "we are police officers, and this man is in our custody."

Klein looked up.

"He has escaped by a way of his own," he said; "he is dead." The Colonel was dumb with amazement. The features of the dead man were unknown to him.

"Who is he? Ten thousand mosquitoes! Who is he?" he asked.

Inspector Sangster recognised the Colonel at once.

"It is an Italian Anarchist named Brescia," he answered; "we were just too late to take him alive, but after all he has saved us a great deal of trouble. And now, Colonel," he continued, "will you be so good as to send some of our men up here? Lock the door there and let no one else enter."

He spoke like a man accustomed to obedience, and the crowd accordingly obeyed.

The Colonel, having fulfilled his mission, made his way back to his hotel in a state of complete bewilderment. Arrived there the waiter handed him a letter which proved the key to the mystery.

"Brought by hand about an hour ago, Colonel," said the man.

The envelope contained a small packet of

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"HE RESTRAINED THE NEW-COMERS WITH UPLIFTED HANDS.

bank-notes, some postal-orders, and the letter. It ran as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—Since our last interview an unexpected, and I am glad to say beneficent, change has taken place in my external circumstances. I think you will understand me when I say that I have been enabled to return to that social stratum from which I was temporarily exiled at the time of our meeting. I mention this only in order to account for an enforced change in my attitude towards the affair which you were so good as to intrust to me. Unwilling, on the other hand, to fail in my obligation to you, I have delegated the execution of your project to a man who appears to be reliable, although I should state that my acquaintance with him began and ended at a hot-potato stall. At all events he is cheap. His fee will be £100. My out-of-pocket expenses have amounted to £1 15s. 6d., leaving a balance in your favour of £198 4s. 6d. This sum I beg to inclose. I have avoided making any use of your name in the matter; my own, I may mention, has ceased to be

WALTER HESLOP.

"I said he was a white man," soliloquized the Colonel, ruefully; "but I reckon he's a bit of a piebald."

The newspapers the next day and for many days after contained very full accounts of the attempted assassination. They varied somewhat in detail, but all agreed in reporting that Colonel Cornelius P. Rankin, the well-known inventor of the great American Kinetograph, took a prominent part in the arrest of the criminal.

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Not so Easy as it Looks.

By Archibald Williams. From Photos. by George Newnes, Limited.

BLOWING THE CORK INTO A BOTTLE.

GIVEN a bottle and a cork a size smaller than the bottle's neck, to blow the cork into the bottle. This problem appears so easy that we are all prepared to attempt the solution. But the result is rather unexpected, for the cork, instead of flying into the bottle, is driven out by the compression of air inside, and hits us smartly in the face with a violence in proportion to the lung-power expended.

Those among THE STRAND readers who are fond of posing their friends with similar simple problems may be able to turn to account the collection here made, and show that our capacities are in many unsuspected little ways more limited than we imagine.

Many men pride themselves on their muscular strength. Let a lady place the tips of her forefingers together, keeping her elbows on a level with her shoulders, and challenge any gentleman in the room to separate them by a fair pull. Unless she be unusually weak, or he very strong, he will probably fail; and his discomfiture may be fitly followed up by the invitation to move her hand from her head or her middle finger from the tip of her nose.

TO SEPARATE A LADY'S FINGER-TIPS REQUIRES THE STRENGTH OF A HERCULES.

TRY TO REMOVE A LADY'S HAND FROM HER HEAD—IT REQUIRES MORE THAN THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF STRENGTH.

The Hercules who can toy with heavy weights should be asked to break with his

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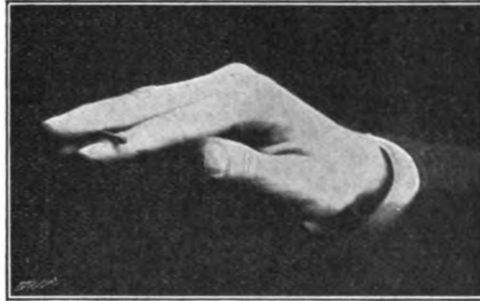
middle finger a stout wooden match placed across the roots of the first and third finger-nails. The arm must be held level from the shoulder and the fingers kept quite straight. Even a slight curvature gives sufficient power to break a much stronger thing than a match; but we place great faith in the wooden splinter to resist all efforts if the conditions be properly observed.



TO BREAK A MATCH PLACED BETWEEN THE FINGERS IS A HERCULEAN TASK.

Paper is a tougher substance than would be inferred from the ease with which a sheet can be torn. But roll a sheet of notepaper into a cylinder and exert your whole strength to pull it in pieces. Here the chances are very much against you.

Another edifying experiment is as follows. Two persons face each other. The one places his fists on top of one another and strives to keep them there while the other (by preference a lady) strikes them sharply with her fore-fingers, taking care that each finger is applied to the corresponding fist of her opponent. The fists fly apart as if by magic, because the muscles cannot act in two ways at once, and while exerting pressure upward and downward are at the mercy of a smart lateral blow, unless—and a man can safely risk the strain —the lower thumb be secretly inserted into the upper hand and held there firmly.

EVEN SANDOW WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PREVENT HIS FISTS FLYING APART.

It is a venerable superstition that an egg cannot be broken between the hands. As the total number of those who have put this to the test is very problematical, there is a great chance for someone to make the experiment in full assembly, and prove to a sceptical world what is the structural power of an egg. A fresh egg would, for obvious reasons, be the safest variety to try with. And there is really no reason why the most timid should not next summer take an egg out to sea when bathing and squeeze it under water, where there will be small danger of spoiling clothes.

But this by the way. A cleaner experiment requires only a piece of strong thread long enough to pass twice round a man's hands and hips, the hands being held palms inwards against the side of the thighs. We very much doubt whether he will be able to break the thread with an extending movement of his arms if the thread be passed over the middle joints of the fingers. Should he succeed, let him with the thread attach the ferrule end of a walking-stick to something firm, and, holding the stick at arm's length by the handle, try to break the thread. The stick must not be pulled towards the body.

Yet a third test, this time with cotton, the place of the stick being taken by an ordinary luggage-label, which is to be held between the fingers (the thumb must not be used) and pulled. It is more likely that the label will slip from the fingers than that the cotton will give way.

Turning to a different class of experiments, we invite our readers to write on a blank circle of paper the figures exactly as they appear on a clock-face. The circle must not be turned round as the figures are added; begin at twelve and work honestly round to it again. We have all consulted the clock

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TO KNOCK A COIN OFF THE EDGE OF THE TABLE WITH ONE EYE CLOSED.

hundreds of times, and we ought, from sheer familiarity, to be able to make short work of this puzzle; but our eyes are in some ways very blind, and before the circuit is complete we shall probably be in trouble.

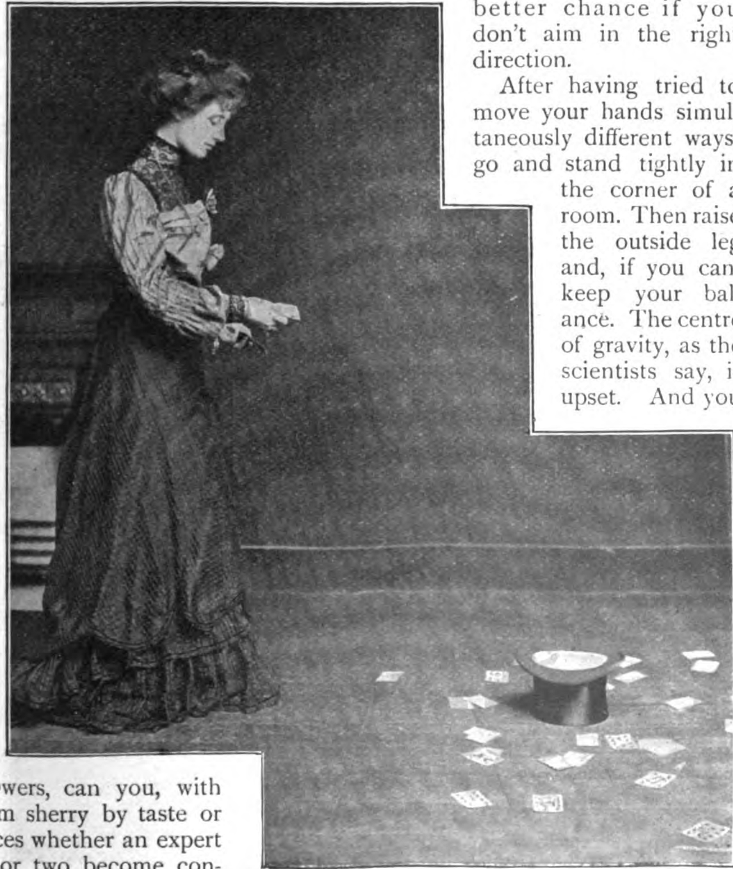
How many people out of a hundred would be ready to lay five shillings on their ability to say the words on the face of a penny postage-stamp? How many are certain whether the crescent of a waxing moon points to left or right? And talking of coins, how many threepenny-bits can be got on a half-crown without overlapping the edge or one another? And how many half-pence would make a pile as high as the diameter of a halfpenny? And which of our silver coins has a smooth edge?

Returning for a moment to physical powers, can you, with eyes shut, tell port from sherry by taste or smell? It is even chances whether an expert will not after a change or two become confused. The dependence of taste on sight is similarly shown when a man is presented with a number of warmed pipes and asked to say which of them are alight.

Put a coin on the edge of a table and, with one eye closed, walk quickly up to it and knock it off the table. You are more than likely to miss it altogether, because a single eye is a bad judge of distance. The difference of angle at which each eye sees an object gives us the idea of solidity and the power of guessing that object's position. Hence the solid effect of a stereoscopic picture taken simultaneously through two lenses as far apart as the human eyes.

Next procure a silk hat (a friend's is as good as anyone else's) and see if anybody present can throw ten out of a pack of cards into it from a distance of 8ft. It is amusing to note how the cards fly straight for the hat and in the last few inches twist aside and fall anywhere rather than within the brim. Like the bad sporting shot, you may have a better chance if you don't aim in the right direction.

After having tried to move your hands simultaneously different ways, go and stand tightly in the corner of a room. Then raise the outside leg and, if you can, keep your balance. The centre of gravity, as the scientists say, is upset. And you



IT IS NOT SO EASY TO THROW CARDS INTO A HAT AS IT MAY APPEAR.

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will find the same thing when you lie flat on the floor and try to sit up without raising the heels. And you get it again if you stand with your back to the wall and your heels 3in. up the wainscoting and try to pick up a wine-glass set between the heels. By-the-bye, before putting the wine-glass away set it on a low table and, keeping your hands behind you, pick it up with your teeth. Most people, especially those blessed with long noses, find this feat difficult unless they are wide-awake enough to go for the farther edge of the glass. Not, of course, that we hint anything Wellingtonian about the unsuccessful.

TO TUCK ONE'S HAND UNDER THE ARM, THEN PLACE THE THUMB IN THE PALM, IS ANOTHER DIFFICULT FEAT.

A few experiments with the fingers. First place your hands palm to palm and the finger-tips touching, and separate any pair of fingers half an inch. Then, turning the third fingers inwards so that the middle joints touch, try to separate the middle fingers. And finally, tuck a hand under an armpit and try to get the thumb into the palm. This is well calculated to teach you that the wrist muscles are sensitive.

We can strongly recommend the following for the smoking-room. Offer a wager that no one will cut a cigar-silk clean through with a sharp knife. Anyone who takes you up imperils his money badly, for the knife ninety-nine times out of one hundred cuts all the strands but the last, which frays out uninjured by the blade and leaves you the winner.

We keep for our last a feat which, while apparently of the simplest, is a physical and scientific impossibility. Take a cotton-reel and remove the labels from the ends. Centre a penny on one end and stick three pins into the wood so that the penny can easily fall forwards but not slip sideways. Then, holding the reel in the left hand, blow into the central hole. The harder you blow the tighter the penny sticks!

TO CUT A CIGAR-SILK CLEAN THROUGH IS FAR FROM EASY.

THE HARDER YOU BLOW THE TIGHTER THE PENNY STICKS.

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At Sunwich Port.

BY W. W. JACOBS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WITH a view to avoiding the awkwardness of a chance meeting with any member of the Nugent family Hardy took the sea road on his way to the office the morning after the captain's return. Common sense told him to leave matters for the present to the healing hand of Time, and to cultivate habits of self-effacement by no means agreeable to one of his temperament.

Despite himself his spirits rose as he walked. It was an ideal spring morning, cool and sunny. The short turf by the side of the road was fragrant under his heel, and a light wind stirred the blueness of the sea. On the beach below two grizzled men of restful habit were endeavouring to make an old boat waterproof with red and green paint.

A long figure approaching slowly from the opposite direction broke into a pleasant smile as he drew near and quickened his pace to meet him.

"You're out early," said Hardy, as the old man stopped and turned with him.

"'Ave to be, sir," said Mr. Wilks, darkly; "out early and 'ome late, and more often than not getting my dinner out. That's my life nowadays."

"Can't you let her see that her attentions are undesirable?" inquired Hardy, gravely.

"I can't be rude to a woman," said the steward, with a melancholy smile; "if I could, my life would ha' been very different. She's always stepping across to ask my advice about Teddy, or something o' that sort. All last week she kept borrowing my frying-pan, so at last by way of letting 'er see I didn't like it I went out and bought 'er one for herself. What's the result? Instead o' being offended she went out and bought me a couple o' neck-ties. When I didn't wear 'em she pretended it was because I didn't like the colour, and she went and bought two more. I'm wearing one now."

He shook his head ruefully, and Hardy glanced at a tie which would have paled the glories of a rainbow. For some time they walked along in silence.

"I'm going to pay my respects to Cap'n Nugent this afternoon," said Mr. Wilks, suddenly.

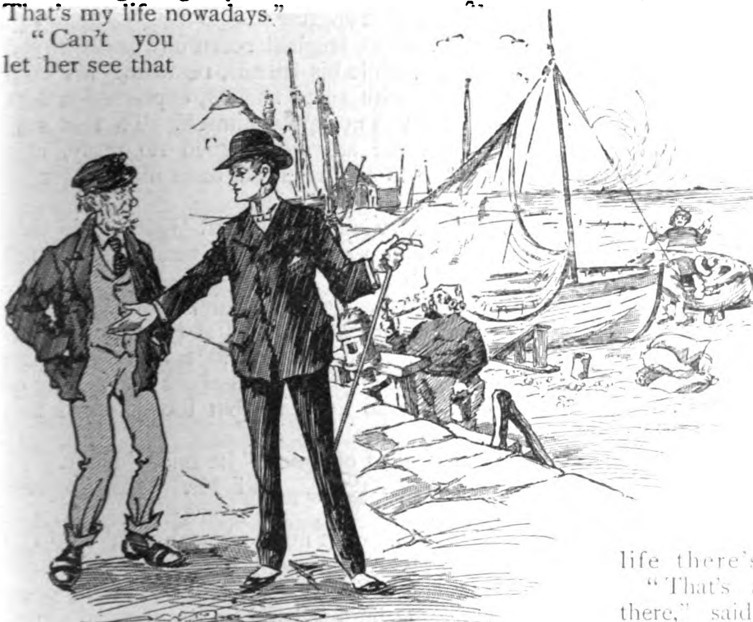
"Ah," said the other.

"I knew what it 'ud be with them two on the same ship," continued Mr. Wilks. "I didn't say nothing when you was talking to Miss Kate, but I knew well enough."

"Ah," said Hardy again. There was no mistaking the significance of the steward's remarks, and he found them somewhat galling. It was all very well to make use of his humble friend, but he had no desire to discuss his matrimonial projects with him.

"It's a great pity," pursued the unconscious Mr. Wilks, "just as everything seemed to be going on smoothly; but while there's life there's 'ope."

"That's a smart barge over there," said Hardy, pointing it out.



"CAN'T YOU LET HER SEE THAT HER ATTENTIONS ARE UNDESIRABLE?"

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Mr. Wilks nodded. "I shall keep my eyes open this afternoon," he said re-assuringly. "And if I get a chance of putting in a word it'll be put in. Twenty-nine years I sailed with the cap'n, and if there's anybody knows his weak spots it's me."

He stopped as they reached the town and said "good-bye." He pressed the young man's hand sympathetically, and a wink of intense artfulness gave point to his last remark.

"There's always Sam Wilks's cottage," he said, in a husky whisper; "and if two of 'is friends *should* 'appen to meet there, who'd be the wiser?"

He gazed benevolently after the young man's retreating figure and continued his stroll, his own troubles partly forgotten in the desire to assist his friends. It would be a notable feat for the humble steward to be the means of bringing the young people together and thereby bringing to an end the feud of a dozen years. He pictured himself eventually as the trusted friend and adviser of both families, and in one daring flight of fancy saw himself hobnobbing with the two captains over pipes and whisky.

Neatly dressed and carrying a small offering of wallflowers, he set out that afternoon to call on his old master, giving, as he walked, the last touches to a little speech of welcome which he had prepared during dinner. It was a happy effort, albeit a trifle laboured, but Captain Nugent's speech, the inspiration of the moment, gave it no chance.

He started the moment the bowing Mr. Wilks entered the room, his voice rising gradually from low, bitter tones to a hurricane note which Bella could hear in the kitchen without even leaving her chair. Mr. Wilks stood dazed and speechless before him, holding the wallflowers in one hand and his cap in the other. In this attitude he listened to a description of his character drawn with the loving skill of an artist whose whole heart was in his work, and who seemed never tired of filling in details.

"If you ever have the hardihood to come to my house again," he concluded, "I'll break every bone in your misshapen body. Get!"

Mr. Wilks turned and groped his way to the door. Then he went a little way back with some idea of defending himself, but the door of the room was slammed in his face. He walked slowly down the path to the road and stood there for some time in helpless bewilderment. In all his sixty years of life his feelings had never been so outraged. His cap was still in his hand, and, with a helpless gesture, he put it on and scattered his floral offering in the road. Then he made a bee-line for the Two Schooners.

Though convivial by nature and ever free with his money, he sat there drinking alone in silent misery. Men came and went, but he still sat there noting with mournful pride the attention caused by his unusual bearing. To casual inquiries he shook his head; to more direct ones he only sighed heavily and applied himself to his liquor. Curiosity increased with numbers as the day wore on, and the steward, determined to be miserable, fought manfully against an ever-increasing cheerfulness due to the warming properties of the ale within.

"I 'ope you ain't lost nobody, Sam?" said a discomfited inquirer at last.

Mr. Wilks shook his head.

"You look as though you'd lost a shilling and found a ha'penny," pursued the other.

"Found a what?" inquired Mr. Wilks, wrinkling his forehead.

"A ha'penny," said his friend.

"Who did?" said Mr. Wilks.

The other attempted to explain and was ably assisted by two friends, but without avail; the impression left on Mr. Wilks's mind being that somebody had got a shilling of his. He waxed exceeding bitter, and said that he had been missing shillings for a long time.

"You're labourin' under a mistake, Sam," said the first speaker.

Mr. Wilks laughed scornfully and essayed a sneer, while his friends, regarding his contortions with some anxiety, expressed a fear that he was not quite himself. To this suggestion the steward deigned no reply, and turning to the landlord bade him replenish his mug.

"You've 'ad enough, Mr. Wilks," said that gentleman, who had been watching him for some time.

Mr. Wilks, gazing at him mistily, did not at first understand the full purport of this remark; but when he did, his wrath was so majestic and his remarks about the quality of the brew so libellous that the landlord lost all patience.

"You get off home," he said, sharply.

"Listen t' me," said Mr. Wilks, impressively.

"I don't want no words with you," said the landlord. "You get off home while you can."

"That's right, Sam," said one of the company, putting his hand on the steward's arm. "You take his advice."

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Mr. Wilks shook the hand off and eyed his adviser ferociously. Then he took a glass from the counter and smashed it on the floor. The next moment the bar was in a ferment, and the landlord, gripping Mr. Wilks round the middle, skilfully piloted him to the door and thrust him into the road.

The strong air blowing from the sea disordered the steward's faculties still further. His treatment inside was forgotten, and, leaning against the front of the tavern, he stood open-mouthed, gazing at marvels. Ships in the harbour suddenly quitted their native element and were drawn up into the firmament; nobody passed but twins.

"HE TOOK A GLASS FROM THE COUNTER AND SMASHED IT ON THE FLOOR."

"Evening, Mr. Wilks," said a voice.

The steward peered down at the voice. At first he thought it was another case of twins, but looking close he saw that it was Mr. Edward Silk alone. He saluted him graciously, and then, with a wave of his hand toward the sky, sought to attract his attention to the ships there.

"Yes," said the unconscious Mr. Silk, "sign of a fine day to-morrow. Are you going my way?"

Mr. Wilks smiled, and detaching himself from the tavern with some difficulty just saved Mr. Silk from a terrible fall by clutching him forcibly round the neck. The ingratitude of Mr. Silk was a rebuff to a nature which was at that moment overflowing with goodwill. For a moment the steward was half inclined to let him go home alone, but the reflection that he would never get there softened him.

"Pull yourself t'gether," he said, gravely. "Now, 'old on me."

The road, as they walked, rose up in imitation of the shipping, but Mr. Wilks knew now the explanation: Teddy Silk was intoxicated. Very gently he leaned towards the erring youth and wagged his head at him.

"Are you going to hold up or aren't you?" demanded Mr. Silk, shortly.

The steward waived the question; he knew from experience the futility of arguing with men in drink. The great thing was to get Teddy Silk home, not to argue with him. He smiled good-temperedly to himself, and with a sudden movement pinned him up against the wall in time to arrest another fall.

With frequent halts by the way, during which the shortness of Mr. Silk's temper furnished Mr. Wilks with the texts of several sermons, none of which he finished, they at last reached Fullalove Alley, and the steward, with a brief exhortation to his charge to hold his head up, bore down on Mrs. Silk, who was sitting in her doorway.

"I've brought 'im 'ome," he said, steadying himself against the door-post; "brought 'im 'ome."

"Brought 'im 'ome?" said the bewildered Mrs. Silk.

"Don' say anything to 'im," entreated Mr. Wilks, "my sake. Thing might 'appen anybody."

"He's been like that all the way," said Mr. Silk, regarding the steward with much disfavour. "I don't know why I troubled about him, I'm sure."

"Crowd roun' 'im," pursued the imaginative Mr. Wilks. "'Old up, Teddy."

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"THE GREAT THING WAS TO GET TEDDY SILK HOME."

"I'm sure it's very kind of you, Mr. Wilks," said the widow, as she glanced at a little knot of neighbours standing near. "Will you come inside for a minute or two?"

She moved the chair to let him pass, and Mr. Wilks, still keeping the restraining hand of age on the shoulder of intemperate youth, passed in and stood, smiling amiably, while Mrs. Silk lit the lamp and placed it in the centre of the table, which was laid for supper. The light shone on a knuckle of boiled pork, a home-made loaf, and a fresh-cut wedge of cheese.

"I suppose you won't stay and pick a bit o' supper with us?" said Mrs. Silk.

"Why not?" inquired Mr. Wilks.

"I'm sure, if I had known," said Mrs. Silk, as she piloted him to a seat, "I'd 'ave 'ad something nice. There, now! If I 'aven't been and forgot the beer."

She left the table and went into the kitchen, and Mr. Wilks's eyes glistened as she returned with a large brown jug full of foaming ale and filled his glass.

"Teddy mustn't 'ave any," he said, sharply, as she prepared to fill that gentleman's glass.

"Just 'alf a glass," she said, winsomely.

"Not a drop," said Mr. Wilks, firmly.

Mrs. Silk hesitated, and screwing up her forehead glanced significantly at her son. "'Ave some by-and-by," she whispered.

"Give me the jug," said Mr. Silk, indignantly. "What are you listening to 'im for? Can't you see what's the matter with 'im?"

"Not to 'ave it," said Mr. Wilks; "put it 'ere."

He thumped the table emphatically with his hand, and before her indignant son could interfere Mrs. Silk had obeyed. It was the last straw. Mr. Edward Silk rose to his feet with tremendous effect and, first thrusting his plate violently away from him, went out into the night, slamming the door behind him with such violence that the startled Mr. Wilks was nearly blown out of his chair.

"He don't mean nothing," said Mrs. Silk, turning a rather scared face to the steward. "'E's a bit jealous of you, I s'pose."

Mr. Wilks shook his head. Truth to tell, he was rather at a loss to know exactly what had happened.

"And then there's 'is love affair," sighed Mrs. Silk. "He'll never get over the loss of Amelia Kybird. I always know when 'e 'as seen her, he's that miserable there's no getting a word out of 'im."

Mr. Wilks smiled vaguely and went on with his supper, and, the meal finished, allowed himself to be installed in an easy-chair, while his hostess cleared the table. He sat and smoked in high good humour with himself, the occasional remarks he made being received with an enthusiasm which they seldom provoked elsewhere.

"I should like t' sit 'ere all night," he said, at last.

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Silk, playfully.

"Like t' sit 'ere all night," repeated Mr. Wilks, somewhat sternly. "All nex' day, all day after, day after that, day——"

Mrs. Silk eyed him softly. "Why would

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you like to sit here all that time?" she inquired, in a low voice.

"B'cause," said Mr. Wilks, simply, "b'cause I don't feel's if I can stand. Goo'-night."

He closed his eyes on the indignant Mrs. Silk and fell fast asleep. It was a sound sleep and dreamless, and only troubled by the occasional ineffectual attempts of his hostess to arouse him. She gave up the attempt at last, and taking up a pair of socks sat working thoughtfully the other side of the fire-place.

The steward awoke an hour or two later, and after what seemed a terrible struggle found himself standing at the open door with the cold night air blowing in his face, and a voice which by an effort of memory he identified as that of Edward Silk inviting him "to go home and lose no time about it." Then the door slammed behind him and he stood balancing himself with some difficulty on the step, wondering what had happened. By the time he had walked up and down the deserted alley three or four times light was vouchsafed to him and, shivering slightly, he found his own door and went to bed.

"CAPTAIN NUGENT."

CHAPTER XIX.

Any hopes which Hardy might have entertained as to the attitude of Miss Nugent were dispelled the first time he saw her, that dutiful daughter of a strong-willed sire favouring him with a bow which was exactly half an inch in depth and then promptly bestowing her gaze elsewhere. He passed Captain Nugent next day, and for a week afterwards he had only to close his eyes to see in all its appalling virulence the glare with which that gentleman had acknowledged his attempt at recognition.

He fared no better in Fullalove Alley, a visit to Mr. Wilks eliciting the fact that that delectable thoroughfare had been put out of bounds for Miss Nugent. Moreover, Mr. Wilks was full of his own troubles and anxious for any comfort and advice that could be given to him. All the alley knew that Mrs. Silk had quarrelled with her son over the steward, and, without knowing the facts, spoke their mind with painful freedom concerning them.

"She and Teddy don't speak to each other now," said Mr. Wilks, gloomily, "and to 'ear people talk you'd think it was my fault."

Hardy gave him what comfort he could. He even went the length of saying that Mrs. Silk was a fine woman.

"She acts like a suffering martyr," exclaimed Mr. Wilks. "She comes over 'ere dropping hints that people are talking about us, and that they ask 'er awkward questions. Pretending to misunderstand 'er every time is enough to send me crazy; and she's so sudden in what she says there's no being up to 'er. On'y this morning she asked me if I should be sorry if she died."

"What did you say?" inquired his listener.

"I said 'yes,'" admitted Mr. Wilks, reluctantly. "I couldn't say anything else; but I said that she wasn't to let my feelings interfere with 'er in any way."

Hardy's father sailed a day or two later, and after that nothing happened. Equator Lodge was an impregnable fortress, and the only member of the garrison he saw in a fortnight was Bella.

His depression did not escape the notice of his partner, who, after first advising love-philtres and then a visit to a well-known specialist for diseases of the heart, finally recommended more work, and put a generous portion of his own on to the young man's desk. Hardy, who was in an evil temper, pitched it on to the floor and, with a few

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incisive remarks on levity unbecoming to age, pursued his duties in gloomy silence.

A short time afterwards, however, he had to grapple with his partner's work in real earnest. For the first time in his life the genial shipbroker was laid up with a rather serious illness. A chill caught while bathing was going the round of certain unsuspected weak spots, and the patient, who was of an inquiring turn of mind, was taking a greater interest in medical works than his doctor deemed advisable.

"Most interesting study," he said, faintly, to Hardy, as the latter sat by his bedside one evening and tried to cheer him in the usual way by telling him that there was nothing the matter with him. "There are dozens of different forms of liver complaint alone, and I've got 'em all."

"Liver isn't much," said his visitor, with the confidence of youth.

"Mine is," retorted the invalid; "it's twice its proper size and still growing. Base of the left lung is solidifying, or I'm much mistaken; the heart, instead of waltzing as is suitable to my time of life, is doing a galop, and everything else is as wrong as it can be."

"When are you coming back?" inquired the other.

"Back?" repeated Swann. "Back? You haven't been listening. I'm a wreck. All through violating man's primeval instinct by messing about in cold water. What is the news?"

Hardy pondered and shook his head. "Nugent is going to be married in July," he said, at last.

"He'd better have had that trip on the whaler," commented Mr. Swann; "but that is not news. Nathan Smith told it me this morning."

"Nathan Smith?" repeated the other, in surprise.

"I've done him a little service," said the invalid. "Got him out of a mess with Garth and Co. He's been here two or three times, and I must confess I find him a most alluring rascal."

"Birds of a feather——" began Hardy, superciliously.

"Don't flatter me," said Swann, putting his hand out of the bed-clothes with a deprecatory gesture. "I am not worthy to sit at his feet. He is the most amusing knave on the coast. He is like a sunbeam in a sick room when you can once get him to talk of his experiences. Have you seen young Nugent lately? Does he seem cheerful?"

"Yes, but he is not," was the reply.

"Well, it's natural for the young to marry," said the other, gravely. "Murchison will be the next to go, I expect."

"SNIFFING AT THEIR CONTENTS."

"Possibly," returned Hardy, with affected calmness.

"Blaikie was saying something about it this morning," resumed Swann, regarding him from half-closed lids, "but he was punching and tapping me all about the ribs while he was talking, and I didn't catch all he said, but I think it's all arranged. Murchison is there nearly every day, I understand; I suppose you meet him there?"

Mr. Hardy, whistling softly, rose and walked round the room, uncorking medicine bottles and sniffing at their contents. A smile of unaffected pleasure lit up his features as he removed the stopper from one particularly pungent mixture.

"Two tablespoonfuls three times a day," he read, slowly. "When did you have the last, Swann? Shall I ring for the nurse?"

The invalid shook his head impatiently. "You're an ungrateful dog," he muttered, "or you would tell me how your affair is going. Have you got any chance?"

"You're getting light-headed now," said Hardy, calmly. "I'd better go."

"All right, go then," responded the invalid; "but if you lose that girl just for the want of

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a little skilled advice from an expert, you'll never forgive yourself—I'm serious."

"Well, you *must* be ill then," said the younger man, with anxiety.

"Twice," said Mr. Swann, lying on his back and apparently addressing the ceiling, "twice I have given this young man invaluable assistance, and each time he has bungled."

Hardy laughed and, the nurse returning to the room, bade him "good-bye" and departed. After the close atmosphere of the sick room the air was delicious, and he walked along slowly, deep in thought. From Nathan Smith his thoughts wandered to Jack Nugent and his unfortunate engagement, and from that to Kate Nugent. For months he had been revolving impossible schemes in his mind to earn her gratitude, and possibly that of the captain, by extricating Jack. In the latter connection he was also reminded of that unhappy victim of unrequited affection, Edward Silk.

It was early to go indoors, and the house was dull. He turned and retraced his steps, and, his thoughts reverting to his sick partner, smiled as he remembered remarks which that irresponsible person had made at various times concerning the making of his last will and testament. Then he came to a sudden standstill as a wild, forlorn-hope kind of idea suddenly occurred to him. He stood for some time thinking, then walked a little way, and then stopped again as various difficulties presented themselves for solution. Finally, despite the lateness of the hour, he walked back in some excitement to the house he had quitted over half an hour before with the intention of speaking to the invalid concerning a duty peculiarly incumbent upon elderly men of means.

The nurse, who came out of the sick room, gently closing the door after her, demurred a little to this second visit, but, receiving a promise from the visitor not to excite the invalid, left them together. The odour of the abominable physic was upon the air.

"Well?" said the invalid.

"I have been thinking that I was rather uncivil a little while ago," said Hardy.

"Ah!" said the other. "What do you want?"

"A little of that skilled assistance you were speaking of."

Mr. Swann made an alarming noise in his throat. Hardy sprang forward in alarm, but he motioned him back.

"I was only laughing," he explained.

Hardy repressed his annoyance by an effort, and endeavoured, but with scant success, to return the other's smile.

"Go on," said the shipbroker, presently.

"I have thought of a scheme for upsetting Nugent's marriage," said Hardy, slowly. "It is just a forlorn hope which depends for its success on you and Nathan Smith."

"He's a friend of Kybird's," said the other, drily.

"That is the most important thing of all," rejoined Hardy. "That is, next to your shrewdness and tact; everything depends upon you, really, and whether you can fool Smith. It is a great thing in our favour that you have been taking him up lately."

"Are you coming to the point or are you not?" demanded the shipbroker.

Hardy looked cautiously round the room, and then, drawing his chair close to the bed, leaned over the prostrate man and spoke rapidly into his ear.

"*What?*" cried the astounded Mr. Swann, suddenly sitting up in his bed. "You—you scoundrel!"

"It's to be done," said Hardy.

"You ghoul!" said the invalid, glaring at him. "Is that the way to talk to a sick man? You unscrupulous rascal!"

"It'll be amusement for you," pleaded the other, "and if we are successful it will be the best thing in the end for everybody. Think of the good you'll do."

"Where you get such rascally ideas from, I can't think," mused the invalid. "Your father is a straightforward, honest man, and your partner's uprightness is the talk of Sunwich."

"It doesn't take much to make Sunwich talk," retorted Hardy.

"A preposterous suggestion to make to a man of my standing," said the shipbroker, ignoring the remark. "If the affair ever leaked out I should never hear the end of it."

"It can't leak out," said Hardy, "and if it does there is no direct evidence. They will never really know until you die; they can only suspect."

"Very well," said the shipbroker, with a half-indulgent, half-humorous glance. "Anything to get rid of you. It's a crack-brained scheme, and could only originate with a young man whose affections have weakened his head—I consent."

"Bravo!" said Hardy and patted him on the back; Mr. Swann referred to the base of his left lung, and he apologized.

"I'll have to fix it up with Blaikie," said the invalid, lying down again. "Murchi-

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son got two of his best patients last week, so that it ought to be easy. And besides, he is fond of innocent amusement."

"I'm awfully obliged to you," said Hardy.

"It might be as well if we pretended to quarrel," said the invalid, reflectively, "especially as you are known to be a friend of Nugent's. We'll have a few words—before my housekeeper if possible, to insure publicity—and then you had better not come again. Send Silk instead with messages."

Hardy thanked him and whispered a caution as a footstep was heard on the landing. The door opened and the nurse, followed by the housekeeper bearing a tray, entered the room.

"And I can't be worried about these things," said Swann, in an acrimonious voice, as they entered. "If you are not capable of settling a simple question like that yourself, ask the office-boy to instruct you."

"It's your work," retorted Hardy, "and a nice mess it's in."

"H'sh!" said the nurse, coming forward hastily. "You must leave the room, sir. I can't have you exciting my patient."

Hardy bestowed an indignant glance at the invalid.

"Get out!" said that gentleman, with extraordinary fierceness for one in his weak condition. "In future, nurse, I won't have this person admitted to my room."

"Yes, yes; certainly," said the nurse. "You must go, sir; at once, please."

"I'm going," said Hardy, almost losing his gravity at the piteous spectacle afforded by the housekeeper as she stood, still holding the tray and staring open-mouthed at the combatants. "When you're tired of skulking in bed, perhaps you'll come and do your share of the work."

Mr. Swann rose to a sitting position, and his demeanour was so alarming that the nurse, hastening over to him, entreated him to lie down, and waved Hardy peremptorily from the room.

"Puppy!" said the invalid, with great relish. "Blockhead!"

He gazed fixedly at the young man as he departed and then, catching sight in his turn of the housekeeper's perplexity, laid himself down and buried his face in the bed-clothes. The nurse crossed over to her assistant and, taking the tray from her, told her in a sharp whisper that if she ever admitted Mr. Hardy again she would not be answerable for the consequences.

"'PUPPY!' SAID THE INVALID."

(To be continued.)

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More Snow Statues.

By Thomas E. Curtis.

THAT there are others beside boys and girls who like to model in snow was shown very prettily in an article which we published a few years ago describing a competition in snow-sculpture which takes place in Brussels annually. Those participating in that competition are, in the main, art students of the city, and many of the sculptures—if we may dignify them by that name—have been in past years commendable examples of the modeller's art; so good, indeed, that one could but regret the transient nature of the work. The sun became the sculptor's enemy, and in a trifling space of time the labour of hours was doomed to disappear.

Since that article was published we have received from our readers many photographs of snow-sculpture, some of which are reproduced in this article. The majority of the pictures, however, represent some of last year's exhibit in a snow-modelling competition which takes place yearly in the Harz Mountains, Germany. Countries with a colder climate than England offer many opportunities for indulgence in the pleasant pastime of snow-sculpture, and there is little doubt that those who winter in the Harz look forward with genuine pleasure to the moment when the St. Andreas winter festival is held, and the snow-modelling, to mention but one only of the attractions of that festival, is begun. In last year's show perhaps the most popular exhibit—and certainly the one most often visited—was the large and striking group shown in our first illustration. It represented the late Li Hung Chang and General Count von Waldersee, who at that time were very important figures in the German public eye. The latter, only shortly

GENERAL VON WALDERSEE AND THE LATE LI HUNG CHANG.

AN ELECTRIC CAR.

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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

The representation of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf was particularly effective last year. The figures stood prominently out from a mound of snow, the wolf well formed and massive (except for a rather formidable tail), and Little Red Riding Hood, with her basket and gay apron, delightfully simple and evidently very communicative. No one could deny, after looking at this clever representation in snow of two of the most memorable figures in the recollection of our childhood, that Little Red Riding Hood was, indeed, very silly to be taken in by such an animal, and that the wolf, himself, was perfectly capable of eating any grandmother alive.

before, had been sent out by the Emperor to China in command of the allied troops, and his movements were exciting wide attention. So also were the movements of the great Chinese statesman who has just died. It cannot be believed that either of the two men would have been greatly flattered by his appearance in snow-form, but each would have had the felicity of knowing that his reputation was more lasting than the material of which his dummy was made.

There is, likewise, some satisfaction in the thought that all electric-cars are not so unstable as the cars shown in our second illustration—albeit this piece of handiwork was one of the features of the festival. Here we have a fairly good reproduction of the modern method of street travel in Germany. But, alas, for the efforts of the maker! The front of his car, designedly intended as the most effective part of the structure, has, owing to his own carelessness or the interference of King Sol, become warped to a degree that suggests pending collapse and imminent danger to the motor-man below.

The legendary lore of Germany, it may be added, plays considerable part in such exhibitions as these. Granted that children are to have a share in the festivities, there will always be an attempt to attract the child's eye and please his imagination. To the boys and girls, therefore, of St. Andreas "Little Red Riding Hood" appealed strongly, but not more so than did the group representing Hans and Gretchen, shown in the

HANS AND GRETCHEN.

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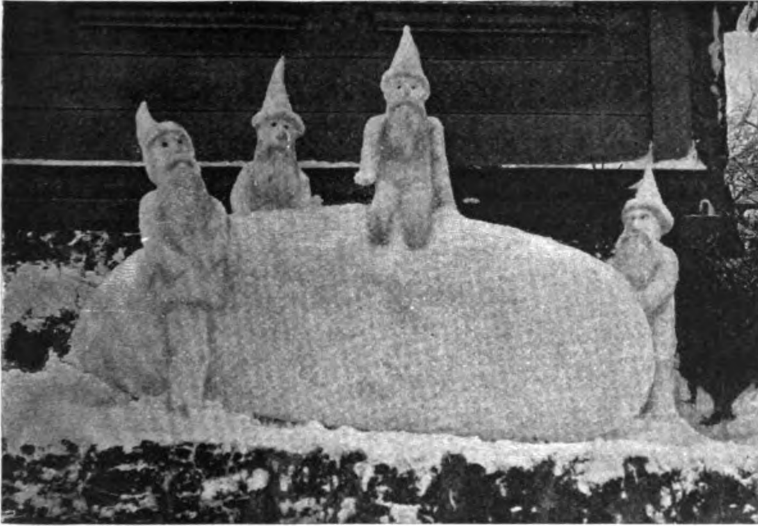
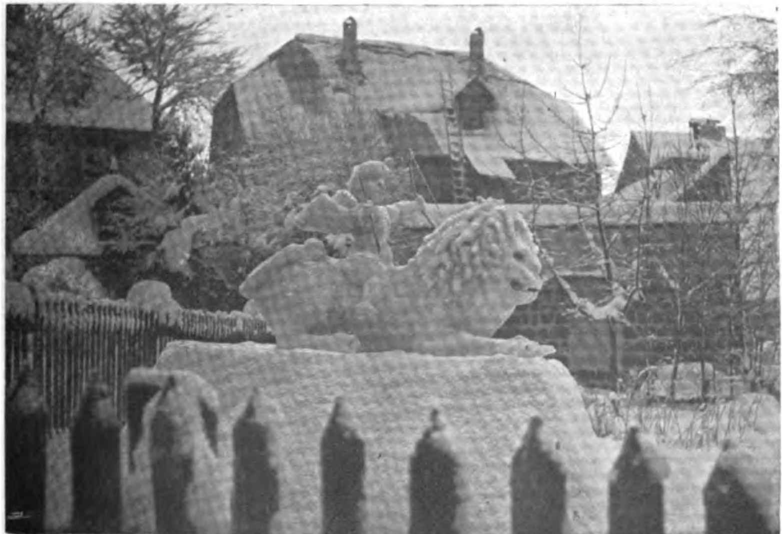


A GROUP OF GNOMES.

reproduction in the lower right-hand corner of the preceding page. Every German child knows by heart the story of the "Babes in the Wood"—how they were sent from home by an impatient mother; how they were put to sleep by the sandman, and how they wakened joyfully, only to find themselves in the presence of the wicked witch who ate children and lived in a ginger-bread house. Well, here they are, as large as life, in the presence of an icy-hearted old witch, who, with a cat by her side and a bird of evil omen on her shoulder, sits in front of her hut—not of ginger-bread, but of snow—a menace, indeed, to the little ones. As the lovely fairy story goes, Hans and Gretchen later outwitted and roasted the poor old witch. The wicked being in our picture simply melted away.

The group of gnomes likewise illustrates the successful search through fairy-land for pretty subjects in snow-modelling. Gnomes, in general—perhaps not the little, long-bearded men of white shown in our picture—are supposed to be the guardians of mines and quarries, and they have a name in legend for pranks of the most mischievous sort. But the gnomes made by the Harz snow-moulder are too firmly attached to their frozen base to do harm even to the most sensitive child who might look upon them. What this frozen base represents would puzzle a scientist to know. Perhaps it represents a stone dug from one of their quarries, over which the fine little creatures are keeping guard.

So well, however, do these different snow-models tell their own story that it seems needless to describe them at length. "Love and the Lion," shown at the bottom of this page, was an impressive piece of "statuary," in making which the artist spent more labour upon the figure of Love than he did upon the Lion. The result is shown in the caricature—it can be called nothing else—of the lion's mouth. Yet the group was distinctly effective. "An Eskimo Hut," shown on page 172, was a failure, and had to be publicly entitled "Eskimo Hütte," in order



LOVE AND THE LION.

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AN ESKIMO HUT.

that people might know what it was. The "Equestrienne" was much more worthy of notice, as the horse alone deserved to be called a horse simply by virtue of its graceful outlines. The legs were a trifle unnatural, however, and the dressed-up dummy on the horse's back failed to convince, on account of its unnatural pose.

As the competition in the Harz is open to everybody, and as the householders in St. Andreas are keenly alive to the success of their festival, it is not to be wondered at that the struggle for the prizes is well fought and the variety of subjects great. Nearly every inhabitant takes a hand in the modelling, and the various subjects are chosen after general consultation among small groups of competitors. The garden or lawn of some member of each group is selected for the display, and the work proceeds as soon as the festival, thanks to a good fall of snow, is assured of success. This accounts for the fact that many of our illustrations show, in their backgrounds, the houses of the people of St. Andreas. Not always, however, are the modellers fortunate in their choices of position. The effect of the Li Hung Chang—Waldersee group is certainly marred by the fence in front of the snow figures.

The "Hunter and the Wild Boar" is introduced in this article merely to emphasize the difference between badly and well-arranged grouping of snow-models. The artist here attempted to do too much, and each of his models is dangerously near mediocrity.

A few more words about the festival may not be out of place. It includes, besides the exhibits of snow-modelling shown herewith, many interesting competitions in skating, ski-running, racing, etc., these being contested by large numbers of athletes—principally from snow-clad countries like Sweden and Norway — who came to St. Andreas to compete for world's championships or to uphold honours already won. The first winter festival was organized in 1895, and 4,000 people took part last year in the health-giving fun. Each festival opens on a Saturday with the reception of guests at the railway station. They are met by a large number of sleighs,

THE EQUESTRIENNE.

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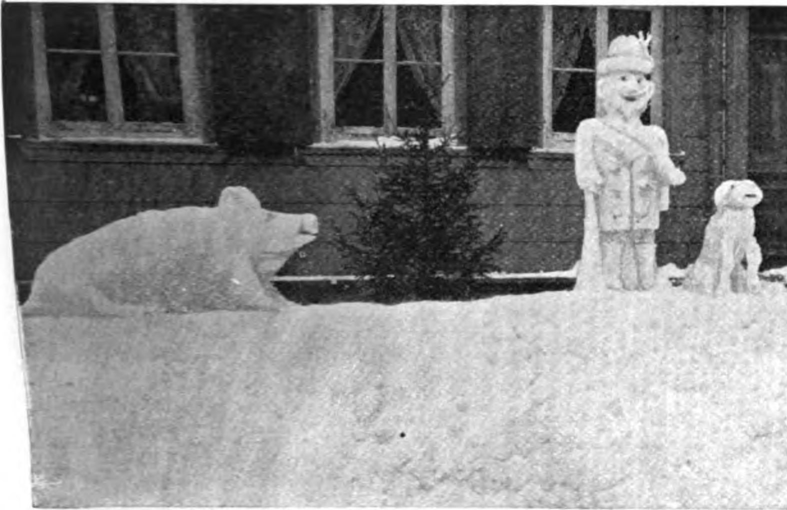

THE HUNTER AND THE WILD BOAR.

and the guests continue to arrive until long past midnight. Sunday follows with a sleighing party.

Last year 135 sleighs took part, through the romantic Sieberthal. In the afternoon of Sunday races take place, and in the evening a grand banquet is held, at which speeches are made by the invited guests and local dignitaries. Fireworks, illuminations, and a concert in the market-place end the festivities of the day.

On Tuesday the races are continued and ski-jumping prizes are contested for. The judging of the snow-models is, however, the event of the day that interests most of the inhabitants, and the judges may be said to have the hardest duty of the festival in deciding who of the people in the village may best deserve the prizes offered by the magistrate. The success of the snow-modelling depends, of course, as much upon the condition of the snow as upon anything else, and the lucky competitor is usually the one who has had the foresight not to begin modelling before the proper time. Many a good model was lost to fortune last year because the sculptor's work began to melt before the judges came round!

The prizes are given to the winners at a breakfast next day, and the festival ends in good fellowship and general satisfaction.

The cold weather of February, 1900, afforded some opportunity in England for indulgence in the delights of snow-modelling, and two of the results we are privileged to reproduce on this page. The first, a study of two bears and a man, comes to us from Mr. D. A. Quiggin, of 11, Harlech Road, Blundellsands, Liverpool, who says: "It was a first attempt at snow-sculpture to amuse the youngsters." Most of our readers will agree with us that this was a very good first attempt, and the youngsters ought to have been highly pleased. The group was made in the garden in front of Mr. Quiggin's house, and, to quote from a letter received, "looked much better than represented, as, owing to the uncertainty of the light, the photo. did not do the group justice." The bear at the window was very realistic, and had in his mouth a branch of the ivy off the house. The man lying in the snow, with his feet toward the front, is represented as being closely examined by the second bear.

Another good snow-model was that of the

A STUDY IN BEARS.

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"Sphinx," which, as Miss Edith Mathew, of 9, Brockley Road, Beckenham, points out in a letter, was modelled in Beckenham by an artist. The modeller did not realize when he did it that it could be seen from the main road, but it was plainly visible, and drew admiration from every passer-by. This, too, was made during the cold spell of February, 1900.

THE SPHINX.

In our article on the Brussels snow statues, which was published in January, 1898, we took occasion to say that a good reproduction in snow of the human face was "easily obtainable." This we are not so sure of to-day. Some hundreds of photographs of snow-statues have proved to us that caricatures of the human face are easy, but that truthful, accurate reproductions of the human features are exceedingly difficult. To show the great difference, we have ventured to reproduce on this page two photographs: one taken at the Harz festival, showing the "Wild Man of the Woods," and the other a photograph of a snow bust of the late composer, Signor Verdi, modelled in Genoa, and sent to us by Mr. Albert de la Mare. The first is, of course, a model of a mythical personage; but for all that the face is dull and "wooden," and appears to have been done with just enough care to satisfy the on-lookers that a human head and face was intended. We think any of our readers could have been as successful. Compare it, however, with the Verdi, and note how much delicacy of touch and accuracy of feature can be put into such work. The man who made the bust of Verdi accomplished the very difficult feat of making an almost speaking likeness—by all odds one of the best specimens of such work we have ever seen.

Our photographs of the St. Andreas snow-statues were taken by Mr. F. Petz, of Duderstadt.

THE WILD MAN OF THE WOODS.

THE LATE SIGNOR VERDI.

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A Story of Hearts.

By Winifred Graham.

ATHURST HALL was full of visitors, for Mrs. Elphinstone's dances were the most popular in the county. She understood the art of entertaining in all its intricate details. Wealth and beauty had not spoilt her charm; she was as simple, happy, and unaffected as her little daughter "Babs," a tiny, auburn-haired mite, with big, inquiring eyes. Under the mop of red-brown curls a very sensible and observant mind lay concealed.

Babs watched her fellow-creatures with interest, and saw a very great deal for a person in socks.

It was Babs who first remarked on Leonard Morgan's changed appearance when he arrived with a dozen other guests to partake in the festivities at Bathurst Hall.

"Cousin Leonard can't keep his teeth still; is he doing it for fun?" she asked her mother, innocently.

Mrs. Elphinstone went across to her nephew, a tall, bronzed young man.

"You have an attack of fever again," she said, laying her hand on his shoulder.

"I shall be all right presently," he replied, forcing a smile. "Ever since my return from India these tiresome malaria fits come and go. I was quite well when I left London, but began shivering in the train. It seems really so silly, I'm quite annoyed with myself. I daresay it will pass off--please don't bother about me."

Mrs. Elphinstone sat down beside him and felt his pulse. He seemed to like the process, for an amused smile came involuntarily to his lips, not forced this time, but spontaneous.

"Does it tick very loud?" asked Babs, leaning against his elbow.

"I don't know; you must ask Aunt Helen," replied Leonard.

Babs glanced inquiringly towards her mother, the childish eyes looking very wide and sympathetic at that moment.

"I'm sure you ought to go to bed and not dance to-night," said Helen Elphinstone, decidedly. "You don't look fit to dress and come down; you should keep quiet and warm."

Leonard shook his head, disdaining the idea.

"Wild horses would not keep me upstairs," he declared.

"Well, I know it would be rather hard thinking of a pretty *fiancée* below—obliged to spend her evening with other men," answered his young aunt, feelingly. "I saw Mabel yesterday, and she was rather hurt you had stayed so much in town. I assured her you had been very busy, but she scarcely seemed to believe me."

"Oh, it will be all right to-night when I explain," he said, cheerfully. "I'm an abominable correspondent, you know. I could not tell her half I had to do in letters."

"Talking of letters, there are some waiting for you in the hall. I don't think you saw them as you came in."

Leonard did not like to own he had felt too ill and dizzy to notice anything.

"I'll fetch them," said Babs, bounding away. To Babs the habit of walking was distasteful; she always ran at top speed, and had won a reputation as a messenger.

"Look," she said, returning breathlessly, "there's an envelope with an 'M' on it—that must be from Lady Mabel."

Leonard opened the initialled envelope first. The sight of the familiar handwriting sent his blood flowing faster through his veins. Though outwardly undemonstrative, he was desperately in love.

Babs watched his face as he read. "I wonder he does not smile," she thought, "for it is from Lady Mabel, I know."

He remained perfectly silent and still as a stone image; he did not open the other letters.

Babs knelt against his knee. "Shall I get you some more cake?" she asked.

He made no reply. It was evident he had not heard the little piping voice.

"Or some tea—or—or bread and butter?" she continued.

He rose hurriedly, nearly knocking her over.

"I'm going up to my room," he told Mrs. Elphinstone. "I believe you are right, and I should be better in bed. You can tell Mabel I have a slight attack of fever—nothing serious, and say I'm sorry not to see her."

"Good boy! You are doing the right thing. We shall miss you horribly, but it can't be helped. It would be madness to dance, and you don't look fit to be up."

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Babs crept unseen to the foot of the stairs to watch Cousin Leonard's ascent. She thought he walked like old gentlemen who did not come for the dances, and her feeling little heart filled suddenly with compassion.

"I wish he wasn't ill," she said. "We should have had such nice games after tea. Poor Cousin Leonard!"

The guests saw no more of Leonard Morgan; but Babs hovered about in the passage and listened outside his door. She begged to be allowed to say "good-night," but nurse packed her off to bed before the carriages began to rumble up the avenue. Babs had no intention of going to sleep; her mind was full of the music and dancing below, the many-coloured lights sparkling in the garden, the mirth, feasting, and gaiety of that festive scene. She also thought of Leonard, wondering if he, too, lay awake thinking of Lady Mabel and the pleasant evening he had missed.

"It's worse for him having to go to bed," she told herself. "I'm only a very little girl; but, of course, he expects to sit up."

Anxiety on behalf of the sufferer, and a certain restlessness produced by the knowledge of the merry crowd below, urged Babs to desert her cot and wander in the direction of Leonard's room.

"I might just peep and see if he's awake," she said softly to herself. "When I was ill people came in and out all night long."

She crept to the door on tiptoe and put her ear to the keyhole. She fancied she heard him tossing about, and then a slight cough assured her he was not sleeping. The room was bright with moonlight, and the baby figure looked like a veritable moonbeam as it approached the sick man.

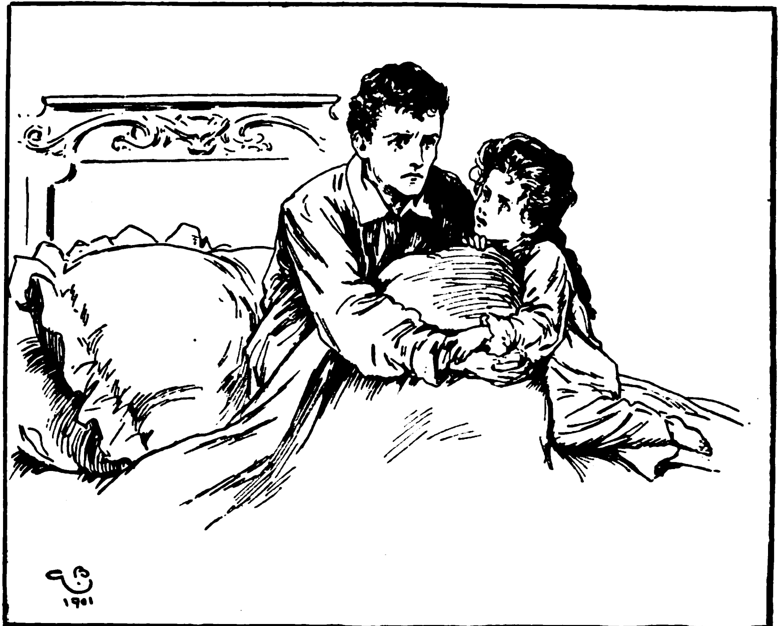
"Poor Cousin Leonard!" said a small voice in his ear, and a cool hand was laid on his forehead.

He had seen her come in, and rose on his elbow to stroke her curls.

"Ah! poor indeed!" he replied.

"Do you feel very bad?" she queried.

He looked at her with haggard eyes; his face was deathly white and drawn; his lips trembled.



"'DO YOU FEEL VERY BAD?' SHE QUERIED."

"Yes, you can't understand, Babs, but I'm regularly bowled over."

"Oh! but I can understand," she replied, proudly. "I had measles last year. I know just how it feels to be ill."

"I don't mind about illness," he said, enigmatically.

The words puzzled Babs.

"Of course—I see," she murmured, after a pause, "you are disappointed because you mustn't dance. I missed two Christmas trees the winter I had measles. One does feel vexed about that sort of thing. I expect Lady Mabel is sorry, too. Do you know, I believe I saw her in the garden; the moonlight was on her hair; she sat just under my window. All the people are sitting in the garden to-night. Mother says they like that much better than dancing, but it seems to me it must be rather dull—so far away from the fun and the music."

"You—saw—Mabel!" The words came brokenly. Leonard was sitting up, with his

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elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands. His eyes appeared to be staring at something far off.

"Yes, and I thought to myself—if I could talk to Lady Mabel she might give me a message for Cousin Leonard, but I was so far away up at the window it was no good calling out or waving. I peeped again, and saw her on the sofa. You know, there are sofas in the garden this evening—it looks so funny. She sits on that same sofa after every dance, I do believe."

"Don't, Babs, don't tell me any more—I can't bear it! You see, dear, I'm very fond of Mabel."

"I know. You're going to marry her, and I'm to be a bridesmaid and carry her train. I think I should like you to give me a little heart on a chain instead of a bracelet—you said I might choose anything I liked."

"All right, you shall have the heart, Babs, but there won't be a wedding, because she does not care for me now. You are the only person who knows yet, so don't talk about it to anyone."

Babs put her little arms round his neck and kissed him. The sudden realization that she was face to face with sorrow brought hot tears to her eyes, tears that made every-crying as if someone had dealt her a blow.

He lay down again with a deep sigh and apparently forgot her presence.

She stole to the door without speaking; her heart was beating wildly, and a sudden look of determination came in the little round, dimpled face which no one had ever seen there before.

Instead of turning in the direction of the nursery she ran as fast as her legs could carry her to the back staircase. All the servants were busy in the front of the house—fortune favoured Babs's enterprise. Swiftly she fled towards the garden; the music of a stirring dance reached her from the ball-room. She darted past innumerable strange forms and vanished like a phantom in the night mists.

"Where would you like to sit?" asked a tall, grey-haired man of an exceedingly pretty girl. She pointed to a sofa, placed out in the cool garden.

"I like this seat best," she replied. "It's close to a great bed of lilies, and I love the scent."

"You look tired," he said; "I don't believe you are enjoying yourself."

"One needs good spirits for a ball," answered the girl.

"'YOU LOOK TIRED,' HE SAID; 'I DON'T BELIEVE YOU ARE ENJOYING YOURSELF.'"

thing look foggy, and which had to be brushed hastily away with the corner of the pillow-case. She wanted to tell him how sorry she was, but the words stuck in her throat, and she just stood trembling and

"And," continued the grey-haired man, "it's awfully slow having to dance with an old uncle, eh, Mabel?"

The girl put out her hand quickly and laid it on his arm.

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"Oh! please don't say that," she pleaded. "It hurts me. You don't know how miserable I am to-night, and it has been torture dancing with other men. I'm happier with you; I can talk to you and trust you."

"Yes, dear little woman. What's the trouble?"

"I've broken off my engagement with Leonard. I began to think he did not care for me, and at last the thought became a sure conviction—I could no longer bear the strain. So I wrote and released him. I said I wished to be set free. I was too proud to let him guess how deeply I suffered. I sent the letter here, hoping to-night he might show some signs of feeling—which would enable me to call him back. Instead, he has not even bothered to come down, but made some excuse about not feeling well, and remained in his room. Now I know that I was right—he is only too glad I have given him this easy way of escape."

She leant back and put her hand over her eyes. She was conscious that the man beside her spoke words of sympathy, but they fell upon stony ground. Nothing could cure that frozen, numb sensation which seemed to congeal her very life-blood; no presence but Leonard's could bring relief to the unceasing ache of heart and head.

As the music recalled them she rose wearily.

"I suppose I must go back," she said. "I don't want anyone to think I mind. It has helped me a little, just speaking about it to you. I feel strengthened from having dropped my mask for a moment. One does grow so tired of smiling."

As Lady Mabel moved away a curly head appeared for an instant from under the sofa, and a pair of glistening eyes followed her retreat.

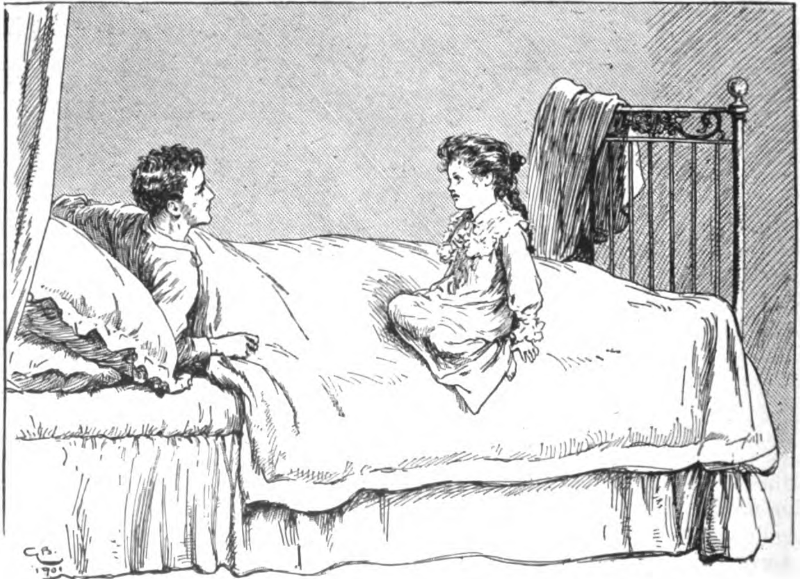
Then the remaining couples were once more astonished by the vision of a white sprite, which passed and vanished like a will-o'-the-wisp before they had time to perceive its identity.

Running even faster than before, inspirited by the good news she had to tell, Babs, with glowing cheeks, regained the invalid's room.

"I wonder why grown-up people say what they don't mean?" she thought, her head still full of Lady Mabel and the conversation she had overheard.

Leonard was not asleep, but pretended to be from disinclination to talk. He heard his door open, this time with no effort at concealment, but by somebody who bounded in and turned on the electric light, filling the room with radiance. Babs seemed to bring with her a great flood of joy as she sprang upon the bed and sat beaming down at the worried face on the pillow.

"Everything is coming right," she cried. "I've been as far as the garden, and it was awfully terrifying. I thought I should be caught, and—and lots of the party-people saw me. They said, 'What's that?' and 'Who's there?' Oh, and heaps of other things, but I had not time to stay and explain. It was like playing hide-and-seek, for I got under the sofa and kept quite still. I tried not to breathe even, but of course I had to sometimes. Lady Mabel came and sat on the sofa with her uncle. She told him she was miserable because you did not care for her, so, just out of kindness, she wrote the letter which came this afternoon. She thought, perhaps, to-night, you would—let me see,



"'EVERYTHING IS COMING RIGHT,' SHE CRIED."

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what did she say?—'Show some signs of feeling.' Yes, those were her very words, and she thinks it's just an excuse about your being ill."

Leonard put out his hands and seized hold of Babs. The sudden grip startled her, for his fingers trembled and their grasp positively hurt.

"Do you really mean this, Babs? Is it all true? Every word? You're—you're not playing a trick on me?"

She shook her curls emphatically. "I shouldn't go to Heaven ever if I told stories. Lady Mabel told a story. But perhaps it does not matter for grown-up people; they are different."

"Yes, yes; of course," he stammered. "And now, Babs, do you know, I'm going to get up straight away and go down to the dance. I've something important to say to Mabel, and the fever must take care of itself."

Babs smiled approval.

"'LITTLE DARLING,' WHISPERED MABEL."

"Oh," she said, "I'm so glad. Now I shall be able to go to sleep. It wasn't really the music kept me awake. I thought lots about you being alone and ill."

He kissed her as she sprang off the bed. Her poor little feet were cut by stones, but she was too excited to notice the injury.

"Good-night, Cousin Leonard," she cried, as she slipped away, triumphant at the success of her expedition.

"Good-night, little brick," he called after her, and though he spoke cheerily his voice sounded weak from illness.

Babs toddled back to the night nursery, her eyes suddenly heavy, and ready for dreamland.

"It was rather cold in the garden," she said, as she snuggled down under the clothes. "I'm more comfortable here. I'm glad I don't play hide-and-seek every night, the grass gets wet, and after all it was only hide, and no seek."

A delicious sense of drowsiness brought peace to the excited soul of the little child who had made sore hearts happy.

Under her window stood two figures looking up with grateful eyes.

"What can we do for Babs?" said Lady Mabel.

Leonard touched a little gold heart dangling from one of her bracelets.

"Shall we creep upstairs and tie that on Babs's wrist while she is asleep?" he suggested.

Mabel smiled.

"Yes."

Together they stole to the nursery, and with a tiny piece of ribbon cut from Mabel's dress fastened the trinket to the baby arm.

"Little darling," whispered Mabel, bending over the brown curls. "You don't know what you have done to-night! It may not have seemed much to you; it meant all the world to us!"

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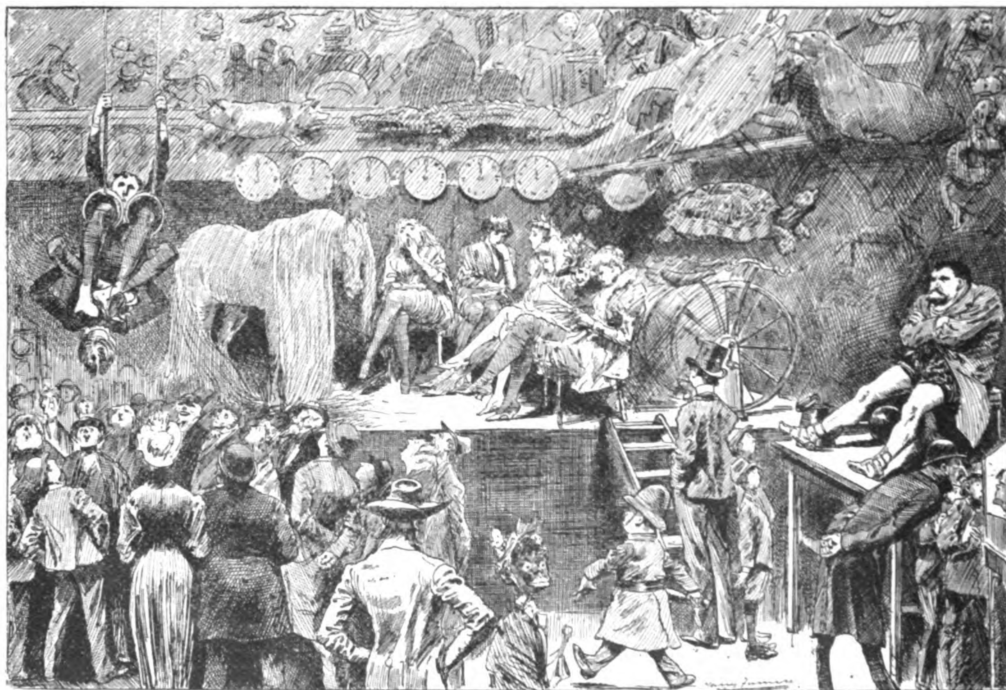
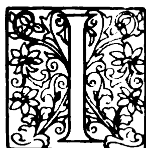
A Dime Museum.

BY HARRY FURNISS.



From a Drawing by] A DIME MUSEUM. [*Harry Furniss.*



I MUST make an Irish bull to explain to my English readers what an American dime museum really is. It is a fivepenny penny show. The dime is fivepence, and you get fifty times more value in the dime museum of America than you do in the penny show of England.

Dime museums, Sunday papers, and colonelships are the only really cheap things in the States.

"Museums for the Morbid" would be a better title, for although some of them may represent the grimy chrysalis that may some day develop into a Barnum's Show, those I have seen were old clothes shops of show business; worn-out wonders, mawkish monstrosities, old family "fakes"; they are, indeed, "vulga in extremis."

Attracted, like a moth, by the glare of many lamps, I was drawn into one of these museums when in New York. Covering the building outside were huge paintings portraying some of the wonders on view within, and in the centre a vilely painted picture of six ladies on bicycles, accompanied by an announcement setting forth that there was a competition going on between these rival representatives of different nations. England was leading by a mile or two, followed by France, with Germany, Italy, and Spain close up, the lady who pedalled to uphold the honour of the United States being absolutely last. This was on Thursday evening. I believe it invariably happens that the fair Americaine and the hope of England reverse their positions by Saturday evening.

When I went through I found myself in the central hall. On a large platform were six rather worn-out-looking ladies of various sizes and ages (I question whether they were of different nationality) in tights, seated in a row with their wraps and jackets on. She who did battle for Italy was deeply engrossed in reading an evening paper, which, by the way, was an American one; one slumbered, others chatted, and the sixth yawned. Behind

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"THE PROFESSOR."
From a Drawing by Harry Furniss.

the studio of the dime museum's property-maker.

The head of a John Dory growing out of an old sailor's boot; a petrified cat with nine tails; the skull of a soldier who had lived for fifty-three years with nineteen bullets in his brain; a baby bear with eagle's wings and a donkey's tail; a prairie oyster with a sponge growing out of it; and finally, in an asbestos case, the tail of a comet.

Cases line the walls all the way up the stairs, filled with these freaks of Nature, and wax models of assassins and Ambassadors, perjurers and princes, side by side.

"'Tis the voice of the Professor, I hear him explain" to a wondering crowd the chief living attractions of his great museum. A white-eyed girl in a short dress, who is twiddling her thumbs while seated on a chair on a raised daïs, and is adorned with a palpable wig of almost white, towy hair, is the first subject in the Professor's discourse.

"A *re*markable and *ex*tra-ordinary Circassian beauty, a genuine human prize. Natur' usually supplies the colouring matter for the hair, but she's forgot it in this instance. Ladies and gentlemen, it is one of them freaks of Natur' that might happen in *any* family!"

them were their stationary cycles, riveted to the floor, and the dial on the wall recorded the distances covered.

On the same platform was a horse exhibited for its extreme length of tail and mane, and I have an idea that it also talked, laughed, and sang — the latter, of course, rather "hoarsely."

On another platform sat a "strong man," waiting for his turn, and gazing with a look of utter contempt upon two youths who were going through their performance on the flying rings; while a diminutive policeman, about 2½ft. high, strutted about, greatly impressed by his brief authority.

Around were common objects of the showman's stock displayed in cases. The boots worn by Stabbenheimer, the well-known murderer, when he was arrested; the scalp of Bloodskin, the Indian assassin; the glass eye of Bridget Mulligan, the Bowery Beauty; the button found in the sausage that led to the discovery of the murder of Goldbug, the millionaire, by the sausage-maker, Pigstiggins, and many other interesting relics of this kind, all duly labelled and described. Then, hanging from the ceiling, were other curiosities from the sea, the slums, the battlefield, the mountain, the prairies, the skies, and—

THE CIRCASSIAN BEAUTY.
From a Drawing by Harry Furniss.

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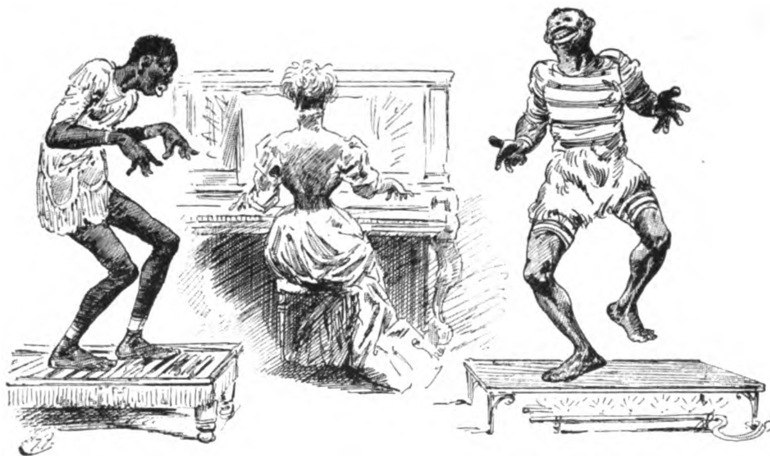
As I was drifted along by the crowd to hear the Professor describe the next attraction, with an awe that all must feel for a Professor, I tried to realize what he had just said, and I pictured to myself the surprise of Mr. Gillespie Quiverfull, of Somerset House, on finding, when he returned to his little suburban villa at Peckham Rye, that his dear wife had presented him with a splendid specimen of an infantile Circassian beauty!

A negro was next introduced to us, dressed in black tights ornamented with gold lace. The Professor then proceeded:—

"This gentleman in early youth lived on the peaceful banks of the silvery Kumkatchemalivo River, and had to trip daily over the sharp spikes of the prickly cactus that flourishes in them unexplored regions. This early training has so far benefited him as to give him the power of strolling about on the edges of razors with the greatest facility."

But why this gentleman selected walking on razors as his favourite amusement was not explained to us by the Professor. Now, if he had walked on the boulders and jagged rocks that are possibly strewn about the shores of the beautiful Kumkatchemalivo, I could have understood that he was practising to become a pedestrian in the streets of civilized New York. But, after all, these so-called razors may only have been New York restaurant knives, which anyone could jump on with impunity. As the coloured gentleman proceeded to take a constitutional on these razors he was accompanied on the piano by a lady, and his feet were about as much affected by the edges of the razors as were her fingers by the keys of the piano.



From a Drawing by] WALKING ON RAZORS AND DANCING ON HOT PLATES. [*Harry Furniss.*

There was another little raised table on the same platform, under which gas-jets were alight, and behind which was seated coloured gentleman number two. He was dressed in a bathing suit, a leopard skin, and a grin of self-satisfaction and conscious superiority.

In my juvenile days I used to be very much amazed that showmen had the nerve to describe the various members of their company in the most offensive and abusive terms, but I invariably consoled myself with the belief that, as these notorieties always hail from the most remote districts of far-distant climes, they would not, of course, be able to understand a word the showman was saying, and their feelings would be saved thereby.

Now the Professor described this coloured gentleman as having been a most atrocious scoundrel in his earlier days, but I know by this time that professors of mesmerism can get creatures on to the platform to be made pincushions of, to swallow miscellaneous distasteful articles, to be abused and ridiculed for so many dollars a week, and in the same way these princes and chiefs will walk on razors, dance on hot plates, and be daily described as bloodthirsty assassins for their bread and butter.

"This unmitigated scoundrel now before you is the eldest son of Chief Khillemaneetem, and has committed more acts of barbarous atrocity than any other cannibal that ever lived. He was captured by another tribe and sentenced to be roasted alive straight away, and I guess he'd have been pretty well roasted on both sides, but making a *tre*menjious effort he managed to escape

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From a Drawing by] "LURING." [*Harry Furniss.*

His remarks were evidently as blunt as his razors.

The next object of interest was a Zulu chief with feathers, assegais, and warrior's shield complete. He was described as even a blacker villain than the plate-dancing Hottentot. The Professor waxed quite eloquent in describing the baseness of this member of his troupe, and wound up by pathetically remarking :—

"He has lured many and many a maiden clothed simply in the atmosphere from the peaceful security of her domestic hearth. He will now proceed to lure!"

The luring process consisted of the chief's capacious mouth opening to its fullest extent and emitting blood-curdling yells. The effect thereby produced may have enchanted the sable beauties of Africa, but his luring had a distinctly opposite effect upon the fair maidens of America, for they not only declined to be "lured," but betook themselves away from the vicinity of the museum, as we all did.

with his life, and now dances upon the very identical plates, heated white-hot, that he was to have been served up on!"

Fried soles were not appetizing to me just then, so I followed the Professor to the subject of his next lecture.

As I passed, the cactus gentleman from the Kumkatchemalivo had finished his pet amusement of walking on razors, and as he was sitting down, forgetting the presence of the lady pianist, he looked scornfully at the dusky potentate who was dancing on the heated crockery and said :—

"Guess, Bill, I'm gittin' darned tired of your tarnation show!"

My artistic nature was touched by observing a brother brush seated before an easel bearing a large notice with this announcement upon it : "Your Portrait While You Wait,

From a Drawing by] MY PORTRAIT. [*Harry Furn*

25 cents," and somehow or other I found myself unconsciously lapsing into an empty chair at right angles to the easel. The artist immediately smoothed out the paper in front of him, measured me in the approved style with his crayon, which he held out at arm's length as if it were a revolver with which he was going to shoot me, and began my portrait.

This was evidently a novelty, and as the crowd collected round me with quite as much interest as they had crowded round the Circassian beauty, the Kumkatchemalivo razor-walker, or the fire-proof plate-dancer, I felt that I must go through the terrible ordeal, as judging from the notice taken of my action the poor fellow couldn't have many sitters, so I stuck to my guns, and here is the result! If you can imagine all the features the very reverse, you might possibly conjure up a portrait something like me.

I was so delighted by the artist's having given me some hair on the top of my head that I paid him double fee, especially as he had thrown in a beautiful, rouge-like complexion.

I could hardly keep my countenance during the whole of this operation, as all the time I was in position I had to gaze upon a group of waxwork figures in the corner representing Stanley discovering Emin Pasha. Emin was smoking a hookah with a most perfect waxwork air of unconcern upon his otherwise inexpressive features, quite regardless of some snakes which were uncoiling and investing his fez. In a cavern some pigmies were supposed to be eating human beings. All this was most realistic and awe-inspiring, and fully typical of the Dime Museum of America.

From a Drawing by] A FREAK. [*Harry Furniss.*

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The House Under the Sea.

By Max Pemberton.

CHAPTER IX.

WE LOOK OUT FOR THE "SOUTHERN CROSS."

HE wind blew a hurricane all that night, and was still a full gale when dawn broke. To say that no man among us slept is to put down a very obvious thing. The roaring of the breakers on the reefs below us, the showers of stones which the heights rained down, the dreadful noises like wild human voices in the hills, drove sleep far from any man's eyes. And more than that, there was the ship to think of. What had become of the ship? Where did she lie? When should we see her again? Aye, how often we asked each other that question when the blast thundered and the lightning seemed to open the very heavens, and the spindrift was blown clean over the heights to fall like a salt spray upon our faces. Was it well with the ship or ill? Mister Jacob we knew to be a good seaman, none better. With him the decision lay to run for the open water or to risk everything for our sakes. If he made up his mind that the safety of the *Southern Cross* demanded sea-room he would take it, and let to-morrow look after itself. But I was anxious, none the less; for, if the ship were gone, "God help us on Ken's Island," I said.

Now, the old Frenchman was the first to be mov.ng when the day came, and no sooner did all the higher peaks show us a glimmer of the dawn-light—very beautiful and awesome to look upon—than he set up the ladder and began to show us the way to the mountain-top.

"You make signal; you fetch ship. Sailor-men go down where landman afraid. Little boat come in; shipmate go out. Old Clair-de-Lune he know. Ah, messieurs, the wind is very dreadful to-day—what you call harriken. Other day, all quite easy plan—but this day not so, great water, all white—no go, no man."

It was queer talk, and we might have laughed at him if we'd have forgotten that he saved our lives last night and was waiting to save them again this morning. But you don't laugh at a friend, talk as he may, and for that matter we were all too excited to think of any such thing, and we made haste to scramble up out of the pit and to follow him to the heights where the truth should be known—the best of it or the worst. For the path or its dangerous places we cared nothing now. The rocks, upstanding all about us, shut in the view as some great basin cut in the mountain's heart. You could see the black sky above and the bottomless chasms below—but of the water nothing. Imagine, then, how we raced for the summit: now up on our feet, now on all-fours like dogs; now calling, man to man, to hasten; now saying that haste wouldn't help us. And no wonder—no wonder our hearts beat high and our hands were unsteady, for beyond the basin we should find the sea, and the view might show us life or death.

Old Clair-de-Lune was the first to be up, but I was close upon his heels, and Dolly Venn not far behind me. Who spoke the first word I don't rightly recollect; but I hadn't been on the heights more than ten seconds when I knew why it was spoken, and what the true meaning of it might be.

The ship was gone!

All the eyes in the wide world could not have found her on that angry sea below us, or anywhere on the black and looming horizon beyond. The night had taken her. The ship was gone. Hope as we might, speak up as we might, tell each other this story or tell each other that—the one sure fact remained that the *Southern Cross* had steamed away from Ken's Island and left us to our fates.

"He'll be running for sea-room, and come in when the gale falls," said Peter Bligh, when we had stood all together a little while, as crestfallen a lot as the Pacific Ocean could show that day; "trust Mister Jacob to be cautious—he's a Scotchman, and would think first of the ship. A precious lot of good his wages would do him if the ship were down in sixty fathoms and he inside her!"

"That's true," cried Dolly Venn, "though your poor old father didn't say it, Mister Bligh. The ship's gone, but she'll come back again." And then to me he said, very earnestly, "Oh, she must come back, captain."

"Aye, lad," said I, "let her ride out the gale, and she'll put back right enough. Mister Jacob isn't the one to desert friends. He'll have learned from Harry Doe how it stands with us, and he'll just say, ''Bout ship'; that's what Mr. Jacob will say. I've no fear of it at all. I'm only wondering what sort of shore-play is to keep us amused until we sight the ship again."

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Well, they looked doleful enough; but not a man among them complained. 'Tis that way with seamen all the world over. Put them face to face with death and some will laugh, and some will curse, and some talk nonsense; but never a man wears his heart upon his sleeve or tells you that he's afraid. And so it was that morning. They understood, I do believe, as well as I did, what the consequences of the gale might be. They were no fools, to imagine that a man could get from Ken's Island to San Francisco in any cockle-shell the beach might show him. But none of them talked about it none charged me with it; they just put their hands in their pockets like brave fellows who had made up their minds already to a very bad job; and be sure I was not the one to give a different turn to it. The ship had gone; the Lord only knew when she would come back again. It was not for me to be crying like a child for that which neither I nor any man could make good.

"WE RACED FOR THE SUMMIT."

"Well," said I, "the ship's gone, sure enough, and hard words won't bring her back again. What Mister Jacob can do for his friends, that, I know, will be done. We must leave it to him and look after ourselves so far as this place is concerned. You won't forget that the crew downstairs will be ready enough to ask after our health and spirits if we give them a look in, and my word is for lying-to here until night comes or the ship is sighted. It must be a matter of hours, anyway. The gale's abating; a landsman would know as much as that."

They said, "Aye, aye," to it and Peter Bligh put in a word of his humour.

"The ship's gone, sure enough," said he; "but that's more than you can say for my appetite! Bear or dog, I'm not particular, captain; but a good steak of something would come handy, and the sooner the better. 'Twere enough to bring tears to a man's eyes to think of all the good grub that's gone aboard with Harry Doe. Aye, 'tis a wonderful thing is hunger, and the gift of the Lord along with good roast beef and pork sausages. Maybe you find yourself a bit peckish, captain?"

I answered "Yes," though that was far from the truth, for what with watching through the night and thinking about the ship and little Ruth Bellenden's loneliness in this place of mystery, and far worse than mystery, I'd forgotten all about meal times, and never once had asked myself where breakfast was to come from. But now the long faces of my shipmates brought me to a remembrance of it, and when little Dolly Venn cried, "Oh, captain, I am so hungry!" I began to realize what a parlous plight we were in and what a roundabout road we must tread to get out of it. Luckily for us, the old Frenchman, who had stood all this time like a statue gazing out over the desolate sea, now bobbed up again, good Samaritan that he was, and catching Master Dolly's complaint, he spoke of breakfast on his own account.

"Ah! you hungry, you thirst, messieurs; sailor-man always like that. Your ship gone? Never mind, he shall come back again, to-

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day, to-morrow, one, two, three day—pray God it be not longer, shipmate, pray God!"

I thought him a fine, picturesque old figure, standing there on the headland with his long hair streaming in the wind like a woman's, and his brawny arms outstretched as though he would call the ship back to us from the lonely ocean. Truth to tell, the place was one to fill any man with awe. Far as the eye could see the great waste was white with the foam of its breaking seas; the headland itself stood up a thousand feet like some mighty fortress commanding all the deep. Far below us were the green valleys of the island, the woods we had raced through last night; pastures with little white houses dotted about on them; the bungalow itself wherein Ruth Bellenden lived. No picture from the gallery of a high tower could have been more beautiful than that strange land with the wild reefs lying about it and the rollers cascading over them, and the black glens above which we stood, and the great circle of the water like some measureless basin which the whole earth bounded. I did not wonder that old Clair-de-Lune was silent when he looked down upon a scene so grand. It seemed a crime to speak of food and drink in such a place; and yet it was of these that Peter Bligh must go on talking.

"We'll do the prayin', shipmate, if you'll do the cookin'," cried he, hopefully; "as for that — you speak like a wise man. 'Tis wonderful easy to pray on a full stomach! There isn't a hunger or a thirst this side of 'Frisco which I would not pray out of this same island if you'll be pleased to bring 'em along. Weigh anchor, my man," says he, "and we'll pipe down to dinner."

Well, the old man laughed at his manner of putting it, and, without further ado, we all went down to the bird's nest in the hollow, and there we lighted a fire in the shelter of the pit, and old Clair-de-Lune going away in search of rations, he returned presently with victuals enough to feed a missionary, and, more than that, as pretty a trio to serve them as any seaman could hope for. For what should happen but that the three young girls we'd seen yesterday in the woods came romping up the hill together; and one bringing a great can for the coffee, and another a basket of luscious fruit, and a third some new-made bread and biscuit, they ran down the ladder to us and began to talk in their pretty language, and now and then in English which did not need much understanding.

"I am Rosamunda," says one.

And the second, she says:—

"I am Sylvia—Sylvia—Sylvia."

And the third, she chimes in with:—

"I am Celestine, and I have brought you bread."

And they all stood together, shy and natural, looking now at one, now at another of us; but most often, I thought, at little Dolly Venn, who had a way of making them understand which an older man might have envied.

"And wonderful pretty names, too, young ladies, though a seaman doesn't often hear the likes of 'em," cries Peter Bligh, gallant enough, as all Irishmen are. "They're all Pollies in our parts, and it do come easier to the tongue and more convenient if you know many of 'em. Whereby did you hitch up names like those?" asks he; "which, askin' your pardon, seem to me to be took out of a picture-book."

They giggled at this; but old Clair-de-Lune, who was mighty proud of them, and justly, answered Peter Bligh as though the question were serious.

"Monsieur, in my own country I am artiste; I play the drama, the comedy, the tragedy. Clair-de-Lune they call me at the theatre. To the daughters of my master I give the artiste's name—why not? Better the good name than the bad name! It was long year ago, shipmate; the *Belle Ile* was wrecked on these reef; the *maître* is drowned, but I and the young ladies are save. We come, we go, none interfere. The Governor is angry, we hide in the hill; the Governor laugh, we go down to the valley. When the sleep-time comes we go to the house under the sea: you shall find him a dangerous time, but we hide far down. None frighten Claire-de-Lune; they frighten of him. He become the father according to his best."

It was touching, I must say, to hear this old man's broken story; and prettier still to see the affectionate eyes with which these little girls watched every movement of one to whom, I am sure, they were beholden for all that they got out of Ken's Island. For the rest, the tale was plain enough. The father had been wrecked and drowned on the sword-fish reef; the servant had saved the children and himself from the ship, and his own natural cleverness had done the rest. No one interfered with him, he said; and this was true. I verily believe that the demons in the valley below believed that he and the children with him were nothing more or less than spirits.

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"A PICTURESQUE OLD FIGURE."

"Really, young lady," said I, "it seems to me that it depends upon Mister Jacob and the ship. But, supposing I cannot go away —what then? How does the sleep-time concern me?"

"You must not stay," she said, quickly; "for us it is different; we—we live in the house under the sea, but no stranger may live there—the Governor would not permit it. On the island all things sleep. If you do not go to the house under the sea—ah, monsieur, but you will sail away, you will sail in your ship."

She put it very childishly, the same cock-and-bull story that the old Frenchman had been at last night. What to make of it I knew no more than the dead. Here we seemed to be on as fair an island as the whole Pacific might show you; and yet these odd folk could talk of sun-months and sleep-time, and other stuff which might have been written in a fairy-book. Do you wonder that I laughed at them and treated it as any sane man, not given to fables, would have done?

"Sleep-time or sun-time, I'll be away before then, please God, mademoiselle," said I; "do not fear for Jasper Begg, who was always fond of his bed and won't grumble overmuch, be it sleep or waking. For the rest, we'll take our chance, as others must do here, I fancy. Madame Czerny, for instance —do you know Madame Czerny, young lady?"

She nodded her head and said that she did.

"Yes, yes, we know Madame Czerny; she is the Governor's wife. I think she is unhappy, Monsieur Captain. In the sun-months I see her, but in the sleep-time she lives in the house under the sea, and no one knows. You are her friend, perhaps; you would know that she is unhappy?"

I knew it well enough; but I wished to lead this little talker on, and so I said I did not.

"Unhappy, young lady! Why should she be unhappy?"

I say his story was plain, and yet there was something in it which was Greek to me. He had named a house under the sea, and what that meant, or how any man could build such a house, lay beyond my understanding. I should have asked a question about it there and then, and have sought light on the matter if it hadn't have been that the food was already cooked, and, the others being mighty anxious, we sat down to steaming coffee and broiled kid's flesh and good bread and sweet fruit, and I was very willing to keep my curiosity. Once, it is true, the young girl who called herself "Rosamunda" came and sat by my side and wished to talk to me; but, prettily as she spoke our tongue, her measure of it was limited, and we did not get very far, in spite of good intentions.

"Do you like the island, do you like living here?" I asked her.

She answered me with a doubting shake of her pretty head.

"In the sun-months, yes, I like it; but not in the sleep-time. You will go away before the sleep-time, monsieur?"

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I asked it naturally, as though I was very surprised; but you could not deceive Mlle. Rosamunda. A more artful little witch never played at fairies in a wood.

"If she is not unhappy, why have you come here, Monsieur Captain? You come to help her—oh, I know! And you say that you do not."

"Perhaps so, young lady; perhaps I do—that I will tell you by-and-by. But I am curious about the Governor. What sort of a man is he, and where does he happen to be at this particular moment? I'm sure you could say something nice about him if you tried."

She looked at me with her big, questioning eyes, as though the question were but half understood. Presently she said:—

"You laugh at me. Monsieur Czerny has gone away to the world. Of course he would go. He has gone in the ship. What shall I tell you about him? That he is kind, cruel; that we love him, hate him? Everyone knows that; everyone has told you. He is the Governor, and we are his people who must obey. When he comes back he will ask you to obey him too, and you must say 'yes.' That will be at the sleep-time: eight, nine, ten days. But why do you ask, Monsieur Captain? Has not Madame Czerny said it because you are her friend? I know that you teaze me. Sailors love to teaze little girls, and you are no better than the other ones."

She cast down her eyes at this, and looked for all the world the taking little coquette that she was. Her odd speech told me something, enough at least to put a hundred questions into my head and as many useless answers. The Governor was away. The island alternately hated and feared him. The sleep-time, whatever it was, might be looked for in ten days' time. We must be away and on board the ship by then or something dreadful would happen to us. Ruth Bellenden's unhappiness was known even to these little girls, and they surmised, as the others had surmised, that we were on shore to help her. For the rest, the men on Ken's Island, I imagined, would hunt us night and day until we were taken. Nor was I mistaken in that. We'd scarcely finished our meal when there was the sound of a gun-shot far down in the valley, and, old Clair-de-Lune jumping up at the report, we were all on our feet in an instant to speak of the danger.

"Halloa, pop-guns," cries Peter Bligh, in his Irish way; "what for now would any man be firing pop-guns at this time of the morning?"

"It's to ask after your health, Peter," said I, when we'd listened awhile; "what else should a man be firing after, unless he takes you for a rabbit? Will you run down and thank him kindly?"

He hitched up his breeches and pulled out his briar-pipe.

"If this is track-running, take down my number. I'm through with it, gentlemen, being not so young as I was."

A gun-shot, fired out at sea, cut short his talk. Old Clair-de-Lune, nipping up the ladder, bade us follow him, while to the girls he cried, "*Allez-vous en!*" All our quiet talk and content were gone in an instant. I never answered little Dolly Venn when he asked me, "Do you think there's danger, sir?" but, running up the hill after the Frenchman, I helped him to carry the ladder we'd dragged out of the pit, for I knew he'd need of it.

"What is it, Clair-de-Lune? Why are they firing?" I asked him, as he ran.

"Governor home," was his answer—"Governor home. Great danger, *capitaine.*"

CHAPTER X.

WE ARE SURELY CAGED ON KEN'S ISLAND.

WE ran up the hill, I say, as men who raced for their lives. The little girls, snatching up their bags and baskets, exchanged a quick word with Clair-de-Lune and then hurried off towards the bungalow. Our own path lay over difficult rocks and steep slopes and chasms fearful to see. Of these our leader made nothing, and we went on, up and up, until at last the road carried us right round the highest peak, on whose very walls we walked like chamois on a mountain crag. It was here, on a narrow ledge high above the sea, that the Frenchman stopped for the first time.

"Shipmates," said he, when he had got his breath, "journey done, all finish, you safe here, you rest. I go down to see Governor; but come back again, come back again, messieurs, with bread and meat."

Well, I don't think one of us had the voice to answer him. The place itself—the ledge above the sea and the little low, cramped cave behind it—occupied all our thoughts. Here, in truth, a man might lie safely enough—yet in what a situation. The very door of the house opened upon an abyss a thousand feet above the rocks below. We had the sea before our eyes, the sea beneath us, the sea for our distant horizon. Day and night the breakers thundered on the sword-fish reef; the wind moaned in the mighty eaves of

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"SHE LOOKED AT ME WITH HER BIG, QUESTIONING EYES."

thought themselves well paid—no knowledge, not the smallest, of any way of escape—food short and likely to be shorter. Friends we had, true friends. Night and morning Clair-de-Lune and the little girls found their way up to us with bread and meat and the news that was passing. It was on the fifth day that they came no more, and I, at least, knew that they would never come again.

"Lads," I said, "one of two things has happened. Either they've been watched and followed, or the time of which they made mention has come. I trust the old Frenchman as I would trust my own brother. He knows how it will fare with four men left on a lonely rock without food or drink. If he doesn't come up here to-day, it's because he daren't come or because he's ordered elsewhere."

They turned it over in their minds, and Dolly Venn spoke next.

"Last night in my watch I heard a bell ringing, sir. At first I thought it was fancy—the sea beating on the rocks or the wind moaning in the hills; but I got the ladder and went down the hill, and then I heard it distinctly, and saw lights burning brightly on the reef far out to the north. There were boats passing, I'm sure, and what was so wonderful that I didn't like to speak about it, the whole of the sea about the reef shone yellow as though a great lantern were burning far down below its heart. I could make out the figures of men walking on the rocks, and when the moon shone the figures disappeared as though they went straight down into the solid rock. You may not believe it, captain,

those tremendous crags. We were like men placed suddenly on a steeple's side and left there to live or fall, as fortune went.

I tell you this, plain and straightforwardly, because five days passed on that awful ledge, and, except for one day, there is nothing but a seaman's talk of question and answer and idle hope to set down on these pages. If every hour of the day found one of us with eyes which yearned for our lost ship, with hearts grown heavy in waiting and disappointment—that was his affair, and of no concern to others. Be sure we didn't confess, one to the other, the thought in our heads or the future we must live through. We had come to Ken's Island to help little Ruth Bellenden, and this fearful plight was the result of it—ship gone, the island full of demons that would have cut our throats for nothing and

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but I'm quite sure of what I say, and if Clair-de-Lune does not come to-night, I ask you to go down the hillside with me and to see for yourself."

Now, the lad spoke in a kind of wonder-dream, and knowing how far from his true nature such a thing was, it did not surprise me that the others listened to him with that ready ear which seamen are quick to lend to any fairy tale. Superstitious they were, or sailors they never would have been; and here was the very stuff to set them all ears, like children about a bogey. Nor will I deny that Dolly Venn's tale was marvellous enough to make a fable. Had it been told to me under any other circumstances, my reply would have been: "Dolly, my lad, since when have you taken to sleep-walking?" But I said nothing of the kind, for I had that in my pocket which told me it was true; and what I knew I deemed it right that the others should know also.

"When a man sees something which strikes him as extraordinary," said I, "he must first ask himself if it is Nature or otherwise. There are lots of things in this world beyond our experience, but true for all that. Ken's Island may be rated as one of them. The old Frenchman speaks of a sleep-time and a sun-time. Lads, I do believe he tells the truth. If you ask me why—well, the why is here, in these papers Ruth Bellenden gave me five days ago."

I took the packet from my pocket and turned the pages of them again as I had turned them—aye, fifty times—in the days which had passed. Thumbed and dirty as they were (for a seaman's pocket isn't lined with silk); thumbed and dirty, I say, and crumpled out of shape, they were the first bit of Ruth Bellenden's writing that ever I called my own, and precious to me beyond any book.

"Yes," I went on, "this is the story of Ken's Island, and Ruth Bellenden wrote it. Ten months almost from this day she landed here. What has passed between Edmond Czerny and her in that time God alone knows! She isn't one to make complaint, be sure of it. She has suffered much, as a good woman always must suffer when she is linked to a bad man. If these papers do not say so plainly, they say it by implication. And, concerning that, I'll ask you a question. What is Edmond Czerny here for? The answer's in a word. He is here for the money he gets out of the wreckage of ships!"

It was no great surprise to them, I venture, though surprise I meant it to be. They had guessed something the night we came ashore, and seamen aren't as stupid as some take them for. Nevertheless, they pricked up their ears at my words, and Peter Bligh, filling his pipe, slowly, said, after a bit:—

"Yes, it wouldn't be for parlour games, captain!"

The others were too curious to put in their word, and so I went on:—

"He's here for wreckage and the money it brings him. I'll leave it to you to say what's done to those that sailed the ships. There are words in this paper which make a man's blood run cold. If they are to be repeated, they shall be spoken where Edmond Czerny can hear them, and those that judge him. What we are concerned about at this moment is Ken's Island and its story. You've heard the old Frenchman, Clair-de-Lune, speak of sleep-time and sun-time. As God is in heaven, he spoke the truth!"

They none of them answered me. Down below us the sea shimmered in the morning light. We sat on a ledge a thousand feet above it, and, save for the lapping waves on the reef, not a sound of life, not even a bird on the wing, came nigh us. You could have heard a pin drop when I went on.

"Sleep-time and sun-time, is it fable or truth? Ruth Bellenden says it's truth. I'll read you her words——"

Peter Bligh said, "Ah," and struck a match. Seth Barker, the carpenter, sat for all the world like a child, with his great mouth wide open and his eyes full of wonder. Dolly Venn was curled up at my feet like a dog. I opened the papers and began to read to them:—

"On the 14th of August, three weeks after the ship brought us to Ken's Island, I was awakened at four o'clock in the morning by an alarm-bell ringing somewhere in the island. The old servant, she whom they called 'Mother Meg,' came into my room in great haste to tell me to get up. When I was dressed' my husband entered and laughingly said that we must go on board the yacht at once. I was perplexed and a little cross about it; but when we were rowed out to the ship I found that all the white people were leaving the island in boats and being rowed to those rocks which lie upon the northward side. Edmond tells me that there are dangerous seasons in this beautiful place, when the whole island is unfit for human habitation and all must leave it, sometimes for a week, sometimes for a month."

I put the paper down and turned another page of it.

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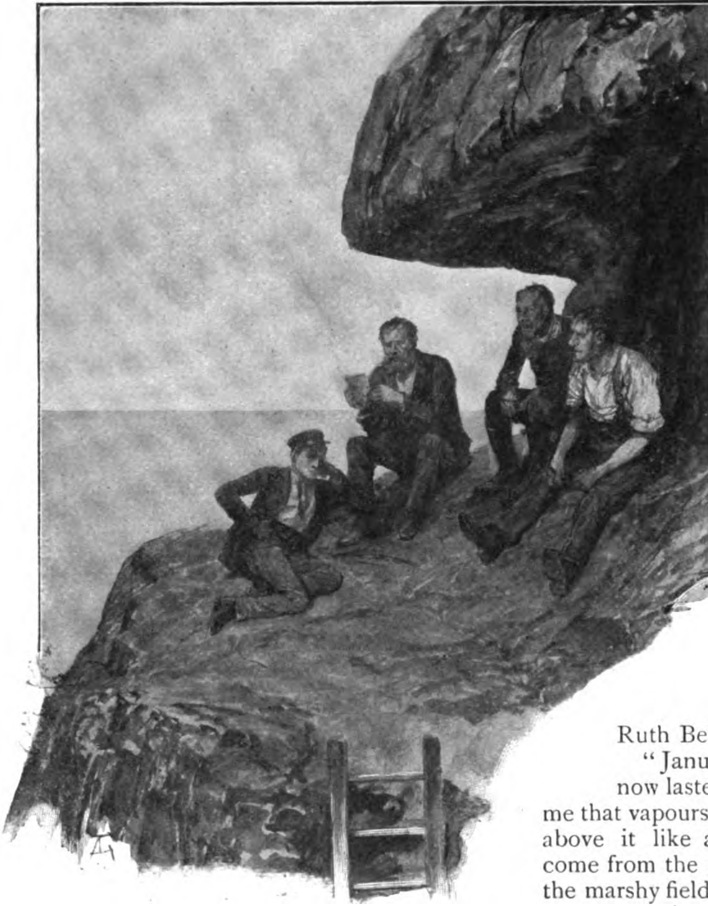

"I OPENED THE PAPERS AND BEGAN TO READ."

"That, you see," said I, "is written on the 14th of August, before she knew the true story or what the dangerous time might mean. Passing on, I find another entry on September 21st, and that makes it clearer:—

"There is here a wonderful place they call 'The House Under the Sea.' It is built for those who cannot escape the sleep-time otherwise. I am to go there when my husband sails for Europe. I have asked to accompany him and am refused. There are less delicate ways of reminding a woman that she has lost her liberty.

"November 13th.—I have again asked Edmond to permit me to accompany him to London. He answers that he has his reasons. There is a way of speaking to a woman she can never forget. My husband spoke in that way this morning.

"December 12th.—I know Edmond's secret, and he knows that I know it! Shall I tell it to the winds and the waves? Who else will listen? Let me ask of myself courage. I can neither think nor act to-night.

"December 25th.—Christmas Day! I am alone. A year ago—but what shall it profit to remember a year ago? I am in a prison-house beneath the sea, and the waves beat against my windows with their moaning cry, 'Never, never again—never again!' At night, when the tide has fallen, I open my window and send a message to the sea. Will any hear it? I dare not hope.

"January 1st.—My husband has returned from his cruise. He is to go to Europe to see after my affairs. Will he tell them, I wonder, that Ruth Bellenden is dead?

"January 8th.—The sleep-time has now lasted for nine weeks. They tell me that vapours rise up from the land and lie above it like a cloud. Some think they come from the great poppies which grow in the marshy fields of the lowlands; others say from the dark pools in the gorges of the hills. However it may be, those that remain on the island fall into a trance while the vapour is there. A strange thing! Some never wake from it; some lose their senses; the negroes alone seem able to live through it. The vapours arise quite suddenly; we ring the alarm-bell to send the people to the ships.

"January 15th.—We returned to the island to-day. How blind and selfish some people are! I do believe that Aunt Rachel is content to live on this dreadful place. She is infatuated with Edmond. 'I am anchored securely in a home,' she says. 'The house under the sea is a young man's romantic fancy.' The rest is meaningless to her—a man's whim. 'I cannot dissipate my fortune on Ken's Island.' Aunt Rachel was always a miser.

"February 2nd.—This morning Edmond came to me for that which he calls 'an understanding.' His affection distresses me. Oh, it might all be so different if I would but say 'yes.' And what prevents me—the

voices I have heard on the reef; or is it because I know—I know?

"February 9th.—I am on the island again and the sun is shining. What I have suffered none shall ever know. I prefer Edmond Czerny's anger to his love. We understand each other now.

"February 21st.—My message to the sea remains unanswered. Will it be for ever?

"March 3rd.—If Jasper Begg should come to me, how would they receive him? How could he help me? I do not know—and yet my woman's heart says 'Come!'

"April 4th.—There has been a short recurrence of the sleep-time. A ship struck upon the reef, and the crew rowed ashore to the island. I saw them last night in the moonlight, from my windows. They fell one by one at the border of the wood and slept. You could count their bodies in the clear white light. I tried to shut the sight from my eyes, but it followed me to my bedroom!

"May 3rd.—I whispered my message to the sea again, but am alone—God knows how much alone!"

I folded up the papers and looked at the others. Peter Bligh's pipe had gone out and lay idle in his hand. Dolly Venn was still curled at my feet. Seth Barker I do not believe had budged an inch the whole time I was reading. The story gripped them like a vice—and who shall wonder at that? For, mark you, it might yet be our story.

"Peter," said I, "you have heard what Madame Czerny says, and you know now as much as I do. I am waiting for your notion."

He picked up his pipe and began to fill it again.

"Captain," says he, "what notions can I have which wouldn't be in any sane head? This island's a death-trap, and the sooner we're off it the better for our healths. What's happened to the ship, the Lord only knows! At a guess I would say that an accident's overtook her. Why should a man leave his shipmates if it isn't by an accident? Mister Jacob is not the one to go psalm-singing when he knows we're short of victuals and cooped up here like rats in a trap! Not he, as I'm a living man! Then an accident's overtook him; he doesn't come, because he can't come, which, as my old father used to say, was the best of reasons. Putting two and two together, I should speak for sailing away without him, which is plain reason anyway."

"We walking on the sea, the likes of which the parson talks about?" chimed in Seth Barker.

"If you haven't got a boat," says Dolly Venn, "I don't see how you are to make one out of seaweed! Perhaps Mister Jacob will come back to-morrow."

"And perhaps we sha'n't be hungry before that same time!" added Peter Bligh; "aye, that's it, captain, where's the dinner to come from?"

I thought upon it a minute, and then I said to them:—

"If Dolly Venn heard a bell ringing last night that's the danger-bell of which Miss Ruth speaks. We cannot go down to the island, for doesn't she say it's death to be caught there? We cannot stop up here or we shall die of hunger. If there's a man among you that can point to a middle course, I shall be glad to hear him. We have got to do something, lads, that's sure!"

They stared at me wonderingly; none of them could answer it. We were between the devil and the deep sea, and in our hearts I think we began to say that if the ship did not come before many hours had passed, four of her crew, at least, would cease to care whether she came or stopped.

CHAPTER XI.

LIGHTS UNDER THE SEA.

THE day fell powerfully hot, with scarce a breath of wind and a Pacific sun beating fiercely on the barren rocks. What shelter was to be had we got in the low cave behind the platform; but our eyes were rarely turned away from the sea, and many a time we asked each other what kept Clair-de-Lune or why the ship was missing. That the old man had some good reason I made certain from the beginning; but the ship was a greater matter. Either she was powerless to help us or Mister Jacob had mistaken his orders. I knew not what to think. It was enough to be trapped there on that bit of a rock and to tell each other that, sleep-time or sun-time, we should be dead men if no help came to us.

"Belike the Frenchman's took with the fog and is doing a bit of a doze on his own account," said Peter Bligh, gloomily, toward three bells in the afternoon watch—and little enough that wasn't gloomy he'd spoken that day. "Well, sleep won't fill my canteen anyway! I could manage a rump-steak, thank you, captain, and not particular about the onions!"

They laughed at his notion of it, and Seth Barker sympathetically pegged his belt up

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one. I was more sorry for little Dolly Venn than any of them, though his pluck was wonderful to see.

"Are you hungry, Dolly, lad?" I asked him, by-and-by. Foolish question that it was, he answered me with a boy's bright laugh and something which could make light of it:—

"It's good for the constitution to fast, sir," he said, bravely; "our curate used to tell us so when I went to church. We shall all be saints—and Mr. Peter will have a halo if this goes on long enough!"

Now, Peter Bligh didn't take to that notion at all, and he called out, savagely:—

"To blazes with your halos! Is it Christianity to rob an honest man of his victuals? Give me a round of top-side and leave me out of the stained-glass window! I'm not taking any, lad—my features isn't regular, as my poor——"

"Peter, Peter," said I, bringing him to, "so it's top-side to-day? It was duck and green peas yesterday, Peter; but it won't be that to-night, not by a long way!"

"If we sit on this rock long enough," chimed in Seth Barker, who was over-patient for his size, "some on us will be done like a rasher. I wouldn't make any complaint, captain; but I take leave to say it isn't wisdom."

I had meant to say as much myself, but Peter Bligh was in before me, and so I let him speak.

"Fog 'or no fog," cries he, "I'm for the shore presently, and that's sure and certain. It ain't no handsome vulture that I'm going to feed anyway! I don't doubt that you'll come with me, captain. Why, you could play 'God save the King' on me and hear every note! I'm a toonful drum, that's what I am——"

"Be what you like, but don't ask us to dance to your music," said I, perhaps a little nettled; "as for going down, of course we shall, Peter. Do you suppose I'm the one to die up here like a rat in a trap? Not so, I do assure you. Give me twilight and a clear road, and I'll show you the way quick enough!"

I could see that they were pleased, and Dolly Venn spoke up for them.

"You won't go alone, sir?" asked he.

"Indeed, and I shall, Dolly, and come back the same way. Don't you fear for me, my lad," said I; "I've been in a fog before in my life, and out of it, too, though I never loved them overmuch. If there's danger down below, one man has eyes enough to see it. It would be a mortal waste and pity that four should pay what one can give. But I won't forget that you are hungry, and if there's roast duck about, Peter Bligh shall have a wing, I promise him."

Well, they all sat up at this; and Peter Bligh, very solemnly crossing his fingers after the Italian fashion, swore, as seamen will, that we'd all go together, good luck or bad, the devil or the deep sea. Seth Barker was no less determined upon it; and as for Dolly Venn, I believe he'd have cried like a child if he'd been left behind. In the end I gave way to them, and it was agreed that we should all set out together, for better or worse, when the right time came.

"Your way, lads, not mine," said I; and pleased, too, at their affection. "As you wish it, so shall it be; and that being agreed upon I'll trouble Peter Bligh for his tobacco, for mine's low. We'll dine this night, fog or no fog. 'Twould want to be something sulphurous, I'm thinking, to put Peter off his grub. Aye, Peter, isn't that so? What would you say now to an Irish stew with a bit of bacon in it, and a glass of whisky to wash it down? Would fogs turn you back?"

"No, nor Saint Patrick himself, with a shillelagh in his hand. I'm mortal empty, captain; and no man's more willing to leave this same bird's nest though he had all the sulphur out of Vesuvius on his diagram! We'll go down at sunset, by your leave, and God send us safely back again!"

The others echoed my "Amen," and for an hour or more we all sat dozing in the heat of the angry day. Once, I think toward seven bells of the watch, Dolly Venn pointed out the funnels of a steamer on the northern horizon; but the loom of the smoke was soon lost, and from that time until six o'clock of the afternoon I do not think twenty words were to be heard on the rock. We were just waiting, waiting, like weary men who have a big work to do and are anxious to do it; and no sooner had the sun gone down and a fresh breeze of night begun to blow than we jumped to our feet and told each other that the time had come.

"Do you, Peter, take the ladder and let Seth Barker steady the end of it," said I. "The road's tricky enough, and precious little dinner you'll get at the bottom of a thousand-foot chasm! If there's men on the island, we shall know that soon enough. They cannot do more than murder us, and murder has merits when starvation's set against it. Come on, my lads," said I, "and keep a weather-eye open."

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This I said, and willingly they heard me; no gladder party ever went down a hillside than we four, whom hunger drove on and thirst made brave. Dangerous places, which we should have crossed with wary feet at any other time, now found us reckless and hasty. We bridged the chasms with the ladder, and slid down it as though it had been a rope. The bird's nest, where five days ago we'd first found shelter from the islanders, detained us now no longer than would suffice for thirsty men to bathe their faces and their hands in the brook which gushed out from the hillside, and to drink a draught which they remembered to their dying day. Aye, refreshing it was, more than words can tell, and such strength it gave us that, if there had been a hundred men on the mountain path, I do believe our steps would still have been set for the bungalow. For we were about to learn the truth. Curiosity is a good wind, even when you're hungry.

Now, there was a place on the headland, three hundred feet above the valley, perhaps, whereat the hill path turned and, for the first time, the island was plainly to be seen. Here at this place we stopped all together and began to spy out the woods through which we had raced for our lives six days ago. The sun had but just set then, and, short as the twilight is in these parts, there was enough of it for us to make a good observation and to be sure of many things. What I think struck us all at the first was the absence of any fog such as we had heard about both from the Frenchman and Ruth Bellenden's diary. A bluish vapour, it is true, appeared to steam up from the woods and to loom in hazy clouds above the lower marshland. But of fog in the proper sense there was not a trace; and although I began to find the air a little heavy to breathe, and a curious stupidness, for which I could not altogether account, troubled my head, nevertheless I made sure that the story of sleep-time was, in the main, a piece of nonsense and that we should soon prove it to be so. Nor were the others behind me in this.

"It is no fog I see which would slow me down a knot!" said Peter Bligh, when the island came into view; "to think that a man should go without his dinner for yon peat smoke! Surely, captain, they are simple in these parts and easy at the bogeys. 'Twill be roast duck, after all—and, maybe, the sage thrown in!"

This was all well said, but Dolly Venn, quicker with his eyes, remarked a stranger fact.

"There's no one about, sir, that I can see," said he, wisely, "and no lights in the houses either. I wonder where all the people are? It's curious that we shouldn't see someone."

He put it as a kind of question; but

"THEY'VE LIT UP THE SEA."

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before I could answer him Seth Barker chimed in with his deep voice, and pointed toward the distant reef:—

"They've lit up the sea, that's what they've done," said he.

"By thunder, they have!" cries Peter Bligh, in his astonishment; "and generous about it, too. Saw anyone such a thing as that?"

He indicated the distant reef, which seemed, as I bear witness, ablaze with lights. And not only the reef, mark you, but the sea about it, a cable's length, it may be, to the north and the south, shone like a pool of fire, yellow and golden, and sometimes with a rare and beautiful green light when the darkness deepened. Such a spectacle I shall never see again if I sail a thousand ships! That luscious green of the rolling seas, the spindrift tossed in crystals of light, foam running on the rocks, but foam like the water of jewels, a dazzling radiance—aye, a very carpet of quivering gold. Of this had they made the northern channel. How it was done, what cleverness worked it, it needed greater brains than mine to say. I was for all the world like a man struck dumb with the beauty of something which pleases and awes him in the same breath.

"Lights under the sea, and people living there! It's enough to make a man doubt his senses," said I. "And yet the thing's true, lads: we're sane men and waking; it isn't a story-book. You can prove it for yourselves."

"Aye, and men going in and out like landsmen to their houses," cried Peter, almost breathless; "it's a fearsome sight, captain, a fearsome sight, upon my word."

The rest of us said nothing. We were just a little frightened group that stared open-mouthed upon a seeming miracle. If we regarded the things we saw with a seaman's reverence, let no one make complaint of that. The spectacle was one to awe any man; nor might we forget that those who appeared to live below the sea lived there, as Ruth Bellenden had told us, because the island was a death-trap. We were in the trap and none to show us the road out.

"Peter," said I, suddenly, for I wished to turn their thoughts away from it, "are you forgetting it's dinner-time?"

"I clean forgot, captain, by all that's holy," said he.

"And not feeling very hungry, either," exclaims Dolly Venn, who had begun to cough in the steaming vapour, which we laughed at. I was anxious about the lad already, and it didn't comfort me to hear Seth Barker breathing like an ox and telling me that it should be clearer in the valley.

I said, "Yes, it might be," and all together we began to march again. A sharp walk carried us from the hill path through the tangle of bushes into the woods wherefrom danger first had come to us. The night had set in by this time and a clear moon was showing in the sky. Rare and beautiful, I must say, that moonlight was, shimmering through the hazy blue vapour and coming down almost as a carpet of violet between the broad green leaves. No scene that I have witnessed upon the stage of a theatre was more pleasing to my eyes than that silent forest with its lawns of grass and its patches of wonderful, fantastic light, and its strange silence, and the loneliness of which it seemed to speak. So awesome was it that I do not wonder we went a considerable way in silence. We were afraid, perhaps, to tell each other what we thought. When Peter Bligh cried out at last, we started at the sound of his voice as though a stranger hailed us.

"Yonder," cried he, in a voice grown deep and husky; "yonder, captain, what do you make of that? Is it living men or dead, or do my eyes deceive me?"

I stopped short at his words and the others halted with me. We were in a deep glen by this time; and all the surrounding woodland was shut from our sight. Great trees spread their branches like a canopy above us; the grass was soft and downy to the feet; the bewitching violet light gave unnatural yet wonderful colours to the flowery bushes about us. No fairy glen could have showed a heart more wonderful; and yet, I say, we four stood on the borders of it, with white faces and blinking eyes, and thoughts which none would change even with his own brother.

Why did we do it, you ask? Ah, I'll tell you why.

There were three men sleeping in the glen, and the face of one was plainly to be seen. He lay upon his back, his hands clenched, his limbs stiff, his eyes wide open as though some fearsome apparition had come to him and was not to be passed by. Of the others, one had dropped face downward and lay huddled up at the tree's foot; but the third was in a natural attitude, and I do believe that he was dead. For a long time we stood there watching them—for he whose eyes were to be seen uttered every now and then a dismal cry in his sleep, and the second began to talk like a man in a delirium. Spanish he

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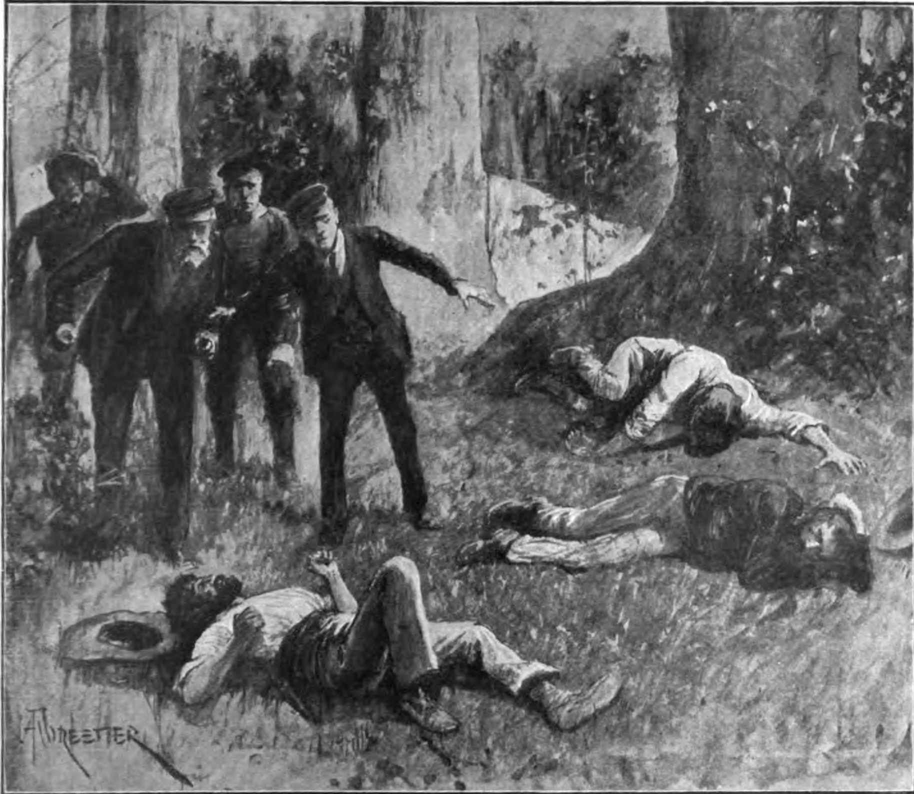

"WE STOOD THERE WATCHING THEM."

spoke, and that is a tongue I do not understand. But the words told of agony if ever words did, and I turned away from the scene at last as a man who couldn't bear to hear them.

"They're sleeping," said I, "and little good to wake them, if Miss Ruth speaks true. Come on, lads—the shore's our road and short's the time to get there."

Peter Bligh reeled dizzily in his walk and began to talk incoherently—a thing I had never heard him do before in all his life.

"They're sleeping, aye, and what's the waking to be? Is it the mad-house or the ground? She spoke of the mad-house, and, who'll deny, with reason? There was air for a man in the heights and no parlour plants. I walked forty miles to Cardiff Fair and didn't dance like this. Take bread when you've no meat, and, by thunder, I'll fill your glasses."

Well, he gabbled on so, and not one of us gave him a hearing. I had my arm linked in Dolly Venn's, for he was weak and hysterical, and I feared he'd go under. Seth Barker, a strong man always, crashed through the underwood like an elephant stampeding. The woods, I said, could show us no more awesome sight then we had happed upon in the hollow; but there I was wrong, for we hadn't tracked a quarter of a mile when we stumbled suddenly upon the gardens of the bungalow, and there, lying all together, were five young girls I judged to be natives, for they had the shape of Pacific Islanders, and, seen in that strange light, were as handsome and taking as European women. Asleep they were, you couldn't doubt it; but, unlike the white men, they lay so still that they might have been dead, while nothing but their smiling faces told of life and breathing. They, at least, did not appear to suffer, and that was something for our consolation.

"Look yonder, Dolly lad, and tell me what you see," said I, though, truth to tell, every word spoken was like a knife through my chest; "five young women sleeping as though they were in their own beds. Isn't that a sight to keep a man up? If they can go through with it, why not we—great men that have the sea's good health in them? Bear up, my boy, we'll find a haven presently."

I didn't believe it, that goes without saying,

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nor, for that matter, did he. But wild horses wouldn't have dragged the truth from him. He was always a rare plucky one, was little Dolly Venn, and he behaved as such that night.

"Better leave me, sir," he said; "I'm dead weight in the boat. Do you go to the beach, and perhaps the ship will come back. You've been very kind to me, Mister Begg, so kind, and now it's 'good-bye,' just 'good-bye' and a long good-night."

"Aye," said I, "and a sharp appetite for breakfast in the morning. Did you ever hear that I was a bit of a strong man, Dolly? Well, you see, I can pick you up as though you were a feather, and now that I have got you into my arms I'm going to carry you—why, where do you think?—into Ruth Bellenden's house, of course."

He said nothing, but lay in my arms like a child. Peter Bligh had fallen headlong by the gate of the bungalow, and Seth Barker was about raving. I had trouble to make him understand my words; but he took them at last and did as I told him.

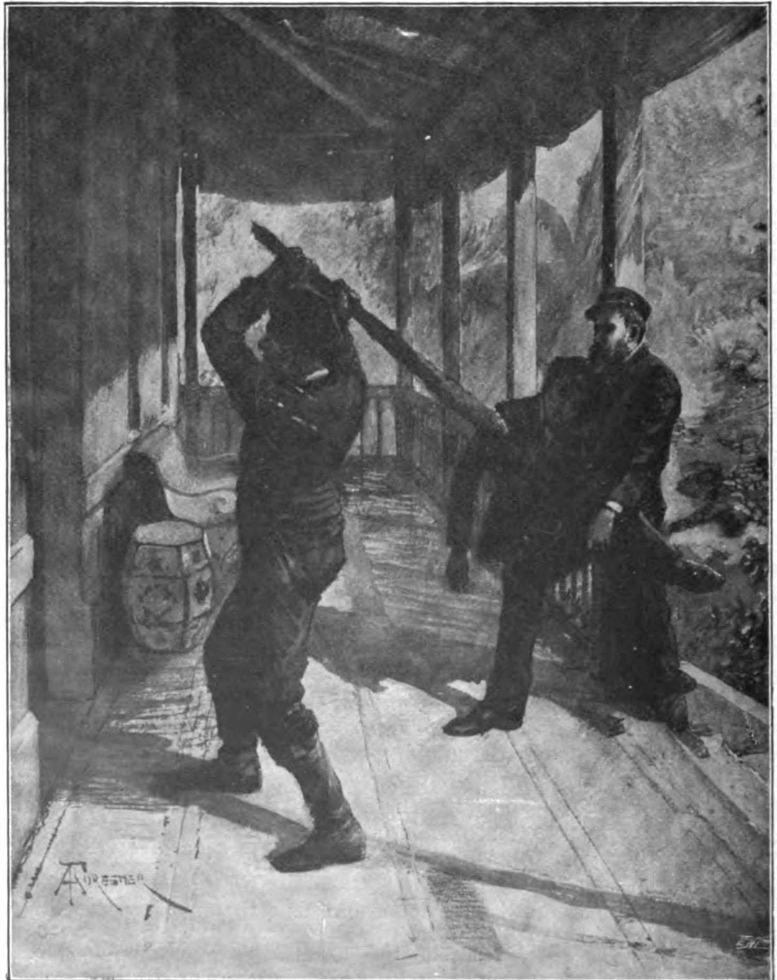
"Open that door — with the bludgeon if you can't do it otherwise. But open it, man, open it!"

He drew himself up erect and dealt a blow upon the door which might have brought down a factory chimney. I ran into the house with Dolly Venn in my arms, and as I ran I called to Barker, for God's sake, to help Mister Bligh. There would be no one in the house, I said, and nothing to be got by whispers. We ran a race with death, and for the moment had turned the corner before him.

"Get Mister Bligh to the house and bar up the door after you. The fog will fill it in five minutes, and what then? Do you hear me, Seth Barker—do you hear me?"

I asked the question plainly enough; but it was not Seth Barker who replied to it. You shall judge of my feelings when a bright light flashed suddenly in my face and a pleasant voice, coming out of nowhere, said, quite civilly:—

"The door, by all means, if you have any regard for your lives or mine!"



"OPEN IT, MAN, OPEN IT!"

(To be continued.)

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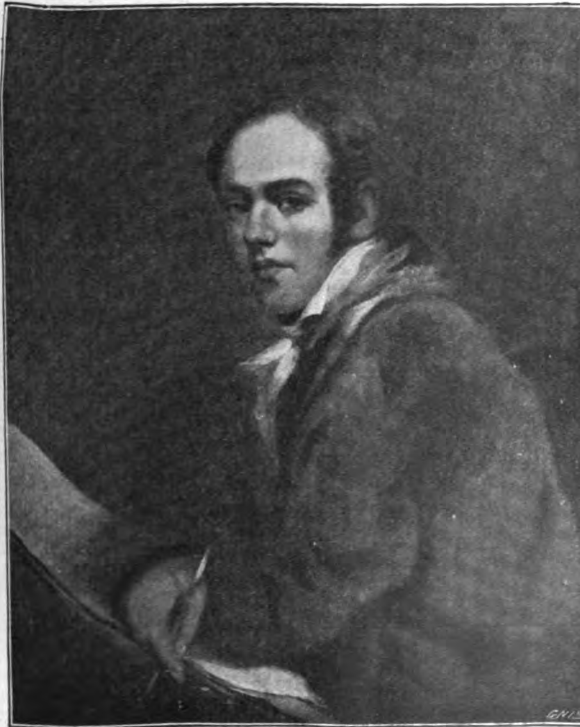
The Chantrey Bequest.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

EVERY year, as regularly as the spring comes round and the Academy opens its doors to the picture-gazing public, expectancy gathers in the air as to who are the lucky artists whose work will be bought under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest.

These purchases now make up one of the most interesting rooms at the Tate Gallery, to which the canvases were moved from South Kensington, and where, as the years go by, the collection becomes larger. I venture to believe that a vast number who cannot find their way to the Chelsea Embankment will delight in looking at the reproductions of some of these pictures which essentially go to make up a gallery of modern art.

But before touching on the pictures themselves a few words as to the man who caused them to be brought together will not be out of place.



SIR FRANCIS CHANTREY.
From the Picture by Himself.

The son of a carpenter and small farmer who worked near Sheffield, Francis Legatt Chantrey, who was born at Norton, Derbyshire, on April 7th, 1781, was only twelve when his father died. His education was the scanty one which could be picked up in the village school, yet before he was in his teens he had to face the world, and he began earning his living in a grocer's shop. When he was sixteen, however, he was so attracted by the work he saw in the window of a carver and gilder that he proceeded to apprentice himself there for three years. During that time he learnt to draw portraits in coloured chalks, a statuary stonemason taught him the rudiments of marble carving, another man taught him to paint in oils, and with this stock-in-trade he advertised, just after he was twenty-one, that he would do portraits and miniatures at from two to three guineas each. Portrait painting, even at that price, was evidently not lucrative, for he had to make his living by wood-carving. In this connection an exceedingly interesting incident is related of him at a time when he had made his fame. He was dining one day at the house of Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, and recognised the table as a piece of his own work. To this story I may make an addition, for the marble mantelpiece which stood in the dining-room was also recognised by him as another piece of his work, and it was so pointed out by Rogers to the well-known painter, Mr. Frederick Goodall, R.A., who as a boy was a constant visitor at the house, and who thus joins the day of Chantrey with our own. Three examples of Mr. Goodall's work are indeed to be seen in the Tate Gallery, although none of them is in the Chantrey Room.

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Art was assuredly not well paid in the early years of the last century, seeing that Sir Francis Chantrey—he was knighted by George IV.—made the colossal busts of the three Admirals, Howe, Duncan, and St. Vincent, for £10 each for Greenwich Hospital. It would be interesting to discover how much they would fetch now were they put up to public auction. With examples of his work most Londoners are familiar, although they are probably quite unaware of the fact, for the statue of George IV. in Trafalgar Square, the Wellington at the Royal Exchange, and the Pitt in Hanover Square are, among others, due to him.

In spite of his scant opportunities of being taught he was only thirty-four when he was elected an A.R.A., and three years older when he dropped the first letter and became a full Royal Academician, an honour a good deal thought of, in spite of Mr. Whistler's witty dictum that it is "a difference without a distinction."

The greater part of the property Chantrey left was bequeathed to go, after the death of his widow, to the Royal Academy, which was enjoined to spend a certain portion every year in buying pictures to form a collection for the nation.

That this article should play the part of a catalogue, even an illustrated catalogue, to the gallery is by no means my intention. I propose rather to select a few pictures here and there from the collection, which numbers nearly eighty, and perhaps on some other occasion return to the subject.

It is always a difficult thing to discover the genesis of an idea of a picture as of any other artistic work, and it is, therefore, impossible to say at this time what gave Mr. F. D. Millet his suggestion for "Between Two Fires," which represents an old Puritan sitting at an oak table with a meal and a bottle of red wine in front of him, while he divides his attention between the food and the two girls who have got it for him. If only the wine tastes as well as it is painted it cannot be long before some of the Puritanism will have been thawed out of the old man's heart, and he will be ready to enjoy the holiday time—probably Christmas, as the presence of the ivy and holly on the

From the Picture by] "BETWEEN TWO FIRES." [*F. D. Millet.*

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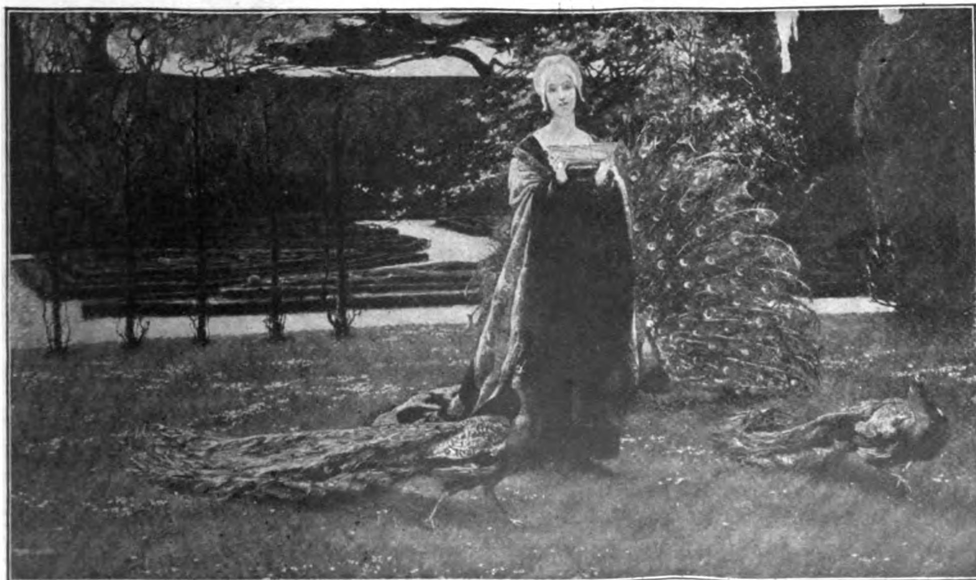
chandelier suggests. The Puritan is old Colarossi, one of the best-known models of the day, who, for Mr. Millet, did something which he had never done before and has never done since. In order to sit for the Puritan he actually shaved off his moustache.

The two girls were from the country near the village of Broadway, where Mr. Millet lives; but there is nothing in any way notable about them.

Undoubtedly the most interesting thing connected with the picture is the room in which the scene is laid, for it is a corner of Mr. Millet's own house. It is a fourteenth-century building of some dimensions, with a refectory, wardrobe, cellar, oratory, solar, and one or two other rooms practically perfect. The only changes which have been made during the passage of the centuries are some which have been rendered inevitable by necessary repairs. In the oratory and the solar, indeed, the open timbered roofs are still quite perfect; but in the refectory some rafters and one or two trusses have had to be removed.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth one wing of the little building was altered, and there is now a fine oak-panelled room in it. The room itself which is represented in the picture is really the refectory, which now serves Mr. Millet as a studio. A good specimen of a squint is to be seen in the solar, so that the abbot who lived there could look down into the refectory. According to Domesday Book, an abbot and eight lay brethren lived in the house, and carried on the farming with the aid of forty "villains" or common people. The Grange was attached to the Abbey of Pershore, and was one of a number of similar establishments in the neighbourhood, but this is the only one which is still extant.

Mr. Young Hunter's "My Lady's Garden" reproduces in its landscape the garden of Holland House, the use of which he was allowed by special permission of Lady Ilchester, who owns the Holland House estate. The peacocks themselves were painted from numerous studies made in Kensington Gardens, as well as from a pair of stuffed ones which were lent to the artist by a friend. In those stuffed specimens, however, lurked unexpected work, for when the picture was almost finished it was found that the "eyes" in the peacock's tail were all wrong. They are really arranged in a perfect mathematical order, quite different from the way they appeared in the stuffed specimens, and a comparison with the stuffed specimens in the Natural History Department of the British Museum showed that even there the same error occurred. This discovery necessitated a great deal of repainting in order that the "eyes" might be put in correctly. These circles on the tail are so arranged that a straight line drawn from the angles formed



From the Picture by] "MY LADY'S GARDEN." [*Young Hunter.*

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by straight lines joining the centre of the circles intersects the diamonds exactly, and each diamond is constructed with absolute accuracy. These diamond shapes widen out as they approach the end of the tail, and the eyes also become bigger.

Who is there who has once seen it who does not remember Sir John Everett Millais's alive, yet with a body almost too definite to be a spirit.

"That is just the question I want everybody to ask," said Sir John, with a smile, and everyone will, therefore, have to form his own opinion for himself. Such a vision, as full of reality as if it were the body of a woman in all the exquisite beauty of

From the Picture by] "SPEAK, SPEAK!" [*Sir J. E. Millais, P.R.A.*
(By permission of the Berlin Photographic Company, 133, New Bond Street, London, W.)

"Speak, Speak!" which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1895? Scrupulously exact as he was always known to be in all his work, few outside his most intimate professional friends are probably aware that the whole scene was built up in his studio and was, in that way, patiently painted in the actual surroundings. A good many people have been puzzled as to whether the woman at the foot of the bed *is* a real woman, or merely an apparition presented to the excited mind of the sick man, who saw her as if she were real. Indeed, it is said that an art critic once went to Sir John and asked him that very question, hoping to get a definite answer as to the painter's own intention in representing the woman with a face almost too white to be life, appeared to Milton and inspired his sonnet :—

Methought I saw my late espouséd saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis from the grave.
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

Perhaps, however, with this vivid insight into the mind of a great poet, few people who see either the original picture or its reproduction in little here will have any difficulty in coming to a definite decision in the matter.

Peculiar interest attaches to Lord Leighton's picture, "The Bath of Psyche," for the origin of it was a panel painted specially to fit a certain place in the hall of his friend,

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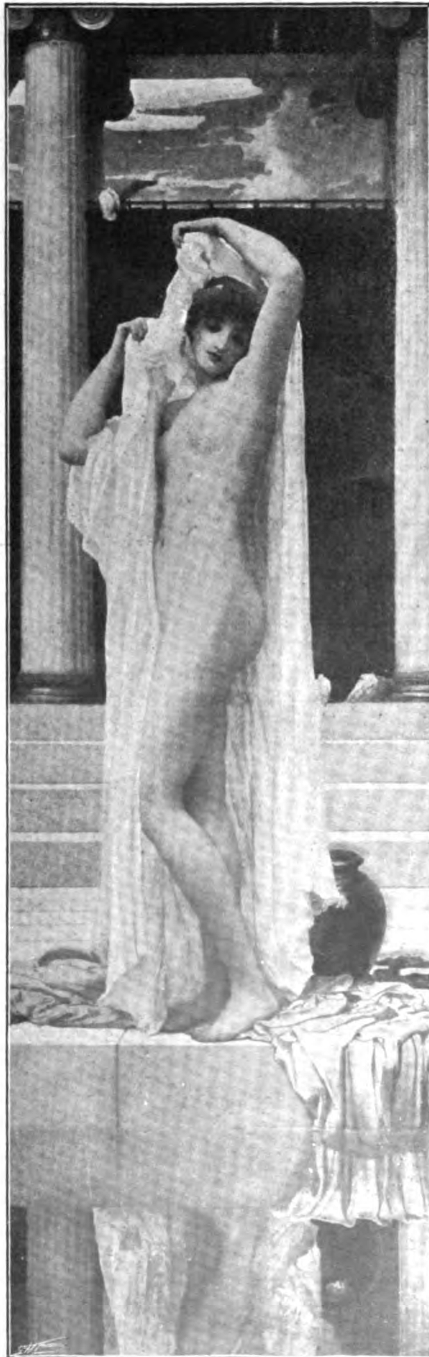
Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, R.A. Indeed, the exigencies of the space at his disposal were sufficient to account for the peculiar nature of the composition. When, however, he determined to enlarge the idea for a picture he cut off the water and the reflections from it and added the colonnade of marble columns in order to widen the space. It was a typical characteristic of the dead painter that, when the idea occurred to him that he might elaborate the conception he had used as a gift to his friend, he did not do it without first asking Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema whether he had any objection to this course. It need hardly be added that the latter very willingly consented to this being done, with the result that the world of art is the richer by a fine example of the artist, who was as cultured as he was gifted in many departments of life.

It is a curious thing that although a great many people knew the late John Pettie at the time he was painting the "Vigil," which represents a newly-made knight kneeling at the altar of the chapel with his arms and armour in accordance with the old custom, I have not succeeded in getting any particular facts about it. One vivid circumstance, however, throws a most interesting sidelight on the painter's method and his acute perception which found in himself the severest critic. This is the fact that no single model sat for the face; the component features of it were made up from several sources. It may perhaps be within the recollection of some people that when it was first exhibited in the Academy it was caricatured in *Punch* as "The Sword-Swallower." So grotesquely appropriate was the title that several artists often speak of it by that name. Not long ago, indeed, someone went to the Tate Gallery and, wanting to look at the picture, whose proper title he did not recall, went to one official and asked, "Can you tell me where 'The Sword-Swallower' is?" "There is no picture of that name in the gallery," was the answer. He, however, led the way to Pettie's picture, and said, "Perhaps that is what you are looking for?" and the visitor acknowledged that it was.



"THE BATH OF PSYCHE."
From the Picture by Lord Leighton, P.R.A.
(By permission of the Berlin Photographic Company, 133, New Bond Street, London, W.)

In "Beyond Man's Footstep" Mr. Briton Riviere, R.A., has devoted himself to one of those subjects which he has made peculiarly his own. Quite apart from itself it is particularly interesting as an example of the way in which the artistic temperament will sometimes brood on a subject until an all-compelling impulse forces it to be developed, not so much for the sake of the public as for the satisfaction of the artist. It must have been quite fifteen years from the time Mr. Riviere first had the idea of painting this picture until the canvas was placed on the easel and

From the Picture by] "VIGIL." [*John Pettie, R.A.*

his hand began to fashion what his brain had so long ago conceived. Although he has never been in the Arctic regions, the vastness of the North has always greatly fascinated Mr. Riviere, and impressed his imagination with the fact that the reality must inevitably exceed any previous conception of it. Some such idea was undoubtedly in his mind when he arranged the scheme of the picture, although the bear was painted from studies made in the Zoo and the wonderful colouring of the ice was made from special studies of glacial

From the Picture by] "BEYOND MAN'S FOOTSTEP." [*Briton Riviere, R.A.*

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ice, which, of course, are within the reach of any excursionist who goes as far afield as Switzerland.

"The Sick Child" is one of the numerous examples of Mr. Joseph Clark's partiality for that special subject. He is, indeed, known as "Sick Child Clark" among his friends, on account of the success of this picture—the first of the kind he did. It was exhibited as long ago as 1857, when he was a very young artist indeed, and was, as it were, the shadow cast by the traditional coming events. "Mother's Darling," the example of his work which she wears around her neck is that of the St. Cross at Winchester, but there is no special significance to be attached to the fact that the figure is represented wearing it.

A journalist with a turn for epigram once declared some years ago that the greatest American actress was a Pole, referring, of course, to Mme. Modjeska. In a similar way one might say that the most celebrated English painter is an American, for Mr. J. S. Sargent, R.A., is the son of a Boston physician, although he was born in Florence. His picture, "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose," is

From the Picture by] "MOTHER'S DARLING." [Joseph Clark.

which comes within the scope of this article, was really begun before there was any definite idea as to what the final outcome of the picture would be. The artist sketched the characteristic attitude of the child, and it remained in that condition for a long time on the canvas, until in time the idea developed itself and the young mother grew out of the gloom of imagination into the light of reality. The Greek cross brooch

popularly supposed to have been painted in order to reproduce a certain colour scheme which he had in mind. Unhappily, no reproduction in black and white can give any idea of the extraordinary artistry of the canvas, with its Chinese lanterns in a garden of lilies, roses of pink and red, and the crimson and yellowish carnations with their greyish leaves in strong contrast with the two children in their white dresses.

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From the Picture by] "CARNATION, LILY, LILY, ROSE." [*J. S. Sargent, R.A.*

It was really a desire to reproduce a certain light effect which induced Mr. Seymour Lucas, R.A., to paint "After Culloden," which was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1884. He was walking down one of the rows in Great Yarmouth, and was struck by the wonderful arrangement of a forge. He thought it would be an exceedingly picturesque thing to reproduce that forge, and with that for his central idea he started to build up a story which would enable him to carry this into effect. He was a good deal interested at the time in the rebellion of 1745, and it occurred to him that a dramatic moment could be obtained by having a Jacobite, flying through a country still in favour of the Pretender, stop in order to get a new shoe to replace the one his horse had lost, and, while the men were engaged in doing this, that Cumberland's soldiers should break in and discover them. It is obvious that at the approach of troops the Jacobite would seek a hiding-place. Having decided on introducing a detachment of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, the painter's next point was to make the fact of the Jacobite's whereabouts plain beyond all question. This was finally done by leaving the man's blue coat on the horse's back. His defiance of his pursuers is suggested by the gauntlet lying on the ground. In order to get all the facts he desired Mr. Lucas actually turned his studio into a smithy. While travelling in Wales he came upon an old smithy which practically reproduced all the conditions he had in his mind, and he thereupon bought it and transferred it—lock, stock, and

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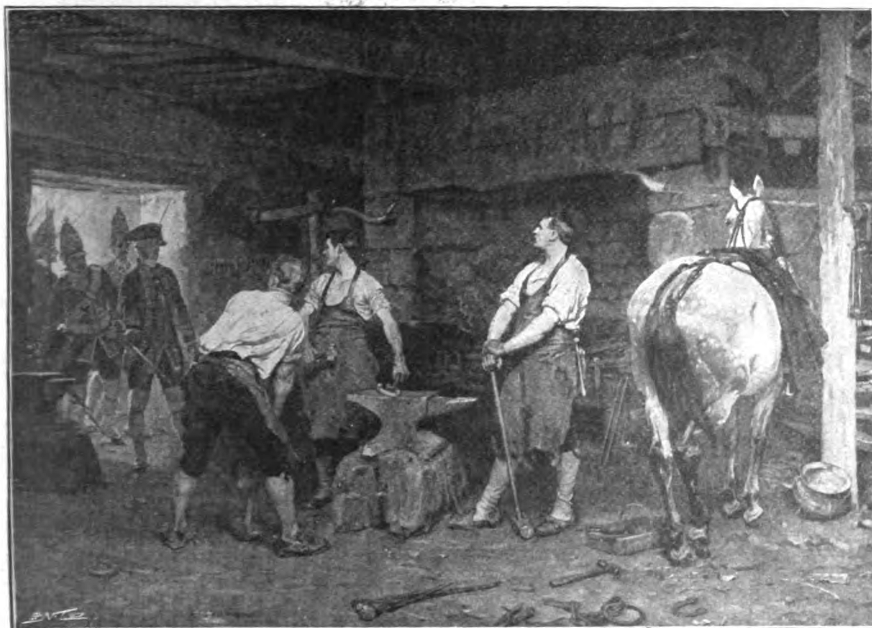
barrel—to London. The smiths used as models were not real smiths at all, and the central one with the shoe in the tongs was, as a matter of fact, Mr. Lucas's own gardener. By constantly working in the sun his arms had become splendidly tanned, and as he was a well-developed man, with some appreciation of the actor's art, he was able to realize the situation very well, for it may be remarked in passing that good models must, of necessity, have some appreciation of the actor's art in order to throw themselves into a given character and imagine the expression. Mr. Lucas's studio not being on the level ground a sand-bank had to be built in order to get the horse up and down when the time came for painting it, and though rather restive at first, it got so accustomed to "sitting" that it eventually became a very good model indeed.



From the Picture by] "1746." [Seymour Lucas, R.A.

(*Searching for Rebels after Culloden.*)

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This picture is now being published as an engraving by Messrs. Frost and Reed for the first time, and it is by their courtesy that I am enabled to reproduce it in this article.

It was something of a similar desire to Mr. Lucas's that induced Mr. William F. Yeames, R.A., to start work on his life-size picture of "Amy Robsart," which reproduced a passage in Aubrey's history of Berkshire, quite as well as the famous incident in Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth." The passage in the history of Berkshire is as follows: "Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, being the great favourite of the Queen Elizabeth, it was thought she would have made him her husband; to this end, to free him from all obstacles, he had his wife, Amy Robsart, conveyed to the solitary house of Cumnor Hall, in Berkshire, inhabited by Anthony Foster, his servant. This same Foster, in compliance with what he well knew to be the Earl's wishes, came with others in the dead of night to the lady's bedchamber and stifled her in bed and flung her downstairs, thereby believing the world would have thought it a mischance and so blinded their villainy; and the morning after, with the purpose that others should know of her end, did Foster, on pretence of carrying out some behest of the Countess, bring a servant to the spot where the poor lady's body lay at the foot of the stairs."

This may be compared with the following passage from "Kenilworth":—

"In less than two minutes Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the courtyard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the Earl's usual signal; the instant after the door of the Countess's

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From the Picture by] "AMY ROBSART." [*W. F. Yeames, R.A.*

chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way.

"There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall —a faint groan—and all was over.

"'Look down into the vault: what seest thou?'

"'I see only a heap of white clothes like a snowdrift.'"

It is worth recalling in this connection that Edward VI. attended the wedding of Robert Dudley and Amy Robsart in 1556; and in 1560, when living at Cumnor, not far from Oxford, she sent all her servants to Abingdon fair, and when they returned she was found dead at the foot of the staircase. The verdict in her death was "mischance." The man seen in the picture is Tony Foster, and the other is the young servant whom he brought, as recounted in the "history." It was seeing a staircase in the Palais de Cluny in Paris similar to that in the picture which inspired Mr. Yeames to begin work on a subject that had been for some considerable time in his mind.

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"Try Not That Pass."

BY ROBERT BARR.

THE tramp had assumed an easy, careless attitude, with his right foot on the platform of the veranda, while the proprietor of the cottage stood as negligently leaning against one of the pillars looking quizzically down upon his visitor.

"Yes, sir," the tramp was saying, "I've been in the railway business myself, and, before now, have ridden in my own private car all over the United States."

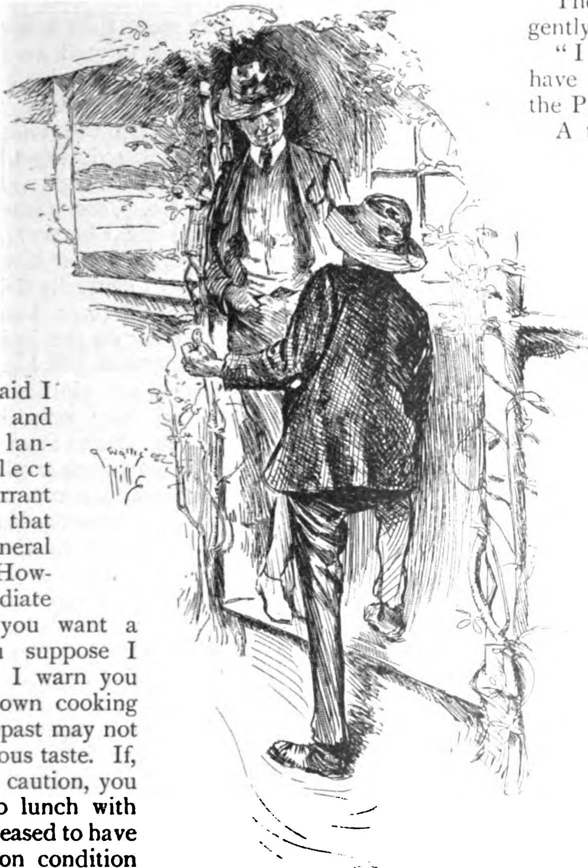
His auditor evidently did not believe this assertion, for, although he said nothing, he smiled incredulously.

"I began," continued the tramp, "as telegrapher on the Michigan Central——"

"And rose to be general manager, I suppose," interjected the listener, "thus acquiring your private car."

"Not exactly that," rejoined the tramp, "but I have enjoyed my private car nevertheless. I see you do not credit my statement," and the ragamuffin heaved a deep, regretful sigh.

"I haven't said I doubted you, and indeed your language is select enough to warrant the assumption that you are a general manager now. However, the immediate point is that you want a meal, and you suppose I can supply it. I warn you that I do my own cooking here and the repast may not suit your fastidious taste. If, in spite of this caution, you are prepared to lunch with me, I shall be pleased to have your company on condition that you tell me how you came by your private car."



"I'VE RIDDEN IN MY OWN PRIVATE CAR ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES."

"Willingly," cried the tramp, stepping up on the veranda with an air that suggested polite training. "I have been at times my own cook alongside the dusty highway, and I have no doubt your efforts in the culinary line far excel mine."

The proprietor bowed, and said by way of introduction :—

"My name is Willis Norton."

"And mine," said the tramp, with equal *savoir faire*, "is Wandering Willie, a pseudonym I have adopted from a pathetic Scottish song of that name. Obvious family reasons prevent that candour which you have just displayed in the frank enunciation of your own cognomen."

"Bless me," cried Norton, with a laugh, as he led the way into the cottage, "I believe you are, in disguise, the society reporter of some newspaper."

The tramp smiled indulgently.

"I confess," he said, "I have been connected with the Press in my time."

A table stood under the deep shade of a back veranda, and the outlook was so good that even the tramp gazed at it in admiration. The pine cottage had been built close to the strand of a narrow lake, which might have been mistaken for a wide river. The sandy beach was nearly as white as snow and the waters of the lake were clear as crystal. On the opposite banks were palmettos with here and there a dense mass of sub-tropical undergrowth.

"Has it a name?" asked the tramp, indicating the sheet of water.

"Well, I call it Lake Oronto, although I believe

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it is nameless on the map, and I think it the prettiest little sheet of water in all Florida. Take a chair, if you please."

"Yes," said the tramp, seating himself, "you have certainly a most enticing prospect. One can hardly credit the fact that it is mid-winter up North."

Norton set out the meal with a deftness that indicated long practice, and drew up a chair opposite his guest.

"If you will excuse me," said the latter, "I shall not begin to talk until I have made some progress with this appetizing repast. I am very hungry."

"I am glad of that," said Norton, genially, "for a good appetite excuses a poor cook."

There was silence for a few minutes, during which Norton absently drummed on the table with his fingers, for he had lunched an hour previously, and sat there merely out of courteousness to his visitor. Suddenly the tramp threw back his head and laughed.

"I knew you didn't believe me," he said. "I suppose it is by design, and not accident, that you are at this moment telegraphing your opinion of me with the ends of your fingers on the table."

Norton smiled and did not deny it.

"You have been a railroad man yourself, perhaps?" continued the tramp.

"Yes, I was in the manager's office, under old Mitcham on the Sand Bag Route, until my health broke down, then I came to Florida, bought a few hundred acres of land, own at least part of this lake, and have been vegetating for some years."

The tramp looked at him, critically.

"Your health appears to be all right," he said.

"Oh, it is thoroughly re-established, and I yearn for my old position. I have applied for it, but it is filled. When a man drops out of business in this country he finds it hard to overtake his lost opportunity."

"My railroading is done outside the manager's office," said the tramp, pushing back his empty plate, "and I have often wondered why you legitimate railway men don't try to get some inkling of the business from the hobo's point of view."

"Have a cigar?" said Norton, offering him a bunch.

The tramp made a selection, bit off one end, and lit the other, with a courteous murmur of thanks.

"I have travelled free on most of the railways of the United States and yet never owned a pass," he went on. "At last it struck me that, with my knowledge of telegraphing and penmanship, I ought to have a private car. If you know the ropes and take care that your actions are in line with customary usage, then, if you don't see what you want, all you have to do is to ask for it. Almost anything is possible on our admirable railway system. I selected a grain car belonging to the C.B. and Q., lying disused on a siding in Indiana. I picked up a couple of railway padlocks, easily found if you know where to look for them, and so fastened the outside doors, after which I was never disturbed."

"But, good gracious," exclaimed Norton, "you cannot put on a padlock from the inside of the car?"

"No, but you can saw a little door at the end of the car just above the floor, screw-nail any kind of hinges on the inside, and by smearing the joints outside with paint or mud no brakeman will ever notice it; that lets you out and in, and the big doors being locked there is no intrusion on your privacy. You will need a telegraph instrument, which doesn't cost more than a few dollars, and if you have some printed car-labels they will come handy, although a bit of chalk will do nearly as well. You take the number of this car, then tap the telegraph line and order the operator during a lull in proceedings to attach car number so-and-so to West-bound train No. 7, for instance. And thus you send the car wherever you please. I found by experience that it was well to avoid large cities, so I generally laid up some ten miles from Chicago or St. Louis, for instance. You fit up the car on the inside to suit your taste, with a mattress you have found somewhere, or with old clothes that are given you, and you may even have a fire to broil a bit of steak or fry some ham, but that is dangerous and may lead to discovery or conflagration. I lost my first car through inadvertently, or thoughtlessly, rather, running it over the C.B. and Q. route once too often. This car had been missing for a year or two, and so an acute official nabbed it. It had got to be a very comfortable car, and I was sorry to part with it."

"But," cried the amazed Norton, "how about way-bills and that sort of thing? They keep a record of every car—where it has come from, where it is sent to, and all that."

The tramp spread out his hands and shrugged his shoulders.

"I told you," he said, "that I was familiar with the outside of the manager's office and not with the inside. I am merely informing

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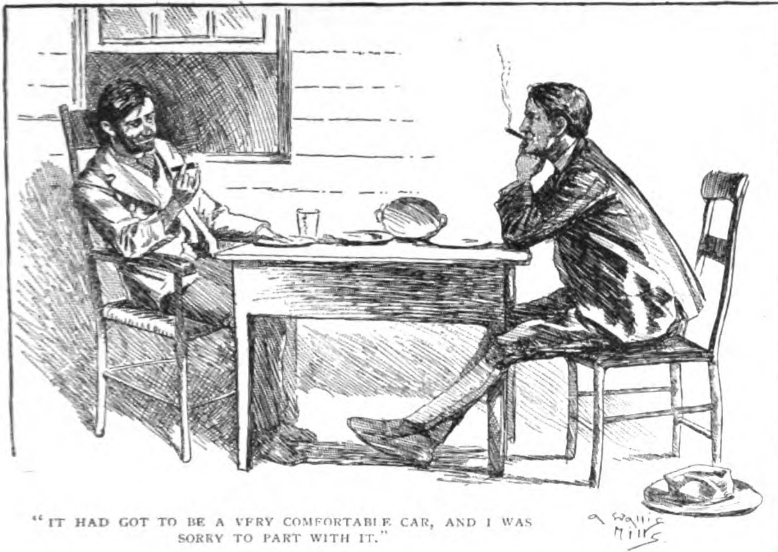
"IT HAD GOT TO BE A VERY COMFORTABLE CAR, AND I WAS SORRY TO PART WITH IT."

you what I have done and not in any way trying to account for it, as I do not understand their system of book-keeping. I know that if you tap a wire and order the operator to attach car No. 3,367 to freight-train No. 4 he will do it if a car bearing that number is on his siding. A label or a chalk-mark will send the car where you wish it sent. And now, Mr. Norton, I must thank you for an excellent meal, so daintily supplemented by this choice cigar. One might deduct from its aroma, even if he knew nothing of geography, that Florida is in proximity to Havana. If I meet you at Delmonico's in New York you must dine with me. I'll take no refusal. I spend my winters in Florida and California and my summers in New York or New England, sometimes visiting the Western States. Good-bye."

Norton sat and pondered long after his guest had departed. The story of the tramp, although he did not in the least believe it, had set him thinking. If he could prove to old Mitcham, the manager of the Sand Bag Route, that there were several grave faults in the working of the line which that alert young man, Willis Norton, had been clever enough to discover, there was a chance that Mitcham might offer him his old situation, or perhaps some other post in the office a step or two farther down the ladder. Yet, unless he had proof of what the hobo said, there was little use in going to so shrewd a man as old Mitcham with the tale. One remark of this casual traveller stuck to him. He had said in effect that if you adhered to the form and routine of railway work anything was possible. This suggested a scheme to Norton which would show old Mitcham that there was carelessness to be amended in railway practice, and if the scheme were successful he would have in hand documentary proof of his statement. He fished a discoloured oblong card out of his pocket-book and gazed thoughtfully upon it. It was his personal pass over the Sand Bag Route, main line and branches, now several years out of date, and of no value even to the owner. It should have been called in when it expired, but was never asked for, and so had remained in his pocket-book.

Next morning early he got upon his horse and rode to Savilla, the nearest railway station, and there took train for Jacksonville. Once in the chief city of Florida he went direct to the leading printing-house and said to the foreman :—

"I am in rather a hurry, and want a little job done for me with neatness and dispatch. I wish you to print for me a hundred letter-heads with the words 'Lake Oronto Navigation Company, Lake Oronto, Florida.' Then I wish you to duplicate this pass on suitable cardboard; all except the heading, which is to be 'Lake Oronto Navigation Company,' with the cut of a river steamer underneath. I would like the letter-paper finished first, if you please."

The order was completed with the skill and artistic excellence characteristic of an enterprising American printing-house. When the young man received these packages he took them to a type-writing office and had the girl rattle off several dozen of the following letters, each addressed to different railway managers :—

"Lake Oronto Navigation Company,

"Lake Oronto, Florida, Jan. 17th, 18--.

"Dear Sir,—I have pleasure in inclosing an annual pass made out in your name and good until the end of the year. This should have been sent off last month, but, as you

"HE RODE TO SAVILLA."

are aware, we are now in the midst of the tourist season in Florida and press of business has caused the delay.--Yours very truly,

"WILLIS NORTON,
"General Manager, L.O.N. Co."

While these letters were being typed he wrote on the various cards, in a beautiful Spencerian hand, the names of the various railway managers, and underneath scrawled his own title in quite a different style of calligraphy—the sign-manual of an exceedingly busy man burdened with numerous cares, the signature being very illegible, looking somewhat like a spread-eagle struck by lightning. These were inclosed, each with its proper communication, stamped, and sent off. This piece of bogus business dispatched, Norton took the evening train back to Savilla, and so home to his lonely cabin again.

Curiously enough, the first response received was over the well-known scribble of old Mitcham, and the formal letter inclosed a cardboard annual pass authorizing Willis Norton, Esquire, to travel free on the Sand-Bag Route and all its branches until the 31st of December that year. All this was before the Inter-State Commerce Act was passed, and perhaps to-day such a result is not to be looked for. But before two weeks Willis Norton had accumulated a varied assortment of annual passes as bulky as a pack of cards. The very success of his plan rather frightened him. He had expected one or more to have written him, "You have taken the 17th of January for the 1st of April. There is no Lake Oronto Navigation Company." However, no one discovered the non-existence of the Navigation Company, but the question occurred to his mind, if they did, what would happen? He said to himself that his conscience was clear so long as he did not use any of the passes, which he had no intention of doing. He had asked for nothing and had received much. Nevertheless, he felt himself in the position of the man who had the tiger by the tail, and didn't know whether to let go or hang on. He had intended at first to send his own old useless pass only to old Mitcham, together with the new one, but reflection showed him that if he proved the Mitcham system to be lax and careless he would merely anger that irascible magnate and render for ever impossible his chance of getting a situation in his former office, so he resolved to show Mitcham the slipshod methods of other lines without saying anything of the Sand Bag Route. But if the manager claimed such a thing was impossible on his road, then the Mitcham line pass would be used as the right bower of the game. But now that he had all the material ready he became more and more reluctant to use it. Up to the present his action had been merely a practical joke on various estimable railway companies, but if he took advantage of the outcome to further his worldly prospects he had doubts about the strict honesty of the proceeding. Thus the days passed over his head without any definite move on his part. He said to himself that he did not wish to go North during the cold season, but he became more and more convinced that he would not use the passes for any purpose whatever.

One day the ghost of his bogus company arose and confronted him. He heard a call on the road, and, going to the veranda, he saw that a neat covered buggy had driven up silently in the sand. Its sole occupant was a fashionably dressed young woman, on whose fair brow was an expression of perplexity. She held in her hand a card on which she

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was gazing fixedly, and by intuition rather than by sight he jumped to the conclusion that it was one of his own unfortunate passes.

"I fear I have lost my way," said the girl. "Can you tell me which direction I should take for Lake Oronto?"

"This is Lake Oronto," replied Norton.

"Then I must have reached the wrong side of it. I am looking for the offices of the Navigation Company and for a man whose name is on this card, but I cannot quite make it out; it looks like 'Washington.' Perhaps you can read it?"

She handed him the pass signed by himself.

"The signature is rather difficult," admitted the young man, wondering what on earth he could say to her; "it stands for Willis Norton. I may add that I am Mr. Norton, and that this is the office of the Navigation Company."

"Really?" cried the girl, with arched eyebrows, glancing over cottage and man with a look of surprise. "Then I have been right after all. When is the steamer due?"

"It won't be along for quite a while yet," stammered Norton, in faltering accents.

"Ah, I'm glad I am in time. Won't you ask someone to take care of my horse and give him a feed of oats?"

"I will look after your horse," said Norton, assisting her to alight and placing at her disposal a rocking-chair on the veranda. "All my servants are away at Savilla for the day," he added, recklessly.

He was glad of the opportunity of attending to the horse that he might collect his thoughts and make up his mind what he should say to this charming and unexpected visitant. Once in the stable he looked again at the card, and saw it was made out to E. B. Howard, General Manager of the Great C.X. and G. line, whose head-quarters were in Chicago. He resolved at once to seek refuge in the clause which stated that if this pass were presented by any other than the person named, it was to be taken up and the full fare charged. He returned slowly to the veranda and found his caller very complacently rocking herself to and fro, gazing across the sandy road at the forest.

"May I ask your name?" he inquired.

"My name is Sadie Howard, and my father is manager of the C.X. and G. Railroad."

"Do you intend to travel on this pass? It is good only for the person named."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," replied the young lady, airily; "I always get transportation when I show one of my father's cards. Still, it is of no moment whatever. I am quite willing to pay my fare, having come so far. I am staying at the Alhambra, in Savilla, and my father sent this pass down to me when he wrote the other day, so I thought I would drive over and see the lake. Do you wish the money now for the round trip?" and she made an ineffectual search for her pocket book.

"HE FOUND HIS CALLER VERY COMPLACENTLY ROCKING HERSELF TO AND FRO."

"No, no," replied Norton, hastily; "the — the — the clerk on the boat attends to all that, you know."

"Oh, of course," she said, subsiding again into her chair.

He stood there altogether nonplussed, feeling himself to be the biggest fool in all the United States.

"When does the steamer come?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Well, you know, she is kind of irregular. This is our busy season."

The girl smiled.

"It does not seem very busy round here," she said.

"No, no, not right *here*; of course not. You see, we are a sort of—sort of way station, if I may put it in that light."

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"Oh, I thought you said this was the head office."

"Not exactly the head office—not the *head* office. No! I come here merely to get away from the bustle at the other end of the lake. I like to get away now and then and—and rest, you know."

"Yes, I understand. That's just the way my father feels about Chicago, but it's very seldom he gets a vacation. Wasn't that the whistle I heard just now?"

The unfortunate Norton recognised the sound as the cry of a friendly owl, accustomed to wake the echoes at night and occasionally, when disturbed, hooting during the day.

"I think," he said, breathlessly, "we had better get into the small boat and be ready."

"Oh, very well," replied the girl, rising.

He led her through the cottage to the back veranda, picking up a few cushions on his way. These he arranged on the back seat of his trim little skiff, and deferentially handed the young woman over the gunwale. She seated herself and cried out with admiration at the beauty of the lake.

"How clear it is, and how pretty that beach of silver sand! It is an enchanting spot."

"Yes," responded Norton; "tourists consider it one of the choicest bits of scenery in Florida."

"How strange that I never had heard of it until my father wrote. I am very glad I came. You have no pier here, I see, and so I suppose take passengers on and off from this boat?"

"Exactly," responded the general manager, pushing off the skiff and picking up the oars.

He rowed in silence for some distance over the placid water, the girl at first giving expression to exclamations of delight, but by-and-by she ceased her comments and began to look anxiously up and down the lake.

"I see nothing of the steamer," she exclaimed, at last.

Norton drew a deep sigh, rested on his oars, and met her troubled eyes.

"Miss Howard," he began, slowly, "I have to throw myself on your mercy. There is no Oronto Navigation Company and no steamer. This is the only craft on the lake, and I am sure I am delighted to fulfil my obligation to the pass you hold by rowing you from one end of the lake to the other and all round it."

"What do you mean?" she cried, clutching the sides of the boat, her wide eyes alert with alarm.

"If you will permit me I will tell you all about it. I have been playing to very hard luck this last few years. I used to be in the office of old Mitcham, general manager of the Sand Bag Route, when my health gave way and I was ordered South. I had some money and, foolishly enough, bought up this wilderness, thinking I could support myself by fruit culture. One year the frost smote me, and not only destroyed my orange trees, but also all chance of selling the land for anything like the sum I paid. I have been trying to get back into the railway business again, but the place that knew me knows

"I HAVE TO THROW MYSELF ON YOUR MERCY."

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me no more, and old Mitcham seems to have let me slip entirely from his memory. My health is now fully re-established, and I yearn to get North again. A month or two ago a tramp happened along and begged my hospitality. I gave him a meal and he told me a story. The story set me thinking." Here Norton, with a vividness which always pertains to the relation of a reality, gave the tale of the tramp and set forth his own subsequent action in the matter of the passes. The fear which had undoubtedly thrilled the young woman when the narrative began gradually faded away, and towards the end she sat with her elbow on her knee and her chin resting in her hand, a twinkling smile now and then illumining her comely face as she listened to the graphic story of the tramp ordering great railway companies to do his bidding regarding the private car, while the history of the Lake Oronto Navigation Company made her laugh outright.

"I think," she said, when he had concluded, "that I ought to inform the police."

"It wouldn't do any good, I fear," said Norton, shaking his head. "I doubt if even you could make a case of false pretences out of it, for you see I made no request of the managers, and they gave me the passes of their own free will. Even if I used their favours, which I have no intention of doing, I question whether you could get out a warrant for my arrest."

"Then you have made no recent application to Mr. Mitcham for your old place?"

"No."

"Could you get from him a letter of recommendation?"

"Oh, I *have* a letter of recommendation from him already. He gave me one when I left; curt, you know, but, on the whole, very satisfactory—from the like of *him*."

"I sympathize deeply with your case, and shall say nothing to the police. You have indeed been playing to hard luck, as you said, but perhaps your luck will change. My father manages the C.X. and G., and everyone admits he manages it well; but I manage my father. If you will intrust me with that letter from Mitcham and a selection of the passes you received, including those from my father and from Mitcham, I am going North in a few days and will present your case at head-quarters, and I think you will have a much better berth on the C.X. and G. than on a line like the Sand Bag Route, which my father says ought to be in the hands of a receiver."

"You are very generous and forgiving," said the young man, earnestly, "but I could not think of troubling you and, as it were, taking advantage of my own villainy. Somehow I did not seem to realize the blackness of my conduct until I began to talk to you. In my own justification I may say that my conscience has been troubling me all along, but——"

"Yes, you are very guilty," interrupted the girl, flippantly; "still, as I told you, I manage the manager of a great railway line centring in Chicago, so it is not likely that I am going to be dictated to by the manager of a company in Florida which has no real existence. Now make no more objections, but turn your boat and row me back to the General Offices of the Oronto Navigation Company."

Railway people in Chicago admit that Mr. Willis Norton is a most capable man, but they say that he has also had the greatest run of good luck ever known in that enterprising city. His rise was rapid, and he is now assistant-general manager of the C.X. and G. They say that in some unaccountable manner he succeeded in hypnotizing the old man and gaining his consent to the marriage of his daughter, not knowing that it was the other way about, and that the daughter overruled the strong objections put forward by Mr. E. B. Howard.

The Nortons have a charming winter residence erected on the shores of Lake Oronto, Florida. The cottage has been moved to a position partly over the waters of the lake, and it makes a roomy and efficient boat-house. Visitors wonder why a sign the whole length of the boat-house facing the lake reads: "Lake Oronto Navigation Company," but Mrs. Norton smiles and says she has promised never to divulge the secret of that organization, so it is generally supposed Norton bought out the Navigation Company that he might run his own speedy electric launch undisturbed upon the mirror-like surface of the lake.

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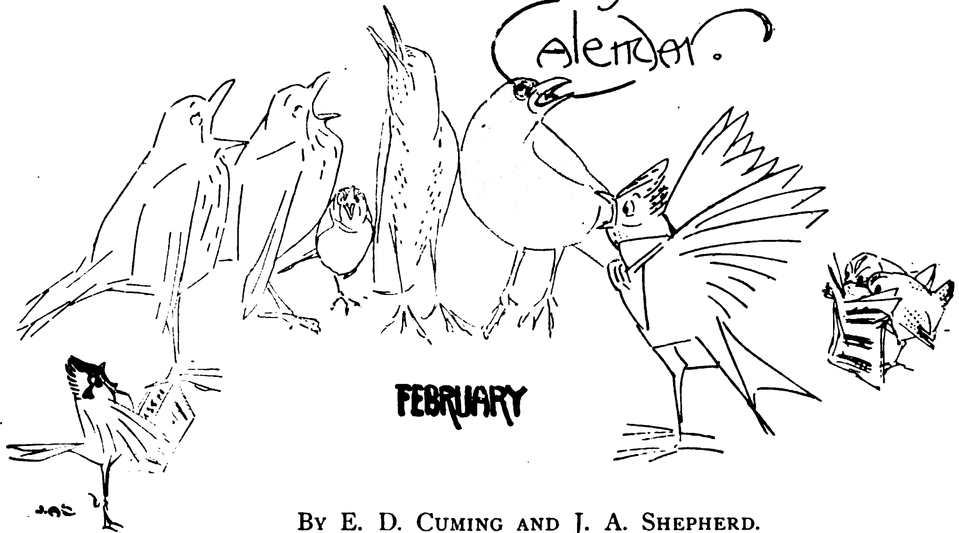

By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd.

AS we can choose our own weather for this calendar, Be it enacted that with the dawn of February ice and snow disappear. The world is beginning to wake up.

The trout takes unto himself a wife early this month, and side by side the loving couple seek seclusion in some small stream whose gravel bed and swift, shallow waters offer conveniences for family affairs. With their tails they fan away the gravel to make a little trench for the eggs: the trout has a small family; she lays about a thousand eggs for each pound of her own weight, hence the precaution she takes to bury them in a trench. Trout eggs are held in great esteem as food by various fish, including the trout themselves: eels, roach, dace, and other coarse fish gather round a newly-wedded pair and follow them, in anticipation of the wedding breakfast of eggs. The fresh-water shrimp eats large quantities, but as the trout eats the shrimp in large quantities, this adjusts matters. The circumstance that angling becomes lawful while they are still on their honeymoon seems to afford ground for complaint to the mildest mannered trout. The salmon, whose domestic labours are now over in most rivers, orders her nursery on much the same system as the trout, but she has a family even smaller in proportion than her little relative, producing eight or nine hundred eggs for each pound of her own weight. The hen salmon exhibits sad want of good feeling towards her mate. If a poacher, as poachers are apt to do, "snatches" with a hook lashed to a long stick the cock salmon from the spawning-bed before the egg-trench has been made, she shoots away down stream, button-holes the first cock-fish she meets and proposes to him, if he does not propose at once to her; all she cares about is her eggs and their safety; a consolable widow.

"A CONSOLABLE WIDOW."

Frost having relaxed its hold on the ground, the mole bethinks him of his duty and gets to work.

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BROTHER MOLES AT EASE.

dines all day and all night, for his appetite is insatiable, perhaps the result of honest toil. Monkish in his seclusion, dress, industry, and love of good living, there is a very unmonastic side to his character: he is incurably quarrelsome and his sole recreation is a fight.

The hedgehog, an early riser among winter-long sleepers, is up and about now in search of the succulent slug, who also is the first of his kind to come abroad. The hedgehog has no high-flown ideas on the subject of early rising; could he establish a larder on the cold storage system and stock it with the

driving new tunnels, sinking new shafts, and advertising the resumption of business by means of new mole-hills. The mole is only idle when the earth is too hard for his shovel hands to dig; he sleeps at intervals during

"HIS SOLE RECREATION IS A FIGHT."

severe weather, but a passion for labour, which is almost morbid, masters him the moment the frost goes; he never agitates for an eight hours' day or goes on strike. He never knocks off work for meals; but he

beetles, worms, and other unsavoury meats that his soul loveth, he would no doubt get up for a meal like the squirrel and dormouse and go back to bed again. He can't do that, so he gets up for the sufficient reason

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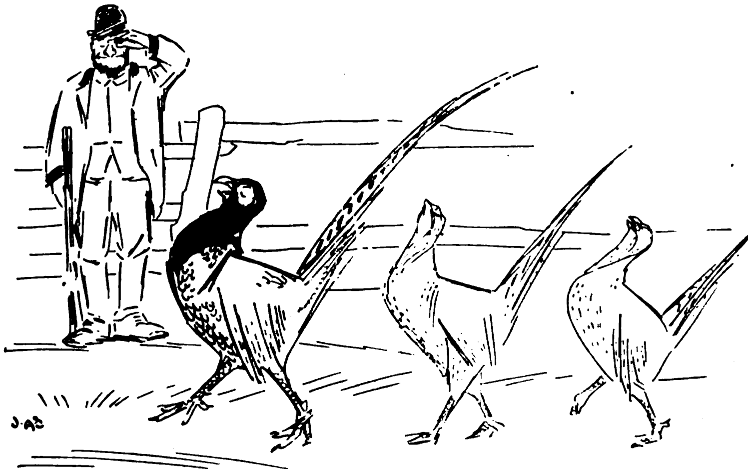

"THE GAMEKEEPER IS THEIR MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT."

that he is hungry. The wood-lice, popularly known as "slaters" from their colour and scales, are abroad once more, having left the damp place of their winter abiding under rotten wood. One wood-louse boasts ability to roll up in a ball: in which posture he presents such resemblance to a pill that medical science in its reckless experimental infancy gave him place in the pharmacopœia and prescribed him for certain disorders. A dreadful fate for the insect; but we must not expend all our sympathy on him.

The pheasant and partridge celebrate the close of the shooting season on 2nd February. Henceforward till autumn their persons are sacred, and their whilom foe, the gamekeeper, is their most obedient servant. The conduct of the partridge, who about this time has been known to boldly invade the streets of town or village, must not be attributed to bravado born of this stimulating sense of security; it is more probable that unrequited love has temporarily unhinged the bird's mind.

The wild geese who have spent the winter with us now bestir themselves, choose some experienced old gander as leader, and turn their heads north—their bodies following at a respectful distance: geese on the wing always seem to be trying to win a race "by a neck." The grey lag, supposed to be the ancestor of our domestic geese, stays longest; some grey lags cannot tear themselves away from us at all and stay to nest in the far north of Scotland. Farmers are busy ploughing now, and various gulls discover a keen and intelligent interest in agriculture—that phase of it, at least, which renders accessible worms and grubs. Following the ploughman in company with the rooks are the black-headed gull, so called because the summer hood he dons is chocolate and not black; the common gull, and occasionally the herring gull. The common gull is no sailor; when rough weather threatens he is the first to come ashore.

"Who wouldn't sell a farm and go to sea?"
They ask, who view the storm without alarm.
The sentiment does not appeal to me,
Who'd rather leave the sea and take a farm.

The herring gull, commonest of our large gulls, enjoyed possession of four dozen different classical names when Dresser wrote

"AN INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE."

his great work on "The Birds of Europe." Every self-respecting ornithologist holds it a duty to give him a new one; so by this time he should have about sixty. What would the Lord Chamberlain do if Mrs. Herring Gull appeared for presentation at a Drawing Room and gave all her "full name" as in duty bound? The chaffinch, who has been silent

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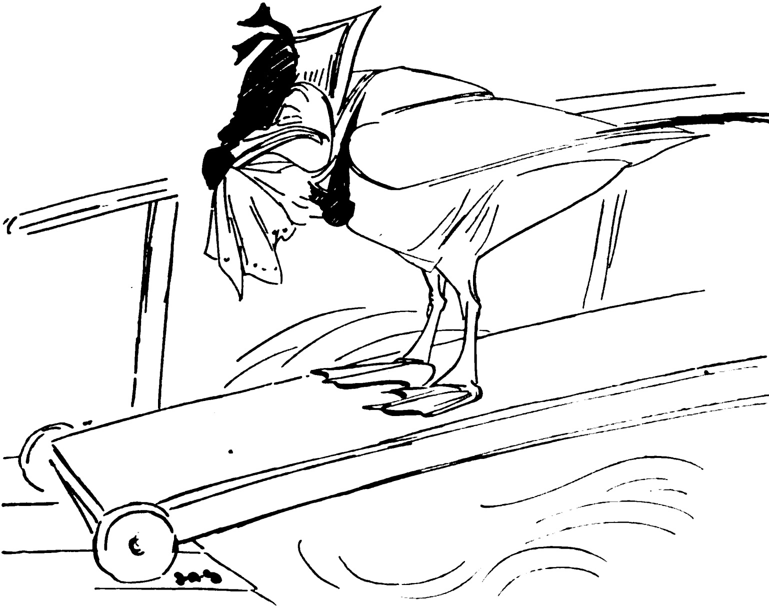
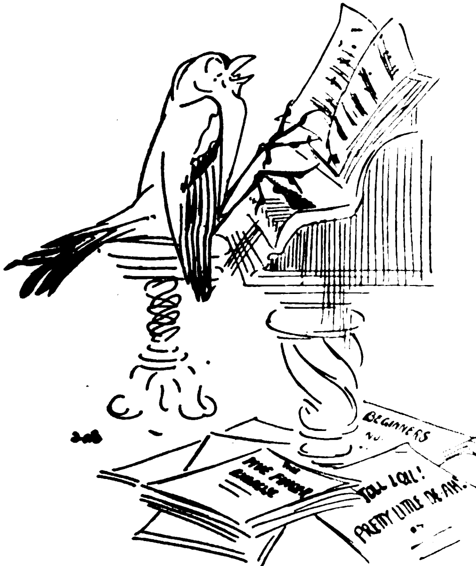


"THE COMMON GULL IS NO SAILOR."

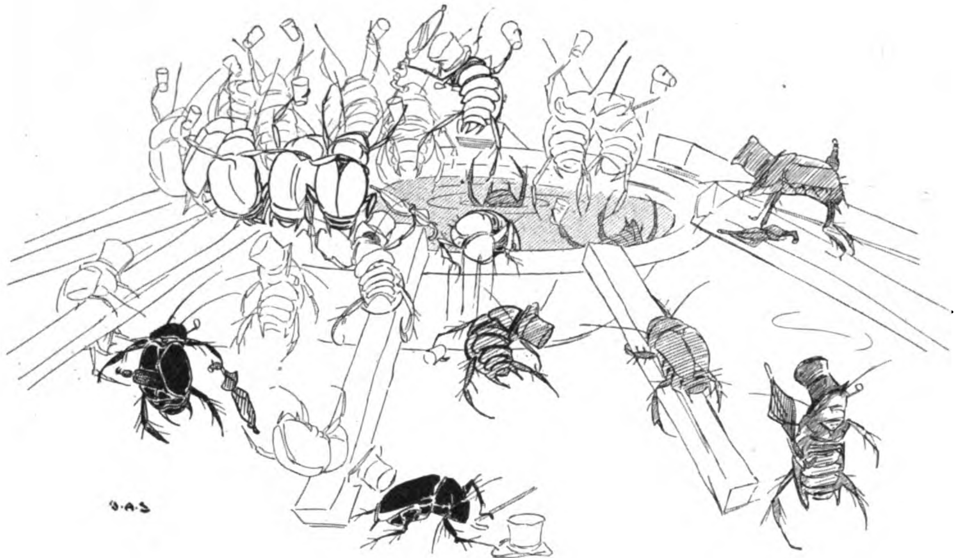
all the winter, begins that short, defiant cry of his, "Toll loll! Pretty little de-ah!" as it is interpreted: the chaffinch's idea of music is elementary and his repertoire limited; but



"THE CHAFFINCH'S IDEA OF MUSIC IS ELEMENTARY."

his song answers its purpose as a challenge; he is always ready for a fight at this season. Herein he resembles the blackbird, who makes it a point of honour to pick a quarrel with every fellow of his own kind he meets. The yellow-hammer begins the petition for "A very lit-tle bit of bread and no che-e-e-ese!" which indulgence considers a song; and the little blue-tit finds the tongue of which he never makes very aggressive use. The missel-thrush is less in evidence now, but the song-thrush, skylark, blackbird, and hedge-sparrow and wren take heart and practise more regularly; the fact that earthworms appear now and other foods are more plentiful has much to do with the musical programme; we can't expect hungry birds to waste vital energy in song. The genial house sparrow is chirpy; he has found the first crocus of the year, and, having eaten the bud, has done some mischief, wherefore he is happy. Indoors the cricket is chirruping as gaily as ever; neither to him nor to the cock-

"CHIRPY."



"TOO GENIAL."

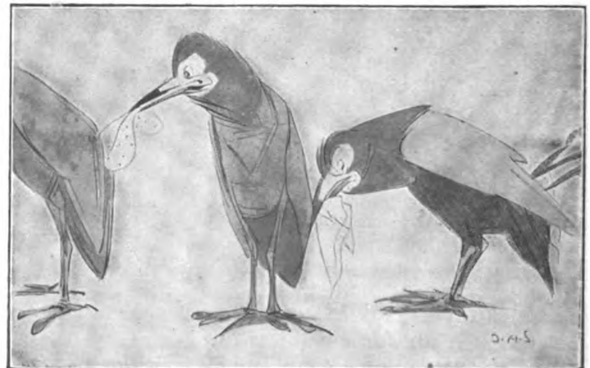
roach do the seasons make any difference; hot-house flowers these, who live behind the kitchen-range and love best the cook who does not rake out the fire at night. Wise in his generation, the cricket does not abuse hospitality; cheery and sociable though his nature be, he seldom collects about him his relations, friends, and acquaintances with their respective families and hangers-on. He keeps the cook's welcome for himself. The cockroach owes his unpopularity to his belief in "the more the merrier"; he cannot do without society, and he never tries. His disposition is too friendly, too genial. He finds a basin of beer on the kitchen floor, pauses on the brim to call his friends and neighbours, toboggans gaily down and drinks, not wisely but too well.

When lights are out and maids in bed
The cockroach seeks good cheer,
He steals the meat and eats the bread
And takes the proffered beer.

Oh, the cockroach is a festive soul,
His happiest hour's here,
Pledging his friends in a pudding-bowl
Of flat but amber beer!

The cricket is not a teetotaler: opportunity serving, he exceeds like his friend the cockroach.

The pigeons in the yard are beginning to coo sweet somethings, and the fancy of the ring-dove in the wood lightly turns to thoughts of love. Also the tawny owl yields to the tender passion: the amorous owl hooting his tale of love must feel acutely defects of his voice, but he, at any rate, is not so heavily handicapped in this respect as his cousin, the barn owl, who can only screech, snore, and hiss. The tawny owls do not give themselves much trouble about house and furniture: they are fond of a hole in some decayed tree, but they will lease an old nest of rook or magpie with a light heart, or take an unfurnished hole in a ruin. Some of the crow family are now on matrimony intent. The raven lays aside his habitual solemnity of demeanour and seeks to win the heart of his bride by uncouth gambols unbefitting his character and appearance. The voice of the love-making raven is soft, almost musical; he performs wild and fantastic feats of agility



ROOK MORALITY

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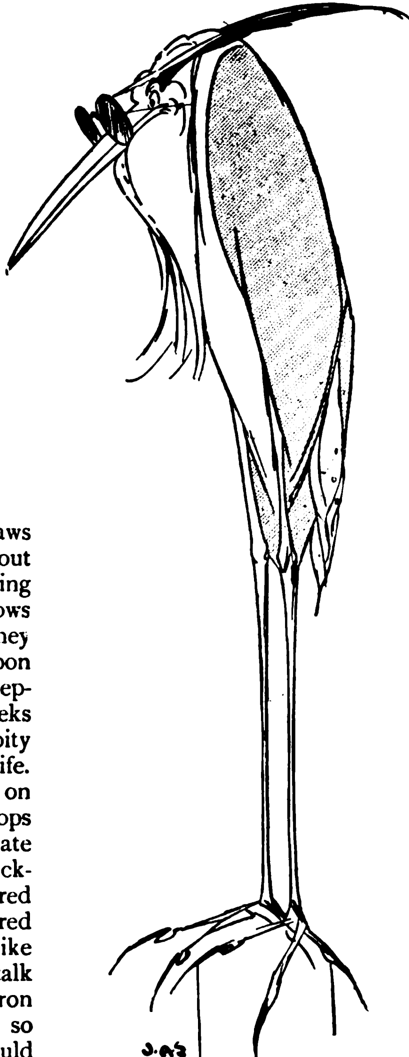
on the wing, even turning somersaults and pretending to fall on his back with folded wings, while she looks on, let us hope, not laughing at him. The raven, if left alone, returns to his old nest year after year, adding a few odds and ends and refurnishing with wood and hair. He rarely is left alone in this country. Sheep-stealing is still a capital offence when a raven is the culprit, and it is to be feared that he does kill young and weakly lambs. The rooks are gathering on the rookery: they don't mean to begin building just yet, but rooks are thieves of a sort among whom there is no honour, and steal each other's sticks of furniture impartially. A rook cannot trust his own father, and would think his father was suffering from senile decay if the old bird trusted him. The jackdaws are beginning to hang about the church tower, peering through the belfry windows at their old nests; they won't enter seriously upon the business of housekeeping for another six weeks at least, but where probity is flexible suspicion is rife. The herons foregather on the heronry in the tree-tops and solemnly contemplate the flat, commodious stick-heaps whereon they reared their children or were reared themselves last year. Unlike the rooks, they neither talk nor quarrel. The heron is of pensive habit, as so ardent a fisherman should be, and he thinks long and gravely.



"A LONG THINK."

The frog wakes up and comes to the surface to look round, solemnly enjoining his friends to "Work! work! work!" without the least idea of doing a hand's turn himself. All he wants to do is to drink: he is a "soaker" in the fullest meaning of the word, for when dry he absorbs moisture at every pore; there is an air of smug contentment almost seraphic about the frog's expression as he treads water with his eyes uplifted and expands under the soothing influence of wet. His foe the viper has come out, drawn from his winter retreat by the warmth, to lie basking in the sun for an hour. The summit of viper ambition is to lie basking in the sun; but this accessible ambition is not peculiar to vipers, as the aspect of the London parks on any fine day will convince you.

The cookery-book says the flounder is "now at its best," which is not saying much. The flounder was soured in infancy. Child of nearly the most improvident parents that swim (they think nothing in flounder circles of launching a family of a million or a million and a half of helpless babies on a cold, wet world), the flounder, like other flat fish, was born upright as a John Dory, with an eye on each side of his head. When about a week old he became conscious that he was growing top-heavy and leaning more and more to one side. Then he got tired of seeing nothing but sand with one eye and tried to peer round his nose. Obliging Nature helped him to rectify the mistake she had made, and gradually the eye came round—sometimes it comes right through the soft cartilages of the head — and settled down beside its fellow. And then the young flounder resigned himself to his fate.

What must the flounder feel
Launched on an even keel,
By turn of Nature's wheel
Degraded to a flat-fish?

Is this the reason why
He twists his mouth awry,
As if about to cry?
Is this the bane of *that* fish?

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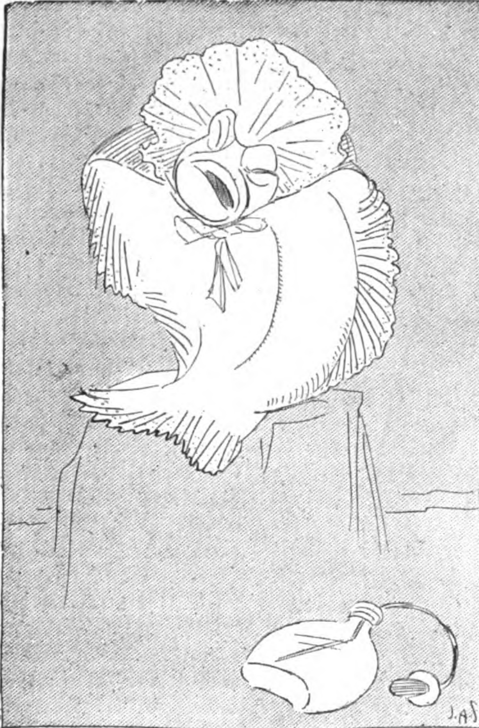
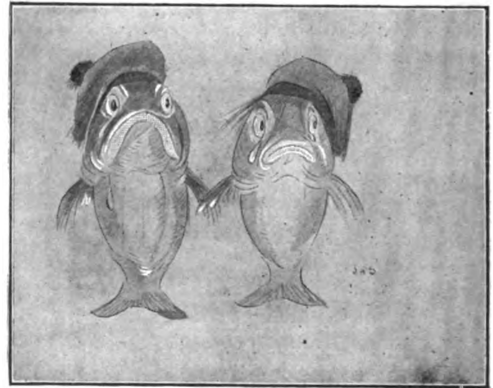


"SOURED IN INFANCY."

The startled expression in the eye of the cod suggests that the fish suffers life-long anxiety concerning the fate of her children; but this theory won't hold water, because, although a 30lb. cod lays seven million eggs or more, she divests herself of all parental responsibility as soon as she has done it. The ugly, big-headed babies which result from such eggs as other fish and the gulls don't eat are left to make their own way in the world.

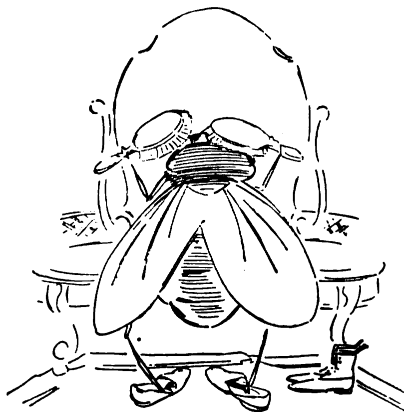
The field-cricket opens his hole for the summer and sits at the door ready to dart in if anyone passes, as if he knew that the police were always after him. He lives his own retired life solacing the passing hour with the music produced by rubbing the base of one scale-like fore-wing against the other. His defective ear for music *may* be due to the curious site Nature has selected for his organs of hearing: he wears what answer for ears on his forelegs. A few butterflies, the brimstone and small tortoiseshell conspicuously, who have passed the winter in butterfly form, now come out and flutter round. The attire of these survivals of last summer is often rather ragged and unkempt; their wings look as if the insects had folded them up hurriedly and carelessly when they were going to bed; or as if they had slept in them.

The house-fly crawls out of his winter hiding-place and goes to the window; he feels grimy and dull, but he washes his face and hands vigorously, shampoos his bald head as if parting his hair at the back, and with a brave show of jollity



"LEFT TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY IN THE WORLD."

resumes his life-long task of thumping his head on the glass. He doesn't keep it up long at first; perhaps it makes his head ache. Flies and other small insects, by the way, consider that there is no bedroom to equal the interior of a straw for economy and comfort. Eligible straws in stack or thatch are in great demand for winter quarters; the drawback is that the tits pull out the straws and catch the fly before he can jump out of bed. All these early insects receive cordial welcome from the birds.



PULLING HIMSELF TOGETHER.

The early lamb has entered upon a career which for the first few hours consists of baa-ing and blunders. The first thing he does is to lose his mother; and forthwith, skipping

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like a large geometer, he starts for whatever object catches his eye.

"O, mother mine! you're found at last. Wherever have you been?"
The sheep-dog coldly wards him off: "I don't know what you mean."

"Then *you* are she!" The eager lamb his woolly carcass shoots
Against the shepherd's legs, to learn ewes don't wear hob-nail boots.

Some passing stranger next he tries, then tree-stump, bush, or rock;
And last, by happy accident, he stumbles on the flock.

"Bless me! the world is full of ma's as far as I can see.
Well, well, I'm not particular, the first will do for me."

"I'M NOT YOUR MA-A!"

While foisting himself on every ewe in the field in turn, his anxious mother catches sight of him and comes up at a canter, baa-ing affectionate reproaches and declaring she will never, never let him out of her sight again.

In the poultry-yard the turkey-cock, full of self-importance, is gobbling and strutting with his wing feathers stiffly brushing the ground and his tail spread fan-wise. Mr. Turvey-drop must have founded his idea of Deportment (with a capital D) on the turkey-cock. When a pretty young turkey-hen crosses his path his attitude stiffens still more, but he shakes aside the wattle that droops over his beak to smile at her. The fowls are busy; they have begun to lay, and convinced as they are that "All life comes from the (hen's) egg," they give themselves airs which are rather discounted by the extraordinary excitement into which the sight of a newly-laid egg throws the responsible hen. She stalks fussily out of the fowl-house quivering with self-congratulation. "Cock, cock, cock! I've laid an egg! An Eeg-g! An Eeeg-g! Come and look; come and look, look, loo-ook!" And the cock, scratching on he dust-heap, chuckles, "You *don't* say so; never heard of such a thing!" without turning his head. The cock treats his wives with lofty contempt except when one needs punishment, then he throws dignity, restraint, and reserve to the winds and hunts her round the yard, calling her all the names in chicken vocabulary.

"DEPORTMENT!"

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Marianna and the Fish Prince.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN. BY R. E. VERNÈDE.

IT is related in the Fairy Chronicles that once upon a time Moralia was the topsy-turviest country in the world. Pigs flew about there and fishes were to be seen walking on land, and if you decided that the tree in your garden was a pear tree it was pretty certain to grow strawberries in the winter and apples in the spring. That kind of thing, of course, had happened before in other kingdoms, but in Moralia it went to extremes. Take pigs, for instance. The trouble was not to drive them to market, but to get them to settle down when they had arrived there. Often, when a farmer thought he had his pigs fixed safely in the pig-market and was bargaining with a trader for a fair price, whir-r-r—there would be a flutter of wings, and off the pigs would sail to the highest palm tree, leaving him agape!

"What can you expect in Moralia?" the intending purchaser would say, and would betake himself to some more certain market.

Again, travellers would often find the highways blocked by a shoal of herrings that had strolled ashore, and everyone would have to turn to and salt them where they stood, and in the meantime people could only get about by way of the canals, unless those were also blocked by cats and horses swimming for their pleasure.

It was annoying, too, to order a pound of greengages and find when you opened the bag that they had turned into mangoes or some sort of fruit that you didn't like nearly so much; or to purchase periwinkles and discover that they were really only pins. You cannot eat pins, at least, very few people can, and you cannot fasten dresses with periwinkles; and, naturally enough, trade soon fell away from Moralia. For nobody ever knew what was going to be what. At school the children used to write things with their india-rubber and erase them with their pencils. The schoolmaster used to say that he wouldn't have *his* pupils writing copper-plate. And certainly their copybooks did not resemble it.

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Altogether, matters in Moralia were in a very bad way. People in other countries shook their heads over it and said that it couldn't go on like that. They said that if that was Moralia's boasted civilization they didn't think much of it. All the same, it did go on until what I have to tell had happened. And the cause of the topsy-turviness, as very few people knew, was that the King of Moralia had offended a Wizard.

It happened in this way. The King, who was the most prim and proper gentleman in the world, a little too proper and prim, perhaps, was invited to attend a banquet the Wizard was giving. He didn't like to refuse, because that sort of invitation is equivalent to a command. But at the same time he disapproved of the whole thing. He disliked the Wizard and he hated anything magical—which is a foolish thing to do. As a result, he wore a very glum face throughout. When he opened his mouth at all it was to criticise the dresses and the behaviour of the fairies present or to speak sharply to the invisible hands that waited on him. Also, at the end of the feast, when the gnomes and trolls began to exchange cigars, and the Wizard himself, a little excited with nectar, perhaps, began to talk what seemed nonsense, the King could contain himself no longer.

"I can't agree with you," he exclaimed, at last.

"What about?" the Wizard inquired, frowning. He had noticed the King's behaviour already, and was by no means pleased.

"That two and two make five," said the King.

"Ah, but you don't make allowances," began the Wizard, "for what we——"

"They only make four," said the King, abruptly.

Now, if there is one thing that Wizards dislike more than being contradicted, it is being interrupted, and this one, though courteous for a Wizard, glowered.

"It seems to me," he said, very slowly and distinctly, "that you don't make allowances for what we call magic."

"No, I don't," snapped the King.

"Why not?"

"Because I think it's grossly exaggerated," said the King.

"Indeed!"

There was a dead pause as the Wizard spoke, and the King became aware that the eyes of all present were fixed upon him. There were green eyes, and red eyes, and white eyes, some fiery and some dull, but

they all stared at him until he felt dizzy. He almost expected to be turned into a stone or a stock-pot or a stork. But as a matter of fact nothing, as it seemed, happened at all. Only, when the King arrived back in Moralia, having slept all night on the road, the magic had taken effect and Moralia was topsy-turvy.

The King's feelings may be imagined. He had been so orderly, and now everything was so contrary. He tried to wring his hands, but found himself walking on them instead, and he had to be content with wringing his legs. Anyone who has tried the process knows that it makes things appear even more curious than they are. For a moment the King fancied that it was only he that was bewitched, but he was mistaken. The Lord Chamberlain came in, and he was holding one arm to his side like a handle and the other curved outward like a spout.

"Is—is anything the matter with you, sire?" he asked, observing his Royal master in so unusual and undignified an attitude as is involved in trying to wring one's legs.

"No," said the King, sharply, "why should there be?"

"I don't know," said the Chamberlain, hurriedly. "But I fancied that you were ups——"

"What's the matter with you, though?" cried the King.

"Nothing," said the Chamberlain, who still held his left hand in the shape of a spout. "Nothing—nothing at all—but—er—it's a curious thing—very. I feel as if I were a tea-pot."

"A tea-pot?" repeated the King. He was about to say that, in that case, the Chamberlain had better resign his office, but, instead of doing so, he found himself crying out:—

"Hurrah! I'm a tea-pot too. Let's all be tea-pots!"

Tea-pots the King and all his Court were for the rest of the day, in so far as curving their arms and wearing a strainer on their left hands could make them so. Next day the King suggested in a shamefaced way that they should all fly kites. And so they did, or rather the kites flew them. For the kites ran along the ground, while the King and all his Ministers performed the most curious gyrations in the air at the end of pieces of string, with long tails fastened on to them. Next day they fancied they were Polar bears, and insisted on climbing up poles and having buns thrown to them.

And so matters went from bad to worse.

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The strange thing was that nobody laughed at them, for everyone in Moralia was afflicted with some absurd fancy or other, and though all felt ashamed and ill at ease there was no one who could see precisely what was ludicrous and extravagant.

For the King had brought up his people to be very stiff and to disbelieve in magic, and though they were now bewitched they were all as solemn as ever. And at the end of sixteen years, when the King's daughter, the Princess Marianna, came of an age to be married, she was the most eccentric and most solemn person in the kingdom. It was natural enough that this should be so. The Queen-Mother had died when the Princess was but an infant, and Marianna had done as she pleased in the enchanted country all her days. Now she was the most beautiful Princess that has probably ever existed. Her hair was all gold and came below her knees, and her eyes were like violets, and she was lithe as a panther. The fame of her great beauty had induced many Kings and Princes to journey even to Moralia, which, for several reasons, had become one of the most perilous as well as one of the most trying places in the world to travel through. One reason was that the inhabitants would sit on the tree-tops and throw cocoa-nuts down on anyone passing; another, that the sign-posts were all put wrong, so that one wandered round and round as if in a maze, and as often as not got into some morass or fell into some hole that had been dug for an afternoon's amusement. But the chief reason was that the King had put at the head of affairs the most monstrous creature—a Sea Prince—who had come up out of the sea to make mischief in Moralia. The poor King thought he must be a genius because he was so ugly. He resembled a cod-fish with whiskers, and he walked sometimes on his fins and sometimes on his tail. And as he had determined to wed the Princess Marianna himself, despite his gruesome ugliness, he naturally encouraged her in all her eccentricities and cast every possible obstacle in the way of the Kings and Princes who came to woo her. Many of these had perished already, and it seemed likely on the day of Marianna's coming of age that no more would venture after her. Nor could her wedding be much longer delayed, since the King was getting old and must have some successor.

The cod-fish sat in the Cabinet that day and chuckled and rubbed his fins.

"I shall wed Marianna to-morrow," he gurgled to himself. And he opened and shut his great slit of a mouth in a way that one might suppose would have made even the most daft Princess shudder, if she could have seen it. But, as a matter of fact, Marianna was up and away in the woods, swinging in the high boughs of an acacia. She had not permitted any of her maidens to do anything for her. She would not have her hat on nor her shoes, and only at the last moment, in a spirit of fancifulness, she had caught up her opal slippers and taken them with her. The inhabitants of Moralia had given up the pastime of throwing cocoa-nuts from the trees at wayfarers, for, truth to tell, no wayfarers came along now. But Marianna had taken the radiant slippers because they were hard and easy to throw, and if anyone happened to pass by she should have something to hurl. Now, she was swinging in the acacia tree. Blossoms of the white, sweet flower dropped in showers about her, as the boughs swayed to and fro, and the sunlight caught in her hair. And she never gave a thought to anything or anybody, least of all to the Prince who at that moment was coming on horseback through the forest towards the acacia tree.

Nor, indeed, did Prince Rideo, for that was the young man's name, give very much thought to the Princess Marianna. He had heard vaguely of her beauty and of the topsy-turvy country where she lived. Being young and adventurous, and rashly fond of comedy, he had set out to see Moralia. That it was so perilous only added to the charm of journeying in it; and as for the Princess—if she were so lovely as was reported, why, he would see her at least. He might fall in love with her, perhaps, but he doubted it.

So he rode on, laughing to himself. He had encountered many strange things already, the finger-posts that led all wrong, and some winged pigs that started away like a covey of partridges, and lizards that lay in the shade to bask, and flies catching spiders in their webs, and sheep driving a flock of shepherds to their folds. Prince Rideo was greatly amused, though he had escaped with difficulty out of a morass and had been compelled to cut to pieces with his sword a herd of geese that attacked him. But he was more greatly astonished when he rode under the acacia tree and an opal slipper, very hard and pointed, hit him on the chest. He caught it before it fell to the ground, and then looked up into the tree.

"Who's there?" he demanded.

Marianna peeped out from among the blossoms, and he thought he had never seen

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anyone so beautiful. She was sitting on a bough, very fearless, and cried out :—

"Give me back my slipper!"

"Did you drop it?" asked the Prince, smiling.

Marianna opened her eyes wide to see a man smile. She had never seen anyone in Moralia smile before, for their lack of humour was what made the enchantment work so successfully.

"No; I threw it," she said.

"Then I sha'n't give it to you again," said the Prince, putting it in his pocket.

"Why not?" asked Marianna.

"You might throw it again."

"I do as I please," said Marianna, haughtily. "Give it me back at once or I shall throw the other slipper."

As the Prince only laughed she threw the other.

"Now I have both," he said. "And if you are the Princess

"AS THE PRINCE ONLY LAUGHED SHE THREW THE OTHER SLIPPER."

Marianna, I will only give them back to you on your wedding-day."

He was so strange and unusual a person to see in that topsy-turvy country that the Princess, in spite of her anger, could not resist talking to him a little. She swung to a lower bough, and her hair was all about her like a cloth of gold.

"But I am to be wedded to-morrow," she said, seriously, "so that I must have my slippers."

"To whom?" asked Rideo, eagerly.

"To the Fish Prince," she said. "He is

my father's councillor, and to-day my father is building the church, so that it may be ready for to-morrow."

Prince Rideo was so taken aback by this news that he hardly knew what to do. For he had fallen in love with her on the spot, and to think that Marianna should wed a Fish Prince disgusted him.

"Do you love him?" he asked her.

"Love?" Marianna repeated the word. "I don't know," she said. "I never thought of it."

"Then you shall not wed him," said the Prince, decidedly.

He was laughing again now, for he was light-hearted and saw no difficulties in the way.

"I shall ride straight to the King, your father," he said, "and tell him that I love you."

"Oh," said Marianna, thoughtfully.

That was all she said, for she did not understand what he meant. Everything was so topsy-turvy in Moralia that love was as unconsidered as laughter. But she did not

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ask for the opal slippers again, and the Prince rode on with them in his pocket to the Court of the King. He rode so fast that he came to the end of the woods in no time, and, in the open land beyond, a curious sight met his eyes. Not only the capital city of Moralia stood there, and the great gates of entrance, and the palace, a stately mass of domes and minarets, but also the beginning of a building, such as Prince Rideo thought he had never seen before. It resembled more than anything the steeple of a church stuck the wrong way up in the ground, and all about it was a great concourse of people, working at it in a fashion quite their own. Some men stood with their tools balanced on their noses, one trying in this attitude to plane a log of wood, a second to hammer at a nail that a third was delicately balancing; others stood on their heads, mixing hods of mortar or holding buckets full of red-hot coals, such as workmen use, to the sides of bellows, as if the buckets could make a draught and the bellows a fire. Nobody paid any attention to Prince Rideo, until he asked :—

"Which is the King?"

Then several pointed to an elderly man, with a reddish-grey beard and thin legs, who was running aimlessly about balancing a ladder on his head. A crown, fastened to his waist by a cord, dangled at his heels. He stopped as Prince Rideo went up to him.

"What do you want?" he cried.

"The hand of your daughter," said the Prince.

"Ah!" said the King, and he looked worried. "I'm sorry you can't stop now."

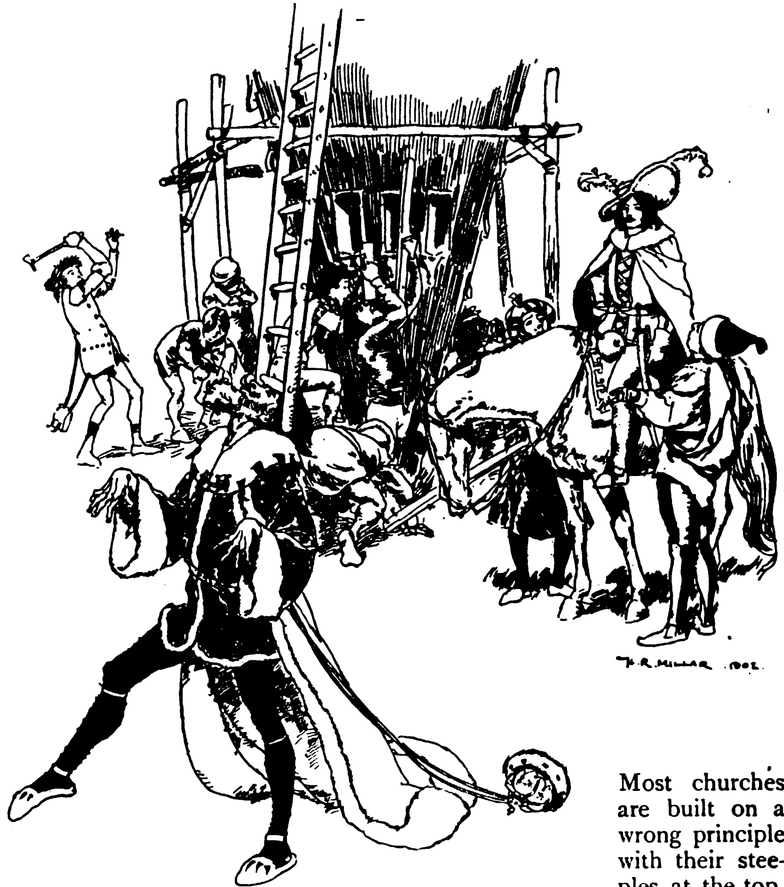
"But I can," the Prince objected.

"Ah—well—I can't," said the King. "You see, I'm trying to get this ladder up."

"What for?"

The King, who had started off, paused a moment at this question and put his hand to his head.

"Why, of course," he said, at last; "it's the church, you see. I'm building a church for my daughter to be married in to-morrow. Most churches are built on a wrong principle with their steeples at the top. This one's going to have it at the bottom. It's quick work—quick work."


"AN ELDERLY MAN, WITH A REDDISH-GREY BEARD AND THIN LEGS, WAS RUNNING AIMLESSLY ABOUT BALANCING A LADDER ON HIS HEAD."

And he began trotting round the steeple again, balancing the ladder and dragging the crown in the same absurd manner. When he completed the circuit, and saw the Prince still standing there, he cried out again :—

"What do you want?"

"The hand of your daughter."

"But she's engaged," said the King.

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"She's going to be married to the Fish Prince, who is my Prime Minister, to-morrow. It's a very suitable match. I'm sorry you can't stay for the wedding. But the fact is there isn't a room in the palace to offer you. They're full up—full up."

"Full of what?" asked Prince Rideo, who knew that no strangers had come to Moralia for a long time.

"Full of water," the King explained. "It's a scheme I've got for breeding canaries under water. Quite new—quite new."

"Indeed!" said the Prince, politely. But the King was running round the steeple again, for the ladder would not remain balanced if he stopped for any length of time. So Prince Rideo rode on, hardly knowing whether to laugh or to cry. Coming to the palace, he inquired of the janitor for the Fish Prince.

"He is in the cabinet," said the janitor.

So the Prince rode on without dismounting till he came to the cabinet, and he beat on the door of it with the handle of his sword. The Fish Prince rose in great fear and came sidling to the door on his tail, for usually no one dared to disturb him. When he saw the Prince he blinked his lidless eyes and snapped his mouth up and down. "What do you want?" he asked, though he knew quite well what the Prince wanted.

"The hand of the Princess Marianna."

"That is impossible," gurgled the Fish Prince. "I am going to wed her to-morrow."

"You!" Prince Rideo looked at him with such scorn that the Fish Prince shook with shame, like a jelly-fish.

"The King has promised her to me," he choked out.

"Well," said Prince Rideo, "I will promise you something also. And that is, if you are not gone to the lowest ooze of the sea by to-morrow when I return, I will kill you with my own sword."

Then he turned his horse's head and rode away into the country. How was he to keep his promise? Moralia was in so topsy-turvy a state that the Fish Prince could do as he pleased in it and no one detected his hideousness. Prince Rideo ground his teeth to think of it, and his horse took the first road that happened and carried him into a woodless country of rock and sand. Quite suddenly the vision of the foolish King, balancing the ladder on his head, came to Prince Rideo's mind and, despite his disappointment, he laughed aloud.

"Did you laugh?" An old, old man came out from behind a rock and put the question.

Prince Rideo replied courteously that he did.

"Who could help it?" he added.

"And yet," said the old man, "you are the first who has laughed in Moralia for many years. Lack-a-day!"

He looked so miserable that the Prince almost laughed again, and perhaps it was as well that he did not quite laugh. For the old man was, in reality, the Wizard who had cast the spell in Moralia; and the Fish Prince, who had taken such advantage of it, was his deadliest foe. But even wizards cannot always undo their mischief when they will. And it had been ordained by the fairies that only when a man who could laugh came to Moralia and brought to it a phial of the water from the fountain that is in the middle of the sea could the land regain its former state. So the Wizard was naturally very pleased to hear the Prince laugh, and explained why.

"Will you fill the phial from the fountain?" he asked.

The Prince turned his horse's head.

"I will go at once," he said.

"Ah," said the Wizard, smiling, "you are bold, Sir Prince. But remember one thing. The Fish Prince is your foe and has endless power over the sea. He will cast every obstacle in your way——"

"Give me the phial!" said the Prince, smiling.

"Here it is," said the Wizard. "And with your permission I will shoe your horse's feet, that they may not slip in the waves."

"Make haste, then," said Prince Rideo. "For by to-morrow I must be back to give Marianna her opal slippers."

The Wizard shod the horse swiftly with enchanted shoes, and it was well that he did so, for when Prince Rideo came to the seashore it seemed that he could go no farther, for the deep lay all around to the horizon, and there was no boat at hand or any wood with which to build a raft. But the horse galloped, and the Prince perceived that he was on a narrow causeway of rocks that ran out seaward just under the water's surface. It was more slippery than ice, but the horse sped on, until land became dim and indistinct behind him and then faded away.

"This is easier than I imagined," said Prince Rideo.

Hardly had he spoken when the sea became black with thousands of monstrous crabs, as big as men. They had claws like pincers and their beady eyes glared venomously. The Prince struck at them with his sword

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bravely enough as they scuttled up the causeway; but the steel rang vainly on their backs, and the Prince would have been wrenched down and devoured had not the horse galloped like lightning along the rocks so that the crabs could not keep pace with him.

"The Fish Prince can do nothing," said Prince Rideo, exhilarated with the speed.

As he uttered this there arose a most rich and entrancing music to the left and to the right of him, and the Prince looking out in the sunset saw far off in the sea the most beautiful maidens singing to the melody of golden harps. They and their songs were so beautiful that the Prince pulled at the reins and would have ridden off the causeway to greet them; but the horse galloped on, on, on. And though the Prince was angry at first he saw later that there was good reason for it. For these were the sirens who wait for men in the sea to drag them down; and, as the sun sank on them, he saw that the maidens had sharks' tails and were a part of the Sea Prince's conspiracy.

"I had best be careful," he said.

And at the words the sun went down in the sea and a great storm rose. Billows swept hundreds of feet over the causeway, and the foam seemed to lash the very sky. But the horse galloped on, and Prince Rideo clung to the saddle manfully, though he was almost suffocated with surge. Sea-snakes swam alongside in that tempest, spitting, and squids, like branching trees, reached at him with their suckers, and giant rocks moved to and fro trying to clap him between them. But Prince Rideo spurred forward. And then quite suddenly the storm ceased, and the darkness was drawn apart like a curtain and the full moon came out. And there, just ahead of him, a fountain spirted out of the middle of the sea.

"THE SEA BECAME BLACK WITH THOUSANDS OF MONSTROUS CRABS, AS BIG AS MEN."

You may be sure that Prince Rideo filled his phial with no loss of time and set out on the return speedily. No peril threatened him now, but he had come farther than he supposed, and dawn broke before he had got to land and arrived in sight of the palace once more.

A great procession was moving towards the steeple, which still remained unfinished. The crowd of people was in every conceivable attitude except that of ordinary mortals walking on their two feet, and everyone was doing something intensely absurd

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in the solemnest manner. At the head of the procession the King was walking on one leg with his crown round one knee, with the Archbishop beside him trying to roll his mitre like a hoop. Behind them walked the Princess Marianna, bare-foot, leaning on the fin of the Fish Prince. She looked so lovely that Prince Rideo's wrath knew no bounds, and he thundered up with his drawn sword and broke the phial violently in the fish's face.

The effect was instantaneous. Everyone came to their feet, stared, and burst out into laughter. The Archbishop ceased rolling his mitre, and the King slipped his crown on to his head. As for the Princess, she shrank back and looked with disgust on the Fish Prince.

"Who is this monster?" she cried, and shut her eyes. In that moment, while the creature still leared and snapped, Prince Rideo ran him through with his sword, as he had promised. All the crowd cheered and laughed.

But Prince Rideo held up his hand for silence.

"Moralia has been bewitched," he said, "for many years, but to-day the water of the Fountain of Laughter has broken the spell, as you all see. And now Moralia has become itself again."

Then he turned to Marianna.

"Will you wed me now?" he asked.

She smiled and blushed and looked more beautiful than ever.

"I have no shoes to go to church in," she said.

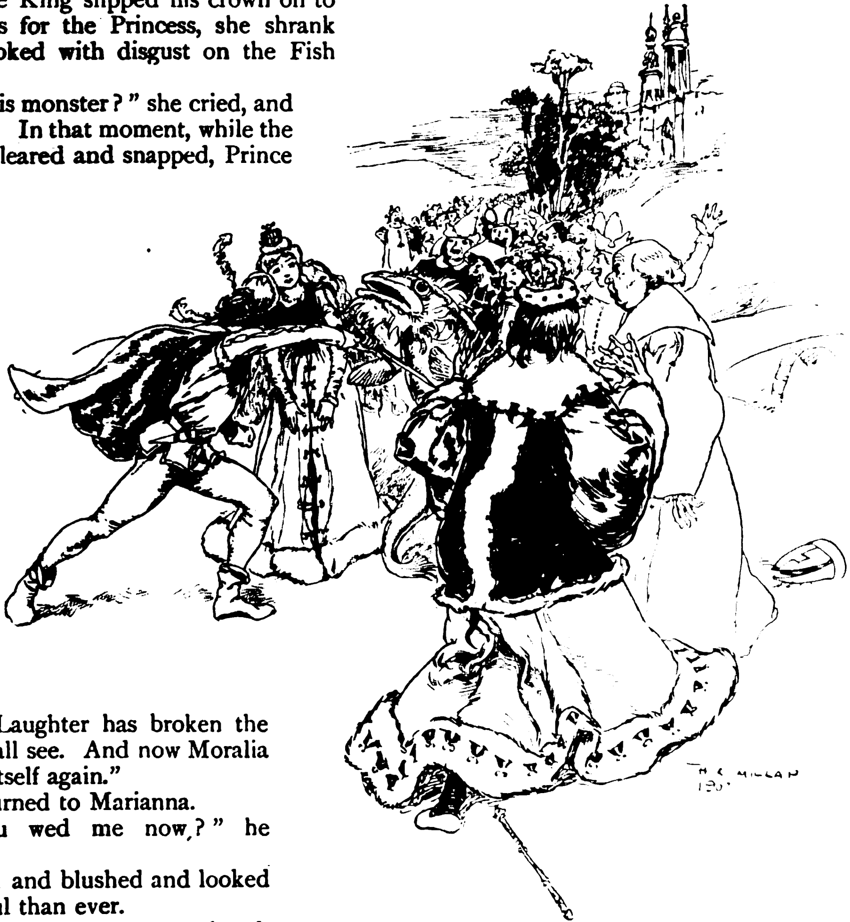
Prince Rideo drew out the opal slippers from his pocket.

"These will fit," he said, and she put out her foot for him to try them on.

"But—they are my own!" she exclaimed; and then it came back to her how the Prince had ridden under the acacia tree and all that had happened after, and she smiled and blushed again.

"Now you must marry me," said Prince Rideo.

"I will," said Marianna, and she did. For they went straight to one of the proper churches, with its steeple the right side up, and the Archbishop superintended the ceremony. Then the people asked the Prince to be King, and the old King asked him too.



"PRINCE RIDEO RAN HIM THROUGH WITH HIS SWORD."

So he was given the crown and ruled wisely and well. And no country in all the world was less topsy-turvy than Moralia, and probably no country ever will be.

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An Eighteen-mile Switchback.

BY REGINALD H. COCKS.

TO rattle down a mountain-side continuously for nine miles, at a speed attaining sixty miles an hour, is probably one of the most exhilarating sensations that it is possible to experience, and one that few people have ever heard of.

Amongst examples of the railroad's slender and sinuous tentacles which continue to spread throughout the world, none displays more daring originality in construction than the switchback, or gravity railroad, at Mauch Chunk, U.S.A.

The whole idea can be traced back to a man stumbling over "something black" on a certain dark night in the year 1791. The man was a hunter, Philip Ginter by name. The cause of the stumble proved to be a large lump of coal, and this is how anthracite coal was first discovered. Directly this wealthy coal district was struck there naturally sprang up difficulties with regard to transportation at so great an altitude, for, be it remembered, the discovery was made in wild and mountainous country.

The following year the Lehigh Coal Mine Company was formed, but the mines were not worked to any extent until 1812, when certain improvements were made for bringing coal to market by navigation. In 1818 a road was cut from the river to the mines to facilitate transportation, and this, nine miles in length, constitutes the grading of the present railway. A pair of horses would bring down from four to six tons in two waggons; but it was found next to impossible to keep the roads in good order, so in the natural course of events a railroad was laid down on the track in 1827. The whole transportation was worked by gravity, the empty cars being returned to the mines by mules, the latter riding down with the coal, but in their own "saloons."

The mules travelled about forty miles a day, and so enamoured of the trip did they become that not one could be persuaded to walk downhill when, on one occasion, the train was sent up without the mule-car. In fact, the drivers had to go down to the bottom and push up the waggon themselves in order to satisfy the mules and afford these animals the opportunity once again of having a free ride down and enjoying the natural scenery which it is said they love to dwell upon.

From a] LOOKING UP MOUNT PISGAH. [*Photo.*

With the increase of business a return track was added in 1844, and the railroad then stretched over Mount Pisgah, along its side to Jefferson Plane, again to the summit (Sharp Mountain), and down the ridge to the mines at Summit Hill, where it joins the old mule-track, and thence back to the river. Thus the discovery of the black diamond opened up "modern civilization," and the Switchback Railway, as the old coal-track is now styled, is exclusively used for pleasure, being operated only from the middle of May to the 1st of November.

The starting-point of this gravity railroad may be best

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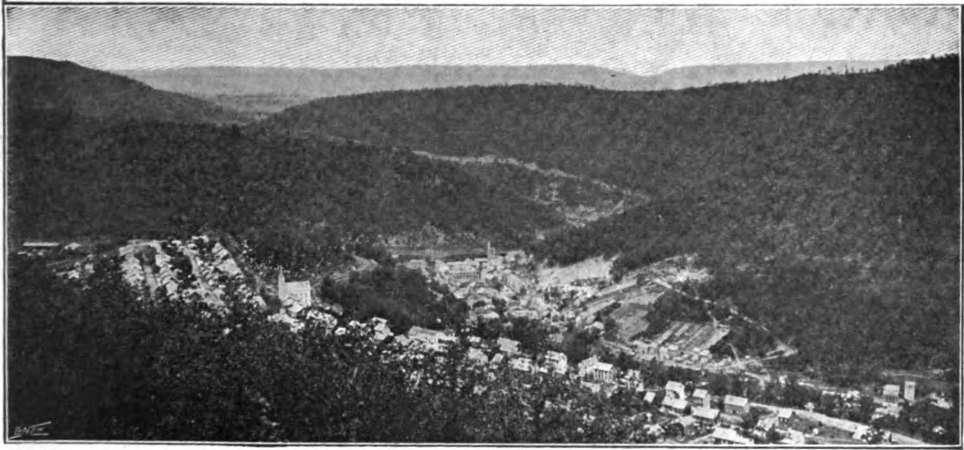

From a] VIEW FROM MOUNT PISGAH. [*Photo.*

reached by electric-car from Mauch Chunk, about five hours' rail from New York, and, embarking at the station, which is situated on the brow of a hill, we first experience the fact that a switchback can be made a genuine means of locomotion. The single car in which we commence our lightning trip differs but little from the ordinary cable-car in America, except that the brakesman, who, by the way, has sole control of the running, sits inside the car and in the front of it. The signal being given, the brakes are released and the car runs by gravity to the foot of Mount Pisgah Plane. At this juncture we face what at first sight appears to be the perpendicular side of a mountain, with four shimmering threads of steel connecting foot and summit in an undeviating line. A momentary halt is made and, the engineer at the top of the mountain having been apprised of our progress, a safety or "Barney" car is slowly drawn up from a pit under the track at our rear and, pushing us from behind, we start off to climb the mountain-side. The gradient the whole way up is one foot in three, and when we reach the summit of Mount Pisgah we are no less than 900ft. above our starting-point and 1,500ft. above tide-water. There are two tracks, and upon each runs a safety-car, to which is attached two steel bands, each 7½in. wide. These bands are fastened to iron drums, 28ft. in diameter, situated in the engine-house at the top of the plane, the motive power being two stationary engines, each developing 120 horse-power.

The ascent just made looks perilous enough to unstring the nerves of the most venturesome, but it is reassuring to know that in all the years that this enterprise has been in operation not a single passenger has met with any accident. Every possible precau-

From a] "TWO-MILE TURN." [*Photo.*

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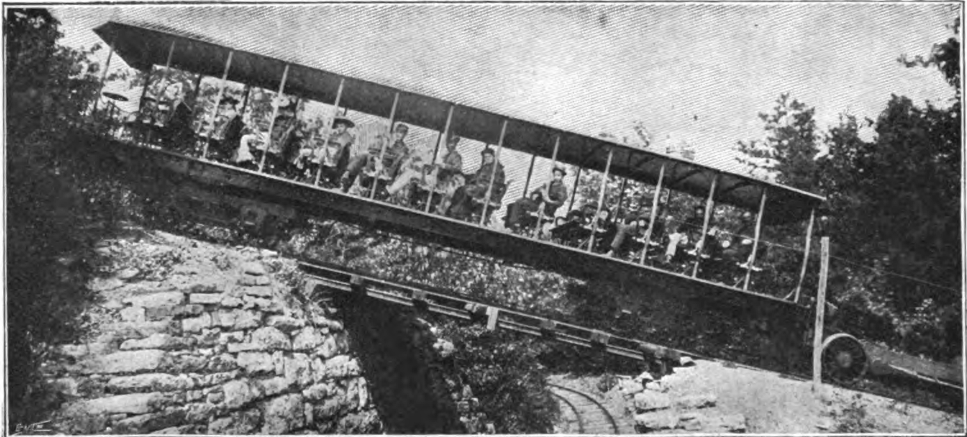
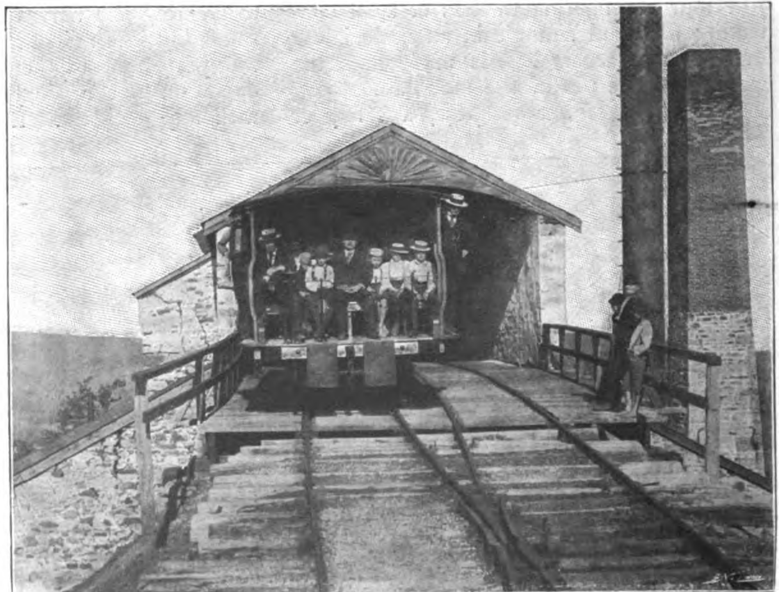

From a] GOING UP MOUNT JEFFERSON—CROSSING DOWN-TRACK. [*Photo.*

tion is taken. The safety-car which hauls up the one in which we travel has an iron arm which extends from the side over a ratchet-rail between the two tracks: should the steel bands break, or even the machinery fail, the slightest backward movement causes the arm to drop into the notches of the ratchet-rail, holding the car stationary.

The panorama opening up as we make the ascent is one of appalling grandeur. Mountain-tops which, but a few moments ago, towered above us now become insignificant, and the vastness of the scene as viewed from the summit is awe-inspiring. Tier upon tier of long blue ridges loom, as far as the eye can see, and below us, spread out like a vast flower-bed, valleys, ravines, villages, and mining settlements lie scattered in strange confusion. Mount Pisgah Plane, up which we have now come, is 2,322ft. in length, and we proceed along through the engine-house, where the safety-car is detached, and slowly on over a trestle spanning a ravine, where again a magnificent bird's-eye view is obtained. We are now running by force of gravitation only, and two miles from Mount Pisgah pass the old tunnel and hamlet of Hackelbernie. The fall of the grade to the next plane is about 47⅜ft. to the mile, and we have left Mount Pisgah 6¼ miles away. The motion of the car is so easy that you do not realize the velocity at which you are travelling, nor have you time to absorb the rugged, broken grandeur through which you are passing at locomotive speed.

Four miles farther we come to Bloomingdale Valley and the plane of Mount Jefferson. Here a brief pause is made, and, as was the case at Mount Pisgah, a safety-car is hitched on behind us and we are slowly hauled up a distance of 2,070ft., the earth appearing to recede from us. After reaching the summit, which is 1,660ft. above sea-level, we gain


From a] ON THE TOP OF JEFFERSON PLANE. [*Photo.*

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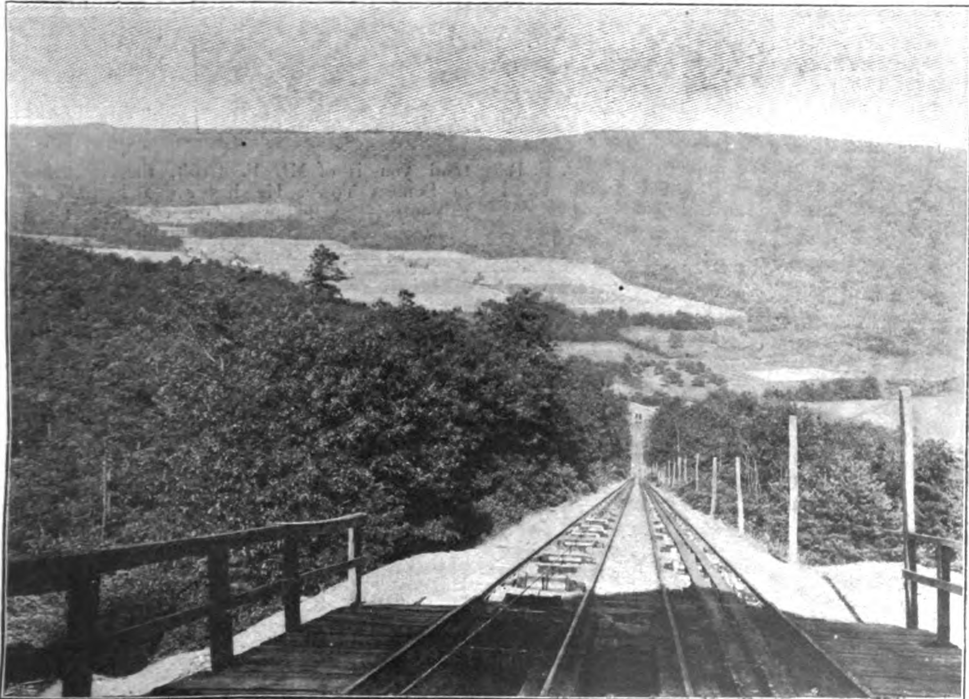
momentum (the safety-car having been unhitched) and rush along by gravity for another mile and a dip of 45ft. Here we arrive at Summit Hill, an interesting mining village with a population of 3,000. At this place you will find the famous burning mines, which have been on fire since 1858.

The last lap of our sensational journey now remains to be accomplished, and it is without a doubt the most thrilling of any. Our road lies along down the old mule-track, nine miles' continuous descent, with a grade of 96ft. to the mile. The brakes are gradually released at Summit Hill and we at once gain momentum, down, down, descending in serpentine zig-zags through shaded woods, around the sharpest of curves, along the edge of precipices, on and on, our speed increasing at every revolution of the wheels.

The kaleidoscopic glimpses of scenery which the passenger may be able to snatch here and there serve to keep him wrapt in excitement and almost callous as to the manner in which the car will swing round the next sharp bend, for it is during this last lap that we attain the speed of sixty miles an hour, the cars not being heavy enough to warrant faster running with assurance of safety.

The pace at length perceptibly slackens and the car is gradually brought to a standstill at Mauch Chunk, at the very same platform whence we set out.

The entire journey has taken us just two hours to accomplish, and, although the distance covered has not exceeded eighteen miles, it must be remembered that quite twenty minutes were occupied at Summit Hill where we halted, and yet another thirty minutes must be deducted for the climb of 2,070ft. up Mount Jefferson Plane; these, together with one or two other allowances, will materially improve the times of running if compared from point to point. The cost of this circuitous journey is about three shillings, this including the ride up in the electric-car to the starting terminus at Mauch Chunk.



From a] VIEW FROM THE TOP OF JEFFERSON PLANE. *[Photo.*

The idea of utilizing hilly country as a means to locomotion by aid of gravity suggests itself as being both cheaper to construct, and also to maintain, than any other form of railway, where tunnelling and other costly operations are necessary.

In fact, a genuine switchback ride, such as the one described, claims first place for utility and pleasure (not excluding the aerial or wire railways) of any kind of locomotion.

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

A HUMAN MANGLE.

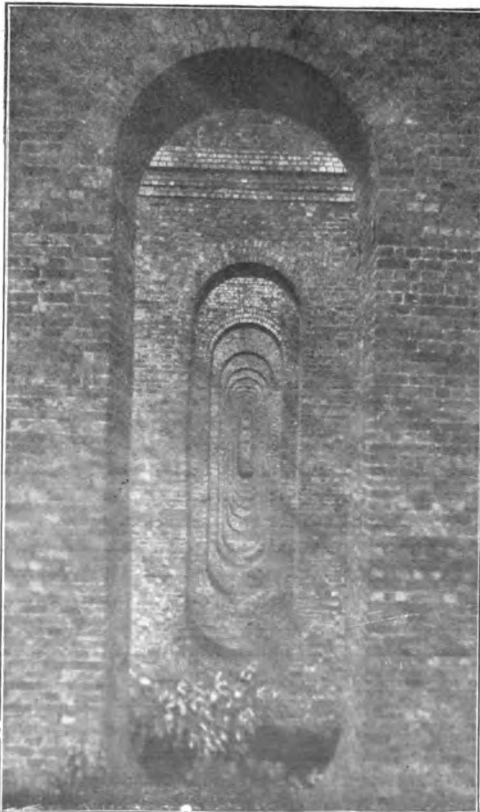
"This photo. may prove acceptable for inclusion among your 'Curiosities.' The three gunners shown in the picture had extemporized a very efficient and ingenious mangle out of a form, a table, and the cook's rolling-pin. The man seated on the upturned form only lends his weight to the proceedings, the other two push the form to and fro, until the article on the table has been sufficiently mangled by the rolling-pin."—Mr. F. R. Needham, Master Gunner, R.G.A., Lenan Head Battery, near Clonmany, Co. Donegal.

UNDER A VIADUCT.

"I send you a curious photograph which may interest some of your readers. It is a telescopic view of the inside of the arches of Chappel Viaduct, Essex. These arches, thirty-two in number, are 74ft. high, and form a very imposing structure in the Colne Valley. I took the photo. with 'No. 4 Cartridge Kodak.'"—Miss Eva Brooks, Wakes Colne, Essex.

"THE PEARLIE KING."

"The photo. I send you is of Mr. F. Croft, the Pearlie King of Somers Town. He has 4,900 buttons on his suit—*i.e.*, as follows: 700 on cap, 1,500 on waistcoat, 1,500 on trousers, 700 on belt, 500 on straps (wrist); total, 4,900."—Mr. J. Bremell, 7, Star Street, Paddington, W.



* Copyright, 1902, by George Newnes, Limited.

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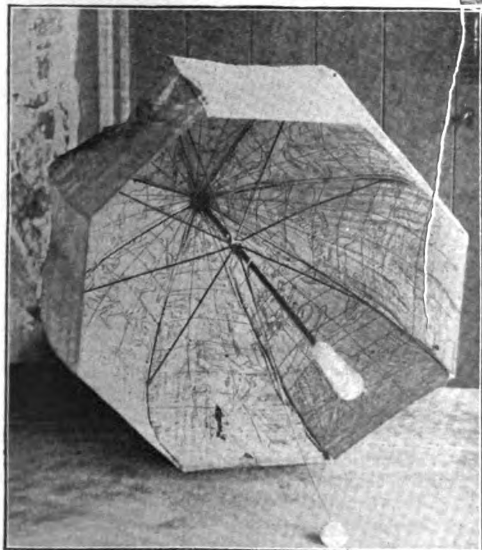
A PORTRAIT.

"I beg to send you the enclosed photo. as a contribution to your 'Curiosity' pages. A brother of mine tried to step through a long window, thinking it was open. He found it was closed, but succeeded in opening part of it, leaving the profile of Sir Wm. Harcourt in the gap. This is just as the glass remained when the noise subsided."—Mr. Arthur R. Mills, 38, Billing Road, Northampton.



A CURIOUS UMBRELLA.

"I send you a photograph of a peculiar umbrella, which I came across in an old farmhouse in this neighbourhood. It is made of white silk, with a turned ivory handle and round ivory ball at the top. Holes are pierced through to represent stars. It is more of a sphere than shown in the photograph, and will not stand opening to the fullest extent."—Mr. A. C. Meader, Stalbridge, Dorset.

EXTRAORDINARY BEE-HIVES.

"In the forests of Mysore there are four varieties of bees, the largest of which is called, in the Canarese language, 'Hejjainoo.' These construct enormous hives of a semicircular form, measuring frequently 5ft. by 3ft., under the large, spreading branches of the loftiest trees in the jungle. There are often as many as 100 to 120 hives on a single tree, and when these are disturbed by a species of eagle, which preys upon the larvæ, it is extremely dangerous to go anywhere in the vicinity, as these bees are so aggressive and so persistent in their attacks that they have been frequently known to pursue people for miles; and it is asserted that, even if the person dives under water in order to avoid them, they will remain hovering over the surface, and unless he is able to swim under water a considerable distance he will certainly be attacked when he reappears. The honey, although its flavour does not commend itself to Europeans, is much appreciated by the natives. The ladders used by the toddy-men consist of single notched poles, placed one above the other, and it is remarkable how skilfully they carry out this dangerous operation. The bees are dispersed at night by means of straw torches, and the hives are removed with a sickle and lowered to the ground with a basket attached to a rope."—Mr. T. Anderson, Barguai, Saklaspur, Hassan, India.

A GIANT TOAD-STOOL.

"The toad-stool shown in the photograph was, in reality, about 1ft. in height. A photograph was taken of it, the camera being placed about 18in. behind the plant and on the ground. Being so close to the camera its height is enormously exaggerated, the house in the background adding to this effect."—Mr. R. F. Bransby, Easingwold, Yorks.

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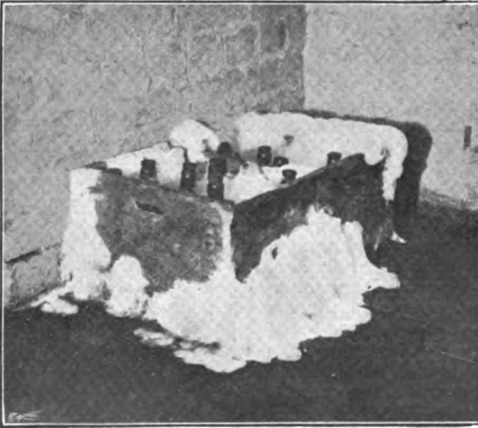
AN ORIGINAL "POSE."

"I send you a photograph, taken in mid-Pacific on board ss. *Doric*, of a young lady taken in a disused air-shaft. Being extremely agile she climbed in entirely without assistance, and was there snapped by an American friend of mine."—Mr. J. W. Glenny, 95, New Bond Street, W.

AN INGENIOUS ADVERTISER.

"I enclose for the 'Curiosities' section of your Magazine a photograph that I took, in a wild part of British Columbia, on the 'Snowshoe' Mine, 5,000ft. above the sea, thinking that it may, perhaps, be of some interest. The sign, which is that of a cabinet-maker, reads as follows: 'You will be dead a long time. While you live

make your home a paradise. Buy furniture at J. W. Jones, Grand Forks, B.C.'"—Mr. Geo. G. Waterlow, Uplands, Fareham, Hants.

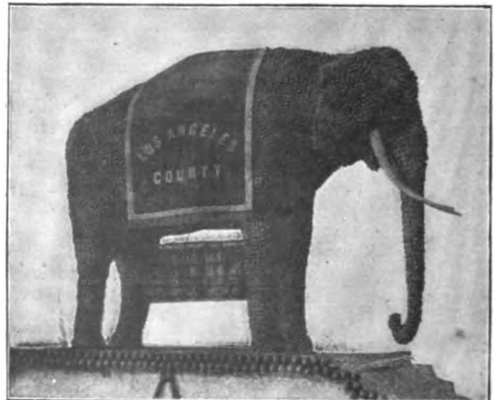


A CURIOUS MOULD FORMATION.

"The enclosed photograph was taken by me, by flashlight, specially for THE STRAND MAGAZINE, and represents a case containing bottles of home-brewed ginger-beer, which was placed in a corner of a damp cellar, where it remained untouched for several months. Upon going to it a few days ago to get a bottle I found the whole of the inside filled with a soft, white mould, which had also worked its way out through every joint on to the floor, where it was banked up around the case, giving it exactly the appearance of having been out in a heavy snowstorm. None of the bottles had burst or leaked, and the only way I can account for such a curious formation is that in filling them a small quantity of the ginger-beer must have been spilt."—Mr. Herbert J. Mason, Carlton House, Edgbaston.

A WALNUT JUMBO.

"Most of the elephants in the United States are those used in connection with circuses, and come from the Old World. This elephant, however, is a production of the New World, and was raised in California. It is composed of walnuts grown near Los Angeles; its bones are made of wood, and the walnuts were fastened upon a cloth covering the wooden framework with glue. The tusks—also made of wood—are whitened so that they closely resemble ivory. The elephant, which was on exhibition at the Pan-American Exposition, is as large as an ordinary baby elephant, being about 15ft. in length and over 6ft. in height."—Mr. D. A. Willey, Baltimore.



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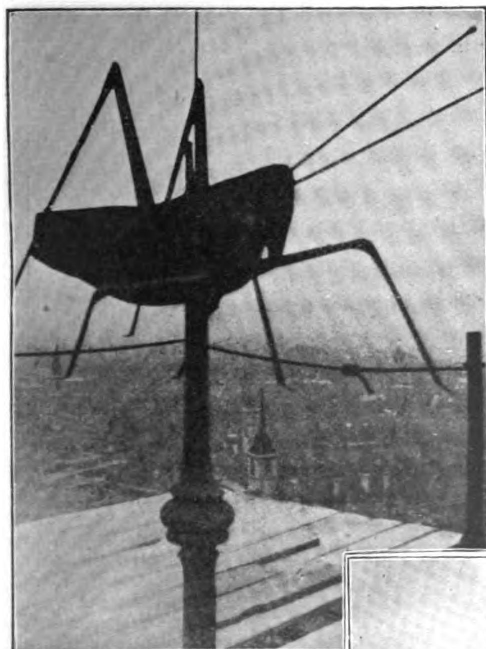
THE "GRESHAM" GRASSHOPPER.

"I send you what I believe to be the only photograph that has ever been taken of this huge insect. I photographed it myself from the top of the scaffolding which was erected round the steeple of the Royal Exchange some time ago. Thousands of people must have noticed this insect as it slowly moves its great head towards the point of the compass from which the wind may be blowing. The dimensions not being generally known, I give them as follows: The grasshopper is situated 185ft. above the level of the ground. The spindle upon which it revolves is 16ft. in height. The insect is 8ft. 8in. over all, 6ft. 4in. from the head to the tail, and from the back to the chest 1ft. 3in."—Mr. Paul S. Holtorp, 105, Forest Road, Dalston, N.E.



A PEACEFUL ENDING.

"The subject of the photo. I send you is a disused traction-engine, which has become overgrown with the grenadilla (passion flower). Both the flower and the fruit are distinguishable in the photo. The subject is on a farm near the main road between Durban and Maritzburg in this Colony."—Mr. J. Nolan, Camperdown, Natal.

A POROUS-PLASTER PIG.

"My photo. is that of a porous-plaster pig on which I sowed grass seed, and the effect is so ludicrous that I had it photographed solely for the edification of your many readers. I call it, 'What is it—an animal, vegetable, or mineral?' In one way it is all three."—Miss Edith A. Lewer, Workham Lodge, No. 1, Queen's Place, Southsea.

"SWEETS TO THE SWEET!"

"I send you a photo. which represents an old staircase in a manor-house in the Midlands, and was taken by pointing the camera upwards. The reason of the serious faces of the ladies looking over the banisters was that I promised them a box of chocolates if you reproduced the picture in THE STRAND, and, consequently, they did not wish to spoil the result by any movement on their part. The best effect is obtained by holding the picture over one's head."—Mr. Robert B. A. Ellis, 19, Artillery Buildings, Victoria Street, S.W.

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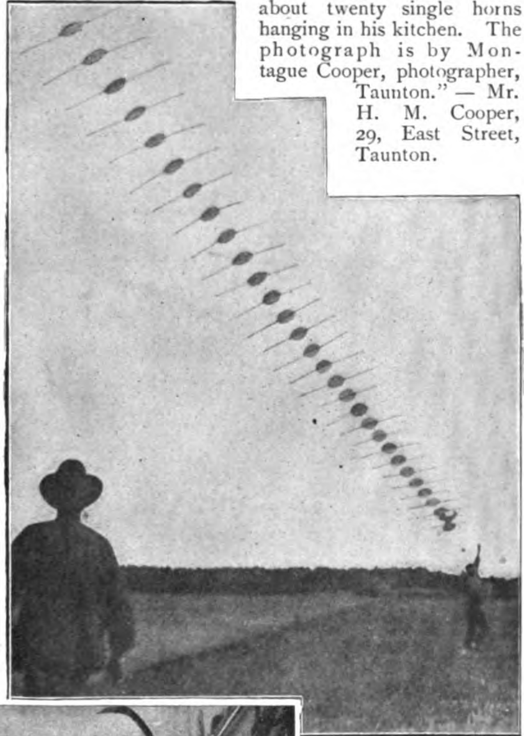
A METEORIC TOMBSTONE.

"Ten years ago a meteor fell on the farm of Mr. T. B. Lane, Talmadge, Ohio. It penetrated 16ft. into the earth. It was afterwards dug up, and upon the death of Mr. Lane some years later was placed upon the family monument in Glendal Cemetery, Akron, Ohio, where it is one of the greatest attractions. It resembles a great lump of iron ore."—Photo. by F. R. Archibald, 114, Balch Street, Akron, Ohio.

A CURIOUS FRIEZE.

"The horns shown in this picture are the property of Mr. Jno. Barber, who for fifty-two years has lived on the estate of the late Mr. Fenwick Bissett, at Bagborough, so long the popular master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. The wild red deer are now to be found in England only in the counties of Somerset and Devon, roaming the tract of country contained in lines drawn from the Quantock Hills across Exmoor, to Barnstaple on the west and Dulverton on the east. The deer shed the horns annually about the month of April, and they grow again to their full size by the middle of August; the weight of a good pair averaging 8lb. They are usually shaken off in the open, though sometimes one is found at the foot of a tree, showing it to have been knocked off when only one had fallen previously. The horns are at their best on a stag of about eight summers, when they should possess all their rights, with brow, bray, and tray, and sometimes four on top; after this they begin to deteriorate. Mr. Barber has been collecting the specimens for many years, there being forty pair and about twenty single horns hanging in his kitchen. The photograph is by Montague Cooper, photographer, Taunton."—Mr. H. M. Cooper, 29, East Street, Taunton.



A CHINESE KITE.

"Each year the Chinese employed in the salmon canneries at Fairhaven, Washington, make kites in a variety of shapes and sizes, which sing or hum when flying in the air. The kite shown here won a prize in the kite-flying contest, and the Chinamen who made it were very proud of it and held it outstretched so that the picture could be taken. The photo. shows the kite flying in the air. It might be mentioned that kite-flying is a national pastime of the Chinese people."—Taken at Fairhaven, Washington, by Mr. F. A. Agar, Great Falls, Montana.

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"THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES."

(*See page 252.*)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.
Vol. xxiii. APRIL, 1902. No. 135.

The Hound of the Baskervilles.

ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF

SHERLOCK HOLMES.

By CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIXING THE NETS.

SIR HENRY was more pleased than surprised to see Sherlock Holmes, for he had for some days been expecting that recent events would bring him down from London. He did raise his eyebrows, however, when he found that my friend had neither any luggage nor any explanations for its absence. Between us we soon supplied his wants, and then over a belated supper we explained to the Baronet as much of our experience as it seemed desirable that he should know. But first I had the unpleasant duty of breaking the news of Selden's death to Barrymore and his wife. To him it may have been an unmitigated relief, but she wept bitterly in her apron. To all the world he was the man of violence, half animal and half demon; but to her he always remained the little wilful boy of her own girlhood, the child who had clung to her hand. Evil indeed is the man who has not one woman to mourn him.

"I've been moping in the house all day since Watson went off in the morning," said the Baronet. "I guess I should have some credit, for I have kept my promise. If I hadn't sworn not to go about alone I might have had a more lively evening, for I had a message from Stapleton asking me over there."

"I have no doubt that you would have had a more lively evening," said Holmes, drily. "By the way, I don't suppose you appreciate that we have been mourning over you as having broken your neck?"

Sir Henry opened his eyes. "How was that?"

"This poor wretch was dressed in your clothes. I fear your servant who gave them to him may get into trouble with the police."

"That is unlikely. There was no mark on any of them, so far as I know."

"That's lucky for him—in fact, it's lucky for all of you, since you are all on the wrong side of the law in this matter. I am not sure that as a conscientious detective my first duty is not to arrest the whole household. Watson's reports are most incriminating documents."

"But how about the case?" asked the Baronet. "Have you made anything out of the tangle? I don't know that Watson and I are much the wiser since we came down."

"I think that I shall be in a position to make the situation rather more clear to you before long. It has been an exceedingly difficult and most complicated business. There are several points upon which we still want light—but it is coming, all the same."

"We've had one experience, as Watson has no doubt told you. We heard the hound on the moor, so I can swear that it is not all empty superstition. I had something to do with dogs when I was out West, and I know one when I hear one. If you can muzzle that one and put him on a chain I'll be ready to swear you are the greatest detective of all time."

"I think I will muzzle him and chain him all right if you will give me your help."

"Whatever you tell me to do I will do."

"Very good; and I will ask you also to do it blindly, without always asking the reason."

"Just as you like."

"If you will do this I think the chances are that our little problem will soon be solved. I have no doubt——"

He stopped suddenly and stared fixedly up over my head into the air. The lamp beat upon his face, and so intent was it and so still that it might have been that of a clear-cut classical statue, a personification of alertness and expectation.

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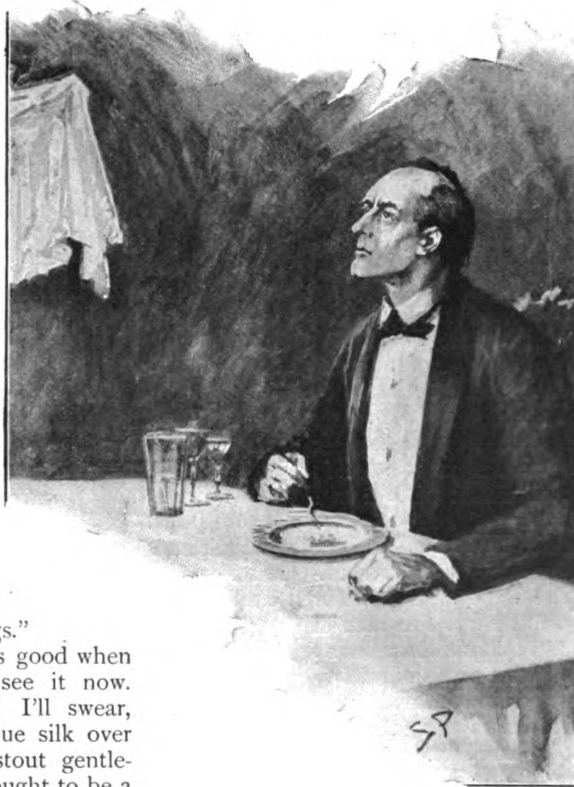
"What is it?" we both cried.

I could see as he looked down that he was repressing some internal emotion. His features were still composed, but his eyes shone with amused exultation.

"Excuse the admiration of a connoisseur," said he, as he waved his hand towards the line of portraits which covered the opposite wall. "Watson won't allow that I know anything of art, but that is mere jealousy, because our views upon the subject differ. Now, these are a really very fine series of portraits."

"Well, I'm glad to hear you say so," said Sir Henry, glancing with some surprise at my friend. "I don't pretend to know much about these things, and I'd be a better judge of a horse or a steer than of a picture. I didn't know that you found time for such things."



"HE STOPPED SUDDENLY AND STARED FIXEDLY UP OVER MY HEAD INTO THE AIR."

"I know what is good when I see it, and I see it now. That's a Kneller, I'll swear, that lady in the blue silk over yonder, and the stout gentleman with the wig ought to be a Reynolds. They are all family portraits, I presume?"

"Every one."

"Do you know the names?"

"Barrymore has been coaching me in them, and I think I can say my lessons fairly well."

"Who is the gentleman with the telescope?"

"That is Rear-Admiral Baskerville, who served under Rodney in the West Indies. The man with the blue coat and the roll of paper is Sir William Baskerville, who was Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons under Pitt."

"And this Cavalier opposite to me—the one with the black velvet and the lace?"

"Ah, you have a right to know about him. That is the cause of all the mischief, the wicked Hugo, who started the Hound of the Baskervilles. We're not likely to forget him."

I gazed with interest and some surprise upon the portrait.

"Dear me!" said Holmes, "he seems a quiet, meek-mannered man enough, but I daresay that there was a lurking devil in his eyes. I had pictured him as a more robust and ruffianly person."

"There's no doubt about the authenticity, for the name and the date, 1647, are on the back of the canvas."

Holmes said little more, but the picture of the old roysterer seemed to have a fascination for him, and his eyes were continually fixed upon it during supper. It was not until later, when Sir Henry had gone to his room, that I was able to follow the trend of his thoughts. He led me back into the banqueting-hall, his bedroom candle in his hand, and he held it up against the time-stained portrait on the wall.

"Do you see anything there?"

I looked at the broad plumed hat, the curling love-locks, the white lace collar, and the straight, severe face which was framed between them. It was not a brutal countenance, but it was prim, hard, and stern, with a firm-set, thin-lipped mouth, and a coldly intolerant eye.

"Is it like anyone you know?"

"There is something of Sir Henry about the jaw."

"Just a suggestion, perhaps. But wait an instant!" He stood upon a chair, and holding up the light in his left hand he curved

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his right arm over the broad hat and round the long ringlets.

"Good heavens!" I cried, in amazement.

The face of Stapleton had sprung out of the canvas.

"Ha, you see it now. My eyes have been trained to examine faces and not their trim-

"With designs upon the succession."

"Exactly. This chance of the picture has supplied us with one of our most obvious missing links. We have him, Watson, we have him, and I dare swear that before to-morrow night he will be fluttering in our net as helpless as one of his own butterflies.

"'GOOD HEAVENS!' I CRIED, IN AMAZEMENT.'

mings. It is the first quality of a criminal investigator that he should see through a disguise."

"But this is marvellous. It might be his portrait."

"Yes, it is an interesting instance of a throw-back, which appears to be both physical and spiritual. A study of family portraits is enough to convert a man to the doctrine of reincarnation. The fellow is a Baskerville—that is evident."

pin, a cork, and a card, and we add him to the Baker Street collection!" He burst into one of his rare fits of laughter as he turned away from the picture. I have not heard him laugh often, and it has always boded ill to somebody.

I was up betimes in the morning, but Holmes was afoot earlier still, for I saw him as I dressed coming up the drive.

"Yes, we should have a full day to-day," he remarked, and he rubbed his hands with

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the joy of action. "The nets are all in place, and the drag is about to begin. We'll know before the day is out whether we have caught our big, lean-jawed pike, or whether he has got through the meshes."

"Have you been on the moor already?"

"I have sent a report from Grimpen to Princetown as to the death of Selden. I think I can promise that none of you will be troubled in the matter. And I have also communicated with my faithful Cartwright, who would certainly have pined away at the door of my hut as a dog does at his master's grave if I had not set his mind at rest about my safety."

"What is the next move?"

"To see Sir Henry. Ah, here he is!"

"Good morning, Holmes," said the Baronet. "You look like a general who is planning a battle with his chief of the staff."

"That is the exact situation. Watson was asking for orders."

"And so do I."

"Very good. You are engaged, as I understand, to dine with our friends the Stapletons to-night."

"I hope that you will come also. They are very hospitable people, and I am sure that they would be very glad to see you."

"I fear that Watson and I must go to London."

"To London?"

"Yes, I think that we should be more useful there at the present juncture."

The Baronet's face perceptibly lengthened.

"I hoped that you were going to see me through this business. The Hall and the moor are not very pleasant places when one is alone."

"My dear fellow, you must trust me implicitly and do exactly what I tell you. You can tell your friends that we should have been happy to have come with you, but that urgent business required us to be in town. We hope very soon to return to Devonshire. Will you remember to give them that message?"

"If you insist upon it."

"There is no alternative, I assure you."

I saw by the Baronet's clouded brow that he was deeply hurt by what he regarded as our desertion.

"When do you desire to go?" he asked, coldly.

"Immediately after breakfast. We will drive in to Coombe Tracey, but Watson will leave his things as a pledge that he will come back to you. Watson, you will send a note to Stapleton to tell him that you regret that you cannot come."

"I have a good mind to go to London with you," said the Baronet. "Why should I stay here alone?"

"Because it is your post of duty. Because you gave me your word that you would do as you were told, and I tell you to stay."

"All right, then, I'll stay."

"One more direction! I wish you to drive to Merripit House. Send back your trap, however, and let them know that you intend to walk home."

"To walk across the moor?"

"Yes."

"But that is the very thing which you have so often cautioned me not to do."

"This time you may do it with safety. If I had not every confidence in your nerve and courage I would not suggest it, but it is essential that you should do it."

"Then I will do it."

"And as you value your life do not go across the moor in any direction save along the straight path which leads from Merripit House to the Grimpen Road, and is your natural way home."

"I will do just what you say."

"Very good. I should be glad to get away as soon after breakfast as possible, so as to reach London in the afternoon."

I was much astounded by this programme, though I remembered that Holmes had said to Stapleton on the night before that his visit would terminate next day. It had not crossed my mind, however, that he would wish me to go with him, nor could I understand how we could both be absent at a moment which he himself declared to be critical. There was nothing for it, however, but implicit obedience; so we bade good-bye to our rueful friend, and a couple of hours afterwards we were at the station of Coombe Tracey and had dispatched the trap upon its return journey. A small boy was waiting upon the platform.

"Any orders, sir?"

"You will take this train to town, Cartwright. The moment you arrive you will send a wire to Sir Henry Baskerville, in my name, to say that if he finds the pocket-book which I have dropped he is to send it by registered post to Baker Street."

"Yes, sir."

"And ask at the station office if there is a message for me."

The boy returned with a telegram, which Holmes handed to me. It ran: "Wire

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received. Coming down with unsigned warrant. Arrive five-forty.—LESTRADE."

"That is in answer to mine of this morning. He is the best of the professionals, I think, and we may need his assistance. Now, Watson, I think that we cannot employ our time better than by calling upon your acquaintance, Mrs. Laura Lyons."

His plan of campaign was beginning to be evident. He would use the Baronet in order to convince the Stapletons that we were really gone, while we should actually return at the instant when we were likely to be needed. That telegram from London, if mentioned by Sir Henry to the Stapletons, must remove the last suspicions from their minds. Already I seemed to see our nets drawing closer round that lean-jawed pike.

Mrs. Laura Lyons was in her office, and Sherlock Holmes opened his interview with a frankness and directness which considerably amazed her.

"I am investigating the circumstances which attended the death of the late Sir Charles Baskerville," said he. "My friend here, Dr. Watson, has informed me of what you have communicated, and also of what you have withheld in connection with that matter."

"What have I withheld?" she asked, defiantly.

"You have confessed that you asked Sir Charles to be at the gate at ten o'clock. We know that that was the place and hour of his death. You have withheld what the connection is between these events."

"There is no connection."

"In that case the coincidence must indeed be an extraordinary one. But I think that we shall succeed in establishing a connection after all. I wish to be perfectly frank with you, Mrs. Lyons. We regard this case as one of murder, and the evidence may implicate not only your friend Mr. Stapleton, but his wife as well."

The lady sprang from her chair.

"THE LADY SPRANG FROM HER CHAIR."

"His wife!" she cried.

"The fact is no longer a secret. The person who has passed for his sister is really his wife."

Mrs. Lyons had resumed her seat. Her hands were grasping the arms of her chair,

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and I saw that the pink nails had turned white with the pressure of her grip.

"His wife!" she said, again. "His wife! He was not a married man."

Sherlock Holmes shrugged his shoulders.

"Prove it to me! Prove it to me! And if you can do so——!" The fierce flash of her eyes said more than any words.

"I have come prepared to do so," said Holmes, drawing several papers from his pocket. "Here is a photograph of the couple taken in York four years ago. It is indorsed 'Mr. and Mrs. Vandeleur,' but you will have no difficulty in recognising him, and her also, if you know her by sight. Here are three written descriptions by trustworthy witnesses of Mr. and Mrs. Vandeleur, who at that time kept St. Oliver's private school. Read them, and see if you can doubt the identity of these people."

She glanced at them, and then looked up at us with the set, rigid face of a desperate woman.

"Mr. Holmes," she said, "this man had offered me marriage on condition that I could get a divorce from my husband. He has lied to me, the villain, in every conceivable way. Not one word of truth has he ever told me. And why—why? I imagined that all was for my own sake. But now I see that I was never anything but a tool in his hands. Why should I preserve faith with him who never kept any with me? Why should I try to shield him from the consequences of his own wicked acts? Ask me what you like, and there is nothing which I shall hold back. One thing I swear to you, and that is, that when I wrote the letter I never dreamed of any harm to the old gentleman, who had been my kindest friend."

"I entirely believe you, madam," said Sherlock Holmes. "The recital of these events must be very painful to you, and perhaps it will make it easier if I tell you what occurred, and you can check me if I make any material mistake. The sending of this letter was suggested to you by Stapleton?"

"He dictated it."

"I presume that the reason he gave was that you would receive help from Sir Charles for the legal expenses connected with your divorce?"

"Exactly."

"And then after you had sent the letter he dissuaded you from keeping the appointment?"

"He told me that it would hurt his self-respect that any other man should find the money for such an object, and that though he was a poor man himself he would devote his last penny to removing the obstacles which divided us."

"He appears to be a very consistent character. And then you heard nothing until you read the reports of the death in the paper?"

"No."

"And he made you swear to say nothing about your appointment with Sir Charles?"

"He did. He said that the death was a very mysterious one, and that I should certainly be suspected if the facts came out. He frightened me into remaining silent."

"Quite so. But you had your suspicions?"

She hesitated and looked down.

"I knew him," she said. "But if he had kept faith with me I should always have done so with him."

"I think that on the whole you have had a fortunate escape," said Sherlock Holmes. "You have had him in your power and he knew it, and yet you are alive. You have been walking for some months very near to the edge of a precipice. We must wish you good morning now, Mrs. Lyons, and it is probable that you will very shortly hear from us again."

"Our case becomes rounded off, and difficulty after difficulty thins away in front of us," said Holmes, as we stood waiting for the arrival of the express from town. "I shall soon be in the position of being able to put into a single connected narrative one of the most singular and sensational crimes of modern times. Students of criminology will remember the analogous incidents in Grodno, in Little Russia, in the year '66, and of course there are the Anderson murders in North Carolina, but this case possesses some features which are entirely its own. Even now we have no clear case against this very wily man. But I shall be very much surprised if it is not clear enough before we go to bed this night."

The London express came roaring into the station, and a small, wiry bulldog of a man had sprung from a first-class carriage. We all three shook hands, and I saw at once from the reverential way in which Lestrade gazed at my companion that he had learned a good deal since the days when they had first worked together. I could well remember the scorn which the theories of the reasoner used then to excite in the practical man.

"Anything good?" he asked.

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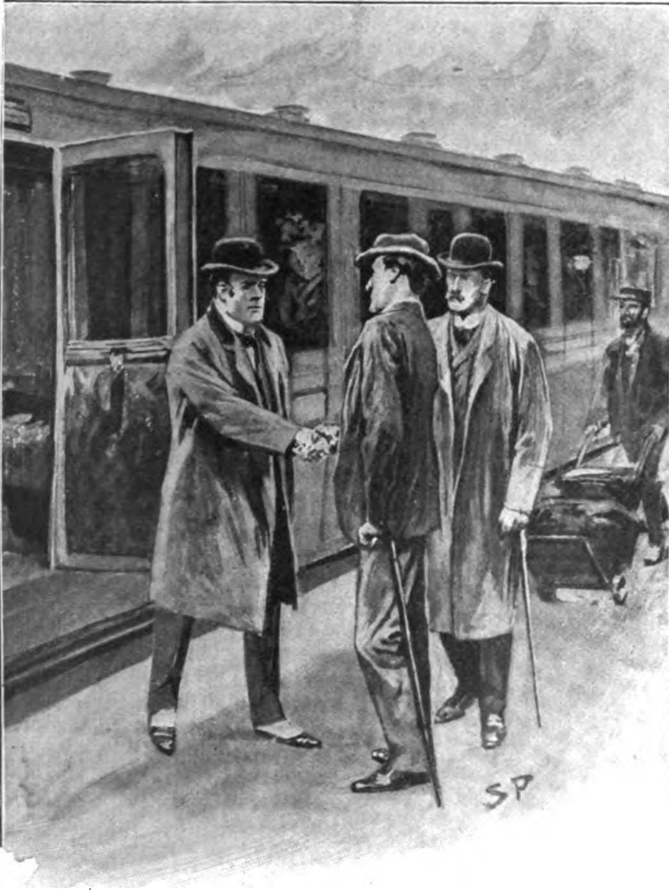
"The biggest thing for years," said Holmes. "We have two hours before we need think of starting. I think we might employ it in getting some dinner, and then, Lestrade, we will take the London fog out of your throat by giving you a breath of the pure night air of Dartmoor. Never been there? Ah, well, I don't suppose you will forget your first visit."



"WE ALL THREE SHOOK HANDS."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES.

ONE of Sherlock Holmes's defects—if, indeed, one may call it a defect—was that he was exceedingly loth to communicate his full plans to any other person until the instant of their fulfilment. Partly it came no doubt from his own masterful nature, which loved to dominate and surprise those who were around him. Partly also from his professional caution, which urged him never to take any chances. The result, however, was very trying for those who were acting as his agents and assistants. I had often suffered under it, but never more so than during that long drive in the darkness. The great ordeal was in front of us; at last we were about to make our final effort, and yet Holmes had said nothing, and I could only surmise what his course of action would be. My nerves thrilled with anticipation when at last the cold wind upon our faces and the dark, void spaces on either side of the narrow road told me that we were back upon the moor once again. Every stride of the horses and every turn of the wheels was taking us nearer to our supreme adventure.

Our conversation was hampered by the presence of the driver of the hired wagonette, so that we were forced to talk of trivial matters when our nerves were tense with

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emotion and anticipation. It was a relief to me, after that unnatural restraint, when we at last passed Frankland's house and knew that we were drawing near to the Hall and to the scene of action. We did not drive up to the door, but got down near the gate of the avenue. The wagonette was paid off and ordered to return to Temple Coombe forthwith, while we started to walk to Merripit House.

"Are you armed, Lestrade?"

The little detective smiled.

"As long as I have my trousers I have a hip-pocket, and as long as I have my hip-pocket I have something in it."

"Good! My friend and I are also ready for emergencies."

"You're mighty close about this affair, Mr. Holmes. What's the game now?"

"A waiting game."

"My word, it does not seem a very cheerful place," said the detective, with a shiver, glancing round him at the gloomy slopes of the hill and at the huge lake of fog which lay over the Grimpen Mire. "I see the lights of a house ahead of us."

"That is Merripit House and the end of our journey. I must request you to walk on tiptoe and not to talk above a whisper."

We moved cautiously along the track as if we were bound for the house, but Holmes halted us when we were about two hundred yards from it.

"This will do," said he. "These rocks upon the right make an admirable screen."

"We are to wait here?"

"Yes, we shall make our little ambush here. Get into this hollow, Lestrade. You have been inside the house, have you not, Watson? Can you tell the position of the rooms? What are those latticed windows at this end?"

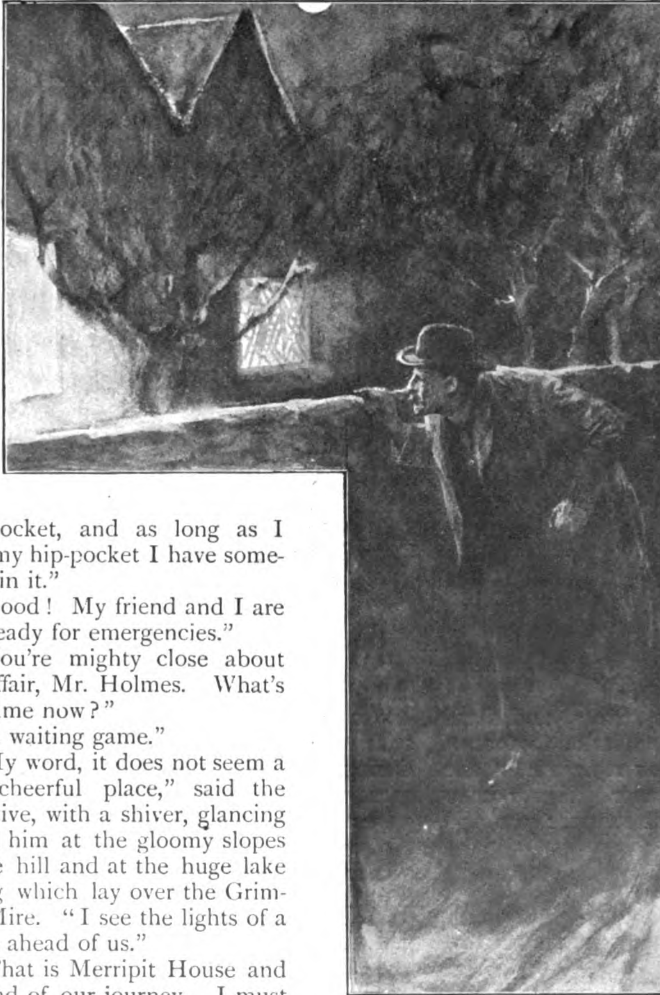
"I think they are the kitchen windows."

"And the one beyond, which shines so brightly?"

"That is certainly the dining-room."

"The blinds are up. You know the lie of the land best. Creep forward quietly and see what they are doing—but for Heaven's sake don't let them know that they are watched!"

I tip-toed down the path and stooped behind the low wall which surrounded the stunted orchard. Creeping in its shadow I reached a point whence I could look straight through the uncurtained window.



"I COULD LOOK STRAIGHT THROUGH THE UNCURTAINED WINDOW."

There were only two men in the room, Sir Henry and Stapleton. They sat with their profiles towards me on either side of the round table. Both of them were smoking cigars, and coffee and wine were in front of them. Stapleton was talking with animation, but the Baronet looked pale and distrait. Perhaps the thought of that lonely walk across the ill-omened moor was weighing heavily upon his mind.

As I watched them Stapleton rose and left the room, while Sir Henry filled his glass

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again and leaned back in his chair, puffing at his cigar. I heard the creak of a door and the crisp sound of boots upon gravel. The steps passed along the path on the other side of the wall under which I crouched. Looking over, I saw the naturalist pause at the door of an out-house in the corner of the orchard. A key turned in a lock, and as he passed in there was a curious scuffling noise from within. He was only a minute or so inside, and then I heard the key turn once more and he passed me and re-entered the house. I saw him rejoin his guest, and I crept quietly back to where my companions were waiting to tell them what I had seen.

"You say, Watson, that the lady is not there?" Holmes asked, when I had finished my report.

"No."

"Where can she be, then, since there is no light in any other room except the kitchen?"

"I cannot think where she is."

I have said that over the great Grimpen Mire there hung a dense, white fog. It was drifting slowly in our direction and banked itself up like a wall on that side of us, low, but thick and well defined. The moon shone on it, and it looked like a great shimmering icefield, with the heads of the distant tors as rocks borne upon its surface. Holmes's face was turned towards it, and he muttered impatiently as he watched its sluggish drift.

"It's moving towards us, Watson."

"Is that serious?"

"Very serious, indeed — the one thing upon earth which could have disarranged my plans. He can't be very long, now. It is already ten o'clock. Our success and even his life may depend upon his coming out before the fog is over the path."

The night was clear and fine above us. The stars shone cold and bright, while a half-moon bathed the whole scene in a soft, uncertain light. Before us lay the dark bulk of the house, its serrated roof and bristling chimneys hard outlined against the silver-spangled sky. Broad bars of golden light from the lower windows stretched across the orchard and the moor. One of them was suddenly shut off. The servants had left the kitchen. There only remained the lamp in the dining-room where the two men, the murderous host and the unconscious guest, still chatted over their cigars.

Every minute that white woolly plain which covered one half of the moor was drifting closer and closer to the house. Already the first thin wisps of it were curling across the golden square of the lighted window. The farther wall of the orchard was already invisible, and the trees were standing out of a swirl of white vapour. As we watched it the fog-wreaths came crawling round both corners of the house and rolled slowly into one dense bank, on which the upper floor and the roof floated like strange ship upon a shadowy sea. Holmes struck his hand passionately upon the rock in front of us, and stamped his feet in his impatience.

"If he isn't out in a quarter of an hour the path will be covered. In half an hour we won't be able to see our hands in front of us."

"Shall we move farther back upon higher ground?"

"Yes, I think it would be as well."

So as the fog-bank flowed onwards we fell back before it until we were half a mile from the house, and still that dense white sea, with the moon silvering its upper edge, swept slowly and inexorably on.

"We are going too far," said Holmes. "We dare not take the chance of his being overtaken before he can reach us. At all costs we must hold our ground where we are." He dropped on his knees and clapped his ear to the ground. "Thank Heaven, I think that I hear him coming."

A sound of quick steps broke the silence of the moor. Crouching among the stones we stared intently at the silver-tipped bank in front of us. The steps grew louder, and through the fog, as through a curtain, there stepped the man whom we were awaiting. He looked round him in surprise as he emerged into the clear, star-lit night. Then he came swiftly along the path, passed close to where we lay, and went on up the long slope behind us. As he walked he glanced continually over either shoulder, like a man who is ill at ease.

"Hist!" cried Holmes, and I heard the sharp click of a cocking pistol. "Look out! It's coming!"

There was a thin, crisp, continuous patter from somewhere in the heart of that crawling bank. The cloud was within fifty yards of where we lay, and we glared at it, all three, uncertain what horror was about to break from the heart of it. I was at Holmes's elbow, and I glanced for an instant at his face. It was pale and exultant, his eyes shining brightly in the moonlight. But suddenly they started forward in a rigid, fixed

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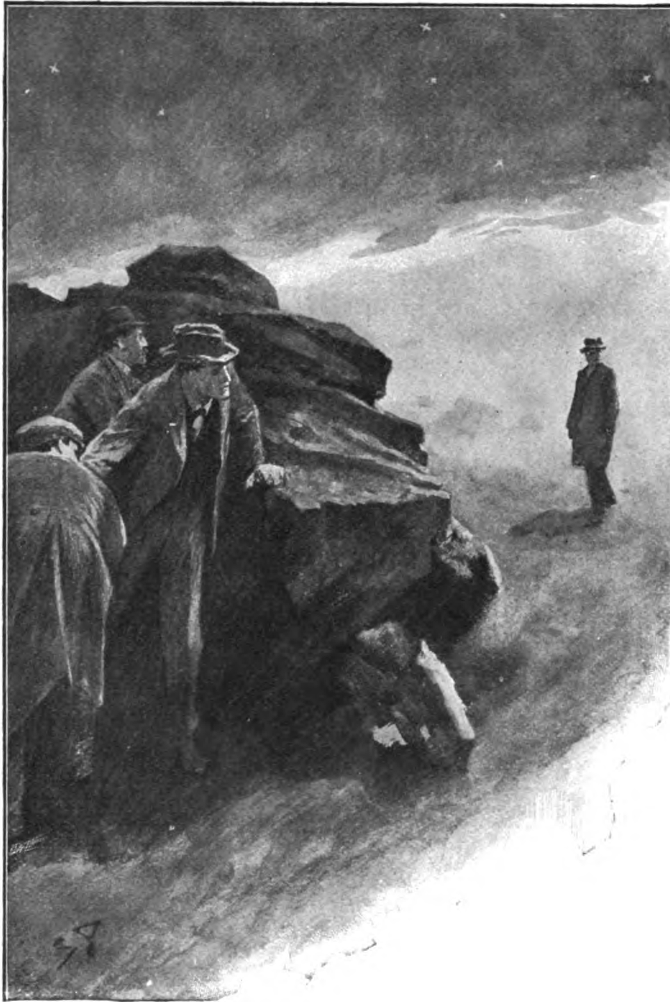
stare, and his lips parted in amazement. At the same instant Lestrade gave a yell of terror and threw himself face downwards upon the ground. I sprang to my feet, my inert hand grasping my pistol, my mind paralyzed by the dreadful shape which had sprung out upon us from the shadows of the fog. A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.



"HE LOOKED ROUND HIM IN SURPRISE."

(*To be concluded.*)

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The Arcadian Calendar

MARCH

By
E. D. Cuming
and
J. A. Shepherd.

THE madness of the March hare is not for treatment by doctors nor investigation by Commissioners in Lunacy. He is in love: nothing else is the matter with him; but high spirits submerge a weak head, and, intoxicated by thoughts of "her," he indulges in the antics and follies that have made him a by-word. A little self-control, a little dignified reserve, would be becoming, but these qualities are foreign to hare character:—

I am not mad, unless it be for thee, dear;
  With joy I skip to hear thee softly squealing.
I love! am loved! Could an encyclopædia
  Tell all—tell half—that I this hour am feeling?

The squirrel wakes up thoroughly now and comes out of his bedroom for the year. The gnats and various flies respond to the increasing warmth of the sun and come out to enjoy it. The bats, who have sent out a messenger to report on the weather a score of times since they went to bed, get up, or, rather, get down, and, blinking and winking,

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come out to enjoy the gnats. The bat's system of catching insects is simple and efficacious: his wings, as you know, extend to the tip of his tail; when he flies he bends his tail under and makes a neat little pouch in which he nets insects as he swoops through the swarm, and there he keeps them until he goes home. He can't eat their wings; for if he did they would probably choke him, so he always nips them off: with praiseworthy refinement he always puts his wing before his mouth while eating; thus other bats are not offended by this little habit. The toad is about again: it takes him some time to collect his faculties after five months' unbroken slumber, and he sits gazing thoughtfully upwards to assure himself that the sky remains where he left it. Having fully realized the fact that suspension of his interest in creation has produced no serious effect upon the solar system he goes to look for a worm. His sight is indifferent, and he is never sure whether a worm *is* a worm until it moves: then he pounces on it open-mouthed and swallows it alive. The worm is prone to return under this treatment, but the toad thrusts him back with a firm, unsparing hand.

"HE IS IN LOVE."

The cock pheasant is crowing bravely; it is his method of inquiring whether anyone knows just cause or impediment to his union with the pretty young hen who has accepted his advances. If there be another cock within hearing there will be a fight. A pheasant-fight is an affair of honour—even less serious than a hare-fight: half-a-dozen pecks and kicks on either side and it is over, then more crowing and wing-clapping to announce that both combatants won. The cock pheasant marries with discretion. The young bird unversed in matrimony begins with one wife, to whom he pays some attention. As he grows older and finds wedded life has for him no responsibilities at all, he marries profusely: six or eight wives are no more trouble than one when each supports herself. The birds who gathered together in flocks for the winter have broken up their parties now, and separate on "urgent private affairs." The linnets are pairing; so are the chaffinches, whose courtship, by the way, is worth watching. The cock is a smartly-dressed fellow, and he knows it; and he shows off his clothes with an ingenuous vanity that is charming.

When a bird goes in search of a bride,
  And he favour would find in her sight,
False modesty goes to one side,
  For what use is there hiding one's light?
Though she doesn't attend when he talks,
  And only looks bored when he sings,
She's impressed when she sees how he walks,
  And admires the good taste of his "things."

The chaffinch has a proper sense of his own importance, however, and does not waste time on a hen who is slow to make up her mind.

The golden plovers, who generally spend the winter at the seaside, come inland: those who mean to start housekeeping in this country resort to the moors and high-lying wastes, and those who prefer a cooler climate take

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wing for Northern Europe. Many of the woodcock who came to see us in October make up their minds to stay: the increase of plantations in these islands during recent years has won the woodcock's hearty approval, and those who don't care for travelling are glad to nest in our coverts. The majority, though, like many other migrants, pack up and go north, by night, as if leaving unpaid bills behind them. The snipe are on the move, too, either northward bound or to the marshes where they breed; the teal, smallest of our ducks, is also looking out for a home. These birds do not intend to start housekeeping already—though the woodcock does not lose much time: like sensible parents, they like to seek at leisure a place where they can bring up a family in comfort and security.

The earliest of the spring arrivals from the South are coming now. The cock pied-wagtails who went away for the winter are back, and their wives will appear a little later. The pied-wagtail puts on a little extra swagger in these days: he seems to be bragging about his travels, as they brag who seldom leave their own parish; so many of his species find this country quite good enough for them in the cold weather. The goldfinches—those of them who fled the English winter—are coming back, too, and are joining in the concerts, now increasing every day. These early spring arrivals find the homeward journey rather too much for them when the equinoctial gales are blowing, and, like more highly organized beings after a gale in the Channel, stop the moment they reach the shore to rest before continuing their journey inland. The equinoctial gales are responsible for many accidents that would demand staring head-lines and large type to describe, did birds conduct newspapers. Travelling, as many species on migration do, at night, there is always the risk of coming against a telegraph wire when descending, and the risk is doubled when there is a high wind. Birds are apt to take too much for granted when moving from place to place. When the first wires were stretched along the Highland railway the men working on the line found it well worth while to keep their eyes open when going to work in the morning; the grouse committed suicide by dozens every night against telegraph and fence wires.

"THE TOAD IS ABOUT AGAIN."

The golden-crested wren, smallest of European birds, is creeping about in the pine-tops, singing to himself in a diffident whisper. The gold crest's is hardly a song that flattery itself would applaud: indeed, the conscientious listener only calls it a song as a concession to diminutive beauty. The blackbird and thrush are singing vigorously, and the starling, with cheerful disregard of the copyright laws, is singing by turns as much of the song of each as he can remember. It must be exasperating to a blackbird to hear that spurious imitation of his best notes attributed to himself.

The mole is busier than ever, for his wife

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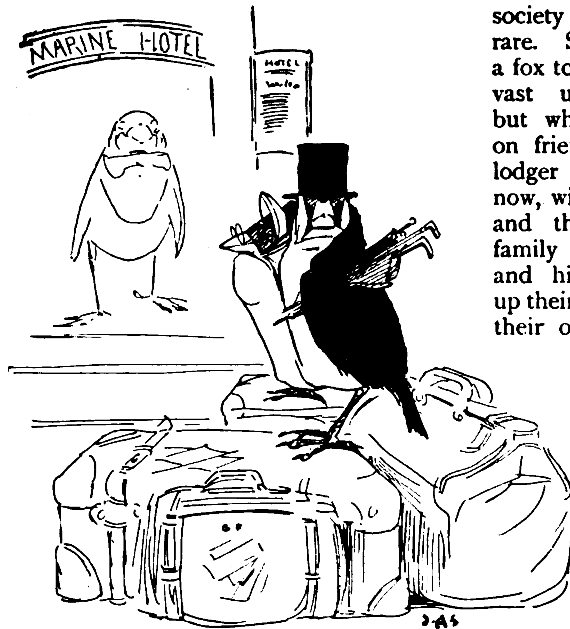
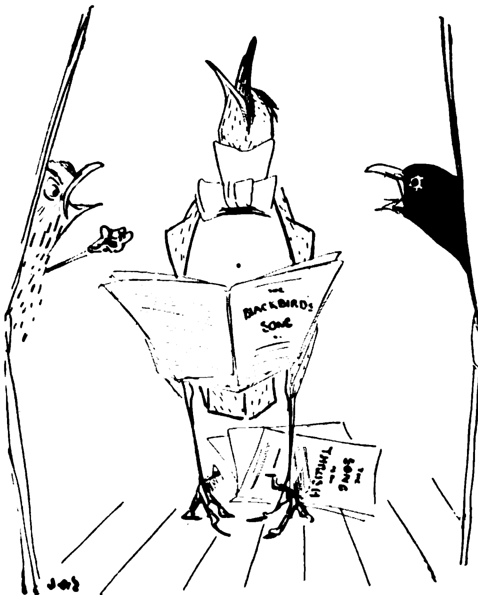
is nursing five children in the nest under the big mole-hill where two tunnels cross, and he can't collect worms and grubs fast enough to satisfy her. A hungry mole has not a shred of manners: he or she grabs at anything eatable and tears it to pieces like a famishing wolf. Hunger seems to drive the mole frantic. The badgers are very busy too. These, the nearest British representatives of the bears, are the county families among wild creatures, in virtue of their fidelity to their cete, as the badger's residence is called. There are old family cetes in England which have been occupied for centuries. The badger is commoner than many people suppose: his retiring habits and avoidance of society make him appear rare. Sometimes he allows a fox to take a room in his vast underground house, but whether he is always on friendly terms with the lodger is doubtful. Just now, winter being well over and the appearance of a family being imminent, he and his wife are cleaning up their ancestral home with their own hands, bringing out barrow-loads of bracken and leaves during the night.



"MR. AND MRS. GOLDFINCH BREAK THEIR JOURNEY AT THE COAST."

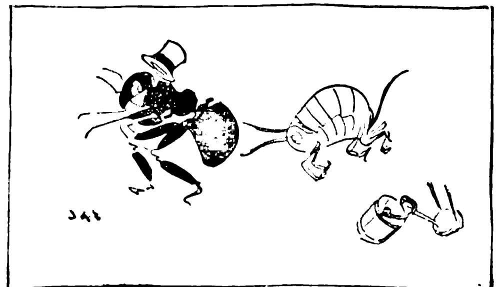


"THE PLAGIARIST STARLING."

Gone is our greatness! Let it be confest
That we, compelled by poverty, alas!
Must take the fox in as a paying guest.
Nay! things are come with us to such a pass
I do spring-cleaning in an apron drest.

The badger possesses the unique accomplishment of being able to walk and trot backwards: a talent which stood him in ill stead when the "sport" or cruelty of badger-drawing had vogue.

The little brown ants come out and run about doing nothing with feverish industry. If they could make up their minds which way to go and what to do when they got there, and didn't get in one another's way at every turn, their application to business might be more fruitful of results; but who shall take it upon him to judge the ant? Even now in the ant-hill the eggs of the plant-louse are hatching out in their special cells: the ant carried them in last autumn, with an eye to his own needs this summer. The lice produce a secretion which the ant likes, so in his foresight and wisdom he rears them from the egg and pets and feeds and


"PLAYING AT FARMING."

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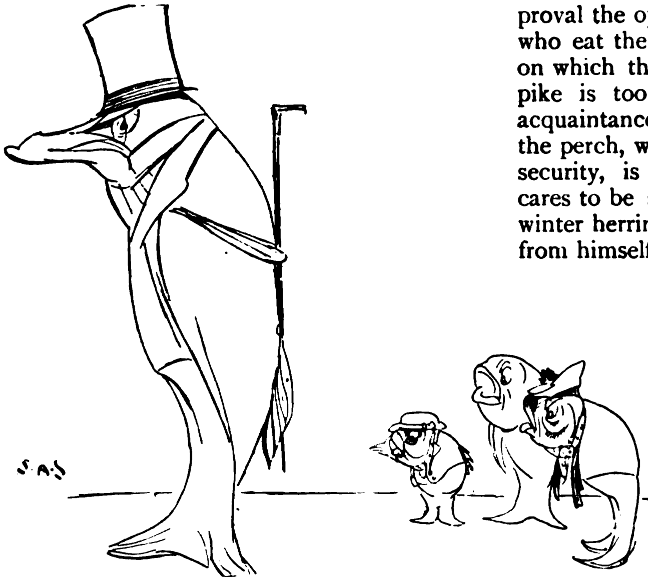

"THE PIKE IS UNPOPULAR."

cares for them, as a man who plays at farming pets his Jersey cows. André, one of the great authorities upon ant economics, counted 584 kinds of tiny insects, 542 of them belonging to the beetle persuasion, which are kept in domestication by various species of ant. We have learned something about the ant's social system: when we are clever enough, perhaps, we shall be able to pick up hints from them concerning the management of streets and political obstruction.

The pike withdraw from the deep pools and seek the seclusion of comparatively shallow, weedy streams, where they spawn. The pike lays about 800 eggs for each pound of her own weight, and other fish view with approval the operations of ducks and water-fowl who eat the eggs in thousands off the weeds on which they were placed for safety. The pike is too much addicted to eating his acquaintances to be popular among them: the perch, whose prickly back fin gives him security, is the only respectable fish that cares to be seen near him. In the sea the winter herring, so called to distinguish him from himself as a summer visitor, has arrived off the coast under his usual escort of whales, dogfish, and gulls, to receive his usual welcome in the nets. The herrings hang about for a few weeks, then come into the shallows and stick their eggs arelessly upon stones and shells: then they put out to sea again. Herrings are said on good authority to be able to utter musical sounds: you are not to picture the shoal singing the National Anthem: their vocal efforts are limited to a sound like a deep-toned bell or gong which has been heard while the net was being drawn over them. The mackerel is in season now: in other words, he is most interesting on the table. Legend has wreathed

"THE HERRING HAS ARRIVED OFF THE COAST."

"THE MACKEREL IS MOST INTERESTING AT TABLE."

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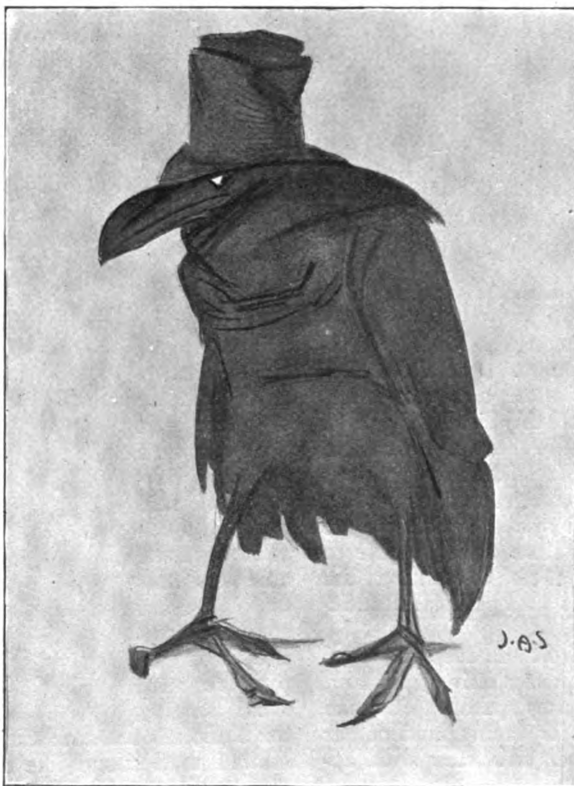
itself round the personal history of the mackerel. Ælian says that fishermen used to train selected specimens to decoy their fellows into the net: equally remarkable, the children of these highly-educated fish inherited the accomplishment from their parents. Either the intelligence of the mackerel has undergone very great deterioration since Ælian wrote in the second century, or inventive fisher-boys imposed upon the credulity of that gentleman.

Down in the underwood the wrens, tails up as usual, are hopping from one eligible building lot to another, and find it difficult to make a choice, for that beautiful domed nest must be hidden so carefully that nobody shall find it. At last they decide on a bramble-smothered bush and get to work. One day when the nest is half finished the jenny wren drops a thread of grass with a scream and turns pale—if birds can turn pale. Somebody has touched the nest: a shred of grass on the door-sill has been moved half a hair's breadth, and nothing will induce either of the pair to touch it again. They find a new place and, with luck, build a new nest without being discovered; but the cock wren has the mortification of hearing humans say that he built that deserted house all by himself in defiance of his wife, and call it a "cock nest." Cock nests are common, for wrens will abandon work if they even think they have been seen building.

The ravens have built or repaired their house and the hen is sitting on her four or five eggs, while he forages around. He prefers lamb, but is quite content with a rat in default: so good a ratcatcher is the raven that were he only allowed scope for his skill on the farm where rats are not wanted he might by his services in this direction recover a shred of good character. He has no more character now than a ticket-of-leave man. The rookery is a chaos of theft, mendacity, and strife: the young and inexperienced couples, married, according to tradition, on March 18th, are bringing sticks, and the old hands are stealing them. These young rooks would gladly go and start nesting on the trees a couple of fields away, but that would not be tolerated for an hour: the old ones would send a deputation with instructions not to leave one stick lying on another. So the unfortunate young couples stay and do what stealing they can on their own account. The rooks do not sleep in the rookery while building is in progress, but adjourn by consent to distant trees: so the sensible rook remains after working hours and steals industriously from the other nests.



"HE HAS NO MORE CHARACTER NOW THAN A TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN."

A few more insects make their appearance: the quaker moth in his grey dress and the virgin moth nearly as sober in his attire. The carrion beetle appears, and him known to housewives as the bacon beetle: the latter is domestic in his tastes and destructive in his habits: his powers of mischief are surprising in a creature only a quarter of an inch long. He loves fat bacon, but will put up with old boot if necessity compel: he eats corks for a change, but, it is only fair to say, without ulterior motive. The universally distributed and unpopular flea reaches the perfect stage of his imperfections late in February, and it is said that country people in Kent make a practice of keeping the

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cottage door shut all day on March 1st under the impression that this simple measure will keep him out of the house for twelve months. The active and intelligent earwig emerges from retirement with an invigorated appetite for flowers. The earwig for ages has been misrepresented and misunderstood: we shall meet him, or his wife, later on.

"A KENT HOPPER."

The blackbird and the thrush are deep in their domestic labours now: each species brings up two or three families during the season, so it behoves them to begin early. Both blackbird and thrush rear their children on sound utilitarian principles, requiring those of the first brood to lend assistance in tending their younger brothers and sisters. The cock thrush sets a good example by taking an occasional turn on the eggs when his wife wants to go out to tea, but the blackbird is less accommodating: fighting is far more in his line than nursery-work. The thrush considers her nest incomplete without a nicely smoothed and water-tight lining made of mud. Most birds of her size prefer a bed of soft, dry grass, but there is no accounting for tastes. The missel thrushes are nesting, too, for they mean to bring up a second family by-and-by. The missel thrush can take care of herself and her eggs. Even the magpie and jay think twice before trying to rob her nest while she or her mate is near. The hedge sparrow is sitting on her first clutch of blue eggs; the linnet is nesting also. All these early birds, save the missel thrush, who thinks the weather too mild, are singing their loudest and longest at this time, as is the skylark.

And who shall ask us song-birds the reason of our singing,
When all our wives are sitting and we are free from care?
When later spring's upon us, paternal duties bringing,
We have to feed the babies and sha'n't have time to spare.

The robins are building their nest: the orthodox site is some shallow hole in a bank, but the robin is often at pains to prove himself superior to family tradition. An old kettle tossed into the hedge, a ploughboy's discarded boot, an old jam-pot, commends itself to him; and having in mind the character of the robin one can imagine other birds accusing him of self-advertisement. If open windows offer opportunity he will build on a bookshelf, and has been known to take on lease a nook made between prayer-books and a corner of the book-ledge in a pew. He is always trying to qualify for a place in the "Curiosities" page of THE STRAND.

"TENDING THEIR YOUNGER BROTHERS AND SISTERS."

The resident meadow pipit or

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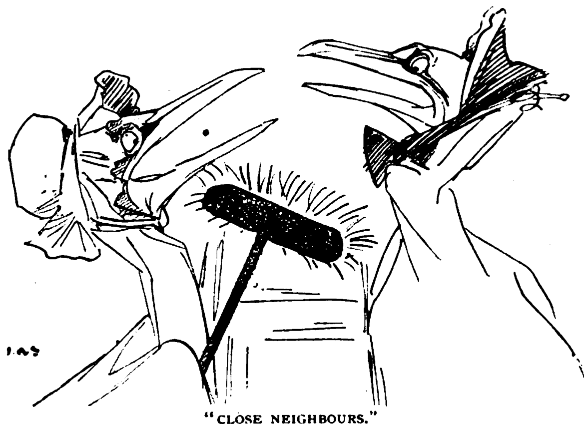
titlark is nesting. It is early, but perhaps the titlark's idea is to get the best places before the return of those of their relations who have been abroad for the winter. The early-nesting titlark has another advantage: she will hatch out her first brood before the cuckoo arrives, the cuckoo being particularly fond of imposing upon her.

The vixen has laid up her cubs in the main earth in the wood and discharges her maternal duties, comfortably conscious that hounds will not be allowed to hunt her. She does not welcome visitors' kind inquiries concerning the health of herself and family; in fact, if anyone calls she takes the first opportunity of moving her children to a new nursery, and if disturbed there seeks other lodgings at once.

The trout are rising now; in other words, sucking in flies as they float down stream: it appears an insignificant action, but has been known to send a grave and soberly conducted citizen home at a rate of ten miles an hour to fetch his rod, to make him forget his meals, and inspire his wife with the conviction that he has been drowned. Down by the horse-pond the ducks are waking the echoes with joyful and noisy laughter, because they have found the first frog spawn of the season. "Ha, ha, ha, haa! Kwa, kwa, kwa, kwa, kwah!" There is something suggestive of the kitchen in the unbridled joviality of the duck. The true spring migrants begin to come home during the latter end of March: the wheatear, who has nothing to do with wheat nor with ears, and who is almost as fond of experiments in nesting-places as the robin himself; the chiff-chaff, who, in spite of a delicate constitution, occasionally tries to brave an English winter, and if it be severe pays with his life for the experiment; the sand-martin, smallest of the swallow family and the first to return, appears to warn all whom it may concern that the swallows will soon be here bringing the spring.

On the coast the solan geese bethink them of family affairs and repair to the rock-stacks to begin quarrelling. The solan goose or gannet is not a more reputable character than the rook; and, as the birds nest in a colony, the storm of squabbling that goes on when building and stealing begin can be heard a mile away.



"CLOSE NEIGHBOURS."

The calm, deliberate snail is out carrying the house in which he spent the winter: there is a majestic repose in the demeanour of the snail which suggests conscious superiority, but which is too often rudely disturbed. The song thrush is his great enemy, and the snail must regret the good old fifteenth-century days when man kept the thrush in dove-cotes and fattened him on pounded figs and flour for the table: snails might walk abroad in peace then. The little field-mouse is nursing her first babies of the season in her underground nest. The field-mice are too active to go to bed for five or six months like some of their relations: with greedy providence they lay up a vast store of acorns, beech-mast, peas, beans, and corn, and live in luxury; unless some intrusive pig scents the store, never very deeply buried, when it disappears to the last grain. Mrs. Field-mouse presents her lord with a family about once a month from March to September. Foxes, weasels, hawks, and owls love the grown-ups; and the rook and the crow are said to dig the youngsters out of the nest and eat them: in fact, the supply of field-mouse is equalled only by the demand.

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The blackcock keeps up the grand old knightly exercise of the tournament, but the character of the ceremony is somewhat marred, from the sentimental point of view, by the fact that he marries with more than Moslem profusion. The tournament is held at dawn on some secluded spot consecrated to the purpose. Each male challenges all and sundry to fight: and all and sundry are so willing that triangular duels are common. While the feathers are flying, for it is no sham fight, the grey hens appear from the surrounding bushes, and, regardless of the laws of chivalry, would enter the lists themselves if allowed. The jousts over, beauty bestows its hands on the victor.

The long-eared bat shakes off dull sloth by degrees, and after much sneezing and coughing spreads his stiff wings and smooths out his ears. This bat is supposed to possess worse sight than others, wherefore these ears in compensation: to say that he can hear a gnat sigh is to convey but a feeble idea of the acuteness of his hearing. The pipistrelle is now making eyes at the young ladies of his acquaintance; it would be interesting to know if they use their wings as fans to hide their blushes.

The wood pigeons are nesting: they are content with a mere platform of loose twigs when they build for themselves, but evidently appreciate better quarters, as they often take lodgings for the season in a rook's old nest or the forsaken drey of a squirrel. The grouse have begun to lay: the eggs, yellowish white, closely blotched and mottled with rich chestnut and dark brown, are very beautiful, but the colours are not "fast" when the eggs are first laid, and the careless bird often scratches and smudges the paint before it dries. The nest is a disgrace: the merest scratching, with any odds and ends of dry stuff that may be lying handy scraped in to furnish it. The young stag drops his antlers now, old ones postpone doing so till later; the red deer can't bear to waste his trophies, so he eats them, possibly as medicine. The stag must receive a terrible shock the first time he sees his discrowned head reflected in a pool: he is sensitive about his appearance, for he goes quietly away into secluded places where frivolous hinds won't see and laugh at him. The roebuck's horns, which he shed at Christmas, are fully grown again ere now.

"FROM MARCH TO SEPTEMBER."

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THE GODDESS IN THE CAR

BY C. N. AND A. M. WILLIAMSON.

WITH a whirr like the beating of mighty wings, the giant automobile rushed through the night along a solitary part of the broad, white road between Paris and Chartres. Its blazing acetylene lights rent the darkness with a blinding glare; behind it travelled a pillar of dust; stones and twigs were swirled into the air-vortex created by its passage. Goggled. masked, clothed all in black leather, Raoul Jullien bent over the steering-wheel. Crouched at his feet was a slighter enshrouded figure (like a familiar attending a demon), stop-watch in hand, looking eagerly for the kilomètre stones as they flickered by, one every forty seconds.

Suddenly on the driver's ears there fell a sound which caused him to stiffen in his seat and slightly turn his head to listen. The crouching shape at his feet heard it also, for there was a quick lifting of the head, and through the round goggles that protected the eyes shot a questioning gleam. The sound became each instant more insistent: it seemed in Raoul's bewildered ears like a cataract with a heart throbbing in it. Then there was the loud clanging of a gong, a reverberation that might have been the shouting of a human voice. If he had dared, Raoul would have turned to look; but a moment after the strange sounds smote upon his consciousness he had their explanation. There was a rush of air that left him gasping, a blaze of light that blinded. A large automobile dashed by, just shaving his left wheel, and leaving him enveloped in a swirling cloud of dust with which his head-lights contended as ineffectually as the rays of a lighthouse with a sea-fog. His face was stung with flying stones; he could scarcely breathe; he could not see a yard ahead. With a curse he threw out the clutch and put on the brakes. The great car came to a sudden stop. Far away was the dying murmur of the car that had outpaced it. Raoul strained his senses to listen till the throbbing beats melted into the silence of the night. Then he jumped down on to the road, whipped off his cap, his goggles, and his silken mask, stamped furiously on the ground, and shook his fist in the air. At that moment Jullien's handsome face was not agreeable to gaze upon.

"Why, father, you have what I call your

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Satan look," said a half-taunting voice at his elbow, in very melodious French. The malignity died out of Raoul's eyes, and he turned upon the speaker with a satirical smile. It was a tall girl who faced him—a girl of perhaps nineteen, in a grey, close-fitting, tailor-made dress that showed the beauty of a well-poised figure. In one leather-gauntleted hand she swung her cap and mask, the other still held the stop-watch with which she had been timing the speed of the car. The night breeze sighing along the poplar-shaded road ruffled the rings of bright hair that framed her broad, low forehead. Her hazel eyes looked black in the reflection of the acetylene lamps, the half-laughing curve of her red lips with an inner sparkle of white teeth was full of resolution, of recklessness, and of humour.

"That was the English car; you're done," the girl went on, half-mockingly. Then, with a rapid change of tone, "I'm sorry," she added.

"That, as you say," came the quiet answer, "was the English car. I have not made you an expert automobilist for nothing. There is no French or German car whose motor makes a beat like that; it is something very new."

"It is also something very fast," suggested the girl.

"Also something very fast," assented the man. "So fast," he went on, slowly, "that if it runs in the Paris-Bordeaux race there is no chance for me—for us."

"That's what I have been thinking," replied the girl. She was studying the man's face intently. Her gaze suggested confidence, admiration, and expectation. It seemed to say: "I know you're in a difficulty, but I am sure you will get out of it. I am only interested in wondering what means you will adopt."

With an ostentatious politeness the man motioned the girl towards the car and mounted again to his place. He had not stopped the motor, which had gone humming rhythmically on during the brief talk on the road; now he turned the car on the broad highway and set her head towards Paris. He went at speed, perhaps at forty miles an hour—not the furious racing pace at which the car had been travelling when she was passed by the other. There was no need now to yell into his companion's ear if he wished to make himself heard; they could speak in ordinary conversational tones.

"This is a serious business, Diane," the man began. "I have told you how much depends on my winning this race. The prize is large; I believed there was no competing car that could go as fast or stay as well as mine. If I win the race we are in clover again; if I lose, it's bankruptcy at the least—perhaps worse things than that. On this car I have spent all my skill, all my experience. With decent luck I might look upon the prize as in my pocket. Now comes this cursed Englishman with his infernal car! It's lucky we saw him to-night, eh? Knowing how dangerous he is, we can take steps——"

"What steps?" asked the girl.

"Wait a little; let me think—then I'll tell you."

They were at the outskirts of Paris, and dawn was stealing over the city, when the man bent down and spoke long and earnestly into the girl's ear. She flushed as she listened, then clapped her leather-gloved hands when she fully understood what was expected of her.

"I'll do it, father," she cried, as the car stopped at last and swung into a large *garage* in the Avenue de la Grande Armée; "you know I'd risk more than that for you. Besides, it's an adventure I shall revel in. I'll sleep now, and after breakfast I'll lose no time in getting on the war-path."

Raoul Jullien kissed his step-daughter on the forehead.

The apartment where the inventor and famous automobilist lived with his beautiful half-English step-daughter was over the workshop; but when Diane peeped into his study between eight and nine o'clock the same morning he was not there. The girl went quickly out into the street and took an omnibus that led to the outskirts of the city. She was simply dressed in rather shabby black, with her masses of bright brown hair brushed up and hidden under a wide-brimmed hat. Her mended gloves, the worn purse she carried in her hand, the sadness of her beautiful face, from which, with an effort, she had chased all gaiety, gave her the air of a girl struggling with poverty, and compassion mingled with admiration in the looks men cast upon her. Where the omnibus stopped she got down, asked a question of a policeman, then picked her way towards a thoroughfare of workshops.

As she approached a certain number she slackened her pace and strolled carelessly by the door. A notice-board with the words "*à louer*" hung by one corner. The high doors of the workshop were shut, but Diane's quick eyes saw the tracks of enormous "pneus" in the dust, disappearing

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under them, and she knew she had come to the right place. She formed a sudden resolution and gave a hesitating pull at the rusty bell. She heard it tinkle inside, then stood waiting with a fast-beating heart. There was a firm step within, two heavy bolts were withdrawn, the large doors swung open a little way, and a young man stood looking at her.

He was dressed in the blue blouse of the French mechanic, yet he was unmistakably English. Aged about twenty-six or seven, he was erect, broad shouldered, virile. He had clean-cut features, his clear skin was darkly sunburnt, and a pair of brigh blue eyes looked out from the brown face with peculiar and pleasant frankness.

Diane's own father, long dead, had been English. The language which she had first learned to speak was English; but her mother had returned to France when the girl was nine or ten years old, and had soon after married Raoul Jullien. For ten years, therefore, Diane's associations had been wholly French. She had been taught to dislike her father's countrymen, and the few she had chanced to meet had not been of an attractive type. Whether or not her dead father had been of finer clay, she had no means of knowing, for her mother had died while she was still a child, and Raoul, who had kept her constantly with him, hated England and the English.

"CAN I SEE THE MASTER HERE?"

But this Englishman in the mechanic's blouse had a face that won her respect and a curious, unwilling sympathy, with the first glance. Diane was brave to recklessness herself, and she adored courage in a man. This man looked as if he would fear nothing. And his eyes were so true that it would be difficult not to believe all he might say.

"*Bon jour,*" he began. But Diane, whose mind had travelled miles in the seconds since their glances met, answered him in English, which (as it had been the language of her infancy and childhood) she spoke without foreign accent. "Good morning," she said. "You, too, are English. Can I see the master here?"

"Master?" echoed the young man, smiling. "There's no master here, unless I'm master."

Diane was surprised. Her adventure was likely to be more dramatic than she had fancied; yet—she wished that the fight were to be waged with a different man. However, there was nothing to do but go on with the programme as it had been mapped out.

She let her eyelids droop, and tottering slightly, caught with one shabbily-gloved hand at the door-post as if for support. "I beg your pardon," she murmured. "I'm a little faint. I—I haven't had any breakfast. I'm looking for work. I thought, as you're English here, there might be something—typewriting—almost anything. But I'm afraid——" she paused, with a tremor in her voice that was not wholly feigned.

"Please come in," the man said, eagerly. "This isn't a workshop. But do let me get you something from the *café* close by. I shall be so glad. And——we're both English."

"Yes, I trust you. And I shall be thankful," Diane answered. With this she looked up, and met such a kind, pitying, and admiring gaze, that she dropped her eyes hastily, the shamed blood mounting guiltily to her forehead.

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The young man opened the door, and she passed into a large, bare workshop, with a partitioned space at the farther end. A mingled odour of oil, hot metal, and petrol greeted her nostrils.

The proprietor pulled forward a chair for his guest. "Please sit down," he begged. "I'll be at the *café* and back in five minutes."

He snatched his hat and ran out, shutting the door behind him.

The instant that the sound of his steps died away Diane jumped up and darted to the partition. She was no longer drooping, but as keen and alert as a hunter on the trail. Five minutes and he would be back. She had five minutes.

Behind the screen stood a great racing automobile.

Its shape puzzled her. There was no bonnet in front covering the motor, no coiling radiator; the engines seemed to be concealed within the body of the carriage, which was of dull grey aluminium. Hastily she pulled down the wooden front of the car, and there was revealed to her a motor of a new kind, differing entirely from the French and German types, with all of which she was familiar.

Skilled as she was in mechanical contrivances, she could not at once grasp the idea of the new machine before her; but, lifting out the floor of the car, she saw a curious arrangement of eight horizontal cylinders placed in fours, crosswise, and in a second she realized that this meant the abolition of water-cooling, which necessitates an apparatus cumbersome, heavy, and expensive. This motor was cooled by air; the shafts were fixed, causing the cylinders to rotate in a horizontal plane. In thus rotating they would keep themselves cool by means of fan-shaped flanges cast upon them. There was no separate fly-wheel; the cylinders formed the fly-wheel, thus giving compactness, great power in a small space, and, above all, extreme lightness. Of these eight cylinders, each one looked to Diane's practised eye as if it might develop about five-horse power, making forty-horse power altogether; but owing to the lightness of the car it might successfully be backed against another of sixty-horse power.

Diane's eyes brightened with admiration for the audacity of the invention and the brilliant way in which it was worked out; but suddenly came the recollection that this very cleverness meant ruin for her step-father. He would assuredly—unless the Englishman met with some untoward accident—be beaten in the great race, and then—the deluge!

The girl did not love her step-father, but she had grown so used to his unscrupulous ways that she hardly realized they were unscrupulous—often dishonourable. He had such an amusing method of justifying himself; he was so witty, so gloriously audacious; his smart twistings and turnings of fortune to suit his own ends had afforded so much sport to them both in their eventful life. Besides, Diane believed (Raoul had impressed it upon her often enough) that she was penniless and owed everything to her step-father's generosity. And one of her virtues was a capacity for passionate gratitude.

This poor English inventor, so clever, so young! What a pity it was! How she hated herself! And yet—and yet—— Oh, when Raoul knew what a rival he had he would surely set some strange scheme on foot.

Into the midst of her reflections came a distant sound, or she imagined it. With lightning speed and deftness she replaced the floor, closed the car, flew back to her chair, and had dropped into it just as her unsuspecting host awkwardly opened the door, bearing in one hand a tray with a steaming coffee-pot, fresh rolls, and crisp curls of yellow butter.

That he was unsuspecting was the cruel part. Diane liked fighting; but the fight must be fair and above-board. She tried to salve her conscience as she played at eating the Englishman's food by telling herself that, after all, she was doing him no great harm. She would merely report what she had seen to Raoul. What he would then think fit to do she did not know, and she was not responsible; but her sophistries, worked out under those honest eyes, brought no consolation.

He trusted her, this Sidney Armstrong. He told her things about himself, and even confided to her that he had a motor-car which he had entered for the great race to-morrow morning. To win meant everything to him—just as it did to Raoul Jullien; yet instinctively she knew that this man would sooner lose the race, and his life too, than win by means which were dishonourable. He asked questions concerning herself, which she answered with lies that choked her; and he was eager to help. Were they not both young, both English? Was she not a girl alone? And what was a countryman in a strange land for, if not to help?

But Diane made excuses; said that she had an address or two at which to call. She was much better now and could go on. But she wished him luck, and—perhaps—she would let him know by-and-by how she fared.

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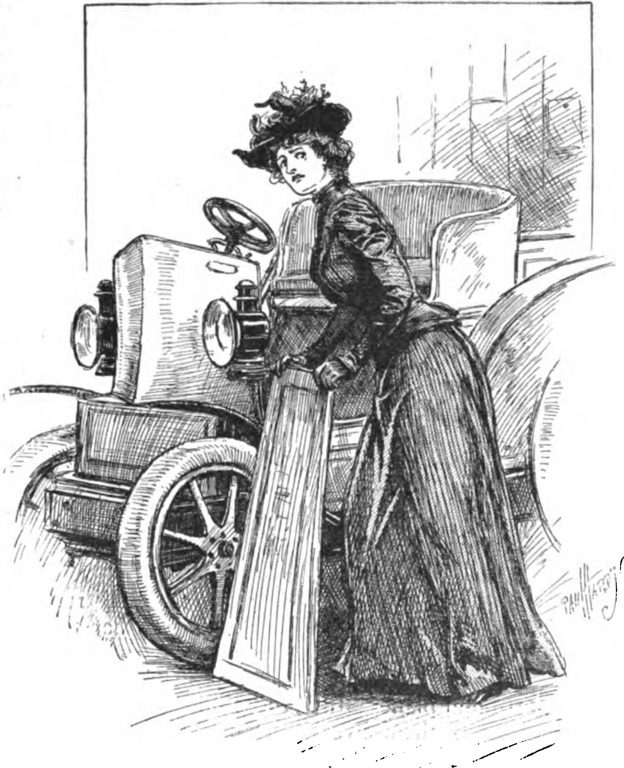
Then, somehow, she got away; and the warm, cordial pressure of his hand set her nerves tingling.

As Diane reached home she met the postman at the door, just in time to take in a letter addressed in a business-like hand. It was a rare thing for her to receive a letter, as she had no friends; but before opening it she inquired of their one servant if M. Jullien were in. He had been obliged to go out for a little while, said the woman, but had left word that he particularly wanted to see mademoiselle, and would soon be back. Then Diane opened the letter. It was from a firm of solicitors in London. She read it once, twice, then again, still scarcely understanding what it meant, unable to realize all that was involved in these formal words: "The annual allowance made to her for the last ten years by her uncle in England would in future be increased from twelve thousand five hundred francs to twenty-five thousand francs per annum, owing to the death of a cousin, whose share would now go to her." Why, she had received no allowance, she did not even know she had an English uncle! She had always imagined herself penniless, supported out of kindness of heart by her step-father. What, then, had become of all this money that was hers—this one hundred and twenty-five thousand francs? A hot flush mounted to her forehead as the truth forced itself into her mind.



"INTO THE MIDST OF HER REFLECTIONS CAME A DISTANT SOUND."

At that instant the door opened, and Raoul, the *débonnaire*, the easy-going, unscrupulous schemer, came gaily in.

"Has Denis been here?" he asked, brightly, looking round the room. "Ah, I see he hasn't. I called to see him, missed him, left word for him to come on here, and thought that he might have arrived before me."

"Denis!" exclaimed the girl. "What do you want with Denis? He is a horrible man."

"Oh, Denis is not such a bad fellow. But why is my little step-daughter so tragic to-day? What is that paper in your hand?"

Silently she handed him the letter. His dark eyes comprehended its purport in a flash, and, when he looked up at her, she read guilt in his face.

"It is true, then?" she said, coldly. "You have taken my money and spent it all these years, making me believe that I was dependent on you. You have intercepted my letters——"

"Had I not the right?" broke in Raoul. "Am I not your guardian? Have I not educated you, clothed you, fed you? But let us talk of this later, and I can explain everything. The urgent question is: What have you found out about the English car?" He had changed again to his usual manner.

"Everything. You have no chance against it. It is an air-cooled motor, quite new in design. It is both powerful and light." Raoul looked black. "Now I have done my part of the business, you must keep your promise and tell me what are your plans. What do you mean to do?"

"To do?" answered her step-father,

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innocently. "Why, what can be done? Make the best fight possible, I suppose; and, if I'm beaten, take it as well as I can."

Diane knew that he was not speaking the truth. There was challenge in his eyes. He realized that everything was changed between his step-daughter and himself. She had found him out, and would trust him no longer. Therefore he would not trust her. Whatever plans he had in his mind he would carry out alone. Each understood this, though no word was spoken. Hitherto Diane had believed that, however Raoul might behave to others, to her he was loyal. From this belief she had been rudely awakened, and she began to look with new eyes on the schemer with whose fate the chances of life had linked her own. She was sure that some plot was being hatched by Jullien against the young English inventor, and already she hated herself for the ready acquiescence with which, for the sake of "adventure," she had consented to play the spy. The man Denis, whom Raoul sometimes employed in shady transactions, was her special detestation. She resolved to watch, and if possible frustrate any underhand scheme the two might set on foot.

As the day wore on Diane's strong nerves were keyed almost to the breaking point. Raoul avoided her, spending all his time in the *garage* superintending the mechanics who were preparing his great automobile for the early morning start in the morrow's momentous race. Once, when Diane had restlessly followed her step-father to the workshop, she saw the stealthy-footed Denis come in, draw him apart, and talk with him in whispers, then glide out again. Raoul dined at his usual restaurant; Diane ate at home alone. The start of the race was at 2.30 in the morning, and competitors had to be at their places, for the examination of papers, half an hour beforehand. It took half an hour to reach Ville d'Avray through the crowded traffic of cycles, carriages, cabs, and motor-cars; and the girl knew that her step-father would start about half-past one o'clock.

He had promised to take her with him to the starting-point, where he would be joined by the mechanic who was to accompany him to Bordeaux; but since their conversation of the morning he had not mentioned this again, and she supposed that he now wished her to remain at home.

Towards eleven o'clock at night Diane was fully dressed in her room when she heard her step-father come upstairs. He moved softly about in the hall—seemed to approach her door and listen, then went to the *salon*. She noticed that he left the outer door of the flat unfastened, and ten minutes later there came another step on the staircase. She recognised the thin voice of Denis. Raoul called him in; the door of the *salon* was closed with a bang. Diane reasoned that whatever plot was afoot against the Englishman was now probably ripe for execution, and her heart knocked against her side. It took but a few moments to persuade herself that if it were lawful to play the spy upon an innocent man in the morning it was certainly lawful to do the same by two conspirators at night, and accordingly she stole on tiptoe to the door of her room. It was locked! At the instant of this discovery it flashed into Diane's mind that there was still a way by which she could overhear what her step-father and Denis were saying. She crept to the window of her room, pushed open the wooden sun-blinds, and peeped out. A stream of light issued from the *salon* window. Some 3ft. below her was a cornice of stone, perhaps 10in. broad, which ran along the house. As a daring child she had more than once made the passage from one room to another along this perilous way, and her nerve was not less steady now. True, if she slipped, there was a fall of 60ft. into the dark courtyard below; but she did not mean to fall. She pulled off her little high-heeled shoes, lowered herself on to the ledge, and, with her face to the wall of the house, her open hands pressed against it for support, moved cautiously along the narrow ledge. When she reached the *salon* window she crouched down, holding on by the half-open *persienne*, and peered in between its lattices.

Her step-father and Denis were standing up, facing each other under the circle of light thrown from the hanging-lamp, a scar across Denis's cheek standing out vividly like a scarlet thread.

"No need for that," Raoul was saying. "A strong sleeping-draught will keep him quiet for the next twelve hours, and is all that's necessary. Your plan for getting in is good. We can disable the car also by taking away the sparking-plugs. Come; there is no time to lose."

They each took a *fine champagne* from a carafe on the table, Raoul lowered the lamp, and they went out. As the *salon* door closed Diane heard the lock click, and realized that she was to be kept a prisoner till all danger of her intervention was past.

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"HER STEP-FATHER AND DENIS WERE STANDING UP FACING EACH OTHER."

It was dark and very still in the large bare workshop Sidney Armstrong had rented. The vague roar of traffic came muffled from the street, and the insistent voices of hawkers crying newspapers rose above the other sounds.

The young Englishman lay motionless upon his back, his head pillowed on a block of wood. His breathing was deep and regular. At last he opened his eyes, but the lids closed heavily, and he was still for half an hour more. Then his eyes opened again and he lay staring up into the darkness. He could not remember where he was. His brain was acting confusedly and great billows of vapour seemed to be rolling over him. He tried to think, but could not piece things together consecutively. He wondered what time it was, and, with an effort, felt for the match-box in his pocket, struck a light, and looked at his watch. It had stopped at two o'clock. But two o'clock *when?* What day was this? Then suddenly, as with a lightning flash, all became clear: this was the day of the great race! His heart gave a bound and he struggled to his feet, feeling unaccountably weak and shattered. He remembered now that he had determined not to leave his car last night, but to stay by it, and have supper sent in from the adjacent *café.* The supper had come, brought by a strange waiter whose face he did not know, a loquacious fellow with a red scar across his cheek, who stood talking to him as he ate and drank. There was a bottle of beer, which the waiter opened and poured out. He was thirsty, and drank a glass right off. Then things had seemed blurred and dim, the waiter's face had grown larger and larger; and he was laughing hideously. After that Armstrong remembered nothing.

Two o'clock! His watch had stopped at two. Why, the start for the race was at half-past two, away at Ville d'Avray. He had overslept himself; he could not get there in time; he was ruined!

Instinctively he turned his head to the partitioned space behind which he kept the car hidden from prying eyes. The doors were open; the car was gone! Armstrong reeled as though he had been struck on the head. The thing which had happened seemed so monstrous that his mind refused to believe it. For an instant he imagined that he must be the victim of a delusion.

As he stood thus, overwhelmed, there came the hoarse cry of a hawker from the street outside, "*Le Vélo, Le Vélo*—result of the Paris-Bordeaux race." Armstrong stamped his foot on the ground to make sure that he was awake, and not the prey of some spell of magic. The race over? Impossible! He felt that he must go mad if he did not rend the mystery which was stifling him. He hurried, unsteadily, to the outer door and looked into the street. The lamps were

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lighted. It was dark. He beckoned the man who had a bundle of newspapers under his arm, asked for *Le Vélo*, and demanded the time. "Getting on for ten o'clock," said the fellow, putting the sheet into his hand and hurrying away.

Armstrong leaned against the doorpost of his workshop and looked at the paper. Again there swept over him the same overwhelming sense of unreality as his eyes took in these words in large type on the front page: "Paris-Bordeaux—Victory for the English Car — Armstrong, the English Inventor, Breaks the Record on his Air-Cooled Motor—Full Description of the Great Race—Scenes on the Road, by Our Special Correspondents."

The Englishman passed a hand over his forehead and read on: "Paris-Bordeaux this year has resulted in an overwhelming victory for the dark horse—the English car. French automobilists have been humiliated—crushed: it is the only word to use. Everyone is stupefied. After the previous performances of English cars little attention was paid to the one English automobile entered for this year's race, though a rumour somehow crept out that the car was a very powerful one. The young English inventor (to whom, though he has humbled our national pride, all honour must be given) arranged for us a series of dramatic surprises. He was almost late at the starting-point. The officials of A.C.F. had thrice called his name, without reply, when there was a wave of excitement among the spectators, and the great car came tearing to the starting-point. Its novel shape caused intense astonishment. The inventor, Sidney Armstrong, is young and extremely slight. He wore his goggles and mask, so that his face could scarcely be seen; but many spectators said that so frail-looking a *chauffeur* would never be able to stand the terrific strain of the race to Bordeaux. Contrary to universal practice, Armstrong was unaccompanied by a *mécanicien*. His papers were in due order. The French favourite, Raoul Jullien, who started second, had departed, amid loud cheering, before the English car, which started eighteenth, had come upon the scene. When the judge gave the word 'Go' there was a cry of astonishment at the marvellous way in which the English automobile bounded forward, and the spectators lining the road beyond the railway-bridge said that the car had scarcely come into view at the bottom of the hill before it was out of sight at the top. It makes a strange whirring noise, different to the sound of any French automobile."

Then followed a minute account of every phase of the race, sent by correspondents stationed along the route. Everywhere there was unbounded surprise when the English car was seen to be going faster than all the others, overhauling them and passing them one by one. "Between Châtellerault and Poitiers Armstrong was gaining rapidly on the leading French car driven by Raoul Jullien. Here there was a sensational incident. Jullien, not dreaming that any other car could overtake him, was holding the centre of the road and going at great speed. Suddenly his *mécanicien* drew his attention to the fact that the English car was gaining on him. At the sound of the loud clanging of the gong on the English car just behind him the intrepid Jullien seemed to lose his nerve. He looked over his shoulder, which was, of course, an act of madness. His car swerved, and just as Armstrong came alongside him Jullien's car ran off the road and overturned in a broad ditch. Jullien and his *mécanicien* were sent flying, and the spectators thought they must certainly be killed. Seeing what had happened, the Englishman stopped his car within a few yards and ran to the help of the French champion, who was lying motionless. Armstrong showed great agitation at the unhappy accident; but when a local doctor who had been among the spectators assured him after a hasty examination that there were no bones broken, and that Jullien was merely stunned by his fall, the young Englishman ran to his car, started again amid the cheers of the bystanders (touched by his obvious feeling at the distressing incident), and in a few moments was out of sight." Finally there was an account of his triumphal entry into Bordeaux far in advance of any other competing cars, and in fifty-five minutes less than the time in which Fournier had accomplished the distance.

Armstrong read these details like a man dazed. It was as unreal as if a mesmerist had hypnotized him, and he wondered vaguely when all this was going to end and he was to enter again into real life—the real life where miracles do not happen. Then a sound smote on his ears. It was like familiar music to his bewildered senses. He looked up. Along the crowded street came speeding a great racing-car, the people separating to give it a clear course. It slackened pace opposite to him, turned in a graceful curve, and ran gently past him into the work-

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shop. It was his own car, its aluminium body yellow now with dust; and from the chair-seat there sprang a slight figure, clothed in the black leather knickerbockers and black leather coat of a *chauffeur*. One movement of a little gauntleted hand and the disfiguring mask, the large, close-fitting cap, were plucked off, and down tumbled a mass of bright brown hair which had been tucked underneath the cap.

Dressed in his own leather clothes, which had lain ready for him to wear, with his papers in the pockets (he had not even noticed their loss), stood the girl to whom he had given shelter and food yesterday morning—or was it years ago? And Sidney Armstrong thought himself still dreaming. Yet it was she, more beautiful than in the hour which had only seemed long because he had fallen fathoms deep in love as its sixty minutes passed.

He stared at the vision, and as he stared the vision broke into tears. In his dream she sobbed and laughed, and explained strange things, hardly seeming to know in her excitement that he had caught her outstretched hands and was holding them tightly — so tightly that the pressure must have hurt.

"JULLIEN AND HIS MÉCANICIEN WERE SENT FLYING."

In the dream she was begging him to forgive her and some man who had injured him —to forgive the man for her sake, and forgive

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her because she had won the race for him to make up for some sin which he did not even know that she had committed. And she was telling how she had been locked up in a house somewhere, and had cut a hole in the panel of the door with a knife; how she had heard of a plot to drug him so that he would sleep until the great race was run, and to disable the car, also, lest by any chance he should recover too soon.

"I had to make up to you somehow," she sobbed, still in the dream. "I thought it all out—what I should do. I took sparking-plugs from his workshop, for I knew he would have stolen yours. It was midnight when I got away and came to your place. I had to get in, so I climbed through that little window up there. You were lying insensible on the floor, looking like death, but I was sure you were not dead—that you would wake up, well enough, when it was too late. So I did what I could for you in a moment or two to make you comfortable, and then turned to the car. That was what you would wish most. Afterwards — oh, I hardly know what happened — I am dazed still. There was only one thing to do if your car was to have its chance. These clothes—I had to put them on, and be *you*. The race! Why, it seems to me now as I look back like a flickering picture in a cinematograph. I think it will never be clearer in my mind. I'd only ten minutes in Bordeaux—I wouldn't stay; for, you see, I *had* to come back and tell you—everything. You would be breaking your heart with anxiety, and, after doing my best to ruin you, I owed you that. Nothing they could say would stop me, and I came back by a different road, not to be delayed, for each moment would be an hour to you. Here I am at last—at last! And your car has won. I've done my best to atone. *Can you forgive me?*"

"Forgive—you!" he echoed. "When I owe you everything? When you've won the race, and half killed yourself — for me? You're not a woman—you're a goddess! I ought to be on my knees to you——"

"No! If you let me go I shall fall," she laughed and cried together, clinging to him. "I'm weak and broken, but so happy!"

"I worship you!"

"I know. Your eyes said it. That's why I'm happy. And I've won the race."

"You've won me—every fibre of me. Don't be angry. Just because I'd never seen you till yesterday, you think, perhaps——"

"Oh, it's a lifetime since yesterday."

"And I've known you always."

Sidney Armstrong was no longer dreaming. His happiness was real.

"CAN YOU FORGIVE ME?

The Inter-'Varsity Sports; and Some Records.

By C. B. Fry.

From Photographs by Stearn, Cambridge.

THE annual contest in track-athletics between Oxford and Cambridge is distinguished from the generality of such meetings, indeed from practically all our first-class meetings, in that its main idea is not man against man but team against team. The point at issue being whether Light or Dark Blue is to succeed in gaining first place in the greater number of "events," each of the various competitions included in the programme has a double interest, first for its own sake and then for its bearing upon the collective result; a race once over is not straightway done with, for not until either side has won more than half the total number of "events" is the question of victory decided. Thus the Inter-'Varsity Sports are invested with a thorough-going unity and a sustained plot-interest, both of which are wanting, for instance, in the Amateur Championships, where each race is independent and, beyond the accident of being held on the same afternoon, has no relation to the rest. This collective character, however, so far from diminishing the interest of each particular event, rather increases it by investing the part with the importance of the whole. Then, over and above, there remains the personal interest in the style and achievements of the individual athlete, and the subsidiary interest in the performances that stand out as "best on record."

The features of the sports and their place in the world of athletics may perhaps be suggested by a review of the ten "events" of which they are composed, together with some mention of the prominent feats and records.

The hundred yards race makes a good introduction to the sports. In anticipation the race is always exciting, because none, even of the *cognoscenti*, with full information about previous performances, can surely pick the winner. Times recorded for sprints in trial races are notoriously deceptive, because watches and time-keepers, to say nothing of conditions such as tracks, wind, and weather, differ considerably.

Since, too, the race run all fair is usually decided by a narrow margin, often by a few inches, seldom by more than a couple of feet, a slight mistake at the start or in the running may retard the fastest man enough to lose him the race. For instance, not many years ago one of the Cambridge sprinters, who on form had a fine chance of winning, was easily beaten because during the race he was thrown out for a stride or two by treading on the tag of a careless shoelace. And again, an Oxford man leading his field by a clear foot within some twenty yards of the finish, where he could not well have been caught, foolishly turned his head for a nervous glimpse of the other runners, and therein not only lost his lead but was clean passed by two of his rivals. One Old Blue declares he lost the hundred purely because he allowed his mind to wander for one flash of time from the supreme idea of reaching the tape; in wondering where his colleague was the relaxation of his mind from the intense effort of full speed seemed to ungear his pace just enough to allow the second string, who as a matter of fact was running level with him, to forge the necessary inches ahead.

No wonder the sprinters feel that hollow, lonely sensation as they wait before the fire in the long dressing-room at Queen's Club for the steward to call them out. An anxious man is the sprinter before the race. He feels a trifle better as he emerges from the barrier and takes his preliminary trot round the starting-post. There he finds Mr. Wilkinson, the Sheffield professional starter, who always officiates at these meetings, waiting serenely with loaded pistol. Such a pistol, too! Stubby barrel, muzzle-loading, about ten bore, rammed brimful of black powder. Wilkinson will have none of new-fangled revolvers; he prefers his old-fashioned little cannon, with its copper caps, which "never misses fire and makes a noise." He is an adept at starting sprint-races—a ticklish job, because, if the highly-strung nerves of the runners are flurried, there is sure to be trouble with contagious unsteadiness on the mark and false starts. In the Inter-'Varsity Sports there is no such thing as enforcing the rigour of the A.A.A. law which puts back a yard the man who makes a false start. But Wilkinson will not let the runners go till he has them rigidly steady. Usually, he secures this immediately. The moment the four "strings" arrive and begin to strip he informs

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THE 100 YARDS—A. E. HIND WINNING, 1901.

Ramsbotham and G. Jordan, of Oxford, showed a high degree of pace, but none of them were particularly smart starters. Ramsbotham travelled marvellously fast in the last thirty or forty yards, but, slow at getting up his speed, spoilt his time at the beginning of the race. Both Jordan and Monypenny were comparatively better at 120 or 150 yards. The latter, indeed, equalled the British amateur record of 14 4-5th sec. for 150 yards, a splendid time. Last year the Cambridge sprinter, A. E. Hind, was timed on the Fenners track as having run the hundred in 9 4-5th sec. He did not, however, at Queen's Club succeed in approaching this phenomenal performance; but the track then was a trifle heavy and there was an appreciable head wind. Possibly he was capable of even time, but 9 4-5th sec. appears rather too good, since it means that Hind would have beaten Bradley and Downer on their championship form by about two yards. A recent Oxford sprinter, C. R. Thomas, achieved level time on the Iffley Road track. Judging partly by the times and partly by reminiscent inspection, I doubt whether more than a few 'Varsity sprinters, at any rate accord-

them, with a brief geniality suggestive of his desire that all four may win, that he will tell them to get on their marks and will fire when he sees them steady. Bang! And almost before the reverberation dies away the worsted is broken. There is a momentary comparison of opinions by the judges, and then the little flag, dark or light blue as the case may be, is run up to the head of the white mast in front of the pavilion, and the gentleman at the megaphone informs the assembly of all the details of the race, who has won, by how much, and in what time.

A good average time for the inter-'Varsity hundred yards is 10 2-5th sec., and only now and again is the race run faster. The inter-'Varsity record is 10sec., or, as it is called, level time; it dates back to the early seventies and is shared by three Oxford men—J. P. Tennant, J. H. Wilson, and G. H. Urmson. This equals the British amateur record standing to the credit of Wharton, Bradley, Downer, Duffey, and several others, but is not accepted as such on the books of the A.A.A. Many Old Blues consider Montagu Shearman as fast as any sprinter who has yet run for either 'Varsity: his time was 10 1-5th sec. More recently, C. J. B. Monypenny, of Cambridge, and A.

THE 100 YARDS—C. R. THOMAS WINNING, 1900.

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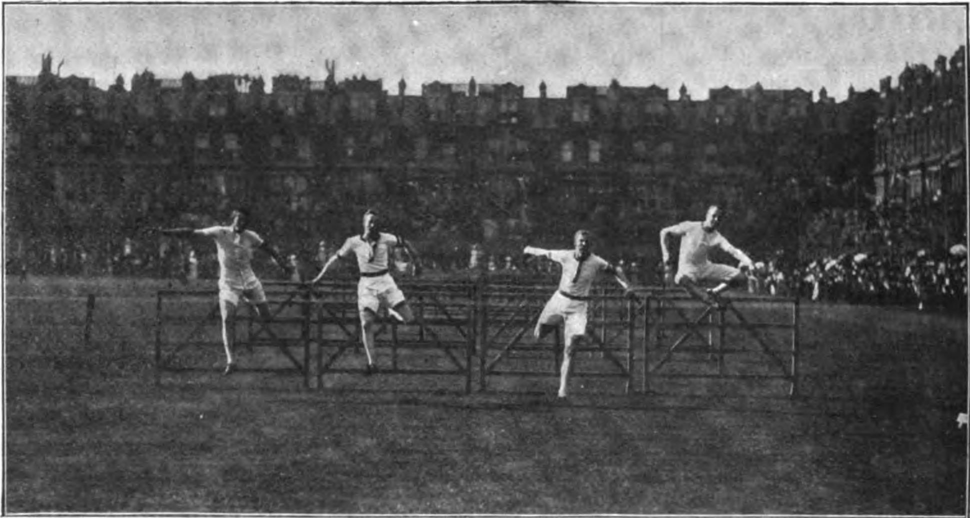
ing to their running in the Oxford and Cambridge Sports, have been quite up to championship form. Still, it must not be forgotten that the Inter-'Varsity Sports are held in the early spring, when the track is usually not dry and when the weather is cold and bleak, whereas the championship is held in the summer, usually under more favourable conditions. Another point to remember is that some of the best 'Varsity sprinters have blunted the extra fine edge of their speed by training for the quarter-mile. There is no doubt, too, that 'Varsity sprinters would make better times if they paid as much attention as the Americans to perfecting themselves in the art of starting.



THE HURDLES—E. T. GARNIER WINNING, 1898. HIS FOOT IS ON THE GROUND, WHILE THE OTHER RUNNERS ARE IN THE AIR.

On one count the hurdle race is *par excellence* the University event. Hurdling, for some inexplicable reason, has never been much practised anywhere except at Oxford and Cambridge. In years gone by it was fairly popular in the Nottingham district, and the London and provincial clubs have produced here and there an exceptionally fine hurdler, but none of them can show consistent quality in this branch of athletics. The high standard maintained by the 'Varsities is remarkable; indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that, with scarcely an exception, the inter-'Varsity winner has been absolutely first-class, and it may be added that the second man has often been so too. And not long ago E. A. Parkes, who ran third at Queen's Club, actually won the championship.

The sprinters' steeplechase, requiring a strong turn of speed combined with consummate art in fencing, though perhaps it yields to the quarter-mile in dramatic excitement, is generally regarded as the prettiest of all the events. To run 120 yards in 12 2-5th sec. on the flat is a fair performance, yet A. C. Kranzlein, the famous American hurdler, who holds the world's record, has run that distance over hurdles in 15 2-5th sec. The mechanical precision with which an adept hurdler takes three strides of equal length in between his obstacles, and slithers over the hurdle in his fourth, covering about 12ft. from rise to fall, is strikingly beautiful. A. B. Loder, W. R. Pollock, and W. G. Paget-Tomlinson, all of them Cantabs, hold the inter-'Varsity record of 16sec., a time exactly equal to the amateur record that stood for many years, until first Godfrey Shaw and then Kranzlein knocked it out. It must be remarked that as the inter-'Varsity hurdles have often been run on turf heavy with rain, some of the comparatively moderate times have actually been notable achievements. Paget - Tomlinson stripped a light-weight sprinter rather above middle height and finely proportioned. He had great speed between the hurdles, an elastic style in fencing, and a light foot. E. T. Garnier, who won three times and numbered Paget-Tomlinson among his conquered, was not nearly as fast between his hurdles, but cleared them so low and so completely without hang that he gained in the air what he lost on the flat. It is curious to note that his father, E. S. Garnier, won in 1871, and his younger brother, G. R. Garnier, in 1901.

The quarter-mile, long enough to provide

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sustained suspense and run at a pace sufficient to stimulate intense excitement, is a most popular race. From the athlete's point of view it has the doubtful interest of being the most exacting of all races. And often, to add to the dramatic feeling, it happens that the dread quarter is the turning-point of the sports. The skilled observer watches the race keenly, for, as it happens, the Queen's Club course for this race involves two sharp corners, so sharp as to be almost hazards; much may happen at either of them, and luck or judgment in negotiating them has often decided the race; it is quite easy to get jammed at either, or to be thrown on to an outside berth, and thus lose an irrecoverable yard or two. I have heard an old winner declare that the best tactics are to lead round both corners, which is easier said than done. Preconcerted plans for this race often "gang agley": the second string is afflicted with nice problems of how and when to get out of the way. One way and another the quarter is three races in one—a race for the first corner, a race for the second, and then a race for the tape.

THE QUARTER-MILE—W. FITZHERBERT BEATING G. JORDAN, 1896.

The 'Varsities are deservedly proud of their quarter-milers and these runners proud of their race. In cases when, as often happens, the same man is first string both in the hundred and in the quarter, his heart yearns rather for success in the latter. The history of the race is full of great struggles, and the times recorded have been consistently good ever since R. H. Macaulay in 1880 scored the first of his three successive wins for Cambridge. C. J. B. Monypenny in 1892 was the first to bring the time below 50sec.—he won by eight yards and in 49 4-5th sec. But this record was lowered yet another 1-5th sec. by another Cantab, W. Fitzherbert, in the second of his four duels with G. Jordan, in which each man won twice. Jordan in his second win equalled Monypenny's time. These three cracks differed in style. Monypenny, a lean, greyhound man, very light of limb, lifting his feet only a little from the ground, ran persistent and level, as though strung on a wire; he was a machine with multiplying gear in his action, so regular, smooth, and unflagging was the repetition of his long stride. Jordan, built somewhat like him but on bigger lines and more muscular, ran with a higher knee action, a fine, free stepper with fire and devil in his stride, making great play with his ankles and alighting each time on the very ball of his toe. It was a fine sight to see him about forty yards from home arch his eyebrows, set his teeth, and gather himself with a tigerish tug to his supreme effort. Fitzherbert, very tall and long of limb, swallowed up the track with a huge, lunging stride, little knee action or ankle play, but tremendous reach and power. He swayed just a trifle from side to side, like an American pacer; and sometimes at the end of the race the sway increased into a roll, but it was just then that his stride grew longer than ever. The power of his style saved it on the verge of ungainliness and made it pleasing to the eye. His races with Jordan, strong wine of athletic strife, were the finest things I have ever seen on a running track. Fitzherbert won the championship with 49 3-5th sec. in 1895, beating both E. C. Bredin and Jordan. Jordan ran the race in America in what is described as "a hair over 49." But the fastest of all 'Varsity quarter-milers, though he did not make his best time until after he had gone down, was H. C. L. Tindall, who still shares with E. C. Bredin the British amateur record of 48½sec.

As to the half-mile, its distinguishing characteristic is its late introduction into the Oxford and Cambridge programme. It is strange

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THE HALF-MILE—H. E. GRAHAM, RECORD-HOLDER, WINNING, 1900.

indeed that the race should not have been included until four years ago. Admittedly a fine race, the distance, besides being the common meeting-ground of the quarter-miler who is a good stayer and of the long-distance man who can go fast, brings out a distinct class of runner. In past years there have been many men at Oxford and Cambridge who would have gained their full Blues for the half, yet have had to content themselves with being second strings in the quarter and the mile. Nothing phenomenal has yet happened in the race at Queen's Club; the fastest time recorded in its brief history was done by H. E. Graham, of Cambridge, in 1900 — 1min. 58 3-5th sec. But the finest half-miler of 'Varsity fame ran before the event was included in the programme; this was F. J. K. Cross, who in 1888 ran the distance at Oxford in 1min. 54 3-5th sec., a magnificent time that stands to this day as the British amateur record. Cross ran in masterful style, combining consummate grace and strength in his long, low, sweeping action. The pace at which he could ply the stride of a middle-distance man made him formidable even at 100 yards; at a quarter-mile he was exceptional, actually on one occasion running the distance in 49 4-5th sec.; the mile he won for Oxford four times, making a fast time on each occasion and breaking the previous record in his final victory in 1889. F. S. Horan also, the great Cambridge three-miler, and W. E. Lutyens, the miler, were both first-class at the half; while H. W. Workman, another Cambridge three-miler, proved himself capable of running the half in 1min. 54 4-5th sec. at Montreal, when the combined Oxford and Cambridge team met the Canadian Universities, McGill and Toronto, last year. With such men in view, it is impossible not to regret that the half-mile was not included from the beginning in the inter-'Varsity programme.

In the two long-distance races, the mile and the three miles, the peculiar characteristic of the Inter-'Varsity Sports as a match between team and team is clearly brought out. Here is seen the self-denying duty of the pace-maker. Six men take part in each of these races, but, allowing for occasional disturbances of the normal, only two of them run to win; the rest provide their first strings with

THE MILE—W. E. LUTYENS, RECORD-HOLDER, WINNING, 1895.

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a register of the pace. Each champion desires to run the whole distance at the highest uniform pace of which he is capable; he must, of course, in the actual race depend to a large extent upon circumstances and his own judgment, but he finds it useful to have with him a prepared pace-maker. During training, therefore, the second and third strings are taught, by dint of numerous rehearsals, to run certain parts of the distance at a pace exactly suited to the requirements of the first string, in the hope that on the day of the race he may thus be prevented from running the body of the race either too fast or too slow, and may be kept fancy-free and unworried for the final struggle home. Of course, a pace-maker, after having fulfilled his duty in running his third or two-thirds of the distance at the exact pace prescribed, is at liberty to continue the race as he chooses and take what place he can, provided he in no way interferes with the chances of his own as against the opposing first string. Roughly speaking, pace-making comes to this, that the extra men have to run a certain part of the race faster than they would naturally run it if they were running in their interests alone, in order to facilitate the progress of the man picked out to win for his side. The necessity for pace-making explains why the men who come in second and third in the trial sports at Oxford and Cambridge are sometimes not chosen to be second and third strings in the inter-'Varsity contest; for it does not follow that the men who are second or third best over the whole distance are the best to run one or two-thirds of the distance at a given pace. It is often remarked how small a part of the field actually finishes in the long distances; but, of course, the pace-makers often stop, not because they could not finish, but because their task is done.

The mile at one time was almost a monopoly for Oxford, for the Dark Blues won twenty-one times in the first twenty-eight years; but in the last ten years Cambridge has scored nine wins in this event. Between them the 'Varsities can boast a fine tale of milers. During the first twenty years of the contest the recorded times, it is true, were only on four occasions below 4min. 30sec., but since then they have been only twice above it. G. E. H. Pratt, of Oxford, in scoring a narrow win in 1884, set the record at 4min. 26 2-5th sec., but five years later F. J. K. Cross, in the fourth of his easy wins, lowered this by 2 4-5th sec. The very next year W. Pollock-Hill, of Oxford, brought the time down to 4min. 21 3-5th sec., winning by sixty yards. But

THE THREE MILES—F. S. HORAN WINNING, 1895.

in 1894 W. E. Lutyens, of Cambridge, who, like Cross, won four times, set up the present record of 4 min. 19 4-5th sec. It is a great pity that neither Cross nor Pollock-Hill met Lutyens; the winner would have made a marvellous time, not far from the amateur record held by F. E. Bacon—4min. 17sec. Pollock-Hill, a tall, sparely-built, and very tough runner of notable stamina, combined a typical long-distance stride with a fine turn of pace. At Oxford he made the amateur record for 1,000 yards, a record since lowered at Cambridge by Lutyens, but for inter-'Varsity purposes he devoted himself, except on one occasion, to the three miles. Lutyens, a man of medium height, finely shaped for running and by nature a polished mover, travelled with a beautiful feathery stride, using his ankles to the full in giving himself the upward rise.

Honours in the three miles have been fairly equally divided. It is rather curious to note that five times during thirty-three years—that is, on nearly half the available occasions—this race has been won three years running by the same man. And, in addition, W.

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Hough won three times, though not consecutively, out of the four he ran. The greatest distance by which the race has been won is 280 yards, by F. R. Benson; the least, seven yards, by F. M. Ingram. Hough set the record at 15min. 1 1-5th sec. in 1880, and this stood for thirteen years, when F. S. Horan, before mentioned, reduced it to 14min. 44 3-5th sec., which is 20 3-5th sec. worse than the amateur record by Sid Thomas. On a comparision of times it certainly appears that Horan was much the best man ever produced by the 'Varsities at the three miles. Like Pollock-Hill, he possessed great pace; he seems to have been a better man than Lutyens in the half-mile, and, indeed, better than any British contemporary except Bredin. In America, on a fast track and a favourable day, he ran the half in 1min. 56sec. He had a free, untiring stride and never failed for pace. A curious sideway action with his shoulders and arms in running rather detracted from the ease of his style.

The four remaining events, the two jumps, the hammer, and the weight, have never been very popular as entertainments; so few of the spectators are near enough to follow intelligently the progress of the competition, which is at best somewhat long drawn out.

THE HIGH JUMP—M. J. BROOKS, RECORD-HOLDER.

Even the high jump is liable to be tedious during the preliminary stages, and, indeed, is rarely interesting unless the two best men have a pointed struggle or unless one man achieve a really considerable height. To the jumpers themselves the contest is exciting enough, for high-jumping is much more tricky and complicated than it looks. When a man approaches his limit he knows that the least mistake in taking off will ruin his jump. Therefore, he samples the lath long and carefully. It is very easy for a man to lose confidence if in one of his attempts his foothold gives way; and confidence means much in jumping. To do his best a man must take off almost exactly on the same spot each time. One of the objections to a fixed place for jumping, like that at Queen's Club, is that the uprights cannot be moved for a new foothold. A heavy-weight jumper is often handicapped towards the end of the competition by the track having been cut up and loosened during the earlier stages. The attendant, pat he never so busily with the back of a spade, can only partially restore the surface. There is little doubt that firm, natural turf of good quality, closely cropped, is better than the cinder track; it is more springy and quite as solid. Good turf is not friable like cinder track and does not jar the legs nearly as much.

The 'Varsities have not been notably rich in first-class high jumpers, but the inter-'Varsity record, 6ft. 2½in., by M. J. Brooks, is indeed a fine one. Even in America, where high-jumping has been developed to scientific excellence, 6ft. is not done too often; in Britain very, very rarely. Brooks's famous jump compares not unfavourably with the amateur record by P. H. Leahy, the Irishman—6ft. 4¾in. From all accounts Brooks's natural style somewhat resembled in essentials the scientific method cultivated in America, of which M. Sweeney, holder of the world's record at 6ft. 5 5-8th in., has proved the greatest exponent. Brooks took a short run, quite slow, and then jumped straight up, lifted his legs over the bar while his body was still below it on the near side, and then levered his body up afterwards, using his hips as a fulcrum. It is this gymnastic leverage of the body that distinguishes the American style. G. Howard Smith, who won the high jump for Cambridge last year with 5ft. 10½in., though he depends chiefly on his native springiness, has just a touch of this

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method in clearing the bar; he is the only 'Varsity man besides Brooks who has surmounted 6ft. in a competition: this he did at Montreal last year. In the Inter-'Varsity Sports E. D. Swanwick is second to Brooks with 5ft. 11in. Swanwick, a tall, slight, but very strong man, took the lath obliquely, but much more neatly than most jumpers in this style. He was capable of 6ft.; in fact, in practice he managed it. Besides the above-mentioned, only one man, W. P. Montgomery, also of Oxford, has done over 5ft. 10in. in the sports. The average height attained is not strikingly good; some of the winning jumps during the first ten years, possibly owing to wet or rough turf, were decidedly mediocre. During the last ten years, however, the height has only once fallen below 5ft. 8in. It must be admitted, however, that only very occasionally have both 'Varsities in any given year been able to boast a first-class jumper.

For long-jumping the conditions at Queen's Club are perfect. Straight in front of the pavilion is laid a miniature track between forty and fifty yards long and 3½ft. broad, which is as carefully tended as any part of the running path. At each end of this a thickish board of tough wood is let into the ground flush with the surface, so that one edge of it about 2in. broad, which is painted white, affords a stable mark to take off from. Immediately beyond the board there is a sheer drop of several inches into the shallow some 13ft. long which extends to the pit into which the jumpers alight. The ends of this pit are open, but each side is contained by a piece of wood marked off in feet and inches.

Formerly the pit was filled with soft earth mixed with saw-dust raked smooth and patted level with a spade; but as it was found that this soft earth broke away too much after the jumper alighted to admit of accurate measurement, the middle part of the pit has now been filled with a kind of clay invented by the ground-man at Fenners. Into this the heel of the jumper cuts as clean as may be, and measurement is easy.

Each jumper has four tries, and is placed according to his best effort. The order of jumping, as in the case of the high jump, is pre-arranged, and may not be departed from. If a man refuses without crossing the mark he may go back and have another try, but if he crosses the mark it counts as a jump. The distant spectator may, as a rule, safely conclude that the man who jumps highest in the air is also covering the greatest distance. Moderate long-jumping is not very taking to the eye, but the good is worth watching. To make a fine jump a man must artfully unite speed and spring in an all-out effort.

Inter-'Varsity long-jumping has on the average been very poor. Twenty-one feet is a schoolboy jump, yet on nearly half the occasions the winner has failed to compass that distance. E. J. Davies, who won three times running, jumped 22ft. 10½in. in 1874, and this stood as a record till 1892, when it was broken and set at 23ft. 5in.,* which is still the record, though G. C. Vassall came within 2in. of it in 1899. Davies, a very fast sprinter, is said to have secured his length of jump chiefly by pace. Vassall was a very consistent jumper; his run-up was strong, level, and accurate; he generally struck square on the mark and then rose high, gathering himself compactly in the air. Another good 'Varsity jumper was J. L. Grieg, who on one occasion beat 22ft. with all four jumps; he was methodical and possessed fine nerve.

* Mr. Fry's natural modesty has prevented him from stating that this record-breaker was himself.—ED.

THE LONG JUMP—C. B. FRY MAKING THE RECORD LONG JUMP OF 23FT. 5IN., 1892.

THROWING THE HAMMER—G. F. ROBERTSON WINNING, 1895.

The hammer and the weight, generally known as the "strong-man" events, are the ugly ducklings of the sports. For years now there has been heated discussion as to whether they ever ought to have been included in the programme. Some people say that they are not in keeping with an athletic meeting, while others urge that being unique in kind they ought to be preserved. The truth appears to be that "strong-man" events performed by men skilful as well as strong are good sport, but are otherwise both feeble and uninteresting. It is a great mistake to suppose that hammer-throwing and weight-putting are feats of brute strength; they depend equally upon skill, for success is due not to the amount of strength possessed, but to the amount applied, and the application of strength to the projection of a 16lb. hammer or a weight is neither simple nor easy. On the whole, "strong-man" events have not been much cultivated at the Universities; in fact, the practice of them for their own sake has been scantily maintained, and would probably have lapsed into desuetude but for their inclusion in the sports. Recently there has been a revival of interest in them, which dates to the first visit of the Yale team, when Hickock showed what fine work was possible. Also it happened that for the last few years the "strong-man" idea has been a power in the land and the subject of much general interest.

The great name in hammer-throwing is G. H. Hales, of Cambridge, who compassed 138ft. In his days the throwers were allowed unlimited run and length of handle. Later the hammermen were reduced to a 30ft. circle and a 4ft. handle, and more recently to the regulation A.A.A. 9ft. circle. Among more recent performers G. F. Robertson, J. D. Greenshields, and E. E. B. May have been the best. Robertson's longest throw was 116ft. 7in. E. E. B. May threw 128ft. 3in. at New York last year, but was beaten by W. A. Boal, of Harvard, with 136ft. 8in. This sort of distance is no mean athletic performance, and is decidedly worth looking at.

The 'Varsity standard for the weight has been low; anything over 36ft. has won more often than not. The record is held by J. H. Ware, with 39ft. 1in., a distance which would not be thought much of in America. The British record for the weight is 46ft. 5½in., by D. Horgan; the world's record, 47ft., by G. R. Grey, a Canadian.

PUTTING THE WEIGHT, 1899.

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At Sunwich Port.

By W. W. Jacobs.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARMED at the ease with which he had demolished the objections of Mr. Adolphus Swann and won that suffering gentleman over to his plans, Hardy began to cast longing glances at Equator Lodge. He reminded himself that the labourer was worthy of his hire, and it seemed moreover an extremely desirable thing that Captain Nugent should know that he was labouring in his vineyard with the full expectation of a bounteous harvest. He resolved to call.

Kate Nugent, who heard the gate swing behind him as he entered the front garden, looked up and stood spellbound at his audacity. As a fairly courageous young person she was naturally an admirer of boldness in others, but this seemed sheer recklessness. Moreover, it was recklessness in which, if she stayed where she was, she would have to bear a part or be guilty of rudeness, of which she felt incapable. She took a third course, and, raising her eyebrows at the unnecessarily loud knocking with which the young man announced his arrival, retreated in good order into the garden, where her father, in a somewhat heated condition, was laboriously planting geraniums. She had barely reached him when Bella, in a state of fearsome glee, came down the garden to tell the captain of his visitor.

"Who?" said the latter, sharply, as he straightened his aching back.

"Young Mr. Hardy," said Bella, impressively. "I showed 'im in; I didn't ask 'im to take a chair, but he took one."

"Young Hardy to see me!" said the captain to his daughter, after Bella had returned to the house. "How dare he come to my house? Infernal impudence! I won't see him."

"Shall I go in and see him for you?" inquired Kate, with affected artlessness.

"You stay where you are, miss," said her father. "I won't have him speak to you; I won't have him look at you. I'll——"

He beat his dirty hands together and strode off towards the house. Jem Hardy rose from his chair as the captain entered the room and, ignoring a look of black inquiry, bade him "Good afternoon."

"BELLA, IN A STATE OF FEARSOME GLEE, CAME DOWN THE GARDEN TO TELL THE CAPTAIN OF HIS VISITOR."

"What do you want?" asked the captain, gruffly, as he stared him straight in the eye.

"I came to see you about your son's marriage," said the other. "Are you still desirous of preventing it?"

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"I'm sorry you've had the trouble," said the captain, in a voice of suppressed anger; "and now may I ask you to get out of my house?"

Hardy bowed. "I am sorry I have troubled you," he said, calmly, "but I have a plan which I think would get your son out of this affair, and, as a business man, I wanted to make something out of it."

The captain eyed him scornfully, but he was glad to see this well-looking, successful son of his old enemy tainted with such sordid views. Instead of turning him out he spoke to him almost fairly.

"How much do you want?" he inquired.

"All things considered, I am asking a good deal," was the reply.

"How much?" repeated the captain, impatiently.

Hardy hesitated. "In exchange for the service I want permission to visit here when I choose," he said, at length; "say twice a week."

Words failed the captain; none with which he was acquainted seemed forcible enough for the occasion. He faced his visitor stuttering with rage, and pointed to the door.

"Get out of my house," he roared.

"I'm sorry to have intruded," said Hardy, as he crossed the room and paused at the door; "it is none of my business, of course. I thought that I saw an opportunity of doing your son a good turn—he is a friend of mine—and at the same time paying off old scores against Kybird and Nathan Smith. I thought that on that account it might suit you. Good afternoon."

He walked out into the hall, and reaching the front door fumbled clumsily with the catch. The captain watching his efforts in grim silence began to experience the twin promptings of curiosity and temptation.

"What is this wonderful plan of yours?" he demanded, with a sneer.

"Just at present that must remain a secret," said the other. He came from the door and, unbidden, followed the captain into the room again.

"What do you want to visit at my house for?" inquired the latter, in a forbidding voice.

"To see your daughter," said Hardy.

The captain had a relapse. He had not expected a truthful answer, and, when it came, in the most matter-of-fact tone, it found him quite unprepared. His first idea was to sacrifice his dignity and forcibly eject his visitor, but more sensible thoughts prevailed.

"You are quite sure, I suppose, that your visits would be agreeable to my daughter?" he said, contemptuously.

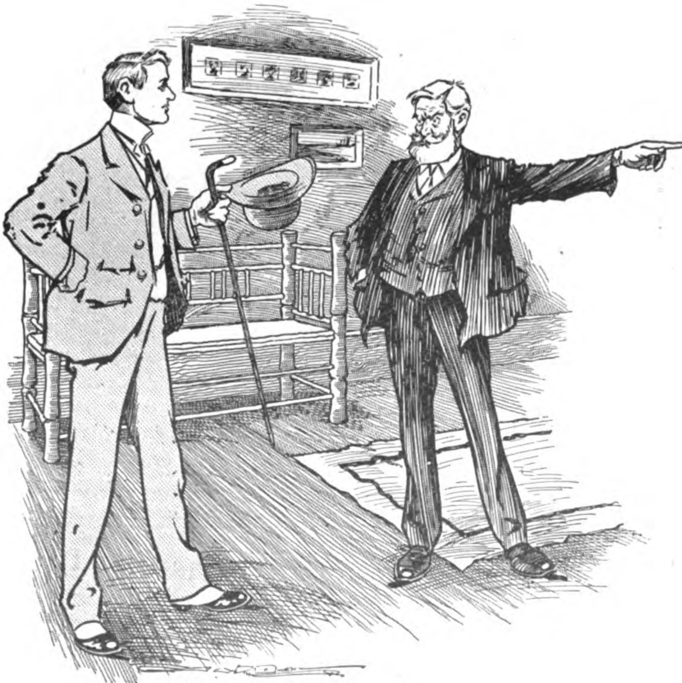
Hardy shook his head.

"I should come ostensibly to see you," he said, cheerfully; "to smoke a pipe with you."

"Smoke!" stuttered the captain, explosively; "smoke a pipe with ME?"

"Why not?" said the other. "I am offering you my services, and anything that is worth having is worth paying for. I suppose we could both smoke pipes under pleasanter conditions. What have you got against me? It isn't my fault that you and my father have quarrelled."

"I don't want anything more to say to you," said the captain, sternly. "I've shown you the door once. Am I to take forcible measures?"



"'GET OUT OF MY HOUSE,' HE ROARED.

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Hardy shrugged his broad shoulders. "I am sorry," he said, moving to the door again.

"So am I," said the other.

"It's a pity," said Hardy, regretfully. "It's the chance of a lifetime. I had set my heart on fooling Kybird and Smith, and now all my trouble is wasted. Nathan Smith would be all the better for a fall."

The captain hesitated. His visitor seemed to be confident, and he would have given a great deal to prevent his son's marriage and a great deal to repay some portion of his debt to the ingenious Mr. Smith. Moreover, there seemed to be an excellent opportunity of punishing the presumption of his visitor by taking him at his word.

"I don't think you'd enjoy your smoking here much," he said, curtly.

"I'll take my chance of that," said the other. "It will only be a matter of a few weeks, and then, if I am unsuccessful, my visits cease."

"And if you're successful, am I to have the pleasure of your company for the rest of my life?" demanded the captain.

"That will be for you to decide," was the reply. "Is it a bargain?"

The captain looked at him and deliberated. "All right. Mondays and Thursdays," he said, laconically.

Hardy saw through the ruse, and countered. "Now Swann is ill I can't always get away when I wish," he said, easily. "I'll just drop in when I can. Good day."

He opened the door and, fearful lest the other should alter his mind at the last moment, walked briskly down the path to the gate. The captain stood for some time after his departure deep in thought, and then returned to the garden to be skilfully catechized by Miss Nugent.

"And when my young friend comes with his pipe you'll be in another room," he concluded, warningly.

Miss Nugent looked up and patted his cheek tenderly. "What a talent for organization you have," she remarked, softly. "A place for everything and everything in its place. The idea of his taking such a fancy to you!"

The captain coughed and eyed her suspiciously. He had been careful not to tell her Hardy's reasons for coming, but he had a shrewd idea that his caution was wasted.

"To-day is Thursday," said Kate, slowly; "he will be here to-morrow and Saturday. What shall I wear?"

The captain resumed his gardening operations by no means perturbed at the prophecy. Much as he disliked the young man he gave him credit for a certain amount of decency, and his indignation was proportionately great the following evening when Bella announced Mr. Hardy. He made a genial remark about Shylock and a pound of flesh, but finding that it was only an excellent conversational opening, the subject of Shakespeare's plays lapsed into silence.

It was an absurd situation, but he was host and Hardy allowed him to see pretty plainly that he was a guest. He answered the latter's remarks with a very ill grace, and took covert stock of him as one of a species he had not encountered before. One result of his stock-taking was that he was spared any feeling of surprise when his visitor came the following evening.

"It's the thin end of the wedge," said Miss Nugent, who came into the room after Hardy had departed; "you don't know him as well as I do."

"Eh?" said her father, sharply.

"I mean that you are not such a judge of character as I am," said Kate; "and besides, I have made a special study of young men. The only thing that puzzles me is why you should have such an extraordinary fascination for him."

"You talk too much, miss," said the captain, drawing the tobacco-jar towards him and slowly filling his pipe.

Miss Nugent sighed, and after striking a match for him took a seat on the arm of his chair and placed her hand on his shoulder. "I can quite understand him liking you," she said, slowly.

The captain grunted.

"And if he is like other sensible people," continued Miss Nugent, in a coaxing voice, "the more he sees of you the more he'll like you. I do hope he has not come to take you away from me."

The indignant captain edged her off the side of his chair; Miss Nugent, quite undisturbed, got on again and sat tapping the floor with her foot. Her arm stole round his neck and she laid her cheek against his head and smiled wickedly.

"Nice-looking, isn't he?" she said, in a careless voice.

"I don't know anything about his looks," growled her father.

Miss Nugent gave a little exclamation of surprise. "First thing I noticed," she said, with commendable gravity. "He's very good-looking and very determined. What

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are you going to give him if he gets poor Jack out of this miserable business?"

"Give him?" said her father, staring.

"I met Jack yesterday," said Kate, "and I can see that he is as wretched as he can be. He wouldn't say so, of course. If Mr. Hardy is successful you ought to recognise it. I should suggest one of your new photos. in an eighteenpenny frame."

She slipped off the chair and quitted the room before her father could think of a suitable retort, and he sat smoking silently until the entrance of Mrs. Kingdom a few minutes later gave him an opportunity of working off a little accumulated gall.

While the junior partner was thus trying to obtain a footing at Equator Lodge the gravest rumours of the senior partner's health were prevalent in the town. Nathan Smith, who had been to see him again, ostensibly to thank him for his efforts on his behalf, was of opinion that he was breaking up, and in conversation with Mr. Kybird shook his head over the idea that there would soon be one open-handed gentleman the less in a world which was none too full of them.

DO HOPE HE HAS NOT COME TO TAKE YOU AWAY FROM ME."

"We've all got to go some day," observed Mr. Kybird, philosophically. "'Ow's that cough o' yours getting on, Nat?"

Mr. Smith met the pleasantry coldly; the ailment referred to was one of some standing and had been a continual source of expense in the way of balsams and other remedies.

"He's worried about 'is money," he said, referring to Mr. Swann.

"Ah, we sha'n't 'ave that worry," said Mr. Kybird.

"Nobody to leave it to," continued Mr. Smith. "Seems a bit 'ard, don't it?"

"P'r'aps if 'e 'ad 'ad somebody to leave it to 'e wouldn't 'ave 'ad so much to leave," observed Mr. Kybird, sagely; "it's a rum world."

He shook his head over it and went on with the uncongenial task of marking down wares which had suffered by being exposed outside too long. Mr. Smith, who always took an interest in the welfare of his friends, made suggestions.

"I shouldn't put a ticket marked '*Look at this!*' on that coat," he said, severely. "It oughtn't to be looked at."

"It's the best out o' three all 'anging together," said Mr. Kybird, evenly.

"And look 'ere," said Mr. Smith. "Look what an out-o'-the-way place you've put this ticket. Why not put it higher up on the coat?"

"Becos the moth-hole ain't there," said Mr. Kybird.

Mr. Smith apologized and watched his friend without further criticism.

"Gettin' ready for the wedding, I 'spose?" he said, presently.

Mr. Kybird assented, and his brow darkened as he spoke of surreptitious raids on his stores made by Mrs. Kybird and daughter.

"Their idea of a wedding," he said, bitterly, "is to dress up and make a show; my idea is a few real good old pals and plenty of licker."

"You'll 'ave to 'ave both," observed Nathan Smith, whose knowledge of the sex was pretty accurate.

Mr. Kybird nodded gloomily. "'Melia and Jack don't seem to 'ave been 'itting it off partikler well lately," he said, slowly. "He's getting more uppish than wot 'e was when 'e come here first. But I got 'im to promise that he'd settle any money that 'e might ever get left him on 'Melia."

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Mr. Smith's inscrutable eyes glistened into something as nearly approaching a twinkle as they were capable. "That'll settle the five 'undred," he said, warmly. "Are you goin' to send Cap'n Nugent an invite for the wedding?"

"ARE YOU GOIN' TO SEND CAP'N NUGENT AN INVITE FOR THE WEDDING?"

"They'll 'ave to be asked, o' course," said Mr. Kybird, with an attempt at dignity, rendered necessary by a certain lightness in his friend's manner. "The old woman don't like the Nugent lot, but she'll do the proper thing."

"O' course she will," said Mr. Smith, soothingly. "Come over and 'ave a drink with me, Dan'l; it's your turn to stand."

CHAPTER XXI.

GOSSIP from one or two quarters, which reached Captain Nugent's ears through the medium of his sister, concerning the preparations for his son's marriage, prevented him from altering his mind with regard to the visits of Jem Hardy and showing that painstaking young man the door. Indeed, the nearness of the approaching nuptials bade fair to eclipse, for the time being, all other grievances, and when Hardy paid his third visit he made a determined but ineffectual attempt to obtain from him some information as to the methods by which he hoped to attain his ends. His failure made him suspicious, and he hinted pretty plainly that he had no guarantee that his visitor was not obtaining admittance under false pretences.

"Well, I'm not getting much out of it," returned Hardy, frankly.

"I wonder you come," said his hospitable host.

"I want you to get used to me," said the other.

The captain started and eyed him uneasily; the remark seemed fraught with hidden meaning. "And then——?" he inquired, raising his bushy eyebrows.

"Then perhaps I can come oftener."

The captain gave him up. He sank back in his chair and crossing his legs smoked, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. It was difficult to know what to do with a young man who was apparently destitute of any feelings of shame or embarrassment. He bestowed a puzzled glance in his direction and saw that he was lolling in the chair with an appearance of the greatest ease and enjoyment. Following the direction of his eyes, he saw that he was gazing with much satisfaction at a photograph of Miss Nugent which graced the mantelpiece. With an odd sensation the captain suddenly identified it as one which usually stood on the chest of drawers in his bedroom, and he wondered darkly whether charity or mischief was responsible for its appearance there.

In any case, it disappeared before the occasion of Hardy's next visit, and the visitor sat with his eyes unoccupied, endeavouring to make conversation with a host who was if anything more discourteous than usual. It was uphill work, but he persevered, and in fifteen minutes had ranged unchecked from North Pole explorations to poultry farming. It was a relief to both of them when the

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door opened and Bella ushered in Dr. Murchison.

The captain received the new arrival with marked cordiality, and giving him a chair near his own observed with some interest the curt greeting of the young men. The doctor's manner indicated polite surprise at seeing the other there, then he turned to the captain and began to talk to him.

For some time they chatted without interruption, and the captain's replies, when Hardy at last made an attempt to make the conversation general, enabled the doctor to see, without much difficulty, that the latter was an unwelcome guest. Charmed with the discovery he followed his host's lead, and, with a languid air, replied to his rival in monosyllables. The captain watched with quiet satisfaction, and at each rebuff his opinion of Murchison improved. It was gratifying to find that the interloper had met his match.

Hardy sat patient. "I am glad to have met you to-night," he said, after a long pause, during which the other two were discussing a former surgical experience of the captain's on one of his crew.

"Yes?" said Murchison.

"You are just the man I wanted to see."

"Yes?" said the doctor, again.

"Yes," said the other, nodding. "I've been very busy of late owing to my partner's illness, and you are attending several people I want to hear about."

"Indeed," said Murchison, with a half-turn towards him.

"How is Mrs. Paul?" inquired Hardy.

"Dead!" replied the other, briefly.

"Dead!" repeated Mr. Hardy. "Good heavens! I didn't know that there was much the matter with her."

"There was no hope for her from the first," said Murchison, somewhat sharply. "It was merely a question of prolonging her life a little while. She lived longer than I deemed possible. She surprised everybody by her vitality."

"Poor thing," said Hardy. "How is Joe Banks?"

"Dead," said Murchison again, biting his lip and eyeing him furiously.

"Dear me," said Hardy, shaking his head; "I met him not a month ago. He was on his way to see you then."

"The poor fellow had been an invalid nearly all his life," said Murchison, to the captain, casually.

"Aye, I remember him," was the reply.

"I am almost afraid to ask you," continued Hardy, "but shut up all day I hear so little. How is old Miss Ritherdon?"

Murchison reddened with helpless rage; Captain Nugent, gazing at the questioner with something almost approaching respect, waited breathlessly for the invariable answer.

"She died three weeks ago; I'm surprised that you have not heard of it," said the doctor, pointedly.

"Of course she was old," said Hardy, with the air of one advancing extenuating circumstances.

"Very old," replied the doctor, who knew that the other was now at the end of his obituary list. "Are there any other of my patients you are anxious to hear about?"

"ARE THERE ANY OTHER OF MY PATIENTS YOU ARE ANXIOUS TO HEAR ABOUT?"

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"No, thank you," returned Hardy, with some haste.

The doctor turned to his host again, but the charm was broken. His talk was disconnected, owing probably to the fact that he was racking his brain for facts relative to the seamy side of shipbroking. And Hardy, without any encouragement whatever, was interrupting with puerile anecdotes concerning the late lamented Joe Banks. The captain came to the rescue.

"The ladies are in the garden," he said to the doctor; "perhaps you'd like to join them."

He looked coldly over at Hardy as he spoke to see the effect of his words. Their eyes met, and the young man was on his feet as soon as his rival.

"Thanks," he said, coolly; "it is a trifle close indoors."

Before the dismayed captain could think of any dignified pretext to stay him he was out of the room. The doctor followed and the perturbed captain, left alone, stared blankly at the door and thought of his daughter's words concerning the thin end of the wedge.

He was a proud man and loth to show discomfiture, so that it was not until a quarter of an hour later that he followed his guests to the garden. The four people were in couples, the paths favouring that formation, although the doctor, to the detriment of the border, had made two or three determined attempts to march in fours. With a feeling akin to scorn the captain saw that he was walking with Mrs. Kingdom, while some distance in the rear Jem Hardy followed with Kate.

He stood at the back door for a little while watching; Hardy, upright and elate, was listening with profound attention to Miss Nugent; the doctor, sauntering along beside Mrs. Kingdom, was listening with a languid air to an account of her celebrated escape from measles some forty-three years before. As a professional man he would have died rather than have owed his life to the specific she advocated.

Kate Nugent, catching sight of her father, turned, and as he came slowly towards them, linked her arm in his. Her face was slightly flushed and her eyes sparkled.

"I was just coming in to fetch you," she observed; "it is so pleasant out here now."

"Delightful," said Hardy.

"We had to drop behind a little," said Miss Nugent, raising her voice. "Aunt and Dr. Murchison *will* talk about their complaints to each other! They have been exchanging prescriptions."

The captain grunted and eyed her keenly.

"I want you to come in and give us a little music," he said, shortly.

Kate nodded. "What is your favourite music, Mr. Hardy?" she inquired, with a smile.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Hardy can't stay," said the captain, in a voice which there was no mistaking.

Hardy pulled out his watch. "No; I must be off," he said, with a well-affected start. "Thank you for reminding me, Captain Nugent."

"I am glad to have been of service," said the other, looking his grimmest.

He acknowledged the young man's farewell with a short nod and, forgetting his sudden desire for music, continued to pace up and down with his daughter.

"What have you been saying to that—that fellow?" he demanded, turning to her, suddenly.

Miss Nugent reflected. "I said it was a fine evening," she replied, at last.

"No doubt," said her father. "What else?"

"I think I asked him whether he was fond of gardening," said Miss Nugent, slowly. "Yes, I'm sure I did."

"You had no business to speak to him at all," said the fuming captain.

"I don't quite see how I could help doing so," said his daughter. "You surely don't expect me to be rude to your visitors? Besides, I feel rather sorry for him."

"Sorry?" repeated the captain, sharply. "What for?"

"Because he hasn't got a nice, kind, soft-spoken father," said Miss Nugent, squeezing his arm affectionately.

The appearance of the other couple at the head of the path saved the captain the necessity of a retort. They stood in a little knot talking, but Miss Nugent, contrary to her usual habit, said but little. She was holding her father's arm and gazing absently at the dim fields stretching away beyond the garden.

At the same time Mr. James Hardy, feeling, despite his bold front, somewhat badly snubbed, was sitting on the beach thinking over the situation. After a quarter of an hour in the company of Kate Nugent all else seemed sordid and prosaic; his own conduct in his attempt to save her brother from the consequences of his folly most sordid of all.

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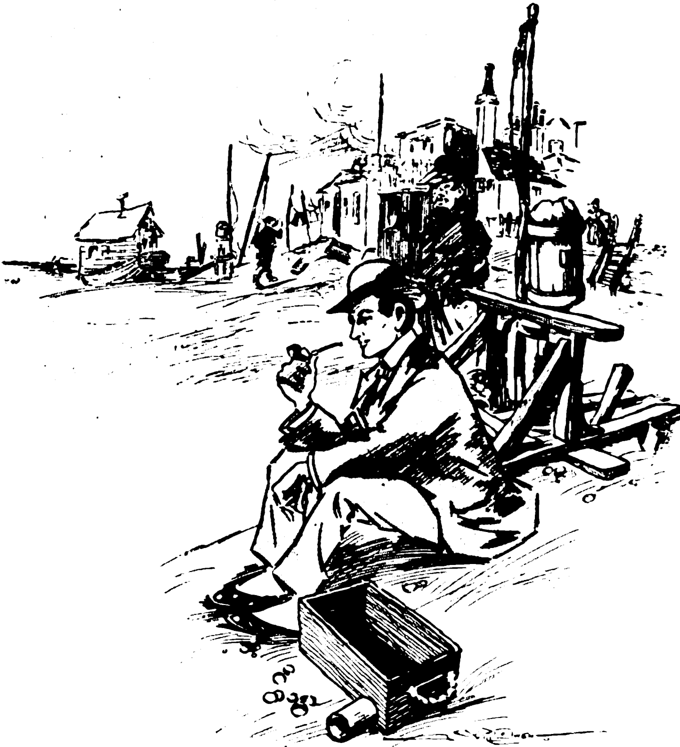
He wondered, gloomily, what she would think when she heard of it.

He rose at last and in the pale light of the new moon walked slowly along towards the town. In his present state of mind he wanted to talk about Kate Nugent, and the only person who could be depended upon for doing that was Samson Wilks. It was a never-tiring subject of the steward's, and since his discovery of the state of Hardy's feelings in that quarter the slightest allusion was sufficient to let loose a flood of reminiscences.



"HE WONDERED WHAT SHE WOULD THINK WHEN SHE HEARD OF IT."

It was dark by the time Hardy reached the alley, and in most of the houses the lamps were lit behind drawn blinds. The steward's house, however, was in darkness and there was no response when he tapped. He turned the handle of the door and looked in. A dim figure rose with a start from a chair.

"I hope you were not asleep?" said Hardy.

"No, sir," said the steward, in a relieved voice. "I thought it was somebody else."

He placed a chair for his visitor and, having lit the lamp, slowly lowered the blind and took a seat opposite.

"I've been sitting in the dark to make a certain party think I was out," he said, slowly. "She keeps making a excuse about Teddy to come over and see me. Last night 'e talked about making a 'ole in the water to celebrate 'Melia Kybird's wedding, and she came over and sat in that chair and cried as if 'er 'art would break. After she'd gone Teddy comes over, fierce as a eagle, and wants to know wot I've been saying to 'is mother to make 'er cry. Between the two of 'em I 'ave a nice life of it."

"He is still faithful to Miss Kybird, then?" said Hardy, with a sudden sense of relief.

"Faithful?" said Mr. Wilks. "Faithful ain't no word for it. He's a sticker, that's wot 'e is, and it's my misfortune that 'is mother takes after 'im. I 'ave to go out afore breakfast and stay out till late at night, and even then like as not she catches me on the doorstep."

"Well, perhaps *she* will make a hole in the water," suggested Hardy.

Mr. Wilks smiled, but almost instantly became grave again. "She's not that sort," he said, bitterly, and went into the kitchen to draw some beer.

He drank his in a manner which betokened that the occupation afforded him no enjoyment, and, full of his own troubles, was in no mood to discuss anything else. He gave a short biography of Mrs. Silk which would have furnished abundant material for half-a-dozen libel actions, and alluding to the demise of the late Mr. Silk, spoke of it as though it were the supreme act of artfulness in a somewhat adventurous career.

Hardy walked home with a mind more at ease than it had been at any time since his overtures to Mr. Swann. The only scruple that had troubled him was now removed, and in place of it he felt that he was acting the part of a guardian angel to Mr. Edward Silk.

(To be continued.)

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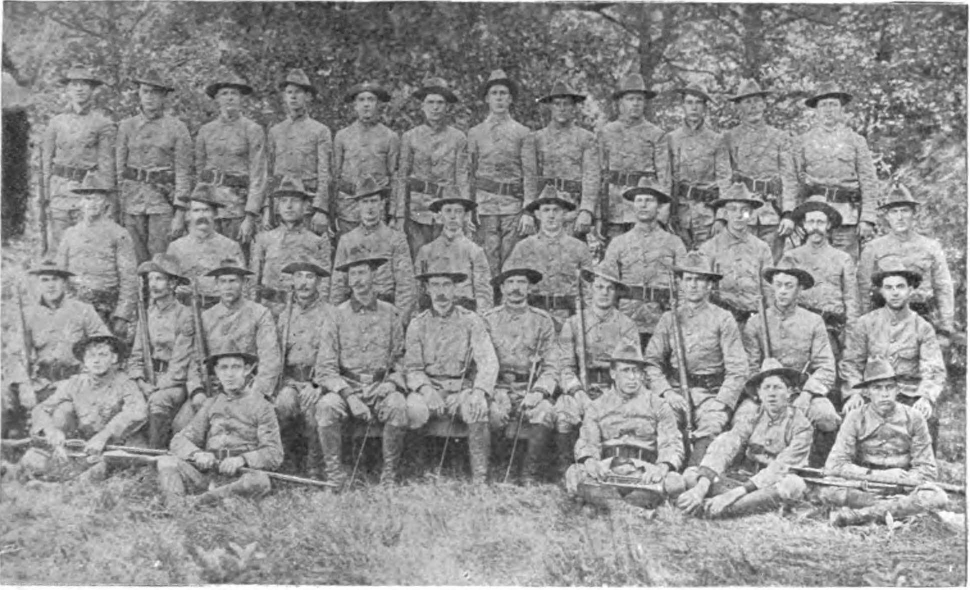
The Most Extraordinary Military Organization in the World.

By E. Leslie Gilliams.



COMPANY C, THIRD REGIMENT, N.G.S.M., IN UNCLE SAM'S UNIFORM.

THE most remarkable body of soldiers in the world is Company C, 3rd Regiment, the National Guards of Minnesota, stationed at Duluth. Every member of this fine company is thoroughly familiar with the military drills of every nation, and could fall into the ranks and fill all the requirements of a well-drilled and disciplined soldier of any land.

When the company was stationed at Chattanooga during the Spanish-American War it gained the well-earned reputation of being the best-drilled company of all the 70,000 troops in camp. Since then the company has taken up the drills of other nations, both ancient and modern, and has become marvellously expert. All the various drills of the company are held in the uniforms of the soldiers of the country which the troops are supposed to represent, and to make these costumes historically correct the company has expended over three thousand dollars. Lieutenant C. Josten is the originator of the scheme, and he deserves great credit for the admirable manner in which he has disciplined his men.

LIEUTENANT CHARLES JOSTEN, ORGANIZER OF THE COMPANY.

At their weekly meetings at the armoury Company C frequently entertain their friends with an exhibition of the international drills. Richard Little is captain, Charles Josten first lieutenant, and John C. Lawrence second lieutenant of this strange company, and they have their men so thoroughly drilled that no extra preparations have to be made for visiting nights. The company goes through the usual weekly programme and the spectators are delighted.

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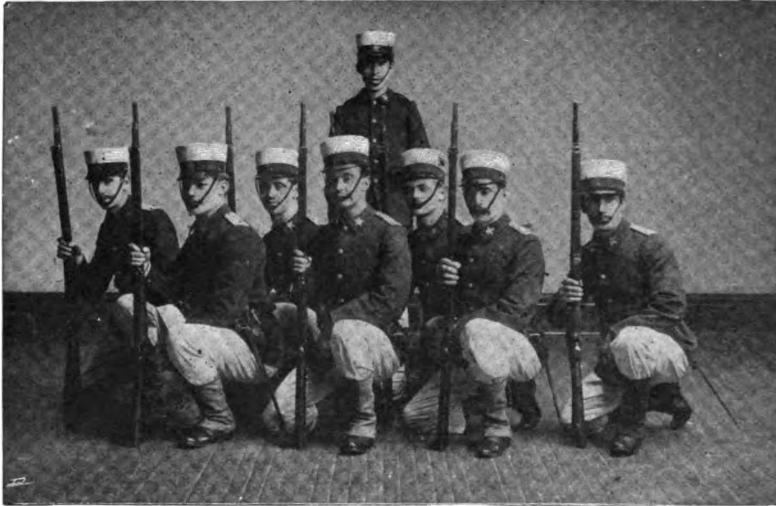
Each military number is preceded by a bugler and a standard-bearer, carrying the flag or standard of the nation represented and blowing the bugle-call of the different nations as they fall in line. The costumes—they can hardly be called uniforms—of many are rich silk and satin handsomely embroidered.

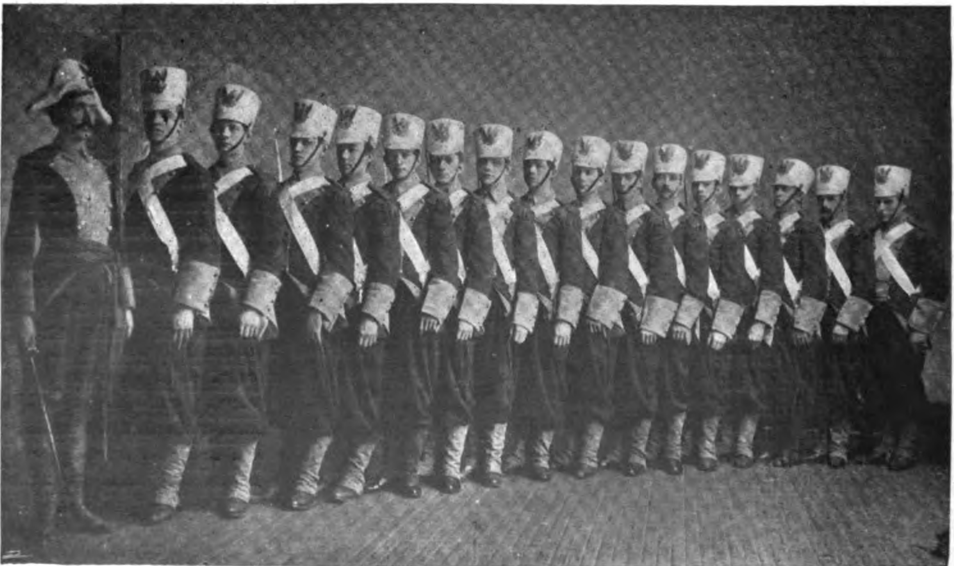
As is expected, the first drill represents the United States Army style. They execute the so-called setting up exercise of military calisthenics in a precise and perfect manner.

After America comes Japan. The Japanese, preceded by their flag, arrive on the drill floor in double quick, which time is maintained throughout their part of the drill, consisting of extended order movements. This is one of the most interesting numbers given, and is always much admired.


JAPANESE MOUNTAINEERS.

The audience forgets while watching this drill of the Orientals that the men responding to the orders are all Uncle Sam's boys, every one of them, and all as well versed in the drill of the United States Army as they are in that of a Japanese regiment.

The "Japs" fall back, then the Imperial Guards of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte march to the floor in single file and in close


IMPERIAL GUARDS OF NAPOLEON.

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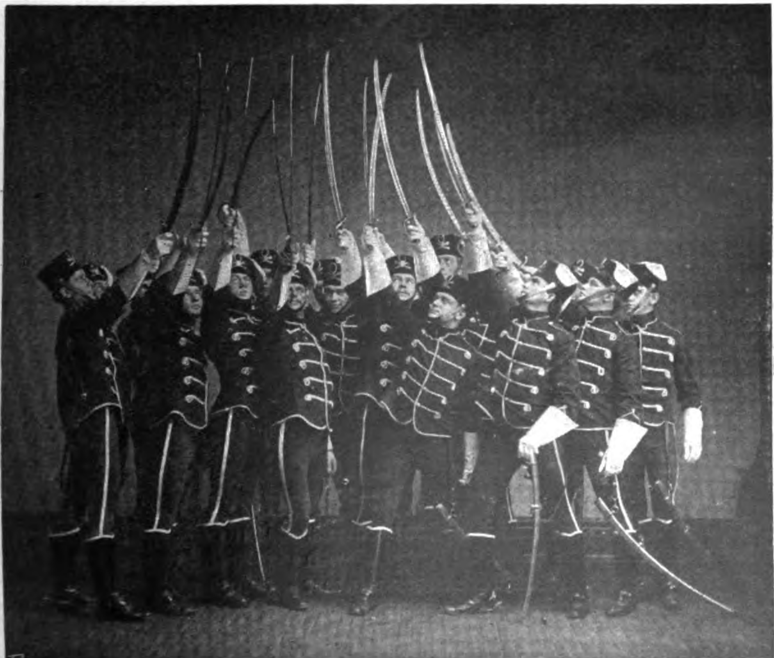
order. They execute the manual of arms, loading and firing from every possible position, giving a full charge with yells and hurrahs. This section is accompanied by the regulation *vivandière*, so common in the French army of that period.

This *vivandière* is quite an attractive feature, and the artistic manner in which she plays her part brings to mind the French gallants who, even during the most stirring war times, never lose the courtly ease and grace which have always characterized the French as a nation.

During the "rest" of soldiers this female sutler regales the supposedly tired veterans with wine and stirring songs of war. The introduction of the *vivandière* into the Imperial Guards was a happy thought on the part of the drill-master, and shows how perfectly conversant he is with the war-lore of other countries.

MISS GEORGIA ALEXANDER, THE VIVANDIÈRE OF THE COMPANY.

The Black Hussars of the German Empire of about 1873 succeed the French detachment; they come into view in double rank formation. Their dashing appearance and magnificent bearing make a picturesque and warlike scene. After they have gone through a complete and somewhat lengthy drill of the sabre in an absolutely perfect manner they dip into the lighter tactics of war, giving a series of fancy and intricate marchings with a skill and precision seldom seen to better advantage in any other land. Major F. E. Resche is the instructing officer of this detachment. He has put months of earnest and patient work into the drilling, and has well earned the reputation which his success has made for him. It is difficult enough to train a body of men to perfect drill work of the United States Army, but there seems to be the instinct of the soldier in every male American, and he falls into the national drills as a matter of course after a few lessons; it is a difficult matter, however, when he is obliged to transport himself in imagination to Germany, and go through the military drills of that country. The costumes help the men greatly, and the energy of their leader has finally brought the "Black Hussars" to a state where it is difficult to realize that they are not the genuine article.



BLACK HUSSARS OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE, 1873.

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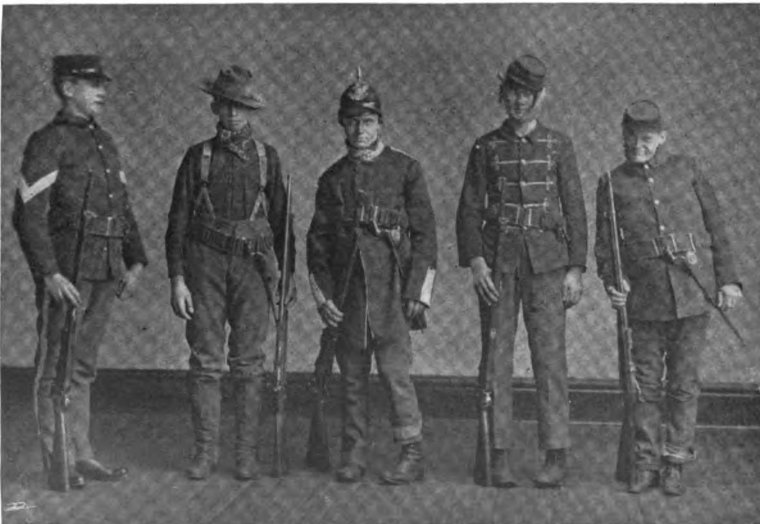
BRITISH SAILORS.

The British Empire is represented by a squadron of sailors commanded by Captain R. Little. They come on in file and are placed in extended order; when in position they give a spirited exhibition of the cutlass exercises common on a man-o'-war, finishing the drill in a series of marching manœuvres. Dressed as they are in white canvas with black trimmings, they make a fine contrast to the dazzling German Hussars which preceded them.

When entertaining their friends Company C gives a humorous number. It is called the "awkward squad." Having their business down to a point of art, they succeed in creating no end of amusement with their queer antics. Every man does exactly opposite to the thing expected of him; there is no order or time in this detachment, which is chiefly made up of the "clowns" of the company, who prove the maxim, "It takes a smart man to be a fool," for they certainly produce a clever performance.



THE "AWKWARD SQUAD."

As though to make the awkward squad

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more ridiculous, it is followed by the stately Arabs. These picturesque sons of far-off Arabia run in one by one, wildly yelling and gesticulating, to the centre of the drill floor. Each man, when arrived in place, stands stock fast like a statue. Then the commanding officer walks out slowly and deliberately in

A COMPANY OF ARABS.

front of his company and gives the necessary orders, the men performing a superb series of gun exercises. When completed, all sit cross-legged, forming a large circle, when a magnificently-attired Arabian dancer and singer suddenly appears and entertains the swarthy sons of the Desert with enthralling songs and charming dances. This over the men rise, holding their guns high up in the air, and slowly disappear from view. The uniforms of these men are picturesque in the extreme — no two alike, yet all forming and blending into a harmonious whole.

A detachment of Royal Swedish Halberdiers of the time of Gustavus Adolphus, in their handsome uniforms of wide yellow trousers and tight-fitting short coats of blue, maroon-coloured jack boots, steel helmets, and long halberds, comes next; presenting, as they do, a series of halberd exercises similar to modern bayonet exercises, as well as a number of foot movements, they make, indeed, a handsome appearance.

Rome at the time of Cæsar Augustus follows Sweden, and this is the most gorgeous drill of the series. The men, especially selected for physical development, clad in glittering armour, with sandals, shields, Roman swords, and helmets, marching in the arena, make a dazzling appearance. After marching in single file, double file, column of fours, and

ROYAL SWEDISH HALBERDIERS—TIME OF GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

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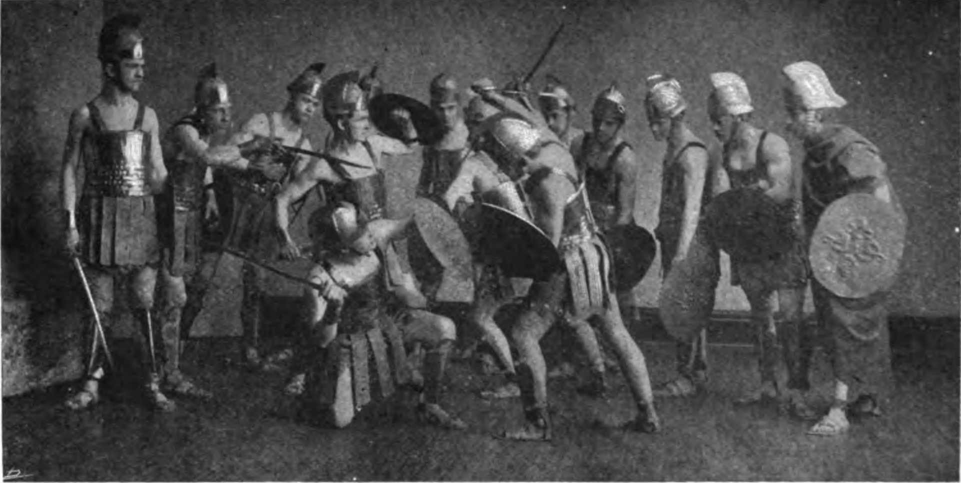
company front, so as to give the spectators the best possible chance to revel in the beautiful display shown them, the men fall into various dramatic groups, such as the "Dying Gladiator," etc. Coloured calcium light effects thrown upon all this brilliancy heighten the scene greatly. Again the men fall into regular order, forming a circle, Roman captain in the centre, and the manual of the sword is executed. At command, when still in the circular formation, each odd number faces about and all engage in combat.



ANCIENT ROMAN SOLDIERS.

The charge seems very real, the clang and clash of the steel turn the usually peaceful armoury into a stormy battlefield, but the noise, thrusts, and defences are the only evidence of war, for the Romans fall back to a man and not one even scratched, to make room for the last drill.

America ends as well as opens the series of military exercises. The most modern American soldier in khaki and complete heavy marching order makes a vivid contrast to the graceful and splendidly-equipped Roman who went before him. In addition to executing the up-to-date United States tactics, the men pitch their shelter-tents, and as a fit *finale* lie down to slumber on their Government blankets. By the time this stage of drill is reached the company is so enthusiastic that Romans, Japs, Arabs, Germans, French, and the rest forget their assumed nationality and join the American soldiers in lustily singing a national air, for they are, after all, Uncle Sam's boys, and it is impossible for them to sink their patriotism for more than a few hours in the uniform of a foreign nation.

Every week Company C, 3rd Regiment of Minnesota National Guards, meets and goes through its series of drills, and when the armoury is thrown open to the friends of the company the drill-room is packed to overflowing.

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A Wonderful Girl.

By Richard Marsh.

AS a small girl I must have been a curiosity; at least, I hope so; because if I were only an average child what a time parents, and guardians, and schoolmistresses, and those sort of persons, must have of it. To this hour I am a creature of impulse. But then——! I did a thing; started to regret it when it was about half done; and if I ever thought at all about the advisability of doing it it was certainly only when everything was over.

Take the case of my very fleeting association with Bradford's Royal Theatre.

So far as I can fix it, at the time I must have been about twelve—a small, elf-like creature, with eyes which were ever so much too big for my face, and a mass of unruly, very dark brown hair. Some people have told me that then it was black, but I doubt it; for there are those who tell me that it is black now, which I have the very best of reasons for knowing it is not. At that school they called me "The Witch," in allusion, I believe, not only to my personal appearance, but also to my uncanny goings-on.

The school was in a Sussex village. To that village there used to come each year a travelling theatre—it took the form of a good-sized oblong tent which was erected in a field which was attached to the Half Moon Hotel. I imagine that the whole country-side must have patronized Bradford's Royal Theatre, because sometimes it would stay there for two months at a time. It put in its first appearance so far as I was concerned during my second term at Miss Pritchard's school. We girls were not supposed to know anything about it; but well do I remember the awe with which I used to gaze at the exceedingly dingy canvas structure as we passed it in our walks. And once when Nelly Haynes, with whom I was walking, pointing to an individual who was lounging in his shirt-sleeves at the entrance to the field, observed that that was one of the principal actors—though what she knew about it I have not the faintest notion—I could not have stared at him with greater curiosity had he been the slave of Aladdin's wonderful lamp.

Even yet, when I am in the mood, I read everything in the way of print that I can lay my hand on. In that respect, also, I fear that the girl was mother to the woman. I had recently come across an article in a magazine treating of Infant Phenomena; I am not quite sure if the plural ought to be written with an *a* or an *s*, when using the word in that particular sense; but, any way, I will leave it. How I had lighted on the magazine I cannot remember; but I rather fancy that it must have been the property of one of the governesses who had left it lying about, and that I borrowed it without going through the form of asking leave. I know that I took it to a corner of the orchard, of which we had the freedom when there was no fruit upon the trees, and that I devoured that

"I TOOK IT TO A CORNER OF THE ORCHARD."

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article. It was all about precocious children, recording how Mozart had composed masses—whatever they were—at the age of two, or less; and how some little girl had won fame as a dancer at the age of three, or perhaps a trifle more. But in particular it told of the Infant Roscius. The story of that wonderful boy—he was throughout alluded to as the wonderful boy—set my brain in a whirl. I do not think that I have read much—if anything—about William Henry West Betty since; but I do believe that I recollect nearly all that I read then. He took London by storm when he was twelve years old—my age! the tale of my own years nearly to a tick! As Selim, in "Barbarossa"—when one thinks of it it must have been a wonderful part in a truly wonderful play for that wonderful boy—the whole world of wit and wealth and fashion was at his feet. In the course of a single season he gained over seventeen thousand pounds!

Those are facts and figures for you—especially were they facts and figures for me then. By the time I had reached the end of that article my mind was firmly resolved upon one point: that I would be an Infant Phenomenon. There should be a Wonderful Girl as well as a Wonderful Boy. It seemed clear to me that girls of the proper type might be made quite as attractive as boys. The mystery was that there should not have been a Wonderful Girl already. But the want should be immediately supplied.

Of course one or two difficulties were in the way. I had never acted myself or seen anybody else act, and knew as much about plays as about Mars. And then, Betty was encouraged, while I had an inward conviction that that would not be the case with me. Under these circumstances I did not quite see, at the moment, how I was to play the principal part at Covent Garden; nor even begin to charm the world, as young Betty had done, at a theatre in Ireland. But not for one moment did I allow myself to be daunted by considerations of that kind.

I think it was the very next day—my enthusiasm lasted all through the night, which was not always the case, for I have gone to sleep intending to marry a missionary and woke up bent on being a queen of the cannibals—that Fate threw in my way the very opportunity I wanted at Bradford's Royal Theatre.

I imagine that it must have been pretty bad weather about that time: when it was not raining it was blowing; and when, as the Irishman said, it was doing neither it was doing both. Climatic conditions unfavourably affected the attendance at Bradford's Royal Theatre. I know such was the case because I heard the governesses saying so. It all comes back to me. It was after morning lessons; I was in the schoolroom writing to someone at home—in those days I was a tremendous correspondent—and some of the governesses were talking together close to where I sat. They paid no attention to the pair of large ears attached to the small person close at hand. The theme of their conversation was Bradford's Royal Theatre, and they were expressing their fears that things had lately gone very badly with the company thereof. Two remarks stick in my memory: that on one occasion there had only been one-and-ninepence taken at the door, and that at the close of a recent week there had been less than two pounds to divide among seven people. What warrant they had for their statements I cannot say; but I know that they made a vivid impression on me at the time. And when they spoke of certain individuals being in actual want it was all I could do to refrain from showing more interest in the topic under discussion than, under the circumstances, would have been discreet.

Because, as I listened, it burst in upon me in one of those sudden flashes of illumination to which I was singularly liable, that here was the very opening I wanted: here was a chance to figure, in a double sense, as a Wonderful Girl.

On the one hand, I would dower these unfortunate people with the wealth of which they stood so much in need; on the other, I would take the world by storm. At Bradford's Royal Theatre, in the guise of a benevolent fairy, I would commence the career compared to which that of the Infant Roscius would be as nothing.

I did not stop to consider; it was not my custom. Stealing from the schoolroom, taking my hat from its peg, crossing the playground, paying no attention to the girls who spoke to me, through the gate out into the road I marched right straight away to Bradford's Royal Theatre.

When I think of it I hardly know whether to laugh or cry. The eager little creature that I was, with my heart swelling in my bosom, my head full of unutterable things, striding along the country road; now breaking into a run, now compelled to relax my speed for want of breath. It must have been nearly one o'clock—our dinner-time at school. I remember that I had twopence in

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my pocket. I fancy that at Miss Pritchard's—my first boarding-school—my allowance was threepence a week, and as that was paid on Saturday, and I still had twopence left, it is probable that I adventured in the regions of infant phenomena upon a Monday. My way lay past a solitary shop. I got hungry as I walked—in those days I did get hungry; the presence of that shop brought the fact vividly home to me. I paused to see what might be bought: my instinct pointed to sweets. Just as I was about to follow my instinct I perceived, on a dish in the corner of the window, a German sausage, or, rather, a portion of one. I thought of the hungry folk at Bradford's Royal Theatre. My mind was made up on the instant. Into the shop I went, and asked for twopennyworth of German sausage.

"I ASKED FOR TWOPENNYWORTH OF GERMAN SAUSAGE."

Whoever it was that served me must have stared; for I can hardly have looked like an individual who might be expected to make a purchase of the kind. But, anyhow, I got what I desired, and with it in my hand, wrapped in a piece of newspaper, I pursued my way.

I would not only present these unfortunates with the first-fruits of my great gifts; I would furnish them with food as well.

Whether, while I was being served with the German sausage, I had time to begin to reflect, I cannot say; but I have a clear recollection that, after quitting that emporium of commerce, my steps were not marked by the enthusiasm which had originally sent me speeding like an arrow from a bow. Probably the whole distance was not more than three-quarters of a mile; and of that less than two hundred yards remained. But that two hundred yards took me longer than all the rest had done.

I was beginning—positively!—to be afraid. When I reached a point at which the histrionic temple was only on the other side of the road I stood still. I was conscious of considerable reluctance to cross from the side on which I was to the side on which it was. For one thing, I was appalled by the peculiar dreariness of its appearance. I could not fancy the Infant Roscius commencing his career in that. The tent itself did look so shabby; the living-waggons, which stood disconsolately together in the mud, were so much in want of painting; about the whole there was such an atmosphere of meanness, such a wealth of mire, that my heart began to sink. A small girl ran from the tent to a waggon, and from the waggon back to the tent. She struck me as being the dirtiest and most disreputable-looking creature I had ever seen. I called to her, meaning to give her that twopennyworth of German sausage, and then retire, postponing the opening of my career until a future time. But either I did not call loud enough, or she was in too much haste to heed: she disappeared without a glance in my direction.

The moment she was gone sudden consciousness of the shameful thing that I would do swept over me. I had come to help those poor people, and just because they evidently were so much in want of help I proposed to leave them to their fate. Was I attempting to quiet my conscience by pretending that it would be enough to present them with twopennyworth of German sausage? What—my thoughts flying back to what the governess had said—was twopennyworth of German sausage among seven? Why, I could eat it all myself, and more! Over the road I tore, clattered along the boards which formed a causeway through the thick, upstanding filth; in a flash was through the entrance and in the theatre.

Then I paused. Without, the day was dull; inside, to my unaccustomed eyes, all at first was darkness. I have not forgotten the anguish with which I began to realize some of the details of my surroundings. It was all so dreadful, so different to anything I had expected. To begin with, there was the smell. As the merest dot I never could stand odours of any kind; even now whoever presents me with a bottle of scent makes of me an enemy. That tent smelt as if all the bad air was kept in and all the good kept out. Then it was so small; to me it, perhaps, appeared smaller than it actually was, because I thought that Miss Pritchard's pupils would have filled it. And dirty—untidy—comfortless beyond my powers of description. There was nothing on the ground to protect one's feet from the oozing damp. On what the audience sat I could not think—I saw nothing in the way of seats, unless they were represented by some boards which were piled upon each other at one side. At one end, raised a little from the ground, was a platform of rough planks, so small that there could hardly have been room on it for half-a-dozen persons standing abreast. It never occurred to me till afterwards that that was the stage. I kept wondering where the stage was—I knew that theatres had stages.

While, as they became used to the light, my keen young eyes were taking these things in, I perceived that the place had occupants. There were four men and three women. I should have put them down as the seven I had heard alluded to, had there not also been a litter of children. It was only the children who seemed to take any interest in me. They clustered round—a ragamuffin crowd—regarding me as if I were some strange beast. At last one of them exclaimed: "Mother, here's a little girl!"

The woman whom I suppose the child addressed looked up from some potatoes which she was washing in a pail of water.

"Well, little girl, what is it you're wanting?"

The place, the people, their surroundings, everything was so altogether different to the vague something I had anticipated that, like the creature of moods I was, I seemed, all at once, to have passed from a world of fact into a world of dream. It was like one in a dream I answered.

"I have come to be the Infant Roscius."

Not unnaturally the lady who was washing the potatoes failed to understand.

"What's that?" she demanded.

I repeated my assertion.

"I have come to be the Infant Roscius."

Other of the grown-ups roused themselves to stare at me.

"What's she talking about?" inquired a second woman, who had a baby at her breast.

An elderly man, who was perched on the edge of the platform smoking a pipe, hazarded an explanation.

"She's after tickets; that's what it is she wants."

The potato-washer seemed to be brightened by the hint.

"Has your mother sent you to buy some tickets?"

I shook my head solemnly.

"I have come to act."

"To—what?"

That my appearance, words, and manner together were creating some sort of sensation I understood; that these were ignorant people I had already—with my wonted promptitude—concluded. It seemed to me that it would be necessary to treat them as children—and dull of comprehension at that—to whom I, as a grown-up person, had to explain, in the clearest possible manner, exactly what it was that had brought me there. This I at once proceeded to do; with what, I have no doubt whatever, was an air of ineffable superiority.

"I am going to be a wonderful girl. I am nearly twelve, and young Betty was only twelve, and he earned over seventeen thousand pounds in one season, and if I earn as much as that I will give it all to you." I paused to reflect. "At least, I would give you a great deal of it. Of course, I should like to keep some; because a wonderful girl mayn't go on long, and when I stop of course I should want to have a fortune to live upon—like young Betty had. But still, that wouldn't matter, because there'd be plenty for seven."

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Amid my confused imaginings I had pictured the announcement of my purpose being received with wild applause. Those who heard would cast themselves at my feet, throw their arms about me, and rain tears upon my head. Not that that sort of thing would be altogether agreeable; but something of the kind would have to be put up with. When people were beside themselves with gratitude at seeing themselves snatched from the gaping jaws of famine some latitude for the expression of their feelings had to be allowed them. If, however, the persons to whom my explanation was actually addressed were beside themselves with gratitude, they managed to conceal the fact with astonishing success. It struck me that they did not understand me even yet, which showed that they must be excessively dull—more stupid even than the teeny-weeny tots in the first class who could not be got to see things.

The seven looked from me to each other, then back again to me. The woman with the baby repeated her former question—as if she had no sense of comprehension. I wondered if she were deaf.

"What's she talking about?"

The man who had dropped the hint about the tickets, descending from his perch upon the platform, came sauntering in my direction. As he moved he placed his hand against his forehead.

"Barmy on the crumpet," he observed.

What he meant I had not a notion. It moved a third woman—whose girth precluded any notion of her being on the verge of famine—to exclaim: "Poor dear!"

The potato-washer began to put me through an examination.

"What's your name?"

"Molly Boyes."

"Where d'ye live?"

"West Marden."

"You ain't come all the way from West Marden here?"

"I've come from Miss Pritchard's school."

The statement seemed to fill the man with illuminating light.

"Ah, that's just what I thought! D'rectly I see her that's just what I thought. Miss Pritchard's—that's the girls' school on the Brighton road—house is inside a wall. I went there to try to get them for 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' First the lady said there wasn't to be no flogging, then that she couldn't possibly bring her pupils if there wasn't any chairs for them to sit upon. I told Mr. Biffin what she said, and he said: 'Well, there wasn't any chairs and there was an end of it.'"

The woman with the baby interposed an observation.

"We should do better if there was chairs. It isn't likely that the front-seat people will want to sit on boards."

The big woman proffered a reminder.

"On the front seats there's baize."

Which the woman with the baby spurned.

"What's baize?"

The man addressed himself to me. He was a thin man, with iron-grey hair, and there was something about his face which made me think that, though he was untidy and I wished he would not wear such a very greasy cap, I might induce myself in time to like him. Never once did he remove his pipe from his mouth or his hands from his trouser-pockets.

"Well, Miss Boyes, it's a pity you should have come to act, seeing that there's a good many of us here that does that sort of thing already. The difficulty is to get people to come and see us do it. Do you think that many of your friends would come and see you act?"

"Well—not many of my friends."

"That, again, is unfortunate."

"But strangers would."

"It's that way with you, is it? With us it's different. We look to friends for our support; strangers are sometimes disagreeable. What plays were you thinking of acting?"

"I don't know any plays as yet, but I soon could."

"Of course; that's easy enough. 'Hamlet,' I suppose, and that kind of thing. And what sort of part were you thinking of playing?"

"I really haven't thought."

"No; you wouldn't, such a trifle being of no consequence. You weren't thinking of playing old women?"

"Well, I don't think I could act old women, but I might try. Young Betty acted an old man."

"Young Betty did. Is that so? And who might young Betty be? A friend of yours? That young lady over there, her name's Betty."

He jerked his elbow towards the woman with the baby. I was shocked; although, having already taken their ignorance for granted, I was able to conceal my feelings with comparative ease.

"He was a boy."

"A boy? With a name like Betty? What was his father and mother up to, then?"

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"His name was William Henry West Betty. He was the Infant Roscius."

"Was he?"

"He was the Wonderful Boy. I am going to be a Wonderful Girl."

"You're that already. Seeing that you are a Wonderful Girl, what might have put it into your head to come here?"

"You are very poor, aren't you?"

"Poor? That's what you might call a leading question. We're not rich. Who told you we were poor?"

"Didn't you only take one-and-ninepence at the door one night?"

By this time general interest was being roused in our conversation. As soon as the words were out of my mouth I was aware that they had been heard with more attention than anything I yet had said. Though why that should be the case was beyond my capacity of perception.

"Only took one-and-ninepence at the door one night, did we? Oh! Looks as if someone had been talking. From whom might you have heard that piece of news?"

"And one week weren't there less than two pounds to divide among seven? You could not live on that; no one could; it's not to be done. It simply means starvation."

I merely repeated, with all the earnestness of which I was capable, what I had heard the governesses saying. My remarks were followed by what even I felt was a significant silence. My interlocutor, bringing forward with his foot what looked like an empty egg-box, placed himself upon a corner. It creaked under his weight.

"It would seem as if somebody knows almost as much about this temple of the drama as it knows about itself. And it certainly is true that, regarded as a week's earnings, two pounds isn't much between seven. So you thought——"

"I thought I'd come and help you."

"Come and help us? By acting?"

"I THOUGHT I'D COME AND HELP YOU."

"If I'm going to be a Wonderful Girl—and I am going to be—it's quite time I was beginning. Young Betty was at the height of his fame when he was twelve. So I thought I would commence by making a lot of money for you here—which would keep you all from starving; and then, of course, I shall go on to London and make the rest of my fortune there."

"I see. Well! this bangs Banagher—Banagher it bangs."

What he meant I could not say. But he should have been a capital actor, because not a muscle of his face moved. A man behind him laughed—stinging me as with the lash of a whip.

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The big woman delivered herself of her former ejaculation.

"Poor dear!"

The potato-washer remarked:—

"Strikes me, my girl, that you've a good opinion of yourself."

The grey-headed man had his eyes upon what I had in my hand.

"What might you happen to have there?"

"It's some food which I have brought for you."

"For me in particular, or for all the lot of us?"

"It's for the seven."

"The seven? I see. The seven who divided those two sovereigns?"

"Yes. It's some German sausage. I hope you like German sausage."

"It's my favourite joint."

I endeavoured to correct what I imagined to be a still further display of his ignorance.

"I don't think that German sausage is a joint. It's not generally looked upon as such. It's a long, round, cold thing, off which, you know, they cut slices."

I passed him the parcel; he—removing, for the first time, one of his hands from his pockets for the purpose of taking it—balanced it on his open palm as if on a scale. It was a pretty grimy piece of newspaper; and was not of a size to suggest extensive contents. I became more and more conscious of its wretched smallness as, with every outward appearance of care and gravity, he slowly unwrapped it. The others gathered closer round, as if agog with curiosity. Finally there were revealed three or four attenuated slices. He held them out at arm's length in front of them.

"For seven!"

"There isn't much," I managed to murmur, oppressed all at once by the discovery of what a dreadful little there really was. "But I had only twopence."

"You had only twopence, so you purchased twopennyworth of German sausage for seven?"

"Of course I'll earn a deal of money for you, besides."

A girl came rushing into the tent behind me. The interruption was welcome, for I instinctively felt that matters had reached a point at which a diversion of any sort was to be desired. But I was far from being prepared for the proclamation which she instantly made.

"Here's the lady come. I've been and fetched her."

To my blank astonishment there appeared Miss Pritchard. That intelligent young woman, having a shrewd eye for a possible reward, had availed herself of the information which had been extracted from me to rush off to the school to proclaim my whereabouts; receiving, as I afterwards learnt, a

"ESCORTED BY MISS PRITCHARD BACK TO SCHOOL."

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shilling for her pains. Never before had I seen Miss Pritchard in such a state of agitation; and no wonder, considering the pace at which she must have torn along the road.

"Molly! Molly Boyes, what is the meaning of this?"

The sight of her had driven me speechless: I could not have told her for everything the world contained. My interlocutory friend explained instead, in a fashion of his own.

"It's all right, madam, everything's quite right. Having heard that things were in a bad way with us in this temple of the drama, this young lady has brought us twopennyworth of German sausage to save us from actual starvation; and has expressed her intention—I don't quite follow that part, but so far as I can make out she's proposing to make our fortunes by beginning to be a Wonderful Girl, which it isn't necessary for her to begin to be, seeing as how I should say that she's been a Wonderful Girl ever since the moment she was born."

Of what immediately followed I have but a dim appreciation. I know that, on the instant, I was turned into a common butt, or I felt as if I was. The children pointed their fingers at me and jeered; the grown-ups were all talking at once; there was general confusion. The whole rickety tent was filled with a tumult of scorn and laughter.

"I GAVE HER AS FULL AND COMPLETE AN EXPLANATION AS SHE COULD POSSIBLY HAVE DESIRED."

Presently I was being escorted by Miss Pritchard back to school, the children standing in the middle of the road to point after me as I went. I was in an agony of shame. With that keenness of vision with which I have been dowered I perceived, as I was wont to do, too late, what an idiot I had been! What a simpleton! What a conceited, presumptuous, ignorant little wretch! How I had made of myself a mock and a show for the amusement of the company of Bradford's Royal Theatre! I felt as if the hideous fact were written on my face—on every line of me. All I wanted was to hide; to bury myself somewhere where none might witness my distress. Although my worthy schoolmistress was walking faster than I ever saw her walk before or afterwards, I kept tugging at her hand—she was not going fast enough for me.

So soon as we reached the school she took me into her little private sitting-room, and required from me an immediate explanation of my conduct. Amid my blinding sobs I gave her as full and complete an explanation as she could possibly have desired. The bump of frankness was, and is, marked on my phrenological chart as developed to an even ridiculous extent. When I have been indulging in one of my usual escapades nothing contents me but an unrestrained declaration of all the motives which impelled me to do the thing or things which I ought to have left undone.

I told her about the article in the magazine, and about my resolve to be a female Infant Roscius, and about what I had heard of the pitiful state of things at Bradford's Royal Theatre, and my determination to assist them while starting on my meteoric career; and before I had gone very far, instead of scolding, she had her arm about me and was endeavouring to soothe my sobs. She must have been a very sensitive person for a schoolmistress—though I do not know why I should say that, because I have not the least idea why schoolmistresses should not be as sensitive as anybody else, since they are human; for when I began to tell her of how I had expended my capital on the purchase of what that grey-headed man had called his "favourite joint," she drew me quite close to her, and in the midst of my own anguish I actually felt the tears upon

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her cheeks. She took me on her knee, and instead of sending me to bed, or into the corner, or punishing me in any way whatever, she kissed and comforted me as if I had not been the most ridiculous child in the world. It might not have been the sort of treatment I deserved, but I loved her for it ever afterwards.

What was more, she promised not to betray me to the governesses, or to my schoolfellows, or to anyone, but I think that she wrote and told my mother, though mother never breathed a hint of her having done anything of the sort to me, but I always thought so. It was weeks and weeks before I could bear the slightest allusion to anything "wonderful" without becoming conscious of an internal quiver. I fancy Miss Pritchard must have given instructions as to the direction our walks were to take: it was some little time before the governess led us past the site of Bradford's Royal Theatre. When next we went that way every vestige of the "temple of the drama" had disappeared: the dingy—and odious—tent had gone.

It was with a positive gasp of satisfaction that I recognised the fact. A weight seemed lifted off my bosom, and my heart grew lighter there and then. When, the walk being over, we returned, before anyone could stop me or had an inkling of my intention, I dashed headlong into Miss Pritchard's private room. She was seated at the table, writing.

"It's gone!" I cried.

She must have been very quick of under-

"'IT'S GONE!' I CRIED.

standing. She did not ask me what had gone; she just put her arm about me, as she had done before; and pushed my hair from off my brow — and, I think, she laughed.

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The Automobile in America.

By George Grantham Bain.

THE AUTOMOBILE RACES AT NEWPORT—MR. "OLLIE" BELMONT'S COACH AT LEFT, AND MR. W. K. VANDERBILT, JUNIOR, IN THE MIDDLE OF PICTURE.

NO one knows what the next fad of the millionaire will be. F. Marion Crawford, the famous novelist, suggested in conversation with me not long ago that it might be to own islands in the Pacific and visit them in flying machines—but that, of course, is a potentiality of the distant future. Just now the millionaire is going in for automobiling, and, of course, is going to extremes. Nothing satisfies him but tearing along the country roads at a speed of a mile a minute, or turning corners on an oval race-track at almost break-neck speed. If he endangered only his own neck, no one would feel like interfering with his enjoyment; but when he threatens the lives of the farmers on Long Island by whizzing along their roads and through the adjacent villages at unlawful speed he invites criticism.

The French are an odd people, seen through American eyes. French regulations seem to the stranger in Paris to be enforced with a severity which, under some conditions, is little less than cruel. Crossing on the *Lucania* with the Mayor of Syracuse, N.Y., I heard him tell how he was arrested in Paris for getting on an omnibus within a hundred yards of a transfer station, because it was contrary to a law of which, in his innocence of the French language, he knew nothing. But when, a month before, I had hired an automobile on the Place de l'Opéra to take me about the city on some business, I found that the *chauffeur* knew no law but his own pleasure or my need of haste. "Toot-toot," said the automobile horn; and all Paris fled from our path as we flew along the boulevards. It was very amusing as well as exciting for me, but it was not at all amusing to the sober Frenchman, compelled to quicken his pace if he would escape the wheels of the modern Juggernaut.

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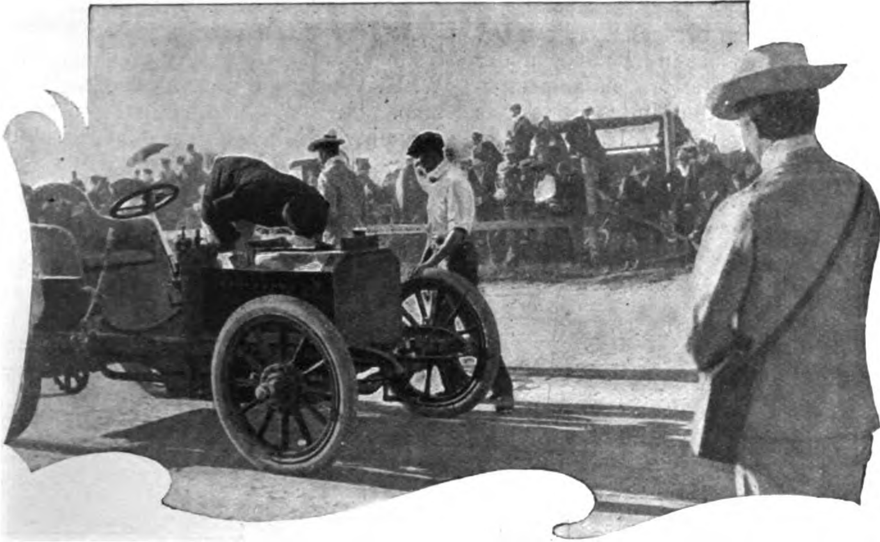
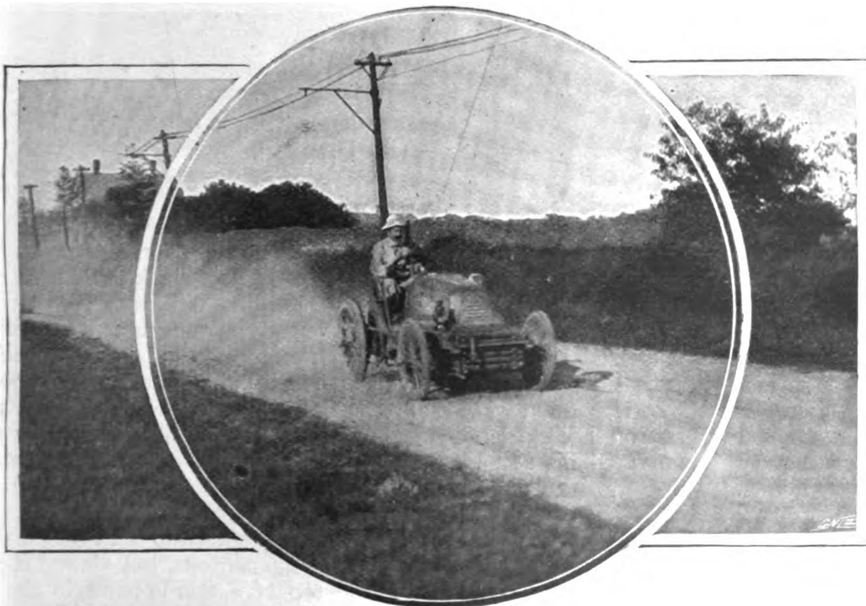


MR. W. K. VANDERBILT, JUNIOR, EXAMINING THE MECHANISM OF HIS MACHINE.

The American millionaire has been abroad and has seen how they do things in Paris. He has brought back a Panhard or a Mors with him, and he goes screeching along the peaceful country roads of Long Island at lightning speed. There has been talk of retaliation. One of New York's best illustrated papers pictured a suggestion that the farmer take the law into his own hands with a shot-gun. This is an extreme which will probably not be reached, though the farmers of Long Island may take a leaf from the book of the street railroad passengers in St. Louis. In the city on the Mississippi street railroad service has been so unspeakably bad that a citizen, when four cars had passed without observing his signal to stop, drew a revolver and held up the fifth car like a highwayman. He was arrested, but the judge "stayed" his fine and expressed a great deal of sympathy with his offence.

The automobile has become a fad of



MR. FOXHALL KEENE ON A COUNTRY ROAD.

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millionaires in a much better sense, however. The millionaire now goes in for racing under legal restrictions, and the first notable automobile meet held in the United States was organized and managed by W. K. Vanderbilt, jun. Mr. Vanderbilt brought one of the first foreign racing automobiles to New York. It was a French machine. Of unusual size and unfamiliar pattern, it attracted a great deal of attention, and as it was painted white it was quickly nicknamed "The White Ghost." That title typifies some of the characteristics of the high horse-power automobile in a way that will be easily recognised.

SECRETARY BARIGHT, OF THE NATIONAL AUTO-RACING ASSOCIATION, SUPERVISING A START OF STEAM-PROPELLED VEHICLES — J. J. ASTOR IN FIRST CAR.

MR. J. CHURCH SMITH, NEWPORT.

"The White Ghost" had made a very unpleasant name for itself on Long Island before Mr. Vanderbilt imported his second machine, which was of German make—a Daimler. At that time the Daimler machines held the record for road work. It was later that the Mors took first honours in the Paris-Bordeaux and the Paris-Berlin races, and later still that it made the world's record on a track.

At Newport they call him "Willie," to distinguish him from his well-known father, W. K. Vanderbilt, sen., the famous railroad man. "Willie" Vanderbilt is a very unassuming and pleasant-faced young man, an enthusiast, and a man of no little courage. No timid man will sit over a steam-engine behind a high-pressure boiler and go tearing around a course where the curves are so abrupt that it is necessary for the *chauffeur* to lean far out towards the inner rail to hold the machine to the track. This is what young Vanderbilt did at Newport last summer when he won first prize on the Aquidneck track with his Daimler machine, nicknamed "The Red Devil." He personally supervised all the arrangements for the meeting, and he was assisted by some other well-known American millionaires, among them Foxhall Keene, the only American in the Paris-Berlin race, and O. H. P. Belmont (who sent his machine into one of the contests, but viewed the race from the top of a four-in-hand in the spectators' inclosure). Mr. Vanderbilt took an active part in the proceedings, which is really

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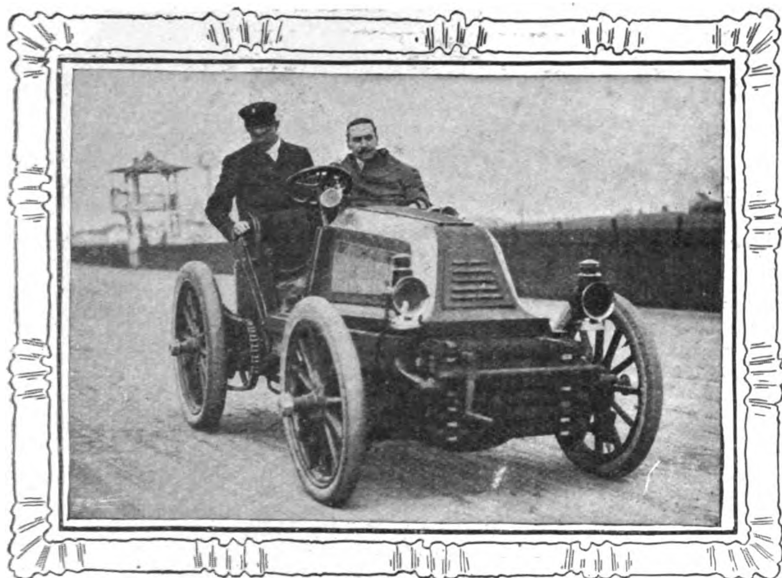

M. FOURNIER AND MR. DUNBAR WRIGHT, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE AUTOMOBILE CLUB.
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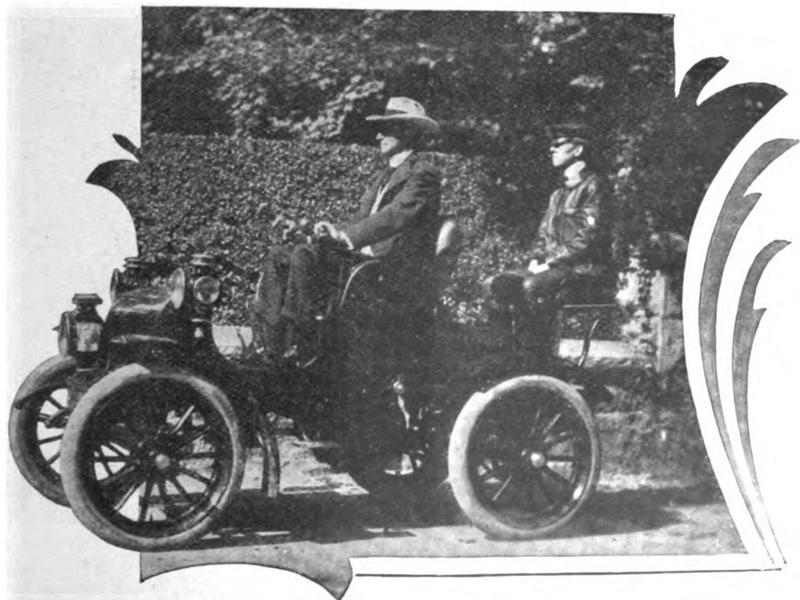
mile a minute mark; and later at Brooklyn he got well within that speed — in fact, made the mile on a straight-away track in less than 58sec. This is the world's record, and it was a ten days' wonder all over the United States.

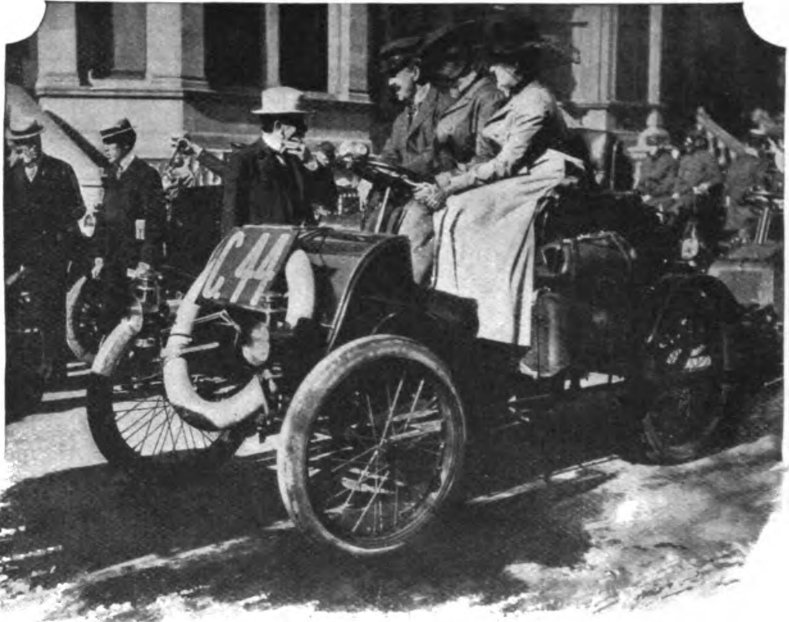
The straight-away track is the ideal of the automobilist. Such a track, to reach his highest ideal, must have a straight approach half a mile long and a straight strip at least a quarter of a mile long beyond the finishing line, in which to bring the machine to a stop. There is no straightaway track of this kind in the world, I believe. The special need for one arose with the production of the racing automobile, and it has not yet been met. Two or three difficulties are to be faced in constructing it. In the first place it will be difficult to find use for a track one

the only way to enjoy automobiling as a sport. No man is expected to ride his thoroughbred runners on the track; but surely there can be no comparison between seeing a fine, intelligent horse struggling for victory on the course and witnessing the evolutions of a steam machine on a mile track. The joy of automobiling is in running your own machine, and the American millionaire has shown no disposition to shirk this feature of the sport.

After the race-meet at Newport there was another at Providence, which was rendered more exciting by the presence of Henri Fournier, the famous French *chauffeur*, winner of the Paris-Bordeaux and the Paris-Berlin races. M. Fournier broke the track record at the Providence races, coming very close to the



MR. J. MACNAGHTEN ON HIS AUTOMOBILE.



MR. H. K. BROWNING AND WIFE AND MISS SIMONS.

and three-quarter miles long for anything but automobile racing, and this is not yet popular enough to support a track for itself on any commercial basis. Possibly some one of the millionaire devotees of the sport will establish a private track some day. It would cost less than half a million dollars. Another difficulty of the straight-away track is the location of the spectators' stand; for it is plain that the spectators cannot view both the start and the finish of the race. Then there is the question of timing. At the Brooklyn races part of the Volunteer Signal Corps of the State Militia was used to signal the start of each machine to the finish point a mile away, and stop-watches were started by the signal. But this system at its first trial did not prove altogether accurate or satisfactory.

THE START OF THE NEW YORK-BUFFALO AUTO RACE—PRESIDENT SHATTUCK, OF THE AUTO CLUB, IN THE CAR.

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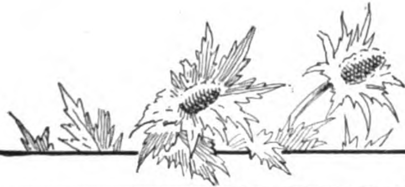
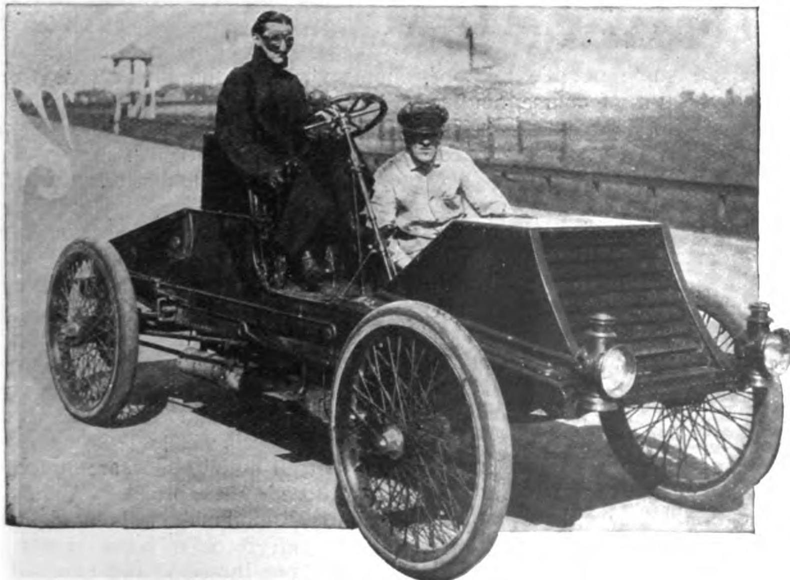
Brooklyn's races were held on a speedway, which was built especially for bicycle riders some years ago. It was almost an ideal track, though not perfectly level. This



THE RACE FOR DE DION 5 HORSE-POWER VOITURETTES AT NEWPORT.

speedway is part of the park system of the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York, and it was used by permission of the Park Commissioners. No doubt this track will be used in 1902, unless there should be some public protest against it. There is no likelihood that it will be used more than once or twice, as its use interferes with ordinary traffic. In 1903 there will probably be a straightaway track at the World's Fair



MR. A. BOSTWICK.
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MRS. A. L. RIKER IN HER MOTOR-CAR.

not at all the way to meet foreign competition.

A foreign automobile is a great luxury. In the first place A. R. Shattuck, the president of the Automobile Club of America, tells me the French manufacturers of high-class machines are so far behind with orders that they can promise delivery only some months ahead. As no American millionaire is willing to wait for anyone he usually buys his automobile from someone more fortunate, to whom a finished machine is about to be delivered, and for this, of course, he must pay a considerable premium. A 30 to 40 horse-power machine—the highest class of road-racer—will cost him about ten thousand dollars. A 10 to 12 horse-power machine will cost from three thousand dollars to four thousand dollars. To this must be added a duty of 45 per cent. as well as freight, which makes the initial cost of the machine five thousand dollars to fifteen thousand dollars. Repairs are a very considerable item. Mr. Shattuck's Panhard machine, for instance, has tyres which cost fifty dollars each. Every American automobilist feels that with his French machine he must have a French *chauffeur*, and, besides the wages of this man, he must usually pay his expenses to this country—perhaps those of his family—and guarantee his return expenses as well.

American automobiles are much cheaper than those built abroad. A small steam machine of good make will cost eight hundred dollars; an 8 or 9 horse-power gasoline machine, one thousand two hundred dollars; and a gasoline machine of higher horse-power, two thousand dollars. There have been built

at St. Louis, where some notable tests of speed will be made. But, of course, neither this nor the speedway in Brooklyn solves the problem of the permanent automobile race-track.

That automobile racing must be for the present a sport of millionaires is easily understood when we consider the cost. The racing automobiles are turned out by French and German makers, chiefly by the former. French manufacturers have got a big start on the Americans in this line of work, and, much as they pride themselves on the excellence of their work and their ingenuity, American as well as English manufacturers are not in the same class with Frenchmen in the making of fine automobiles. They are improving all the time, and no doubt they will surpass the foreign manufacturer in time; but for a long time they seemed to be engaged in a wild competition to turn out the greatest number of machines at the cheapest price—which was

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some special machines of a high horse-power which have cost much more. Speaking of the relative value of machines of different grades, W. K. Vanderbilt, jun., has been quoted as saying that the high-priced machine was the cheapest in the end.

Among the noted enthusiasts for automobiling in the United States is Albert P. Bostwick, who owns five or six machines, all of American make. Mr. Bostwick has broken several records, only to see his own smashed within an hour by some machine of foreign make. Mr. Bostwick is entered in the Paris-Vienna race of next year. So is Foxhall Keene, who is having a special machine built by Fournier for the event. Another entry is that of David Bishop, a wealthy man, who is champion of the United States on three-wheeled vehicles. It is proof of the democracy of the sport that at Newport Mr. Bishop rode a race against a negro.

New York has an automobile club with 360 members. It is doing all that it can to promote the good roads movement in the United States — a movement which began with the growth of bicycle riding in popularity, and has spread all over the United States. Naturally this movement finds its best support in the East, where the population is most dense. Last year the Board of Supervisors of New York appropriated four hundred and twenty thousand dollars to this work of making good roads.

Massachusetts has spent four million dollars on good roads, of which one million five hundred thousand dollars have been spent in the last three years. Massachusetts has constructed 358 miles of fine roads. New Jersey has built 600 miles of good roads, and Connecticut has done some noteworthy work along the same line. Even in remote Texas, where the automobile is hardly known, one county issued six hundred thousand dollars of bonds last year to pay for road improvements.

Automobiling, however, is not confined to the East. Chicago has some well-known automobile millionaires, among them J. Ogden Armour and John W. Gates. St. Louis contributes James Campbell, the famous financier; and Cleveland, Myron T. Herrick. In Washington automobiling is a popular fad, especially in the diplomatic colony, and Countess Cassini, Baroness Hengelmueller, the French Ambassador (M. Jules Cambon), and many other famous members of the *Corps Diplomatique* are devotees of the horseless vehicle.

MRS. JAMES G. BLAINE ON HER MOTOR-CAR.

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A PICTURE LETTER.

THE accompanying clever picture-letter was sent home by Corporal Standish, of the Duke of Edinburgh's Volunteer Rifles, from Kuruman, in South Africa. Many of our readers are, no doubt, ingenious enough to decipher it.

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H. W. Standish

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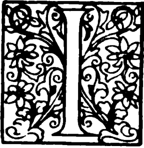
The House Under the Sea.

BY MAX PEMBERTON.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DANCING MADNESS.



IT was a great surprise to me that there should have been one of Edmond Czerny's men left in the bungalow; and when I heard his voice I stood for a full minute, uncertain whether to go on or to draw back. The light of the lamp was very bright; I had Dolly Venn in my arms, remember, and it was all Seth Barker's work to bring in Mister Bligh, so that no one will wonder at my hesitation, or the questions I put to myself as to how many men were in the house with the stranger, or what business kept him there when the island was a death-trap. These questions, however, the man answered for himself before many minutes had passed; and, moreover, a seaman's instinct seemed to tell me that he was a friend.

"Walk right in here," he cried, opening a door behind him and showing me a room I had not entered when I visited Madame Czerny. "Walk right in and don't gather daisies on the way. You've been a pleasure cruise in the fog, I suppose—well, that's a sailor all the time—just all the time."

He opened the door, I say, upon this, and when we had followed him into the room he shut it as quickly. It was not a very large apartment, but I noticed at once that the windows were blocked and curtained, and that half the space was lumbered up with great machines which seemed made up of glass bowls and jars; while a flame of gas was roaring out of an iron tube and a current of delicious fresh air blowing upon our faces. Whatever we were in for, whether friendship or the other thing, a man could breathe here, and that was something to be thankful for.

"'WALK RIGHT IN HERE,' HE CRIED."

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" We were caught in the woods and ran for it," said I, thinking it time to make my explanations; "it may have been a fool's errand, but it has brought us to a wise man's door. You know what the lad's trouble is, or you wouldn't be in this house, sir. I'll thank you for any kindness to him."

He turned a pleasant face toward me and bade me lay Dolly on the sofa near the flaming burner. Peter Bligh was sitting on a chair, swearing, I fear, as much as he was coughing. Seth Barker, who had the lungs of a bull, looked as though he had found good grass. The fog wasn't made, I do believe, which would harm him. As for the doctor himself, he seemed like a perplexed man who has time for one smile and no more.

" The lad will be all right in five minutes," said he, seriously; " there is air enough here, we being five men, for," he appeared to pause, and then he added, "for just three days. After that—why, yes, we'll begin to think after that."

I did not know what to say to him, nor, I am sure, did the others. Dolly Venn had already opened his eyes and lay back, white and bloodless, on the sofa. A hissing sound of escaping gas was in the room. I breathed so freely that a sense of excitement, almost of intoxication, came upon me. The doctor moved about quietly and methodically, now looking to his burners, now at the machines. Five minutes came and went before he put another question.

" What kept you from the shelter?" he asked, at last. I knew then that he believed us to be Edmond Czerny's men; and I made up my mind instantly what to do.

" Prudence kept us, doctor," said I (for doctor plainly he was); "prudence, the same sense that turns a fly from a spider's web. It is fair that you should know the story. We haven't come to Ken's Island because we are Edmond Czerny's friends; nor will he call us that. Ask Madame Czerny the next time you meet her, and she'll tell you what brought us here. You are acting well toward us and confidence is your due, so I say that the day when Edmond Czerny finds us on this shore will be a bad one for him or a bad one for us, as the case may be. Let it begin with that, and afterwards we shall sail in open water."

I said all this just naturally, not wishing him to think that I feared Edmond Czerny or was willing to hoist false colours. Enemy or friend, I meant to be honest with him. It was some surprise to me, I must say, when he went on quietly with his work, moving from place to place, now at the gas-burner, now at his machine, just for all the world as though this visitation had not disturbed him. When he spoke it was to ask a question about Miss Ruth.

" Madame Czerny," said he, quietly; " there is a Madame Czerny, then?"

Now, if he had struck me with his hand I could not have been more surprised at his ignorance. Just think of it—here was a man left behind on Ken's Island when all the riff-raff there had fled to some shelter on the sea; a man working quietly, I was sure, to discover what he could of the gases which poisoned us; a man in Mistress Ruth's own house who did not even know her name. Nothing more wonderful had I heard that night. And the way he put the question, raising his eyebrows a little, and looking up over his long, white apron!

" Not heard of Madame Czerny!" cried I, in astonishment, " not heard of her—why, what shore do you hail from, then? Don't you know that she's his wife, doctor—his wife?"

He turned to his bottles and went on arranging them. He was speaking and acting now at the same time.

" I came ashore with Prince Czerny when he landed here three days ago. He did not speak of his wife. There are others in America who would be interested in the news—young ladies, I think."

He paused for a little while, and then he said, quietly:—

" You would be friends of the Princess's, no doubt?"

" Princess be jiggered," said I; " that is to say, Heaven forgive me, for I love Miss Ruth better than my own sister. He's no more a prince than you are, though that's a liberty, seeing that I don't know your name, doctor. He's just Edmond Czerny, a Hungarian musician, who caught a young girl's fancy in the South, and is making her suffer for it here in the Pacific. Why, just think of it. A young American girl——"

He stopped me abruptly, swinging round on his heel and showing the first spark of animation he had as yet been guilty of.

" An American girl?" cried he.

" As true as the Gospels, an American girl. She was the daughter of Rupert Bellenden, who made his money on the Western American Railroad. If you remember the *Elbe* going down, you won't ask what became of him. His son, Kenrick Bellenden, is in America now. I'd give my fortune, doctor,

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to let him know how it fares with his sister on this cursed shore. That's why my own ship sails for 'Frisco this day—at least, I hope and believe so, for otherwise she's at the bottom of the sea."

I told the story with some heat, for amazement is the enemy of a slow tongue; but my excitement was not shared by him, and for some minutes afterwards he stood like a man in a reverie.

"You came in your own ship!" he exclaimed next. "Why, yes, you would not have walked. Did Madame Czerny ask you here?"

"It was a promise to her," said I. "She left the money with her lawyers for me to bring a ship to Ken's Island twelve months after her marriage. That promise I kept, doctor, and here I am and here are my ship-mates, and Heaven knows what is to be the end of it and the end of us!"

He agreed to that with one of those expressive nods which spared him a deal of talk. By-and-by, without referring to the matter any more, he turned suddenly to Peter Bligh and exclaimed:—

"Halloa, my man, and what's the matter with you?"

Now, Peter Bligh sat up as stiff as a board and answered directly.

"Hunger, doctor, that's the matter with me! If you'll add thirst to it, you've about named my complaint."

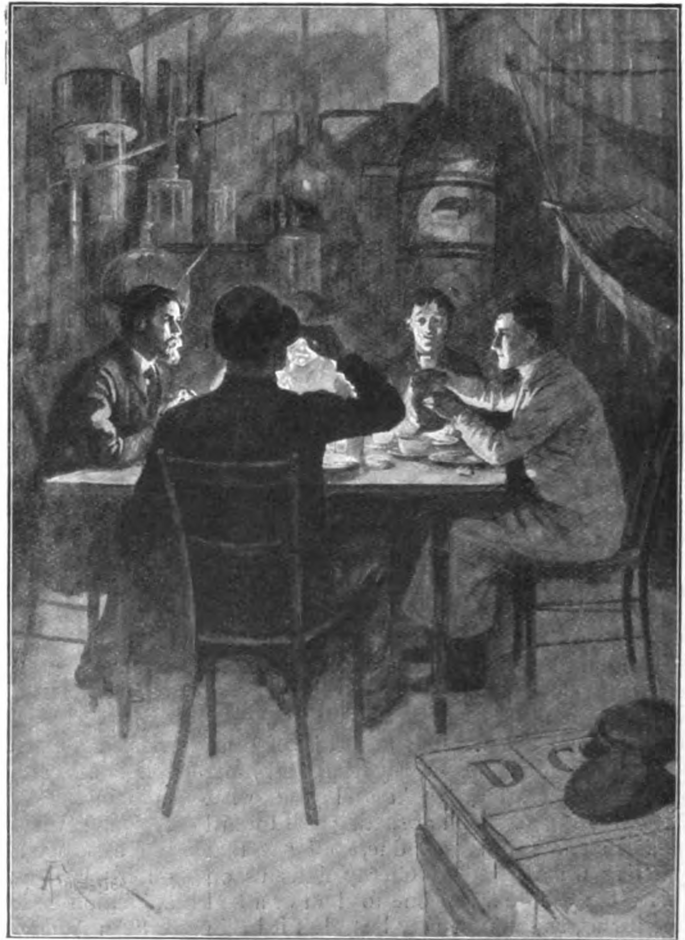
"Fog out of your lungs, eh?"

"Be sure and it is. I could dance at a fair and not be particular about the women. Put me alongside a beef-steak and you shall see some love-making. Aye, doctor, I'll never get my bread as a living skeleton, the saints be good to me, my hold's too big for that!"

It was like Mister Bligh, and amused the stranger very much. Just as if to answer Peter, the doctor crossed the room and opened a big cupboard by the window, which I saw to be full of victuals.

"I forget to eat, myself, when the instruments hustle me," said he, thoughtfully; "that's a bad habit, anyway. Suppose you display your energy by setting supper. There are tinned things here and eggs, I believe. You'll find firewood and fresh meat in the kitchen yonder. Here's something to keep the fog out of your lungs while you get it."

He tossed a respirator across the table, and Peter Bligh was away to the kitchen before you could count two. It was a relief to have something to do, and right quickly our fellows did it. We were all sitting at the


"WE WERE ALL SITTING AT THE SUPPER TABLE."

supper table when half an hour had passed and eating like men who had fasted for a month. To-morrow troubled the seamen but little. It did not trouble Peter Bligh or Seth Barker that night, I witness.

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A strange scene, you will admit, and one not readily banished from the memory. For my part, I see that room, I see that picture many a time in the night watches on my ship or in the dreaming moments of a seaman's day. The great machines of glass and brass rise up again about me as they rose that night. I watch the face of the American doctor, sharp and clear-cut and boyish, with the one black curl across the forehead. I see Peter Bligh bent double over the table, little Dolly Venn's eyes looking bravely at me as he tries to tell us that all is well with him. The same curious sensations of doubt and uncertainty come again to plague me. What escape was there from that place? What escape from the island? Who was to help us in our plight? Who was to befriend little Ruth Bellenden now? Would the ship ever come back? Was she above or below the sea? Would the sleep-time endure long, and should we live through it? Ah! that was the thing to ask them. More especially to ask this clever man, whose work I made sure it was to answer the question.

"We thank you, doctor," I said to him, at one time; "we owe our lives to you this night. We sha'n't forget that, be sure of it."

"I'll never eat a full meal again but I'll remember the name of Doctor—Doctor—— which reminds me that I don't know your name, sir," added Peter Bligh, clumsily. The doctor smiled at his humour.

"Dr. Duncan Gray, if it's anything to remember. Ask for Duncan Gray, of Chicago, and one man in a thousand will tell you that he makes it his business to write about poisons, not knowing anything of them. Why, yes, poison brought me here and poison will move me on again; at least, I begin to imagine it. Poison, you see, holds the aces."

"It's a fearsome place, truly," said I, "and wonderful that Europe knows so little about it. I've seen Ken's Island on the charts any time these fifteen years, but never a whisper have I heard of sleep-time or sun-time or any other death-talk such as I've heard these last three days. You'll be here, doctor, no doubt, to ascertain the truth of it? If my common sense did not tell me as much, the machinery would. It's a great thing to be a man of your kind, and I'd give much if my education had led me that way. But I was only at a country grammar school, and what I couldn't get in at one end the master never could at the other. Aye, I'd give much to know what you know this night!"

He smiled a little queerly at the compliment, I thought, and turned it off with a word.

"I begin to know how little I know, and that's a good start," said he. "Possibly Ken's Island will make that little less. The master of Ken's Island is generously sending me to Nature's university. I think that I understand why he permitted me to come here. Why, yes, it was smart, and the man who first set curiosity going about Prince Czerny in Chicago is well out of Prince Czerny's way. I must reckon all this up, Captain—Captain——"

"Jasper Begg," said I, "at one time master of Ruth Bellenden's yacht, the *Manhattan*."

"And Peter Bligh, his mate, who is a Christian man when the victuals are right."

Seth Barker said nothing, but I named him and spoke about Dolly Venn. We five, I think, began to know each other better from that time, and to fall together as comrades in a common misfortune. Parlous as our plight was, we had food and drink and tobacco for our pipes afterwards; and a seaman needs little more than that to make him happy. Indeed, we should have passed the night well enough, forgetting all that had gone before and must come after, but for a weird reminder at the hour of midnight, which compelled us to recollect our strange situation and all that it betided.

Comfortable we were, I say, for Dr. Gray had found fine berths for us all: Dolly on the sofa, his skipper in an arm-chair, Peter Bligh and Seth Barker on rugs by the window, and he himself in a hammock slung across the kitchen door. We had said "good-night" to one another and were settling off to sleep, when there came a weird, wild call from the grounds without; and so dismal was it and so like the cries of men in agony that we all sprang to our feet and stood, with every faculty waking, to listen to the horrible outcry. For a moment no man moved, so full of terror were those sounds; but the doctor, coming first to his senses, strode toward the window and pulled the heavy curtain back from it. Then, in the dazzling light, that wonderful gold-blue light which hovered in mist-clouds about the gardens of the bungalow, I saw a spectacle which froze my very blood. Twenty men and women, perhaps, some of them Europeans, some natives, some dressed in seamen's dress, some in rags, were dancing a wild, fantastic, maddening dance which no foaming Dervish could have surpassed, aye, or imitated, in his cruellest moments. Whirling round and

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round, extending their arms to the sky, sometimes casting themselves headlong on the ground, biting the earth with savage teeth, tearing their flesh with knives, one or two falling stone-dead before our very eyes, these poor people in their delirium cried like animals, and filled the whole woods with their melancholic wailing. For ten minutes, it may be, the fit endured; then one by one they sank to the earth in the most fearful contortions of limb and face and body, and, a great silence coming upon the house, we saw them there in that cold, clear light, outposts of the death which Ken's Island harboured.

"ONE BY ONE THEY SANK TO THE EARTH."

We saw the thing, we knew its dreadful truth, yet many minutes passed before one among us opened his lips. The spell was still on us—a spell of dread and fear I pray that few men may know.

"The laughing fever," exclaimed the doctor, at last, letting the curtain fall back, with trembling hand. "Yes, I have heard of that somewhere."

And then he said, pointing to the lamp upon the table:—

"Three days, my friends, three days between us and that!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORM.

You have been informed that Dr. Gray promised us three days' security in the bungalow, and I will now tell you how it came about that we quitted the house next morning, and set out anew upon the strangest errand of them all.

There's an old saying amongst seamen that the higher the storm the deeper the sleep, and this, maybe, is true, if you speak of a ship and of an English crew upon her. It takes something more than a capful of wind to blow sleep from a sailor's eyes; and though you were to tell him that the Judgment was for to-morrow, I do believe he would take his four hours off all the same. But at Ken's Island things went differently; and two, at least, of our party knew little sleep that night. Again and again I turned on my bed to see Dr. Gray busy before his furnace and to hear Peter Bligh snoring as though he'd crack the window-glass. Nevertheless, sleep came to me slowly, and when I slept I dreamed of the island and all the strange things which had happened there since first we set foot upon it. Many sounds and shapes were present in my dream, and

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the sweet figure of Ruth Bellenden with them all. I saw her, brave and patient, in the gardens of the bungalow; the words which she had spoken, "For Heaven's sake come back to me!" troubled my ears like the music of the sea. Sometimes, as dreams will, the picture was but a vague shadow, and would send me hither and thither, now to the high seas and an English port, again to the island and the bay wherein I first landed. I remember, more than all, a dream which carried me to the water's edge, with my hand in hers, and showed me a great storm and inky clouds looming above the reef and the lightning playing vividly, and a tide rising so swiftly that it threatened to engulf us and flood the very land on which we stood. And then I awoke, and the dawn-light was in the room and Dr. Gray himself stood watching by the window.

"Yes," he said, as though answering some remark of mine, "we shall have a storm—and soon."

"You do not say so!" cried I; "why, that's my dream! I must have heard the thunder in my sleep."

He drew the curtain back to show me the angry sky, which gave promise of thunder and of a hurricane to follow; the air of the room seemed heavy as that of a prison-house. In the gardens outside a shimmer of yellow light reminded me of a London fog as once I breathed it by Temple Bar. No longer could you distinguish the trees or the bushes or even the mass of the woods beyond the gate. From time to time the loom of the cloud would lift and a beam of sunlight strike through it, revealing a golden path and a bewitching vision of grass and roses all drooping in the heat. Then the ray was lost again, and the yellow vapour steamed up anew.

"A storm undoubtedly," said the doctor, at last, "and a bad one, too. We should learn something from this, captain. Why, yes, it looks easy—after the storm the wind."

"And the wind will clear Ken's Island of fog," cried I. "Ah, of course, it will. We shall breathe just now and go about like sane men. I am younger for hearing it, doctor."

He said, "Yes, it is good news," and then put some sticks into the grate and began to make a fire. The others still slept heavily. Little Dolly Venn muttered in his sleep a name I thought I had heard before, and, truth to tell, it was something like "Rosamunda." The doctor himself was as busy as a housemaid.

"Yes," he continued, presently, "we should be pretty well through with the sleep-time, and after that, waking. Does anything occur to you?"

I sat up in the chair and looked at him closely. His own manner of speech was catching.

"Why, yes," said I, "something does occur. For one thing, we may have company."

He lit a match and watched the wood blazing up the chimney. A bit of fire is always a cheerful thing, and it did me good to see it that morning.

"Czerny has more than a hundred men," said he, after some reflection. "We are four and one, which make five; five exactly."

Now, this was the first time he had confessed to anything which might let a man know where his sympathies lay. Friend or enemy, yesterday taught me nothing about him. I learnt afterwards that he had once known Kenrick Bellenden in Philadelphia. I think he was glad to have four comrades with him on Ken's Island.

"If you mean thereby, doctor, that you'd join us," was my reply, "you couldn't tell me better news. You know why I came here and you know why I stay. It may mean much to Madame Czerny to have such a friend as you. What can be done by five men on this cursed shore shall be done, I swear; but I am glad that you are with us—very glad."

I really meant it, and spoke from my heart: but he was not a demonstrative man, and he rarely answered one directly as one might have wished. On this occasion, I remember, he went about his work for a little while before he spoke again; and it was not until the coffee was boiling on the hob that he came across to me and, seating himself on the arm of my chair, asked, abruptly:—

"Do you know what fool's errand brought me to this place?"

"I have imagined it," said I. "You wanted to know the truth about the sleep-time."

He laughed that queer little laugh which expressed so much when you heard it.

"No," said he, "I do not care a dime either way! I just came along to advertise myself. Ken's Island and its secrets are my newspaper. When I go back to New York people will say, 'That's the specialist, Duncan Gray, who wrote about narcotics and their uses.' They'll come and see me because the newspapers tell them to. We advertise or die, nowadays, captain, and the man who gets a foothold up above must take some risks. I took them when I shipped with Edmond Czerny."

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It was an honest story, and I liked the man the better for it. No word of mine intervened before he went on with it.

"Luck put me in the way of the thing," he continued, the mood being on him now and my silence helping him; "I met Czerny's skipper in 'Frisco, and he was a talker. There's nothing more dangerous than a loose tongue. The man said that his master was the second human being to set foot on Ken's Archipelago. I knew that it was not true. A hundred years ago Jacob Hoyt, a Dutchman, was marooned on this place and lived to tell the story of it. The record lies in the library at Washington; I've read it."

He said this with a low chuckle, like a man in possession of a secret which might be of great value to him. I did not see the point of it at the time, but I saw it later, as you shall hear.

"Yes," he rattled on, "Edmond Czerny holds a full hand, but I may yet draw fours. He's a clever man, too, and a deep one. We'll see who's the deeper, and we will begin soon, Captain Begg—very soon. The sleep-time's through, I guess, and this means waking."

Now, this was spoken of the storm without, and a heavy clap of thunder, breaking at that moment, pointed his words as nothing else could have done. I had many questions yet to ask him, such as how it was that he persuaded Czerny to take him aboard (though a man who knew so much would have been a dangerous customer to leave behind), but the rolling sounds awoke the others, and Peter Bligh, jumping up half asleep, asked if anyone knocked.

"I thought it was the devil with the hot water—and bedad it is!" cries he. "Is the house struck, or am I dreaming it, doctor? It's a fearsome sound, truly."

Peter meant it as a bit of his humour, I do believe; but little he knew how near the truth his guess was. The storm, which had threatened us since dawn, now burst with a splendour I have never seen surpassed. A very sheet of raging fire opened up the livid sky. The crashing thunder shook the timbers of the house until you might have thought that the very roof was coming in. In the gardens themselves, leaping into your view and passing out of it again as a picture shuttered by light, great trees were split and broken, the woods fired, the gravel driven up in a shower of pelting hail. I have seen storms in my life a-many, but never one so loud and so angry as the storm of that ebbing sleep-time. There were moments when a whirlwind of terrible sounds seemed to envelop us, and the very heavens might have been rolling asunder. We said that the bungalow could not stand, and we were right.

"A WHIRLWIND OF FIRE SWEEPING ABOUT US."

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Now, this was a bad prophecy; but the fulfilment came more swiftly and more surely than any of us had looked for. Indeed, Dolly Venn was scarce upon his feet, and the sleep hardly out of Seth Barker's eyes, when the room in which we stood was all filled by a scathing flame of crimson light, and, a whirlwind of fire sweeping about us, it seemed to wither and burn everything in its path and to scorch our very limbs as it passed them by. To this there succeeded an overpowering stench of sulphur, and ripping sounds as of wood bursting in splinters, and beams falling, and the crackling of timber burning. Not a man among us, I make sure, but knew full well the meaning of those signals or what they called him to do. The bungalow was struck: life lay in the fog without, in the death-fog we had twice escaped.

"She's burning—she's burning, by ——!" cried Seth Baker, running wildly for the door; and to his voice was added that of Duncan Gray, who roared:—

"My lead, my lead—stand back, for your lives!"

He threw a muffler round his neck and ran out from the stricken bungalow. The whole westward wing of the house was now alight. Great clouds of crimson flame wrestled with the looming fog above us; they illumined all the garden about as with the light of ten thousand fiery lamps. Suffocating smoke, burning breezes, floating sparks, leaping tongues of flame drove us on. Cries you heard, one naming the heights for a haven, another clamouring for the beach, one answering with an oath, another, it may be, with a prayer; but no man keeping his wits or shaping a true course. What would have happened but for the holding fog and the sulphurous air we breathed, I make no pretence to say; but Nature stopped us at last, and, panting and exhausted, we came to a halt in the woods, and asked each other in the name of reason what we should do next.

"The sea!" cries Peter Bligh, forgetting his courage (a rare thing for him to do); "show me the sea, or I'm a dead man!"

To whom Seth Barker answers:—

"If there's breath, it's on the hills; we'll surely die here!"

And little Dolly, he said:—

"I cannot run another step, sir; I'm beat—dead beat!"

For my part I had no word for them; it remained for Dr. Gray to lead again.

"I will show you the road," cried he, "if you will take it."

"And why not?" I asked him. "Why not, doctor?"

"Because," he answered, very slowly, "it's the road to Edmond Czerny's house."

CHAPTER XIV.

A WHITE POOL—AND AFTERWARDS.

We must have been a third of a mile from the shore when the doctor spoke, and three hundred yards, perhaps, from the pool in the glens. It is true that the storm seemed to clear the air; but not as we had expected, nor as fair argument led us to hope. Wind there was, hot and burning on the face; but it brought no cool breath in its path, and did but roll up the fog in banks of grey and dirty cloud. While at one minute you would see the wood, green and grassy, as in the evening light, at another you could scarce distinguish your neighbour or mark his steps. To me, it appeared that the island dealt out life and death on either hand; first making a man leap with joy because he could breathe again; then sending him gasping to the earth with all his senses reeling and his brain on fire. Any shelter, I said, would be paradise to men in the bond of that death-grip. Sleep itself, the island's sleep, could have been no worse than the agony we suffered.

"Doctor," I cried, as I ran panting up to him, "Edmond Czerny's house or another—show us the way, here and now! We cannot fare worse; you know that. Lead on and we follow, wherever it is."

The others said, "Aye, aye, lead on and we follow." Desperation was their lot now; the madman's haste, the driven man's hope. There, in that fearful hollow, lives were ebbing away like the sea on a shallow beach. They fought for air, for breath, for light, for life. I can see Peter Bligh to this day as he staggers to his feet and cries, wildly:—

"The mouth of a volcano would be a Sunday parlour to this! Lead on, doctor, I am dying here!"

So he spoke; and, the others lurching up again, we began to race through the wood to a place where the fog lay lighter and the mists had left. Wonderful sights met our eyes—aye, more wonderful than any words of mine could picture for you. In the air above flocks of birds wheeled dizzily as though the very sky were on fire. Round and round, round and round, they darkened the heaven like some great wheel revolving; while, ever and anon, a beautiful creature would close its wings and swoop to death upon the dewy grass. Other animals, terri-

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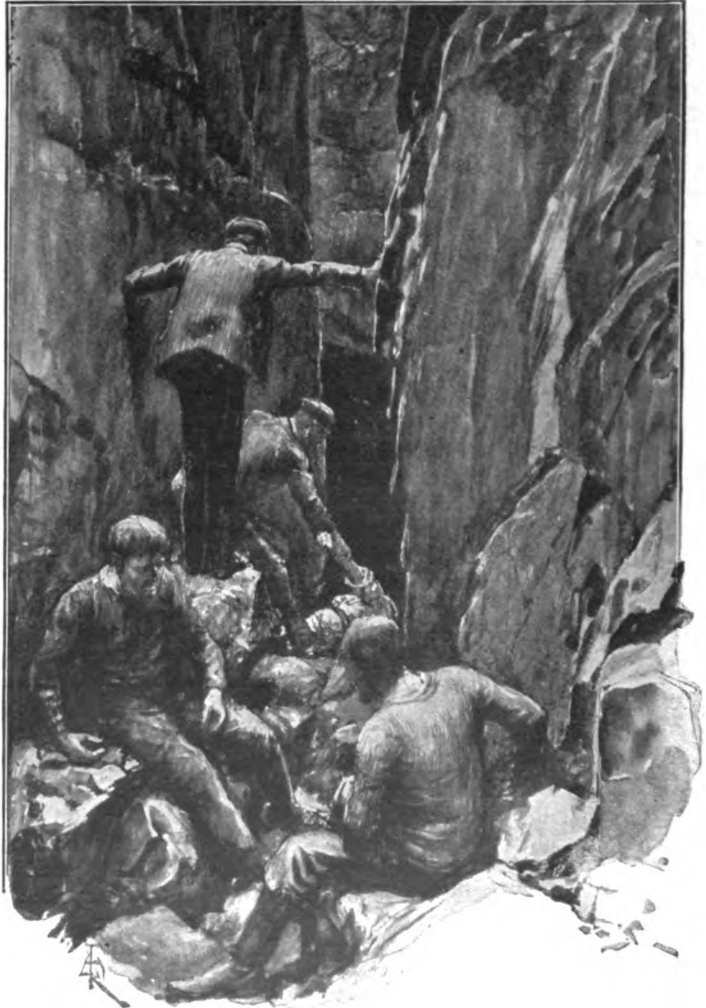
fied cattle, wild dogs, creatures from the heights and creatures from the valleys, all huddled together in their fear, raised doleful cries which no ear could shut out. The trees themselves were burnt and blackened by the storm, the glens as dark as night, the heaven above one canopy of fiery cloud and stagnant vapour.

Now, I knew no more than the dead what Duncan Gray meant when he said that he would lead us to Czerny's house. A boat I felt sure he did not possess, or he would have spoken of it; nor did he mean that we should swim, for no man could have lived in the surf about the reefs. His steps, moreover, were not carrying him toward the beach, but to that vile pool in the ravine wherein a man had died on the night we came to Ken's Island. This pool I saw again as we ran on toward the headland; and so still and quiet it seemed, such a pretty lake among the hills, that no man would have guessed the terror below its waters or named the secret of it. Nevertheless, it recalled to me our first night's work, and how little we could hope from any man in Czerny's house; and this I had in my mind when the doctor halted at last before the mouth of an open pit at the very foot of the giant headland. He was blown with running, and the sweat dropped from his forehead like water. The place itself was the most awesome I have ever entered. On either hand, so close to us that the arms outstretched could have touched them, were two mighty walls, which towered up as though to the very sky beyond the vapour. A black pit lay before us; the fog and the burning wind in the woods we had left. Silence was here—the awful silence of night and solitude. No eye could fathom the depths or search the heights. What lay beyond, I might not say. The doctor had led us to this wilderness, and he must speak.

"See here," he cried, mopping the sweat from his face and rolling up his shirt-sleeves, like a man who has good work to do, "the road's down yonder, and we need a light to strike it. Give me your hand, one of you, while I fetch up the lantern. A Dutchman didn't write of Ken's Island for nothing. I guess he knew we were coming his way."



"HE STRETCHED OUT A HAND TO ME."

He stretched out a hand to me with the words, and I held it surely while he bent over the pit and groped for the lantern he spoke of.

"Three days ago," said he, "I ran a picnic here all to myself. It is as well to find new

lodgings if the old don't suit. I left my lantern behind me, and this is it, I reckon."

He pulled up from the depths a gauze lantern such as miners use, and, lighting it, he showed us the heart of the pit. It was a deep hole, 30ft. down, perhaps, and strewn with rubbish and fragments of the iron rocks. But what was worth more to us, aye, than a barrel of gold, was the sweet, fresh air which came to us through a tunnel's mouth as by a siphon from the open sea herself; and, blowing freshly on our faces, sent us quickly down toward it with glad cries and the spirits of men who have broken a prison gate.

"The sea, the sea, by all that's precious!" cries Peter Bligh. "Oh, doctor, I breathe, I breathe, as I am a Christian man, I breathe!"

We tumbled down into the pit headlong and sat there for many minutes wondering if, indeed, the death were passed or if we must face it again in the minutes to come. There before us, once we had passed the tunnel's mouth, stood a vast, domed hall which, I declare, men might have cut and not Nature in the depths of that strange cavern.

Open to the day through great apertures high up in the face of the cliff, a soft glow like the light which comes through the windows of a church streamed upon the rocky floor and showed us the wonders of that awesome place. Room upon room we saw, cave upon cave: some round like the mosques a Turk can build, others lofty and grand as any cathedral; some pretty as women's dens, all decked with jewels and ornament of jasper and walls of the blackest jet. These things I saw; these rooms I passed through. A magician might have conjured them up; and yet he was no magician, but only Duncan Gray, the man I knew for the first time yesterday, but already called a comrade.

"Doctor," I said, "it is a house of miracles, truly! But where to now—aye, that's the question; where to?"

He sat upon a stone, and we grouped ourselves about him. Peter Bligh took out a pipe from his pocket and was not forbidden to light it. There was a distant sound in the cave like that of water rushing, and once another sound to which I could give no meaning. The doctor himself was still thinking deeply, as though hazarding a guess as to our position.

"Boys," he said, "I'll tell you the whole story. This place was discovered by Hoyt, a Dutchman. If Czerny had read his book, he would know of it; but he hasn't. I took the trouble to walk in because I thought it might be useful when he turned nasty. It is going to be that, as you can see. Follow through to the end of it, and you are in Czerny's house. Will you go there or hold back? It's for you to say."

I filled my pipe, as Peter had done, and, breathing free for the first time for some hours, I tried to speak up for the others.

"A sailor's head tells me that there is a road from here to the reef; is that true?" asked I at last; "is it true, doctor?"

He put on his glasses and looked at me with those queer, clever eyes of his. I believe to this day that our dilemma almost pleased him.

"A sailor's head guesses right first time," was his answer. "There is a road under the sea from here to Czerny's doorstep. I'm waiting to know if it's on or back. You know the risks and are not children. Say that you turn it up and we'll all go back together, or stay here as wisdom dictates. But it's for you to speak——"

We answered him all together, though Peter Bligh was the first he heard.

"The lodgings here being free and no charge for extras," said Peter, sagely.

And Dolly Venn, he said:—

"We are five, at any rate. I don't suppose they would murder us. After all, Edmond Czerny is a gentleman."

"Who shoots the poor sailormen that's wrecked on his shore," put in Seth Barker, doggedly.

"He'd be of the upper classes, no doubt," added Peter Bligh; "he'll see that we don't sleep in damp sheets! Aye, 'tis the devil of a man, surely!"

Dr. Gray heard them patiently — more patiently than I did — and then went on again:—

"If you stop here, you starve; if you go on—well, you take your luck. Should the fog lift up yonder, you'll be having Czerny back again. It's a rule of three sum, gentlemen. For my part, I say go on and take your luck, but I won't speak for you unless you are willing."

"None more willing," cried I, coming to a resolution on the spot. "Forward let it be, and luck go with us. We'd be fools to die like rats in a trap when there's light and food not a mile away. And cowards, too, boys—cowards!" I added.

The others said: "Aye, aye, we're no cowards!" And all being of one mind we set out together through that home of wonders. Edmond Czerny's house we sought, and thither this iron road would carry us. A

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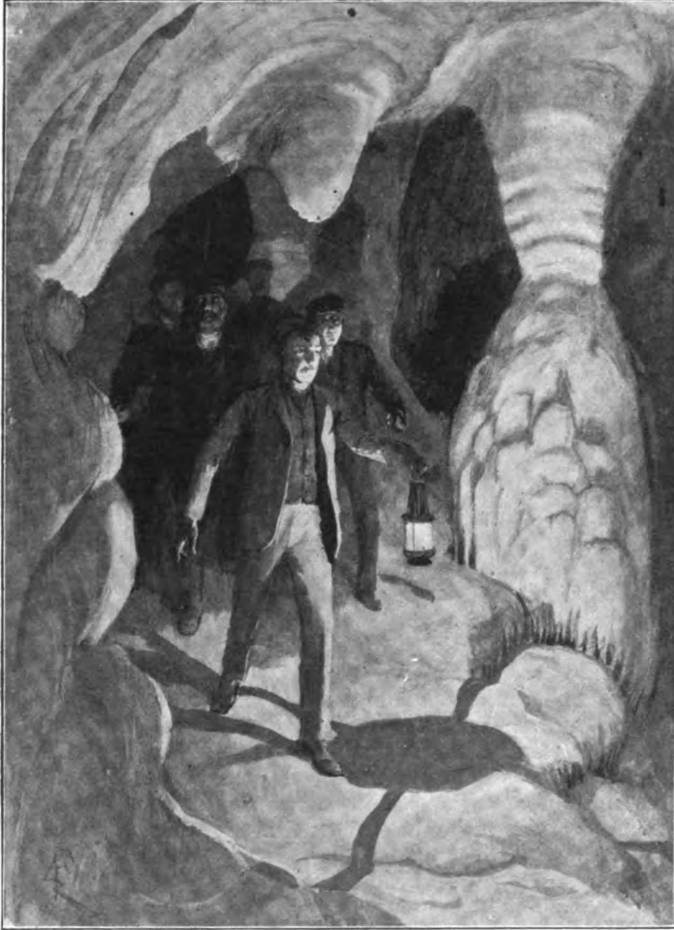
path more beautiful no man has trodden. From this time the great, church-like grottos gave place to lower roofs and often black-dark openings. By here and there we dived into tunnels wondrously cut by some forgotten river of fire in the ages long ago, and, emerging again, we entered a wilderness of ravines wherefrom even the sky was to be seen and the cliffs towering majestically above us. Then, at last, we left the daylight altogether, and going downward as to the heart of the earth I knew that the land lay behind us and that the sea flowed above our heads.



"FROM GROTTO TO GROTTO."

Reader of a plain seaman's story, can you come with me on such a journey as I and four stout hearts made on that unforgotten day? Can you picture, as I picture now, that dark and lonesome cavern, with the sea beating upon its roof and the air coming salt and humid to the tongue, and the echo of distant breakers in your ears, and always the night and the doubt of it? Can you follow me from grotto to grotto and labyrinth to labyrinth, stumbling often by the way, catching at the lantern's dancing rays, calling one to the other, "All's well—lead on"? Aye, I doubt that you can. These things must be seen with a man's own eyes, heard with his own ears, to be understood and made real to him. To me that scene lives as though yesterday had brought it. I see the doctor with his impatient step. I see Peter Bligh stumbling after him. I hear little Dolly Venn's manly voice; I help Seth Barker over the rocks. And these four stand side by side with me on the white pool's edge. The danger comes again. The fear and the loathing are unforgotten.

I speak of fear and loathing and of the dread white pool, and you will ask me why

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and how we came thereto. And so I say that the water lay, maybe, a third of a mile from the land in a clear, transparent basin of some quartz or mica, or other shining mineral, so that it gave out crystal lights even to the darkness, and the arched grotto which held it was all aglow, as though with hidden fires. A silent pool it was, we said, and our path seemed to end upon its brink; but even as we stood asking for a road, all the still water began to heave and foam, and, a great creature rising up from the depths, the lantern showed us a monster devil-fish, and we fell back one upon the other with affrighted cries. Nor let any man charge us with that. A situation more perilous I have never been in, and never shall. The fish's terrible suckers searching all the rocks, the frightful eye of the brute, the rushing water, the half-light worse than darkness, might well have driven back a stronger man than I. And upon the top of that was the thought that by such lay the road to safety. We must pass the grotto, or perish of starvation.

Now, the first fright of this encounter was done with in a minute or two, and when it was plain to us that the devil-fish was stuck in the pool which some tide of the sea fed, perhaps, and that his suckers could not reach the higher part of the rock, we began to speak of it rationally, and to plan a way of going over. I was for emptying our revolvers into the fish straightaway; but the doctor would have none of it, fearing the report, and, remembering what he had read in the Dutchman's book, he came out with another notion.

"Hoyt went over the rocks," said he, calmly, while we still drew back from the pool affrighted, our hearts in our boots I make sure, and not one of us that did not begin to think of the fog again when he saw the devil-fish struggling to be free. "It's not a sweet road, but better than none at all. Keep behind me, boys, and mind you don't slip or you'll find something worse than sharks. Now for it, and luck go with us."

With this he began to clamber round the edge of the pool, but so high up that it did not seem possible for the fish to touch him. There was good foothold on the jagged hunks of rock, and a man might have gone across safely enough but for the thought of that which was below him. For my part, I say that my eyes followed him as you may follow a walker on a tight-wire. One false step would send him flying down to a death I would not name, and that false step he appeared to make. By Heaven! I see it all so clearly now. The slip, the frantic clutch at the rocks, the great tentacle which shot out and gripped his leg, and then the flash of my own revolver fired five times at the terrible eyes below me.

There were loud cries in the cave, the wild shouts of terrified men, the smoke of pistols, the foaming and splashing of water, all the signs of panic which may follow a fellow-creature about to die. That the devil-fish had caught the doctor with one of his tentacles you could not doubt; that he would drag him down into that horrid stomach, I myself surely believed. Never was a fight for life a more awful thing to see. On the one hand a brave man gripping the rocks with hands and feet until the crags cut his very flesh; on the other that ghoul-like horror seeking to wind other claws about its prey and to drag it toward its gaping mouth. What miracle could save him, Heaven alone knew; and yet he was saved. A swift act of his own, brave and wonderful, struck the sucker from the limb and set him free. Aye, what a mind to think of it! What other man, I ask, would have let go his hold of the rocks when hold meant so much to him and that fish swam below? Nevertheless, the doctor did so. I see it now—the quick turn—the knife drawn from its sheath—the severed tentacle cut clean as a cork, the devil-fish itself drawing back to the depths of the crimson pool. And then once more I am asking the doctor if he is hurt; and he is answering me, cheerily, "Not much, captain, not much," and we four are following after him as white as women, I do believe, our nerves unstrung, our hearts quaking as we crossed the dreadful pit.

Well, we went over well enough, shirk it as we might. The bullets which sent the devil-fish to the bottom sent him there to die, for all I knew. The pool itself was red with blood by this time, and the waters settling down again. I could see nothing of the fish as I crossed over; and Seth Barker, who came last and, like a true seaman, had forgotten his fear already, swung the lantern down to the water's edge, but discovered nothing. The doctor himself, excited as you might expect and limping with his hurt, simply said, "Well over, lads, well over"; and then, taking the lantern from Seth Barker's hands, he would not wait to answer our curiosity, but pushed on through the tunnel.

"It's not every man who has a back-door with a watch-dog like that," said he, as he went; "Edmond Czerny, maybe, does not know his luck; I'll tell him of it when we're through. It won't be a long while now,

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"THE GREAT TENTACLE SHOT OUT AND GRIPPED HIS LEG."

boys, and I'm glad of it. My foot informs me it's there, and I shall have to leave a card on it just now."

"Then the sooner you let us look at it the better, doctor," said I. "Aye, but you were nearly gone. My heart was in my throat all the time you stood there."

"Which is no place for a man's heart to be," said he, brightly; "especially at the door of Edmond Czerny's house."

He stood a moment and bade me listen. We were in an open place of the tunnel then, and a ray of light striking down from some lamp above us revealed an iron ladder and a wooden trap above it. The sea I could hear beating loudly upon the reef; but with the sea's voice came others, and they were human.

"Yes," said the doctor, quietly, "we are in the house all right, and goodness knows when we shall get out of it again!" And then, with a cry of pain, he fell fainting at my feet.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INTERLUDE, DURING WHICH WE READ IN RUTH BELLENDEN'S DIARY AGAIN.*

MAY 5TH.—My message to the sea has been heard. Jasper Begg is on Ken's Island. All that this means to me, all that it may mean, I dare not think. A great burden seems lifted from my shoulders. I have found a friend and he is near me.

May 6th.—I have seen Jasper to-night, and he has gone away again. He is not changed, I think. It is the same honest English face, the same cheery English voice. I have always said that Jasper is one of the handsomest Englishmen I have ever seen. And just as on my own yacht, so here on Ken's Island, the true English gentleman speaks to me. For Jasper is that above all things, one of Nature's gentlemen, whom the rough word will never disguise nor the sea life change. He would be thirty-five years of age now, I remember, but he has not lost his look of youth, and there is the same shy reticence which he never could conquer. He has come here according to his promise. A ship lies in the offing, and he would have me go to it. How little he knows of my true condition in this dreadful place. How may a woman go when a hundred watch her every hour?

May 7th.—Clair-de-Lune, the Frenchman, came to the bungalow very early this morning to tell me of certain things which happened on the island last night. It seems that Jasper is still here, and that the storm has driven away his ship. I do not know whether to be sorry or glad. He cannot help me—he cannot!—and yet a friend is here. I take new courage at that. If a woman can aid a brave man to win her liberty, I am that woman and Jasper is the man. Yesterday

* The Editor has thought it well to give at this point the above extract from Ruth Bellenden's diary, as permitting some insight into the events which transpired on Ken's Island after Jasper Begg's discovery and Edmond Czerny's return.

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I was alone; but to-day I am alone no longer, and a friend is at my side, and he has heard me. His ship will come back, I say. It is an ecstasy to dream like this!

May 10th.—I have spent four anxious days—more anxious, I think, than any in my life. The ship has not returned, and Jasper Begg is still a fugitive in the hills. There are three of his companions with him, and we send them food every day. What will be the end of it all? I am more closely watched than ever since this was known. I fear the worst for my friends, and yet I am powerless to help them.

May 10th (later).—My husband, who has now returned from San Francisco, knows that Jasper is here and speaks of it. I fear these moods of confidence and kindness. "Your friend has come," Edmond says; "but why am I not to know of it? Why is he frightened of me? Why does he skulk like a thief? Let him show himself at this house and state his business; I shall not eat him!" Edmond, I believe, has moments when he tries to persuade himself that he is a good man. They are dangerous moments, if all a man's better instincts are dead and forgotten.

May 11th.—Clair-de-Lune, Edmond tells me, has been sent to the lower reef. I do not ask him why. It was he who helped my friends in the hills. Is it all real or do I dream it? Jasper Begg, the one man who befriended me, left to die as so many have been left on this unpitying shore! It cannot be—it cannot be! All that I had hoped and planned must be forgotten now. And yet there were those who remembered Ruth Bellenden and came here for love of her, as she will remember them, for love's sake.

May 13th.—The alarm bell rang on the island last night and we left in great haste for the shelter. The dreadful mists were already rising fast when I went down through the woods to the beach. The people fled wildly to the lower reef. It is not three months since the sleep-time, and its renewal was unlooked for. To-night I do not think of my own safety, but of those we are leaving on the heights. What is to become of Jasper, my friend—who will help him? I think of Jasper before any other now. Does he, I wonder, so think of me?

May 13th (later).—The House Under the Sea is built inside the reef which lies about a mile away on the northern side of the island. There can be nothing like it in the world. Hundreds of years ago, perhaps, this lonely rock, rising out of the water, was the mouth of some great volcano. To-day it is the door of our house, and when you enter it you find that the rocks below have been hollowed out by Nature in a manner so wonderful that a great house lies there with stone-cold rooms and immense corridors and pits seeming to go to the heart of the world. None but a man with my husband's romantic craving would have discovered such a place, or built himself therein a house so wonderful. For imagine a suite of rooms above which the tides surge—rooms lighted by tunnels in the solid rock and covered over with strongest glasses which the sea cannot break. Imagine countless electric lamps lighting this labyrinth until it seems sometimes like a fairy palace. Say that your drawing-room is a cave, whose walls are of jewels and whose floor is of jasper. Night and day you hear the sea, the moaning winds, the breaking billows. It is another world here, like to nothing that any man has seen or ever will see. The people of a city could live in this place and yet leave room for others. My own rooms are the first you come to; lofty as a church, dim as one, yet furnished with all that a woman could desire. Yes, indeed, all I can desire! In my dressing-room are gowns from Dousé's and hats from Alphonsine's, jewels from the Rue de la Paix, furs from Canada—all there to call back my life of two short years ago, that laughing life of Paris and the cities when I was free, and all the world my own, and only my girlhood to regret! Now I remember it all as one bright day in years of gathering night. Everything that I want, my husband says shall be mine. I ask for liberty, but that is denied to me. It is too late to speak of promises or to believe. If I would condone it all; if I would but say to Edmond, "Yes, your life shall be my life, your secrets shall be mine; go, get riches, I will never ask you how." If I would say to him, "I will shut out from my memory all that I have seen on this island; I will forget the agony of those who have died here; I will never hear again the cries of drowning people, will never see hands outstretched above the waves, or the dead that come in on the dreadful tides; I will forget all this, and say, 'I love you, I believe in you'"—ah, how soon would liberty be won! But I am dumb; I cannot answer. I shall die on Ken's Island, saying, "God help those who perish here!"

May 14th.—Three days have passed in the shelter, and Clair-de-Lune, who comes to me every day, brings no good news of Jasper. "He is on the heights," he says; "if food

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"THE DRAWING-ROOM IS A CAVE, WHOSE WALLS ARE OF JEWELS AND WHOSE FLOOR IS OF JASPER."

were there he might live through the sleep-time." My husband knows that he is there, but does not speak of it. Yesterday, about sunset, I went up to the gallery on the reef, where the island is visible, and I saw the fog lying about it like a pall. It is an agony to know that those dear to you are suffering, perhaps dying, there! I cannot hide my eyes from others; they read my story truly. "Your friends will be clever if they come to Ken's Island again," my husband says. I do not answer him. I shall never answer him again.

May 15th.—There was a terrible storm on the island last night, and we all went up to the gallery to see the lightning play about the heights and run in rivulets of fire through the dark clouds above the woods. A weird spectacle, but one I shall never forget. The very sky seemed to burn at times. We could distinguish the heart of the thicket clearly, and poor people running madly to and fro there as though vainly seeking a shelter from the fire. They tell me to-day that the bungalow is burnt; I do not know whether to be sorry or glad. I am thinking of my friends. I am thinking of Jasper, thinking of him always.

May 16th.—I learn that there was a stranger left behind in the bungalow, a Dr. Gray, of San Francisco. He landed with Edmond last week, and is here for scientific reasons. My husband says that he does not like him; but allowed him, nevertheless, to come. He was in the bungalow making experiments when the lightning struck the house and destroyed it. It is feared that he must have perished in the fire. My husband tells me this to-night and is pleased to say it. But what of Jasper, my friend; what of him?

May 16th (later).—I was passing through the great hall of the house to-night, going to my bedroom, when something happened which made my very heart stand still. I thought that I heard a sound in the shadows, and imagining it to be one of the servants, I asked, "Who is there?" No one answered me; and, becoming frightened, I was about to run on, when a hand touched my own, and, turning round quickly, I found myself face to face with Jasper himself, and knew that he had come to save me!

(To be continued.)

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Half an Hour in a Crevasse.

By W. M. Crook.

[Mr. W. M. Crook, who pens the following narrative of his recent perilous adventure on the Théodule Pass, is a well-known London journalist, an accomplished classical teacher, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and an old Alpine climber. The first telegrams reporting the accident were of a very alarming character. The following is the first full and accurate account published, and is almost unique in the annals of mountaineering.]

N Monday, the 9th of September last, a party of seven, of whom I was one, left the Riffel Alp Hotel for a walk over the Gorner and Lower Théodule Glaciers to the Gandeck hut. We were without a guide, as the glaciers are both "dry" and safe, and four of the party had a very fair amount of mountaineering experience. Only two of us carried ice-axes and I brought a rope, as something had been said about the possibility of some of us proceeding to the upper hut at the top of the Théodule Pass.

The day was beautifully fine and warm, though the weather had been very broken, and there was a good deal of new snow on the lower slopes of the mountains. The Matterhorn was whiter than I had ever seen it before.

We had a very pleasant if uneventful walk up to the Gandeck, where we lunched—so far as I was concerned, most copiously. I had been in Switzerland about a fortnight, and was in excellent health and possessed of an excellent Swiss appetite. Four of the party determined after lunch to return to the Riffel Alp; three of us, Mrs. Bryant, Miss Nicholls, and myself, decided to go on to the upper hut, with which intent we left the Gandeck at five minutes to three.

After delaying on the rocks to take a few snap-shots while one of the ladies was sketching, we took to the glacier. The recent snow had almost entirely obliterated the beaten track which usually traverses the Upper Théodule Glacier during the summer. But I had frequently crossed the glacier before, always, with one exception, without a guide; I had even crossed it alone without seeing a human being between the Upper Théodule hut and the Gandeck. I knew the glacier better than any other in the Alps. I had taken the precaution to look at the Swiss Government map and to compare it with the maps in Whymper's guide, and I had Sir W. M. Conway's Climbers' Guide and a compass with me. I did not anticipate any difficulty in finding my way on a clear day over a course I had so often traversed before.

But glaciers change from year to year, and necessarily, therefore, so do the paths over them. There is no conservatism about a glacier; it is radical, almost revolutionary, in its changes. When we came to new snow we began talking about putting on the rope. Why we did not put it on I really do not know. With the fullest intention of roping up I walked a few steps forward. The apparently solid snow gave way under my right foot. I plunged at once with the left to save myself. The snow gave again, this time all round me, and I was flying downwards through space.

I had often wondered what the sensation was like; now my curiosity was unexpectedly gratified. A friend who had had a somewhat similar experience had once told me that he was conscious of nothing from the moment he slipped till he stuck in the ice below. I had read in the papers that young Carrel, who fell from the Col du Lion when Dr. Black and Miss Bell were killed this summer, remembered nothing, and was conscious of nothing from the time he was dragged down till he found himself lying damaged far below. But when Mr. Whymper fell—I believe at exactly the same spot on the Col du Lion—some 200ft., striking seven or eight times in his fall, he was conscious the whole time, and has written a most graphic description of his sensations in his "Scrambles Amongst the Alps."

My experience was certainly more like Mr. Whymper's. I was not only conscious, but consciousness seemed to be quickened. These are the thoughts that passed through my mind as I fell: "Now I am being killed. Well, if this is what being killed is like, it's

not half so bad as people make out or as I expected." I was conscious, too, though more confusedly, of a rush past me of broken fragments of snow and ice, of a stream of falling water, and that I was passing rapidly between two dark walls of ice. I knew exactly where I was and what was happening. But in far less time than it takes to write these lines, or even to think them now, I was pulled up suddenly, feeling not a bit the worse, and pulled up with much less of a jerk than one would have expected.

One of the greatest surprises to me in this experience was the sensation of falling. I must confess I had always dreaded it. I hate to feel the ground giving way under me. Though I use a lift many times daily, I never can quite reconcile myself to the start downwards; I never enjoy the downward rush of a switchback and, as a child, I hated a swing. The only exception I knew to this rule was a ship at sea. I am never quite happy on board ship unless the vessel is both pitching and rolling. I had always feared that flying through the air in consequence of a fall would have an unpleasant resemblance to the motion of a descending lift—but it hasn't.

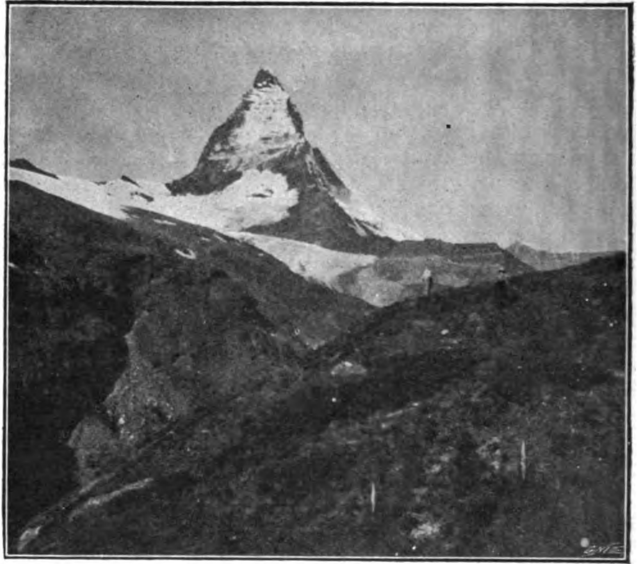
The sensation to me, at any rate, has a closer resemblance to tobogganing than to any other sensation I have ever experienced. Though I was quite conscious of the danger I ran, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the rush through the air was almost exhilarating. Of this I feel certain: that had I been killed right out by the fall, a more painless, one might almost say pleasant, death could hardly be conceived. There was no pain, no shock, no anxiety. It is no more formidable than going to sleep.

The moment I stuck I took stock of my position. I was, at the first glance, apparently quite unhurt. I had lost only my cap, of which I could see no trace. My heels had stuck on a tiny ledge of frozen snow, my knees were tightly jammed against the opposite wall of ice. I looked up to see how far I had come down. A round, bright blue hole right above me, apparently some 40ft. or 50ft. overhead, afforded my only glimpse of the outside world. It was a patch of deep and unflecked blue—how beautiful it seemed!

As I looked up at it a curious thing occurred. The following stanza flashed across my mind:—

> I never saw a man who looked
> With such a wistful eye
> Upon that little tent of blue
> Which prisoners call the sky,
> And at every drifting cloud that went
> With sails of silver by.

The quotation is from a sombre poem, the last flicker of great talent expiring in degra-



THE MATTERHORN AS IT APPEARED AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR WALK.
The two ladies who were my companions in the adventure are shown walking in front. The steepness of the N. face (right-hand side) of the Matterhorn is seen better from this point. The victims of the first accident slipped in what appears in the photograph as a snow-slope at the very top.
From a Photo.

dation. It is from "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." By C. 3. 3. So far as I can recollect I had only read it once, and the words were not recalled by me quite correctly, but the instantaneousness with which the thought embodied in the stanza came to me struck me very much.

Meantime, what had been going on overhead? The two ladies who were with me were both climbers of considerable experience, and nothing I can write can give to the mind of the reader an exaggerated conception of their courage, coolness, and presence of mind. To most women, even women of considerable nerve, the experience of finding themselves suddenly in the middle

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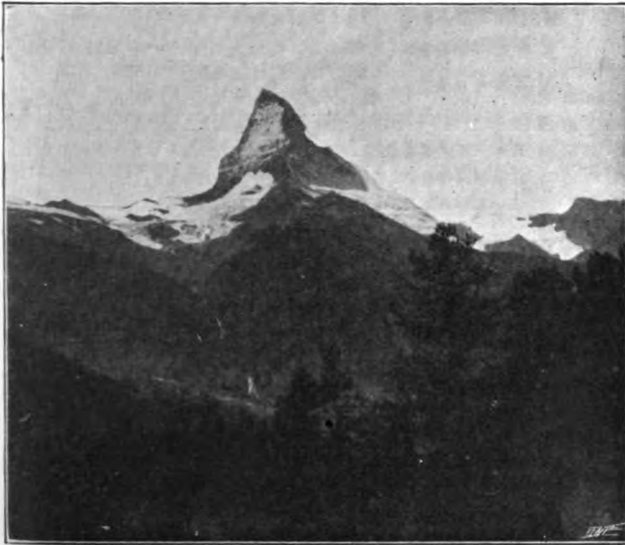
of a dangerously-crevassed glacier, with the only man and the only rope in the party deep down in a crevasse, with no other human being in sight and with the nearest help half a mile or more away, would be sufficiently trying to shake their nerves and possibly render them useless to help. But this is what my companions did.



THE MATTERHORN FROM THE RIFFEL ALP HOTEL.
The angle facing the spectator is the N.E., which forms the easiest way to the top. The dark north face on the right-hand side is that down which the four victims of the first great accident fell in 1865. The bodies of the guide Croz, of Rev. Mr. Hudson, and of Mr. Hadow were found on the Matterhorn Glacier, which is shown partly in sunshine and partly in shadow at the foot of the N. face. The body of Lord Francis Douglas was never found. The height from the top to the part of the glacier in shadow is 4,000ft. The height of the top above sea-level is 14,700ft.
From a Photo.

As I was falling, Miss Nicholls, who was the nearer to me, with remarkable pluck tried to catch the rope which was wound round my shoulders. Fortunately she failed, as she could not possibly have held me, and as I was three stone heavier than she was I should inevitably have dragged her down, and if she had fallen head foremost she would almost certainly have been killed. When she failed to reach my rope, and the apparently solid snow surface was giving way everywhere, she threw herself, with great presence of mind, full length on the ground, so as to distribute her weight and prevent herself from following me down the crevasse.

Then Mrs. Bryant, talking as coolly as if she were sitting at an afternoon tea-table, called down to me to know if I was all right. I said I was, for the present. After a brief consultation Mrs. Bryant decided to remain and watch my temporary tomb, as in the snow-field of a glacier such holes are hard to find again if once you leave them, and Miss Nicholls went back over the glacier to the Gandeck hut to look for help. Mrs. Bryant kept calling down to me a report of all Miss Nicholl's movements, so that I knew what was going on above just as well as if I could see it.

Below, I commenced to study my surroundings carefully. I had fallen most fortunately: I was within a rope's length of the top; I was firmly stuck for the present; I was practically unhurt, and I had retained my ice-axe.

There was only one possible danger—the danger of falling farther. I thought the little snow-ledge on which my heels rested might possibly give way and I might journey farther down. As I knew that everything that presence of mind and pluck could do was being done for me above, I felt, on the principle that God helps those who help themselves, that I must do everything I could to make myself secure.

For the first moment or two I considered the possibility of cutting my way up. But I soon came to the conclusion that this was not possible or only to be tried as a last resort. The sides of the crevasse were not straight, but wavy, so that each side overhung in turn. Now, it is impossible to cut your way up an overhanging ice-wall. Just where I was the crevasse was only about 2ft. wide, and I might have got up a little distance by cutting handholds and footholds on each side alternately. But the crevasse widened rapidly and was 6ft. across at the top, where such a process would have been utterly impossible. Besides, even where I was such a process would have been very difficult and dangerous, and as I knew that even if help had to be fetched from the Riffel Alp it could be here in five or six hours, I thought it was better to secure myself where I was within easy reach of a rope.

So I began by cutting two deep, strong handholds in front of me in case my support

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gave way. I curved them inwards and downwards by the heat of my fingers, and then left them for use in case of emergency.

As this made my fingers very cold I rubbed them with snow taken from a little ledge within reach. I had a small bottle of liqueur brandy in my left-hand outside jacket pocket. I found this unbroken, so I drank about a teaspoonful of it and rubbed all my fingers with a small quantity of it. In taking the bottle out of my pocket I discovered some blood on the crevasse wall behind me, showing that my head was cut somewhere. I suspected it was merely a flesh-wound inflicted by some tiny spike of ice in my downward passage. I felt my head all over till I discovered where the blood was coming from — a place just above my left ear. I plastered it with some snow, and as a stream of cold water, caused by melted snow, was pouring continually on my head —I was in a cold shower-bath the whole time I was down—I felt that this slight cut would be well on its way to a cure by the time I got to the top. The shower-bath reminded me of one Easter Day in a gully on Tryfan, where the stream flowed in at my collar and flowed out where it could. But the crevasse is more comfortable than the gully in this respect — you have not got the nails of a comrade's boots sticking into your shoulders or your head. I prefer the shower-bath neat to the shower-bath plus nails.

Having attended to the only cut I could discover —all my knuckles were scratched, but so slightly that the cold soon stopped their bleeding — I began step-cutting on both sides of the crevasse and on my right and left hand side, so that I should have something to stand in if my ledge melted away. I found foot-holds much more difficult to make than hand-holds, as they had to be made much bigger, and the narrowness of the space in which I was jammed made it extremely difficult to get any work on the axe. While I was doing this I noticed that my left foot seemed to be extremely wet. This was the grimmest incident of the whole adventure. Everyone who has seen the bodies of those killed in the mountains knows that they almost invariably lose their boots. Unfortunately, I have had at least my share of experience of deaths in climbing. Only last Easter Monday I was one of the bearers who brought in the body of an unfortunate gentleman, Mr. Weightman, of Bootle, who had lost his life on Tryfan the previous day. The very ice-axe which I had down with me in the crevasse was one of the two ice-axes which formed the cross-trees of the bier on which we carried his body down into Cwm Tryfan. I had never known anyone lose a boot and live. Now, as I looked at my left leg, I found that my leather gaiter had been almost stripped off. The top button was gone and all the other buttons were unfastened, except the lowest. It seemed as if a grim dissector had laid me on his dissecting-table and commenced to operate. As I looked down at my gaiter, full of water, I could not help a sort of feeling of sombre satisfaction at the thought that his operation had been interrupted at an early stage.

THE GORNER GLACIER.
The Lower Théodule Glacier appears at the extreme right. In the foreground is the path we failed to find in the darkness. Part of the Breithorn, the Twins, and part of the Lyskamm appear in the background.
From a Photo.

I think I had made about six not altogether satisfactory steps when an unfortunate accident occurred. In trying to put more weight into my blows I struck the butt-end of my

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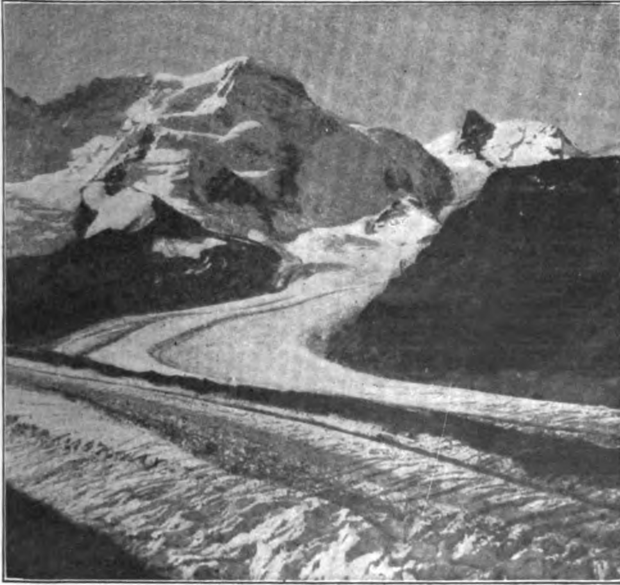
ice-axe against the ice-wall behind me and knocked it out of my hand. It went flying down the narrower part of the crevasse beneath me and stuck about 40ft. below, where the crevasse narrowed to about a foot in width and was entirely closed across by a bridge of frozen snow. If I were of a tearful disposition I could have shed tears over its loss. It was a beautiful weapon, specially made for me by Schenk, of Grindelwald. It had been my constant companion for many years in many toils and dangers, and now to see it buried in an ice-tomb appeared almost cruel. I never felt so kindly towards any inanimate thing.

My first determination was to try to recover it. I had 80ft. of rope round my shoulders. The axe did not appear to be more than 40ft. below me. I thought I could loose the rope from my shoulders, possibly loop it round the axe and pull it up again. I had commenced to take the rope off when a shout from Mrs. Bryant attracted my attention. She said people were coming from the Gandeck hut. This made me reconsider. Rescue was now almost certain and not far off. In taking the rope off me in my cramped position I might slip. If I had slipped straight down I don't think it would have been serious. The crevasse was too narrow for me to go farther than, or as far as, my axe. But when you are between two walls of ice you have no guarantee where you will slip, and beneath me on each side the crevasse widened out, like a pair of spectacles, to a diameter of about 5ft., and there on each side a huge, dark hole gaped. No, thanks! I didn't want to get into either of those, or I should have fallen beyond the reach of any help. Where I was there was plenty of light, the clear blue ice admitted any amount, but these holes were black. They may have been 1,000ft. deep for all I know. So I abandoned my poor ice-axe to its fate, and it lies buried 100ft. down in its cold grave. It was cowardly, but I thought it was the wisest thing to do. Perhaps, some thirty years hence, it will come out, with my cap, in some canton where it is not expected, as Mark Twain says.



THE GORNER GLACIER, SHOWING THE MORAINES, on one of which we were benighted, in the foreground. The glacier running into it is the Lower Théodule. The Breithorn is the mountain mass in the background, with the Little Matterhorn to its right.
From a Photo.

After the loss of my axe I began to cast about for something to do to make myself still more secure. I had a large penknife in one of my knickerbocker pockets, which I thought might prove a useful weapon. Close to my head on the left-hand side was a curious, projecting, rounded boss of ice. Grasping my knife like a dagger I picked a hole at each side of this, and then connected these two holes by one made at right angles to them behind the projection, partly picked with my knife and partly tunnelled by the warmth of my fingers, all of which I used in turn to melt my tunnel through. When it was big enough I passed the loose end of my rope through it and knotted it tightly. If this boss of ice would have held this might have made me safe, even if all my foot-holds and hand-holds had proved useless.

Having now done everything I could, I settled myself to await my rescuers. But all my elaborate efforts had been unnecessary. I had hardly commenced what I anticipated would be the dreariest portion of my imprisonment when Mrs. Bryant called down, "They are here!" Only in those words and when she

had announced the departure of the rescue party from the hut had her voice varied from the firm, quiet tones in which she had said everything she had to say to me since my fall. A slight difference in her intonation indicated that she was glad to have such an announcement to make.

Immediately I heard a man's bass voice, talking volubly in German-Swiss quite two hundred words to the minute, far above me. What he was saying I could not make out. Being in no mood to listen to an eloquent oration I interrupted him by asking him in a loud tone—remembering other scenes of a similar kind, I was slightly irritated—whether he had a rope. He replied that he had a long one. "Then," I said, in my most commanding tones, "let it down, and let it down quickly." This produced the desired effect. The stream of eloquence stopped and a shower of snow and pieces of ice fell on my head. I knew what that meant, and looked up. Far above in the bright, blue circle a little black string was hanging, moving quickly down. When it was about 20ft. above my head the talking recommenced. He wanted to know if it had reached me yet. I said it had not, and told him to send it on till I instructed him to stop. When I had got hold of it I knotted it twice tightly round my body, and then set to work to undo my own rope from the boss of ice to which I had tied it in front. He did not understand this at all, and my German was not equal to explaining to him what I had done. Had I told him that I was roped on to the ice-wall in front of me he would have thought I was mad. So I simply told him on no account to pull till I gave the word, but I had great difficulty in restraining his impetuous desire to rescue me without delay, and for a second or two I was in fear of being pulled in two different directions by my own rope and his. However, I succeeded in keeping him in check till I had unroped myself from the ice-wall in front, and then I called to him to draw me up slowly. He pulled at a tremendous rate, and my head came bump against an overhanging part adorned with icicles, with the result that I got three more cuts on the head, fortunately very slight ones. In less than no time my right shoulder came bang against the cornice at the top, that part of the frozen snow-covering of the crevasse which, by reason of its proximity to the solid ice, had become almost ice itself. He tugged desperately to get me through this, but much more nearly pulled the rope through me and squeezed the breath out of my body. Unfortunately I did not know the German word for a cornice, and he did not appear to understand either the English or French name for it. At last he said he could not get me through—could I help him? I vainly tried with my foot to reach the other side of the crevasse, but it was 6ft. away. Turning round on the rope, I tried to break away the cornice with my fingers; but I could not do this. Fortunately the landlady of the Gandeck, who had run up with him and who was holding the rope just behind him, saw what was the matter, and turning to Mrs. Bryant, who was third on the rope, asked her for her alpenstock, and with its iron point hammered the cornice away. Immediately I was sprawling, gasping for breath, on the surface. "Gott sei dank!" said the pious landlady, who had come up in her slippers and was still out of breath from the race. She is a devout Roman Catholic, and early in the morning of every Sunday and holiday she hurries down over two glaciers to the little Roman Catholic chapel by the Riffel Alp, attends mass, and hurries back again. Her piety keeps her in excellent training, as I found to my very great gain. We walked back to the Gandeck, where my two companions dressed the cuts on my head with a surgical skill not inferior to their courage, and after we had had some tea we started back to our hotel at a quarter to six o'clock.

But not before one of those Gilbertian touches, of which life is full, had occurred. Naturally, I gave some slight financial recognition to these two poor people, the guide and the woman who had rushed to my rescue the moment they heard of my danger. The man, whose volubility was gone and whose staidness had returned, thanked me very warmly till I reduced him to silence by insisting that the thanks were all due from me to him, not from him to me. Not so the woman. She simply overwhelmed me with thanks. I have never been so thanked for any service I have rendered to anyone in my life as this woman who pulled me out of what might easily have been my grave thanked me. I tried to explain to her that the boot was on the other leg. But her self-possession had now become volubility, and though I can talk two hundred to the minute in my own language I cannot do it in German-Swiss, with the result that I had to retire discomfited. I abandoned the unequal contest, and actually had to leave the hut after she had

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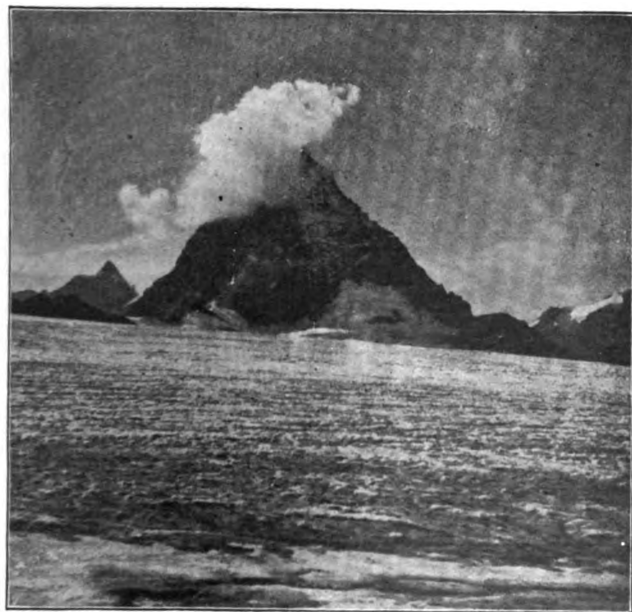
finally taken one of my hands in both of hers, shaken it like a pump-handle, repeating all the time, "A thousand, thousand thanks," and other expressions of gratitude. It was a most amusing reversal of things as they ought to be.

One would imagine we had had adventures enough for one day, but the end was not yet. Considering I had two ladies with me I ought to have taken a guide down from the Gandeck with us. We had still two glaciers to cross to reach the Riffel Alp. Though I did not feel damaged, except one rib which was hurt by the final tugging at the rope, it was late in the afternoon, and there was a danger of being caught in the darkness on the glaciers. But I was very angry with myself for having done such a foolish thing as walk into a concealed crevasse. There were a party of Germans at the hut (including a doctor, who kindly proffered his services, which I declined) and several Swiss guides. The thought just occurred to me—nothing more—that I ought to engage one of these last. I drove it away angrily as if it had been an evil thing, because I felt something like this. "We are the only English-speaking people (two of us, at least, were Irish) here; all the rest are foreigners. We must let them see that this sort of thing doesn't knock the stuffing out of English-speaking folk, women or men." So, having poured the water out of my left boot and wrung out my stocking, the wettest part of my garments, we started off. Except for two slight intervals, one or other of the ladies led the whole way down. Miss Nicholls led all down the Lower Théodule Glacier, never once deviating from the right track. No guide could have led more unerringly. She led also down the Gorner to the last moraine, where night suddenly came on. This was serious. For, however easy a "dry" glacier may be in daylight, it is another matter in the dark. So we put on the rope, Mrs. Bryant now leading, as her eyesight proved best in the darkness. I had a notion that we could land from a tongue of ice near the foot of the Matterhorn couloir on the Riffelhorn. Whether that is possible or not in the daylight, we utterly failed to do it in the dark. We crept cautiously down the long tongue of ice leading to the coûloir, but apparently a huge bergschrund gaped at its farther end. In succession we tried six or seven tongues of ice, but always with the same result. At last our leader, whom I could not see, called out the welcome news that the tongue we were on had no bergschrund at the end. Gradually Mrs. Bryant ascended over *débris* and boulders. Once on the lateral moraine all danger was past. But to find the path, the only path that led up to the Riffel Alp, was our next difficulty. Vainly we searched, amid multitudinous boulders, in dense darkness, for a path so easy to find by day. We could do nothing without a light. I had two boxes of matches with me, but both were soaked through. I tried to dry some of the matches in my hands, but failed. Miss Nicholls hammered splendid sparks out of the rocks with her axe and attempted to light pages of her sketch-book, but without result. After about two hours of fruitless endeavour we decided to camp out for the night. Fortunately, it was warm and fine. The



THE MATTERHORN FROM THE ROCKS ABOVE THE GANDECK HUT.
The Dent d'Hérens appears to the left. The glacier is the snow-covered Upper Théodule Glacier, into a crevasse of which I fell.
From a Photo.

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ladies had some chocolate, and I passed round my little brandy-bottle. As none of us ever drinks brandy under ordinary circumstances we found these little sips of it a great help in keeping warm. I had bought a franc's-worth of liqueur cognac a fortnight before, and we did not succeed in exhausting what remained of it during that night; so our potations were not very deep.

There is a certain fascinating weirdness in a night spent by a glacier. All night long—so my companions tell me, for I slept a good deal—stones kept falling down the Matterhorn couloir, from the sides of the glacier, from the Riffelhorn, and from the rocks opposite us. All night long one could hear the monotonous roar of the Matter-Visp, the stream that issues from the Gorner Glacier. Only one trace of humanity was in sight—the lights in the Schwarzsee Hotel. But they went out early, and we were left in complete darkness till the heavens took up the running with a tolerable display of sheet lightning.

But all things, even sleepless nights, have an end. By about 5.45 a.m. there was light enough to move. The first thing we had to determine was the problem on which side of us the path was. Had we passed it in the darkness or was it still in front? The rapidly-increasing light soon settled that question, and by seven o'clock we were enjoying a hot breakfast in our hotel. For the next twenty-four hours I felt some anxiety as to the health of my two brave companions, but I am happy to be able to say that their constitutions proved as sound as their nerves.

Three days later I discovered that both my ears had been frost-bitten during the half-hour I had spent in my crevasse. Fortunately frost-bitten ears do not appear to be a very serious form of ailment.

One only regret have I in consequence of this experience. I missed the chance of a lifetime. My camera—a No. 2 Bull's-eye Kodak—fell with me. There were ten photographs in it and two unused films. It never occurred to me to take two snap-shots of the crevasse from inside.

A few days after this occurrence I learned from the rescuing guide how far I had fallen. I estimated it at about 40ft. or 50ft. He said he had twenty mètres (about 65ft.) of rope out besides what I had tied round my body.

This makes the third time that I have had to do with a fall into a crevasse, though it was the first time I had fallen in myself. My first experience of it was in a winter attempt on the Schreckhorn. I was out with two of the best guides in the Oberland, and through the deep winter's snow we were wading, as we thought, quite safely, on snow-shoes. Suddenly my leading guide went through, carrying down, as I did, one rope with him. Fortunately we had a second rope; it would have taken about ten hours to get to the nearest help and back again. He had only fallen about 12ft., so we tied loops at each end of the rope, the second guide crossed the crevasse, and we passed down a loop from each side. After the imprisoned guide had put both loops round him I wanted to pull him up. But as he was a very heavy man and we were both very light he thought the risk too great, and made us hold tight till he cut off one of his snow-shoes, which he threw up to the surface, and then cut steps in the side of the crevasse, so that his whole weight should not be on the rope in coming up. As it turned out this precaution was quite unnecessary, as we were able to haul him up without any difficulty after an "immersion" of twenty minutes.

On the second occasion two friends, a guide, and myself were roaming unroped on a dry glacier when one of my companions, in jumping a crevasse, slipped and fell in. Inside two minutes the guide talked as much French down that crevasse as would fill a French newspaper — to a man who didn't understand a word he said. The other friend and myself had to take the rope off that guide's shoulders and let it down before the stream of eloquence dried up. We had our friend up in five minutes. He had fallen 30ft., and, though he lost a considerable quantity of blood, he was not otherwise hurt, and did twelve hours' work before we reached the nearest shelter and in four days was ready for a heavy expedition.

As I have written above, I had ten photographs in my camera when I fell into the crevasse. Four of these did not turn out well, as they had been taken in rather misty weather in the Bernese Oberland. But six were taken in bright sunlight in the Zermatt district, five of them on the day of our adventure. Though the leather case of my Kodak was soaked through, the Kodak itself and its contents were undamaged by the wet. The five photographs accompanying this article are, I should imagine, the only ones in existence which have spent half an hour in a crevasse.

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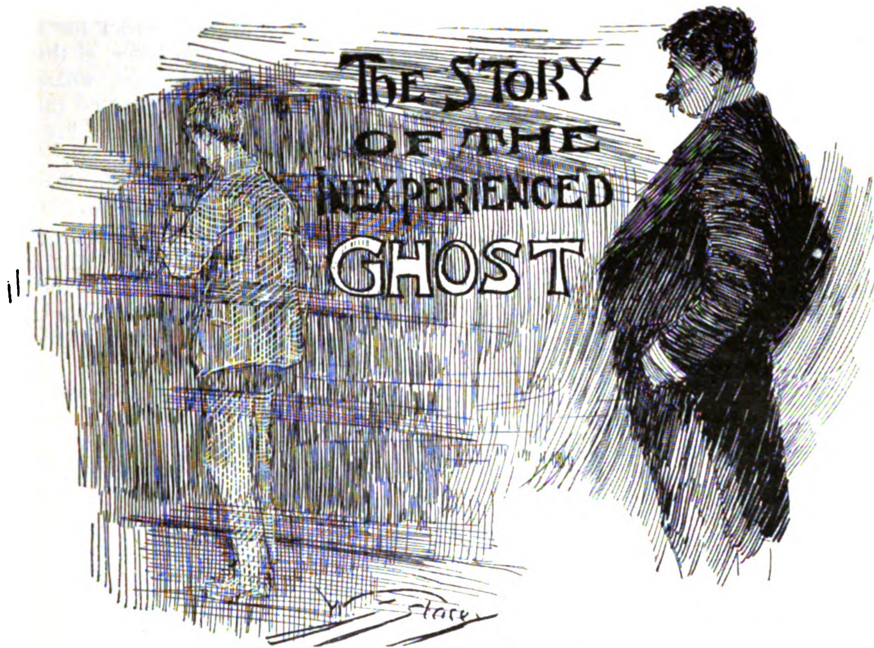

By H. G. Wells.

HE scene amidst which Clayton told his last story comes back very vividly to my mind. There he sat, for the most part of the time, in the corner of the authentic settle by the spacious open fire, and Sanderson sat beside him smoking the Broseley clay that bore his name. There was Evans, and that marvel among actors, Wish, who is also a modest man. We had all come down to the Mermaid Club that Saturday morning, except Clayton, who had slept there overnight—which indeed gave him the opening of his story. We had golfed until golfing was invisible; we had dined, and we were in that mood of tranquil kindliness when men will suffer a story. When Clayton began to tell one, we naturally supposed he was lying. It may be that indeed he was lying—of that the reader will speedily be able to judge as well as I. He began, it is true, with an air of matter-of-fact anecdote, but that we thought was only the incurable artifice of the man.

"I say!" he remarked, after a long consideration of the upward rain of sparks from the log that Sanderson had thumped, "you know I was alone here last night?"

"Except for the domestics," said Wish.

"Who sleep in the other wing," said Clayton. "Yes. Well——" He pulled at his cigar for some little time as though he still hesitated about his confidence. Then he said, quite quietly, "I caught a ghost!"

"Caught a ghost, did you?" said Sanderson. "Where is it?"

And Evans, who admires Clayton immensely and has been four weeks in America, shouted, "*Caught* a ghost, did you, Clayton? I'm glad of it! Tell us all about it right now."

Clayton said he would in a minute, and asked him to shut the door.

He looked apologetically at me. "There's no eavesdropping of course, but we don't want to upset our very excellent service with any rumours of ghosts in the place. There's too much shadow and oak panelling to trifle with that. And this, you know, wasn't a regular ghost. I don't think it will come again—ever."

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"You mean to say you didn't keep it?" said Sanderson.

"I hadn't the heart to," said Clayton.

And Sanderson said he was surprised.

We laughed, and Clayton looked aggrieved. "I know," he said, with the flicker of a smile, "but the fact is it really *was* a ghost, and I'm as sure of it as I am that I am talking to you now. I'm not joking. I mean what I say."

Sanderson drew deeply at his pipe, with one reddish eye on Clayton, and then emitted a thin jet of smoke more eloquent than many words.

Clayton ignored the comment. "It is the strangest thing that has ever happened in my life. You know I never believed in ghosts or anything of the sort before, ever; and then, you know, I bag one in a corner; and the whole business is in my hands."

He meditated still more profoundly and produced and began to pierce a second cigar with a curious little stabber he affected.

"You talked to it?" asked Wish.

"For the space, probably, of an hour."

"Chatty?" I said, joining the party of the sceptics.

"The poor devil was in trouble," said Clayton, bowed over his cigar-end and with the very faintest note of reproof.

"Sobbing?" someone asked.

Clayton heaved a realistic sigh at the memory. "Good Lord!" he said; "yes." And then, "Poor fellow! yes."

"Where did you strike it?" asked Evans, in his best American accent.

"I never realized," said Clayton, ignoring him, "the poor sort of thing a ghost might be," and he hung us up again for a time, while he sought for matches in his pocket and lit and warmed to his cigar.

"I took an advantage," he reflected at last.

We were none of us in a hurry. "A character," he said, "remains just the same character for all that it's been disembodied. That's a thing we too often forget. People with a certain strength or fixity of purpose may have ghosts of a certain strength and fixity of purpose—most haunting ghosts, you know, must be as one-idea'd as monomaniacs and as obstinate as mules to come back again and again. This poor creature wasn't." He suddenly looked up rather queerly, and his eye went round the room. "I say it," he said, "in all kindliness, but that is the plain truth of the case. Even at the first glance he struck me as weak."

He punctuated with the help of his cigar.

"I came upon him, you know, in the long passage. His back was to me and I saw him first. Right off I knew him for a ghost. He was transparent and whitish; clean through his chest I could see the glimmer of the little window at the end. And not only his physique but his attitude struck me as being weak. He looked, you know, as though he didn't know in the slightest whatever he meant to do. One hand was on the panelling and the other fluttered to his mouth. Like—*so!*"

"What sort of physique?" said Sanderson.

"Lean. You know that sort of young man's neck that has two great flutings down the back, here and here—so! And a little, meanish head with scrubby hair and rather bad ears. Shoulders bad, narrower than the hips; turndown collar, ready-made short jacket, trousers baggy and a little frayed at the heels. That's how he took me. I came very quietly up the staircase. I did not carry a light, you know—the candles are on the landing table and there is that lamp—and I was in my list slippers, and I saw him as I came up. I stopped dead at that—taking him in. I wasn't a bit afraid. I think that in most of these affairs one is never nearly so afraid or excited as one imagines one would be. I was surprised and interested. I thought, 'Good Lord! Here's a ghost at last! And I haven't believed for a moment in ghosts during the last five-and-twenty years.'"

"Um," said Wish.

"I suppose I wasn't there a moment before he found out I was there. He turned on me sharply and I saw the face of an immature young man, a weak nose, a scrubby little moustache, a feeble chin. So for an instant we stood—he looking over his shoulder at me—and regarded one another. Then he seemed to remember his high calling. He turned round, drew himself up, projected his face, raised his arms, spread his hands in approved ghost fashion—came towards me. As he did so his little jaw dropped, and he emitted a faint, drawn-out 'Boo.' No, it wasn't—not a bit dreadful. I'd dined. I'd had a bottle of champagne and, being all alone, perhaps two or three—perhaps even four or five—whiskies, so I was as solid as rocks and no more frightened than if I'd been assailed by a frog. 'Boo!' I said. 'Nonsense. You don't belong to *this* place. What are you doing here?'

"I could see him wince. 'Boo-oo,' he said.

"'Boo—be hanged! Are you a mem-

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ber?' I said; and just to show I didn't care a pin for him I stepped through a corner of him and made to light my candle. 'Are you a member?' I repeated, looking at him sideways.

"He moved a little so as to stand clear of me, and his bearing became crestfallen. 'No,' he said, in answer to the persistent interrogation of my eye; 'I'm not a member—I'm a ghost.'

"'Well, that doesn't give you the run of the Mermaid Club. Is there anyone you want to see, or anything of that sort?' And doing it as steadily as possible for fear that he should mistake the carelessness of whisky for the distraction of fear, I got my candle alight. I turned on him, holding it. 'What are you doing here?' I said.

business to haunt here. This is a respectable private club; people often stop here with nursemaids and children, and, going about in the careless way you do, some poor little mite might easily come upon you and be scared out of her wits. I suppose you didn't think of that?'

"'No, sir,' he said, 'I didn't.'

"'You should have done. You haven't any claim on the place, have you? Weren't murdered here, or anything of that sort?'

"'None, sir; but I thought as it was old and oak-panelled——'

"'That's *no* excuse.' I regarded him firmly. 'Your coming here is a mistake,' I said, in a tone of friendly superiority. I feigned to see if I had my matches and then looked up at him frankly. 'If I were you

"'WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?' I SAID."

"He had dropped his hands and stopped his booing, and there he stood, abashed and awkward, the ghost of a weak, silly, aimless young man. 'I'm haunting,' he said.

"'You haven't any business to,' I said, in a quiet voice.

"'I'm a ghost,' he said, as if in defence.

"'That may be, but you haven't any

I wouldn't wait for cock-crow—I'd vanish right away.'

"He looked embarrassed. 'The fact *is*, sir——' he began.

"'I'd vanish,' I said, driving it home.

"'The fact is, sir, that—somehow—I can't.'

"'You *can't?*'

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"'No, sir. There's something I've forgotten. I've been hanging about here since midnight last night, hiding in the cupboards of the empty bedrooms and things like that. I'm flurried. I've never come haunting before, and it seems to put me out.'

"'Put you out?'

"'Yes, sir. I've tried to do it several times, and it doesn't come off. There's some little thing has slipped me, and I can't get back.'

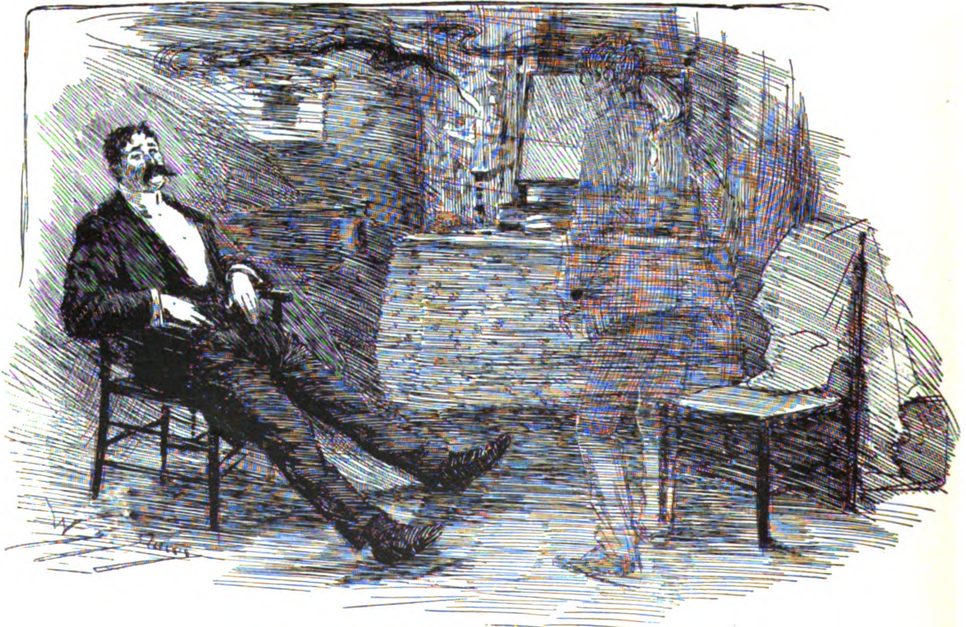
"That, you know, rather bowled me over. He looked at me in such an abject way that for the life of me I couldn't keep up quite the high, hectoring vein I had adopted. 'That's queer,' I said, and as I spoke I fancied I heard someone moving about down below. 'Come into my room and tell me more about it,' I said. 'I didn't, of course, understand this,' and I tried to take him by the arm. But, of course, you might as well have tried to take hold of a puff of smoke! I had forgotten my number, I think; anyhow, I remember going into several bedrooms—it was lucky I was the only soul in that wing—until I saw my traps. 'Here we are,' I said, and sat down in the arm-chair; 'sit down and tell me all about it. It seems to me you have got yourself into a jolly awkward position, old chap.'

"Well, he said he wouldn't sit down; he'd prefer to flit up and down the room if it was all the same to me. And so he did, and in a little while we were deep in a long and serious talk. And presently, you know, something of those whiskies and sodas evaporated out of me, and I began to realize just a little what a thundering rum and weird business it was that I was in. There he was, semi-transparent—the proper conventional phantom, and noiseless except for his ghost of a voice—flitting to and fro in that nice, clean, chintz-hung old bedroom. You could see the gleam of the copper candlesticks through him, and the lights on the brass fender, and the corners of the framed engravings on the wall, and there he was telling me all about this wretched little life of his that had recently ended on earth. He hadn't a particularly honest face, you know, but being transparent, of course, he couldn't avoid telling the truth."

"Eh?" said Wish, suddenly sitting up in his chair.

"What?" said Clayton.

"Being transparent — couldn't avoid telling the truth—I don't see it," said Wish.



'HE SAID HE WOULDN'T SIT DOWN; HE'D PREFER TO FLIT UP AND DOWN THE ROOM.'

"*I* don't see it," said Clayton, with inimitable assurance. "But it *is* so, I can assure you nevertheless. I don't believe he got once a nail's breadth off the Bible truth.

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He told me how he had been killed—he went down into a London basement with a candle to look for a leakage of gas—and described himself as a senior English master in a London private school when that release occurred."

"Poor wretch!" said I.

"That's what I thought, and the more he talked the more I thought it. There he was, purposeless in life and purposeless out of it. He talked of his father and mother and his schoolmaster, and all who had ever been anything to him in the world, meanly. He had been too sensitive, too nervous; none of them had ever valued him properly or understood him, he said. He had never had a real friend in the world, I think; he had never had a success. He had shirked games and failed examinations. 'It's like that with some people,' he said; 'whenever I get into the examination-room or anywhere everything seems to go.' Engaged to be married of course—to another over-sensitive person, I suppose—when the indiscretion with the gas escape ended his affairs. 'And where are you now?' I asked. 'Not in——?'

"He wasn't clear on that point at all. The impression he gave me was of a sort of vague, intermediate state, a special reserve for souls too non-existent for anything so positive as either sin or virtue. *I* don't know. He was much too egotistical and unobservant to give me any clear idea of the kind of place, kind of country, there is on the Other Side of Things. Wherever he was, he seems to have fallen in with a set of kindred spirits: ghosts of weak Cockney young men, who were on a footing of Christian names, and among these there was certainly a lot of talk about 'going haunting' and things like that. Yes—going haunting! They seemed to think 'haunting' a tremendous adventure, and most of them funked it all the time. And so primed, you know, he had come."

"But really!" said Wish to the fire.

"These are the impressions he gave me, anyhow," said Clayton, modestly. "I may, of course, have been in a rather uncritical state, but that was the sort of background he gave to himself. He kept flitting up and down, with his thin voice going—talking, talking about his wretched self, and never a word of clear, firm statement from first to last. He was thinner and sillier and more pointless than if he had been real and alive. Only then, you know, he would not have been in my bedroom here—if he *had* been alive. I should have kicked him out."

"Of course," said Evans, "there *are* poor mortals like that."

"And there's just as much chance of their having ghosts as the rest of us," I admitted.

"What gave a sort of point to him, you know, was the fact that he did seem within limits to have found himself out. The mess he had made of haunting had depressed him terribly. He had been told it would be a 'lark'; he had come expecting it to be a 'lark,' and here it was, nothing but another failure added to his record! He proclaimed himself an utter out-and-out failure. He said, and I can quite believe it, that he had never tried to do anything all his life that he hadn't made a perfect mess of—and through all the wastes of eternity he never would. If he had had sympathy, perhaps—— He paused at that, and stood regarding me. He remarked that, strange as it might seem to me, nobody, not anyone, ever, had given him the amount of sympathy I was doing now. I could see what he wanted straight away, and I determined to head him off at once. I may be a brute, you know, but being the Only Real Friend, the recipient of the confidences of one of these egotistical weaklings, ghost or body, is beyond my physical endurance. I got up briskly. 'Don't you brood on these things too much,' I said. 'The thing you've got to do is to get out of this—get out of this sharp. You pull yourself together and *try*.' 'I can't,' he said. 'You try,' I said, and try he did."

"Try!" said Sanderson. "*How?*"

"Passes," said Clayton.

"Passes?"

"Complicated series of gestures and passes with the hands. That's how he had come in and that's how he had to get out again. Lord! what a business I had!"

"But how could *any* series of passes——" I began.

"My dear man," said Clayton, turning on me and putting a great emphasis on certain words, "you want *everything* clear. *I* don't know *how*. All I know is that you *do*—that *he* did, anyhow, at least. After a fearful time, you know, he got his passes right and suddenly disappeared."

"Did you," said Sanderson, slowly, "observe the passes?"

"Yes," said Clayton, and seemed to think. "It was tremendously queer," he said. "There we were, I and this thin vague ghost, in that silent room, in this silent, empty inn, in this silent little Friday-night town. Not a sound except our voices and a faint pant ing he made when he swung. There was

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the bedroom candle, and one candle on the dressing-table alight, that was all—sometimes one or other would flare up into a tall, lean, astonished flame for a space. And queer things happened. 'I can't,' he said; 'I shall never——!' And suddenly he sat down on a little chair at the foot of the bed and began to sob and sob. Lord! what a harrowing, whimpering thing he seemed!

"'You pull yourself together,' I said, and tried to pat him on the back, and, you know, my confounded hand went through him. By that time, you know, I wasn't nearly so —massive as I had been on the landing. I got the queerness of it full. I remember snatching back my hand out of him, as it were, with a little thrill, and walking over to the dressing-table. 'You pull yourself together,' I said to him, 'and try.' And in order to encourage and help him I began to try as well."

"I GOT THE QUEERNESS OF IT FULL."

"What!" said Sanderson, "the passes?"

"Yes, the passes."

"But——" I said, moved by an idea that eluded me for a space.

"This is interesting," said Sanderson, with his finger in his pipe-bowl. "You mean to say this ghost of yours gave away——"

"Did his level best to give away the whole confounded barrier? *Yes.*"

"He didn't," said Wish; "he couldn't. Or you'd have gone there too."

"That's precisely it," I said, finding my elusive idea put into words for me.

"That *is* precisely it," said Clayton, with thoughtful eyes upon the fire.

For just a little while there was silence.

"And at last he did it?" said Sanderson.

"At last he did it. I had to keep him up to it hard, but he did it at last—rather suddenly. He despaired, we had a scene, and then he got up suddenly and asked me to go through the whole performance, slowly, so that he might see. 'I believe,' he said, 'if I could *see* I should spot what was wrong at once.' And he did. '*I* know,' he said. 'What do you know?' said I. '*I* know,' he repeated. Then he said, suddenly, 'I *can't* do it if you look at me—I really *can't;* it's been that, partly, all along. I'm such a nervous fellow that you put me out.' Well, we had a bit of an argument. Naturally I

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wanted to see; but he was as obstinate as a mule, and suddenly I had come over as tired as a dog—he tired me out. 'All right,' I said, '*I* won't look at you,' and turned towards the mirror, on the wardrobe, by the bed.

"He started off very fast. I tried to follow him by looking in the looking-glass, to see just what it was had hung. Round went his arms and his hands, so, and so, and so, and then with a rush came to the last gesture of all—you stand erect and open out your arms—and so, don't you know, he stood. And then he didn't! He didn't! He wasn't! I wheeled round from the looking-glass to him. There was nothing! I was alone, with the flaring candles and a staggering mind. What had happened? Had anything happened? Had I been dreaming? . . . . And then, with an absurd note of finality about it, the clock upon the landing discovered the moment was ripe for striking *one*. So!—Ping! And I was as grave and sober as a judge, with all my champagne and whisky gone into the vast serene. Feeling queer, you know — confoundedly *queer!* Queer! Good Lord!"

"I WAS ALONE."

He regarded his cigar-ash for a moment. "That's all that happened," he said.

"And then you went to bed?" asked Evans.

"What else was there to do?"

I looked Wish in the eye. We wanted to scoff, and there was something, something perhaps in Clayton's voice and manner, that hampered our desire.

"And about these passes?" said Sanderson.

"I believe I could do them now."

"Oh!" said Sanderson, and produced a pen-knife and set himself to grub the dottel out of the bowl of his clay.

"Why don't you do them now?" said Sanderson, shutting his pen-knife with a click.

"That's what I'm going to do," said Clayton.

"They won't work," said Evans.

"If they do——" I suggested.

"You know, I'd rather you didn't," said Wish, stretching out his legs.

"Why?" asked Evans.

"I'd rather he didn't," said Wish.

"But he hasn't got 'em right," said Sanderson, plugging too much tobacco into his pipe.

"All the same, I'd rather he didn't," said Wish.

We argued with Wish. He said that for Clayton to go through those gestures was like mocking a serious matter. "But you don't believe ——?" I said. Wish glanced at Clayton, who was staring into the fire, weighing something in his mind. "I do—more than half, anyhow, I do," said Wish.

"Clayton," said I, "you're too good a liar for us. Most of it was all right. But that disappearance . . . . happened to be convincing. Tell us, it's a tale of cock and bull."

He stood up without heeding me, took the middle of the hearthrug, and faced me. For a moment he regarded his feet thoughtfully, and then for all the rest of the time his eyes were on the opposite wall, with an intent expression. He raised his two hands slowly to the level of his eyes and so began. . . .

Now, Sanderson is a Freemason, a member of the lodge of the Four Kings, which

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devotes itself so ably to the study and elucidation of all the mysteries of Masonry past and present, and among the students of this lodge Sanderson is by no means the least. He followed Clayton's motions with a singular interest in his reddish eye. "That's not bad," he said, when it was done. "You really do, you know, put things together, Clayton, in a most amazing fashion. But there's one little detail out."

"I know," said Clayton. "I believe I could tell you which."

"Well?"

"This," said Clayton, and did a queer little twist and writhing and thrust of the hands.

"Yes."

"That, you know, was what *he* couldn't get right," said Clayton. "But how do *you*——?"

"Most of this business, and particularly how you invented it, I don't understand at all," said Sanderson, "but just that phase—I do." He reflected. "These happen to be a series of gestures—connected with a certain branch of esoteric Masonry—— Probably you know. Or else—— *How?*" He reflected still further. "I do not see I can do any harm in telling you just the proper twist. After all, if you know, you know; if you don't, you don't."

"I know nothing," said Clayton, "except what the poor devil let out last night."

"Well, anyhow," said Sanderson, and placed his churchwarden very carefully upon the shelf over the fireplace. Then very rapidly he gesticulated with his hands.

"So?" said Clayton, repeating.

"So," said Sanderson, and took his pipe in hand again.

"Ah, *now*," said Clayton, "I can do the whole thing—right."

He stood up before the waning fire and smiled at us all. But I think there was just a little hesitation in his smile. "If I begin——" he said.

"I wouldn't begin," said Wish.

"It's all right!" said Evans. "Matter is indestructible. You don't think any jiggery-pokery of this sort is going to snatch Clayton into the world of shades. Not it! You may try, Clayton, so far as I'm concerned, until your arms drop off at the wrists."

"I don't believe that," said Wish, and stood up and put his arm on Clayton's shoulder. "You've made me half believe in that story somehow, and I don't want to see the thing done."

"Goodness!" said I, "here's Wish frightened!"

"I am," said Wish, with real or admirably feigned intensity. "I believe that if he goes through these motions right he'll *go*."

"He'll not do anything of the sort," I cried. "There's only one way out of this world for men, and Clayton is thirty years from that. Besides . . . And such a ghost! Do you think——?"

Wish interrupted me by moving. He walked out from among our chairs and stopped beside the table and stood there. "Clayton," he said, "you're a fool."

Clayton, with a humorous light in his eyes, smiled back at him. "Wish," he said, "is right and all you others are wrong. I shall go. I shall get to the end of these passes, and as the last swish whistles through the air, Presto!—this hearthrug will be vacant, the room will be blank amazement, and a respectably dressed gentleman of seventeen stone will plump into the world of shades. I'm certain. So will you be. I decline to argue further. Let the thing be tried."

"*No*," said Wish, and made a step and ceased, and Clayton raised his hands once more to repeat the spirit's passing.

By that time, you know, we were all in a state of tension—largely because of the behaviour of Wish. We sat all of us with our eyes on Clayton—I, at least, with a sort of tight, stiff feeling about me as though from the back of my skull to the middle of my thighs my body had been changed to steel. And there, with a gravity that was imperturbably serene, Clayton bowed and swayed and waved his hands and arms before us. As he drew towards the end one piled up, one tingled in one's teeth. The last gesture, I have said, was to swing the arms out wide open, with the face held up. And when at last he swung out to this closing gesture I ceased even to breathe. It was ridiculous, of course, but you know that ghost-story feeling. It was after dinner, in a queer, old shadowy house. Would he, after all——?

There he stood for one stupendous moment, with his arms open and his upturned face, assured and bright, in the glare of the hanging lamp. We hung through that moment as if it were an age, and then came from all of us something that was half a sigh of infinite relief and half a reassuring "*No!*" For visibly—he wasn't going. It was all nonsense. He had told an idle story, and carried it almost to conviction, that was all! . . . . And then in that moment the face of Clayton changed.

It changed. It changed as a lit house

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"HE STOOD THERE, VERY GENTLY SWAYING."

changes when its lights are suddenly extinguished. His eyes were suddenly eyes that are fixed, his smile was frozen on his lips, and he stood there still. He stood there, very gently swaying.

That moment, too, was an age. And then, you know, chairs were scraping, things were falling, and we were all moving. His knees seemed to give, and he fell forward, and Evans rose and caught him in his arms. . . . .

It stunned us all. For a minute I suppose no one said a coherent thing. We believed it, yet could not believe it. . . . . I came out of a muddled stupefaction to find myself kneeling beside him, and his vest and shirt were torn open, and Sanderson's hand lay on his heart. . . . .

Well—the simple fact before us could very well wait our convenience; there was no hurry for us to comprehend. It lay there for an hour; it lies athwart my memory, black and amazing still, to this day. Clayton had, indeed, passed into the world that lies so near to and so far from our own, and he had gone thither by the only road that mortal man may take. But whether he did indeed pass there by that poor ghost's incantation, or whether he was stricken suddenly by apoplexy in the midst of an idle tale—as the coroner's jury would have us believe—is no matter for my judging; is just one of those inexplicable riddles that must remain unsolved until the final solution of all things shall come. All I certainly know is that, in the very moment, in the very instant, of concluding these passes he changed, and staggered and fell down before us—dead!

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A Barbers' University.

BY ALDER ANDERSON.

AMONG the "tales of terror" for which a previous generation seems to have had a strange partiality was one relating how a barber in the Rue de la Harpe, in Paris, turned unwary customers into mincemeat. The feline reception: "Pray be seated," then —a dexterous slash with a razor, a tilting chair, a trap-door opening into a cellar, and an underground passage communicating with an adjoining pastrycook's shop. The resultant pies were said to be celebrated all over Paris for the delicacy of their flavour.

With the recollection of this story in my mind I might easily have imagined from the thoughtful expression on my barber's face that he was considering how I would taste in patties. He did not give me time, however, to formulate the idea, and soon showed me that the reason for his preoccupation was much less serious — for me.

From a] A DEMONSTRATION IN HAIR-DRESSING BY PROFESSOR PROPICE. [*Photo.*

Bending down, he whispered confidentially in my ear, as to one of the initiated, "This is the great day!"

A few weeks previously, during the moments of enforced leisure which a station in the chair of tonsorial sacrifice involves, I had read, for the hundredth time perhaps, the gaudy advertisements on the walls setting forth the merits of M. Farceur's Eau Divine and Mme. de la Fumisterie's Régénérateur Capillaire, rival but equally efficacious preparations for making hair sprout on billiard-balls, when my glance fell on a more sober-looking placard behind glass and in a neat wooden frame. It much resembled those parchments which may sometimes be seen adorning the consulting-rooms of young members of the faculty, but though, like them, it began with the word "Diplôme" and terminated with a number of illegible signatures and seals, it proved, on perusal, much less portentous than a legalized permission to kill. It was, in fact, a Diploma of Professor of Hairdressing, awarded to M. Dubois, Knight of the Order of St. Louis and member of the French Academy (of Coiffeurs). M. Dubois was the "patron" of the shop and, as I can personally testify, is very excellent at all barbering operations.

A few inquiries of the *artiste* whose scissors were playing fast and loose with my locks, and I soon learned all about the Parisian Coiffeurs' University. Once a year the University gave a grand *fête de nuit*, an intelligent combination of the useful and the agreeable, various barbering competitions being succeeded by a ball and supper. As soon as Professor Dubois learnt that I was interested in the matter he gave me a cordial invitation to attend. And now the eventful day has arrived!

A profusion of electric lights, a deafening

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orchestra, a crowd of fair women and brave men, knights of the comb and razor every one, with immaculate shirt-fronts, white-gloved fingers, and shinily-shod feet—scarcely a trace of Bohemianism. Professor Dubois kindly acted as my cicerone, pointed out the various celebrities, and presented me to many of the leading University dons, his colleagues. I accepted half-a-dozen invitations to visit *salles de coiffure* which, their respective owners each assured me, excelled in magnificence of gilding, marble, and looking-glass all I had ever seen. The conviction began to grow upon me that, compared to hairdressing, no other profession in the world was worth a moment's consideration!

From a] A FANCIFUL ADDITION FOR A BALL COSTUME. [*Photo.*

The serious part of the evening's proceedings consisted, as has been said, in the various competitions. That for ladies' hair-dressing attracted the greatest number of candidates. On each side of deal tables, stretching from end to end of a long room, the models were ranged, and about three-quarters of an hour was accorded for the trial. As soon as the signal to start was given there began such a combing and brushing as never was seen—at any rate by me. Every man worked with a will: curled, frizzled, waved, and tied; gave a pat here, a pull there; retired a few steps in order the better to judge of the effect, like an artist with his picture; piled tier upon tier, and finally completed his work by decking the structure with feathers and tinsel. As the evolution in their headgear proceeded the ladies grew visibly more proud, and she who had sat down a humbly shrinking maid rose up completely transformed in appearance and as haughty as the affianced bride

From a] THE JUDGES INSPECTING THE COMPETITORS' WORK. [*Photo.*

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of Lucifer. No wonder the fair sex have paid so little heed to the fulminations of Holy Church against the artificial dressing of hair, stigmatized time after time by councils of learned priests as a direct inspiration of the Fiend.

While the competition was in progress I learned something concerning the profession of barber's model. The principal desideratum in a model is what my obliging informant described as a silky texture of hair growing on a small, well-shaped skull. Regular features are a secondary consideration. A model with good hair and a head of the right shape may aspire to the very highest honours. Talented young barbers will outbid one another for her services, and will gladly *pay her* five shillings for the privilege of doing her hair. With a large, square head, or with hair like tow or wire, the most cunning *artiste* in the world can do little or nothing. So large a share does a good model play in the success of a candidate that the lucky man usually presents her with two louis d'or in addition to the stipulated fee.

By this time, the three-quarters of an hour having expired, the competitors were instructed to leave the room, and the doors were securely fastened. The judging then began with all the grim seriousness of a military inspection. Each of the judges, pencil and paper in hand, examined the heads one after another, prodded them with their forefingers, looked at them from both front and back, making all the while voluminous notes of their impressions. On the conclusion of this ceremony the voting commenced, and the name of the competitor who had received the greatest number of votes was announced by the secretary. The doors were then thrown open and the lucky man solemnly summoned to receive his reward—a professor's diploma.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT CASTING UP THE VOTES.
From a Photo.

From a] THE JUDGES. *[Photo.*

In the International contest the prize was awarded to a Dutchman. Last year it fell to an Englishman, I was told.

I congratulated the Dutchman's model on her success. "Might I beg mademoiselle to be so good as to tell me her name?" "Eel Dah!" she replied, graciously. "Eel Dah!" I repeated, somewhat puzzled. Then, remembering I was in France, sudden light

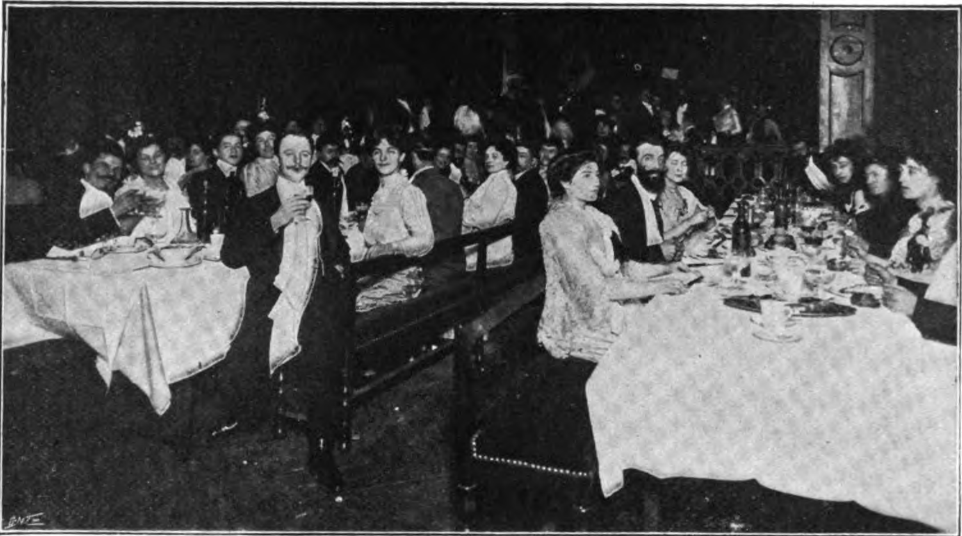
From a] THE EIGHT BEST-DRESSED HEADS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION. [*Photo.*

broke in upon me. "You would say Hilda, no doubt, mademoiselle?" The young lady acquiesced with a smile, though I could see it struck her as rather comical, but she had learned evidently that any and every eccentricity of pronunciation is to be looked for from an Englishman. "Eel Dah" was anxious, however, to impress upon me, especially if her portrait were to be published, that she is a coiffeur's model only in her spare moments; her true profession is that of artists' model—for the head. All honour, "Eel Dah," to your industry, though the camera and the flash-light have vilely libelled your pretty face, doubly worthy of respect when allied with so modest a robe as yours.

In another room a similar competition for men's hair-dressing took place. In this case I imagined I should be more competent to express an opinion of my own, and I narrowly watched the judging. The head of one model appeared to me certain to get the prize, a conclusion in which I was confirmed when I observed with what attention the head was examined by the judges, who pushed their fingers in between the neat little curls and cautiously turned back some tufts of hair, as if they expected to discover springs hidden underneath. It was a most fearful and wonderful-looking work of art, and I would have been ready to plump for it without hesitation had my opinion been asked. There must, however, have been something grievously wrong with that head, though invisible to the eyes of the profane, for not a single vote was cast for it.

"EEL DAH," OR HILDA, THE OWNER OF THE BEST-DRESSED HEAD.
From a] [*Photo.*

The first prize fell to a head of black hair, carefully parted down the back, the owner of which might have passed in the dusk for one of the *attachés* of



From a] THE COMPETITORS AND MODELS AT SUPPER. [*Photo.*

the Bessarabian Legation. He appeared to feel the dignity of his position very keenly, and he certainly looked much prouder than poor "Eel Dah." The curled model, whose head came in last, appeared thunderstruck at the result.

After work came play, and by midnight all the guests were dancing away as fast as an orchestra, anxious to get through the stipulated number of tunes as speedily as possible, could make them.

Then followed supper, when the barbers proved themselves as deft with their knives and forks as with their scissors. The fact of the matter is that "when a barber isn't barbering and his scissors are at rest he's *much* the same as any other man."

Daylight had almost appeared when one of my new-found friends, taking me up to a row of dummy heads, insisted on delivering a homily on the merits of each, explaining how a low forehead and a Roman nose required to be set off by fewer curls than a high forehead with a Greek nose; or perhaps it was the other way about. Which ever it was, however, he conveyed to me the impression that a successful barber must be not only as skilled a physiognomist as Lavater, but able to give points in tact to a Talleyrand. He was a man with a vast store of curious, if somewhat technical, lore. "But, see you, sir, the ideal does not exist!"

It was with this Bacon-like aphorism ringing in my ears that I bade adieu to the Barbers' University—a sadder and a wiser man.

From a] "THE UNATTAINABLE IDEAL." [*Photo.*

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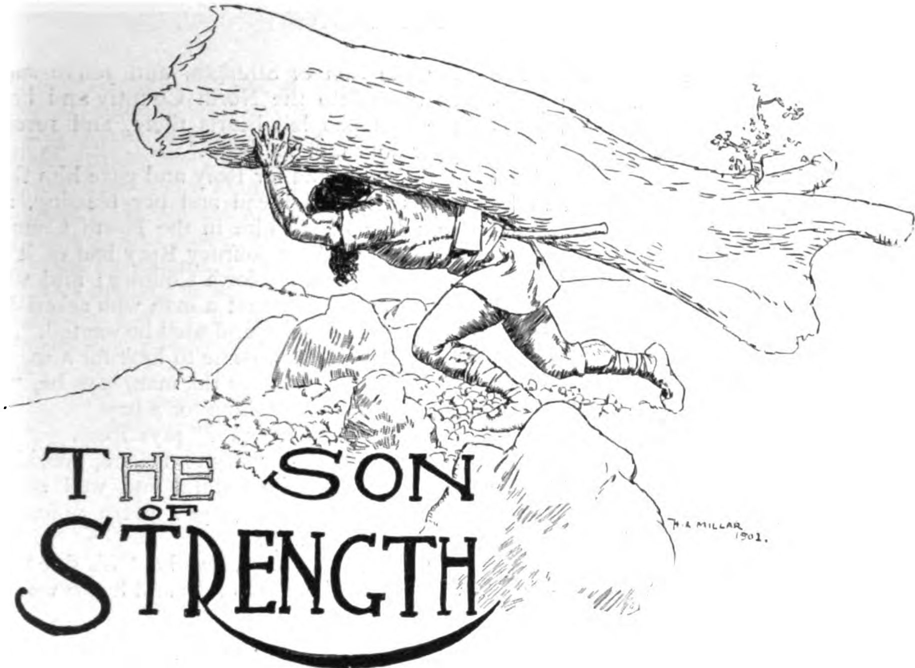

The Son of Strength

An Irish Story for Children. Told by Seumas MacManus.

Author of "Through the Turf Smoke," etc.

NCE upon a time, when pigeons built their nests in old men's beards and the turkeys chewed tobacco, there was a race of rich bad people in the North of Ireland and there was a race of good poor people in Connaught; and these poor people used to have to go to the North of Ireland to work and earn money to support their families. The people they worked for were very bad and very cruel, and the bargain they always made with their servants was that the servant could not claim any wages at the end of the year if he hadn't done everything that was laid before him. And because they offered a big penny in wages the unfortunate poor Connaught people used always to accept the terms. And then, when it would come near the end of the year, there would be some things laid before them to do that would either kill them altogether out and out, or else they would have to refuse to do it, and in that way lose all their wages for the year.

Now, there was a poor man once who hired himself out three times with these bad people; and the first year he went home to his wife with his wages, but with the life just barely in him, for only that he was such a brave man he would never have got through it all and won his wages. But when poverty drove him to it he had to go and hire for a second year, and when he came home at the end of the second year he had his wages bravely with him sure enough, but his life barely. And his poor wife had to nurse him for six months to make him the same man again; but the third time he came home he was only able to stagger as far as his own door's threshold, and there he fell down from the weakness. And he said the last he had got to do, and which killed him out and out, was to carry a big oak tree on his back for three miles from the wood to his master's house, and he said it broke his heart and took his life.

"When I die, wife," says he, "there is closed up in that left fist of mine an acorn of that oak tree. I want you to open my fist when I am dead, and take that acorn and plant it in the garden; and I want you to nurse that little son of mine, Rory, that you have on your knee; I want you to nurse him, until he is able to catch and pull up by the roots the tree that grows from that acorn. When my son is able to do that he will be the Son of Strength, and well fitted to go into the North Country and to break the hearts of the bad people there; and to revenge me and the hundreds of our poor people that they have cheated and killed."

His poor wife promised she would do this, and then he died. When he was dead she opened his fist and took out the acorn and she planted it in the garden, and very soon a

young tree sprang up out of it. And she nursed her little son till he was seven years of age, and on the day he was seven years old she took him out into the garden and gave him a hold of the oak tree with both of his hands and told him to pull, and he pulled with all his might, but he only shook the tree and could not get it up.

Then she nursed him for seven years more. And on the day that he was fourteen years old she took him out into the garden again and gave him a hold of the oak tree, which was now grown big, and told him to pull with all his might. And with all his might Rory did pull: he loosened the tree in the ground, but it just didn't come with him.

So she took Rory and she nursed him for seven years more. And on the day he was twenty-one years old she went out with him into the garden again, and the tree was now a big one, and she told Rory to take hold of the tree and to pull with all his might. And Rory took hold of the tree and he pulled with all his might and it came with him, and he swung it three times round his head and threw it from him over three miles.

"And now, Rory," says his mother, "you are the Son of Strength, and you're surely fit to go into the North Country and break the bad people's hearts there, and revenge your poor father's death."

So she baked for Rory and gave him three cakes of hard bread and her blessing, and sent him off to hire in the North Country. And a long, long journey Rory had of it till he came into the North Country; and when he came there he met a man who asked him where he was going and what he wanted. And Rory said he had come to look for a master.

"That's luck," says the man, says he, "for I was travelling looking for a boy."

"What's your terms?" says Rory.

Says the man: "My terms are, provided," says he, "you do faithful and well all the work I lay afore you, ye'll get a pound for every day of the year."

"Well," says Rory, says he, "it's fine terms surely, and I agree to it"; and home with his new master he went, and he got his supper and a soft bed.

And early in the morning the master had him up and took him out to show him his first work, and he took him to a big barn where there was as much corn as thirteen men could thrash in thirteen weeks and gave Rory a flail, and he told him when he would have all that corn thrashed he might come home for his breakfast; then he went away. Rory looked at the bit of a flail he gave him and then he swung it over his head and fired it away one-and-twenty miles, where it fell upon a city and swept off all the roofs of the houses and the heads of the people. Then he went out to the wood and he pulled up two oak trees by the roots and he made a flail out of them; and he came to the barn and started to thrash, and every time he swung the flail he was knocking a bit out of the roof, and every time he struck, the corn and the straw were flying and falling all over the country for ten miles on every side; and the people didn't know what was happening at all,

"RORY TOOK HOLD OF THE TREE AND HE PULLED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT AND IT CAME WITH HIM."

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and they thought the end of the world must surely be come when it was raining corn and broken straws from the sky. And in a very short time Rory had finished the thrashing, and then there wasn't a patch of roof to the barn. He started for home and he met his master, who asked where he was going and what he wanted.

"As I thought it was too early for breakfast," says Rory, "I come to ask you for another wee job to do between now and then."

"HE TOOK A HOLD OF HIM BY THE TWO HORNS AND GAVE HIM THREE SWINGS ROUND HIS HEAD."

"Didn't I give you enough corn to thrash?" says the master, in wonderment.

"Oh, not at all," says Rory, says he; "I have that done long ago"; and at this the master was frightened out and out, and he told Rory he had nothing else for him to do just now, so he could rest until breakfast-time.

And then he went and he got the people together and he told them about this wonderful fellow that was come from Connaught, and that when he was beginning this way there was no knowing what he would do, for he might take it into his head to kill all of them. So, after they had consulted for long, it was agreed that they should send him to the Wood of the Wild Bulls to bring home a year-old heifer. "And if," says they, "he comes back from there alive it's more than we bargain for." So the master went to Rory after he got his breakfast, and he said he wanted him to fetch home a year-old heifer from the Wood of the Wild Bulls. And Rory said he would do that; so off he set, and when he came into the Wood of the Wild Bulls, the wild bull that was king of the others took a half-mile race at him, meaning to toss him to the stars, and all the other wild bulls came and stood around to watch the play.

Rory said nothing, but stood quietly till the wild bull came tearing into his reach and then he took a hold of him by the two horns, gave him three swings round his head, and began slashing at the other wild bulls with him; and he slashed the life out of nineteen of them before he let him go, and when he laid him down then he was as dead as a door-nail and there wasn't a bone in his body

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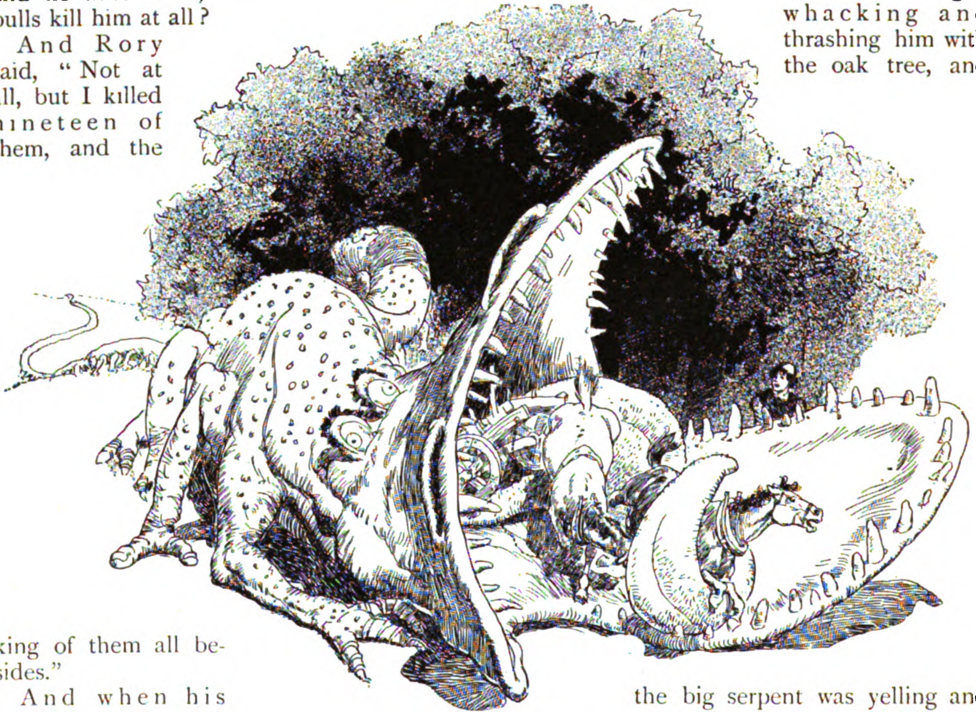
that wasn't in jelly. And then he picked the best year-old heifer he could find and drove it home to his master, and when he came home with it his master was in wonderment, and he asked him, didn't the bulls kill him at all?

And Rory said, "Not at all, but I killed nineteen of them, and the king of them all besides."



"THE FIRST THING HE DID WAS TO SWALLOW THE TWO HORSES AND CART AT ONE GULP."

And when his master heard this he went off again and he called the people together and he consulted with them, and they all agreed that if they didn't kill Rory, Rory would surely kill them.

So the best way they thought to get rid of him now was to send him to the Mountain of Oak Woods with horses and a cart to cut down oak trees and draw them home. For no man had ever gone there before and come out of it alive; but the big serpent of the Oak Woods had devoured him and his horses and carts.

A cart and two big horses Rory got. Then he was sent off to draw oak trees from the mountain, and when Rory came to the mountain he tied his horses to one of the trees and he began to cut down. Well, a very short time he was at this till the big Serpent of the Woods appeared, and he was crawling on ninety-nine legs and the open mouth of him was as wide as a mountain, but Rory didn't mind one bit, only went on cutting the trees. Up the serpent came, and the first thing he did was to swallow the two horses and cart at one gulp, and then he started towards Rory, but Rory got hold of an oak tree he was after cutting down, and he gave one jump and jumped clean on the serpent's back and began whacking and thrashing him with the oak tree, and the big serpent was yelling and screeching that he could be heard in the eastern world. But Rory didn't stop whacking and slashing till the serpent begged for his mercy.

"Ye've swallowed my two horses and cart, and it's small mercy I have for ye, for ye have left me without anything to draw the oak trees home, and now it's you yourself that'll have to draw them home for me."

And the big serpent was only too glad to get off on these terms. So Rory got his ropes round the whole oak wood and tied it to the serpent's tail, and then he started driving him with his oak tree; and he drove him till he drove him right up to his master's hall door; and everybody as he came along barred and bolted the doors and windows and went in under their beds. And when Rory had the oak wood safe at his master's door he let the big serpent loose and gave him three whacks of the oak tree and sent him to the mountain again.

And when the people got up courage enough to go out, they got together again and consulted what to do with Rory, for he would surely be the death of all of them. It was agreed that his master should set him to

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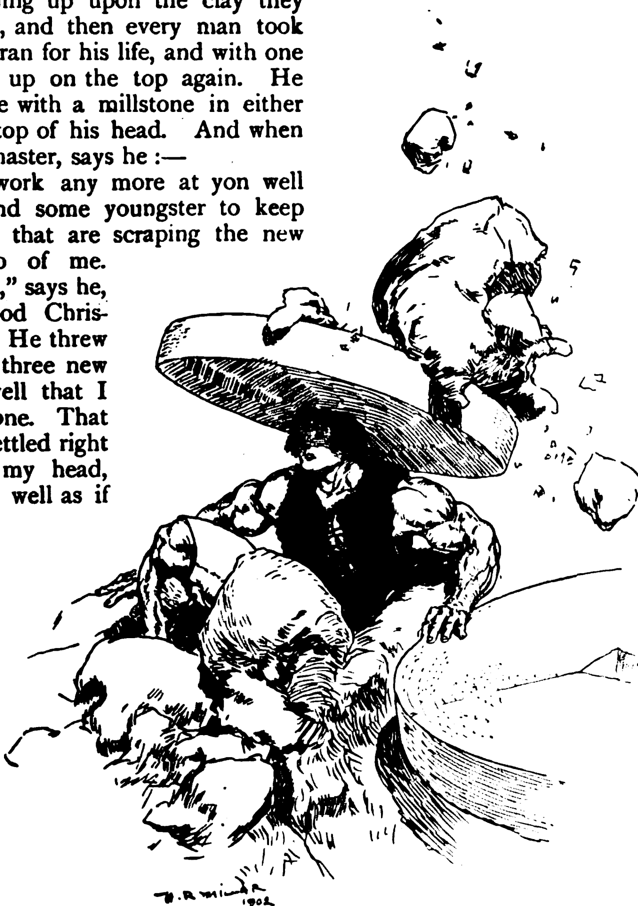
dig a well ninety feet deep, and when he would be down at the bottom of the well they were to throw mill-stones in on the top of him to hold him down whilst they should begin to fill up the well with clay again.

So next day when Rory asked the master what he was to do this time, the master told him to go down to the meadow and dig a well ninety feet deep, because he had great scarcity of water. Down to the meadow Rory went and started digging the well, and they were watching him till he got to the bottom ninety feet down, and then they had three mill-stones ready, and they rolled the three of them on top of Rory, and a hundred men at the same time began with spades and shovels slapping in the clay as fast as ever they could; but in one minute more they saw Rory's head with a mill-stone sitting right on the top of it coming up upon the clay they were throwing in, and then every man took to his heels and ran for his life, and with one spring Rory was up on the top again. He started for home with a millstone in either hand and one atop of his head. And when he reached his master, says he :—

"I will not work any more at yon well if you don't send some youngster to keep away the crows that are scraping the new clay down atop of me. And do you see," says he, "what some good Christian has done? He threw me down these three new hats knowing well that I was in need of one. That one there just settled right on the top of my head, and it fits me as well as if my measure was taken for it. Here's two," says he to the master, "and I wish you'd put them away for me till this one is worn out."

And Rory whirled the two mill-stones into the kitchen, and after that he never went in or out or round about that he hadn't one of the new hats on him. And the people were all of them very much put out now, and they didn't well know what to do, and when they came together again and consulted some of them said there was no use in any more consulting, for they could not get rid of him, and that they might as well get up and run off now that he was out of sight, and leave the country to him entirely; and every man took to his heels and cleared out of the country. And when Rory came home that night all the country-side was deserted, and there wasn't a man, woman, or child to claim land or strand, house or hill, and he was master himself of all of it.

When he got himself gathered together he started away for his own home, and there he got his old mother on his back and carried her with him to the new country-side that he had got, and he built a castle on it, and himself and his mother lived happy and well ever after.



THEY SAW RORY'S HEAD WITH A MILL-STONE SITTING RIGHT ON THE TOP OF IT.

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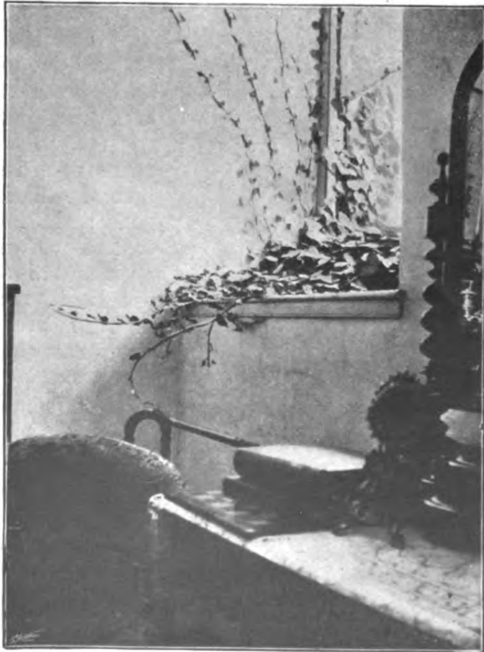
Curiosities.

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

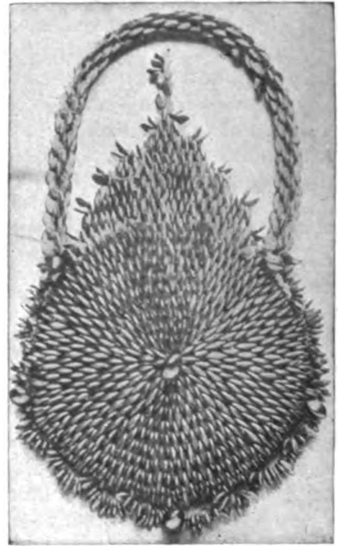
AN INTERESTING FAMILY.

"I send the photo. of a female hedgehog with her four babies a day old. I put them on a board to show the young. The nest of leaves in which they were was found at the foot of a hedge on February 6th, 1901. The young are, of course, blind. The white spines are soft and very curious."—The Rev. J. E. Somerville, Castellar, Crieff, Perthshire.



THE OPEN-AIR CURE AT HOME.

"Herewith I inclose photo. of the interior of a bedroom occupied by a person suffering from consumption who has adopted the 'open-air' cure. The window has not been shut for the last two years, not even during the coldest weather; and, as can be seen, the ivy has grown in upon the window-board and on the walls of the room. Since the adoption of this system the patient has added more than 50lb. to his weight."—Mr. Stafford Y. Bennett, "Clevelands," Downend, Bristol.



A PURSE MADE OF APPLE-PIPS.

"I send a photo. of a purse made by the Zulus entirely of apple-pips strung together with a fine thread. It is a marvel of native workmanship, consisting of over 2,000 pips, and I hope it may be of use in your 'Curiosities.'"—Mr. James Pelling, 21, Temple Street, Brighton.

SNAP-SHOTTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

"The photo. I send you was taken by myself one day while out hunting lions. I was armed with a pocket Kodak and a rifle, and the photograph shows the work done by the first-mentioned weapon. The South American lion, or puma, always seeks the shelter of a bush when pursued, and the one whose likeness I send was caught in the act of 'talking' in that manner which so terrifies horse, guanaco, and ostrich. It is not sent as a work of art, but on account of its rarity. I believe that it is the only one of its kind in existence. I may remark that the toning was done under great difficulties, water being very scarce, and so full of saltpetre that it is almost impossible to quench one's thirst."—Mr. Frederick L. Farmer, San Julian, Costa del Sud, Argentine Republic.

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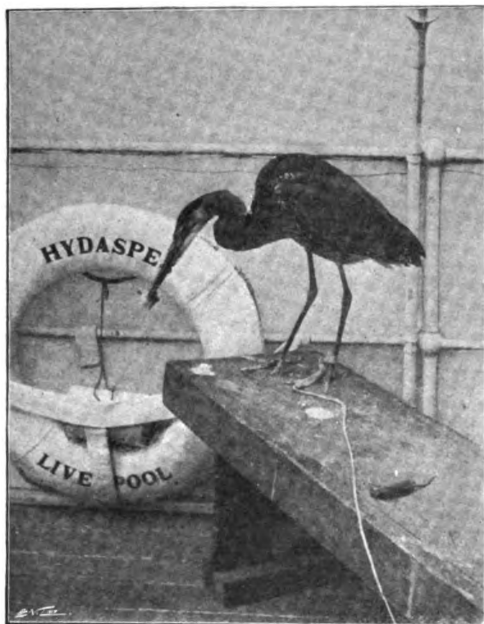
A DARK ROOM IN A TREE.

"Here is a photograph of a tree which may be of some interest to the readers of THE STRAND. The tree stands about five miles from our house on the outskirts of Philadelphia. It is an immense oak, the heart of which is decayed, forming a cavity of such size that ten persons may sit or stand with comfort in

it. The opening shown in the photograph is the only means of ingress or egress. When we discovered the tree we were chagrined to find that, while we had an unopened box of plates with us, those contained in the plate-holders had been exposed. We overcame this difficulty by first entering the cavity and then closing the opening with our coats. We then reloaded our plate-holders with safety."—Mr. Eugene Field, 710 N, Forty-Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

A DANGEROUS LEAP.

"I send you a snap-shot taken long ago in America of the Stand Rock. This curiosity of Nature stands some 70ft. from the ground, and is about 8ft. across. All tourists to Wisconsin are eager to perform the feat which you see the guide doing, but most, on second thoughts, change their minds. Merely to look over the side is enough to dissuade one from attempting the feat."—Mr. L. G. Howard, Collège Anglais, Douai (Nord), France.



WHERE DID THIS BIRD COME FROM?

"Herewith a photo. of a species of crane, which on October 29th, 11.50 p.m., dropped, utterly exhausted, on the bridge of the ss. *Hydaspes.* A stiff north-easterly gale was blowing at the time, and the ship was in lat. 21deg. 10min. N., long. 66deg. 00min. W., 160 miles from Puerto Rico, the nearest land. He soon recovered, and has become a great pet. 'James,' as he has been named, shows a great liking for young rats, one of which he is depicted in the act of killing, preparatory to swallowing it whole. Considering the direction of wind, where did he come from?"—Mr. C. T. Morres, third officer ss. *Hydaspes.*

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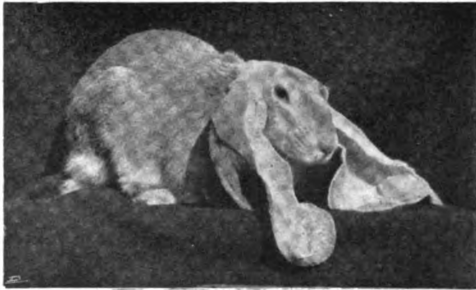
A MARVELLOUS SNAP-SHOT.

"This is a snap-shot taken of a young man who was accidentally shot while posing with another fellow to represent a duel. The young men were just getting ready to pose when a shot rang out and one of them fell with a yell to the ground. The amateur who snapped the picture was so scared that he did not know he had taken it till he developed the films and discovered it among them. The bullet only caused a small flesh wound, with no serious results." — Miss Myron A. Cohen, 1,111, Case Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

A LOP RABBIT.

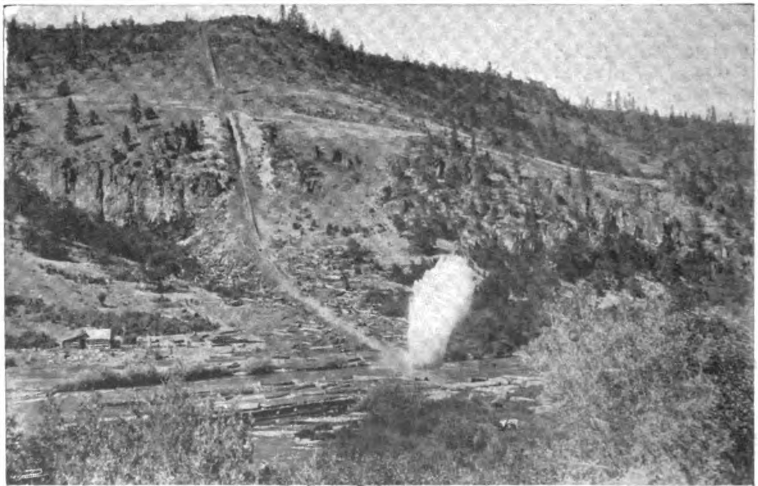
"The pretty little creature shown in my photograph is a lop rabbit with extremely long ears. His name is 'The Little Pitcher,' and I am proud to say that he has won no fewer than twenty-one first and special prizes,



though he is only ten months old." — Miss Olive Graham, Edmond Castle, Carlisle.

LOG-CHUTING.

"The accompanying photograph represents a log chute operated at Klamath Hot Springs, Northern California, down which immense logs are shot from the mountain-top to the surface of the Klamath River at the rate of about four miles a minute. The chute is 2,970ft. in length, and its top is at an elevation of nearly 1,000ft., the descent to the river being made in one long, straight sweep. The chute is constructed of immense timbers bolted together, and supported on mammoth logs which are set firmly in the hillside. It is merely a great trough about 10ft. across and 5ft. in depth. From the forests in Oregon, ten miles back in the hills from the top of the chute,



great sections of tree-trunks, some of them 6ft. in diameter and varying in length from 12ft. to 36ft., are transported by railroad and fed, one by one, into the chute, through which they gravitate with ever-increasing momentum to the surface of the river. Ordinarily, the logs make the descent of over half a mile in thirty seconds, faster than the swiftest express train, but an exceptionally large log, under favourable conditions, makes the run in from eight to ten seconds, or at the rate of about four miles per minute. The logs strike the water with terrific force, tossing the spray high in the air, the illustration showing the beautiful effect thus produced. At times a small obstruction will cause a rapidly-descending log to leap from the chute part way down the incline, to go crashing over the hillside, carrying destruction to everything in its path. The logs shown on either side of the chute have thus had their plunging careers cut short. The great friction produced by the rapid rush of the timbers sometimes ignites them, and they dash into the water almost in a blaze. This friction, it is thought, has been the cause of several fires which in the past few years have partly consumed the chute." — Mr. Frank Greaves, 130, Ellis Street, San Francisco, California.

"SOLDIERS OF THE KING."

"Notwithstanding the fact that these men present a more or less military appearance they are not destined for the front. Typists will at once see that these 'soldiers' are composed of the capital 'V,' small 'v' (both inverted), capital 'O,' and the diagonal." — Mr. C. H. Chandler, 10, Allison Road, Harringay, N.

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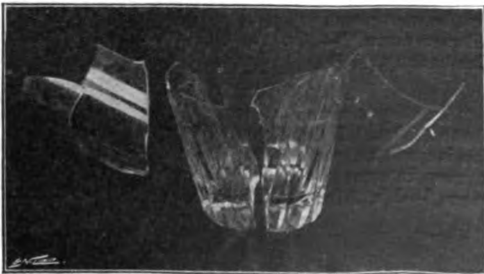
A DISASTROUS BLASTING OPERATION.

"A blast at a stone quarry in the neighbourhood of Colwyn Bay, North Wales, hurled this stone over two hundred yards, and so great was its impetus that it continued its career, leapt over a mound and fence, striking the ground and tearing it up, finally landing in the stone wall shown in the photo., close on two hundred yards from its first landing-place. Crashing through the wall, which is 18in. thick, the stone made a gap quite 10ft. wide, and its weight is estimated at no less than three tons."—Mr. F. R. Eskrigge, 13, Gladstone Road, Seaforth, Liverpool.

"LASSOING."

"This lucky 'snap' represents a South American farm hand or 'peon' lassoing a heifer. It was taken on an 'estancia' in Uruguay, and shows the loop of the lasso in mid-air and ready to fall upon the hapless fugitive with fatal accuracy."—Mr. C. Donald Macdonald, c/o Banco Britanico de la America del Sud, Buenos Aires.



GLASS-BREAKING BY THE VOICE.

"I am sending you a photo. for your 'Curiosities' of a broken tumbler which may be interesting to some of your readers, the breakage being caused by the human voice under the following circumstances. The glass was on the sideboard, six or seven feet away from the dining-table, and had been there quite an hour untouched. My youngest son, who is a student at the Royal Academy of Music, was giving the pitch of a certain note to his brother when a peculiar ring was heard, and the tumbler fell quietly to pieces, as you see—not a sound as of breakage, but just a quiet parting. This has happened to others before, for I remember my friend the late Signor Foli telling me it occurred once with him accidentally; and I have known him try with the utmost power of his voice, with three or four dozen glasses close to him, and all to no purpose—none would break. I may add that the edges are not very sharp, much the same as they would be if smashed with a hard substance, and there were no splinters or little pieces."—Mr. E. Bowen, "Inglemount," Inglemere Road, Forest Hill, S.E.

A SEVEN-FOOT CUCUMBER.

"Cucumbers are vegetables found in gardens in America. They usually grow to a length of 4in. to 5in., but for some reason a cucumber in the garden of Mr. Maurice Ziegler, of Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, decided to outdo its fellows and to lengthen so rapidly that Mr. Ziegler says that he could almost see it grow. After it had become 2ft. in length the owner nourished it with plenty of fertilizer and water until it reached the remarkable length of 7ft. It was then cut from the vine and photographed with its owner. When placed upright the top end of the gigantic vegetable is nearly 2ft. above Mr. Ziegler's head, and is actually longer than the vine on which it grew."—Mr. D. A. Willey, Baltimore.

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FOXGLOVE OR CANTERBURY BELL?

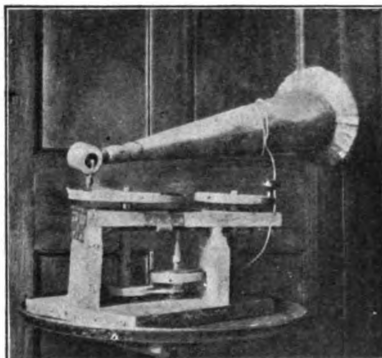
"This extraordinary plant was grown in the garden of General Collingwood, 'Isola,' Heathcote Road, Boscombe. It was a foxglove, but on each stem at the top grew a Canterbury bell blossom."—Miss Dorothy Churchill, "Isola," Heathcote Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth.

FIND THE FACE.

"This snap-shot looked at right side up is a photo. of my collie 'Roy'; upside down you will see a curious 'listen-to-my-tale-of-woe' sort of face. I confess I don't know who that is, but perhaps it may be sufficiently interesting for your 'Curiosities.'"—Miss Bell, St. Oram's, Felixstowe.

AN EXTRAORDINARY GRAMOPHONE.

"I send you a photograph of an extraordinary gramophone made by a gentleman eighty-eight years old (Mr. Samuel Roskruge, the Excise officer of this



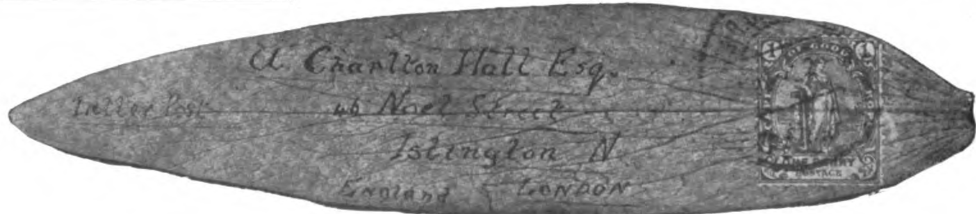
town for a quarter of a century). It reproduces as well as the most expensive machines, and is composed of an old box, a pill-box, and cardboard horn."—Mr. Tom Williams, 16, High Street, Bideford.

AN EGG WITH A MOTTO.

"Herewith a photograph of an egg, one of many, which was laid by one of our hens, a black Minorca, in August last. It appears on the photo. exactly as it was laid. The weight of it was 4¼ oz., which can be judged from the print, as it is in an ordinary egg-cup. From the naturally lithographed initial 'P' on the egg, coupled with the season's laying record of the hen, we concluded that her motto was 'Perseverance.'"—Mr. A. Glen, Wellshot House, Cambuslang, N.B.

A STRANGE MISSIVE.

"I send you a stamped leaf sent me by a friend in South Africa. I think you will agree with me that this is quite unique coming the distance it has, and it may interest your readers in your 'Curiosity' pages."—Mr. Albert C. Hall, 40, Moorgate St., E.C.



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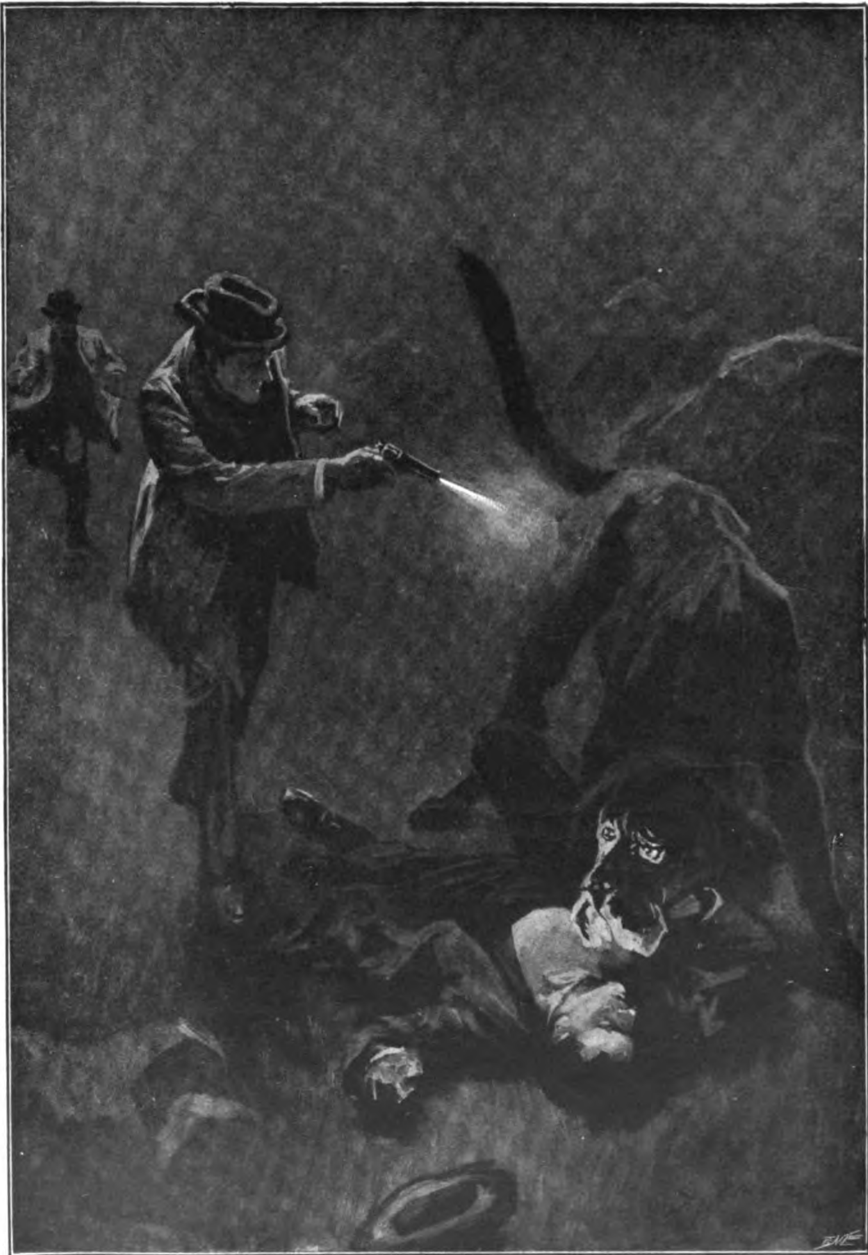

"HOLMES EMPTIED FIVE BARRELS OF HIS REVOLVER INTO THE CREATURE'S FLANK."

(*See page* 363.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiii. MAY, 1902. No. 136.

The Hound of the Baskervilles.

ANOTHER ADVENTURE OF

SHERLOCK HOLMES.

By CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER XIV. (*continued*).

WITH long bounds the huge black creature was leaping down the track, following hard upon the footsteps of our friend. So paralyzed were we by the apparition that we allowed him to pass before we had recovered our nerve. Then Holmes and I both fired together, and the creature gave a hideous howl, which showed that one at least had hit him. He did not pause, however, but bounded onwards. Far away on the path we saw Sir Henry looking back, his face white in the moonlight, his hands raised in horror, glaring helplessly at the frightful thing which was hunting him down.

But that cry of pain from the hound had blown all our fears to the winds. If he was vulnerable he was mortal, and if we could wound him we could kill him. Never have I seen a man run as Holmes ran that night. I am reckoned fleet of foot, but he outpaced me as much as I outpaced the little professional. In front of us as we flew up the track we heard scream after scream from Sir Henry and the deep roar of the hound. I was in time to see the beast spring upon its victim, hurl him to the ground, and worry at his throat. But the next instant Holmes had emptied five barrels of his revolver into the creature's flank. With a last howl of agony and a vicious snap in the air it rolled upon its back, four feet pawing furiously, and then fell limp upon its side. I stooped, panting, and pressed my pistol to the dreadful, shimmering head, but it was useless to pull the trigger. The giant hound was dead.

Sir Henry lay insensible where he had fallen. We tore away his collar, and Holmes breathed a prayer of gratitude when we saw that there was no sign of a wound and that the rescue had been in time. Already our friend's eyelids shivered and he made a feeble effort to move. Lestrade thrust his brandy-flask between the Baronet's teeth, and two frightened eyes were looking up at us.

"My God!" he whispered. "What was it? What, in Heaven's name, was it?"

"It's dead, whatever it is," said Holmes. "We've laid the family ghost once and for ever."

In mere size and strength it was a terrible creature which was lying stretched before us. It was not a pure bloodhound and it was not a pure mastiff; but it appeared to be a combination of the two—gaunt, savage, and as large as a small lioness. Even now, in the stillness of death, the huge jaws seemed to be dripping with a bluish flame and the small, deep-set, cruel eyes were ringed with fire. I placed my hand upon the glowing muzzle, and as I held them up my own fingers smouldered and gleamed in the darkness.

"Phosphorus," I said.

"A cunning preparation of it," said Holmes, sniffing at the dead animal. "There is no smell which might have interfered with his power of scent. We owe you a deep apology, Sir Henry, for having exposed you to this fright. I was prepared for a hound, but not for such a creature as this. And the fog gave us little time to receive him."

"You have saved my life."

"Having first endangered it. Are you strong enough to stand?"

"Give me another mouthful of that brandy and I shall be ready for anything. So! Now, if you will help me up. What do you propose to do?"

"To leave you here. You are not fit for further adventures to-night. If you will wait, one or other of us will go back with you to the Hall."

He tried to stagger to his feet; but he was still ghastly pale and trembling in every limb. We helped him to a rock, where he sat shivering with his face buried in his hands.

"We must leave you now," said Holmes.

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"'PHOSPHORUS!' I SAID."

"The rest of our work must be done, and every moment is of importance. We have our case, and now we only want our man.

"It's a thousand to one against our finding him at the house," he continued, as we retraced our steps swiftly down the path. "Those shots must have told him that the game was up."

"We were some distance off, and this fog may have deadened them."

"He followed the hound to call him off—of that you may be certain. No, no, he's gone by this time! But we'll search the house and make sure."

The front door was open, so we rushed in and hurried from room to room, to the amazement of a doddering old manservant, who met us in the passage. There was no light save in the dining-room, but Holmes caught up the lamp and left no corner of the house unexplored. No sign could we see of the man whom we were chasing. On the upper floor, however, one of the bedroom doors was locked.

"There's someone in here," cried Lestrade. "I can hear a movement. Open this door!"

A faint moaning and rustling came from within. Holmes struck the door just over the lock with the flat of his foot and it flew open. Pistol in hand, we all three rushed into the room.

But there was no sign within it of that desperate and defiant villain whom we expected to see. Instead we were faced by an object so strange and so unexpected that we stood for a moment staring at it in amazement.

The room had been fashioned into a small museum, and the walls were lined by a number of glass-topped cases full of that collection of butterflies and moths the formation of which had been the relaxation of this complex and dangerous man. In the centre of this room there was an upright beam, which had been placed at some period as a support for the old, worm-eaten balk of timber which spanned the roof. To this post a figure was tied, so swathed and muffled in the sheets which had been used to secure it that one could not for the moment tell whether it was that of a man or a woman. One towel passed round the throat and was secured at the back of the pillar. Another covered the lower part of the face, and over it two dark eyes—eyes full of grief and shame and a dreadful questioning—stared back at us. In a minute we had torn off the gag, unswathed the bonds, and Mrs. Stapleton sank upon the floor in front of us. As her beautiful head fell upon her chest I saw the clear red weal of a whiplash across her neck.

"The brute!" cried Holmes. "Here, Lestrade, your brandy-bottle! Put her in

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the chair! She has fainted from ill-usage and exhaustion."

She opened her eyes again.

"Is he safe?" she asked. "Has he escaped?"

"He cannot escape us, madam."

"No, no, I did not mean my husband. Sir Henry? Is he safe?"

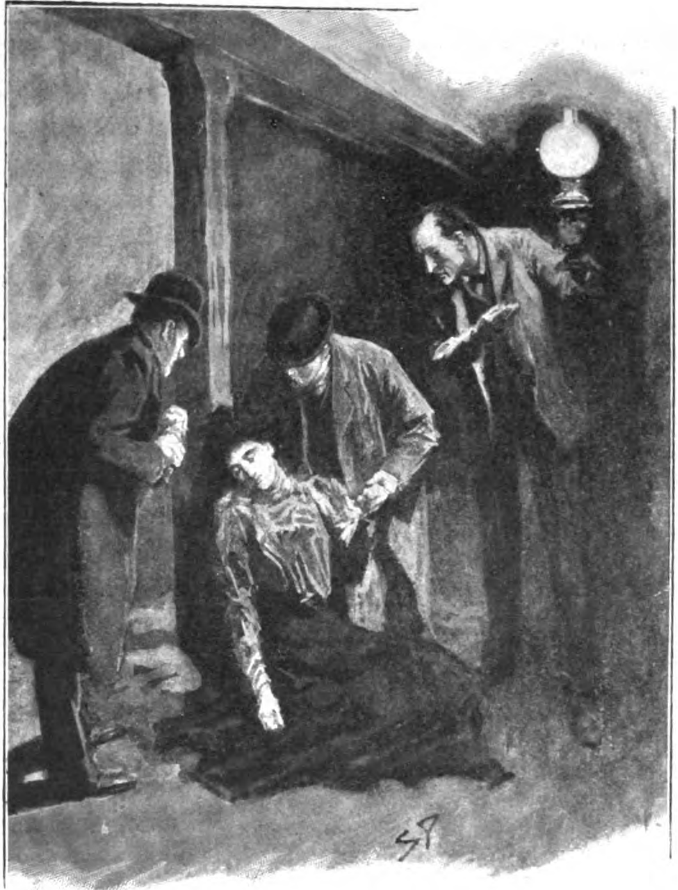
"Yes."

"And the hound?"

"It is dead."

She gave a long sigh of satisfaction.

"Thank God! Thank God! Oh, this villain! See how he has treated me!" She shot her arms out from her sleeves, and we saw with horror that they were all mottled with bruises. "But this is nothing—nothing! It is my mind and soul that he has tortured and defiled. I could endure it all, ill-usage, solitude, a life of deception, everything, as long as I could still cling to the hope that I had his love, but now I know that in this also I have been his dupe and his tool." She broke into passionate sobbing as she spoke.



"MRS. STAPLETON SANK UPON THE FLOOR."

"You bear him no good will, madam," said Holmes. "Tell us then where we shall find him. If you have ever aided him in evil, help us now and so atone."

"There is but one place where he can have fled," she answered. "There is an old tin mine on an island in the heart of the Mire. It was there that he kept his hound and there also he had made preparations so that he might have a refuge. That is where he would fly."

The fog-bank lay like white wool against the window. Holmes held the lamp towards it.

"See," said he. "No one could find his way into the Grimpen Mire to-night."

She laughed and clapped her hands. Her eyes and teeth gleamed with fierce merriment.

"He may find his way in, but never out," she cried. "How can he see the guiding wands to-night? We planted them together, he and I, to mark the pathway through the Mire. Oh, if I could only have plucked them out to-day. Then indeed you would have had him at your mercy!"

It was evident to us that all pursuit was in vain until the fog had lifted. Meanwhile we left Lestrade in possession of the house while Holmes and I went back with the Baronet to Baskerville Hall. The story of the Stapletons could no longer be withheld from him, but he took the blow bravely when he learned the truth about the woman whom he had loved. But the shock of the night's adventures had shattered his nerves, and before morning he lay delirious in a high fever, under the care of Dr. Mortimer. The two of them were destined to travel together round the world before Sir Henry had become once more the hale, hearty man that he had been before he became master of that ill-omened estate.

And now I come rapidly to the conclusion of this singular narrative, in which I have

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tried to make the reader share those dark fears and vague surmises which clouded our lives so long, and ended in so tragic a manner. On the morning after the death of the hound the fog had lifted and we were guided by Mrs. Stapleton to the point where they had found a pathway through the bog. It helped us to realize the horror of this woman's life when we saw the eagerness and joy with which she laid us on her husband's track. We left her standing upon the thin peninsula of firm, peaty soil which tapered out into the widespread bog. From the end of it a small wand planted here and there showed where the path zig-zagged from tuft to tuft of rushes among those green-scummed pits and foul quagmires which barred the way to the stranger. Rank reeds and lush, slimy water-plants sent an odour of decay and a heavy miasmatic vapour into our faces, while a false step plunged us more than once thigh-deep into the dark, quivering mire, which shook for yards in soft undulations around our feet. Its tenacious grip plucked at our heels as we walked, and when we sank into it it was as if some malignant hand were tugging us down into those obscene depths, so grim and purposeful was the clutch in which it held us. Once only we saw a trace that someone had passed that perilous way before us. From amid a tuft of cotton-grass which bore it up out of the slime some dark thing was projecting. Holmes sank to his waist as he stepped from the path to seize it, and had we not been there to drag him out he could never have set his foot upon firm land again. He held an old black boot in the air. "Meyers, Toronto," was printed on the leather inside.

"It is worth a mud bath," said he. "It is our friend Sir Henry's missing boot."

"Thrown there by Stapleton in his flight."

"Exactly. He retained it in his hand after using it to set the hound upon his track. He fled when he knew the game was up, still clutching it. And he hurled it away at this point of his flight. We know at least that he came so far in safety."

"HE HELD AN OLD BLACK BOOT IN THE AIR."

But more than that we were never destined to know, though there was much which we might surmise. There was no chance of finding footsteps in the mire, for the rising mud oozed swiftly in upon them, but as we at last reached firmer ground beyond the morass we all looked eagerly for them. But no slightest sign of them ever met our eyes. If the earth told a true story, then Stapleton never reached that island of refuge towards which he struggled through the fog upon that last night. Somewhere in the heart of the great Grimpen Mire, down in the foul slime of the huge morass which had sucked him in, this cold and cruel-hearted man is for ever buried.

Many traces we found of him in the bog-girt island where he had hid his savage ally. A huge driving-wheel and a shaft half-filled with rubbish showed the position of an abandoned mine.

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Beside it were the crumbling remains of the cottages of the miners, driven away no doubt by the foul reek of the surrounding swamp. In one of these a staple and chain with a quantity of gnawed bones showed where the animal had been confined. A skeleton with a tangle of brown hair adhering to it lay among the *débris.*

"WHERE THE ANIMAL HAD BEEN CONFINED."

"A dog!" said Holmes. "By Jove, a curly-haired spaniel. Poor Mortimer will never see his pet again. Well, I do not know that this place contains any secret which we have not already fathomed. He could hide his hound, but he could not hush its voice, and hence came those cries which even in daylight were not pleasant to hear. On an emergency he could keep the hound in the outhouse at Merripit, but it was always a risk, and it was only on the supreme day, which he regarded as the end of all his efforts, that he dared to do it. This paste in the tin is no doubt the luminous mixture with which the creature was daubed. It was suggested, of course, by the story of the family hell-hound, and by the desire to frighten old Sir Charles to death. No wonder the poor wretch of a convict ran and screamed, even as our friend did, and as we ourselves might have done, when he saw such a creature bounding through the darkness of the moor upon his track. It was a cunning device, for, apart from the chance of driving your victim to his death, what peasant would venture to inquire too closely into such a creature should he get sight of it, as many have done, upon the moor? I said it in London, Watson, and I say it again now, that never yet have we helped to hunt down a more dangerous man than he who is lying yonder"—he swept his long arm towards the huge mottled expanse of green-splotched bog which stretched away until it merged into the russet slopes of the moor.

CHAPTER XV.

A RETROSPECTION.

It was the end of November, and Holmes and I sat, upon a raw and foggy night, on either side of a blazing fire in our sitting-room in Baker Street. My friend was in excellent spirits over the success which had attended a succession of difficult and important cases, so that I was able to induce him to discuss the details of the Baskerville mystery. I had waited patiently for the opportunity, for I was aware that he would never permit cases to overlap, and that his clear and logical mind would not be drawn from its present work to dwell upon memories of the past. Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer were, however, in London, on their way to that long voyage which had been recommended for the restoration of his shattered nerves. They had called upon us

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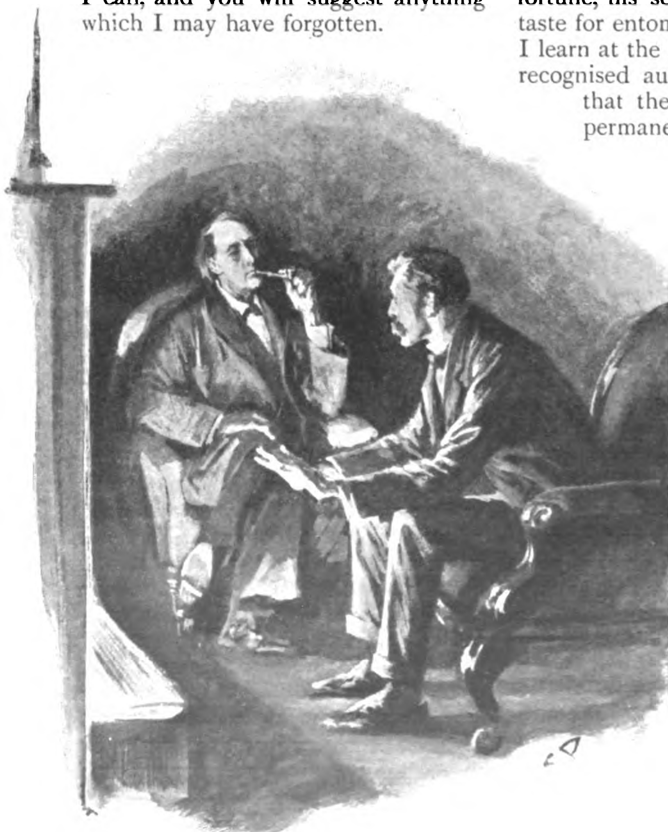
that very afternoon, so that it was natural that the subject should come up for discussion.

"The whole course of events," said Holmes, "from the point of view of the man who called himself Stapleton was simple and direct, although to us, who had no means in the beginning of knowing the motives of his actions and could only learn part of the facts, it all appeared exceedingly complex. I have had the advantage of two conversations with Mrs. Stapleton, and the case has now been so entirely cleared up that I am not aware that there is anything which has remained a secret to us. You will find a few notes upon the matter under the heading B in my indexed list of cases."

"Perhaps you would kindly give me a sketch of the course of events from memory."

"Certainly, though I cannot guarantee that I carry all the facts in my mind. Intense mental concentration has a curious way of blotting out what has passed. So far as the case of the Hound goes, however, I will give you the course of events as nearly as I can, and you will suggest anything which I may have forgotten.



"A RETROSPECTION."

"My inquiries show beyond all question that the family portrait did not lie, and that this fellow was indeed a Baskerville. He was a son of that Rodger Baskerville, the younger brother of Sir Charles, who fled with a sinister reputation to South America, where he was said to have died unmarried. He did, as a matter of fact, marry, and had one child, this fellow, whose real name is the same as his father. He married Beryl Garçia, one of the beauties of Costa Rica, and, having purloined a considerable sum of public money, he changed his name to Vandeleur and fled to England, where he established a school in the east of Yorkshire. His reason for attempting this special line of business was that he had struck up an acquaintance with a consumptive tutor upon the voyage home, and that he had used this man's ability to make the undertaking a success. Fraser, the tutor, died, however, and the school which had begun well sank from disrepute into infamy. The Vandeleurs found it convenient to change their name to Stapleton, and he brought the remains of his fortune, his schemes for the future, and his taste for entomology to the south of England. I learn at the British Museum that he was a recognised authority upon the subject, and that the name of Vandeleur has been permanently attached to a certain moth which he had, in his Yorkshire days, been the first to describe.

"We now come to that portion of his life which has proved to be of such intense interest to us. The fellow had evidently made inquiry, and found that only two lives intervened between him and a valuable estate. When he went to Devonshire his plans were, I believe, exceedingly hazy, but that he meant mischief from the first is evident from the way in which he took his wife with him in the character of his sister. The idea of using her as a decoy was clearly already in his mind, though he may not have been certain how the details of his plot were to be arranged. He meant in the end to have the estate, and he was ready to use any tool or run any risk

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for that end. His first act was to establish himself as near to his ancestral home as he could, and his second was to cultivate a friendship with Sir Charles Baskerville and with the neighbours.

"The Baronet himself told him about the family hound, and so prepared the way for his own death. Stapleton, as I will continue to call him, knew that the old man's heart was weak and that a shock would kill him. So much he had learned from Dr. Mortimer. He had heard also that Sir Charles was superstitious and had taken this grim legend very seriously. His ingenious mind instantly suggested a way by which the Baronet could be done to death, and yet it would be hardly possible to bring home the guilt to the real murderer.

"Having conceived the idea he proceeded to carry it out with considerable finesse. An ordinary schemer would have been content to work with a savage hound. The use of artificial means to make the creature diabolical was a flash of genius upon his part. The dog he bought in London from Ross and Mangles, the dealers in Fulham Road. It was the strongest and most savage in their possession. He brought it down by the North Devon line and walked a great distance over the moor so as to get it home without exciting any remarks. He had already on his insect hunts learned to penetrate the Grimpen Mire, and so had found a safe hiding-place for the creature. Here he kennelled it and waited his chance.

"But it was some time coming. The old gentleman could not be decoyed outside of his grounds at night. Several times Stapleton lurked about with his hound, but without avail. It was during these fruitless quests that he, or rather his ally, was seen by peasants, and that the legend of the demon dog received a new confirmation. He had hoped that his wife might lure Sir Charles to his ruin, but here she proved unexpectedly independent. She would not endeavour to entangle the old gentleman in a sentimental attachment which might deliver him over to his enemy. Threats and even, I am sorry to say, blows refused to move her. She would have nothing to do with it, and for a time Stapleton was at a deadlock.

"He found a way out of his difficulties through the chance that Sir Charles, who had conceived a friendship for him, made him the minister of his charity in the case of this unfortunate woman, Mrs. Laura Lyons. By representing himself as a single man he acquired complete influence over her, and he gave her to understand that in the event of her obtaining a divorce from her husband he would marry her. His plans were suddenly brought to a head by his knowledge that Sir Charles was about to leave the Hall on the advice of Dr. Mortimer, with whose opinion he himself pretended to coincide. He must act at once, or his victim might get beyond his power. He therefore put pressure upon Mrs. Lyons to write this letter, imploring the old man to give her an interview on the evening before his departure for London. He then, by a specious argument, prevented her from going, and so had the chance for which he had waited.

"Driving back in the evening from Coombe Tracey he was in time to get his hound, to treat it with his infernal paint, and to bring the beast round to the gate at which he had reason to expect that he would find the old gentleman waiting. The dog, incited by its master, sprang over the wicket-gate and pursued the unfortunate Baronet, who fled screaming down the Yew Alley. In that gloomy tunnel it must indeed have been a dreadful sight to see that huge black creature, with its flaming jaws and blazing eyes, bounding after its victim. He fell dead at the end of the alley from heart disease and terror. The hound had kept upon the grassy border while the Baronet had run down the path, so that no track but the man's was visible. On seeing him lying still the creature had probably approached to sniff at him, but finding him dead had turned away again. It was then that it left the print which was actually observed by Dr. Mortimer. The hound was called off and hurried away to its lair in the Grimpen Mire, and a mystery was left which puzzled the authorities, alarmed the countryside, and finally brought the case within the scope of our observation.

"So much for the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. You perceive the devilish cunning of it, for really it would be almost impossible to make a case against the real murderer. His only accomplice was one who could never give him away, and the grotesque, inconceivable nature of the device only served to make it more effective. Both of the women concerned in the case, Mrs. Stapleton and Mrs. Laura Lyons, were left with a strong suspicion against Stapleton. Mrs. Stapleton knew that he had designs upon the old man, and also of the existence of the hound. Mrs. Lyons knew neither of these things, but had been impressed by the death occurring at the time of an uncancelled

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appointment which was only known to him. However, both of them were under his influence, and he had nothing to fear from them. The first half of his task was successfully accomplished, but the more difficult still remained.

"It is possible that Stapleton did not know of the existence of an heir in Canada. In any case he would very soon learn it from his friend Dr. Mortimer, and he was told by the latter all details about the arrival of Henry Baskerville. Stapleton's first idea was that this young stranger from Canada might possibly be done to death in London without coming down to Devonshire at all. He distrusted his wife ever since she had refused to help him in laying a trap for the old man, and he dared not leave her long out of his sight for fear he should lose his influence over her. It was for this reason that he took her to London with him. They lodged, I find, at the Mexborough Private Hotel, in Craven Street, which was actually one of those called upon by my agent in search of evidence. Here he kept his wife imprisoned in her room while he, disguised in a beard, followed Dr. Mortimer to Baker Street and afterwards to the station and to the Northumberland Hotel. His wife had some inkling of his plans; but she had such a fear of her husband — a fear founded upon brutal ill-treatment—that she dare not write to warn the man whom she knew to be in danger. If the letter should fall into Stapleton's hands her own life would not be safe. Eventually, as we know, she adopted the expedient of cutting out the words which would form the message, and addressing the letter in a disguised hand. It reached the Baronet, and gave him the first warning of his danger.

"It was very essential for Stapleton to get some article of Sir Henry's attire so that, in case he was driven to use the dog, he might always have the means of setting him upon his track. With characteristic promptness and audacity he set about this at once, and we cannot doubt that the boots or chambermaid of the hotel was well bribed to help him in his design. By chance, however, the first boot which was procured for him was a new one and, therefore, useless for his purpose. He then had it returned and obtained another—a most instructive incident, since it proved conclusively to my mind that we were dealing with a real hound, as no other supposition could explain this anxiety to obtain an old boot and this indifference to a new one. The more *outré* and grotesque an incident is the more carefully it deserves to be examined, and the very point which appears to complicate a case is, when duly considered and scientifically handled, the one which is most likely to elucidate it.

"Then we had the visit from our friends next morning, shadowed always by Stapleton in the cab. From his knowledge of our rooms and of my appearance, as well as from his general conduct, I am inclined to think that Stapleton's career of crime has been by no means limited to this single Baskerville affair. It is suggestive that during the last three years there have been four considerable burglaries in the West Country, for none of which was any criminal ever arrested. The last of these, at Folkestone Court, in May, was remarkable for the cold-blooded pistolling of the page, who surprised the masked and solitary burglar. I cannot doubt that Stapleton recruited his waning resources in this fashion, and that for years he has been a desperate and dangerous man.

"We had an example of his readiness of resource that morning when he got away from us so successfully, and also of his audacity in sending back my own name to me through the cabman. From that moment he understood that I had taken over the case in London, and that therefore there was no chance for him there. He returned to Dartmoor and awaited the arrival of the Baronet."

"One moment!" said I. "You have, no doubt, desciibed the sequence of events correctly, but there is one point which you have left unexplained. What became of the hound when its master was in London?"

"I have given some attention to this matter and it is undoubtedly of importance. There can be no question that Stapleton had a confidant, though it is unlikely that he ever placed himself in his power by sharing all his plans with him. There was an old manservant at Merripit House, whose name was Anthony. His connection with the Stapletons can be traced for several years, as far back as the schoolmastering days, so that he must have been aware that his master and mistress were really husband and wife. This man has disappeared and has escaped from the country. It is suggestive that Anthony is not a common name in England, while Antonio is so in all Spanish or Spanish-American countries. The man, like Mrs. Stapleton herself, spoke good English, but with a curious lisping accent. I have myself seen this old man cross the Grimpen Mire by the path which Stapleton had marked out. It is

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very probable, therefore, that in the absence of his master it was he who cared for the hound, though he may never have known the purpose for which the beast was used.

"The Stapletons then went down to Devonshire, whither they were soon followed by Sir Henry and you. One word now as to how I stood myself at that time. It may possibly recur to your memory that when I examined the paper upon which the printed words were fastened I made a close inspection for the water-mark. In doing so I held it within a few inches of my eyes, and was conscious of a faint smell of the scent known as white jessamine. There are seventy-five perfumes, which it is very necessary that a criminal expert should be able to distinguish from each other, and cases have more than once within my own experience depended upon their prompt recognition. The scent suggested the presence of a lady, and already my thoughts began to turn towards the Stapletons. Thus I had made certain of the hound, and had guessed at the criminal before ever we went to the West Country.

"It was my game to watch Stapleton. It was evident, however, that I could not do this if I were with you, since he would be keenly on his guard. I deceived everybody, therefore, yourself included, and I came down secretly when I was supposed to be in London. My hardships were not so great as you imagined, though such trifling details must never interfere with the investigation of a case. I stayed for the most part at Coombe Tracey, and only used the hut upon the moor when it was necessary to be near the scene of action. Cartwright had come down with me, and in his disguise as a country boy he was of great assistance to me. I was dependent upon him for food and clean linen. When I was watching Stapleton Cartwright was frequently watching you, so that I was able to keep my hand upon all the strings.

"I have already told you that your reports reached me rapidly, being forwarded instantly from Baker Street to Coombe Tracey. They were of great service to me, and especially that one incidentally truthful piece of biography of Stapleton's. I was able to establish the identity of the man and the woman, and knew at last exactly how I stood. The case had been considerably complicated through the incident of the escaped convict and the relations between him and the Barrymores. This also you cleared up in a very effective way, though I had already come to the same conclusions from my own observations.

"By the time that you discovered me upon the moor I had a complete knowledge of the whole business, but I had not a case which could go to a jury. Even Stapleton's attempt upon Sir Henry that night which ended in the death of the unfortunate convict did not help us much in proving murder against our man. There seemed to be no alternative but to catch him red-handed, and to do so we had to use Sir Henry, alone and apparently unprotected, as a bait. We did so, and at the cost of a severe shock to our client we succeeded in completing our case and driving Stapleton to his destruction. That Sir Henry should have been exposed to this is, I must confess, a reproach to my management of the case, but we had no means of foreseeing the terrible and paralyzing spectacle which the beast presented, nor could we predict the fog which

"BE READY IN HALF AN HOUR."

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enabled him to burst upon us at such short notice. We succeeded in our object at a cost which both the specialist and Dr. Mortimer assure me will be a temporary one. A long journey may enable our friend to recover not only from his shattered nerves, but also from his wounded feelings. His love for the lady was deep and sincere, and to him the saddest part of all this black business was that he should have been deceived by her.

"It only remains to indicate the part which she had played throughout. There can be no doubt that Stapleton exercised an influence over her which may have been love or may have been fear, or very possibly both, since they are by no means incompatible emotions. It was, at least, absolutely effective. At his command she consented to pass as his sister, though he found the limits of his power over her when he endeavoured to make her the direct accessory to murder. She was ready to warn Sir Henry so far as she could without implicating her husband, and again and again she tried to do so. Stapleton himself seems to have been capable of jealousy, and when he saw the Baronet paying court to the lady, even though it was part of his own plan, still he could not help interrupting with a passionate outburst that revealed the fiery soul which his self-contained manner so cleverly concealed. By encouraging the intimacy he made it certain that Sir Henry would frequently come to Merripit House and that he would sooner or later get the opportunity which he desired. On the day of the crisis, however, his wife turned suddenly against him. She had learned something of the death of the convict, and she knew that the hound was being kept in the out-house on the evening that Sir Henry was coming to dinner. She taxed her husband with his intended crime, and a furious scene followed, in which he showed her for the first time that she had a rival in his love. Her fidelity turned in an instant to bitter hatred and he saw that she would betray him. He tied her up, therefore, that she might have no chance of warning Sir Henry, and he hoped, no doubt, that when the whole countryside put down the Baronet's death to the curse of his family, as they certainly would do, he could win his wife back to accept an accomplished fact and to keep silent upon what she knew. In this I fancy that in any case he made a miscalculation, and that, if we had not been there, his doom would none the less have been sealed. A woman of Spanish blood does not condone such an injury so lightly. And now, my dear Watson, without referring to my notes, I cannot give you a more detailed account of this curious case. I do not know that anything essential has been left unexplained."

"He could not hope to frighten Sir Henry to death as he had done the old uncle with his bogie hound."

"The beast was savage and half-starved. If its appearance did not frighten its victim to death, at least it would paralyze the resistance which might be offered."

"No doubt. There only remains one difficulty. If Stapleton came into the succession, how could he explain the fact that he, the heir, had been living unannounced under another name so close to the property? How could he claim it without causing suspicion and inquiry?"

"It is a formidable difficulty, and I fear that you ask too much when you expect me to solve it. The past and the present are within the field of my inquiry, but what a man may do in the future is a hard question to answer. Mrs. Stapleton has heard her husband discuss the problem on several occasions. There were three possible courses. He might claim the property from South America, establish his identity before the British authorities there, and so obtain the fortune without ever coming to England at all; or he might adopt an elaborate disguise during the short time that he need be in London; or, again, he might furnish an accomplice with the proofs and papers, putting him in as heir, and retaining a claim upon some proportion of his income. We cannot doubt from what we know of him that he would have found some way out of the difficulty. And now, my dear Watson, we have had some weeks of severe work, and for one evening, I think, we may turn our thoughts into more pleasant channels. I have a box for 'Les Huguenots.' Have you heard the De Reszkes? Might I trouble you then to be ready in half an hour, and we can stop at Marcini's for a little dinner on the way?"

THE END.

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Illustrated Interviews.

LXXVII.—THE LATE SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN, K.C.B., CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

[A sad interest attaches to the following interview, owing to the fact that Sir Archibald Milman corrected the proofs and gave a sitting for the photograph which appears on the next page only the day before his sudden and lamented death.]

OF probably no other man in the United Kingdom than Sir Archibald Milman could it be said that he practically lived his life in connection with the House of Commons. For forty-five years he was in its service, while as a boy he played in and about the Palace of Westminster, which, with its 1,100 apartments, 100 staircases, and two miles of corridors, will of necessity long remain one of the most distinguished buildings in the world.

"As a boy," Sir Archibald said to me when, in spite of the serious illness which compelled him to give up what was the labour of love of his life, he received me in his own room in Speaker's Court of the Palace of Westminster, "I was educated at Westminster School. The old Houses of Parliament were burnt down in the year I was born—1834. Throughout my boyhood the new Houses of Parliament were rising on land and foreshore, to be known by the old name—the Palace of Westminster. Barry was obliged to take our stairs and landing-stage, and we boys had to get into our boats from the coal-barges; so to make up to us he allowed us the run of the place. At all events we took it, and we used to go clambering up into the scaffolding over the building as it rose. In those days I little thought that I should come tc have a place or, indeed, to practically spend my life within those walls.

SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN.
From a Photo. by Sir Benjamin Stone.

We used, boy-like, to walk out on the planks of the scaffolding in the most adventurous manner, little heeding the fact that a false step would probably mean our death. Indeed, I used sometimes to go up there and hide from the others. I recall two occasions when I nearly came to grief. The Speaker's tower was being put up, and between the two sides a board had been placed. I thought it would be great fun to go across that board. It was a very long board, and I started with confidence. When, however, I got to the middle, my weight and the movement made it sway violently up and down, and if I had attempted to go on I should no doubt have been thrown off. Luckily, however, I kept my head and remained standing until the vibration lessened. Then, with my eyes fixed immovably on the end of the plank, I started more slowly and carefully and got across in safety. Another time I started to go over another plank across a dark place. I could not see that it had been placed crooked on half a brick, and as soon as my weight came into play the board tipped down. I thought I was lost. I descended till the outer edge of the board touched the stonework below the brick. I felt like slipping off. There was no good attempting to go back, so I had to go forward very carefully. I came out on the roof of Westminster Hall. I tried then to get back, but I removed the half brick before I started.

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SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN AT HOME.
From a Photo. taken the day before his death by George Newnes, Ltd.

I have another less bright recollection. Supplies of building material arrived at high water, were passed over the coffer-dam, and were carried by hodmen through the crypt, but the trestles were too high, and bricks and stone were thrust against the splendid bosses of Edward I. They had to be restored—a piteous loss of fine ancient work.

"From Westminster I went abroad for a year to study modern languages, and then entered Trinity College, Cambridge. After taking my degree Lord Canning gave me an appointment at the Post Office, which I need hardly tell you was very different from what it is now. It was only about half the size and there was no telegraph department. There is nothing of special interest, however, to recall in connection with those days—much routine work thoroughly done and checked. After two years Sir Denis Le Marchant gave me an appointment in the House of Commons, and I entered the service in the Public Bill Office in the January of 1857. Those were the days of the rivalry between Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston, and those two great politicians naturally fired my already vivid interest in politics, so that I used to go into the House to listen to the debates whenever I possibly could."

"Would you compare the House in those days with the House of to-day?" I asked.

"The most trusted judgment in the House at that time was probably that of Cornewall Lewis, who used to relieve the tedium of his duties as Chancellor of the Exchequer by writing learned dissertations on early Egyptian chronology. On the front bench were such men as Sir George Grey, Sir Charles Wood, and Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton, the uncle of the present Mr. Henry Labouchere. An amusing story is told of uncle and nephew. On one occasion someone said to Mr. Labouchere that he had seen his father in the House of Lords. 'Oh,' he replied, 'I am glad the old gentleman is in so comfortable a place.' Lord Taunton was a remarkable man. When the Great Western Railway were building their line they had to encroach on certain of his estates, and as compensation they awarded him damages to the amount of £30,000. After many years he returned the amount in full with a letter explaining that, so far from the railway having done him harm, it had actually benefited his property, and under the circumstances he did not think he was justified in taking any part of the amount which had been awarded him. That is, so far as I am aware, the only case of compensation being paid back to a railway, although there can be no doubt that most of the people who have been compensated have derived a great deal of benefit in the same way.

"In those days the ascendency of the Ministers was very great and the etiquette was very strict. Except for purposes of business no one ever addressed the Prime Minister in the House, and friendly greetings were rarely exchanged if members passed Ministers in the lobby. The Leaders of the Government and the Opposition sat with their hats over their brows and occasionally conferred with a colleague; but anything like the general intercourse between the front benches and the others such as prevails to-day was quite unknown. Again, the term 'My honourable friend,' which is

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now used by one member to another if they have a mere passing acquaintance in a Committee-room, was then reserved for people with whom you dined. There were more restraint and formality and, I think, more dignity.

"You ask about obstruction. The only form in which obstruction appeared was that certain members objected to going on with business after twelve o'clock at night. They would move the adjournment of the House, and so made their presence felt. If, however, the House was anxious to go on with work they usually gave way. There were no scenes in those days: members would have been ashamed of them and thought them undignified. Every rising member was anxious to get the ear of the House—that is, to be listened to with patience—and any member who had any genuine information to give was always heard.

"When Sir Charles Barry received his instructions about the size of the present House, which had to be built after the fire of October, 1834, he was told that sixty members represented a working House and two hundred a full House. He provided double that accommodation, but the influence of each successive Reform Bill has caused more members to attend and more members to take part in the debates, and in this way the House seems to have become too small to accommodate its members, a fact on which comment is so frequently made. Incidentally, too, the larger number of members speaking in a debate has tended to produce a less finished and concentrated form of eloquence. I recollect a member getting up one day and expressing his regret that he had had to occupy the time of the House for twenty minutes, remarking that he was unprepared to speak, and adding that, if he had had time and were prepared, he would have taken five minutes instead of twenty.

"A member acting in good faith was rarely called to order, and the business of the Chairman of Committees, and even of the Speaker, was much lighter than it is at present. In those days, too, an Indian debate, which is now a matter of great importance, was apt to end in a count-out. *A propos* of debates on Indian affairs I recall that when the Indian Mutiny was announced there was a great dandy at the India Office. He was afterwards Lord Leconfield, and he got up in the House in yellow kid gloves in order to make his speech. How great a knowledge was necessary for the head of the India Office you can judge by the fact that in that speech he said he believed Delhi was on the Ganges, a statement which even at that time of great anxiety amused the House very much. Very little was thought of the Mutiny

From a Photo. by] THE PUGIN DRAWING-ROOM AT SPEAKER'S COURT. [*George Newnes, Ltd.*

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From a Photo. by] SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN'S STUDY. [George Newnes, Ltd.

When he came in in 1875 he had a following of seven. Of these one could not speak. He could fumble with a paper and say: 'Mr. Speaker, sir,' but he could get very little farther than that. Between 1875 and July, 1886, Mr. Parnell's following increased from seven to eighty-five, whereupon Mr. Gladstone pronounced in favour of Home Rule, as he recognised that the large majority of Irish members were in favour of it, and that their support would make his Government safe. In the days when the negotiations were going on between Mr. Gladstone and Parnell, Mr. Gladstone said one day to him, 'How deeply Irish history must have grieved you!' Parnell looked up quietly and answered, 'I know nothing about Irish history!'

at the time, for when it broke out at Meerut, little more than a week after the *Bombay Gazette* had published the statement that 'India is quiet throughout,' Lord Palmerston said that it was a local mutiny, but he thought it right to send out 10,000 men. In the Mutiny the troops were for the first time given rifles, the Enfield muskets, and in order to prevent the cartridges jamming they were greased with fat. These cartridges were served out to the native troops. At last, in the House, an old Indian officer, General Thompson, got up and pointed out the grave danger which the Government was running by this course.

"'You compel these Indians with their strong ideas of caste,' he said, in effect, 'to put the grease of a cow into their mouth, which is a sacrilege and involves the loss of caste, and unless you rescind that order you will have the whole country against you.'

"It cannot help striking people to-day as curious that when the Mutiny was over, and Lord Canning returned home, no one took any notice of his arrival at Southampton on April 26th, 1862. He arrived and departed for London just as if he had been an ordinary passenger, and he drove from Waterloo to the India Office without anyone taking the slightest heed of him. Compare that with what would happen to-day were a representative of the Crown to return after such an event.

"I need hardly say that Parnell was a most striking figure. He kept himself aloof.

"You ask me about Parnell's method of opposition. He began by opposing everything—private members' Bills and Government Bills—at all hours. Most people will probably be surprised, having regard to the scenes which resulted from this opposition, to learn that Parnell used as well as abused the rules of the House and often went about his opposition in the most approved Parliamentary fashion, and would consult the authorities at the table as to the best line to take. He was paramount in his party, and every order that he gave had to be obeyed.

"Parnell was always very clever at seeing anything which was really popular in England, and he was instrumental in carrying several reforms through his opposition tactics, among those reforms being the abolition of flogging in the Army. His power of self-control was enormous, and was never more vividly exemplified than in connection with a circumstance in which the late Lord Randolph Churchill was the chief actor. It was at the time when Lord Randolph Churchill was acting as Leader of the House. There had been certain negotiations going

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on between him and Parnell, but nothing came of them. On the occasion in question Lord Randolph Churchill, in the course of a speech, bitterly denounced Parnell as a disturber of his country's peace. All through it the latter sat quiet, but his face showed what he was feeling, for it was white. When Lord Randolph sat down everybody expected that Parnell would reply, and everybody was on the *qui vive* to hear his defence. Instead of that Parnell remained sitting. The Speaker also expected Parnell to reply, for, although several members rose, the Speaker saw none of them. There was a dramatic pause. When Parnell persistently refused to get up the Speaker called on one of the members. The House, however, was in no mood to hear him, and quickly shouted him down, while cries of 'Parnell, Parnell,' came from all over the House. As if in obedience to those cries Parnell got up. He said, as nearly as I can recollect without reference to the record of his speech: 'The noble lord has recently made overtures to me. He will probably make overtures to me again. It would be a pity, therefore, for me to say anything in reply that might disturb the course of any future advances he may make to me.' Then he sat down, having completely smashed Lord Randolph, who brought about his own destruction a little while after by attempting to destroy Lord Salisbury on the memorable charge of the extravagance of the Ministry of which he himself was a member."

"Who was the greatest Parliamentarian during all the time you were in the House?"

"Mr. Gladstone, without the slightest doubt. Nobody could compare with him in that respect. His knowledge of character was consummate, and he had the wonderful art of persuading members that what was dearest to their heart was also dearest to his. It amounted to fascination. One of the most adroit things he ever did was his introduction of the Urgency Rule. Government business had precedence, but no sooner had Mr. Gladstone been called than Mr. Dillon got up and made a speech about the wrongs of Ireland, and standing with folded arms he stamped his foot on the floor and said the wrongs of his country were so great they would admit of no delay. The Speaker remonstrated, but Mr. Dillon stood his ground, with the result that he was suspended. Parnell sprang into the breach, and went on until he, too, was suspended, and his suspension was followed by the suspension of twenty-seven Irish members *en masse*, who refused to leave the House for the purpose of enabling the division to be taken. Then Mr. Gladstone rose and made a speech, introducing his resolutions to invest the Speaker with all the powers of the House to draw up rules of procedure whenever the House voted that the state of public business was urgent by three-fourths of the members, of whom at least two hundred must take part in the division. Following that resolution was a line declaring 'the state of public business is urgent.' No one seemed to appreciate the full meaning of the words and everybody wondered why they had been introduced. The House, however, carried the motion, and then at once the brilliancy of the *coup d'état* dawned on members, for from that moment the rules

From a Photo. by] THE DINING-ROOM AT SPEAKER'S COURT. [*George Newnes, Ltd.*

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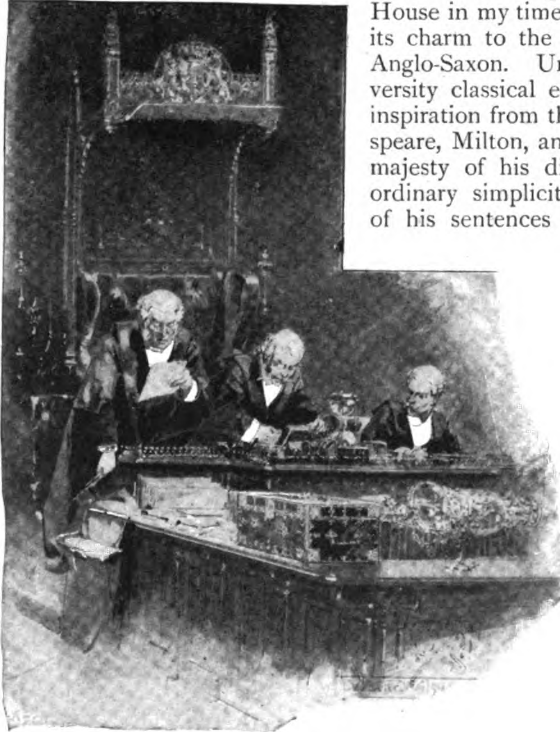
were in the hands of the Speaker, and a few days afterwards the more stringent regulations which he had drawn up were laid by him on the table.

"That suspension of the Irish members *en masse* was the first time such an occurrence had ever taken place in the House. It has occurred since, and even last Session. When Parnell came in next morning he found that instead of being able to worry the House for a fortnight and being suspended for the rest of the day he could be suspended in five minutes if necessary. The result was we got through the Session splendidly. Our world had a new master.

"You ask me to compare Gladstone and Disraeli as orators.. In my opinion they were not comparable. The one was an enthusiast with strong sympathies, while the other had to make the best of things for his own side, whatever those things might be. An example of Disraeli's tactics was the fact that he turned out the Liberal Government on a £6 franchise and then brought in a Household Franchise Bill of an even more radical nature than the one which he had denounced as too extreme a measure.



SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN AT HIS POST IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.
From a Drawing by T. Walter Wilson, R.I.

"In one respect, a humorous one, both Gladstone and Disraeli could certainly be compared. They both had the habit of using striking bits of their speeches over and over again. Gladstone's peroration, for instance, in which that famous phrase, 'The flowing tide is with us and the ebbing tide is with them,' produced an extraordinary effect when the House first heard it. When he introduced his next Reform Bill he used it again, and in a somewhat altered form it appeared in his speech on his third Reform Bill. By that time, of course, everybody remembered it, and it produced no effect at all. That, too, was the weakest part of Disraeli's oratory. Having found his great phrase, which produced his great effect, he introduced it a second time, exaggerating it a little. That second time it would have a certain success, but not the same as the first; while the third time, when it was still more exaggerated, people became bored.

"As orators, neither Gladstone nor Disraeli could compare with John Bright. He was, no doubt, the greatest orator in the House in my time. His speaking owed its charm to the singular purity of his Anglo-Saxon. Unhampered by a University classical education, he drew his inspiration from the Bible, from Shakespeare, Milton, and Burns. It was the majesty of his diction and the extraordinary simplicity of the construction of his sentences which gave him his masterful position in the House.

"You ask why, seeing that he was so little of a statesman, he was always included in the Cabinet? I think the reason was that it was felt that the people in the country knew that so long as he was a member of the Cabinet the interests of peace and Free Trade would be safeguarded and were safe. So determined was he on having peace that on two occasions he left the Government when it was getting warlike. After his death a statue, as you know, was put up to him in the Central Hall. It was, I think, the worst statue that ever was erected. His sons got permission to carry it off, and I do not know what became of it. Up till now, however, another statue has not taken its place. Mr. Bright's brother, Jacob Bright, used also to be a member of the House. He, too, was a Quaker. I remember one morning seeing a young girl of about

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fourteen riding in the Row. She had beautiful fair hair, and she was dressed in a crimson velvet habit. As she galloped past me I recognised her. She was the daughter of Jacob Bright, the Quaker."

"Would it be possible, Sir Archibald, to select any single incident as being the most striking in the whole of your Parliamentary experience from the many striking scenes which you have witnessed?"

"Yes, quite possible. Undoubtedly the most remarkable scene was when the then Sir Stafford Northcote, as Leader of the House, rose in his place to announce that the Fleet had been ordered to go up to Constantinople. The Government at the time was neither very firm nor strong, and against it was Mr. Gladstone with his overpowering enthusiasm and his eloquence aroused by the Bulgarian atrocities. When Sir Stafford made his announcement there was a deathlike silence in the House. You could hear a pin drop, for everyone knew that we were on the brink of a European war, and everyone felt that we were not prepared for it. The tension in the House was extraordinary.

SIR ARCHIBALD MILMAN.
From an earlier Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"Later on in the evening, between nine and ten o'clock, Sir Stafford again rose in his place and asked permission to interrupt the debate. Again there was the same hush, the same silence, the same expectancy. He said that Russia had yielded the point, and the order for the Fleet to force the Dardanelles had been countermanded. No, there was no cheering; the news was received in dead silence. It was far more impressive than any applause could possibly have been. Gradually, however, there came a murmur of approval, a sort of sigh of relief at the idea of a great crisis having passed.

"At this time one of the wits of the House—no, I cannot tell you which one—started a story which created a great deal of amusement wherever it was told. It was that Sir Stafford was to be seen every night engaged in a series of archæological investigations in Westminster Abbey, his object being to see if he could find anywhere a little piece of the backbone of Lord Palmerston."

One step, we are told, divides the sublime from the ridiculous. I took it, and asked Sir Archibald what was the most ludicrous incident he had ever witnessed.

"This one," he replied. "The judges are supposed to be in attendance on the House of Lords in order to aid the members with their knowledge of law in the event of necessity. They used also to take certain messages from the Lords to the Commons. On this occasion one of the Princesses had to receive her marriage portion, and the Bill being a money Bill had to be brought to the Commons. To give *éclat* to the occasion the Bill was returned by two judges. I, of course, knew they were coming, but didn't know who the two judges would be. As it happened, one of them was 5ft. nothing, while the other was 6ft. 3in. in height. When they appeared the contrast between them was such, heightened as it was by the fact that their robes had evidently been brought down in a bag and were crumpled and were not put on straight, that the House simply shrieked with laughter. The judges declared that they would never go again, as they had been insulted by the 'ill-bred Commons,' and, as a matter of fact, that was the last occasion on which a judge has ever come with a communication from the Upper House."

Did space permit, or had the condition of his health allowed, it would no doubt have been possible to extend these reminiscences of a notable career. Sir Archibald indeed proposed to spend his leisure in writing his reminiscences—a volume which would have been sure to command a great deal of attention, seeing that he could have related so much of men who have made the history of our time.

His last days were spent in the apartments in which he had lived so long in the Palace of Westminster. The drawing-room there, shown in the illustration on page 375, is noteworthy for the fact that it alone, of all the residential rooms in the Palace, is in exactly the same condition as it was when it left Pugin's hands. It still has even the wall-paper which he designed, an arrangement of the cipher V.R. and the pomegranate, which was introduced into English decorative art when Catherine of Aragon married Henry VIII., although its value for this purpose had been demonstrated in the early history of the children of Israel.

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At the Far Bastion.

By Frank Savile.

"PLEASE, sir, Private Simpson's come off his post unrelieved!"

I was tired and a little drowsy after the long field-day, and at first I thought I must have misunderstood. Sergeant Bates stood in the guard-room doorway and repeated his announcement, his very moustache bristling with indignation.

"Please, sir, Private Simpson's come off sentry without waiting for the relief!"

"You mean he's deserted his post?" I roared, incredulously.

"Yes, sir. He's here, sir. He's got some cock-an'-bull story about a—a skeleton, sir, and I think he's mad, sir."

I jumped to my feet. The vagaries of Tommy Atkins are many, but this was beyond anything I had come in contact with. To walk off sentry-go with any excuse except changing guard—why, it was unbelievable!

"Bring him in!" I thundered, screwing up my features to represent the very acme of displeasure.

There was a measured tramp of ammunition-boots, and the sergeant ushered in the delinquent. Private Simpson was white and shaking. It was obvious that his knees knocked together as he saluted.

"I WASN'T THINKIN' OF NOTHIN' AT ALL TILL I SAW IT WAS A SKULL, SIR."

I gave him one comprehensive look.

"Does he smell of drink, sergeant?" I demanded.

Bates hovered over his prisoner for a moment, dilating his nostrils.

"No, sir," he admitted, reluctantly.

"Please, sir, I ain't touched a drop since last night," pleaded the private.

"Then what is the meaning of this?" I exploded. "Are you out of your mind?"

"No, sir. Please, sir, I only tell you the gospel truth, sir. My post's along the far bastion below the lab'rat'ry. On my dyin' oath, sir, as I was a-standin' there, five minutes ago, sir, I saw something white against the stonework. I wasn't thinkin' of nothin' at all till I saw it was a skull, sir, peerin' at me over the sea-wall. An' then I saw an arm, sir, an' then his ribs rose up, sir, an' then——"

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"That'll do—that'll do!" I interrupted, savagely. "It's either drink or mania, and I've a pretty good suspicion which. Put him under arrest, sergeant, and let the doctor see him in the morning. Take him away!"

"Please, sir," implored Simpson, whimpering, "as sure as I stand here that there skeleton climbed up the sea-wall arm by arm an' leg by leg, all a-shinin' an' a-moanin', and he come nearer an' nearer, an' I tried to yell an' couldn't, an' I tried to challenge an' I couldn't; so, please, sir, I run for the guard-room an' the guard to——"

"That's enough!" I shouted. "You'll tell your story at orderly-room to-morrow. Under arrest at once, sergeant. Who is the next man waiting guard?"

"Private Sullivan, sir."

"All right. I'll see him myself."

Bates saluted, turned right about face, and hustled his prisoner towards the door. Private Simpson disappeared, weeping and calling on gods and men to witness that his tale was the truth and no lie, while I strode out to interview his successor.

"Are you afraid of ghosts, Sullivan?" I asked, as the burly Irishman came to attention.

"No, sorr."

"Then don't let any of Simpson's drunken imaginations make you think you are," said I, for well I knew how this sort of panic spreads from man to man. "Get to your post at once."

"Yes, sorr."

He hesitated, and I looked at him inquiringly.

"Well?" I asked, sharply.

"Will I have a round or two of ball cartridge, sorr?"

"Why, you've just told me you aren't afraid!"

"No more I am, sorr. But if anyone's tryin' any monkey-tricks around the bastion I'd like to show them it's—unhealthy, sorr."

I shook my head.

"No," said I, "your bayonet's enough to settle any ghost that ever walked. You have blank cartridge if you wish to give an alarm, and that's all you require. Get on at once."

Sullivan saluted and disappeared, while I returned in a very caustic frame of mind to the guard-room.

The far bastion stretches out into the sea below the laboratory which the Ordnance Department officials use for their experiments. It was, of course, its isolated position which made it such an admirable site. In case of any accidental explosion there was no other building near enough to be harmed. The main fort—Fort Cardew—towers over the bay at least a thousand yards away, while the guard-room and storehouse are quite as distant. There is no doubt that it is a lonely post, and as I meditated on Simpson's imbecility a glimmering recollection came into my mind of a rumour that a military execution had taken place on the spot untold years before. No doubt the felon, whoever he was, was buried where he died. I began to wonder if any of Simpson's comrades had been unnerving him with tales of unquiet spirits, and whether they had taken this tradition as a peg to hang their legends upon. I determined to make inquiry in the morning, though I was fairly well satisfied in my own mind that it was spirits of another nature that had led to the soldier's extraordinary conduct.

As I smoked and meditated I heard a step outside. Gilmore, my captain, came in. His face was alert and smiling, in spite of the fact that, like myself, he had had twelve hours upon his feet. I have seldom seen him look more pleased with himself, and to me, weary and a trifle out of temper, his blatant satisfaction seemed extremely inappropriate.

"What's the best news, then?" I grumbled, "for by your face you've heard it."

"Don't be crusty," said he; "I *am* a bit elated, I own. You ought to be delighted to see a cheerful fellow-creature in this desolate hole."

"It's just my confounded luck to be here at all," said I, for I was officer of the night a long way out of my turn. Haughton and Thring had seen fit to hire a motor-car that afternoon. With the wildest ideas on steering they had got upset within the first five miles. As a result they were in bed, bandaged and groaning, while I was doing their duty after a twelve-hour field-day. Gilmore nodded sympathetically.

"It's too bad," he agreed, "and that's why, as I was this way, I looked in to cheer you up a bit. Are you grateful?"

"Why, yes," I said, "I was getting rather tired of my own company. But what in the name of goodness is keeping *you* from between the blankets at this time of night?"

"Excitement for one thing," he answered, "satisfaction for another. The fact that I have been down to the laboratory with Sir Henry for a third."

"Good heavens!" said I, "I think every-

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body must be mad to-night. What is he doing at the laboratory at this hour?"

"He is fitting a couple of the new shells with his own electric time-fuse instead of percussions. Did you hear about the practice at the manœuvres to-day?"

"I didn't believe what I heard," I replied, "for Ferrers tried to make out you had got an effective range of 15,000 yards with the 6-inch!"

His face was glowing with happiness as he smote me on the back.

"But it's *true!*" he shouted; "it's *true*, my boy! And it's with my shells they did it—*mine!*"

"What!" I cried. "Have those experiments you've been tinkering at all the summer turned up trumps?"

"I should think they have!" he answered. "Sir Henry is nearly as excited over it as I am. There is something in the new rifling, no doubt, but the principal part is the cartridge and the shell. Professionally speaking, my fortune's made. Sir Henry says the Government are bound to take it. As far as artillery goes it's the discovery of the century!"

"What's the principle?" I asked.

He hesitated a moment.

"Well, I can't give you details exactly, but it's partly the complete combustion of the charge and partly the new amalgam of the shell-casing. It strips to the new rifling in a way that entirely alters the underspin. I believe we have added 30 per cent. to modern ranges. You should have seen the foreign attachés stare!—Pultowitz, Martinetti, and Cuignet."

"Cuignet? Who's Cuignet?" I asked.

"The Frenchman."

I grinned.

"He had prophetic visions of a Kentish battery shelling Dunkirk from the North Foreland," I chuckled. "It's what they all have been trying to get at for years—that alteration of the underspin."

"Yes!" he cried, thumping his fist upon the table, "and I've done it—I've done it! When Sir Henry has added one of his own time-fuses—well, you'll see to-morrow."

"Is Sir Henry still up at the laboratory?" I asked, suddenly.

"Yes; he wouldn't let me stay—he never will let anyone stay when he's experimenting. I'm to go back for him in half an hour."

"Then he's alone?" said I.

"Of course."

I shuffled my feet uneasily. No doubt it was entirely ridiculous, but I felt a sudden pang of misgiving. Something queer had happened at the far bastion. Suppose—only suppose—that someone was trying "monkey tricks," as Private Sullivan called them, on an old man engrossed in his work. Suddenly, and without consideration, I began to tell Gilmore the story of Private Simpson's extraordinary hallucination.

Before I finished he had jumped to his feet.

"Why on earth didn't you tell me this before?" he exclaimed.

I really couldn't see any good reason to connect Simpson's ravings with the fact that Sir Henry was alone in the laboratory, and I said so. Yet all the same that tinge of anxiety—an irrational one, I own—was growing into a feeling of alarm. But I wouldn't confess it, even to myself, and I scoffed at Gilmore.

"You didn't see Cuignet's face at the manœuvres to-day," he said, curtly, as he made for the door. "I am going back at once."

I followed him.

"I'll come so far with you," said I. "But you don't seriously think that anyone would make an attempt——"

"I shall not allow myself to think seriously at all," he answered, "till I find Sir Henry safe where I left him. But I can't help remembering that two of the most important military secrets of the century are at present guarded by one unconscious sentry and a feeble old man. It's not only a question of the new shell—there's the electric fuse also. If anyone got to know—Hang it all! the thing simply won't bear thinking of! Come along!"

I told Bates where I was going and followed Gilmore hurriedly round the corner of the storehouse. We ran. It was a dark, starless night, and it was impossible to avoid stumbling now and then, but I am certain that we took no more than four minutes to reach the first embrasure of the bastion. And at that moment Sullivan's voice rang out in challenge; but not to us.

"Who goes there?"

The sound came from above, in the direction of the laboratory walls. We could see the windows of Sir Henry's room brilliantly lit. The challenge rang out a second time—a third. There was no answer, or, at any rate, none that we could hear. We halted an instant at the foot of the stairway that leads up from the sea-wall, and as the echoes of the voice died down a red stream of flame flared across the night and the report of a rifle rang out.

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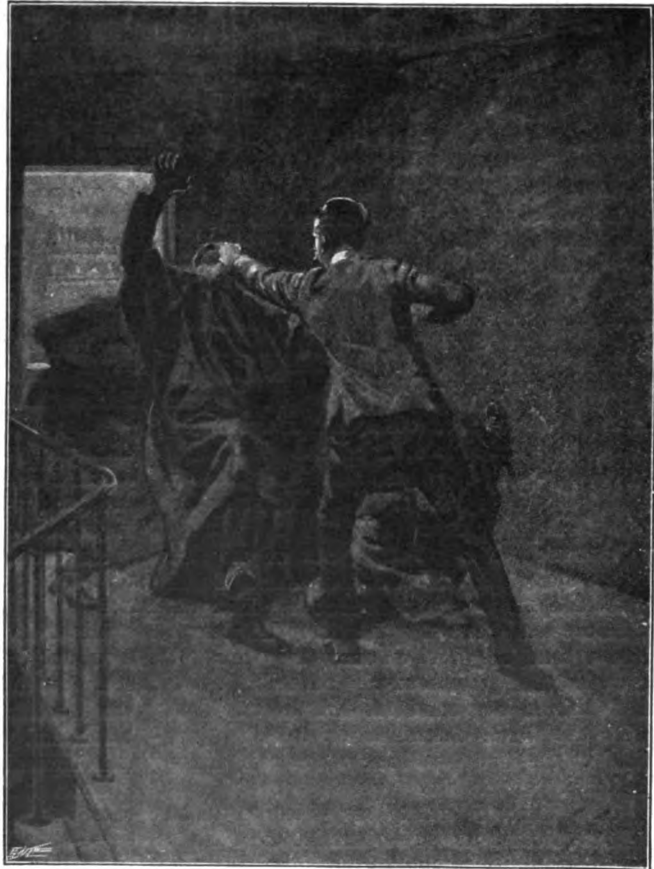
There was the sound of steps, the rattle of scattered gravel, a noise of scuffling. A string of oaths in the strongest Irish brogue ended in the agony of a shriek. A moment later a bright square of light opened out of the darkness where the laboratory door was burst open.

Outlined against the sudden gleam we saw two figures that entered. But they claimed little of our attention; for, white and wavering against the darkness, a *skeleton* stood at the stairway head and flung from him a man whose outstretched arms appealed to the empty night.

With a choking cry Gilmore raced up the steps and I followed at his heels. As suddenly as it had appeared the vision was gone, dropping, so it seemed, into the very earth!

At the stairway-head we both stumbled and half fell across Sullivan's body. He groaned and moved convulsively, and as I stretched across him to recover my over-reach my fingers plunged into a warm, sticky trickle that oozed from his side.

At his feet a dark heap of thick fabric had been dropped—a long cloak on which was accurately designed the ghastly tracing of a human being's fleshless bones! The grim device glowed as if it were afire, and it did not need Gilmore's exclamation of "Luminous paint!" to make me understand how the unfortunate Simpson had been tricked into leaving his post.



"I PUT ALL THE FORCE OF MY PENT PASSION INTO ONE LEFT-HANDER."

We gathered ourselves up and plunged through the open doorway. There was a sound of a tussle from the upper room, a thud, and a cry from Sir Henry, and then three masked and cloaked figures came rushing from the inner room. Beyond them we could see the old man stretched motionless upon the floor. We met them at the stair-top.

The leader bore a heavy weight, and at him Gilmore flung himself, snarling more like a rabid wolf than a human being, and tearing his burden from him in the first shock of his onset. The two rolled on the boards together, searching with eager hands for each other's throats.

The other two closed in. They kicked, they screeched, they hammered their fists upon Gilmore's head, his sides, his shoulders. The whole brunt of their attack was directed to recover the prize he had wrested from their leader, and I doubt if they so much as saw me. I drew their attention summarily.

I put all the force of my pent passion into one furious left-hander that struck the nearest squarely upon the temple. He fell like a poleaxed bullock. I promptly gathered the second into a close embrace, satisfied with the fact that the odds of battle were now become even again as we were but two to two, and with the knowledge that Sullivan's shot must have aroused the guard, who would

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be with us inside of five minutes. I meant to keep my man till then or know the reason why!

But after a few desperate instants I began to wonder if the task was within my powers. The fellow seemed nearly insane with terror and rage. He raved, he shrieked curses—and what a jump my pulses gave as I recognised the language, for it was French!—and he made his teeth meet like a mad dog's in my cheek and ear. He kicked like a mule, dashing his heavy boots against my shins till I could have shrieked with the agony of it.

In the sudden impulse of my pain I half lifted him and flung him back. He seemed to give way without an effort. The next second we fell as it were into emptiness as we rocked over the head of the stairs. We thundered down the steps, still locked together, and rolled out into the open, and there we wrestled hideously with teeth and fists and nails, through an interval that may have measured but seconds in mere time, but was age-long in the madness of our wrath.

A nail-studded boot crashed against my cheek. I yelled with the pain, realizing at the same moment that Gilmore and his antagonist had followed us. They were tearing, not at each other, but at the black, bulky object which each tried to make his own—the shell, as well I knew—the prize on which the whole issue of the battle hung. I heard Gilmore groan.

The strength was leaking out of me like water out of a cask, but at that sound I was goaded up to one last strenuous effort. If Gilmore was worsted while I lay helpless I knew that all our labour was vain. I dropped my grip from my adversary's ribs and shifted my hands to his throat, filled with the fierce determination to finish my half of the fight—if luck were with me—before it was too late.

And there I made my mistake. The fellow thrust aside my open hands, dashed me back, and sprang to his feet. At the same instant the third of our foes joined the fray—the fellow that I had floored rocked unsteadily through the open doorway.

A shot rang out. In the dim light I saw that Sullivan had crawled into a kneeling posture and, too weak to come to our assistance, was emptying his magazine to signal an alarm. I staggered up. There was a flash of steel before my eyes and I felt the slash that opened my arm from wrist to elbow.

And then, with an exultant cry, Gilmore's antagonist tore the shell from his grip, darted towards the stairway, and fled down into the dark shadows of the sea-wall!

His two companions sped after him, diving into the darkness like rabbits into a burrow. With a shout I pursued, but got no farther than a couple of yards. Something shot out from below me and brought me down in a heap. I saw, with stupefaction, that it was Gilmore's hand that had seized my ankle and that it was Gilmore who was pinning me to earth. I yelled and struggled in his grip, bewildered, half insane at his astounding cowardice.

"Let me go!" I raved. "Curse you, you coward, let me go!"

He hung on to me grimly; he closed his arms about me like a vice; he seemed neither to hear the savage words nor feel the blows I showered upon him.

There came a sound of hurried oars from below and the splash of men urging a boat across the calm. At the same moment Bates and a dozen others came flying down the path.

Gilmore released his grasp and jerked me to my feet. I turned upon him furiously.

"You infernal poltroon!" I shouted. "Why did you trip me?" and aimed a blow with all my strength at his face.

He made no effort to avoid it, and I, weak with my struggle and my passion, barely touched him. He stood panting, quivering, and staring into the darkness, not offering me so much attention as a look.

At that instant a blaze of light enveloped us. Up at the fort they had heard the shots, and had flashed the searchlight upon us in a brilliant wave that lit up the bastion, the laboratory, and the surrounding expanse of sea. In the middle of the glare a row-boat was speeding across the surface towards a black hull which was shadowy in the darkness beyond the circle of the light.

Bates dashed up to me, holding up his rifle.

"I've a magazine full of ball cartridge, sir," he cried. "Shall I shoot—shall I shoot?"

I didn't hesitate.

"Yes!" I roared, "shoot! And for Heaven's sake shoot straight," I added, as I heard his breech-block click.

Gilmore strode forward.

"No!" he panted, "no! Bring down your rifle!"

I turned upon him with uplifted fists and frantic with rage. I yelled to Bates to fire—I swore terrible oaths that the man was

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insane—that he had gone suddenly demented, and believed only too firmly that I swore the truth. And then Gilmore spoke.

"They are dead men already," he said, solemnly. "They have fifty seconds of life—fifty, no more! I have set the time-fuse!"

I staggered back, gasping. And then a

"'I HAVE SET THE TIME-FUSE!' HE SAID."

hush fell upon us—such a hush as falls within the prison-yard when the hangman's grip is on the lever of the drop. Our eyes were turned towards the boat that passed lonelily distinct through that pitiless glare.

I drew one deep breath. Then a monstrous pillar of red flame soared into the night, its reflection dancing crimson on the ripples of the oar-splash. The thunder of the explosion hammered against our ears, the shock of it set us lurching like drunken men. A fountain of spray, milk-white and gleaming, gushed up to fall back in a thousand cataracts of foam, while innumerable ripples spread across the centre of the whirl. A few dark splinters floated in the turmoil till the undersuck drank them down, and the thud of the first huge billow fell heavily upon the sea-wall. And then the glare shone on nothing but dwindling eddies, dying into calm.

"The skeleton?" said Private Sullivan, as I sat beside his cot in hospital next day. "Am I a child, sorr, to be frighted with their death's-head toys? I gave him three challenges as he gibbered at me from behind his painted cloak, and then I took my bayonet to him. I'd have stuck him, too, if the other black scoundrels hadn't stole up behind to knock up my rifle and shove me on to his knife. And the rest you know, sorr."

The rest, indeed, we know. And France knows, and perchance will consider herself before she probes too daringly for Britain's secrets again. And we? We have had our warning on the far bastion. Let us see to it that we need no second one.

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Making a Policeman.

By H. J. Holmes.

"ROUGH diamonds."

Very apt, indeed, that descriptive phrase, uttered by an official of New Scotland Yard when ushering the writer into the presence of the latest selection of candidates for service in the Metropolitan Police Force.

Without hesitation it may be truly asserted that there is no body of public servants chosen with such infinite care and discretion as those who come as recruits to the famous police institution on the Embankment. We, who enjoy their guardianship and not unfrequently their friendship, know how eminently satisfactory is the result.

A foreigner once remarked to the writer that "every policeman in London is a gentleman." And no one who has had occasion to consult the man in blue will feel disposed to dispute the distinction.

Undoubtedly the Metropolitan Policeman—he is worthy of the capital letter—is a living monument of civility, kindliness, and good temper.

Even the Commissioner cannot find his rough diamonds without taking considerable pains to do so, and when he finds them he will not take the trouble to pick them up for polishing purposes unless he feels certain that they will turn out well.

CHIEF-INSPECTOR ROSE, THE MAN WHO MAKES THE POLICEMAN.
From a Photo.

Who would guess that the smartly set-up, smooth-spoken, well-informed policeman, who grips a question the moment it leaves the querist's lips, and whose glib tongue rolls off a quick intelligent reply, hails, in the majority of cases, from the most countrified districts in Great Britain? He has renounced his native pastoral charms for the privilege of serving the King, clad in uniform of blue, in London's muddy or dusty streets! Yes; the great majority of London's policemen are country-bred. They are greatly preferred. There is, however, a fair sprinkling of reservists and town-bred men in the ranks.

There are many good points about the police service which attract the best class of candidates. The pay is not abnormal, to be sure; still, 25s. 6d. a week, on appointment, is not at all an unsatisfactory wage when accompanied with a good supply of comfortable clothing, and coals, or a money allowance in lieu thereof; besides, there is always the certainty, with the necessary recommendation of good conduct, of an annual increase of 1s. per week until the maximum of 33s. 6d. is reached. There is also a good prospect of promotion after some years of service to the important position of sergeant, and, higher still, inspector, with increased pay. There are few men in the service for ten years who have not enjoyed the pleasurable sensation of promotion. Constables may even, in time, reach the height of a superintendentship with a salary of £400 a year!

Another golden prospect before the young recruit is—a pension. After fifteen years' service, if unfit for further duty, a man is retired on a fair percentage of his pay, according to length of service. On the completion of the full service of twenty-six years he is entitled to retire on two-thirds of his salary. A man of approved service of more than three years and less than fifteen is granted a gratuity at the rate of one month's pay for each year of service.

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Such prospects are rare, indeed, in ordinary civilian business life in town or country. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Commissioner finds his rough diamonds.

When a young fellow finally decides to have a shot at the Metropolitan Police Force he writes to New Scotland Yard, addressing his letter to the Commissioner, Candidates' Department, asking for an official form of application.

That form will not be long in coming, for they believe in business principles at New Scotland Yard. It is a large foolscap sheet of four pages, containing, first and foremost, a form of recommendation, with a fully set out blank list in which to state the various characteristics of the candidate. He must fill this up in his own handwriting, giving his age, height, complexion, colour of eyes and hair, his trade, whether he is married or single, number of children if married, and a statement as to whether the candidate has been in any of the public services—if so, in which of them and for what length of time; finally the name and address of the candidate's last employer. All these particulars must be given plainly and truthfully, as the least discrepancy is certain to be found out by means of the wonderful network of the Yard.

The form of recommendation must also include two testimonials of character signed by at least two respectable householders, who have had personal knowledge of the candidate during the previous five years or more, and a testimonial from his last employer is also imperative. If the candidate has been in the public service he must also produce a certificate of good conduct in that service.

The man who would be a constable in the Metropolitan Police must possess the following qualifications, which are absolutely indispensable—if he doesn't possess them he might as well try to amuse himself by crawling through the eye of a needle as to cross the portal of the Candidates' Department at New Scotland Yard.

His age must not be over twenty-seven nor under twenty-one; he must stand 5ft. 9in. clear, without shoes or stockings; be able to read well, write legibly, and have a fair knowledge of spelling; be generally intelligent, according to the judgment of the officers or chief surgeon of the police, by whom he will be examined on all other qualifications; be free from any bodily complaint whatsoever, of a strong constitution, and equal to the performance of police duty; and particular as to personal cleanliness.

Tuesday is Candidates' Day at New Scotland Yard, and there, by ten o'clock, from fifty to sixty strapping young fellows assemble ready for the ordeal. They make the acquaintance for the first time of Chief-Inspector Rose, the Policeman-Maker. This veteran has been responsible for the smart turning-out of most of the constables whose beats lie in the Metropolitan area. That is the inspector's special *rôle* at Scotland Yard. Every successful candidate passes through his hands.

Chief-Inspector George Rose is the oldest man in the service. He has just completed his forty-first year of active work in the Metropolitan Police. He is a hardy Highlander—

> The chieftain of the good clan Rose,
> That firm and warlike band—

From a] MEDICAL EXAMINATION. [*Photo.*

and does not dream of retiring for years! There are very few of the younger generation of London policemen who have not received their first lessons in police duty from this worthy veteran, who is wonderfully vigorous and strong of voice in the execution of his onerous duties, for the polishing of the Commissioner's "rough diamonds" is by no means a simple task, even for one so well versed in the art of training as is the inspector.

From a] MEASURING. [Photo.

In a few words, sharp and to the point, the candidates are informed what is expected of them, and stress is laid on the proper reading and understanding of the terms and conditions upon which each constable is admitted for service, as expressed at length in the preliminary document supplied to each candidate.

The principal business of the day is the all-important medical examination, to be followed by the education tests.

On the doctor's arrival the men quickly enter a dressing-room to unrobe, issuing forth clad only in a long cloak. They enter the doctor's room in turn, and come out again in the course of five or ten minutes, mostly with broad grins upon their faces. One and all seem to be relieved because *that* portion of the day's programme is over.

Meanwhile, as the procession towards the doctor's room slowly wends its way by ten-minute gaps, the measurement of each candidate is proceeded with. Several of the men present on the day of the writer's visit were little short of 6ft. high. Only seldom is a man rejected owing to lack of inches—he has already been measured, as a rule, before undertaking the journey from his home to London, and he knows it would be useless to come if he were below the standard height.

As to weight, the standard varies according to the height of the candidate.

Next comes the examination necessary to prove the qualification of candidates as to reading and writing, etc. Thanks to our present-day educational system, it is very seldom that a man is unable to pass the tests. The three R's can always be reckoned to be among the acquaintances of the embryo policeman.

The day's proceedings decide who are accepted as candidates on probation and who are the plucked ones. If there are any of the lattter they depart whence they came, and Scotland Yard knows them no more.

From a] WEIGHING. [Photo.

The successful ones are told the good news, and are informed that for the following three weeks they will be instructed in their various duties and drilled, and, if satisfactory, they will be accepted as constables and thereafter drafted to any division to which the Commissioner may see fit to send them.

During the next three weeks the Candidates' Section House, Kennington Lane, forms their temporary home. The Section House is a comfortable building

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From a] EXAMINATION FOR READING AND WRITING. [Photo.

Chief - Inspector Rose they make excellent use of the time thus spent. The slouching gait, or ugly walk from the shoulders, disappears for ever, and makes way for the smart, soldierly style that tells the well-drilled man.

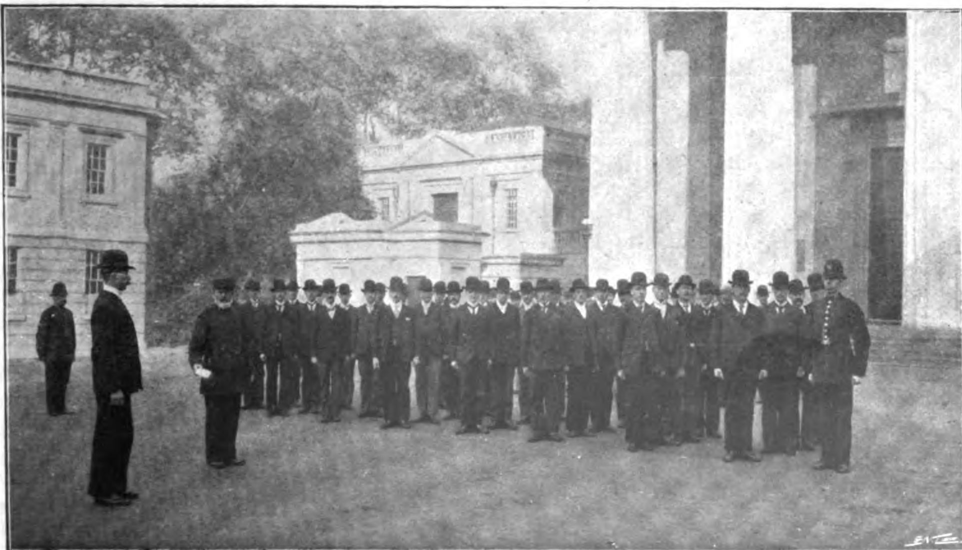
At Scotland Yard Chief - Surgeon McKellar spreads some useful knowledge amongst the coming policemen in the shape of a course of five lectures devoted to ambulance work and elementary anatomy, *pro bono publico*, as everyone must admit who has witnessed a street accident. First aid to the injured is dwelt upon at some length and, at the close of the lectures, the intelligent young fellows, who follow Surgeon McKellar's every word with interest, know enough to save life and reduce pain when occasion demands, as has been proved over and over again.

The rule which states that "all candidates must be re-vaccinated on appointment as constables" necessitates another visit of the chief surgeon or his assistants. In due time every man is nursing a punctured arm, and ready to argue that "vaccination is a bit off" when drill and active life must be maintained.

attached to the police-office, and is fitted up to accommodate eighty men with board and lodging.

While in this establishment the "candidates on approbation" are paid a weekly amount, something less than the regular pay. There are billiard and reading rooms in connection with the house, the men being made as comfortable as possible during their sojourn.

During their three weeks' probation the candidates have a pretty busy time of it. They are constantly on the move between the Section House, New Scotland Yard, and Wellington Barracks. At the former they are instructed in telegraphy; in the grounds of the latter they go through a course of hard drilling every day, and under the direction of


From a] DRILLING. [Photo.

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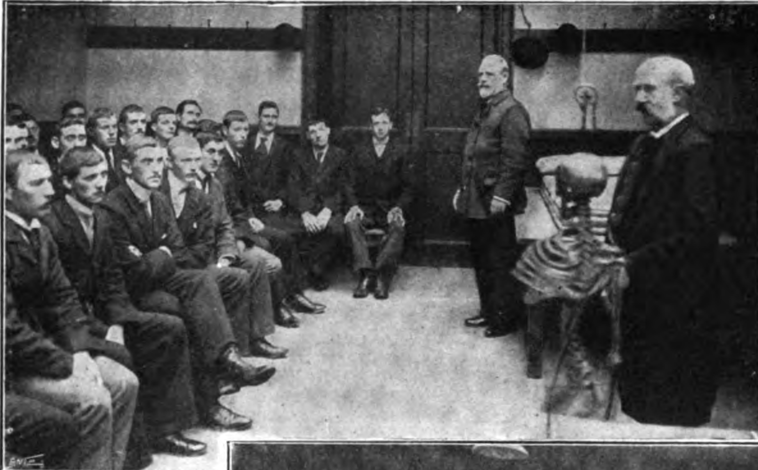
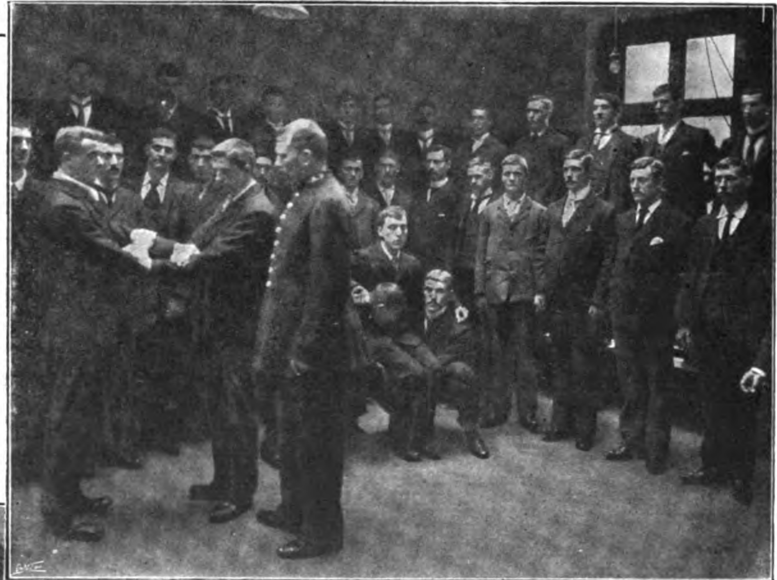


SURGICAL LECTURE—FIRST AID INSTRUCTION.
From a Photo.

the men he signifies same in the usual manner. The candidates accordingly are ordered to appear at Scotland Yard on the following Monday morning, where they are duly "affirmed" by the Commissioner or one of the Assistant Commissioners, to do their duty faithfully.



PRACTICE FIRST AID.
From a Photo.

When the end of the probation period has almost come the candidates are paraded at Wellington Barracks, and go through their drill in the presence of one of the Chief Constables. If this official is satisfied with the appearance and proficiency of

From a] FITTING CLOTHES. [*Photo.*

fully. Earlier on the same morning the candidates perform an important change in their appearance. They are solemnly marched to the Receiver's Store, where they are all provided with uniforms. These are donned previous to attending before the Commissioner for oath-taking purposes.

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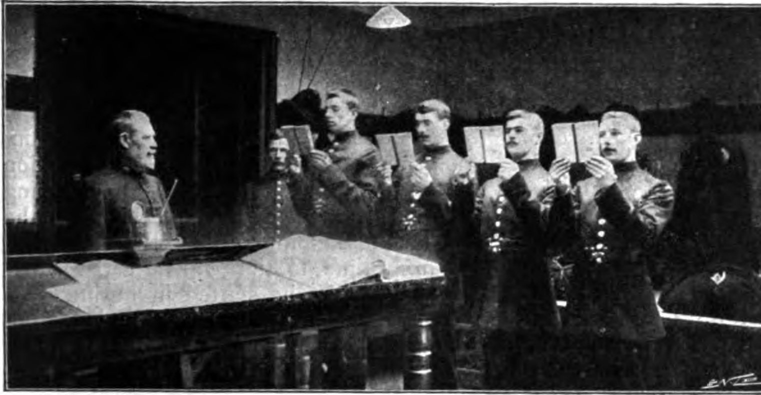

From a] TAKING THE OATH. [Photo.

Each constable makes the following "General Declaration":—

"I, John Jones" (or whatever his name may be), "being appointed a constable of the Police Force of the Metropolitan Police District, do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the office of constable, and that I will act as a constable for preserving the peace and preventing robberies and other felonies, and apprehending offenders against the peace, and in all respects to the best of my skill and knowledge discharge the duties of the said office faithfully and according to law."

When a constable is chosen for duty at or in a Royal Palace he makes an additional declaration in these terms:—

"I, ——, being a constable belonging to the Metropolitan Police Force, do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of constable within the Royal Palaces of His Majesty and ten miles thereof."

Nothing remains now for the new policeman but to be drafted off to the division arranged by the Commissioner. There he is employed on reserve-duty at the station and in attending the police-courts during the hearing of charges and summonses. He will spend fourteen days at such work so as to gain actual experience before acting alone in the streets.

He is instructed for one hour daily as to the law of arrests and general regulations of the service. Other details, such as a suitable and convenient place in which to live and the subdivision to which he may be attached, are gone into by his superintendent. And at the end of the fourteen days he goes on duty in the streets as a fully-fledged policeman.

From a] THE COMPLETE ARTICLE. [Photo.

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An Alarming Sacrifice.

By Geo. Manville Fenn.

WALK through St. Paul's Churchyard any sunny morning and most probably you will meet a knot of magnificent men. They will be either fair or dark, giants of grand physique, between thirty and forty, beards Aaronesque, clear-skinned, decidedly handsome, but of the barber's dummy waxen type, oiled, cleaned up, scented, dressed in the newest City tailor style, smiling with smug self-satisfaction as, with heads thrown back and portly presence, they swing along the wide pavement; in short, suggestive of the show-pen and ready for the judge.

What are they? Admirers of the lady butterflies attracted by the shops that border that windy place—contented Adonises of a vast modern type? Oh, dear, no! Drapers' town travellers of the great wholesale houses: the noble-looking beings who often become the set smiling shop-walkers of pushing establishments.

James Champion Fishburn was one of these gentlemen, but proving, in spite of his noble presence, a failure with his employers—in other words, not bringing in sufficiently extensive "lines" in his order-book—there was a quarrel, and the wholesale company discharged him. As J. C. F. put it, he resigned, decided to turn shop-walker at once, dropped the "James" at the beginning of his name, and, leaving the Champion, balanced it at the other end with an addition, took four small shops in the middle of a North London row, and turned them into one by knocking out doorways right and left. Then with the prophetic intention of adding the rest of the row from time to time till he had secured the whole block, he started in business for himself under the title of "Champion Fishburn and Company," in very large gilt letters.

Unfortunately, he had no capital, but he had plenty of enterprise, and he was known to the minor, pushing wholesale houses who were hungry to get rid of cheap, flashy stock.

Champion Fishburn's appearance, smile, the bend of his huge loins, and the soft, insinuating rub of his smooth white hands were sufficient guarantee for the wholesale forcers of unnecessaries upon the feminine market, and they agreed among themselves that the site chosen was right and that he would do and develop a fair business; so they supplied the capital—in goods—and filled his four-in-hand shop most generously, only taking bills at one, two, three, four, or more months as security.

Champion Fishburn and Company began business, after the dissemination of a large

"THE WHOLESALE COMPANY DISCHARGED HIM."

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supply of bills, with a shop-walker—C. F. himself—who was the admiration of the neighbourhood and a perfect Rimmel to his own premises as he paced, highly scented, from shop to shop and generally presided over the staff, three young ladies or priestesses of his gaily-decked altar.

Business came as a matter of course, for the goods ticketed in the windows were mostly attractive bargain baits, and a fairly brisk trade was carried on; but where there is no substantial capital and catch custom is secured by selling articles with the finest margin of profit, and often with none at all, it becomes—especially as drapery and haberdashery goods deteriorate rapidly from constant exhibition—exceedingly difficult to meet bills every month, and ruinous when the same have to be renewed.

It was so with the new establishment. Champion Fishburn and Company had puffing new lines of goods in the windows, stacks of empty paper boxes in the shops by way of stock, and, worst of all, fresh lines in the proprietor's forehead as he paced the establishment and kept up a smile which grew more forced and ghastly every day.

"The governor's being hit," said Miss Smith, the senior young lady. "You girls can do as you like; I mean to be on the look-out."

"It's going to be 'an alarming crash,' and no mistake," said the proprietor to himself, as with aching and swollen legs he had gone into the counting-house one afternoon to rest them upon a chair. "I can't keep it up. Wish I was back in Doctors' Commons again. Hanged if I know what to do. Might have an annual sale—at the end of the first six months! Halloa! What the deuce is the matter now? Quarrel among the girls? Row to give them an excuse to go, perhaps. Well, Miss Smith," he said, severely, as that young lady entered, "what is it?"

"Will you please come into number two, sir? We've caught one of those kleptomaniacs."

Champion Fishburn's heavy legs came down on the tapestry carpet and he rose, "swelling wisibly" as he put on his most noble aspect and followed his assistant, though no guidance was needed, hysterical sobs, cries, and even shrieks telling where the trouble had arisen.

"Shut those doors!" cried the chief, in a voice that would have been invaluable to a general, and his staff rushed to obey the command, leaving him alone with a fine-looking, showily-dressed lady sitting stiffly back on one of those particularly uncomfort able, attenuated drapers' shop chairs, wringing her gloves—on her hands—swaying herself about, and threatening to fall heavily upon the floor.

"Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh!" she cried, in a regular gamut, beginning at C below the stave and soaring up a long way towards the second octave above. "It is an insult! Horrible! I am a lady. How dare they? Oh! oh! oh! oh!"

The last "Oh's!" began above the stave and came down as if to meet the three young ladies, who, after closing and bolting the swing doors, had hurried back. "How dare they? I'll have redress."

"Miss Smith," said the proprietor, haughtily, "will you have the goodness to explain the meaning of this?"

"Yes, sir. I was serving her, sir, with lace-bordered handkerchiefs, and she said they weren't good enough and asked for gloves, and while I was getting them she slipped I don't know how many handkerchiefs in her muff."

"Oh, you wicked woman! A trick! A trap! I'll have in the police. I am a lady. I couldn't have done such a thing."

"I'm sure she did, sir," said Miss Smith, "and—there, sir, look at that!"

Miss Smith's clever, sharp fingers had made a snatch at a white corner visible inside the lady's sealskin muff, and the act drew out not only one new folded pocket-handkerchief but a portion of two more.

"Oh, disgraceful! My own handkerchief. How dare you?"

"But there are two more, madam," said Fishburn, severely, "and I perceive that the first bears our gummed-on ticket."

"Yes, sir," said the second young lady, "and these others have it, too."

"Oh!" shrieked the lady. "Then it is a trick—a trap. You wicked creatures, you must have thrust them there."

"Please, sir, I ain't sure," said the third assistant, who was very young, slow, and stupid, and drawled in her utterance, "but I was watching her, and I think she took one of the rolls of satin ribbon marked 'Slightly Soiled' out of the basket and put it under her mantle."

"What?" shrieked the lady. "How dare you?"

The plump young assistant did not say how she dared, but she showed the way, for she turned back the left fold of the wearer's stiff silk mantle and plunged in a hand, to withdraw two rolls of wide satin ribbon, one

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of which fell with a rap on the floor, unrolling as it went.

"She's got a great big pocket in there, sir," said the girl, showing her teeth.

"Hah!" said the proprietor, in his sternest way. "How fortunate that the establishment is not crowded with customers! Young ladies, bring this person to my private room. I will have her searched. Miss Smith, summon the porter to fetch the police."

"No, no, no! Oh, pray don't! Pray don't!"

"Into my room, madam," cried the proprietor, so grandly that the culprit allowed herself to be taken into custody by two of the assistants, and a procession was formed, the majestic shop-walker leading the way and the plump young lady coming last, bearing the annexed goods and enjoying what she afterwards called "the fun"—it being an agreeable change from dressing the shop-window and folding and unfolding stock.

The loud, hysterical cries had sunk into pitiful sobs and protests as the lady was taken into the principal's room, that gentleman giving his chief assistant an order or two and then discreetly withdrawing till he was summoned by Miss Smith, who said nothing till he was face to face with the moaning and sobbing woman, holding now a handsome gold-mounted scent-bottle to her nostrils.

"She had this card of silk lace, sir, in her great inside pocket and that half-dozen pairs of gloves, sir."

"Purchases — purchases, my good woman," sobbed the culprit.

"They weren't wrapped up, sir."

"No; I threw away the paper when I opened them in my carriage," sobbed the culprit, feebly.

"Is your carriage waiting outside, madam?"

"No, no, no! I dismissed my coachman, as I had an engagement in town."

"Not our marks, Miss Smith?" said the draper, as he turned over the choice goods.

"Oh, dear, no, sir," was the assistant's reply, and then to herself: "The idea! We haven't got anything so good on the premises."

"H'm! I see: a regular experienced shop-lifter."

"Oh, no, no, no, no!"

"There is no doubt about it, madam," said the draper, running his eyes over his customer's expensive apparel, and wondering how it had been obtained. "Well, I am very sorry. I dislike the publicity of these matters, but it is a case for the police."

"No, no! I beg! I pray! Mister — I don't know your name," cried the lady, frantically; "let me explain. I will pay anything. The exposure would kill me. Pray, pray send these young ladies away, and I can explain so that you will be ready to pity me."

"You confess, then, madam, that you did steal these goods?"

"Yes—*yes—yes!*" came, in company with a burst of sobs. "But the *exposé;* pray send these young ladies away and let me explain."

"Do you wish us to go, sir?" said Miss Smith, shortly.

The proprietor shrugged his shoulders and pursed up his lips.

"Well—er—yes," he said, grandly; "perhaps it would be as well. I will hear what this person has to say."

The three assistants retired unwillingly, to form a cluster in the shop and

"HAVE PITY ON ME."

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begin discussing the matter in whispers, while as soon as the door was closed upon them the prisoner started from her seat, caught one of Fishburn's hands in hers, dropped upon her knees, and flung back her head.

"Oh, no, no!" she sobbed, passionately. "Have pity on me. I am a lady, and you—great, noble-looking man—you cannot trample a weak, helpless creature in the mire."

"I am very sorry, madam," he said, unyieldingly, "but I must have in the police. I cannot—I dare not, in the interests of trade, overlook such an offence."

"Oh, no, no, no! Mercy, mercy! I am afflicted with that horrible mania. When I have a fit I know not what I am doing. It is not a case for police, but for some great physician."

"If it is, madam, I will be as merciful as in the interests of justice I can be. What is your name?"

"My name?" cried the lady, releasing the hand to which she had clung and fumbling with the handsome crocodile-skin handbag depending from her wrist till she had extracted a gold case, out of which she, with trembling fingers, withdrew a card.

"Mrs. Concannon, 14, Replica Road, Bayswater," read the draper. "And this, of course, madam, is your husband's address?"

"My husband?" cried the lady, wonderingly. "I have no husband, sir. He died ten years ago, and it was his loss that unhinged my reason. I'm afraid that I have often been guilty of taking things since then," she added, plaintively.

"This is very, very sad, madam."

"Dreadful, sir," said the culprit, piteously; "but it is my misfortune, not my fault. I am not in want of money. It is a terrible temptation that comes over me sometimes. Is it likely that I, with a clear income of two thousand a year from dividends of Consols, should want to stoop to petty theft?"

"Well—er—no, madam, it does seem unaccountable," said Fishburn, who had somehow felt a thrill of excitement run through his nerves at the sound of two thousand a year.

"It is horrible, sir, I repeat," sobbed the woman, passionately. "Mine is a case for pity, not for punishment. Pity me, then, sir," she cried, clinging to his hands again, "and let me pay for what I took."

"Impossible, ma'am," said Fishburn, firmly, and somehow he began to hold the pair of plump, soft, clinging hands rather more tightly. "But have you no friends whom I could consult with?"

"I? Friends? Oh, no; I am a wretched lonely woman. Think, too, of the disgrace."

Just then Champion Fishburn could not think of the disgrace, but only of the widow, certainly not forty, lady-like, pleasant-featured, and with two thousand a year in her own right.

Two thousand a year! What could not a man in such a business as his do with two thousand a year? In the first place he could be independent of his backers, add three or four more shops to the present, and afford a couple of male assistants. With two thousand a year he could soon be worth a hundred thousand pounds.

He was a business man, full of energy, and he had the suppliant at his feet and fully in his power. What should he do? Had not Nature endowed him with a handsome, a noble presence, which he knew must be impressing the trembling, appealing woman at his feet? She was growing more and more attractive—in fine, getting handsome by degrees, while her fortune grew beautiful in a bound.

"The ball is at my feet and I will kick it," he said to himself, making use of a most unfortunate metaphor. "Ruin is on one side, for I can never keep those bills afloat; on the other—well—not youth and beauty, but comfortable, mature age and wealth. Rise, madam," he cried, loftily, "and take this chair. I feel ashamed and grieved to see so beautiful a lady humbled and abased at my feet."

"Oh, sir!" she murmured, softly, as she yielded to the pressure of his hands and took the chair he led her to. "Then you will take pity on my weakness and forgive me?"

As she spoke she made good use of her rather fine eyes, and unconsciously changed the draper's determination.

"No, madam," he said, firmly; "not quite forgive you; but I cannot bring myself to hand over a lady of such charm and position in society to the law she has outraged."

"No, no, no; you will not do that," she murmured, with a passionately appealing look.

"No, madam," he continued, drawing himself up, and certainly looking a splendid specimen of humanity, "but I will take pity on your position."

He took her hand now between both of his.

"You have no one to protect you, no one to save you from the consequences of such acts as yours?"

"Oh, sir," she faltered, "what do you mean?"

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"To save you, if I can, from perhaps ending your days in gaol."

"Mr.—Mr.—— !"

"Fishburn, madam; Champion Fishburn. I am softened, impressed by pity for the position of a lonely, weak, but beautiful woman. Let me be your champion, madam, to the end."

"My—my champion?" she faltered. "I do not understand."

"Let me speak plainly then, madam. Let me be your husband. I am free, young—comparatively—and I will be your protector, and—and—and, under the circumstances, as good a husband as you could get."

"I—I marry again? Oh, what would poor Edward say?"

"I don't know, madam," said Fishburn, sharply; "but seeing the position in which you stand, if late husbands have plenty of common sense I should think he would say you had made a deuced good bargain."

"But I—stoop to marry a tradesman?"

"No, madam; not stoop—look up to a protector— an honest man, madam, and I'm afraid I couldn't as a British tradesman say that I was marrying an honest woman."

"True," replied the lady, sadly; "but remember, it is my misfortune, not my fault."

"I'm afraid, madam, that the law will not believe that tale. The law is very hard sometimes, as hard, I'm told, as plank beds and oakum."

"Oh, Mr. Champion, pray, pray be a gentleman."

"I'll match the article as near as I can, madam."

"But it is so sudden, sir. I never for a moment imagined——"

"No, madam, neither did I.—But two thousand a year!" he thought.—"Now, madam, I'm a man of prompt dealings. Which is it to be: my wife or — you know what?"

"Not the police?"

"Yes, madam, the police."

"Oh, sir," she faltered, "you are cruel."

"Only to be kind, madam. Yes or no?"

There was a long, deep sigh, a softening of the lady's eyes, and then a brightening, as they slowly took in the proposer's noble proportions.

"You will be kind to me?" she murmured.

"As a man can be."

"And never revert to the—er—slip which brought us together?"

"Never, on my honour as a man. Now, madam, yes or no?"

"Yes," she faltered, softly and slowly, withdrawing her right glove and displaying three or four genuine and handsome rings.

"Heigho!" she sighed, as the contract was sealed by the champion pressing his lips to the soft white hand. "Who could have thought it?"

"Who, indeed?" said Fishburn, gallantly.

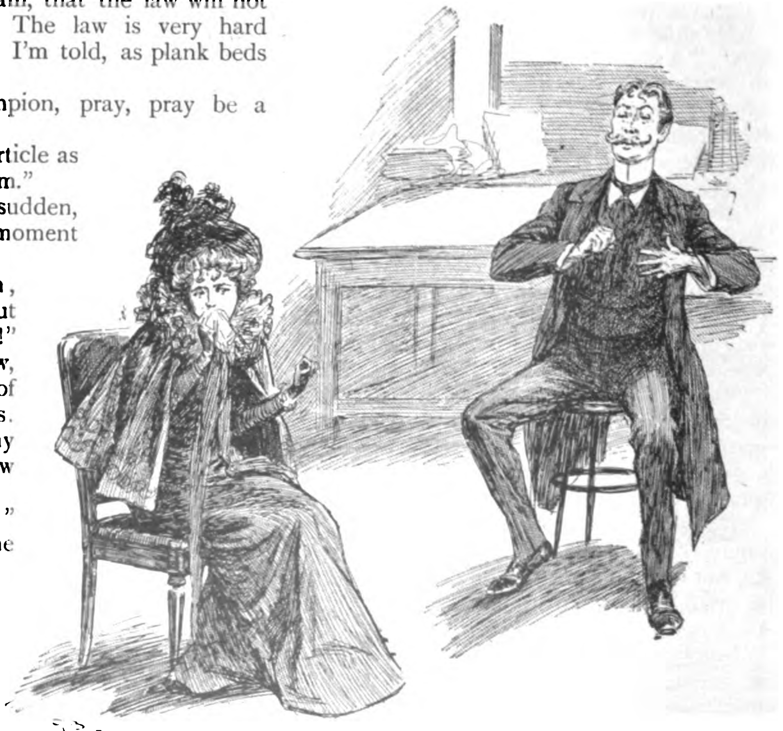
"Ah, who, indeed?" sighed the lady, looking up at the speaker in quite a satisfied way. "It is dreadfully weak of me, but you really are a very fine man."

"I am," he said, coolly. "I have been told so often."

"Ah! By ladies?"

"No, madam; by my masculine friends," he replied, with dignity.

Meanwhile the three assistants had been



"BUT IT IS SO SUDDEN, SIR."

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wonderingly waiting, and their surprise was increased by the action of their chief, who came out of his private room at last, hat in hand, paying no heed to them whatever, but ushering the kleptomaniac to the door.

"You will not mind riding in a common hansom cab?" he said, with the recollection of the dismissed carriage flashing before his eyes.

"No, not now, with you," she said, softly.

"Well!" said Miss Smith to her fellows.

"I never did," said the second.

"I say, just look," said the plump youngest, giggling, for Champion Fishburn was handing the lady into the cab and following directly, but finding a want of room for his goodly proportions as he cried aloud:—

"Bayswater!"

A short time after he helped the lady to alight at a small but charmingly-furnished house, and left her an hour later with all the preparations settled and he in the highest of spirits.

"DISMISSED."

"I don't like the look of things at all," Miss Smith had said, earlier in the evening. "I knew we were going wrong, as I said before, but this beats everything, and I shall resign."

"Then so will we," said the other two. "Let's all get somewhere together again, dears."

But Champion Fishburn and Company did not wait for the young ladies to resign, he dismissed them at once upon his return.

Then matters progressed swiftly. The shutters of the four shops remained up, with huge bills displayed outside:—

Notice.—Closed for Stocktaking.—May 24th. Be ready! Commencement of our Fourteen Days' Surplus Sale.

That bill was stuck on the very day that Champion Fishburn and Company were married by license and went down to the seaside for half a honeymoon.

It was on the morning after their arrival that Mrs. Fishburn beamed upon her lord from her side of the hotel breakfast-table and cooed forth:—

"I want us to be very happy, darling."

"Yes, love; the wish is mutual."

"Then let us be quite open one with the other. Your business—is it very prosperous?"

"Well, no, love. I am fain to confess that it is in a very bad state. It is a new concern, and wants capital."

"Dear, dear! What a pity! I am sorry."

"But it will soon recover now, dear, for you will help me with your income, and that will send it up by leaps and bounds."

"Ah, but then, you see, I have no income."

"What?" he cried, excitedly.

"Not a shilling," she said, coolly. "I have a little jewellery worth, say, a hundred pounds."

"But the house—the furniture?" he cried, aghast.

"Oh, they belong to the landlady, of course. I was only a monthly tenant."

"And the carriage?"

"What carriage?"

"*Sold!*" cried the champion, with a groan. "Oh, woman! Treacherous, deceitful woman!"

"Hush, dear! The waiter is coming into the room."

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"Curse the waiter, madam! Let him take the slightest notice and I'll be hung for murdering him."

"Don't be foolish, lovey. You've married a very nice wife who idolizes you; and as for me, I believe I have got the handsomest husband in London."

"You, then, are not a lady?"

"For shame, sir! Do I look like anything else?"

"Oh, I don't know," he groaned. "What is to be done? You penniless and I a ruined man, almost bankrupt. I say again, what is to be done?"

"Oh, we must make the best of things. You have a good shop in a good situation. Re-open as soon as you get back and work up a good sale trade. I'll help you, dear. —More sugar?"

"Bah! No!—You help me? What can you do?"

"I? Oh, I'm in the trade."

"You?"

"Yes; I was at Cooper and Swinger's five years, and I'm well up in all calico crams."

"In all *what?*" roared the deluded husband, furiously.

"Well, love, tricks of the trade. From what I know of you, Cham—no, lovey, I shall call you Sham—you're a deal too honest to get on. I can put you up to no end of nice little ways of making money in the trade. We'll have monthly sales of bankrupt stocks. *Awful sacrifices. Alarming crashes. Ruinous purchases. Failures in the City.* I know. Save no end of money in window-dressing by having the panes whitewashed and bill-covered half the time. I'll show you how to do the trick and bring the women crowding in to our sales. But you'll have to get rid of those three girls."

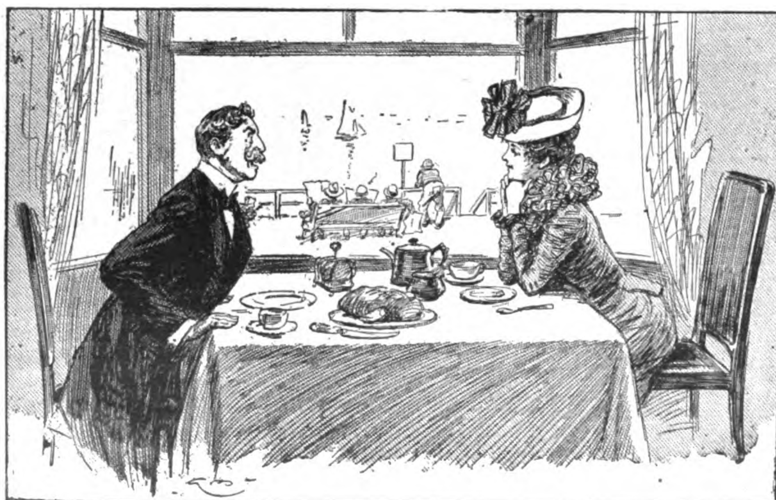
"They're gone," said Fishburn, sulkily.

"That's right. Now, look here, Sham. I prophesy that with my help you'll have the whole block of those little houses turned into Champion Fishburn and Company's Emporium."

"Never, madam! We'll separate at once. I'll have a divorce."

"No, don't, darling; have some of this grilled ham; it's delicious. You've married a very sharp wife who knows the cheap trade far better than you do, and I've married the handsomest man in London. What more could we want?"

Mr. James Champion Fishburn did not say, but he softened down as he saw that in the diamond cut diamond transaction it would be wise to make the best of it; and he did, his wife's prophecy coming true, for by degrees the whole block was absorbed, the people coming in their thousands. These all agreed in conversation that it was a terribly catchy, elevenpence-three-farthing sort of a business—but they went there all the same.



"I'M WELL UP IN ALL CALICO CRAMS."

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The Arcadian Calendar

APRIL

By E. D. Cuming
and
J. A. Shepherd.

If there be anything of human nature in the dormouse, the impulse of him who first wakes up properly for the summer must be to pull the bed-clothes off all the others ; but we may picture him rousing his friends in more dainty fashion :—

Then climbing on a toadstool high, " Wake, brothers mine ! " he said.
" The springtime is come back again, you *must* get out of bed."
He scolded long and loudly ; declared he'd call the cat.
At last he got a hare-bell and rang them up with that.

To stoop to simple fact, each dormouse considers he has done his duty to society when he has got himself out of his winter nest ; he leaves his relations alone. The short-tailed field-mouse, or field-vole, and the shrew-mouse also quit their winter quarters ; the shrew yawns, and looks round for somebody to quarrel with : the shrew appears to be always poking his long nose into other people's affairs, and if you meet two shrews together they are sure to be fighting.

The movements of animals and birds are governed by temperature and not by the dates of the calendar : wherefore the puffin, whose beak to the ribald mind always, and not without good reason, suggests a false nose, deserves honourable mention as a shining exception. The puffin prides himself on his punctuality : he arrives on the rocks or cliffs overhanging the sea, where vast colonies of his kindred

" INQUISITIVE."

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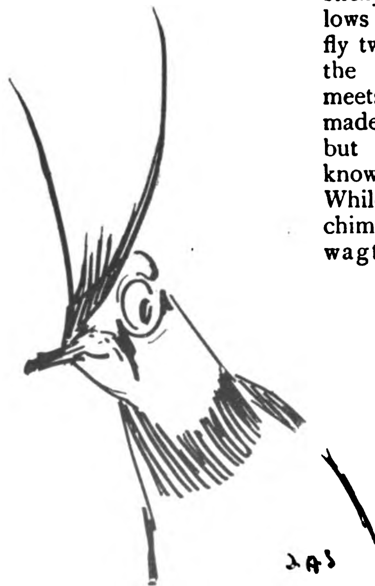
"LOAFING."

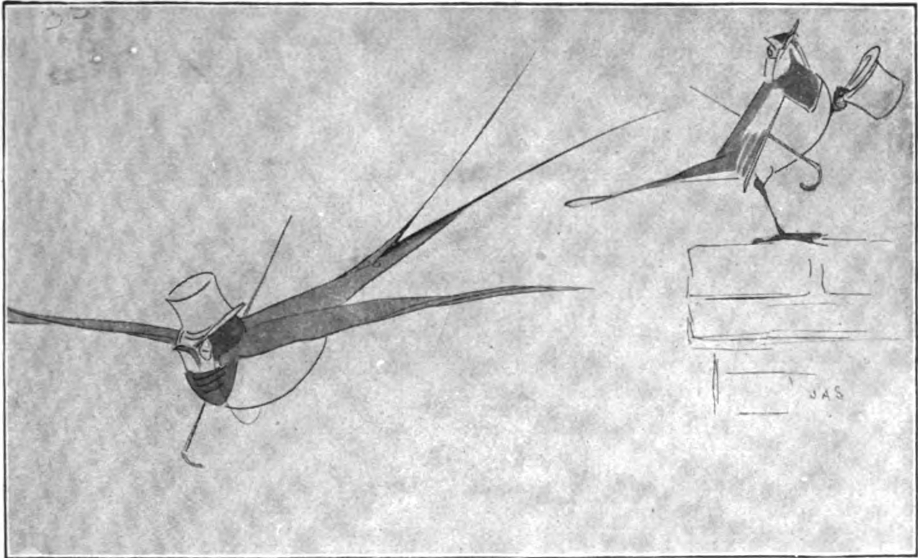
assemble to breed, almost on the same day in each year: a business-like habit which has gained the bird credit among the folks of Unst, in the Shetlands, for supernatural acquaintance with the almanac.

The cock puffin, if necessary, turns to and digs a burrow, wherein his wife shall lay her egg by-and-by; he uses his beak as a pick-axe and his feet as spades to shovel out the loose earth. Those puffins who have secured lodgings in a rabbit-hole, or have a house of their own ready made, can take life easily. These bathe, sit in rows and think, or loaf about with the waddling gait of rheumatic sailors. The guillemot takes up his quarters on the breeding-grounds—ledges of rocks—about the same time as the puffin. The lapwing, or peewit, has laid her four eggs in some saucer-like depression on fallow or waste land. She does not go to the trouble of making a proper nest; possibly she thinks it is not worth while, when half the boys in the country are seeking plovers' eggs to sell: but, as incubation proceeds, the housewifely instinct asserts itself and she decorates the premises with a few bents. The snipe, who has put together an apology for a nest in some bunch of rushes, or tussock of grass, to receive four eggs which are about nine sizes larger than so small a bird has any business to produce, periodically sets scientific societies by the ears by the practice called "bleating," or "drumming." It is the habit of the snipe, both cock and hen, particularly in the evening, to make a bleating sound while flying, and whether the bird does it with wings or tail or both, and why at all, after courting is a joy of the past, is a fruitful source of discussion.

The little wryneck, otherwise called the "cuckoo's mate," for the rather insufficient reason that, like several other birds, he arrives before the cuckoo, is come and retires unobtrusively into the shrubbery, where he runs up and down the trees like a woodpecker, collecting insects with his long, sticky tongue. The swallows are home again, and fly twittering up and down the street; the swallow meets a few acquaintances made when he was abroad, but he does not care to know them in England. While he crouched on the chimney-stack the pied-wagtail swaggered up smirking; the swallow merely glanced over his shoulder at the presumptuous bird and dived into mid-air without answering; it was a dead "cut," and left the wagtail gaping with amazement.



"WHO SAID BOYS?"



"A DEAD CUT."

The cuckoo comes back and, having announced his arrival from the seclusion of his favourite beech-tree, pauses to listen: ten to one he hears a child say, "There's the cuckoo!" and some grown-up reply, "It's too early: that was only some boy or other." He hears that sort of thing every year. He dare not show himself because the little birds mob him for a hawk: a barred breast and curved bill give the cuckoo a hawk-like look, on which it is to be feared Mrs. Cuckoo presumes; but of that anon. The cock nightingale is home again: whether the males of migratory species start before their wives, or both sexes set out together and the ladies dawdle by the way, is not known. It is preferable to believe that the husband starts first to see if the weather be sufficiently mild for his delicate spouse; but there is some reason to think that she sets off with him, and that when she gets tired he tells her that he can't wait, and comes on alone. The nightingale will not sing until his wife arrives, which is rather nice of him. When she comes he sings in the daytime for a while.

Then other song-birds come to say,
"We hate to make a fuss,
But people, if *you* sing by day,
Won't listen much to us.

"We, blackbird, linnet, thrush, and lark,
Have got to earn our bread;
Would you mind waiting till it's dark,
And sing when we're in bed?"

"A NIGHT OFF—MRS. NIGHTINGALE HAS NOT YET ARRIVED."

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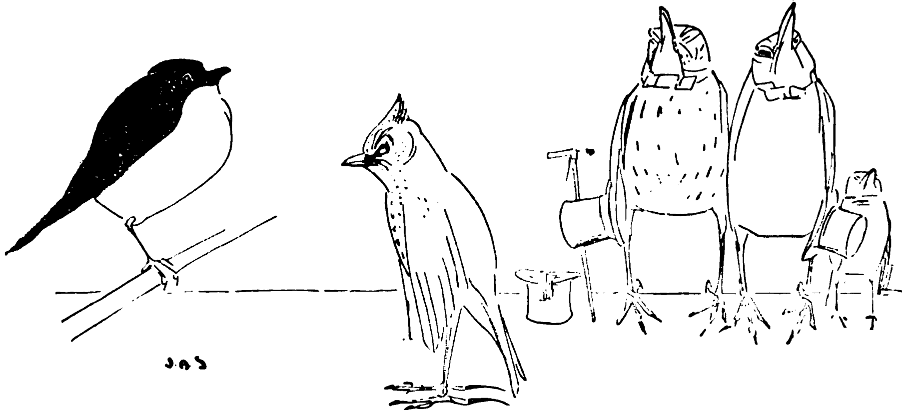

"THE NIGHTINGALE RECEIVES A DEPUTATION OF SONG-BIRDS."

The nightingale consents, and abides by the agreement loyally enough, but the other parties to the contract infringe it barefacedly. The blackcap, who comes back to us about the same time, sings all day and far into the night in warm weather. The thrush sometimes gets up at two o'clock in the morning and spoils the nightingale's finest efforts by singing at the top of his voice; and the sedge-warbler sings at night, too.

There is plenty of music now; the robins, who are cousins of the nightingale, are as unprofessional in musical matters as their general behaviour might lead us to expect. Two cocks begin singing at one another and, gradually losing their heads from excitement, forget the elementary rules of vocalization and fairly scream; when too hoarse to go on, they stop and fight. Those goldfinches who have been abroad for the winter are back again to compare notes with their home-staying brethren on the relative merits of climate, and to sing. The lively white-throat is returned, but apparently has not recovered the fatigues of the journey from Southern regions, for he does not contribute much to the musical festivities just yet. The bullfinch is singing in an amateurish way: he stays with us throughout the year, perhaps that he may be on the spot as soon as the buds begin to show, for he cherishes the conviction that buds are made for bullfinches: this is a prolific source of misunderstanding between himself and the gardener. His natural song is not remarkable: but he is an industrious pupil and can learn almost anything. The chaffinches have finished their nest by the middle of the month. Convinced that every eye is on them with fell designs, they choose a bough overgrown with lichen and make their neat house to match its surroundings so exactly that it is really difficult to see even when you are looking at it. The bird knows this and sits till you almost have your hand on her.

"THE JOHN BULLFINCH INTERESTED IN FRUIT CULTURE."

The magpies are devoting themselves to family matters. The magpie, being a thief, assumes that all creatures are thieves, and builds for his habitation a solidly-constructed, domed mansion, with mud foundation, sticks—thorny for choice—lath and plaster, and a final furnishing of grass and sundries. The nearer the ground he builds the more particular the magpie to choose thorny sticks for his house. It is a precaution much needed, for he has more enemies than friends. His relative, the jay, builds about

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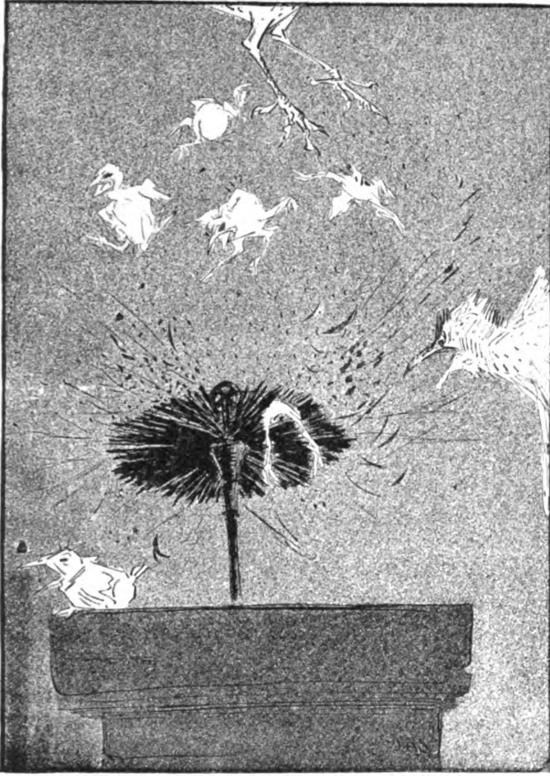

"THE STARLING FAMILY SURPRISED."

the same time. The jay does not fortify his cup-shaped dwelling; he trusts to his talent for aouse to drive away trespassers. The starling is busy, too; a hole in a tree commends itself as a house; but pure mischief often induces him to block up a chimney with his nest. He enjoys himself immensely when a fire is lighted — until the sweep comes—stalking round the rim of the chimney-pot, and drinking in with delight every word that comes up from below. In the rookery wives are sitting on eggs or tending young ones, and husbands are flying to and fro bringing grubs and things. The lady rooks are restless. When a cock rook alights his wife scrambles off her eggs, clamouring for news; he has brought none: never listens to gossip: and orders her back to her nest before the eggs get cold, enforcing commands with his beak if need be. No wonder the voices from the rookery have a mournful ring:—

It's very hard: the season is beginning,
The joy of others knows not cloud nor flaw;
But we, our faith to ancient maxims pinning,
Tied to these tree-tops only sit and caw,
It's very ha-a-a-ard.

It's very hard: we have to sit here thinking
Because to hatch in April is our law;
While other birds are flirting, shopping, prinking,
Rook mothers sadly sit at home and caw,
It's very ha-a-a-ard.

The carrion crows make a speciality of robbing pheasant, partridge, and grouse nests, and the gamekeeper is by consequence their mortal foe. Nevertheless, these abandoned thieves are as casual in their domestic

"THE LADY ROOKS' LAMENT."

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"CONNECTED WITH THE CHURCH."

arrangements as though they were recognised benefactors of the community. You may see the comparatively tidy nest half a mile away, and when you reach the foot of the tree you often find it as easy to climb as the stairs. The jackdaw will never win a prize in a "tidy house" competition, but she does what none of her relations take the trouble to do—pulls the wool nest-lining over her eggs to hide them before she goes out. Between the jackdaw and the barn owl, who also likes the belfry as a nursery, there seems to be a tolerably good understanding so long as the latter does not come out by day. The owl does not even pretend to make a nest: she puts her round, white eggs on the bare masonry and sits on them with an air of profound sagacity tempered by somnolence. The fieldfare, who lingers until all or nearly all the northward-bound birds have gone, now tears himself away; like his cousin, the missel-thrush, he seems to enjoy bad weather, for the more backward the spring the longer he stays with us.

The nuthatches are finishing off their house by this time. Shrewd, practical common sense distinguishes this bird. When nuthatches find a hole in a bough which won't do because the door is too wide they don't stand over it saying, "What a pity!" They measure the entrance with a mason's eye, decide that the defect can be remedied, and forthwith build up the doorway with clay and stones to the right size.

The hare is tending her children in the form, over which she has pulled the tall grass for the sake of concealment. Generally she has one child, sometimes two or three, but seldom more: she is a careful, attentive mother and loses a great deal of her timidity when nursing her babies. How much interest the father takes in his family is doubtful: he is sometimes to be seen about the neighbourhood of the form, so we may conclude that he calls to see them occasionally. The hare is a steadier character than he used to be: five hundred years ago this fickle creature was male one month and female the next by turns, and until quite recently was in league with witches—so the old authorities say. The wildest hare is remarkable for his respectful manners: whistle to him and he instantly stops and stands up on his hind legs at "attention" to know what you want. The dormouse and harvest mouse are absorbed in family cares very soon

"A REFORMED CHARACTER."

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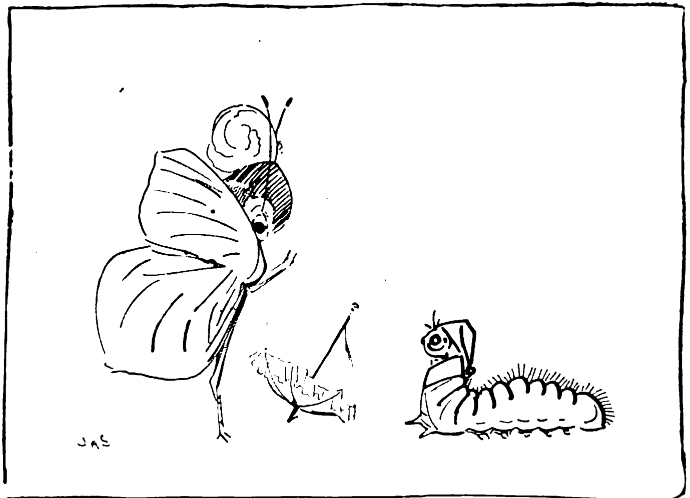
"THE CREW OF THE 'NANCY' BRIG."

after getting up; the nest of the harvest mouse is a beautiful little ball of moss and grass woven together and fastened to stems a foot or more above the ground. These mice are very careful parents, always shutting the door when they go abroad, lest the children should tumble out.

The marten, biggest of the weasel tribe, comes down from the rocky hill-sides where he has passed the winter, and takes up his residence in some quiet wooded valley. If he can find a magpie's old nest or a squirrel's deserted drey he takes that for the season, and here his wife brings up her family.

The frog's children have been out of the egg a week, and are fully developed tadpoles. Tadpoles have either a passion for uniformity or they are madly jealous; any member of the shoal who betrays a tendency to rise to Higher Things in the shape of froghood is punished with death the moment budding limbs and shortening tail betray his craving after progress: for Nature, who here exchanges the extravagant for the parsimonious, requires the tadpole to use up the tail he won't want as a frog and convert the tissue into legs. If you see one tadpole in the pond you need not sympathize with his loneliness: he is "the crew of the *Nancy* brig" (you remember the Bab Ballad which was "too cannibalistic" for *Punch*), who, having borne his part in devouring his friends, survives by virtue of the discretion, or luck, which delayed his development towards froghood. The small white butterfly—who is one of those that pass the winter in the chrysalis state—emerges in all the transient glory of wings to enjoy herself for a time. As the sun grows warmer she becomes grave and thoughtful, mindful of her mortality: under these circumstances she lays her eggs, the butterfly equivalent for making a will; and having stuck ten or twelve dozen on the underside of a cabbage leaf recovers her spirits and flits away gaily—to die. A butterfly never makes acquaintance with her own children; she has gone the way of all butterflies before the eggs give up their caterpillars: what she would say if, in defiance of natural law, she lived to be accosted as "Mamma!" by a caterpillar is for Mr. Shepherd to conjecture.

The earliest dragon-flies enter upon their perfect state in April. Till now they have dwelt under water as nymphs, which in youth resemble spiders and in the fulness of time take upon them the more plethoric aspect of beetles. Every nymph feels eventually a craving to better himself. It comes



"MAMMA!"

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on him in the spring, and he begins by climbing up a rush or reed to reach the air; then he holds on tight and wonders what is going to happen. What does happen is that the dragon-fly, who has been developing inside the nymph, bursts out through the back of his former horny body—first his head, then the fore part of him (the thorax), then the half-formed wings, then the legs. Having got his legs clear he takes a firm foothold upon the dead self which is still clinging to the rush and draws out his long body. This done, he sits still for half an hour or so to grow his wings properly. Then he takes a well-earned rest, and flies away thinking how favourably dragon-flyhood compares with the lot of a nymph. This transformation is one of the most wonderful things in Nature. The amorous little beetle, whose code of private signals to his love has earned him the name of the Death Watch, begins ticking behind the wainscot. There is a sameness about his conversation; but which of us, even if conversant with the Morse code, could convey intelligible messages to his nearest and dearest by bumping the floor with his head? The extraordinary thing is the patience of the insect who thus painfully bumps all night.

The house-martin is come; and having satisfied himself that the mud nest under the eaves is still standing and has not been misappropriated by sparrows, he skims away to call on the swallow as head of the family. The swallow, as senior, always wears a long-tailed dress-coat; while the house-martin wears a short Eton jacket, showing a good deal of white shirt below it. Do these regular summer visitors ever compare notes with the rare birds who would come and breed in England if only they were allowed to enjoy peace—the hoopoe and golden oriole, for instance? Can't you imagine this sort of interview on the African coast of the Mediterranean some fine April evening?

"You ought to come," the martin urged, "and also bring your wife.
They'd welcome you with paragraphs, the *Field* and *Country Life*."
"They would," the hoopoe drily said, "and every mother's son
Who's given up his catapult would go and get his gun.
"Protection Acts invite us in? Of that I have no doubt.
But tell me: what's the betting on our ever getting out?
If we could visit you *incog.* we'd dearly like to go.
When I devise a safe disguise I'll write and let you know."

The hoopoe would be rather puzzled to disguise himself; what is he to do with that crest, like a cocked-hat? He comes occasionally and takes his chance; it is a poor one if anybody with a gun handy sees him. The ring-ouzel, who looks like a blackbird in a white waistcoat, is back now and loses little time in pushing on to the quiet mountain streams. The ring-ouzel likes to be thought shy and retiring; but he does not hesitate to come and raid the fruit garden. The red-start has arrived; he might escape notice but for the play he makes with that bright chestnut tail of his; he is proud of it, and is continually flirting it like a fan. The yellow-hammers are engaged in a loving dispute as to which of them shall sit to-day; husband and wife take turns at hatching the eggs, which, by the way, are covered with straggly lines, as if the cock-

"HA, HA! DO YOU THINK THEY'LL KNOW ME NOW?"

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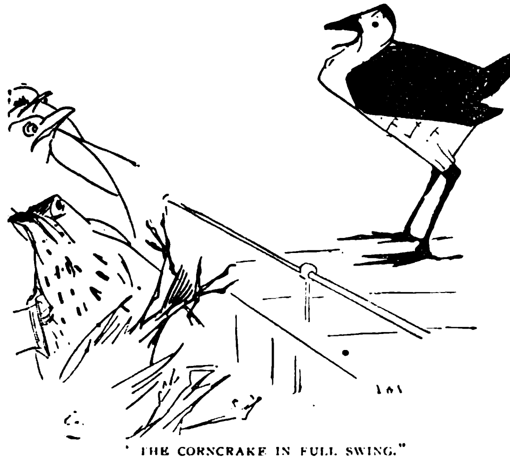
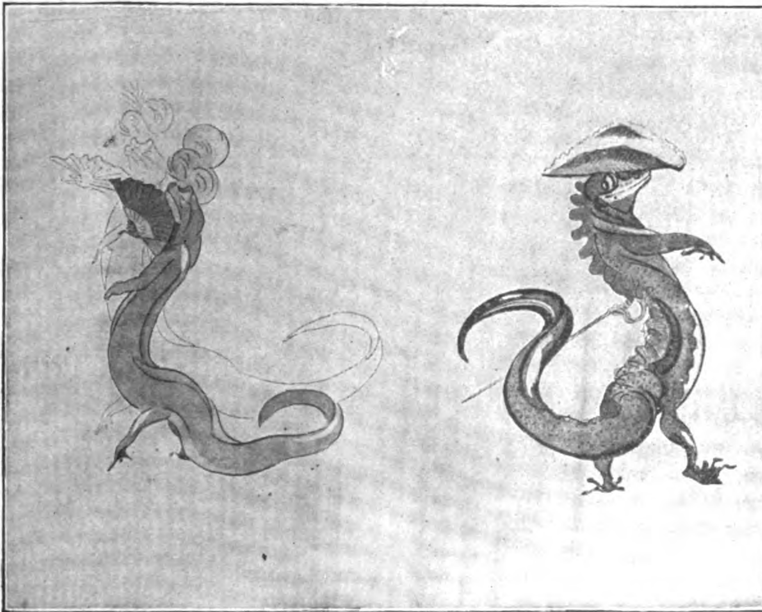
bird had been whiling away the time by writing his name on them with his eyes shut. They call the yellow-hammer the "writing lark" in some parts of the country. The corncrake, who comes home towards the end of this month, is roused to envy by the chorus of song all round him, and uplifts his voice; in compass, quality, and tone it resembles such chords as you can wind out of a rusty fishing-reel, but the corncrake has no ear for music, and you may hear him all day and all night in the long grass. For some reason he cannot bear to show himself, and you may live in the midst of creaking the summer long and never see the handsome chestnut bird himself.



"THE CORNCRAKE IN FULL SWING."

The lizard has been out of bed for two or three weeks now, and grows quite lively as the sun gains strength. Lizards do not even give marriage a chance of proving a failure, the parties always separating at the church door, if one may use the expression: and yet the open-handed nature of the reptile suggests amiable qualities. We all know the man who would give away his head if asked for it; the lizard doesn't go quite so far as that, but he will give away his tail without hesitation. You lay hold of it: he looks round, gives the tail a gentle wriggle, sees that you really are anxious to have it, and with more than Mexican courtesy surrenders it at once. Then he runs away cheerfully to grow another. The ugly little newt is beginning to assert himself; at this season he grows a saw-like crest all along his back for a sign or token that he contemplates matrimony, and goes around smacking his tail with the air of a gallant, while the Miss Newts take refuge in an assumption of profound indifference.



"UGLY, BUT GALLANT."

(To be continued.)

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The House Under the Sea.

By Max Pemberton.

CHAPTER XVI.

ROSAMUNDA AND THE IRON DOORS.

WE had no notion that the doctor had come by any serious hurt, and when he fell in a dead faint we stood as men struck by an unseen hand. Light we still had, for the rolling lantern continued to burn; but the wits of us, save the wits of one, were completely gone, and three sillier fellows never gaped about an ailing man. Dolly Venn alone — trained ashore to aid the wounded—kept his head through the trouble and made use of his learning. The half of a minute was not to be counted before he had bared an ugly wound and showed us, not only a sucker still adhering to the crimson flesh, but a great, gaping cut which the doctor's own knife had made when he severed the fish's tentacle.

"You, Seth Barker, hold up that lantern," says he to the carpenter, as bold as brass and as ready as a crack physician at a guinea a peep: "give me some linen, one of you—and please be quick about it. I'll trouble you for a knife, Mister Peter, and a slice of your shirt, if you don't mind!"

"'IT'S ONLY A CUT,' SAID HE."

Now, he had only to say this and I do believe that all four of us began to tear up our linen and to reduce ourselves to the state of Adam when they discharged him from Eden; but Peter Bligh, he was first with it, and he had out his clasp-knife and cut a length of his Belfast shirt before you could say "Jack Robinson."

"'Tis unlikely that I'll match it in these parts, and I've worn it to my mother's memory," says he while he did it; "but 'tis yours, Dolly, lad, and welcome. And what now?" asks he.

"Be quiet, Mister Peter," says Dolly, sharply; "that's what's next. Be quiet and nurse the doctor's leg, and do please keep that lantern steady."

Well, big men as we were, we kept quiet for the asking, as ignorance always will when skill is at the helm. Very prettily, I must say, and very neatly did Dolly begin to bind the wound, and to cut the suckers from their hold. The rest of us stood about and looked on and made believe we were very useful. It was an odd thing to tell ourselves that a man who had been hale and hearty five minutes before might now be going out on the floor of that hovel. I knew little of Duncan Gray, but what little I did know I liked beyond the ordinary; and every time that Dolly took a twist on his bandage or fingered the wound with the tenderness of a woman, I said, "Well done, lad, well done; we'll save him yet." And this the boy himself believed.

"It's only a cut," said he, "and, if there's no poison, he'll be well enough in a week. But he won't be able to stand, that's certain."

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Voices we had heard, human voices above us, when first we entered the cellar; and now, when a warning was uttered, we stood dumb for some minutes and heard them again.

"Douse the glim — douse it," cries Peter, in a big whisper; "they're coming down, or I'm a Dutchman!"

He turned the lantern and blew it out as he spoke. The rest of us crouched down and held our breath. For ten seconds, perhaps, we heard the deep, rough voices of men in the rooms above us. Then the trap-door opened suddenly, and a beam of light fell upon the pavement not five yards from where we stood. At the same moment a shaggy head peered through the aperture, and a man cast a quick glance downward to the cellar.

"No," said the man, as though speaking to someone behind him, "it's been took, as I told you."

To which the other voice answered:—

"Well, more blarmed fool you for not corking good rum when you see it!"

They closed the trap upon the words, and we breathed once more. The lesson they had taught us could not be forgotten. We were sobered men when we lighted the lantern with one of Seth Barker's matches and turned it again on the doctor's face.

"In whispers, if you please," said I, "and as few as you like. We are in a tight place, my lads, and talk won't get us out of it. It's the doctor first and ourselves afterwards, remember."

Dr. Gray, truly, was a little better by this time, and sitting up like a dazed man he looked first at Dolly Venn and then at his foot, and last of all at the strange place in which he lay.

"Why, yes," he exclaimed, at last, "I remember; a cut and a fool who walked on it. It serves me right, and the end is better than the beginning."

"The lad did it," said I; "he was always a wonder with linen and the scissors, was Dolly Venn."

"To say nothing of a square foot of my shirt," put in Peter Bligh, obstinately. "'Tis worth while getting a bit of a cut, doctor, just to see Dolly Venn sew it up again."

The doctor laughed with us, for he knew a seaman's manner and the light talk which follows even the gravest mishap aboard a ship. That our men meant well toward him he could not doubt; and his next duty was to tell us as much.

"You are good fellows," said he, "and I'm much obliged to you, Master Dolly. If you will put your hand inside my coat you will find a brandy-flask there, and I'll drink your health. Don't worry your heads about me, but think of yourselves. One of you, remember, must go and see Czerny now; I think it had better be you, captain."

I said yes, I would go willingly; and added, "when the right time comes." The time was not yet, I knew—when men walked above our heads and were waking. But when it came I would not hold back for my shipmates' sake.

We had a few biscuits among us, which prudent men had put in their pockets after last night's meal; and, my own flask being full of water, we sat down in the darkness of the cellar and made such a meal as we could. Minute by minute now it became more plain to me that I must do as Duncan Gray said, and go up to find Czerny himself. Food we had none, save the few biscuits in our hands; salt was the water in the crimson pool behind us. Beyond that were the caverns and the fog. It was just all or nothing; the plain challenge to the master of this place, "Give us shelter and food," or the sleep which knows no waking.

We passed the afternoon sleeping and dozing, as tired men might. Voices we heard from time to time; the moan of the sea was always with us—a strange, wild song, long-drawn and rolling, as though the water played above our very heads in the gentle sport of a Pacific calm. At a dwelling more remarkable than the one we were about to enter no man has knocked or will knock in all the years to come. We were like human animals which burrow in a rocky bank a mile from any land. There were mysteries and wonders above, I made sure.

Now, I left my comrades at ten o'clock that night, when all sounds had died away above and the voice of the sea growing angrier told me that my steps would not be heard.

"I shall go to Czerny, lads," said I, at the moment of leaving them, "and he will hear the story. I'll do my best for good shipmates, trust me; and if I do not come back—well, you'll know that I cannot. Good night, old comrades. We've sailed many a sea together and we'll sail many another yet, God willing."

They all cried "Aye, aye, sir!" and pressed my hand with that affection I knew they bore me. I mounted the ladder and raised the trap.

I was in Edmond Czerny's house, and I was alone.

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Now, I had opened the trap, half believing I might find myself in some room, perhaps in the kitchen of the house. Men would be there, I said, and Czerny's watch-dogs ready with their questions. But this was not a true picture; and while there were arc lamps everywhere, the place was not a room at all, but a circular cavern, with rude apertures in the wall, and curtains hung across in lieu of doors. This was not a little perplexing, as you will see; and my path was not made more straight when I heard voices in some room near by, but could not locate them nor tell which of the doors to avoid.

For a long time I stood, uncertain how to act. In the end, I put my head round the first curtain, at a venture, and drew it back as quickly. There were men in that place, half-naked men, grouped about the door of a furnace whose red light flashed dazzlingly upon walls and ceiling and gave its tenants the aspect of crimson demons. What the furnace meant or why it was built, I was soon to learn; for presently one of the men gave an order, and upon this an engine started, and a whirr of fans and the sucking of a distant pump answered to the signal. "Air," said I to myself; "they are pumping air from above."

"THERE WERE MEN GROUPED ABOUT THE DOOR OF A FURNACE."

The men had not seen me, so quick was I, and so soft with the leather curtain; and going tip-toe across the cave I stumbled at hazard upon a door I had not observed before. It was nothing more than a big and jagged opening in the rock, but it showed me a flight of stairs beyond it, and twinkling lamps beyond that again. This, I said, must surely be the road to the sea, for the stairs led upward, and Czerny, as common sense put it, would occupy the higher rooms. So I did not hesitate any more about it, but treading the stairway with a cat's foot I went straight on, and presently struck so fine a corridor that at any other time I might well have spent an hour in wonder. Lamps were here—scores of them, in wrought-iron chandeliers. Doors you saw with almost every step you took — aye, and more than doors —for there were figures in the light and shadow; men passing to and fro; glimpses of open rooms and tables spread for cards, and bottles by them; and wild men of all countries, some sleeping, some quarrelling, some singing, some busy in kitchen and workshop. By here and there, these men met me in the corridor, and I drew back into the dark places and let them go by. They did not remark my presence, or if they did, made nothing of it. After all, I was a seaman, dressed as other seamen were. Why should they notice me when there were a hundred such in Czerny's house? I began to see that a man might go with less risk because of their numbers than if they had been but a handful.

"I shall find Czerny, after all," said I to myself, "and have it out with him. When he has spoken it will be time enough to ask, what next?"

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It was a little consoling to say this, and I went on with more confidence. Passing down the whole length of the corridor I reached a pair of iron doors at last and found them fast shut and bolted against me. There was no branch road that I could make out, nor any indication of the way in which I must open the doors. A man cannot walk through sheer iron for the asking, nor blow it open with a wish; and there I stood in the passage like a messenger who has struck upon an empty house but is not willing to leave it. See Czerny that night I must, even if it came to declaring myself to the rogues who occupied the rooms near by, and whose voices I could still hear. I had no mind to knock at the door; and, truth to tell, such a thing never came into my head, so full it was of other schemes. Indeed, I was just telling myself that it was neck or nothing, when what should happen but that the great iron door swung open, and the little French girl, Rosamunda, herself stepped out. Staggered at the sight of me, as well she might be (for the electric lamp will hide no face), she just piped one pretty little cry and then fell to saying:—

"Oh, Captain Begg, Captain Begg, what do you want in this house?"

"My dear," says I, speaking to her with a seaman's liberty, "I want a good many things, as most sailors do in this world. What's behind that door, now, and where may you have come from? Tell me as much, and you'll be doing me a bigger kindness than you think."

She didn't reply to this at once, but asked a question, as little girls will when they are thinking of somebody.

"Where are the others?" cried she; "why do you come alone? Where is the little one, Mister—Mister——"

"Dolly Venn," said I; "ah, that's the boy! Well, he's all right, my dear, and if he'd have known that we were meeting, he'd have sent his love. You'll find him down yonder, in the cellar beyond the engine-house. Show me the way to Mister Czerny's door, and we'll soon have him out of there. He's come a long way, and it's all for the pleasure of seeing you—of course it is."

The talk pleased her, but giving her no time to think about it, I went on: "Mister Czerny, now, he would be living by here, I suppose?"

She said, "Yes, yes." His rooms were through the great hall which lay beyond the doors; but she looked so startled at the idea of my going there, and she listened so plainly for the sound of any voices, that I read up her apprehensions at a glance and saw that she did not wish me to go on because she was afraid.

"Where is your old friend, the Frenchman?" I asked her on an impulse; "what part of this queer house does he sling his hammock in?"

She changed colour at this, and plainly showed her trouble.

"Oh, Mister Begg," says she, "Clair-de-Lune has been punished for helping you on Ken's Island. He is not allowed to leave his room now. Mister Czerny is very angry, and will not see him. How can you think of coming here—oh, how can you do it?"

"It's easy enough," said I, lightly, "if you don't miss the turning and go straight on. Never fear for me, young lady; I shall pull through all right; and when I do, your friend goes with me, be sure of it. I won't forget old Clair-de-Lune, not I! Now, just show me the road to the governor's door, and then run away and tell Dolly Venn. He'll be precious glad to see you, as true as fate."

Well, she stood for a little while, hesitating about it, and then she said, as though she had just remembered it:—

"Benno Regnarte is the guard, but he has gone away to have his supper. I borrowed the key and came through. If you go in, he will not question you. The governor may be on his yacht, or he may be in his room. I do not know. How foolish it all is—how foolish, Captain Begg! They may never let you go away again!"

"Being so fond of my company," cried I, gaily. "Well, we'll see about it, my dear. Just you run off to Dolly Venn and leave me to do the rest. Sailors get out where other people stick, you know. We'll have a try, for the luck's sake."

I held her little hand in mine for a minute and gave it a hearty squeeze. She was the picture of prettiness in a print gown and a big Spanish shawl wrapped about her baby face. That she was truly alarmed, and rightly so, I knew well; but what could I do? It was Czerny or the pit. I chose Czerny.

Now, she had opened the iron door for me to pass by, and without another word to her I crossed the threshold and stood in Czerny's very dwelling-house. Thereafter, I was in a vast hall, in a beautiful place for all the world like a temple; with a gallery running round about it, and lamps swinging from the gallery, and an organ built high up

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"SHE HAD OPENED THE IRON DOOR FOR ME TO PASS BY."

in a niche above the far end, and doors of teak giving off all round, and a great oak fire-place such as you see in English houses; and all round the dome of this wonderful room great brass-bound windows, upon which the sea thundered and the foam sprayed. Softly lighted, carpeted with mats of rare straw, furnished as any mansion of the rich, it seemed to me, I do confess, a very wonder of the earth that such a place should lie beneath the breakers of the Pacific Ocean. And yet there it was before my eyes, and I could hear the sea-song high above me, and the lamps shone upon my face; and, as though to tell me truly that here my journey ended, whom should I espy at the door of one of the rooms but little Ruth Bellenden herself, the woman I had crossed the world to serve!

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH JASPER BEGG ENTERS THE HOUSE UNDER THE SEA.

I DREW back into a patch of shadow and waited for her to come up to me. Others might be with her and the moment inopportune for our encounter. She walked with slow steps. Care had written its story upon her sweet face. I saw that she was alone, and I put out my hand and touched her upon the arm.

"Miss Ruth," said I, so soft that I wonder she heard me—"Miss Ruth, it's Jasper Begg. Don't you know me?"

She turned swiftly, but did not cry out. One wild look she cast about the hall, with one swift glance she made sure of every door, and then, and only then, she answered me.

"Jasper, Jasper! Is it really Jasper Begg?" she cried, while her look of joy and gratitude I never shall forget.

Now, she had asked a woman's natural question; but I shall always say that there never were wits quicker than Ruth Bellenden's; and hardly were the useless words out of her mouth than she drew back to the room she had left; and when I had entered it after her she closed the door and listened a little while for any sounds. When none came to trouble her she advanced a step, and so we two stood face to face at last, in as pretty a place as all London, or all Europe for that matter, could show you.

Let me try to picture that scene for you as it comes to me when I write of it and seek to bring it back to my memory. A trim, well-kept cabin, such I call her room—a boudoir the French would name it—all hung round with pale rose silk, and above that again an artist's pictures upon a wall of cream. Little tables stood everywhere and women's knick-knacks upon them; there were deep chairs which invited you to sit, covered in silks and satins, and cushioned so that a big man might be afraid of them.

Upon the mantelshelf a clock from Paris swung a jewelled pendulum, and candlesticks matched it on either side. A secretaire, littered over with papers and bright with silver ornaments, had its back to the seaward wall; a round window, cut in the rock above it, stood hidden by curtains of the richest brocade. The carpet, I saw, was from Turkey; the mats from Persia. In the grate a wood-fire glowed warmingly. Ruth Bellenden herself, the mistress of the room, capped the whole, and she was gowned in white, with rubies and diamonds strung about her stately neck, and all that air of proud command I had admired so much in the days bygone. Aye, such a scene, believe me, as a grand London drawing-room might show you any

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night of London's months you care to name, and yet so different from that. And I, a plain sailor, found myself thrust forward there to my confusion, yet feeling, despite it all, that the woman I spoke to was woman at heart, as I was man. A few days ago I had come to her to say, "You have need of me." To-night it was her lot to answer me with my own words.

"Jasper," she said, her hand still on the switch of the lamp, "what miracle brings you to this place?"

"No miracle, Miss Ruth," said I, "but a plain road, and five men's necessity. We were dying on Ken's Island and we found a path under the sea. It was starvation one way, surrender the other; I am here to tell Mr. Czerny everything and to trust my life to him."

Now, she heard me almost with angry surprise; and coming forward into the light she stood before me with clasped hands and heated face.

"No," she said, and her "no" was a thing for a man to hear; "no, no; you shall never tell my husband that. And, oh, Jasper!" she cried upon it, "how ill you look—how changed!"

"My looks don't tell the truth," said I, not wishing to speak of myself; "I am up and down like a barometer in the tropics. The plain fact is, Miss Ruth, that the ship's gone, clean gone! I gave Mister Jacob the sure order to stand by us for three days, and that he didn't do. It means, then, that he couldn't. I greatly fear some accident has overtaken him; but he'll come back yet, as I'm a living man!"

She heard me like one dazed: her eyes were everywhere about the room, as though seeking something she could not find. Presently she opened the door with great caution, and was gone a minute or more. When she returned she had a flask of spirits and some biscuits in her hand, and this time, I noticed, she locked the door after her.

"Edmond is sleeping; they have sent Aunt Rachel to Tokio," she almost whispered; "Benno, our servant, is to be trusted. I heard that you were starving in the hills; but how could I help—how could I, Jasper? It was madness for you to come here, and yet I am glad—so glad! And, oh," she says, "we'll find a way; we'll find a way yet, Jasper!"

I poured some brandy from the flask, for I had need of it, and gulped it down at a draught. Her vivacity was always a thing to charm a man; as a girl she had the laughter and the spirits of ten.

"What shall we do, Jasper?" she kept on saying, "what shall we do next? Oh, to think that it's you, to think that it is Jasper Begg in this strange house!" she kept crying; "and no way out of it, no safety anywhere! Jasper, what shall we do—what shall we do next?"

"We shall tell your husband, Miss Ruth," said I, "and leave the last word with him. Why, think of it, five men cast adrift on his shore, and they to starve. Is he fiend or man that he refuses them food and drink? I'll not believe it until I hear it. The lowest in humanity would never do such a thing! Aye, you are judging him beyond ordinary when you believe it. So much I make bold to say!"

I turned to the fire and began to warm my fingers at it, while she, for her part, drew up one of the silk-covered chairs, and sat with her pretty head resting in a tired way between her little hands. All our talk up to this time had been broken fragments; but this I judged the time for a just explanation, and she was not less willing.

"Jasper," says she of a sudden, "have you read what I wrote in the book?"

"To the last line," said I.

"And, reading it, you will ask Edmond to help you?"

"Miss Ruth," said I, "how shall one man judge another? Ships come to this shore, and are wrecked on it. Now and then, perchance, there is foul play among the hands. Are you sure that your husband has any part in it—are you sure he's as bad as you think him?"

Well, instead of answering me, she stood up suddenly and let her dress fall by the shoulder-knots. I saw the white flesh beneath bruised and wealed, as though a whip had cut it, and I knew that this was her witness to her story. What was in my heart at such a sight I would have no man know; but my fingers closed about the pistol I carried, and my tongue would speak no word.

"Why do you compel me to speak?" she went on, meanwhile. "Am I to tell of all the things I have seen and suffered on this dreadful place in the year—can it be only that?—the long, weary year I have lived here? Do you believe, Jasper, that a man can fill his house with gold as this is filled—this wild house so far from the world—and fill it honestly? Shall I say, 'Yes, I have misjudged him,' the man who has shot my servant here in this room and left me with the dead? Shall I say that he is a good

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man because sometimes, when he has ceased to kill and torture those who serve him, he acts as other men? Oh, I could win much if I could say that; I could win, perhaps, all that a woman desires. But I shall never speak—never; I shall live as I am living until I am old, when nothing matters!"

It was a very bitter and a very surprising thing for me to hear her speak in this way. Trouble I knew she must have suffered on Ken's Island; but this was a story beyond all imagination. And what could I say to her, what comfort give her—I, a rough-hearted sailor, who, nevertheless, would have cut off my own right hand if that could have served her? Indeed, to be truthful, I had nothing to say, and there we were for many minutes, she upon one side of the fire and I upon the other, as two that gazed into the reddening embers and would have found some old page of our life therein recorded.

"I SAW THE WHITE FLESH BRUISED AND WEALED AS THOUGH A WHIP HAD CUT IT."

"Miss Ruth," said I at last, and I think she knew what I meant, "I would have given much not to have heard this thing to-night; but as it is spoken—if it were twenty times as bad for me and those with me—I am glad we came to Ken's Island. The rest you will anticipate, and there is no need for me to talk about it. The day that sees me sail away will find a cabin-passenger aboard my ship. Her name I will not mention, for it is known to you. Aye, by all a man's promise she shall sail with me or I will never tread a ship's deck again."

It was earnestly meant, and that, I am sure, Miss Ruth knew, for she put her hand upon mine, and, though she made no mention of what I had said, there was a look in her eyes which I was glad to see there. Her next question surprised me altogether.

"Jasper," she asked, with something of a smile, "do you remember when I was married?"

"Remember it!" cried I; and I am sure she must have seen the blood rush up to my face. "Why, of course I remember it! How should a man forget a thing like that?"

"Yes," she went on, and neither looked at the other now, "I was a girl then, and all the world was my playground. Every day was a flower to pick; the night was music and laughter. How I used to people the world my hopes created—such romantic figures they were, such nonsense! When Edmond Czerny met me at Nice, I think he understood me. Oh, the castles we built in the air, the romantic heights we scaled, the passionate folly with which we deceived ourselves! 'The world is for you and I,' he said, 'in each other's hearts'; and I, Jasper, believed him, just because I had not learnt to be a woman. His own story fascinated me; I cannot tell how much. He had been in all countries; he knew many cities; he could talk as no man I had ever met. Perhaps, if he had not been so clever, it would have been different. All the other men I knew, all except one, perhaps——!"

"There was one, then," said I, and my meaning she could not mistake.

But she turned her face from me and would not name the man.

"Yes," she went on, without noticing it, "there was one; but I was a child and did

not understand. The others did not interest me. Their king was a cook; their temple the Casino. And then Edmond spoke of his island home: I was to be the mistress of it, and we were to be apart from all the world there. I did not ask him, as others might have asked him, 'What has your life been? Why do you love me?' I was glad to escape from it all, that little world of chatter and unreality, and I said, 'I will be your wife.' We left Europe together and went first to San Francisco. Life was still in a garden of roses. If I would awake sometimes to ask myself a question, I could not answer it. I was the child of romance, but my world was empty. Then one day we came to Ken's Island, and I saw all its wonders, and I said, 'Yes, we will visit here every year and dream that it is our kingdom.' I did not know the truth; what woman would have guessed it?"

"You learnt it, Miss Ruth, nevertheless," said I, for her story was just what I myself had imagined it to be. "You were not long on Ken's Island before you knew the truth."

"A month," she said, quietly. "I was a month here, and then a ship was wrecked. My husband went out with the others; and from the terrace before my windows I saw —ah, Heaven! what did I not see? Then Edmond returned and was angry with the servant who had permitted me to see. He shot him in this room before my face. He knew that his secret was mine, he knew that I would not share it. The leaves of the rose had fallen. Ah! Jasper, what weeks of terror, of greed, of tears—and now you—you in this house to end it all!"

I sat for a long while preoccupied with my own thoughts and quite unable to speak to her. All that she had told me was no surprise, no new thing; but I believe it brought home to me for the first time the danger of my presence in that house, and all that discovery meant to the four shipmates who waited for me down below in the cavern.

For if this man Czerny—a madman, as I always say—had shot down a servant before this gentle girl, what would he do to me and the others, sworn enemies of his, who could hang him in any city where they might find him; who could, with one word, give his dastardly secret to the world; who could, with a cry, destroy this treasure-house, rock-built though it might be? What hope of mercy had we from such a man? And I was sitting there, it might be, within twenty paces of the room in which he slept; Miss Ruth's hand lay in my own. What hope for her or for me, I ask again? Will you wonder that I said, "None; just none! A thousand times none"? The island itself might well be a mercy beside such a black pit as this.

"Miss Ruth," said I, coming to myself at last,

"MISS RUTH'S HAND LAY IN MY OWN."

"how little I thought when you went up to the great cathedral in Nice a short year ago that such a sunny day would end so badly! It is one of the world's lotteries; just that and nothing more. Edmond Czerny is no sane man, as his acts prove. Some day you will blot it all out of your life as a page torn and forgotten. That your husband loved you in Nice, I do believe; and so much being true, he may come to reason again, and reason would give you liberty. If not, there

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are others who will try—while they live. He must be a rich man, a very rich man, must Edmond Czerny. One above knows why he should sink to such an employment as this."

"He has sunk to it," she said, quickly, "because gold is fed by the love of gold. Oh, yes, he is a rich man, richer than you and I can understand. And yet even my own little fortune must be cast upon the pile. A month ago he compelled me to sign a paper which gives up to him everything I have in the world. He has no more use for me, Jasper; none at all! He has sent my only living relative away from me. When you go back to England they will tell you that I am dead. And it will be true—true; oh, I know that it will be true."

She had come to a very low state, I make sure, to utter such a word as this, and it was a sorry thing for me to hear. To console her when I myself was in such a parlous plight was just as though one drowning man should hold out his hand to another. To-morrow I myself might be flung into that very ocean whose breakers I could hear rolling over the glass of the curtained windows. And what of little Ruth then?

That question I did not answer. Words were on my lips—such words as a driven man may speak—when there came to us from the sea without the boom of a distant gun, and, Miss Ruth springing to her feet, I heard a great bell clang in the house and the rush of men and the pattering of steps; and together, the woman I loved and I, we stood with beating hearts and white faces, and told each other that a ship was on the rocks and that Edmond Czerny's fiends were loose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHANCE OPENS A GATE FOR JASPER BEGG, AND HE PASSES THROUGH.

THE fiends were out; never once did I doubt it. The alarm-bell ringing loudly in the corridor, the tramp of feet as of an army marching, the cry of man to man proclaimed the fact beyond any cavil. If the clang of arms and the loud word of command had found me unwilling to believe that sailors must die that night on the reef to the southward side, the voice of Edmond Czerny himself, crying by the very door behind which I stood, would have answered the question for good and all. For Czerny I heard, I would have staked my life on it—Czerny, whom last I had seen at Nice on the morning of his marriage.

"To the work, to the work!" I heard him shouting; "let Steinvertz come to me. There is a ship on the Caskets—a ship, do you hear?"

His voice was hoarse and high-pitched, like the voice of a man half mad with delirium. Those that answered him spoke in terms not less measured. Had a pack of wild hounds been slipped suddenly to its prey, no howls more terrifying could have been heard than those which echoed in that house of mystery. And then, upon the top of the clamour, as though to mark the meaning of it, came silence, a silence so awesome that I could hear myself breathing.

"They've left the house, then," I said to Miss Ruth in a whisper; "that's something to be glad about!"

She passed the remark by and, seating herself in a chair, buried her face in her hands. I could hear her muttering, "Heaven help them—oh, help them!" and I knew that she spoke of those dying out on the dangerous reef. For the time being she seemed to have forgotten my presence; but, after a spell, she looked up suddenly and answered the question.

"Yes," she said; "my husband will be on the yacht. He has not the courage to be anywhere else. You and I are quite alone now, Jasper."

My fingers closed tight about my seaman's cap, and I went to the door and unlocked it. Strong and clear in my head, and not to be denied, was something which seemed to set my brain on fire. "Good Lord," I said, "what does it mean?" Was it chance or madness that I should pass it by?

"There would be men below at the furnaces and others standing to guard," I put it to her; "how many in all do you make out that a man might chance to meet if he went below just now, Miss Ruth?"

She became very calm at the words, I thought, and stood up that she might take my words more readily.

"Jasper!" she exclaimed, "what are you going to do, Jasper?"

"Heaven knows," said I. "Tell me how many men there are in this house."

She stood and thought about it. The flushed face told the story of her hopes. Neither of us would speak all that came leaping to our tongues.

"There would be five, I think, in the engine-house and six for the guards," she said, and I could almost see her counting them; "the lower gate is the second in the corridor. There is a ladder there, and—oh, Jasper, what do you mean?" she asked again.

"Mean?" said I; "why this: that it is

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time my shipmates shared your hospitality. Aye, we'll bring them along," says I, "Seth Barker and the others. And then," says I, coming quite close to her, "the luck being with us, we'll shut the doors. Do you say there are two of them?"

She said that there were two: one for the men, a small gate in the reef; the other for Czerny—they called it, the great gate. "And, oh," she cried, while her very gladness seemed to thrill me through; "oh, if you could, if you could, Jasper——!"

"Whether I can or no the night will prove," said I, more quietly than before. "One thing is sure, Miss Ruth, that I am going to try. It's worth the trying, indeed it is. Do you find your own room and know nothing at all about it. The work below is men's work, and there are men, thank Heaven, to do it."

You say that it was a boast; aye, perhaps it was that, yet what a boast! For think of it. Here at the very moment when it appeared that our lives were at Czerny's mercy, at this very moment when we must look to his cruel hand for succour or sleep in the death-pit of the island, there comes this message from the sea and the wretches go out. There is not a sound in the house, and I know that my comrades are waiting for my word. I have three brave men behind me; the peril fires my blood so that, man or demon against me, I care nothing for either. Was it a boast for a man to stake all on a throw at such an hour? Not so, truly, but just what any English seaman would have done, saying, "All or nothing, the day or the night," as chance should decide for him.

Now, my hand was upon the key when I told little Ruth that it was men's work, and without waiting to hear her wise displeasure I opened the door and stepped out into the silent hall. One man alone kept watch there, and he was in the shadows, so that I could not see his face or tell if he were armed. I knew that this man was the first between me and my liberty, and without a moment's hesitation I crossed the hall; and aware of all the risks I took, understanding that a word of mine might bring the guard down from the sea, I clapped a pistol to the sentry's head and let him know my pleasure.

"Open that gate, Benno Regnarte!" said I.

"'OPEN THAT GATE, BENNO REGNARTE!' SAID I."

He was a short man, burly, with curly hair, and not an unpleasant face. So quick had I come upon him, so strange, perhaps, he thought it that I named him at hazard, that he fell back against the iron and stood there gaping like one who had seen a bogey in the dark. Never, I believe, in all this world was a seaman so frightened. He could not speak or utter a sound, or even raise his hand. He just stood there like a shivering fool.

"Benno Regnarte, open that gate!" I repeated, seeing that I had the name all right; "I'll give you half a minute."

The threat brought him to his senses. Without a word, a sign, a sound, he opened the iron doors and waited for me to go through.

"Now," said I, "give me those keys and march on. And by the heavens above me, if you open your lips far enough for a fly to go in, I'll shoot you dead where you stand!"

He gave me the keys with a hand that trembled so that he nearly dropped them. In spite of my injunction he mumbled some-

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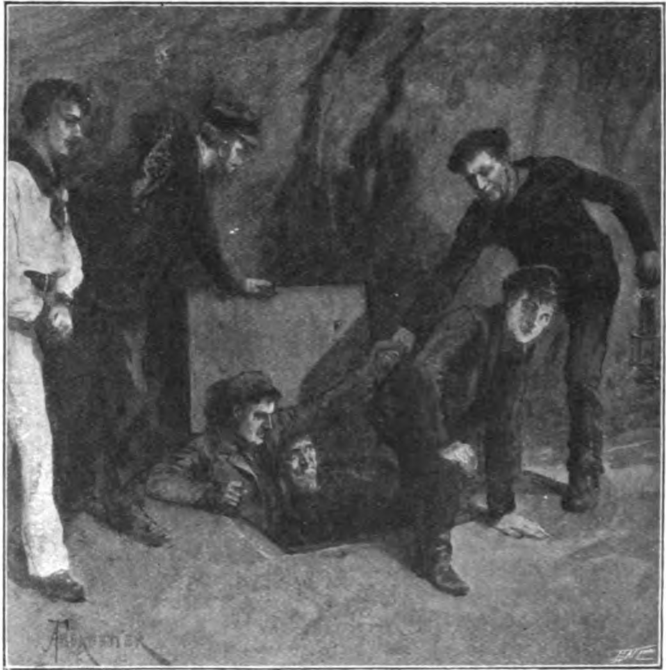
thing, and I was not unwilling to hear it.

"I am the friend of Madame Czerny," said he, cringingly; "trust me, signor, for mercy's sake trust me!"

"When you earn the trust," said I, grimly; "now march, and remember!"

I let him go through, and then locked the iron doors behind me. Miss Ruth, at least, must be protected from the rogues below. The lamps in the corridor were still burning, and, by here and there, I thought that I saw figures in the shadows. But no man hailed me, and when I came to the great dormitory which, at first passing, was full of seamen, I found the door of it open and no more than six or seven men still about its tables. If they heard me come up they suspected nothing. I shall always say that the brightest idea of that night was the one which came to me while I stood by the open door and counted the men that Czerny had left to guard his house. For what should I do, upon the oddest impulse, but put my hand round the door very quietly and, closing it without noise, turn the key first in the lock and then put it in my pocket.



"'UP YOU COME—UP FOR YOUR LIVES!' CRIED I."

"Six," said I to the man before me; "and you make seven. How many more in this place now, Benno Regnarte?"

He held up his hands and began to count.

"In the engine-room one, two, three," he said; "upon the ladder hereby two; at the great door two more. Seven men altogether, signor. Your party will be more than that?"

I laughed at his notion, and, seeing that the man still shivered with fear and was not to be counted, I went straight ahead to the greater work I had to do. Already the alarm was raised in the room behind me, and men were beating with their fists upon the iron door. It was ten to one that their cries must be heard and one of the sentinels called from the sea; but, miracle if you will, or greed of plunder if that is the better term, none came; none answered that heavy knocking. And I—why, I was at the cavern's head by that time, and, opening the trap, I had spoken to my shipmates.

"Up you come, every one of you—up for your lives!" cried I. "Do you, Seth Barker, lift the doctor, and let Peter Bligh follow after. There's no time to lose, lads—no time at all."

I took them by surprise, be sure of it. That opening trap, the light flashing down upon them, the message when they had begun to despair of any message, the call to action—aye, how they leaped up to answer me with ready words!

"To Heaven be the glory!" cries Peter Bligh, and I can hear him now. "To Heaven be the glory! 'It was the captain's voice,' says I, before ever you spake a word."

"And oh, aren't we sick of it—just sick of it!" chimes in Dolly Venn as he climbs the ladder like a cat and stands willingly at my side.

I pressed his hand, and showed him the revolver I carried.

"Whip it out, lad, whip it out," said I; "we've work to do to-night for ourselves and another. Oh, I count on you all, Dolly, as I never counted before!"

He would have said something to this, I make sure, but the others came through the trap while I spoke, and four more astonished men never stood in a cavern to ask, "What next?"

"The ladder to the reef side," said I,

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putting their surprise by and turning to the Italian in whose hands our lives might lie; "can men hold the top of it, or is it best taken by the sea?"

He answered me with a dramatic gesture and a face which spoke his warning.

"At the rockside it is straight; they shoot you from the top, captain. No man go up there from this place. They fire guns, make noise."

"And the report will call the others," said I. "So be it; but we'll close that door, anyway."

It was Greek to the others, and they gaped at the words. From the room which I had locked loud shouts were to be heard and heavy blows upon the iron panels. That such cries would call men from the sea presently, I knew well. We had but a few minutes in which to act, and they were precious beyond all words. The gate must be shut though a hundred lay concealed in the rooms of mystery about us. On our part we staked all on chance; we threw the glove blindly to fortune. And, remember, I alone knew anything of that house in which we stood; that house, above which the sea ever rolled her crested breakers and lifted her eerie chantry. My shipmates were but astonished strangers, not willing to go back, yet half afraid of that which lay before them. The bright lights in the caverns, the dark doors opening into darkness, and upon these the great corridor, so vast, so gloomy, so mysterious, were to them new pictures in a wonderland the like to which they had never seen before and will never see again.

"What place is this, and where is the best parlour?" asks Peter Bligh, his clumsy head blundering to a question even at such a time. "'Tis laid out for a small and early, and crowns to be broken," says he. "Have you took it furnished, or are there neighbours, sir? 'Tis a queer house entirely."

I cut him short and turned to the doctor.

"What news of the foot, sir?" I asked him; "how are you feeling now?"

He replied light-heartedly enough, wishful, I could see, to make light of it.

"Like a man who has bought a wooden leg and prefers the old one," said he; asking at the same time, "What's the course, captain, and why do we follow it?"

"The course," said I, "is to Madame Czerny's boudoir, and a good couch to lie upon. Do you two get on as fast as you can and leave us to the parley. It's coming, sure enough, and lame men won't help the argument. We'll need your help by-and-by, doctor, when the heads are broken."

I made the guess at hazard, little knowing how near the truth it was to prove. We were almost at the head of the first stairway by this time, and the uproar in the corridor might have awakened the seven sleepers. Impossible, I said, that such a warning should not bring in men from the sea, sentinels who would ask by whose hand the key had been turned; but the danger lay behind us in the shadows where we had not looked for it. Aye, the three in the engine-house, how came I to forget them? They were atop of us before the doctor was out of hearing, and a great hulking German, his face smeared with soot and a bar of iron in his hands, caught me by the shoulder and swung me round almost before I had done speaking.

"Who, in thunder, are you?" asks he. It was a question which had to be answered.

Now, I had picked up a wrinkle or two about "rough-and-tumbles" in the years I traded to Yokohama, and though my heart was in my mouth and it was plain to me that this was the crisis of the night, when a single unlucky stroke or mis-spoken word might undo all that chance had done for us, I nevertheless kept my wits about me, and letting the man turn me round as he willed I presently caught his arm between both of mine and almost broke the bone of it. Upon which he lifted up a cry you might have heard at the sword-fish reef, and writhing down I struck him with all my force and he fell insensible.

"Seven and one make eight," said I, and a man might forgive himself for boasting at such a time; for, mark you, but two were left to deal with, and while one was making for little Dolly Venn, Peter Bligh had the throat of the other in such a grip that his friends might well have said, "The saints help him!"

"Hold him, Peter, hold him!" cried I, my blood fired and my tongue set loose; but there was no need to be anxious for Mister Bligh, I do assure you.

"He'll need new teeth to-morrow, and plenty of 'em!" says he, shaking the man as a dog shakes a rat. "Aye, go on, captain, the fun's beginning here."

I waited to hear no more, but ran at the man who closed with little Dolly Venn. "Dolly's is the need," said I; though in that I was mistaken, as you shall see presently. And I do declare it was a picture to watch that bit of a lad dancing round à hulking Dutchman, and hitting the wind out of him as though he had been a cushion. Grunt? The lubber grunted like a pig, and every time

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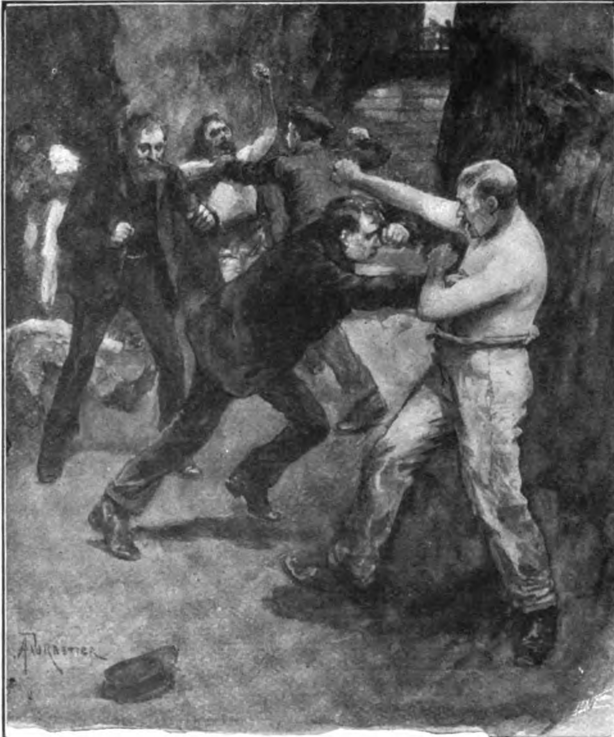
he stopped for want of breath in came Master Dolly again with a lightning one which shook him like a thunder-bolt. No "set-to" that I have seen in all my life ever pleased me half as much; and what with crying and laughing by turns, and singing out "Bravo, Dolly!" and dancing round the pair



"BRAVO, DOLLY!"

of them, the sweat ran off me like rain, and I, and not little Dolly Venn, might have been doing for the Dutchman in the shadows of that corridor.

In the end, believe me, this foreign bully turned tail and ran like a whipped cur. It was all I could do to keep the lad from his heels.

"Next time, Dolly," cried I, holding him back roughly, "next time, lad; we have better work to do, much better work to do. Here's Peter needing a box for his goods—and a pretty big one, too. Is it over, Peter? Will he be talking any more?" I asked Mister Bligh.

He answered me by pointing to a figure on the floor beside him, stark and motionless and very still. Peter had played his part, indeed; I knew that the gate of Czerny's house was open.

"All together, lads," said I, leading them on now with a light heart; "all together and out of the shadows, if you please. We've another gate to close, and then—as One is above me, I do believe we have bested Edmond Czerny this night!"

It was something to say, a thought to thrill a man, and yet I would not dwell upon it, remembering all that lay between us and Miss Ruth's freedom—all that must be done in the doubtful hours before us.

"The iron ladder by which the men come in," I asked of the Italian, suddenly, "where is that, Regnarte?"

Now, this man had been very frightened during the brawl at the stairs-head; but, seeing the stuff we were made of, and being willing all along to join with us (for I learned afterwards that he nursed a private spite against Czerny), he replied to me very readily:—

"The ladder is the second door, captain; yet why, since no man can go up? I tell you that two hold it, and they have guns. You cannot go, captain! What good the key when men have guns?"

"We'll see about that," said I. And cocking my pistol I strode to the door he indicated.

It was an iron door, opening inward to a small apartment cut out of the solid rock. For a while I could see nothing when I entered the little cavern—it laid bare; but, becoming used to the dim light presently, I took a few steps forward, and looking up I saw a rocky chimney and an orifice far up and the stars glimmering in the grey-blue sky above me. This, then, was the second gate to Czerny's house, I said; the sea-gate by which his men passed in. Here, as yonder where Miss Ruth's apartment lay, the reef lifted itself above the highest tides; here was the gate we must shut if the night were to be won. And who would dare it with armed men on the threshold, and a ladder for foothold, and the knowledge on our part that one word of the truth would dig a grave for recompense? And yet it had to be dared: a man must go up that night for a woman's sake.

Well, I took off my boots at the ladder's foot, and thrusting my pistol into my waist-belt I spoke a warning word to Peter Bligh.

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"This," said I, taking from Regnarte the key I needed, "this opens the iron doors you will meet down yonder. If misfortune happens to me, go straight through and take my place. Hold the rooms as long as you can and let your judgment do the rest. Belike Mister Jacob will come back with the ship. I wish I could think so!" I added.

He nodded his head, and but half understanding what I was about he watched me anxiously when I put my naked foot with wary step on the ladder and began to go up. I saw him for a moment, a comrade's figure in the dim light of the cavern, and then thinking only of my purpose, and of what it would mean to one who waited for me, I clenched my teeth and began my journey. Below me were the little cave and the glimmer of a distant lamp, shipmates crying "God speed!" the hidden house, the mystery; above me that dark funnel of the rock and the sky, which seemed to beckon me upward to freedom and the sea.

If danger lay there I could not espy it or detect its presence. Not a sound came from the open trap, no figures were to be seen, no spoken voice to be heard.

Nevertheless, I knew that the Italian spoke the truth and that his reckoning was good. Edmond Czerny was no fool to leave a sea-gate open to all the world. Somewhere on the foothold of the rocks men were lurking, I made sure. That they heard nothing of their friends' outcry in the corridor below, that they did not answer it, was a thing I had not, at the first, understood; but it became plain when the chimney I climbed shut out every sound but that of the breaking seas, and gave intervals of silence so great that a man might have heard a ticking watch. No, truly, it was no wonder that they had not gone down nor heard that loud alarm, for they hungered for the wreck; for pillage and plunder, and all the gruesome sights Ken's Island that night could show them; and this hunger kept them at the water's edge, hounds kennelled when others were free, unwilling idlers on a harvest day. Heaven knows, they paid a price for that when the good time came.

Now, at the ladder's head, everything was as I had seen it in the mind's picture; and even before I made the top fresh spray would shower upon my face, while the sea sounded as though its waves were breaking almost at my very ears. Unchallenged and, for all I could make out, unwatched, I grew bolder step by step, until at last I touched the topmost rung; and, looking over, I saw the white crests of the breakers and the pinnacles of the reef and the distant island under its loom of gold-blue fog. Halted there, with one hand swung free and my good pistol ready, I peered intently into the night—a sentinel watching sentinels, a spy upon those that should have spied. And standing so I saw the men, and they saw me; and quickened to the act by the sudden danger, I swung over the first half of the trap which shut the chimney in, and made ready to close the second with all the deftness I could command.

There were two men at the sea's edge, but they did not hear me, I believe, until the first door of that trap was down. Perchance, even then, they thought that a comrade played a jest upon them, and that this was all in the night's work, for one of them coming up leisurely peered into the hole and put a question to me in the German tongue. This man, my heart beating like a piston and my nerves all strung up, I struck down with the butt-end of my pistol, and I swung over the trap and shot the bolts and locked the great padlock before the other could move hand or foot. For the foreigner fell, without a cry, headlong into the sea which played at his very feet.

"Shut—shut, by thunder!" cried I to those below, and gladder words a seaman never spoke to comrades waiting for him. "One gate more and the night is ours, lads!"

They heard me in astonishment. Remember how new this place of mystery was to them; how little I had told them of that which I knew. If they followed me like the brave men that they were, set it down to the affection they bore me, and the belief that I led them on no child's errand. So much must have occurred to them as we gained the upper house and shut the iron doors behind us. The way lay to the sea again, the road most dear to the heart of every sailor. Let the main gate of Czerny's house be closed and all was won, indeed.

Aye, and you shall stand with me as, mounting a broad stairway beyond Miss Ruth's own door, I found myself out upon a great plateau of rock, and beheld the silent ocean spread out like a silver carpet before my grateful eyes and knew that the house was ours—that house the like to which no man has built or will build during the ages.

(To be continued.)

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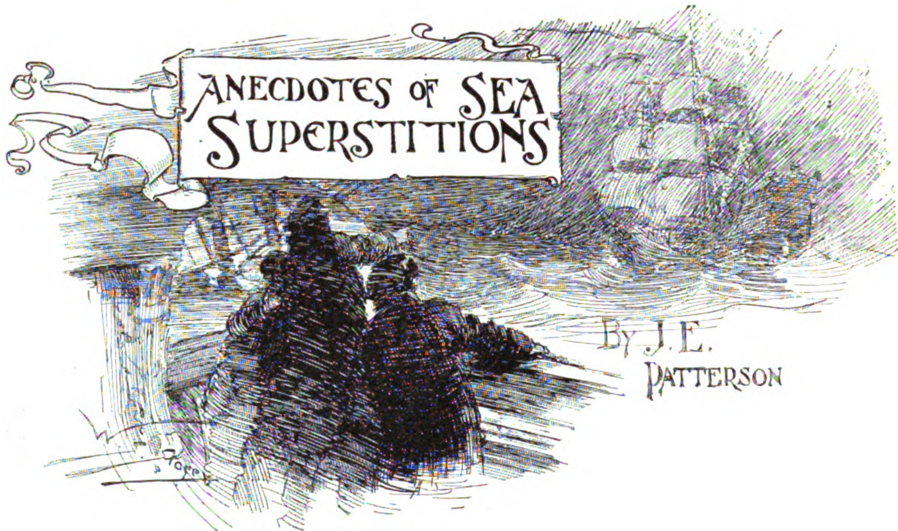

In all probability the Ancients had their strings of superstitious happenings as long as any civilized nation's of to-day, if not longer. With the same varying degrees, faith in uncanny signs, portents, and forebodings no doubt held sway through all the stages of mind-culture, from the churlish shepherd on the mountain-side to the philosopher in the city porch. The wryneck's cry, that sent a sylvan grape-tender scurrying home in horrifying belief that the bird heralded a death in his family, might have screeched its head off at Socrates and still remained unnoticed. An Athenian gentleman would most likely be less affected on his path being crossed by the flight of three ravens than would his rural contemporary, who, perhaps, was worth more drachmæ than the townsman. And we may rest quietly assured that at the heavy end of the scale of superstition stood the seaman of his day. Sea-going men are the most prone of any class to this form of mind-darkness, and one may safely say that the same rule held good thousands of years ago.

> When . . . .
> . . . . sailors eye their mates and catch their breath,
> And talk with fear of hatches overturned,
> Knives stuck in masts, and low blue lights that burned
> But yestereve about the weather-vane ;
> Of many foundered ships that tried in vain
> To run a Friday's voyage ; of drownèd cats,
> And vessels out of which the auguring rats
> Decamped when last in port ; of sneezes done
> To left, night-squealing pigs, and whistling on
> The bow by thoughtless lads ; of horsey dreams,
> And where the light of woman's eye out-gleams
> The brilliance of gems ; and other things
> Which fill the sailor's mind with murmurings
> And speak to him of wrecks.

Such are, in part, the superstitious ideas dominating the minds of almost all seamen of to-day. Science, education, the spread of knowledge, and broader thinking generally have let in light on many a common darkness that existed even so late as fifty years ago. As was but natural, some of this light has penetrated that conservative-minded, yet liberal-handed, nomad of the great waters—the foreign-going merchant Jack. Isolated though he is from his fellows on shore, removed from the direct influence of quick and radical changes in human thought, it would be a wonder if even he stood comparatively still in his thinking. Yet the change in his attitude towards the seemingly occult has been painfully slow, indirect, and is still miserably limited.

Many superstitious ideas firmly believed in by his immediate forerunners are now generally smiled at; others have narrowed down to very small areas of influence; but a large number of superstitions are almost as rife to-day as they were a hundred years ago. In fact, only the most preposterous in the category, and some of

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them were highly so, have passed away with the great ignorance of the past.

The phantom ship, and its heralding disaster to the vessel whereof a crew, or some of them, see it; a like result from the catching of a stormy petrel or an albatross; the sea-serpent and its leaving wreck or foundering in the train; the hearing of peculiar, wail-like singing when near the shore on a calm, dark night and attributing it to a mermaid, that will speedily bring about a gale during which she will lead the vessel on to some neighbouring rocks or shoals—these and many others as greatly foolish have happily gone from the mind of the average European seaman; that is, excluding a very large majority of Finns and home-trading Italian sailors. The latter cling to their old beliefs in these matters with that peculiar persistency so characteristic of Latin races. With the former, mystery, strangely inseparable from cold and comparative isolation, is an essential element of life.

Until quite recently, and in some quarters even now, the Finn has always been looked on as the believer in, and possessor of, sea-magic *par excellence.* Out of hundreds I have never met one Finnish sailor who was not the dupe of many highly superstitious notions; and it is no uncommon happening to meet one who not only still believes in the mermaid, the phantom ship, and such, but is assured that he also possesses wonderful and uncanny powers.

One autumn we were loading unusually late in Revel. The ice had held off well, enabling us to finish loading with deals when we should otherwise have been frozen up a week or two before. As usual at such times, a couple of the fo'c's'le hands—a young Eastern Swede and a middle-aged Shetlander — were full of quietly significant predictions that we should pay for our temerity in thus braving the strange rulers of the ice kingdom. Oh, they were as sure of trouble following as they were of death. When a sprightly and more up-to-date "Tynesider" said, "Yes—but when?" they were silent and looked injured, or replied that his undue profanity would get him into further difficulties—on that he could rely.

"THEY WERE AS SURE OF TROUBLE FOLLOWING AS THEY WERE OF DEATH."

However, we got safely away down the Gulf of Finland, with a westerly wind that died into a calm as the old brigantine drew in under that western arm of Dago called Dago Ort. The skipper had held her close in to save ground, and thus sooner bear away down the Baltic. Night fell upon us as we lay there, the land but a few cables' length off under our lee, and the stars glittering as they only do on a moonless night in cold latitudes.

The Swede and the Shetlander had the watch on deck, the former being at the wheel and his watch-mate on the look-out.

Suddenly an unearthly wailing, in a low key, stole up over the lee-rail. It was so irregular that at times it came but in gasps; at others it had the semblance of an inter-

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mittent melody; then, again, it was loud enough to seem as if it sprang from something quite close at hand. As a matter of course, the watch, including the old mate, pricked up their ears. With bated breath they put questions to themselves, the two men being so far apart that they could not ask each other what this fearful singing meant. Then the helmsman exclaimed, in an awe-struck whisper:—

"Necken, Necken!—the Necken, sir—the Necken!"

But the mate, without taking any apparent notice of him, went to the lee-rail, leaned over it alongside the other member of the watch, and peered into the darkness; there he listened with all the hearing he had. He was of the old blunt sea-dog kind, having remarkably little faith in anything he did not readily understand or of which he could not get a tangible hold.

"What the hangment's that?" he muttered—"a boat got adrift with a frightened kid in it?"

All the answer or solution he received was a continuance of the irregular dismal wailing. This now seemed to strike the brigantine under her lee-bow, then steal along that side of her with all the unnerving weirdness of the fabled mermaid's song, yet without its supposed entrancing melody. Just as the mate was about to go forward and further investigate the strange occurrence, the Shetlander ran aft to him and whisperingly blurted out his fearful apprehensions on the subject, the whole of these being interpolated with half-expressed questions as to the mate's opinions on what was happening. His superior listened to him quietly for awhile, then brusquely told him to "shut up that tom-foolery," pushed him aside, and went into the waist. But the peculiarly suggestive noise had ceased; and, although they hearkened attentively during the remainder of the watch, it was heard no more.

Yet neither this fact nor the arguments and laughs of their shipmates prevented the two A.B.'s from doggedly declaring their belief in the wailing having been the commencement of a northern siren's wrecking song, which they were sure would have had disastrous consequences to us had it not been for the north-east breeze that sprang up just afterwards and carried the vessel away down the Baltic. Still, in proof of the fact that superstitions, like old habits, die hard, more of our company than the Swede and the Shetlander were the secretly-disturbed repositories of many qualms and fears, which did not give them peace until we were well up the Humber. Nor did all succeed in keeping their dark forebodings hidden. So inherent in the seaman's blood and so ineradicable is faith in the occult mysteries of Nature that this particular belief of our two most superstitious men gained ground generally with every change of weather we experienced during the remainder of that homeward passage.

On arriving at Hull the cause of the noise was explained. It would have been earlier told, but that the perpetrators feared some awkwardness on the mate's part because of their fooling him with the others. The young North-countryman, after persuading the more matter-of-fact of his two watch-mates to conspire with him, had crept noiselessly over the bows, he having the vessel's cat in a little bag, the other meanwhile decoying the look-out man from his post and into the fo'c's'le, to ask him if it were true that Shetland sweethearts went out in the boats fishing with their lovers in order to feather their future nests the sooner—a question framed solely for the purpose of drawing him out of the "Tynesider's" way.

The smooth water combined with the lightness of the brigantine had allowed the joker to get a seat low down on the martingale-stays. There, with the cat's head just out of the bag, its tail—covered by the bag—between his teeth, and its body under his arm, he had caused the mournful noise that put such fear into the breasts of our two darkened comrades—that is, he bit the animal's tail till pain made it mew out a loud, pitiful wail, which he crudely regulated by squeezing its body between his arm and side. The stoppage of the unearthly sounds was occasioned by the look-out man's running aft to the mate, which opportunity the deceiver seized to get back unobserved to the fo'c's'le. Of course, when the story was told his victims did not hesitate to assure him, and not lightly, that he would one day suffer dearly for putting a cat to such a profane use.

At another time — in a deep-water-man, homeward bound with wheat from Portland, Oregon—the superstitious notion concerning cats was the cause of a death and further real trouble. Amongst our A.B.'s there was a tall, fidgety "growler." Hardy by name, he was not so in anything but expletive-garnished complaints against fate and his general circumstances, large and small. He also had a chest trouble, his coughing, wheezing, and other emphasized evidences

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of this matter being no little trouble to his watch-mates; for he was ever something of a skulker, and when work had to be done by a party of men of whom he formed a unit his high, round shoulders were always seen lurching very slowly along in the *rear* of the crowd, to the harsh accompaniment of strained coughs and guttural croakings. He professed to hail from Blackwall, but he was not the only renegade in that matter then crossing the Atlantic in the good ship *Clio.* On all subjects and ideas, except that of the world being dominated by selfishness, he was a thorough sceptic, and he regularly argued or grumbled all the rest of the forward hands into silence. Case-hardened against the notion that there is any good in the world, he

The *Clio* owned two of these animals—one a lazy tabby that preferred to remain aft because it would rather be fed by the spoiling teward than hunt the natural prey for its living; the other, a fine, sleek-coated black that made the fo'c's'le his home, a fact that was mostly owing to his fondness of a young Irish seaman with whom he regularly turned in and came out on watch. He caught a rat on an average every alternate day. As will be naturally guessed, Tom (the cat) was the butt of much cantankerousness on the part of the "growler." If the animal secured and made a meal of a rat, it was (to Hardy) but a proof of the whole world being all for self—that the strong always prey on the weak; whereat all

"IT WAS A PROOF THAT THE STRONG ALWAYS PREY ON THE WEAK."

was a most unpleasant shipmate; as disquieting a one as ever footed a ratlin or kept a look-out, he was always ready to quarrel but never to fight. He it was who started almost every piece of dog-watch jangling and friction when at work, and if he had one minor pet antipathy that hatred was for cats.

his listeners would be incidentally reminded that they had much to be thankful for, because none of them had his cough and consequent weakness. If Tom failed to catch a rodent, he was "a skulk an' not doin' his duty." If he sat up looking at Hardy, the latter would throw a biscuit at

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him for daring to be so "cheeky." If Tom gave him a wide berth for a time, as he usually did after being vigorously kicked out of the way, "even the 'spongin'' cat gave *him* the cold shoulder"; and Tom would there and then be the object of some hurriedly seized and viciously thrown missile.

About midway through the second dog-watch—ending a day that had been marked by calms and cats'-paws—Tim (the young Irish A.B.) was playing with his feline friend on the lee-rail by the fore-rigging. This was mostly done by inducing it to climb the shrouds and running-gear after a little paper ball, which he hauled up and let down by a piece of twine over one of the ratlins. Unnoticed by the men interested in this harmless fun, a squall was gathering; and, breaking before the inexperienced second-mate thought it would, the squall swept down on us with a rush that sent the watch-out hurrying to the different sets of halyards.

Tom was then some 8ft. or 10ft. up the main-top-gallant staysail down-hauler, to which Hardy happened to run. He no sooner saw the cat than he cried: "S-s-s! come down there," then gave the rope a jerk, sending poor Tom hurling away two or three fathoms to leeward; then he shouted to those at the staysail halyards, "Let go!" cursing the cat incidentally. The sail was hauled down amidst the mostly impolite expostulations of Tom's friends; to which the "growler" made as many grumbling excuses, and as often cursed the cat for not "keepin' to the scuppers, w'ere cats should be."

To continue the matter at that juncture was impossible. The squall proved both heavy and long, occasioned a general reduction of canvas by all hands, and quickly drew itself out to a fresh breeze that finally developed into a gale at dawn on the following morning. As a natural consequence, the more superstitious members of the crew—and they were all too many—continually reverted to the loss of Tom, and predicted all sorts of catastrophes as the only possible results of Hardy's action. Some said that the trouble would fall on him; others believed that we should all be sufferers, and gave him no friendly looks or allusions whilst announcing their belief. After breakfast the ship was reduced to a storm allowance of sail, and matters continued so—she still lying on the starboard tack—till close on two bells in the first dog-watch.

At that time the bo'sun told off Hardy to watch his opportunity to get on the fo'c's'le-head and make matters secure there for the night. Hardy did as he was bidden, grumbling the while at being selected for the dangerous work. Naturally he, though not usually smart in his movements, went sprightly about the task; but before he had finished it, and with no more warning than its inboard roar, a huge wall of green water rushed over the bow, he being driven like a cork against the fife-rail.

In a minute or so the water cleared, half of it down on to the main deck and the rest over the lee-bow, on the edge of which, partly outside the lowest bar of the iron railings, Hardy was seen in a bight of the fore-topmast staysail down-hauler. As the water swept back to its native quarters the ship rolled up to windward. Hardy struggled to get inboard again, calling for help, and the mate and the bo'sun—both aft—yelled for someone to go to his assistance.

The only ones near enough to be of timely service to him were a knot of the more superstitious men gathered under the lee of the fore-deckhouse. With the exception of an old Devonian and a negro, these were all of Finnish and Scandinavian blood. A voice amongst them muttered to the effect that this was the expected punishment, and helpers would get their "whack" (share) of it.

Not a foot of theirs stirred.

The struggling man slipped back aboard with the last part of the weather-roll, just as the mate again shouted an order for someone to go to his help, and a couple of men ran forward from the after-deck. But with that windward roll, and before the intending helpers could reach him or he regain his feet, a second, though smaller, sea boarded the fo'c's'le-head. The ship went to leeward with it, and Hardy was never seen again.

Whether he was rendered unconscious by his head striking a stanchion or a rail, as the water swept him outboard, or that his not rising was due to an inability to swim, we could not tell. That those who might have been instrumental in saving his life were soundly reprimanded may be taken for granted. They were also promised to "hear more about it"; but the hearing was all that the promise attained to—as is commonly the case at sea; for not one promise, good, bad, or indifferent, made whilst afloat is kept ashore. Yet that was not the end of the matter. The action of those half-fearful, half-callous men, their hanging back at the critical moment, was the cause of much friction between them and the less superstitious of their shipmates. On both sides there were "hard nuts" to crack—on the one, sullenly

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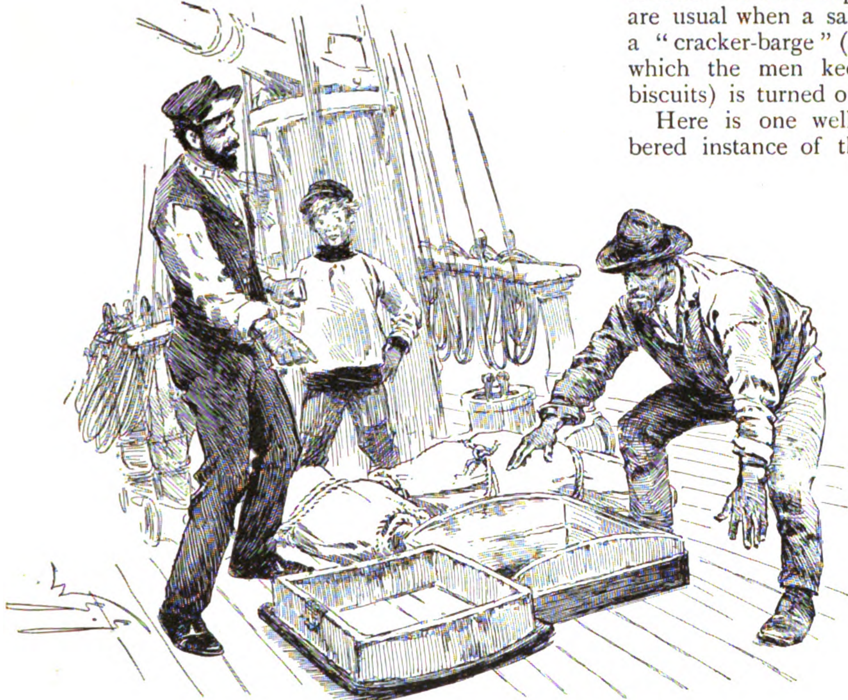
defiant men mumbling crude excuses for their lack of humanity and state of mind, men who had been in many a *mêlée*, and bore physical and temperamental signs of battle and the general opposition of life; on the other, brighter looks, quicker movements, lighter tongues, broader thoughts, equal grit and grip, and all the characteristics that mark the newer school of seamen from the old. The affair caused an absolute and clearly defined division of all the forward hands into two parties. Tumultuous times on deck—such as squalls, tacking and wearing of ship, bracing-up at change of watches, and, in fact, at all periods of quick hurrying to and fro, when men are apt to take mishaps as intended insults and chance nothings become matters of vital importance—there were grumblings which came near being worse happenings on the spot, threats of violence which had material results in the half-secrecy of later dog-watches, and, emanating from the drowning of Tom, several men left the *Clio* with scars of which they would never be rid.

Every item in the lines at the beginning of these reminiscences of superstition afloat is but a common occurrence in the sailing portion of our merchant vessels of to-day. Many a time, when a cover-hatch (one that fits like a cap over low coamings) has been capsized, have I heard the remark, said with every appearance of conviction: "There's another ship gone to the bottom!—you blunderin' galoot!—w'y don't you look wot you're doin'?"; the meaning being that for each cap-hatch so treated a ship must founder. Similar expressions are usual when a salt-pot or a "cracker-barge" (a box in which the men keep their biscuits) is turned over.



"YOU BLUNDERIN' GALOOT!"

Here is one well-remembered instance of the knife in a mast. I was crossing the North Sea in a small craft. The time was summer. For some days light, shifty winds had baffled us, then came a calm. Late one afternoon the skipper said he thought that we should have a breeze before nightfall, and the helmsman—an elderly Finnishman—ventured to feel sure that we should. When the skipper asked for his reason, he, in significant silence, pointed seriously to a jack-knife stuck in the mizzen-mast, and its handle indicating away about two points before the beam—that being the north-north-west. The skipper looked at the knife, turned his face in another direction, and smiled. He knew that to ridicule the matter would get himself into ill-repute and cause some dissatisfaction; whilst humouring it would keep the men in a pleasant frame of mind with him and themselves, and do no one any harm. He, a

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somewhat young East-coaster, was a diplomatist—as is ever the popular and successful ship-master. A knowledge of humanity, a tolerance of its foibles, charity to its defects and limitations are always needful lubricants for the smooth commanding of men.

Being "large" in what phrenologists term "human nature," our "old man" had in his composition something akin to most men (where such was not the case, and no absolute benefit could be gained by perverseness, he had the wisdom to appear otherwise); thus when, at sunset that evening, a breeze sprang up in the named quarter—a fair one for us—there was general satisfaction forward at the thought that the skipper believed the Finn's action had brought us what we all most wished for.

Another example of Scandinavian superstition now called to mind occurred in connection with the idea that ill-luck must come of a boy's whistling on the weather-bow. Amongst the A.B.'s was one Olafsen, an elderly, crusty, old-time Norwegian, nigh as full of foolish notions as the skin of grunting Denis was full of pork. For packet we had a West-country brig, captained by a Somerset man, who was impregnated with belief about cows praying on their knees at twelve o'clock on Old Christmas Eve; about a "holy thorn" which he declared began to flower at sunset on the last day of the dying year (old reckoning), was in full bloom at midnight, and had shed its blossom by sunrise: this latter at Glastonbury. He also had a lingering regard for witchcraft and certain other evidences of pre-School Board days. However, his was a homely sort of temperament. He would talk to any man who happened to be at the wheel when he walked and smoked on the brig's small poop, as though they were brothers; if a youngster chanced to be "getting his hand in at steering" during a fine dog-watch, the "old man" would question him — kindly in all things — as to his family history, his habits aboard and ashore, his ambitions and intentions, his health generally, and almost everything that appertained to him between the cradle and the grave. On each subject the lad would receive little homilies, then be quietly called to account for steering off the course, which had been brought about by the interest he had taken in the "old man's" words.

Naturally, between the latter and Olafsen there existed a peculiar, unspoken bond of sympathy, one that caused the young mate some occasional pangs of "the green-eyed monster." We were then homeward bound from the Mediterranean. The time was summer and the weather fine. Whilst crossing "the Bay," Timson, a bright-eyed lad of the Fens, was found on the weather-bow by the Norwegian, whistling cheerily in the teeth of the gentle breeze, two points free of which the brig was drawing nearer home. Without any ado Olafsen gave him a slap on his ear. The lad vented a slight cry of pain, flashed a killing look at Olafsen, then darted away, muttering boyish threats of vengeance, mixed with queries as to the cause of the

"OLAFSEN GAVE HIM A SLAP ON HIS EAR."

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blow. The man stood there watching him off, scowling under his thick, outstanding, gingery eyebrows, and his withered lips puckered up—as was his fashion at such times—beneath their covering of blended fair and fiery hair. Others had seen the incident, some knowing the cause of it, some in ignorance. Those who understood the matter looked becomingly serious, whilst grins and guffaws characterized the faces of the purblind.

Curious it was that so trivial a thing should lead to so much of importance—importance in matters quite foreign to it. Of course, mostly half-expressed in surly growls at his action, Timson was made to understand the enormity of his wrong-doing; but the information was gained mainly by his own intelligence. On his part he declared, both emphatically and oft, that the man who could "knock 'alf a lad's jolly head orf for w'istling 'The Anchor's Weighed' could commit a murder any day in the week."

Olafsen was not a general favourite, far from it in some quarters. True, he and "the doctor" (cook) were rather "shipmatey"; but in his manner, about him commonly and vaguely, there was a peculiar, undefinable something—a sort of underlying spirit that often characterized him without his knowing it, and "set his watchers' teeth on edge." For this reason the lad was not wanting in abettors whenever he, in the absence of Olafsen, talked of retaliation. In fact, two of the A.B.'s were more to blame for what happened than was the boy himself; for without their help and encouragement he would never have dared to do what he did.

The ill-fortune of a head-wind, so forcibly predicted by the Norwegian, came not. Two days went by, during which Timson again felt the heavy hand of his enemy. Then the breeze backed to the westward, making us a fair wind, and our packet began to bowl away for the English Channel. It was the first night under these new conditions when the mischief occurred. Free winds and pleasant seas ever have the virtue of causing lively humours on a homeward passage. Thus when Timson and his two inciters went below at midnight, they being in one watch, it was agreed between them to have a little fun at the expense of Olafsen, who was in the watch then on deck, and not being at the wheel he was sure to return to the fo'c's'le for something within a few minutes of the relief—a regular habit of his.

By the aid of a white shirt, owned by one of the two up-to-date able-seamen, a crude head hastily made of a ball of spun yarn and given a white appearance with some Maltese lace (which Timson was taking home for his sister), they quickly manufactured a legless ghost. The object was then attached, by its neck and at a right angle, to the end of a broomstick, which one of the men held outwards as he lay, apparently asleep, in his bunk. Effective preparations were also made for withdrawing the thing—for its "vanishing." First it was to disappear by being dropped behind a pile of other things; then drawn by the other man into his bunk, a lower one, and there dismembered. The sickly and miserable fo'c's'le lamp was removed to a place and angle where its reduced flame could just take in the "apparition" and leave the remainder of the fo'c's'le in almost total darkness.

The materials for this trick having been previously got ready—to what fearful end its perpetrators could never have guessed—the whole arrangements were soon made. Then the two jokers lay back awaiting results, almost sure of a grunt, a curse, a dash at the object, and some consequent laughs. The boy, huddled open-eyed under his blanket, waited for—he knew not what; a bundle of wonder, exultation, fear of consequences, and other mixed feelings, he bided the issue in a far pleasanter frame of mind than did his confederate leaders. Minutes went by. The expected came not, and those in waiting, sleepy from their watch on deck, began to doze. The "ghost" would have fallen to ignominious collapse, but that its holder had stuck the opposite end of the broomstick under his side.

When full consciousness returned to them it came with a bang that drew the trio bolt-upright in their bunks and caused the improvised "apparition" to disappear prematurely behind its intended hiding-place. A fearful exclamation had jerked them back to their senses. It had issued from the lips of Olafsen, who now leaned against the corner of the bo'sun's cabin (a box of a berth built in the fo'c's'le), partially framed by the starlit doorway beyond, and muttering, in his native tongue, like a gibbering monkey. The two men were about to leap from their bunks when Olafsen started forward a step, crying, "No, no! No, no! I not mean to kill you, Otto! I—I—I—Oh, God, God! mercy, mercy!" and, wheeling about, he tore out of the fo'c's'le as though it were a tank infested with sharks.

After him sprang the two; the boy, nigh

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"I NOT MEAN TO KILL YOU, OTTO!"

scared out of his wits, at their heels. Along the deck they went in the wake of the running Norwegian; but the fear of death—the devil, that awful supposed something from beyond the grave—added to the frightful spur which we term a murderer's conscience, lent him a speed they could never attain. When they gained the three-step ladder up to the little poop a heavy splash sounded on the comparatively quiet night. On the poop the "old man" stood like one transfixed, his pipe in his right hand and his gaze endeavouring to scan all directions at once.

Aft at the wheel stood the helmsman, wonder and stupefaction written on his face. Olafsen had darted by them as a dolphin before a shark, and ere they knew who or what had torn past he had taken a flying leap over the taffrail. Consternation precluded all efforts to save him, even had there been nothing else to prevent our doing so. When we, collectively, had gained a full knowledge of what had happened the place where Olafsen had disappeared was far astern. Nevertheless, our vessel was speedily brought to the wind, then put about and tacked again; but no signs of the Norwegian could we find. After the necessary explanations had been given the skipper, of course, soundly reprimanded the practical jokers. Yet this did not explain away Olafsen's reason for his terrible act. The latter came at daybreak, when the "old man" took possession of the dead man's chest and other belongings. Then it was that the secret came out. There, in a little "ditty"-box, securely locked and hidden away at the bottom of his chest, was a scrawled confession that he, in a moment of jealous passion, had taken the life of a fellow-creature. It was apparently one of those hot-blooded love-stories that are the curse of some lives; its details were lost in the past, and we had but the bare fact, just as our log-book gave account of his death: "Committed suicide on the night of June 23rd, 18—; latitude, 44·8 N.; longitude, 7·15 W."

Such was the most outstanding result of a piece of sea superstition known to me. Yet in the course of some years afloat I became acquainted with many superstitious incidents as interesting, though luckily not so tragic, as the one above related.

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The Other End of the Wires.

A MONOLOGUE.

BY M. WALTER-THOMAS.

(Present time, about one o'clock in the day. A comfortable study, with a telephone above the writing-desk. Enter HILDA, *with three unopened letters in her hand.)*

HILDA : I do so hate the midday post; it always brings such stupid letters : things that aren't worth reading and have to be answered. Oh, dear ! Mme. Corder's nasty long envelope. (*Opens a letter.*) Goodness, six guineas for that hideous thing that I wore once, and then sent straight off to the Horrocks for their jumble sale ! Who's this from ? (*Opens another.*) Ah ! Clara, she generally writes a lot of gossip. (*Reads.*) " Dearest Hilda . . . . um . . . . what a nice tennis-party they had . . . . um . . . . young Findlater from your father's office "—so she's met Harry Findlater !—" quite a handsome boy ! " — nasty, patronizing girl —" . . . . um . . . . Belle has had such lovely wedding-presents, and all her dresses from Jones and Hood can't be distinguished from Worth " . . . . horrid suburban frocks ! . . . " party at the Shorters' . . . . young Findlater most attentive to me, so I talked to him about your people. He seems to know you well . . . . um . . . . Your loving Clara." How horrid to be discussed by Clara ! I am sure she said all the disagreeable things she could think of about me ! (*Sits in a pensive attitude.*) Dear, dear ! What if he really is in love with her ? How horrid ! I did think he was getting so nice ; but that's the way with men so often. They sit by you, and suddenly grow sympathetic and confidential, and then burst out with the news that they are desperately in love with—your best friend ! Of course, if Harry did propose, father and mother would be wild, and there would be a regular fight —so stupid ! as if it mattered his not having any money, when father has plenty, and does nothing but buy stupid shares and things with it. (*Examines third letter.*) Why, *whom* is this from ? Whom *is* it from ? I shall find out by opening it, I suppose. (*Reads.*) " My Dear Miss Gerald,—I have tried, and tried, and tried." Why, what on earth——? (*Turns over to the signature.*) " Harry Findlater." (*Jumps up, kissing the letter.*) Oh !

" SO SHE'S MET HARRY FINDLATER ! "

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you darling! so you really have written! I wonder what else? (*Reads.*) "I have tried, and tried, and tried to get a chance of speaking to you, but you *will* always talk of general things, and I can't tell you." Stupid! you sat by me last Tuesday all through that musical At Home, and talked about tortoises! (*Reads.*) "So I am writing to tell you, unless you know it already, which I think you must." Oh! how men worry round a point, instead of coming to it. (*Reads to herself, smiling.*) But when they *do* come to it, how nicely they put it! (*Reads.*) "When you get this by the midday post, I shall be mad with anxiety to know your answer, so as a member of the S.P.C.A."—Cruelty to Animals?—"I think it your duty to let me know at once. Do telephone down to the office; your father will be having his lunch—please do, there's a darling! . . . . ." Cheek! Telephone, indeed! The imperiousness of modern young men! Let him come round submissively this evening!—oh, bother, I am going out to the Drummonds' to-morrow—I shall go to Ley for a week—I wonder when he can. (*Telephone bell rings in the room.*) Ah! someone at the telephone. (*Adjusts the tubes, and speaks into it.*) Yes—Yes—Yes, I'm Miss Gerald. Oh! it's Mr. Findlater; good morning, Mr. Findlater. (*To the audience.*) Dreadfully embarrassing! (*To the telephone.*) Yes, the midday post is just in—Yes, I have had some letters. (*To the audience.*) What *am* I to say? (*To the telephone.*) No, I haven't read them all, only one or two. (*To the audience.*) Just saved myself! (*To the telephone.*) Why should you be concerned about my letters, Mr. Findlater?—Is father there?—Not come back yet from lunch?—Oh, is that all? Good morning, Mr. Findlater. (*Switches off. Sinks down in a chair with a sigh of relief.*) Well, what a trying conversation! Dreadful boy, to ring up for an answer like that! Such an up-to-date idea! Let's see, how was it done before? Laurence spoke to father first; then father spoke to mother; then father and mother sent for Aunt Jane; then father and mother and Aunt Jane sent for Laurence and spoke to him; and, at last, after about a fortnight, Laurence was allowed to speak to me, and mother told me what to say. Why, Harry has no idea how long these things take! Expects me to telephone *yes* or *no* as soon as I have read his letter. I couldn't answer all at once; besides, I shall have to explain why I can't, and then be persuaded into it, and then I shall have to persuade father and mother, and then I shall have to quarrel with Harry, and then make it up and have a present — I think I should like sapphires: diamonds are getting common;

"THEN FATHER AND MOTHER AND AUNT JANE SENT FOR LAURENCE AND SPOKE TO HIM."

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besides, I had them last time — then I shall have to tell Clara, and be properly engaged.—Why, it will take weeks; and he thinks I can do it all by telephone while father is finishing his lunch. Goodness! is he still at the other end of the wires? He will hold on to them like a bull-dog till father comes in and finds him—I *must* say something. (*Rings up.*) Are you there? . . . Are you there? . . . (*To the audience.*) How tiresome! it is the exchange. (*To the telephone.*) I want 130404 — Mr. Gerald's office, 130404—No. 0404, not 04 only — 130404 — 130404. (*To the audience.*) What idiot is at the other end of this? (*To the telephone.*) Oh, is that you, Mr. Findlater?—I beg your pardon?—Yes, I've read my letters — Yes, I've read yours, Mr. Findlater—I really couldn't give you an answer now — It was quite a shock; I never dreamt for a moment — I don't think it's any use— I said I don't think it's any use — No, I'm not cruel; I'm only wondering what father would say— No, you are *not* to; do you hear, Harry —Mr. Findlater, I mean—you are not to say a word to father. *I* must tell him; quite at the end of dinner. Now, don't say a word to him — but I can't give you an answer, Mr. Findlater, now—No; I'm going out this evening— No; I am going to the country for a few days to-morrow—Oh! no, I couldn't write about . . . . about things like that, it would be horrid—Well, I know father will begin by saying—When I tell him, of course—Well, tell him I want him to let me be engaged to you. (*To the audience.*) There now! I've practically said 'yes' already when I didn't mean to do it for weeks. . . . . (*With a little shriek: to the telephone.*) Oh, Harry, don't make those dreadful noises! They must sound all over the office—No, I won't say it down the tube; it's idiotic—No; I won't!—How can you be so silly?—Very well, "I promise, Harry, darling"—does that satisfy you?—You heard quite well; I'm not going to repeat it.

"OH, HARRY, DON'T MAKE THOSE DREADFUL NOISES!"

A VOICE OUTSIDE: Hilda! Hilda!

HILDA (*hanging up the tube*): Oh, there's mother calling me! All right, I am coming now. (*Goes to the door and calls.*) They're in the right-hand top small drawer of the chest of drawers in the spare room—No, right-hand small drawer—Very well. (*Comes back.*) I *do* wish I had not let Harry guess I would accept him at once. I really think I had better write to him—it is more dignified, and I can be much more indefinite. I don't want him to think I am ready to jump into his arms if he only holds them open. Yes, I *will* write. (*Seats herself at a table and opens a writing-case.*) No, not that fancy paper, it would look as if I were so fond of him. Ah, a sheet with the crest, then he shall just see—— (*Writes.*) "Dear Mr. Findlater"— Well, I have been calling him Harry all the time. (*Tears up the sheet.*) "My dear Mr. Findlater." (*Stops writing and shakes her stylographic pen.*) Now, I do believe Wilson has been using my stylograph, horrid thing! (*Knocks her elbow on the table, etc.*) I shall have to go and fill the stupid thing. (*Writes.*) There, now, it has simply *spat* all over the paper. (*Tears up the sheet.*) Oh! dear, there isn't another crested sheet left. I am sure Wilson uses it. (*Rises.*) I wonder if Harry is at the telephone all the time. Oh! well, he's all right.—But father will be coming in from his lunch. What's the time? (*Consults watch.*) Bother! stopped! Oh! dear, I wish there was a cinematograph down to the office. Perhaps I had better ring up and advise him to go back to his work, or father will come in and find him. Besides, I do so want to know exactly

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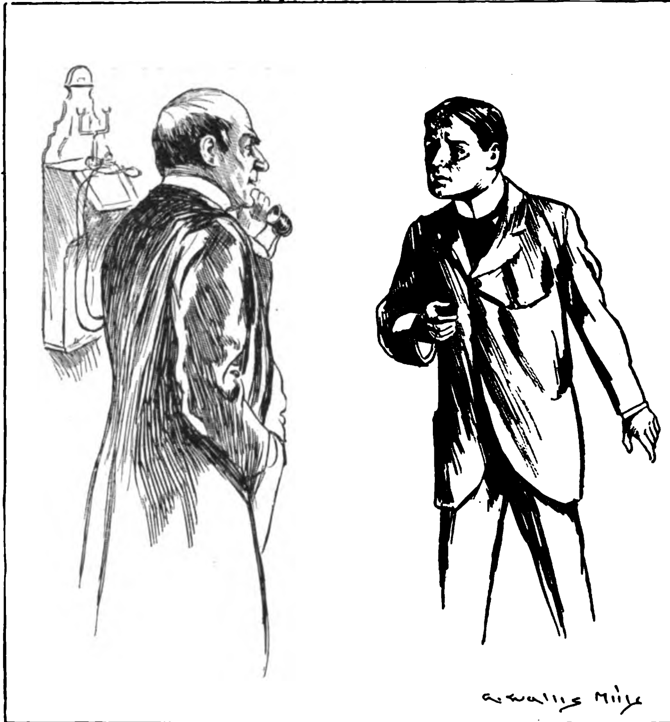
what Clara Fry said to him about me. (*Rings up.*) Are you there?—Are you there? (*To the audience.*) Yes, I do believe he has been waiting for me. (*To the telephone.*) Yes, it's Hilda—Clara Fry wrote to me this morning, Harry, and said she had met you, and that you paid a great deal of attention to her, and flirted with her, and I do think it was horrid of you, after the way you laughed at her last summer and imitated her serve at tennis.—What? You're not talking distinctly.—Why didn't you say anything the other evening, when I sent father off to the Lyceum early by putting the clock on an hour?—Harry, when did you begin to think you would like to—to—well, to write the sort of letter you *did* write to me?—What? You *do* talk so softly—You don't really like Clara, do you? She thinks every man is in love with her.—Is father cross to-day? Don't let him have any complaints and things, because sometimes he comes back from the office like a bear with a sore head, and I mean to simply devour him with niceness when he comes home to tea.—It's all for your sake, Harry—Do you think you could *feel* a kiss down the tube, dear, if you put your lips there instead of your ear? (*To the audience, with a scream.*) Oh!—"Whom are you talking all this confounded twaddle to?" Oh! it's *not* Harry at the telephone. (*Listening.*) Now someone is saying, "Will you go back to your work, Findlater, instead of hanging about the telephone?" "Whom am I talking this confounded twaddle to?" (*springing from the tube in consternation*). It's father! Oh, it's father at the other end of the wires! *What* shall I do? (*hurrying back to the telephone*). I must explain. Oh! I *can't* explain! What did I say about a bear with a sore head? I can't think of anything except to run and tell mother all about it, and make *her* explain to father to-night! (*Exit very hurriedly.*)



"WILL YOU GO BACK TO YOUR WORK, FINDLATER?"

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A Parlour Séance with David Devant.

By E. T. Sachs.

Author of "Sleight of Hand." From Photos. by George Newnes, Ltd.

THE normal attitude of the public towards the conjurer is that of endeavouring to find him out. In the case of David Devant it has hitherto proved to be an occupation productive of very small result, and, by way of variety, I, personally, have been devoting myself to the task of finding him in. This is not the easy thing it might appear, for, temporarily forsaking the home of magic in Piccadilly, whose mystery-permeated walls are to be replaced by a new building at no great distance of time, David Devant has been occupied in carrying the cult of the occult into the provinces, and along with it the fame of the celebrated Egyptian Hall combination.

I sought out David Devant with a set purpose. On previous occasions this man of many parts had provided delectable amusement for readers of The Strand Magazine, and it occurred to me that the time was ripe for some more. As became one of his vocation, I found David Devant enshrouded in the dim light of his sanctum. In front of him was a spot of greater brightness, and this inspection showed to be a miniature stage, a precise model of the one which our magician employs, with every detail, down to the electric foot-lights, complete. The pigmy rehearsal in progress was that of the new entertainment which David Devant was preparing for his audiences, and which, by this time, will have become familiar throughout the country.

1.—Showing the match-box apparently empty.

It may be news to the reader to be told that the magician forms the one exception to the world's economic provision which prohibits less gifted mortals from doing two things at once. The Man of Magic not only habitually employs either hand in two separate and distinct occupations, but he will probably have his mind engaged on a third matter in addition. So it did not in the least interfere with Devant's occupation of the moment when I told him the purpose of my visit. With his head half inside the miniature proscenium he said: "You want something from me for the readers of The Strand Magazine in the shape of easy tricks, without sleight of hand, or with very little? Something that can be done with common objects of every-day use? Ah, I daresay I can manage that, if you give me a few minutes.' He was busy arranging a *coulisse* at the exact angle, and, whilst continuing to do this with the left hand, he reached with the right for a match-box, which he handed me with the admonition to empty it of its matches. Whilst this was being done the conjurer's voice was raised in a loud call for "Ernest." "Ernest" is no other than Devant, junior, and he speedily made his appearance out of the gloom, and, for all I could see to the contrary, he might have come through the wall. The youngster was sent to bring a glass of water, and Devant, showing me the match-box empty (Fig. 1), begged me to close it and retain it in my hands. Ernest arriving with the glass of water, a half-crown was

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produced, placed in a handkerchief (Fig. 2), and, under its folds, held suspended over the tumbler (Fig. 3). At a given signal the half-crown was allowed to fall into the water, and that it had done so was announced by the jingle it made against the glass. Yet, on the handkerchief being removed by Ernest, no coin was visible in the tumbler. Told to shake the match-box, a rattle betrayed the presence of a solid object inside, and on investigation this proved to be the half-crown.

2.—PLACING THE COIN IN THE HANDKERCHIEF.

It may seem impossible that no sleight of hand enters into this trick, but such is the case, a little adroitness being all that is called for. Unknown to the audience, the conjurer has a second half-crown (a florin, penny, or other coin may be used) and an eye-glass of about the same size. When the match-box is being exhibited empty one half-crown is held concealed in the third, fourth, and fifth fingers of the right hand (I presume throughout that the reader is not able to "palm" coins), which is holding the outer cover of the box. Into this cover, on the upper side, this coin is slipped. When the tray part is pushed in the coin is forced over the advancing end of the tray, so as to be nipped between it and the cover. In this position the coin is held secure, and when the tray is finally pushed home it naturally falls down and is thus contained in the box.

The mystery of the half-crown in the tumbler is explained by the conjurer having concealed under three fingers of the right hand the eye-glass, this concealment being covered by holding the coin between finger and thumb, the whole being very accurately portrayed in Fig. 2. The handkerchief is thrown over this hand, but the left hand picks up, not the coin but the eye-glass, the right hand, with the coin held between the first and second joints of the middle finger, being dropped unostentatiously at the side, an early opportunity being taken for transferring the half-crown to the pocket. By putting off the closing of the match-box till now the effect of the illusion is improved.

3.—THE COIN (IN HANDKERCHIEF) HELD OVER TUMBLER.

It is advisable that the eye-glass should fit the bottom of the

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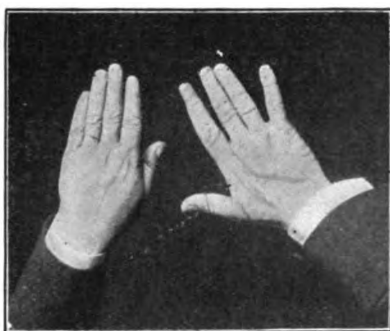
tumbler rather closely in order that the performer may pour out the water and hold the tumbler upside down. A champagne tumbler is most suitable for the trick.

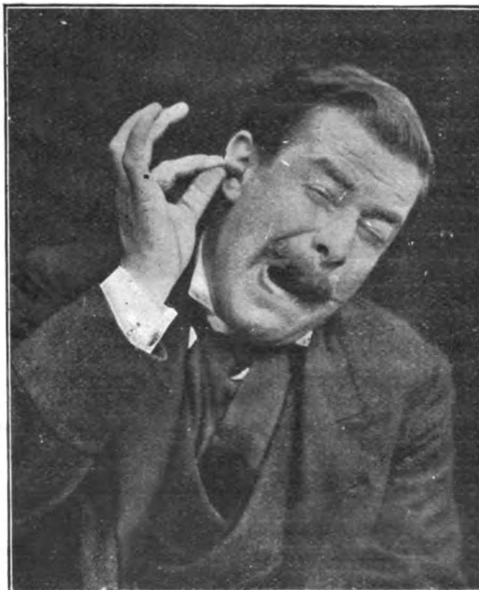
In Fig. 3 the reader is shown what is not visible to the spectator, namely, the coin, for which the eye-glass has been substituted, being held between the finger-joints. In actual practice the hand would not be held open in this way, for, of course, the back of it would be presented to the spectator.



4.—COMMENCEMENT OF THE THIMBLE TRICK.

In Fig. 1 the half-crown is inside the match-box cover, held in position by the first finger of the right hand, inserted in the cover for the purpose.

5.—SWALLOWING THE THIMBLE.



6.—RECOVERING THE THIMBLE.

"What do you think of that?" asked Devant, immersing himself, as it were, in his stage again, the positions of two delicious little gilded Empire chairs seeming to give him some trouble. I said that the match-box idea was quite new to me, and would prove a stumbling-block to the average intelligence.

When Devant next turned round to me he extended towards me his dexter finger.

On the end of it was a thimble. Holding up the backs of his hands as in Fig. 4, he said: "See that? Now, look here. One, two." At "one" he passed the right hand rapidly across the back of the left; at "two" the hand was passed below the other, and lo! the thimble had become transferred from the first finger of the right hand to the corresponding finger of the left hand. The "one, two" action was repeated and the thimble was back to its original position. After this had been done two or three times the finger with the thimble on it was popped suddenly into the mouth (Fig. 5), and when withdrawn the thimble remained behind. It was recovered by way of the ear (Fig. 6). Just to show how painless the operation was the thimble was put back into the ear, the finger inserted into the mouth again, and when withdrawn there was the thimble on the end.

7.—HOW THE THIMBLE TRICK IS DONE.

The secret of the trick is revealed at Fig. 7, the

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vanished thimble being concealed at the root of the thumb. The right hand shows the thimble in the act of being concealed; in the left hand the movement has been completed.

In the case of the first sleight (Fig. 4) the performer has two thimbles, one of which is concealed in the left hand at the commencement. In the act of making the "one, two" passes the performer conceals the thimble in the right hand and produces that in the left. If he were to endeavour to do this with the hands quiescent the deception would cease to be such, but under cover of the rapid passes the double movements escape detection.

8.—PASSING A COIN THROUGH A HAT—THE EFFECT.

In Figs. 5 and 6 one thimble only is necessary. The hand, with thimble on finger, is advanced rapidly towards the mouth, which organ makes a gesture strongly significant of an anticipated swallowing, this materially helping the illusion (and no one can say that David Devant is here lacking in appropriate gesture), and when the finger is popped in, the fact that no thimble is upon it will pass absolutely unnoticed. The thimble has, of course, been concealed at the root of the thumb under cover of the advancing movement. After making several gulps suggestive of swallowing, accompanied with pleasurable feelings, the hand is suddenly advanced to the ear, the thimble being brought out on the top of the finger *en route*. Once in the orifice of the ear the tips of finger and thumb are substituted, as in the illustration. When the order is reversed from ear to mouth the thimble is concealed as the hand is made to approach the ear. The action of pushing in the thimble is simulated (it would not be unnatural for the performer to suffer some agony under the operation), and after the fingers have been shown empty the forefinger is rapidly inserted into the mouth, the thimble being got on to it on the road.

9.—WHAT THE SPECTATORS DO NOT SEE.

With the facility for concealing the thimble once acquired, as it may be in a short time, the performer may, of course, vary his methods of causing it to disappear and reappear. He will be guided in this by his opportunities.

If Ernest did not show very great interest in the thimble trick it was probably because he had seen it a few times before, but he woke up again when sent for a "bowler" hat and a soda-water tumbler, both "common objects" enough in most households. Each article having been examined, the tumbler was stood upon the table and on it the hat, crown downwards. Anything less magical than this could scarcely be. However, some pennies were produced, one was marked, and Devant announced that he would throw them into the hat with such effect that the marked coin would penetrate the felt and fall into the glass, the others remaining in the hat. The coins were duly pitched into the hat and, plainly enough, one of them, and one only, was seen to fall into the tumbler (Fig. 8).

The secret of the illusion of the coin passing through the hat, which, I may state, is a very complete one, is thus accomplished. When the performer places the hat on the glass

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he has, unknown to the spectators, a coin concealed under the hat. Making a little fuss over balancing the hat upon the tumbler he gets the coin into the position shown at Fig. 9, where it will be seen that more of the coin overhangs the inner side of the rim than it does the outer. The tumbler is shown tilted for the convenience of illustration, but very little, if any, tilting is really necessary. Now, if the balance of the hat is suddenly disturbed, its pressure on the coin will be momentarily relieved and the coin will fall into the glass. If more of the coin is outside than inside the rim then it will fall upon the table, and there may be smiles. Such disturbance is brought about if a few coins are thrown smartly into the hat in a very oblique direction, so that, striking it on one side, it is caused to tilt and so release the coin underneath. Care should be taken that the hidden coin is in a direct line with the throw—whether towards or away from the performer does not matter—as the desired result is then more likely to come about.

The concealed coin may be the marked one or an indifferent one. If it is the marked coin then it must necessarily be exchanged for another before the hat is placed in position. As the performer is assumed to be unable to palm the exchange can be effected by commencing the trick by placing the marked coin in a handkerchief and changing it precisely as shown at Fig. 2. The performer then alters his mind, pretending to see an objection to the use of a handkerchief, and takes up the hat, the supposed marked coin (the real Simon Pure now being in the performer's possession) being placed amongst the others. The preliminary changing of the marked coin creates the best effect, because a spectator may be allowed to lift the hat off the tumbler and take out the coin for identification.

If an unmarked coin be used it follows that the performer must retain possession of the marked one, refraining from throwing it into the hat. He will also be obliged to take the coin out of the tumbler himself and change it for the marked one as he hands it for examination. The following manœuvre for effecting this is successful if executed with dash. With the marked coin concealed in the left hand, the tumbler is seized by the right at the brim in such a way that the fingers can be made to overhang inside to a considerable extent, though no suggestion of such overhanging must be made as the tumbler is seized. The action of pouring the coin out of the tumbler into the left hand is now rapidly executed, the fingers of the right hand momentarily extended as the tumbler is inverted arresting the descent of the coin, and the marked coin that is already in the left hand will appear to have come out of the tumbler.

Devant said he would now show me a "Davenport Brother" trick, done with some other common objects, viz., a finger-ring and a piece of cord. Ernest, who had been a mute spectator of the preceding trick, keeping strictly to himself any explanation that may have formed itself in his little mind, was dispatched for the cord, and on returning with it was bidden to bind his father's hands together behind his back, as at Fig. 10. Devant taking a seat on a chair, I was told to place my signet-ring between his lips and to state upon which finger of either hand I should like it to appear. I named the little finger of the left hand. Acting on instructions, Ernest brought from the corner a small Japanese folding screen. "When I say 'Right,'

10.—DAVENPORT TRICK FOR THE PARLOUR—THE KNOTS TIED.

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11.—THE HANDS AS BEFORE—RING ON FINGER.

take away the screen quickly," said Devant; and barely was the obstruction in position than "Right" was shouted from behind it. When it was removed there sat Devant, with an innocent look upon his face, having apparently never moved. But the ring was no longer between his lips, and on rising and turning round it was seen to be upon the selected finger, the hands bound as before (Fig. 11).

For the explanation of the trick look at Fig. 12. It will be seen that the performer twists his two hands round his back far enough to enable him to open one of the palms, into which he drops the ring, when it is a simple thing to place it upon the chosen finger. As there is no question of untying the knots, they may be knotted several times over, or sealed, if the spectators desire it; and the trick possesses a merit which is not an attribute of every illusion, inasmuch as it may be repeated several times without anyone being much wiser.

It will be noticed that the wrists are not bound close together, but in the case of very slim people this can be done. It is merely a question of conformation. A well-developed person should have the wrists tied loosely, or he will not be able to twist his hands round sufficiently far. The careful performer will, of course, experiment in private and learn precisely what he can do and what he cannot.

The model stage had been a good deal neglected, but it was far from being out of Devant's mind, and my attention was directed to it. On a scale of about 1 in 20 I saw before me an exact representation, colour scheme and all, of Devant's fit-up stage, as arranged for Chinese effects. He explained that he would personate a Celestial magician, and in that capacity cover the stage with all manner of strange living things, both beasts of the field and fowls of the air, which will come from nowhere in particular and appear none the worse for it. From the model before me I certainly obtain no glimpse whatever of the secret of this promised production, and being anxious to gather particulars of a few more parlour tricks (not that anyone nowadays confesses to possessing a parlour), I institute no inquiries. On my suggesting that perhaps

12.—THE EXPLANATION.

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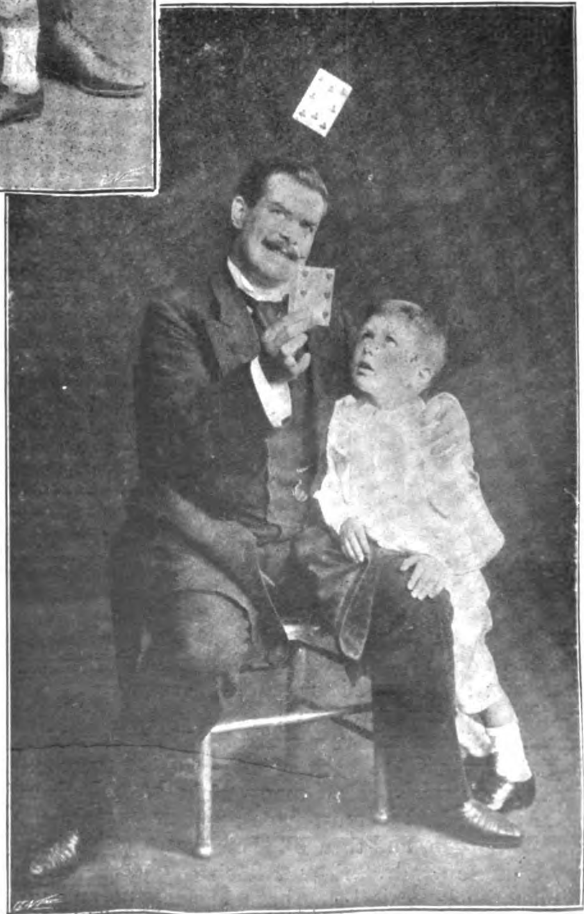
13.—THE JUMPING CARD—SELECTING THE CARD.

Devant has a card trick to give away, I am asked if I know his jumping card trick. I do not; and as Ernest is fortuitously discovered to have a pack of cards concealed in his blouse (not so very surprising, perhaps, in the presence of a couple of conjurers), facilities are at once afforded for showing it me. "This, you see, is an ordinary pack of cards; take one, Ernest." Ernest, with a display of caution that is no doubt begotten of some experience as an experimental chopping-block, does as required (Fig. 13), notes the denomination of the card, and sees it slowly pushed back into the centre of the pack. I am, of course, acting as referee in this affair, and my conjurer's eye notes that it is indifferent to the performer what card is chosen, nor is it necessary for him to know the name of it. For the sake of effect, however, we are asked the name of the card, which happens to be the eight of clubs. "Now," said Devant, "all I am going to do is to hold the pack in the fingers and at my word of command the eight of clubs will jump out of the pack. Eight of clubs, jump!" And sure enough it did jump, flying a good 6ft. into the air (Fig. 14). The reader need not be told that the effect is very good indeed.

The *deus ex machinâ* is a piece of elastic, or rubber band fastened between two cards, as shown in Fig. 15. In the early stages of the trick these two cards are at the bottom of the pack, and it is an easy matter to prevent the person selecting a card from trying to take either of them, in the very unlikely event of anyone wanting to do so. Whilst the selected card is being looked at the performer carelessly shuffles the pack, thus bringing the two prepared cards to the middle of it, and on the chosen card being



14.—WHAT HO! SHE JUMPS.

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returned it is pushed down between the two cards, where it meets the elastic. This, of course, gives to the pressure; and when the card is pressed home the elastic is prevented from reacting by the grip of the hand holding the pack. When the word of command is given the pressure on the outside is relaxed, and the released elastic shoots the card into the air.

15.—DEUS EX MACHINÂ.

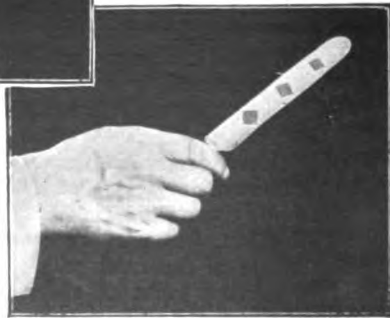
A more effective card trick without sleight of hand I do not know, and I say so. "Glad you like it," says Devant. "I have always found it take very well, and it is really quite easy. There are various ways of fixing the elastic between the cards, and the neatest way, I think, is to peel each card, pass the elastic through a slit in the face side, and secure it by pasting the card together again. This makes a very neat job of it, and nothing is given away if the back of either of the prepared cards is exposed. How many tricks have I given you? Five? We must have another to make up the half-dozen, and then I'll show you a little bit of my Chinese magic. Ernest, fetch a cheese-knife." Whilst the knife is being brought Devant cuts up six little squares (or diamonds—the shape is quite immaterial), and these being wetted are placed on the blade of the knife, three on either side.

16.—KNIFE TRICK—REMOVING THE FIRST PIECES OF PAPER.

17.—THE KNIFE APPARENTLY TURNED OVER.

"Now, watch. I take away two pieces, one from either side" (suiting the action to the word—Fig. 16). "You see that the piece on the other side has been removed," saying which the knife is turned over (Fig. 17). "Now I take away two more pieces," and the finger and thumb of the left hand remove the second pair of pieces, each side of the knife being again shown, with one piece only upon it. Finally, the remaining pieces are removed and the knife-blade shown empty on either side "To bring all six pieces back again, all I have to do is to wave the knife in the air. Here they are: three at the front and three at the back." (See Fig. 18.)

This very amusing effect is brought about by presenting to the spectator one side of the blade only. Instead of twisting the knife in the thumb and fingers so as to really expose first one side and then the other, the knife is brought round with a rapid semi-circular sweep (towards the performer), starting from the position shown at Fig. 18 and finishing in that of Fig. 17. This sweep need not be either violent or extensive—the quieter and more confined in area the better—and it will produce the effect of the knife being actually turned over.



18.—THE PAPERS RESTORED—FIRST POSITION OF KNIFE.

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The Man Who Disappeared

By L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace.

I AM a lawyer by profession, and have a snug set of chambers in Chancery Lane. My name is Charles Pleydell. I have many clients, and can already pronounce myself a rich man.

On a certain morning towards the end of September in the year 1897 I received the following letter:—

Sir,—I have been asked to call on you by a mutual friend, General Cornwallis, who accompanied my step-daughter and myself on board the *Osprey* to England. Availing myself of the General's introduction, I hope to call to see you or to send a representative about eleven o'clock to-day.

The General says that he thinks you can give me advice on a matter of some importance.

I am a Spanish lady. My home is in Brazil, and I know nothing of England or of English ways. I wish, however, to take a house near London and to settle down. This house must be situated in the neighbourhood of a large moor or common. It must have grounds surrounding it, and must have extensive cellars or basements, as my wish is to furnish a laboratory in order to carry on scientific research. I am willing to pay any sum in reason for a desirable habitation, but one thing is essential: the house must be as near London as is possible under the above conditions.—Yours obediently, Stella Scaiffe.

This letter was dated from the Carlton Hotel.

Now, it so happened that a client of mine had asked me a few months before to try and let his house—an old-fashioned and somewhat gruesome mansion, situated on a lonely part of Hampstead Heath. It occurred to me that this house would exactly suit the lady whose letter I had just read.

At eleven o'clock one of my clerks brought me in a card. On it were written the words, "Miss Muriel Scaiffe." I desired the man to show the lady in, and a moment later a slight, fair-haired English girl entered the room.

"Mrs. Scaiffe is not quite well and has sent me in her stead. You have received a letter from my step-mother, have you not, Mr. Pleydell?"

"I have," I replied. "Will you sit down, Miss Scaiffe?"

She did so. I looked at her attentively. She was young and pretty. She also looked good, and although there was a certain anxiety about her face which she could not quite repress, her smile was very sweet.

"Your step-mother," I said, "requires a house with somewhat peculiar conditions?"

"Oh, yes," the girl answered. "She is very anxious on the subject. We want to be settled within a week."

"That is a very short time in which to take and furnish a house," I could not help remarking.

"Yes," she said, again. "But, all the same, in our case it is essential. My step-mother says that anything can be done if there is enough money."

"That is true in a sense," I replied, smilingly. "If I can help you I shall be pleased. You want a house on a common?"

"On a common or moor."

"It so happens, Miss Scaiffe, that there is a place called The Rosary at Hampstead which may suit you. Here are the particulars. Read them over for yourself and tell me if there is any use in my giving you an order to view."

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She read the description eagerly, then she said :—

"I am sure Mrs. Scaiffe would like to see this house. When can we go?"

"To-day, if you like, and if you particularly wish it I can meet you at The Rosary at three o'clock."

"That will do nicely," she answered.

Soon afterwards she left me.

The rest of the morning passed as usual, and at the appointed hour I presented myself at the gates of The Rosary. A carriage was already drawn up there, and as I approached a tall lady with very dark eyes stepped out of it.

A glance showed me that the young lady had not accompanied her.

"You are Mr. Pleydell?" she said, holding out her hand to me, and speaking in excellent English.

"Yes," I answered.

"You saw my step-daughter this morning?"

"Yes," I said again.

"I have called to see the house," she continued. "Muriel tells me that it is likely to suit my requirements. Will you show it to me?"

I opened the gates, and we entered a wide carriage-drive. The Rosary had been unlet for some months, and weeds partly covered the avenue. The grounds had a desolate and gloomy appearance, leaves were falling thickly from the trees, and altogether the entire place looked undesirable and neglected.

The Spanish lady, however, seemed delighted with everything. She looked around her with sparkling glances. Flashing her dark eyes into my face, she praised the trees and avenue, the house, and all that the house contained.

She remarked that the rooms were spacious, the lobbies wide; above all things, the cellars numerous.

"I am particular about the cellars, Mr. Pleydell," she said.

"Indeed!" I answered. "At all events, there are plenty of them."

"Oh, yes! And this one is so large. It will quite suit our purpose. We will turn it into a laboratory.

"My brother and I—— Oh, I have not told you about my brother. He is a Spaniard —Señor Merello—he joins us here next week. He and I are scientists, and I hope scientists of no mean order. We have come to England for the purpose of experimenting. In this land of the free we can do what we please. We feel, Mr. Pleydell—you look so sympathizing that I cannot help confiding in you—we feel that we are on the verge of a very great—a very astounding discovery, at which the world, yes, the whole world will wonder. This house is the one of all others for our purpose. When can we take possession, Mr. Pleydell?"

I asked several questions, which were all answered to my satisfaction, and finally returned to town, prepared to draw up a lease by which the house and grounds known as The Rosary, Hampstead Heath, were to be handed over at a very high rent to Mrs. Scaiffe.

"THE SPANISH LADY SEEMED DELIGHTED WITH EVERYTHING."

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I felt pleased at the good stroke of business which I had done for a client, and had no apprehensions of any sort. Little did I guess what that afternoon's work would mean to me, and still more to one whom I had ever been proud to call my greatest friend.

Everything went off without a hitch. The Rosary passed into the hands of Mrs. Scaiffe, and also into the hands of her brother, Señor Merello, a tall, dark, very handsome man, bearing all over him the well-known characteristics of a Spanish don.

A week or two went by and the affair had well-nigh passed my memory, when one afternoon I heard eager, excited words in my clerks' room, and the next moment my head clerk entered, followed by the fair-haired English-looking girl who had called herself Muriel Scaiffe.

"I want to speak to you, Mr. Pleydell," she said, in great agitation. "Can I see you alone, and at once?"

"Certainly," I answered. I motioned to the clerk to leave us and helped the young lady to a chair.

"I cannot stay a moment," she began. "Even now I am followed. Mr. Pleydell, he has told me that he knows you; it was on that account I persuaded my step-mother to come to you about a house. You are his greatest friend, for he has said it."

"Of whom are you talking?" I asked, in a bewildered tone.

"Of Oscar Digby!" she replied. "The great traveller, the great discoverer, the greatest, most single-minded, the grandest man of his age. You know him? Yes—yes."

She paused for breath. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Indeed, I do know him," I answered. "He is my very oldest friend. Where is he? What is he doing? Tell me all about him."

She had risen. Her hands were clasped tightly together, her face was white as death.

"He is on his way to England," she answered. "Even now he may have landed. He brings great news, and the moment he sets foot in London he is in danger."

"What do you mean?"

"I cannot tell you what I mean. I dare not. He is your friend, and it is your province to save him."

"But from what, Miss Scaiffe? You have no right to come here and make ambiguous statements. If you come to me at all you ought to be more explicit."

She trembled and now, as though she could not stand any longer, dropped into a chair.

"I am not brave enough to explain things more fully," she said. "I can only repeat my words, 'Your friend is in danger.' Tell him—if you can, if you will—to have nothing to do with *us*. Keep him, at all risks, away from *us*. If he mentions us pretend that you do not know anything about us. I would not speak like this if I had not cause—the gravest. When we took The Rosary I did not believe that matters were so awful; indeed, then I was unaware that Mr. Digby was returning to London. But last night I overheard . . . . Oh! Mr. Pleydell, I can tell you no more. Pity me and do not question me. Keep Oscar Digby away from The Rosary and, if possible, do not betray me; but if in no other way you can insure his leaving us alone, tell him that I—yes, I, Muriel Scaiffe—wish it. There, I cannot do more."

She was trembling more terribly than ever. She took out her handkerchief to wipe the moisture from her brow.

"I must fly," she said. "If this visit is discovered my life is worth very little."

After she had gone I sat in absolute amazement. My first sensation was that the girl must be mad. Her pallor, her trembling, her vague innuendoes pointed surely to a condition of nerves the reverse of sane. But although the madness of Muriel Scaiffe seemed the most possible solution of her strange visit, I could not cast the thing from my memory. I felt almost needlessly disturbed by it. All day her extraordinary words haunted me, and when, on the next day, Digby, whom I had not seen for years, unexpectedly called, I remembered Miss Scaiffe's visit with a queer and ever-increasing sense of apprehension.

Digby had been away from London for several years. Before he went he and I had shared the same rooms, had gone about together, and had been chums in the fullest sense of the word. It was delightful to see him once again. His hearty, loud laugh fell refreshingly on my ears, and one or two glances into his face removed my fears. After all, it was impossible to associate danger with one so big, so burly, with such immense physical strength. His broad forehead, his keen, frank blue eyes, his smiling mouth, his strong and muscular hands, all denoted strength of mind and body. He looked as if he were muscle all over.

"Well," he said, "here I am, and I have a good deal to tell you. I want your help also, old man. It is your business to introduce me to the most promising and most

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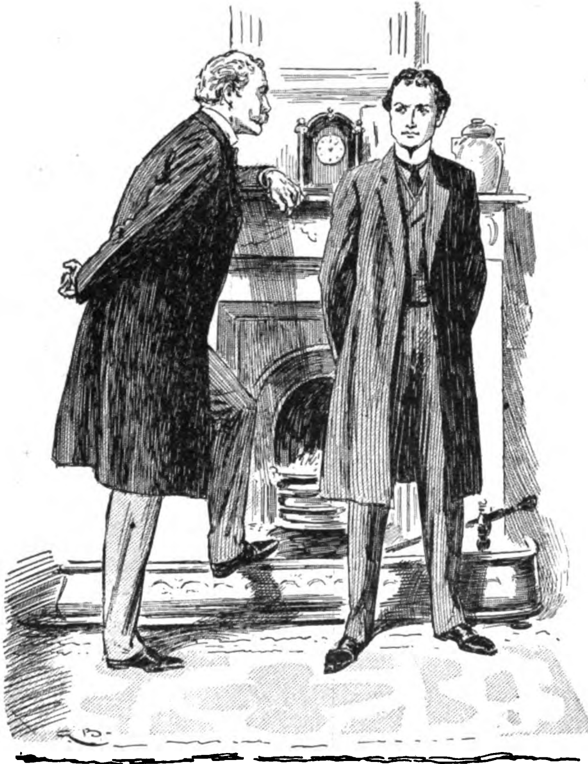
enterprising financier of the day. I have it in my power, Pleydell, to make his fortune, and yours, and my own, and half-a-dozen other people's as well."

"Tell me all about it," I said. I sat back in my chair, prepared to enjoy myself.

Oscar was a very noted traveller and thought much of by the Geographical Society.



"I WANT YOUR HELP ALSO, OLD MAN."

He came nearer to me and dropped his voice a trifle.

"I have made an amazing discovery," he said, "and that is one reason why I have hurried back to London. I do not know whether you are sufficiently conversant with extraordinary and out-of-the-way places on our globe. But anyhow, I may as well tell you that there is a wonderful region, as yet very little known, which lies on the watershed of the Essequibo and Amazon rivers. In that region are situated the old Montes de Cristæs or Crystal Mountains, the disputed boundary between British Guiana and Brazil. There also, according to the legend, was supposed to be the wonderful lost city of Manos. Many expeditions were sent out to discover it in the seventeenth century, and it was the Eldorado of Sir Walter Raleigh's famous expedition in 1615, the failure of which cost him his head."

I could not help laughing.

"This sounds like an old geography lesson. What have you to do with this *terra incognita*?"

He leant forward and dropped his voice.

"Do not think me mad," he said, "for I speak in all sanity. I have found the lost Eldorado!"

"Nonsense!" I cried.

"It is true. I do not mean to say that I have found the mythical city of gold; that, of course, does not exist. But what I have discovered is a spot close to Lake Amacu that is simply laden with gold. The estimates computed on my specimens and reports make it out to be the richest place in the world. The whole thing is, as yet, a close secret, and I have come to London now to put it into the hands of a big financier. A company must be formed with a capital of something like ten millions to work it."

"By Jove!" I cried. "You astonish me."

"The thing will create an enormous sensation," he went on, "and I shall be a millionaire; that is, if the secret does not leak out."

"The secret," I cried.

"Yes, the secret of its exact locality."

"Have you charts?"

"Yes; but those I would rather not disclose, even to you, old man, just yet."

I was silent for a moment, then I said:—

"Horace Lancaster is the biggest financier in the whole of London. He is undoubtedly your man. If you can satisfy him with your reports, charts, and specimens he can float the company. You must see him, Digby."

"Yes, that is what I want," he cried.

"I will telephone to his office at once."

I rang the bell for my clerk and gave him directions.

He left the room. In a few moments he returned with the information that Lancaster was in Paris.

"He won't be back for a week, sir," said the clerk.

He left the room, and I looked at Digby.

"Are you prepared to wait?" I asked.

He shrugged his great shoulders.

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"I must, I suppose," he said. "But it is provoking. At any moment another may forestall me. Not that it is likely; but there is always the possibility. Shall we talk over matters to-night, Pleydell? Will you dine with me at my club?"

"With a heart and a half," I answered.

"By the way," continued Digby, "some friends of mine—Brazilians—ought to be in London now: a lady of the name of Scaiffe, with her pretty little step-daughter, an English girl. I should like to introduce you to them. They are remarkably nice people. I had a letter from Mrs. Scaiffe just as I was leaving Brazil telling me that they were *en route* for England and asking me to look her up in town. I wonder where they are? Her brother, too, Señor Merello, is a most charming man. Why, Pleydell, what is the matter?"

I was silent for a moment; then I said: "If I were you I would have nothing to do with these people. I happen to know their whereabouts, and——"

"Well?" he said, opening his eyes in amazement.

"The little girl does not want you to call on them, Digby. Take her advice. She looked true and good." To my astonishment I saw that the big fellow seemed quite upset at my remarks.

"True!" he said, beginning to pace the room. "Of course the little thing is true. I tell you, Pleydell, I am fond of her. Not engaged, or anything of that sort, but I like her. I was looking forward to meeting them. The mother—the step-mother, I mean—is a magnificent woman. I am great friends with her. I was staying at their Quinta last winter. I also know the brother, Señor Merello. Has little Muriel lost her head?"

"She is anxious and frightened. The whole thing seems absurd, of course, but she certainly did beg of me to keep you away from her stepmother, and I half promised to respect her secret and not to tell you the name of the locality where Mrs. Scaiffe and Señor Merello are at present living."

He tried not to look annoyed, but he evidently was so. A few moments later he left me.

That evening Digby and I dined together. We afterwards went exhaustively into the great subject of his discovery. He showed me his specimens and reports, and, in short, so completely fired my enthusiasm that I was all impatience for Lancaster's return. The thing was a big thing, one worth fighting for. We said no more about Mrs. Scaiffe, and I hoped that my friend would not fall into the hands of a woman who, I began to fear, was little better than an adventuress.

Three or four days passed. Lancaster was still detained in Paris, and Digby was evidently eating his heart out with impatience at the unavoidable delay in getting his great scheme floated.

One afternoon he burst noisily into my presence.

"Well," he cried. "The little girl has discovered herself. Talk of women and their pranks! She came to see me at my hotel. She declared that she could not keep away. I just took the little thing in my arms and hugged her. We are going to have a honeymoon when the company is floated, and this evening, Pleydell, I dine at The Rosary.

"I JUST TOOK THE LITTLE THING IN MY ARMS AND HUGGED HER."

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Ha! ha! my friend. I know all about the secret retreat of the Scaiffes by this time. Little Muriel told me herself. I dine there to-night, and they want you to come, too."

I was about to refuse when, as if in a vision, the strange, entreating, suffering face of Muriel Scaiffe, as I had seen it the day she implored me to save my friend, rose up before my eyes. Whatever her present inexplicable conduct might mean, I would go with Digby to-night.

We arrived at The Rosary between seven and eight o'clock. Mrs. Scaiffe received us in Oriental splendour. Her dress was a wonder of magnificence. Diamonds flashed in her raven black hair and glittered round her shapely neck. She was certainly one of the most splendid-looking women I had ever seen, and Digby was not many moments in her company before he was completely subjugated by her charms.

The pale little Muriel looked washed-out and insignificant beside this gorgeous creature. Señor Merello was a masculine edition of his handsome sister: his presence and his wonderful courtly grace of manner seemed but to enhance and accentuate her charms.

At dinner we were served by Spanish servants, and a repulsive-looking negro of the name of Samson stood behind Mrs. Scaiffe's chair.

She was in high spirits, drank freely of champagne, and openly alluded to the great discovery.

"You must show us the chart, my friend," she said.

"No!" he answered, in an emphatic voice. He smiled as he spoke and showed his strong, white teeth.

She bent towards him and whispered something. He glanced at Muriel, whose face was deadly white. Then he rose abruptly.

"As regards anything else, command me," he said; "but not the chart."

Mrs. Scaiffe did not press him further. The ladies went into the drawing-room, and by-and-by Digby and I found ourselves returning to London.

During the journey I mentioned to him that Lancaster had wired to say that he would be at his office and prepared for a meeting on Friday. This was Monday night.

"I am glad to hear that the thing will not be delayed much longer," he answered. "I may as well confess that I am devoured by impatience."

"Your mind will soon be at rest," I replied. "And now, one thing more, old man. I must talk frankly. I do not like Mrs. Scaiffe—I do not like Señor Merello. As you value all your future, keep that chart out of the hands of those people."

"Am I mad?" he questioned. "The chart is seen by no living soul until I place it in Lancaster's hands. But all the same. Pleydell," he added, "you are prejudiced, Mrs. Scaiffe is one of the best of women."

"Think her so, if you will," I replied; "but, whatever you do, keep your knowledge of your Eldorado to yourself. Remember that on Friday the whole thing will be safe in Lancaster's keeping."

He promised, and I left him.

On Tuesday I saw nothing of Digby.

On Wednesday evening, when I returned home late, I received the following letter:—

I am not mad. I have heavily bribed the kitchen-maid, the only English woman in the whole house, to post this for me. I was forced to call on Mr. Digby and to engage myself to him at any cost. I am now strictly confined to my room under pretence of illness. In reality I am quite well, but a close prisoner. Mr. Digby dined here again last night and, under the influence of a certain drug introduced into his wine, has given away the whole of his discovery *except* the exact locality.

He is to take supper here late to-morrow night (Thursday) and to bring the chart. If he does, he will never leave The Rosary alive. All is prepared. *I speak who know.* Don't betray me, but save him.

The letter fell from my hands. What did it mean? Was Digby's life in danger, or had the girl who wrote to me really gone mad? The letter was without date, without any heading, and without signature. Nevertheless, as I picked it up and read it carefully over again, I was absolutely convinced beyond a shadow of doubt of its truth. Muriel Scaiffe was not mad. She was a victim, to how great an extent I did not dare to think. Another victim, one in even greater danger, was Oscar Digby. I must save him. I must do what the unhappy girl who was a prisoner in that awful house implored of me.

It was late, nearly midnight, but I knew that I had not a moment to lose. I had a friend, a certain Dr. Garland, who had been police surgeon for the Westminster Division for several years. I went immediately to his house in Eaton Square. As I had expected, he was up, and without any preamble I told him the whole long story of the last few weeks.

Finally, I showed him the letter. He heard me without once interrupting. He read the letter without comment. When he folded it up and returned it to me I saw that his keen, clean-shaven face was full of interest. He was silent for several minutes, then he said:—

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"I am glad you came to me. This story of yours may mean a very big thing. We have four *primâ-facie* points. *One:* Your friend has this enormously valuable secret about the place in Guiana or on its boundary; a secret which may be worth anything. *Two:* He is very intimate with Mrs. Scaiffe, her step-daughter, and her brother. The intimacy started in Brazil. *Three:* He is engaged to the step-daughter, who evidently is being used as a sort of tool, and is herself in a state of absolute terror, and, so far as one can make out, is not specially in love with Digby nor Digby with her. *Four:* Mrs. Scaiffe and her brother are determined, at any risk, to secure the chart which Digby is to hand to them to-morrow evening. The girl thinks this so important that she has practically risked her life to give you due warning. By the way, when did you say Lancaster would return? Has he made an appointment to see Digby and yourself?"

"Yes; at eleven o'clock on Friday morning."

"Doubtless Mrs. Scaiffe and her brother know of this."

"Probably," I answered. "As far as I can make out they have such power over Digby that he confides everything to them."

"Just so. They have power over him, and they are not scrupulous as to the means they use to force his confidence. If Digby goes to The Rosary to-morrow evening the interview with Lancaster will, in all probability, never take place."

"What do you mean?" I cried, in horror.

"Why, this. Mrs. Scaiffe and Señor Merello are determined to learn Digby's secret. It is necessary for their purpose that they should know the secret and also that they should be the *sole possessors* of it. You see why they want Digby to call on them? They must get his secret from him *before* he sees Lancaster. The chances are that if he gives it up he will never leave the house alive."

"Then, what are we to do?" I asked, for Garland's meaning stunned me, and I felt incapable of thought or of any mode of action.

"Leave this matter in my hands. I am going immediately to see Inspector Frost. I will communicate with you directly anything serious occurs."

The next morning I called upon Digby and found him breakfasting at his club. He looked worried, and, when I came in, his greeting was scarcely cordial.

"What a solemn face, Pleydell!" he said. "Is anything wrong?" He motioned me to a seat near. I sank into it.

"I want you to come out of town with me," I said. "I can take a day off. Shall we both run down to Brighton? We can return in time for our interview with Lancaster to-morrow."

"It is impossible," he answered. "I should like to come with you, but I have an engagement for to-night."

"Are you going to The Rosary?" I asked.

"THEY HAVE SUCH POWER OVER DIGBY THAT HE CONFIDES EVERYTHING TO THEM."

"I am," he replied, after a moment's pause. "Why, what is the matter?" he added. "I suppose I may consider myself a free agent." There was marked irritation in his tone.

"I wish you would not go," I said.

"Why not?"

"I do not trust the people."

"Folly, Pleydell. In the old days you used not to be so prejudiced."

"I had not the same cause. Digby, if ever people are trying to get you into their hands, they are those people. Have you not already imparted your secret to them?"

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"How do you know?" he exclaimed, springing up and turning crimson.

"Well, can you deny it?"

His face paled.

"I don't know that I want to," he said. "Mrs. Scaiffe and Merello will join me in this matter. There is no reason why things should be kept dark from them."

"But is this fair or honourable to Lancaster? Remember, I have already written fully to him. Do, I beg of you, be careful."

"Lancaster cannot object to possible wealthy shareholders," was Digby's answer. "Anyhow," he added, laughing uneasily, "I object to being interfered with. Pray understand that, old man, if we are to continue friends; and now by-bye for the present. We meet at eleven o'clock to-morrow at Lancaster's."

His manner gave me no pretext for remaining longer with him, and I returned to my own work. About five o'clock on that same day a telegram was handed to me which ran as follows:—

Come here at once.—GARLAND.

I left the house, hailed a hansom, and in a quarter of an hour was shown into Garland's study. He was not alone. A rather tall, grey-haired, grey-moustached, middle-aged man was with him. This man was introduced to me as Inspector Frost.

"Now, Pleydell," said Garland, in his quick, incisive way, "listen to me carefully. The time is short. Inspector Frost and I have not ceased our inquiries since you called on me last night. I must tell you that we believe the affair to be of the most serious kind. Time is too pressing now to enter into all details, but the thing amounts to this. There is the gravest suspicion that Mrs. Scaiffe and her brother, Señor Merello, are employed by a notorious gang in Brazil to force Digby to disclose the exact position of the gold mine. We also know for certain that Mrs. Scaiffe is in constant and close communication with some very suspicious people both in London and in Brazil.

"Now, listen. The crisis is to be to-night. Digby is to take supper at The Rosary, and there to give himself absolutely away. He will take his chart with him; that is the scheme. Digby must not go—that is, if we can possibly prevent him. We expect you to do what you can under the circumstances, but as the case is so serious, and as it is more than probable that Digby will not be persuaded, Inspector Frost and myself and a number of men of his division will surround the house as soon as it becomes dark, and if Digby should insist on going in every protection in case of difficulty will be given him. The presence of the police will also insure the capture of Mrs. Scaiffe and her brother."

"You mean," I said, "that you will, if necessary, search the house?"

"Yes."

"But how can you do so without a warrant?"

"We have thought of that," said Garland, with a smile. "A magistrate living at Hampstead has been already communicated with. If necessary, one of our men will ride over to his house and procure the requisite instrument to enforce our entrance."

"Very well," I answered; "then I will go at once to Digby's, but I may as well tell you plainly that I have very little hope of dissuading him."

I drove as fast as I could to my friend's rooms, but was greeted with the information that he had already left and was not expected back until late that evening. This was an unlooked-for blow.

I went to his club—he was not there. I then returned to Dr. Garland.

"I failed to find him," I said. "What can be done? Is it possible that he has already gone to his fate?"

"That is scarcely likely," replied Garland, after a pause. "He was invited to supper at The Rosary, and according to your poor young friend's letter the time named was late. There is nothing for it but to waylay him on the grounds before he goes in. You will come with us to-night, will you not, Pleydell?"

"Certainly," I answered.

Garland and I dined together. At half-past nine we left Eaton Square and, punctually at ten o'clock, the hansom we had taken put us down at one of the roads on the north side of the Heath. The large house which I knew so well loomed black in the moonlight.

The night was cold and fresh. The moon was in its second quarter and was shining brightly. Garland and I passed down the dimly-lit lane beside the wall. A tall, dark figure loomed from the darkness and, as it came forward, I saw that it was Inspector Frost.

"Mr. Digby has not arrived yet," he said. "Perhaps, sir," he added, looking at me, "you can even now dissuade him, for it is a bad business. All my men are ready," he continued, "and at a signal the house will be surrounded; but we must have one last try to prevent his entering it. Come this way,

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please, sir," he added, beckoning to me to follow him.

We passed out into the road.

"I am absolutely bewildered, inspector," I said to him. "Do you mean to say there is really great danger?"

"The worst I ever knew," was his answer. "You cannot stop a man entering a house if he wishes to; but I can tell you, Mr. Pleydell, I do not believe his life is worth that if he goes in." And the inspector snapped his fingers.

He had scarcely ceased speaking when the jingling of the bells of a hansom sounded behind us. The cab drew up at the gates and Oscar Digby alighted close to us.

Inspector Frost touched him on the shoulder.

He swung round and recognised me.

"Halloa! Pleydell," he said, in no very cordial accents. "What in the name of Heaven are you doing here? What does this mean? Who is this man?"

"I am a police-officer, Mr. Digby, and I want to speak to you. Mr. Pleydell has asked you not to go into that house. You are, of course, free to do as you like, but I must tell you that you are running into great danger. Be advised by me and go away."

For answer Digby thrust his hand into his breast-pocket. He pulled out a note which he gave me.

"Read that, Pleydell," he said; "and receive my answer." I tore the letter from its envelope and read in the moonlight:—

Come to me. I am in danger and suffering. Do not fail me.—MURIEL.

"A hoax! A forgery!" I could not help crying. "For God's sake, Digby, don't be mad."

"Mad or sane, I go into that house," he said. His bright blue eyes flashed with passion and his breath came quickly.

"Hands off, sir. Don't keep me."

He swung himself away from me.

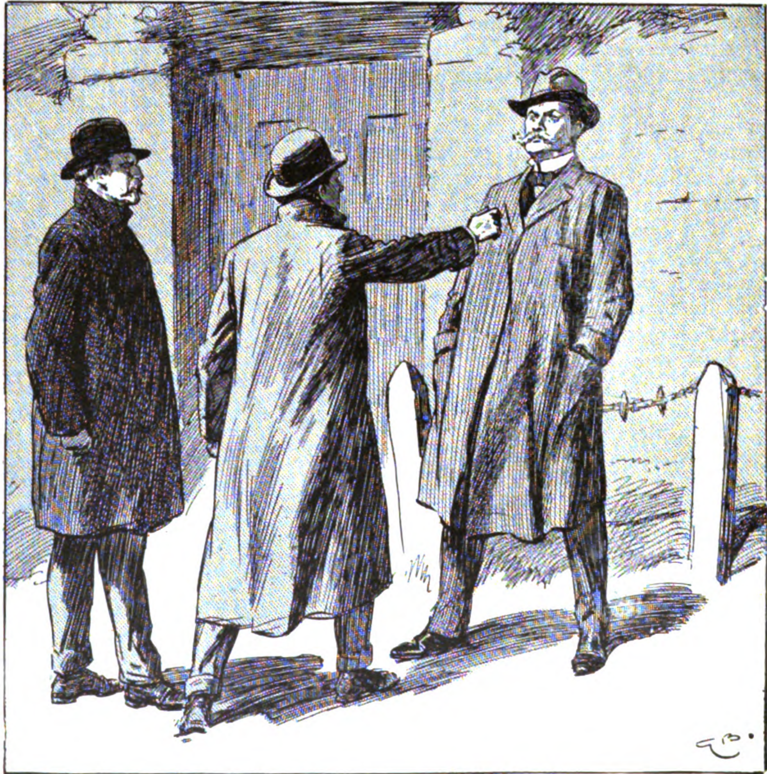
"One word," called the inspector after him. "How long do you expect to remain?"

"Perhaps an hour. I shall be home by midnight."

"And now, sir, please listen. You can be assured, in case of any trouble, that we are here, and I may further tell you that if you are not out of the house by one o'clock, we shall enter with a search warrant."

Digby stood still for a moment, then he turned to me.

"I cannot but resent your interference, but I believe you mean well. Good-bye!" He



"HE SWUNG HIMSELF AWAY FROM ME."

wrung my hand and walked quickly up the drive.

We watched him ring the bell. The door was opened at once by the negro servant. Digby entered. The door closed silently. Inspector Frost gave a low whistle.

"I would not be that man for a good deal," he said.

Garland came up to us both.

"Is the house entirely surrounded, Frost?" I heard him whisper. Frost smiled, and I

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saw his white teeth gleam in the darkness. He waved his hand.

"There is not a space of six feet between man and man," I heard him say; "and now we have nothing to do but to wait and hope for at least an hour and a half. If in an hour's time Mr. Digby does not reappear I shall send a man for the warrant. At one o'clock we enter the house."

Garland and I stood beneath a large fir tree in a dense shade and within the inclosed garden. The minutes seemed to crawl. Our conversation was limited to low whispers at long intervals.

Eleven o'clock chimed on the church clock near by; then half-past sounded on the night air. My ears were strained to catch the expected click of the front door-latch, but it did not come. The house remained wrapt in silence. Once Garland whispered:—

"Hark!" We listened closely. It certainly seemed to me that a dull, muffled sound, as of pounding or hammering, was just audible; but whether it came from the house or not it was impossible to tell.

At a quarter to twelve the one remaining lighted window on the first floor became suddenly dark. Still there was no sign of Digby. Midnight chimed.

Frost said a word to Garland and disappeared, treading softly. He was absent for more than half an hour. When he returned I heard him say:—

"I have got it," and he touched his pocket with his hand as he spoke.

The remaining moments went by in intense anxiety, and, just as the deep boom of one o'clock was heard the inspector laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Come along quietly," he whispered.

Some sign, conveyed by a low whistle, passed from him to his men, and I heard the bushes rustle around us.

The next moment we had ascended the steps, and we could hear the deep whirr of the front door bell as Frost pressed the button.

In less time than we had expected we heard the bolts shot back. The door was opened on a chain and a black face appeared at the slit.

"Who are you and what do you want?" said a voice.

"I have called for Mr. Digby," said Frost. "Go and tell him that his friend, Mr. Pleydell, and also Doctor Garland want to see him immediately."

A look of blank surprise came over the negro's face.

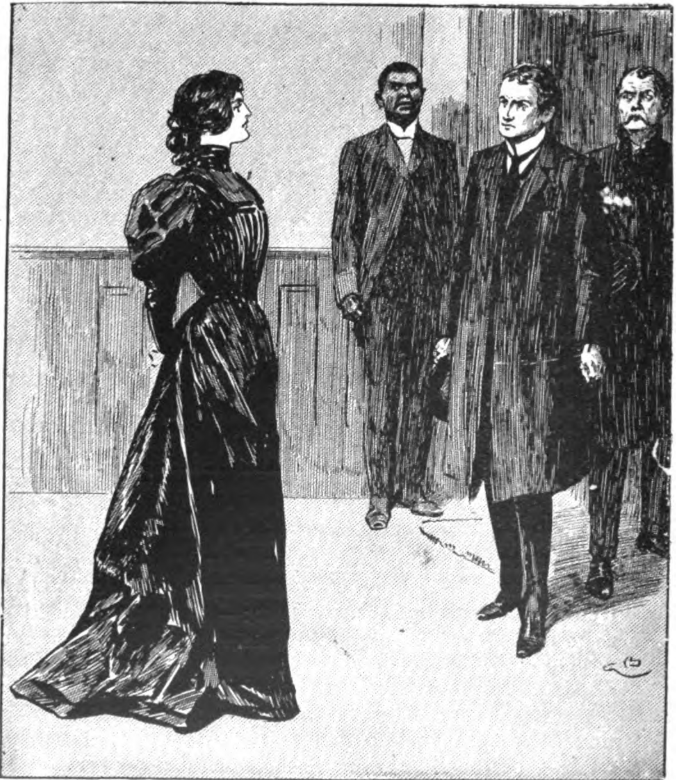
"But no one of the name of Digby lives here," he said.

"Mrs. Scaiffe lives here," replied the inspector, "and also a Spanish gentleman of the name of Señor Merello. Tell them that I wish to see them immediately, and that I am a police-officer."

A short conversation was evidently taking place within. The next moment the door was flung open, electric lights sprang into being, and my eyes fell upon Mrs. Scaiffe.

She was dressed with her usual magnificence. She came forward with a stately calm and stood silently before us. Her large black eyes were gleaming.

"Well, Mr. Pleydell," she said, speaking in



"SHE CAME FORWARD WITH A STATELY CALM."

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an easy voice, "what is the reason of this midnight disturbance? I am always glad to welcome you to my house, but is not the hour a little late?"

Her words were interrupted by Inspector Frost, who held up his hand.

"Your attitude, madam," he said, "is hopeless. We have all come here with a definite object. Mr. Oscar Digby entered this house at a quarter past ten to-night. From that moment the house has been closely surrounded. He is therefore still here."

"Where is your authority for this unwarrantable intrusion?" she said. Her manner changed, her face grew hard as iron. Her whole attitude was one of insolence and defiance.

The inspector immediately produced his warrant.

She glanced over it and uttered a shrill laugh.

"Mr. Digby is not in the house," she said.

She had scarcely spoken before an adjoining door was opened, and Señor Merello, looking gaunt and very white about the face, approached. She looked up at him and smiled, then she said, carelessly:—

"Gentlemen, this is my brother, Señor Merello."

The Señor bowed slightly, but did not speak.

"Once more," said Frost, "where is Mr. Digby?"

"I repeat once more," said Mrs. Scaiffe, "that Mr. Digby is not in this house."

"But we saw him enter at a quarter past ten."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"He is not here now."

"He could not have gone, for the house has been surrounded."

Again she gave her shoulders a shrug. "You have your warrant, gentlemen," she said; "you can look for yourselves."

Frost came up to her.

"I regret to say, madam, that you, this gentleman, and all your servants must consider yourselves under arrest until we find Mr. Oscar Digby."

"That will be for ever, then," she replied; "but please yourselves."

My heart beat with an unwonted sense of terror. What could the woman mean? Digby, either dead or alive, must be in the house.

The operations which followed were conducted rapidly. The establishment, consisting of Mrs. Scaiffe, her brother, two Spanish men-servants, two maids, one of Spanish extraction, and the negro who had opened the door to us, were summoned and placed in the charge of a police-sergeant.

Muriel Scaiffe was nowhere to be seen.

Then our search of the house began. The rooms on the ground-floor, consisting of the drawing-room, dining-room, and two other big rooms, were fitted up in quite an every-day manner. We did not take much time going through them.

In the basement, the large cellar which had attracted Mrs. Scaiffe's pleased surprise on the day when I took her to see The Rosary had now been fitted up as a laboratory. I gazed at it in astonishment. It was evidently intended for the manufacture of chemicals on an almost commercial scale. All the latest chemical and electrical apparatus were to be found there, as well as several large machines, the purposes of which were not evident. One in particular I specially noticed. It was a big tank with a complicated equipment for the manufacture of liquid air in large quantities.

We had no time to give many thoughts to the laboratory just then. A foreboding sense of ever-increasing fear was upon each and all of us. It was sufficient to see that Digby was not there.

Our search in the upper regions was equally unsuccessful. We were just going down stairs again when Frost drew my attention to a door which we had not yet opened. We went to it and found it locked. Putting our strength to work, Garland and I between us burst it open. Within, we found a girl crouching by the bed. She was only partly dressed, and her head was buried in her hands. We went up to her. She turned, saw my face, and suddenly clung to me.

"Have you found him? Is he safe?"

"I do not know, my dear," I answered, trying to soothe her. "We are looking for him. God grant us success."

"Did he come to the house? I have been locked in here all day and heavily drugged. I have only just recovered consciousness and scarcely know what I am doing. Is he in the house?"

"He came in. We are searching for him; we hope to find him."

"That you will never do!" She gave a piercing cry and fell unconscious on the floor.

We placed the unhappy girl on the bed. Garland produced brandy and gave her a few drops; she came to in a couple of minutes and began to moan feebly. We left her,

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"WE WENT UP TO HER."

"Are you satisfied?" he repeated.

"We must talk sense or we shall all go mad," was Garland's answer. "The thing is absurd, you know. Men don't disappear. Let us work this thing out logically. There are only three planes in space and we know matter is indestructible. If Digby left this house he went up, down, or horizontally. *Up is out of the question.* If he disappeared in a balloon or was shot off the roof he

promising to return. We had no time to attend to her just then.

When we reached the hall Frost stood still.

"The man is not here," he muttered.

"But he is here," was Garland's incisive answer. "Inspector, you have got to tear the place to pieces."

The latter nodded.

The inspector's orders were given rapidly, and dawn was just breaking when ten policemen, ordered in from outside, began their systematic search of the entire house from roof to basement.

Pick and crowbar were ruthlessly applied, and never have I seen a house in such a mess. Floorings were torn up and rafters cut through. Broken plaster littered the rooms and lay about on the sumptuous furniture. Walls were pierced and bored through. Closets and cupboards were ransacked. The backs of the fireplaces were torn out and the chimneys explored.

Very little was said as our investigation proceeded, and room after room was checked off.

Finally, an exhaustive examination of the basement and cellars completed our search.

"Well, Dr. Garland, are you satisfied?" asked the inspector.

We had gone back to the garden, and Garland was leaning against a tree, his hands thrust in his pockets and his eyes fixed on the ground. Frost pulled his long moustache and breathed quickly.

must have been seen by us, for the house was surrounded. He certainly did not pass through the cordon of men. *He did not go down*, for every cubic foot of basement and cellar has been accounted for, as well as every cubic foot of space in the house.

"So we come to the chemical change of matter, dissipation into gas by heat. There are no furnaces, no ashes, no gas cylinders, nor dynamos, nor carbon points. The time when we lost sight of him to the time of entrance was exactly two hours and three-quarters. There is no way out of it. He is still there."

"He is not there," was the quiet retort of the inspector. "I have sent fo. the Assistant Commissioner to Scotland Yard, and will ask him to take over the case. It is too much for me."

The tension in all our minds had now reached such a state of strain that we began to fear our own shadows.

Oscar Digby, standing, as it were, on the threshold of a very great future, the hero of a legend worthy of old romance, had suddenly and inexplicably vanished. I could not get my reason to believe that he was not still in the house, for there was not the least doubt that he had not come out. What would happen in the next few hours?

"Is there no secret chamber or secret passage that we have overlooked?" I said, turning to the inspector.

"The walls have been tapped," he replied. "There is not the slightest indication of a

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hollow. There are no underground passages. The man is not within these walls."

He now spoke with a certain degree of irritation in his voice which the mystery of the case had evidently awakened in his mind. A few moments later the sound of approaching wheels caused us to turn our heads. A cab drew up at the gates, out of which alighted the well-known form of Sir George Freer.

Garland had already entered the house, and on Sir George appearing on the scene he and I followed him.

We had just advanced across the hall to the room where the members of the household, with the exception of poor Muriel Scaiffe, were still detained, when, to our utter amazement, a long, strange peal of laughter sounded from below. This was followed by another, and again by another. The laughter came from the lips of Garland. We glanced at each other. What on earth did it mean? Together we darted down the stone steps, but before we reached the laboratory another laugh rang out. All hope in me was suddenly changed to a chilling fear, for the laugh was not natural. It had a clanging, metallic sound, without any mirth.

In the centre of the room stood Garland. His mouth was twitching and his breath jerked in and out convulsively.

"What is it? What is the matter?" I cried.

He made no reply, but, pointing to a machine with steel blocks, once more broke into a choking, gurgling laugh which made my flesh creep.

"IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM STOOD GARLAND."

Had he gone mad? Sir George moved swiftly across to him and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Come, what is all this, Garland?" he said, sternly, though his own face was full of fear.

I knew Garland to be a man of extraordinary self-control, and I could see that he was now holding himself in with all the force at his command.

"It is no use—I cannot tell you," he burst out.

"What—you know what has become of him?"

"Yes."

"You can prove it?"

"Yes."

"Speak out, man."

"He is not here," said Garland.

"Then where is he?"

He flung his hand out towards the Heath, and I saw that the fit was taking him again, but once more he controlled himself. Then he said, in a clear, level voice:—

"He is dead, Sir George, and you can never see his body. You cannot hold an inquest, for there is nothing to hold it on. The winds have taken him and scattered him in dust on the Heath. Don't look at me like that, Pleydell. I am sane, although it is a wonder we are not all mad over this business. Look and listen."

He pointed to the great metal tank.

"I arrived at my present conclusion by a

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process of elimination," he began. "Into that tank which contained liquid air Digby, gagged and bound, must have been placed violently, probably after he had given away the chart. Death would have been instantaneous, and he would have been frozen into complete solidity in something like forty minutes. The ordinary laboratory experiment is to freeze a rabbit, which can then be powdered into mortar like any other friable stone. The operation here has been the same. It is only a question of size. Remember, we are dealing with 312deg. below zero Fahrenheit, and then—well, look at this and these."

He pointed to a large machine with steel blocks and to a bench littered with saws, chisels, pestles, and mortars.

"That machine is a stone-breaker," he said. "On the dust adhering to these blocks I found this."

He held up a test tube containing a blue liquid.

"The Guiacum test," he said. "In other words, blood. This fact taken with the facts we already know, that Digby never left the house; that the only other agent of destruction of a body, fire, is out of the question; that this tank is the receptacle of that enormous machine for making liquid air in very large quantities; and, above all, the practical possibility of the operation being conducted by the men who are at present in the house, afford me absolutely conclusive proof beyond a possibility of doubt as to what has happened. The body of that unfortunate man is as if it had never been, without a fragment of pin-point size for identification or evidence. It is beyond the annals of all the crimes that I have ever heard of. What law can help us? Can you hold an inquest on nothing? Can you charge a person with murder where no victim or trace of a victim can be produced?"

A sickly feeling came over me. Garland's words carried their own conviction, and we knew that we stood in the presence of a horror without a name. Nevertheless, to the police mind horror *per se* does not exist. To them there is always a mystery, a crime, and a solution. That is all. The men beside me were police once more. Sentiment might come later.

"Are there any reporters here?" asked Sir George.

"None," answered Frost.

"Good. Mr. Oscar Digby has disappeared. There is no doubt how. There can, of course, be no arrest, as Dr. Garland has just said. Our official position is this. We suspect that Mr. Digby has been murdered, but the search for the discovery of the body has failed. That is our position."

Before I left that awful house I made arrangements to have Muriel Scaiffe conveyed to a London hospital. I did not consult Mrs. Scaiffe on the subject. I could not get myself to say another word to the woman. In the hospital a private ward was secured for the unhappy girl, and there for many weeks she hovered between life and death.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Scaiffe and her brother were detained at The Rosary. They were closely watched by the police, and although they made many efforts to escape they found it impossible. Our hope was that when Muriel recovered strength she would be able to substantiate a case against them. But, alas! this hope was unfounded, for, as the girl recovered, there remained a blank in her memory which no efforts on our part could fill. She had absolutely and completely forgotten Oscar Digby, and the house on Hampstead Heath was to her as though it had never existed. In all other respects she was well. Under these circumstances we were forced to allow the Spaniard and his sister to return to their own country, our one most earnest hope being that we might never see or hear of them again.

Meanwhile, Muriel grew better. I was interested in her from the first. When she was well enough I placed her with some friends of my own. A year ago she became my wife. I think she is happy. A past which is forgotten cannot trouble her. I have long ago come to regard her as the best and truest woman living.

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At Sunwich Port.

BY W. W. JACOBS.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. NATHAN SMITH, usually one of the most matter-of-fact men in the world, came out of Mr. Swann's house in a semi-dazed condition, and for some time after the front door had closed behind him stood gaping on the narrow pavement.

He looked up and down the quiet little street and shook his head sadly. It was a street of staid and substantial old houses; houses which had mellowed and blackened with age, but whose quaint windows and chance-opened doors afforded glimpses of comfort attesting to the prosperity of those within. In the usual way Mr. Nathan Smith was of too philosophical a temperament to experience the pangs of envy, but to-day these things affected him, and he experienced a strange feeling of discontent with his lot in life.

"Some people 'ave all the luck," he muttered, and walked slowly down the road.

He continued his reflections as he walked through the somewhat squalid streets of his own quarter. The afternoon was wet and the houses looked dingier than usual; dirty, inconvenient little places most of them, with a few cheap gimcracks making a brave show as near the window as possible. Mr. Smith observed them with newly-opened eyes, and, for perhaps the first time in his life, thought of the drawbacks and struggles of the poor.

In his own untidy little den at the back of the house he sat for some time deep in thought over the events of the afternoon. He had been permitted a peep at wealth; at wealth, too, which was changing hands, but was not coming his way. He lit his pipe and, producing a bottle of rum from a cupboard, helped himself liberally. The potent fluid softened him somewhat, and a half-formed intention to keep the news from Mr. Kybird melted away beneath its benign influence.

"After all, we've been pals for pretty near thirty years," said Mr. Smith to himself.

He took another draught. "Thirty years is a long time," he mused.

He finished the glass. "And if 'e don't give me something out of it I'll do 'im as much 'arm as I can," he continued; and, buttoning up his coat, he rose and set out in the direction of the High Street.

"'SOME PEOPLE 'AVE ALL THE LUCK,' HE MUTTERED."

The rain had ceased and the sun was making faint efforts to break through watery clouds. Things seemed brighter, and Mr. Smith's heart beat in response. He was going to play the part of a benefactor to Mr. Kybird; to offer him access, at any rate, to such wealth as he had never dreamed of. He paused at the shop window, and, observing through a gap in the merchandise that Mr. Kybird was behind the counter, walked in and saluted him.

"I've got news for you," he said, slowly; "big news."

"Oh," said Mr. Kybird, with indifference.

"Big news," repeated Mr. Smith, sinking thoughtlessly into the broken cane-chair and slowly extricating himself. "Something that'll make your eyes start out of your 'ed."

The small black eyes in question

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were turned shrewdly in his direction. "I've 'ad news of you afore, Nat," remarked Mr. Kybird, with simple severity.

The philanthropist was chilled; he fixed his eyes in a stony stare on the opposite wall. Mr. Kybird, who had ever a wholesome dread of falling a victim to his friend's cuteness, regarded him with some uncertainty, and reminded him of one or two pieces of information which had seriously depleted his till.

"Banns up yet for the wedding?" inquired Mr. Smith, still gazing in front of him with fathomless eyes.

"They'll be put up next week," said Mr. Kybird.

"Ah!" said his friend, with great emphasis. "Well, well."

"Wot d'ye mean by 'Well, well'?" demanded the other, with some heat.

"I was on'y thinking," replied Mr. Smith, mildly. "P'r'aps it's all for the best, and I'd better 'old my tongue. True love is better than money. After all it ain't my bisness, and I shouldn't get much out of it."

"Out of wot, Nat?" inquired Mr. Kybird, uneasily.

Mr. Smith, still gazing musingly before him, appeared not to hear the question. "Nice after the rain, ain't it?" he said, slowly.

"It's all right," said the other, shortly.

"Everything smells so fresh and sweet," continued his Nature-loving friend; "all the little dicky-birds was a-singing as if their little 'arts would break as I come along."

"I don't wonder at it," said the offended Mr. Kybird.

"And the banns go up next week," murmured the boarding-master to himself. "Well, well."

"'Ave you anything to say agin it?" demanded Mr. Kybird.

"Cert'nly not," replied the other. "On'y don't blame me when it's too late, that's all."

Mr. Kybird, staring at him wrathfully, turned this dark saying over in his mind. "Too late for wot?" he inquired.

"Ah!" said Nathan Smith, slowly. "Nice and fresh after the rain, ain't it? As I come along all the little dicky-birds——"

"Drat the little dicky-birds," interrupted Mr. Kybird, with sudden violence. "If you've got anything to say, why don't you say it like a man?"

The parlour door opened suddenly before the other could reply, and revealed the face of Mrs. Kybird. "Wot are you two a-quarrelling about?" she demanded. "Why don't you come inside and sit down for a bit?"

"IF YOU'VE GOT ANYTHING TO SAY, WHY DON'T YOU SAY IT LIKE A MAN?"

Mr. Smith accepted the invitation, and following her into the room found Miss Kybird busy stitching in the midst of a bewildering assortment of brown paper patterns and pieces of cloth. Mrs. Kybird gave him a chair, and, having overheard a portion of his conversation with her husband, made one or two casual inquiries.

"I've been spending a hour or two at Mr. Swann's," said Mr. Smith.

"And 'ow is 'e?" inquired his hostess, with an appearance of amiable interest.

The boarding-master shook his head.

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"E's slipping 'is cable," he said, slowly. "E's been making 'is will, and I was one o' the witnesses."

Something in Mr. Smith's manner as he uttered this simple statement made his listeners anxious to hear more. Mr. Kybird, who had just entered the room and was standing with his back to the door holding the handle, regarded him expectantly.

"It's been worrying 'im some time," pursued Mr. Smith. "'E 'asn't got nobody belonging to 'im, and for a long time 'e couldn't think 'ow to leave it. Wot with 'ouse property and other things it's a matter of over ten thousand pounds."

"Good 'eavens!" said Mr. Kybird, who felt that he was expected to say something.

"Dr. Blaikie was the other witness," continued Mr. Smith, disregarding the interruption; "and Mr. Swann made us both promise to keep it a dead secret till 'e's gone, but out o' friendship to you I thought I'd step round and let you know."

The emphasis on the words was unmistakable; Mrs. Kybird dropped her work and sat staring at him, while her husband wriggled with excitement.

"'E ain't left it to me, I s'pose?" he said, with a feeble attempt at jocularity.

"Not a brass farden," replied his friend, cheerfully. "Not to none of you. Why should 'e?"

"He ain't left it to Jack, I s'pose?" said Miss Kybird, who had suspended her work to listen.

"No, my dear," replied the boarding-master. "He's made 'is will all ship-shape and proper, and 'e's left everything—all that 'ouse property and other things, amounting to over ten thousand pounds—to a young man becos 'e was jilt—crossed in love a few months ago, and becos 'e's been a good and faithful servant to 'im for years."

"Don't tell me," said Mr. Kybird, desperately; "don't tell me that 'e's been and left all that money to young Teddy Silk."

"Well, I won't if you don't want me to," said the accommodating Mr. Smith, "but, mind, it's a dead secret."

Mr. Kybird wiped his brow, and red patches, due to excitement, lent a little variety to an otherwise commonplace face; Mrs. Kybird's dazed inquiry, "Wot *are* we a-coming to?" fell on deaf ears; while Miss Kybird, leaning forward with lips parted, fixed her eyes intently on Mr. Smith's face.

"It's a pity 'e didn't leave it to young Nugent," said that gentleman, noting with much pleasure the effect of his announcement, "but 'e can't stand 'im at no price; 'e told me so 'imself. I s'pose young Teddy'll be quite the gentleman now, and 'e'll be able to marry who 'e likes."

Mr. Kybird thrust his handkerchief into his tail-pocket, and all the father awoke within him. "Ho, will 'e?" he said, with fierce sarcasm. "Ho, indeed! And wot about my daughter? I 'ave 'eard of such things as breach o' promise. Before Mr. Teddy gets married 'e's got to 'ave a few words with me."

"'E's behaved very bad," said Mrs. Kybird, nodding.

"'E come 'ere night after night," said Mr. Kybird, working himself up into a fury; "'e walked out with my gal for months and months, and then 'e takes 'imself off as if we wasn't good enough for 'im."

"The suppers 'e's 'ad 'ere, you wouldn't believe," said Mrs. Kybird, addressing the visitor.

"Takes 'imself off," repeated her husband; "takes 'imself off as if we was dirt beneath 'is feet, and never been back to give a explanation from that day to this."

"I'm not easy surprised," said Mrs. Kybird, "I never was from a gal, but I must say Teddy's been a surprise to me. If anybody 'ad told me 'e'd ha' behaved like that I wouldn't ha' believed it; I couldn't. I've never said much about it, becos my pride wouldn't let me. We all 'ave our faults, and mine is pride."

"I shall bring a breach o' promise action agin 'im for *five thousand pounds*," said Mr. Kybird, with decision.

"Talk sense," said Nathan Smith, shortly.

"Sense!" cried Mr. Kybird. "Is my gal to be played fast and loose with like that? Is my gal to be pitched over when 'e likes? Is my gal——"

"Wot's the good o' talking like that to me?" said the indignant Mr. Smith. "The best thing you can do is to get 'er married to Teddy at once, afore 'e knows of 'is luck."

"And when'll that be?" inquired his friend, in a calmer voice.

"Any time," said the boarding-master, shrugging his shoulders. "The old gentleman might go out to-night, or agin 'e might live on for a week or more. 'E was so weak 'e couldn't 'ardly sign 'is name."

"I 'ope 'e '*as* signed it all right," said Mr. Kybird, starting.

"Safe as 'ouses," said his friend.

"Well, why not wait till Teddy 'as got the money?" suggested Mrs. Kybird, with a knowing shake of her head.

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"Becos," said Mr. Smith, in a grating voice, "becos for one thing 'e'd be a rich man then and could 'ave 'is pick. Teddy Silk on a pound or thereabouts a week and Teddy Silk with ten thousand pounds 'ud be two different people. Besides that 'e'd think she was marrying 'im for 'is money."

"If 'e thought that," said Mrs. Kybird, firmly, "I'd never forgive 'im."

"My advice to you," said Nathan Smith, shaking his forefinger impressively, "is to get 'em married on the quiet and as soon as possible. Once they're tied up Teddy can't 'elp 'imself."

"Why on the quiet?" demanded Mr. Kybird, sharply.

The boarding-master uttered an impatient exclamation. "Becos if Mr. Swann got to 'ear of it he'd guess I'd been blabbing, for one thing," he said, sharply, "and for another, 'e left it to 'im partly to make up for 'is disappointment—he'd been disappointed 'imself in 'is younger days, so 'e told me. Suppose 'e managed to get enough strength to alter 'is will?"

Mr. Kybird shivered. "It takes time to get married, though," he objected.

"Yes," said Mr. Smith, ironically, "it does. Get round young Teddy, and then put the banns up. Take your time about it, and be sure and let Mr. Swann know. D'ye think 'e wouldn't understand wot it meant, and spoil it, to say nothing of Teddy seeing through it?"

"Well, wot's to be done, then?" inquired the staring Mr. Kybird.

"Send 'em up to London and 'ave 'em married by special license," said Mr. Smith, speaking rapidly—"to-morrow, if possible; if not, the day after. Go and pitch a tale to Teddy to-night, and make 'im understand it's to be done on the strict *q.t.*"

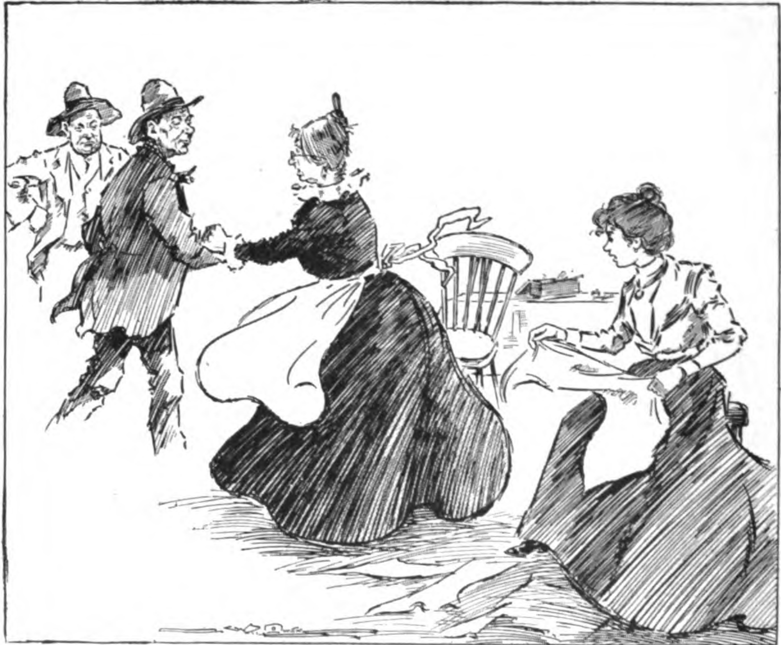
"Special licenses cost money," said Mr. Kybird. "I 'ave 'eard it's a matter o' thirty pounds or thereabouts."

Mr. Nathan Smith rose, and his eyes were almost expressive. He nodded good-night to the ladies and crossed to the door. Mrs. Kybird suddenly seized him by the coat and held him.

"Don't be in a 'urry, Nat," she pleaded. "We ain't all as clever as you are."

"Talk about looking a gift-'orse in the mouth——" began the indignant Mr. Smith.

"Sit down," urged Mr. Kybird. "You can't expect us to be as quick in seeing things as wot you are."



"MRS. KYBIRD SUDDENLY SEIZED HIM BY THE COAT."

He pushed his partly mollified friend into his chair again, and taking a seat next him began to view the affair with enthusiasm. "'Melia shall turn young Nugent off to-night," he said, firmly.

"That's right," said the other; "go and do a few more silly things like that and we shall be 'appy. If you'd got a 'ead instead of wot you 'ave got, you wouldn't talk of giving the show away like that. Nobody must know or guess about anything until young Teddy is married to 'Melia and got the money."

"It seems something like deceitfulness," said Miss Kybird, who had been listening to the plans for her future with admirable composure.

"It's for Teddy's own sake," said Nathan Smith. "Everybody knows 'e's half crazy after you."

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"I don't know that I don't like 'im best, even without the money," said Miss Kybird, calmly. "Nobody could 'ave been more attentive than 'im. I believe that 'e'd marry me if 'e 'ad a hundred thousand, but it looks better your way."

"Better all round," said Nathan Smith, with an approving nod. "Now, Dan'l, 'op round to Teddy and whistle 'im back, and mind 'e's to keep it a dead secret on account o' trouble with young Nugent. D'ye twig?"

The admiring Mr. Kybird said that he was a wonder, and, in the discussion on ways and means which followed, sat listening with growing respect to the managing abilities both of his friend and his wife. Difficulties were only mentioned for the purpose of being satisfactorily solved, and he noticed with keen appreciation that the prospect of a ten thousand pound son-in-law was already adding to that lady's dignity. She sniffed haughtily as she spoke of "that Nugent lot"; and the manner in which she promised Mr. Smith that he should not lose by his services would have graced a duchess.

"I didn't expect to lose by it," said the boarding-master, pointedly. "Come over and 'ave a glass at the Chequers, Dan, and then you can go along and see Teddy."

CHAPTER XXIII.

The summer evening was well advanced when Mr. Kybird and his old friend parted. The former gentleman was in almost a sentimental mood, and the boarding-master, satisfied that his pupil was in a particularly appropriate frame of mind for the object of his visit, renewed his instructions about binding Mr. Silk to secrecy, and departed on business of his own.

Mr. Kybird walked slowly towards Fullalove Alley with his head sunk in meditation. He was anxious to find Mr. Silk alone, as otherwise the difficulty of his errand would be considerably increased, Mrs. Silk's intelligence being by no means obscured by any ungovernable affection for the Kybird family. If she was at home he would have to invent some pretext for luring Teddy into the privacy of the open air.

The lamp was lit in the front room by the time he reached the house, and the shadows of geraniums which had won through several winters formed a straggling pattern on the holland blind. Mr. Kybird, first making an unsuccessful attempt to peep round the edges of this decoration, tapped gently on the door, and in response to a command to "Come in," turned the handle and looked into the room. To his relief, he saw that Mr. Silk was alone.

"Good evening, Teddy," he said, with a genial smile, as he entered slowly and closed the door behind him. "I 'ope I see you well?"

"I'm quite well," returned Mr. Silk, gazing at him with unconcealed surprise.

"I'm glad to 'ear it," said Mr. Kybird, in a somewhat reproachful voice, "for your sake; for everybody's sake, though, p'r'aps, I did expect to find you looking a little bit down. Ah! it's the wimmen that 'ave the 'arts after all."

"MR KYBIRD AND HIS OLD FRIEND PARTED."

Mr. Silk coughed. "What d'ye mean?" he inquired, somewhat puzzled.

"I came to see you, Teddy, on a very delikit business," said Mr. Kybird, taking a seat and gazing diffidently at his hat as he swung it between his hands; "though, as man to man, I'm on'y doing of my dooty. But if you don't want to 'ear wot I've got to say, say so, and Dan'l Kybird'll darken your door no more."

"How can I know whether I want to 'ear

it or not when I don't know wot it is?" said Mr. Silk, judiciously.

Mr. Kybird sat biting his thumb-nail, then he looked up suddenly. "'Melia," he said, with an outburst of desperate frankness, "'Melia is crying 'er eyes out."

Mr. Silk, with a smothered exclamation, started up from his chair and regarded him eagerly.

"If she knew I'd been 'ere," pursued Mr. Kybird, "she'd——I don't know wot she wouldn't do. That's 'er pride; but I've got my pride too; the pride of a father's 'art."

"What—what's she crying about?" inquired Mr. Silk, in an unsteady voice.

"She's been looking poorly for some time," continued the veracious Mr. Kybird, "and crying. When I tell you that part o' the wedding-dress wot she was making 'ad to be taken away from 'er because o' the tears she dropped on it, you may 'ave some idea of wot things are like. She's never forgot you, Teddy, and it was on'y your quick temper that day that made 'er take on with young Nugent. She's got a temper, too, but she give 'er love once, and, being my daughter, she couldn't give it agin."

He stole a glance at his listener. Mr. Silk, very pale and upright, was standing on the hearthrug, shaking all over with nervous excitement. Twice he tried to speak and failed.

"That's 'ow it is, Teddy," sighed Mr. Kybird, rising as though to depart. "I've done my dooty. It was a 'ard thing to do, but I've done it."

"Do you mean," said Mr. Silk, recovering his voice at last, "do you mean that Amelia would marry me after all?"

"Do I mean?" repeated Mr. Kybird, naturally indignant that his very plain speaking should be deemed capable of any misconstruction. "Am I speaking to a stock or a stone, Teddy?"

Mr. Silk took a deep breath, and buttoned up his coat, as though preparing to meet Mr. Nugent there and then in deadly encounter for the person of Miss Kybird. The colour was back in his cheeks by this time, and his eyes were unusually bright. He took a step towards Mr. Kybird and, pressing his hand warmly, pushed him back into his seat again.

"There's 'er pride to consider, Teddy," said the latter gentleman, with the whisper of a conspirator. "She can't stand being talked about all over the town and pointed at."

"Let me see anybody a-pointing at 'er," said the truculent Mr. Silk; "let me see 'em, that's all."

"That's the way to talk, Teddy," said Mr. Kybird, gazing at him with admiration.

"Talk!" said the heroic Mr. Silk. "I'll do more than talk." He clenched his fists and paced boldly up and down the hearthrug.

"You leave things to me," said Mr. Kybird, with a confidential wink. "I'll see that it's all right. All I ask of you is to keep it a dead secret; even your mother mustn't know."

"I'll be as secret as the grave," said the overjoyed Mr. Silk.

"There's lots o' things to be taken into consideration," said Mr. Kybird, truthfully; "it might be as well for you to be married immediate."

"Immediate?" said the astonished Mr. Silk.

"She 'asn't got the nerve to send young Nugent about 'is business," explained Mr. Kybird; "she feels sorry for 'im, pore fellow; but 'e's got a loving and affectionate 'art, and she can't bear 'im making love to 'er. You can understand what it is, can't you?"

"I can imagine it," said Mr. Silk, gloomily, and he flushed crimson as the possibilities suggested by the remark occurred to him.

"I've been thinking it over for some time," resumed Mr. Kybird; "twisting it and turning it all ways, and the only thing I can see for it is for you to be married on the strict *q.t.* Of course, if you don't like——"

"Like!" repeated the transported Mr. Silk. "I'll go and be married now, if you like."

Mr. Kybird shook his head at such haste, and then softening a little observed that it did him credit. He proceeded to improve the occasion by anecdotes of his own courting some thirty years before, and was in the middle of a thrilling account of the manner in which he had bearded the whole of his future wife's family, when a quick step outside, which paused at the door, brought him to a sudden halt.

"Mother," announced Mr. Silk, in a whisper.

Mr. Kybird nodded, and the heroic appearance of visage which had accompanied his tale gave way to an expression of some uneasiness. He coughed behind his hand, and sat gazing before him as Mrs. Silk entered the room and gave vent to an exclamation of astonishment as she saw the visitor. She gazed sharply from him to her son. Mr. Kybird's expression was now normal, but despite his utmost efforts Mr. Silk could not entirely banish the smile which trembled on his lips.

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"Me and Teddy," said Mr. Kybird, turning to her with a little bob, which served him for a bow, "'ave just been having a little talk about old times."

"He was just passing," said Mr. Silk.

"Just passing, and thought I'd look in," said Mr. Kybird, with a careless little laugh; "the door was open a bit."

"Wide open," corroborated Mr. Silk.

"So I just came in to say ''Ow d'ye do?'" said Mr. Kybird.

Mrs. Silk's sharp, white face turned from one to the other. "'Ave you said it?" she inquired, blandly.

"I 'ave," said Mr. Kybird, restraining Mr. Silk's evident intention of hot speech by a warning glance; "and now I'll just toddle off 'ome."

"I'll go a bit o' the way with you," said Edward Silk. "I feel as if a bit of a walk would do me good."

Left alone, the astonished Mrs. Silk took the visitor's vacated chair and, with wrinkled brow, sat putting two and two together until the sum got beyond her powers of calculation. Mr. Kybird's affability and Teddy's cheerfulness were alike incomprehensible. She mended a hole in her pocket and darned a pair of socks, and at last, anxious for advice, or at least a confidant, resolved to see Mr. Wilks.

She opened the door and looked across the alley, and saw with some satisfaction that his blind was illuminated. She closed the door behind her sharply, and then stood gasping on the doorstep. So simultaneous were the two happenings that it actually appeared as though the closing of the door had blown Mr. Wilks's lamp out. It was a night of surprises, but after a moment's hesitation she stepped over and tried his door. It was fast, and there was no answer to her knuckling. She knocked louder and listened. A door slammed violently at the back of the house, a distant clatter of what sounded like saucepans came from beyond, and above it all a tremulous but harsh voice bellowed industriously through an interminable chant. By the time the third verse was reached Mr. Wilks's neighbours on both sides were beating madly upon their walls and bloodcurdling threats strained through the plaster.

She stayed no longer, but regaining her own door sat down again to await the return of her son. Mr. Silk was long in coming, and she tried in vain to occupy herself with various small jobs as she speculated in vain on the meaning of the events of the night. She got up and stood by the open door, and as she waited the clock in the church-tower, which rose over the roofs hard by, slowly boomed out the hour of eleven. As the echoes of the last stroke died away the figure of Mr. Silk turned into the alley.

"HE TOOK UP HIS CANDLE AND WENT OFF WHISTLING."

"You must 'ave 'ad quite a nice walk," said his mother, as she drew back into the room and noted the brightness of his eye.

"Yes," was the reply.

"I s'pose 'e's been and asked you to the wedding?" said the sarcastic Mrs. Silk.

Her son started and, turning his back on her, wound up the clock. "Yes, 'e has," he said, with a sly grin.

Mrs. Silk's eyes snapped. "Well, of all the impudence——" she said, breathlessly.

"Well, 'e has," said her son, hugging himself over the joke. "And, what's more, I'm going."

He composed his face sufficiently to bid her "good-night," and, turning a deaf ear to her remonstrances and inquiries, took up a candle and went off whistling.

(To be concluded.)

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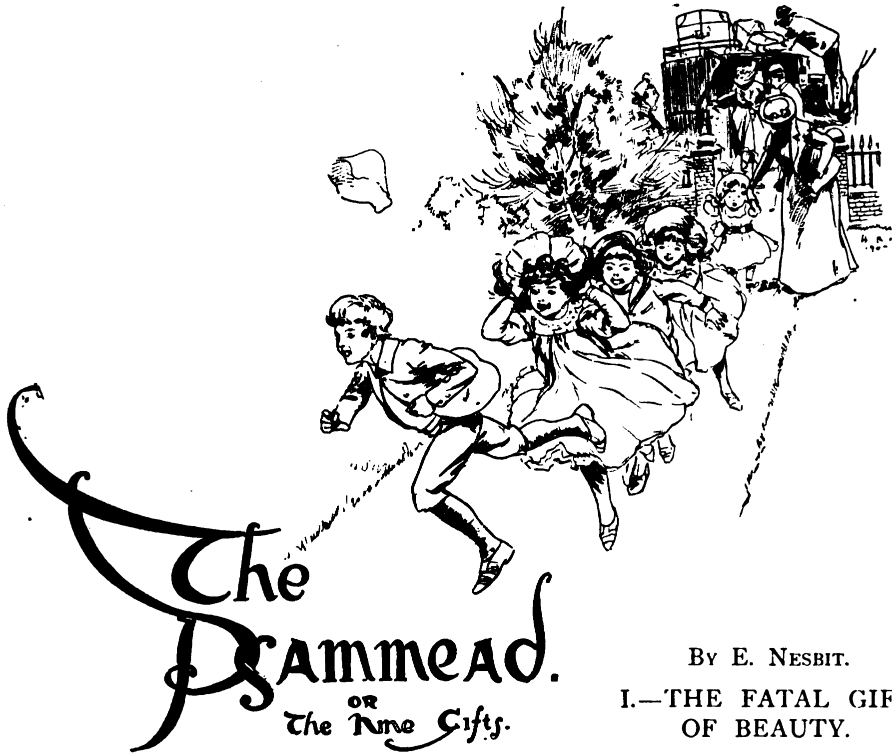
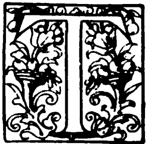


The Psammead. or The Five Gifts.

By E. Nesbit.

I.—THE FATAL GIFT OF BEAUTY.

HE house was three miles from the station, but before the dusty hired fly had rattled along for five minutes the children began to put their heads out of the carriage window and to say, "Aren't we nearly there?" And every time they passed a house, which was not very often, they all said: "Oh, *is* this it?" But it never was, till they reached the very top of the hill, just past the chalk-quarry and before you come to the gravel-pit. And then there was a white house with a green garden and an orchard beyond, and mother said, "Here we are!"

"How white the house is!" said Robert.

"And look at the roses," said Jane.

"And the plums," said Anthea.

"It is rather decent," Cyril admitted.

The baby said, "Want go walky," and the fly stopped with a last rattle and jolt.

Everyone got its legs kicked or its feet trodden on in the scramble to get out of the carriage that minute, but no one seemed to mind. Mother, curiously enough, was in no hurry to get out, and even when she had come down slowly and by the step, and with no jump at all, she seemed to want to see the boxes carried in and even to pay the driver, instead of joining in that first glorious rush round the garden and the orchard and the thorny, thistly, briary, brambly wilderness beyond the broken gate and the dry fountain at the side of the house, and exploring the wilderness beyond. But the children were wiser, for once.

The children had explored the gardens and the outhouses thoroughly before they were caught and cleaned for tea, and they saw quite well that they were certain to be happy at the White House. They thought so from the first moment; but when they had found the back of the house covered with jasmine, all in white flower and smelling like a bottle of the most expensive scent that is ever given for a birthday present, and when they had seen the lawn, all green and smooth and quite different from the brown grass in the gardens at Camden Town, and when they had found the stable with a loft over it and some old hay still left they were almost certain; and when Robert had found the broken swing and tumbled out of it and got

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a lump on his head the size of an egg, and Cyril had nipped his finger in the door of a hutch that seemed made to keep rabbits in, if you ever had any, no one had any longer any doubts whatever.

The best part of it all was that there were no rules about not going to places and not doing things. In London almost everything is labelled "You mustn't touch," and though the label is invisible it's just as bad, because you know it's there, or if you don't you jolly soon get told.

The White House was on the edge of a hill with a wood behind it — and the chalk-quarry on one side and the gravel-pit on the other. Down at the bottom of the hill was a level plain with queer-shaped white buildings where people burnt lime, and a big red brewery and other houses, and when the big chimneys were smoking and the sun was setting the valley looked as if it were filled with golden mist, and was like an enchanted city out of the "Arabian Nights."

"CYRIL HAD NIPPED HIS FINGER IN THE DOOR OF A HUTCH."

Grown-up people find it very difficult to believe really wonderful things, unless they have what they call "proof." But children will believe almost anything, and grown-ups know this. That is why they tell you that the earth is round like an orange, when you can see perfectly well that it is flat and lumpy, and that the earth goes round the sun, when you can see for yourself any day that the sun gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night like a good sun as it is, and the earth knows its place and lies as still as a mouse. Yet I daresay you believe all that about the earth and the sun, and if so you will find it quite easy to believe that before Anthea and Cyril and the others had been a week in the country they had found a fairy. At least, they called it that because that was what it called itself, but it did not look much like it.

It was at the gravel-pits. Father had to go away suddenly on business, and mother had gone away to stay with granny because she was not very well. They both went in a great hurry, and when they were gone the house seemed very quiet and empty, and the children wandered from one room to another and looked at the bits of paper and string on the floors left over from the packing and not yet cleared up, and wished they had something to do. It was Cyril who said :—

"I say, let's take our Margate spades and go and dig in the gravel-pits. We can pretend it's seaside."

"Father says it was once," Anthea said; "he says there are shells there thousands of years old."

So they went. Of course, they had been to the edge of the gravel-pit and looked over, but they had not gone down into it for fear father should say they mustn't play there, and the same with the chalk-quarry. The gravel-pit is not really dangerous if you don't try to climb down the edges, but go the slow, safe way round by the road, as if you were a cart.

Each of the children carried its own spade, and took it in turns to carry the Lamb. He was the baby, and they called him the Lamb because "Baa" was the first thing he ever said. They called Anthea "Panther," which seems silly when you read it, but when you say it it sounds a little like her name.

The gravel-pit is very large and wide, with grass growing round the edges at the top and dry, stringy wild flowers, purple and yellow. It is like a giant's washhand-basin. And there are mounds of gravel, and holes in the sides of the basin where gravel has been taken out, and high up in the steep sides there are the little holes that are the little front doors of the little sand-martins' little houses.

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The children built a castle, of course, but castles are rather poor fun when you have no hope of the swishing tide ever coming in to fill up the moat and wash away the drawbridge, and, at the happy last, to wet everybody up to the waist at least.

Cyril wanted to dig out a cave to play smugglers in, but the others thought it might bury them alive, so it ended in all spades going to work to dig a hole through the sand to Australia. These children, you see, believed that the world was round and that on the other side the little Australian boys and girls were really walking wrong way up, like flies on the ceiling, with their heads hanging down into the air.

The children dug and they dug and they dug, and their hands got sandy and hot and red, and their faces got damp and shiny. The Lamb had tried to eat the sand, and had cried so hard when he found that it was not, as he had supposed, brown sugar, that he was now tired out, and was lying asleep in a warm, fat bunch in the middle of the half-finished castle. This left his brothers and sisters free to work really hard, and the hole that was to come out in Australia soon grew so deep that Jane, who was called "Pussy" for short, begged the others to stop.

"Suppose the bottom of the hole gave way suddenly," she said, "and you tumbled out among the little Australians, all the sand would get in their eyes."

"ANTHEA SUDDENLY SCREAMED, 'IT'S ALIVE!'"

"Yes," said Robert; "they would hate us, and throw stones at us, and not let us see the kangaroos, or opossums, or emu-brand birds, or anything."

Cyril and Anthea knew that Australia was not quite so near as all that, but they agreed to stop using the spades and to go on with their hands. This was quite easy, because the sand at the bottom of the hole was very soft and fine and dry, like sea-sand. And there were little broken shells in it.

"Fancy it having been wet sea here once, all sloppy and shiny," said Jane, "with fishes and conger-eels and coral and mermaids."

"And masts of ships and wrecked Spanish treasure. I wish we could find a gold doubloon or something," Cyril said.

"How did the sea get carried away?" Robert asked.

"Not in a pail, silly," said his brother. "Father says the earth got too hot underneath—as you do in bed sometimes—so it just hunched up its shoulders and the sea had to slip off, as the blankets do off us, and the shoulder was left sticking out and turned into dry land. Let's go and look for whole shells—I think that little cave looks likely, and I see something sticking out there like a bit of a wrecked ship's anchor, and it's beastly hot in the Australian hole."

The others agreed, but Anthea went on digging. She always liked to finish a thing when she had once begun it. She felt it would be a disgrace to leave that hole without getting through to Australia.

The cave was disappointing because there were no shells, and the wrecked ship's anchor turned out to be only the broken end of a pick-axe handle, and the cave party were just making up their minds that sand makes you thirstier when it is not by the seaside, and someone had suggested going home for lemonade, when Anthea suddenly screamed:—

"Cyril! Come here! Oh, come quick—it's alive! It'll get away! Quick!"

They all hurried back.

"It's a rat, I shouldn't wonder," said Robert. "Father says they infest old places—and this must be pretty old if the sea was here thousands of years ago——"

"Perhaps it is a snake" said Jane.

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"Let's look," said Cyril, jumping into the hole. "I'm not afraid of snakes. I like them. If it is a snake I'll tame it and let it sleep round my neck at night."

"No, you won't," said Robert, firmly. "But you may if it's a rat."

"Oh, don't be silly," said Anthea, "it's not a rat, it's *much* bigger. And it's not a snake. It's got feet, I saw them, and fur. No—not the spade. You'll hurt it. Dig with your hands."

"And let *it* hurt *me* instead. That's so likely, isn't it?" said Cyril, seizing a spade.

"Oh, don't," said Anthea. "Squirrel, *don't*. I—it sounds silly, but it said something. It really and truly did——"

"What?"

"It said, 'You let me alone——'"

But Cyril merely observed that his sister must have gone off her nut, and he and Robert dug with spades, while Anthea sat on the edge of the hole, jumping up and down with hotness and anxiety. They dug carefully, and presently everyone could see that there really was something moving in the bottom of the Australian hole.

Then Anthea cried out, "*I'm* not afraid. Let me dig," and fell on her knees and began to scratch as a dog does when he has suddenly remembered where it was that he buried his bone.

"Oh, I felt fur," she cried, half laughing and half crying. "I did, indeed! I did!" when suddenly a dry, husky voice in the sand made them all jump back, and their hearts jumped nearly as fast as they did.

"Let me alone," it said. And now everyone heard the voice, and looked at the others to see if they had, too.

"But we want to see you," said Robert, bravely.

"I wish you'd come out," said Anthea, also taking courage.

"Oh, well—if that's your wish," the voice said, and the sand stirred and spun and scattered, and something brown and furry and fat came rolling out into the hole, and the sand fell off it, and it sat there yawning and rubbing the ends of its eyes with its hands.

"I believe I must have dropped asleep," it said, stretching itself.

The children stood round the hole in a ring, looking at the creature they had found. It was worth looking at. Its eyes were on long horns like a snail's eyes, and it could move them in and out like telescopes; it had ears like bats' ears, and its tubby body was shaped like a spider's and covered with thick, soft fur; its legs and arms were furry, too, and it had hands and feet like a monkey's.

"What on earth is it?" Jane said. "Shall we take it home?"

The thing turned its long eyes to look at her and said:—

"Does she always talk nonsense, or is it only the rubbish on her head that makes her silly?"

It looked scornfully at Jane's hat as it spoke.

"She doesn't mean to be silly," Anthea said, gently. "We none of us do, whatever you may think. Don't be frightened; we don't want to hurt you, you know."

"Hurt *me*?" it said. "*Me* frightened? Upon my word! Why, you talk as if I were nobody in particular." All its fur stood out like a cat's when it is going to fight.

"Well," said Anthea, still kindly, "perhaps if we knew what you are in particular we could think of something to say that wouldn't make you cross. Everything we've said so far seems to have. Who are you? And don't get angry. Because really we don't know."

"You don't know?" it said. "Well, I knew the world had changed; but—— Well, really, do you mean to tell me seriously you don't know a psammead when you see one?"

"A sammyadd? That's Greek to me."

"So it is to everyone," said the creature, sharply. "Well, in plain English, then, a sand-fairy. Don't you know a sand-fairy when you see one?"

It looked so grieved and hurt that Jane hastened to say: "Of course, I see you are, *now*. It's quite plain now one comes to look at you."

"You came to look at me several sentences ago," it said, crossly, beginning to curl up again in the sand.

"Oh, don't go away again! Do talk some more," Robert cried. "I didn't know you were a sand-fairy, but I knew directly I saw you that you were much the wonderfullest thing I ever saw."

The sand-fairy seemed a shade less disagreeable after this.

"It isn't talking I mind," it said, "as long as you're reasonably civil. But I'm not going to make polite conversation for you. If you talk nicely to me, perhaps I'll answer you and perhaps I won't. Now say something."

Of course, no one could think of anything to say, but at last Robert thought of "How

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"THE PSAMMEAD."

long have you lived here?" and he said it at once.

"Oh, ages — several thousand years," replied the psammead.

"Tell us all about it. Do——"

"It's all in books."

"*You* aren't," Jane said. "Oh, tell us everything you can about yourself. We don't know anything about you, and you *are* so nice."

The sand-fairy smoothed its long, rat-like whiskers and smiled.

"Do, please, tell," said the children all together.

It is wonderful how quickly you get used to things, even the most astonishing. Five minutes before the children had had no more idea than you had that there was such a thing as a sand-fairy, and now they were talking to it as though they had known it all their lives.

It drew its eyes in and said:—

"How very sunny it is, quite like old times! Where do you get your megatheriums from now?"

"What?" said the children all at once. It is very difficult always to remember that "what" is not polite, especially in moments of surprise or agitation.

"Are pterodactyls plentiful now?" the sand-fairy went on.

The children were unable to reply.

"What do you have for breakfast?" the fairy said, impatiently. "And who gives it you?"

"Eggs and bacon and bread and milk and porridge and things. Mother gives it us. What are mega—what's-its-names and ptero—what-do-you-call-thems? And does anyone have them for breakfast?"

"Why, almost everyone had pterodactyls for breakfast in my time. Pterodactyls were something like crocodiles and something like birds. I believe they were very good grilled. You see, it was like this: of course, there were heaps of sand-fairies then, and in the morning early you went out and hunted for them, and when you'd found one it gave you your wish. People used to send their little boys down to the sea-shore early in the morning before breakfast to get the day's wishes, and very often the eldest boy in a family would be told to wish for a megatherium ready jointed for cooking, because it was rather awkward to kill. It was as big as an elephant, you see, so there was a good deal of meat on it. And if they wanted fish the ichthyosaurus was asked for—he was twenty to forty feet long, so there was plenty of him. And for poultry there was the plesiosaurus—there were nice pickings on that, too. Then the other children could wish for other things. But when people had dinner-parties it was nearly always megatherium and ichthyosaurus, because his fins were a great delicacy and his tail made soup."

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"There must have been heaps and heaps of cold meat left over," said Anthea, who meant to be a good housekeeper some day.

"Oh, no," said the psammead, "that would never have done. Why, of course, at sunset what was left over turned into stone. You find the stone bones of the megatherium and things all over the place even now, they tell me."

"Who tell you?" asked Cyril; but the sand-fairy frowned and began to dig very fast with its furry hands.

"Oh, don't go," they all cried; "tell us more about when it was megatheriums for breakfast. Was the world like this then?"

It stopped digging.

"Not a bit," it said; "it was nearly all sand where I lived, and coal grew on trees and the periwinkles were as big as tea-trays—you find them sometimes now, only they're turned into stone. We sand-fairies used to live on the sea-shore, and the children used to come with flint spades and pails and make castles for us to live in. That's thousands of years ago, but I hear that children still build castles on the sand. It's difficult to break yourself of a habit——"

"But why did you stop living in the castles?" asked Robert.

"It's a sad story," said the psammead, gloomily; "it was because they would build moats to the castles, and the nasty wet, bubbling sea used to come in, and, of course, as soon as a sand-fairy got wet it caught cold, and generally died, and so there got to be fewer and fewer, and whenever you found a fairy and had a wish you used to wish for a megatherium and eat twice as much of it as you wanted, because it might be weeks before you got another wish."

"And did *you* get wet?" Robert inquired.

The sand-fairy shuddered. "Only once," it said, "the end of the twelfth hair of my top left whisker—I feel the place still in bad weather. It was only once, but it was quite enough for me. I went away as soon as the sun had dried my poor, dear whisker. I skurried away to the back of the beach and dug myself a house deep in warm, dry sand, and there I've been ever since. And the sea changed its lodgings afterwards. And now I'm not going to tell you another thing."

"Just one more, please," said the children. "Can you give wishes now?"

"Of course," it said; "didn't I give you yours a few minutes ago? You said, 'I wish you'd come out,' and I did."

"Oh, please, mayn't we have another?"

"Yes, but be quick about it. I'm tired of you."

I dare say you have often thought what you would do if you had three wishes given you, and have despised the old man and his wife in the black-pudding story, and felt certain that if you had the chance you could think of three really useful wishes without a moment's hesitation. These children had often talked this matter over, but now the chance had suddenly come to them they could not make up their minds.

"Quick," said the sand-fairy, crossly; and the only one who could think of anything was Anthea, and she could only think of a private wish of her own and Jane's, which they had never told the boys. She knew the boys would not care about it—but still it was better than nothing.

"I wish we were all as beautiful as the day," she said, in a great hurry.

The children looked at each other, but each could see that the others were not any better-looking than usual. The psammead pushed out its long eyes, and seemed to be holding its breath and swelling itself out till it was twice as fat and furry as before. Suddenly it let its breath go, in a long sigh.

"I'm really afraid I can't manage it," it said, apologetically. "I must be out of practice."

The children were horribly disappointed.

"Oh, *do* try again," they said.

"Well," said the sand-fairy, "the fact is, I was keeping back a little strength to give the rest of you your wishes with. If you'll be contented with one wish a day among the lot of you I dare say I can screw myself up to it. Do you agree to that?"

"Yes, oh, yes," said Jane and Anthea. The boys nodded. They did not believe the sand-fairy could do it.

It stretched out its eyes farther than ever, and swelled and swelled and swelled.

"I do hope it won't hurt itself," said Anthea.

"Or crack its skin," Robert said, anxiously.

Everyone was very much relieved when the sand-fairy, after getting so big that it almost filled up the hole in the sand, suddenly let out its breath and went back to its proper size.

"That's all right," it said, panting heavily. "It'll come easier to-morrow."

"Did it hurt much?" asked Anthea.

"Only my poor whisker, thank you," it said; "but you're a kind and thoughtful child. Good-day."

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It scratched suddenly and fiercely with its hands and feet and disappeared in the sand. Then the children looked at each other, and each child suddenly found itself alone with three perfect strangers, all radiantly beautiful.

They stood for some moments in perfect silence. Each thought that its brothers and sisters had wandered off, and that these strange children had stolen up unnoticed while it was watching the swelling form of the sand-fairy. Anthea spoke first:—

"Excuse me," she said, very politely, to Jane, who now had enormous blue eyes and a cloud of russet hair, "but have you seen two little boys and a little girl anywhere about?"

"I was just going to ask you that," said Jane, and then Cyril cried:—

"Why, it's *you!* I know the hole in your pinafore! You *are* Jane, aren't you? And you're the Panther. I can see your dirty handkerchief, that you forgot to change after you'd cut your thumb! Crikey! The wish *has* come off, after all. I say, am I as handsome as you are?"

"If you're Cyril, I liked you much better as you were before," said Anthea, decidedly. "You look like the picture of the young chorister, with your golden hair; and if that's Robert, he's like an Italian organ-grinder. His hair's all black."

"You two girls are like Christmas cards, then, that's all — silly Christmas cards," said Robert, angrily. "And Jane's hair is simply carrots."

It was, indeed, of that Venetian tint so much admired by artists.

"Well, it's no use finding fault with each other," said Jane. "Let's get the Lamb and lug it home to dinner. The servants will admire us most awfully, you'll see."

Baby was just waking up when they got to him, and not one of the children but was relieved to find that he, at least, was not as beautiful as the day, but just the same as usual.

"I suppose he's too young for wishes to act on him," said Jane. "Or perhaps it's because he wasn't with us."

Anthea ran forward and held out her arms.

"Come to Panther, ducky," she said.

The baby looked at her disapprovingly and put a sandy pink thumb in his mouth. Anthea was his favourite sister.

"Come, then," she said.

"G'way long!" said the baby.

"Come to own Pussy," said Jane.

"Wants my Pantie," said the Lamb, dismally, and his lip trembled.

"Here, come on, veteran," said Robert, "come and have a yidey on Yobby's back."

"Yah, narky, narky boy," howled the baby, giving way altogether. Then the children knew the worst. *The baby did not know them!*

"THE BABY DID NOT KNOW THEM!"

They looked at each other in despair, and it was terrible to each, in this dire emergency, to meet only the beautiful eyes of perfect strangers, instead of the merry, friendly, commonplace, twinkling, jolly little eyes of its own brothers and sisters.

"This is most awful," said Cyril, when he

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had tried to lift up the Lamb, and the Lamb had scratched like a cat and bellowed like a bull. "We've got to *make friends* with him. We can't carry him home screaming like that. Fancy having to make friends with our own baby! It's too silly."

That, however, was exactly what they had to do. It took over an hour, and the task was not rendered any easier by the fact that the Lamb was by this time as hungry as a lion and as thirsty as a desert.

At last he consented to allow these strangers to carry him home by turns, but, as he refused to hold on to such new acquaintances, he was a dead weight and most exhausting.

"Thank goodness we're home," said Jane, staggering through the iron gate to where Martha, the nursemaid, stood at the front door, shading her eyes with her hand and looking out anxiously. "Here! Do take baby!"

Martha snatched the baby from her arms.

"Thanks be, *he's* safe back," she said, "Where are the others, and whoever to goodness gracious are all of you?"

"We're *us*, of course," said Robert.

"And who's us, when you're at home?" asked Martha, scornfully.

"I tell you it's *us*, only we're beautiful as the day," said Cyril. "I'm Cyril and these are the others, and we're jolly hungry. Let us in and don't be a silly idiot."

Martha merely dratted the speaker's impudence and tried to shut the door in his face.

"I know we *look* different, but I'm Anthea, and we're so tired and it's long past dinner-time."

"Then go home to your dinners, whoever you are, and if our children put you up to this play-acting you can tell them from me they'll catch it; so they know what to expect." With that she did bang the door. Cyril rang the bell violently. No answer. Presently cook put her head out of a bedroom window and said:—

"If you don't take yourselves off, and that sharp, I'll go and fetch the police." And she slammed down the window.

"It's no good," said Anthea. "Oh, do come away before we get sent to prison."

The boys said it was nonsense, and the law of England couldn't put you in prison for just being as beautiful as the day, but they followed the others out into the lane.

"We shall be our proper selves after sunset, I suppose," said Jane.

"I don't know," Cyril said, sadly. "It mayn't be like that now—things have changed a good deal since megatherium times."

"Oh," cried Anthea, suddenly, "perhaps we shall turn into stone at sunset, like the megatheriums, so that there mayn't be any of us left over for the next day."

She began to cry, so did Jane. Even the boys turned pale. No one had the heart to say anything.

It was a horrible afternoon. There was no house near where the children could beg a crust of bread or even a glass of water. They were afraid to go to the village because they had seen the cook go down there with a basket, and there was a local constable. True, they were all as beautiful as the day, but that is a poor comfort when you are as hungry as a hunter and as thirsty as a sponge.

Three times they tried in vain to get the servants in the White House to let them in and to listen to their tale. And then Robert went alone, hoping to be able to climb in at one of the back windows, and so open the door to the others. But all the windows were out of reach, and Martha emptied a toilet jug of cold water over him from a top window and said:—

"Go along with you, you nasty little Eyetalian monkey."

It came at last to their sitting down in a row under the hedge, with their feet in a dry ditch, waiting for sunset, and wondering whether when the sun did set they would turn into stone, or only into their own old natural selves, and each of them still felt lonely and among strangers, and tried not to look at the others, for though their voices were their own their faces were so radiantly beautiful as to be quite irritating to look at.

"I don't believe we *shall* turn to stone," said Robert, breaking a long, miserable silence, "because the sand-fairy said he'd give us another wish to-morrow, and he couldn't if we were stone, could he?"

The others said "No," but they weren't at all comforted.

Another silence, longer and more miserable, was broken by Cyril's suddenly saying, "I don't want to frighten you girls, but I believe it's beginning with me already. My hand's quite dead. I'm turning to stone, I know I am, and so will you in a minute."

"Never mind," said Robert, kindly, trying to keep up the spirits of the others, "perhaps you'll be the only stone one, and the rest of us will be all right, and we'll cherish your statue and hang garlands on it."

But when it turned out that Cyril's hand

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had only gone to sleep through his leaning on it too long, and when it came to life in an agony of pins and needles, the others were quite cross.

"Giving us such a fright for nothing," said Anthea.

The third and miserablest silence of all was broken by Jane. She said:—

"If we *do* come out of this all right we'll ask the sammyadd to make it so that the servants don't notice anything different, no matter what wishes we have."

The others only grunted. They were too wretched even to make good resolutions.

At last hunger and fright and crossness and tiredness, four very nasty things, all joined together to bring one nice thing, and that was sleep. The children lay asleep in a row, with their beautiful eyes shut and their beautiful mouths open. Anthea woke first. The sun had set and the twilight was coming on.

Anthea pinched herself very hard to make sure, and when she found she could still feel pinching she decided that she was not stone, and then she pinched the others. They also were soft and could feel a pinch.

"Wake up!" she said, almost in tears for joy. "It's all right; we're not stone. And, oh, Cyril, how nice and ugly you do look, with your old freckles and your brown hair and your little eyes. And so do you all," she added, so that they might not feel jealous.

When they got home they were very much scolded by Martha, who told them about the strange children.

"A good-looking lot, I must say, but that impudent."

"I know," said Robert, who knew by experience how hopeless it would be to try explaining things to Martha.

"And where on earth have you been all this time, you naughty little things, you?"

"In the lane."

"Why didn't you come home hours ago?"

"We couldn't because of *them*," said Anthea.

"Who?"

"The children who were as beautiful as the day. They kept us there till after sunset. We couldn't come back till they'd gone. You don't know how we hated them. Oh, do — do give us some supper. We are so hungry."

"Hungry! I should think so," said Martha, angrily, "out all day like this! Well, I hope it'll be a lesson to you not to go picking up with strange children—down here after measles as likely as not. Now, mind, if you see them again don't you speak to them, but come straight away and tell me. I'll spoil their beauty for them!"

"MARTHA EMPTIED A TOILET JUG OF COLD WATER OVER HIM."

"If ever we *do* see them again we'll tell you," Anthea said, and Robert, fixing his eyes fondly on the cold beef that was being brought in on a tray by cook, added, in heartfelt undertones:—

"And we'll take jolly good care we never *do* see them again."

And they never have.

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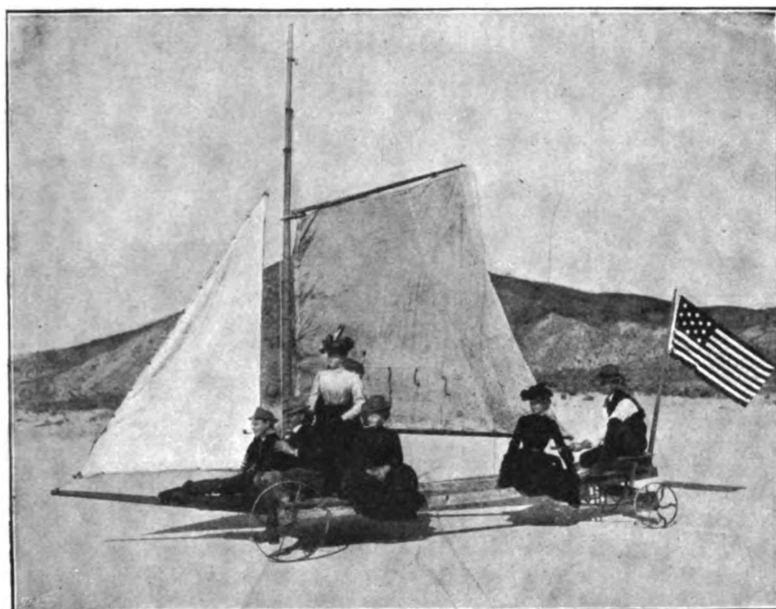
Sailing on Land.

By John L. von Blon.



From a] THE "DESERT QUEEN." [*Photo.*
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GLIDING over the pathless stretches of shifting sand that comprise the dreaded Mojave Desert in Southern California is the queerest craft that ever sailed. Strange tales of a phantom ship that have lately come from that forlorn region, the last place in all the world where a clever modern invention would be looked for, may be traced to this. It is a yacht on wheels, a graceful land-going clipper, faster than any that ever rode the main, and is aptly named *Desert Queen.* To the very heart of the great sun-blistered, forbidding waste this odd thing carries its plucky navigators, and ludicrous stories are brought to the outer world by solitary prospectors who in their roamings have seen the white sails silhouetted against the ever-changing background. Who would not be surprised, or even awed, by the remarkable spectacle of a trim craft, such as ordinarily belongs to the sea, skimming over this barren place where not a drop of water ever falls?

Beyond doubt this is the most singular vehicle ever conceived to be propelled by the wind. It was built by two miners, Carl H. and Charles S. Hoyt, of Cleveland, Ohio, nearly a year ago. It has been in use ever since, covering thousands of miles. The Hoyts have a gold mine in the buttes near the town of Rosamond, and live nine miles away, at the other end of a peculiar dry lake, which is hard as concrete and swept smooth as a tennis court by the sands for ever driven over it before the fierce winds rushing through Tehachepi Pass. This level tract suggested the novel idea of a sailing machine, and it was built of odds and ends picked up about the camp.

For the front support an old buggy axle was used, and to this were attached two iron wheels, 30in. in diameter, which had done service on a farming implement. Other parts were improvised with similar ingenuity, and the result is a stanch "boat" 14ft. long, 8ft. across the front, and tapering to the rear, with a mast 15ft. high, mainsail 10ft. on the boom and 10ft. on the mast, jib and jibboom to match. The steering contrivance is like those used on hook and ladder trucks. The "ship" answers her helm perfectly, and sails about as close to the wind as the ordinary water craft. On her initial run *Desert Queen* got beyond control, and while tearing along at a terrific rate came to grief with a crash. Broken timbers, bruised men, and wrecked sails were littered on the plain, and it took many days to repair the damage and make needed alterations. Now she

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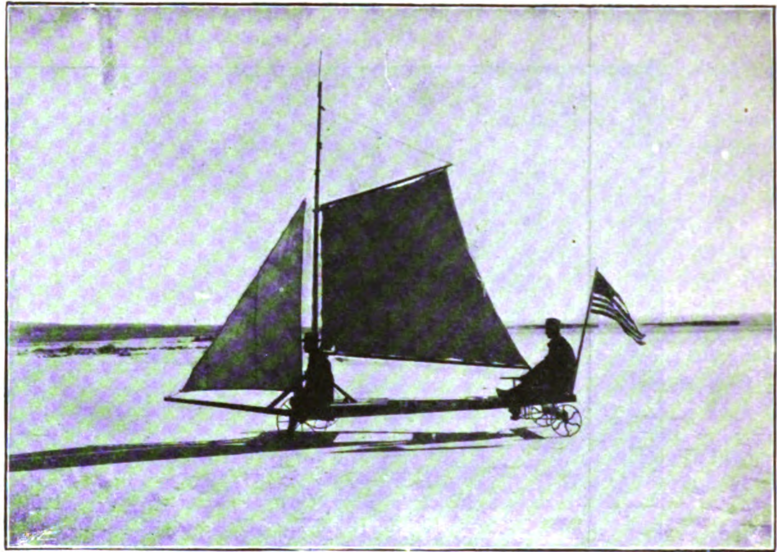

From a] ON THE DAILY RUN TO THE MINES. [*Photo.*

carries her owners and their tools and supplies to and from the mine every day, and often they take out excursion parties of half-a-dozen people. She is the wonder of all who have heard of her, and hundreds have gone to Rosamond from far and near to see her.

The most astonishing quality of the *Desert Queen* is her speed, which is almost incredible. Fifty miles an hour has been attained on the dry lake under favourable wind, and her owners believe that she could readily make seventy-five, but the danger would be too great. The longest fast run was forty miles on the open desert in eighty minutes. What the possibilities of a carefully-balanced machine with larger frame and wheels, ball-bearings and rubber tyres, and plenty of canvas would be on the smooth lake-bed can hardly be conjectured, but it is to be demonstrated. Several mining capitalists are talking of building two such craft for racing and for experimental purposes in other directions.

Various possibilities have been suggested by this invention, including a new, quick, and cheap mode of transportation across the Sahara, where winds are said to constantly prevail. Thus may a rival of the camel spring up in a place where camels were tried without success years ago, and where a few are said to be wandering still.

A fast ride on the *Desert Queen*, amid surroundings more desolate than the mighty ocean, is thrilling and exciting, to say the least. You go dodging, at the start, between dots of greasewood and cacti as the "ship" leaves camp with the rising wind; here and there grotesque yucca trees stand like sentinels, with limbs like long arms outstretched to reach you; horned toads scurry away over the hot sands, and lizards dart, looking like blue streaks, for the shelter, but not always quickly enough, for the *Queen's* wheels have crushed many before they could move; jack-rabbits go skittering through the brush, and little ash-coloured desert chipmunks scatter the sand about in their frenzied haste to get into their retreats; an occasional coyote, long and grey and lean—the picture of starved want—rises upon his scraggy hind legs and sniffs; now and then you may run over a deadly "sidewinder" (rattlesnake), or pass the bleaching bones of some poor creature, human or otherwise, that suffered the horrors of starvation and probably sucked the blood from its own parched tongue before the end came.

These things you notice at first; but the wind increases and the pace grows madder. You tie a string to your hat and anchor it to your suspender; your handkerchief is whipping from your neck and goes sailing and writhing up and away—away out of sight almost before you realize that it is gone. This is, indeed, a different wind from any that ever blew in any other part of the world.

You are fairly flying now, and but a little sail is up. The air is filled with sand and pebbles as large as buckshot, and they pelt you hard; all around towering spirals of dust—small end of the spiral down—go springing across the plain, whirling up food for the terrible storm that is sweeping from the Sierra Mountains to Death Valley. Wilder becomes the dash of the *Queen*, and you hang on frantically with both hands and find it hard to catch your breath. The man who steers and the man who hauls in canvas are too busy to see you gasp and shudder; but at last, when Doomsday seems near, the

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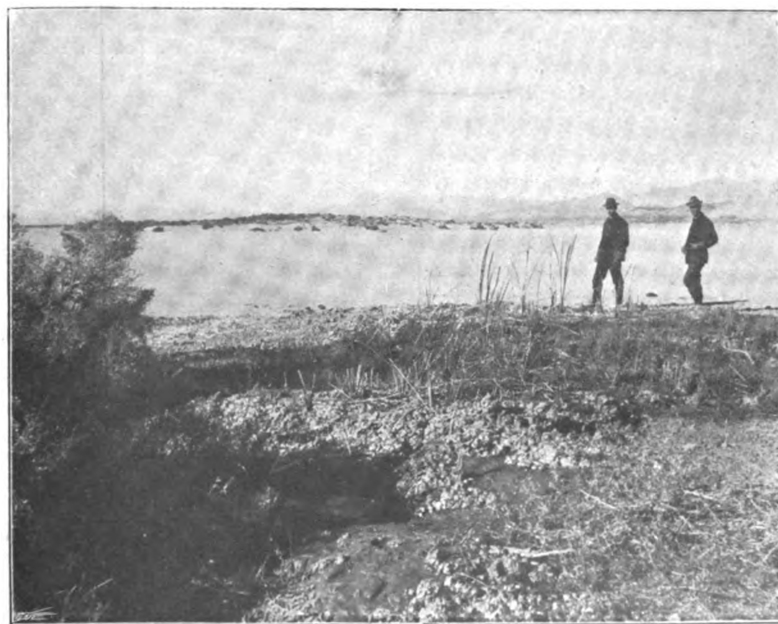
sails are all lowered and the terrifying voyage is ended. And then you are told that it has not begun to blow yet! Thirty minutes later it would be impossible to stand erect anywhere on the ground over which you have passed! That is just a little taste of the Mojave Desert.

An experience never to be forgotten is a night run on the *Queen*. Through the weird surroundings that are her element it is more impressive than a voyage over the most tempestuous sea. There is something uncanny about the singular craft, shooting noiselessly through the moonlight like a white-sheeted spectre, and when first "launched" stray gold-seekers who met her were frightened almost out of their wits, and many will swear that they have seen the real "phantom ship."

Not long ago, just at dusk one evening, the *Queen* ran upon a roving band of Mojave Indians squatting around their camp-fire. With wild whoops of alarm the scared natives made a rush to get away, the braves trampling the squaws and papooses under foot. It was the very "Spirit of Evil" that the breeze brought to them, and their fright was amusing to behold. After the white monster had passed on they returned to the fire, threw away the food they had prepared, and all hands turned in and prayed through the entire night. It requires something extraordinary to make a Mojave Indian think of his prayers.

Surprising pranks have been played with the new land yacht by the ever-present and wonderful mirage. A hundred miles from Rosamond a sailing vessel has been frequently seen against the horizon, sometimes apparently in a blue sea studded with islands green with waving palms, and again inverted and seemingly suspended in the sky. Several times have been sighted what looked like a score of schooners standing one above another and then resting on calm water in a line. These phenomena have been observed at a distance in various directions from the borders of the desert, and there is no doubt that all were but reflections of the *Desert Queen* projected on the endless screen by Nature's projectoscope, which cuts no such capers anywhere else.

One of the remarkable features of the Rosamond dry lake is a mud geyser, near the centre, constantly flowing, and so deep that it never has been fathomed. Not long ago a party of cowboys attached a leaden weight to a line and dropped it hundreds of feet, but no bottom was found, though the diameter of the hole is but a few yards at the opening.



THE ROSAMOND DRY LAKE, WHERE THE FASTEST RUN IS MADE, SHOWING THE REMARKABLE MUD GEYSER IN THE FOREGROUND.
From a] [*Photo.*

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

"PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE."

"This photo. illustrates a case of putting the 'cart before the horse.' Apparently the horse is used to push the vehicle, but as a matter of fact the vehicle pulls the animal along whether he wishes to go or not. It is an automobile, the driving mechanism being concealed in the body of the carriage. It is steered by a wooden wheel with the rim removed, and the power, which is furnished by gasoline motor, is controlled by an invisible lever. This peculiar carriage has been in use in Baltimore for advertising purposes."—Mr. D. A. Keen, Willey, Baltimore.

A VAGARY OF JACK FROST.

"The accompanying photo. is one taken in the Tyrol of a fountain which froze as it was playing. It is 12ft. high, and, strange to say, what cannot be seen in the photo., the fountain threw up water through the top which froze as it descended."—Miss A. M. Scott, 386, Avenue Louise, Brussels, Belgium.

"LIFE IN THE OLD DOG YET."

"Is this proof of British pluck and endurance in an old man of seventy-three of sufficient interest to be printed on your 'Curiosity' page? The photo., which was taken by J. E. Wren, New Brompton, shows an iron 'electric traction' standard which the old man—in top-boots, be it observed—has just climbed. This feat of hardihood in one so aged was first accomplished by Mr. James Tuffnell to prove that there was 'life in the old dog yet'; and was again done, against the pleading of his family, in order that the camera might register the feat. After thirty years of 'roughing it' in America this old gentleman is as hearty as many men half his age, and is so ready to enter into any physical contest that his wife is ever dreading the day when he may attempt too much."—Mr. P. W. Tuffnell, 6, Trafalgar Road, New Brompton, Kent.

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A WOULD-BE "PLANT."

"I send you the inclosed photograph taken by me recently of a plant said to be a native of West Africa, called 'Pingus Pongus,' of the Statia Limonium order. Perhaps some of your travelled readers of the 'Curiosity' section could give me fuller particulars should they have seen it growing in its native habitat."—Mr. Alan Treverton Jones, Tregleath, Newport, Mon.

A QUEER WALKING-STICK.

"The article illustrated in our photograph might as an alternative be called a record in pencils, for in a world of walking-stick novelties it is perhaps as queer as any, being nothing more or less than an overgrown lead pencil. The wood is cedar, varnished to represent malacca, and the lead is of a very superior quality. The knob at the top serves the double purpose of protecting the point and as a comfortable handle. It was given to its present owner by a well-known Deal boatman, having been acquired by him in his peregrinations abroad. An ordinary-sized pencil has been photographed by the side of the record pencil in order to give an idea of the latter's size."—Mrs. Jane Williams, 5, Gabriel Street, Honor Oak Park, S.E.

THE LATEST PHOTOGRAPHIC JOKE.

"I send you photographs of a Clyde ship-drawing office staff, taken when a few of the staff were leaving. Not being pleased with the photo. I painted mine in colours and altered it as shown until it looked like an imaginary Highland wedding. Perhaps my contribution may interest some of your readers inclined the same way who are not too well pleased with their beauty when taken in a group. I send two photos. taken by myself from the originals, which were 12in. by 10in. I represent Buller in the photograph."—Mr. J. McNair Dunbar, 15, North Claremont Street, Glasgow.

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AN ACROBATIC DOG.

"Inclosed is a picture of a terrier taken by myself. This little animal will spend as much time as he is allowed in demolishing the lower branches of available trees. He will swing for minutes together until he can manage to gnaw through the branch."—Rev. H. Larken, M.A., Reepham, Lincoln.

"WHEN IS A PARROT NOT A PARROT?"

"I send you a photographic freak which I think may be of some use to you for your 'Curiosity' page. Polly is really quite a good-looking bird, but, as will be seen, has assumed in her photograph an extraordinary likeness to an old gentleman holding a cigarette in his hand. I have asked many skilled photographers, but they can none of them account for this singular result."—Mr. William Bastian, Surg. R.N., H.M.S. *Hyacinth*, Devonport.

TWENTY-FOUR TINY TOTS.

"I send you a photograph taken at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, showing the master, assistants, and resident students of the hospital, each of whom is nursing a baby from one to eight days old. A photograph of this kind is taken every June. The students are from various hospitals of the United Kingdom and abroad—Bombay, Montreal, Sierra Leone, Dublin, Edinburgh, London, etc., being represented. This photo. was taken by Chancellor, of Dublin."—Mr. Du Lyle, formerly an assistant master of the hospital.

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WHAT IS A HAT-CAT?

"The cat I am seen wearing as a hat in the photo. is very much alive and absolutely free. If I place her in this head-dress attitude she will remain quite still until I take her off."—Mr. T. S. Cunningham, Chirton, Devizes.

A RECORD CARD TOWER.

"In your September issue of THE STRAND MAGAZINE you produced a picture of what was considered a unique performance in building card towers. The inclosed photograph of myself would, I feel sure, prove of great interest to your readers, inasmuch as I have beaten the previous record by five stories and formed a fresh record which I think will be hard to beat. While this photograph was being developed I added another story, making twenty-one; but on attempting the twenty-second the tower collapsed."—Miss Rosie Farner, 8, Bexley Road, Erith.

INDIA'S ARTISTIC TOMMIES.

"I beg to submit to you for your 'Curiosity' page some photos. taken at De Aar, South Africa, in May last, 1901, of some animals made by the native soldiers, out of their own imagination, with the clay they had at hand. I send you four photographs which were taken by Major Bruce Swinton, Adjutant 3rd Batt. 2nd Queen's Surrey Regiment."—Mrs. M. Wilson Noble, Tangley Park, Guildford.

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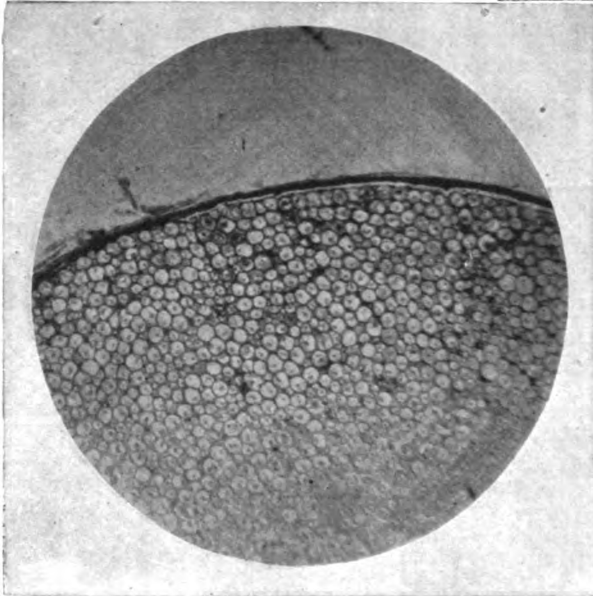
A HUMAN TELEGRAPH CABLE.

"Every schoolboy is aware that among the fittings which comprise his internal economy Nature has provided him with what is familiarly termed a 'funny-bone.' In still plainer English, this is a nerve composed of myriad tiny fibres, each separate, and the resemblance to a submarine cable is strikingly apparent. Indeed, in a general sense, the functions of the 'funny-bone' or ulnar nerve are identical, for it transmits messages from the elbow-point to the brain. Our photograph illustrates a small portion of the nerve taken through a microscope magnifying about 100 times."—We are indebted to Mr. H. F. Hatfield, 1, Park Road, Forest Hill, S.E., for this interesting scientific contribution.

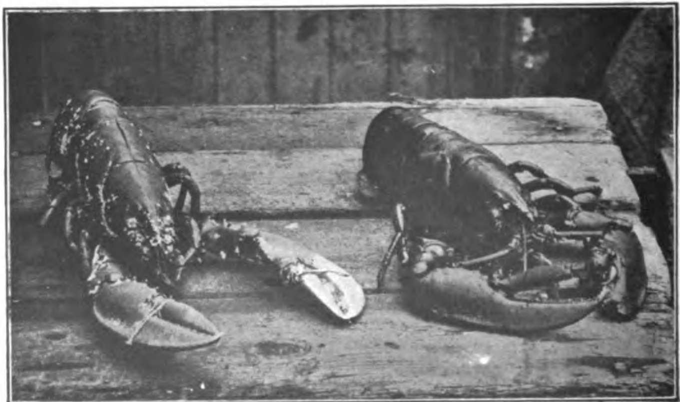


"IN FEAR OF THE HEAD MASTER."

"Inclosed you will find an amateur photograph. It is one of myself, which was taken about a year ago when I was in Norwich at school. If looked at closely it will be seen that I am seated on a round waste-pipe projecting out from the playground wall, which I reached by a human ladder, *i.e.*, boys' shoulders. Whilst in this lofty position, unfortunately for me, one of my schoolfellows appeared on the scene with a camera and took this photo. of me, much to my fear and disgust, as I was afraid it might get into the hands of the head master. Note the boys below."—Mr. C. Hope Butler, Lancaster House, Magdala Road, Nottingham.

HOW THE LOBSTER CASTS HIS SHELL.

"The lobster is a remarkable crustacean. It is very pugnacious, and in combat often loses a limb, which rapidly grows on again, of the same form and structure as the removed member. Another peculiar characteristic is the process of moulting or casting of the shell, which in adult lobsters occurs once a year, and in younger ones much oftener. In the example illustrated the picture to the left shows the discarded shell, that to the right the released lobster with its new shell of a few days' growth. At this stage the flesh of the animal must be in a peculiarly pulpy or plastic condition to enable it to withdraw its two big claws through the narrow limits of the inner joints and otherwise extricate itself from the shell."—Mr. Thomas Kent, Albert Square, Kirkwall.



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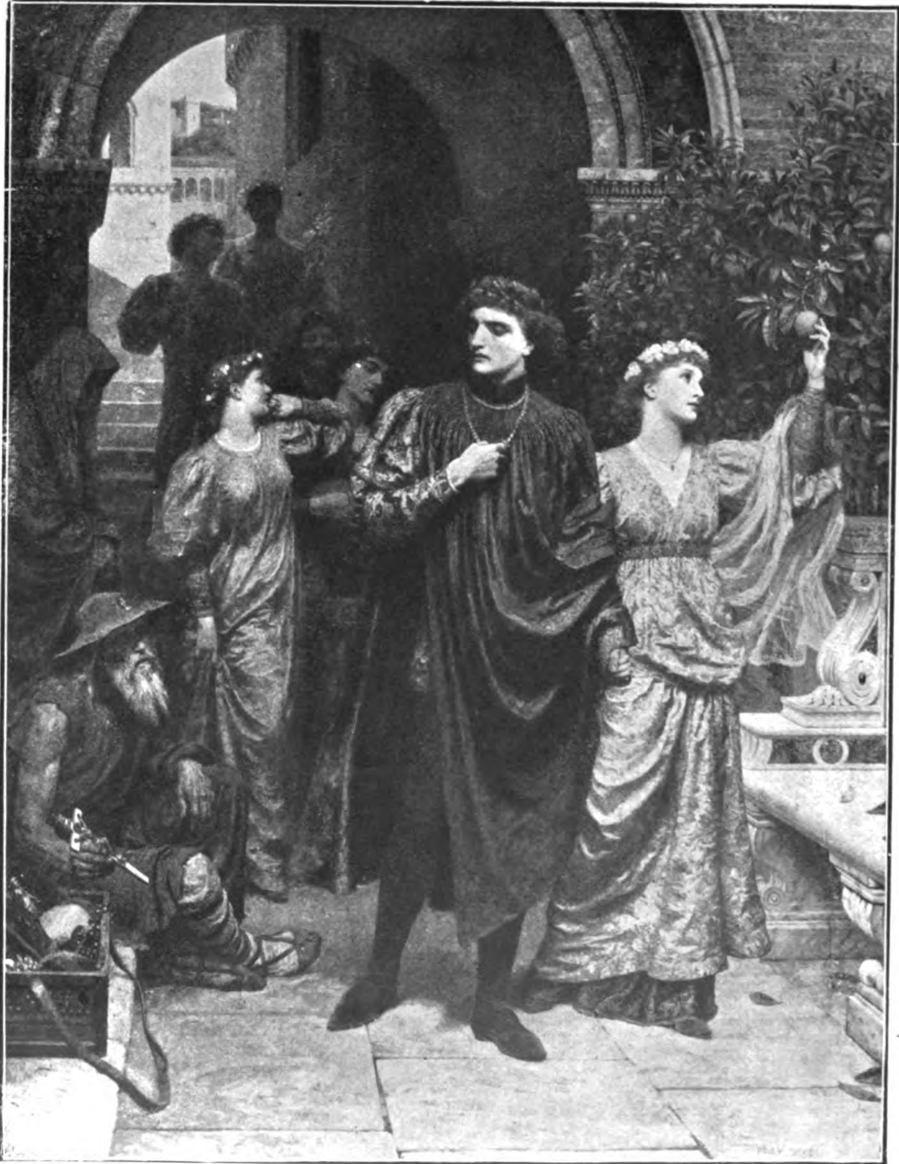

"THE SYMBOL."

From the Picture by Frank Dicksee, R.A.

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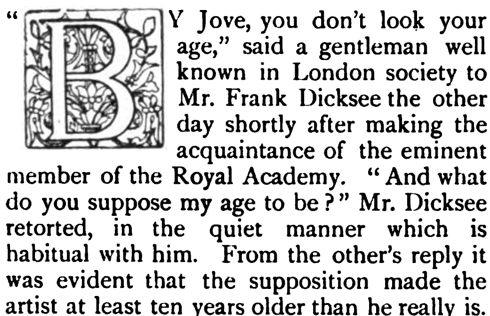
The Strand Magazine.

Vol. xxiii. JUNE. 1902. No. 137.

Painters and Their Pictures.

MR. FRANK DICKSEE, R.A.

By Frederick Dolman.



“BY Jove, you don't look your age,” said a gentleman well known in London society to Mr. Frank Dicksee the other day shortly after making the acquaintance of the eminent member of the Royal Academy. “And what do you suppose my age to be?” Mr. Dicksee retorted, in the quiet manner which is habitual with him. From the other's reply it was evident that the supposition made the artist at least ten years older than he really is.

Most people on entering for the first time Mr. Dicksee's studio in Greville Place, Maida Hill, have a similar feeling of surprise in regarding the figure of its owner, although they do not give this blunt expression to it. Having in their minds the record of Mr. Dicksee's work and the reputation which it has brought him they look for a grey-haired veteran of the brush in place of “the man of forty” or so, with a brown-bearded face which has—at the first look, at any rate—none of the marks of time upon it. In point of fact, Mr. Dicksee began his career at so early an age that, notwithstanding the work he has produced, he is still under fifty.

If not exactly born in a studio, Mr. Dicksee may be said to have been brought up in one. His father, in his time, was a well-known painter who regularly exhibited at the Royal Academy until his death in 1896, although he did not attain to the honours of membership. From him Mr. Dicksee received lessons in art almost before he could talk or walk. “I cannot remember,” he remarked on one occasion, “the time when I didn't draw.” For scholastic training he attended, when not playing truant in his father's studio, the Rev. George Henslow's private school at Bloomsbury until the age of sixteen. Art was in the blood—three other members of the family, including his sister, Margaret, are successful painters—and there was never any question as to the profession Frank was to adopt. Before he was seventeen he had actually qualified himself for the Royal Academy Schools, and during the five years spent there he won both gold and silver medals. The gold medal was awarded for his first picture exhibited at the Academy in 1875, the subject being “Elijah Confronting Ahab and Jezebel in Naboth's Vineyard.”

On leaving the Academy Schools Mr. Dicksee devoted himself to black and white illustrative work for several of the magazines, and afterwards for a time assisted Mr. Henry Holiday in his decorative work. In the meantime he was carefully preparing himself for higher things. He was a diligent member of the Langham Sketching Club, and it was in its rooms at Langham Place that the two pictures by which, above all others, Mr. Dicksee is probably best known had their origin—I mean “Harmony” and “The Symbol.” On certain evenings it was, and is, the rule of the club that the members present should each make an extempore drawing—a sketch, that is to say, expressing some idea which suggested itself on the spur of the moment. It was from two sketches thus made that Mr. Dicksee was led to paint “Harmony” and “The Symbol.”

Mr. Dicksee was only twenty-four when his “Harmony” became the “picture of the year,” 1877. Although it was only the second picture submitted by the young artist to their judgment, the Hanging Committee placed it in the centre of the first room.

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During the whole time the Academy was open the public crowded round this picture as they afterwards in another year crowded round Luke Fildes's "The Doctor," and before the exhibition closed the Council of the Royal Academy endorsed public opinion by purchasing the work for the nation out of the Chantrey fund.

In the course of twenty-five years the general admiration of "Harmony" has not suffered, and to-day at the National Gallery of British Art Mr. Dicksee's canvas is one of perhaps half-a-dozen before which the people can be seen to linger most. Writing ten years after, it was a well-known critic who thus described the charm which "Harmony" has for "the man in the street" and the connoisseur alike :—

"This beautiful work, so original in subject and treatment, so instinct with true poetic feeling, must be still vividly remembered by all who saw it on the Academy walls. The girl seated at the organ, the lover listening in rapt attention, the glory of the evening light through the stained-glass window forming an aureole round the girl's glistening hair, the subdued but beautiful colour, the carefully finished yet not too prominent details, all formed a veritable poem on canvas, bringing indefinite association with Adelaide Procter's 'Lost Chord' and—

> A twilight song ; while the shadows sleep
> Dusk and deep;

and, indeed, with all beautiful abstractions, whether of music, poetry, or painting."

From the Picture by] "A REVERIE." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*

(Reproduced by permission from the original painting in the possession of the Liverpool Corporation, owners of the copyright.)

It is natural to associate the picture with the song. But although "The Lost Chord" had been written and set to music some years before "Harmony" was painted, Mr. Dicksee, it seems, had neither the words nor the music in his mind when he made his sketch on that eventful evening—as it afterwards proved to be for him—at the Langham Club.

Although "Harmony" was not inspired in this way, Mr. Dicksee will admit to friends that he is very impressionable to music. It

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seems to him that no influence can be so powerful upon the feelings and emotions. It was with this conviction upon him that he painted his well-known "Reverie" a few years ago—the picture of a man seated in an easy-chair, musing tenderly, whilst a lady, somewhat younger, played on the piano in a soft lamp-light. There has been a good deal of misconception about this picture, it would seem. Mr. Dicksee has received scores of letters on the subject. Some of these correspondents inquired whether it was to be what erratic past, had married and settled down with a woman of a quiet, simple disposition. One evening after dinner she happens to play an air which, by an association of ideas, recalls one of his past romances and leads to a reverie upon a woman he had once loved. Of course, as Mr. Dicksee admitted, there are some people, regarding it as an act of disloyalty to his wife that a married man should ever think of his past loves, who will not care to give this interpretation to the picture. Nor is there any

From the Picture by] "THE MIRROR." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*

(By permission of Philip H. Waterlow, Esq., owner of the copyright.)

regarded as a sort of companion to Mr. Orchardson's picture, "Her Mother's Voice." Others stated that of course they knew what the picture meant—a widower listening to his daughter's playing and recalling his lost wife as she used to play to him; but they had a friend who did not understand it, etc.

Some time ago Mr. Dicksee was kind enough to explain to me the idea which was in his own mind when he painted the work. He was thinking of a man who, after a some-

coercion obliging them to do so. It happens to be the meaning which the painter, who thinks that a little thought occasionally given to old ties implies no treachery to present ones, intended in "A Reverie." But everybody is free to give to the picture the meaning which pleases him best, and in any case "A Reverie" must always be admired for the excellence of its art.

A similar misunderstanding of the painter's purpose occurred with respect to "The

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Crisis." This picture was exhibited in the same year as Mr. Fildes's "The Doctor," and the degree of resemblance between them forms, perhaps, an instance of coincidence in art, the two painters becoming acquainted with each other's work for the first time at the Royal Academy. But the

From the Picture by] "THE CONFESSION." [Frank Dicksee, R.A.
(In the collection of the late Lord Wantage.)

figure bending over the bed of sickness in Mr. Dicksee's picture was not intended, as was supposed by some people, to be a physician anxiously watching his patient for the change in condition which was to decide the issue of life or death. In Mr. Dicksee's mind he was a devoted father regarding his daughter with the strain and suspense induced by the imminence of this contingency. Mrs. Chandler Moulton, the American poetess, wrote some pathetic verses on the assumption that the patient was the onlooker's young wife, and sent a copy to Mr. Dicksee with the inquiry whether she had correctly interpreted his meaning. Candour compelled him to reply that she had not, but her perception was certainly not so much at fault as that of some critics of the picture.

With regard to the painting of "Evangeline," which was the outcome in 1879 of Mr. Dicksee's black and white illustrations for the *édition de luxe* of Longfellow's poem, the artist has been induced, notwithstanding his strong reserve on such a subject, to reveal some details which may be said to be typical of his extremely careful method of work. Longfellow's poem, as some readers will remember, tells the story of the unhappy fate of the French settlers in Acadia, Nova Scotia, who were expelled by the British Government in 1755. The particular episode which Mr. Dicksee depicts is an old man's farewell to his home on the beach just before an embarkation at night, when "vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him." In order that he might study sunset at sea Mr. Dicksee spent some weeks at Lynmouth, taking his easel to the beach every fine evening for an hour as the glowing light fell upon the water and gradually faded into darkness. By much patient effort he thus obtained the beautiful radiance in the sky and on the sea which forms so striking a

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feature of the picture. Long after he had returned home and had nearly finished "Evangeline" in his studio Mr. Dicksee became doubtful and dissatisfied about some of the details in his beach, and in order to remove this doubt and dissatisfaction he went down to Herne Bay next day and made some sketches of the beach there.

It may be added that this was Mr. Dicksee's first attempt to paint Nature on a large scale. Brought up in his father's house in Fitzroy Square, educated in London, living the ordinary life of a townsman, his opportunities for close study of Nature had been few. But the result showed that, moved by enthusiasm for his subject and sustained by strong determination, Mr. Dicksee could succeed in giving us the truth and beauty of an open-air view as well as the charm of light and grace of an interior scene.

From the Picture by] "MEMORIES." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*

(By permission of Messrs. C. E. Clifford and Co., Haymarket, owners of the copyright.)

Mr. Dicksee has more than once repeated this success, most recently, perhaps, in "The Funeral of a Viking." The theme was suggested to him long ago by a passage in Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship," concerning those heroes of the northern seas in ancient Europe, and when it was eventually attempted no pains were spared to give it the utmost truth. Mr. Dicksee made his studies for the motion of the sea at Sidmouth, in South Devon. In order to paint the waves from the right point of view it was necessary that he should himself be on the sea, looking towards the land. Mr. Dicksee at first tried a bathing machine, fixing his easel on the ledge in front of the vehicle. But every now and then it was, of course, necessary to have the bathing machine drawn up from the advancing tide, and the frequency of this operation was found to be fatal to successful work. Mr. Dicksee then chartered a boat and the services of two boatmen, who, with their oars and by the aid of ropes, maintained its equilibrium as much as was possible in the surf near the shore. With great patience, much wetting, and one or two narrow escapes from capsizing, Mr. Dicksee was thus enabled to transfer to colours on his canvas the particular movements and hues of the waves which were desired for "The Funeral of a Viking."

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Having returned to London and secured suitable models, the artist's next care was for the fidelity of various other features in the picture. Mr. Dicksee did not go to Christiania to see the Viking ship which has been preserved there, but he examined the relics of these craft which are to be found in our own museums, as well as drawings and models, the dragon's head at the prow, for instance, being painted from a drawing in the British Museum. He was very careful, too, about the Viking's armour, which was specially made for him to paint by a girl-student in *repoussé* work at the South Kensington Schools. This armour is one of the most interesting things now to be seen in Mr. Dicksee's studio, where there is a large wardrobe full of the articles of costume, etc., which he has used in painting his pictures.

From the Picture by] "PAOLO AND FRANCESCA." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*
(By permission of the Fine Art Society, New Bond Street, owners of the copyright.)

"The Symbol," which some critics declare is Mr. Dicksee's best picture, was produced with a similar regard for historic accuracy in costume and other details. But, strangely enough, "The Symbol," with its scene so full of the Italian air and spirit, was painted before its author had visited Italy. First conceived, like "Harmony," as an extempore sketch at the Langham Club, it was not until 1881 that Mr. Dicksee completed the canvas for the Royal Academy. In January of that year, although only twenty-seven, the artist was elected A.R.A., an honour which had been secured for him by the two pictures, "Harmony" and "Evangeline." Mr. Dicksee was then the youngest member of the Royal Academy, and his supporters were peculiarly gratified (and his opponents, if he had any, equally con-

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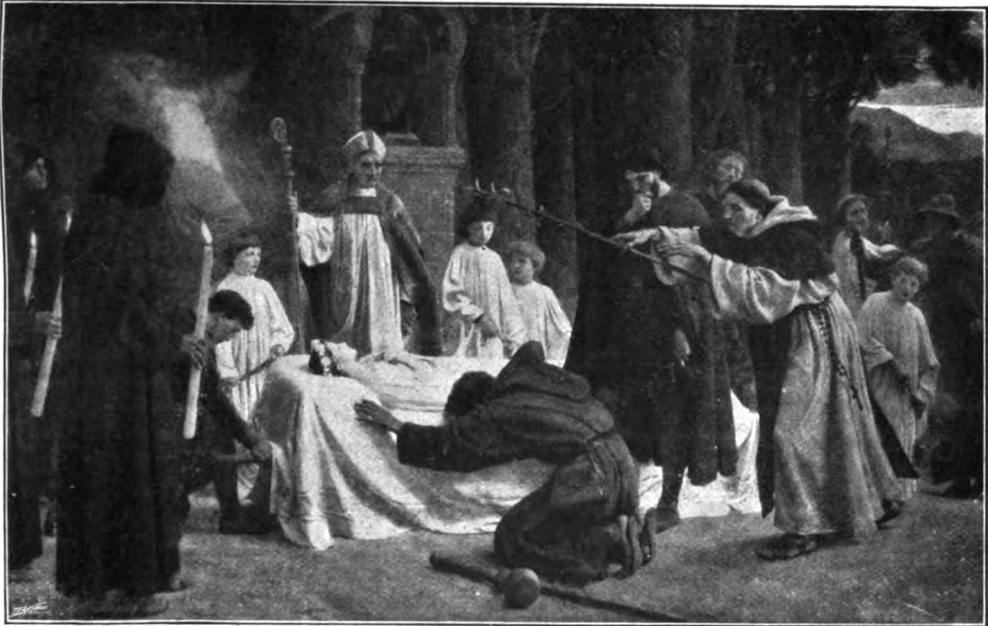
founded) when the election was followed by the exhibition of a work so powerful and original as "The Symbol." In this picture of a party of revellers rebuked by the sight of a pedlar holding a crucifix in his hand, Mr. Dicksee's brilliant colouring caught the spirit, it was said, of the old Venetian painters. The spirit had come to him by intuition, for, as I have indicated, Mr. Dicksee up to that time had had no opportunity of familiarizing himself with the work of the Venetians.

fact, if he had he doubts whether this picture would ever have been painted, owing to the disturbing effect of the music on the artistic ideas which he had formed in connection with the subject. To understand the picture one must remember that Tannhäuser, according to the German legend, after a sensual life, goes to Rome to secure the Pope's intercession for the forgiveness of his sins. The Pope replies that it is as impossible that Tannhäuser should be forgiven as for the staff in his hand



From the Picture by] "THE REDEMPTION OF TANNHÄUSER." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*
(By permission of T. Dixon Galpin, Esq., owner of the copyright.

In "Paolo and Francesca" and "The Redemption of Tannhäuser" Mr. Dicksee has given us two pictures which owe as much to his own imaginative power as to their literary and traditional origin. He painted "Paolo and Francesca" after reading the fifth chapter of Dante's "Inferno," wherein the unfortunate lovers' story is told, being unacquainted at the time with Leigh Hunt's poem and Silvio Pellico's tragedy on the same subject, whilst Stephen Phillips's drama had not then been published.

"The Redemption of Tannhäuser" was not inspired, as might be supposed, by Wagner's opera, although Mr. Dicksee greatly admires this. At the time he was painting the picture he had not heard the opera—in

to blossom. The knight thereupon returns to the Venusberg, where Venus holds her court. Three days afterwards the Pope's staff puts forth green leaves, and messengers are dispatched from Rome in quest of Tannhäuser. According to the old legend their search is unavailing, and the knight is never seen again. But both painter and poet have deviated from the tradition at this point, Tannhäuser's redemption being effected in opera and picture by the influence of Elizabeth, a beautiful maiden whose pure love for him moves him to repentance.

Mr. Dicksee painted "Startled" and "The Mountain of the Winds" entirely from his imagination, never going outside his studio for preparatory studies. "Startled" was the

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picture Mr. Dicksee painted on his election to full membership of the Academy in 1891, according to the rule which requires every new R.A., on receiving his diploma, to deposit a specimen of his art in what is known as the "Diploma Gallery" at Burlington House. "The Mountain of the Winds" had its origin in the mythological tales of a cave of the winds, Mr. Dicksee substituting a mountain for a cave because it lent itself better to an embodiment on canvas of the force of wind. Another largely imaginative subject was "The Passing of Arthur," although the picture was based, of course, upon Tennyson's poem, at the end of "The Idylls of the King."

From the Picture by] "THE MOUNTAIN OF THE WINDS." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*

With such insight as I have been able to give into Mr. Dicksee's method of work it is not surprising that he is one of our least prolific painters. His large canvases are fewer than the years in which he has been practising his profession. Nor has he given much time to portrait-painting, although this has not been from any want of temptation to devote himself to what is usually the most lucrative part of the painter's art. His earliest success, after "Harmony" and "Evangeline," was in portraiture. The work was exhibited in 1880 under the title of "The House Builders," but it was in reality the portraits of Sir William and Lady Welby-Gregory. At the time Sir William gave the commission to Mr. Dicksee, Sir William was about to build his present residence, Denton Manor, Grantham, and on the artist's suggestion he and his wife were painted in their library examining the architect's model and plans of the new house. It was quite a matter of comment when Mr. Dicksee was represented by a portrait only in last year's Academy, albeit it was a beautiful portrait of the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos.

Mr. Dicksee seemingly takes much more pleasure in idealizing a face than in faithfully reproducing it. In such pictures as "The Two Crowns"—which, exhibited in 1900, was his last important subject in the Royal

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Academy, and was purchased for £2,000 by the Chantrey Trustees—"Romeo and Juliet"—which, like "Evangeline," was the outcome of black and white illustration—and "Too Late"—an original rendering of a rather well-worn theme for painters, the parable of the Foolish Virgins—Mr. Dicksee has given us some beautiful conceptions of womanhood. To another of his pictures, "The Magic Crystal," Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, it may be remembered, went for his example of "The Most Beautiful Women in Art." Yet Mr. Dicksee, I believe, has enjoyed no exceptional fortune, by the kindness of friends or in other ways, in his models for either the men or women of his pictures. The models he has employed have been almost invariably the "professionals" who are open to the employment of London artists generally. This being so, Mr. Dicksee's pictures certainly prove that not the least among his high qualities is the capacity to idealize the grace, beauty, and refinement of the commonplace in our life of to-day.

From the Picture by] "THE CRISIS." [*Frank Dicksee, R.A.*

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The House Under the Sea.

BY MAX PEMBERTON.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHICH SHOWS THAT A MAN WHO THINKS OF BIG THINGS SOMETIMES FORGETS THE LITTLE ONES.

I WAS the first to be out on the rock, but Peter Bligh was close upon my heels, and, wonderful to tell, the Italian almost as quick as any of us. To what gate of the sea the staircase was carrying me I knew no more than the others. The time was gone by when anything in Czerny's house could surprise me; and when at the stairs' head we found that which looked for all the world like a great port-hole with a swing door of steel to shut it, I climbed through it without hesitation, and so stood in God's fresh air for the first time for nearly three days.

That this was the main gate to the sea I had all along surmised, and now proved surely. No sooner was I through the door than all the world seemed to spread out again before my eyes—the distant island, the shimmering sea, the blue sky shut to us through such long hours. The rock itself, where we gained foothold, lifted itself clear and dry above the breakers at my feet. There were steps leading down to the water's edge, a still pool wherein boats were warped, other crags of the reef defying the tides; these and the silence of the night everywhere; but of men I saw nothing. The terrible fight we had anticipated, blow for blow, and ringing alarm, the struggle for foothold on the rock, the challenge to Czerny's men—such things did not befall. We stood unchallenged on the plateau, and we stood alone.

I said that it was a miracle, and yet the Lord knows it was no miracle at all.

Let me try and describe this place for you that you may understand our situation more clearly, and how it befell that such a simple circumstance brought about such a strange turn of fortune. We had come up from the heart of the reef, as you know, and the staircase led out to a gate of steel opening in the face of a rocky crag, which stood well above the level even of the storm-seas. A lower plateau (unwashed by the sea) stood below the gate, and other crags jutted out of the sea and showed windows to the western sun. I made a bit of a map of the land and water thereby to keep it in my memory; and such as it is I print it here

that you may get the position truly. Place us at the main gate of this house of wonders and put Czerny's crew by the sword-fish reef, and all will be plain to you.

The island lay perhaps a mile to the southward; and nearer to us, at a cable's length as I reckoned it, a group of rocky pinnacles in the open sea marked the door we had shut and the ladder by which Czerny's men went in to shelter. But the oddest thing of all was this, that the main gate to this house of wonders should be left unguarded at an hour so critical.

Could they not have struck us down as we came out, one by one, firing their guns to call comrades from the sea, and bringing a hundred more atop of us to end our chances there and then? Of course they could; and yet it was not done. No man hailed us; we had the breaking seas at our feet, the fresh air in our lungs, the spindrift wet upon our faces. And who was the more surprised, I at finding the gate unguarded or my comrades to discover that there was such a gate at all, the Lord only knows. Like

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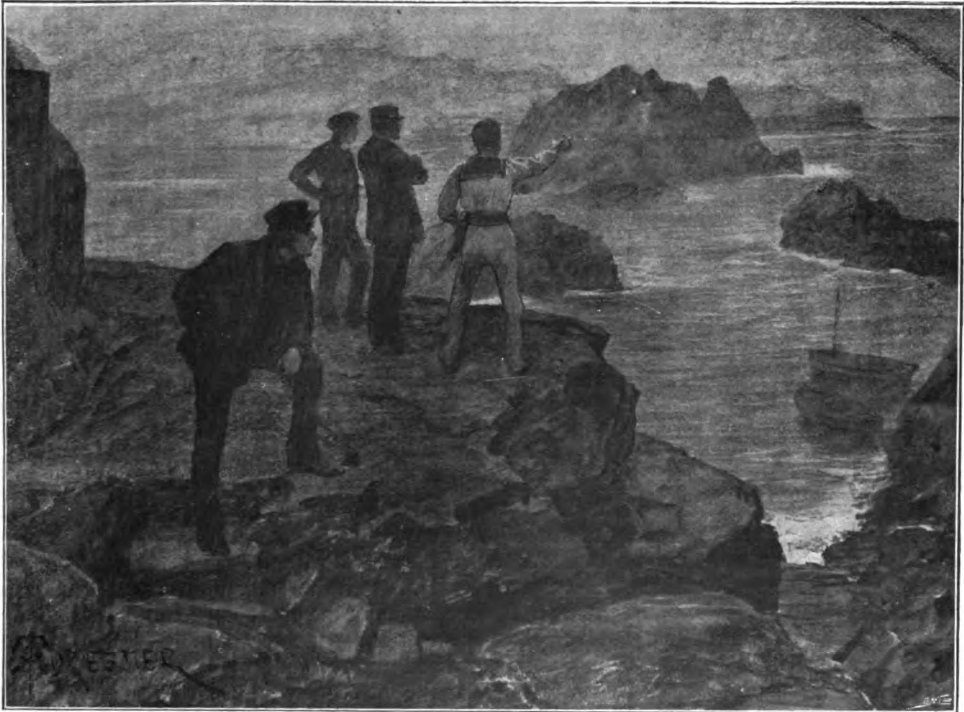
three who stumbled upon a precipice we halted there at the sea's edge, and looked at one another to ask if such great good fortune could, indeed, be ours.

I have told you before that the Italian was at our heels when we gained the rock, and it was to him now that I addressed my question.

"You said there were two at the gate, Regnarte. Where are they, then, and what keeps them?"

He cracked his bony fingers many times, and began to gabble away vociferously in his own language—a tongue I like the sound of, but which no right-minded man should talk. When he came to some calmness and to a sane man's speech, he pointed to the pinnacles of the lesser gate and began to make the truth clear to me.



"HE POINTED TO THE PINNACLES OF THE LESSER GATE."

"You come lucky, sir, you come lucky, true! Hafmitz gone yonder; he and mate, too; he go to see why other men cry out!"

I saw it like a flash. The alarm had been given at the other end of the reef, and the two that should have guarded this had put out in their boat to see what the matter was. If a man had wished to believe that Providence guided him that night, he could not have found a circumstance to help him farther on the road.

"Luck! Luck's no word for it, my lads," said I. "If a man told such a thing ashore, who'd believe him? And yet it's true—true, as your own eyes tell you."

They had not found their tongues yet and none of them uttered a syllable. The wonders they had seen: that house of mystery lying like a palace of the story-books far down below the rolling Pacific; the surprise of it all; the picture of lights and rooms and of a woman's face; and now this plateau of rock with breakers at their feet and the island mists for their horizon; and, in the far distance, away upon the sword-fish reef, sights and sounds which quickened every pulse—who shall blame them if they could answer me never a word? They simply halted there and gazed spellbound across the shimmering water. I alone knew how far we stood from the end where safety lay.

Now, Peter Bligh was the first to give up his star-gazing; and, shaking himself like a great dog, he turned to me with a word of that common sense which he can speak sometimes.

"'Tis a miracle, truly, and a couple of

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doors to it," cried he, like one thinking keenly. "Nevertheless, I make bold to say that if they have a key to yonder hatch we are undone entirely, captain."

I sat upon a crag of the rock and tried to think of it all. Czerny's men would return in an hour, or two at the most, and the truth would be out. They would come—the seamen to the lesser gate, the others to this door of steel by which we sat—and, finding that knocking did not open, they would take such measures as they thought fit to blast the doors. A gun well fired might do as much if gun could be trained upon the reef. Once let them inside and it needed no clever tongue to say how it would fare with us or with those we sought to protect. No man, I said, would live to tell that story, or to carry the history of Edmond Czerny's life to a distant city. All that lay between us and life was this door of steel shutting like a port-hole in the solid rock. And could we hold it against, it might be one, it might be three hundred men? That was a question the night must answer.

"Regnarte," I said, upon an impulse, "you have guns in this house?"

He held up his fingers and opened them many times to express a great number.

"One, two, three hundred guns," said he. "Excellency has them all; but here one gun much bigger than that. You seamen, you shall know how to fire him, captain. Excellency say that no man take the gate while that gun there. Ah! the leg on the other boot now!"

He cracked his fingers all the time he said this, and shook his keys and danced about the plateau like a madman. For a while I could make neither head nor tail of what he meant; but presently he turned as though he would go down to the cabins again, and, standing upon the very threshold of the staircase, he showed me what I had never seen or should have looked for in twenty years—the barrel of a quick-firing gun and the steel turret which defended it.

"'Tis a pom-pom, or I'm a heathen nigger!" cries Peter Bligh, half mad at the sight of it. "A pom-pom, and a shield about it. The glory to Saint Patrick that shows me the wonder!"

And Dolly Venn, catching hold of my hand in like excitement, he says:—

"Oh, Mr. Begg, oh, what luck, what luck at last!"

I crossed the plateau and saw the thing with my own eyes. It was a modern Krupp quick-firing gun, well kept, well fitted, well placed behind a shield of steel which might defend those who worked it against a hundred. Those who set it upon the rock so set it that not only the near sea but the second gate could be covered by its fire. It would sweep the water with a hail of lead, and leave unseen those that did the work. And the irony of it was chiefly this, that Edmond Czerny, seeking to defend the door of his house against all the world, now shut it upon himself.

"Yes," said I, at last, and I spoke almost like a man drunk with excitement; "give me shell for that, and we'll hold the gate against five hundred!"

The hope of it set every nerve in my body twitching; sweat, I say, began to roll down my face like rain.

"You have a magazine in this place," I continued, turning upon the Italian in a way that surprised him; "you have arms in this house and shot for that gun. Where are they, man, where are they?"

He stood stock-still with fright, and stammered out a broken reply.

"Excellency has the key, captain—I show you! Don't be angry, captain!"

He turned to enter the house again, and I followed him, as eager a man as ever hunted for that which might take a fellow-creature's life.

"Do you, Peter and Dolly, keep a watch here," said I, indicating the place, "while I go below with this man. We must hold the gate, lads, hold it with our lives! If the two yonder come back, be sure you close their mouths. You understand, Peter—close their mouths!"

"Aye, I understand, captain!" said he, very quietly. "They'll not sing hymns when I've done with them!"

I followed the Italian down the stairs, and we made for the great hall again. Many lights were burning there, and the figures of women passed in and out of the splendid rooms. At the far corner, opposite Miss Ruth's own apartment, the Italian came to a halt and began to gabble again.

"Excellency live here, sir," said he; "the gun-room—you go right through to him; but Excellency, he have the key. Me only door-man. I speak true, sir!"

I opened the door of the room he indicated, and feeling upon the wall switched on a lamp. It was the palace of a place, with great book-racks all round it, and arm-chairs as long as beds in every corner, and instruments and tables and pretty ornaments enough to furnish a mansion; but for none

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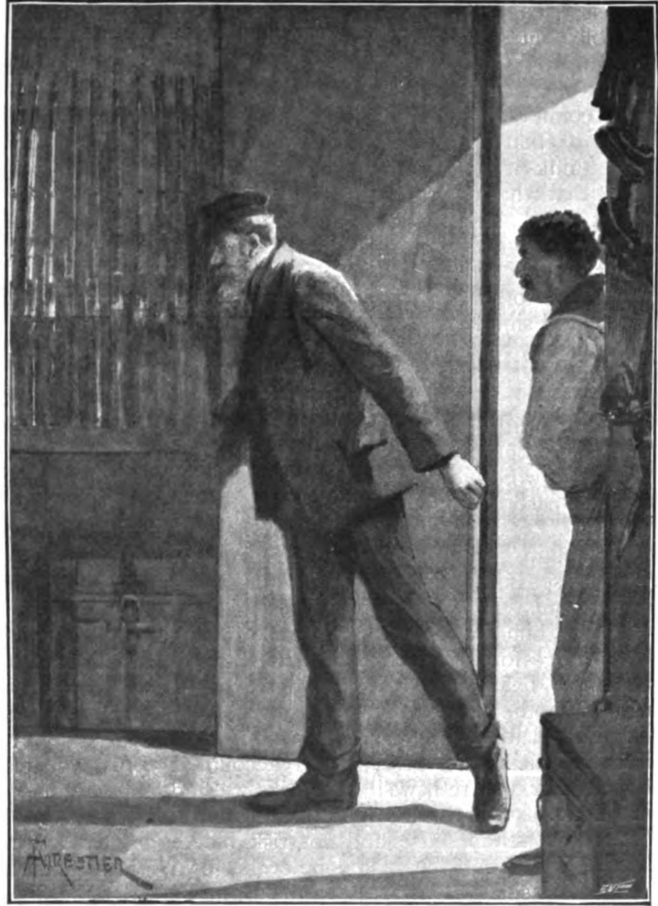
of these things had I eyes that night. Yonder, at the end of the room, a curtain opened above a door of iron: and through that door I saw at a glance the way to the gun-room lay. Ah, how my head tried to grapple with the trouble! The keys—where lay the keys? What chance or miracle would show me those? Was the key on Czerny's person or here in one of the drawers about? How much would I have paid to have been told that truly! But how to open it!

Now the Italian watched me with curious eyes as I went up to the door and drew the curtain back from it. A quick glance round the room did not show me what common sense was seeking — an iron safe in which Czerny's keys might lie. That he would keep the key of the armoury in the room, unless it were on his person, I had no doubt; and argument began to tell me that, after all, a safe might not be necessary. If alarm came it would come from the sea; or from the lower doors, which were locked against his demon crew. I began to say that the keys would be in a drawer or bureau, and I was going to ransack every piece of furniture, when—and this seemed beyond all reason—I saw something shining bright upon a little table in the corner, and crossing the room I picked up the very thing for which a man might have offered the half of his fortune.

"Heaven above!" said I, "if this is it—if this is it——"

And why should it not have been? News of the wreck had come to the house like a sudden alarm leaping up in the night; the keys, which I held with greedy fingers, might they not have been in Czerny's hands when the bell clanged loudly through the startled corridors? I saw him, forgetful in his very greed, serving out rifles to his willing men, running up at hazard to be sure of the truth, leaving behind him that which might open his house to the world for ever. And in my hand the fruit of his alarm was lying.

Ah, Heaven! it was the truth, and the door opened at my touch, and arms for a hundred men glittered in the dim light about me.



"ARMS FOR A HUNDRED MEN GLITTERED IN THE DIM LIGHT ABOUT ME."

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST ATTACK IS MADE BY CZERNY'S MEN.

We carried the shot to the stairs' head, each man working as though his own life were the price of willing labour. If Miss Ruth had tidings of the great good fortune the night had sent to us, she would neither stay our hands with questions nor wait for idle answers. For a moment I saw her, a figure to haunt a man, looking out from the door of her own room; but a long hour passed before I changed a word with her or knew if that which we had done would win her consent. Now, indeed, was Ruth Bellenden at

the parting of the ways, and of all in Czerny's house her lot must have been the hardest to bear. She had blotted the page of her old life that night and it never would be re-written. None the less, a woman's courage could show me a bright face and all that girlish gentleness which was her truest charm. Never once would she speak of her own trouble, but always lightly of ours; so that we three—little Ruth, Dr. Gray, and Jasper Begg—might have been friends met upon any common adventure, and not at the crisis of that desperate endeavour. And so I think it will befall in all the perilous days, that what is written in the story-books about loud exclamations and pale faces and all the rest of it is the property of the story-teller, and that in plain truth you find none of these things, but just silent actors and simple talk, and no more noise of the difficulty than the common day will bring. This, at least, is my memory of that never-to-be-forgotten night. To-morrow might give us life or death—a grave beneath the seas or mastership of that house of mystery; though of this no word passed between us, but briefly we gave each other the news and asked it in return.

"Captain," says the doctor, he being the first to speak, "they tell me you've struck a gun-store. Is it true or false?"

I told him that it was true, and making light of it—for I did not wish Miss Ruth to be upset before there was good reason—I named another thing.

"Yes," said I, "we shall defend ourselves if there's need, and give a good account, I hope. For the rest, we'll take it as we find it. I am trusting that Mister Czerny will listen to common sense and not risk bloodshed. If he does, the blame be on his own head, for I shall do my best to make it easy for him."

"I know you will—I know you will, Jasper," says little Ruth, closing her hand upon mine, and not caring much what the doctor thought of it, I'll be bound; "we can do no more than our duty, each of us. Mine is very hard, but I shall not turn from it—never, while I know that duty says, 'Go on!'"

"That I'm sure you won't, Miss Ruth," was my answer to her; "if ever duty justified man or woman it justifies you and I this night. Let us begin with that and all the rest is easy. What we are doing is done as much for the sake of our fellow-men as for ourselves. We work for a good end—to let the world know what Ken's Island harbours and to keep our fellow-men from such a place. Accomplish that much, and right and humanity owe us something, though it's not for me to speak of it, nor is this the time. My business is to hold this house against the demons who are pillaging the ship yonder. The sea-gate I can take care of, Miss Ruth. It's what's below in the pit that I fear."

She listened with a curiosity which drank in every word and yet was not satiated. Nevertheless, I believe but half of my story was plain to her. And who blames her for that? Was not it enough for such a bit of a girl to say, "My friends are with me. I trust them. They will win my liberty." The arguments were for the men—for Mister Gray and me, who sought a road in the darkness, but could not find one.

"Two doors to this house, captain," says the doctor, after a little while, "and one of them shut. So much I understand. Are you sure that the cavern below is empty, or do you still count men in it?"

"'Tis just neither way," said I, "and that's the worst of it, doctor. The sea's to be held while the shell lasts and perhaps afterwards; but if there are men down below, why, then it's another matter. I'm staking all on a throw. What more can I do?"

He leaned back upon the sofa and appeared to think of it. Presently he said:—

"Captain, a man doesn't shoot with his foot, does he?"

And then, not waiting for me to answer, he goes on:—

"Why, no; he shoots with his hand. Just you plant me in the passage and give me a gun. I'll keep the door for you—by Jove, I will!"

Now, I saw that this promise frightened Miss Ruth more than she would say, for it was the first time that it occurred to her that men might come out of the pit. But she was just the one to turn it with a laugh, and crying, "What folly! what folly!" she called out at the same time for little Rosamunda, and began to think of that which I had clean forgotten.

"Jasper," says she, "you will never make a general—never, never! Why, where's your commissariat? Would you starve your crew and think nothing of it? Oh, we shall feed Mister Bligh, and then it will be easy," says she, prettily.

I made no objection to this, for it was evident that she wished to conceal her fears from us; but I knew that the doctor was wise, and before I left him there was a rifle at his side and twenty rounds to go with it.

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"If there's any sound at the door of the corridor — so much as a scratch," said I, "fire that gun. I shall be with you before the smoke's lifted, and you will need me, doctor—indeed, you will!"

poor creatures! Did man ever hear of such a villainy—to fire a good ship in her misfortune? It would be a sin against an honest rope to hang such a crew as that!"

I stepped forward to the water's edge that

"I SHALL BE WITH YOU BEFORE THE SMOKE'S LIFTED."

I left him upon this and went up, more anxious than I would have confessed, to my shipmates at the gate. I found them standing together in the moonlight, which shone clear and golden upon a gentle sea, and gave points of fire to the rocky headlands of Ken's Island. So still it was, such a scene of wonder and of beauty, that but for the words which greeted me, and the dark figures peering across the water, and something very terrible on the distant reef, I might have believed myself keeping a lonely watch in the glory of a summer's night. That delusion the East denied. I knew the truth even before Mister Bligh named it.

"They've fired the ship, captain—fired the ship!" says he, with just anger. "Aye, Heaven do to them as they've done to those

I might see the thing more clearly. Looming up upon that fair horizon were wreathing clouds of smoke and crimson flames, and in the heart of it all the outline of the ship these fiends had doomed. No picture ever painted could present that woful scene or describe its magnificence as we saw it from the watch-tower of the reef. It was, indeed, as though the very heavens were on fire, while the sea all about the burning hull shone like a pool of molten gold in which strange shapes moved and the shadows of living things were to be seen. Now licking the quivering masts, now blown aside in tongue-shaped jets, the lambent flame spurted from every crack and crevice, leaped up from every port-hole of that splendid steamer. I saw that her minutes were numbered, and I said

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that before the dawn broke she would sink, a mass of embers, into the hissing breakers.

"Good Lord, Mister Bligh!" cried I, the seaman's habit coming to me at the dreadful spectacle, "was ever such a thing heard of? And the poor people aboard—what of them now? What haven may they look for?"

"They've put the men ashore, sir," said Dolly Venn, hardly able to speak for his anxiety. "I saw two boat-loads go across to the bay while Mister Bligh was piling the ammunition. They've sent them to die on the island. And we so helpless that we must just look on like schoolgirls. Oh! I'd give all I've got to be over yonder with a hundred bluejackets at my elbow. Think of it, sir! Just a hundred, and cutlasses in their hands."

"Aye," said I, "and a tree for every rogue that rows a boat yonder. Well, my lad, thinking's no good this night, nor can you get the bluejackets by whistling. We haven't all served our time in a Queen's ship, Dolly, and we're just plain seamen; but we'll try and speak a word to Edmond Czerny by-and-by, or I'll never speak another. Now, help me with your young eyes, will you, and tell me if that's a ship's gig yonder, or if it isn't——"

He said that it was a ship's gig, and he pointed out that which I had not seen before—a steam yacht lying off to the east of us and waiting for some of her crew to go aboard. Edmond Czerny would be on deck there, I thought, watching the hounds he had sent to the work; and if that spectacle of death and destruction did not gratify him, then nothing would in all the world. And surely such a sight even he had not beheld in all his years. That shimmering molten sea, the island catching the reflected lights and making its own pictures of them; the distant forests, whose trees lifted fiery branches and leaves of flame; the mist-clouds raining blood and gold, the burning steamer, the great arena of fire-flecked sea and the small boats swimming upon it—what more of delight or devilry could Ken's Island give this vulture of the deep?

So much the night would show us as Providence willed and good hearts might determine.

Now, I have told you that little Dolly Venn had served in the Naval Reserve and knew more of gunnery than the most of us. To this, I bear witness, we owed much that night.

"You've got a skipper's part, Dolly, lad," said I, "and yon gig begins the trouble, if my eyes don't deceive me. Why, she's coming in here, lad, straight to this very door, just as fast as oars can bring her. And there's more to follow—a fleet of them, as any lubber could tell you."

"'Tis like a fête and gala on the old stinking Liffey," says Peter Bligh, peering with me across the busy sea. "A dozen boats, and every one of them full. I'd give something to see Mister Jacob to-night; indeed, and I would, captain. We are over few for such an 'out and home' as this."

It was rare to see Peter Bligh serious, but he had the right to be that night, and I was the last to blame him. Consider our situation and ask what others would have felt, placed as we were—four willing men upon a bit of a craggy rock rising sheer out of a thousand fathom sea, and commanded to hold the gate for our lives and for another life more precious against all the riff-raff that Ken's Island could send against us. Out on the shimmering sea I counted twelve boats with my own eyes, and knew that every one of them was full of cut-throats. In the half of an hour or sooner that demon's crew would knock at our gate and demand to come in. Whatever way we answered them, however clever we might be, was it reason to suppose that we could hold the rock against such odds, hold it until help came when help was so distant? I say that it was not. By all the chances, by every right reason, we should have been cut down where we stood, and our bodies swimming in the sea before the sun shone again on Ken's Island and its mysteries. And if this truth was present in my mind, how should it be absent from the minds of the others? Brave faces they showed me, bright words they spoke; but I knew what these concealed. We stood together for a woman's sake; we knew what the price might be and made no complaint of it.

"We are over few, Peter," said I, "but over few is better than many when the heart is right. Just you drink up that grog and put yourself where there is not so much of your precious body in the moonlight. It will be Dolly's place at the gun, and mine to help him. There is this in my mind, Peter, that we've no right to shoot fellow-creatures unless they call upon us so to do. When the gig comes up I'll give them a fair challenge before the volley's fired. After that it's up and at them, for Miss Ruth's sake. You will not forget, Peter, that if we can hold this place until help comes, belike we'll carry Miss Ruth to Europe and shut down this demon's den for ever. If that's not work good enough to put heart into a man, I don't know what is.

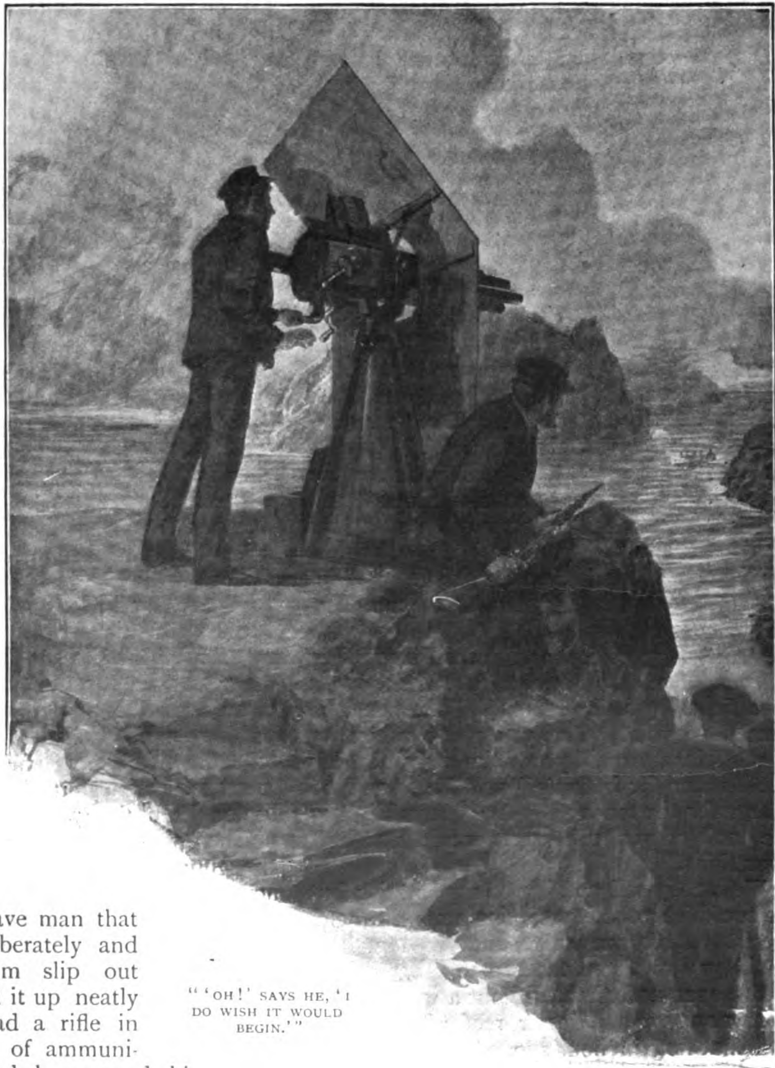
Aye, my lads," said I to them all, "tell yourselves that you are here and acting for the sake of one who did you many a kindness in the old time; and mind you shoot straight," says I, "and don't go wasting honest lead when there's carrion waiting for it."

They answered "Aye, Aye!" and Dolly, leaping up to the gun, began to give his orders just for all the world as though he skippered the ship and I was but a passenger.

"We'll put Regnarte in front," says he, "so that we can keep an eye on him. Let Peter hail them from where he's standing now; the rock covers him, captain, and the shield will take care of you and me. And oh!" says he, "I do wish it would begin—for my fingers are just itching!"

"Let them itch, lad, let them itch," was my answer; "here's the gig by the point, and they won't trouble you with that complaint long. Do you, Peter, give them a hail when I cry, 'Now!' If they stop, well and good; if they come on — why, you won't be asking them to walk right in!" says I.

He took my meaning and set to work like the brave man that he was. Very deliberately and carefully I saw him slip out of his coat and fold it up neatly at his feet. He had a rifle in his hand and a pile of ammunition on the floor, and he opened his own Remington and began to fill it. For my part, I stood by the gun's shield, and from that place, covered by a ring of steel, I looked out across the awaking sea. Impatience, doubt, hope, fear — these I forgot in the minutes which passed while the gig crept slowly across that silver pool. The silence was so great that a man might almost breathe it. Slow, to be sure, she was; and every man who has waited at a post of danger knows what it means to see a strange sail creeping up to you foot by foot, and to be asking yourself a dozen times over whether she be friend or enemy, a welcome consort or a rogue disguised. But there is an end to all things, even to the minutes of such suspense; and I bear witness that I never heard sweeter music than the ringing hail which Mister Bligh sent across the still sea to the eight men in the gig, and to any other his message might concern.



"'OH!' SAYS HE, 'I DO WISH IT WOULD BEGIN.'"

"Ahoy!" cries he, "and what may you be

wanting, my hearties, and what flag do you sail under?"

Now, if ever a hail out of the night surprised eight men, this was the occasion and this the scene of it. They had come back from the pillaged ship believing that the sea-gate of the house stood open to them and that friends held it in all security. And here upon the threshold a strange voice hails them; they are asked a question which turns every ear toward the rock, sends every man's hand to the gun beside him. Instantly, their own vile deeds accusing them, they cry, "Discovery!" They tell each other, I make sure, that Czerny's house is in the possession of strangers. They are stark mad with curiosity, and unable for a spell to say a word to us.

They would not speak a word, I say; their oars were still, their boat drifted lazily to the drowsy tide. If they peered with all their eyes at the rock from which the voice came, but little consolation had they of the spectacle. The shadows spoke no truth, the gate hid the unknown; they could read no message there. Neither willing to go back nor to advance, they sat gaping in the boat. How could they know what anxious ears and itching hands waited for their reply?

A voice at last, crying harshly across the ripple of the water, broke the spell and set every tongue free again. Aye, it was good to hear them speak.

"Bob Williams," cries the voice. "What ho! my ancient! I guess that's you, Bob Williams."

"And I guess it isn't," roars Peter Bligh, half mad, like a true Irishman, at the thought of a fight. "It isn't Bob Williams, and be derned to you! Are you going ashore to Ken's Island or will you swim awhile? It's good water for bathing," says he, "and no charge for the machine. Aye," says he, "by the look of you cold water would not hurt your skins."

Well, they had nothing to say to this; but we could hear them parleying amongst themselves. And presently, another long-boat pulling up to them, the two together drifted in the open and then, without a word, began to row away to the lesser reef, whose gate I had shut not an hour ago. This I saw with very great alarm; for it came to me in an instant that if they could force the trap—and there were enough of them to do that, seeing that they had rifles in their hands—the whole of the lower rooms would swarm with their fellows presently, and I did not doubt that the house would be taken.

"Dolly," cried I, appealing to the lad, when, the Lord knows, my own head should have been the one to lead, "Dolly," cried I, "they'll force the gate—and what then, Dolly——?"

He had leapt up when the boats moved off, and now, drawing me back, with nervous fingers he began to show me what a man-of-war had taught him.

"No, sir, no," says he, wildly, "no, it's not that. Help me and I'll tell you—and, oh, Mister Begg, don't you see that this gun was put here to cover that very place?" says he.

Well, I had seen it, though in the stress of recent events it had slipped my memory; and yet it would have been as plain as the nose on the face to any gunner, even to the youngest. For if Czerny must hold his house against the world, how should he hold it with one door of two open to the sea? That devilish gun, swung there on a peak of the rock, could sweep the waters, turn where you might. It was going to sweep the lesser gate to-night.

"Round with her and quick about it," cries Dolly Venn, and never a gladder cry have I heard him utter. "They're coming ashore, captain. They are on the rock already."

I stood up to make sure of it, and saw four men leap from the gig to the rock which it was life or death for us to hold. And to Dolly I said:—

"Let go, lad; let go, in Heaven's name!"

He stood to the gun; and clear above all other sounds of the night the sharp reports rang out. That peaceful, sleeping sea awoke to an hour the like to which Ken's Island will never know again. We cast the glove to Edmond Czerny and powder spake our message. Henceforth it was his day or ours, life or death, the gallows or the sea.

There were four men upon the rock when the gun began to spurt its vomit of shot across the sea, and two of them fell almost with the first report. I saw a third dragging himself across the crags and pressing a hand madly against every stone as though to quench some burning flame; a fourth crouched down and began to cry to his fellows in the boats for mercy's sake to put in for him; but before they could lift a hand or ship an oar the fire was among them; and skimming the waves for a moment, then carrying beyond them, it caught them as a hail of burning steel at last and shut their lips for ever. Aye, how shall I tell you of it truly—the worming, tortured men, the

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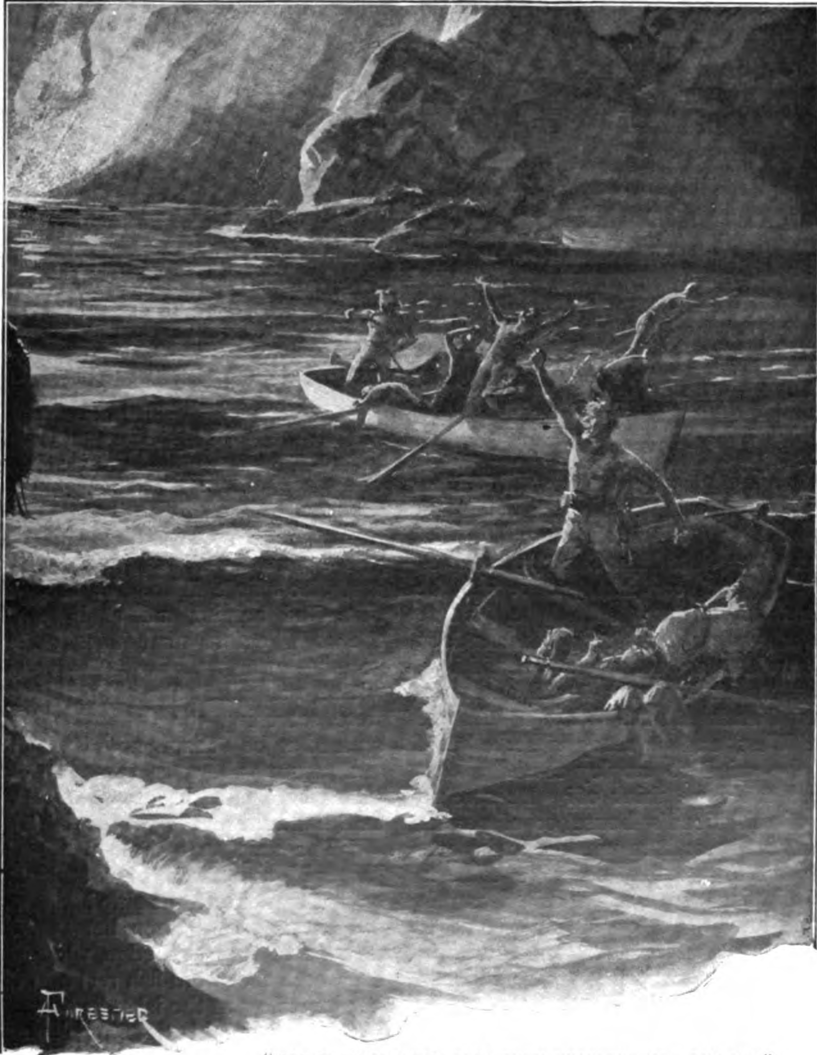
gaping wounds they showed, the madness which sent them headlong into the sea, the sagging boat dipping beneath them, the despair, the terror, when death came like a whirlwind? These things I shut from my eyes; I would not see them. The sharp reports, the words of agony, the oaths, the ferocious threats—they came and went as a storm upon the wind. And afterwards, when silence fell, and I beheld the silver sea, the ebbing flames where the steamer burned, the woods wherein honest seamen suffered in the death-trance from which but few would waken, I turned to my comrades and, hand linked in hand, I said, "Well done!"



"THE MADNESS WHICH SENT THEM HEADLONG INTO THE SEA."

CHAPTER XXI.

WHICH BRINGS IN THE DAY AND WHAT BEFELL THEREIN.

It was just after dawn that Miss Ruth came up from her room below and found me at my lonely post on the plateau of the watch-tower rock. Dolly Venn was fast asleep by that time, and Peter Bligh and the carpenter no less willing for a spell of rest. I had sent them to their beds when it was plain to me that, whatever might come after, the night had nothing more in store for us; and though heavy with sleep myself I put it by for duty's sake.

Now, I was watching all alone, my rifle

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between my knees and my eyes upon the breaking skies, when I heard a quick step behind me, and, turning round, I saw Miss Ruth herself, and felt her gentle hand upon my shoulder.

"I couldn't sleep, Jasper," said she, a little sadly I thought. "You are not angry with me for being here, Jasper?"

It blew cold with the dawn, and I was glad to see that she had wrapped her head in a warm white woollen shawl—for these little things stick in a man's memory—and that her dress was such as a woman might wear in that bleak place. She had dark rings about her eyes—which I have always said could look at you as the eyes of no other woman in all the world; and I began to think how odd it was that we two, whom fortune had cast out to this lonely rock together, should have said so little to each other, spoken such rare words since the ship put me ashore at the gate of her island home.

"Miss Ruth," said I, "it's small wonder what you tell me. This night is never to be forgotten by you and me, surely. Sometimes, even now, I think that I am dreaming it all. Why, look at it. Not two months ago I was in London hiring a ship from Philips, Westbury, and Co. You, I believed, were away in the Pacific, where all things beautiful should be. I saw you, Miss Ruth, in an island home, happy and contented, as it was the wish of us all that you should be. There were never lighter hearts on a quarter-deck than those which set out to do your bidding. 'It's Miss Ruth's fancy,' we told ourselves, 'that her friends should bring a message from the West, and be ready to serve her if she has the mind to employ them.' What other need could we think of? Be sure no whisper of this fiend's house or of yonder island where honest men will die to-day was heard by any man among us. We came to do your bidding as you had asked us. It was for you to say 'go' or 'stay.' We never thought what the truth would be—even now it seems to me a horrid nightmare which a man remembers when he is waking."

She drew a little closer to me, and stood gazing wistfully across the westward seas, beyond which lay home and liberty. Perchance her thoughts were away to the pretty town of Nice, where she had given her love to the man who had betrayed her, and had dreamed, as young girls will, of all that marriage and afterwards might mean to her.

"If it were only that, Jasper," she said, slowly, "just a dream and nothing more! But we know that it is not. Ah, think, if these things mean so much to you, what they have meant to me. I came away from Europe believing that Heaven would open at my feet. I said that a good man loved me, and I gave myself heart and soul to him. Just a silly little girl I was, who never asked questions, and trusted—yes, trusted all who said they loved her. And then the truth, and a weary woman to hear it! From little things which I would not see, it came speaking to me in greater things which I dare not pass by, until I knew—knew the best and the worst of it! And all my castles came tumbling down, and the picture was shut out, and I thought it was for ever. The message I spoke to the sea would never be answered, or would be answered when I no longer lived to hear it spoken. Do you blame a woman's weakness? Was I wrong to believe that you would forget the promise?"

"I never forgot it, Miss Ruth," was my answer, "never for a moment. 'Maybe,' said I to Peter Bligh, 'she'll laugh when I go ashore; maybe—but it is a thousand to one against that—she'll have need of me.' When I saw Ken's Island looming on my port-bow, why I said, 'It's just such a picture of a place as a rich man would pitch upon for an island home. It's a garden land,' said I, 'a sunny haven in this good Pacific sea.' Judge how far I was from the truth, Miss Ruth, how little I knew of this prison-house that, God helping me, shall stand open to the world before many days have come and gone."

She was silent for a spell, for her eyes were searching the distant island, and she seemed to be scanning its fog-bound heights and misty valleys as though to read that secret of the night of which I hoped no man had told her.

"The ship that came ashore last night, Jasper?" she asked, of a sudden. "What have they done to the ship?"

I put my hand upon her arm and led her forward to the sea's edge, whence we could espy both the sword-fish reef and the ashes of her bungalow at the island's heart. The day had broken by this time, quick and beautiful as ever in the Pacific Ocean. Sunny waves rolled up to our very feet. There were glittering caps of rock gleaming above the island of death. Czerny's yacht lay, the picture of a ship, eastward in the offing. The long-boats, twelve of them, and each loaded with its vile crew, drifted round and round the master's ship; but never a man that went aboard from them.

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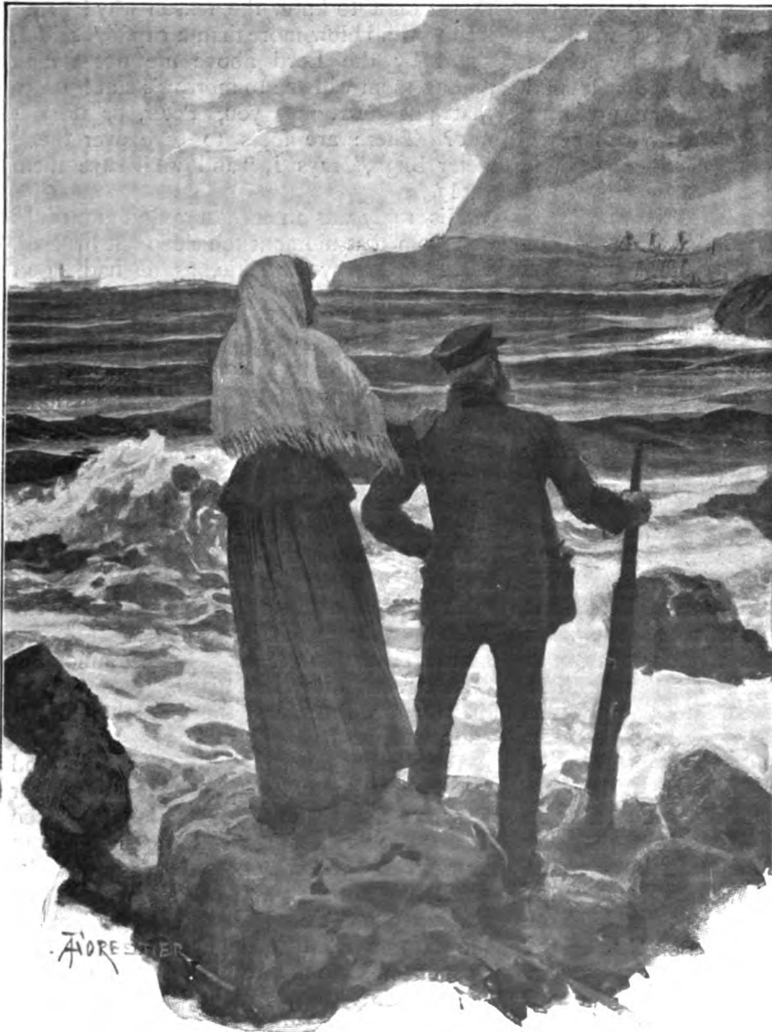
"The ship," said I, "is where many a good ship has gone before: a thousand fathoms down by yonder cruel reef. As for those that sailed her, they live or die on Ken's Island, mistress. Last night in my watch I heard them crying like wild beasts that hunger drives. Those who do not sleep to-day herd together on yonder beach. I counted nine of them not half an hour since."

She tried to see with me, looking across the water; and presently she said:—



"SHE TRIED TO SEE WITH ME, LOOKING ACROSS THE WATER.

"There are men there and women, too—oh, Jasper, think of it, women!"

"Ah!" said I, "I have been thinking of it for an hour or more, ever since I first made a signal to them. So much comes of being a seaman, who can speak to folks when others are dumb. If they read my message aright, they'll not stay on Ken's Island to sleep, be sure of it; but I doubt that they'll dare it, Miss Ruth. Poor souls; their need is sore, indeed!"

"And our own, Jasper," says she, "is our own less? You are brave men, and you have all a woman's trust and gratitude; but, Jasper, when my husband comes, what will you say to him? They are a hundred and we are but five, shut up in this prison of the sea! We may live here for ever and no help come to us. We may even die here, Jasper. There are things I will not either name or think of. But, oh, Jasper," says she, "if we could save those poor people!"

It was always thus with her—nine thoughts for others and not the half of one for herself. What she meant by the things she would not name or speak of, I could hardly guess; but it was in my head that she meant to indicate the corridors below and that unknown danger which iron doors shut down. I had been a clearer-headed man that morning if I could have put away from me my doubt of what the depths were hiding from us. But I hid it from her always. A truce of self-deception shut out the question as one we neither cared to hear nor answer.

"Miss Ruth," said I, speaking very slowly, "those people have a boat, for you can see it on yon sands. Let them find the courage

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to float it, and it is even possible that Dolly Venn and I can do the rest. We should be thirteen men then, and glad of the number. I won't hide it from you that we are a pitiful handful to face such a horde as lingers yonder. Why, think of it. Your husband keeps them off the yacht, that's clear to a child's eye. What harbour, then, is open to them? The island—yes, there's that! They can go and sleep the death-sleep on the island, as many an honest man before them. But they will have something to say to Czerny first, if I know anything of their quality! Our plight is bad enough; but I wouldn't be in your husband's shoes to-day for all the money in London City. We may pull through—there would be rasher promises than that; but Edmond Czerny will never see a white man's town again—no, not if he lives a hundred years!"

"It would be justice, God's justice," said she, very slowly; "there is that in the world always, Jasper. Whatever may be in store for me, I should like to think that I had done my duty as you are doing yours."

"We won't talk of that," said I; "the day is dark, but the sunshine follows after. Some day, in some home across the sea, we'll tell each other how we held Ken's Island against a hundred. It may be that, dear friend; Heaven knows, it may be that!"

It was five o'clock in the morning by my watch when I signalled for the second time to the people on the beach, and half-past five when first they answered me. Until that time I had not wished to awake Dolly Venn or Mister Bligh; but now, when it began to come to me that I might, indeed, save these poor driven folks and add to the garrison which held the house, sleep was banished from my eyes and I had the strength and heart of ten. No longer could I doubt that my signals were seen and read by some sailor on that distant shore. Driven out, as they must have been, by the awful fogs which loomed over Ken's Island, gasping for their lives at the water's edge, who shall blame their hesitation or exclaim upon that delay? Over the sea they beheld a white flag waving. Was it the flag which friend or foe had raised? There, from that craggy rock, help was offered them. Could they believe such good fortune, those who seemed to have but minutes to live?

Well, Dolly Venn came up to me, and Peter Bligh, half awake from sleep; and all standing together (Seth Barker keeping watch below) I told them how we stood and pointed out that which might follow after.

"There'll be no attack from Czerny's men with the light," said I; "for so much is plain reason. If there's murder done out yonder, look for it on Czerny's yacht when his friends would go aboard. Why, see, lads, there are a hundred and twenty men, at the lowest reckoning, drifting yonder in open boats. Who's to feed them, who's to house them? They can go ashore on Ken's Island and dance to the sleep-music; but they are not the sort to do that, from what we've seen of them! No, they'll have it out with Edmond Czerny; they'll want to know the reason why! And let the wind blow more than a capful," said I, "and by the Lord above me not a man among them will see to-morrow's sun! Does that put heart into you, Peter, or does it not? There are folks to save over there, Peter Bligh," says I, "and we'll save them yet!"

His reply was an earnest "God grant it!" and from that moment the sleep left his eyes, and standing by my side, as he had stood many a day on the bridge of the *Southern Cross*, he began to read the signals and to interpret them aloud as the old-time duty prompted him.

"Eight men and a woman, and one long-boat," says he; "sickness amongst them and no arms. 'Tis to know if they shall put off now or wait for the dark. You'll be answering that, captain."

"Let them come, let them come," said I; "how's the dark to help them? Will they live a day in the fogs we know of? And what sort of a port is Ken's Island in the sleep-time for any Christian man? If Czerny murders them on the high seas, so much the more against him when his day comes. Let them come, Peter, and the Lord help them, poor wretches."

I was using my arms with every word, and trying to make my meaning clear to the poor folks on the beach. So far they had been content to answer me with questions; but now, all at once, they ceased to signal, and a black object riding above the surf told me that they had risked all and were afloat, be the danger what it might. At the same moment a sharp cry from Dolly Venn turned my eyes to Czerny's yacht; and I saw his men rowing their boats for the open water of the bay, and I knew that murder was in their minds, and that the hour had come when every veil was to be cast aside and their purpose declared against all humanity.

"Clear the gun and stand by," was my order to the others; "we'll give them something to take home with them, and it sha'n't

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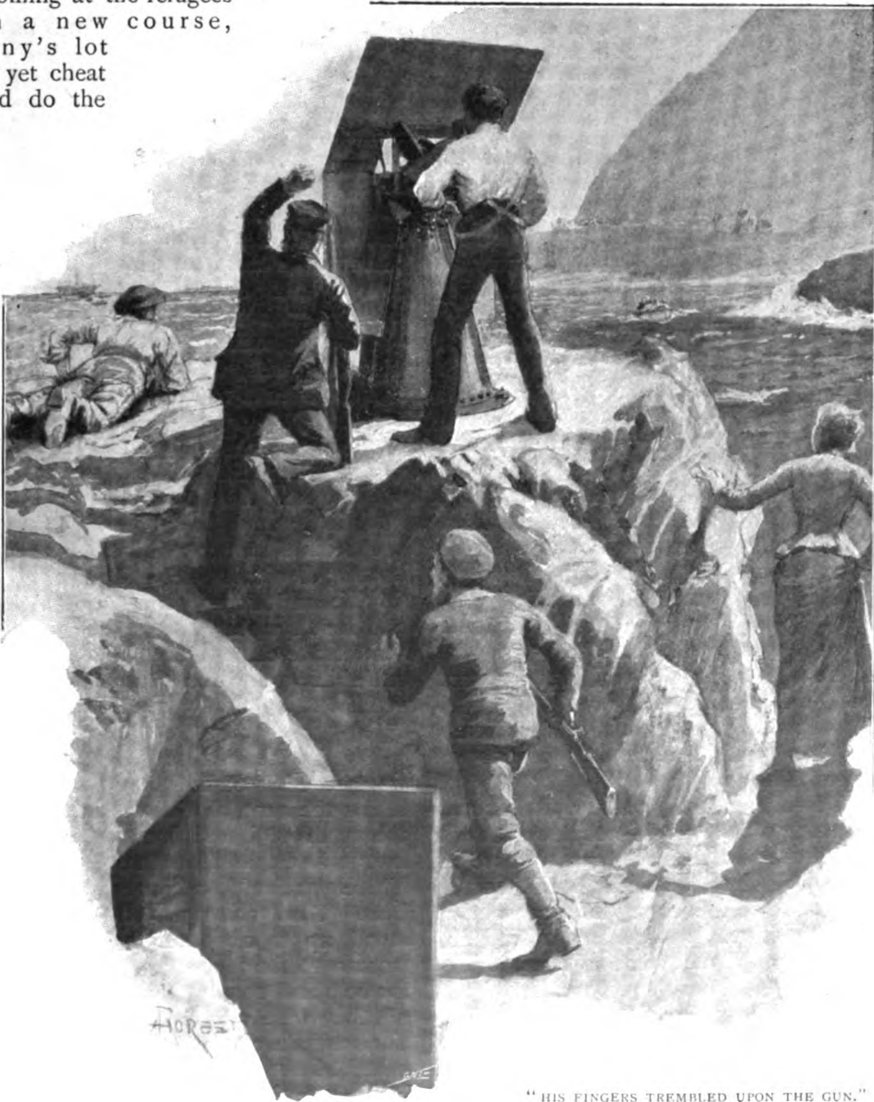
be pippins! Can you range them, Dolly, or must you wait? There's no time to lose, my lad, if honest lives are to be saved this day."

He went to work without a word, charging his magazine and training the gun eastwards towards the advancing boats. If he did not fire at once, it was because he doubted his range; and here was his difficulty, that by sweeping round to the east and coming at the refugees upon a new course, Czerny's lot might yet cheat us and do the infernal work they intended. Indeed, the poor people in the long-boat were just racing for their lives; and whether we could help them or whether they must perish time alone would show. Yard by yard, painfully, laboriously, they pushed toward the rock; yard by yard the brigand crew were bearing down upon them. And still Dolly kept his shot; the gun had nothing to say to them. No crueller sight you could plan or imagine. It was as though we were permitting poor driven people to be slaughtered before our very eyes.

"Fire, Dolly, lad!" cried I, at last—"fire, for pity's sake! Will you see them die before our very eyes?"



"HIS FINGERS TREMBLED UPON THE GUN."

His fingers trembled upon the gun. He had all the heart to do it; but still he would not fire.

"I can't," says he, half mad at his

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confession, "the gun won't do it—it's cruel, captain—cruel to see it—they're half a mile out of range. And the others dropping their oars. Look at that. A man's down, and another is trying to take his place——"

It was true as I live. From some cause or other, I could only surmise, the long-boat lay drifting with the tide and one of Czerny's boats, far ahead of its fellows, was almost atop of her.

"They're done!" cries Peter Bligh, with an oath, "done entirely. God rest their souls. They'll never make the rock——"

We believed it surely. The refugees were done: the pirates had unsheathed their knives for the butchers' work. I said no human help could save them; and, saying it, a voice from the open door behind me gave the lie to Peter Bligh and named a miracle.

"'Tis the others that need your prayers, Mister Bligh — Czerny's lot are sinking sure——"

I looked round and found Seth Barker at my elbow. His orders had been to watch the gate of the corridor below. I asked him what brought him there, and he told me something which sent my heart into my mouth.

"There's knocking down below and strange voices, sir. No danger, says Mister Gray, but a fact you should know of. Belike they'll pass on, sir, and please God they'll leave the engine for their own sakes."

"Does Mister Gray say that?" asked I. "Does he fear for the engine?"

"If it stops, we're all dead men for want of breath, the doctor says."

"Then it sha'n't stop," said I, "for here's a man that will open the trap if two or twenty stand below."

He had quickened my pulse with his tale, for the truth of it I could not deny; and it seemed to me that danger began to close in upon us, turn where we might, and that the outcome must be the worst, the very worst a man could picture. If I had any satisfaction, any consolation of that wearing hour, it was the sight I beheld out there upon the hither sea, where Czerny's boat drifted upon its prey—yet so drifted that a child might have said, "She's done with; she's sinking."

"Cheated, by all that's wonderful," cries Peter Bligh, with a tremendous oath; "aye, down to oblivion, and an honest man's curse go with you. The rogue's done, my lads; she's done for, certain."

We stood close together and watched the scene with burning eyes. Dolly Venn chattered away about a shot that must have struck the boat last night and burst her seams. I cared nothing for the reasons, but took the facts as the sea showed them to me. Be the cause what it might, those who would have dealt out death to the refugees were going down to eternity now, their arms in their hands, their mad desire still to be read in every gesture. When the truth came swift upon them, when the seas began to break right in across their beam, then, I say, they leaped up mad with fear, and then only forgot their prey. For think what that must have meant to them, the very boat sinking beneath them; their comrades far away; the waves lapping their feet; the sure knowledge that they must die, every man of them within hail of those very woods wherein so many had perished for their pleasure. Aye, it came upon them swiftly enough, and the good boat, making a brave effort to battle with the swell, went down headlong anon, and the cries of twelve drowning men echoed even in the distant island's hills. That which had been a placid sea with two ship's boats was still a placid sea though but one boat swam there. I beheld horrible faces looking upward through the blinding spindrift; I saw arms thrust out above the foam-flecked waters; I witnessed all that fearful struggle for life and air and the sun's bright light; and then, aye, then the scene changed awfully, and silence came upon all, and the sun was still shining, and the untroubled deep lapped gently at our feet.

The twelve had perished; but the nine were saved. Stand awestruck as we might, seeing the hand of God in this deliverance, the truth of it remained to put new heart into us and to hide that scene from our eyes. There, pursued no longer, was the island boat. Glad voices hailed us, wan figures stood up to clasp our hands; we lifted a woman to the rocks; we ran hither, thither, for help and comfort for them. But nine in all, they were our human salvage, our prize, our treasure of honest lives. And we had snatched them from the brigand crew, and henceforth they would stand with us, shoulder to shoulder, until the day were won or lost and Ken's Island gave up its mysteries, or gathered us for that last great sleep-time from which there is no waking.

(*To be continued.*)

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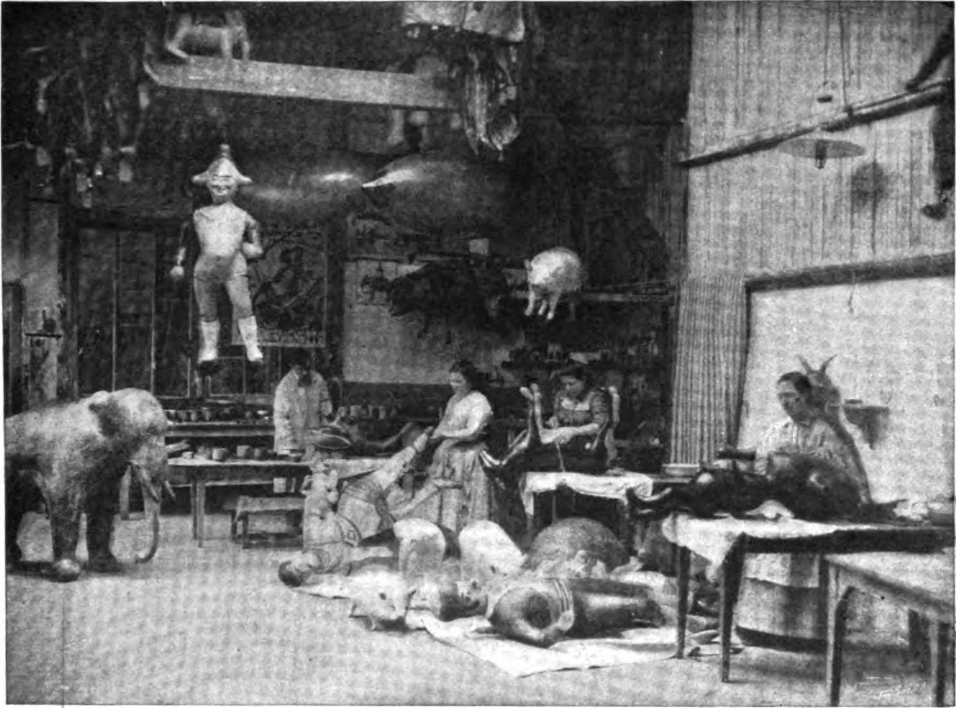
The Hoardings of the Air.

BY HERBERT VIVIAN.



From a Photo. specially taken by] A SCENE IN THE BALLOON FACTORY. *[Paul Géniaux.*

I HAVE always felt a temptation to join the society for checking the abuses of public advertisement. It is too aggravating, when you have toiled up mountains, crossed crevasses, and dodged avalanches in the hope of beholding a unique piece of scenery, to be confronted by unsightly puffs of a soap or a chocolate. Travelling by train is tedious enough, but it sometimes has compensations. For instance, M. Bouguerreau, daintiest of French artists, told me the other day that his latest and best masterpiece was suggested to him by a couple of minutes' outlook from a railway-carriage window. It was after an all-night journey, when he saw wonderful mists curling up into the false dawn, and they suggested to him a cloud of nymphs, while some rough brown stones in the foreground were satyrs crouching to admire the mysterious vision. But how quickly the spell would have been conjured away if, in the midst of this fairy scene, his eye had suddenly met a mustard-maker's hoarding! Again, what noble edifice or venerable pile could altogether escape being vulgarized by a lavish decoration of sky-signs?

On the other hand, there are not the same objections to balloons as an advertising device. Perhaps it is that the mobility of a balloon confers upon it a certain natural grace; at any rate, distance lends enchantment to it. I remember at one of the Paris exhibitions a fine sensation was produced by the extraordinary balloon, of which a photograph is reproduced on the next page, shaped like a scent-bottle, whereon a perfumer's name was writ very large indeed. A car, capable of holding thirty persons, was attached and the bottle used to float all over Paris. Each trip cost some £400, but a far more effective advertisement was secured than if the money had been spent in the ordinary humdrum way.

This balloon was the creation of M. Lachambre, who stands quite at the head of his profession. It was he who constructed the balloon in which the unfortunate André

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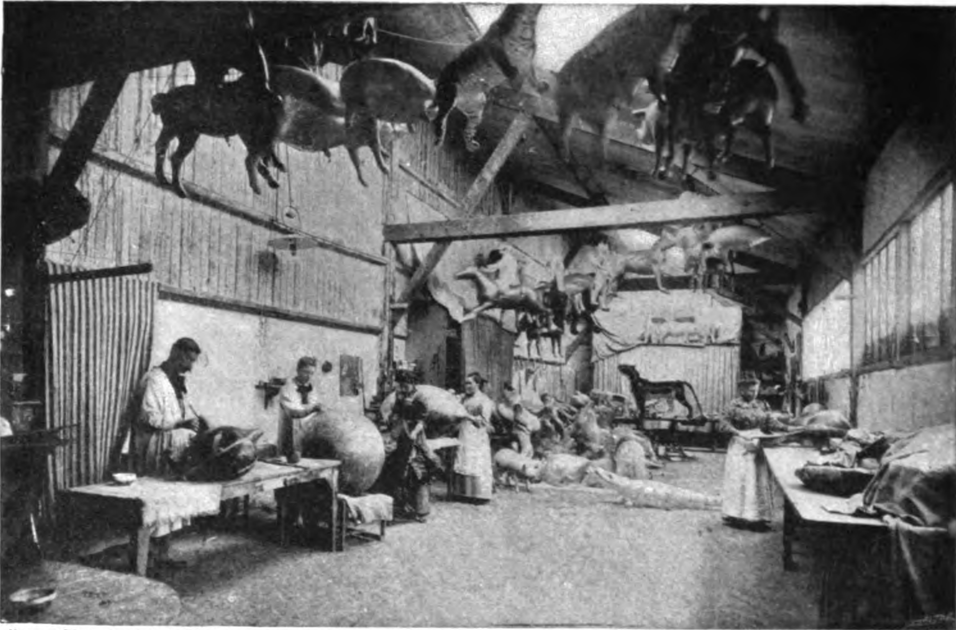

From a Photo. specially taken by] A GENERAL VIEW OF THE WORKROOM. [*Paul Géniaux.*

set out for the inexorable Arctic. All the air-ships of M. Santos-Dumont have come from the same workshops, and I was able to observe the process of manufacturing his latest design. What we may call the passenger-balloons, whether captive, navigable, or otherwise, are made of silk; and in view of aeronautics possibly becoming some day a popular pursuit, I thought it would be interesting to get an idea of the cost of the sport.

At present a balloon of 150 cubic mètres, with all the necessary accessories, costs from £54 to £62, according to the silk used. This is the smallest size made for human ascensions, and would only accommodate one person. A balloon of 3,000 cubic mètres may cost as much as £900, but could carry sixteen persons. In fact, to buy a balloon may be reckoned as rather cheaper than buying a motor-car. But when you come to the cost of using your vehicle you will find that you must spend a pound in the air when a few pence would suffice on the road.

THE SCENT-BOTTLE BALLOON.
From a Photo. by Henri Lachambre, Paris.

M. Lachambre

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had plenty to say about his aeronaut clients and the balloons he had constructed for them, but the subject has lately lost much of its novelty, and I was more specially anxious to hear about the possibilities of balloons for advertisements. He confessed at once that his grotesques were intended originally to add to the fun of a fair, and had only come by chance to be adapted to the more serious purpose. Yet he agreed that few, if any, ways of catching the public eye were likely to be so attractive. Picture the effect upon a crowd, say at a race meeting or a coronation, or any great popular concourse, if the air were suddenly filled with floating effigies of wild beasts, clowns, Mother Hubbards, John Gilpins, soldiers, policemen, and even famous public characters, all proclaiming the merits of a new quack medicine. At election times they might be provided with "clean slates" and sent up to overhang a constituency with exhortations to vote for "the people's friend" or "pure beer," as a substitute for the monotonous array of posters now in vogue.

A FULL-BLOWN TIGER.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

When I entered the chief workshop I seemed to have stepped into the midst of a fairy tale. Huge fish of strange shapes and vivid colours were swimming about leisurely, tethered to the rafters. All the funniest characters that have been made familiar by many pantomimes bobbed up and down, shaking with merriment, or conspired in corners as though hatching prodigious practical jokes. There were pigs with wings, monkeys riding a-cock-horse, apocalyptic beasts wearing each other's heads promiscuously, gnomes, ogres—in fact, every conceivable accessory to a first-class nightmare.

M. Lachambre laughed at my amazement. "That is nothing," said he; "I have whole warehouses full of stranger beings than these."

He opened a cupboard and displayed hundreds of variegated bundles all ranged together most symmetrically.

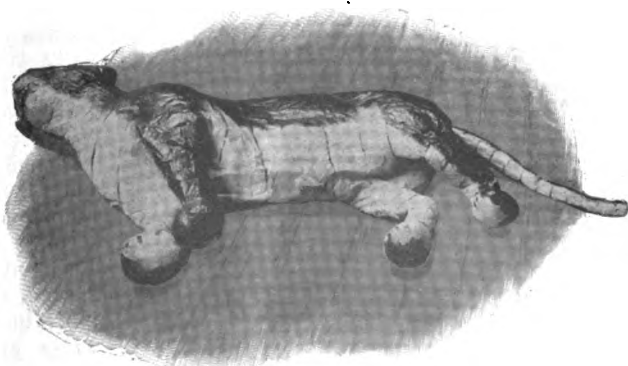
"If these were blown out," said he, "I could quickly fill this room."

"And if you inflated all your stock?"

"Ah! then I could populate the air for the whole of the Metropolis."

He gave a sign, and industrious hands set to work to ur.do bundles. A nozzle was applied to a pump; a few quick foot-beats and a mysterious being sprang suddenly into existence. In less than ten minutes a score of them were bumping about the floor in all directions, as though bewildered with their new-found life, and struggling to rise up. Frankenstein himself would have grown green with envy.

A life-size tiger was blown very taut and hung up to have his likeness taken. Never was there a more provoking sitter. It seemed an age before he would consent to stop fidgeting, and so natural were his movements that I half expected him to emit a roar and fall upon the great sleek porker which had just come to life hard by. When we had had our fill of admiration,



THE TIGER COLLAPSING.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

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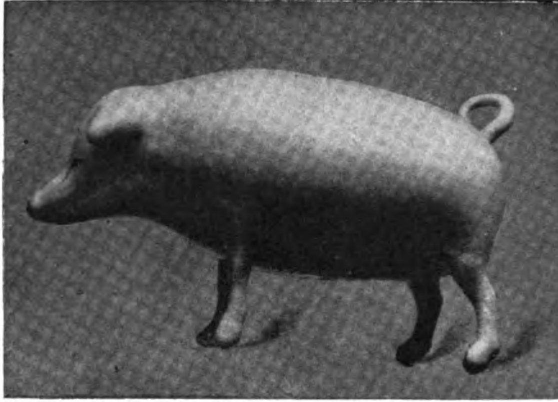
his air-nozzle was untied and he was thrown upon a rug to expire. Never could I have imagined a more realistic death-scene. His convulsive agonies were terrible to behold. He lashed the air with his tail, which tied itself into knots as it grew more limp; his legs stretched themselves out in writhing convulsions; they were drawn in painfully; the beast made frantic efforts to extend them again, each time feebler and feebler; and most horrible of all were the deep throbbing gasps of his great white breast. His head fell back with a jerk; his tail was now extended, limp and flat; his legs were feebly stiffened, and the hard breathing grew more laboured and more faint. It was all horribly gruesome, and reminded me irresistibly of the saddest death-scene I ever witnessed—that of my dear gazelle. An attendant now wanted to come and give the tiger his *coup de grâce* by rolling him back into his bundle, but I begged him to let me see the whole tragedy to its natural end. I felt that the dramatic scene was too good to be lost, so the bellows were called into requisition once more, the lord of the forest received a fresh lease of life, and died anew before the cold stare of the camera.



A PORKER BALLOON.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

I was by this time so profoundly distressed that I welcomed more jovial sights. The porker was filled out so tautly that I am sure he would have taken a prize at any show, and I was told that his sleek surface would be peculiarly adapted for advertising purposes. Paint some thick red letters upon his hams and they would command attention at a great distance. Next came a merry Polichinelle with the traditional humps, soaring aloft in pursuit of a red-nosed gendarme. The police force, I understood, was in special request as a medium of buffoonery, which is scarcely encouraging for those who expect to find law and order respected in France.

Then we went on to organize various comic scenes. On the next page are the figures of a funny little man and woman, whose wedding we extemporized. As a matter of fact, they are not little when we come to measure them in inches, but their huge heads, out of all proportion with their bodies, give them the appearance of dwarfs. When we posed them side by side the female instantly gave a lurch, with the result that her arm thrust itself into that of her companion, to the intense amusement of the company, who were evidently impressed by her familiarity. Having taken their picture, we set to work to provide unsuitable wedding-guests, and all the cupboards had to be ransacked. What would I prefer? I suggested a chimney-sweep, but a long search failed to produce one. Presumably he was sleeping after his early labours. Then I said: "Let us have some political characters. Where is Monsieur Chamberlain?" But it turned out that almost alone among the makers of grotesques in France M. Lachambre had not yet started to caricature the chief butt of the French Press and music-halls. However, I was able to produce an indiarubber

POLICHINELLE SOARING.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

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toy which I had purchased on the boulevards. It had a cannibal-looking face, with very long teeth, and an eye-glass served to dot the i's. When blown out it proceeded to expire with sepulchral groans, and it had a great sale as "Chamberlain's last sigh" (*le dernier soupir de Shambairlan*).

My two suggestions having failed, I decided to leave the choice of the guests to my host, and he soon produced a goodly array. Instead of a chimney-sweep he produced a fireman, whom he declared to be far more frequently summoned in Paris. As a substitute for the Colonial Secretary he gave me a choice of General Boum, a light tenor, and a *singe comique*, but I dismissed all three as uncomplimentary. However, we had a cook and a wrestler, a pastry-cook and a harlequin, an apothecary and a pork-butcher, a Turk, a redskin, a Zulu, the Marquis of Carabas, Robert Macaire, Don Quixote, an astrologer, an alguazil, a French sportsman, a duke, and an archangel. When I pointed out that the fair sex was insufficiently represented a further search was made, and we inflated Madame Pipelet (the concierge's wife), a geisha, a Neapolitan singer, a bathing-woman, La Mère Michel, Red Riding Hood (Petit Chaperon Rouge), Mrs. Satan, La Belle Fatma, Colombine, Mascotte, a mediæval Princess, and the Queen of the Washerwomen. The party was now complete, and there was plenty of fun to be had in allowing them to float about and flirt in the air. I related the story of the wedding-party at Uzhitse, in Servia, where a pack of wolves devoured the bride and bridegroom, the pope, and all the guests. The hint was taken at once. Six life-size wolves were inflated and let loose upon our happy party. With a little childish freedom of the imagination it would have been possible to vow they were giving chase among the rafters, and when the bridegroom's valve opened in the embrace of a wild beast and he collapsed upon the floor we adjudged him to have been devoured. This description may serve to indicate the amount of fun to be obtained for a children's party from a good supply of these inimitable balloons.

A MARRIED COUPLE.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

After this, various set-pieces were produced. We had a bull-fight with a very creditable number of accessories; a tamer of crocodiles, who was deliciously grotesque; the King of Yvetot (a famous character in French nursery-rhymes) riding on his donkey and attended by his Court; and, finally, a menagerie. I put them on their mettle to produce as fine a menagerie as any in the world, and they certainly produced a far funnier one. Scarcely any animal was missing, and the incongruities of size added to the fanciful effect. The dormouse was bigger than the wild boar, and Puss in Boots could have put St. George to shame by swallowing up the dragon. There was a very fine sea-lion, with an absurdly knowing face; a mild-eyed hippopotamus coquetted with a ferocious rabbit; and a bloated lion lay down with a brutal lamb. I could have gone on playing with these delightful toys for days, but an overdue luncheon-hour recalled me to business, and I requested to see something made.

Big, serious balloons are made of silk, but those with which we are concerned consist of skins to be found inside oxen. As each is only about a foot square it may be imagined that a large number are required to make an elephant or a life-size Polichinelle. The

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skin is called *baudruche*, which I fancied was French for gold-beaters' skin, but the slimy white films, which were taken out of water-buckets for my inspection, seemed very different from the dainty little plasters sold by our chemists under the same name.

succeeded in contriving a very effective effigy. These balloons are not very cheap. A creature 19in. long, if made with single skins, will only cost 4s.; but the single-skin balloons are only intended to be let off once on a *fête* day and allowed to disappear. To hang outside a shop or to float a number of times you require a double thickness of skin. This, if filled with ordinary household gas, will maintain its equilibrium in the air, and may be used by advertisers as a sort of captive balloon. Nineteen inches long it will cost 7s. 6d., but in the case of an animal between 5ft. and 7½ft. long it will come to £3, while for a life-sized elephant, fatted ox, or gigantic Queen of the Washerwomen you must run to £6.

PREPARING A MODEL.
From a Photo. specially taken by Paul Géniaux.

When a gold-beaters' skin balloon is to be made, the first step is to make a model in wood, divisible into two sections. On this the skins are stretched, double thickness, to form a skin-model. The wood having been removed, the two halves of the skin-model are joined and inflated. These models are often more grotesque than the finished balloon itself. I espied one, which was intended to represent a Norman woman, with a great bump on her head where her *coiffe* would appear, and took a photograph of it when it was being trimmed—like someone lying flat on his back to be shaved.

When the skin-model is finished it is inflated; more skins are stretched out upon it to take the exact shape; finally the air is let out and the model is extracted. Then the balloon is expanded itself and a man proceeds to paint it. I saw a big fish treated in this way. It was intended as an advertisement of some preserved salmon, and the artist had only a label off a tin to guide his labours. Still, he

Perhaps the most successful toy or advertisement balloon which M. Lachambre has created was a Brobdingnagian horse, which trotted and galloped over the roofs of houses, even away over the domes of Nancy, and suggested some magical creature out of the "Arabian Nights." There is, however, no limit to the size and minuteness of what can be done in this respect, and any princely pill-man who cared to give M. Lachambre *carte-blanche* would have no difficulty in staggering the town.

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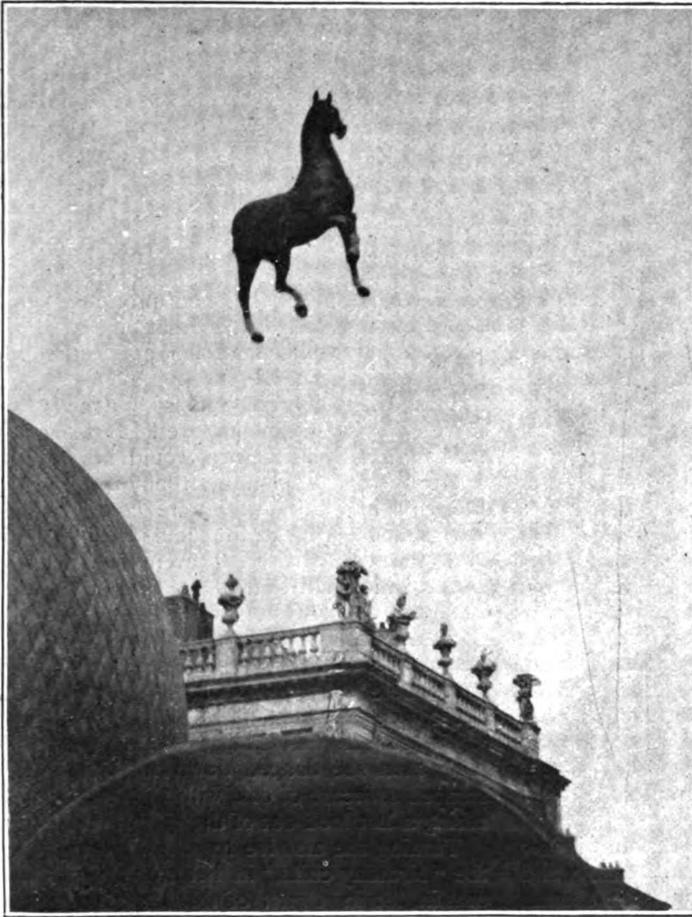

From a Photo. by] A HORSE-BALLOON, ALOFT. [*Henri Lachambre.*

M. Lachambre, however, looks on all this as child's play. He considers it his mission in life to equip an André for the North Pole or a Santos-Dumont to brave the Mediterranean. On the subject of military balloons he has a great wealth of information, though he is somewhat chary of dispensing it. There is no doubt that an aeronaut makes an excellent spy, particularly if he can ascend out of the range of bullets. The outfit for one officer consists of a balloon of 350 cubic mètres, a hydrogen apparatus producing sixty to eighty cubic mètres of gas per hour, and a steam trolly with four or five horse-power and a cable 350 mètres long. For more serious operations the maker recommends a balloon of 650 cubic mètres, which would be about 34ft. in diameter, with a 500-mètre cable, and apparatus capable of producing gas at the rate of 150 to 175 cubic mètres per hour. These would evidently be of no great utility on a sudden emergency, but might assist a campaign where guerilla warfare was barred.

My conclusion when I came away was that ballooning is still in absolute infancy. But so was motor-travelling a very few years ago. All the polish and finish of detail have been perfected, and, within the limitations of the sport, all possible comfort has been attained. But, as in the case of the gold-beaters' skin tiger who died so pathetically, each balloon possesses the semblance without the reality of life. Frankenstein has formed his monsters but cannot inspire them. Probably some trivial, semi-accidental discovery will very soon render the navigation of the air as easy as tricycling. For the present it is mere rudderless meandering. But I think I have shown that both graceful and amusing balloons are available, and I have no hesitation in recommending them to advertisers in search of a novelty, as well as to those who seek original distractions for an outdoor festival.

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The Merry Month of May.

BY WINIFRED GRAHAM.

SHE was born in May, she was christened "Maisy," and winter and summer she had carried with her through seven years of happy existence all the beauty together with all the sweetness of May flowers.

Her home lay amongst the Wicklow mountains in the fair, fresh Emerald Isle, a delightful old house nestling in the valley, surrounded by a large park—an ideal spot for childhood's dreams. All the year round this small person looked forward to her birthday party. From far and near the children flocked to dance in the great oak room with its highly-polished floor. At five o'clock all the shutters downstairs were closed and a blaze of artificial light illuminated the simpering family portraits of old - world damsels and the frowning manliness of their sterner companions.

Mrs. Arnold stood by her bedroom window in the sunlight. All was prepared below, and she thought with a sigh this was the second year Johnnie had been absent from his little step-sister's birthday treat. Johnnie, her first-born, her only son, the child with whom she had been left a widow at the early age of nineteen—far away on African soil, fighting for his country. Dearly as she loved her second child, it was impossible not to feel sad occasionally when certain anniversaries especially emphasized Johnnie's absence.

The red-tinged clouds were just settling on the distant mountains, hiding their peaks in a misty radiance. Below the white may trees, heavy with blossom, foretold the speedy approach of June. In a few more days the month of roses would crown the earth and timid spring give way to flaming summer.

The garden looked strangely ideal in the twilight; Mrs. Arnold felt a sudden thrill at the beauty of the evening.

"Everything must be merry and gay for Maisy's party," she told herself; "it would not do for a single shadow to fall on the child's happiness, or Johnnie would be vexed." He had promised to think of *her* wherever he might be, and promised, too, only in his last letter, that if it were possible he would send her a telegram of good wishes.

From early morning Maisy watched the drive with eager, longing eyes. A telegram for her from South Africa would have been a great event, a splendid trophy to show to the girls and boys who were coming to be her guests. But as the hours dragged on and the day advanced, even the childish hopes, which had burned so brightly, began to flag.

"You really must not expect it to come," her parents told her; "Johnnie is so unlikely to be able to send it off. He only said, 'If it were possible!'"

No sooner was Maisy dressed for the party than she danced down the broad, low-stepped staircase of oak, with the intention of taking a last look out of the hall door.

Turning the massive handle with difficulty, the "birthday child," in her frock of spotless muslin, let in a gust of fresh, sweet-scented air, straight from the hills beyond.

She could hardly believe her eyes, for the joy of a long day's waiting was actually facing her in the form of a boy standing with a yellow envelope in his outstretched hand.

"I was just going to ring, miss," he said, as she snatched the precious telegram, her fingers trembling and her cheeks aflame with scarlet roses. Very pretty she looked in her soft, fluffy frills, her hair tied on one side, American fashion, with a pale blue ribbon, little blue shoes, blue bows on her sleeves, and wide, inquiring eyes.

She never thought to look if the telegram were addressed to her; she just rushed back into the house, saying excitedly to herself, "It's come! It's come!"

The hall was empty, though brightly lighted and decorated with great bowls of spring flowers. Maisy knelt on a broad sofa under a hanging-lamp and opened the precious message, her heart beating so fiercely with suppressed emotion she could hardly breathe.

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Maisy was an exceptionally quick child, and had been able to read since she was five.

Carefully she spelt out the words one by one, till their full import broke upon her with paralyzing force. Then, as if filled with deadly terror, she started off running as fast as she could to her own room at the top of the house. Shutting the door, she sank down by the window, her head buried in the curtains, and lay crouching there as if stunned.

Close to her heart she held the terrible message, while haggard and drawn grew the now ashen little face. Was this "sorrow," of which she had vaguely heard: this beat, beat of a sledge-hammer at one's temples, the horrible burning dryness of eyes which could not shed a tear?

Maisy possessed a peculiarly strong nature for her years; she suffered in a way uncommon to childhood. Her pain could not find relief in a sudden outburst of sobbing like a heavy storm on an April day. The clouds of her grief sailed high in the heaven of her soul, touching regions of despair, making her kind little heart ache and bleed to think she could not be alone upon these dark, grave heights of misery. Other feet must tread the path of sorrow, and even as the thought burned in upon her brain she caught the sound of a woman's musical laugh.

"SHE COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HER EYES."

Mrs. Arnold's voice echoed cheerfully through the old house; she was calling, "Maisy! Maisy!"

The guests of the birthday queen were actually arriving, and no Maisy to greet them!—children who had mostly driven long distances, with horses and servants to be fed before returning.

"The party must be stopped, must be stopped!" said Maisy to herself, in a tremulous whisper—a whisper which sounded so strange and unnatural, she hardly recognised her own voice.

The rumble of carriage wheels on the drive made the pitiful little figure turn a white, scared face to the window-pane.

A vision of daintily-frocked figures with eager, smiling faces caught her eyes as she looked out, and the merry laugh of a little boy, so like the pictures of Johnnie in his childhood, met her gaze. He had dropped his hat as he sprang off an Irish car, and dived under the horse to regain his lost property, much to the amusement of a bevy of small girls in a brougham.

No thought of human suffering, of human

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care, entered their calculations! They looked so full of anticipation, so happy and high-spirited, that Maisy quickly shut out the sight, and pulled the blind down with a snap.

She slipped off the window-seat and stood upright in the dim room. A number of bewildering thoughts chased each other through her brain. How was she to tell her mother the news which would break her heart? Johnnie, she knew, was mother's idol. Johnnie belonged more to mother than to father, yet both loved him dearly.

Gradually Maisy began to realize this telegram from the War Office was not her property, yet she had opened it in all innocence, and by a strange chance became the possessor of a dread secret.

Maisy had asked Mrs. Arnold only that morning whether she, being grown up, would really enjoy a children's party? Her mother for reply snatched her up in her arms, kissed her many times, and declared heartily she would enjoy the party as much as Maisy or any of her guests.

"CAREFULLY SHE SPELT OUT THE WORDS ONE BY ONE."

All this passed with lightning speed through the child's puzzled brain, and with it an idea which set every nerve on the rack, as she braced herself to an effort.

Why not leave both father and mother in merciful ignorance until the last carriage rolled away and the party, already fast assembling, had been played out to its bitter end? No suffering, she tried to think, could add to her own heart's torture, and at least mother would have a few more happy hours!

She was an intensely unselfish child; the blood of heroes and martyrs must have flowed in her veins, for the fiery trials of the stake would have seemed nothing in comparison to the task she now set herself.

"Mother must think I am enjoying the party or she won't be happy herself!" Maisy said aloud, and again she gave a little start at hearing her own voice.

She smoothed her crumpled muslin frock, tossed back her dishevelled hair, and, setting her small lips firmly in unspoken resolve, moved slowly to the door.

She could hear the children uncloaking in the room below, the music of their voices filling the house with mocking merriment. Against her heart lay the cruel message, like a sharp dart piercing the sensitive flesh; the walls seemed to swim round. Maisy wondered what it meant—the queer, rocking feeling as she groped her way down the passage. Was this another sign of her new acquaintance—"sorrow," this odd sensation of giddiness and the sound of rushing waters in her ears?

On the stairs Maisy met her governess, carrying a picturesque wreath of may-blossoms, which she placed on the child's curly hair. It had been twined by the head gardener, despite repeated assurances from the servants that may-flowers were unlucky when brought into the house.

"There!" said Miss Brown, smilingly; "you look quite a birthday girl now that you are crowned. We could not find you, and lots of the children have come. Mrs. Arnold has been looking for you everywhere."

"I was upstairs," said Maisy, simply; and Miss Brown fancied there was something mysterious in the sweet little face which looked wistfully into hers. Somehow its

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expression did not seem in keeping with the may-wreath and the general air of festivity below.

But a moment later the child had darted away before Miss Brown found time to ask if anything were the matter. As Maisy ran quickly towards the hall she collected her scattered thoughts with difficulty. Maisy knew that to please her mother, and to hide the dark cloud hovering over the house and its inmates, she must pretend to enjoy the party provided for her pleasure, the party which appeared so terrible in the light of Maisy's superior knowledge. Little could Mrs. Arnold guess how fiercely the baby heart was beating under its white party frock, or what a load of pain lay throbbing under the dainty wreath, with its freshly-opened buds, just tinged by the faintest pink shadow on frail white leaves. The child's aching head might well have carried a crown of thorns instead of a halo of spring flowers. Yet the little feet skipped to and fro, twinkling across the floor in their small blue shoes, as she welcomed her juvenile friends.

"How happy she is!" said Mrs. Arnold, watching her tiny daughter with pride. "Maisy has quite the instincts of a hostess already. It is the great day of the year for her, this May birthday, and she seems to have quite got over her disappointment at the non-arrival of Johnnie's telegram."

"Yes," replied Maisy's father, "I never thought he would be able to send it, so it seemed almost a pity to raise the child's hopes. I keep thinking so much of him to-day; he always made these children's parties such a success."

Mrs. Arnold sighed.

"He is never out of my thoughts a moment," she murmured, and a suspicious moisture gathered momentarily in her eyes as she watched the romping dance.

She felt glad to see that her husband was putting his whole soul into Maisy's party, as if to make up to the child for Johnnie's absence. Mr. Arnold dearly loved his beautiful little daughter, and never felt jealous of the intense devotion she lavished upon her step-brother. Johnnie had a knack of always winning love; no one grudged him his universal popularity.

It seemed to Maisy that the music and dancing would never cease, or the endless chatter of merry voices. Whenever she felt she could bear it no longer her eyes travelled to Mrs. Arnold, and catching her smiling glance she laughed and shouted with the rest, as children will do from sheer gladness of heart when play, dance, and feasting prevail.

At last the carriages once more came rumbling up the drive, small figures in cloaks and shawls congregated in the hall, and good-bye kisses fell in showers upon Mrs. Arnold's pleasurably-flushed cheek.

The party had distracted her thoughts at last from their channel of keen anxiety. The light-hearted little creatures, with healing hands, all unconsciously gave back to the anxious mother the glow of her own youth.

"I really have enjoyed it, dear," she said to her husband, in Maisy's hearing.

With a sharp pang at her heart the child moved away. She had not thought out yet how and when she would break the news. Every moment seemed to make the task more difficult.

Miss Brown struck up a last tune as the farewells were being said; it was Maisy's favourite: "When Johnnie Comes Marching Home!"

It broke like a funeral dirge on Maisy's ear; no one noticed her fall back against the oak panelling, her wide, tearless eyes staring straight in front of her, and a pair of tiny, nervous hands fingering a thin envelope, half-hidden by the white frills of her little muslin dress.

She caught the sound of her mother's voice speaking cheerfully in the hall, and, once more hiding the dreadful message, Maisy said "Good-night" without betraying her despair.

As she kissed Mr. Arnold she whispered something in his ear.

"Eh? What's that?" he queried.

"Please," said the small voice, "please come up and see me when I've gone to bed; it's vewy, vewy particular!"

"All right, young woman, I won't forget," came in reassuring accents, as the birthday child flitted away.

Maisy hurried into bed, scarcely speaking a word.

She lay quite still, gazing at the flickering night-light, and for the first time great hot tears began rolling down her cheeks. At last the tears came so thick and fast she could no longer see the shadows on the wall.

Anxiously she listened for a footstep, and presently a tall figure pushed the door open and peeped in.

"Daddy, is that you?"

"Yes, little one."

"Come vewy close to me, daddy, I've something to tell you."

He bent over the child's bed, surprised to

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find her crying. She sat upright, tossing back her hair, and revealing a face with two bright pink spots on each cheek.

"It was just when the party was beginning," she said; "I could not tell then, with all the children and mother so happy, and —and everything like that!"

Even now this tear-stained atom of humanity paused in her story, thinking how she could try her little best to smooth the path of pain, wondering, with the unquenchable hope of a child, whether her weak hands might not in some way hold back the roaring torrent or stay the dreaded tide.

"Go on," he said, in a low, kind voice.

"A—a telegram came," she faltered, "I thought it was for me, and oh! it's just under my pillow."

With eager fingers she felt for the hidden horror.

"Here it is," she cried, diving under the sheet. "Oh! daddy, daddy, you couldn't guess how dreadful it is—you couldn't, weally!"

She pushed the flimsy message into his hand; then, hiding her eyes on his shoulder, whispered the awful intelligence: "Johnnie—our Johnnie is dead!"

Only five words, spoken in a gasping sob, yet they re-echoed round the room and seemed to fill the air with wailing: "Johnnie is dead—Johnnie is dead!"

Mr. Arnold never spoke. He appeared to be struck dumb with the shock of Maisy's revelation.

He took the crumpled paper to where the night-light burned upon the washing-stand.

A narrow tongue of flame leapt up with a flickering glow to illuminate the writing. Maisy followed her father, and the shadows gave the white-robed figure an ethereal look. She appeared peculiarly phantom-like in the dim room. She might have been a miniature high priestess, as she stood with her hands pressed on the cold marble slab, her dark-fringed eyes fixed upon the small flame as if it were a holy light burning upon some sacrificial altar.

"COME VEWY CLOSE TO ME, DADDY."

Mr. Arnold struck a match and lit another candle. He did not hear an excited footstep enter the room quickly. Maisy, seeing her mother, crept to her side, clasping her tightly round the waist with both arms.

Mrs. Arnold also held an open telegram in her hand.

"I can't understand what this means," she said, "a telegram from the War Office, apparently explaining some error. Johnnie is well and safe; it seems his name has appeared in a wrong list—a list of the dead or wounded."

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A cry broke from the startled child, a cry unlike any Mrs. Arnold had ever heard, and her blood ran cold as she watched her husband catch the little swaying form to his heart. A strange medley of laughter and sobbing burst in agony and relief from the baby lips, till gradually, between them, the anxious parents soothed and calmed her.

"Oh, isn't it lovely to fink Johnnie is weally alive after all!" Maisy gasped, as it gradually dawned on her mother the hours of fearful misery she had been saved through the forethought of her child.

"I've been dweadfully unhappy—but now I don't mind, because we are so vewy, vewy happy again, it makes up for evewything!"

A joyous trio went down the broad staircase to the brightly-lighted dining-room, Mr. Arnold carrying Maisy wrapped in her little pink dressing-gown.

She had seized her faded wreath of may-blossoms, and was once more a birthday queen, crowned by the namesake flowers of her own especial month.

"We must drink Johnnie's health," said her father, "before we put you back to bed again, young lady."

"To Johnnie, to Johnnie!" she cried, as

"'TO JOHNNIE, TO JOHNNIE!' SHE CRIED."

Mr. Arnold stood her on the table, her little pink feet looking like roses. The tumbled wreath on her dishevelled curls gave her a bacchanalian air—the miniature high priestess had changed into a sprite of revelry—with sparkling eyes, glowing cheeks, and a shrill, merry voice.

She was carried up to bed by Miss Brown, strangely sleepy, and, at last, husband and wife were left alone.

Then there fell upon them a silence—"The joy that is deepest is dumb!" A sense as of something holy, and a shadow of something vast, filled both their hearts as in that quiet home, under the shelter of green mountains, they locked their bliss from the world, and the shadow of a sorrow mercifully withheld drew back like a vast tidal wave, leaving them rejoicing on a golden shore.

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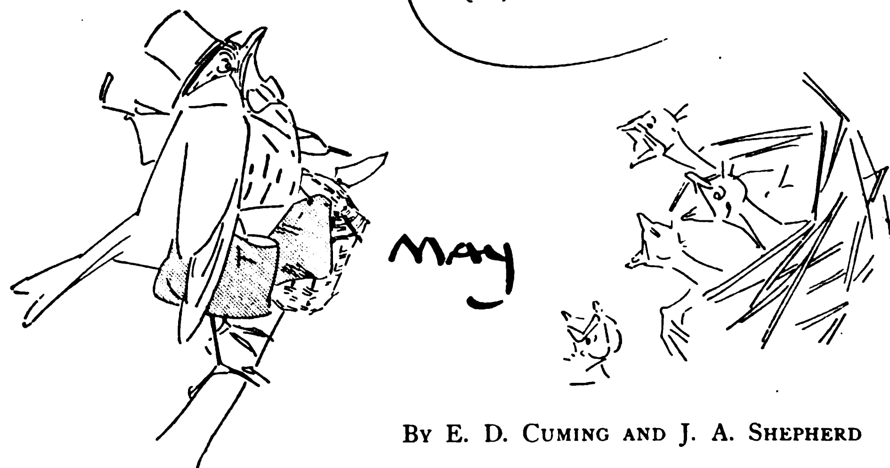

By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd

THIS is one of the busiest months of the year: few birds now are free from brow-wrinkling family responsibilities. The kingfisher is sitting on half-a-dozen round white eggs in an untidy nest of small fish-bones built at the end of a hole. You would not expect anything so bright and beautiful to do such coarse work as digging: and though the kingfishers sometimes make one for themselves, they more often take the deserted house of a water-vole—one who has moved into more commodious premises. The splendour of his tenant must astonish the simple-minded water-vole:—

> A bird like him take such a hole as that!
> Dark and ill-drained as 'prentice paws could make it.
> I'm sure a self-respecting water-rat
> Would rather die without a home than take it.

The cuckoo has no housekeeping cares, but she must engage suitable foster-mothers to whose care she may confide her eggs, and in the absence of a registry office must go round the hedges and find them for herself. The cuckoo has been known to choose them among one hundred and ten different species, the reed-warbler, hedge-sparrow, robin and garden-warbler, and meadow-pipit being preferred. A cuckoo gets into the habit of employing nurses of one kind, and is supposed to give preference to the species by a member of which she herself was reared, which seems a very sensible thing to do. She never asks a bird to take care of her egg; she simply deposits it in the nest if the owner be out when she calls, if necessary laying it on the ground and using her bill to lift it in. If the foster-mother be sitting it is a hundred to one she mistakes the cuckoo for a hawk and takes flight instantly, leaving her nest at her employer's disposal. Nature, whose arrangements here seem to the unscientific mind to err on the side of partiality, has made the cuckoo's egg absurdly small, and this enables a bird less than half the cuckoo's size to hatch it.

The nightjar, latest of our spring migrants, arrives about the middle of May. The nightjar resembles nothing so much as a big, beautiful moth; but a harmless indiscretion has earned him a bad name. He lives on insects, and as insects abound about cattle in the twilight when he comes abroad, he is prone to haunt their neighbourhood; whence the luminous notion that he milks the cows. The tits have either eggs or babies to look after; the great tits' sense of humour leads them to nest in places where they are least

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wanted; a letter-box strikes them as an ideal situation; but it is due to him—or rather to her—to say that she has no objection to the letter-box being used for its legitimate purpose, and tolerates periodical inundations of letters upon herself and nest with philosophic calm. The little blue tit is more orthodox in her choice of site; any hole in wall or tree is good enough for her; there she sits, defying man and all his fingers with vigorous pecks; it is as though a dormouse should hit you with his clenched fist. The while she hisses fiercely with touching but misplaced confidence in her ability to make you believe she is a snake.

"THE CUCKOO IN SEARCH OF A NURSE."

The long-tailed, otherwise the bottle, tit orders his establishment on lines which his wife must deem susceptible of improvement. The house is egg-shaped, with the door at the side near the top; it is very pretty, but, like all "bijou" residences, has drawbacks. You see, this bird has a tail about twice as long as his body, and the house does not lend itself to stowage of the same. One can't help feeling for the housewife in these circumstances:—

"It's a beautiful nest," said the doubting hen tit,
"But will you just kindly explain
How on earth you suppose I am going to sit
When I haven't got room for my train?"

"You will sit," said her mate, "on the soft feather bed
I have carefully placed on the floor,
And arrange your long tail neatly over your head
With the end sticking out at the door."

She does what he tells her, and very uncomfortable the position must be, particularly when her ten or twelve children are beginning to grow: with such a family twice a year the long-tailed tit's wife might adopt a working dress—but we have heard enough about long skirts and their objections.

Our eighteen kinds of bumble-bee are busy. Bumble-bee tastes are purely domestic: none of the tribe affect club-life like the honey-bee. As soon as decent weather permits, a widowed queen bumble-bee who has survived from last year sets about her lonely task of nesting: some kinds prefer an underground burrow; others build a tiny house—the merest cabin—of carded moss and dried grass on the ground. In this the mistress piles a heap of pollen and honey, within which she lays her eggs: so the larvæ are born literally in the midst of plenty. The true bumble-bees suffer a good deal of annoyance from disreputable relations (*Apathi*), who call when they are out and lay their eggs in the heap of pollen and honey—much as the hedge-sparrow, meadow-pipit, and others are victimized by the cuckoo. The larvæ reach full growth in a few days, and some species then retire into a silken cocoon which they spin for themselves; this would not be worth mentioning but for the thrifty practice of the bee: it carefully eats its way out at one end of the cocoon, and thereafter uses the receptacle as a pot in which to store food.

The sand-martin, first of the family to arrive, is the first to nest. Sand-martins, industrious souls, dig their own holes, a yard deep sometimes, and use them year after year. The nest, a loose, untidy jumble of feathers with a little dry grass, is the abiding-place of countless fleas—a tin of Keating

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would be a boon to a colony of sand-martins.

The black-headed gulls, whom we last saw making up parties for their visit to the "gullery," or nesting-ground, on some inland mere or marsh near the sea, are all sitting by the beginning of May; those of them whose eggs have been taken away by men for food have got over their trouble and have laid more. The common gull, companionable like others of his kind, selects a somewhat similar nursery, but begins housekeeping rather later than the black-headed. The herring gull—perhaps at the dictates of an uneasy conscience, for he is an inveterate egg-thief—builds a careless nest of herbage on cliff-ledges where callers are likely to be few. The great black-backed gull is exclusive in his habits: no house in a cliff-terrace or crowded gullery-town for him; he and his wife retire to some solitary rock-stack and there bring up two or three children in their own iniquitous ways, which include the slaughter of young or injured gulls, of lambs, and even of sickly ewes. This disreputable but majestic fowl steals eggs, and his soul is not superior to the consumption of carrion. The kittiwake, common on every coast in its entirety, and on ladies' hats in fragments, is a comparatively late breeder, but the birds are now assembled on the narrow rock-ledges, where each pair has a holding about large enough to turn round in. All these gulls build a nest, nothing architecturally remarkable, but a clumsy, practical sort of dwelling suitable enough for the reception of eggs. The puffins don't trouble about a nest; when the cock has spent weeks digging and delving out a cave, we can understand his declaring that he won't do another stroke of work; but when the pair lease an old rabbit-burrow or other hole, there is no excuse. Anyhow, each hen lays her single egg on the bare ground in this shady retreat or in a deep nook under a stone; the deplorably dirty state of the puffin's egg, originally dull white freckled with pale brown, suggests that the birds handle it a great deal and never think of washing their hands first. Some other birds are equally careless: the gannet, for instance.

"MR. BUMBLE'S TASTES ARE DOMESTIC."

The woodcock's children are old enough to feed themselves now, but cannot fly; therefore their parents, who believe in early tuition, take them out to late dinners every evening on the soft, marshy ground which young and tender bills can easily probe. The woodcock has a curious way of carrying her progeny: she clasps the young bird between her thighs, tucked close up against her breast. Thus she can make short work of any rebellious chick who doesn't want to go home when daylight doth appear: the woodcock is essentially a bird of night. The young grouse, who can follow their mother soon after they leave the egg, are now beginning to grow enterprising. Peril dogs the steps of the grouse from the day he chips out of the handsome egg, for he enjoys the more than doubtful privilege of being susceptible to a form of acute infectious pneumonia known as "grouse disease," for which no remedy is known. The pheasant is sitting on eggs which will soon hatch out. The pheasant's idea of housekeeping is peculiar. Two or three hens will sometimes club together,

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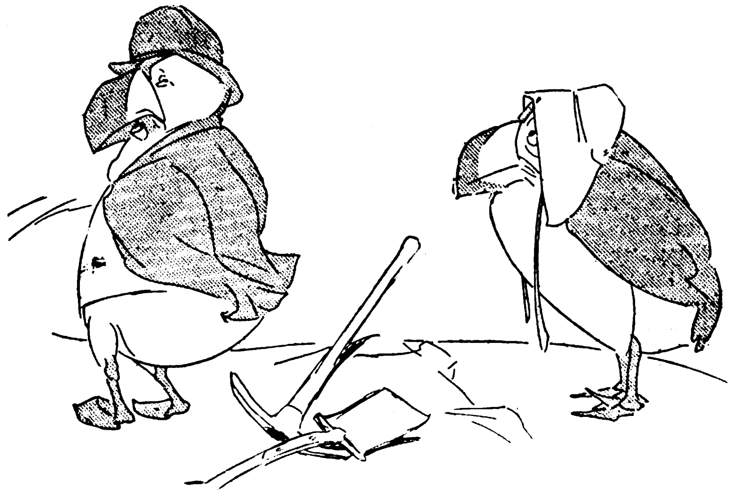
"POOR MOTHER."

either for company (their husbands never coming near them) or from desire to save themselves trouble, and use one common nest. From the fact that the pheasant will occasionally go shares with a partridge in her nest it looks as though she considered building a nuisance to be avoided if possible. The partridge, whose motherly heart does not consider twenty an excessive family, perhaps arranges for her guest to sit on some of her eggs; how a partridge single-handed can spread herself over a score of eggs is a mystery; her husband helps in the hatching, but the parents do not appear to sit together, though both act as nurses to their chicks when they hatch out.

The skylark has now her first laying of four or five eggs in the grass-lined nest she makes under some grass tuft in the open field; the cock bird knows better than to sing right over the nursery and advertise its whereabouts to all the world. Mark the spot where he alights after a trip heavenward and you may be sure the nest is not there: he comes down fifty yards away from it and walks silently home through the grass.

The cockchafer is abroad, booming, buzzing, and blundering in the twilight; he never looks where he is going, and frequently comes to grief. If he carried a lamp it would save him many headaches. Talking of lamps, the glow-worm has lighted hers. The lady glow-worm is wingless, and she can only hope to secure a husband if she be bright and attractive; so she sits in the grass under the hedge and shines by the hour together, with an eye to winged but usually lampless gentlemen. The male glow-worm is not intelligent; he will come in scores to lay his hand and fortune at the feet of candle or lamp, and pesters the unresponsive thing till he dies of misplaced devotion, or oil. The pale green light the glow-worm wears under her tail does not seem to be entirely under her control, which suggests possibilities:—

When a glow-worm has neuralgia and a sadly aching head,
Nearly anything in reason she would give to go to bed,
And it isn't very pleasant, as I'm sure you will not doubt,
To be kept up till eleven by a light you can't put out.


"HE WON'T DO ANOTHER STROKE OF WORK."

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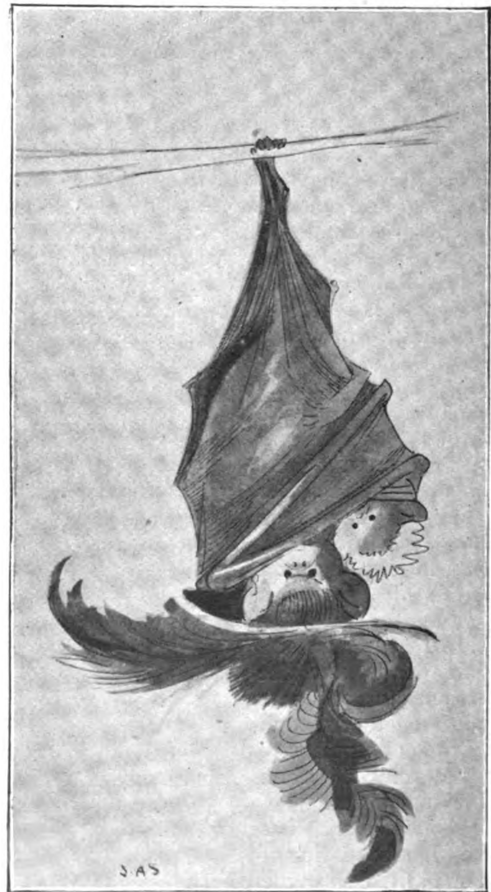
"AN UNRESPONSIVE JULIET."

The bats are nursing their children: tender mothers they are, carrying about with them the blind, naked, helpless babies which cling to their fur. When the mother bat hangs herself up to rest she folds a wing like a shawl about the child.

The young woodpeckers have been introduced to the world—the world in their case being the trunk of the tree in a hole of which they were hatched. They scramble about with their mother learning to spear insects with their barbed tongues: a feeding woodpecker looks as though he were practising billiards with the cue in his mouth. The dipper down by the stream is giving her family a lesson in diving: the young dippers could swim as soon as they left the big moss-ball nest on the rock-ledge under the waterfall; but before they can pass the dipper higher standard they must learn to sink gently to the stream bottom, and when there walk along holding by the weeds, and learn to swim with their wings under water.

The oil beetle's first brood of larvæ, some three or four thousand in number, develop in May. Their first aim in life is to get a bee to carry them around and show them the world: hence, as soon as hatched, each larva hurries away to the nearest flower to wait for a bee—as to the station to wait for a train. He embarks on board the first bee that comes without asking where she is going or anything else, and holds on with all his six hooked legs. Eventually he will leave the bee and settle on her eggs and eat them, in course of time becoming a soft and pampered grub without a thought but of honey.

Numbers of young trout have hatched out by this time. They cannot be called "fish" at the earliest stage of their active career—they cannot feed themselves, and each is supplied with a feeding-bottle nearly as big as himself containing nourishment, which he gradually absorbs. The polecat, whose smell is the least objectionable feature of her character, has now four or five young criminals in some disused rabbit-hole to rear on the proceeds of midnight robbery and assassination. The morals of the polecat



"COMMON BAT AND BABY."

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"A MODEL HUSBAND."

are far worse than those of stoat or weasel. He kills from sheer superfluity of naughtiness: he is a wanton murderer without a redeeming trait to warrant recommendation to mercy.

The foxes, having moved their children half-a-dozen times, to escape real or fancied enemies, are freed from anxiety, the cubs being able to take care of themselves by this time. The vixen brings them out of the gorse covert in the evening and sits by while they play: tug-of-war with a rabbit's leg is one of their favourite games, but, however absorbing the game, the whole family bolt out of sight in a moment if their watchful mother only remark, "Keck, keck!"

As for the birds, there now is not one who can sing who is not singing for all he is worth, the missel-thrush only excepted. The blackcap, whose song would be as famous as the nightingale's were he only endowed with a name that lent itself to poesy and rhythm, is so enthusiastic that he sings nearly all day as he sits on the eggs (he is one of those model husbands who do a full half of the nursery work) and most of the night. The goldfinch considers his work done when he has helped his wife to build that wonderfully neat and compact nest: she does the hatching and he sings to her. Mrs. Bullfinch, who should have four or five children gaping for insects and grubs by this time, did the hatching herself, too; the cock bullfinch does his share of the catering when the children appear. The nightingale's wife is sitting on four or five olive-brown eggs in an untidy nest of dead leaves on the ground under some close hedge-row; both the birds, we may suppose, doze away the day, as no dutiful wife, with or without a taste for music, could sleep through the song he maintains, with short intervals for refreshment, from dark till long after dawn. Towards the end of May the cuckoo's dupes begin to find out what a little monster has been thrust upon them. Nature, pursuing her one-sided policy in favour of the cuckoo, brings the young bird into the world with a curiously hollow back, for no other reason than to enable him to throw his foster-brothers out of the nest; when thirty hours old this infant infanticide, blind and featherless as he is, gets to work, wriggles himself under each nest-fellow in turn, and heaves him bodily overboard to starve. His appetite is so enormous and he grows so fast that he wants all his foster-parents' attention and the whole nest to himself. The adaptation of means to end is not invariably beautiful. What can the

"NIGHTINGALE AFTER A LATE NIGHT."

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bereaved and puzzled parents think of this child they suppose to be their own?

From dawn to dark we toil to meet his needs;
He's *always* hungry, cram him as you will
With beetles, spiders, caterpillars, seeds—
He *always* greets you with an open bill.

Never an instant can his father sit
And rest; nor snatch a minute for his tea.
"More food!" he cries; and what he does with it
Is an enigma to my wife and me.

The herons are very hard-worked in these days; they often bring up two families in the season, and are in such a hurry to get through the business that the hen lays the second batch of eggs without waiting for her first leggy brood to quit the nest. The barn-owl, by the way, does the same thing. The young eels are wriggling up the stream under the bank. Mystery overhangs the domestic affairs of the eel. We know that two sods wet with May dew won't produce vast quantities of eels, as an old authority assured us was the case; and the deservedly popular error that horse-hairs put in water turn into eels is now, even in the worst-informed quarters, regarded with regretful doubts; of eel affairs more by-and-by.

"THE INFANT CRIMINAL."

The badgers, whose family was born soon after the spring cleaning, have repeated the turning-out process, and Mrs. Badger is now nursing two or three children in the remotest chamber of that great underground mansion. She has her own views concerning the upbringing of children, and hers are not allowed to put their noses out of doors till they are eight or ten weeks old. The fox cubs must laugh at the young badgers thus tied to the maternal apron-string, but it were a brave fox cub who ventured near the nursery when Mrs. Badger is about. Up on the deer forest the hind has betaken herself to some quiet and sheltered nook where she can devote herself to the calf who arrives about this time. The fallow buck sheds his antlers and appears usually to leave them lying where they happen to drop. After all, a lunch of horn cannot have much to recommend it to an animal with no front teeth in his upper jaw. The buck is not quite so sensitive about his discrowned appearance as the stag; at any rate, he remains with his brethren sunning himself lazily, feeding and chewing the cud by turns. The fallow deer change their winter coats for their summer dress in May; but they have no narrow-minded rules about the colour and pattern of their clothes. You will see half-a-dozen different shades varying from chocolate brown to pale fawn at any season; some go in for the orthodox white spots, others don't. Equal catholicity of taste is displayed in the matter of antlers: some are broadly palmated, while others are like sticks; the quality of the deer's food has something to do with this, though.

The turtle-doves, who begin nesting rather later than their relatives, are cooing over their apology for a nest. Looking on that wretched structure, on the irregular outline of the bird's beak, his habits and tortuous flight, the cry of the turtle-dove always suggests reasonable complaint:—

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"A LIBEL."

No sooner does *his* wife begin to sit than he votes home-life a bore, and goes off with a party of male friends to amuse himself. Perhaps the eider-duck's appearance at this time offends his orderly eye (she gradually strips off her famous down to line the nest, and certainly does look rather down-at-heel), but this excuse for his behaviour will not hold water; drakes of other species do the same, whose wives do not wear *déshabille* in the nursery. It may be that they feel their own state of eclipse unfits them for female society: they lose their brilliant plumage in the nesting season.

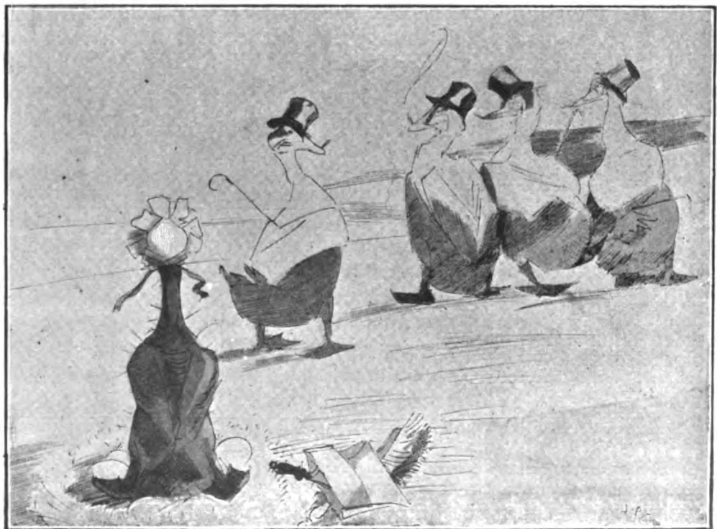
The water-rats have five or six children in a comfortable nest of dry grass deep down in the gallery in the stream-bank. The water-vole, to give him his proper name, is an upright and estimable member of society, a vegetarian whose honesty only yields to the temptation of potatoes, which he loves. On fine evenings he is fond of sitting on his front door-step to contemplate the scenery and wash his pink hands. He enters and leaves his house by the back door, which is under water, when his sworn foes the heron or weasel are about.

That sorely-tried friend of our childhood,

Because his voice is very soft and low
  Men talk of dove and love, and never think
How pregnant is the little fact they know
  That "all the pigeons regularly drink"!
    It's crooel—too *croo*-el!

A dozen twigs loose-laid on naked boughs
  Is "home"! I blush when thrifty chaffinch sees
My nest; or if he mark my erring spouse
  At sunset lurching homeward through the trees,
    It's crooel—too *croo*-el!

We hasten to withdraw this reflection on a blameless character; all the pigeons are rigid teetotalers, though they do drink much and often; and the turtle-dove is a kind and attentive mate who can, and does, hatch an egg as well as his better half. Well might the eider-drake take a leaf from the turtle-dove's book.



"HOME HAS NO ATTRACTION FOR THE EIDER-DRAKE."

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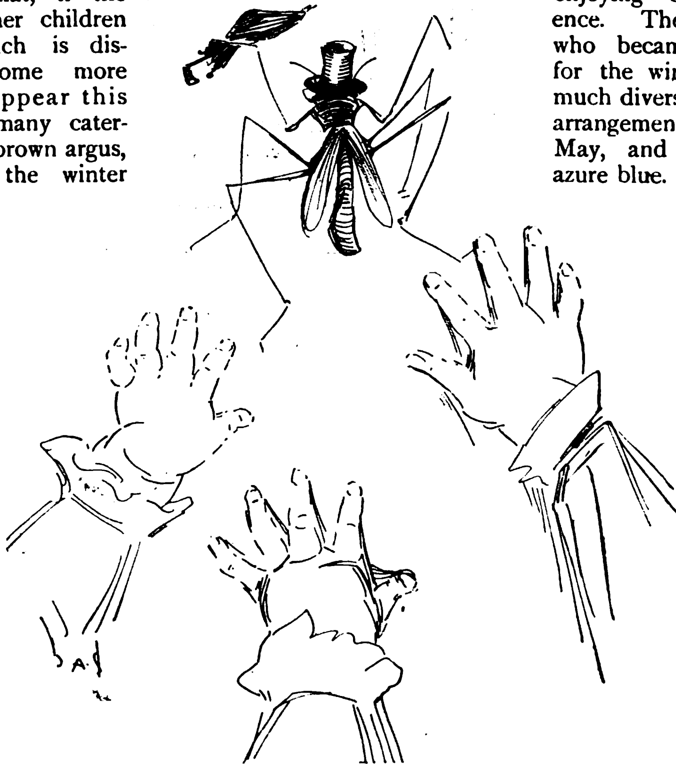
the daddy longlegs, emerges from the larval state underground to dance in the sun or sit contentedly among his knees. What an advantage he must have over other insects when there is any show going on! The gentle earwig is bringing up her family; most insects die when they have laid their eggs, and those who do not die leave them to take care of themselves. Not so the earwig, in whose bosom the maternal instinct is strong. She hovers round her yellow eggs laid under a stone, and looks after them. Scatter them and she will carefully collect them again. When the baby earwigs hatch out she takes them for walks, teaching them to eat the flowers and to wash their faces. Earwigs are scrupulously clean in person, and wash themselves like unto cats. The only blot on the character of this noble creature is that, if the mother die, her children eat her, which is disrespectful. Some more butterflies appear this month and many caterpillars. The brown argus, which spent the winter as an egg, has passed through the caterpillar and chrysalis states. The purple hairstreak, which also wintered as an egg, comes forth as a caterpillar: likewise the brown hairstreak. The greasy fritillary, who prefers to hibernate as a caterpillar, has gone through the chrysalis stage and appears a full-fledged but curiously lazy butterfly; the greasy fritillary is much influenced by weather: on dull, cloudy days it seems to think life not worth living and consents to be caught almost willingly, so depressed are its spirits. Its cousin, the heath fritillary, is out too, after wintering as a chrysalis: this is an intelligent butterfly who shams death when caught. The speckled wood and meadow brown butterflies wintered as caterpillars; these have passed through their chrysalis stage of existence and are enjoying butterfly existence. The swallow-tail who became a chrysalis for the winter — there is much diversity in butterfly arrangements—appears in May, and so does the azure blue.

"THE WATER-VOLE AT HOME."



"THE SORELY-TRIED FRIEND OF OUR CHILDHOOD."

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In the Heart of the Rock.

By Frank Savile.

"YOU heard that Sir Arthur had made Smeatoun his private secretary and personal A.D.C.?" said Thring.

I nodded. I had come back from leave only an hour before and too late for mess. Thring was giving me the gossip of the last six weeks over a pipe and a glass of toddy.

"He wrote to me at the time," said I. "A bit of luck for him. But then he's got any amount of family influence."

Thring grunted.

"The job is sending him stark mad, I believe," he said, drily.

I stopped with my glass half-way to my lips and stared at him.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"What I say," said he, shortly. "The attack, or at any rate the symptoms, took him about ten days ago. He has grown a dozen years older in the last week. He gapes at you—he doesn't hear what is said to him. He's grown a score of wrinkles. He starts like a rabbit if you drop a book, and a salute from one of the men-of-war in harbour makes him skip out of his very skin. There's no sort of doubt he's half-way out of his mind."

"He's ill!" I cried.

"Mentally," agreed Thring, "but not physically. It's simply nervous breakdown."

"What on earth is there to upset a man's nerve in writing invitations to dinner and superintending garden parties?" I inquired.

"You must ask me something easier," said Thring, "but you'll see for yourself that I haven't overstated the case. Well, I must be turning in. It's nearly twelve."

I filled another pipe and sat meditating when he had gone. Smeatoun and I are friends, closer than many brothers, and the news disquieted me more than a little. Money troubles? It couldn't be that. A hundred pounds here or there would not come between him and his sleep, or, for the matter of that, a thousand. And then I heard a step in the passage and a tap. The man himself was standing in the doorway.

"Come in, old chap," I cried, cheerily; "I was just thinking of you." I kicked forward a chair, passed him the whisky and seltzer, and gripped his hand hard as I pushed him into his seat. "And how's the world using you these days?" I asked.

He muttered a few vague words of greeting, tried to pour out some seltzer, spilled the half of it, and then turned with a sort of jerk to look at the clock on the mantelpiece. The hand stood within a minute of midnight. I stared at him in unutterable surprise.

"What's the matter?" I demanded, sharply.

He hesitated and stammered.

"I was wanting to see you," he gulped out at last, and then, some little way off, I heard what sounded like the report of a biggish gun. He leaped to his feet, staring wildly towards the window.

I made for the blind and pulled it up.

"The Spaniards have dropped on one of those smugglers this time," I cried, peering out into the night for a glimpse of a flash. It sounded as if one of the Algeciras batteries was firing.

"No!" he cried, vehemently; "it's no gun! It's here—in the town! It's down by the Victualling Yard; it's——" And then, very distinctly through the night, came a bugle call—the "Alarm."

"Ugh!" I snarled, disgustedly, "there's a fire somewhere. Now, if we have to turn out the men, it's a ten to one chance it will be my company. And I'm simply dog-tired. Just my luck!"

The words were hardly out of my lips when a bugle went in our own barrack-yard. It was the regimental call!

"What did I say?" I cried, turning to find my sword and belt. The sight of Smeatoun's face brought me to a sudden halt. If ever I have seen terror incarnate it was staring out of his eyes. He was gripping the back of his chair, every muscle in his features a-twitch. "Heavens, man!" I exclaimed, "what's there to be frightened of? Have we never had a fire before? Why, I can see it," I went on, throwing up the window; "it's down by the New Mole."

He gave a sort of inarticulate cry, made for the door like a frightened animal, and went down the stairs three steps at a time. I followed as fast as I could, to find no trace of him in the barrack-yard. The men were falling in, and, just as I expected, A and B Companies were detailed for duty and sent off at the double. There was no doubt about our destination as we clattered down the ramp. The flames were soaring above the wharf-houses beyond the Victualling Yard.

We were ordered to form a cordon to keep off the mob of loafers, while inside this the

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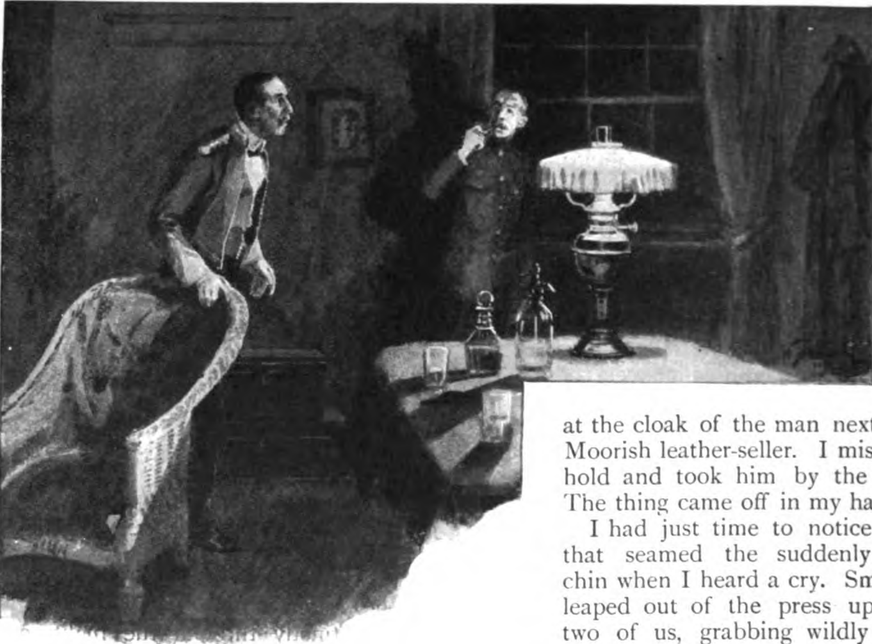

"HE WAS GRIPPING THE BACK OF HIS CHAIR, EVERY MUSCLE IN HIS FEATURES A-TWITCH."

brigade worked both manuals and steam engines for all they were worth. And they had their job cut out for them. I have seen a few fires in my time, but none equal to that. The blaze seemed eating into the very stones of the breakwater. Storehouse after storehouse caught, and matters for a time looked very serious. As usual, not only had we to dodge falling walls and rafters, but we had all we could do to restrain the crowd of townspeople that swarmed around apparently bent on self-destruction. My men stamped deliberately on the slippered feet of the rabble. Here and there a Spaniard tried to draw a knife to resent this summary discipline, but it was invariably knocked out of his fist and he himself hustled off into the hands of a picket before matters got to bloodshed. But the fire spread farther and farther.

"Are the buildings made of asphalt?" I shouted to Broadwood, who had the company of the Fusiliers next me. "The flames are licking up the stonework as if it were so much tar."

Before he could open his lips to answer me there was a crash in the roof of the dock-house above us. A great beam thundered from its place.

I spun back upon my line of men. Half-a-dozen of them, with as many civilians and myself, rolled in a heap. I clutched aimlessly at the cloak of the man next me, a Moorish leather-seller. I missed my hold and took him by the beard. The thing came off in my hand!

I had just time to notice a scar that seamed the suddenly bared chin when I heard a cry. Smeatoun leaped out of the press upon the two of us, grabbing wildly at the Moor with both hands.

The other wriggled, spurned me off, left his cloak in Smeatoun's grasp, and was gone into the darkness before I could speak. A clatter of falling stones followed the beam. One took my friend fairly on the forehead and knocked him senseless. He was dragged off by a bearer-party to the waiting ambulances. The whole incident was over in a matter of seconds.

It was two hours after that before the blaze died down at all and was finally got under control. By three o'clock I got my men off, grimy, smoke-stained, and sore with continual hustling. A dozen of them had to take their bruises to hospital. I doubt if a minor engagement would have furnished more casualties.

The two companies were excused parade the next morning. I was smoking and rubbing embrocation on my shin where a lump of wood had thumped it when the door opened and Smeatoun came in, a large patch of plaster staring on his forehead. If he was excited the night before, at that moment he could only be called distracted. He grabbed me by the arm and shook me impatiently.

"Come with me!" he cried; "come at once!"

"Steady!" I said, a trifle irritably; "don't jerk my bruises like that. Where do you want to go? You had much better keep that banged head of yours quiet."

"You must come — you must!" he

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answered, vehemently. "It's life and death —of a truth, it's life or death for all of us!"

I looked up at him a bit sobered by his passion. His eyes were bloodshot and staring and his lips were white. I reached for my hat, shrugged my shoulders, and nodded.

"Very well," I said, quietly, "lead on!"

I followed him downstairs and across the barrack-yard. Instead of making for the town, as I expected, he led me towards Europa Pass.

"Where now?" I asked, curiously.

"Wait!" was all the answer I got and the only word that I extracted from him till the road ended at the Eastern Cliffs below the Monkey Cave. He sat down upon the parapet, fumbled in his breast-pocket, produced a packet of letters, and flung one on to my knees.

"Read that!" he said, curtly.

It was directed in Spanish to His Excellency the Governor of Gibraltar, and a glance showed me that the contents were in the same language.

"Did Sir Arthur allow you to show me this?" I demanded, before I looked farther. Smeatoun nodded, impatiently.

"Yes—yes!" he cried; "read it—read it!"

"Most illustrious señor," it began, "I have made arrangements which will enable me at any moment to transform the Rock of Gibraltar into an active volcano. For the sum of £1,000,000 (English) I consent to definitely defer such action. I forward proofs. Apply the powder enclosed to the limestone of your own dwelling, ignite it, and watch the result. When I tell you that over a ton of similar composition is stored within the cliffs of this peninsula, your little experiment will make plain to you possibilities which it is worth your while to avert. Kindly advertise your answer in the *Gazette*, using the cipher which you will find over the page. May your Excellency live a thousand years.—X."

I looked from the letter to Smeatoun and from Smeatoun to the letter.

"When a man goes mad at home," said I, "his first thought is to write to the King. Here, I suppose, the Governor is the Official Receiver for the same sort of rubbish."

He nodded, gloomily.

"Of course," he answered. "What I said myself when it arrived—what Sir Arthur said —what anyone would say. Yet, when I took that powder in idle curiosity into the yard and touched it off with a fusee upon the horse-block, I give you my word of honour the stone became molten lava before my eyes!"

He flung another envelope at me.

"Read that before you speak," he shouted, as I opened it. The second letter was fully as brief as the first.

"As your illustrious Excellency, amid all your valiant toils, has forgotten your humble servant, I take the liberty of reminding you that I await an answer. Should your Excellency require a light to read this ill-written scroll, you will find ample illumination by midnight. I kiss your Excellency's hands and feet.—X."

"We received that two hours before the works caught fire!" cried Smeatoun, before I could make any comment.

For the moment I was nonplussed. I stared at the paper, scratched my head, and gaped at Smeatoun stupidly. The irritation, born of his ten days of anxiety, was too much for him. He laid a hand upon my shoulder and shook me as a terrier shakes a rat.

"Can't you say something?" he demanded, passionately. "What are we to do? What is to be done to save this place to the Empire? Sir Arthur believes in you—since that Russian affair he thinks the world of you; he sent me to you; can't you suggest something instead of scratching your head and gaping like a pig? We've got to act, I tell you—we've got to act. Is the biggest fortress in the Mediterranean to become a cinder-heap?"

"He can't do it again," said I, weakly. "He's bluffing, even if it weren't a mere coincidence. He knows too good a watch will be kept to give him another chance."

He rose to his feet and paced backwards and forwards a step or two as if he were choking down his passion. Then he spoke as calmly as he could.

"All you can suggest in the face of a catastrophe like this is to overwork the police and the patrols. You think that a man who can invent this process is the sort of person to be dealt with by a handful of military constables, whose main duties are restricted to taking drunk and disorderly comrades to the cells? That's your idea, eh?"

"Well?" said I, sullenly.

"Did you mark his letter at all—did you consider it with the slightest care? What did he say? 'Within the cliffs.'" He lifted his hand and pointed to the crags above us. "What is to prevent a human mole working silently and unobserved behind that curtain of rock to store any amount of explosive if he so will? 'A ton.' How can we prevent his storing fifty tons if he likes?"

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"All the caves and galleries are under inspection," said I.

"Are they?" he answered, scornfully. He put his fingers to his lips and whistled shrilly. The undergrowth about the cave stirred. Half-a-dozen baboons ambled out of their green ambush and lifted their snouts to the breeze. At their head appeared the father of the colony, an old veteran with hardly a hair upon his bald poll, and known, in consequence, as "Elisha." Smeatoun feigned to have brought sugar, but years of deceit have taught the deceived discrimination. They were not to be taken in, and after a moment's gaping and stretching padded out of sight again.

"They are there to-day," said Smeatoun. "Has it ever occurred to you to think how many days they are not there? You can come and whistle—you may bring sugar or nuts, and not the vestige of a monkey will you see. *Where do they go?*"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"There!" he cried, pointing across the silver shimmer of the Straits to where Almina Point danced in the heat haze. "There's where they go, from there they come, and now they have shown someone else the way."

I looked at him steadily to see if he was serious. Then I laughed. "That cock-and-bull old story about the submarine passage from Ceuta!" I cried. "Heavens! my good man, of all the far-fetched notions——"

He interrupted me with an impatient gesture.

"You saw Elisha just now?" he asked. "Is it possible to mistake him? Is there another baboon as bald and as scarred in all Africa?"

"The chances are against it," I admitted, with a grin. Elisha is the most disgracefully ragged and strangely blemished quadruped that I have ever had the luck to set eyes upon.

Smeatoun brought his hand down with a crash upon the parapet.

"I saw him over there," he cried; "I saw him face to face within fifteen yards. I saw him as plainly as I see you this minute."

"Then he's a better swimmer than I thought him," said I, coolly.

"Swimmer!" he exclaimed. "I tell you he walked there, he and the whole band of them. They are doing it continually. It's nothing short of miraculous that it hasn't been discovered before. Will you listen while I tell you what I saw?"

"Why, certainly," said I, lighting a cigarette; "but don't expect me to do more than listen without uncommon good evidence. Fire away."

"It was this way," he went on, quietly. "The Brethertons brought in their yacht ten days ago and took Sir Arthur and the rest of us a jaunt over to Ceuta. We had the usual ride. I was in the bazaar, and by some mischance they thought I was on board and left without me. They didn't miss me for an hour or two, and meanwhile I had got a horse to ride over to Tangier and take the morning boat back. Up by Cape Leona I halted for a few minutes, tethered my horse, and had a smoke among the boulders. Just as I was going to start again a whole tribe of baboons came frolicking round the corner right upon me, and old Elisha here was at their head. I believe he recognised me. He gave a 'wuff,' halted, grinned, and then anticked off in the direction from which he had come, followed by the rest. I ran after them. Turning a big boulder I missed them and lost their track. I was near the top of the hill, and as I came over the brow on the landward side I could hear them still below me. I looked over the edge to see the whole herd disappear in a gap through the rocks. But I saw more than that. A man, a Moor, was passing down the slope not thirty paces away, running slantwise in the same direction. I could see his face with absolute distinctness, and noticed at the time how unlike an ordinary Moor he was, though he wore djelab and slippers. I ran after him, though he went three yards for my one. I got to the gap. There was nothing the other side of it—not a sign of man or monkeys! Not a sound either. They had utterly disappeared!"

"Well," said I, imperturbably, "and why shouldn't they?"

"Because they couldn't!" he shouted, paradoxically. "The plain behind those rocks is as bare as the palm of my hand. There isn't a niche or a cranny to be seen. I rummaged about—I examined—I looked in every hole or corner within a hundred yards, but entirely in vain. There must be an entrance, but I didn't find it. It has got to be found, though," he added, grimly.

I looked at him meditatively, tapping my fingers on the stone.

"I believe, then, that I understand your murderous attack on that slipper-seller last night?" said I. "You thought he was your man from the other side of the Straits?"

"Thought!" he cried. "I knew him the moment you tore his beard off! The whole explanation came home to me in an instant.

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I had never given him a thought since, because that first letter came the very day I got back from Tangier and drove everything else out of my head. For ten days Sir Arthur and I have had before our eyes a perpetual vision of Gibraltar as an imitation inferno! But the minute I recognised that scar I knew that he was the villain himself looking on at the results of his own work. And I had my hands upon him—actually had my hands upon him," he groaned, "till that confounded stone knocked the senses out of me!"

"Then your idea is that he rambles a dozen miles beneath the sea to store his dynamite, or whatever it is, in the heart of this rock—you seriously believe that?"

"I know it," he answered, doggedly. "There is no other solution possible. All the caves and galleries are under inspection, as you yourself acknowledge. He comes and goes as he likes. He has this place in the hollow of his hand! We have got to find that entrance on Cape Leona or Gibraltar is doomed—gutted—destroyed!"

I hesitated how to answer him. Suddenly an illuminating thought flashed into my mind.

"Now, look here," said I, "the whole thing hangs on whether that was Elisha you recognised or not. We needn't go to Ceuta or Cape Leona to prove whether there is an entrance *this* side or not. If the baboons do go backwards and forwards that gives your theory a foundation at once. Apart from this affair, it must be proved or disproved. When France takes Tangier we don't want her prying over here how and when she likes."

"How are you going to find out?" he cried. "It may take days—weeks! And every minute the peril is growing!"

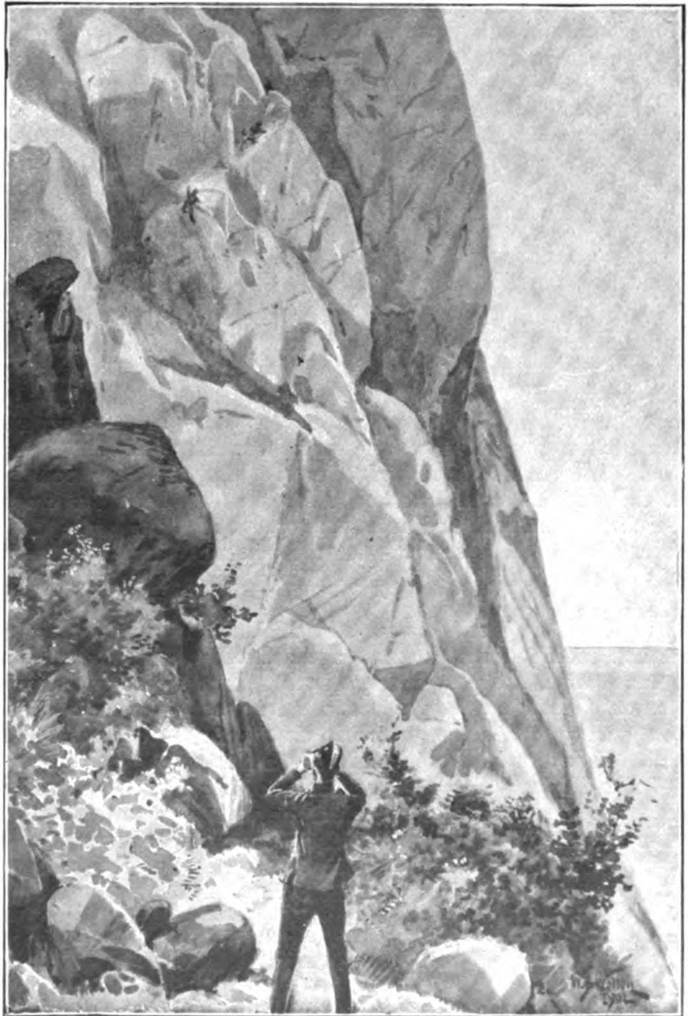
"Don't you trouble yourself," said I. "I know a good deal about the habits of my friends the baboons. I'll guarantee that if they have a secret entrance to the rock I'll find it before to-morrow's dawn."

"How?" he demanded.

"That's my affair," said I; "but be back here by to-morrow evening, with a good strong rope, a large flask of whisky and water, some food, a couple of revolvers, and some candles. That is all I can think of for the present. If any other article occurs to your native intelligence, bring it along. Now I am off to get three days' leave to go up to Ronda."

"Ronda!" he cried; "Ronda!"

"It's as good a place as any to suggest to the Colonel," said I, as I began to walk back towards the town, and that was all he got



"THE WHOLE HERD REACHED THE POINT, ROUNDED IT, AND WERE GONE."

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out of me till we parted. By midnight I was back among the shrubbery below the cave, smoking, dozing, considering, and occasionally chuckling, as I heard the baboons snore and "snoof" among the creepers. What an awakening they were to have!

As the first glimmer of the sunrise showed across the sea from the east one or two of the bushes parted. Old Elisha passed out into the open, stretching his long legs and yawning cavernously. He lifted his nose and sniffed the air curiously, evidently getting the faint taint of human presence and resenting it. As the light increased one or two others followed, till at least a dozen stood blinking meditatively out towards the sea. I felt that my time was come.

I drew out the crackers that I had bought the night before at Bianchi's little firework shop, touched off a couple with a match, and flung them into the group. As they fizzed and snapped among the terrified brutes the reports echoed in the cave with tenfold power. The whole tribe flew out of their den, gave one frantic glance at me as I waved my arms and shouted, and then burst for the cliff in a headlong rush, Elisha leading. I whipped out my binoculars to watch them.

Up they went, hand over hand, flitting from hold to hold like flies rather than like quadrupeds, and sending the limestone chips rattling down among the shrubs below. They strung out across the crags in a long line, one behind the other. There was no uncertainty in Elisha's leading; the path was evidently a well-used and well-remembered one. They made for safety under the goad of this sudden stress, and made for it in a bee-line. The mob fled across the open cliff side, straight, as it seemed, for the summit of Flagstaff Hill. And then Elisha disappeared!

I rubbed my eyes. As far as I could see he had been passing along a ledge a hand's-breadth wide, and was turning a jutting point that only stuck out a foot or two. I waited confidently to see him reappear on the far side. A second baboon vanished—a third—half-a-dozen. Yet no sign came of the leader. The whole herd reached the point, rounded it, and were gone. I flung my cap into the air. The secret was mine!

I heard the sound of voices and the clatter of ammunition boots upon the pebbles. A sergeant and a couple of bombardiers were running down from Europa Pass, aroused by the crackle of my fireworks. I had no notion of any investigation of my doings as yet. I flitted into the Monkey Cave, crouched behind a boulder, and waited while they peered about till they were satisfied. Then I settled down to a long and a hot day's vigil till Smeatoun came with the night.

They are not the pleasantest hours in my recollection—those that I waited through the baking heat of a Gibraltar May. I had a little food, but a most inadequate amount of drink, and I never heard a sweeter sound than Smeatoun's whistle as he came softly down the path, carrying the material I had suggested. I had a most satisfying pull at his flask, and seldom have I enjoyed tepid liquid more.

We sat and smoked a pipe while I told him the story of my morning's surprise of Elisha's band, and pointed out to him the exact point at which the baboons had disappeared. Then we began to discuss how we should reach it unobserved. It was about fifty yards out upon the cliff, which at that point was about two hundred feet high. The ledge was about midway between the top and the bottom.

"I'll lower you down and then slip after you myself," I explained to Smeatoun. "If we make the rope a continuous one, running over the stake, we can untie it from below and pull it down after us. Then we shall leave no trace for the curious to track us by."

"And how are we going to get up again?" he demurred.

"We sha'n't get up at all," said I; "we shall simply repeat the process when we want to come out and lower ourselves to the slope below."

Smeatoun is a brave man, but he has no head for cragsmanship. When we had got our stake driven into the ground and the rope had been rove over it he peered fearfully over the edge and turned very white. He looked at me.

"Oh, there's no way out of it," said I.

I lashed him to the rope with a smaller cord and lowered him gently till I heard him whistle. I looked down as I felt his weight grow less. He was perched upon the narrow shelf, holding on to the jutting point with one hand while he cut himself from the rope with the other. He did not look happy.

I saw him tighten the rope round a jag of the rock and steady it. I slid down to him like a lamplighter, showering rubble on him right and left. He groaned audibly as I landed beside him.

"Good heavens!" he whispered, "I wouldn't do this again for a million pounds. I'm simply sick with giddiness!"

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"You and our friend inside seem to have identical ambitions in finance," I chuckled. "That's the very sum he values his own efforts at."

I began to feel cautiously round the point for the crevice which I knew must be there. The moonlight was vivid, and I saw the black shadow of it the moment I raised my eyes above the little pinnacle round which the baboons had disappeared—a low, narrow cleft, big enough for a monkey's entrance, but scarcely wide enough for a man. Smeatoun closed his eyes as I pointed it out to him. I had practically to lift him over the jutting point to it. The sight of the drop below made him nearly faint.

He is a thinner man than I am, and he wormed his way into the entrance without effort. But it took the whole of his strength to haul me through from the inside, and the buttons flew from my jacket in showers. Three yards in, however, we could both stand upright.

I would not light the lantern till we had felt our way ten yards or more and had turned a corner. The feeble light seemed swallowed in the emptiness and I lit one of the magnesium flares, of which I had brought a dozen or more. Then we realized the vastness of the hollow in which we stood.

We were standing on the threshold of a huge hall, larger by many hundreds of yards than "St. Michael's Cavern," that the guides take globe-trotters to gape at. All about the floor beside us huge fragments of rock were lying, and a look at the sides and roof showed us that they had evidently been broken off many years before and had blocked what was once a magnificently hewn entrance. At an acute angle to the rift by which we had entered another passage passed back into the darkness. The roof of the main cavern was burdened by half-formed stalactites in many places, while in others it was supported by thicker ones that reached to the very floor. A still pool, a quarter of an acre broad, was fed by drippings and filled the whole of the centre of the cave. The soft purr of tiny streams echoed from the walls, which gleamed damp with a multitude of tricklings. As we approached the water's edge Smeatoun suddenly gripped my arm.

"Look!" he whispered, in a half-strangled voice.

Across the thick dust the tread of many footsteps had worn a line from the darkness behind us into the darkness beyond. I flashed the lantern light upon it, following it eagerly.

We soon came to a halt. A neat, compact heap of flour-bags lay before us, piled against the rock side and arranged in a methodical square. I took out my knife, lifted one—and, my goodness! the weight of it—ripped the sacking, and spilt the contents upon the floor. A tiny heap of yellow, meal-like powder was the result. Without another word I took up a pinch of it between my fingers and cast it gingerly into the pond behind me. Some potassium amalgams

"BAG AFTER BAG WE SEIZED, SLASHED OPEN, AND POURED INTO THE LAKE."

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ignite in contact with water, and I was taking no risks.

There was a faint fizzing. A white scum formed, floated away, and all was quiet again. I made an impatient gesture to Smeatoun. Without speaking, we began to work like coal-heavers. Bag after bag we seized, slashed open, and poured into that most appropriate lake. For half an hour we toiled, glistening with perspiration, till of all that store of death and destruction nothing remained but the pocketful I had reserved for our chemical expert's analysis. Gibraltar was saved from one more attack.

We looked at each other when all was done and, for some unexplained reason of sentiment, suddenly clasped hands.

"The next thing is the man," said I.

"Yes, the man," agreed Smeatoun, with a revengeful snarl in his voice. "Let's get the man!"

And then it occurred to me to put out both pipe and lantern and to sink my voice to a whisper as I explained my plans. On that sodden dust anyone might have drifted up within a yard or two unseen.

As I showed Smeatoun, there was but one thing to do: we must get him between us when he came, or in those pipe-like passages he might escape us yet. Whether we had to wait hours or days we did not know, but we were full of determination—there we would stay if it were a week. We felt our way down the lower passage for a hundred yards or more. Our feet told us that it was paved with squared, regular blocks, built in with all the grace of ancient masonry. "Phœnician?" hazarded Smeatoun, as he bent and fingered one or two, and I saw no reason to contradict him. What would not the Spaniards have given for that secret when gallant Elliot was holding them off through seven years of ceaseless siege and famine! We shuffled along nearly half a mile of it, sinking gradually lower and lower in the earthy-smelling aisle, till dread lest our man might come and find us unprepared sent us back at last to settle in for our vigil.

I found myself a lair behind a rock in the main cavern. My companion scraped a lounge for himself about fifty yards down the tunnel. And so, like two human ferrets alert within a warren, we waited for the coney that we knew must come.

We waited, and we waited, till my repeater told me that outside it was day. I was beginning to fight desperately with the desire for sleep when I heard the click of pebbles and the sound of soft footsteps through the darkness.

I sank down in my hiding-place, every nerve in my body tense. The soft pad of feet came on, and I marvelled that he should be so sure of his path that he could dispense with a light. He was near now—he was past Smeatoun—the very rasp of his breathing was audible. I struck the cap of the portfire I held. The glare illuminated the cavern, and at the same time Smeatoun's laughter echoed and re-echoed through and through it. He had his revenge then for the taunts I had thrown at him about his courage on the cliffs.

Blazing with indignation, the white teeth a-gleam and the eyeballs rolling, old Elisha's face stared at me through one short instant of inexpressible surprise. His mouth was agape, one paw was rigidly upheld in the stride that astonishment had halted. Then with a wrathful "wuff" he bounded past me, followed by half-a-dozen of his family that I had not noticed at first, skipped into the upper passage, and was gone. I sank back into my seat swearing, while for full five minutes more Smeatoun's chuckles broke the stillness. And for still longer hours weariness and expectancy were our only company till evening.

Whether I dozed or not I cannot say. All I know is that when I realized that a light was illuminating the lower passage it was bright and ruddy. It did not grow from a pin's point by slow degrees to full power, from which I infer that at first my eyes were closed to its rays. I saw it, understood that it was advancing rapidly upon me, and was intently alert, all in the space of seconds. It was a resin flare, held high above the head of the man who bore it. He strode confidently and unsuspectingly along. I saw Smeatoun, after he had passed, rise from behind his rock at the fellow's back and follow him. Silently I crept forward to fill my end of the passage. The prey was in the snare!

I suppose in the security of his unconsciousness he did not look keenly about him. He was within twenty paces of me when my foot unsettled a pebble that clanged upon the floor. His eyes lifted with a swift, startled stare and his lips pealed out a terrified shriek as I rushed headlong for him.

I was near enough to recognise the scar upon his chin before he turned from me and ran, hauling at his waistbelt, where a knife-hilt shone. He bolted all unseeingly into Smeatoun's outstretched arms. There were another yell and an oath as they met. Then the man dashed his torch in his captor's face. In a moment we were in darkness.

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I cursed my awkwardness as I fumbled at the port-fire that *would* not light. The pant and clatter of the wrestling men spurred me to efforts which my excitement made all the clumsier. There were a thud and an exclamation from Smeatoun. I heard the pad of flying slippers passing away into the darkness.

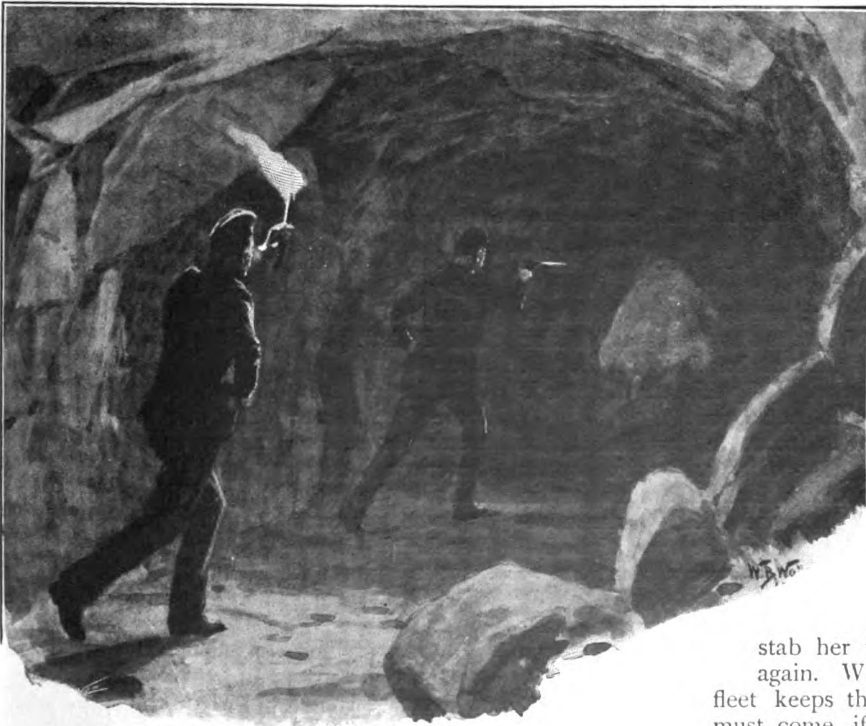
"He's off—he's escaping!" roared my companion, and at the same instant the lagging port-fire took flame.

Silhouetted against the darkness I saw the white djelab flitting with desperate speed down the tunnelled passage, while between me and it Smeatoun's figure was outlined, his arm outstretched to point his revolver. There was a red flash, then a report. The runner staggered, lurched, but still fled. Smeatoun began to run himself. There was a second report—a third. I followed, holding aloft the blazing flare and snatching at my own revolver. But the fourth report was buried in overwhelming uproar.

I saw the flash of the revolver, and at the very same instant a spume of flame seemed to break out among the draperies that streamed from the fugitive's shoulders. Against that white-hot core of light Smeatoun stood out gigantically distinct. A stunning shock flung me back against the rock and into temporary unconsciousness, while to my fainting senses there seemed to come feebly an after-rush of noise like the thunder of a mountain torrent.

It was the cool touch of a rising flood that sent my senses trembling back to me. A trickle of water was at my feet and the deep roar of a cascade was in my ears. Half floating on the mounting tide I saw Smeatoun's unconscious body. I splashed recklessly forward, dragged at his collar, and half-pushed, half-carried him upwards through the darkness. At the same time the port-fire I had dropped went out with a hiss. I spat out a gulp of water that my heedless splashings had flung between my lips. It was salt!

And that was what made me understand. It must have been some detonating explosive that the man was carrying for his infernal composition. Smeatoun's last bullet must have hit it. The explosion, spending its force upwards, had riven the roof, and it was the Mediterranean that was bursting its way into the tunnel and closing for ever the work of the lost centuries. And, when my companion's consciousness fluttered back to him, we two sat silent in the upper cave to see the volume of waters rise nearly to our feet, and to know that one great danger to Gibraltar was past by the instrumentality of the very man who was using it against her. No human moles will creep in to stab her in the back again. While Britain's fleet keeps the seas they must come, if come they dare, by swimming!



"I FOLLOWED, HOLDING ALOFT THE BLAZING FLARE."

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The Life of a Trotting-Horse

BY LESLIE E. GILLIAMS.

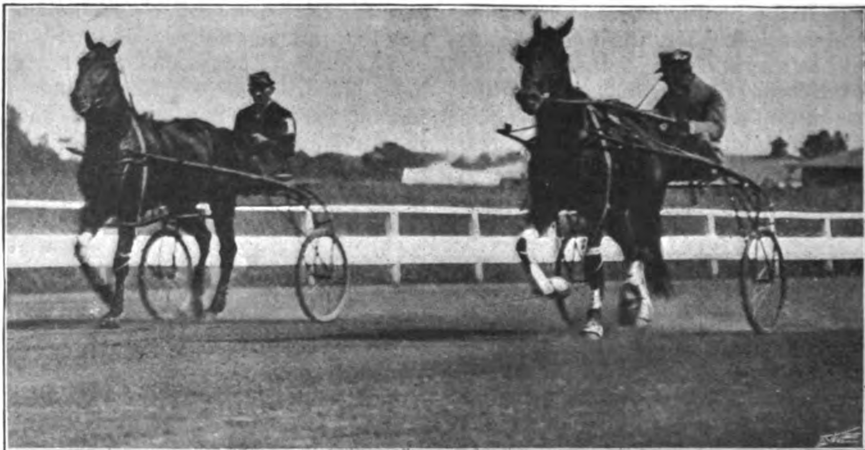
THE topic which at present is of absorbing interest to members of the American sporting world is that of the trotting-horse, his evolution from the time he first entered upon the turf, about 1855, to his latter-day development, when the champion, the famous Cresceus, has made a record of 2min. 2¼sec. It is now the ambition of every American jockey to ride a trotter to the finish of a mile in a two-minute race, and to that end are the States famous racers being trained.

The history of the American trotter covers an era of less than fifty years, and it is only within the past ten or fifteen years that these now monarchs of the race-track held any prestige whatever; previous to that time a trotter was looked upon as a beast so inferior to a runner or pacer as hardly to be thought worthy of training. Why this was the case is a matter of much speculation.

It certainly is a fact to be marvelled at that the graceful, easy-going, and rapid trotter should for so many years have been put in the background for the pacer, whose movements are jerky and lack the ease of motion which makes the trotter such a beauty on or off the turf.

The rise of the trotter is in part, at least, due to the establishment of the speedways in some of the large cities in the States. New York and Philadelphia have these long, smooth avenues so dear to the horseman's heart, where the mettle of a beast can be tried and shown to the best advantage.

It is on these speedways that the trotter appears at his best, and it is in this happy hunting-ground of the sportsman that the king of the turf, the record making and breaking trotter, first received his full recognition. No more than a dozen years ago some enterprising and progressive Yankee jockey discovered that in the trotter lay all the possibilities of a star racer. It was a trainer living west of the great Mississippi who first commenced breeding trotters and training them for the track. He was surprisingly successful, and the trotter once introduced on the track soon won his way into the hearts of the people until he is hailed king of the turf, and for whose benefit — or, rather, that he may be shown the better outside of the races—the beautiful New York and Philadelphia speedways have been constructed.



CRESCEUS, IN HIS RACE WITH THE ABBOT, MAKING THE RECORD FOR THE BEST MILE IN HARNESS—TIME, 2MIN. 2¼SEC.

It is, perhaps, due to these speedways more than to any other one thing that the trotting-horse now reigns supreme on the American race-course, and that he has a just claim to the title of king of the turf. There is no better example to be found than the wonderful Cresceus, George R. Ketchum's famous 2min. 2¼sec. trotter, who has, by his marvellous achievements, won world-wide fame.

It needs but a glance back at the famous trotters of the past, and then a rapid survey of Cresceus's record, to reveal the entire story of the rise of the trotting-horse in America—the wonderful progress he has gained and the foothold he has secured in fifty years.

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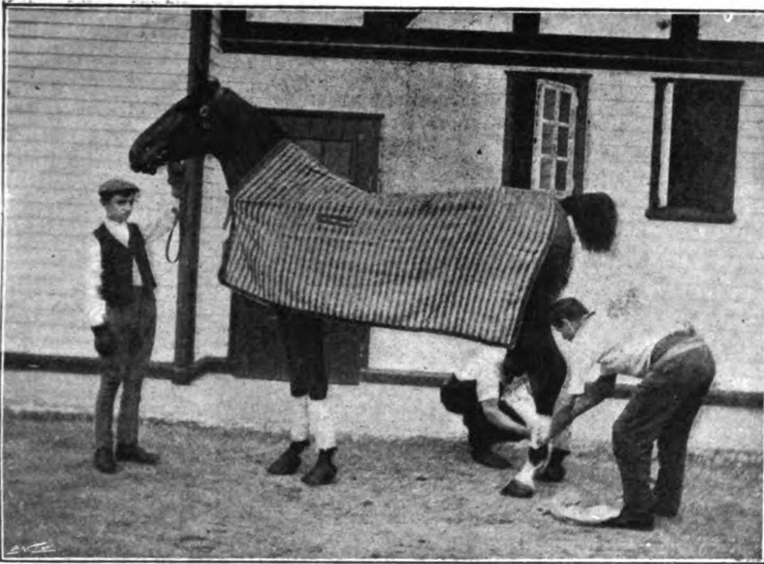


BANDAGING A RECORD-BREAKER PREVIOUS TO A RACE.

where the floors, stalls, etc., are flooded with an antiseptic solution each day.

They are beautiful specimens of American architecture, many of them being regular stone palaces, and a stranger would be more apt to think these imposing stone structures, with their cupolas and towers, were the homes of some multi-millionaire than able to realize that they are stables where famous trotting-horses are bred and trained.

The interior of the buildings is as magnificent as the exterior. The stalls, walks, flooring—and, in fact, the entire woodwork—are of hard wood, highly polished. Heavy Brussels carpets line the aisles, beautifully-framed oil paintings from master brushes and choice steel engravings hang upon the walls.

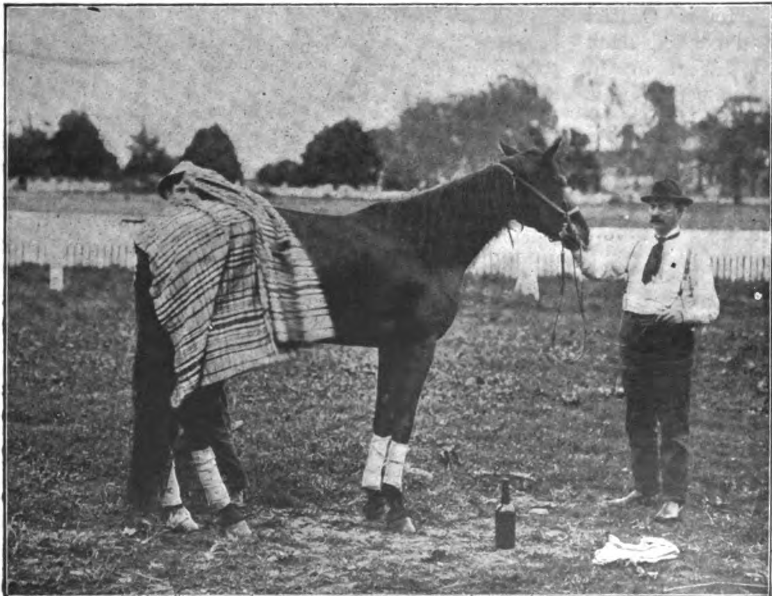
The windows are heavy plate-glass and the

Bob White, of 1856, and Maud S., of 1870, both stars of their times, could not hold a candle to the beloved Cresceus, the 2min. 2¼sec. king, and whose owner claims that he will be the sire of the two-minute horse.

It is now the ambition of every trainer to produce a two-minute trotter, and Ketchum claims that Cresceus is capable of breaking his own record and winning the glory; to this end he is being trained, tried, and entered with all the star racers of the country.

The training of a racer and the keeping him in good condition are no simple tasks, for these thoroughbred equines are as nervous, whimsical, and susceptible to heat and cold as is the most delicately nurtured child.

Their homes are luxuriously fitted-up stables, where the sanitary arrangements are all of the best, and



AFTER BANDAGING—THE HORSE READY FOR A SPEED TRIAL.

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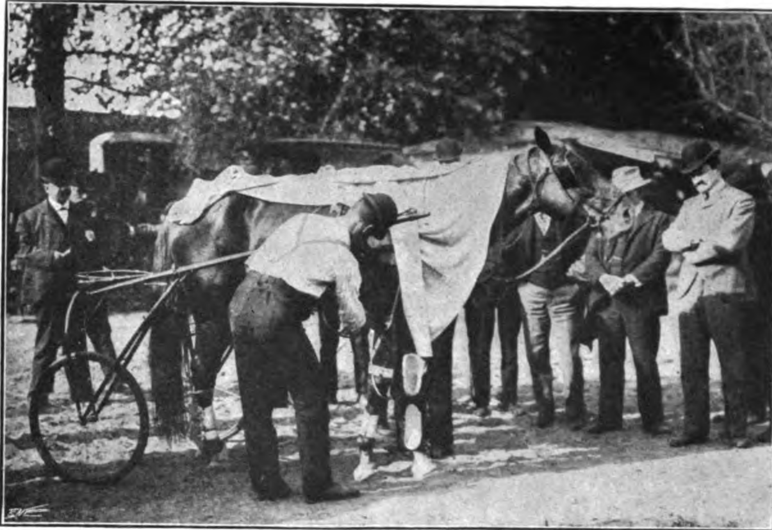

CRESCEUS BEING BLANKETED AFTER A RACE.

entire furnishing of the stalls and feed rooms are of materials of the highest grade.

The stalls are kept warm in winter with steam heat, while electric fans create cool breezes in the hot summer months.

The horses are curried, combed, and rubbed down before they leave the stables and again when they come back after being exercised. Veterinary surgeons are constantly in attendance, and the instant a horse shows the slightest sign of illness he is put on the sick-list and goes under the doctor's care.

He is treated and coaxed back to perfect health again before he is exercised with the other animals. Every precaution is taken to prevent the spread of a disease, and influenza, so prevalent among the equine race, is guarded against most rigorously, the stables being so constructed and regulated as to prevent draughts.

Every stable connected with a large American stock farm is well supplied with bandages and supports, and the horses' legs are examined every day to ascertain whether or not any of the joints are weak, and, if so, they are immediately bandaged and supported.

Great care is taken to prevent sores from spreading, for nothing uses up the strength of a horse so quickly or spoils a racer as do running sores, which are frequently caused from a chafed portion of the body being neglected.

After a race, as soon as the horse leaves the track the trainer stands ready with bucket, water, and sponge, and after rubbing him down covers him with a blanket and leads him up and down until he cools off.

Before a race great care must be exercised to keep the horse calm; nothing is ever done to irritate or excite him, all his whims are catered to, and he is humoured as much as any spoiled child, for the trainer realizes

AFTER A RACE—BANDAGING A SLIGHT INJURY ON THE FORELEG.

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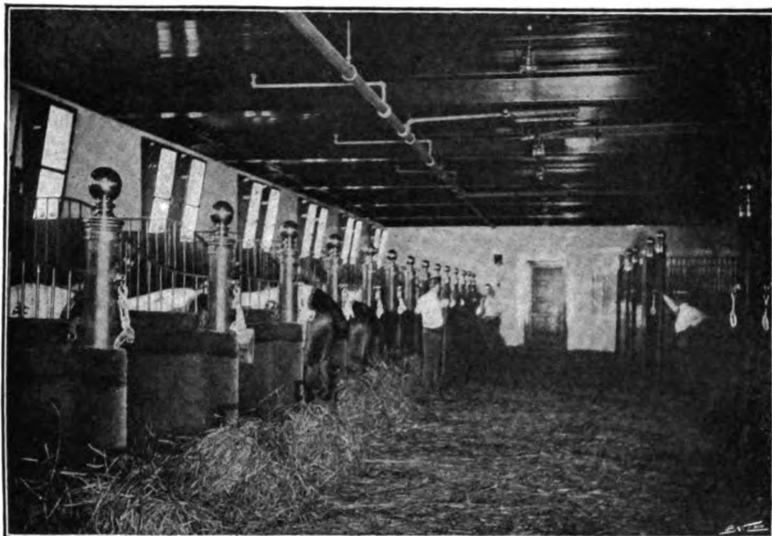
that if his horse's temper becomes ruffled before the race he will not get the best from him when he goes upon the track.


A TYPICAL HOME OF AMERICAN TROTTING-HORSES, SHOWING THE ELABORATE FINISH OF THE STABLES.

Cresceus, an excellent example of the American trotter, is a wonderful horse in many ways. Aside from his phenomenal speed his career is full of interest and romance. "Put the beast out of his suffering, Tim; a bullet or a blow, whichever is surest." "I'd rather ride Cresceus to the finish of a record-breaker than go to Heaven." These two remarks, made by George Ketchum, the owner of the famous Cresceus, tell as clearly and tersely as possible of the rise of the world's favourite from a sick, indolent colt to champion trotter of the twentieth century.

With the recent achievement of this star of the turf almost everyone who cares anything about the noblest animal in the brute creation is conversant, but few are those who can claim an intimate acquaintance with the game stallion, or who can trace back his history to the time when he was a youngster frisking around his sire, the well-known, much-loved, and now deceased Robert McGregor.

It is a startling revelation, but true, that Ketchum was within an ace of never owning Cresceus, and when he became a member of the Ketchum farm his owner ordered him to be shot.

It was just by chance that the trainer secured Mabel, the mare of Cresceus; she was owned by James Dority, a well-known Western trainer, who had won much fame on the turf, and was of the same stock as the famous trotter Nightingale, who as a four-year old made a mile in 2min. 27sec., which was then considered a very wonderful performance. Because of the relationship to this horse, when James Dority died Mr. Ketchum decided to make a bid for Mabel. This was in 1892, and the sale took place at a public auction in Toledo, Ohio.

A SPEEDY TROTTER BEING SHOWN AND EXERCISED ON THE TRACK.

He expected to pay about a thousand dollars for the mare, and would not have

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considered her a bad bargain even at that figure. The competing bidder was Dr. J. V. Newton, of Toledo, Ohio, who with a partner, Mr. Rundall, was bidding jointly for the mare. Through some confusion on their part, each thinking the other was doing the bidding and neither one seeing Ketchum's nod, the mare was knocked down to the latter for two hundred and fifty dollars. Both Newton and Rundall thought the bid was to their account, and great was their consternation when they found that Ketchum had secured the prize, and at such a figure! It was the greatest bargain of the day.

EXERCISING BEFORE THE JUDGE'S STAND ON A LARGE AMERICAN RACE-TRACK.

Shortly after securing Mabel he purchased Robert McGregor, the famous monarch of the home-stretch and a sire of great race-horses, which the world will eyer remember. McGregor did not, however, come into his possession for a mere song as did Mabel, but he was worth many times his cost.

Cresceus was the son of Mabel and McGregor, and an unattractive, measly little colt he was. Ketchum was disgusted, and paid very little attention to the disappointing Cresceus until he was about a year old; then a severe attack of epizootic with which he was stricken brought him directly under his owner's notice. He was blistered and doctored and watched simply because no lover of horses can endure seeing an animal suffer, and no matter how mean his stock, or how poor the qualities he displays, he always endeavours to take the best care of a horse.

Despite the attention given him Cresceus in some manner managed to rub the blister off over the half door of his stall and chafe his neck so that his windpipe was exposed. A more angry-looking sore a horse never suffered from. He presented such a horrible appearance that Ketchum ordered him to be shot. He was only a trotter, and trotters had not even then, as late as 1893, fame enough on the track to make them the recognised kings of to-day. Had he been a runner or pacer, it is very likely his death-warrant would not have been issued.

Tim Muren, the trainer, however, having a soft spot in his horse-loving heart for poor Cresceus, put off the animal's execution until the next morning, when he was so much improved that he was allowed to live.

After recovering from the attack of epizootic, which was so nearly his finish, Cresceus developed into a strong, sturdy, but far from attractive-looking colt, and, although he commenced to show signs of possessing at least a fair stride, Ketchum did not seriously consider putting him on the track until his training was pretty well under way.

Trainer and owner worked him the winter he was coming two years old, Muren for some mysterious reason taking a special interest in him and urging on his training.

That winter was a severe one, with plenty of snow, and Ketchum drove Cresceus frequently on the white ground, beating the best horses in Toledo, among them Charlie Ford, 2min. 12½sec. Still, Ketchum did not look with any confidence upon him as a winning trotter.

He was started in two races as a two-year-old, and in the fall showed a very fast mile over the Erie track. He was again worked all the following winter on the snow, but he did not seem to improve very much, lacking a burst of speed, but when he was entered

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and started in two races at Tiffin, in scoring for the first race it was discovered that he seemed to learn the game very quickly and came to his speed rapidly. From that time on he learned to race and developed very fast.

Feeling confident after this exhibition that he had much speed, Ketchum then started to work him with the sole idea of so conditioning him as to carry his clip for the entire mile, and during that whole year—he was then a three-year-old—worked him heats of a mile and a half, but never drove him faster than 2min. 30sec. clip with one exception, and that was when preparing him for his great race at Columbus. He then was worked one mile in 2min. 20sec.; but it took his life to go that pace. His owner would, however, work him until he was tired in miles from 2min. 40sec. to 2min. 30sec., letting him step from the seven-eighths pole around to the next half-mile pole. In this way he learned to come home, and it muscled him up for long races. Shortly after this he was started in the 2min. 20sec. class at Columbus, Ohio, and was second in a field of aged horses, Pat Wilson winning the race in 2min. 12¼sec. Undoubtedly Cresceus could have gone several seconds better in that race had Ketchum possessed a little more confidence in him.

From Columbus he went to Fort Wayne, Indiana, and trotted the memorable eight-heat race against The Monk, Eagle, Flanagan, and ten others, winning the sixth, seventh, and eighth heats, and obtaining the record for his age—2min. 11¼sec. From the way in which he lasted in this race he convinced Ketchum that he was right in his method of training—viz., giving him his work in mile-and-a-half heats.

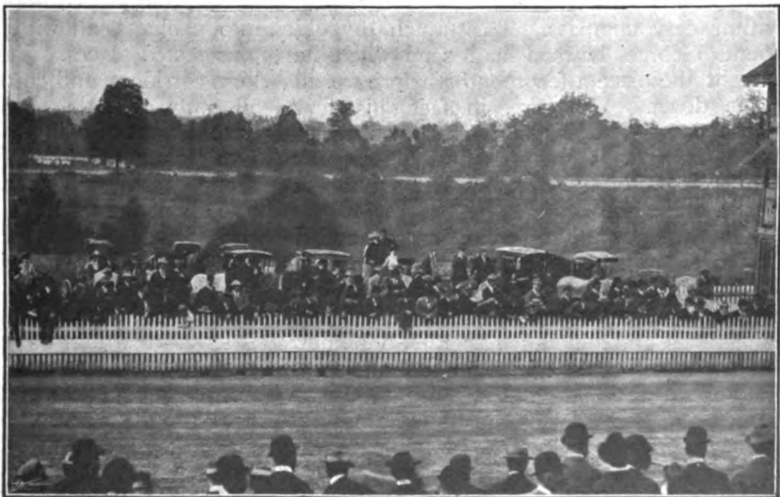
After that he trotted successfully at Syracuse, Boston, and New York, winning in all these places against the flower of the land.

One thing was learned while training him as a four-year-old—that he could not continue to be worked heats of a mile and a half each and get all the speed out of him in races that he wished. He would always save too much reserve speed to go the extra half mile, and he would not come from the three-quarter pole home at a winning gait. So as a five-year-old his trainer stopped working him farther than a mile, and when he reached the wire would stop him at once. After doing this several times he would then trot the mile as fast as desired.

The record-breaker is not a beauty from many standpoints. In the first place he is a sorrel instead of the much-loved black, and although he is, from his trainer's point of view, the most perfect animal that ever stood on four legs, there is always a murmur of disappointment when Cresceus comes on the turf.

When first brought out he lounges about the track, yawns in a most lazy fashion, and the laymen have great difficulty in persuading themselves that this indolent-looking beast is the famous Cresceus. He is a foxy animal, and this apparent laziness is only his clever way of saving his strength and nerve force for the coming race.

His likes and dislikes are just as pronounced as his speed. For example, he has the utmost contempt for Mike the Tramp, the veteran pacemaker, who really deserves much credit for having carried Cresceus over many a fast mile. So violent is the whimsical trotter's dislike for the pacemaker that he wears blinders in all his trials against time to prevent him from catching a glimpse of the equine object of his hatred.



SPECTATORS AWAITING THE START OF A RACE.

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The Wraith of Redscar.

By Bernard Hamilton.

"GHOSTS! Pooh!" said I, John Sterling, stoutly. "Pooh, sir. I believe that no man has seen a ghost. I've never seen one — and that's good enough for me."

All we men were in the billiard-room of Redscar Tower—a lofty, oak-panelled room, hung round with heraldic escutcheons and stags' antlers. It was after dinner; the ladies had gone to bed. Though most of us were comparative strangers we were all chaffing over a game of "Boer pool" — which variety of the game means that you are allowed to play any mean trick on your opponents that you can. Warm and bright it was within, but cold without—the most biting Christmas Eve I had ever known. A change of wind to the east that afternoon had suddenly frozen up everything, so the scent had failed and we had had a short hunting day. Indeed, it is rather about hunting that I would like to be talking now, for I am a plain man and do not know how to garnish tales with adjectives. So, being readier with rod and gun than pen or pencil, I trust you will excuse all shortcomings. Yet I have had many adventures in my time, and this is certainly not the least curious.

Redscar Tower, in the north, is on the edge of the moors, but it also has a stream and open grass-country on the farther side, so there are hunting, shooting, and fishing all within easy compass. This much my old friend George Lawson had seen when he bought the place a few months before we all came down. We were, in fact, his first house party—and his first Christmas party, too. Indeed, it was practically Lawson's first visit—after the cleaners had been got out of the house.

I may mention that George Lawson and I had been boys together at Rugby; in fact, he had been my fag there. Later in life, although our paths had diverged, we had met sometimes and dined together. So I knew all about his career: how he had made his fortune in the City out of South African mines, and decided to retire while he was yet young enough to enjoy life. I knew George Lawson, too, for a shrewd, practical man; not, perhaps, as downright as I am, but sound — quite sound — especially in his investments. And no better investment could he have made—from the point of view of a good sportsman — than Redscar Tower.

Certainly it was mighty hard on the young Earl of Dunslair that he had to part with such a place directly he had inherited it, and retire to the main estate of the family in Northumberland. Especially as the Tower had been the favourite shooting-box of the Dunslairs, and they had inhabited it regularly from August to February every season for years out of mind.

But do not misunderstand me. I call the Tower a shooting-box. I call it so on the same principle as London people who build palaces on the Thames or in the Surrey Hills and call them cottages. Redscar is a rambling old Elizabethan hall of the finest type. It is of stone, and ivy-mantled. Court-yards and cone-capped turrets with noisy vanes make it dismal-looking outside, but impressively mediæval. At any rate, a change to George Lawson after Throgmorton Avenue and his dull, respectable house in West Kensington.

But, inside, the Tower of Redscar is really marvellous. Oak, oak — floor, walls, and ceiling—all through the place. Oiled and beeswaxed to a nut-brown colour, it is a more wonderfully preserved wood than that in any mansion of the kind I have seen at home or abroad. The iron-work of the window-panes has each a different pattern; quaint, low-linteled doors lead out of rooms into cabinets, all with irregular recesses in unexpected places. You come suddenly on long corridors, and curtains hiding access to all sorts of little nooks you would never have dreamt of being there. This Christmas Eve was my first night in the house, and, though I am well accustomed to make my way about the world, I had not yet got the hang of it.

Well—as I was saying—we were round the billiard-table. We were chatting idly about the house. I think it was Augustus Brierly—a writer or something—who first started the idea that Redscar Tower was not really complete without a ghost. Now, I hate such nonsense, and I always make a point of putting my foot down heavily on twaddle of that kind, so, as I have said, I remarked: "Pooh!" It may have been rude, but facts are facts, and cannot be too bluntly stated.

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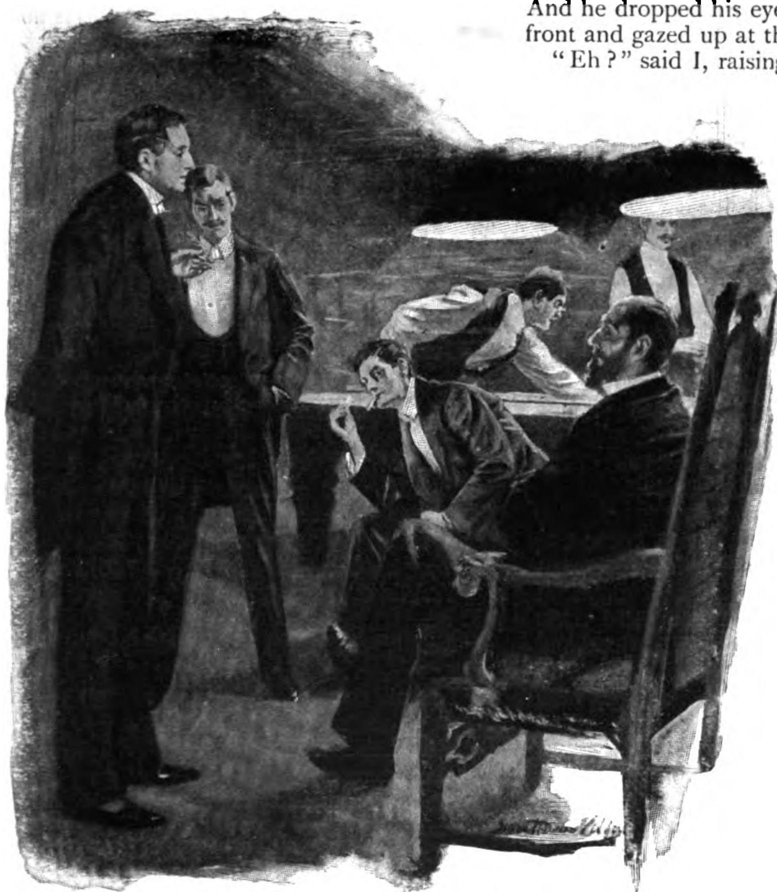

"WE WERE CHATTING IDLY ABOUT THE HOUSE."

And he dropped his eye-glass on to his shirt-front and gazed up at the ceiling.

"Eh?" said I, raising my voice.

Then our good little host, George Lawson, stepped in. "Do stop that, you fellows," said he; "there's not the slightest reason to grizzle over a thing like that. As a matter of fact, my butler tells me we really have a ghost here. It haunts the tower-room at the end of the west wing."

"What's it like?" said young Wilton, a junior cavalry captain and up to any joke.

"Like!" said Lawson, "how should I know? I've only been in possession a few months. I've had enough to do looking after the workmen without taking to spirits; I'll have the butler up and ask, if you really want to know. He's been with me for years, and I know he'll speak the truth. Anyhow, we've already lost servants by it, and it worries me."

Augustus Brierly got up languidly, with his hands in his pockets; he seemed interested now.

"Send for him, by all means, my dear Lawson," he said. "I'm sure Mr. Sterling would like to hear."

"Oh, certainly, I'd like to hear," said I; "as much as that can do no harm."

So the bell was rung, and after a certain delay (due, no doubt, to disturbing the dignity of his evening leisure) in came the butler.

He was just like scores of other butlers: portly, a little flabby, and the last person in the world to allow his respectable soul to be disturbed by any imaginative dream. So much I had to admit to myself.

We all left the game and gathered round

But I must say Brierly was quite equal to keeping his end up. He had been knocked out of the pool—I had taken two of his "lives"—and was sitting on the lounge with his long legs crossed. He ruffled his hair at what I said, fixed the monocle more firmly in his eye, and glared at me through his window-pane, as if no one had ever dared to speak to him like that before.

"Perhaps," said he, sarcastically, I suppose; "perhaps a robust person like you, Mr. Sterling, does not give credence to the investigations—scientific investigations, let me tell you—of the Society for Psychical Research?"

His general air of lean culture irritated me, I confess.

"No, sir," said I. "I do not give credence to any evidence but that of my own senses."

"Then, sir," said he, "I imagine your range of perception cannot be very extensive."

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him; I should have said there were about half-a-dozen of us—all men from town.

"Locker," said our host, "we want you to tell us all you've heard about the ghost in the tower."

"Yes, sir; certainly, sir," said the man, promptly. "There isn't much to tell; but what there is is solemn fack."

"Out with it, then," said George.

"It amounts to this, sir. We did put two maids to sleep in the tower-room, sir, while the cleaning was on. One night I was asleep when, about three o'clock in the morning, as it might be, I was awoke by a terrific screeching. Somethin' awful, sir, it was. So I hops out of the room and found the two young females in their nightdresses a-carryin' on awful and rushing about the passages. They did look like ghostesses themselves."

"Yes; but what did they see?"

"That I never by rights got to know, sir; seeing as they went off next morning, swearing they would not stop another night in Redscar. But I heard tell they said there was an awesome white figure, which stood and stooped and glowered and glared at them in bed. As high as the room he was, they said, and when they screeched the white thing disappeared through the wall, wringing his hands at them. That's all I heard, sir. Another girl has gave notice since then, and they do say, sir——"

"Yes, yes, what do they say?" asked George, quickly.

"I hardly like to tell, sir. It seems unlucky for you, sir——"

"Never mind that."

"They do say, sir, in the village, that it is the Wraith of the old Earl of Dunslair that's come to haunt the tower, sir—because it's passed out of the family which it has been in for hundreds and hundreds of years, sir. They say as how he was a terrible scandalous man in his youth, sir—terrible. And the folks say——"

"Yes, yes, what do they say?"

"They say that his ghost's come to drive you out of the place, sir. The Earl was that proud of the tower in his lifetime, and kept up such state. And he could never abide strangers."

"Is that all, Locker?" said Lawson.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, thank you, you can go; but don't talk to the other servants."

"No, sir."

As the butler went out a sudden chill fell on all of us. We put our cues on the rack as a matter of course, and gathered sympathetically round our host. A report like this is no nice thing to get about.

It was all the merest nonsense, of course.

"For God's sake, don't tell my wife," said Lawson, suddenly, and then was silent. But nobody liked to speak for quite a minute.

"It is quite true about the old Earl of Dunslair," said Lawson, at last, again breaking the silence. "He led a wild life and squandered the estate, so that when his grandson succeeded the other day he had to sell. But I heard he died a devout Catholic at last and built the Roman Catholic chapel here in Redscar village."

"But this is quite an excellent opportunity for Mr. Sterling," interposed Brierly, looking at me.

"How?" said I.

"To test your opinion, to be sure—of the evidence of your senses with regard to visions."

"It is all humbug what the maids saw," said I; "a waving curtain—or something."

"You don't seem anxious to go and see," said he.

"Really," said I, "I don't know what you mean."

"I mean that, for all you say, you don't like to go and see," said he, quietly.

"You mean that I am afraid?" said I, now almost angry.

"Oh, if you like to put it in that way," he answered.

"That's soon settled," said I. "Where is the room, George? Will you let me sleep in it to-night? It will be a new experience."

"Oh, I wouldn't bother, if I were you," said Lawson, good-naturedly; although I could see he was a good deal disturbed.

"But I must. I am a man who sticks to his guns; and Mr. Brierly thinks I am afraid. I insist on going—that is, if you have no objection, George?"

"Oh, I've no possible objection, of course; only the tower-room is right away from everyone in this great rambling place; there's the old furniture in it still—beautiful old stuff. I'll tell them to light a fire in the room, if you really want to try."

"I do," I said, emphatically.

"Then they shall take your things there. Myself, I should be glad enough if you'd lay the old Earl's spectre. I don't want any trouble about servants leaving. If that idea really gets about one never keeps any, and the notion of being a usurper is not pleasant for me in the county."

Certainly it was not a nice thing for Lawson. There was a certain awkwardness about everyone present. As it

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was late the other men took their candles and began to make for bed; not, indeed, without some chaff for me. It was then I for the first time realized what I was going to do. And the idea struck me that the men might try to play a practical joke.

"Look here," I said, with my eye especially on Brierly; "look here, don't any of you try any lark; mind you, I intend, if I see that spook, to mark him." And I held up my fist.

"Well," said George, "if it's the old Earl, the more you mark him the better; he was no credit here, for all the time he held the place. Besides, I don't see why any baronial wraith should come and disturb my house when I've paid good money down on it."

"Just you wire in, Sterling," said young Wilton, as he went out and the rest followed, grinning.

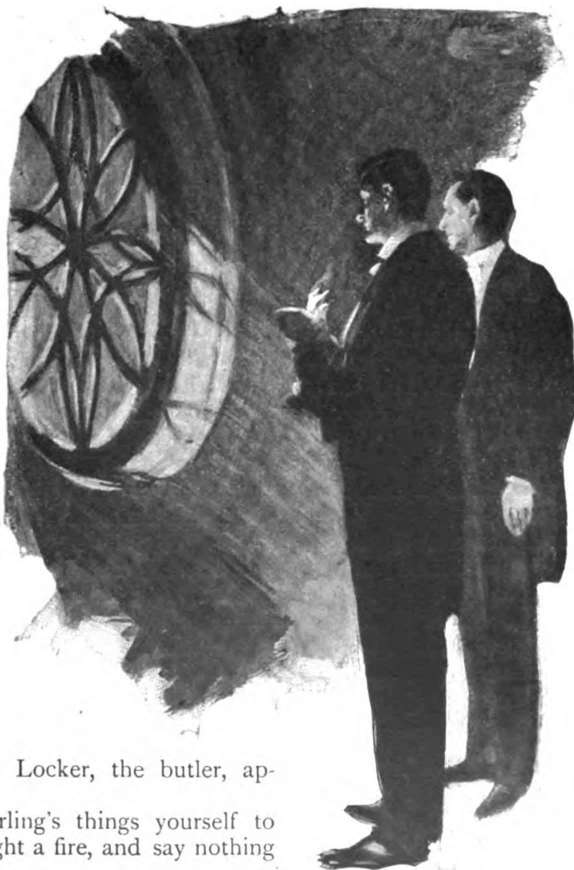
But George took me by the arm after they'd all gone. He didn't laugh at all. "Jack," he said, "it's all very well to make a joke of a thing like this. Whether that room is haunted or not it is a horribly, nasty story to get about that I've ousted the old family. One did not like doing it, of course; all the same, they got a fancy price from me. But I don't like it—I don't like it—my butler is no fool. I don't like it at all, I tell you. Have a drop more whisky?"

"No, thanks," I said; "you can't really believe it, George. I'll be off now."

"Wait a minute till I give directions." He rang the bell, and Locker, the butler, appeared.

"Move Mr. Sterling's things yourself to the tower-room; light a fire, and say nothing to anyone."

"Very good, sir."



"THE MOON WAS STREAMING THROUGH IT ON TO THE LANDING."

In twenty minutes the butler returned, saying all was ready.

"Now," said George, "I'll come with you as far as the door."

So we mounted up the state staircase, our footsteps re-echoing on the oak below, above, and around us. We stood for a moment by a great rose-window, looking out on the gardens.

The moon was streaming through it on to the landing—a great full winter moon—crystal, clear. The branches of the big garden trees could be seen silvered with hoar-frost, and the whole quaint outline of the spreading outbuildings was sheeted in white—like a Christmas card. It struck bitter cold on the landing, and as Lawson led me away from contemplating that frosty landscape he told me that the one difficulty he had about the house was the warming of it. The whole place was one mass of wood, he said, and if it should once chance to catch alight nothing could save it; it would flare up like a furnace.

"So," he added, as he opened the door of the haunted chamber, "my dear fellow, if you feel nervous, and want to keep a light going, do for goodness' sake be careful of these curtains."

He took hold of the great heavy tapestry curtains which hung round the old four-post bedstead in which I was to sleep.

"You see," he said, "they are Elizabethan. I bought everything right out, furniture and all. Beautiful, isn't it? And exactly suitable to the house."

I looked about me curiously. It

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was indeed marvellous furniture, as quaint as the chamber itself. Two great carved oak presses of exquisite finish occupied each side of the room, which being a tower-room was hexagonal. Huge, great cupboards they were, quite 6ft. high. Except for these oak presses, a table, chairs, and the great bed with its hangings, the room was without any modern trumpery ornament; all was solid carving, substantial, grave, and beautiful as the courtly age to which the mediæval designer had belonged. There were no pictures, only an exquisitely carved wooden crucifix hanging on one wall.

The moon was streaming through the diamond panes of the window, which was without a blind. By this light and that of the fire in the great hearth, dimming the glimmer of the candles, one could easily picture men of the old time, with their ruffles and rapiers. A certain oppressive sense of gloom came over me as George bade me "Good-night."

It grew deeper as I turned the key in the lock of the door and heard his footsteps echoing down the long, wooden passage; I knew now that I was alone—utterly alone—at the end of the long wing.

"Suppose I had to call for help," I thought to myself, as I peeled off my coat and lit my pipe. Somehow I began to wish for a novel, just to distract my thoughts.

I rejected that notion as a sign of weakness unworthy of me, and soon tumbled into bed, first carefully putting the candle and matches ready to hand.

I could not sleep, the over-bright moonlight was a great annoyance. So I soon got out and drew the curtains as close as I could over the windows. They did not quite meet, however, and left a broad, brilliant ray of light cutting the dark like a knife. So I drew the thick tapestry curtains of the four-poster all tight round the bed.

Thus I stepped out of the moonlight into perfect darkness at last, when I finally mounted on to the big bed.

"Pooh, what nonsense it all is," I told myself, as I snuggled down into the deep warmth of the feathers. "Ghosts—pooh!"

And so, being healthily tired, I fell asleep like a log.

I awoke.

Something was in my room. I felt it—though I heard nothing. I lay still. The darkness of the curtains of the four-post bed was impenetrable. It was indeed "close-curtained night." I turned on my back to listen the more intently.

"Nonsense!" I said to myself. "There is nothing there.

"Eh, what was that? Was that a faint moan?"

I must be dreaming. I rubbed my eyes and pinched myself.

There came a long, faint-drawn moan, as of someone in pain.

"By Jove!"

Then came an awesome creak from far down the passage. That was nothing. I knew old houses made all sorts of queer noises at night. Still, I confess I was listening now with all my ears.

I was determined not to give myself away should any of the fellows be going to play some joke upon me. I would not draw a curtain of the bed for the same reason. Then It came again.

"Ooo-aaaa-aaaoooh!"

Then a horrible chuckle—beginning low at first, and going off into a sort of unearthly howl.

I thrilled. I had thought that I might possibly see something, but this grisly sound I did not expect.

Then came that dreadful moan again. There could be no mistake about it—none.

I sat up. I felt buried alive in the curtained blackness of the antique bed. The Unknown was without.

It might descend upon me at any second.

Then gibber, gibber, gibber, went a patter of low-uttered rubbish—yet so piteous, so weird—just as if a tormented soul from hell was praying to Heaven for salvation.

A chill ran down my backbone. Was this never to end? The air was close; boxed up as I was in the curtains I felt my breath come heavily. Yet, I confess it, I dared not stir to move the hangings to one side. You see, I did not know what might be on the other side.

I fancied, too, that a faint snuffy stench invaded my nostrils. Was it only the musty hangings?

Then I was startled violently by a great sound of "Boom! Boom!! Boom!!!"

It was only the clock of the house striking three. Really my nerves were more shaky than I thought.

And now I seemed to be suddenly growing very cold; a strange breath of air was filtering between the closed curtains of my bed; the hangings seemed to belly and wave horribly towards me. Where on earth could this current of air come from? Was it of earth?

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My flesh fairly crept now; I felt like a child—afraid of the dark. There were so many little things—each one of itself of no particular significance, but all taken together full of something portentous of evil—unknown evil occurring in the unknown space in the bedroom outside the black hollow of the four-curtained bed. Though the rest might be imagination or it might not, yet I was sure of this creepy, cold breeze blowing in the room, and the faint moaning of one in agony of remorse. Of those two things I was quite sure; yet I could not stir. I suppose that I, John Sterling, was afraid. Afraid, yes, I was mortally afraid.

"Whish!" came suddenly an unmistakable sound—the sharpening of steel. "Whish," went the blade. "Whish!"—backward and forward.

Then as suddenly as it began the swishing ceased. But what did knife-sharpening mean? Was it to be murder? Murder! This was another idea. Murder!

Still I hesitated, for I had sense enough to remember that if I moved out of that awful blackness of my curtained bed I should be dazzled for a moment by the light outside the bed and at the murderer's mercy.

Suddenly—with incredible swiftness—that very blackness was torn asunder by invisible hands.

As the curtains rushed away from each other I fell back on to my pillow, dazzled with the sudden light, and then—aghast.

At the foot of that awful bed framed between the two black wings of the curtains, with wide glistening eyeballs, strands of thin hair standing out from the head like white twisted snakes, and a toothless mouth wide open—all illumined ghastly blue in the light of the moon—a pale apparition glared at me, with such ferocity as seemed to freeze the blood.

"A PALE APPARITION GLARED AT ME."

The vision stood and stared, and then, with a swift rattle of the rings upon the curtain pole, It drew them back.

I was in a darkness of the coffin again.

Again the gibbering went on. The spirit—if spirit it was; and I was now in no mood to deny it—went yet again whispering round the room, like a lost soul in horrid torment.

Suddenly again, without the slightest warning, the curtains, this time on the left side of my bed—the dark side remote from the moonlight shining through the window—were dashed aside, and, mopping and mowing at me, that awful white Thing sidled up, horribly moving now this way and now that, as if inviting me to rise. An appearance of skinny fingers kept pawing on the bed-clothes.

I did not move, but I saw now that the Thing's clothes were of antique cut.

Then the curtains dashed together again, as suddenly as they had been drawn.

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The tale of the old Earl coming back to haunt his old room and to destroy the present tenants of Redscar flashed across me. Could this be the Wraith of the wicked Lord of Dunslair? The whittling sound of a knife, the attempt to make me rise, the bitter cold, all stung me into the feeling that some life and death struggle was surely imminent. Would the apparition come again? Next time I must be ready.

I withdrew myself from my shrinking posture on the pillow and crouched low in the centre of the great black bed; for if that Thing came again I knew not from which side it would come.

So I crouched, shivering with cold, in my night-shirt, determined to make an effort if, for the third time, the vision should appear.

I had not long to wait.

"Swoop!" Back went the curtains on the third side of my bed—this time the side next the mullioned window through which the moonlight was streaming.

But there was nothing there.

I gazed, I confess, in horror at—vacancy. Then slowly, and with an unspeakable horror, lean, long talons began to scrabble at the bed-clothes; the same dread head began to rise above the level of the bed, with its horrific hair and glistening eyeballs. No body showed — only the head and horrid hands appeared, dragging at the coverlet.

Frozen with terror I could wait for no more. With frantic strength I shot my clenched fist full into the dreadful face.

My knuckles seemed to go into something pulpy soft. There came a long-drawn, whining howl. I sprang up in bed and saw a figure, crouching on all-fours, move quickly to the dark wall under the window. I seized my match-box and struck, dropping the lighted match on the bed-clothes. In that second George's warning about fire came to me. I dashed out my hand and pressed out the burning light.

As I did so I looked up and saw that white horror standing right up, grisly in the deep shadow. I struck another match and lit the candle.

The Wraith had vanished utterly.

I leapt out of bed and dashed to the wall where I had last seen it. There was nothing there.

My fingers touched hard stone. I turned to the huge press and looked in; there was nothing there.

I prowled, liked a caged beast, about the room, searching up and down. There was nothing there.

And now, strange to say, the room seemed less cold.

"I SAW A FIGURE CROUCHING ON ALL-FOURS."

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I rattled at the door—that was fast; all the windows—so were they. I went tapping round the room. There was nothing by which anyone could have entered or escaped.

Nothing.

And then a reactionary feeling of deadly nausea came upon me; worse, if anything, than what I had passed through. It must, it must in very truth, it *must* have been the spirit of that old Earl. What else could it have been? The old Earl in his spirit shape, yearning for vengeance.

For the first time in my life I saw that departed spirits must exist. That frightful apparition; the mysterious cold; the utter disappearance. How else could it be accounted for?

I crept back to bed to cogitate. As I hugged myself under the sheets I could not, try as I would, account for this under any other hypothesis than the supernatural. But I almost laughed with pure relief from the tension. Yet, if it were so, how was I to face Mr. Augustus Brierly in the morning?

I should have to confess myself wrong, in spite of my confident statement of the night before. That would be a bitter pill, but anything was better than that which I had just passed through.

Moreover, I did not see how any of the other men could possibly have hoaxed me over the matter. At any rate, I had left my mark on one of them if he had.

Then, mostly from bravado, I'm afraid, I tried to get to sleep. It was no use, of course, so I got up. For hours I paced the room back and fro, determined to be ready should the Wraith return. And this, until morning broke. Then I returned into bed to save appearances.

The butler, coming in to take my clothes to brush, drew my curtains and let in the bright light about me. Even the steam of the hot shaving-water seemed to bring me back to life again as, at last, I sat up in bed in fair daylight. The butler looked curious, but was discreetly silent—as is the manner of butlers.

Had the last night's experience been all a bad dream? No, I was sure that it had not. But at breakfast I should have to meet all the men. If I told truthfully what I had seen I was bound to be unmercifully chaffed. That would not be pleasant, nor the condescending sneer of Brierly. Yet, by Jove, it had been weird. If there ever was a ghost that was one. Should I be honest and bear the brunt, or should I deny that I had seen anything? It was a temptation for a moment, I confess; yet I have always been a downright man, and object altogether to crooked ways of dealing. Yes, I had to face it out.

I was slow in dressing, but slower still perhaps to recognise that the reason was that my hand was a bit shaky. Could it be possible that I, who was, as a rule, as steady as a rock, had had my nerves shaken so much as that? Moreover, the feeling of awe would not leave me.

When I finally got down to the breakfast-room I was greeted with curious glances, but as the ladies and servants were present no one alluded to the matter.

After breakfast most of the men managed to stroll after me into the gun-room, on one excuse or another.

"A bit white about the gills, Sterling, I think!" said young Wilton.

"Chippy—distinctly chippy!" chimed in another youngster.

"Did you sleep much last night?" asked Brierly, with unnecessary politeness.

"Never mind those fellows. Have a pick-me-up—a whisky-and-soda or a pint of champagne?" said Lawson, hospitably.

By Jove! was I as bad as that? I never thought I could have actually shown anything in my face. I strolled over to a mirror and took a steady look at myself. Yes; I was pale and baggy enough under the eyes, in all conscience.

"No, thanks, George," I said. "There's nothing much the matter."

"Well, have you seen anything?" said Brierly, after a short silence. He was evidently unable to restrain his impatience.

I gazed round the party, scrutinizing each face carefully to see if I could observe marks of the blow that I had given my nocturnal visitor. All were smart and debonair as could be; never a sign of anything. I felt nonplussed.

"We're all waiting, Jack," said Lawson, good-naturedly.

"Well," said I, deliberately, just to keep them on tip-toe. "Well, I *have!*"

Brierly's eyes positively blazed with triumph; the others laughed, tentatively.

George looked annoyed and a bit anxious, I thought.

"Won't you tell us?" he said.

I could not resist this, so I at once told them all the tale, omitting nothing.

Then Mrs. Lawson happened to call for her husband to go out; the others had to follow. I was left alone with Brierly.

"You confess then," said he, slowly, "that you cannot account for this vision?"

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"Yes," said I. "I confess that I cannot account for it."

"Won't you acknowledge that the presence was preternatural?" he went on.

"I've told you what I saw; that is enough," said I, shortly.

"You *saw*, you say? You did more than see. Look! it is hard to have a clearer case. There was no clairvoyant or medium to conjure up tricks. Observe, too, that you had never slept in the room before; that no one but ourselves, and that only at a late hour — too late to play a trick, even if it had been the intention of any of us — knew that you were going to occupy that room; and above all, that it can be the object of no living creature to visit that room in the manner you have described."

"I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT I SAW."

"That is all true," said I.

"Well; let us go on," said he. Now that he was interested in his demonstration he dropped his pedantic air; indeed, he became so natural that I really began to like him.

"So far, then," he said, "we have established that it is next door to impossible that it can be any trick; it is equally impossible that burglary can have been the object. For you found nothing disturbed."

"That is true," said I; "except that I couldn't find my razors, at first."

"I think, then, we can dismiss entirely the question of there being any rational object in any man so disturbing you," he said.

"Yes," I answered. "No man in his senses could have done just what that—that appearance—did."

"Well, it is not likely that any man out of his senses could have done it," said he, smiling.

"No, certainly not," I answered.

"There," said he, "that is what I will call our 'negative' case. If what you saw was a man, he must have had some reason for his action; so far as we can either of us see, there can be no possible motive for any *man* so acting; that is one point in favour of its being really the manifestation of a *spirit*."

"Yes," I answered, for his argument was growing upon me. Indeed, it was unanswerable.

"Well," he went on, "let us now look upon it from the point of view of the evidence of your senses. And," he added, "you said you would believe in ghosts if you had the evidence of your senses?"

"Ah," said I, "if you can convince me there, I am quite your convert."

"Well, now, let us consider all your senses in turn; not one, mark you, which is generally considered sufficient evidence by most people. Many people who see something filmy-white floating in the dark at a *séance* are convinced mostly by their own imagination. But let us take all your senses—one by one—and see how they re-act the one upon the other. First, the most obvious sense—the sense of sight. You saw the creature—let me see—three times distinctly—with an interval of intense horror between each vision?"

"Distinctly, utterly distinctly, I saw it," I answered. "I could swear to each time as a separate fact, although I don't mind saying I am a bit nervous of ridicule."

"Don't, I beg, fear that I shall laugh at you over this matter. Far from it. Every case has to be taken on its own merits. If I have hitherto appeared perhaps a little rude,

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you must forgive me. There are cases which have come under my experience which are quite inexplicable—and this one seems at present likely to rank with them. Some things yield to investigation; some do not. My province is only to examine and to classify. I confess this affair interests me extremely. For I have no doubt of your good faith."

"I should hope not," I said.

"You must pardon me again. I was only speaking as a scientific observer, whose entire aim is accuracy. I meant by saying that I did not doubt your good faith that a big, six-foot, healthy man like you is not one who is subject to hallucinations or nervous fits—that, in fact, you are totally prejudiced against anything in the way of psychical phenomena."

"No one more so," I answered, mollified.

"Well, to return to your sense of sight: you have never had any hallucinations of any kind in your life?"

"None whatever."

"Yet you saw the apparition three distinct times, with distinct intervals, in which you could think dispassionately between each vision?"

"Yes."

"So much then for the evidence of your sense of sight—enough alone to convince nine people out of ten. Now for your sense of hearing. You heard gibberings and piteous moans?"

"Distinctly."

"You heard the sharpening of steel—you are sure of that?"

"Quite sure."

"Did you hear nothing more?"

"Only the rattle of the curtain-rings when the curtains were drawn asunder, and a sort of indistinct shuffling and rustle."

"Ha! that is a curious point. But did you hear nothing when the apparition disappeared?"

"Nothing."

"Quite sure?"

"Nothing at all."

"So now," he said, "see what we have got so far. A nearly absolutely negative case, and your sense of hearing confirming your sense of sight. Now, of your sense of smell! Did you smell anything?"

"Yes, a faint odour—musty and sickly—not unpleasant. I think, but I am not sure, that it might have been the smell of the bedroom."

"That is all?"

"That is all."

"Of tasting, of course, you had no opportunity. Now, lastly, of your sense of feeling?"

"Oh, feeling!" said I; "the wraith felt me more than I felt him. I'll wager that."

"Very possibly—but what exactly did you feel?"

"When I hit I felt a yielding, pulpy, soft thing—that might have been an ordinary face, and might not; it had no resistance in it worth mentioning. But I was not at close quarters, and so I could not feel the full force of my own blow."

"Possibly it was a fully materialized psychic body. But what do you think of it all yourself?"

"I confess, now, that—that I must be convinced it was really a spirit."

"I wonder if we could examine the room," said he.

"I did examine it," I said.

"This morning?"

"No, not this morning."

"Well, let us go and examine it now."

"I think," I said, "we'd better, perhaps, wait for Lawson's permission. I know he is very upset about the whole thing, and it would be as well not to cause any commotion among the servants, unless he knows."

"You are right, no doubt; we'll wait till lunch, and ask him then. Meanwhile, let's go and look at the outside of the tower to see if there is any way of getting in. There may be some footmarks."

So we lit our pipes and strolled round to the big, old-fashioned garden.

When we reached the tower we saw that it was ivy-mantled and with not a vestige of a door in it. We looked around the base of the tower in every direction, to see if there were traces of anything in the way of footmarks. The ground was still quite hard from the frost. But the sun having been up some time the white hoar had thawed off from the grass; there was no trace of any footmark to be seen.

Gradually the whole significance of the thing was eating itself into me. There was nothing, simply nothing, to show that what I had seen was not supernatural. Indeed, everything seemed to point to the fact that I had at last to acknowledge that I had seen—a Ghost!

At last I had no doubt. Worse; I was fairly feverish over it.

Then Brierly, quite rationally, began to relate to me several of the instances of similar things which had come under his observation—things which would bear no explanation.

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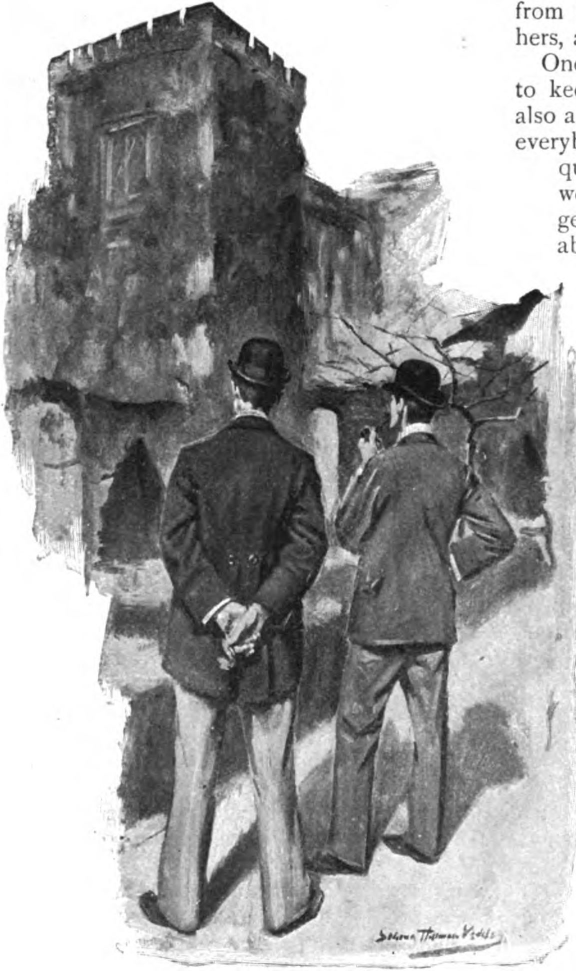

"WE LOOKED AROUND THE BASE OF THE TOWER IN EVERY DIRECTION."

We passed the morning so talking; I felt too upset to do anything else. For I had little confidence in Brierly finding out anything from the room. Notwithstanding my agitation on the previous night, I felt that I had made a very sufficient search.

At last the lunch-bell rang, and we went in to the social meal; all us men with a secret between us, which made us bad companions for the ladies, I fear.

After lunch Lawson, Brierly, and I adjourned again to the billiard-room for a consultation. George, figuratively speaking, took the chair.

"Look here," he said, "we must go slow and lay this ghost, if it can be laid."

Then we fell into a longish talk. At last it was arranged that Lawson and I should occupy the haunted room jointly on that night. He was quite sure he could get away from his room without disturbing his wife in hers, as the dressing-room was between.

One of us was to be in bed and the other to keep watch, concealed somewhere. We also arranged that we would not go up until everybody was in bed. Then came the question as to what further precautions we should take. George Lawson suggested revolvers, but that I said was absurd; heavy sticks were quite sufficient for all our purpose.

That evening it seemed a long dinner enough, and the game at pool afterwards dragged terribly, although we let the other men into the secret. When the ladies retired Lawson began to make scouting excursions towards the servants' quarters, to see if they showed any signs of retiring. Of course they seemed to stay up longer than usual. Then all the other guests went off to bed, while George and I engaged each other at pyramids.

At last the butler came in to know if anything further was wanted, and was told to go to bed.

After a decent interval, having made quite sure that everyone was in their rooms, I walked off with my candle to my haunted chamber, with Lawson following silently behind in his stockinged feet.

We entered the room. Again the moonlight was streaming through the window. We had already determined to allow it to do so, so as to have as much light as possible on the situation. We had also arranged that I, being the bigger man, should be held in reserve and in hiding, while George Lawson was this time to be the victim in the bed.

So, having carefully rattled at the windows to see that they were secure and so on, we finally ensconced ourselves—George in the bed with the curtains drawn, and I in the huge oak cupboard, but with the door slightly ajar. I sat on a stool inside with my eye fixed upon the room so that I could see nearly all that might pass, without myself being observed.

For the first hour the waiting was simply deathly dull. Lawson soon began to snore in good earnest; I envied him in bed while I sat, getting colder and colder, as the fire died down in the hearth. I leaned back in the cupboard and tried to make myself as comfortable as I could in my cramped position.

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I had been sitting so for nearly two hours, listening to the contented breathing of the somnolent George, when, half-asleep as I was, I suddenly felt a cold breath of air stir on my cheek. And in the same instant came a crash and I tumbled back headlong—into a black abyss!

Candidly, I felt for a moment as if I was killed.

I was in absolute blackness, on my back, head down, and where I had no idea.

But I had fallen "soft." And suddenly as I lay—with my head much lower than my feet—I felt something move under me.

Thank God, it was flesh and blood—a real man.

Instantly all my senses returned. I knew then that I was in some kind of well-like passage, communicating with the room, or a flight of stairs coming up into it.

Something groaned a little and moved under me. I found I was not really hurt, except for a slight contusion. So I turned at once and gripped the man lying inert under me.

Then, as I had him in my grasp, I saw George standing in the aperture above showing a light; he was asking if I was hurt.

I answered, "Not a bit," and, gripping our visitor, lifted him a little—he was passive as a child. Then I took him up bodily and stumbled up the stair again to the chamber. It was my ghostly old man, sure enough — a phantom of flesh in a white serving-man's livery, and more frightened than hurt.

"Cheer up, George," I said. "There is your family spectre." And plumped my burden into a chair.

There sat the Wraith, with both arms hanging straight down, for all the world like an automaton which had run down. He sat there, staring at us both, with eyes wide open and jaw dropped on his neck. His tangled white hair and lean face looked in the moonlight sufficiently ghastly for any spirit.

But the old fellow uttered no word—only moved his head from side to side, in a silly way, craning his skinny neck, first at one of us then at the other.

At last I clapped him on the shoulder. He jumped all over.

Then with a shriek he leapt like a goat from the chair and dashed at the wall. He snatched down the wooden crucifix from it and held it before him, standing erect. Then he kept thrusting it forward at us, as if we were evil things to be banned.

This seemed to me to be a bit reversing the proper order of affairs, so I asked him who he was.

A gasp was all the answer.

"We won't hurt you," Lawson said; "we are as good Christians as yourself. You can put the crucifix down; you see it has no terrors for us."

"HE KEPT THRUSTING IT FORWARD AT US."

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This seemed to pacify him. He replaced the cross with the most scrupulous reverence on the wall; then bent his knee before it and crossed himself.

"You are a good Catholic, evidently," said I. "Now tell me what you are doing here."

By now Lawson had brought his candle close to the old face.

"By Jove! it's ——" he said, when the old fellow suddenly broke into a low whine.

"Where is my lord? This is my lord's room," he said. "His lordship cannot see ye now, sorrs."

"No, no," said Lawson, motioning me to keep silence; "you are Larry Maguire. This is my house now. Lord Dunslair is dead; you know that. I am Mr. Lawson. I have bought Redscar."

In an instant the old fellow's face seemed to change; he passed his hand across his forehead.

"Whisht!" he said, "'tis true it is, then? Me lord's with the saints, sure he is. Yes, yes, I know now, I know. Yes, but who are ye?" he asked, humbly.

"I? I tell you I am Mr. Lawson. I am master here now. What are you doing in my house, Larry?"

"You are master—master here now?"

"But who are you?" I asked, impatiently.

"Is it me? Everyone knows me. I am old Larry Maguire that does no harm." Then the old fellow began to whimper.

"But what are you doing here at this time of night, Larry?" said George.

"Whisht, sorr, I cannot come in the day at all—by reason of the new people. Bridget stays me coming in the day. Sure, I come just when I can slip out. To wake my lord and dress him entirely, and just to say a prayer by the Holy Cross here—the wood of the True Cross it is, that they brought here years gone by." And the old man turned again to the crucifix and crossed himself devoutly.

"But why don't you come by the proper door?" said Lawson.

"Eh? Ye would be clever, now," he responded, with a shaking finger and every symptom of senile cunning. "Sure, Bridget will not let me come by the door; so I come by the way no one but me and the master knew. Arrah, and now there be bad spirits of evil here—bad spirits." And he put his hand up, feelingly, to his face, where I had hit him the previous night.

"Where do you live?" said I, my curiosity again getting the better of me.

"Whisht! Where do I live? 'Tis at Redscar I live entirely."

Then the old fellow began to blether to himself—we knew all we wanted from him now.

"Come," said George, taking up the candle. "We'll just explore this passage of yours, Larry."

And so, leaving our old Wraith to croon and maunder to himself, we stepped down the stair.

As I passed out of the room I saw that the back of the big cupboard in which I had been hidden concealed the door of the secret passage and opened into it. Certainly it had sounded hollow when I had tapped it before, but evidently not of the hollowness of the vacancy behind it—rather with the echo made within the massive cupboard itself. Doubtless, also, it was this door which when opened had made me feel a cold breeze.

The passage led right through the solid thickness of the wall for quite a long distance.

At first, by a flight of steps we descended to the level of the ground-floor. Then the passage twisted at a right angle, and at last we came to a door quite a long way from the tower chamber; this was on the latch. Lawson was first; as he walked through his candle-flame blew out, so I could see nothing, but I heard strong language from George.

"Confound the place!" he said. "I've walked straight into a bramble bush."

We lit the light again and beheld the growth of tens of years about the door—a little, insignificant door—which, in the huge block of buildings of which the rambling house consisted, might—and did—easily escape the notice of anyone.

"Well," said George Lawson, when we'd run the last of the passage into the open, "it seems we've been 'had,' after all. Poor old Larry; the old Earl's Irish valet he was, a daft old chap who wears the old livery on occasions of ceremony as his right. It was he who wanted to wake you and sharpened your razors. To think we were scared by old Larry. He sometimes has bad demented fits, but his daughter keeps a good hand upon him. He does the verger work at the Catholic chapel all right; so no one has the heart to shut him up—a harmless lunatic, my dear Sterling—a harmless lunatic, like some others, I think."

"Yes," said I, grinning; "but it's bad for Brierly. I score after all."

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At Sunwich Port.

By W. W. Jacobs.

CHAPTER XXIV.

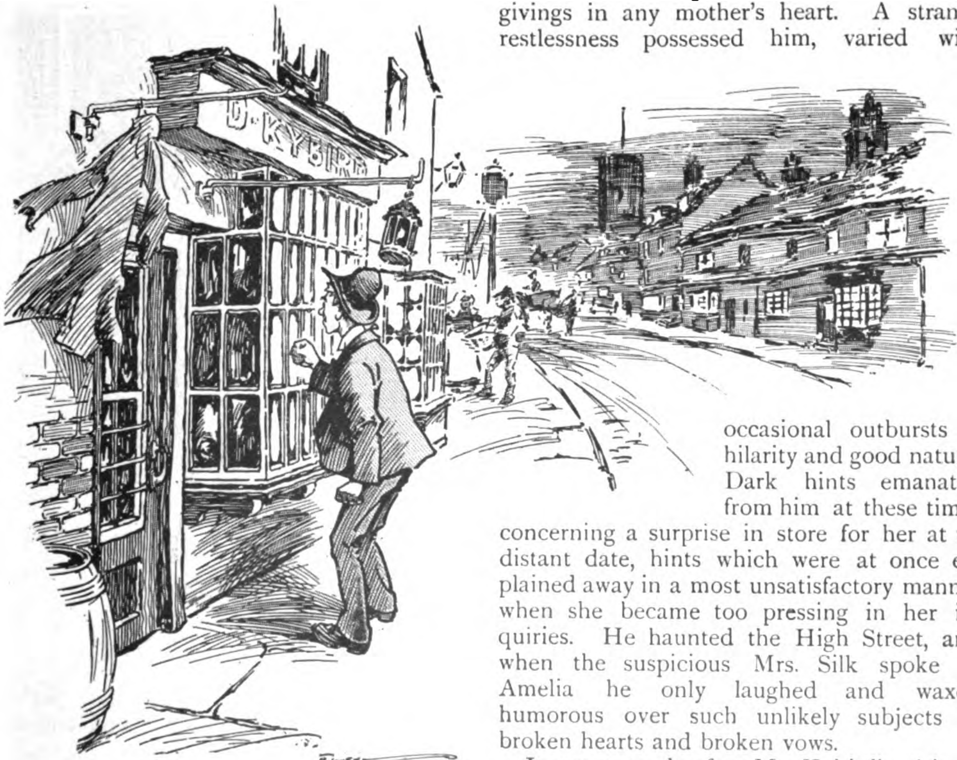
THE idea in the mind of Mr. James Hardy when he concocted his infamous plot was that Jack Nugent would be summarily dismissed on some pretext by Miss Kybird, and that steps would at once be taken by her family to publish her banns together with those of Mr. Silk. In thinking thus he had made no allowance for the workings and fears of such a capable mind as Nathan Smith's, and as days passed and nothing happened he became a prey to despair.

He watched Mr. Silk keenly, but that gentleman went about his work in his usual quiet and gloomy fashion, and, after a day's leave for the purpose of arranging the affairs of a sick aunt in Camberwell, came back only a little less gloomy than before. It was also clear that Mr. Swann's complaisance was nearly at an end, and a letter, couched in vigorous, not to say regrettable, terms for a moribund man, expressed such a desire for fresh air and exercise that Hardy was prepared to see him at any moment.

It was the more unfortunate as he thought that he had of late detected a slight softening in Captain Nugent's manner towards him. On two occasions the captain, who was out when he called, had made no comment to find upon his return that the visitor was being entertained by his daughter, going so far, indeed, as to permit the conversation to gain vastly in interest by that young person remaining in the room. In face of this improvement he thought with dismay of having to confess failure in a scheme which apart from success was inexcusable.

The captain had also unbent in another direction, and Mr. Wilks, to his great satisfaction, was allowed to renew his visits to Equator Lodge and assist his old master in the garden. Here at least the steward was safe from the designs of Mrs. Silk and the innuendoes of Fullalove Alley.

It was at this time, too, that the widow stood in most need of his advice, the behaviour of Edward Silk being of a nature to cause misgivings in any mother's heart. A strange restlessness possessed him, varied with occasional outbursts of hilarity and good nature. Dark hints emanated from him at these times concerning a surprise in store for her at no distant date, hints which were at once explained away in a most unsatisfactory manner when she became too pressing in her inquiries. He haunted the High Street, and when the suspicious Mrs. Silk spoke of Amelia he only laughed and waxed humorous over such unlikely subjects as broken hearts and broken vows.



"HE COULD JUST MAKE OUT A DIM FIGURE BEHIND THE COUNTER."

It was a week after Mr. Kybird's visit to the alley that he went, as usual, for a stroll up

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and down the High Street. The evening was deepening, and some of the shops had already lit up, as Mr. Silk, with his face against the window-pane, tried in vain to penetrate the obscurity of Mr. Kybird's shop. He could just make out a dim figure behind the counter, which he believed to be Amelia, when a match was struck and a gas-jet threw a sudden light in the shop and revealed Mr. Jack Nugent standing behind the counter with his hand on the lady's shoulder.

One glance was sufficient. The next moment there was a sharp cry from Miss Kybird and a bewildered stare from Nugent as something, only comparable to a human cracker, bounced into the shop and commenced to explode before them.

"Take your 'and off," raved Mr. Silk. "Leave 'er alone. 'Ow dare you? D'ye hear me? 'Melia, I won't 'ave it! I won't 'ave it!"

"Don't be silly, Teddy," remonstrated Mr. Nugent, following up Miss Kybird, as she edged away from him.

"Leave 'er alone, d'ye 'ear?" yelled Mr. Silk, thumping the counter with his small fist. "She's my *wife!*"

"Teddy's mad," said Mr. Nugent, calmly, "stark, staring, raving mad. Poor Teddy."

He shook his head sadly, and had just begun to recommend a few remedies, when the parlour door opened and the figure of Mr. Kybird, with his wife standing close behind him, appeared in the doorway.

"Who's making all this noise?" demanded the former, looking from one to the other.

"*I* am," said Mr. Silk, fiercely. "It's no use your winking at me; I'm not going to 'ave any more of this nonsense. 'Melia, you go and get your 'at on and come straight off 'ome with me."

"'BUT SUPPOSE SHE ASKS ME TO?' SAID THE DELIGHTED MR. NUGENT."

Mr. Kybird gave a warning cough. "Go easy, Teddy," he murmured.

"And don't you cough at me," said the irritated Mr. Silk, "because it won't do no good."

Mr. Kybird subsided. He was not going to quarrel with a son-in-law who might at any moment be worth ten thousand pounds.

"Isn't he mad?" inquired the amazed Mr. Nugent.

"Cert'nly not," replied Mr. Kybird, moving aside to let his daughter pass; "no madder than you are. Wot d'ye mean, mad?"

Mr. Nugent looked round in perplexity. "Do you mean to tell me that Teddy and Amelia are married?" he said, in a voice trembling with eagerness.

"I do," said Mr. Kybird. "It seems they've been fond of one another all along, and they went up all unbeknown last Friday and got a license and got married."

"And if I see you putting your 'and on 'er shoulder ag'in——" said Mr. Silk, with alarming vagueness.

"But suppose she asks me to?" said the delighted Mr. Nugent, with much gravity.

"Look 'ere, we don't want none o' your nonsense," broke in the irate Mrs. Kybird, pushing her way past her husband and confronting the speaker.

"I've been deceived," said Mr. Nugent, in a thrilling voice; "you've all been deceiving

me. Kybird, I blush for you (that'll save you a lot of trouble). Teddy, I wouldn't have believed it of you. I can't stay here; my heart is broken."

"Well, we don't want you to," retorted the aggressive Mrs. Kybird. "You can take yourself off as soon as ever you like. You can't be too quick to please me."

Mr. Nugent bowed and walked past the counter. "And not even a bit of wedding-cake for me," he said, shaking a reproachful head at the heated Mr. Silk. "Why, I'd put you down first on *my* list."

He paused at the door, and after a brief intimation that he would send for his effects on the following day, provided that his broken heart had not proved fatal in the meantime, waved his hand to the company and departed. Mr. Kybird followed him to the door as though to see him off the premises, and gazing after the receding figure swelled with indignation as he noticed that he favoured a mode of progression which was something between a walk and a hornpipe.

Mr. Nugent had not been in such spirits since his return to Sunwich, and, hardly able to believe in his good fortune, he walked on in a state of growing excitement until he was clear of the town. Then he stopped to consider his next move, and after a little deliberation resolved to pay a visit to Jem Hardy and acquaint him with the joyful tidings.

That gentleman, however, was out, and Mr. Nugent, somewhat irritated at such thoughtlessness, stood in the road wondering where to go next. It was absolutely impossible for him to sleep that night without telling the good news to somebody, and after some thought he selected Mr. Wilks. It was true that relations had been somewhat strained between them since the latter's attempt at crimping him, but he was never one to bear malice, and to-night he was full of the kindliest thoughts to all mankind.

He burst into Mr. Wilks's front room suddenly and then pulled up short. The steward, with a pitiable look of anxiety on his pallid features, was leaning awkwardly against the mantelpiece, and opposite him Mrs. Silk sat in an easy-chair, dissolved in tears.

"Busy, Sam?" inquired Mr. Nugent, who had heard of the steward's difficulties from Hardy.

"No, sir," said Mr. Wilks, hastily; "sit down, sir."

He pushed forward a chair and, almost pulling his visitor into it, stood over him attentively and took his hat.

"Are you quite sure I'm not interrupting you?" inquired the thoughtful Mr. Nugent.

"Certain sure, sir," said Mr. Wilks, eagerly. "I was just 'aving a bit of a chat with my neighbour, Mrs. Silk, 'ere, that's all."

The lady in question removed her handkerchief from her eyes and gazed at him with reproachful tenderness. Mr. Wilks plunged hastily into conversation.

"She came over 'ere to tell me a bit o' news," he said, eyeing the young man doubtfully. "It seems that Teddy——"

Mr. Nugent fetched a mighty sigh and shook his head; Mrs. Silk gazed at him earnestly.

"Life is full of surprises, sir," she remarked.

"And sadness," added Mr. Nugent. "I hope that they will be happy."

"It struck me all of a 'eap," said Mrs. Silk, rolling her handkerchief into a ball and placing it in her lap. "I was doing a bit of ironing when in walks Teddy with Amelia Kybird, and says they was married last Friday. I was that shaken I didn't know what I did or what I said. Then I came over as soon as I could, because I thought Mr. Wilks ought to know about it."

Mr. Wilks cleared his throat and turned an agonized eye on Mr. Nugent. He would have liked to have asked why Mrs. Silk should think it necessary to inform him, but the fear of precipitating a crisis stayed his tongue.

"What I'm to do, I don't know," continued Mrs. Silk, feebly. "You can't 'ave two queens in one 'ouse, so to speak."

"But she was walking out with Teddy long ago," urged Mr. Wilks. "It's no worse now than then."

"But I wouldn't be married by license," said Mrs. Silk, deftly ignoring the remark. "If I can't be asked in church in the proper way I won't be married at all."

"Quite right," said Mr. Nugent; "there's something so sudden about a license," he added, with feeling.

"Me and Mr. Wilks was talking about marriage only the other day," pursued Mrs. Silk, with a bashfulness which set every nerve in the steward's body quivering, "and we both agreed that banns was the proper way."

"You was talking about it," corrected Mr. Wilks, in a hoarse voice. "You brought up the subject and I agreed with you—not that it matters to me 'ow people get married. That's their affair. Banns or license, it's all one to me."

"I won't be married by license," said Mrs.

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Silk, with sudden petulance; "leastways, I'd rather not be," she added, softening.

Mr. Wilks took his handkerchief from his pocket and blew his nose violently. Mrs. Silk's methods of attack left him little opportunity for the plain speaking which was necessary to dispel illusions. He turned a watery, appealing eye on to Mr. Nugent, and saw to his surprise that that gentleman was winking at him with great significance and persistence. It would have needed a heart of stone to have been unaffected by such misery, and to-night Mr. Nugent, thankful for his own escape, was in a singularly merciful mood.

"All this sounds as though you are going to be married," he said, turning to Mrs. Silk with a polite smile.

The widow simpered and looked down, thereby affording Mr. Nugent an opportunity of another signal to the perturbed steward, who sat with such a look of anxiety on his face lest he should miss his cue that the young man's composure was tried to the utmost.

"It's been a understood thing for a long time," she said, slowly, "but I couldn't leave my son while 'e was single and nobody to look after 'im. A good mother makes a good wife, so they say. A woman can't always 'ave 'er own way in everything, and if it's not to be by banns, then by license it must be, I suppose."

"Well, he'll be a fortunate man, whoever he is," said Mr. Nugent, with another warning glance at Mr. Wilks; "and I only hope that he'll make a better husband than you do, Sam," he added, in a low but severe voice.

Mrs. Silk gave a violent start. "*Better husband than 'e does?*" she cried, sharply. "Mr. Wilks ain't married."

Mr. Nugent's baseless charge took the steward all aback. He stiffened in his chair, a picture of consternation, and guilt appeared stamped on every feature; but he had the presence of mind to look to Mr. Nugent's eye for guidance and sufficient strength of character to accept this last bid for liberty.

"That's my business, sir," he quavered, in offended tones.

"But you ain't *married?*" screamed Mrs. Silk.

"Never mind," said Nugent, pacifically. "Perhaps I ought not to have mentioned it; it's a sore subject with Sam. And I daresay there were faults on both sides. Weren't there, Sam?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Wilks, in a voice which he strove hard to make distinct; "especially 'ers."

"You—you never told me you were married," said Mrs. Silk, breathlessly.

"I never said I wasn't," retorted the culprit, defiantly. "If people liked to think I was a single man, I don't care; it's got nothing to do with them. Besides, she lives at Stepney, and I don't 'ear from 'er once in six months; she don't interfere with me and I don't interfere with her."

Mrs. Silk got up from her chair and stood confronting him with her hand grasping the back of it. Her cold eyes gleamed and her

"'YOU'RE A DECEIVER,' SHE GASPED."

face worked with spite as she tried in vain to catch his eye. Of Mr. Nugent and his ingenuous surprise at her behaviour she took no notice at all.

"You're a deceiver," she gasped; "you've been be'aving like a single man and everybody thought you was a single man."

"I hope you haven't been paying attentions to anybody, Sam?" said Mr. Nugent, in a shocked voice.

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"A-ah!" said Mrs. Silk, shivering with anger. "Ask 'im; the deceiving villain. Ask anybody, and see what they'll tell you. Oh, you wicked man, I wonder you can look me in the face!"

Truth to tell, Mr. Wilks was looking in any direction but hers. His eyes met Nugent's, but there was a look of such stern disdain on that gentleman's face that he was fain to look away again.

"Was it a friend of yours?" inquired the artless Mr. Nugent.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Silk, recovering herself. "Never mind who it was. You wait till I go and tell Teddy," she continued, turning to the trembling Mr. Wilks. "If 'e's got the 'art of a man in 'im you'll see."

With this dire threat, and turning occasionally to bestow another fierce glance upon the steward, she walked to the door and, opening it to its full extent, closed it behind her with a crash and darted across the alley to her own house. The two men gazed at each other without speaking, and then Mr. Wilks, stepping over to the door, turned the key in the lock.

"You're not afraid of Teddy?" said the staring Nugent.

"Teddy!" said Mr. Wilks, snapping his huge fingers. "I'm not afraid o' fifty Teddies; but she might come back with 'im. If it 'adn't ha' been for you, sir, I don't know wot wouldn't 'ave happened."

"Go and draw some beer and get me a clean pipe," said Nugent, dropping into a chair. "We've both been mercifully preserved, Sam, and the best thing we can do is to drink to our noble selves and be more careful for the future."

Mr. Wilks obeyed, and again thanking him warmly for his invaluable services sat down to compile a few facts about his newly acquired wife, warranted to stand the severest cross-examination which might be brought to bear upon them, a task interspersed with malicious reminiscences of Mrs. Silk's attacks on his liberty. He also insisted on giving up his bed to Nugent for the night.

"I suppose," he said later on, as Mr. Nugent, after a faint objection or two, took his candle—"I suppose this yarn about my being married will get about?"

"I suppose so," said Nugent, yawning, as he paused with his foot on the stair. "What about it?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Wilks, in a somewhat dissatisfied voice. "Nothing."

"What about it?" repeated Mr. Nugent, sternly.

"Nothing, sir," said Mr. Wilks, with an insufferable simper. "Nothing, only it'll make things a little bit slow for me, that's all."

Mr. Nugent eyed him for a space in speechless amazement, and then, with a few strong remarks on ingratitude and senile vanity, mounted the winding little stairs and went to bed.

"'IT WAS TEDDY DONE IT,' SAID MR. KYBIRD, HUMBLY."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE day after Mr. Silk's sudden and unexpected assertion of his marital rights Mr. Kybird stood in the doorway of his shop, basking in the sun. The High Street was in a state of post-prandial repose, and there was no likelihood of a customer to interfere with his confidential chat with Mr. Nathan Smith, who was listening with an aspect of great severity to his explanations.

"It ought not to 'ave happened," he said, sharply.

"It was Teddy done it," said Mr. Kybird, humbly.

Mr. Smith shrugged his shoulders.

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"It wouldn't 'ave happened if I'd been there," he observed, arrogantly.

"I don't see 'ow——" began Mr. Kybird.

"No, o' course you don't," said his friend. "Still, it's no use making a fuss now. The thing is done. One thing is, I don't suppose it'll make any diff——"

"Difference," suggested Mr. Kybird, after waiting for him to finish.

"Difference," said Mr. Smith, with an obvious effort. His face had lost its scornful expression and given way to one almost sheepish in its mildness. Mr. Kybird, staring at him in some surprise, even thought that he detected a faint shade of pink.

"We ain't all as clever as wot you are, Nat," he said, somewhat taken aback at this phenomenon. "It wouldn't do."

Mr. Smith made a strange noise in his throat and turned on him sharply. Mr. Kybird, still staring in surprise at his unwonted behaviour, drew back a little, and then his lips parted and his eyes grew round as he saw the cause of his friend's concern. An elderly gentleman with a neatly trimmed white beard and a yellow rose in his buttonhole was just passing on the other side of the road. His tread was elastic, his figure as upright as a boy's, and he swung a light cane in his hand as he walked. As Mr. Kybird gazed he bestowed a brisk nod upon the bewildered Mr. Smith, and crossed the road with the evident intention of speaking to him.

"How do, Smith?" he said, in a kindly voice.

The boarding-master leaned against the shop-window and regarded him dumbly. There was a twinkle in the shipbroker's eyes which irritated him almost beyond endurance, and in the doorway Mr. Kybird—his face mottled with the intensity of his emotions—stood an unwelcome and frantic witness of his shame.

"You're not well, Smith?" said Mr. Swann, shaking his head at him gently. "You look like a man who has been doing too much brain-work lately. You've been getting the better of somebody, I know."

Mr. Smith gasped and, eyeing him wickedly, strove hard to recover his self-possession.

"I'm all right, sir," he said, in a thin voice. "I'm glad to see you're looking a trifle better, sir."

"Oh, I'm quite right, now," said the other, with a genial smile at the fermenting Mr. Kybird. "I'm as well as ever I was. Illness is a serious thing, Smith, but it is not without its little amusements."

Mr. Smith, scratching his smooth-shaven chin and staring blankly in front of him, said that he was glad to hear it.

"I've had a long bout of it," continued the shipbroker, "longer than I intended at first. By the way, Smith, you've never spoken to anybody of that business, of course?"

"Of course not, sir," said the boarding-master, grinding his teeth.

"One has fancies when one is ill," said Mr. Swann, in low tones, as his eye dwelt with pleasure on the strained features of Mr. Kybird. "I burnt the document five minutes after you had gone."

"Did you, reely?" said Mr. Smith, mechanically.

"I'm glad it was only you and the doctor that saw my foolishness," continued the other, still in a low voice. "Other people might have talked, but I knew that you were a reliable man, Smith. And you won't talk about it in the future, I'm quite certain of that. Good afternoon."

Mr. Smith managed to say "Good afternoon," and stood watching the receding figure as though it belonged to a species hitherto unknown to him. Then he turned, in obedience to a passionate tug at his coat-sleeve from Mr. Kybird.

"Wot 'ave you got to say for yourself?" demanded that injured person, in tones of suppressed passion. "Wot do you mean by it? You've made a pretty mess of it with your cleverness."

"Wonderful old gentleman, ain't he?" said the discomfited Mr. Smith. "Fancy 'im getting the better o' *me*. Fancy *me* being 'ad. I took it all in as innercent as you please."

"Ah, you're a clever fellow, you are," said Mr. Kybird, bitterly. "'Ere's Amelia lost young Nugent and 'is five 'undred all through you. It's a got-up thing between old Swann and the Nugent lot, that's wot it is."

"Looks like it," admitted Mr. Smith; "but fancy 'is picking *me* out for 'is games. That's wot gets over me."

"Wot about all that money I paid for the license?" demanded Mr. Kybird, in a threatening manner. "Wot are you going to do about it?"

"You shall 'ave it," said the boarding-master, with sudden blandness, "and 'Melia shall 'ave 'er five 'undred."

"'Ow?" inquired the other, staring.

"It's as easy as easy," said Mr. Smith, who had been greatly galled by his friend's manner. "I'll leave it in my will. That's

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the cheapest way o' giving money I know of. And while I'm about it I'll leave you a decent pair o' trousers and a shirt with your own name on it."

While an ancient friendship was thus being dissolved, Mr. Adolphus Swann was on the way to his office. He could never remember such a pleasant air from the water and such a vivid enjoyment in the sight of the workaday world. He gazed with delight at the crowd of miscellaneous shipping in the harbour and the bustling figures on the quay, only pausing occasionally to answer anxious inquiries concerning his health from seafaring men in tarry trousers, who had waylaid him with great pains from a distance.

He reached his office at last, and, having acknowledged the respectful greetings of Mr. Silk, passed into the private room, and celebrated his return to work by at once arranging with his partner for a substantial rise in the wages of that useful individual.

"PAUSING OCCASIONALLY TO ANSWER ANXIOUS INQUIRIES."

"My conscience is troubling me," he declared, as he hung up his hat and gazed round the room with much relish.

"Silk is happy enough," said Hardy. "It is the best thing that could have happened to him."

"I should like to raise everybody's wages," said the benevolent Mr. Swann, as he seated himself at his desk. "Everything is like a holiday to me after being cooped up in that bedroom; but the rest has done me a lot of good, so Blaikie says. And now what is going to happen to you?"

Hardy shook his head.

"Strike while the iron is hot," said the shipbroker. "Go and see Captain Nugent before he has got used to the situation. And you can give him to understand, if you like (only be careful how you do it), that I have got something in view which may suit his son. If you fail in this affair after all I've done for you, I'll enter the lists myself."

The advice was good, but unnecessary, Mr. Hardy having already fixed on that evening as a suitable opportunity to disclose to the captain the nature of the efforts he had been making on his behalf. The success which had attended them had put him into a highly optimistic mood, and he set off for Equator Lodge with the confident feeling that he had, to say the least of it, improved his footing there.

Captain Nugent, called away from his labours in the garden, greeted his visitor in his customary short manner as he entered the room. "If you've come to tell me about this marriage, I've heard of it," he said, bluntly. "Murchison told me this afternoon."

"He didn't tell you how it was brought about, I suppose?" said Hardy.

The captain shook his head. "I didn't ask him," he said, with affected indifference, and sat gazing out at the window as Hardy began his narration. Two or three times he thought he saw signs of appreciation in his listener's face, but the mouth under the heavy moustache was firm and the eyes steady. Only when

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he related Swann's interview with Nathan Smith and Kybird did the captain's features relax. He gave a chuckling cough and, feeling for his handkerchief, blew his nose violently. Then, with a strange gleam in his eye, he turned to the young man opposite.

"Very smart," he said, shortly.

"It was successful," said the other, modestly.

"Very," said the captain, as he rose and confronted him. "I am much obliged, of course, for the trouble you have taken in the affairs of my family. And now I will remind you of our agreement."

"Agreement?" repeated the other.

The captain nodded. "Your visits to me were to cease when this marriage happened, if I wished it," he said, slowly.

"That was the arrangement," said the dumfounded Hardy, "but I had hoped—— Besides, it has all taken place much sooner than I had anticipated."

"That was the bargain," said the captain, stiffly. "And now I'll bid you good-day."

"I am sorry that my presence should be so distasteful to you," said the mortified Hardy.

"Distasteful, sir?" said the captain, sternly. "You have forced yourself on me for twice a week for some time past. You have insisted upon talking on every subject under the sun, whether I liked it or not. You have taken every opportunity of evading my wishes that you should not see my daughter, and you wonder that I object to you. For absolute brazenness you beat anything I have ever encountered."

"I am sorry," said Hardy, again.

"Good evening," said the captain.

"Good evening."

Crestfallen and angry Hardy moved to the door, pausing with his hand on it as the captain spoke again.

"One word more," said the older man, gazing at him oddly as he stroked his grey beard; "if ever you try to come bothering me with your talk again I'll forbid you the house."

"*Forbid me the house?*" repeated the astonished Hardy.

"That's what I said," replied the other; "that's plain English, isn't it?"

Hardy looked at him in bewilderment; then, as the captain's meaning dawned upon him, he stepped forward impulsively and, seizing his hand, began to stammer out incoherent thanks.

"You'd better clear before I alter my mind," said Captain Nugent, roughly. "I've had more than enough of you. Try the garden, if you like."

He took up a paper from the table and resumed his seat, not without a grim smile at the promptitude with which the other obeyed his instructions.

Miss Nugent, reclining in a deck-chair at the bottom of the garden, looked up as she heard Hardy's footstep on the gravel. It was a surprising thing to see him walking down the garden; it was still more surprising to observe the brightness of his eye and the easy confidence of his bearing. It was evident that he was highly pleased with himself, and she was not satisfied until she had ascertained the reason. Then she sat silent, reflecting bitterly on the clumsy frankness of the male sex in general and fathers in particular. A recent conversation with the captain, in which she had put in a casual word or two in Hardy's favour, was suddenly invested with a new significance.

"I shall never be able to repay your father for his kindness," said Hardy, meaningly, as he took a chair near her.

"I expect he was pleased at this marriage," said Miss Nugent, coldly. "How did it happen?"

Mr. Hardy shifted uneasily in his chair. "There isn't much to tell," he said, reluctantly; "and you—you might not approve of the means by which the end was gained."

"Still, I want to hear about it," said Miss Nugent.

For the second time that evening Hardy told his story. It seemed more discreditable each time he told it, and he scanned the girl's face anxiously as he proceeded, but, like her father, she sat still and made no comment until he had finished. Then she expressed a strong feeling of gratitude that the Nugent family had not been mixed up in it.

"Why?" inquired Hardy, bluntly.

"I don't think it was a very nice thing to do," said Miss Nugent, with a superior air.

"It wouldn't have been a very nice thing for you if your brother had married Miss Kybird," said the indignant Jem. "And you said, if you remember, that you didn't mind what I did."

"I don't," said Miss Nugent, noticing with pleasure that the confident air of a few minutes ago had quite disappeared.

"You think I have been behaving badly?" pursued Hardy.

"I would rather not say what I think," replied Miss Nugent, loftily. "I have no doubt you meant well, and I should be sorry to hurt your feelings."

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"Thank you," said Hardy, and sat gloomily gazing about him. For some time neither of them spoke.

"Where is Jack now?" inquired the girl, at last.

"He is staying with me for a few days," said Hardy. "I sincerely hope that the association will not be injurious to him."

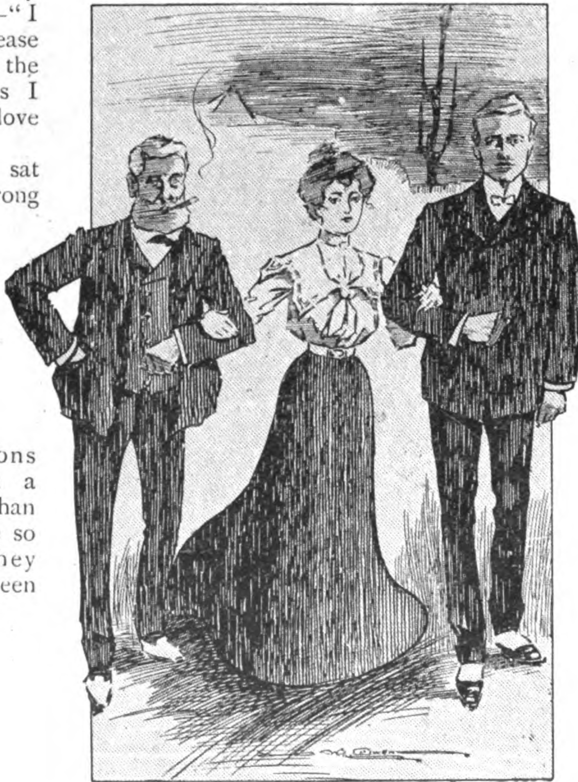
"Are you trying to be rude to me?" inquired Miss Nugent, raising her clear eyes to his.

"I am sorry," said Hardy, hastily. "You are quite right, of course. It was not a nice thing to do, but I would do a thousand times worse to please you."

Miss Nugent thanked him warmly; he seemed to understand her so well, she said.

"I mean," said Hardy, leaning forward and speaking with a vehemence which made the girl instinctively avert her head—"I mean that to please you would be the greatest happiness I could know. I love you."

Miss Nugent sat silent, and a strong sense of the monstrous unfairness of such a sudden attack possessed her. Such a declaration she felt ought to have been led up to by numerous delicate gradations of speech, each a little more daring than the last, but none so daring that they could not have been checked at any time by the exercise of a little firmness.



"If you would do anything to please me," she said at length in a low voice, and without turning her head, "would you promise never to try and see me or speak to me again if I asked you?"

"No," said Hardy, promptly.

Miss Nugent sat silent again. She knew that a good woman should be sorry for a man in such extremity, and should endeavour to spare his feelings by softening her refusal as much as possible, little as he might deserve such consideration. But man is impatient and jumps at conclusions. Before she was half-way through the first sentence he leaned forward and took her hand.

"Oh, good-bye," she said, turning to him, with a pleasant smile.

"I am not going," said Hardy, quietly; "I am never going," he added, as he took her other hand.

Captain Nugent, anxious for his supper, found them there still debating the point some two hours later. Kate Nugent, relieved at the appearance of her natural protector, clung to him with unusual warmth. Then, in a kindly, hospitable fashion, she placed her other arm in that of Hardy, and they walked in grave silence to the house.

THE END.

[*In next month's number Mr. Jacobs will commence a series of complete short stories.*]

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The Most Sensational Motor Ride.

KILPATRICK'S RUSH DOWN A CHUTE.

By Winston Spencer.

MERICA is the land of sensationalism. The man, or for that matter the woman either, in work or amusement who can create a sensation is idolized by the crowd. Especially is this the case with regard to recreation. The more daring, risky, and novel the achievement, the more enthusiastic plaudits does it receive from the general public. This spirit of daredevilry is responsible for the widespread popularity of Mr. Charles Kilpatrick, famous for his remarkable and intrepid accomplishments upon the bicycle.

Kilpatrick's feats are rendered all the more striking from the fact that he has only one leg. Several years ago he had the misfortune to have his right leg so badly crushed under a railway train that it had to be amputated near the thigh. Yet apparently he does not miss the member to any great extent, since he is as agile on his solitary leg as the majority of those who still retain their two limbs.

MR. CHARLES KILPATRICK ON HIS MOTOR-CAR.
From a Photo.

He first leaped into notoriety ten years ago by riding down the steps of the west side of the Capitol at Washington upon a safety bicycle, as the result of a wager. Other intrepid cyclists had previously ridden down the steps upon the east front, but even the most daring of these aspirants to fame declined to repeat the achievement upon the west front, owing to the exceptional steepness of the steps. Still this fact had no terrors for Kilpatrick, and he descended them mounted upon an ordinary safety bicycle without incurring any mishap. This feat had never been accomplished before and has never been emulated since.

The success of this attempt prompted Kilpatrick to repeat the performance for the edification of the general public. The ride down the Capitol steps had been achieved by clandestine means, since, had the authorities gleaned any information of the fact, they would have promptly prevented Kilpatrick from rushing to what was apparently certain destruction. Consequently only the parties to the wager were privileged to witness the event. Kilpatrick returned to New York, constructed a long flight of steps similar to those at Washington, and rode down them twice a day before large audiences at the Madison Square Gardens.

The event was a tremendous success, and Kilpatrick became known as the most daring cyclist in the world. He toured all through the States, and subsequently visited South Africa, where his performance created

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as great a *furore* as it had in his own country.

When he returned home Messrs. Forepaugh and Sells, the well-known circus proprietors, desired a striking sensational act with which to open this year's season in New York, and they inquired whether Kilpatrick could supply them with such a turn. At first the cyclist was at a loss to devise some novelty, since he did not wish to repeat his cycling performance. He wanted to give his fellow-citizens something novel, startling, and up-to-date. Suddenly he thought of the automobile, and decided to utilize this latest means of locomotion for creating a sensation. He went to the circus managers and laid before them his scheme. It was this. He would erect a long chute placed at a sharp angle stretching from the ground just wide enough to admit the automobile, would race up this, turn his machine round at the top, and then rush down again at full speed. The idea was warmly welcomed by the managers, and Kilpatrick immediately set to work to have the chute constructed.

KILPATRICK RIDING DOWN THE CHUTE ON A CYCLE.
From a Photo.

This structure was extremely massive and heavy in character. It was about 140ft. in length by 5ft. in width. The chute was constructed in three sections to facilitate transport and to enable the structure to be accommodated upon the railroad-cars, since the projector contemplates repeating the performance in other cities.

The flooring of the incline consisted of boards laid transversely upon heavy beams, securely braced and bolted together to obviate any possibility of the erection collapsing and dashing the intrepid rider to the ground. The chute was only 6in. in excess of the width of the car, leaving a space of 3in. upon either side to allow for steering-way. It will thus be recognised that the steering lever required a steady, iron hand to hold it, since even a little deviation from the straight course would have thrown the vehicle off the track, to which no protecting rails were placed at the sides. The track was not prepared in any way to retard the pace of the automobile in its descent, but a little powdered resin was distributed upon the boards to prevent the wheels from slipping as much as possible.

The automobile employed by Kilpatrick was of the conventional type made by the Mobile Company of America. It was not built specially for the undertaking, but supplied direct from the stock-room. The vehicle is of the steam type, with gasoline as fuel. The machine weighs 750lb. The nominal steam pressure is 160lb. to the square inch, but for this particular purpose owing to the stiff gradient to be climbed the steam pressure was increased a little.

Kilpatrick purchased two machines, one being kept in reserve in case of a breakdown to the other. This particular type of machine

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is easy and convenient to control, since a reversing lever fitted to the side serves to set the vehicle either for forward or backward motion, while a similar small lever placed upon the same side controls the power. The steering is actuated by a lever placed in front of the driver and the powerful brake is applied by the foot.

While the construction of the chute was in progress Kilpatrick was rehearsing for his act upon the steep hills in the suburbs of Tarrytown and Sing Sing. Notwithstanding the steepness of the hills in this district, none approached the angle of the chute. Still, this practising served to enable him to become acquainted with the vehicle, and to maintain a firm hold of the steering lever so that the car travelled in a straight course down the plane. He also, as shown in the illustration, rode down the chute on his bicycle.

THE MOTOR-CAR ASCENDING THE CHUTE.
From a Photo.

Kilpatrick entered the ring seated in his car and slowly rode round to the foot of the chute. Then, setting the course of his machine, he backed a few feet in order to obtain the necessary start. The power lever was thrown over, and with a whizz he rushed up the inclined plane at full speed, the escaping steam, under the high pressure that was being exerted in order to propel the car, hissing like an ascending rocket. In a few seconds he had gained the platform at the summit of the chute, and nimbly sprang out of the vehicle and turned it round preparatory to the descent. The ascent had been impressive, but the downward run was far more so. With one hand firmly grasping the steering gear, the other hand placed on the power lever, his foot near the brake, in case some unforeseen accident should occur and render it necessary to bring the car to a standstill, and with his eye fixed upon the bottom of the plane, the daring rider slowly started. Once the whole body of the car had passed over the crown of the incline it rapidly gained momentum, and plunged downwards with terrific velocity. When a few feet distant from the bottom the momentum was so great that the machine on one or two occasions swerved slightly and skidded sideways. Only a narrow three inches on either side of the car preserved it from destruction. Had the rider lost his presence of mind, or slightly moved the steering handle, the motor-car would have left the track and precipitated its daring rider to instant death. It speaks volumes for Kilpatrick's presence of mind, nerve, and judgment to say that the vehicle, both in its upward and downward journeys, scarcely deflected from the straight line.

Kilpatrick has earned a reputation for intrepidity, but he assured me that riding down this narrow plane in this car was a far greater tax upon his nerves than riding down the steps upon his safety bicycle. In the latter case the only danger to be feared was the collapse of the cycle underneath him, but since it was strongly and rigidly built he entertained no apprehensions on this score. With the automobile circumstances were widely different; the mechanism of a vehicle of this description is composed of so

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many intricate parts, the failure of any one of which might prove disastrous. Then again there was the weight of the car to take into consideration. This alone was sufficient to hurl it down the incline at a terrific pace.

Kilpatrick had never ridden up this plane previous to the first performance. On this occasion a catastrophe was narrowly averted. He travelled up the incline, and the moment the front wheels had reached the platform at the top he shut off steam. The result was that the heaviest portion of the machine, including himself, still remained upon the incline, and immediately it began to run backwards. The situation was grasped by his brother and two other assistants who were waiting at the top, and they rushed forward and just managed to haul the machine to safety in the nick of time. A second later it would have rushed backwards down the chute, and no application of the brake could have stopped it, so that it would have been dashed to pieces at the bottom or else fallen over the side.

THE MOTOR-CAR RUSHING DOWN THE CHUTE.
From a Photo.

From an evanescent point of view it does not appear to be a great feat to travel up the plane, but it must be remembered that the exceptional steepness of the gradient was a severe strain upon the driving capacity of the engine. The nearest escape Kilpatrick experienced was on the occasion upon which he was riding up the incline, when, about half-way up, the lever failed and the car rushed violently down backwards. Kilpatrick was nonplussed for the moment, but he instantly regained his presence of mind and firmly held the steering lever. The car had attained such velocity that the brake at first failed to act, and it was only brought to a standstill two or three inches away from the wall of the arena.

On another occasion when he reached the platform at the top of a building, owing to momentary preoccupation, he omitted to shut off the steam, with the result that he crashed into the masonry wall of the building. But these have been the only misadventures that he has suffered, though he informed me that he would sooner ride down the steps at the Capitol a dozen times to every single descent he made in his automobile down this sharp chute. One night a young lady, ambitious to experience the sensation of whizzing down the track at lightning speed, accompanied Kilpatrick on his trip, but the excursion was sufficiently exhilarating to deter her from repeating the ride. The fact that only three inches on either side of the car protected her from eternity was too much for her. Probably the majority of spectators would pronounce the performance as a foolhardy feat. Such may be the case, but as an exemplification of iron nerves, cool judgment, and level-headedness the achievement would be difficult to excel.

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Old Maids' Charity.

By John Oxenham.

Author of "God's Prisoner," "Rising Fortunes," "A Princess of Vascovy," "Our Lady of Deliverance," etc., etc.

HEN the Misses Georgine and Pauline de Nerval kept school at Rochellaine, just outside the village of Willstead, I enjoyed the unique privilege of visiting there on something more than terms of simple friendship. For Charles de Nerval, their nephew, had been my dearest friend, and when he joined Charles Leslie Kay in his bold attempt to cross the Great Australian Desert, and never returned, my grief and my loss were as their own. The common sorrow made us nearly kin, and whenever I tired of men and things and craved a breath of sweeter life, I went out to Rochellaine and found it in the simple companionship of two of the sweetest souls that ever cultivated a tiny corner of God's great garden.

My visits did not greatly tax their slender, and at that time gradually failing, resources. A cup of tea and the sight of their faces and the sound of their voices and the unconscious recharging of one's depleted stores of faith and hope and charity through simple contact with them were all I asked, and no one ever came away from Rochellaine wanting.

They were both getting on in years, and the consciousness that their working days ought really to have been over lay heavy on them at times. But no outward and visible sign of it ever escaped them, except possibly in a slight accession of exasperation on the part of Miss Pauline concerning one Todhunter, whom she regarded as the incarnation of perplexing malevolence, because he had had the misfortune to edit the algebra book she used for the fourth form. She vituperated him according to the complexity of the problem she had to prepare for the next lesson, and subjected him, in the person of his book, to much vicarious indignity. One of the regrets of her life was that she could not meet him face to face.

Miss Georgie, the elder sister, attended to the household matters, mothered the girls, and was just that much the sweeter saint in that she and Todhunter were not even on nodding terms. She had very real problems of her own, however, which tried her equanimity to the utmost and would have turned a less sweet soul to vinegar. She considered these light afflictions, however, compared with Pauline's, and when her sister and Todhunter were engaged in mortal combat she would sit with her work as quiet as a mouse and watch her with a sympathetic awe that came near to reverence, much as an early Christian might have watched her kinswoman suffering beasts in the arena.

It must have been the hospitable, homely look of the old house, lying back from the common among its ivy and roses and ancient trees, which sent every passing beggar to its gates. There was a legend in the school that Miss Georgie had once sent one importunate away empty. He had called one day and had been given food for the sake of his sick wife and five starving children. And the next day he called again and demanded more food, and this time, through an unfortunate lack of memory or a superfluity of other things, he asserted, with decorative emphasis, that he had five sick wives and one starving child, which aroused even gentle Miss Georgie's suspicions. She eventually got rid of him by calling to the rescue a mythical dog of unheard-of ferocity and rattling the chain of the gardener's shed as though she were unloosing him.

The girls at Rochellaine were always so exceptionally charming that I once taxed Miss Georgie with rigorously excluding all who did not come up to a certain standard of good looks. She admitted that they always were nice girls, but solemnly denied the other imputation.

"We take them as they are, and, *ma foi!* we are not in the position to refuse any who offer, and we do our best with them," she said.

And the best, when two such blue-blooded old gentlewomen put their souls into it, was very good indeed. As I have said before, they taught many things not always taught in schools, and it is possible that good looks depend less on regularity of features than we sometimes think, and that a plain face lighted from within gives us more pleasure than the most classic perfection which lacks soul. Certain it is that the girls at Rochellaine, with their shining hair, and shining eyes, and shining faces, all seemed to partake of the gentle grace of the dear little old ladies themselves. To sit and watch them flitting among the trees on a dusty summer afternoon, to catch the sparkle of their bright eyes, to hear the music of their voices and their rippling laughter — every voice at

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"HE ASSERTED, WITH DECORATIVE EMPHASIS, THAT HE HAD FIVE SICK WIVES AND ONE STARVING CHILD."

Rochellaine was like music, and every laugh was like the rippling of brooks, Miss Georgie's own especially—was like translation to a promised land after durance vile among Egyptian bricks.

It seems incredible that souls so sweet and already so burdened as these gentle mistresses of Rochellaine should have been preyed upon by other and less needy and still less scrupulous adventurers than those of the back gate. But it was so, and they had many a tale of innocent betrayal to tell.

One day there marched into their drawing-room a tall, thin, elderly gentleman, whose light frock-coat and broad-brimmed wide-awake and rugged face and grey chin-whisker proclaimed him an American in advance of his own pronouncement.

Miss Pauline, whose duty it was to receive the first attack of strangers, promptly rang up reinforcements, and when Miss Georgie entered the stranger uncoiled himself to his full height and, taking her hand and working it solemnly like a pump-handle, said :—

"I'm vurry glad to make your acquaintance, Miss Dennerval. My name's Samuel P. Huckaback, of Rochester, New York. I've just quit business in that city, after forty years' hard work, without more'n three weeks' holiday in all that time. Seemed to me I was due a decent vacation, and so I decided to spend a whole year in Yurrup. And my two gaels, when they heard of it, they said they was bound to come, too. Their maw died two years ago, an' I couldn't find in my heart to leave 'em behind, so I just brought 'em along. But I kain't tote 'em around with me everywhere, and it seemed to me the best thing I could do was to find some good school where they'd be imbibing some English notions and p'r'aps a bit more polish than Rochester affords, while I was taking a preliminary look round. Then, maybe, I could take 'em for a break to some of the places they want to say they've been to, Rome and Paris and Switzerland and that, and so I reckoned we'd be able to combine pleasure and profit. I was at my banker's, Scotts, of Lombard Street, this morning, and happened to say I was looking out for a school for the gaels, and Mr. John Scott he said, 'Mr. Huckaback, you go right straight to Mansion House Station and take a return ticket for Willstead, and see the Miss Dennervals at Rochellaine. It's the best school in England.'"

"So good of him," murmured Miss Georgie. "Mr. Scott was at school here himself, and so was his wife, and we have two of their children here now."

"I've a very high respect for Mr. John Scott," said Mr. Samuel P. Huckaback. "He's a white man all through, and if there's one thing I respect it's a man that's white all through. They ain't any too many nowadays. So I up and away and made a bee-line for this house, and here I am like the other little Samuel"—a reference which puzzled Miss Georgie till midnight, when she laughed out in her sleep. "The gaels are at the Metropole, unless they've wandered out to look at the stores and got lost. They're good gaels. Susie, she's fifteen, and Pollie,

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she's fourteen. And they're smart gaels too in their books, but there's things outside books I'd like 'em to learn, and unless I'm mistaken, and it ain't often I am, they can learn it here."

"Very good of you to say so," murmured Miss Georgie.

"So, if you'll make me out the bill for say six months for the two, I'll bring them down with their boxes day after to-morrow, and I'll give you a cheque right now for the amount."

"Oh, but there is no need," began Miss Georgie, with that involuntary little deprecating flutter of the hands with which she always received the offer of money, however much it might be needed at the moment.

"Short reckonings make long friends," said Mr. Huckaback. "That's been my motto all through, an' I ain't goin' to alter it now I've pulled out. Sold my business at Rochester for a million dollars two months ago, ma'am," he said, with natural pride, "and it was a bargain at that. But when a man gets to sixty, and never had more'n three weeks' holiday since he was a boy, he kind of hankers to take things easy and let others have a go at it."

"Surely!" murmured Miss Georgie. "What a terrible amount of money! Whatever can you do with it all?"

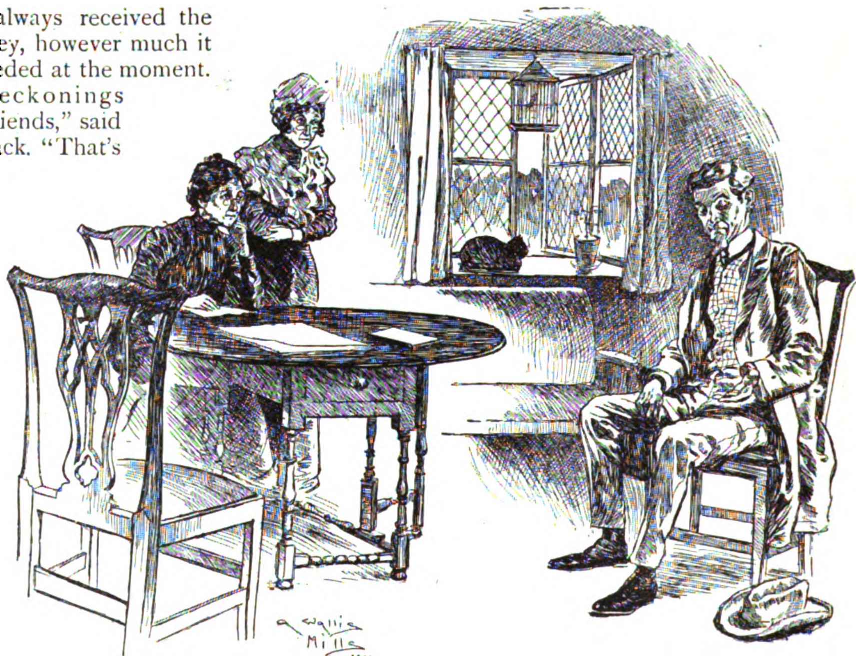
"Oh, I reckon I can find a use for some of it, and I guess them gaels o' mine'll find a use for the rest when my time's up," he said, with a quiet laugh.

He had got out his cheque-book, and Miss Pauline had made out the half-year's bill on the most liberal scale her tender conscience would permit. Mr. Huckaback glanced at the amount only to see the total, and sat down and wrote out a cheque at once on Scott and Sons' Bank in Lombard Street.

Then, as he put away his cheque-book, he dug his long brown hand into his deep trouser-pocket and fished up some silver and a piece of gold and looked at it thoughtfully.

"Now I wonder," he said, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "if you could cash me a little cheque for myself. I promised to go out to Windsor to see a man there that we met on the steamer. And it seems to me I'd sooner ask you to cash my cheque than him. What say? Don't, if you——"

"Oh, certainly!" said Miss Georgie, hurling herself bodily into the spider's net. "Pauline, dear, just see—— How much would you like, Mr. Huckaback?"



"HE FISHED UP SOME SILVER AND A PIECE OF GOLD AND LOOKED AT IT THOUGHTFULLY."

"Well, let me see," and he reckoned up his probable expenditure at Windsor; "say £10 if you can manage it—if not——"

"Just see what there is, Pauline, dear"—and Miss Pauline went away to look, while Miss Georgie explained, "We don't keep very much money in the house, as a rule"—which was an undoubted fact and at times a trying one—"but I know there is some, because one or two of last quarter's accounts have just been paid. They don't all pay in advance," she sighed. "I wish they did. But"—with a flattering little smile—"they haven't all got a million dollars in the bank, I wish they had."

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"It does make a difference to one's feelings," said Mr. Huckaback.

Miss Pauline came back with two £5-notes, and Mr. Huckaback promptly wrote out a cheque for £10.

"I am obliged to you, Miss Dennerval," he said, as he shook hands automatically with them. "Day after to-morrow I'll be round with the gaels and their things, and I take it vurry kindly of Mr. Scott to have sent me here"; and he went away.

"Things are brightening, Pauline," said Miss Georgie, with conviction.

"I hope so, dear," said Miss Pauline, pensively. "I hope it's all right." You see, much striving with Todhunter had given her a comprehensive grasp of business matters, and a certain suspicious distrust of figures in the abstract, as of one personally acquainted with the misleading pranks they could play.

"Why, Pauline, of course it's all right. The cheques are on John's own bank."

"Y-yes!" said Miss Pauline. "I know, dear——" and forbore more.

"We'll take them over to John to-night and ask him to bring us the money to-morrow," said Miss Georgie, and so they did.

"Well, I'll be—er! You don't mean to say that old—er——" said Mr. John Scott, when he saw the cheques and heard the story. The sudden breaks in his flow of speech were occasioned by wifely check-glances from Mrs. Scott.

"What's the matter, John?" asked Miss Georgie, anxiously. "There's nothing wrong with them, is there?"

"Oh, dear me, no!" said Mr. Scott, very red in the face through wifely suppression. "I know Huckaback. He's a bit strange in his ways sometimes."

"But you did tell him to come to us, didn't you?" asked Miss Pauline.

"Well, now, is it likely I'd send him anywhere else?" said Mr. Scott, as he lit a cigar with extreme care.

"No; of course not," said Miss Georgie, promptly. "The girls are to come the day after to-morrow. And I liked Mr. Huckaback extremely, though his style of talking was certainly very strange. I hope the girls won't talk like that."

"I shouldn't think it likely," said Mr. Scott. "I shall come round and see if they're up to Rochellaine standard."

"We'll soon bring them up to standard when we get hold of them," said Miss Georgie.

When they had gone home—it was only three doors away—Mrs. Scott asked, "Is he a swindler, John?"

"Of course he is," said Mr. Scott, "and if you hadn't scowled at me I'd have blurted it out. He's one of the arrantest rogues out. He got our cheque-book from another American who had an account with us last year. But how he got it I don't know. Stole it, maybe. We've had dozens of his cheques presented, and he's never had a cent with us. It's too bad——"

"They mustn't lose their ten pounds, John," said Mrs. Scott.

"Of course not. I'll send it to them to-morrow, and lie like a broker to explain the rest. I'll tell them Huckaback is wrong in the head and hasn't any girls, but thinks he has. He's placed those girls in every school round London, I should say, and done uncommonly well out of them."

Miss Georgie still considers Mr. Samuel P. Huckaback a good specimen of the free-handed, wealthy American, and mourns over his affliction. But Miss Pauline—thanks to Todhunter—probably appraises him more nearly at his proper value.

But that was nothing to the Nurse Clive episode, which was for long one of the mysteries of the little ladies' lives. Their speculations on that subject would fill a book.

Nurse Clive appeared quietly one day in the drawing-room at Rochellaine and captured them completely.

She was tall and graceful, with a sweet, purposeful, and rather sad face, and very telling, large dark eyes. She was dressed in a tasteful nurse's costume of dark serge, and she was eminently well bred in speech and manner and just a trifle nervous.

She asked for a prospectus, and after a glance at it said:—

"I am just home on furlough from India and Egypt after three years' service in the military hospitals. My brother is chaplain to the forces in Madras. His wife has just died, and he has sent his two little girls home and has asked me to find a good school for them. It was Lieutenant-Colonel Fitzroy who gave me your name and address——"

"His daughters were with us for five years," said Miss Georgie.

"Yes, he told me so. He said that my little nieces would find a home here, and that is what I want. I nursed Colonel Fitzroy at Cairo, when he was down with fever. My brother's letter found me there,

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and that is how I came to speak of the matter to the Colonel."

"We would do our very best to make them happy here," said Miss Georgie, "if you decide to leave them in our charge."

"I am sure I could not do better, and it will be a very great relief to me to know that they are in such good hands. You see, I must return to my duties. In fact, they would hardly let me come away," she said, with a pleasant laugh. "But after three years of crowded hospital work I really longed for the voyage and a few weeks in England. Even when you're used to it it is trying to the nerves when actual fighting is going on. It made one's heart bleed to see some of those splendid boys all smashed and broken"; and Miss Georgie and Miss Pauline shivered sympathetically.

Just then the dinner-gong sounded.

"We are just going to have lunch," said Miss Georgie. "Perhaps you would stop and have some with us?"

"Thank you!" said Nurse Clive, hesitating one moment. "I shall be very glad to stop and see the other girls. I am always interested in girls."

"Perhaps you would like to wash your hands," said Miss Georgie, and led her up to her sister's bedroom, which was rather better furnished than her own. "And afterwards I will show you the rooms and we can arrange for your little nieces coming. Are they stopping with you in London?"

"They arrive on the *Poonah* the day after to-morrow. I had booked my passage or I would have waited for them. I think it will be best for me to meet them and bring them straight here. I am stopping at Lady Clontarf's town house in Piccadilly, but it is hardly worth while taking them there just for one night."

"Bring them straight to us by all means," said Miss Georgie. "We will make them feel quite at home, and take every care of them."

NURSE CLIVE.

"By the way, my brother writes that Ellen, the elder girl, is a trifle delicate, and suggests that for some slight extra payment I should endeavour to procure them some little extra privileges at first, such as a fire in their bedroom when it is cold, and so on. You see, being used to the Indian climate, they may feel the change somewhat."

"Certainly," said Miss Georgie. "We had a similar arrangement with another little girl who came to us from India. Her parents paid £1 a month extra during the winter term for little matters of that kind. She was with us for four years. She, too, was delicate at first, but she became quite strong before she left us."

"If you will do as much for my little nieces I shall be very grateful to you," said Nurse Clive. "You will find them both quiet and rather shy children, I believe. That is a family disability. But I am sure they will very soon feel quite at home here, and I know you will be good to them."

"You may be quite sure of that," said Miss Georgie, and she left Nurse Clive to her toilet.

When she came down to the dining-room the girls were all awaiting her in a state of high expectation, and her appearance fully satisfied them. Her dress, now that the long cloak was laid aside, had the severe simplicity of an undress uniform, and fitted her shapely figure with masculine exactitude. On her breast she wore the Royal Red Cross. The girls were delighted. They could hardly eat any dinner. Every one of them in her own mind vowed she would become a military nurse as soon as she left school, and already saw herself looking just exactly like the distinguished personage who sat at Miss Georgie's left hand.

Nurse Clive understood their feelings and talked brilliantly to the little ladies for their benefit. She described the things she had seen: the heroism with which ghastly wounds were borne, the unselfishness of man to man,

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the devotion of her own branches of the Service. And she talked extremely well. She had professionally attended quite a number of distinguished personages, and had met at one time or another almost everyone with whose names the newspapers had familiarized them; and she had bright little reminiscences of them all. None of them ever forgot that dinner.

After dinner, while Miss Pauline and the fourth form wrestled with Todhunter and the rest were all busy, Miss Georgie and Nurse Clive sat in the drawing-room and talked on, or rather Nurse Clive talked while Miss Georgie listened with rapt attention.

"She played upon me like a piano," said Miss Georgie afterwards. "She made me laugh and she made me cry, and—*eh bien!*—I do not understand it, but she had truly a most marvellous power of speech, and her eyes were eloquent beyond her words, and such a charming face! I really think she must have French blood in her."

Nurse Clive had one more surprise for the little ladies—well, perhaps more than one.

"Are you going down to see the procession to-morrow?" she asked. The morrow was the day of the Diamond Jubilee.

"No," said Miss Georgie. "It will be a sight for a lifetime, no doubt, but——"

"Then, do come, both of you, to Piccadilly. It is on the route. Lady Clontarf is on the Continent, but she begged me to make use of her house in any way I wished. You see, I had the good fortune to be of some service to her boy in India."

"That is very kind of you——" began Miss Georgie.

"You would have to come very early to avoid the crowd. Stay! I will come out for you myself in the brougham. It is at my disposal. Now will you and Miss Pauline be ready, say, by eight o'clock? It is very early, but the streets are to be closed at nine."

"We will come certainly, since you are so kind, and thank you very much, my dear," said Miss Georgie, and Nurse Clive got up to go.

"I promised to meet Dr. Mackenzie at the Guards' Hospital at five," she said.

"Oh, but you have plenty of time," said Miss Georgie. "You will have a cup of tea before you go?"

"Thank you so much, but I think I had better start at once," said Nurse Clive.

"The Guards' Hospital? Let me see—that is in——"

"Vincent Square."

"Of course. Now, how will you get there from here?"

Nurse Clive hesitated a moment, and there was in her face a mingled look of surprise and amusement and confusion, such as Miss Georgie saw at times in the faces of her girls when she caught them in some trivial lapse.

"Now, why do you ask that?" said Nurse Clive, with a twinkle in the dark eyes. "I wish you hadn't."

"Oh, my dear, I am sorry. I had no intention of annoying you. But why——"

Then Nurse Clive laughed quietly, and said, "To tell you the plain truth, Miss de Nerval, I'm going to walk, and I didn't want anyone to know. I only found out upstairs that I have lost my purse since I started. I know I had it in the train, for I put my return ticket into it. Either I dropped it or it was stolen."

"But, my dear, you cannot possibly walk from here to Vincent Square. Why, it would take you till midnight."

"Oh, not so long as that," laughed Nurse Clive.

"You must let me lend you what you need," said Miss Georgie, "and you can pay it back to me to-morrow," and she pulled out her slender purse. It contained a sovereign and a shilling and a halfpenny, and some receipted bills, and a bit of stuff she had intended to match some time ago, but had not yet seen her way to spare the money for.

"I wish you hadn't asked me that," said Nurse Clive, with evident reluctance. "I could have walked quite well, and now if I do you will feel unhappy about it."

"Most certainly I shall," said Miss Georgie. "It is not to be thought of for a moment. Pray take that, my dear," and proffered her the sovereign, and eventually prevailed on her to take it. And after a cup of tea Nurse Clive took her leave.

"Has she gone?" asked Miss Pauline, when she came in from the arena after a worse bout than usual with the enemy.

"Yes, dear. She would not let me disturb you in your class. And what do you think, Pauline? She is coming for us at eight o'clock to-morrow morning to take us to Lady Clontarf's house to see the procession."

"That is delightful," said Miss Pauline. "I was longing to go, but I wouldn't have cared to go into the crowd. I think she seems all right, don't you, Georgie?"

"Surely, dear. She is quite delightful. It was most kind of Colonel Fitzroy to remember us. She had to be at the Guards'

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Hospital in Vincent Square at five to meet a doctor there. And do you know, Pauline, she had lost her purse or had it stolen since she got into the train." Miss Pauline stiffened into sudden attention and gazed at her sister as a startled deer gazes at the distant intruder. "And I lent her a sovereign to get back with. I had only that and a shilling and a——"

But Miss Pauline was half-way up the stairs with a heavy heart for the trifling valuables which usually lay about her dressing-table.

They were all there, however. The little enamelled watch with its thin gold chain and pencil-case, the little gold brooch with its single small diamond, the other curb brooch, the thin curb bracelet in its morocco case. Nothing was missing. She took a hasty glance into the drawers. They had not been touched. But Miss Pauline remembered Mr. Huckaback, and doubted. Miss Georgie laughed gently at her w nt of faith.

"Let us go over and tell John Scott all about her, and ask what he thinks," said Miss Pauline, and in the evening they went over to the Scotts' house.

And when Miss Georgie told how she had absolutely forced Nurse Clive to take the money, John Scott laughed out in his big, hearty way, and said, "Oh, Miss Georgie, you are too good for this wicked world. I always knew it, but now I know it more. If you ask my opinion I should say Nurse Clive is, as you say, an uncommonly clever woman, and you will never hear any more of her or of her mythical nieces. However, you are only a sovereign out of pocket, and I should think you've had a good pound's worth of entertainment out of her."

"Is it possible?" gasped poor Miss Georgie.

"I really think you'll have to begin sending all applicants to me," said Mr. Scott, still laughing at thought of Miss Georgie forcing her money on the reluctant Nurse Clive. "I shall have some cards printed saying: 'We do not change cheques; we do not lend money. If you have lost your purse you can walk home. Your references will be carefully looked into by Mr. John Scott, Banker, Lombard Street.' Then you will hand every visitor a card as they come in."

"They would go away at once," said Miss Georgie, piteously.

"And she was going to take you to see the procession," laughed Mr. Scott. "Well, you sha'n't miss that, anyway. A friend of mine who had secured a window in St. Paul's Churchyard sent me word this afternoon that he couldn't use it, and asked me to do so. I was coming across to ask you to go with us. We'll call for you in the carriage

"OH, MISS GEORGIE, YOU ARE TOO GOOD FOR THIS WICKED WORLD."

about half-past eight. Give the girls a holiday, and your minds will be at ease and theirs too. How's old Tod getting on, Miss Pauline? Got the whip-hand of him yet?" You see, John Scott had been at Rochellaine himself when he was a very small boy, and he knew the little old ladies very well indeed.

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"Does Lady Clontarf live in Piccadilly, John?" asked Miss Georgie, plaintively.

"I'll be bound she does. For you might have had a Court Directory handy, and Nurse Clive wouldn't give herself away like that. Just you forget all about Nurse Clive, Miss Georgie, and don't lie awake all night thinking of her, or you'll have a headache to-morrow."

"I can't help it," said Miss Georgie; "and I can't believe it. She had such a sweet face."

"Ah!" said Mr. Scott, "you can't always judge them by their faces. Even a cheque isn't always worth its face value."

At eight o'clock next morning a neat brougham drove up to Rochellaine and Nurse Clive jumped out, and Miss Georgie received her at the door with something more in her kind eyes than the prospect of viewing all the processions in the world could have put there. The sweet old face was rosy red with self-condemnation for the harbouring of un-Christian thoughts, and her welcome was the warmer in consequence.

"So glad you had faith enough in me to expect me," said Nurse Clive. "I have been blushing all night at thought of that sovereign. Here it is, dear Miss de Nerval, and I am so grateful to you. Is Miss Pauline ready?"

Miss Pauline had been ready for half an hour lest she should keep John Scott waiting. She had taught him punctuality in his early youth, and she was not going to give herself away in her old age. Miss Georgie wrote two lines and sent them over to the Scotts' house by the maid. Just—"Dear John, Nurse Clive is *not* a fraud. She has repaid the money and we are going down with her. You will understand. Please take *all* the children in place of us.—Yours sincerely, GEORGINE DE NERVAL."

And then they got into the brougham and drove off, and Miss Pauline was self-consciously quiet all the way, and whenever her fingers touched her brooch, or her bracelet, or her watch-chain, she blushed a little at the fears she had had for them yesterday.

They saw the procession from the window of a room which they and Nurse Clive had entirely to themselves. But the two little ladies were so flustered with the crowds and the flags that they never afterwards could tell which was the house they had been in that day, though they tried to find it more than once. A nice little luncheon was brought in afterwards, which they greatly enjoyed, and Nurse Clive took them home again in the brougham when the streets were clear.

"I shall bring the girls to-morrow," she said, as they bade her good-bye. "The *Poonah* will be up about noon, so we may be here between three and four."

Between three and four next day the brougham brought her and the two little girls and their luggage. Nurse Clive had tea with them, paid the quarter's fees in advance, told Miss Georgie where to send the next accounts to, and left, amid universal regrets.

The little girls were exceedingly nice children, pleasant-faced and gentle in their manners, but reserved almost to self-effacement. They spoke little, and even Miss Georgie's motherly kindness failed to draw them out of their little shells. But they worked hard at their lessons, and bade fair to become ornaments to the school.

John Scott took quite an interest in them in penitence for his mistrust of their aunt, and Mrs. Scott's kind heart went out to them and would have done a great deal more for them than they were willing to permit. Even she had to confess herself powerless against the strange reserve of the shy little maidens.

Miss Georgie in due course, and at the right time, sent on the bill for the next term's fees to the address Nurse Clive had given.

No answer came. She might have been transferred elsewhere, and Miss Georgie's faith suffered no eclipse. That quarter ran into the next, and that into the next again. And still no response from Nurse Clive. She might be dead. The girls had received one or two letters during the first quarter, but none since. Their reserve and timidity increased. Young as they were they seemed to suffer from the situation, though never, by look or word or the inflection of a tone, did the two little old ladies give them the slightest cause for discomfort. If anything their kindness increased as the thought obtruded that it was by no means impossible that the children were left friendless on their hands.

I always had an immense admiration for the little ladies of Rochellaine. It was increased tenfold, if that were possible, by what I saw of their gentle treatment of those two small girls, Ellen and Madge Clive. Their delicate and tactful consideration was the simple outcome of the goodness of their own hearts and could not have wounded the tenderest susceptibilities. And this at a time, mind you, when they had troubles enough of their own to have soured them. But, there, troubles sour some and some they only sweeten, and the dear old ladies of Rochellaine were of the minority.

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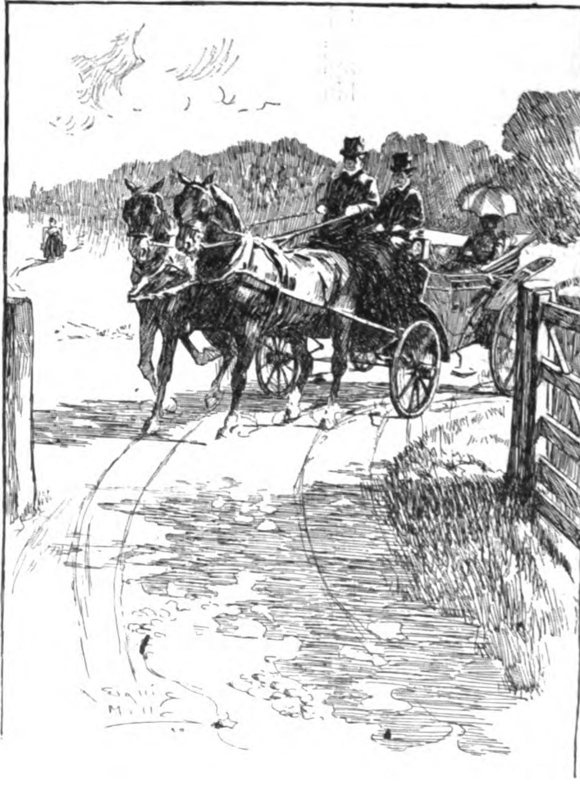
Mr. and Mrs. Scott begged to be allowed to pay the overdue accounts. Miss Georgie asked why? And they could not, without wounding her feelings, tell her why. The accounts remained unpaid, and little Ellen and Madge Clive seemed only to retreat still farther and farther into their shells.

My own idea is that they comprehended the situation perfectly, and suffered accordingly.

Terms passed and no word came from Nurse Clive and no money. The little ladies bore the addition to their burden without a murmur. Miss Georgie had always, I do believe, the secret belief that it would turn out all right in the end. Miss Pauline, I fear, had given up all hopes; but that must be put down to Todhunter. Never by so much as the flicker of an eyelid did either of them make the slightest shade of discrimination between their waifs and the other girls. Indeed, I know that there was often a bit of fire in the little Clive girls' bedroom in winter, when Miss Georgie and Miss Pauline got away early to bed because coal was dear and bed was warmer than their sitting-room.


"A VERY FINE CARRIAGE AND PAIR DROVE UP TO ROCHELLAINE."

The girls had been with them close on two years, and Miss Pauline had given up making out accounts for Nurse Clive as a work of supererogation, when one day the little old ladies had a shock, from which they have hardly recovered yet. If ever you see a look of unusually deep thought on Miss Georgie's pleasant face—not when you are speaking to her, for then she is wholly and absolutely yours, unlike some people who rudely think their own thoughts instead of listening to what you are saying to them—you may know that she is thinking of Nurse Clive.

For a very fine carriage and pair drove up to Rochellaine one day, and the powdered footman flung open the door and a tall and handsome lady got out and walked quickly to the house.

She gave no name, but asked to see Miss Georgie, and Miss Georgie knew her the moment she set eyes on her, and the sweet old face lightened with a smile.

"Dear Miss de Nerval," said the visitor, "I have come to pay off some of my debts, but there is a great deal more that I never can repay you. Please do not ask me any questions. I have come as soon as I could. I am going to take the girls with me now, Miss Georgie. We are going abroad for a time. I am sorry to take them away from you, but ——. May I see them at once, please?" she asked, hungrily.

"Surely!" said Miss Georgie. "But we shall miss them. We are all very fond of them," and she went out and sent Ellen and Madge Clive in. They flew into the tall lady's arms with suppressed little murmurs of joy, as of children long parted from a mother, and half an hour later the carriage had whirled them all out of the little ladies' lives.

"Nurse Clive" paid up all arrears and more besides, but the little ladies missed their two quiet girls.

"How beautiful she is, and how very beautifully she was dressed!" said Miss Pauline, as they talked things over that evening after the girls had gone to bed.

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"And in mourning. I wonder who she is?" said Miss Georgie.

And she would probably be wondering still, if John Scott had not happened to take her and Miss Pauline and his wife down, one night not very long ago, to see "Henry VIII." at the Lyceum. He was always planning little treats of the kind for the little old ladies, for he said he owed his wife to them and that was a debt not easily to be paid.

And at the Lyceum on this occasion they saw what interested them considerably more than the play.

For just before the curtain rose a lady came into one of the boxes on the second tier and with her two girls, all most beautifully dressed. And as soon as Miss Georgie saw them she gripped John Scott's arm and whispered, "That is Nurse Clive, John. Who *can* she be?" And during the interval Mr. Scott took a stroll and found some men he knew, and when they were going home in the train he told them all he had learned.

"A LADY CAME INTO ONE OF THE BOXES WITH HER TWO GIRLS."

"The lady you saw in the box, Miss Georgie, is the Countess of Kilgarnie. She was the daughter of a Colonel Clive, who was killed in India in one of the frontier wars. She was left alone and unprovided for and married young. Her husband, an Army man, also died in India, leaving her two little girls and practically nothing to keep them on. She managed somehow, however, and took to Army nursing. She met Kilgarnie at the Cape and nursed him through a bad bout of enteric. He fell in love with her and married her, and shortly afterwards went back to the front and was killed at Spion Kop. He was a very fine young fellow, and very wealthy, his estates having been carefully nursed during a long minority. He left her everything he could, and for his widow the fat days have succeeded the lean. They say the young Duke of Belcaster wants to marry her. But she is devoted to her girls, and will probably not tempt the gods by another matrimonial venture. And, as far as Belcaster is concerned, I should say she would be very wise. That is the story, Miss Georgie."

"And you thought she had robbed me of a sovereign!" said Miss Georgie.

"And I thought she had run off with my jewellery!" said Miss Pauline.

"Appearances were certainly against her," said Mr. Scott, "but sometimes what looks like gold is not always brass."

A saying which caused Miss Georgie to regard him thoughtfully for full ten minutes, and then she gave it up as being too abstruse for her, and wondered if Pauline had got to the bottom of it.

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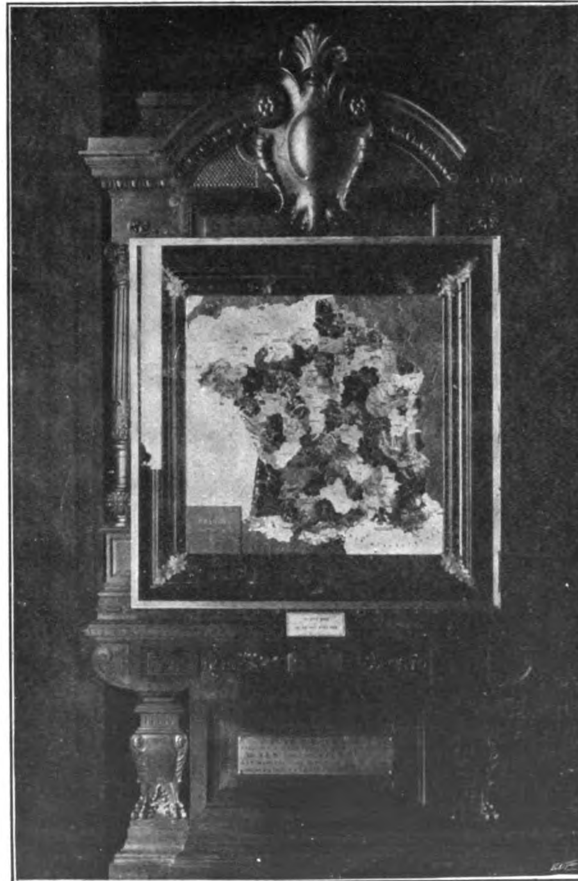
A Map of Precious Stones.

BY H. J. HOLMES.

A MAP of France, cut from the rarest jasper, flashing with costly jewels, and resplendent in gold and other precious metals! Truly a Royal gift, worthy of both giver and recipient: from the Imperial Czar of All the Russias to the great Republican nation, his friend and ally.

It is doubtful if the Czar could have chosen a gift more likely to prove acceptable to France and her people. An immortal map, which moth and rust can never destroy, appears to be a symbol of a nation that will live for ever. That the Royal giver had something of the sort in his mind when he selected his present is not for a moment doubted by the appreciative people whom the Czar thus honoured.

It was when feeling between the two countries was warmest and most brotherly that the Royal Nicholas presented his unique gift. During the exposition of 1900 this map of jewels and gold was the centre of attraction so far as French visitors were concerned. For foreigners it possessed features that lovers of art and of the curious could not resist. Rarely, whilst the magnificent gift was on public view, was it not surrounded by a crowd, which was always full of admiration and interest, and frequently of enthusiasm. Even now, adorning, as it does, a selected position in the Louvre, it still attracts a great deal of attention owing to the circumstances surrounding its presentation, as well as its magnificence of design and artistic finish. Besides, it is claimed that there is nothing in the wide world like it: as a map it is unique. The French nation is proud of it. Even the usually taciturn officials who guard the priceless treasures of the Louvre wax eloquent and discursive when courteously asked for a short account concerning it.



THE MAP OF FRANCE IN PRECIOUS STONES IN THE LOUVRE.
From a Photo.

This wonderful map was not produced without infinite pains. Thousands of Russian workmen and artists had a hand in the manipulation of its varied components.

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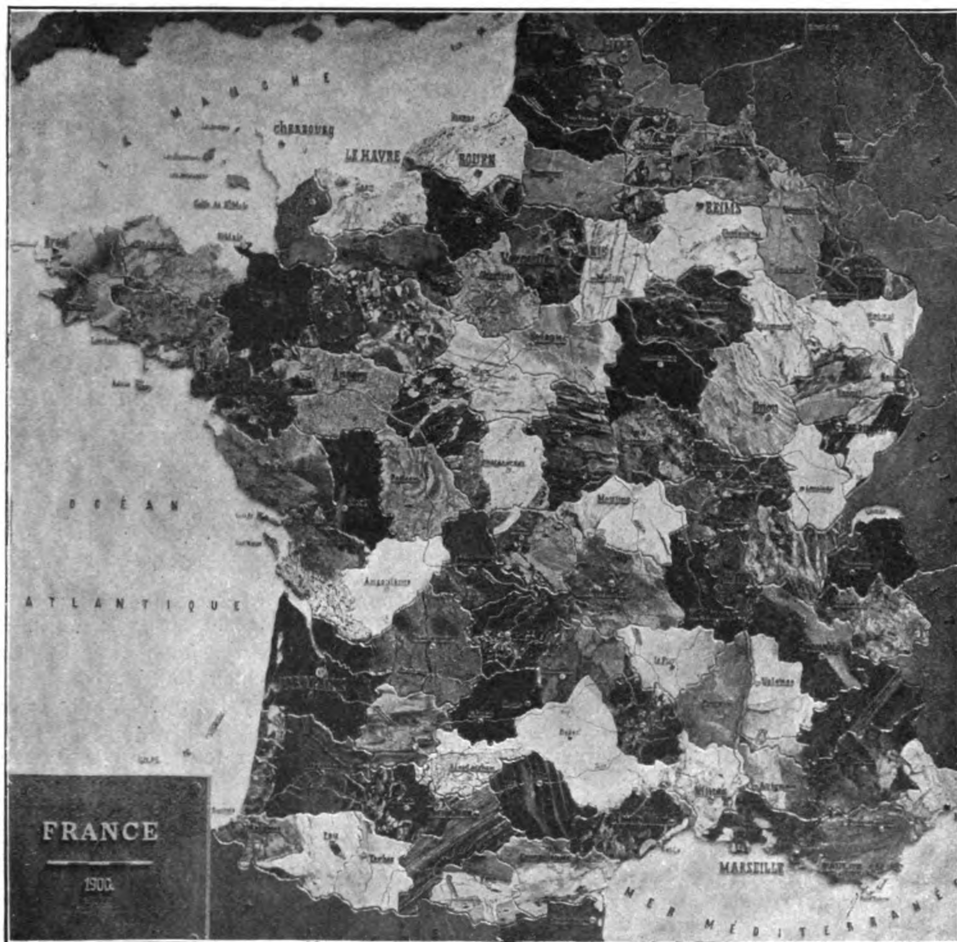
It was designed, with the personal approval of the Czar, by the distinguished Russian engineer De Mostovinko, who also superintended its production and completion. It was put together at the Imperial factory of Ekaterinburg. Months were occupied in the process. It was finished with as much care and correctness as the importance of its destination demanded. So pleased was the Czar with his map of precious stones that he warmly eulogized its designer and presented him with a decoration.

Perhaps the most interesting feature about this wonderful map is that every precious stone and jewel included in its production came from the Imperial mines in the Ural Mountains. Several of the stones are only found in those mines, and are appropriated by the Czar. Some of them are never found at all in commerce.



From a] A NEARER VIEW OF THE COMPLETE MAP. *[Photo.*

The map measures forty inches along each side, and is framed in slate-coloured jasper. The sea is represented by a pale marble, and the portions of foreign countries necessarily included—England, Germany, Italy, and Spain—are in dark grey. The whole is enclosed within a magnificently designed, heavy walnut case, elaborately carved, and standing about eight feet in height.

The formation of the various departments (or counties), as well as the surrounding seas and countries, is as perfect as that found in Governmental maps.

The whole of France is shown entirely in polished jasper, and it will be found that each department (or county) has been cut from jasper of a different colour, the whole blending without the slightest offence to the artistic eye. The mines were ransacked in all directions for the necessary material to

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ensure this effect. The large number of counties thus represented will give the reader some idea of the enormous labour bestowed by the Czar's workpeople on this portion of the undertaking. The jasper used is all of the most beautifully veined that human eye has gazed upon. The polishing is perfect. The cutting of each piece must have entailed the greatest care, so artfully are the joinings of the various departments concealed, so exquisitely do the lines meet.

From a] PART OF THE MAP SHOWING PARIS, REPRESENTED BY AN IMMENSE RUBY. [Photo.

One hundred and six of the more important towns are given: the names in letters of pure gold, the towns represented by costly jewels.

Paris is represented by a ruby of immense size and value, and it must cause commotion amongst those connoisseurs who make a pilgrimage to the Louvre for the purpose of gazing upon this magnificent collection of precious stones.

Havre boasts a beautiful emerald under its golden name, Rouen is represented by a sapphire, Lille by a phenacite (a rare variety of rock-crystal), Rheims by a chrysolite, Lyons by a tourmaline, Nantes by a beryl, Bordeaux by an aquamarine, Marseilles by an emerald, Nice by a garnet, Cherbourg by an alexandrite (a variety of chrysoberyl found in the Ural Mountains, and which looks green by day and reddish-blue by lamplight), and Toulon by a chrysoberyl.

Twenty-one other towns are represented

From a] THE NORTH-WEST COAST. [Photo.

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by amethysts, thirty-five by tourmalines, and thirty-eight by quartz-crystals.

It can easily be imagined that a map whose towns were represented by precious stones should have something equally fine to mark the country's rivers. And the expectation will not be vain. All the rivers shown in this extraordinary map are represented in platinum sunk in the jasper. To effect this the courses of the rivers had first to be cut in the stone and the platinum laid in and polished. The whole effect is very beautiful indeed.

"And a pretty penny it must have cost!" the business-like Briton mentally exclaims.

THE SOUTH COAST, SHOWING MARSEILLES (AN EMERALD) AND TOULON (A CHRYSOBERYL).
From a Photo.

That the map cost a very large amount indeed is obvious. But the exact sum which came out of the Czar's exchequer to "pay the piper" has never, of course, been made public property; nor is it likely that the information will ever be known in a general way.

Estimates by experts on this point vary very greatly, ranging from £16,000, to £80,000. A well-known Parisian jeweller has explained the reason. All the stones and jewels came from the Imperial mines, and practically the only expense was the cutting, polishing, and putting together. The stones only found in those mines (and appropriated by the Czar), never being found in commerce, consequently have no quoted value.

"In fact," said the eminent jeweller referred to, "it is probable that the map did not cost the Czar more than £16,000, if as much; but if a millionaire came to my shop and ordered one like it, I should have to charge him three or four times as much—if, indeed, I could make it at all."

However, no matter whether the Czar expended £10,000 or £100,000 in its production, this map of France, with its precious stones and gold, is regarded by Russia's ally as one of its most priceless treasures.

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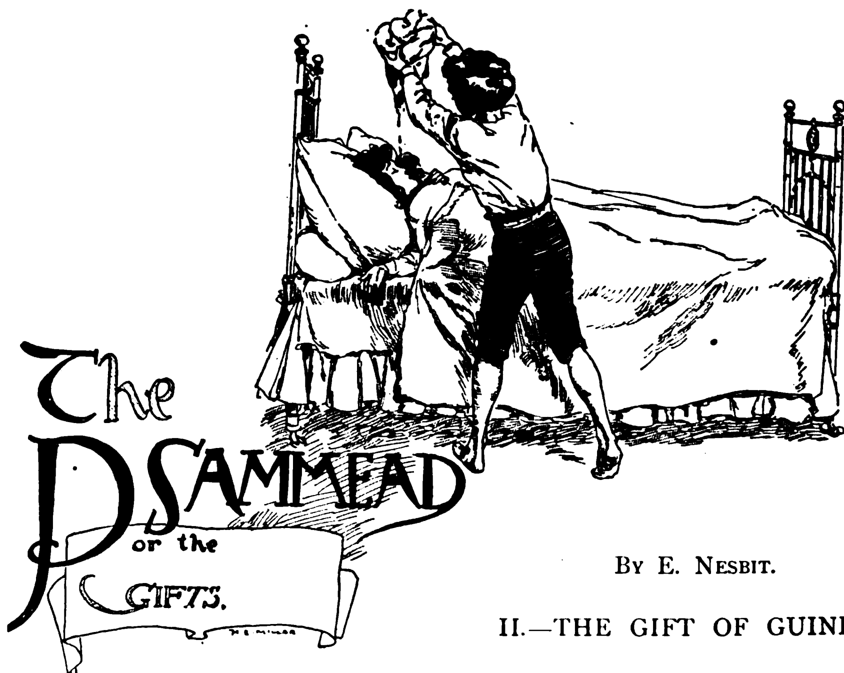

By E. Nesbit.

II.—THE GIFT OF GUINEAS.

NTHEA woke in the morning from a very real sort of dream, in which she was walking in the Zoological Gardens on a pouring wet day without any umbrella. The animals seemed desperately unhappy because of the rain and were all growling gloomily. When she awoke both the growling and the rain went on just the same. The growling was the heavy, regular breathing of her sister Jane, who had a slight cold and was still asleep. The rain fell in slow drops on to Anthea's face from the wet corner of a bath-towel which her brother Robert was gently squeezing the water out of to wake her up, as he now explained.

"Oh, drop it," she said, rather crossly; so he did, for he was not a brutal brother, though very ingenious in apple-pie beds, booby-traps, original methods of awakening sleeping relatives, and the other little accomplishments which make home happy.

"I had such a funny dream," Anthea began.

"So did I," said Jane, wakening suddenly and without warning. "I dreamed we found a sand-fairy in the gravel-pits, and it said it was a sammyadd, and we might have a new wish every day, and——"

"But that's what *I* dreamed," said Robert. "I was just going to tell you. And we had the first wish directly it said so. And I dreamed you girls were donkeys enough to ask for us all to be beautiful as the day, and we jolly well were, and it was perfectly beastly."

"But *can* different people all dream the same thing?" said Anthea, sitting up in bed, "because I dreamed all that, as well as about the Zoo and the rain, and baby didn't know us in my dream, and the servants shut us out of the house because our radiant beauty was such a complete disguise, and——"

The voice of the eldest brother sounded from across the landing:—

"Come on, Robert," it said, "you'll be late for breakfast again, unless you mean to shirk your bath, as you did on Tuesday."

"I say, come here a sec.," Robert replied. "I didn't shirk it, I had it after brekker, in father's dressing-room, because ours was emptied away."

Cyril appeared in the doorway, partially clothed.

"Look here," said Anthea, "we've all had such an odd dream. We've all dreamed we found a sand-fairy."

Her voice died away before Cyril's contemptuous glance. "Dream?" he said; "you little sillies, it's *true*. I tell you it all happened. That's why I'm so keen on being

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down early. We'll go up there directly after brekker and have another wish. Only we'll make up our minds solid before we go what it is we do want, and no one must ask for anything unless the others agree first. No more peerless beauties for this child, thank you. Not if I know it."

The other three dressed with their mouths open. If all that dream about the sand-fairy was real, this real dressing seemed very like a dream, the girls thought. Jane felt that Robert was right, but Anthea was not sure till after they had seen Martha and heard her full and plain reminders about their naughty conduct the day before. Then Anthea was sure, "because," said she, "servants never dream anything but the things in the dream-book—like snakes and oysters and going to a wedding—that means a funeral, and snakes are a false female friend, and oysters are babies."

"Talking of babies," said Cyril, "where's the Lamb?"

"Martha's going to take him to Rochester to see her cousins. Mother said she might. She's dressing him now," said Jane, "in his very best coat and hat. Bread and butter, please."

"She seems to *like* taking him, too," said Robert, in a tone of wonder.

"Servants *do* like taking babies to see their relations," Cyril said. "I've noticed it before; especially in their best things."

"I expect they pretend they're their own babies, and that they're not servants at all, but married to noble dukes of high degree; and they say the babies are the little dukes and duchesses," Jane suggested, dreamily, taking more marmalade. "I expect that's what Martha'll say to her cousin. She'll enjoy herself frightfully."

"She won't enjoy herself frightfully carrying our infant duke to Rochester," said Robert, "not if she's anything like me, she won't."

"Fancy walking to Rochester with the Lamb on your back! Oh, crikey," said Cyril, in full agreement.

"She's going by carrier," said Jane. "Let's see them off, then we shall have done a polite and kindly act, and we shall be quite sure we've got rid of them for the day."

So they did.

Martha wore her Sunday dress of two shades of purple, so tight in the chest that it made her stoop, and her blue hat with the pink cornflowers and the white ribbon. And the Lamb had indeed his very best coat and hat. It was a smart party that the carrier's cart picked up at the cross-roads. Its white tilt and red wheels had slowly vanished in a swirl of chalk dust.

"And now for the sammyadd!" said Cyril, and off they went.

As they went they decided on the wish they would ask for. Although they were all in a great hurry they did not try to climb down the sides of the gravel-pit, but went round by the safe lower road, as if they were carts. They had made a ring of stones round the place where the sand-fairy had disappeared, so they easily found the spot. The sun was burning and bright and the sky was deep blue—without a cloud. The sand was very hot to touch.

"Oh, suppose it was only a dream after all," Robert said, as the boys uncovered their spades from the sand-heap where they had buried them and began to dig.

"Suppose you were a sensible chap," said Cyril; "one's quite as likely as the other!"

"Suppose you kept a civil tongue in your head," Robert snapped.

"Suppose we girls take a turn," said Jane, laughing. "You boys seem to be getting very warm."

"Suppose you don't come shoving your silly oar in," said Robert, who was now warm indeed.

"We won't," said Anthea, quickly. "Robert, dear, don't be so grumpy—we won't say a word; you shall be the one to speak to the fairy and tell him what we've decided to wish for. You'll say it much better than we shall."

"Suppose you drop being a little humbug," said Robert, but not crossly. "Look out—dig with your hands, now!"

So they did, and presently uncovered the spider-shaped, brown, hairy body, long arms and legs, bat's ears, and snail's eyes of the psammead itself. Everyone drew a deep breath of satisfaction, for now, of course, it couldn't have been a dream.

The psammead sat up and shook the sand out of its fur.

"How's your left whisker this morning?" said Anthea.

"Nothing to boast of," it said; "it had rather a restless night. But thank you for asking."

"I say," said Robert, "do you feel up to giving wishes to-day, because we very much want an extra, besides the regular one. The extra's a very little one," he added, reassuringly.

"Humph!" said the sand-fairy. (If you read this story aloud please pronounce

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"humph" exactly as it is spelt, for that is how it said it.) "Humph! Do you know until I heard you being disagreeable to each other just over my head, and so loud, too, I really quite thought I had dreamed you all? I do have very odd dreams sometimes."

"Do you?" Jane hurried to say, so as to get away from the subject of disagreeableness. "I wish," she added, politely, "you'd tells us about your dreams—they must be awfully interesting."

"Is that the day's wish?" said the sand-fairy, yawning.

Cyril muttered something about "just like a girl," and the rest stood silent. If they said "yes," then good-bye to the other wish they had decided to ask for. If they said "no," it would be very rude, and they had all been taught manners, and had learned a little, too, which is not the same thing. A sigh of relief broke from all lips when the sand-fairy said:—

"If I do, I sha'n't have strength to give you a second wish, not even good tempers, or common sense, or manners, or little things like that."

"We don't want you to put yourself out at all about *these* things; we can manage them quite well ourselves," said Cyril, eagerly, while the others looked guiltily at each other and wished the fairy would not keep all on about good tempers, but give them one good rowing if it wanted to, and then have done with it.

"Well," said the psammead, putting out its long snail's eyes so suddenly that one of them nearly went into the round boy's eye of Robert, "let's have the little wish first."

"We don't want the servants to notice the gifts you give us."

"Are kind enough to give us," said Anthea, in a whisper.

"Are kind enough to give us, I mean," said Robert.

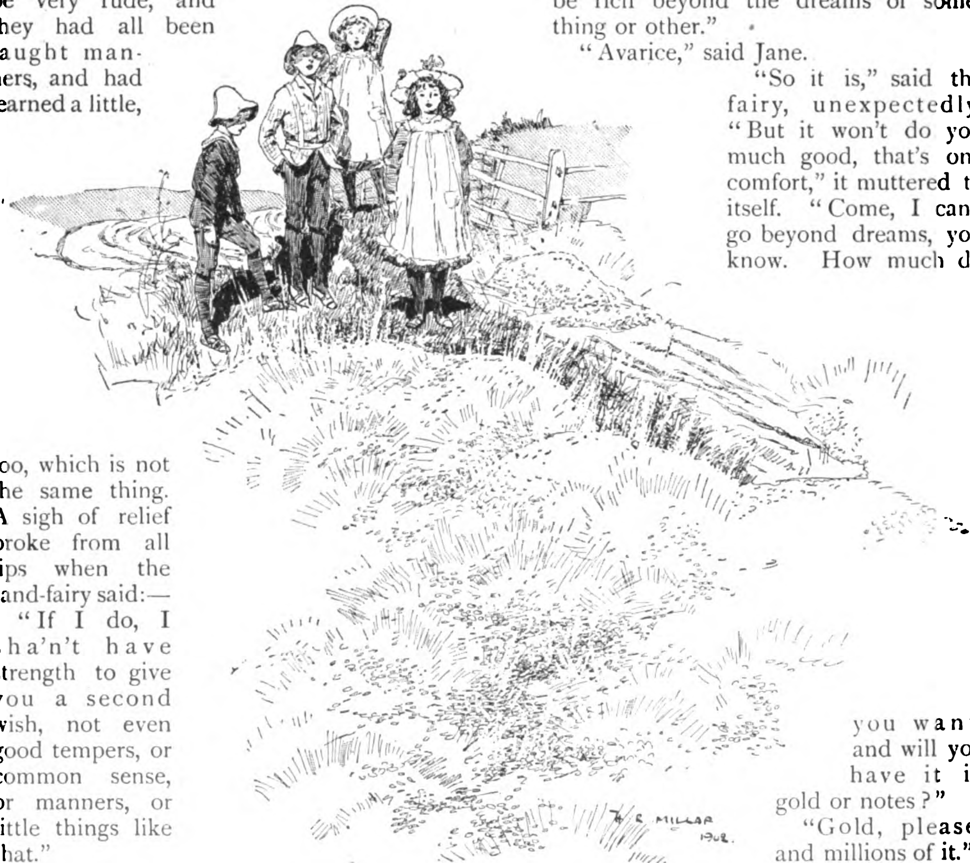
The fairy swelled itself out a bit, let its breath go, and said:—

"I've done *that* for you—it was quite easy. People don't notice things much, any way. What's the next wish?"

"We want," said Robert, slowly, "to be rich beyond the dreams of something or other."

"Avarice," said Jane.

"So it is," said the fairy, unexpectedly. "But it won't do you much good, that's one comfort," it muttered to itself. "Come, I can't go beyond dreams, you know. How much do you want, and will you have it in gold or notes?"



"AND ALL THE GLEAMING HEAP WAS MINTED GOLD."

"Gold, please, and millions of it."

"This gravel-pit full be enough?" said the fairy, in an off-hand manner.

"Oh, *yes*."

"Then get out before I begin, or you'll be buried alive in it."

It waved its long, skinny arms so frighten-

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ingly that the children ran as hard as they could towards the road by which carts used to come to the gravel-pits. Only Anthea had presence of mind enough to shout a timid "Good morning, I hope your whisker will be better to-morrow," as she ran.

On the road they turned and looked back, and they had to shut their eyes and open them very slowly, a little bit at a time, because the sight was too dazzling for their eyes to be able to bear it. It was something like trying to look at the sun at high noon on Midsummer Day. For the whole of the sand-pit was full right up to the very top with new shining gold pieces, and all the little sand-martins' tiny front doors were covered out of sight. Where the road for carts wound into the gravel-pit the gold lay in mounds like stones by the road-side, and a great bank of shining gold shelved down from where it lay flat and smooth between the tall sides of the gravel-pit. And all the gleaming heap was minted gold. And on the sides and edges of these countless coins the midday sun shone and sparkled and glowed and gleamed till the quarry looked like the mouth of a smelting furnace, or one of the fairy halls that you see sometimes in the sky at sunset.

The children stood with their mouths open, and no one said a word.

At last Robert stooped and picked up one of the loose coins from the edge of the heap by the cart-road and looked at it. He looked on both sides. Then he said in a low voice, quite different from his own, "It's not sovereigns."

"It's gold, any way," said Cyril, and now they all began to talk at once. They all picked up the golden treasure by handfuls and let it run through their fingers like water, and the chink it made as it fell was wonderful music. At first they quite forgot to think of spending the money, it was so nice to play with. Jane sat down between two heaps of gold and Robert began to bury her, as you bury your father in sand when you are at the sea-side and he has gone to sleep on the beach with his newspaper over his face. But Jane was not half-buried before she cried out: "Oh, stop, it's too heavy, it hurts."

Robert said "Bosh" and went on.

"Let me out, I tell you," cried Jane, and was taken out, very white and trembling a little.

"You've no idea what it's like," said she; "it's like stones on you, or like chains."

"Look here," Cyril said, "if this is to do us any good it's no good our staying garping at it like this. Let's fill our pockets and go and buy things. Don't you forget it won't last after sunset. I wish we'd asked the sammyadd why things don't turn to stone. Perhaps this will. I'll tell you what, there's a pony and cart in the village."

"Do you want to buy that?"

"No, silly, we'll *hire* it; and then we'll go to Rochester and buy heaps and heaps of things. Look here, let's each take as much as we can carry. But it's not sovereigns. They've got a man's head on one side and a thing like the ace of spades on the other. Fill your pockets with it, I tell you, and come along. You can jaw as we go, if you must jaw."

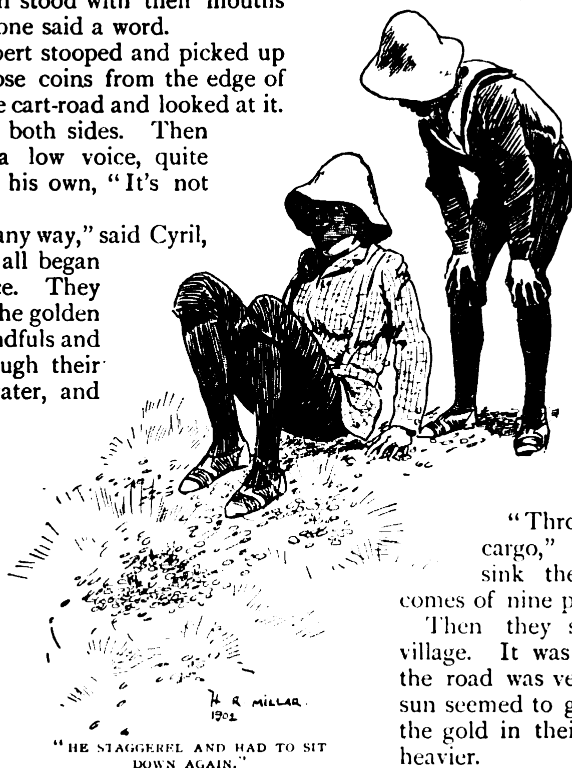
Cyril sat down and began to fill his pockets.

"You made fun of me for getting father to have nine pockets in my Norfolks," said he, "but now you see."

They did. For when Cyril had filled his nine pockets and his handkerchief, and the space between himself and his shirt-front, with the gold coins he tried to stand up. But he staggered and had to sit down again in a hurry.

"Throw out some of the cargo," said Robert. "You'll sink the ship, old chap. That comes of nine pockets."

Then they set off to walk to the village. It was more than a mile, and the road was very dusty indeed, and the sun seemed to get hotter and hotter and the gold in their pockets got heavier and heavier.



"HE STAGGERED AND HAD TO SIT DOWN AGAIN."

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It was Jane who said, "I don't see how we're to spend it all. There must be thousands of pounds among the lot of us. I'm going to leave some of mine behind this stump in the hedge, and directly we get to the village we'll buy some biscuits; I know it's long past dinner-time." She took out a handful or two of gold and hid it in the hollows of an old hornbeam. "How round and yellow they are!" she said; "don't you wish they were gingerbread-nuts and we were going to eat them?"

"Well, they're not and we're not," said Cyril. "Come on."

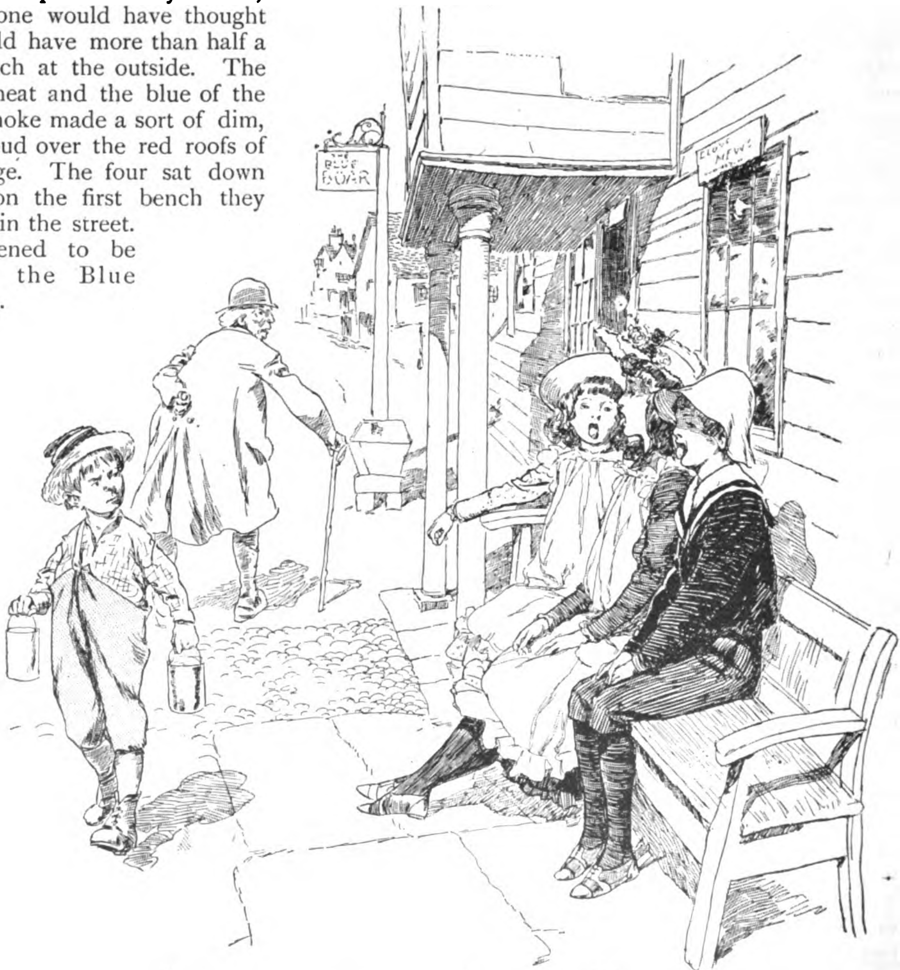
But they came on heavily and wearily. Before they reached the village more than one stump in the hedge concealed its little hoard of hidden treasure. Yet they reached the village with about twelve hundred guineas in their pockets. But in spite of this inside wealth they looked quite ordinary outside, and no one would have thought they could have more than half a crown each at the outside. The haze of heat and the blue of the wood smoke made a sort of dim, misty cloud over the red roofs of the village. The four sat down heavily on the first bench they came to in the street. It happened to be outside the Blue Boar Inn.

It was decided that Cyril should go into the Blue Boar and ask for ginger-beer, because, as Anthea said, "It is not wrong for men to go into public-houses—only for children. And Cyril is nearer being a man than us, because he is the eldest." So he went. The others sat in the sun and waited.

"Oh, hats, how hot it is!" said Robert. "Dogs put their tongues out when they're hot. I wonder if it would cool us at all to put out ours?"

"We might try," Jane said, and they all put their tongues out as far as ever they could go, so that it quite stretched their throats, but it only seemed to make them thirstier than ever, besides annoying everyone who went by. So they took their tongues in again just as Cyril came back with ginger-beer.

"I had to pay for it out of my own two-



"THEY ALL PUT THEIR TONGUES OUT."

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and-sevenpence, though, that I was going to buy rabbits with," he said. "They wouldn't change the gold—and when I pulled out a handful the man just laughed and said it was card-counters. And I got some sponge-cakes, too, out of a glass jar on the bar counter, and some biscuits with caraways in."

The sponge-cakes were both soft and dry—and the biscuits were dry too, and yet soft, which biscuits ought not to be. But the ginger-beer made up for everything.

"It's my turn now to try to buy something with the money," Anthea said. "I'm next eldest. Where is the pony-cart kept?"

It was at the Chequers, and Anthea went in the back way, to the yard, because they all knew that little girls ought not to go into the bars of public-houses. She came out, as she herself said, "pleased but not proud."

"He'll be ready in a brace of shakes, he says," she remarked, "and he's to have one sovereign to drive us in to Rochester and back, besides waiting there till we've got everything we want. I think I managed very well."

"You think yourself jolly clever, I dare say," said Cyril, moodily. "How did you do it?"

"I wasn't jolly clever enough to go taking handfuls of money out of my pocket to make it seem cheap, any way," she retorted. "I just found a young man doing something to a horse's legs with a sponge and a pail, and I held out one sovereign and I said, 'Do you know what this is?' He said, 'No,' and he'd call his father. And the old man came and he said it was a spade guinea, and he said, 'Was it my own to do as I liked with?' And I said 'Yes.' And I asked about the pony-cart, and I said he could have the guinea if he'd drive us into Rochester, and he said, 'Right, oh!'"

It was a new sensation to be driven in a smart pony-cart along pretty country roads. It was very pleasant, too (which is not always the case with new sensations), quite apart from the beautiful plans of spending the money which each child made as they went along—silently, of course, and quite to itself, for they felt it would never have done to let the old innkeeper hear them talk in the affluent sort of way they were thinking in. The old man put them down by the bridge at their request.

"If you were going to buy a carriage and horses, where would you go?" asked Cyril, as if he were only asking for the sake of something to say.

"Billy Peasemarsh, at the Saracen's Head," said the old man, promptly. "Though all forbid I should recommend any man where it's a question of horses, no more than I'd take anybody else's recommending if I was buying one. But if your pa's thinking of a turn-out of any sort, there ain't a straighter man in Rochester nor a civiller spoken than Billy, though I says it."

"Thank you," said Cyril. "The Saracen's Head."

And now the children began to see one of the laws of Nature turn upside down and stand on its head like an acrobat. Any grown-up person would tell you that money is hard to get and easy to spend. But the fairy money had been easy to get, and spending it was not only hard, it was almost impossible. The tradespeople of Rochester seemed to shrink to a tradesperson from the glittering fairy gold ("furrin money" they called it, for the most part). To begin with, Anthea, who had had the misfortune to sit on her hat earlier in the day, wished to buy another. She chose a very beautiful one trimmed with pink roses and the blue breasts of peacocks. It was marked in the window, "Paris model, three guineas."

"I'm glad," she said, "because if it says guineas it means guineas, and not sovereigns, which we haven't got."

But when she took three of the spade guineas in her hand, which was by this time rather dirty owing to her not having put on gloves before going to the gravel-pit, the black silk young lady in the shop looked very hard at her, and went and whispered something to an older lady, also in black silk, and then they gave her back the money and said it was not current coin.

"It's good money, and it says guineas on the hat," said Anthea, "and it's my own."

"I dare say," said the lady, "but it's not the kind of money that's fashionable now, and we don't care about taking it."

"I believe they think we've stolen it," said Anthea, rejoining the others in the street; "if we had gloves they wouldn't think we were so dishonest. It's my hands being so dirty fills their minds with doubts."

So they chose a humble shop, and the girls bought cotton gloves, the kind at sixpence-three-farthings, but when they offered a guinea in payment the woman looked at it through her spectacles and said she had no change, so the gloves had to be paid for out of what was left of Cyril's two-and-sevenpence that he meant to buy rabbits with. and so had the green imitation

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crocodile-skin purse at ninepence-halfpenny which had been bought at the same time. They tried several more shops, the kinds where you buy toys, and scent, and silk handkerchiefs, and books, and fancy boxes of stationery, and photographs of objects of interest in the vicinity. But nobody cared to change a guinea that day in Rochester, and as they went from shop to shop they got dirtier and dirtier, and their hair got more and more untidy, and Jane slipped and fell down on a part of the road where a water-cart had just gone by. Also they got very hungry, but they found no one would give them anything to eat for their guineas. After trying two pastry-cooks in vain, they became so hungry, perhaps from the smell of the cake in the shop, as Cyril suggested, that they formed a plan of campaign in whispers and carried it out in desperation. They marched into a third pastry-cook's—Beale, his name was—and before the people behind the counter could interfere each child had seized three new penny buns, clapped the three together between its dirty hands, and taken a big bite out of the triple sandwich. Then they stood at bay, with the twelve buns in their hands and their mouths very full indeed. The shocked pastry-cook bounded round the counter.

"Here," said Cyril, speaking as distinctly as he could and holding out the guinea he had got ready before entering the shop, "pay yourself out of that."

Mr. Beale snatched the coin, bit it, and put it in his pocket.

"Off you go," he said, brief and stern, like the man in the song.

"But the change," said Anthea, who had a saving mind.

"Change!" said the man; "I'll change you! Hout you goes, and you may think yourselves lucky I don't send for the police to find out where you got it."

"MR. BEALE SNATCHED THE COIN AND BIT IT."

In the Castle gardens the millionaires finished the buns, and though the curranty softness of these was delicious, and acted like a charm in raising the spirits of the party, yet even the stoutest heart quailed at the thought of venturing to sound Mr. Billy Peasemarsh at the Saracen's Head on the subject of a horse and carriage. The boys would have given up the idea, but Jane was always a hopeful child and Anthea generally an obstinate one, and their earnestness prevailed.

The whole party, by this time indescribably dirty, therefore betook itself to the Saracen's. The yard-method of attack having been successful at the Chequers, it was tried again here. Mr. Peasemarsh was in the yard, and Robert opened the business in these terms:—

"They tell me you have a lot of horses and carriages to sell." It had been agreed that Robert should be spokesman, because in books it is always gentlemen who buy horses and not ladies, and Cyril had had his go at the Blue Boar.

"They tell you true, young officer," said Mr. Peasemarsh. He was a long, lean man, with very blue eyes and a tight mouth and narrow lips.

"We should like to buy some, please," said Robert, politely.

"I dare say you would."

"Will you show us a few, please, to choose from?"

"Who are you a-kiddin' of?" inquired Mr. Billy Peasemarsh. "Was you sent here of a message?"

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"I tell you," said Robert, "we want to buy some horses and carriages, and a man told us you were straight and civil spoken, but I shouldn't wonder if he was mistaken."

"Upon my sacred," said Mr. Peasemarsh. "Shall I trot the whole stable out for your honour's worship to see? Or shall I send round to the Bishop's to see if he's a nag or so to dispose of?"

"Please do," said Robert, "if it's not too much trouble. It would be very kind of you."

Mr. Peasemarsh put his hands in his pockets and laughed, and they did not like the way he did it. Then he shouted, "Willum."

A stooping ostler appeared in a stable-door.

"Here, Willum, come and look at this 'ere young dook; wants to buy the whole stud, lock, stock, and bar'l! And ain't got tuppence in his pocket to bless hisself with, I'll go bail."

Willum's eyes followed his master's pointing thumb with contemptuous interest.

"Do 'e, for sure?" he said.

But Robert spoke, though both the girls were now pulling at his jacket and begging him to "come along." He spoke and he was very angry; he said:—

"I'm not a young duke, and I never pretended to be. And as for tuppence—what do you call this?" And before the others could stop him he had pulled out two fat handfuls of shining guineas and held them out for Mr. Peasemarsh to look at. He did look. He snatched one up in his finger and thumb. He bit it, and Jane expected him to say, "The best horse in my stables is at your service." But the others knew better. Still, it was a blow, even to the most desponding, when he said, shortly:—

"Willum, shut the yard doors"; and Willum grinned and went to shut them.

"Good afternoon," said Robert, hastily, "we sha'n't buy any of your horses now, whatever you say, and I hope it'll be a lesson to you." He had seen a little side gate open and was moving towards it as he spoke. But Billy Peasemarsh put himself in the way.

"Not so fast, you young off-scouring," he said. "Willum, fetch the pleece."

Willum went. The children stood huddled together like frightened sheep, and Mr. Peasemarsh spoke to them till the "pleece" arrived. He said many things. Among other things he said:—

"Nice lot you are, aren't you, coming tempting honest men with your guineas?"

"They *are* our guineas," said Cyril, boldly.

"Oh, of course, we don't know all about that, no more we don't. Oh, no, course not. And dragging little gells into it, too. 'Ere—I'll let the gells go if you'll come along to the pleece quiet."

"We won't *be* let go," said Jane, heroically, "not without the boys. It's our money just as much as theirs, you wicked old man."

"Where'd you get it, then?" said the man, softening slightly.

Jane cast a silent glance of agony at the others.

"Lost your tongue, eh? Got it fast enough when it's for calling names with. Come, speak up. Where'd you get it?"

"Out of the gravel-pit," said truthful Jane.

"Next article," said the man.

"I tell you we did," Jane said. "There's a fairy there—all over brown fur—with ears like bats and eyes like snails, and it gives you a wish a day, and they all come true."

"Touched in the head, eh?" said the man, in a low voice; "all the more shame to you boys dragging the poor afflicted child into your sinful burglaries."

"She's not mad, it's true," said Anthea; "there *is* a fairy. If I ever see it again I'll wish for something for you—at least, I would if vengeance wasn't wicked, so there!"

"Lor' lumme," said Billy Peasemarsh, "if there ain't another on 'em!"

And now Willum came back, with a spiteful grin on his face and at his back the policeman, with whom Mr. Peasemarsh spoke long in a hoarse, earnest whisper.

"I dare say you're right," said the policeman at last. "Any way, I'll take 'em up on a charge of unlawful possession pending inquiries, and the magistrate will deal with the case. Send the afflicted ones to a home, as likely as not, and the boys to a reformatory. Now, then, come along, youngsters. No use making a fuss. You bring the gells along, Mr. Peasemarsh, sir, and I'll shepherd the boys."

Speechless with rage and horror, the four children were driven along the streets of Rochester. Tears of anger and shame blinded them, so that when Cyril ran right into a passer-by he did not recognise her till a well-known voice said, "Well, if ever I did! Oh, Master Robert, whatever have you been a-doing of now?" And another voice, quite as well known, said, "Panty! Want go own Panty!"

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They had run into Martha and the baby. Martha behaved admirably. She refused to believe a word of the policeman's story or Mr. Peasemarsh's either, even when they made Robert turn out his pockets in an archway and show the guineas.

"THEY HAD RUN INTO MARTHA AND THE BABY."

"I don't see nothing," she said. "You've gone out of your senses, you two. There ain't any gold there, only the poor child's hands, all over crock and dirt and like the very chimbley. Oh, that I should ever see the day!"

And the children thought this very noble of Martha, even if rather wicked, till they remembered how the fairy had promised that the servants should never notice any of the fairy gifts. So, of course, Martha couldn't see the gold, and so was only speaking the truth; and that was quite right, of course, but not extra noble.

It was getting dusk when they reached the police-station. The policeman told his tale to a sergeant, who sat in a large, bare room with a thing like a clumsy nursery fender at one end to put prisoners in. Jane wondered whether it was a cell or a dock.

"Produce the coins, officer," said the sergeant.

"Turn out your pockets," said the constable.

Cyril desperately plunged his hands in his pockets, stood still a moment, and then began to laugh an odd sort of laugh, that hurt and that felt much more like crying. His pockets were empty. So were the pockets of the others. For, of course, at sunset all the fairy gold had vanished away.

"Turn out your pockets and stop that noise," said the sergeant.

Cyril turned out his pockets, every one of the nine which enriched his Norfolk suit. And every pocket was empty!

"Well?" said the sergeant.

"I don't know how they done it—artful little beggars. They walked in front of me the 'ole way, so as for me to keep my eye on them and not to attract a crowd and obstruct the traffic."

"It's very remarkable," said the sergeant, frowning.

"If you've quite done brow-beating of the innocent children," said Martha, "I'll hire a private carriage, and we'll drive home to their papa's mansion. You'll hear about this again, young man. I told you they hadn't got any gold, when you were pretending to see it in their poor, helpless hands. It's early in the day for a constable on duty not to be able to trust his own eyes. As to the other one, he keeps the Saracen's Head."

"Take them away, for goodness' sake," said the sergeant, crossly. But as they left the police-station he said, "Now, then," to the policeman and Mr. Peasemarsh, and he said it twenty times as crossly as he had spoken to Martha.

Martha was as good as her word. She

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took them home in a very grand carriage, because the carrier's cart was gone, and though she had stood by them so nobly with the police she was so angry with them as soon as they were alone, for "trapseing into Rochester by themselves," that none of them dared to mention the old man with the pony-cart from the village, who was waiting for them in Rochester.

"HE SAID, 'NOW, THEN,' TO THE POLICEMAN AND MR. PEASEMARSH.'

And so, after one day of boundless wealth, the children found themselves sent to bed in deep disgrace, and only enriched by two pairs of cotton gloves, dirty inside because of the state of the hands they had been put on to cover, an imitation crocodile-skin purse, and twelve penny buns, long since digested.

The thing that troubled them most next day was the fear that the old gentleman's guinea might have disappeared at sunset with all the rest, so they went down to the village next day to apologize for not meeting him in Rochester and to *see*. They found him very friendly. The guinea had ***not*** disappeared, and he had bored a hole in it and hung it on his watch-chain. As for the guinea the baker took, the children felt they *could* not care whether it had vanished or not, which was not perhaps very honest, but, on the other hand, was not wholly unnatural. But afterwards this preyed on Anthea's mind, and at last she secretly sent twelve stamps by post to "Mr. Beale, Baker, Rochester." Inside she wrote: "To pay for the buns." I hope the guinea did disappear, for that pastry-cook was really not at all a nice man.

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*Curiosities.**

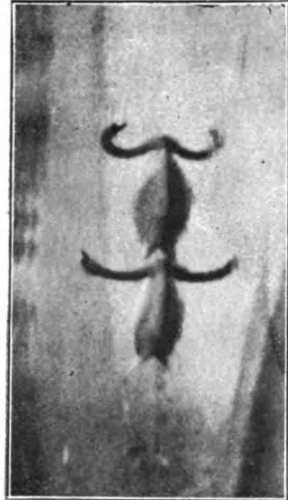
[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

AN EAGLE RISING.

"This is a most happy and probably unique snapshot of an eagle just rising from the ground with outstretched wings poised ready for flight, and its prey tightly clutched in its claws. It is not given to many people on this side of the water to see wild eagles, and if one did, by chance, get so close one has not always a camera ready to snap at it."—Mrs. Mariquita J. Moberley, Ravensbury Gardens, Mitcham.

A CORONATION APPLE.

"This is a photograph of an apple decorated with a portrait of His Majesty, and may not be without interest to readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. The means employed was an ordinary paper stencil plate applied when the apple was nearly its full size, but before it had begun to acquire any colour. This particular specimen was grown in France; but the custom of thus decorating fruit is essentially a German one, and is employed in that country for the decoration of plums, pears, and even pumpkins. It is particularly applied in the matter of 'good wishes' for birthdays or greetings for Christmas and Easter."—Mr. C. Pring, 66, Lupus Street, Pimlico, S.W.



WHAT IS THIS?

"I beg to send you photograph of two 'swans' on the Bolingbroke Pond. When I photographed them I had no idea they would appear so grotesquely absurd when shown in an unnatural position. The right-hand side is really the bottom of the picture."—Mr. Duncan Milligan, F.R.A.S., 21, Spencer Road, New Wandsworth, S.W.

RIDING HIS "HOBBY-HORSE."

"In country districts one often comes across an ancient bicycle still in use, and apparently little the worse for age. The one in the photograph is a genuine old hobby-horse driven by the toes of the rider touching the ground, and the boy was enjoying himself vastly on a gentle slope when we came round the corner."—Mr. Robert Elson, Acre Nook, Alderley Edge, Cheshire.

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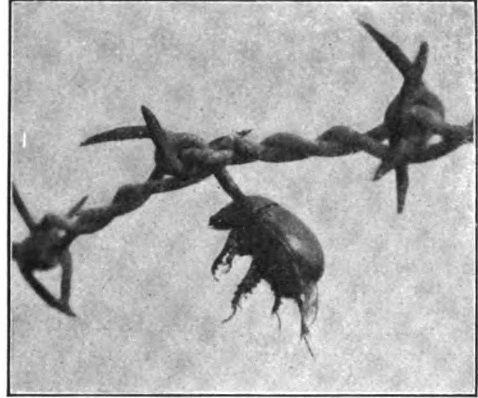
A TOWER BUILT OF FRUIT.

The Westchester County Agricultural Society has gained the honour of having, at an exhibition, one of the most unique and appropriate of attractions. It consisted of a tower of fruit and vegetables as shown in the accompanying photograph. The design of this tower of fruit shows more than artistic skill. Each panel or circle had to be constructed with relation to its neighbour in size, shape, and colour, and it was most successfully accomplished. It must have required a great amount of thought and considerable patience in its building. The neat designs on the base were made of various nuts, while on the ledges and corners can be seen the squash, citron, and other large products of the field. The circle of small cabbages at the base of the column is quite noticeable, and apples played a prominent part in the decoration. Other hard fruits were also used. The upper portion or capital of the column was built of grain, and above all rose a flag-pole. Photograph sent by Mr. H. L. Varian, of Mount Vernon, New York.

A TRAGEDY IN BEETLE LIFE.

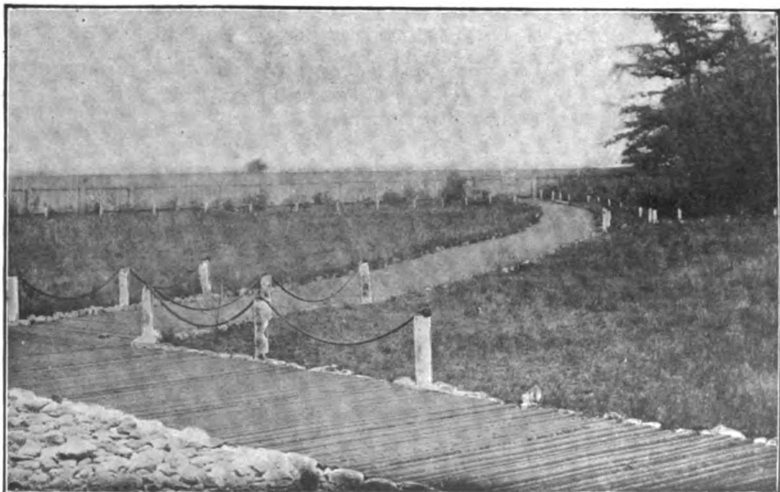
Here is a photograph illustrating a curious tragedy in beetle life. This beetle, being perhaps short-sighted, flew on to a spike of a fence of barbed wire. It is not the work of the butcher bird, as the victim had no



companions, and was untouched for about a week, when a spider found it; also, its position was horizontal, as it would be in flight. Mr. T. K. Evans, 7, Clarendon Villas, Oxford, is responsible for this contribution.

THE HANDY MAN'S ROADWAY.

Lieutenant A. E. Ruxton, of H.M.S. *Arethusa*, China Station, writes: "I enclose the following photograph, taken by me at Comox, Vancouver Island, B.C.; it shows a handy man's roadway when no other material was available, and is a good example of the handy man's ingenuity. The spit on which this rifle range is built consists of deep, loose sand, except for the two plots of grass in the photo., and, no stones or timber being available, a large number of condemned boiler-tubes were brought from Esquimalt Dockyard and laid down. The whole range, houses, butts, and firing points, etc., were built by Jack. A rough estimate in round numbers of the boiler-tubes is about 150,000."



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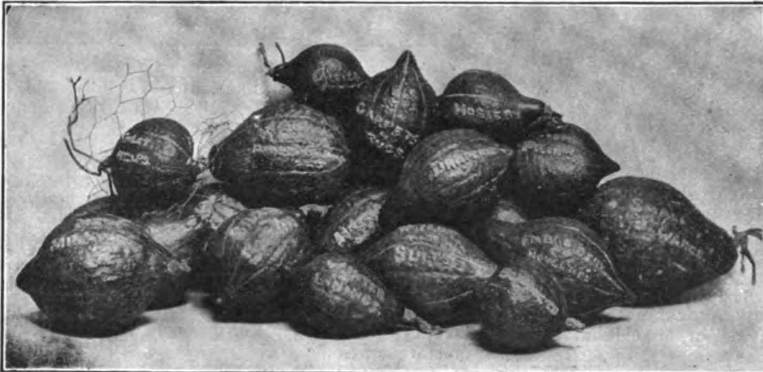
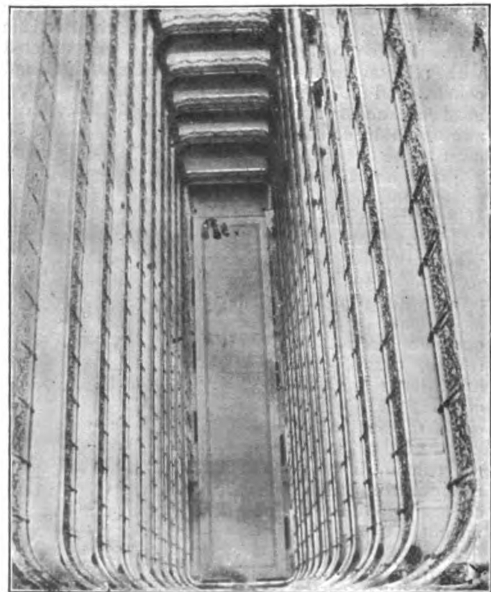
A PECULIAR ACCIDENT.

Le Roy R. Foulkes, 40, Spring Street, Utica, N.Y., who sends us this photograph, says: "The enclosed picture was taken in Utica, N.Y., Nov. 19, 1900, after a very heavy wind storm. The telegraph pole is the freakish part of the picture. A piece of the pole 15ft. or 20ft. long was broken out between the lower cross-arm and 7ft. from the bottom of the pole, the upper part being supported by the wires. The accident, I should say, was due to the fact that a very large tree was blown down, falling on the wires some 100ft. away." Were it possible to know the weight of the wood in the cross-bars, and of the glass in the insulators, our young students of physical science would have a good opportunity for estimating the strain, due to gravity, of this pendent body on the wires. So far as we can judge from the photograph, those standing on the scene of the accident were troubled by no such thoughts as these. They were content merely to witness damage done by storm.



LOOKING DOWNWARD.

"Please find enclosed photograph for Curiosities. It is a picture of the court in the Chamber of Commerce Building, Chicago, Ill., taken from the thirteenth story, with the camera pointing downwards. My friends stand below."—Edna M. Stillwell, 634, N. Lawrence Avenue, Wichita, Kansas.



EDUCATED SQUASHES.

"Enclosed please find photo. of 'educated squashes' which were grown by me in the summer of 1900. They are the old-fashioned Mother Hubbard squashes; when they were small I cut the letters in them, and the sap escaping formed well-made raised letters. I exhibited nineteen of these squashes in the dry goods window of Kennedy and MacInnes, Pittsfield, Mass. They were arranged and displayed with a lace and insertion bordering by their decorator, Mr. Tonkin, and made a handsome window. They attracted much attention, many people thinking the letters made and fastened to the squashes."—Wallace O. Shipton, 80, Wellington Avenue, Pittsfield, Mass.

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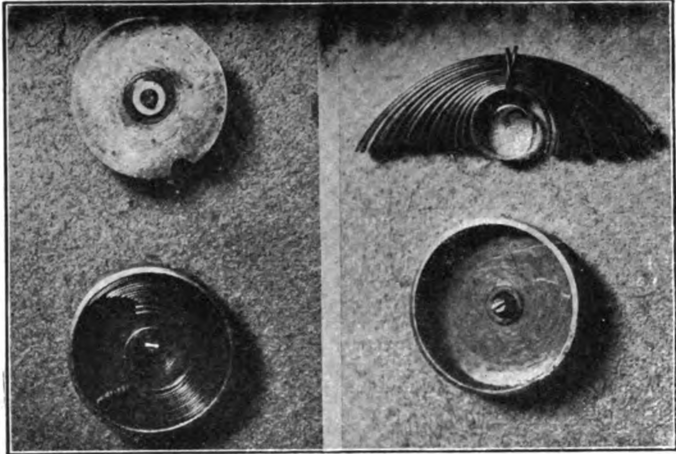
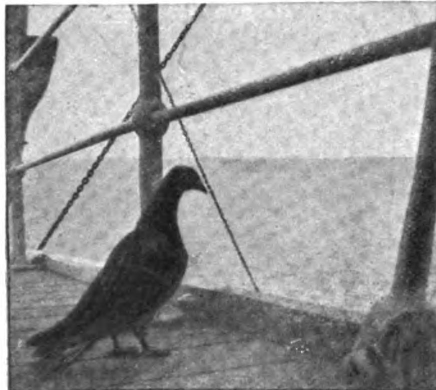
JACK FROST AND THE WATCH.

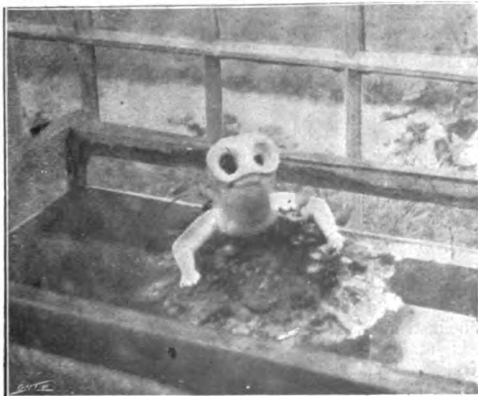


"Having seen your request for curious photographs, I thought the enclosed might prove useful as showing the remarkable effect of a sharp frost on the mainspring of a watch which was brought to me for repair. It was wound up and placed for the night on a marble mantelpiece; the next morning it had stopped. On taking out the barrel which contains the spring I found the latter broken through every coil, as shown in the photo. on the left (barrel with spring inside, cover removed). I counted the pieces and found there were fourteen instead of two, as usual when broken--thirteen breaks. Photo. on the right shows spring removed from barrel and the pieces bound together with a bit of wire in their proper order. I forgot to state that the watch was an English lever."—Mr. H. E. Warner, 80, Netherwood Road, West Kensington Park.

AN ADVENTUROUS PIGEON.



"I enclose a photograph of a pigeon that flew off to the steamship *Nyanza* after she had left the Land's End (England) a day. This pigeon stayed on board the entire passage to Canada and also returned to England on the ship. She again came to Montreal, where the bird mated with another pigeon and deserted the ship. The pigeon had a ring on its right leg and there were some words stamped on the inside of the wing, which could not be deciphered. The bird could have left the ship at any time it wished, but it evidently liked its quarters too well to leave till it found a mate at Montreal. The photograph was taken with a 1dol. camera on board ss. *Nyanza*. The words on the bird's wing we thought were 'Boston, Norfolk,' but were not certain."—Mr. Frank Harvey, Trois Rivières, Province of Quebec, Canada.

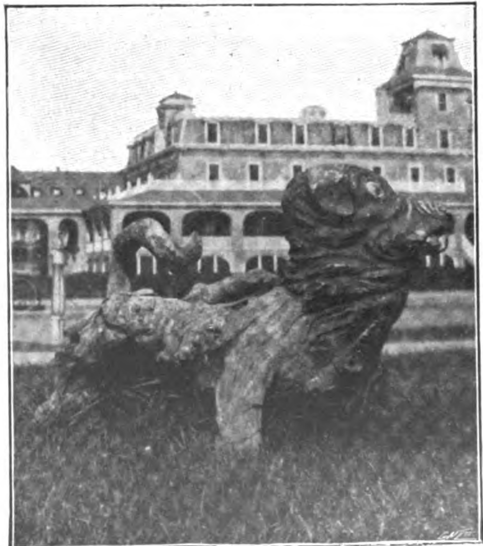


NOT A WATER MONSTER.

"The photo. I send you looks like the portrait of a remarkable creature emerging from the water in our aquarium. It is, however, only a broken doll which our baby has left lying on the rockery!"—Miss Madeline Turner, 161, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich.

A WOODEN DOG.

"Herewith a photo. of the 'Wooden Dog' at Asbury Park, N.J. It was washed up by the ocean several years since and is a very interesting curiosity. It is natural wood upon which there has been but little carving done, the body and tail being exactly as formed by Nature and the head practically so."—Miss Louise G. Hart, 518, "B" Street, N.E. Washington.



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A CURIOUS STUDIO.

"In Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California, is the trunk of a gigantic tree which is being put to the very odd use of a sculptor's studio. It offers plenty of room for stands, models, mounds of clay, and spectators, for the immense tree-butt has been hollowed out till it forms a room a little over 35ft. across. The outside diameter of the trunk is 38ft. 9in. When standing in its native glory the tree was over 325ft. high. Its trunk is now a relic of the big Mid-winter Fair held in Golden Gate Park in 1893. Once there they set it on a brick foundation, topped it with a circular-peaked shingle roof pierced with a skylight, touched up the rough wood finish of the interior, and in this fashion furnished one of the most curious structures on the Fair grounds. It was not exactly the kind of an office that a business man cares to move around with him, so when the Fair was over the exhibitors presented it to the Park Commission. Later on, when M. P. Nielsen, the sculptor, was selected to do some work on park statuary, he quickly realized the unique advantages of transforming it into a studio. The accompanying photographs show how well he has succeeded. In one of them Mr. Nielsen is seen standing beside the tree-trunk; the other is a picture of the interior showing some of the artist's work."—E. Wollens, 2020, Pine St., San Francisco, Cal.

WHAT IS A "PUSH-BALL"?

"Whilst journeying through the City recently I was in the neighbourhood of the athletic goods factory of Mr. Frank Bryan, outside which the enclosed photograph was being taken. I elicited the fact that this is the largest football that has ever been made, but was not intended for football, but for a game called 'Push-Ball,' a sort of tug-of-war reversed. I am sending this photo. to you thinking it might be of interest to your numerous readers. I might mention the smaller ball on the man's hand is an ordinary size match football."—Mr. W. G. Tarr, 82, Kilravock Street, Queen's Park, W.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE SEE-SAW.

"Enclosed is a photo. of a relation of mine sitting upon a 'see-saw.' The camera was placed upon the lower end of the plank and inclined upwards. The instrument was made by Kodak, Ltd."—Mr. F. Decimus Gordon, 96, Cotham Brow, Bristol.

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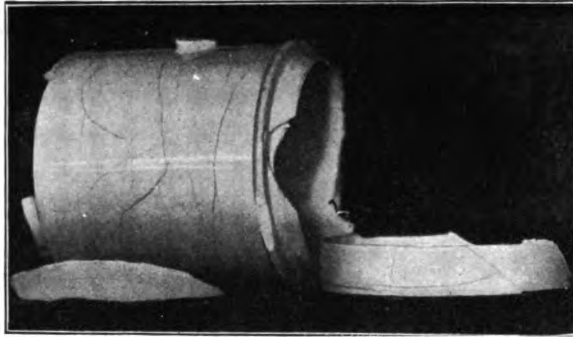
A CHINA POT THAT GROWS.



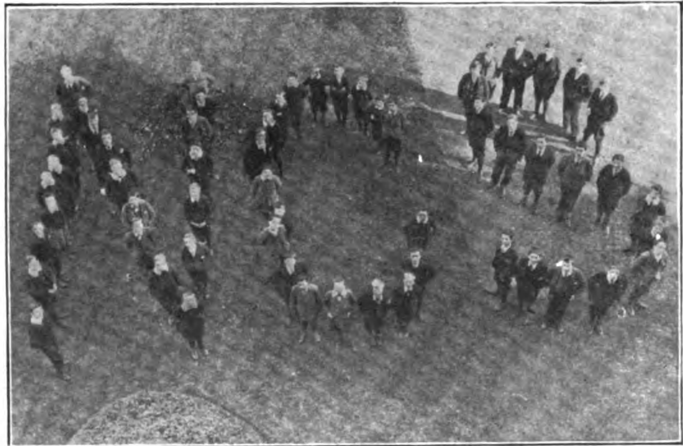
"I enclose a photo. for your Curiosities of a jar originally containing ointment from a chemist, which has taken to growing. It commenced growing in 1886, and has continued ever since. Its growth consists of pieces apparently cracking off, only instead of coming loose they rise up on crystals which gradually grow longer and thinner until about ¼in. long, when they get too weak and the piece drops off. The enclosed photo. shows a piece rising off the side and off the top and bottom. The piece in front has grown and dropped off the lid. The following was written by my aunt in 1894, being all she then remembered about it: 'The gallipot was sent by a chemist in Aberystwyth, filled with ointment, to Mr. W. Williams, in May, 1883. It was soon washed clean, and remained empty for a year or two, and there was nothing remarkable about it. Then it was used for a week or two to hold salt and water; then washed out and left empty on a shelf. A year or more afterwards, in the spring of 1886, it was first observed to stand crookedly and to have its lid on one side, and, in fact, to be "sprouting." That summer Mr. Fisher, demonstrator of chemistry at Oxford, tested the crystals formed in "sprouting," and pronounced them to be salt. It has steadily continued to grow since.' From this you will see that three years elapsed between its containing ointment and beginning to grow; so that it is not remarkable what the ointment was had been forgotten."—Mr. T. K. Evans, 7, Clarendon Villas, Oxford.

NOT A FOOLISH NIGGER BOY.

"I send you a photograph of a dead branch in the park here, curiously resembling a nigger boy, with one leg hanging down. The illusion is so perfect that perhaps you may like to place it among your Curiosities. The photo., I may add, was taken with a telephoto. lens at a distance of about a quarter of a mile."—Mr. E. R. Wood, Temple Newsam, Leeds.

LIVING LETTERS.

"Here is a quaint photograph of a group of boys of the Northern Congregational School (N.C.S.), Silcoates Hall, Wakefield, forming the living letters which are the initials of their school's name. The photo., of course, was taken from an elevation in order to secure the desired result."—Mr. G. Clark, Trebevidd, Mold. Photo. by Mr. William F. Kelvey, of Mold.



SALMON LEAPING A FALL.

"I send you a snap-shot of a salmon leaping at the Falls of Tummel, Perthshire. I need hardly add that this photograph was taken with great difficulty."—Mr. D. R. McGavin, Taycliff, Tayport, Fife.

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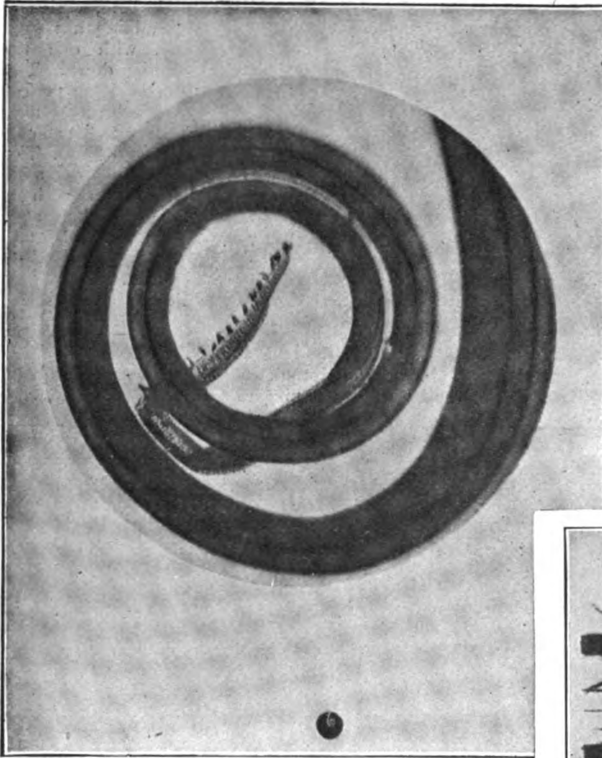
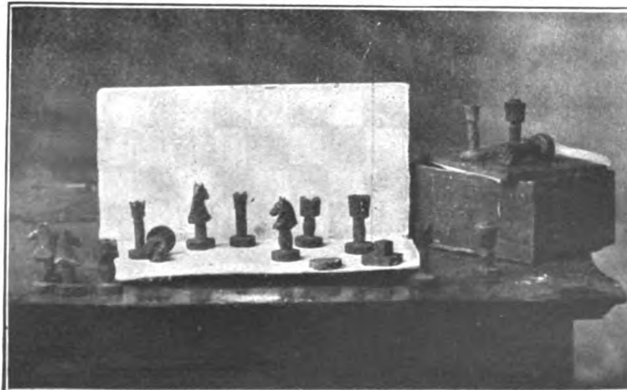


THE TONGUE OF A BUTTERFLY.

"Here is a photograph of a butterfly's tongue very much magnified. The proper size can just be seen in the smaller circle at the bottom of the mounted picture."—Miss Gladwell, Belmont, Belvedere Road, Durdham Downs, Bristol.

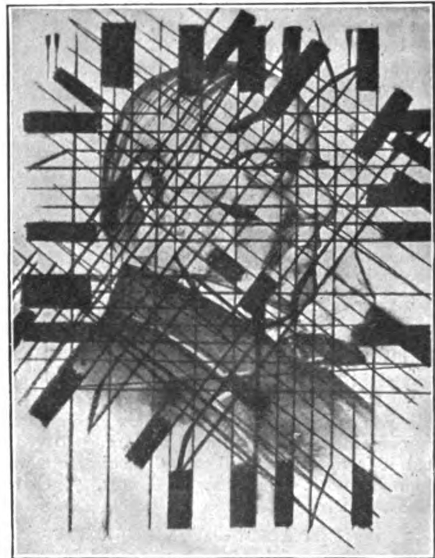
CURIOUS CHESSMEN.

"This photograph will perhaps be of interest to chess players as well as to those who value anything pertaining to war times. The board is of ordinary pliable cardboard, with shadings of pencil very much faded. The men are carved out of wood, one set being pencilled on the top, but as this is almost worn off it is not noticeable in the picture. The pawns of the one set are round, of the other square. The box in which these men have been kept for many years is a cigar-box, quite dilapidated, but still holding together. The set was made by Charles F. Johnson, Private of Co. I., 9th New York Volunteers, 'Hawkins' Zouaves,' while at Newport News. Many a game was played with them in camp and at the hospital, and the story goes that one game was interrupted by a stray shell bursting too near for comfort; the men looked at each other, then, 'It's your move,' said one, and the game proceeded."—Miss Emeline L. Johnson, 120, 4th Avenue, West Duluth, Minn.



A PATHETIC MEMENTO.

"Please find herewith a photographic novelty, which is the original idea of a convict in this prison. You will note that it is an outline or profile of the late lamented President McKinley, and the words which are inscribed across the face of it in elongated letters are his supposed last words, viz.: 'It is God's way; His will, not ours, be done.' In order to read the letters they must be held level with the eyes so as to foreshorten them."—W. E. McDonald, The Southern Illinois Penitentiary, Menard, Ills.



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From the Picture by] "AN EPISCOPAL VISITATION." [*H. S. Marks, R.A.*

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

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Humour at the Royal Academy.

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.

TO speak of humour at the Royal Academy may be somewhat suggestive of the schoolboy's essay on the snakes in Iceland. But if humour is not one of the more prominent features of art at Burlington House it is certainly to be found there, from year to year, without resorting to the eyeglass of burlesque as so effectively used by Mr. Harry Furniss, and this in spite of the austere views which are said to prevail on every successive Hanging Committee. To humour which it is Mr. Furniss's delight to discover Hanging Committees have doubtless been as blind as its authors, and to humour which is conscious they have extended, it is generally believed, only a grudging toleration. That during the last fifteen years, say, so many examples of it should have got on to the walls of the Academy must be taken to illustrate the talent with which our artists have expressed their sense of humour and the pertinacity with which they have appealed to the judgment-seat.

It must be admitted, however, that during the latter part of this period the humour of the Royal Academy has been a diminishing quality, until last year it had almost entirely disappeared. This circumstance, which is a matter of regret, I think, to the general public, whose shillings so largely help to fill the coffers of Burlington House, is very frankly explained by those who ought to know. They assert that sympathy with the sense of humour, which was never too abundant, has now almost entirely departed from the "powers that be." There is now no Stacy Marks or John Pettie to leaven the mass of R.A.'s who consider that no man has any right to be witty in oils, which must be regarded as the exclusive medium of classic dignity or, at any rate, of serious thought. The jest naturally finds its quickest and easiest impression, of course, in black and white. But it also has some claim to colour; humour, that is to say, should have a place in the higher art as it has a place in the higher literature, the higher music, and the higher drama.

"KING SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA."
From the Picture by Sir Arthur Clay, Bart.
(By permission of the Artist.)

If this be so, some recognition

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is due to the small band of artists, such as J. C. Dollman and A. W. Strutt, who, notwithstanding such discouragement, have steadily maintained the right of pictorial humour to be represented on the Academy walls. These painters have found their true *métier* in the amusing aspect of things, and their treatment of serious subjects has been almost by way of digression. A review of the Academy catalogues, on the other hand, reveals several names credited with pictures which may be regarded as experimental excursions into the region of the comic. Instances of such pictures are Sir Arthur Clay's "King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba" and Miss E. W. Solly's "The Judgment of Paris," Sir Arthur Clay being known as a portrait-painter and Miss Solly, who was a pupil of Professor Herkomer at the Bushey School, having devoted herself chiefly to garden scenes and flower-pictures. "The Judgment of Paris" is a garden scene, it is true, but this is only a background for the humorous conception implied in the nude little figures which Miss Solly has painted with a dainty gleefulness. There is a close relationship between these two pictures as successfully parodying two themes from ancient lore which have been in much favour with artists.

From the Picture by] "THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS." [*Miss E. W. Solly.*
(By permission of the Artist.)

The humour of the Royal Academy, I have noted, is chiefly concerned with animals, infants, and highwaymen. For the highwaymen, it may be added, Mr. Dollman is almost entirely responsible, although this versatile artist has during the same years given us admirable examples in the two other departments I have specified. These limitations are probably due much more to the Hanging Committee than to the artists upon whose work they have adjudicated. The humour of animal as compared with human life, and of children, again, as compared with men and women, is certainly more apt to be natural and unstrained when presented on canvas. As one art critic has put it, in a passage which applies only less forcibly to many children: "There is no posing and no intentional fooling on the part of furred and feathered things. They are always in deadly earnest, and they take themselves so seriously that their very air of conviction becomes quaintly amusing. The characteristic habits that in all sections of the animal kingdom distinguish every individual have an essentially comic side that is the more fascinating to the human observer because it is absolutely natural and unconscious."

No artists have more frequently demonstrated this fact on the Academy walls during the past fifteen years than Mr. Alfred W. Strutt and Miss Fannie Moody. Mr. Strutt's brush has ranged from dogs and ducks to horses and foxes, whereas Miss Moody has almost entirely confined herself to cat and dog humour, but in both artists' work, as illustrated in these pages, will be seen the

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same fidelity to Nature arising from close and sympathetic study. Mr. Strutt has become familiar with all kinds of animal life in the country—he is now living in the heart of Sussex—and is as much at home painting in a farmyard as in a studio. He knows the ways of a fox probably better than most of us know the ways of a cat. But, although based upon this exact knowledge, the humour of such pictures as "How Many More?" and "Hav'n't We Met Before?" is based upon imagination as well.

"A very little incident," Mr. Strutt tells me, "puts me on the track of a good subject, and it very rarely happens that I paint a scene which has presented itself actually to me. The slightest hint of an idea is often evolved into what is so often termed a 'humorous picture'; indeed, this has been the case with all my artistic successes. For instance, a lot of children clamouring round a carter leading his horse suggested 'How Many More?'; a favourite fox-hound running through the hall in which hung a fox's pate was the germ of 'Hav'n't We Met Before?'; while 'Hope Deferred' originated from the look of utter disgust I saw on the face of a little terrier seated near a steaming pan which he wished in vain to sample."

From the Picture] "HAV'N'T WE MET BEFORE?" [*by A. W. Strutt.*

(By permission of Messrs. I. P. Mendoza, Limited, St. James's Gallery, King Street, St. James's, Owners of the Copyright and publishers of the etching.)

Although Miss Fannie Moody's most successful Academy pictures have all had a large element of fun, it was not her sense of humour but simply love of animals which first directed her pencil and her brush. Incredible as it seems, the painter of "The Battle of the Standard" and "Professional Jealousy" had no training in art beyond a few lessons in anatomy. As a child she made up illustrated books of natural history, and when she was old enough spent days in the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum, copying all the animal pictures she found there. Miss Moody exhibited her first picture about twelve years ago, and almost every year since she has had a work on the line at Burlington House. Excellent as these pictures are technically, true as they are in knowledge of animal life, it is not too much to say that their humour in subject and title has proved their best passport to popular favour.

Miss Moody usually has several cats and dogs about her home at Battersea Park. She dislikes strangers as models. She must know them well before she can paint them, otherwise they prove the most sulky and lifeless of sitters. Now and again her pets themselves provide the subjects which she paints. This was the case with "The Battle of the Standard," I believe. More often, however, they merely give her the idea which develops into an amusing incident.

"I sketch my leading figure," to quote Miss Moody herself, "a dog or a cat maybe,

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in a characteristic position, and then I think of an interesting grouping around it. For instance, I sketched that dog one day in what is perhaps his pleasantest natural attitude. Then, puzzling my brains for a suitable grouping, I happened to think of 'The Jackdaw of Rheims'—'The Devil must be in that little jackdaw'—and this led me to put in a bird who is audaciously carrying off in its beak a bone which it had snatched out of the dog's mouth.

"On the other hand, I actually saw the scene which I have painted in 'It is Better to be on the Safe Side.' As I was passing a house one morning I caught sight of a couple of dogs at a window peering through the glass at a cat which was gazing at them from the window-sill. And I have made several good pictures out of amusing incidents related to me by friends."

From the Picture by] "THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD." [*Fannie Moody.*
(By permission of the Artist.)

The humour of animal life lost an exponent of considerable achievement and greater promise by the death, about two years ago, of Mr. W. H. Trood, whose well-known Academy picture, "Wait Till the Clouds Roll By," is given here. This picture was painted, together with much of his other work, in a village near Exmoor, where Mr. Trood resided during the latter years of his life, largely for the sake of the excellent variety of four-footed models to be obtained in the district.

The artist's sympathetic understanding of dumb animals was possibly much developed by an affliction which, befalling him in childhood, was otherwise most unfortunate for him. An attack of scarlet fever left him stone-deaf. For the rest of his life he could receive only written communication from other people, whilst his own speech, apart from such words as he used in childhood, was in accordance with a pronunciation derived only from reading. Notwithstanding his affliction, which cut him off from so many pleasures, the painter was always as genial and pleasant as his pictures. Mr. Trood was a popular member of the Chelsea Arts Club, whose members recall, in illustration of his keen sense of humour and clever facial expression, how he obliged a friend by sitting for the well-known series of pictures, "A Game of Nap." About forty at the time of his death, "Wait Till the Clouds Roll By" and one or two similar works formed only the beginning of Mr. Trood's success on the walls of Burlington House.

To a good many people Mr. J. C. Dollman is perhaps best known for his black and white work in the *Graphic* and elsewhere, and this work has doubtless led incidentally to

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From the Picture by] "WAIT TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY." [*W. H. Trood.*
(By permission of Arthur Lucas, 38, Baker Street, Owner of the Copyright.)

the painting of several of his most humorous efforts in oil and water colour. For instance, "Not Worth Powder and Shot," one of his Academy pictures, was suggested by the peculiar appearance of a model he had employed for one of his *Graphic* illustrations. He looked like a prosperous old gentleman until close inspection revealed the shabbiness of his dress and the "seediness" of his condition generally. As he was drawing him Mr. Dollman suddenly bethought himself of the discomfiture which such a figure might have brought upon the highwayman of old, who, after hard riding, overtakes him, only to find that the intended victim, for whom he had used up his horse, was not worth powder and shot as a penniless tramp. The picture was at once started and, with hard work, was finished

From the Picture by] "YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT." [*J. C. Dollman.*
(By permission of Cadbury-Jones & Co., 13, New Burlington Street, Owners of the Copyright.)

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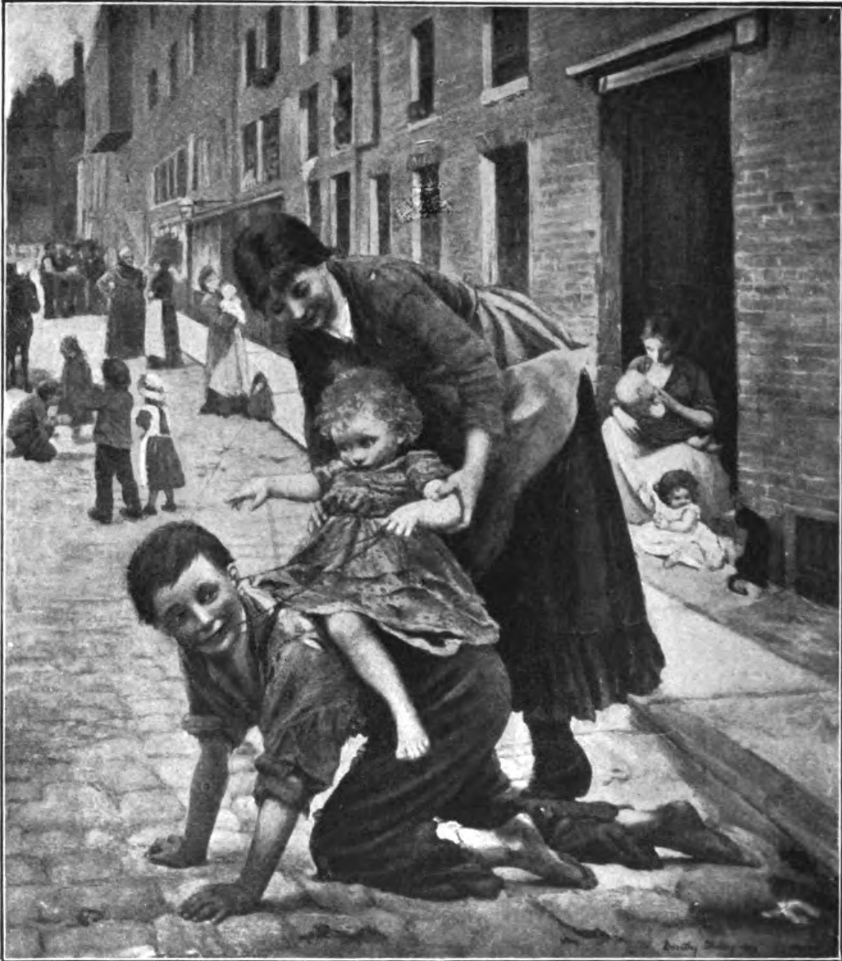

From the Picture by] "AN ARAB STEED." [*Lady Stanley.*
(By permission of the Artist.)

in a fortnight—in time for "sending-in day" in 1895. The sudden inspiration proved a very happy one, and the picture very soon found a purchaser in Lord Rosebery.

But although the humour of the picture—as is always the case with the truest humour—came quickly and spontaneously, and although it was finished in a fortnight, "Not Worth Powder and Shot" was no exception to the extreme pains which Mr. Dollman takes with all his works, irrespective of size and subject. In his view, evidently, the wittiest idea and the cleverest title cannot conceal careless draughtsmanship or unnatural composition. In this picture the two figures are all-important, yet the background was painted from a series of studies of Wimbledon Common, where an incident such as that depicted might have happened a century ago. Similarly, "Your Humble Servant," although probably suggested by a police-notice in London, had its background painted from landscape studies on the South Downs. In the middle of his work on this picture—which occupied a much longer time than "Not Worth Powder and Shot"—Mr. Dollman sent a man down to Purley to procure one of the large white stones common to that part of the country in order that he might paint it lying by the highwayman's feet. Possibly not one person in a dozen looking at the picture would notice this detail, and yet it is the accuracy and truthfulness of such details, Mr. Dollman believes, in a work of art, frankly humorous, which unconsciously impresses a spectator even as he smiles at the jest.

For the origin of another of his humorous

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contributions to the Academy during the last few years—as well remembered, I fancy, as any of them—Mr. Dollman gives credit to a leading firm of print-sellers. They suggested to him the painting of a picture illustrating in some way the humour of golf. Up to that time the artist was quite ignorant of the game, but he joined a golf club and in a short time became an enthusiastic player. In the end, however, it was a bit of history in the Badminton book on golf, and not an incident in present-day play, which gave him the subject for his picture :—

"In 1592 and 1593 the Town Council of Edinburgh contributed to the pious gloom of their country by forbidding this harmless and healthy amusement on Sundays. John Henrie and Pat Rogie, early martyrs of the club, were prosecuted for 'playing of the gowff on the links of Leith every Sabbath the time of the sermonses.'"

"During the Time of the Sermonses" was exhibited at the Academy in 1898, and since that time its engraved copies in the shop-windows have contributed not a little to the gaiety of our streets.

The late Henry Stacy Marks, R.A., as an exponent of the humour of bird-life, has had no successor at the Royal Academy. The best of his pictures are still freshly remembered—"An Episcopal Visitation," "A Select Committee," etc. Mr. Marks, as everyone who knew him well recollects, was naturally gifted with a keen whimsicality which he was able to spontaneously impart to his canvas. But although always having the aspect of spontaneity, some of his humorous pictures were only produced after much toilsome effort. He spent three months in continuous work, for instance, on "A Select Committee," making studies for it among the birds in the Zoological Gardens almost every other day. The picture, "An Episcopal Visitation," which was actually suggested, I believe, by the sight of a well-known prelate communing with a parrot at the Zoo, occupied Mr. Marks for almost as long a period.

"I have never been able to 'dash off' anything," the painter of "An Episcopal Visitation" once told me. "I have to make many studies for every one of my pictures, whether humorous or serious in subject, and am continually altering till it is finished." But although thus elaborated "An Episcopal Visitation," like every other product of his wit, retains the original whimsicality of idea.

The example given in these pages of Lady Stanley's humour was contributed to the

From the Picture by] "FRUSTRATED." [*Walter Hunt.*

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Royal Academy before her marriage, when she was still Miss Dorothy Tennant in fact as well as in fame. Most of Lady Stanley's studies in the child-life of London streets have a touch of pathos as well as of humour; but this is because they are, as a rule, so true to actuality. In "An Arab Steed" she has given free play to her fancy, with the result that the comic element is supreme. As a child in a big West-end house she used to paint her dolls, and these earliest pictures were, I believe, full of mirth and fun. Then came the subduing influence of art training in London and Paris, followed by the important discovery of the picturesque possibilities of the street-arab. With "An Arab Steed" might be coupled, perhaps, Lady Stanley's "Heads or Tails," another of her Academy pictures, for its quiet, unforced humour. Mr. Walter Hunt's picture, "Frustrated," which we reproduce, is an excellent example of the kind of humour of which it is our object to give specimens in this article.

No one who saw "For the Safety of the Public" at the Academy in 1887 can have forgotten the comic excellence of this picture of a muzzled puppy, and it has been a matter for regret to some of its admirers that the artist, Mr. Edmund Caldwell, has not attempted to repeat his success. A charming fox-terrier, belonging to a friend of the artist — "one of those rare models that suggest good subjects"—sat for the picture. Mr. Caldwell had made several studies of him for a picture entitled "Wonders of the Deep"—two little dogs watching some gold-fish in a bowl—and these studies, together with the anti-muzzling agitation of 1886, suggested to him the painting of "For the Safety of the Public."

"FOR THE SAFETY OF THE PUBLIC."
From the Picture by E. Caldwell.
(By permission of Messrs. I P. Mendoza, Limited, St. James's Gallery, Owners of the Copyright and publishers of the etching.)

For a long time the artist could not think of an apt title. One day it was remarked by a friend that inspiration might be found in the police notice on the subject, and forthwith they proceeded to the nearest police-station. There the first line of the "Muzzling Order," "For the Safety of the Public," gave Mr. Caldwell his title. The Chief Commissioner of Police at that time, Sir Edmund Henderson, who wrote the notice, has since often bantered the artist upon their joint authorship. The picture was purchased at the private view by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, and is now at Holly Lodge, Highgate. Of late years, it may be added, Mr. Caldwell has devoted himself to big-game subjects, which he rarely exhibits.

On looking at the pictures reproduced here one can hardly fail to observe the importance of a good title to humour on canvas. Its assistance has not, in the past, been disdained by the greatest masters. Landseer's "Dignity and Impudence," for instance, is a great picture from whatever point of view it is regarded, but its popularity would certainly not have been the same had it been less happily christened. Perusal of the Academy catalogues during the last few years, however, reveals a number of other pictures whose humour is wholly dependent on their titles. But the art of the canvas must equal that of its title in such cases if appreciation is to be sound, and, subject to this condition, the humour of the Royal Academy can never compromise its true dignity, even though humour should become more plentiful there than it is at present.

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The River Fort.

A TALE OF THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER.

By Frank Savile.

ISS VANE and Major Fenton had strolled up the slope behind the tents to sit down beneath the shadow of a great boulder. The camp, bathed in the April sunshine, lay stretched at their feet. Just beyond its outskirts a cloud of dust rolled on towards the river banks, parting now and again to reveal glimpses of green and gold, and lit with swift gleams of scabbard and lance. The torrent shone like molten silver between grey overhanging rocks, till it disappeared two miles away into the shadows thrown by a towering crag in the very centre of the ravine. The battlements that crowned the crag were distinct against the sky, and it was evident that the horsemen who had set the dust astir were making straight for them. Fenton smiled grimly, as he pointed towards the group.

"There goes the blackest rascal on all the frontier line," said he.

Miss Vane arched her eyebrows beneath the shadow of her hat.

"Afrullah Khan?" she asked, with great surprise. "I thought his manners perfect."

Fenton nodded.

"This afternoon they left nothing to be desired," he agreed; "but they won't bear the strong light of history. Unspeakable legends of cruelty hang about his name."

"I think you are a little hard. He has fought us; he has been beaten. Now he sees that nothing is to be gained by further resistance, so he makes his submission and makes it freely."

"Quite so. While we keep our present garrison at Assourah in all probability he will be submissive enough. Wait till the road-making is finished and the troops are withdrawn."

She shook her head.

"Nonsense," she said, decidedly. "You may trust a woman's instincts a good deal farther than a man's suspicions. I feel certain that he means honestly by us; that he wishes to demonstrate his good faith. That is why he has asked Henry to return his visit before we move camp to-morrow."

Fenton stared.

"Do you mean to tell me that he has asked the Colonel into his fort—into Fort Kotal?" he demanded.

"Yes. We are going to ride over when the sun gets a little lower."

"We! Who are we?"

"Beatrice, Henry, and I."

Fenton started to his feet with something like the sound of an oath.

"Am I to understand that Colonel Macworth is going to take his wife and you into that jackal's den? He must be mad!"

"Really, Major Fenton, I think you may trust my brother-in-law to take proper care of, at any rate, his wife. Bee is most anxious to go. So am I."

"But—but—" he stammered, hardly knowing what words to use, so great was his vehemence, "but he *can't* know what he is doing! Not a soul but Afrullah Khan's own brigands have ever seen the inside of Fort Kotal since it was built. And they—in addition to the frightful oaths of fealty they have sworn—have got to come to him certified by blood-guiltiness. There isn't one of the villains but is stained with murder or worse!"

"Well," she answered, complacently, "that only proves my theory that his submission is thorough, or he wouldn't do it."

"It proves that he is up to some scoundrelly trick," exploded Fenton; "you sha'n't go."

The smile vanished from her face.

"Sha'n't?" she asked, coldly.

"I—I shall use my every effort to prevent it," stammered Fenton. "I shall explain matters to the Colonel. He has no previous knowledge of Afrullah Khan. I have."

"I think I can trust Henry to know his own mind," said the girl, "and I shall have a poor opinion of him if he changes it. Why, he would be failing in his duty to the Government if he neglected such an opportunity of gaining the goodwill of the hillmen."

"Their *goodwill!* The goodwill of a Pathan!" cried the man. "The blackguard wouldn't know the meaning of the term if you explained it to him for an hour! To him peace is only the interval used to prepare for further war! And I wish to goodness Macworth hadn't told him what our convoy was. When he heard that those cases contained the rifles for the new levies, and that there was a round thousand of

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"DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT HE HAS ASKED THE COLONEL INTO HIS FORT?"

them. his eyes grew simply wolfish—there is no other word for it."

"No doubt you would have made an infinitely better commander for the convoy than my brother-in-law," said Miss Vane, sarcastically, "but as he happens to be in charge of it—and of me—I shall venture to be guided by his opinions. Shall we go down? I see Beatrice waving her hand to signal that tea is ready."

Fenton flinched. He looked at her appealingly as they turned down the rocky path.

"I—I didn't mean to be rude," he said, humbly.

"But you were," said the girl, sharply, and an instant later regretted it. But as she was proud enough to keep her regrets to herself the rest of the walk was passed in a constrained and rather miserable silence.

Though nothing was openly announced it was tacitly understood in the camp that, though there were eight other officers, the chair next to Miss Vane at tea-time belonged of right to Fenton. Some slight surprise therefore was felt, though not shown, when he relinquished both this right and his tea by walking off to the Colonel's tent. Miss Vane plunged valiantly into the general conversation.

Although he was sore at his snubbing, it was anxiety that filled the Major's heart. He was only second in command of the convoy that was taking rifles, ammunition, and stores to Assourah, but his ten years' experience on the frontier had taught him much that his Colonel had yet to learn. What he had heard from Miss Vane made Fenton anxious to commence his commander's education at once.

Round the tea-table the talk concerned itself with the guest of the afternoon—Afrullah Khan, lord of Fort Kotal and of the adjacent uplands.

"His citadel is practically impregnable for mountain warfare," said Forrest, of the Sikhs, pointing towards it as he spoke. "Of course, a field-gun or two would blow it into fragments, but till we appeared on the scene he had nothing to fear but jezails and perhaps one or two old smooth-bore Cabul cannon. So he has dominated the country-side pretty absolutely."

"He could be starved out?" suggested Mrs. Macworth.

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Forrest shook his head.

"There are acres of cellars in the rock below—enough to hold two years' grain, at least. He keeps them full, too."

"How about water, though? There surely can't be wells in that granite crag?"

Forrest laughed.

"It is the other way about," said he. "In flood time they have rather too much, if anything. The Kotal River runs *through* the fort."

"Through it?" echoed Miss Vane.

"Yes. The walls straddle the stream, so to speak. The river boils through the very centre of the courtyard."

"But there is an entrance at once, then. The fort can't be impregnable."

Carruthers, wing commander of the Gurkhas, chuckled.

"If you think it can be taken by swimming," said he, "you are making a very huge mistake. There is a great wrought-iron grating across the tunnel that passes under the fortification, and the torrent gushes against it at something like thirty miles an hour. They have nothing to fear there."

Miss Vane set down her tea-cup with a smile.

"It sounds most romantic from your description," she said, briskly, "and I am delighted we are going to see it with our very own eyes. We are going over to visit it in a few minutes."

Forrest's eyes grew wide.

"Visit the fort!" he exclaimed.

The obvious surprise in his voice irritated Violet Vane. It seemed to confirm Fenton's words of the afternoon.

"The Colonel is going to take us," she said, curtly.

"Oh, I think there must be a mistake," said Forrest, confidently, but at this moment the man in question appeared at his tent door. Fenton was speaking to him with evident eagerness, but Colonel Macworth was frowning. His last words were audible to all round the little tea-table.

"Thank you, Fenton," he said, drily. "You have done what you believe to be your duty. But as I don't share your views you must not be surprised if I don't attend to your warnings. Give me a cup of tea, my dear," he said to his wife as he dropped into a chair, "and then you and Vi had better get your habits on. We start almost directly."

When the horses were brought round Miss Vane made no objection to Fenton's lifting her to her saddle. In fact, she threw a little additional cordiality into her voice as she thanked him to atone for her ungracious words of the afternoon. Fenton's hand was trembling as he smoothed her skirt into place. He raised his eyes quickly.

"Must you go?" he asked, with a sudden impulse.

The ghost of a frown clouded her smile.

"Of course," she answered, as she drew the reins between her fingers. "How very extraordinary you are! Of course I must go!"

"Then take this," he said, eagerly, and drew a small object from his pocket and pressed it into her hand. The girl looked down to recognise, with great surprise, a neat little nickel-plated revolver.

She stared at it, hesitated, made as if she would return it, and then her lips began to move. Her brother-in-law's voice forestalled her.

"We are waiting, Violet," said Macworth, stiffly. He was under the impression that Fenton was using dissuasions which, as his superior officer, he resented.

Miss Vane started slightly and blushed. She thrust the pistol into the breast of her habit and her spur into her horse's flank, and cantered after her sister; but over her shoulder she threw a look at Fenton which was puzzled, anxious, and a little appealing. A minute later the dust was whirling up behind her horse's hoofs.

The three trotted slowly off into the shadows that the sunset slanted across the ravine, while the escort of eight sowars rode a discreet thirty paces in the rear. Fenton watched the little cavalcade dwindle into the distance, reach the river, and follow its banks to the walls of the fort. Through his binoculars he could distinguish the gaily-clad crowd that swarmed out to do them due honour, and then lost sight of them within the darkness of the arched gateway. He turned with a heavy heart to detail sentries and pickets for the night. He drew them from the Gurkhas. It is a silent-footed man indeed who can rush a Gurkha post.

Time passed. The glow of the sunset paled and died. The dusk grew deeper. Sentries were changed. The camp began to compose itself around the fires, yet no sound of the returning party was heard. Fenton examined his watch. They had been gone close on a couple of hours.

He remembered that Macworth had put the utmost limit of their absence at an hour and a half. He began to walk up and down. He strained his ears into the night for the jingle of curb and accoutrement, but nothing broke the silence of the ravine.

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Half an hour later he roused Forrest, curtly bade him take command, and ordered the remaining forty Sikhs to boot and saddle. In another two minutes they were crossing the plain at the gallop to finally draw rein before the closed gates of Fort Kotal. There was silence on the battlements save for the purr of the cream-white eddy round the river grating. Suddenly through the darkness came a challenge, followed—so Fenton could have sworn—by a grim chuckle.

He walked his horse forward in front of the troopers.

"Tell the Colonel Sahib that I await him with escort," he called.

The reply came on the instant:—

"And he you, sahib—and he you. For two hours we have curbed his impatience."

The flare of a score of torches broke into the darkness of the towers above him. A hundred villainous faces grinned wickedly along the parapet: a hundred voices rained filthy jests at the staring soldiers. The hoarse laughter of the Pathans rang into the desert echoes. Then from the centre of the group a tall figure rose to curse them into silence.

"Cease, dogs!" commanded Afrullah Khan. "Let me have speech with this laggard who waits and is awaited."

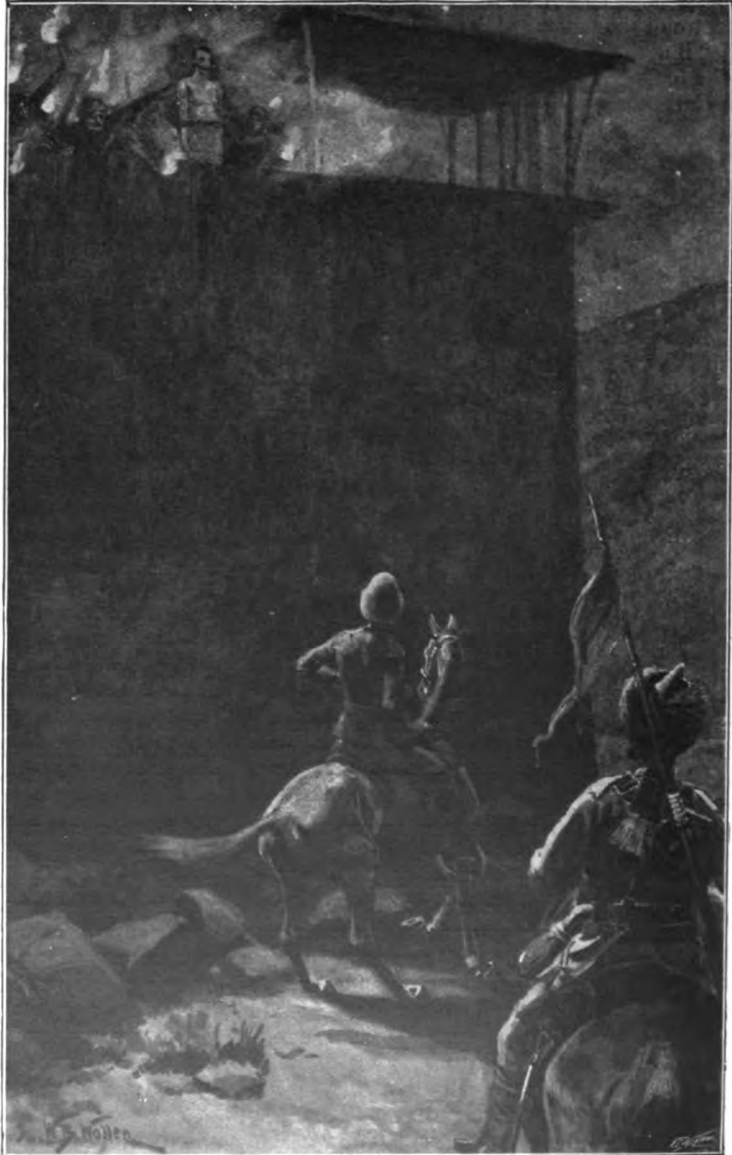
He made a motion of his hand to unseen followers behind.

"Is this your quest, soldier?" he demanded.

An oath burst from Fenton's lips. A chorus of vengeful curses rang down the ranks of the Sikhs.

Bound and stark, lashed at elbow, wrist, and ankle, a figure was thrust forward into the glare. The hopeless, tortured eyes were eloquent of the despair the gagged lips could not utter. Fenton gasped in his rage and his astonishment, and Afrullah Khan laughed grimly at the sound. The Englishman pulled himself together.

"Pathan dog!" he shouted, "as surely as the river runs you shall be hanged from your own battlements if this man and his following



"A FIGURE WAS THRUST FORWARD INTO THE GLARE."

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be not immediately released and humblest apology made!"

"And as surely as the moon shines upon the river that runs, English jackal, no apology shall be made and no release shall be given till my terms are met. Hear them! Pile here beneath my walls the cases of rifles which you guard, and by my life and by the Holy Prophet's beard I swear to give you the man and his women unharmed. Continue to chatter idle threats to me, and it will go ill with the *memsahibs*; and as for the Colonel Sahib"—he licked his thick lips and spoke slowly—"the Colonel Sahib I will deal with—I, with mine own hands."

Fenton gripped at his saddle in the agony of his indecision. To leave Macworth and the two women to the mercies of this unspeakable scoundrel was unthinkable. To betray his trust—and perhaps unavailingly, for who could trust a Pathan's word?—was not that unthinkable, too? No, there was but one course open in honour: to meet threats with threats and force with force—to fling his command at those battlements and cow that grinning fiend with the terrors of a vengeance that should be red indeed. To this effect his answer went back.

"Touch a hair of their heads, Afrullah Khan, and by every shrine you hold holy I swear to you that no man of your following shall be left alive, no single stone of your walls upon another! Release them to me instantly, before I bring my guns to batter your puny walls into dust!"

The Pathan laughed.

"Well crowed, cockerel!" he cried. "You have no guns. Did I not satisfy myself of that this afternoon? And if you would attack with rifles, come, then, and be welcome! For each man that reaches to within fifty yards of my gates I will owe you his weight in silver!"

He strode over to his prisoner as he spoke and dragged the gag from his lips.

"Let this underling of yours know the measure of my mercies," he commanded, "and your pains if they be not met!"

Macworth leaned over the parapet, held by those behind him. He looked Fenton steadfastly in the eyes.

"It is my fault, and I and mine must suffer," he said, sternly. "Have no fear for the women. Thanks to you, Vi has a means of escape for them both. I *forbid* a rescue. There is not the ghost of a chance—you would all be wiped out. Surround the fort. Send for reinforcements to Peshawur—and get guns. Then you can take your vengeance. But give him no rifles—refuse——"

Someone among Afrullah's followers must have had a glimmering of English. He cried fiercely to his leader. The Pathan silenced Macworth with a blow upon the lips before he stuffed the gag again between his teeth. Then he turned to the group below.

"Till dawn I give you," he cried, "till dawn. Then if the rifle-cases be not piled one at a time beside the postern, your white lambs shall cry to you indeed. But hear me! If more than two carriers approach, or they be armed, in that instant they shall perish. You have my leave to go!"

The torches dropped behind the screen of the battlements. The prisoner was dragged out of sight. The shadowy sentries began to patrol the battlements again, and Fenton was left with his troopers, bewildered, hesitating, baffled. He had eight hours to make up his mind—eight only. He bade half-a-dozen troopers draw off into the cover of the hill shadows and keep watch, while with the remainder he galloped back to take counsel with his comrades.

The stillness of the camp woke to furious uproar when the soldiers heard the tale their fellows had to tell. The ressaldars and subadars came as a wrathful deputation, demanding to be led against this nest of hill-cats upon the instant. For the time being they were quieted with promises. A great vengeance should be taken — that Fenton Sahib promised, but they must wait. The little Gurkha infantrymen trotted back to their camp fires and began to whet their kukries impatiently.

Yet, for all his cheerful words to the men, despair was on Fenton's face as he met his brother officers' eyes. What in Heaven's name could they do? Could they only carry out Macworth's orders—watch, besiege, and hear, perchance, the tortured cries of Englishwomen in silence? They swore not. The lives of four hundred men should be wasted before that came about. But was there no other way? The night was drawing on. Was nothing to be attempted?

And then Forrest spoke.

"The coolies with the first load might take a charge of dynamite, leave it beneath the walls, and blow in a breach. If we are waiting in the mountain shadows half a mile off we might win a way in before the first confusion has subsided."

Fenton nodded.

"Something of the kind has been haunting

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my own brain," he said, "but it cannot be left to coolies. They would flinch at the last and give the whole thing away. And Afrullah Khan is no fool. There can be no time-fuse—he would send his underlings out and extinguish it. But a man might blow in a breach with a *percussion* fuse the instant he laid the case down."

"And be blown into fragments himself?" said Carruthers.

Fenton nodded.

"Of course," he said, simply. "And for me there is no question of living if those ladies are not rescued," he added, quietly.

For the moment they stared at him in silence. What was there to say?

"And as temporary commander of this force I claim the right to do the thing myself," he went on, rising to his feet. "We may call that settled."

The six others burst into a tumult of expostulation. Each spoke at once, giving fifty reasons why he and he alone should die. Fenton silenced them curtly. The thing was already arranged.

And then from the background a new voice joined the discussion. Haughton, the doctor, asked humbly if it was permitted a mere non-combatant to speak.

Fenton shrugged his shoulders. "Time is drawing on," he said, shortly.

"I don't want to waste time," said Haughton, smiling, "and at the same time I don't want to waste a man's life. Your plan is worthy of you, Fenton; but why not let the river do for you what you have decided to do yourself? The torrent there can take a charge of dynamite into Afrullah Khan's stronghold a great deal more certainly than you can, eh?"

Fenton looked at him earnestly.

"You mean we might set a charge of dynamite afloat on a raft? The men in the fort would see the fuse burning and rush out and drown it, even if it were not dashed to pieces long before it arrived."

"No; I didn't mean that," said Haughton.

"What did you mean, then?" cried Fenton, impatiently.

Haughton jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"If you will come with me to the hospital tent I can explain much more quickly," he said, and led the way into the darkness. Fenton followed.

"Private Jones has fractured his patella," he said, as he entered a tent where a night-light burned dimly, "and I have managed to make his leg comfortable. Now it will have to be uncomfortable till we get up to Assourah, but I don't think he will mind when I tell him why."

He gently roused the sleeping man in the cot-bed. The soldier stared up at the two wonderingly.

"I have to borrow that air-cushion beneath your knee for the Colonel's lady, Jones," said Haughton.

The man bent forward and plucked it out from beneath the clothes without a word of comment. Haughton smiled as he arranged a pillow to take its place. "You don't ask what I'm taking it for," he said.

"Isn't it for the Colonel's wife?" said the private, simply. "Sure she may have it and welcome. Not ill, I hope, sir?"

And then Haughton gave him a short explanation, which unfortunately sent the patient's temperature up three degrees at a bound. They left him writhing beneath the agony of the knowledge that there was a fight in immediate prospect and that he would be out of it.

Haughton held up the bulky grey bag to Fenton.

"Now do you understand?" he asked.

"No," said the other, stolidly; "I'm blessed if I do."

"It's simple enough," said Haughton. "I unrip one side of this, suspend in the middle of it a glass phial with a few of the picric acid detonators you showed me the other day, add a pound or two of gun-cotton, and sew up the slit again. Then I blow out the bag to its fullest extension. If we set it afloat down the stream it can come to no harm till it reaches the grating, because it is so light and pliable."

"And then?" queried Haughton.

"Then it will jostle and bang about the iron bars."

"Yes. For hours, probably."

"No," said Haughton, "for the simple reason that I shall have made a minute puncture in it. When sufficient air has escaped, the phial will break as it is tossed against the bars, explode the dynamite or gun-cotton—I know you have brought plenty for road-making—and then Afrullah Khan's battlements——"

"Fly into the air," cried Fenton, as he slapped him on the back. "By Jove! Haughton, I believe you've saved us!"

"I hope I have saved you, at any rate," said Haughton, as he began his preparations. "Now go and make your own arrangements and try to remember that you are going to see Miss Vane again. That haggard face of

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yours fairly frightened me a few minutes back."

Fenton wrung his hand silently and hurried out into the night.

Half an hour later the moon shone down on three hundred men stealing by twos and threes to the cover of the boulders that fringed the plain within half a mile of the fort. It was a space that the agile little Gurkhas could be trusted to cover within four minutes at need. The forty Sikhs, on their wiry Walers, believed that they could do it in less than a hundred seconds.

Down on the river-bank Haughton was

The three realized that they were placing themselves in the very grip of death. But it was necessary that they should be near enough to the scene of the coming explosion to profit by the confusion, to win a way into the breach, and to hold it for the one furious minute that must ensue before their troopers joined them. They lurched along slowly to give the floating vengeance time to work, making many halts to get their breath, and taking shorter and shorter paces as they neared their goal. They were within a furlong of the gates when they received a check that they had not foreseen.

"HE RAISED HIS HAND TO A COUPLE OF WAITING COOLIES."

busy for a minute. Then he raised his hand to a couple of waiting coolies, a hundred yards away. They staggered out into the full moonlight of the plain, swinging a long case between them, one that contained rifles, indeed, but only three. The bulk of the contents was human flesh. Fenton, stained a dark chocolate and clad in little beside a tunic and waist-cloth, with Hiram Singh, the ressaldar major, was carrying Carruthers, the lightest of the other officers, stretched out at length in this new coffin.

"Halt where you are! I will send for your burden," roared Afrullah Khan from the battlements.

Fenton swore beneath his breath.

"The old villain is taking no chances," he whispered to the ressaldar.

The man nodded.

"No, sahib. The notion of blowing up the walls under cover of laying down the cases has occurred to him as well as to us. But Haughton Sahib's scheme — that is beyond his evil mind. Have no fear."

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The clang of the opening gate was heard. Four dark figures came padding through the moonlight on bare feet. Two fierce eyes scanned Fenton's face, and a snarling Pathan voice said :—

"Return to your masters, sons of pigs, and say that there is need of haste. There are forty cases to bring and it wants but six hours of dawn. Away with you!"

He and his fellows bent to lift the burden the other two had laid down. Fenton hesitated, uncertain for the moment how to act. Why did the explosion lag?

"Thy servants have need of rest," he whimpered, in true coolie fashion. "Let it be granted us that we sit a moment to recover breath."

The Pathan stopped—suspicious. It was not like an ordinary Bengali camp-follower. Such a one should be scampering back to his fellows, thankful to find himself alive. He peered up into Fenton's face. As ill-luck would have it the Englishman's disguise slipped. A streak of white skin showed above the level of his tunic.

The Pathan's voice rang out in the shrill cry of "Treachery!"

There was instant bustle in the fort. Torches flamed—scores of eager faces lined the parapet. The sound of the gates being opened anew clanged into the night; the roar of voices and the clash of weapons stormed the echoes.

And then, as if the lightning had rent the darkness, a crimson streak flared into the sky and the thunderous boom of the explosion swallowed all lesser sounds into nothingness. The river wall, the towers, the grating, the bastion with its swarm of armed men, burst upwards into spinning fragments. Where a moment before had been dim shadows above the wash of innumerable eddies was a great rent into the heart of the citadel—a breach that laid the courtyard open to the very level of the plain.

Hiram Singh's tulwar had leaped from its concealment in his sash to find a new sheath in the Pathan's throat. Bullets from Fenton's revolver had accounted for two more. The fourth raced for the shattered fort, screaming shrilly, while the Englishmen and the Sikh panted at his heels.

Carruthers halted a bare second to bring his rifle to his shoulder. At the sound of the report the runner pitched forward upon the very brink of the opening, his outflung arms outlined against the glare within. At the same moment the three heard the thunder of the charge sweeping up from behind.

An instant later the troopers halted their horses upon their very haunches, flung the reins upon their necks tetherless, and stormed at their leader's back into the shambles of the inner court.

For a moment it seemed as if resistance was to lack to the attack. Then with yells of rage half a hundred Pathans came with a rush from a dozen doors and windows, Afrullah Khan at their head, every curse—and they are many—that a hillman knows snarling between his yellow teeth. Fenton leaped forward to meet him, Hiram Singh at his elbow.

The Pathan leader rushed on, but not at the Englishman. He swerved. With a quick turn of the heel he made for an open doorway at the courtyard end, his men, following blindly, with him.

Instinct made Fenton understand the hideous grin upon the Pathan's face. He knew himself undone—he was going to take vengeance. Somewhere up that dark entry the prisoners were caged, their fate still trembling in the balance!

He shouted to his troopers to cut the others off, and led them with a rush that jammed the doorway with a furious mob of slashing men, who cut, and cut blindly, at friend or foe—a jostle of living and dying that heaved like a troubled whirlpool as some suffocated wretch fell to smothered agonies, or when some panting hillman's muscles were galvanized into superhuman strength by a bullet in heart or brain. Out of the turmoil only two men won an entrance through the doorway across the heaped corpses—the Pathan leader and Fenton; Afrullah Khan had a lead of a dozen steps. He bounded up the stairs.

Fenton, following, heard the clash of a lock and the jar of an opening door. He leaped the last flight six stairs at a time to overtake his adversary. Afrullah Khan turned, with the door half open behind him, and raised his blade. The Englishman covered him with his revolver. There was no report, only a tiny click. He had emptied it in the courtyard fray!

The Pathan gave a triumphant cry. He raised his sword to the full height of his arm. Fenton flung up his wrist weakly to break the coming blow and slipped upon the uneven stair. The glittering blade seemed to hang aloft untold ages before it fell—he gasped—do what he would he winced before the coming shock.

And then the sword fell, indeed, but alone. It clattered from Afrullah Khan's grasp to

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the floor as a sharp report filled the echoes of the stairway. The Pathan staggered, rocked against the opposite wall, and slid to the pavement. A reeking wound stared in his back, while the faint blue mist of powder-smoke came drifting through the still half-opened door.

And Fenton, too, reeled down unconscious. The strain upon his overwrought nerves had been too great.

When his senses fluttered slowly back to him ten minutes later the fight was over. Red flashes still flared upon the plain and the rifles still spoke, but they only told of hunted hillmen flying to the upland gorges before the Gurkha pursuit. Within the courtyard Colonel Macworth was already in command of his rescuing men.

Fenton stared drowsily at Afrullah Khan's body, still lying where it fell. Still half dazed, he turned to see Violet Vane watching him with anxious, questioning eyes. They were alone.

"He—he was shot down from behind," he muttered, weakly.

She was pale, but she did not falter. Her eyes avoided the Pathan's corpse and fixed themselves steadily on Fenton's face.

"I shot him—I," she answered, controlling a shudder.

He looked up at her wonderingly.

"You—you saved my life?" he cried.

"Or you mine?" she said, trying to smile.

He staggered to his feet. His eyes were shining. His lips moved with words that he hesitated to say. He had no need.

"And so," she said, eagerly, impulsively, "if your life belongs to me, mine is yours — yours," and laid her hands upon his shoulders and her face upon his breast.

"'HE WAS SHOT DOWN FROM BEHIND,' HE MUTTERED, WEAKLY."

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Pampas Plumes

By Arthur Inkersley.

PAMPAS GRASS has long been known in Europe and the United States, having been introduced into England from Buenos Ayres in 1843 and into the United States in 1848. Its home is on the pampas, or great prairies, of South America, which extend over an area of one and a half million square miles in Peru, the Argentine Republic, Patagonia, and other regions. During the wet season the pampas supply food for enormous herds of wild horses and cattle, but in summer they are dry and parched. Only the female plants of the pampas grass possess the beautiful feathery plumes which are the chief reason of its adoption as an ornament to lawns and gardens. Most of the plumes are of a silvery, glossy white colour, but some have a purple and others a yellow tinge.

It is now nearly forty years ago since pampas grass was raised from seed in the county of Santa Barbara, in Southern California, by a Mr. Joseph Sexton, who sold several hundreds of the plants to adorn gardens.

Two years after the introduction of pampas grass into California it was accidentally discovered that in order to obtain the fluffy, feathery plumes it is necessary to gather the female plants while yet immature, pull them from their sheaths, and dry them in the sun. A good deal of experimenting was required before the growers were able to cure the plumes so that they would not drop to pieces when dry. After several trials a marketable article was produced and found a sale in Santa Barbara and San Francisco. Then a florist in New York ordered a few hundred plumes, and soon repeated his order.

From a Photo. by] A FIELD OF WAVING PLUMES. [*N. H. Reed.*

In response to the rapidly growing demand for the plumes the producer extended his plantation, and by increased care in manipulation contrived to make the plumes both larger and handsomer. The production of the plumes was highly profitable. As a proof of this the case may be cited of a woman who planted twenty-eight acres with the grass, from which in one year she sold 260,000 plumes at a price varying from six guineas to twelve guineas per thousand. Taking an average of eight guineas per thousand, the amount realized during the year was not less than two thousand guineas. When first introduced into the New York market the plumes sold for half a guinea apiece, and for a long time the ordinary retail price was two shillings. Then it dropped to tenpence, and later to fivepence. At last the number of plumes became so

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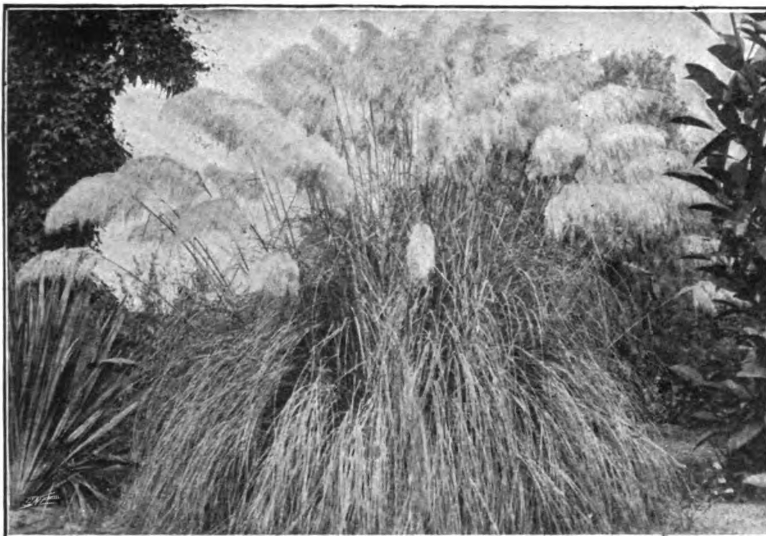

From a Photo. by] A TUFT OF PAMPAS GRASS. [*N. H. Reed.*

great that the grower received only one halfpenny for small ones and one penny for large specimens.

Pampas grass requires a low, moist soil, and for the first year or two considerable cultivation is necessary to keep the weeds down. In order to be sure of getting female plants the roots are divided; they are then planted in rows at intervals of about 16ft. The plants begin to produce plumes in their second year; in the third they produce a larger number; in the fourth, fifth, and sixth they are at their best; and afterwards the productiveness falls off.

Just before the harvest time arrives the grass is trimmed, so as to make it easy to reach the plumes. As is the case with nearly all plants and trees in California, pampas grass grows very luxuriantly, a bunch reaching a height and width of about 20ft. and weighing about a ton.

In the second week of September the plumes begin to show through the green sheaths, but as they do not all come to maturity at once the plants must be watched. The harvest lasts until October. When the plumes protrude about six inches from the sheaths they are cut, and the sheaths are stripped off by pulling upwards. The edges of the grass are so sharp that, if the gatherer attempts to strip the sheath downwards, he will cut his hands, even though he wears thick gloves to protect them. The plumes are laid down on the drying-ground in rows, and for forty-eight hours are left exposed to the sun by day and the dew by night, being turned occasionally. This treatment renders the

From a Photo. by] A DRYING AND BLEACHING GROUND. [*N. H. Reed.*

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plumes white and gives them the feathery, fluffy appearance which constitutes their beauty. But though the heads of the plumes are dry, the stems are far from being so; they are, therefore, taken to the drying-

From a Photo. by] A CORNER OF THE BLEACHING GROUND. [*N. H. Reed.*

house and stacked up there in heaps. After two weeks or so, being completely dried, they are sorted, packed in boxes, and sent away.

While cultivation has developed several varieties of pampas grass, the three principal ones are the Collins, which has a heavy plume; the Spence, which has a long, feathery plume; and the Hayward, which combines the length and heaviness of the other two. Some male plumes have a rose colour, but they are not much esteemed, as they are brittle. If any method of toughening them could be discovered they would be quite valuable. The Hayward variety is named from Mr. E. S. Hayward, a grower of much experience, who supplied most of the information herein given.

From a Photo. by] HARVESTING THE DRIED PLUMES. [*N. H. Reed.*

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The principal markets for pampas plumes are London and Hamburg. They are used as ornaments or are pulled apart and made up in bouquets of dried grasses. In Southern California the plumes are employed in large quantities to decorate the houses, streets, carriages, cycles, automobiles, etc., for the floral carnivals given annually in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and other cities. The plumes are easily dyed and retain the colour imparted to them well. The American flag has been reproduced in pampas grass coloured red, white, and blue. Two or three years ago the Republican National Convention chose the pampas plume as its emblem, and in Europe it is commonly regarded as a characteristic product of America.

From a Photo. by] WOMEN AND BOYS STRIPPING THE PLUMES. [*N. H. Reed.*

As has been said in the earlier part of this article, the cultivation of pampas grass was highly profitable at first, but it has received a severe check. After some years the plantations cease to be productive, and, unless some way is found of renewing the exhausted soil, the industry will languish and die out. After ground has been devoted for some years to the cultivation of pampas grass it is hard to put it to any other use, for the roots of the plants become so strongly intertwined that to pluck them out brings away all the soil down to hard-pan. If it becomes absolutely necessary to remove the plants, they are undermined and blown up with dynamite. This method makes an ugly cavity in the ground, which must be filled up with soil brought from elsewhere.

The growing of pampas plumes is certainly a fascinating employment, and it is to be regretted that so picturesque and profitable an industry should fail to maintain itself. A field of the grass, with lustrous, feathery, fluffy white plumes waving gracefully in the breeze, is a striking and beautiful sight. It is also a rare one, for it can be seen only when the plumes have been allowed to reach maturity before being gathered. And, as explained above, if intended for the market, the plumes must be gathered before reaching this stage, as otherwise they are fragile and will not bear transportation. The plumes laid out in long rows on the ground to dry and bleach present a remarkable appearance, as also does a flat, low-bodied waggon laden with the fluffy, cream-white, glistening harvest.

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The Handwriting.

By Richard Marsh.

IT was some time after mother's death before we knew if we were or were not penniless; and as, of course, it was our duty to be prepared for the very worst we used to discuss among ourselves how, if we were left without a farthing, we should earn one. Though I am perfectly well aware that a single farthing would not have been of much service to us; but, then, I suppose everybody knows what I mean.

When there are six children, and the eldest is a girl, and she is only sixteen, and they have no relatives and not one grown-up person to advise them, it does seem strange what a very few ways there are of making a fortune; that is, within a reasonable space of time. So far as I could make out from what the others said, for every one of them you wanted money to start with; and if you had no money it was not the slightest use your doing anything. Then the boys had such impracticable notions. Dick was full of South Africa. He declared that nothing was easier than to go to South Africa, find what he called a "claim," on which there were tons of gold, or so many pounds to the ton, I do not quite know which, turn it into a company, and there you were, a millionaire, in what he termed "a brace of shakes." But it appeared to me that that "brace of shakes" would be some time in coming. First he would have to get to South Africa; then he would have to find his "claim"—and there was no proof that one was found by everyone; then he would have to get his company up, which might take weeks; and, in the meantime, were we supposed to starve? I seemed to have read somewhere that a human being could not be kept alive without food for more than seven days. I doubted if there would be much left of me after four-and-twenty hours. Jack wanted to be an engine-driver on the railway line—a profession which I feel sure is not too highly paid; while Jim actually yearned to be a fireman in the fire-brigade, though how he imagined that he was going to earn a fortune that way was beyond my comprehension.

Nora and I were reluctantly compelled to admit that if our means of sustenance were to depend on the efforts of the masculine portion of the family we should apparently have to go very short indeed. And the field for girls did seem to be so circumscribed. As I said to her:—

"There do seem to be such a few ways in which girls can get money."

"There aren't any."

We were in the kitchen, she and I alone together. We were supposed to be getting the tea ready. There was not a servant about the place. And the condition the house was getting into in consequence was beyond anything. She was sitting on the edge of the table, with a coal-scoop in one hand and a toasting-fork in the other. Nora always was of a pessimistic disposition. She invariably looked on the blackest side of everything; so one got into the habit of allowing for the peculiarity of her outlook. Besides, I had in my head at that moment the glimmering of an idea how to earn an immense amount.

"There are some ways. For instance, there's writing. There are girls who write for papers and all kinds of things."

"Only those who can't write get paid anything."

I wondered if she had been trying her own hand; the statement did sound so sweeping.

"There's teaching. Look at the lots of governesses that must be wanted."

"Let 'em be wanted. I prefer prussic acid."

"There's drawing for the magazines."

"You might as well talk about drawing for the moon—unless you're a perfect idiot. Then you might have a chance."

I felt sure that she had had experiences of her own; her tone was so extremely bitter.

"And then there are prize competitions. There do seem to be a tremendous number of them about. And some of them for really large prizes."

"Prize competitions!" Nora seemed all at once to have woke to life and vigour. "Promise you won't split if I tell you something?" I promised. "I believe that all prize competitions are frauds run by robbers. Do you know"—she brought the toasting-fork and coal-scoop together with a bang—"that I've gone in for seventy-two of all sorts and kinds and never won a single prize,

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not even a consolation. And some of them were hard enough to kill you. I've guessed how much money there was at the Bank of England; how many babies were born on a Tuesday; picked out twelve successful football teams; named three winners at a horse-race."

"Nora!"

"I have; or, at least, I've tried to. Much the largest prizes are offered for that. I've drawn things, written things, calculated things, prophesied things, made things, collected things, solved things, sold things. Once I tried to sell a lot of papers in the village for the sake of the coupons, but no one would buy a single copy. It was a frightful loss. I do believe I've tried my hand at every sort and kind of thing you can think of, and heaps you can't; and, as I say, I've never even won a consolation prize. No more prize competitions for me!"

"NO MORE PRIZE COMPETITIONS FOR ME!"

That was not encouraging, especially as it was a prize competition which I had got in my mind's eye. After her disclosures I did not breathe a word of it to Nora. But when I got up to my bedroom I took out the paper in which I had seen all about it, and considered. The part which told you about the competition was headed "Delineation of Character by Handwriting." You had to write, on a sheet of paper, a sentence not exceeding twelve words in length. This you had to put into an envelope, which you had to seal and endorse with a pseudonym. This envelope you had to put into another envelope, together with your real name and address and a postal order for a shilling, or twelve stamps, and send it to the paper. The person whose calligraphy was considered to show that the writer was the possessor of the finest character was to receive one hundred pounds.

One hundred pounds for a shilling! Of course, I was perfectly well aware that hosts of people would go in, and that as the chances of success were presumably equal one's own individual chance was but a small one. But, on the other hand, what was a shilling? And, also, some people's writing was better than others. As a matter of fact, I rather fancied my own. It had been admired by several persons. It was large, bold, and, I was persuaded, distinctly characteristic. I perceived that the sentences had to be dispatched to the office of the paper on the following day.

Why should not one of mine go with them? There really seemed no reason. I had twelve stamps. There were pens, ink, and paper. My non-success would merely add to the list of failures with which the family was already credited, making seventy-

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three. What was that? The question was, what sentence should I send? You were left to choose your own. But the presumption was that your chances of success would not be lessened if the one selected was a good one. I had it on the instant. My desk chanced to be open. There, staring at me on the top, was the very thing.

At Mrs. Sawyer's school there had once been a governess named Winston—Sophia Winston. We all of us liked her; I adored her. She was one of the best and sweetest creatures that ever lived, but her health was not very good and she had to leave. Before she left I asked her to write a motto in my book of mottoes. Although she said she would, when I came to look for the book I could not find it anywhere. Somehow in those days my things always were playing games of hide-and-seek with me. So, instead, she wrote a motto on a sheet of paper. There lay the identical sheet of paper in front of me at that moment. I took it up, opened it, read it:—

"Who goes slowly goes safely and goes far."

The very thing! I more than fancied that it was with *malice prepense* that Miss Winston had referred me to that rendering of what I knew was an Italian proverb. It was not my custom to go slowly or safely or—in the sense in which the word was there used—far. But, for the purpose of the present competition, that was not a matter of the slightest consequence. I made six copies of Miss Winston's sentence, picked out the one which I judged was the best, and, after destroying the other five, packed it up with the requisite twelve stamps and sent it off to the office of the paper.

"IT WAS ADDRESSED TO MISS LILY HAYES."

Of course, I told no one of what I had done. I was not quite so silly as that. The boys would have laughed, especially Dick, who was once rude enough to ask me if I wrote with the end of a broomstick; while Nora—after her revelations of the hollowness and deceitfulness of such things—would have concluded I was mad. I simply held my tongue, and I waited.

The paper to which I had sent was a weekly one—it came out every Wednesday. It appeared that the competition was a weekly one also. The sentences had to reach the office on the one Wednesday morning, and in the paper which came out on the following Wednesday the results were announced. Either not many sentences were sent in, or there must have been someone in the office who was uncommonly quick at reading character. There used to be a girl at Lingfield House who pretended to read character from handwriting. She wanted pages of it before she would attempt to say what kind of character you had; then she would take days to form an opinion; and then it would be all wrong. I dare say that in the office of that paper they had had a deal of practice.

On the Thursday morning of the week following I was down first—as, I am sorry to say, I generally had to be; sometimes I actually had to drag the others out of bed; and Nora was every bit as bad as the boys—and as I came into the hall I saw a letter lying on the floor. Smith, the postman, had pushed it through the slit in the door. I picked it up. It was addressed to "Miss Lily Hayes, The Elms, Alfold, Surrey." On the top of the envelope was printed "*Trifles*. The Paper for the Whole World." When I saw it something seemed to give

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a jump inside me, so that I trembled all over. I could hardly tear it open. There were three things inside. One—could I believe my eyes? At first I felt that they must be playing me a trick—but one really was a cheque. "Pay Lily Hayes or order, one hundred pounds." I believe that at sight of it I very nearly fainted. I never have done quite; but I think that I very nearly did do then. It was a most odd sensation. I was positively glad to feel the wall at my back, and I went hot and cold all over. Of the other two enclosures the first was a letter from the editor himself—though, as it had been done by a typewriter, it was not in his own writing; perhaps that was because he was afraid of having his character told—saying that he was glad to inform me that I had been adjudged the winner of that week's competition; that he had pleasure in handing me a cheque for one hundred pounds herewith; and that he would be obliged by my signing and returning the accompanying form of receipt. The second enclosure was the receipt.

As soon as I recovered my senses I tore up the stairs about three at a time. I rushed in to Nora.

"Nora," I cried, "I've won a hundred pounds!"

She was lying reading in bed, and was so engrossed in her book that she did not catch what I said. She grumbled:—

"I wish you wouldn't come interrupting me like that, especially as I've just got to where the hero is killing his second wife."

"Bother his second wife, and bother the hero, too. Look at that!" I held out before her the editor's letter and the cheque. "Seventy-two times you've tried—at least, you said you had; and I've only tried once. And the very first time I've won."

"What are you talking about?"

"If you'll come to Dick's room I'll tell you all about it."

Off I raced to Dick's room, calling out to Con and Jack and Jim as I passed. Presently the whole family were gathered about Dick's bed. Nora had put on a dressing-gown, but the three younger boys were just as they had got out of the sheets.

"Well," said Dick, when he had turned the cheque over and over and over, and held it up to the light to see if it were a forgery, "some rum things do happen, and those who deserve least get most."

"I always have thought," observed Nora, "that those prize competitions were frauds, and now I know it."

Jack was more sympathetic—or he meant to be.

"Never mind what they say; it's only their beastly jealousy. I'm jolly glad you have won, because now we can have new bicycles."

"About time, too," declared Jim. "I've had mine tinkered so many times that there's none of the original machine left."

"I punctured my tyre again yesterday," groaned Con. "That's about the twentieth time this week. It's hardly anything but holes."

I had not contemplated providing the whole family with new bicycles, but they did seem a necessity. I knew that I wanted a new machine, and so did Nora, and in a little matter of that kind the boys were pretty sure not to be very far behind. Fortunately, nowadays, bicycles are so cheap, and then we could always give our old ones in exchange; so, supposing the worst came to the worst and we were all penniless, even after buying six new bicycles, I ought to have a good deal of money left to keep us in food and things. Because, of course, I had to remember that I could not expect to win a hundred pounds every time I tried.

The nearest place to us where they sold papers was the bookstall at the station, and that was six miles away. So after breakfast we all mounted the machines we had and dashed off to get a copy of *Trifles*. On the road Con had another puncture. It would not be stopped. As he said, his tyres did seem to have all they wanted in the way of ventilation. So, as Jim's handle-bar had come off and could not be induced to remain where it ought to be, we left them to console each other. Of course, Dick—who rides tremendously fast—got to the station first and Jack next. Nora and I never got there at all. They came flying back to us when we were about two hundred yards away, each waving a paper above his head and laughing like anything. I was half afraid that there was something wrong, and that, although I had got the prize, I had not won it. But it was something else which was amusing them.

"If ever anyone ought to be sent to a lunatic asylum it's the man who runs this paper," shouted Dick. "Let's get to the stile, and I'll prove my words to your entire satisfaction."

At the stile we all four of us dismounted. Unfolding his paper Dick read aloud from it, Jack following him in his own particular copy:—

"'We have much pleasure in announcing

that, this week, the possessor of the finest character as revealed by her handwriting is Lily Hayes, The Elms, Alfold, Surrey, to whom a cheque for one hundred pounds has accordingly been sent. Her character, as declared by her calligraphy, is as follows.' Now, then, all you chappies, listen!—attention, please!—and, mind you, the character 'declared' is supposed to be Lily's! 'This writing shows a character of unusual nobility.'"

"Hear, hear!" from Jack.

"'The motto chosen is singularly appropriate.' By the way, the motto chosen was: 'Who goes slowly goes safely and goes far'; so everyone who knows her will perceive its peculiar fitness. Now, do just listen to this, Johnny, and I ask the lady herself if he doesn't credit her with exactly those qualities which she hasn't got: 'Patience and thoughtfulness, a high standard of honour, clear-sightedness, resolution combined with a sweet and tranquil temper'—what ho!—'are all clearly shown. The writer is strong on both the moral and the intellectual side. A large and beautiful faith is obvious. To a serene tranquillity of temperament are united a keen insight and a calm persistence in following to a successful issue well-considered purposes instinct with a lofty rectitude.' As an example of how not to delineate character from handwriting I should say that takes the record."

I felt myself that here and there that expert was a trifle out. I certainly should not have called the sentence selected "singularly appropriate" to me. Nor should I have laid much stress upon my patience or my thoughtfulness. I had not been hitherto aware that I was the owner of "a sweet and tranquil temper," or of "a serene tranquillity of temperament," or of "calm persistence." Indeed, there were one or two little matters in which I more than suspected that that character reader was a trifle at fault. But, after all, these were questions of opinion and had nothing to do with the real point, which was, that I had won the hundred pounds.

When we returned home I went upstairs, fetched my desk, carried it down to the morning-room, and prepared to write and tell everyone of my good fortune. In the frame of mind in which I was it was not a piece of news which I was disposed to keep to myself. I opened the desk, got out the note-paper, found the pen, and just as I had got as far as, "My darling Hetty,—I have won a fortune! You never will guess how," I thought of Miss Winston's sentence. It was that which had brought me luck; I was convinced of it. If it had not been for the motto which that curiosity in character readers had found so singularly appropriate I seriously doubted if I should have won. The least I could do was to kiss it in memory of the writer.

I had placed it, after making those six copies, in an envelope which I had endorsed "Miss Winston's Motto." I laid down my pen, raked out the envelope, took out the sheet of paper. On it was the sentence, not in Miss Winston's small, exquisite penmanship, but in my own great, sprawling hand. For a moment or two I stared at it in bewildered surprise. Then—in the twinkling of an eye—I understood what had happened.

In my characteristic blundering fashion I had confused my copy with her original. My writing I had packed into the envelope I was holding, and hers I had put into the one which I had sent to the paper. It was her calligraphy which had been adjudicated on, her character which had been deduced therefrom. The thing was as plain as plain could be; the whole business had had nothing whatever to do with me. I re-perused the winning character as it appeared in the paper. The man was not such an idiot as we had all supposed. It was not a bit like me, but it exactly described Miss Winston. She was all the lovely things he said she was, while I—I was none of them; I was just an addle-headed donkey.

Talk about sensations! My feelings when I found the cheque in the letter were nothing compared to what they were when I realized precisely what the situation was. The world seemed to have all at once stood still, as if something had happened to the works. It was perfectly awful. Here was my name printed in great, big letters in the paper, with my character underneath. I had flaunted the cheque in the face of all the family. In imagination the money was already spent. I had practically promised to buy each one of them a bicycle. And now, after all——

Whose was the money, after all?

Never till that dreadful time did I thoroughly appreciate what it means about not leading us into temptation. It would be quite easy to say nothing. They were my twelve stamps which I had sent, and the sentence on the piece of paper was my property. Really, if you looked at it from one point of view, the hundred pounds belonged to me as much as to anybody else. I had only to keep my own counsel and it was impossible that anyone should even

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guess that there was anything the least bit odd about the matter. Of course, I knew what I knew; and the misfortune was that I did know. If I had only never looked inside that horrid envelope and never found out what had happened, how much happier I should have been!

I laid my head straight down upon the table, and I did cry.

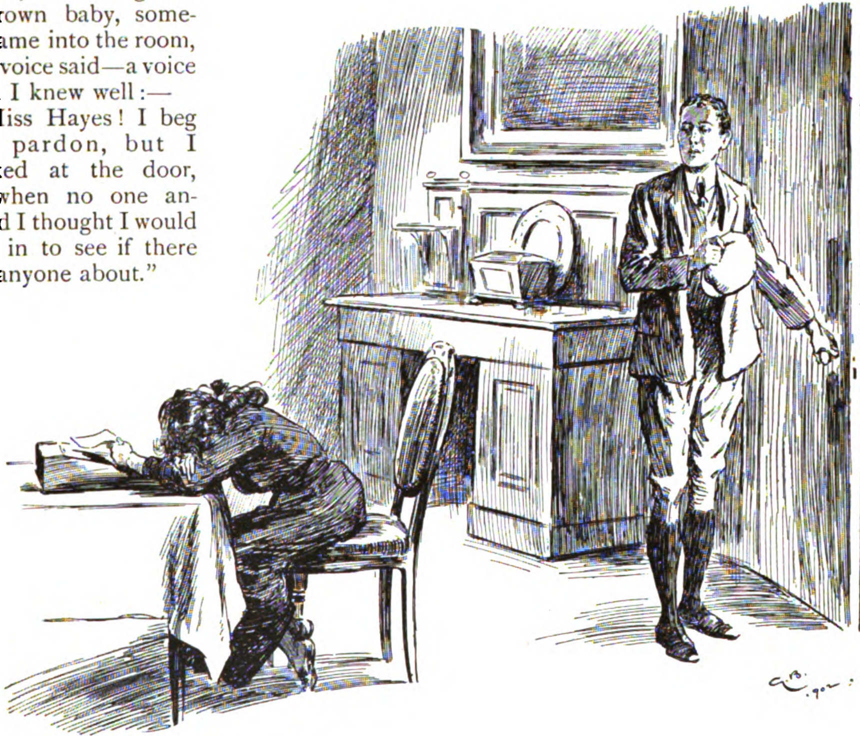
While I was in the very middle of enjoying myself, like a great overgrown baby, someone came into the room, and a voice said—a voice which I knew well:—

"Miss Hayes! I beg your pardon, but I knocked at the door, and when no one answered I thought I would come in to see if there were anyone about."

"No—thank you—nothing's—been—giving—me—trouble."

He apparently concluded that it might be advisable to seem not to notice that there was anything strange in my demeanour.

"I am the bearer of good news." We wanted some badly. I know I did. "You have been good enough to allow me to examine somewhat closely into the condition of your affairs." We had been good enough



"MISS HAYES! I BEG YOUR PARDON."

It was Mr. Gardner! It only wanted him to find me going on like that to finish everything. As usual, all the luck was on my side. I was perfectly aware that the slightest scrap of crying makes me look an object; and here I had been howling myself inside out for goodness alone knew how long. I dabbed at my eyes with my pocket-handkerchief—though I knew I made a fresh smear every time I touched myself, because I had the best of reasons for knowing that tears made me positively grimy—and I tried to pretend that I was not yearning to sink into the ground. He seemed concerned.

"I hope there's nothing wrong—that nothing has been giving you further trouble?"

I did manage to gasp out something.

to allow him! As if it had not been perfectly splendid of him to do it, he being not only Hetty's cousin, but a barrister. "Your mother appears to have managed everything herself, and very well she seems to have done it, too; but the fact makes it somewhat difficult for a stranger to probe quickly to the bottom of everything; and my inexperience has not made it easier. But so far as I have gone I have ascertained beyond all doubt that instead of being in fear of the workhouse—as someone suggested—you are very comfortably off. As time goes on I shall not be surprised if you find yourselves—financially—in a still better position." It was a consolation to know so much. That hundred pounds would not be wanted. "By-the-bye, I saw my cousin Hetty yesterday,

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and she entrusted me with what she called a note for you. I fancy you will find that it extends to about six sheets of paper."

It is not necessary to tell me it was ill-manners—I knew it was—but I felt that I must do something to avoid meeting his eyes; so I opened the envelope and started reading Hetty's letter then and there. The opening words seemed to leap up off the paper and strike me in the face.

"My very own dearest little Lily"—she always would call me little, though I was every bit as big as she was—"what do you think? You remember Miss Winston? She's starving! And she's not only starving, but she's dying of consumption. I've only just found it out by the merest accident. It seems that she's living in a little cottage at a place called Angmering, somewhere near Worthing. She's been ill ever so long, and able to do no work or earn a penny; so that she has absolutely no money to buy herself food or even to pay her rent. If someone doesn't come to her help soon they'll have to take her to the workhouse—to die! Poor Miss Winston! And she such a darling! Isn't it dreadful to think of?"

It was. So dreadful that I could not bear to think. I hope it was not wicked, but I almost felt as if that letter must have dropped out of Heaven. It did seem a miracle that it should have come to me at that very moment. Penniless! Starving! And there was that hundred pounds—her hundred pounds—lying on the table. Was it possible that I had even remotely contemplated the possibility of—of doing what? My conscience so rose up at me that, whether Mr. Gardner was or was not there, I had to hide my face with my hands and start crying all over again. My behaviour seemed to positively frighten him.

"I hope that Hetty has not said anything disagreeable—nothing to cause you pain. I assure you that nothing was farther from her intention, and that the letter was accompanied by all sorts of loving messages."

Then I felt that I must tell him everything. So I did—every morsel, right from the beginning. He was so patient, so full of understanding and of sympathy. Indeed, he was much more sympathetic than I deserved. Still, even if you are not deserving of sympathy, it is a comfort to receive it, particularly if it is nicely offered.

I do not wish to breathe a word against my own family. I am perfectly certain that no one could be fonder of Nora and the boys than I am. Yet I am inclined to think that there are times when, if one must confess, it is just as well to do it to someone who is not exactly a relation. One's relatives are apt to take such a narrow view. I am convinced that no one could have taken a broader view than Mr. Gardner did; and he never laughed once. That, in itself, was an immense relief. I have noticed in Nora, even when I have been confiding to her the most serious things, a tendency to treat me as if I were not quite in earnest. There was nothing of that sort about Mr. Gardner—not a trace. Or, at least, if he did show some faint sign of my having afforded him amusement he did not do it in a brutal way.

"Poor little soul!" he said, when I had

"'POOR LITTLE SOUL!' HE SAID."

finished. "Poor little soul!" I was not certain that I liked him to address me in quite that form of words. But there was something so extremely soothing in his manner that I let it pass. "And so this has

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been the cause of the trouble?" He picked up the copy of the sentence which I had meant to send to the paper. "I see no reason why this should not have succeeded in winning the prize. If you will forgive me for posing as an expert, this handwriting is eminently characteristic."

"Don't be horrid."

"Such is not my intention. I am not suggesting that the character given in the paper is particularly applicable to this."

"I know it isn't."

"But it does not follow that this does not hint at something equally fine, though in a different way."

"Mr. Gardner!"

"I must ask you to forgive me if I annoy you by the expression of my opinion. In any case you are to be congratulated on what you have done."

"How do you make that out, when I have been winning other people's money with somebody else's writing?"

"Precisely. Though I should not phrase it quite like that. Hetty informs me that this lady is in sore straits. Well, you have gained for her what—in her position—she will regard as a fortune, which she never could have done for herself."

"I never meant to."

"Which actually makes it more delightful; because, while you have been trying to do a good deed, you have really done a better." He had a very nice way of putting things. "I would suggest that you yourself take the money to this lady at once. Her pleasure at seeing it will only be eclipsed by her delight at seeing you. And I shall be only too proud and happy if you will allow me to accompany you on your errand of mercy."

That was what did happen. Scarcely had he stopped speaking than Harris appeared at the window.

"If you please, Miss Lily, Miss Nora and the young gentlemen asked me to tell you that they've gone off for the day and won't be back till the evening."

"We also," observed Mr. Gardner, "will go off for the day. "You see, the stars in their courses are on the side of Miss Winston. I came over on my machine; if you'll jump on yours we'll be off."

He seemed to imagine that I could rush off to the other side of the next county just as I was. Masculine persons do have such curious notions—even when they are grown up. I had to scrub my face to make it clean. The condition of my hair was frightful; I seemed to have cried it into a tangled mass. Just as I was struggling with it, his voice came up the stairs.

"I don't know, Miss Hayes, if you are aware that you have been five-and-thirty minutes. If you can get down inside the next five we may catch the train; but if you can't, I'm afraid we sha'n't."

Of course, after that I simply flew. I left my hair nearly as it was, jammed my hat on anyhow, and bounded down the stairs.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting," I remarked.

"I'm used to it," he said. "I have three sisters."

I do not know what he meant. It sounded very rude—almost like one of my own relations.

We caught the train, and, after changing at Chichester, reached Angmering at last. By that time I had come to the conclusion that Mr. Gardner was one of the most delightful persons I had ever encountered; and so intellectual. A trifle dogmatic, perhaps, and a little inclined to regard me as younger than I was. We had a long and most interesting discussion about women in politics, a subject of which I knew absolutely nothing. But it was not necessary on that account that he should hint as much, which he very nearly did. Yet, on the whole, I could not but regard him as the kind of cousin to do one credit, and, at the risk of making her conceited, almost made up my mind to tell Hetty so next time I wrote to her.

Dear Miss Winston! We found her, looking like the shadow of her former self, lying on such a hard, old couch, in such a poor little room. Had I been an angel she could not have seemed more glad to see me. As I told her all about it she was so sweet. And when I gave her the twenty five-pound notes for which Mr. Gardner had changed the cheque at Chichester, the way in which she thanked me did make me feel so strange. As if I had done anything to deserve her thanks! I never knew how happy it made one to be the bearer of good news until that day. As I came away I almost felt as if I had been in the presence of something sacred.

On our way home Mr. Gardner and I had a warm argument about old-age pensions, which nearly ended in a tiff. After we had been talking about them for more than half an hour he as good as said that he did not believe that I knew what an old-age pension was. Even if that were true—and it was perfectly—I did not propose to allow him, almost a stranger, to accuse me of downright igno-

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rance as if I were an untutored savage. He might know something about everything—and anyone could see that he was awfully clever —while I might know nothing about anything—which possibly was the case; still, it was not civil for him to remark on it. The fact was that he would persist in regarding me—I could see quite plainly what was in his mind—as if I were a mere child; which, at sixteen, one emphatically is not. I do not hesitate to admit that I snubbed him in order to let him see that I resented his quite intolerable airs of superior wisdom.

Which made it the more singular that he should have told me, as we were entering the drive, that he had to thank me for one of the pleasantest days he had spent in his life. Considering that I had been metaphorically sitting upon him for ever so long I did not at all understand what he had to thank me for.

When I got out my desk to comme

"WE HAD A MOST INTERESTING DISCUSSION ABOUT WOMEN IN POLITICS."

letter to Hetty, my copy of Miss Winston's sentence was nowhere to be found. I could not think what had become of it. I distinctly remembered Mr. Gardner taking it off the table and making some uninvited comments on the writing—he seemed fond of criticising other people. But I did not recall what had happened to it afterwards. He could not have put it into his pocket by mistake. It seemed such a very odd thing for him to have done—and so excessively careless.

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DIOGENES AND THE DAMSEL

By Eyvind K. Christian.

I.

THE damsel was sweet-and-twenty. Diogenes was four-and-thirty, and looked ten years older. He was excessively tall, and appeared to be taller than he really was, being lean to emaciation—a gaunt, awkward, sharp-featured man with an aggressive chin, closely-shut mouth, cold grey eyes, and a thatch of stubborn-looking red hair. On the whole, he was hardly an Apollo. That is stating the case mildly.

In speech he was brusque to the point of snappiness, and the tone of his utterances was invariably cynical. The outer world knew him as Stephen Scott, but to his intimates and (behind his back) to his office staff he was "Old Diogenes." And his avoidance of the fairer half of creation was so marked that his friends had grown tired of chaffing him, and contented themselves with inventing legends to account for it.

He had come to London many years before, a raw-boned, friendless youth, with a sardonic cast of countenance and a gift for writing sharp-edged articles. To-day he was editor and part proprietor of a popular monthly and a trio of weeklies, and had achieved a measure of notoriety as the author of sundry bitter-flavoured novels, and he was so unsociable that it was counted to one of his friends as a triumph when he lured Scott down into the country to a Christmas house-party, at the behest of his wife, who had picked out a nice, sensible girl for Scott to fall in love with.

The selected girl bored Scott obviously and conscientiously, and no one suspected him of losing his heart to the belle of the house-party—a girl whose admirers were legion, and who had scarcely leisure to be aware of the awkward, silent journalist's existence.

He, who had made a mock of love and derided the possibility of love at first sight, watched this girl from under his shaggy red brows as she talked to the man who had taken her in to dinner, caught in the toils of a supremely unconscious enchantress; while his own dinner companion, justly incensed at receiving haphazard replies to her cleverest epigrams, turned a wrathful white shoulder upon him. He was noted for the cautious quality of his judgments, but he discovered before the first evening was ended that this was the one girl who could repair that belief in womanly truth and goodness which another woman had shattered in the days of his lost youth, the one girl who had it in her power to make this grey, workaday world an Eden to him.

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He hovered on the fringe of her little court, and the host feared uneasily that he was making a cynical study of her for his next book. He watched other men bask in the light of her smiles and turn over the leaves of her music when she sang and played, and he envied them their assurance and their drawing-room graces, which was wholesome for him. When her glance rested carelessly on him for a moment his heart gave a thump and seemed to stand still. When they met on the stairs on Christmas morning, and she smiled at him for the first time and wished him a Happy Christmas in her pretty, soft voice, his self-possession deserted him utterly, and he stammered an unintelligible response and felt an imbecile for the rest of the day.

He had arrived at the stage of intense dissatisfaction with his features, clothes, and manners—a new and bewildering experience—when he learnt that she was a wealthy soap-boiler's heiress, and that she was shortly to be married to one of the men staying in the house, an ornamental Guardsman, who twirled a golden moustache and concealed vague ideas concerning English history and spelling behind a supercilious tolerance of "writer fellows."

Three weeks after the party broke up a gigantic speculation, in which the soap-boiler was involved, came to grief. Scott read of his ruin and suicide in the papers, and his fancy pictured the other man marrying the girl out of hand and making a home for her.

His meditations on this subject rendered his temper uncertain, and his staff soothed ruffled feelings with the guess that somebody had been "getting between old Diogenes and the sun."

So ended, as he thought, his second love affair.

It was in the autumn following that memorable house-party that a novel by a new writer made something of a stir in the literary world. It was a book after Scott's own heart—daring, sharp-edged, caustic. He promptly invited contributions to his magazine from Owen Reeves, the author, and business relations of a satisfactory kind were established between them.

The wisest of men have their foibles, and it had been Scott's boast that he never failed to "spot" the feminine in literature. Not once in his long experience had he been imposed upon by the would-be George Eliots of our day! Also, he held in profound contempt that characteristic product of the nineteenth century, the young woman journalist. He tossed aside unkindly such young-ladyish effusions as were filtered in to him by a youthful and chivalrous sub-editor who sat at the receipt of manuscripts in the outer room, and his manner to such journalistic damsels as crossed his path was so discouraging that the sisterhood shunned his office as tramps shun a marked house.

Consequently, when a very pretty girl desired to see him one morning, stating that she came by appointment and giving her name as "Owen Reeves," a thrill of amused consternation went through the office.

"What a swindle for old Diogenes!" "Sold at last!" "How are the infallible mistaken!" were the mildest of the comments uttered when she had been ushered into the sanctum and the door of communication closed, and the office humorist went through a pantomime of listening at the keyhole and affecting to hear sounds as of a tragedy being enacted within.

Scott's face when *Miss* Owen Reeves was announced had been a sight worth seeing.

His jaw dropped; a dull red flush mounted from his collar to his hair; he sat as if glued to his chair and stricken with dumbness. The young gentleman who noted all this ere he reluctantly withdrew would have been chagrined had he known that he missed the chief humour of the situation.

"*You!*" was what Scott ejaculated, when he found his tongue.

The visitor repressed a strong desire to laugh.

"I cannot pretend to equal surprise," she said. "Of course, I knew you edited the *Holborn Magazine*. Someone told me so when we met at the Raeburns' last Christmas."

He recovered himself sufficiently to place a chair for her, and then retreated to the hearth-rug, where he stood on the defensive, his elbow on the mantel-shelf, eyeing her with a resentful incredulity not yet entirely dissipated. Her glance travelled round the room, as she sat down, with a suggestion of interest, taking in the book-lined walls, the solitary engraving over the fireplace, the littered desk, the vellum-bound copy of the "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám" lying open, face downward, beside a pipe.

"So this is—the Tub," she said; and this time a smile played round the corners of her mouth.

The dull red flush suffused his usually sallow face again. Who had told her his nickname?

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"'YOU!' WAS WHAT SCOTT EJACULATED."

notice in, that a man wrote the book——"

"What difference does that make?" The visitor's pretty, dark eyebrows went up in perplexity.

He was at a loss for a convincing explanation. He fell back lamely on his previous unsupported assertion that a woman ought not to take cynical views of life.

The visitor opined that what was sauce for the gander was sauce for the goose.

"Why do you masquerade under a man's name?" Scott demanded, curtly.

"My name is Winifred Owen Reeves," the girl said, with a fleeting blush and smile—the shadow of the frank, sunshiny smile he remembered. "Very few, if any, of my friends knew that I had a second Christian name."

"I knew your name was Reeves, of course," said Scott, irritably, "but I never dreamt—I never connected the book with you for a moment——" he broke off, knitting gloomy brows.

"Then you didn't marry that fellow?" he said, thinking aloud.

"No," said Miss Reeves, crimsoning. Her surprise at the question was so obvious that he found himself apologizing for it.

She reflected that he was certainly a very odd man.

When she departed, the occupants of the outer office and a young man who was speeding upstairs in bounds that covered three steps at a time were electrified by the spectacle of Diogenes the unsusceptible escorting a young lady downstairs with an air of deference that sat earnestly if somewhat awkwardly upon him.

He was seen from the window putting her into a hansom. The sub-editor whistled softly as he saw his chief stand bare-headed on the pavement in the November drizzle, gazing abstractedly in the direction the

"One of my tubs," he said, grimly. "I am more luxurious than my namesake. I have another to sleep in."

He stared moodily at her, trying to define and comprehend the subtle alteration he perceived in her. She was the girl who had unwittingly enslaved him ten months before, yet she was not the same. She was changed—not for the better. A soul that had been worsted in life's fight looked at him out of her eyes, unfamiliarly. The recollection of her book was a stab. It was undoubtedly clever. He had enjoyed every line of it, unsuspecting. But it was not the book *she* should have written.

"You wrote 'The Reapers,'" he jerked out, abruptly. "I could not have believed that it was yours if you had not come here to-day. Why did you write in such a bitter strain? Women ought not to be cynical."

"Ought they not?" Her tone was demure. "There was an exceedingly kind notice of the book in the *Holborn Magazine*," she reminded him. "It spoke of 'The Reapers' as being 'absolutely true to life'—as 'portraying character with wonderful fidelity'!"

Scott was floored. "Er—yes," he admitted. "But I thought, when we put that

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vehicle had taken long after it was lost to sight.

Miss Reeves had been in the act of stepping into the hansom when a victoria drawn by a pair of high-stepping bays rolled by. In the place of honour, with her chaperon beside her, sat a Chicago beauty whose patronymic had a world-wide fame in connection with tinned meats; and on the opposite seat, bending forward to speak to her, sat the man whom Winifred Reeves had been within a few weeks of marrying. He was decidedly on with the new love, and flushed uncomfortably when he glanced up in passing and met the look of quiet scorn in his old love's clear eyes.

Scott had seen the sudden paling and hardening of her delicately beautiful face, and instantly discovered the cause. And she knew that he had seen it, and hated him furiously. We do not love those who are witnesses of our humiliation.

"Nasty, ill-bred bear of a man!" was her unkind verdict as she drove away. "I hope I shall never see him again!"

And Scott went back to his office to do the logical sum known as putting two and two together, and to stare at the chair on which she had sat, and to wonder how long he must wait before he might devise a pretext for seeing "Owen Reeves" again.

He read and re-read "The Reapers," and the more he read it the less he liked it.

II.

MISS REEVES had been a regular contributor to the "Holborn" set of publications for some months when the editor took her breath away by proposing to marry her.

If he had not been so wofully out of practice where women were concerned he might have known that she would refuse him.

Their umbrellas collided outside Fuller's one wet afternoon, and the collision led to the ordering of tea and cakes for two.

Symptoms of reformation had been observed in Scott of late, a reformation which extended to his boots and ties. He had left off snubbing struggling girl-journalists and changed his tailor. He looked resentfully at Winifred's tired eyes and at the hollows which were becoming all too apparent in her soft, pale cheeks. She had the look of one consumed by an inward fever.

His close scrutiny made her restive. "Do you know that you are dropping lumps of sugar into the cream-jug instead of your cup?" she said, forcing a laugh.

"So I am." He fished them out coolly with a spoon. "I was not thinking of what I was doing."

"You quite gave me that impression."

"I was wondering how long it would be before you broke down," he said, boldly. "You are doing too much—any fool could see that. You look like the ghost of yourself. There is no medium with you women! You should take a rest."

"That is my own affair," she retorted, with a lightning change of mood. "Besides, it is a case of bread-and-butter. And it is high time that I began to save up for my old age."

"The bread-and-butter and the old age pension might be provided by someone else——"

"By whom?"

"By me." Scott took the plunge with a splash.

"You? Mr. Scott!"

Her first impulse was to laugh outright, her second impulse to treat the suggestion as a joke in decidedly bad taste. She perceived with amazement that his face was quite white.

"I have loved you ever since that first evening at the Raeburns'," he said, hoarsely.

She stared at him.

"But this is only the fourth—no, the fifth time we have met. You cannot be in earnest. You cannot possibly know anything of me, or I of you!" she declared, incredulously.

"You were engaged to that other man, then," he went on, unheeding. "You had not a thought to spare for me. You did not guess. But I knew then, as I know now with more certainty, that I could make you care for me if I had the chance. Won't you, at least, give me the chance?"

"Oh, Mr. Scott—I am so sorry," she faltered, moved to pity for him.

"Does that mean 'No'?" he asked, bluntly.

"I am so sorry!—so very sorry!" she faltered again. "But I never dreamt of anything like this. You were so—so——"

"Old?" he suggested, as she hesitated for a word. "Ugly?"

"*No*, oh, no! But so aloof. You seemed the embodiment of isolation. And I had heard so much of you from the Raeburns—they said you were so unsociable that your friends called you Diogenes and that you were a cynic and a woman-hater, and that you had a spite against women writers. I need hardly say that I found out for myself that the last charge was untrue, since you were the first to hold out a helping hand to *me*, after I had learnt, too, what society

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"'DOES THAT MEAN NO?' HE ASKED."

friendships are worth when the sun goes behind a cloud; but I never thought—I never dreamt of this—I only thought of you as——"

"As a cynic in a tub," he said, with a grim look.

"No," she protested, reddening guiltily, and anxious to make amends. "As a friend."

She extended her hand shyly, and he took it.

"I accept the position—*pro tem.*," he said.

She released her hand, with a vexed glance.

"And I gave him such a nice opening to retire gracefully," she thought. "He must be fearfully dense. Or is he going to be horribly persevering? I hope not. It would be such a bore."

Amusement and irritation blended subtly with her sympathy for his disappointment. The memory of it oppressed her. She had had her share of matrimonial proposals, but they had never lain upon her like a heavy weight before.

She realized, when Scott's square-jawed face came between her and her work that evening, that she knew him better than she had fancied—and liked him. Her thoughts of him had taken on a tinge of discomfort.

"He is the kind of man who invariably knows what he wants, and usually gets it in the long run," she mused, uneasily. "I wish he didn't want *me!*"

III.

WINTER came round again—the second winter since her father's ruin and sudden death. With the dawning of the New Year came Winifred's birthday.

She tasted the full bitterness of remembrance in loneliness and oblivion. None of her former friends knew where she lived or what she was doing. If any of them had tried to find her they had failed. She was a proud woman, and in fleeing from conventional sympathy and patronizing kindness she had missed the sincere friendliness which grows from the same soil, the wheat among the tares.

As she lingered over her solitary breakfast her wilful memory tactlessly obtruded flash-light views of other and different birthdays. She roused herself from an unduly prolonged and profitless reverie as her landlady entered bearing a florist's box—a good-sized box tied with the freshest of narrow satin ribbon and announcing itself with a strong fragrance of violets.

"For me?" Winifred ejaculated.

She removed the lid with fingers that trembled a little with surprise and pleasure, and lifted out a splendid mass of violets, purple and white, and from beneath them a great handful of roses.

Who had sent them to her? She could only suppose that some one of her old friends, sharper of eye than the rest, had

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guessed at the identity of "Owen Reeves," and so traced her.

She had missed companionship and the little amenities of social life more than she knew or acknowledged. She bathed her hands delightedly in the wealth of damp, exquisitely fragrant violets. With a flicker of her old brightness and animation she moved about her sitting-room, arranging the roses in tall glass beakers with the flower-lover's lingering touch. There had been bitterness in remembrance. There was sweetness in being remembered.

An hour later, as Scott was dropping off a 'bus in Ludgate Circus, he spied her on top of another. Her genial mood had not yet passed, and she smiled a greeting as he took a vacant place beside her. The frosty air had brought back a faint pink colour to her cheeks, and a knot of the violets nestled in the silver-grey fur round her neck. His eyes unconsciously dwelt upon them.

"SHE LIFTED OUT A SPLENDID MASS OF VIOLETS."

"Are they not lovely?" she said, impulsively, laying her chin against them caressingly. "It is my birthday, and they were a birthday surprise—a great box of them. I am amusing myself by trying to guess who sent them to me."

Scott's honesty had always been his prominent virtue, and was occasionally his stumbling-block.

"I sent them," he said.

She bit her lip, vexed, averting her glance. The odour of the little blue flowers became all at once oppressive. The transient brightness that had gleamed in her face flickered out again, discouraged. She experienced that depressing sense of impotence and futility which is the lot of those who oppose barriers of soft snow to battering-rams.

Scott was offended in his turn by her vexed silence. He had remembered that her birthday fell on New Year's Day--they had drunk her health at dinner on New Year's Day two years ago and made birthday speeches. He had hoped the flowers would give her pleasure.

"It was awfully kind of you," she said, with cold formality of tone.

He set his teeth upon an insanely sarcastic reply. But his side-view of her dispirited face was too much for him.

"You are thinner and paler every time I see you!" he said, irritably. "You are working yourself into an old woman before your time. Presently you will break down. And you expect me to stand patiently by and see you do it!"

"I thought that discussion was now closed," Winifred observed.

"Not at all. It was to be 'continued in our next,'" he assured her. "You may as well give in now as give in a year hence. I am afraid your meek appearance conceals unsuspected depths of obstinacy, Winifred. Why won't you marry me and give me the right to take care of you?"

"I get off here," Winifred remarked, irrelevantly, as the 'bus stopped.

"So do I."

She shot an exasperated glance at him, hesitated, wavered between dignity and an irresistible desire to laugh—and sat still, with a slight shrug expressive of resignation as the 'bus rolled forward again.

"Barkis's second message was—that he was 'a-waitin' for a answer,'" Scott suggested, presently.

"You are very"—she hesitated wearily between "ridiculous" and "persistent"—"very persistent, Mr. Scott! I have already told

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"SHE BIT HER LIP, AVERTING HER GLANCE."

you that I do not care for you—or anyone—in that way."

"I told you that I would teach you to care."

Her face hardened suddenly as he had seen it harden on a previous occasion.

"A man taught me to care—once," she said. "No bird walks into the trap a second time."

IV.

SCOTT'S prediction had been verified. Winifred's second book was in its second edition. And Winifred had broken down.

He stood at the door of the house where she lived, interviewing the querulous-voiced landlady. Mrs. Coppin was beginning to regard him in the light of an old acquaintance, for he had called every day for a fortnight to receive the stereotyped report that Miss Reeves was "no better."

He had just sent up a basket of glorious yellow daffodils, with a request to be allowed to see her, but Mrs. Coppin came back shaking her head.

"She won't see nobody, sir," which was a charitable endeavour to soften down the refusal. "I'm sure I wish she would—it goes to my 'art to see 'er lie there, taking no notice! She's got just the look my sister Keziah 'ad when 'er baby died of croup and 'er man was killed fighting them Egyptian Dervishes; and Keziah went into a waste and died, and that's about what Miss Reeves will do. She don't seem to 'ave no interest in living, and don't eat what would nerrish a fly, nor sleep neither, nor won't let me fetch a doctor, say what I will, nor won't go to bed like a Christian! It gives me the creeps to see 'er——"

"Do you mean to say," Scott exclaimed, "that she never goes to bed and takes no food?"

"Three be-lessed days and nights," said Mrs. Coppin, impressively, "'as she been laying on the sofy in my first-floor front sitting-room. 'What's the good of going to bed,' she ses, 'if you can't go to sleep?' So there she lays, taking no more notice than a immidge out of Madame Tussord's, 'olding the daffydils and vilets in 'er pore 'ot 'ands till they wither, and then lets them drop to the floor and don't care for them no more. And as for the beef-tea and sich that I make 'er, she wont 'ardly turn 'er 'ead to look at it, let alone taste it. And the queer things she ses sometimes when I speak to 'er——"

"You said the front room on the first floor?" Scott interrupted.

"Yes, sir; but——"

But Scott was already up the first flight of stairs.

Winifred lay on a couch by one of the windows in a shroud-like white wrapper, her heavy, dark hair knotted loosely back out of her way, the utter listlessness of one who has nearly done with the things of earth stamped on her face. His flowers were withering already in her burning hands.

She did not turn her head, supposing that it was the landlady who entered. But it was a man's big, trembling hand that was laid on her shoulder, and she turned languidly to see Scott beside her. His heart was beating like a hammer as he stood looking down at

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her. He knew enough of illness to see at a glance that she was very ill indeed.

"Have you come for the story—the one I did not finish?" she said. Her voice seemed to come from far away. There was recognition in the glassy, fever-bright eyes she fixed on his, but no surprise. "I'm afraid you will not be able to make me finish it, for I can't remember what it was about."

He dropped on his knees by the couch, imprisoning the little, hot, dry hands in his own. He could not speak for the moment.

"HE COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE MOMENT."

"Did Mrs. Coppin tell you that I am going to die? Have you come up to say good-bye to me?" The apathetic question was like a knife in his heart. "I am sorry I could not finish the story first. Something went snap inside my head while I was writing it, and I haven't been able to remember anything since. That is why I am going to die. I am all alone in the world—I don't belong to anybody, and I had nothing to live for except my writing, and now that my memory has gone I shall never be able to write any more, so it is no use to go on living, is it?

"I shouldn't mind living so much," she added, piteously, "if I could only go to sleep, but I can't. I can't go to sleep because my head won't leave off thinking. All the thoughts I ever had in my life are going round in it, as if they were written on paper and pinned to a wheel that keeps spinning round all day and all night too."

Still Scott said nothing. The shock of finding her in such a state had bereft him of speech. A shade of wonder came upon her face as she looked up into his.

"There are tears in your eyes!" she said, curiously. "Are you sorry that we shall not see each other again? Is it because of—what you told me—that day at Fuller's? I remember that, you see, though I expect I shall forget it presently, as I seem to have forgotten everything else."

He wrestled desperately with the dumb spirit that had entered into him, and conquered. "You must not talk of dying!" he said, huskily. "I cannot bear it. You are not alone in the world when I love you and would give my life to serve you."

"Do you care so much?" she said, with a faint, half-regretful sigh. "That is a pity. Love is only an illusion. Life is an illusion, too—all the things that we think are real and worth living for are only illusions—some day you will find that out, as I have done, and then you will be glad to die, too."

He picked up his hat.

"I am going for a doctor."

"No," she began, but he cut her short, fiercely.

"This is suicide, nothing else. Do you think I shall allow it?" There was a fighting gleam in his eyes that matched with the fierceness of his tone. His whole soul was up in revolt. Years before he had seen his best friend loose his hold on life as Winifred had loosed hers—and his friend had died, succumbing without a struggle to a chance malady, even as Winifred was doing now.

Was he to see her drift away from him without a fight?

"You say that you are going to die," he said, tightening his hold on the hands that she had made a faint effort to withdraw. "But you reckoned without *me*."

"Without *you?*" She looked puzzled—even a little frightened. "What do you mean?"

For all answer he stooped and kissed her very gently, but with a deliberation about which there could be no mistake.

There was an electric moment. Her eyes were blazing; but he maintained a commendably cool front, although he was trembling from head to foot at his own temerity.

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One of her pillows slipped to the ground. He restored it to its place. Their eyes were very close together as he bent over her, but it was hers that quailed.

"You are mine now," he whispered. "You belong to *me!* And I shall not let you die; I am going now to get a doctor and a nurse."

"Oh," she cried, finding words, as he moved to the door, "how dare you!—how dare you! I will never forgive you!"

"Oh, yes, you will," he replied, soothingly —and was gone.

He had roused her effectually. She rose from the couch inspired by a semi-delirious idea of locking the door, but sank back, half-fainting, among her pillows.

Scott jumped into a hansom. "If I only had that fellow within arm's reach," he muttered between his set teeth—he presumably did not refer to the doctor he was on his way to Harley Street to find—"I would thrash him within an inch of his cowardly life and take the consequences cheerfully. My poor little girl! And she was so bright and light-hearted and bonny two years ago!"

"The doctor will be here soon," he said, gently, when he stood again by Winifred's couch. "And he has telephoned for a clever nurse who will have you all right again in no time."

"What right had you to interfere?" she flashed, angrily, impotently. "I was so tired of everything—I only wanted to be allowed to die quietly—and now ——" a rush of tears quenched the feverish glitter in her eyes, and she broke down, sobbing like a disappointed child.

"It is not good for man to live alone," said the doctor, sententiously, when he arrived on the scene to find a hysterical patient, and Scott looking for dust and ashes for his own head, "nor woman either! No relations, you say? Humph! Owen Reeves?—ah, just so! I am not surprised. That last book was too tense to have been written without a great strain on the nerves. A good cry won't hurt her. You can clear out now, Scott. Send up the landlady."

Scott cleared out obediently.

Weeks passed before he saw Winifred again. There were days when doctor and nurse looked grave—there was one black, never-to-be-forgotten day when Scott, pausing from habit before a florist's window, turned away with a horrible, sick loathing from its display of pure white waxen-petalled hyacinths and lilies. Just such white waxen-petalled flowers had he once seen laid about another woman in her coffin.

But there came a bright spring afternoon when he was admitted once more to the big, light "first-floor front" sitting-room to which he had first penetrated without invitation.

Winifred was going down to Devonshire on the morrow. The couch was unoccupied on this occasion, and she sat in a low chair by the farther window, clad in a tea-gown of some loosely-flowing stuff, a thing of filmy laces and fluttering ribbons, sufficiently spring-like and frivolous in itself to convey a suggestion of returning interest in life. A white-capped nurse was arranging a sheaf of starry narcissus on a book-case in a dusky corner, the sun peeped benevolently through the windows, and a pink flush came upon Winifred's cheeks as Scott entered.

Her eyes fell shyly away from his. Her illness had not obliterated, though it had confused, her memories of their last meeting.

There was a troublesome lump in Scott's throat, and once again it was the girl who broke the silence.

"Do you always get your own way?" she asked, unexpectedly.

"Generally; it saves trouble."

She averted her eyes again quickly that they might not encounter the gleam that flashed suddenly into his. "Well, you have got your own way this far," she admitted, after a pause, "that I did not die after all——"

"No," he said, nailing his colours boldly to the mast, "you are going to get well and marry me."

A flash shot from under her drooped lids. She sat winding and unwinding a ribbon of her gown about her slender white fingers. A sickening premonition of ultimate defeat assailed Scott for the first time; but even as despair clutched him her twitching lips gave way, parting in a smile.

"I suppose I shall have to," she said, softly, "just for peace' sake!"

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The House Under the Sea.

By Max Pemberton.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SIXTY HOURS.

IT was near about midday on a Saturday that we saved the poor folks from the island, and not long after midnight on the Monday that our troubles came to a head. I like to call these the "sixty hours"; and as what I have to write of them is written, as it were, from watch to watch, so swiftly did things happen, I will try to make a diary of it that you may follow me more closely.

Saturday, May 27th. At midday.

There are nine people rescued from the ship, and one of these a girl, Isabel, the daughter of Captain Nepeen, of the American navy. Her father is with her, a tall, stately man, very quiet and orderly, and quite ready to take a man's duty in the house. Of the others, the most part are American seamen, for this was an ocean-going steamer, *Silver Bell*, trading from American ports to Yokohama. All are very astonished at the things they have seen and heard both in this house and upon Ken's Island; but they are too ill to take much part in them, and the young lady lies still in a dead trance. Doctor Gray says that he will save her; but another man, knowing less, might think that she was dead.

The same day. At four o'clock.

They waked me from sleep at this hour to tell me that the men in the caverns below were beating upon the iron doors of the corridor, and appeared likely to force their way up to our part of the house. Captain Nepeen brought the news himself, and had a long talk with me. I found him a cultured man, and one who got a grip of things sooner than I had expected.

"CAPTAIN NEPEEN BROUGHT THE NEWS HIMSELF."

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"Mr. Begg," he said, "it is plain that we have fallen into the hands of a very great scoundrel. I cannot imagine what kind of intellect has made use of this extraordinary place, but I can very plainly divine the purpose. It is for you and me to answer to civilization and justice. We must begin at once, Captain Begg, without any loss of time," says he.

I answered him a little sharply, perhaps, being not over-pleased that he should make so light of my own part in the matter.

"Sir," said I, "what a seaman can do I have done already, or you would not be here to speak of it. Let that go by. The news that you bring won't wait for civilities. It must be plain to you that if we are to stand a siege in this house, we must hold every gate of it. There are men in the galleries below; Heaven knows how many of them. I would name that first and let the rest come after."

He was put about at this, and made haste to express a gratitude I had not looked for. His naval training prompted him to habits of authority. I could see that he was itching to be up and acting, and I knew that he needn't wait long for that.

"Indeed," says he, warmly, "we owe our lives to you, as many a good seaman will owe it in the days to come. I should have spoken of that first. The wonders of this place drive other thoughts from a man's head. We were half dead when we saw your signal, captain. What has become of my fellow-passengers and the rest of the crew, Heaven alone knows. They put us ashore on the island after the ship was taken last night, and nine of us, as you see, are here to tell the story. I have heard the tradition of Ken's Island from the Japanese, but I never believed a word of it before yesterday. Now I know that it is true. My fellow-passengers are there, dead or dying, and at sundown I am certainly going ashore to do what I can for them."

"You are a brave man, Captain Nepeen," said I, "a very brave man. Where you go I follow. We cannot leave poor seamen to perish, cost us what it may. Yet I would not hide it from you that it is a big business, and that the man who goes to Ken's Island to-night may never return. We are now fourteen in this house, and our first duty is to leave it safe for those who trust us. With your help, Captain Nepeen, we'll answer the scum down below," said I.

He assented very heartily and began to speak of the arms that we had and of the manner of employing them. His fellows, I learned, were bivouacked in the great hall, and these he waked first while I was getting the sleep out of my eyes and asking myself "What next?" The room in which I lay was Czerny's own room; and now in the daylight the sea played cool and green upon the arched windows and showed to me such sights on the rocks without as I had never dreamed of in the darker hours. What genius had pitched upon such a house under the waves? I asked. What spirit of evil breathed upon this dreadful place? What craving for solitude sent this master-mind here to the bed of the Pacific Ocean, where it could spy upon these uncanny secrets, watching the still, green water, face to face with devilish shapes butting upon the glass, the friend of the horrid creatures which slimed upon the windows and crawled to their rocky haunts, or fought claw to claw in the sight of their enemy, man? Desperate as the plight was, I must stand a minute before the crystal panes and watch that changing spectacle of the sea's own wonders. The very water was so near that I thought I had but to stretch out a hand to touch it. The weird, wild things that crept over the rocks, surely they would enter this room presently! And Czerny could live here, cheek by jowl with these fearsome mysteries! Again I say that man knows little of his fellow-man, of his better nature or his worse.

The same day. At five o'clock.

We open the lower doors and go down into the galleries. Seven men are with me and each carries a rifle. The quest is not so much for those shut down in the pit as for the life which they may send up to us. Doctor Gray has put it in a word, and it is true. The great engine, which draws the air from the sea's brink and drives it out in life-giving currents through the corridors of Czerny's house, that engine alone stands between us and eternity this day. If those below have kept that engine going until this time, it is for their own safety's sake. Rob them of food and drink, and what security have we that they will continue at the task? And yet, the deed be my witness, it was a perilous journey. No man in our company could say surely how many of Czerny's crew he would find in the black labyrinth we must face. No man could speak of the hidden mysteries lurking in passage or cavern, far from the sea-gate and the sun's light. We were going into the unknown; and we went with timorous steps, each asking himself, "Shall I live to see the day again?" each saying to the other, "Stand close!"

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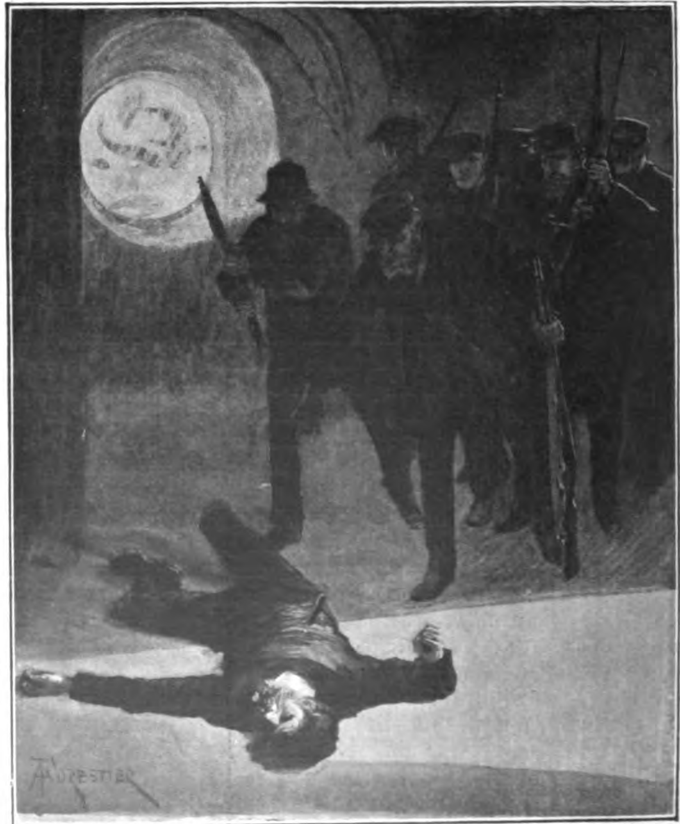
Now, the knocking had ceased when we opened the gates, and we stood for a little while peering down into that great corridor, which I have named already as the backbone of the lower house. Lighted it was, the lamps still burning, its barred doors shut, its branching passages suggesting a hive of rocky nests which might harbour an army of desperadoes. No sound came up to us from below save the sound of the engine throbbing, throbbing, as it fanned a breath of life and drove it upwards to us fresh and sweet upon our faces. Whoever lurked in that abyss feared to show himself or to cry a truce. We were hedged about by black mystery, and, rifle in hand, we set out to learn the truth.

There were lamps in the corridor, but in the passages branching from it no light save that which streamed down, green and silvery, from the windows which shut the still sea out. Oftentimes the seven with me would draw all close together, awed by the fantastic spectacle these glimpses of the sea's heart showed to them. At other times the nearer alarm would set them quaking, and crying "Hist!" they would listen for steps in the silence or other sounds than that of the engine's pulse and the whirring fans. The very stillness, I think, made them afraid. The horrors of the windows—above all, that horror of the nameless fish—could frighten a man as no spectre of God's earth above. If I had accustomed myself in part to these new sensations, if Czerny's house seemed to me rather a refuge than a terror, none the less there were moments when my step halted and my eyes were glued upon the sights I saw. For here it would be a monstrous shark lying still in a glassy pool; or there a very army of ferocious crabs, their eyes outstanding, their claws crushing prey, their great shells shaped like fungi of the deep; or going on a little way again I stopped before a giant port-hole and discovered a devil-fish and his nest in the deep and said that nothing like to it had been heard or told of. Here lies a great basin scooped out of the coral rock, and the green water is focused in it until it looks like a prism, and everywhere, in nook and crevice, the deadly tentacles, the frightful eyes of these unnameable creatures seem to twist and stare, and threaten us. Such fish we counted, hundreds of them, at the windows of the second cavern we entered; and, drawing back from it affrighted, we went on like men who fear to speak of that which they have seen.

"A madman's house; it could not be anything else," says Captain Nepeen, as pale as any ghost; "unless I had seen it with my own eyes, Mr. Begg, no story that ever was written would make me believe it. And yet it is true, as Heaven is above us, it is true."

"No doubt of that," said I, "a madman's house, captain, and madmen to people it. But of that we'll speak by-and-by; for the shadows may listen. Keep your gun ready; there will be others about beside ourselves. Here's the first of them—stone-dead!"



"HERE'S THE FIRST OF THEM—STONE-DEAD!"

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They all came to a stand at my words, and saw that which my eyes discovered for them—the figure of a dead man, lying full and plain to be seen in the lamp's glare, and so fallen that no one might ask you how he had died.

"One," said I, "and that which killed him left behind! He's been struck down as he ran. There's the knife that did it, lads!"

A young seaman amongst us shuddered when he saw the knife still sticking in the dead man's side. The rest of us drew the body out of the light and went on again with wary steps. We were near the great dormitory at this time, the door of which I myself had locked; but it was open now and the lock broken. Lamps still burned in that vast room, food lay still upon its tables; but the story of it was to be read at every step. Chests overturned, chairs smashed, a litter of clothes upon the floor, broken bottles, an empty pistol, great marks upon the door where iron had indented it, bore witness to the struggle for light and freedom. The prisoners had fled, but life was the price of liberty. I took one swift glance round this broken prison, and then led my comrades out of it.

"The birds have flown and one of them is winged," said I. "There are five more to take, and the shadows hide them! Come on, my lads, or they'll say that eight were scared by five, and that's no tale to tell of honest seamen!"

I spoke up to encourage them, for, truth to tell, the dark and the mystery were playing strange tricks with my nerves. As we penetrated deeper into that labyrinth I could start at every shadow and see a figure in every cranny. The men that the dark patches harboured, where were they? Their eyes might be watching every step we took, their pistols covering our bodies as we hurried on to the depths. And yet no sound was heard, the great engine throbbed always; the cool, sweet air blew fresh upon our faces.

Now, the first voice spoke at the head of the engine-room stairs, from an open cavern which no lamp illumined. I had just called out to Captain Nepeen to follow me to the engine-room, and was bidding the others wait at the stairs-head, when a shot came flashing out of the darkness, and in the flame of the gun's light I saw a great hulking figure, and recognised it instantly. It was that of Kess Denton, the yellow man, whom I had left senseless at the door of Ruth Bellenden's bungalow more than twenty days ago. A giant figure, the head bandaged, the arms and chest naked, a rifle gripped in both hands, this phantom of the darkness showed itself for an instant and then vanished with an echoing laugh which mocked and angered us. At the same moment the young seaman who had shuddered before the dead fell headlong in the passage, and with one loud cry gave up his life.

And this was the first man who died for little Ruth Bellenden's sake.

We swung about on our heels as the report rang out and fired a blazing volley into the darkness of the cavern. What other men lingered there, how many of the driven ghouls who haunted the labyrinth received that hail of lead, I shall never know or care to ask. Groans answered our shots; there were cries of pain, the curses of the wounded, the derisive laughter of those that escaped. But little by little the sounds died away, echoing in other and distant galleries, or coming to us as whispered voices speaking from places remote, and leaving to us at last a silence utter and profound.

We were masters of the bout and the engine was ours.

"Captain Nepeen," said I, "do you and three others go back to the stairs-head and hold it until I come. If they are afraid to face us here, they'll never face us at all. Why, look at it. Seven men out in the light, as fair a target as a woman might ask for, and they show us their heels. Go back and hold the gate, and I and those with me will answer for the engine. Time afterwards to hunt the vermin out."

He took my order unwillingly, I could see. A greater glutton for a fight than that smooth-faced American sailor I shall never meet in all my days. Keen as a hound after quarry, he would have hunted out the vermin, I do believe, if the path had led down to the mouth of Hades itself.

"You will not go alone, captain," cried he; "that's plain madness."

"I take two to my call," said I, "and leave you the rest."

"But what—aren't you afraid, man?"

"Afraid! Of whom?" said I. "Of an old man—but that's too far ahead. I'll speak of it when I come up, captain. Perhaps it's only my own idea. But it's good enough to go on with."

He had still something to say, and, looking first into the black cavern, which we had filled with shot, and then down the stairs toward the engine-room, he went on presently:—

"You take a big risk and I hope you'll

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get out of it. How many do you expect to find below?"

"One," said I, quickly, "and he a friend. It's a strange story, captain, and wonderful, too. But it will wait."

I was at the door of the engine-room before he could answer me, and pulling back the great leather curtain I put my own idea to the proof. Just as forty hours ago, so now that gloomy cavern shimmered with the crimson light which the giant furnaces cast upon its rocky roof. Now, as then, leather-clad figures moved before its molten fires. There were the mighty boilers, the pumping engine, the throbbing cylinders, the shining cranks; but the man who staggered toward me in the white light, the man who uttered a glad cry of recognition, the man who fell at last at my feet, imploring me for the love of mercy to bring him food and drink, that man was no enemy.

He was Clair-de-Lune, the old Frenchman, and I had but to look at him twice to see that he was the neighbour of death.

"HE FAINTED IN MY ARMS."

"Clair-de-Lune, old comrade!" I cried, "you! We owe our lives to *you*, then! By thunder, you shame us all!"

He was pale as death; the sweat ran in streams down upon his naked breast; his words came like a torrent when he tried to tell me all.

"Three days in prison, and no man come to me," he said, pathetically; "then I hear your voice. I say it is Captain Begg. I am glad, monsieur, because it is a friend. I break the door of my prison and would come up to you; but no, there is no one in the house; all gone. I say that my friends die if I do not serve them. There are lads with me; but they are honest. Ah, Captain Begg, food and drink, for the love of Heaven!"

He fainted in my arms, and I carried him from the place. Again, in all providence, I and those dear to me had been saved by the fidelity of one of the oddest of God's creatures.

The same day. At eight o'clock.

I have begun to believe that the Italian is right, and that Czerny left no more than eight men in the lower house. No attack has been made upon the Americans we put in charge of the engine, nor is there any news of those mutineers who fled from us this morning, save that which comes from two of them, very pitiful creatures, broken-down and starving, who have surrendered their arms and begged for food. The others, they say, will come in presently, when the big man, whom they call Kess Denton, will let them. They protest that their comrades are but four, and two of them wounded grievously. I no longer feel any anxiety about that which is below, and I have told Miss Ruth as much. She has now been two hours with Captain Nepeen. Her way of life draws her sympathetically toward that brave and gentle man. It must be so. The world has put a great gulf between the simple seaman and those whom

fortune shelters at her heart. A plain sailor has his duty to do; the world would laugh at him if he forgot it because the years have taught him to worship a woman's step and to seek that goal of life to which her hand may lead him.

An hour later.

We are to go ashore with the dark to see if we can save any of the refugees marooned on the island. It is a desperate chance and may cost good men's lives. I do not forbid it, for I have lived and suffered on Ken's Island myself. If there are living men there now—it may be women, too—held in that trance of death from which they must awake to madness or never wake again, the commonest instinct of pity says to me, "Go." I have consulted Doctor Gray, and he is doubtful of the venture. "Mind what you are doing, I beg of you," he says. "Are there not women to save in this house?" Miss Ruth overhears him and draws me aside, and, putting her hand upon my arm winningly, she lifts her pretty face to mine and says, "Jasper, you will save them!"

I am going ashore, and Captain Nepeen goes with me.

At ten o'clock.

We put off a boat at ten o'clock and rowed straight for the open beach. It was a gloriously clear night, with a heaven of blazing stars and a sea like flowing silver. The ship's boats made so many black shapes, like ocean drift in the pools of light; and Czerny's yacht, speaking of that dread presence, lay as an evil omen in the anchorage to the northward. Ken's Island itself was uplifted like some mountain of the sea, snow-capped in its dazzling peaks, harbouring its wayward forests and lovely glens and fresh meadows which the moon's light frosted. And over all was that thin veil of the fog, a steaming blue vapour flecked with the richest hues; now drifting in clouds of changing tints, now spreading into fantastic creations and phantom cities, pillars of translucent yellow flame, banks of darker cloud as though a storm were gathering. Sounds of the night came to us from that dismal island; we heard the lowing of the kine, the sea-bird's hoot, ever and anon the terrible human cry which spoke of a soul in agony. And with these were mingled grimmer sounds, like very music of the storm: the echo of distant gun-shots fired by Czerny's men at the anchored yacht which refused them harbourage.

There were four with me in the boat, and Captain Nepeen was one of them. I had set Peter Bligh at the tiller, and Seth Barker and an American seaman to pull the oars. We spoke rare words, for even a whisper would carry across that night-bound sea. There were rifles in our hands; good hope at our hearts. Perchance, even yet, we should awake some fellow-creature from the nameless sleep in the woods whose beauty veiled the living death.

Now, I say that Czerny's men were firing rifle-shots at the anchored schooner, and that sound was a true chantey for our ears. What eyes would they have for us when their salvation lay aboard the yacht? We were nothing to them; the ship was all. And, be sure, we did not go unwatched or helpless. Behind us, at the gate we had left, our gun showed its barrel like the fang of a slipped hound. Cunning hands were there, brave fellows who followed us in their hearts while we crossed the basin swiftly and drew near the terrible shore. If we had seen the sun for the last time, then so be it, we said. It is not a seaman's way to cry at danger. His word is "must," and in a sure purpose lies his salvation.

We made the island at the westward end that we might have a clear sheet of water between Czerny's boats and our own; and we so set our course that our gun could sweep the intervening seas if any eye detected us. The land was low-lying toward the west and marshy; yet, strange to be told, the fog lay light upon it. It had been planned between us that Captain Nepeen and I should go ashore while the others held the boat. We carried revolvers in our hands, but no other arms. The death-fog was our true defence; and against that each man wore the respirator that Duncan Gray had made for him. Sleep might be our lot, but it would come upon us slowly.

"It will be straight for the woods, captain," said I, "and all our heart go with us. Your friends who were put ashore last night will never stray far from the beach, believe me. We'll search the foreshore and leave the rest to chance. As for going under, we sha'n't think of that. It would never do to begin by being afraid of it."

He answered readily enough that he had never thought of such a thing.

"Where you lead, there I follow, Captain Begg," said he. "I shall not be far behind you, rely upon it."

"And me not far from the shore when it's 'bout ship and home again," chimes in Peter Bligh. "Luck go with you, captain, for you are a brave man entirely!"

I laughed at their notion of it, and went a

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little way up the beach. The respirator about my mouth, charged with some chemical substance I did not know the use of, permitted me to breathe at first with some ease. And what was more extraordinary was this, that while in the woods the fog had seemed to suffocate me, here it was exhilarating; bracing a man's steps so that he seemed to walk on air; exalting him so that his mind was on fire and his head full of the wildest notions. No coward that ever lived would have known a moment's fear under the stimulation of that clear blue vapour. I bear witness, and there are others to bear witness with me, that a whole world of strange figures and wonderful places opened up to our eyes when we began to push ashore and to leave the sandy beach behind us. And that was but the beginning of it, for more fearful things were to follow after.

I will try to describe for you both the place and the scene, that you may realize my sensations and follow me truly in this, my third journey to Ken's Island. Imagine, if you can, an undulating stretch of lush grass and pasture-land, a glorious meadow flooded with the clear, cold light; arched over with a heaven of stars; bordered about by heavy woods; dipping to the sea on two sides and extending shimmering sands to the breaking swell on the third. Say that a hot blue fog quivers in the air above this meadow-land, and is breathed in at every breath you take. Conceive a mind so played upon by this vapour that the meadows and the woods beyond the meadows are gradually lost to view, and a wonder-world quickly takes their place. Do this and you may follow me more surely to a phantom city of majestic temples hewn out of a golden rock and lifting upward until they seem to touch the very skies; you may peer with me into abysses so profound that no eye can fathom their jewelled depths; you may pass up before walls built wholly of gems most precious; you may sleep in woods beneath trees silvered over with light; search countless valleys rich in unknown flowers. And the city is peopled with an unnumbered multitude of moving figures, the sensuous figures of young girls all glittering in gold and jewels; the shapes of an army of giants in blackest armour; and there are fearful animals that no eye has seen before, and beasts more terrible than the brain can conceive.

Say, too, that this deadly vapour of the island so stimulates the faculties that earth no longer binds a man nor Heaven imprisons him. Say that he can rise above the spheres to unknown worlds, can span the seas and bridge the mountains. Depict him, as it were, throwing off his human shape and seeing the abodes of men so far below him, so puny, so infinitely small, that he begins to realize eternity. Cast him down from these visions suddenly and in their place set up black woods and the utter darkness of Nature impenetrable. Let the exaltation leave him, the sights fade utterly, the dismal abyss of the nether world close him in. Awake him from these again and let him reel up and stagger on and believe that he is sinking down to the eternal sleep. Such sensations Ken's Island will give him until at last he shall fall; and lying trance-bound for the rain to beat upon his face, or the sun to scorch him, or the moon to look down upon his dreams, he shall lie and know that the world is there, and that nevermore may he have part or lot in it.

I have set down this account of my own experiences on the island that you may compare it with the books of others who have since visited this wonderful place; but I would not have you think that I and the brave man who stood at my side forgot that human errand which put us ashore in those dismal swamps; or hung back to speak of our own sensations while others might need us so sorely. If we passed from delirium to sanity, from the height of hysterical imagination to the depths of despair and gloom, none the less the faculty of action remained, the impulse which cried, "Straight on," and left us willing still to dare the worst if thereby a fellow-creature might be saved. Burning as our brains were, heavy the limbs, we could still push on across the meadows, search with our eyes for those poor people we had come out to save. How long this power of action would remain to us, what supreme misfortune would end our journey at last, throwing us, it might be, to the grass, there to sleep and end it all, we would not so much as consider. Good men were perishing on Ken's Island, and every instinct said, "You, Jasper Begg, and you, James Nepeen, hold out a hand to them."

"Do you see anything, captain?" I asked my companion again and again; "we should be near them now. Do you hear any sound?"

He answered me, gasping for his breath:—

"Not a whisper."

"Yonder," I would go on, "yonder by the little wood: they landed there. Can you get as far, captain?"

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"I'll try, by Heaven!" said he, between his teeth.

"They'll not be far from the wood," said I, "that's common sense. Shut your eyes to all the things you see and don't think about it. It's an awful place, captain. No living man could picture its fellow."

I waited for him to come up to me, and so placed myself that his eyes, I hoped, might turn seaward and not up toward the woods where such weird sights were to be seen. For this place, the angle of the great pasture-land where it met the forest, was occupied by sleeping cattle, white, and still, and frigid, so that all the scene, glimmering in the moonlight, might have been cut out of some great block of marble; and cows and sheep, and trees and hills, all chiselled by the hand of Death. That a living thing should be speaking and moving there seemed almost an outrage upon the marvellous beauty of that field of sleep. The imagination reeled before this all-conquering trance, this glory of Nature spell-bound. It were as though a man must throw himself to the earth, do what he would, and surrender to the spell of it. And that, perchance, we had done, and the end had been there and then, but for a woman's cry, rising so dolefully in the woods that every impulse was awakened by it and all our resolutions re-taken.

"Did you hear that?" I cried to him, wildly; "a woman's voice, and near by, too! You'll not turn back now, Captain Nepeen!"

"Not for a fortune!" said he, bravely; "it would be Gertrude Dolling, the purser's sister; we cannot leave her!"

The desire was like a draught of wine to him. He had been near falling, I make sure, but now, steadying himself for an instant upon my arm, he set off running at all his speed, and, I at his heels, we crossed the intervening grass and were in the wood. There we found the purser's sister, stumbling blindly to and fro like a woman robbed of sight, while children were clinging to her dress and crying pitifully because she did not heed them.

It was an odd scene, and many must come and go before I forget it. Dark as the wood might be by day, the moonlight seemed to fill every glade of it, showing us the gnarled trunks and the flowering bushes, the silent pools and the grassy dells. And in the midst of this sylvan rest, remote from men, a lonely thicket of the great Pacific Ocean, was this figure of civilization, a young girl decked out in white, with a pretty hat that Paris might have sent her, and little children, in their sailors' clothes, clinging trustingly, as children will in confidence to a woman's protecting hand. No surprise was it to me then, nor is it a surprise now, that the girl neither saw nor heard us. The trance had gripped her surely; the first delirium of exaltation had robbed her of sight and sense and even knowledge of the children. That doleful wailing song of hers was the first chant of madness. Her steps were undirected, now carrying her to the wood's heart, now away from it a little toward the sea's beach. My order, twice given, that she should

"THE GIRL NEITHER SAW NOR HEARD US."

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stand and wait for us was never answered; I do not even think that she felt my hand upon her shoulder. But she fell at last, limp and shuddering, into my arms, and I picked her up and turned toward the sea.

"The children to you, and straight ahead," said I to the captain; "run for your life, and for the lives of these little ones. It will be something to save them, captain."

He answered me with a word that was almost a groan; but stooped to his task, nevertheless. He knew that it was a race for their lives and ours.

I had the burden in my arms, I say, and no feather's weight was less to me in the hope of my salvation and of those we strove for. The way lay straight down, through a ravine of the low cliffs to the beach we had left and the good boat awaiting us there. Nothing, it seemed, but a craven will could stand henceforth between us and God's fresh air that night. And yet how wrong that reckoning was! There were a dozen of Czerny's men halloaing wildly on the cliff-side when we came out of the wood; and almost before we had marked them, they were after us headlong like demons mad in wine.

Now these men, as we learned afterwards, driven by hunger and thirst to the point of raving, had come ashore that very evening; it may be to rifle the stores on the island; it may be in that spirit of sheer madness which sometimes drives a seaman on. Twenty in all when they landed, there were eight asleep already when we encountered them; and lying on the cliff's side, some with arms and heads overhanging, some shuddering in the fearful sleep, one at least bolt-upright against the rock with his arms outstretched as though he were crucified, they dotted that dell like figures upon a battle-field. The rest of them, a sturdy twelve, fired by the dancing madness, brandishing their knives, uttering the most awful imprecations, ran on the cliff's head above us, and seemed to be making straight for the cove where our boat lay. And that is why we saw that the race was for life or death.

There are moments in his life when a man must decide "aye" or "nay" without checking his step to do so. As things stood, the outlook could not have been blacker while we ran through the ravine to the water's edge. Behind, in the wood, lay the dancing death; before us these madmen with their gleaming knives, their unearthly yells, their reeling gait and fearful gesticulations. We had to choose between them, the sleep in the lonely glen, or the race downward to the shore; and we chose the latter, believing, I think, that the end must be the same, turn where we would.

"Keep your course, keep your course!" I cried to the captain as we ran on. "Hold to it, for your life—it's our only chance!"

He set one of the children on the sand, and, bidding the little one run on ahead, he drew his revolver and stood shoulder to shoulder with me.

"A straight barrel and mark your men," cried he, very quietly; "it's a cool head that wins this game. We have ten shots and the butts will do for two. You will make that twelve if you add it up, captain."

His coolness surprised me, but it was not to be wondered at. Never from the first had I heard this man utter one word which complained of our situation or of its difficulty. To Captain James Nepeen a tight corner was a pleasure-ground; and now with these yelling reptiles all round him, and the vapour steaming in the woods behind, and the sea shimmering like a haven that would beckon us to salvation, he could yet wear that cynical smile of his, and go with lighter step, and bear himself like the true seaman that he was. Of all that I have ever sailed with I would name him first as a true comrade in peril or adversity. To his skill I owed my life that night.

"One," said he, suddenly, when a great head showed itself on the cliff above us and was instantly drawn back. So quick had he been, so wild did the aim appear, that when a body rolled presently down the grassy bank and lay stark before us I could not believe that a bullet had done its work.

"One," cried he again, triumphantly—"and one from twelve leaves eleven. Ha, that's your bird, captain, and a big one!"

I had pulled my trigger, prompted by his example, and another man from the cliff above lifted his arms and fell with a loud cry. And this was the astonishing thing, that though we two were caged in a ravine like rats in a trap, and had shot two of the wretches stone-dead, no answering shot was fired from above, no rifle levelled at us.

"No arms," cries the captain, presently; "and most of them half drunk. We're going through this, Mister Begg, right through, I assure you!"

Well, I began to believe it; nevertheless, there were men on the shore before us, halloaing madmen, with clasp-knives in their hands and murder in their faces. Clear in the moonlight you could see them; the still

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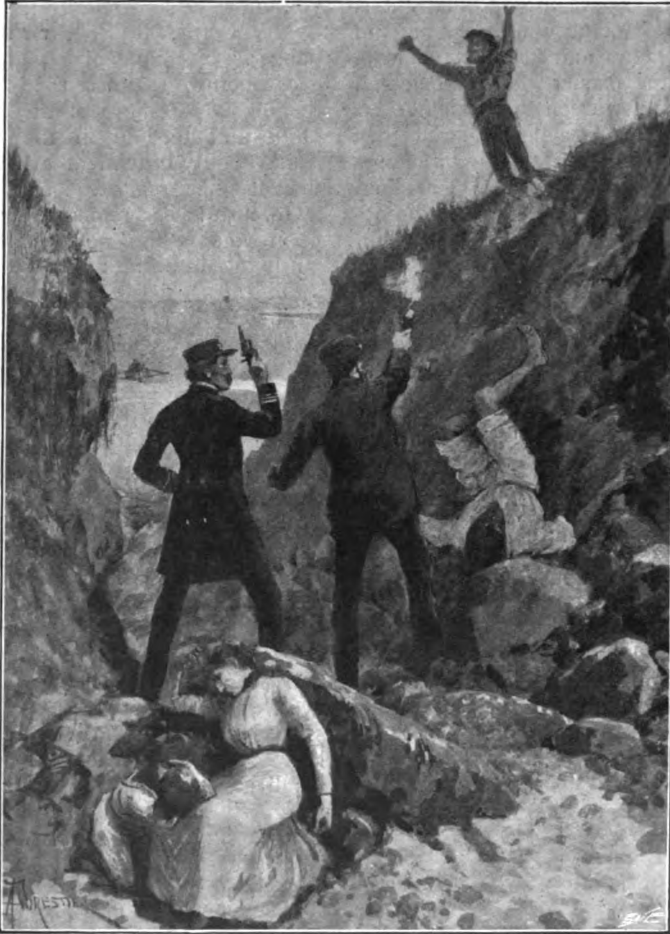
air sent up their horrid imprecations. Those men we must pass, I said, if we would reach the boat. And we passed them. It seems a miracle even when I write of it.

Now, we had halted at the foot of the ravine and were just prepared to go headlong for the rest, believing, it may be, that one at least of us must fall, when they fired a shot, not from the gun at the watch-tower gate, but from Czerny's own yacht away in the offing; and coming plump down upon the sand, not a cable's length from our own boat, a shell burst with a thunderous explosion, and, scattering in fragments of steel, it scared the mutineers as no rifle could have done. Roaring out like stricken bulls, cursing their master in all tongues, they began to storm the cliff-side nimbly and to run for the shelter of the woods; but some fell and rolled backward to the sand, some turned on their own knives and lay dead at the gully's foot; while those who gained the summit stood all together, and wailing their doleful song they yelled defiance at Czerny's ship.

But we—we made the boat; and falling half-dead in it, we thrust it from the beach and heard our comrades' voices again.



"ANOTHER MAN FELL WITH A LOUD CRY."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE END OF THE SIXTY HOURS.

The same night. Off Ken's Island. Half-past twelve o'clock.

We have not returned to the watch-tower rock, nor can we bring ourselves to that while there is any hope left to us of helping those whom Czerny marooned on the dangerous shore. Our gig drifts lazily in a pool of the whitest moonlight. We can still make out the ship's boats lying about Czerny's yacht, and the angry crews which man them. From the beach itself rises up the mutineers'

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wail of agony, like a wild beast's cry, at one time loud and ferocious, then dying away in a long-drawn cry, which haunts the ear. Ever and anon, as the mood takes them, the gunners on Czerny's yacht let fly at us with their erring shells; but they smite the air or hurt the water, or drop the bounding fire on the shimmering spread of sand beyond us. Perhaps it is that this employment occupies the minds of the long-boats' crews and keeps them from reckoning with the master who has befooled them. They, at least, are at the crisis of their peril. Afloat there on a gentle swell they must know that any hour may bring a changing wind and a breaking sea, and a shore rock-bound and unattainable. They are playing with chance, and chance will turn upon them presently. Let them make for the island where the laughing woods say, "Come!" and the heralds of sleep will touch them upon the foreheads, and raving, dreaming, they will fall at last, just victims of the island visions. Say that their brute intelligences do not yet understand this, but hunger and thirst will teach them ere the dawn, and then reckoning must come!

All this I foresaw as we let the boat drift by the sandy bays, and spake, one to another, of to-morrow and that which it must bring. Whatever our own misfortune might be, that of Czerny's men was worse a hundredfold. For the moment it amused them to see the shells plunging and hissing in the sea about us; for the moment the desire to be quit of us made them forget how it stood with them and what must come after. But the reckoning would be sure. Let a capful of wind come scudding across that glassy sea, and all the riches in the world would not buy Edmond Czerny's life of these sea-wolves who sought it.

"They'll stand by until they know the worst, and then nothing will hold them," I said to my comrades. "If they think they can get aboard the yacht, they'll do so and make for some safe port. If not, they'll try to rush the house. Assume that they are driven hard enough, and no gun will keep them off. Let ten or twenty go down, the rest will come on. I am thinking that we should get back to the house, lads, and not leave it to younger heads. We've done what we could here, and it's plainly useless to go on with it!"

They were all with me in this, none more so than Captain Nepeen, who, up to this time, had been for the shore and the friends who might be found there.

"At least we have made every prudent effort; and there are others to think of," said he. "If they had a gunner worth a groat, we should not be where we are, captain. You must allow something to chance and a lucky shot. They may get home even yet. I will not ask you what that would mean, for you are a seaman and you know."

His words, I think, recalled us to the danger. No hope of rescue rewarded our eyes when we scanned the black woods and the lonely foreshore of the forbidden land. Dark and terrible in the moonlight, like some mighty beacon of evil rising up above that sleeping sea, it seemed to say to us, "Go, turn back; remember those who count upon you." And we pulled from it reluctantly out into the broad sea, and breathed a full breath as we left its vapours and its fetid shores.

Three shots were fired at us while we crossed the open channel, and one fell so close that we could see the cleavage of the water and feel the silver spray upon our heated faces. This quickened our oars, you may be sure, and set our course true and straight for the house, whose iron gate stood up like a fortress of the deep and opened its rocky shelter to us. Clair-de-Lune was there, too, halted and motionless by the sea's brink; Dolly Venn stood at his side; and once I thought that I saw Miss Ruth herself peering across the lapping wavelets and watching us with a woman's anxious eyes.

Nor did we go unobserved by those who had so much to gain if mischance should befall us in that last endeavour. Like pirates' junks, slipping from a sheltered creek, the demons in the long-boats espied us in the moonlight and began to row toward us and to hail us with those wild shouts which yesterday we had heard even in the House Under the Sea. Yet, I witness, they did not affright us. We knew that sure eyes watched them from the reef; no lads playing at the length of a watchdog's chain kept more surely from the dog's teeth than those night-birds from the gun's range. Shots they fired—wild, reckless shots, skimming the water, peppering the sky, whistling in the clear air above us. But the boats drew no nearer, and it seemed that we must touch our haven unharmed, when the American seaman, stretching out his arms in a gesture fearful to think of, and ceasing to row with horrid suddenness, fell backward without any word and lay, a dying man, before us.

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They had shot him through the heart; and he was the second who fell for Ruth Bellenden's sake.

Sunday morning. Five o'clock.

I have known little sleep for the last thirty hours, nor can I sleep at the crisis of our misfortunes. It is a still, grey morning, with heavy cloud in the east, and lapping, rhythmical waves beating upon the windows of the house as though anon a gale must blow and all this torrid silence be swept away.

I cannot conceal it from myself what a gale would mean to us; how it must scatter the open boats, drifting there at the mercy of a Pacific sea; how, perchance, it might even lift the fog from Ken's Island and show us sunny fields and sylvan woods, a harbourage of delight to which all might flock with leaping hearts. And yet, says reason, if it so befall they jostle one with the other, the sweet and the bitter, the good and the bad, until it seems to me that I no longer get at the heart of it, but am as a man drifting without a chart, set free on some unknown sea whose very channels I may not fathom. Three hours ago when I came ashore and lifted the dead man out, and sent the sleeping girl to shelter, Ruth Bellenden's hand was the first to touch my own, her word the first my ear would catch. So clear it was, such music to a man to hear that girlish voice asking of his welfare as a thing most dear to her, that all the night vanished at the words, and Ken's Island was lost to my sight, and only the memory of the olden time and of my life's great hope remained to me.

"Jasper!" she said, "it was not you—oh, Jasper, it was not you, then!"

"'JASPER!' SHE SAID, 'IT WAS NOT YOU!'"

that you yourselves may go ashore to yonder island, what logic shall keep Czerny's men from the same good anchorage? They are as twenty to one against you. If there are houses there, and stores for the sun-time, who will shut them to this horde of desperadoes? Aye, the head reels to think of it; the hours pass slowly; to-morrow we shall know.

Now, I have thought of all this, and yet there are other things in my mind, and

I stepped from the boat and, taking her hand in mine, I drew her a little nearer to me; then, fearful of myself, I let go her hand again and told her the simple truth.

"Miss Ruth," said I, "it is yon poor fellow. I will not say 'Thank God!' for what right have I to serve you before him? He did his duty; help me to do mine."

She turned away and gazed out over the sea to the yacht still thundering its cannon

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and ploughing with its wasted shot the unoffending sea. Deep thoughts were in her mind, I make sure, a torture of doubt, and hope, and trepidation. And I—I watched her as though all my will was in her keeping, and there, on the lonely rock, was the heart of the world I would have lived and died in.

"You cannot forbid me to be glad, Jasper," she said, presently; "you have given me the right. I saw you on the shore. Oh! my heart went with you, and I think that I counted the minutes, and I said, 'He will never come; he is sleeping.' And then I said, 'It is Jasper's voice.' I saw you stand up in the boat and afterwards there were the shadows. Jasper, there cannot be shadows always; the sun must shine sometimes."

She held my hand again and touched it with her cheek. I think that I forgot all the place about, the sea and the men, the distant shore and the island's shape, the still night and the dawn to come; and knowing nothing save that Ruth, little Ruth, was by my side, I went into dreamland and said, "It shall be for ever."

Monday morning. At six o'clock.

I cannot sleep and I have come to keep watch on the rock. Old Clair-de-Lune is with me, but silence is in the house below, where some sleep and some are seeking sleep. Of all who can discuss our future bravely, none speaks better sense than this simple old man; and if he rebukes my own confidence he rebukes it justly. I ask him when the sleep-time will pass and the sun-time come. He shakes his head, he will not prophesy.

"Heaven forbid it should pass," says he. "They will go ashore to the island, and we—we perish," says he. "Pray that it shall not be, captain. We have food for three week—month; but what come after? You pick up by ship, you say. But not so. When your ship come here the fiends set trap, and all is wreck and burn and steal! They take your ship and you perish, you starve. Ah, monsieur, pray that the sun-time do not come."

I lay back upon the rock and thought of it. This old man, surely, was right. Let the fog drift from Ken's Island, the woods awake, life stir again, and how stood we—where was our benefit?

"It is a fearful position," said I, "and Heaven alone knows what the end of it will be. That something has happened to Mister Jacob and my ship I can no longer doubt, Clair-de-Lune. The *Southern Cross* is on the rocks, be sure of it, and good men with her. Take it that they are picked up and set on the American coast. What then? Who finds the money for another steamer? It is not to be thought of: we must dismiss it from our minds. You say that we have food for three weeks, and the condensers down below will give us water. But it won't be three weeks before we are in or out of it, my friend. If we are starving, others are starving—those out yonder by Czerny's yacht. He'll give them food to-day; but how long will they drift like cattle for the rain to beat on? Your sense will tell you that they won't drift long, but will be asking questions and wanting their answers. Aye, Clair-de-Lune, we'll listen with all our ears when that begins!"

He had a glass with him and he began to scan the yacht very closely and the ship's boats about it. I had not noticed that there was an unusual stir in the anchorage, but he remarked it now and drew his own conclusions.

"They give rogue man arms and cutlass, captain; he go overboard too. I see them pass from boat to boat. Ah, there he is, the bread and the biscuit. They get breakfast and then come here, captain. What else you look for? They not lie there all the days. They too much clever for that. We few and little; they big and strong. Why shall they not take the house? Some die, but other mans remain. Czerny he say to them, 'Great much price if you kill the English captain. He know that all his money is locked up down here. Why shall he not come, captain?"

I could not tell him why. My own glasses showed me the things he made mention of and others beside. Arms, I saw, were being passed down from the yacht to the small boats clustered about it. There was no sunlight to glisten upon the bright barrels of the rifles, but I could distinguish them nevertheless; and cutlasses were handed from boat to boat—a good fifty of them I counted, and there were more to come. What the meaning of it was a child might have told you. Truce prevailed between master and man in their common desire of possession. The last great attack was to be made upon us—the rock to be rushed. Even a woman would have divined as much.

"Clair-de-Lune," said I, "the end is coming at last; and it won't be very long. We're dealing with a remarkable man, and it is not to be supposed that he'll sail away and leave us here without one good blow for it. Aye, it's a great mind altogether, and there's

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the plain truth. Who else but the cleverest would have thought of this place, and come here like a human vulture to feed upon ships and men? There have been many Edmond Czernys in the world; but this man I name chief among them, and others will name him also. We set ourselves against a hand in a million; stiff backs we need to wrestle with that; but we'll do it, old comrade, we'll see it through yet!"

It was a wild boast, yet, Heaven knows, a well-meant one. Perhaps, if he had pushed me to the confession, I would have told him that I was far from believing my own prophecies, and that, in truth, I realized, as he did, the perilous hazard of our position and all that defeat might mean to us. Just as he knew, so did I know that before the night came down dead men might lie on the rocks about me and be engulfed in that sea which beat so gently upon the lonely shore; that living men from the boats yonder might swarm in the galleries below, and women's cries be heard, and something follow which even I dare not contemplate. The dreadful truth, perhaps, kept our tongues away from it; we talked of other things, of Czerny and his house, and of what we would do if the best should befall.

"He wonderful man," old Clair-de-Lune went on, standing, like some old Neptune of the sea, bolt upright on the pinnacle of rock; "wonderful man, and none like him! Thirteen year ago he first find this place, and thirteen year he wreck the ships. I know, for there was a day when he tell me much and I listen. He say, 'Make great fortune and no trouble to earn him. If sailor-man drown, more fool he.' All the years back, hundreds of years, ships perish on Ken's Island. Czerny he hear the story in Japan, and he come to see the place for himself. They say he once sleep through the fog and mad afterwards. He no longer have right or wrong or care about the world. He come to Ken's Island and grow rich. Then his engineers find this rock. Once, long time ago, it have been part of the island, captain. The—what you say?—volocano, he shoot fire into the sea; but that was before the peoples. Czerny, he go down into the rock and he discover great cavern and little cavern, and he say, 'I live here in the sleep-time.' Plenty of money make fine house. He shut out the sea wherever he would come in; he build great windows in the rock; his *mécanicien*, he put up engine and draw air from the skies. Long year Czerny live here alone. Then one day come madame—ah, captain, I was sorry when I saw madame come! 'She will suffer here,' I said; she have suffered much already. Czerny is not as other men. If madame say to him, 'You good man; you and I live here always,' then she have everything, she go where she will, she become the master. But I say when I see her, 'No, never; she will not say that. She good woman.' And then I fear for her, captain; I fear greatly. I did not know she have the English friend who will save her."

He turned to me wistfully, and I read in

"WE HELD A COUNCIL OF WAR."

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his eyes of that deep affection which little Ruth Bellenden has never failed to win from all who know and learn to love her.

Monday. At three o'clock.

We held a council of war in the great hall at this hour, and came upon a plan to meet the supreme attack which must be made upon us to-night. We are all of one mind, that Czerny will seek to rush the house under cover of the darkness, and in this the sunless day must help him. We cannot look for any moon or brightness of the stars which shall aid our eyes when the sun has set. It will be a dark night, cloudy and, perhaps, tempestuous. If the storm should break and Nature be our ally, then the worst is done with already and the end is sure. But we have no right to hope for that. We must face the situation like thinking men, prepared for any eventuality.

Now, I had slept a little at the height of the day, and the first news that they brought to me when I waked was of the surrender of the four that remained in the caverns below, and of the fidelity of the other two of Czerny's men who already had joined us. So far as I can make out there may be but one living man in the lower story of the house, and for him and his goodwill we care nothing.

The rest of the crowd we fought, seeing, perhaps, that fortune goes with us so far, will themselves stand on fortune's side and serve us faithfully. That much, at least, I put to my fellows as we sat round the table in the hall and made those plans which reason dictated.

"They'll serve," said I, "so long as we are on the winning side. We'll put them in the engine-room, where they'll keep the fires going for their own sakes. If they so much as look false, then shoot them down. It is in my mind, Captain Nepeen," said I, "that we'll have need of such a man as you, and three good fellows with you, at the lesser gate. You should find cover on the rocks while we hold the near sea for you. If Czerny gets a foothold there and beats that door in, I need not tell you how it will go with us. For the rest, I leave two men at the stairs-head and two in this hall to be at Miss Ruth's call. Peter Bligh and Dolly Venn go up with me to work the gun. If they rush it—

"WE SPRING TO OUR FEET; WE CRY, 'READY!'"

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well, twenty there won't keep them back with rifles. But I count upon the coward's part, and I say that a man will think twice about dying for such as Czerny and his ambitions. Let that be in all your minds, and remember —for your own sake remember—what you are fighting for."

"For women's honour and good men's lives," said Captain Nepeen, quietly. "Yes; that's the stake, gentlemen. I don't think we need say any more to nerve our arms and clear our eyes. We fight for all that is most dear to honest men. If we fail, let us at least fail like true seamen who answer 'Here' when duty has called."

The same evening. At six o'clock.

We all dined together at this time in the large dining-room near by Miss Ruth's boudoir. An odder contrast than that between this fine room below and the still, desolate sea above, no mind could imagine. For, on the one hand, were the insignia of civilization—luxury, display, the splendid apartment, the well-dressed women, the table decked out with fine linen and silver, the windows showing the sea-depths and all their wondrous quivering life; on the other hand, the black shapes of night and death, the menace of the boats, the anchored yacht, the darkening skies, the looming island. We sat down fourteen souls, that might have met in some great country house, and there have gathered in friendship and frivolity. Never in all my life had I seen Miss Ruth so full of vivacity or girlish charm. Her laughter was like the music of bells; the jest, the kindly word was for every man; and yet sometimes I, at her side, could look deep into those grey-blue eyes to read a truer story there. And in the babble of the talk she would whisper some treasured word to me, or touch my hand with her own, or say, "Jasper, it must be well, it must be well with us!" Of that which lay above in the darkening east, no man spoke or appeared to think. There was ruby wine in our glasses; the little French girls capered about us like nymphs from the sea; we spoke of the old time, of sunny days in the blue Mediterranean, of wilder days off the English shores, of our homes so distant and our hopes so high; but never once of the night or that which must befall.

Monday. At eleven o'clock.

We have now been at our stations for two hours and nothing has transpired. I have Clair-de-Lune with me at the great sea-gate, and Dolly Venn and Seth Barker are at the gun. The night is so dark that the best-trained eye can distinguish little either on sea or land. Ken's Island itself is now but a blur of black on a cloud-veiled horizon. We have shut off every light in the house itself; the reef runs no longer beneath the sea like a vein of golden light, nor do the windows cast aureoles upon the sleeping water. What breeze there is comes in hot gusts like breath from heated waters. We cannot see Czerny's yacht nor espy any of his boats near or afar; but we crouch together in the shelter of the rocks, and there is water near to our hand, and food if we seek it, and the ammunition piled, and the barrels of the rifles outstanding, and the figures with their unspoken thoughts, their hopes, their fears of the dreadful dawn that must be. Whence out of the night shall the danger come? Shall it come, leaping and brandishing knives, a veiled army springing up from the shadows; or shall it come by stealth, boat by boat, now upon this quarter, now upon that, outposts seeking to flank us, deadly shots fired we know not where? I cannot tell you. The comrades at my side ask again and again, "Do you see anything, captain?" I answer, "Nothing!" It is the truth.

Monday. At midnight.

We are still upon the rock and the shadows engulf us. The lad at my side, sick with waiting, has curled himself up on a bed of stone and is half asleep; Seth Barker leans against a crag like some figure hewn out of granite; old Clair-de-Lune is all hunched up as a bundle. Nevertheless, masterly eyes scan the lapping waters. Will the night never speak to us? Will the day bring waiting? Ah, no! not that! A shot rings out clear on the still night air; a flash of fire leaps across the sea. We spring to our feet; we cry, "Ready!" The sixty hours are over and the end is near!

(*To be concluded.*)

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The Humorous Artists of Australasia.

BY THOMAS E. CURTIS.

[Attention is drawn to the fact that the present series of articles on the Humorous Artists of the World have already dealt with English artists in January, 1902; with those of Germany in April, 1901; with those of France in December, 1901; and with those of America in March, April, and May, 1902.]

T is a truism that young countries get all that is good out of older and more settled ones. Particularly true is it of Australia. Its style of humour is certainly distinctive, but the influence of the best English and American comic art — particularly the American influence, on account of similarities of life and existence between the United States and Australia—is undeniable.

Until the great gold-finds of the early fifties of the last century, when thousands of adventurous spirits went there to seek their fortune — some, indeed, to lose all they had —Australia was practically an unknown land. Many stayed and there made their homes, forming a great, cosmopolitan, lively, and vigorous civilization, the spirit of which was enhanced by an energetic climate. Such times are ripe for the development of new and vigorous humour, and it was not long before the clever young men and women of the new-found land, stimulated by the variety of their daily life, yet influenced by the traditions of the older lands from which they came, brought into being what may now distinctly be called Australian humorous art.

LIVINGSTONE HOPKINS ("HOP").
From a Photo. by Mr. Barnett, The Falk Studios, Melbourne.

The first humorous publication to make its appearance was the Sydney *Punch*, modelled not only in its title upon the famous London publication of that name. It ran for many years, and on its staff were men of varied ability. The most prominent of these was Alfred Clint, a man of sharp tongue and satirical pen, who ended up by becoming a scenic artist. With Clint worked Montague Scott, a kind of Australian du Maurier, and in his day a draughtsman of great merit. Some of Scott's humorous designs are now to be seen on the Sydney Post Office, but, as an Australian artist has recently pointed out, the credit of the designs of Scott and the sculptor who carried them out has been given to the Government architect of that time. It may or may not be to Scott's credit that much adverse comment has been made upon his work, but it is certainly true that many people fail to see the genuine humour in the artist's creations.

When the Sydney *Bulletin* started, about 1879, *Punch* was too feeble to stand the shock, for the *Bulletin* was an exceedingly energetic youngster, and one merely has to see it and read it to-day, in its ripe middle-age, to imagine what it was in its early youth. *Punch* existed a few years and then gave up the ghost. By this time the *Bulletin* was fairly on its feet. Amongst the first humorous artists on its staff were W. MacLeod (now the managing-director of the paper) and S. Begg (now on the staff of the *Illustrated London News*). These two clever men maintained its artistic reputation until the arrival of Livingstone Hopkins—or "Hop," as he is better known—from New York.

"Hop" belongs to the Tom Nast period of American humour—probably the best period America has ever seen. At least, it was the period of the finest humorous writings of Mark Twain, Josh Billings, and others of their school—a fine, healthy atmosphere of genuine humour, and not the forcing-frame or hot-house fun developed in recent years. "Hop" went to Australia on a three years' engagement; but finding the soil, climate, and temperament of the people most congenial has stayed twenty years, and is now a permanent fixture in the social and art life of Sydney. He is to-day more Australian than American, and is a humorist of world-wide repute, ranking, in the estimation of

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many artists, with the very few of the world's real humorists. He is a man standing over six feet high, has a long, melancholy face, with large eyes and ears, like a modern Don Quixote, and wears a closely-trimmed beard. He himself tells the story of his first experience with an Australian barber. The barber accidentally cut the face of the artist, and when remonstrated with quietly remarked: "Well, you see, you are a stranger to me, and it will take me some time to get the run of your face."

THE HEATHEN IN HIS BLINDNESS: "I fear," said the new shepherd, sweetly smiling, "I fear that your father, the chieftain, does not like me!"
Cannibal Belle (apologetically): "Well, you see, Pa has turned vegetarian."
(Pa is seen in the midd e distance pensively cracking a cocoanut.)
DRAWN BY "HOP" FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

The influence exerted by Hopkins on Australian life by virtue of the political cartoons and humorous sketches which have appeared with such unfailing regularity in the *Bulletin* cannot be estimated. Long residence has given him a knowledge of the foibles of Australian human nature, which lends an individuality to everything he turns out, and the Australian would miss the signature of "Hop" from the *Bulletin* with the same poignancy of feeling which Englishmen felt when the familiar sign of "J. T." was absent from the pages of *Punch*. The influence of this man, too, on the rising generation of artists is very great. He is geniality itself, and lends a helping hand to everyone. He is a painter of considerable ability, a clever etcher, a musician, playing the violin and 'cello, both made by himself, a lecturer and after-dinner speaker, and in every way an all-round man.

TWO CLAY MASKS.—Hopkins, by Phil May; and Phil May, by Hopkins.

The popularity of "Hop" is, therefore, great not only in the art world. In his smoke-room or his den, as he calls it, may be seen not only the best-known humorous artists in Sydney, but also many evidences of his clever handiwork as a designer of furniture. On one occasion, it is reported, after contesting and losing the presidentship of the Sydney Art Society, he made a speech at a dinner of the society and humorously ended off with the remark, "Well, if you haven't elected me your president the day has not been lost. I have been spending my time profitably and now possess one of the best dog-kennels in Sydney."

In 1885 Phil May went to Australia, and the impetus given by his advent was strong and lasting. May was then almost unknown, and it was through the pages of the Sydney *Bulletin* that his work came before the eyes of the London publishers. Curiously, too, when "Phil" returned some three years afterwards to London he was hailed by these same publishers as an Australian. For some time in Sydney "Hop" and May had adjoining studios, and much of

the best work done by these two men was done at that period. Their points of view and methods of work were entirely different, and on many occasions they took delight in depicting each other humorously in the *Bulletin*. It is needless here, of course, to say more about May as an Australian artist, but no account of the development of Australian humorous art would be complete without some passing mention of his well-known name. When May left Sydney a dinner was given to him, with "Hop" as chairman, by his brother artists, and that dinner marked the end

ALF. VINCENT.
From a Photo. by Mr. Barnett, The Falk Studios, Melbourne.

HASH-HOUSE ZOOLOGY.—Boarder: "Bridget, there was no water in my carafe this morning."
Bridget: "Hin your phwat?"
Boarder: "In my carafe—my water-bottle.'
Bridget (puzzled): "Well, Oi'll put some in roight away; but Oi always t'ought a giraffe wuz a burrud."
DRAWN BY ALF. VINCENT FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

of an epoch in Australian art. After quitting Sydney May worked in Melbourne during the Exhibition of 1888, when many notable people came under his observation and were depicted by his skilful pen. Mr. Melton Prior, then representing the *Illustrated London News* in Melbourne, was a favourite subject, and May's sketches of Prior calmly making a sketch of a battle on a snorting war charger, bumping about in his saddle, hat flying in air, shells bursting all around him, and medals on his breast, is among the best recollections of that happy time.

Imitation, more or less great, is the sincere flattery shown to the work of great artists, and the appearance in the *Bulletin* of a personality known as "Phil May II." was widely heralded. This personality was the young and exceedingly clever Alf. Vincent. The nickname was indeed flattering to so young a man—for he was but twenty—yet it was not long before he had developed a style of

A LITERARY GRIEVANCE.—The Youth: "'Ave yer got the *Perleece Gazette?*"
The Shopkeeper: "Yes."
The Youth (in painfully injured tone): "Then w'y don't yer put it in the winder so's a bloke can read it?"
DRAWN BY ALF. VINCENT FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

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his own, and the Vincent drawings for the *Bulletin* are now known throughout Australia. They still bear some evidence of May's influence, but have never been slavish copies. Vincent is a native of Tasmania, and is still under thirty. After his first appearance in the *Bulletin* he contributed very little for a year or two to that paper, and was thought to be lost. His work suddenly appeared, however, in the pages of the Melbourne *Punch*, and during his three years' connection with that popular journal Vincent produced many notable drawings, the series by which he is best known being his "Colonial Premiers in England," which depicted the visit of the leading Australasian politicians to London during the Jubilee year. These humorous drawings were republished in book form and ran through several editions.

A PUSHING BOY.—Lady: "Have you any tinned fish?"
Boy: "No, mum! we're just out of it; but we have some lovely tinned tacks."
DRAWN BY ALF. VINCENT FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

About six years ago Vincent was offered a position on the Sydney *Bulletin* staff to do the familiar "Melbourne page," which had previously been done by Rossi Ashton, now well known in London, and Tom Durkin, both very clever men with different points of view. Vincent accepted the offer and has since remained with the *Bulletin*, contributing many clever drawings, both political and humorous, to that paper. It falls to the lot of few young men to be so soon appreciated, but such appreciation so

D. H. SOUTER.
From a Sketch by A. Henry Fullwood.

A CITY SIMILE.—Country Kid: "That's the best cow we've got."
City Kid: "Why don't you get his handlebars straightened?"
DRAWN BY D. H. SOUTER FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

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generously given should develop the rare talent that Vincent possesses.

Another well-known name is that of D. H. Souter, who draws in the decorative manner of the late Aubrey Beardsley and Will Bradley, the American poster designer. He is a Scotchman, who has been in Australia several years, and has made a specialty of humorous work from his early arrival there. He is also an expert lithographic artist, was once a scene-painter, and has a reputation for lightning sketches which few can equal in facility. In this latter work the spontaneity of his inspiration is highly appreciated. Souter is president of the Sydney Society of Artists and a trustee of the National Gallery of New South Wales, in Sydney. As a brother artist has said of him, "Souter helps to buy the nation's pictures and other works of art, and in these positions he is the most humorous of all."

Frank P. Mahony, B. E. Minns, and Fred Leist are, like Vincent, natives of Australia, and for subtle humour and draughtsmanship easily take a place in the front rank.

This is what Miss Smith, President of the New Woman Anti-Female Society, climbed the fence for the other day.

DRAWN BY F. P. MAHONY FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

FRANK P. MAHONY.
From a Photo. by H. King, Sydney, N.S.W.

MRS. GRIGGS: "Now, William, do be keerful o' them there Christmas things."

DRAWN BY B. E. MINNS.

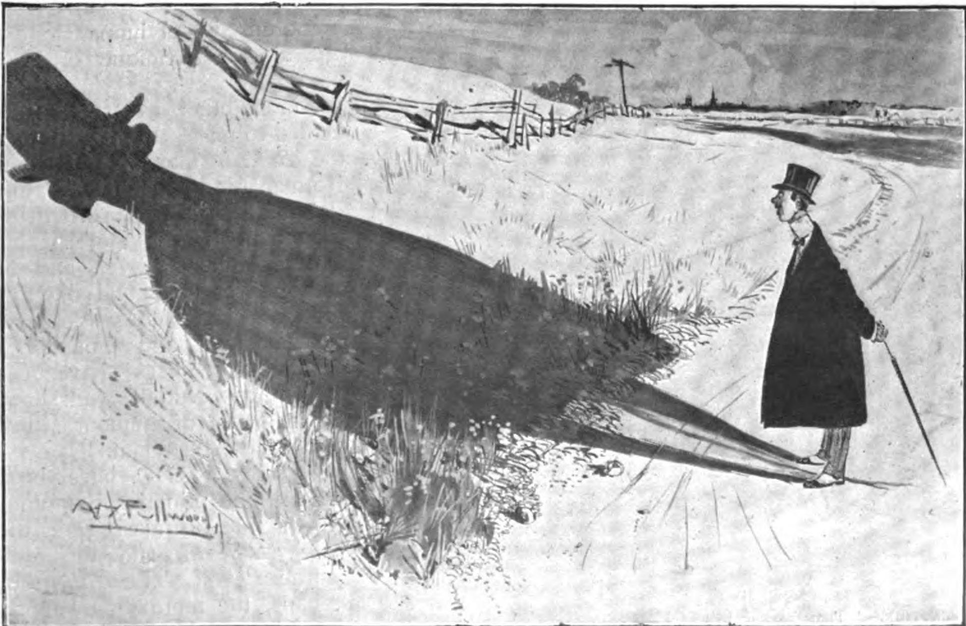
Mahony possesses a thorough knowledge of animals, which has been used to good advantage in his humorous work in the pages of the *Bulletin*. He is, moreover, a distinguished painter, and many of his canvases adorn the walls of the Sydney National Gallery. He is about thirty-eight years of age, and his training has been thoroughly Australian. Although not on the staff of the *Bulletin* his work regularly appears therein.

B. E. Minns possesses a reputation both in Australia and in London, for he is now temporarily resident in London, and his work has appeared in many of the English comic papers. The connection early formed by him with the *Bulletin* still continues, and it is a rare thing for an issue of the *Bulletin* to appear without one of his drawings. All of this work, of course, is regularly forwarded to Australia. Minns was born in the Bush, and never saw a city till he went, at the age of nineteen, to Sydney, to be articled as a solicitor's clerk. He put in most of his time, however, drawing heads and figures instead of deeds, and finally left one black art for the other, which he was better fitted for. He has seven pictures in the Sydney Gallery, paints landscapes and heads of aborigines, and was once vice-president of the Art Society of New South Wales. His growing reputation in London may give some idea of the esteem in which his work is held in Australia.

A. HENRY FULLWOOD.
From a Photo. by J. H. Newman, Sydney, N.S.W.

The humorous draughtsmanship of Fred Leist first appeared in the *Bulletin*. He had been in obscurity for many years as a designer of furniture, when he was taken up by the *Bulletin* and his talent encouraged. He is about thirty, has illustrated many tales of a humorous nature, and has a strong and individual style.

The artist most influenced by "Hop" is probably A. Dyson, who has done many drawings in the "Hop" style and manner both for the Melbourne *Punch* and the Sydney *Bulletin*. He is a young man of much promise, and, like many others, owes his encouragement to the talented Scotchmen who are so prominent in the management and editorship of the Australian humorous Press. The editor of the *Bulletin*, Mr.



AN AUSTRALIAN SHADOW.—Cholly: "Great Scott! Is that me?"
DRAWN BY A. HENRY FULLWOOD.

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AT ROSENBLOOM'S MUSICALE: "V. n't you sing something, Mrs. Sneiderthal?"
"Well, I'll try."
"Certainly! Certainly! That's vat I meant."
DRAWN BY BERT LEVY FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

Archibald, has a fine sense of humour and is himself a powerful writer.

The work of Mr. A. Henry Fullwood, who, from personal acquaintanceship with many of the artists mentioned in this article, has kindly supplied us with much of the information herein contained, is likewise well known. Mr. Fullwood is now resident in London, and his drawings in the *Bulletin* showed not only a keen appreciation of the humorous side of human nature, but also a technique of great merit.

A REASONABLE PROPOSITION.—Fighting Mac: "Gimme a match."
The Lock-up Keeper: "Look 'ere, you ain't going to smoke in there."
F. M.: "Orlright, jist open the dhure, and I'll go outside and shmoke!"
DRAWN BY NORMAN LINDSAY FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

PRECAUTION.—"That plackguard's hookin' it vith von of my coats on. Fire at hith trousers, Ikey."
DRAWN BY NORMAN LINDSAY FOR THE SYDNEY "BULLETIN."

Among other artists who have helped to make the reputation of the *Bulletin* may be mentioned Norman Lindsay, Bert Levy, and P. Nuttall. Lindsay is particularly prominent in the more recent issues of the *Bulletin*, and he usually gives us a good joke to a good drawing. Levy is one of the new men, and some of his so-called "Jew gags" have been very funny. Nuttall's work shows a broadness of humour which is distinctly Australian.

As may already have been noticed, the principal humorous papers in Australasia are the Sydney *Bulletin* and the Melbourne *Punch*. The *Bulletin* is, perhaps, the more widely appreciated journal, because it contains the best work of the best writers

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and draughtsmen. It is familiarly known as the "Bushmen's Bible," and each issue is eagerly read by thousands and thousands of people. It particularly encourages young and unknown art students, and the prices paid to staff men and outsiders compare favourably with the prices paid in the Mother Country. In the minds of many people the paper was at its best when Phil May was on it, but with a staff so brilliant as that which it possesses no one can dare say that the future of the *Bulletin* will be less bright than its splendid past.

HARRY ROUNTREE.
From a Photo. by the Sarony Studio, Newton, Auckland, N.Z.

The Melbourne *Punch*, which has often been referred to previously, was originally a close imitation of the London *Punch*, its principal cartoonist having been "Tom Carrington," whose reputation will always be firmly connected with the history of Australian humorous art. This paper was founded in 1855 by Mr. Edgar Ray, but it was not until after its purchase by the M'Kinley Brothers in 1872 that it began to exert a distinct influence upon social and political life, and its political cartoon has since been an acknowledged power. The story is told that one cartoon, which appeared in the old days, called forth great admiration and increased the circulation of the paper. At that time Parliamentary matters were very quiet, and the place of the cartoon in the particular issue referred to was occupied by blank paper, with these words underneath: "The Political Situation: 'A blank, my lord.' — Shakespeare." The public thought it a happy hit; but, as one who knows about it has written, "Only those behind the scenes knew that necessity was in this case the mother of invention. The artist had not been paid and had struck work, the paper was compelled to come out without its cartoon, and the editor's wit concealed the proprietors' temporary poverty."

The work of Carrington, who followed Tenniel closely in his draughtsmanship, and who has had wide experience on the now defunct *Sketcher* and the *Australasian*, did much to give the Melbourne *Punch* an acknowledged position. The paper was later served by an American, Luther D. Bradley, who was the soul of *Punch* for several years, and whose artistic record in Australia was remarkable. His conception of the late Sir Henry Parkes as an octopus is remembered with the same gratification as are the exceedingly clever pictorial skits on the first Berry Ministry and the Embassy to London now associated with Carrington's name. When, by the way, the latter artist left the *Sketcher* he was succeeded by Rossi Ashton, who later worked on *Punch*. Ashton also

THE PLEASURES OF CYCLING.—"On Sunday I went for a short ride. It was wet!"—*Extract from diary.*
DRAWN BY HARRY ROUNTREE.

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did the Melbourne cartoon for the *Bulletin*.

Most of the Melbourne *Punch* work is now done by Alek Sass and G. H. Dancey. Dancey supplies full-page cartoons, generally on national subjects. The style of Sass, although it is somewhat too local in nature to be generally appreciated by the English public, is widely appreciated over-seas. Sass received his artistic training at the Melbourne Gallery.

It is a peculiarity of Australasian journalism that no papers exist wholly devoted to comic work, such as *Punch* in England or *Fliegende Blätter* in Germany. With the exception of occasional "Annuals," such as the well-known *Henslowe's Annual*, from which we reproduce a drawing by "Pasquin," a clever artist, the daily and weekly Press provide all the humour necessary for the public, and many of the weeklies have given generous space to the humorous draughtsman. Reputations, however, have been local rather than national. The drawings of J. H. Chinner, whose connection with *Quiz*, of Adelaide, began many years ago, helped to give that paper an influential position. Chinner's great merits, his facility in catching and recording likenesses and his aptness with the pencil, quickly made for him a special place in the ranks of humorous artists. In the same way the work of W. Blomfield, who for many years has done humorous work for the Auckland *Observer*, has given to this artist a reputation which, although confined to New Zealand, is no less noteworthy because his humour has been expended on subjects of a local nature. "Blo," as he signs himself and as he is popularly known, is a specialist in political and personal buffoonery, and his cartoons are well liked by the public of "Maoriland," a name given happily to New Zealand by the Sydney *Bulletin*, which promises to pass into the language. "Blo" is about forty, and his draughtsmanship is of the broad and often crude quality which results when training has been lacking. In New Zealand the American, and not the English, style of humour is, as in Australia, best liked, and a large amount of the comic work in the Press is, we regret to say, lifted from the American comic weeklies. This, however, does not prevent the development of native talent, and in this connection it may be interesting to note the rapid rise of Harry Rountree, whose abilities as a humorous draughtsman and news artist have been recently recognised in New Zealand. Rountree's work has also appeared in London papers, particularly in *The King*, and the young artist promises to make for himself an important position in art.

THE MUMMER.—Mr. Craypaire: "You must find it doocid hard to make both ends meet, eh?"
Super: "Sir! I am an actor, not a contortionist."
DRAWN BY "PASQUIN" FOR "HENSLOWE'S ANNUAL."

Two other New Zealand artists should here be mentioned—Ashley Hunter and E. B. Vaughan, both of whom have worked for the New Zealand *Graphic*. Hunter's success has lain in the facility with which he ridicules the craze in New Zealand for Governmental panaceas for all political ills. The work of Vaughan, like that of many of his *confrères*, has been too local to give him the reputation which his undoubted abilities deserve.

The future of Australasian art, and particularly that form of it which has here been under discussion, should be brilliant. Encouragement is cheerfully given by the Press and Government to artists, and the freedom of life to be found in the Colonies ought to afford to the artistic world a variety of subjects which should prevent humorous draughtsmanship from getting flat, stale, and hide-bound. The lurking danger of comic art in communities where conservatism of thought and feeling is less to be met with than in older and more staid communities is a broadness and exaggeration in humour and in expression at which many may look askance. In our selection of drawings we have attempted to reproduce those which were humorous in spirit, treated with skill by the artist, and, if the word must be used, unobjectionable. From a purely English point of view there are many drawings and jokes published in the Australasian Press which show a freedom rarely to be found either in England or America.

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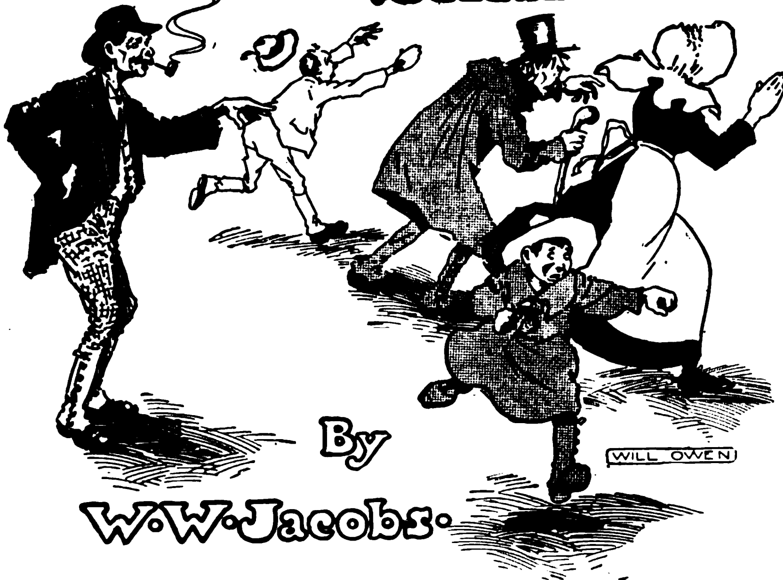
A Tiger's Skin



By W. W. Jacobs

THE travelling sign-painter who was re-painting the sign of the Cauliflower was enjoying a well-earned respite from his labours. On the old table under the shade of the elms mammoth sandwiches and a large slice of cheese waited in an untied handkerchief until such time as his thirst should be satisfied. At the other side of the table the oldest man in Claybury, drawing gently at a long clay pipe, turned a dim and regretful eye up at the old sign-board.

"I've drunk my beer under it for pretty near seventy years," he said, with a sigh. "It's a pity it couldn't ha' lasted my time."

The painter, slowly pushing a wedge of sandwich into his mouth, regarded him indulgently.

"It's all through two young gentlemen as was passing through 'ere a month or two ago," continued the old man; "they told Smith, the landlord, they'd been looking all over the place for the Cauliflower, and when Smith showed 'em the sign they said they thought it was the George the Fourth, and a very good likeness, too."

The painter laughed and took another look at the old sign; then, with the nervousness of the true artist, he took a look at his own. One or two shadows——

He flung his legs over the bench and took up his brushes. In ten minutes the most fervent loyalist would have looked in vain for any resemblance, and with a sigh at the pitfalls which beset the artist he returned to his interrupted meal and hailed the house for more beer.

"There's nobody could mistake your sign for anything but a cauliflower," said the old man; "it looks good enough to eat."

The painter smiled and pushed his mug across the table. He was a tender-hearted man, and once—when painting the sign of the Sir Wilfrid Lawson—knew himself what it was to lack beer. He began to discourse on art, and spoke somewhat disparagingly of the cauliflower as a subject. With a shake of his head he spoke of the possibilities of a spotted cow or a blue lion.

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"Talking of lions," said the ancient, musingly, "I s'pose as you never 'eard tell of the Claybury tiger? It was afore your time in these parts, I expect."

The painter admitted his ignorance, and, finding that the allusion had no reference to an inn, pulled out his pipe and prepared to listen.

"It's a while ago now," said the old man, slowly, "and the circus the tiger belonged to was going through Claybury to get to Wickham, when, just as they was passing Gill's farm, a steam-ingine they 'ad to draw some o' the vans broke down, and they 'ad to stop while the blacksmith mended it. That being so, they put up a big tent and 'ad the circus 'ere.

"I was one o' them as went, and I must say it was worth the money, though Henery Walker was disappointed at the man who put 'is 'ead in the lion's mouth. He said that the man frightened the lion first, before 'e did it.

"It was a great night for Claybury, and for about a week nothing else was talked of. All the children was playing at being lions and tigers and such-like, and young Roberts pretty near broke 'is back trying to see if he could ride horseback standing up.

"It was about two weeks after the circus 'ad gone when a strange thing 'appened: the big tiger broke loose. Bill Chambers brought the news first, 'aving read it in the newspaper while 'e was 'aving his tea. He brought out the paper and showed us, and soon after we 'eard all sorts o' tales of its doings.

"At first we thought the tiger was a long way off, and we was rather amused at it. Frederick Scott laughed 'imself silly a'most up 'ere one night thinking 'ow surprised a man would be if 'e come 'ome one night and found the tiger sitting in his arm-chair eating the baby. It didn't seem much of a laughing matter to me, and I said so; none of us liked it, and even Sam Jones, as 'ad got twins for the second time, said 'Shame!' But Frederick Scott was a man as would laugh at anything.

"When we 'eard that the tiger 'ad been seen within three miles of Claybury things began to look serious, and Peter Gubbins said that something ought to be done, but before we could think of anything to do something 'appened.

"We was sitting up 'ere one evening 'aving a mug o' beer and a pipe—same as I might be now if I'd got any baccy left—and talking about it, when we 'eard a shout and saw a ragged-looking tramp running towards us as 'ard as he could run. Every now and then he'd look over 'is shoulder and give a shout, and then run 'arder than afore.

"'It's the *tiger!*' ses Bill Chambers, and afore you could wink a'most he was inside the house, 'aving first upset Smith and a pot o' beer in the doorway.

"Before he could get up, Smith 'ad to wait till we was all in. His langwidge was awful for a man as 'ad a license to lose, and everybody shouting 'Tiger!' as they trod on 'im didn't ease 'is mind. He was inside a'most as soon as the last man, though, and in a flash he 'ad the door bolted just as the tramp flung 'imself agin it, all out of breath and sobbing 'is hardest to be let in.

"'Open the door,' he ses, banging on it.

"'Go away,' ses Smith.

"'It's the tiger,' screams the tramp; 'open the door.'

"'You go away,' ses Smith, 'you're attracting it to my place; run up the road and draw it off.'

"Just at that moment John Biggs, the blacksmith, come in from the tap-room, and as soon as he 'eard wot was the matter 'e took down Smith's gun from behind the bar and said he was going out to look after the wimmen and children.

"'Open the door,' he ses.

"He was trying to get out and the tramp outside was trying to get in, but Smith held on to that door like a Briton. Then John Biggs lost 'is temper, and he ups with the gun—Smith's own gun, mind you—and fetches 'im a bang over the 'ead with it. Smith fell down at once, and afore we could 'elp ourselves the door was open, the tramp was inside, and John Biggs was running up the road, shouting 'is hardest.

"We 'ad the door closed afore you could wink a'most, and then, while the tramp lay in a corner 'aving brandy, Mrs. Smith got a bowl of water and a sponge and knelt down bathing 'er husband's 'ead with it.

"'Did you see the tiger?' ses Bill Chambers.

"'See it?' ses the tramp, with a shiver. 'Oh, Lord!'

"He made signs for more brandy, and Henery Walker, wot was acting as landlord, without being asked, gave it to 'im.

"'It chased me for over a mile,' ses the tramp; 'my 'art's breaking.'

"He gave a groan and fainted right off. A terrible faint it was, too, and for some time we thought 'e'd never come round agin. First they poured brandy down 'is throat, then gin, and then beer, and still 'e didn't come round, but lay quiet with 'is eyes closed and a horrible smile on 'is face.

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"He come round at last, and with nothing stronger than water, which Mrs. Smith kept pouring into 'is mouth. First thing we noticed was that the smile went, then 'is eyes opened, and suddenly 'e sat up with a shiver doing that there was the chance for the others to get 'ome safe. Two or three of 'em took a dislike to Smith that night and told 'im so.

"The end of it was we all slept in the tap-room that night. It seemed strange at first,

"FOR SOME TIME WE THOUGHT 'E'D NEVER COME ROUND AGIN."

and gave such a dreadful scream that we thought at first the tiger was on top of us.

"Then 'e told us 'ow he was sitting washing 'is shirt in a ditch, when he 'eard a snuffling noise and saw the 'ead of a big tiger sticking through the hedge the other side. He left 'is shirt and ran, and 'e said that, fortunately, the tiger stopped to tear the shirt to pieces, else 'is last hour would 'ave arrived.

"When 'e 'ad finished Smith went upstairs and looked out of the bedroom winders, but 'e couldn't see any signs of the tiger, and 'e said no doubt it 'ad gone down to the village to see wot it could pick up, or p'r'aps it 'ad eaten John Biggs.

"However that might be, nobody cared to go outside to see, and after it got dark we liked going 'ome less than ever.

"Up to ten o'clock we did very well, and then Smith began to talk about 'is license. He said it was all rubbish being afraid to go 'ome, and that, at any rate, the tiger couldn't eat more than one of us, and while 'e was but anything was better than going 'ome in the dark, and we all slept till about four next morning, when we woke up and found the tramp 'ad gone and left the front-door standing wide open.

"We took a careful look-out, and by-and-by first one started off and then another to see whether their wives and children 'ad been eaten or not. Not a soul 'ad been touched, but the wimmen and children was that scared there was no doing anything with 'em. None o' the children would go to school, and they sat at 'ome all day with the front-winder blocked up with a mattress to keep the tiger out.

"Nobody liked going to work, but it 'ad to be done, and as Farmer Gill said that tigers went to sleep all day and cnly came out towards evening we was a bit comforted. Not a soul went up to the Cauliflower that evening for fear of coming 'ome in the dark, but as nothing 'appened that night we began to 'ope as the tiger 'ad travelled farther on.

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"Bob Pretty laughed at the whole thing and said 'e didn't believe there was a tiger; but nobody minded wot 'e said, Bob Pretty being, as I've often told people, the black sheep o' Claybury, wot with poaching and, wot was worse, 'is artfulness.

"But the very next morning something 'appened that made Bob Pretty look silly and wish 'e 'adn't talked quite so fast; for at five o'clock Frederick Scott, going down to feed 'is hins, found as the tiger 'ad been there afore 'im and 'ad eaten no less than seven of 'em. The side of the hin-'ouse was all broke in, there was a few feathers lying on the ground, and two little chicks smashed and dead beside 'em.

"The way Frederick Scott went on about it you'd 'ardly believe. He said that Govinment 'ud 'ave to make it up to 'im, and instead o' going to work 'e put the two little chicks and the feathers into a pudding basin and walked to Cudford, four miles off, where they 'ad a policeman.

"He saw the policeman, William White by name, standing at the back-door o' the Fox and Hounds public-house, throwing a 'andful o' corn to the landlord's fowls, and the first thing Mr. White ses was, 'It's off my beat,' he ses.

"'But you might do it in your spare time, Mr. White,' ses Frederick Scott. 'It's very likely that the tiger'll come back to my hin-'ouse to-night for the rest of 'em, and he'd be very surprised if 'e popped 'is 'ead in and see you there waiting for 'im.'

"'He'd 'ave reason to be,' ses Policeman White, staring at 'im.

"'E PUT THE TWO LITTLE CHICKS AND THE FEATHERS INTO A PUDDING BASIN AND WALKED TO CUDFORD."

"'Think of the praise you'd get,' said Frederick Scott, coaxing like.

"'Look 'ere,' ses Policeman White, 'if you don't take yourself and that pudding basin off pretty quick, you'll come along o' me, d'ye see? You've been drinking and you're in a excited state.'

"He gave Frederick Scott a push and followed 'im along the road, and every time Frederick stopped to ask 'im wot 'e was doing of 'e gave 'im another push to show 'im.

"Frederick Scott told us all about it that evening, and some of the bravest of us went up to the Cauliflower to talk over wot was to be done, though we took care to get 'ome while it was quite light. That night Peter Gubbins's two pigs went. They were two o' the likeliest pigs I ever seed, and all Peter Gubbins could do was to sit up in bed shivering and listening to their squeals as the tiger dragged 'em off. Pretty near all Claybury was round that sty next morning looking at the broken fence. Some of them looked for the tiger's footmarks, but it was dry weather and they couldn't see any. Nobody knew whose turn it would be next, and the most sensible man there, Sam Jones, went straight off 'ome and killed his pig afore 'e went to work.

"Nobody knew wot to do; Farmer Hall said as it was a soldier's job, and 'e drove over to Wickham to tell the police so, but nothing came of it, and that night at ten minutes to twelve Bill Chambers's pig went. It was one o' the biggest pigs ever raised in Claybury, but the tiger got it off as easy as

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"ONE O' THE BIGGEST PIGS EVER RAISED IN CLAYBURY."

the floor till everybody 'ad left off talking to look at 'im.

"'Wot's the matter, Henery?' ses one of 'em.

"'Don't ask me,' ses Henery Walker, with a shiver.

"'You don't mean to say as 'ow you've seen the tiger?' ses Bill Chambers.

"Henery Walker didn't answer 'im. He got up and walked back'ards and for'ards, still with that frightened look in 'is eyes, and once or twice 'e give such a terrible start that 'e frightened us 'arf out of our wits. Then Bill Chambers took and forced 'im into a chair and give 'im two o' gin and patted 'im on the back, and at last Henery Walker got 'is senses back agin and told us 'ow the tiger 'ad chased 'im all round and round the trees in Plashett's Wood until 'e managed to climb up a tree and escape it. He said the tiger 'ad kept 'im there for over an hour, and then suddenly turned round and bolted off up the road to Wickham.

possible. Bill 'ad the bravery to look out of the winder when 'e 'eard the pig squeal, but there was such a awful snarling noise that 'e daresn't move 'and or foot.

"Dicky Weed's idea was for people with pigs and such-like to keep 'em in the house of a night, but Peter Gubbins and Bill Chambers both pointed out that the tiger could break a back-door with one blow of 'is paw, and that if 'e got inside he might take something else instead o' pig. And they said that it was no worse for other people to lose pigs than wot it was for them.

"The odd thing about it was that all this time nobody 'ad ever seen the tiger except the tramp, and people sent their children back to school agin and felt safe going about in the daytime till little Charlie Gubbins came running 'ome crying and saying that 'e'd seen it. Next morning a lot more children see it and was afraid to go to school, and people began to wonder wot 'ud happen when all the pigs and poultry was eaten.

"Then Henery Walker see it. We was sitting inside 'ere with scythes, and pitchforks, and such-like things handy, when we see 'im come in without 'is hat. His eyes was staring and 'is hair was all rumpled. He called for a pot o' ale and drank it nearly off, and then 'e sat gasping and 'olding the mug between 'is legs and shaking 'is 'ead at

"It was a merciful escape, and everybody said so except Sam Jones, and 'e asked so many questions that at last Henery Walker asked 'im outright if 'e disbelieved 'is word.

"'It's all right, Sam,' ses Bob Pretty, as 'ad come in just after Henery Walker. 'I see 'im with the tiger after 'im.'

"'*Wot?*' ses Henery, staring at 'im.

"'I see it all, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'and I see your pluck. It was all you could do to make up your mind to run from it. I believe if you'd 'ad a fork in your 'and you'd 'ave made a fight for it.'

"Everybody said 'Bravo!'; but Henery Walker didn't seem to like it at all. He sat still, looking at Bob Pretty, and at last 'e ses, 'Where was you?' 'e ses.

"'Up another tree, Henery, where you couldn't see me,' ses Bob Pretty, smiling at 'im.

"Henery Walker, wot was drinking some beer, choked a bit, and then 'e put the mug

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down and went straight off 'ome without saying a word to anybody. I knew 'e didn't like Bob Pretty, but I couldn't see why 'e should be cross about 'is speaking up for 'im as 'e had done, but Bob said as it was 'is modesty, and 'e thought more of 'im for it.

"After that things got worse than ever; the wimmen and children stayed indoors and kept the doors shut, and the men never knew when they went out to work whether they'd come 'ome agin. They used to kiss their children afore they went out of a morning, and their wives too, some of 'em; even men who'd been married for years did. And several more of 'em see the tiger while they was at work, and came running 'ome to tell about it.

"The tiger 'ad been making free with Claybury pigs and such-like for pretty near a week, and nothing 'ad been done to try and catch it, and wot made Claybury men madder than anything else was folks at Wickham saying it was all a mistake, and the tiger 'adn't escaped at all. Even parson, who'd been away for a holiday, said so, and Henery Walker told 'is wife that if she ever set foot inside the church agin 'e'd ask 'is old mother to come and live with 'em.

"He was a quiet man, was George, but when 'is temper was up 'e didn't care for anything. Afore he came to Claybury 'e 'ad been in the Militia, and that evening at the Cauliflower 'e turned up with a gun over 'is shoulder and made a speech, and asked who was game to go with 'im and hunt the tiger. Bill Chambers, who was still grieving after 'is pig, said 'e would, then another man offered, until at last there was seventeen of 'em. Some of 'em 'ad scythes and some pitch-forks, and one or two of 'em guns, and it was one o' the finest sights I ever seed when George Kettle stood 'em in rows of four and marched 'em off.

"They went straight up the road, then across Farmer Gill's fields to get to Plashett's Wood, where they thought the tiger 'ud most likely be, and the nearer they got to the wood the slower they walked. The sun 'ad just gone down and the wood looked very quiet and dark, but John Biggs, the blacksmith, and George Kettle walked in first and the others follered, keeping so close together that Sam Jones 'ad a few words over his shoulder with Bill Chambers about the way 'e was carrying 'is pitchfork.

"'ARE YOU BRAVE LADS A-LOOKING FOR THE TIGER?' HE ASKS."

"It was all very well for parson to talk, but the very night he come back Henery Walker's pig went, and at the same time George Kettle lost five or six ducks.

"Every now and then somebody 'ud say, '*Wot's that?*' and they'd all stop and crowd together and think the time 'ad come, but it 'adn't, and then they'd go on agin, trembling, until they'd walked all round the wood without seeing anything but one or two rabbits. John Biggs and George Kettle wanted for to stay there till it was dark, but the others

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wouldn't 'ear of it for fear of frightening their wives, and just as it was getting dark they all come tramp, tramp, back to the Cauliflower agin.

"Smith stood 'em 'arf a pint apiece, and they was all outside 'ere fancying theirselves a bit for wot they'd done when we see old man Parsley coming along on two sticks as fast as 'e could come.

"'Are you brave lads a-looking for the tiger?' he asks.

"'Yes,' ses John Biggs.

"'Then 'urry up, for the sake of mercy,' ses old Mr. Parsley, putting 'is 'and on the table and going off into a fit of coughing; 'it's just gone into Bob Pretty's cottage. I was passing and saw it.'

"George Kettle snatches up 'is gun and shouts out to 'is men to come along. Some of 'em was for 'anging back at first, some because they didn't like the tiger and some because they didn't like Bob Pretty, but John Biggs drove 'em in front of 'im like a flock o' sheep and then they gave a cheer and ran after George Kettle, full pelt up the road.

"A few wimmen and children was at their doors as they passed, but they took fright and went indoors screaming. There was a lamp in Bob Pretty's front room, but the door was closed and the 'ouse was as silent as the grave.

"George Kettle and the men with the guns went first, then came the pitchforks, and last of all the scythes. Just as George Kettle put 'is 'and on the door he 'eard something moving inside, and the next moment the door opened and there stood Bob Pretty.

"'Wot the dickens!' 'e ses, starting back as 'e see the guns and pitchforks pointing at 'im.

"''Ave you killed it, Bob?' ses George Kettle.

"'Killed *wot?*' ses Bob Pretty. 'Be careful o' them guns. Take your fingers off the triggers.'

"'The tiger's in your 'ouse, Bob,' ses George Kettle, in a whisper. ''Ave you on'y just come in?'

"'Look 'ere,' ses Bob Pretty. 'I don't want any o' your games. You go and play 'em somewhere else.'

"'It ain't a game,' ses John Biggs; 'the tiger's in your 'ouse and we're going to kill it. Now, then, lads.'

"They all went in in a 'eap, pushing Bob Pretty in front of 'em, till the room was full. Only one man with a scythe got in, and they wouldn't 'ave let 'im in if they'd known. It a'most made 'em forget the tiger for the time.

"George Kettle opened the door wot led into the kitchen, and then 'e sprang back with such a shout that the man with the scythe tried to escape, taking Henery Walker along with 'im. George Kettle tried to speak, but couldn't. All 'e could do was to point with 'is finger at Bob Pretty's kitchen—*and Bob Pretty's kitchen was for all the world like a pork-butcher's shop!* There was joints o' pork 'anging from the ceiling, two brine tubs as full as they could be, and quite a string of fowls and ducks all ready for market.

"BOB PRETTY'S KITCHEN WAS FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE A PORK-BUTCHER'S SHOP!"

"'Wot d'ye mean by coming into my 'ouse?' ses Bob Pretty, blustering. 'If you don't clear out pretty quick, I'll make you.'

"Nobody answered 'im; they was all examining 'ands o' pork and fowls and suchlike.

"'There's the tiger,' ses Henery Walker, pointing at Bob Pretty; 'that's wot old man Parsley meant.'

"'Somebody go and fetch Policeman White,' ses a voice.

"'I wish they would,' ses Bob Pretty. 'I'll 'ave the law on you all for breaking into my 'ouse like this, see if I don't.'

"'Where'd you get all this pork from?' ses the blacksmith.

"'And them ducks and hins?' ses George Kettle.

"'That's my bisness,' ses Bob Pretty, staring 'em full in the face. 'I just 'ad a excellent oppertunity offered me of going into the pork and poultry line and I took it. Now, all them as doesn't want to buy any pork or fowls go out o' my 'ouse.'

"'You're a thief, Bob Pretty!' says Henery Walker. 'You stole it all.'

"'Take care wot you're saying, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'else I'll make you prove your words.'

"'You stole my pig,' ses Herbert Smith.

"'Oh, 'ave I?' ses Bob, reaching down a 'and o' pork. 'Is that your pig?' he ses.

"'It's just about the size o' my pore pig,' ses Herbert Smith.

"'Very usual size, I call it,' ses Bob Pretty; 'and them ducks and hins very usual-looking hins and ducks, I call 'em, except that they don't grow 'em so fat in these parts. It's a fine thing when a man's doing a honest bisness to 'ave these charges brought agin 'im. Dis-'eartening, I call it. I don't mind telling you that the tiger got in at my back-winder the other night and took arf a pound o' sausages, but you don't 'ear me complaining and going about calling other people thieves.'

"'Tiger be hanged,' ses Henery Walker, who was almost certain that a loin o' pork on the table was off 'is pig; 'you're the only tiger in these parts.'

"'Why, Henery,' ses Bob Pretty, 'wot are you a-thinkin' of? Where's your memory? Why, it's on'y two or three days ago you see it and 'ad to get up a tree out of its way.'

"He smiled and shook 'is 'ead at 'im, but Henery Walker on'y kept opening and shutting 'is mouth, and at last 'e went outside without saying a word.

"'And Sam Jones see it, too,' ses Bob Pretty; 'didn't you, Sam?'

"Sam didn't answer 'im.

"'And Charlie Hall and Jack Minns and a lot more,' ses Bob; 'besides, I see it myself. I can believe my own eyes, I s'pose?'

"'We'll have the law on you,' ses Sam Jones.

"'As *you* like,' ses Bob Pretty; 'but I tell you plain, I've got all the bills for this properly made out, upstairs. And there's pretty near a dozen of you as'll 'ave to go in the box and swear as you saw the tiger. Now, can I sell any of you a bit o' pork afore you go? It's delicious eating, and as soon as you taste it you'll know it wasn't grown in Claybury. Or a pair o' ducks wot 'ave come from two 'undered miles off, and yet look as fresh as if they was on'y killed last night.'

"George Kettle, whose ducks 'ad gone the night afore, went into the front room and walked up and down fighting for 'is breath, but it was all no good; nobody ever got the better o' Bob Pretty. None of 'em could swear to their property, and even when it became known a month later that Bob Pretty and the tramp knew one another, nothing was done. But nobody ever 'eard any more of the tiger from that day to this."

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The Arcadian Calendar.

June.

By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd.

ANY number of flowers are out, and the bees are filling their pockets industriously. With all their sterling qualities bees are very inhospitable: the hive is a club to which no visitors are admitted; but if a honey-laden stranger come weary to the door, they bring him in, turn out his pockets, and then bundle him out. An empty-handed visitor may consider himself lucky if he escape alive. The mole, who worked even more hours per week last month than usual, lays aside his spade of an evening now, and comes out to enjoy the air; a thirsty soul, like some other miners on holiday, he drinks frequently—so often that he makes a regular path to the nearest water. He is sometimes to be seen wandering about disconsolately when his galleries have been flooded: you wonder if he is trading on his reputation for blindness and begging charity from passers-by. His sight certainly is not keen, but it is as good as he wants. Insect-eating birds, particularly such as the fly-catcher, find it difficult to do their marketing for a family in rainy weather when gnats and flies stay at home. The swallow gets over the difficulty by eating small beetles, and no doubt finds them an agreeable change; but the spotted fly-catcher must sometimes go hungry: he might profitably copy the red-backed shrike, the "butcher-bird," who impales on the thorns of some bush a choice assortment of bees, beetles, spiders, and even mice and small birds, for future use. Does this kind of thing ever happen?

"THE BLIND IMPOSTOR."

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"Oblige me," said the fly-catcher, "with half an ounce of gnat,
Nice tender flies or midges for Sunday's nursery dinner;
Or else I'll take some spider-chops, but please to cut them fat,
Food's been so hard to find of late my chicks grow daily thinner."

"This is my private larder; I—aw—do not keep a *shop*,"
The butcher-bird made answer, with magnificent disdain.
"But since your chicks are hungry you can have this spider-chop,
You needn't mind explaining and you needn't call again."

It is to be feared that if a fly-catcher *did* appeal to the butcher-bird he would run serious risk of being added to the larder himself.

The house-martin is skimming to and fro along the street, swooping up at every turn to kiss his wife as she sits on her eggs looking out of the window, or bring her a fly, or inquire whether the sparrows have been threatening her again. The sparrows hold mass meetings and pass resolutions concerning the sacred rights of numbers, and then go and hustle the martin off her nest by force to give it to some prominent sparrow agitator. It does not always pay, because the martins have been known to assemble and wall up the door with the sparrow inside.

"HE CAN'T FIND ROOM FOR ANOTHER."

The swifts have resigned themselves to family duties and have made some slovenly repairs to their old nests in holes in the church-tower. A few odds and ends of straw, grass, and feathers held together with a sticky secretion produced by the bird is good enough for the two white eggs. Sometimes two hens go shares in one nest to save trouble. Domesticity is not the swift's strong point; early or late, they would far rather be out of doors playing their endless game of follow my leader than looking after their nests.

The grasshoppers are abroad, skipping from somewhere to nowhere with reckless gaiety: the grasshopper never looks before he leaps, and is horribly surprised when a record jump, made amid the applause of admiring friends, takes him into the stream. Struggles are useless, and the first passing trout relieves him of all concern with this world. The latest-hatched young trout are out of long clothes by June, have given up—that is, have taken in—their feeding-bottles, and are real trout-fry, a fruitful source of joy to all, from the kingfisher to their own fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts. Practically all our thirty-nine sorts of dragon-fly are out now. The dragon-fly attains full manhood a few days after he struggles out of his nymph-case, and he loses little time in marrying. You see the dragon-flies running Derbies and Oaks up and down the stream, sowing their few wild oats before settling down to matrimony. The wooing of the dragon-fly recalls the methods of Mr. Billy Chope in "Tales of Mean Streets." Lizerunt, you may remember, was greatly pleased when Billy "caught and twisted her arm and bumped her against the wall, for she knew that this was love." The dragon-fly seizes the lady of his choice firmly by the neck with the pair of pincers he wears at the extreme end of his person, and parades her along the stream in triumph. And now is there great rejoicing among fish, birds, and anglers: "the May-fly is up," and is rapidly going down. The May-fly appears suddenly in swarms. The big trout rises lazily to the surface and

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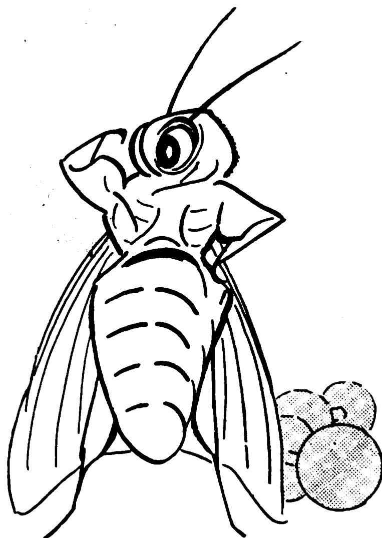
sucks in fly after fly as they drift down stream, till he can't find room for another; insectivorous birds flutter round and revel till they perch incapable in gratified repletion, to digest and dream of to-morrow's more May-fly. And the angling clerk gets a telegram, which he opens with trembling fingers ere he comes to beg three days' leave to attend his aunt's funeral.

More moths are out—notably the goat-moth, who owes his name to the peculiar goat-like smell he has in his caterpillar phase of existence; and the humming-bird hawk-moth, who sets tradition at defiance by coming abroad at noonday to deceive the unlearned in entomology into writing to the papers eager letters headed, "Humming Bird in England." The goat-moth, by the way, remains a caterpillar for three years; this Samson among caterpillars has more muscles in his composition—4,061, to wit—than a man.



"SANDOW ECLIPSED."

The fallow doe drops her fawn in June: though an attentive and considerate mother she is sometimes apt to forget it and stroll away to feed, leaving her child asleep. The fawn sleeps the sound sleep of healthy infancy, and you may occasionally come upon him curled up in a quiet corner of the park. The squirrels, who have laid aside their thick winter clothes for distinctly second-hand summer garments, are nursing three or four children in the nest they hold on long lease in a fir-tree or in the fork of a beech. The squirrel is frequently arraigned for wilful destruction of young trees in early summer, and the evidence that he bites away the outer bark of Scotch firs, spruce, and larch, to eat the inner bark, and also eats the sprouting buds, is too strong to save him from a verdict of "guilty." Squirrels are most popular with people who don't own plantations.

The common lizard has a family, three, four, or five. This lizard is one of those creatures which are ashamed of their eggs; she never lays them, preferring to hatch them out in her own body, to which end she wastes a great deal of time basking in the sun. The sand lizard does lay her eggs: and, possibly aggrieved by the necessity thrust upon her to do otherwise than her cousin, is short of temper, not to say snappish. The warty newt exercises, in regard to her eggs, a degree of solicitude many more conspicuous animals might emulate, depositing them one by one on the edge of a leaf and then turning the edge over to keep them safe.

The cuckoo is grown hoarse now, and stammers cuc-*cuc*-koo; and the nightingale, harassed by family cares, has given up singing for the season: he puts away his music as soon as his children are hatched, and responds to all his wife's blandishments with a frog-like croak. She implores him to sing—he need not be afraid of waking the babies: perhaps she tries to goad him into song by saying that people will think he has gone to Wales, where nightingales are almost unknown. But he won't sing: he can't. Various caterpillars, having changed their skins five or six times, become conscious that there is a change coming over them, and consciousness that "something is going to happen" makes the caterpillar feel dyspeptic and out of sorts; he habitually over-eats himself, so his indisposition does not at first alarm him; but he gets worse and worse, and at last finds the only position in which he can rest comfortably is hanging upside

"THE NIGHTINGALE IS A LITTLE THROATY."

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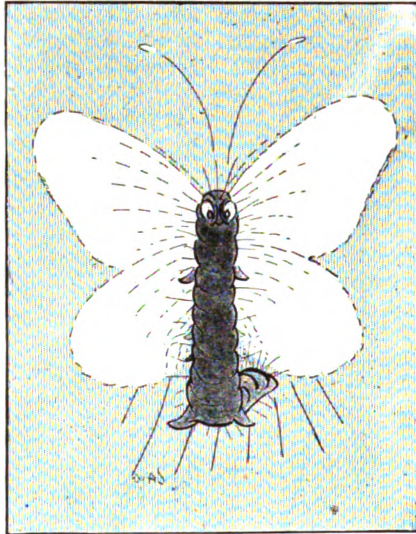
down or tied by a thread of self-made silk to a twig; members of some species can only find comfort by rolling themselves up in blankets—in a cocoon, I should say. The caterpillar thinks he is going to die, though any field-mouse could explain what is the matter:—

Come, now, fling all your tremors away
As metamorphistical sorrow;
You're a very sick larva to-day,
But think what will happen to-morrow!

True, the pupic condition's a bore,
But sleep lightly and dream of the things
You will do when, a pupa no more,
You're a butterfly flying with wing!

Picture the caterpillar sinking off to sleep with a smile irradiating his wan countenance as he thinks that perhaps he will be up, freed from the chrysalis condition, a brilliantly-dressed butterfly in time for Ascot.



"WHAT IS THIS STRANGE FEELING COMING OVER ME?"

The silver-washed fritillary is abroad, as is its cousin the pearl-bordered fritillary, and that sovereign among butterflies, the Purple Emperor. The large white butterfly has no strong preference for one summer month over another, and is as likely to come out in June as later. The Red Admiral caterpillar has hatched out of the egg; this caterpillar does not court observation, drawing the leaves of his food-plant carefully about him to make a hiding-place wherein he feeds — caterpillars do little but feed; life to them is one long round of meals. The Red Admiral caterpillar feigns death if disturbed, and does it very well. The Painted Lady caterpillar has the same retiring disposition as the Red Admiral; she was born on a thistle, and for greater seclusion draws the points of the leaf together

"BUTTERFLIES AT ASCOT."

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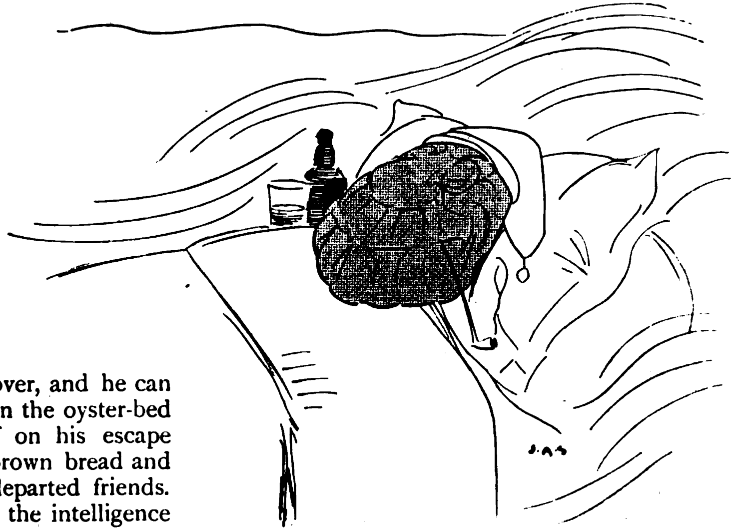
she only partially succeeds in hiding herself. She is an irregular character; like the large white, the Painted Lady is no slave to time. The brimstone and clouded yellow caterpillars are out, too, this month. Each caterpillar, you will remember, has its own particular food-plant. The Red Admiral is born on a stinging-nettle, and on that agreeable habitation he spends his caterpillarhood. The Painted Lady's abiding-place is the thistle and she declines to live anywhere else. This explains the conduct of a caterpillar who, when you charitably place him out of harm's way on a leaf, curls up in a temper and ungratefully tumbles off it. You have chosen the wrong plant and have hurt his feelings.

June also brings peace to the heart of the apprehensive oyster; the season is over, and he can lie back on his pillow in the oyster-bed to congratulate himself on his escape from a shroud of thin brown bread and butter, and to mourn departed friends. It is unjust to disparage the intelligence of the oyster. The French fishermen have schools wherein they teach him to keep his mouth shut when exposed to the air, that he may travel safely from the coast to Paris. When we think how difficult it is to teach more highly organized beings to do this at the right time, it must be conceded that the oyster shows promise.

The reticence of the hedgehog has left naturalists somewhat in the dark concerning his family affairs, but it seems tolerably certain that he may be congratulated now on the birth of a family of five or six, which his wife is nursing in a nest very like that in which she spent the winter.

The black cormorant and his near relative the shag, who is often mistaken for him at a distance, are rearing their children. One hesitates to intrude upon the privacy of the shag; first, because he has sixteenth-century ideas about domestic hygiene, and also because he and his wife have such an unlovely method of feeding their babies. The parents swallow their own fish dinner, and about an hour afterwards invite the children to literally "come in and see what I've got in my crop"; only the young cormorant's wings, wedged against the corners of the parental mouth, prevent it from pursuing investigation past return. The terns, otherwise known as sea-swallows, have colonized a spot on the pebbly beach above high-water mark; each pair has moved a few stones aside and the hen replaces them with three eggs which are so like the stones that you might pass through the whole colony without knowing it, did the terns swooping overhead refrain from vociferous warnings not to tread on them. How each bird distinguishes her own eggs is a question only a tern could answer. The guillemots make no household arrangements at all. Each hen lays one very large egg, shaped like an attenuated pear, on the bare ledge of rock. There is sound practical purpose in the shape of the guillemot's egg: the bird is in the habit of sitting with it between her legs and of jumping up on small provocation—many sea-birds appear to suffer from nerves. Were the egg a round one it would roll off the ledge the moment she moved, as she sits facing the rock and turns in the act of getting up; being pear-shaped and being placed always with the narrow end seawards, it merely rolls round on its small axis when disturbed, unless the guillemot jumps up in such reckless haste that she throws it overboard, as sometimes happens. In such event she says nothing, but quietly lays another and hopes her husband won't find out. There is wonderful variation in the blotching and marking of the great egg, also in the ground colouring,



"IN THE OYSTER-BED."

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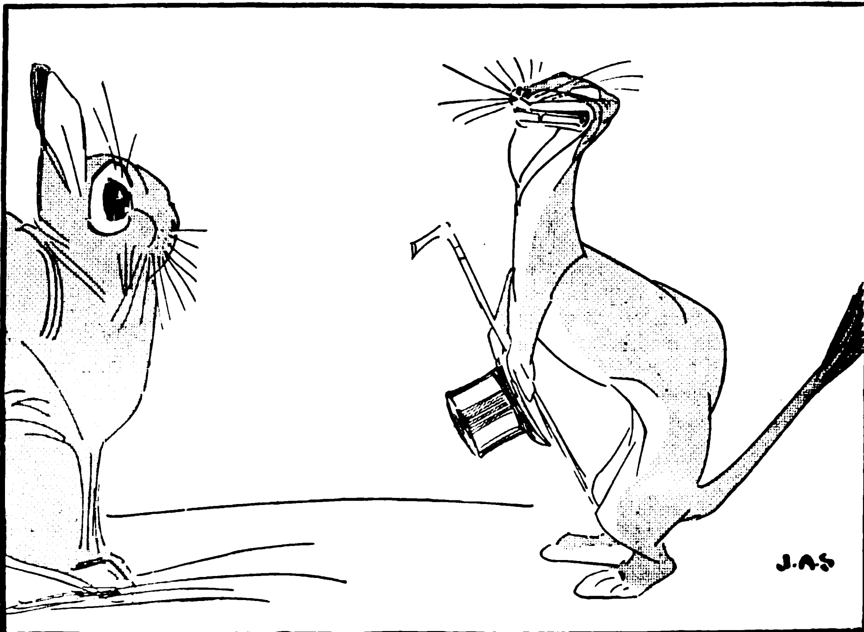
"THE SEAL WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO WINTER WITH US."

The fact that a second egg, if laid to replace the first, lost by accident or theft, resembles its predecessor in colour and marking tends to confirm this conjecture.

The common seal now has a child (sometimes twins, but not often) to provide for, and is even warier than usual. The baby seal can swim when three hours old, and at that mature age puts cheerfully to sea with its mother. Time was when seals frequented the English south and east coasts, but it were a reckless seal who ook his life in his flipper and paid a visit to Brighton or Southend nowadays. They come up the Thames occasionally and, being harmless and strange, are naturally shot. Given a safe-conduct for self and family and frequent programmes of music — not necessarily classical — the seal would be delighted to winter at our south coast resorts. Seals are passionately fond of music and are not hard to please; they have been known to listen with gratified attention to a

which ranges from chalky white to pale blue; this may help the bird to identify her own property when she leaves home in a hurry with a cloud of neighbours.



"THE FASCINATING STOAT."

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prolonged amateur performance upon flute or penny whistle. The young stoats are old enough to be educated, and their father takes them in hand to teach the art of fascination. The stoat is naturally of playful disposition and has a marvellously fascinating manner towards rabbits. He is a born rabbit-killer, and, it is to be supposed, imparts his secret to his children. As thus:—

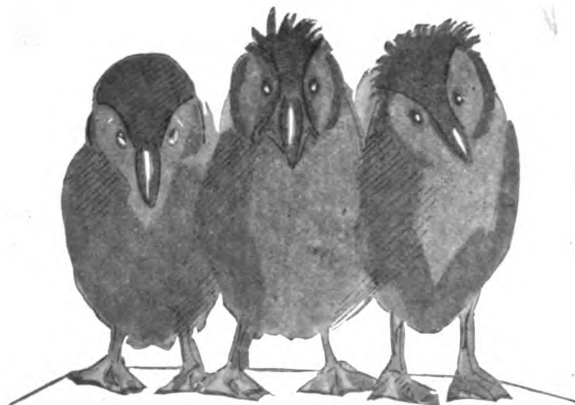
He runs faster than you, therefore what you must do
Is to catch him by cunning and wile,
And I never yet knew the *cuniculus* who
Could not be deceived by a smile.

You advance with the air of a stoat to whom care
Is a stranger; your footsteps beguiling,
With a skip here and there or a leap in the air,
Till you get near enough to start smiling.

Then call up on your face, as you draw near the place
Where he sits with ears cocked and nose twitching,
Such a winning grimace as I show you, in case
You should not know the kind most bewitching.

Then you smilingly say: "What a beautiful day!
I do trust your dear children are well.
What a season for hay! And the—O, by the way!
I've a story I'm dying to tell!"

Whatever the secret of his power the rabbit succumbs to it. He will squat and stare at his enemy or, at most, run away so feebly that the bloodthirsty little savage can easily overtake and seize him by the neck; and once the stoat gets his teeth in he holds on. A rabbit rescued from the insidious advances of a stoat was picked up with his heart palpitating violently, his eyes closed, and his limbs almost useless. It was several minutes before he could be brought round.



"YOUNG PUFFINS."

The dabchick, respectfully known as the little grebe, is unmethodical in her household arrangements. She thinks April not too early and August not too late to nest, so we are quite as likely as not to find her at home in June. She builds a big raft-nest on the water and moors it by ribbons of reed to aquatic plants at the stream side, as if ready to cast off and put to sea the moment danger threatens. She does nothing so original, however; when she leaves her eggs (which are creamy-white to begin with and look as though rescued from a wet dust-bin ere they hatch) she covers them over with weeds which she picks for the purpose; hence their exceeding dirtiness. The dab-chick has a curious habit of tucking a child under each wing and diving with them, presumably as a lesson. The great crested grebe, familiarly known as the loon, has hatched out her chicks by now, for she gets to work earlier than her small cousin; her nest is a moored raft also, and her eggs were in a shocking state from contact with the wet weeds used to cover them; but the loons are most careful parents, taking their children, who wear striped blazers in the nursery, for trips on their backs. The Slavonian grebe, who looks as though he had forgotten to brush his hair, is a regular winter visitor to Scotland and Ireland, but does not care about England as a residence. The young puffins, creatures of preternatural solemnity of demeanour and austerely garbed in black, are now beginning to inquire when they may go out: they spend the first three weeks of their lives in the hole where they first saw twilight, and are kept at home—that is, on the breeding-ground: not in the hole—till fully grown. They do not always leave then, young puffin being much esteemed by the folks of the western islands, who catch and eat the birds in large numbers.

The bees are swarming: in other words, the first detachment of nymphs have reached the stage when they become perfect bees, and these must quit the hive of their birth. First comes the queen bee: she passes out into the open air and, glad to escape from the heat of the hive, settles on a branch or anything handy: where she alights the thousands of workers alight, too, in a compact mass. They are holding a meeting to decide where to go and what to do, and this is the moment to hive them. They will settle down where the queen bee settles, or will follow the example of any half-dozen enterprising enough to give

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them a lead, and stay in any receptacle if the queen graciously signify her approval. She is not hard to please, and will consent to be crowned in (not *with*) an old hat if that appear to offer peace and quiet.

The rooks have reared their children and with patience, qualified by much talking, have brought them downstairs for the first time. Digging for worms and grubs is an art that cannot be taught on the tree-tops, and the young rooks must receive their lessons in working for a livelihood in the fields. The magpies have brought their children out for the same purpose: perhaps because it takes time to educate an expert thief, the magpies keep their brood about them long after the youngsters can take care of themselves. The children, we may suppose, profit by example and precept even as that eminent man, Mr. Fagin, would have had Oliver Twist learn the industry in which Charley Bates and the Dodger excelled. The magpies keep their family around them till late in August. The carrion crows also introduce their brood to society; the young crow—and the old one, too, for aught I know—has his own ideas about the utility of ants; he walks over the ant-heap brushing his stiffened and expanded tail against the ground, whereby the much-disturbed ants lose their tempers and swarm over the trespasser, to his evident satisfaction. I suppose they relieve him of parasites.

"COMING DOWNSTAIRS."

The night-jar, who in the early days of the month laid two eggs on the bare ground in some open patch among gorse, has hatched out the twins, who during infancy wear night-shirts of grey, downy stuff. Baby night-jars are enterprising; they are scarcely out of the egg before they begin to take

"EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT."

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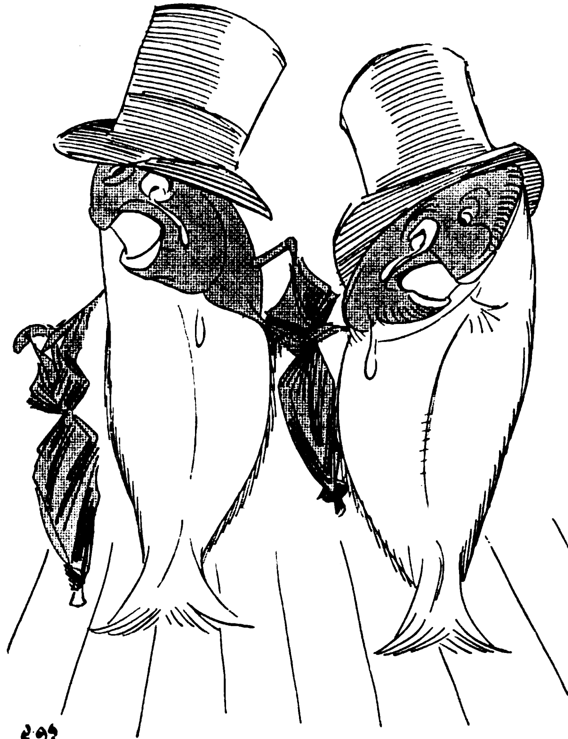
an interest in things, and they go scrambling about the neighbourhood with reckless disregard of the fact that their parents are looking everywhere for them to give them their tea. Their nursery days must be fraught with anxiety to father and mother.

The common snake bethinks her of her duty and pensively seeks the nearest manure-heap, in which she deposits twelve or fifteen leathery eggs, which she ties one to another with a string of her own manufacture. Having put them carefully out of sight she has done with them: the warm manure will do the hatching free of charge.

The turbot has produced her eggs with the lavish prodigality that distinguishes flat-fish; an eighteen-pound turbot produces from five and a half to ten millions of spawn, which are chiefly useful as food for other fish. The turbot and the sole are not agreeable characters; they lie on the sea-floor and work sand over themselves till only their eyes are exposed, and thus ambushed wait for victims—sprats and sand-eels in the case of the turbot; marine worms, shrimps, and fry in that of the sole. The latter fish, by the way, has delicately sensitive fingers on the under-side of its head, with which it feels for prey as it skims over the bottom. The sole is at his prime in June, and the fishmonger adds insult to injury by "pairing" him with some total stranger for sale:—

We may be cock-eye'd; flat we are indeed;
But shall a squint withhold from us the doles
Of sympathy you know to be the meed
Of good, fresh, cheap, but sorrowful twin soles?

Good taste (or flavour) maybe override
Outward defects. The breakfast bell doth toll;
Write me an epitaph when I am fried,
And say a requiem for the passing sole!



"SORROWFUL TWIN SOLES."

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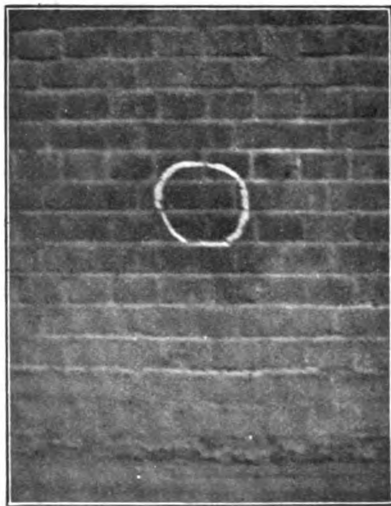
The Sign-Language of Tramps.

By Victor Pitkethley. Photographs by C. E. Reed.

HE common or roadside tramp is not a popular or interesting person. His appearance is usually unprepossessing, his honesty is frequently not above suspicion, and his distaste for work has passed into a proverb. Police and public alike eye him with suspicious dislike as he slouches along the high-road; and when he is forced by stress of weather or other circumstances to seek a night's lodging in some casual ward, the master first forces him to take a bath and then sets him some peculiarly obnoxious task, specially designed for the discouragement of his species.

The tramps, thus cut off by a barrier of dislike from communion with their more respectable fellow-creatures, have been forced, in sheer self-defence, to aid and assist one another. There is no particular bond of sympathy between tramp and tramp; but the necessity for self-preservation compels the members of this strange fraternity of wayfarers and work-haters to co-operate to a certain extent. One of the most interesting forms which this co-operation takes is the silent, but none the less powerful, medium of a sign-language, whereby any member of the brotherhood, following in the steps of a pioneer, may learn what fate has in store for him in the way of good or bad luck at the various places he visits. The writer was recently privileged to have this curious sign-language explained to him by a venerable and grizzled member of the tramp fraternity — an interesting old ruffian who confessed that he had been tramping the high-roads and by-ways of rural England for the last forty years, during which period he had done about a fortnight's honest work.

My informant first told me that the amateur tramp — the out-of-work labourer looking for a job, and similar *dilettanti*, on whom the regular tramp looks down with scorn — is totally unaware of the existence of the sign-language. Knowledge of this is jealously preserved among the professional tramps — the loafers one meets camped in secluded places in the country, or hanging round farmsteads in search of food. To these men it is invaluable, enabling them to tell at a glance what sort of reception they will meet with at any house they propose to visit. The signs have the merit of being easily made; a piece of chalk or whiting and a handy wall or fence are all that is required. When made they are quite unintelligible to the layman, and look very like the meaningless scrawls of school-children who have purloined a fragment of the teacher's chalk. That the marks are *not* meaningless, however, will be abundantly proved by the following illustrations, which were prepared under the supervision of my tramp friend.



"NO GOOD TO CALL HERE."

The members of the fraternity not being, as a rule, artistically gifted, the marks are distinguished by their absolute simplicity; there is no sign which cannot be drawn in an instant by the most unskilled hand. Take, for instance, the first sign we reproduce here. This shows a simple circle, drawn on a wall, and yet it conveys to the eye of the initiated tramp the unwelcome information: "No good to call here." Some other tramp has happened along this way, has called at this farmhouse with a modest request for food or money, and has been repulsed. Therefore he has left behind him a warning to any fellow-tramp who may be on the same road: "No good to call here." And Weary Willie gives the inhospitable dwelling a wide berth.

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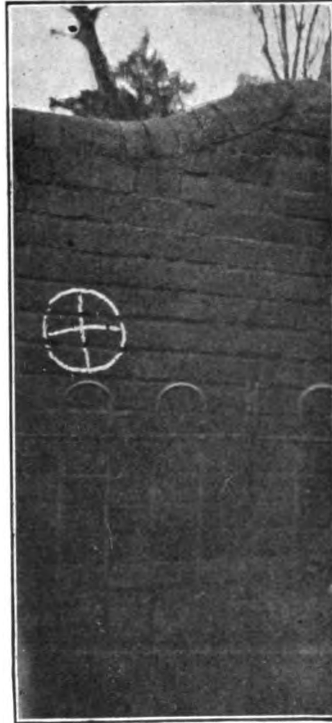
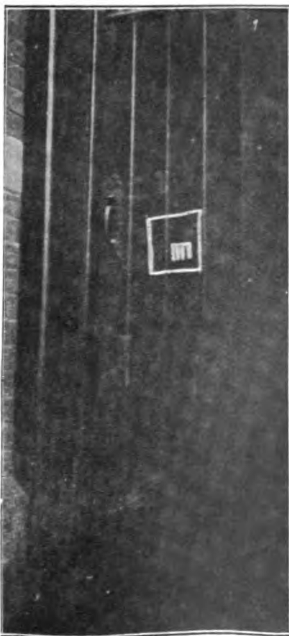
We have seen that a plain circle is an omen of evil to the tramp, indicating a stony-hearted refusal of his gentle pleadings and the possible "firing-out" of himself from the farmyard by some indignant owner. If, however, a large cross be inserted in the circle, as in our second photograph, then the sign tells a very different story—a story which sends its travel-stained reader hurrying up the path to the back door. For now it reads: "The people here will give you food." And your genuine tramp never declines food that is to be had for the asking—unless it be a pie made by the newly-married *diplomée* of the cookery school.



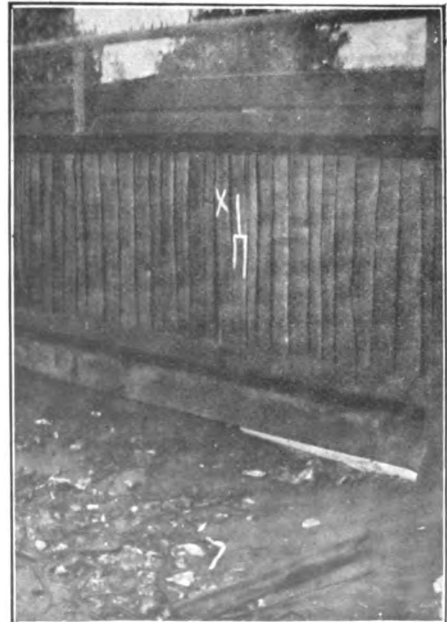
"PEOPLE HERE WILL GIVE YOU FOOD."

The tramp is not always allowed to approach and leave a house or farm in peace. As I have before remarked, his appearance is usually distinctly against him, and some of the species have an awkward habit of annexing little unconsidered trifles which come in their way. Moreover, farmers suspect them of an unhappy *penchant* for sleeping in stacks and accidentally setting them on fire. Hence it is that poor Weary William is as often as not forcibly ejected from the premises or else driven off by some ferocious watch-dog. When this fate happens to a tramp he is in duty bound to do his best to prevent his comrades from walking into the same trap. Therefore, if circumstances permit and no pursuit is attempted, he affixes to the farm the sign shown herewith. Primarily this means "Dog in the garden," but it is also used as a general strong note of caution. When placed upon a private house it means just what it says—that there is a troublesome dog stationed in the garden—but when the wandering tramp sees it on the side of a barn or farmstead he usually associates it with a choleric farmer with a horse-whip or a tribe of unsympathetic labourers who are likely to throw him into the duck-pond.



"THERE IS A DOG IN THE GARDEN."

At certain times of the year, however, particularly at such busy seasons as seed-time and harvest, farmers can often do with the temporary services of unskilled men, and when tramps offer themselves they are frequently taken on. A tramp who has fallen upon a place of this sort sketches on some convenient fence the following sign, which



"YOU MAY GET A JOB HERE."

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"PITCH A YARN—THREE WOMEN IN THIS HOUSE."

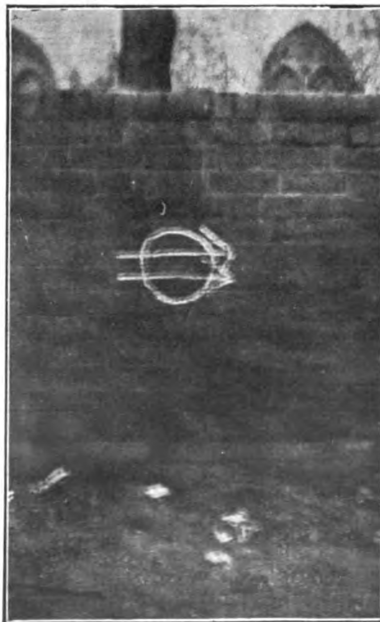
means, practically, "Food and money here if you care to work." As many tramps have a rooted objection to manual labour, it is not all of them who hail this sign with joy. Money, by the way, is usually indicated in the sign-language by tiny circles, but as tramps do not often receive money the sign is not much used.

What is known among this precious fraternity as a "soft shop" is indicated by the next sign we have photographed—the large V and the three triangles. This counsels the wayfarer to "Pitch a yarn—three women in house." Women are always represented by small triangles—a crude imitation of the outline of a lady's skirt. "Pitching a tale," of course, as most people can testify from personal experience, is an art in which the average tramp is an adept. The variety of romantic stories of distress which he can pour into the ears of sympathetic old maids and trustful servants is amazing.

In striking contrast to the "soft shop" sign comes the portcullis arrangement next shown. This is an emblem which the tramp regards with absolute terror, passing the house on which it is placed with muttered curses against the occupier. For the criss-cross lines indicate that the occupier is so uncharitable as to give tramps in charge as rogues and vagabonds! If any country reader of this Magazine wishes to protect his dwelling against tramps—at any rate, against the older hands—he has only to inscribe this sign on some prominent gate-post or fence. Weary William has no desire to make the acquaintance of the village constable, with the subsequent painful interview with the local bench of magistrates.

"THE OCCUPIER OF THIS HOUSE GIVES TRAMPS IN CHARGE."

If anything could dash his hopes more than the sign we have just reproduced it is that shown in our last photograph. For this sign tells the foot-sore tramp that his journey has been more or less in vain; that he will meet with nothing but unkindness in the village; and that the best thing he can do is to drag his tired limbs onwards to some other and more hospitable hamlet. For the pioneer tramp tells us here: "Get out of this village as soon as you can; there is nothing any good to be got here." What could be more depressing after a long day's journey?



"GET OUT OF THIS VILLAGE AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN."

There are several other signs in the tramp language, most of them more intricate than the foregoing and some of them not well known, but we have contented ourselves with reproducing the signs most commonly used by the fraternity of the road.

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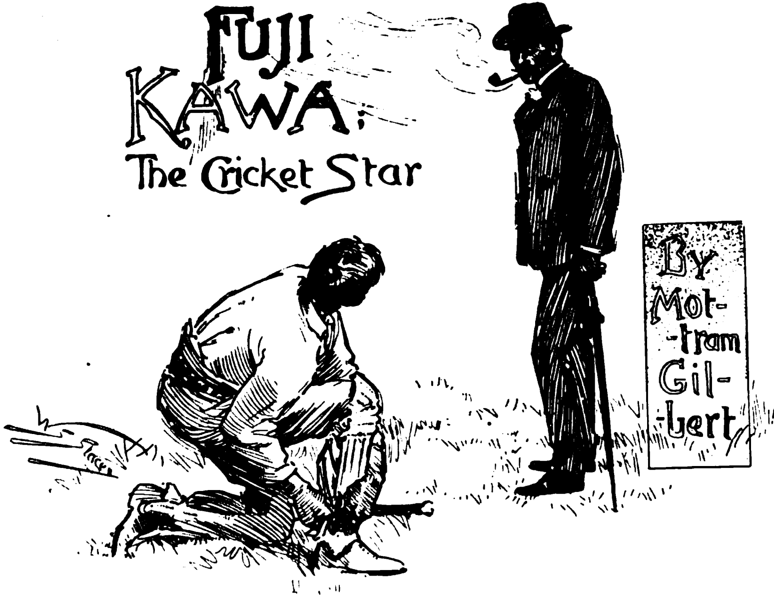

FUJI KAWA, a most capable young Japanese gentleman, had been in England a little over two years. He had been sent by a progressive and enlightened Government intent upon railway expansion to investigate and report upon the best types of triple expansion engines and tubular boilers, and he worked in the drawing offices and shops of the West Central Railway Company, Limited.

He was a many-sided man, and of a most original and inventive turn of mind. Witness the ingenious way in which he adapted the turbine type of marine engine to the needs of railway locomotion. In one way or another it was his habit to improve almost everything he was concerned in. Had he not been in the very first flight as an engineer, he might have made a handsome income on the music-hall stage as a juggler. He could draw and paint beautifully, and was seldom at a loss for new and luminous ideas about any subject you might touch upon, from chess to canary-breeding.

Yet there was nothing very striking in his appearance. He was simply a little brown-faced man, with high cheek-bones and coal-black hair. Almost the only thing he could not do was to pronounce the letter "l." Otherwise his English was practically perfect.

One bright April evening Fuji Kawa turned up on the ground of the West Central Railway Cricket Club. He stood smoking his pipe behind the net, watching the batsmen with an air of abstraction.

The captain was kneeling near him, putting on his pads.

"Ever played cricket, Fudgey?"

"Yes. I prayed a bit with some Engrish boys in Japan."

"Ah! Now that's where you won't be able to make any of those improvements you are so fond of!"

"I don't know," said Fuji Kawa, quietly; "I rike my way of batting better than yours."

"Bless the man! Whatever will he say next?"

Nevertheless, when the captain's innings was over, he came back and, tossing over to Fuji Kawa the pads he had just taken off, shouted to him in merry scorn:—

"Here! Put 'em on, Fudgey. I want to see you reform English cricket!"

Fuji Kawa smiled and said nothing; then he put the pads on.

When his turn came his proceedings were of an extraordinary character. Placing one foot on each side of the block-hole, he faced the bowler full-fronted, in much the same way as a wicket-keeper does. His position suggested croquet rather than cricket.

The majority laughed at him and seemed to anticipate an exquisite piece of fooling. Those who knew him, and had learnt that there was generally an excellent reason for everything he did, watched attentively.

For the first few balls the bowlers were not

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serious. Fuji Kawa played the straight ones with ease and thumped a long-hop to leg with careless vigour. Then they began to think there might be something in the man after all, and tried their best to get him out. Fuji Kawa's stumps remained intact, and he glanced many a good ball behind the wicket, both to leg and off.

"Here, Stokes," cried one of the bowlers to the ruddy professional, "take my ball. Come and get this beggar out."

Stokes bowled his best and fastest. He was a really good bowler, and often got a wicket with an express delivery which pitched inches to the off and took the leg-stump. However, he made no more impression on Fuji Kawa's defence than the others had done.

Then he tried the off-theory. The only result was that Fuji Kawa took to slipping his left hand down the handle below the right, and repeatedly hit him left-handed square past cover-point.

"I rike a bat frat on both sides," he explained. Of course there was chaff for Stokes. How did he expect to keep up his name if he got smacked about all over the field by the first foreigner he bowled at? Whereupon the worthy Stókes, whose misfortune it was to be somewhat short-tempered, threw down his ball, saying it wasn't cricket.

"Let them as talks loudest get him out," he declaimed, with no little heat. "I knows 'ow to bowl to a right-'ander and I knows 'ow to bowl to a left-'ander. But thump my weskit if anybody can bowl to a right-'ander and a left-'ander at the same bloomin' time."

And he walked away, with intense dignity.

"HE WALKED AWAY, WITH INTENSE DIGNITY."

"Can you play at Barton next Saturday, Fudgey?" asked the captain.

"If you rike," said Fuji Kawa.

The West Central were not doing well at Barton. The home team had declared their innings closed at a hundred and forty-eight for six wickets. The visitors had seven men out for sixty-one, and there was still half an hour to play.

Fuji Kawa was in next. Several disconsolate batsmen sitting in the pavilion watched him anxiously as he walked to the wickets.

He took guard, and then faced the bowler in his peculiar way.

That worthy hesitated, and looked as if about to accuse him of deliberately wasting time.

"Now, then," cover-point exclaimed, "take time off umpire!"

"I am quite ready," said Fuji Kawa.

"I can't bowl at him like that," said the bowler to the umpire; "where are the wickets?"

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"Never mind, my boy. You'll soon hit his leg," was the significant whisper.

The first ball was a good one, and Fuji Kawa pushed it gently back to the bowler, without moving either foot. The next was shorter. He turned on it like a lion, and hooked it round to square-leg for four, in a way that Ranjit Sinhji himself could not have excelled. The third ball was meant for a yorker, but Fuji Kawa skipped nimbly down the pitch and got another four to leg. Off the last ball of the over he scored a neat two behind the wicket.

"I can't make him out!" said the bowler to the Barton captain as the fielders crossed over.

A bye brought Fuji Kawa to the other end. Off the fast bowler he immediately took two two's and a three to fine long-leg.

The Barton spectators, who had been merry while the wickets were falling fast, watched in silent perplexity. The captain began to alter his field. Two men were taken out of the slips and placed square and deep on the leg-side. Cover-point was ordered to betake himself to fine long-leg.

Fuji Kawa was ready for this move. He began to slip his left hand below the right and to hit left-handed to leg through the place cover-point had just vacated. Three times in succession he made a four by this stroke. The hundred was hoisted, and both bowlers were showing signs of temper. Neither of them had succeeded in hitting Fuji Kawa's leg. The West Central men thought the game was saved, and were getting jubilant. Then the other batsman made a bad stroke and was caught at cover. Eight wickets were down for one hundred and five, and there was ten minutes to play.

The fielders were told to scatter themselves equally all round the wickets and look out for chances. Fuji Kawa placed almost every ball between them with the greatest ease, and scored either two or four, keeping the bowling almost entirely to himself. The total mounted by leaps and bounds to one hundred and forty, when a rising ball hit his glove and dropped on his foot.

"'S that?" yelled an infuriated fieldsman.

The mendacious umpire raised his hand.

"Out? How out?" asked Fuji Kawa.

"Leg-before."

"Reg-before? Off my grove?"

"Good-bye, mister," said cover-point, with a broad grin; "you've got to go."

Fuji Kawa stroked his nose reflectively and went. The last man came in, trembling in every fibre of his body; but he safely negotiated the rest of the over. Then the church clock chimed half-past six and the game was drawn.

Fuji Kawa sat in the captain's room that evening, discussing the match over a pipe.

"FUJI KAWA SAT IN THE CAPTAIN'S ROOM THAT EVENING, DISCUSSING THE MATCH OVER A PIPE."

"We should have won, Fudgey, if you hadn't been swindled out. Still, I can't think what made you take to such a rummy way of batting. Isn't it dangerous with fast bowling?"

"Not more dangerous than wicket-keeping, I think."

The captain told him that what passed for fast bowling in local cricket was only called medium in county games.

Whereupon Fudgey asked whether there was a really fast bowler engaged on the county ground. On being told there was one, he took down the address of the Wessex secretary.

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On the Monday evening Fuji Kawa appeared at the county nets and faced the fast bowler. After being hit twice on the thigh and once in the stomach he found the Wessex professional's pace was too great for him to be able to play a good length ball without moving his feet; but as he became accustomed to the new conditions his natural genius seemed to come to his aid and he began to play forward, first right-handed and then left-handed, in a style that was a modification of the ordinary one.

The great man slanged his methods energetically, as was only natural, but did not get him out.

On three Saturdays out of the next four Fuji Kawa made a century for the West Centrals. His fame began to be noised abroad throughout the length and breadth of Wessex.

The *Wessex Evening Pioneer* had a paragraph in its weekly cricket notes, stating that it might be worth the while of the county committee to keep an eye on the batting of a young Japanese gentleman in the service of the West Central Railway Company. His method, it was true, was what might be termed revolutionary; even more so, in fact, than that of Ranjit Sinhji himself. But the fortunes of western county cricket had been for some years steadily on the wane. Enterprise must be looked for; and the committee could not afford to overlook the claims of a batsman who averaged nearly two hundred in local matches.

The county captain warmly advocated Fuji Kawa's claims to a place in the team. But the committee told him that, although they attached very great weight to his recommendations, they felt unable to play a batsman whose methods were so unorthodox. He replied that if he wasn't going to have a voice in the selection of the team he led they might go to Hanover and get their whiskers singed. Further, they might find another captain at their earliest convenience.

As desirable captains were hard to find in Wessex the committee caved in under protest, and Fuji Kawa was given a trial on the home ground against Yorkshire.

The Yorkshiremen batted first and made two hundred and five. At the end of the first day's play Wessex were out for a paltry ninety-nine, Fuji Kawa having been bowled between his legs for seven. It did not occur to the northern cracks that they need make a big score in the second innings. Their next match was at the other end of the country, and they would all rather sleep in bed than in the train. They hoped to finish the match in two days and travel in comfort on the third. Care in such matters is well repaid before the end of a long season. After luncheon on Tuesday they sent Wessex in to make two hundred and ninety to win. Everybody thought this a hopeless task against the best bowling in England.

This time Fuji Kawa was sent in first. He began very carefully, and the score crept up to thirty before his partner was magnificently caught at extra cover. Fuji Kawa was joined by his captain, a young giant with tremendous driving powers.

Nevertheless, the little man began to score three runs for every one that his partner made. Throwing restraint to the winds, he hit all round the wicket with wonderful confidence. Glances, hooks, and forward push-strokes almost seemed to jostle each other on their way to the boundary. It did not seem to matter in the least how the field was altered. Fuji Kawa's strokes were nearly always placed between the men. After an hour's batting he completed his hundred, the total being only a hundred and forty.

The crowd cheered rapturously.

"Dash my wig," cried one enthusiast to his friend, "if he goes on like this we shall win. *Win!* D'ye hear, Tom?"

And he thumped the other violently on the back.

"Drop it, you silly juggins, and watch the game. Ain't they crowding in?"

News of what was going on had penetrated into the town. The ring of spectators, often incomplete, was gradually becoming three or four deep.

Fuji Kawa never turned a hair. He started for his second hundred with the utmost composure. Two hundred was telegraphed before the captain was neatly stumped. Yorkshire found themselves facing the prospect of an utterly unexpected defeat.

The next batsman was a slow scorer, but Fuji Kawa continued to make runs at the same tremendous pace. The curious thing was that he never seemed to be hitting hard and always kept the ball down; but the fielders had to be so much spread out for his multitudinous strokes that he always seemed to be able to find the intervals between them. The policy of "nine men on the off" was futile when Fuji Kawa was at the wicket. Seldom did he fail to score a couple of boundaries in any over. The Wessex spectators had not given vent to such roars of delight for many a long year.

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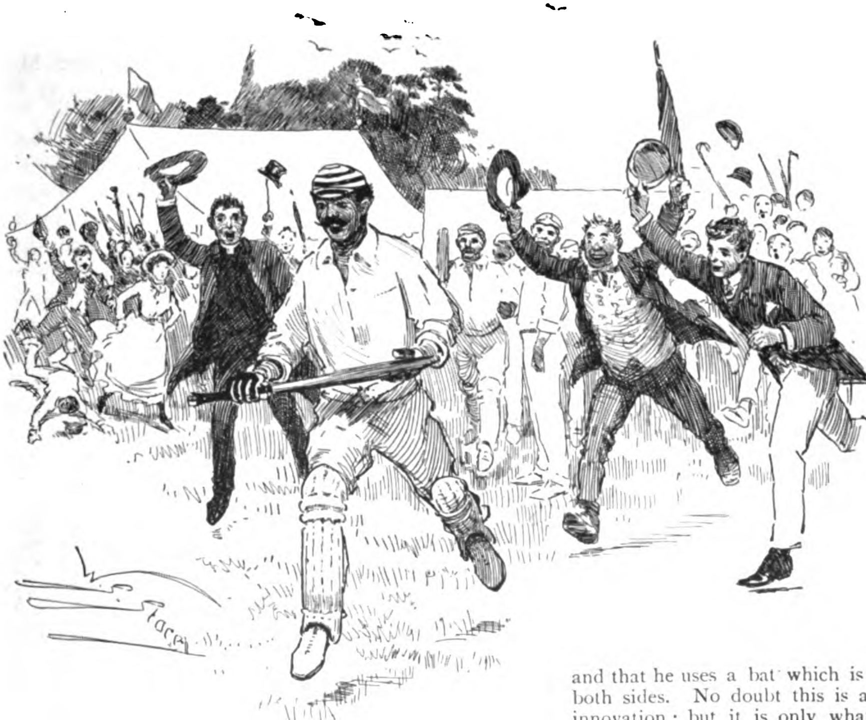
The bowling was repeatedly changed, but the rate of scoring was kept up. Shortly before five o'clock a tumult of applause, louder and more prolonged than ever, greeted the little Japanese. He had broken record by scoring two hundred in his first county match. The ring had the appearance of effervescing with hats and sticks.

Another four to Fuji Kawa and the game was won.

The players made for the pavilion at a gallop, but their effort was of no avail. With one mind that crowd charged upon them from all sides, laughing, cheering, shouting, and madly throwing into the air everything that they could lay their hands upon. Each man and boy was wildly determined to get a close view of the wonderful little Japanese. Eventually he was carried into the pavilion on the shoulders of the Yorkshire players.



"EACH MAN AND BOY WAS WILDLY DETERMINED TO GET A CLOSE VIEW OF THE WONDERFUL LITTLE JAPANESE."

The police were powerless to make that crowd go. The people thronged in front of the building clamouring for a speech, but as nobody kept silent there was very little chance of Fuji Kawa's being heard. He came out on the balcony and repeatedly raised his cap. Again and again was the cheering renewed. Never had any cricketer so suddenly leaped into the very heyday of popularity. By none was he more heartily congratulated than by the Yorkshire captain.

Next day a prominent London daily gave tongue as follows :—

Much has lately been written and said concerning the rapidly advancing tide of progress in the Land of the Rising Sun. We have been told repeatedly of the remarkable adaptability of the Japanese race for assimilating the knowledge of the West and benefiting by European inventions and enlightenment. Very few people, however, could have imagined yesterday that the inborn genius of a Japanese gentleman would have surmounted the difficulties inseparable from a novice in county cricket, and broken all English records for a first appearance by scoring 204 not out. We are told that his method is absolutely original; and that he uses a bat which is flat on both sides. No doubt this is a daring innovation ; but it is only what might have been expected from a member of such a virile and ingenious race. Should his success continue, we fully anticipate that a band of imitators will spring up, to multiply the troubles of the modern bowler. In that case we look for a storm of protest and much newspaper correspondence. It is rash, however, to venture upon prediction, unless possessed of knowledge. We can only speculate as to what the future will bring forth.

Fuji Kawa's success throughout the month of June was consistent and no less remarkable. Every week he headed the *Sportsman's* list of averages, with a record that gradually

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ascended from one hundred and fifty towards two hundred. His portrait began to be enclosed in packets of cigarettes and thrown on the screen in places of entertainment, receiving applause as enthusiastic as that bestowed on the presentment of the German Emperor. By the end of the month he had scored more than two thousand runs and had only been dismissed eleven times.

His place in the Gentlemen's team for the Lord's match against the Players became absolutely secure. Wessex, instead of being at the bottom of the list of counties, stood in the second place, having been only once defeated.

It was the second day of the great match. Every inch of space at Lord's was taken up. Thirty thousand people had been refused admission at the turnstiles for want of room.

The Players had stayed in all the first day, making four hundred and eighty runs.

"I don't think the Gentlemen will get so many," said a man in the crowd.

"Give me ten to one that Fudgey don't mike more than that hisself, and I'll tike yer," said his neighbour.

"Shut up, you idiot!" said the first speaker, clapping his hands as the professionals came out, tossing the ball from one to another.

Fuji Kawa and a batsman of hitherto unrivalled fame followed after a brief interval, receiving a tremendous ovation. His partner took the first ball and scored a three to leg. The next was a yorker of terrific pace, and hit Fuji Kawa on the ankle. There was a unanimous confident appeal. The umpire's right hand twitched at his side. Then he slowly shook his head, thinking he "was not quite sure it would have hit the sticks." The crowd gasped with relief, and gave vent to their feelings by cheering lustily.

As it turned out, no decision ever given by an umpire on the cricket-field was more momentous than this one.

Throughout the whole of that long, hot day the two batsmen defied every bowler on the Players' side. When the tired fielders at last had respite from their labours, Fuji Kawa had made seven hundred and five!

The total was one thousand and forty-eight for no wicket.

The scene that took place when the stumps were drawn is said to have been beyond description.

The Gentlemen declared their innings closed without batting on the third day, and won by an innings and three hundred runs.

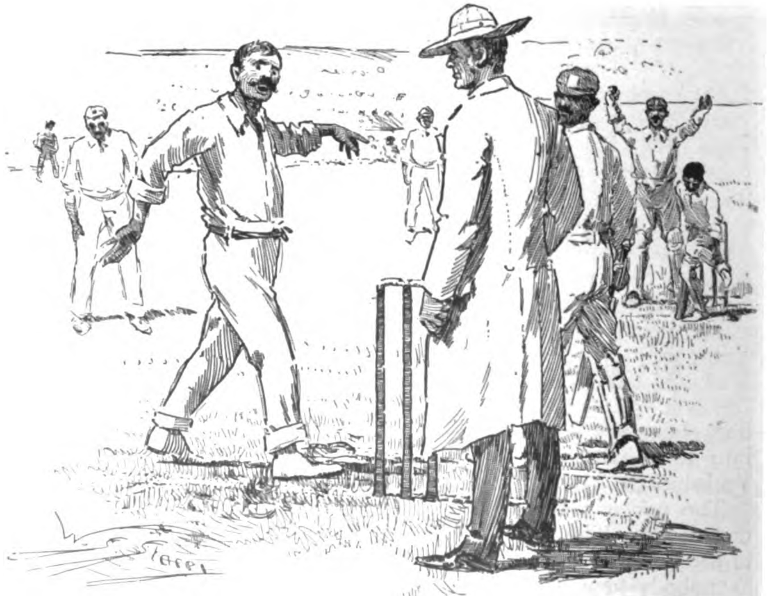
At the end of the season Fuji Kawa had attained the unprecedented aggregate of five thousand and fifty-four runs, averaging one hundred and seventy-two.

Then the newspaper correspondence began to rage in deadly earnest. The county captains held a meeting in December. Resolutions were passed—the Wessex captain alone dissenting — recommending the M.C.C. to amend the laws of the game so as to forbid Fuji Kawa's unorthodox methods.

However, they might have saved themselves the trouble. Fuji Kawa went back to Japan in January. He is now devoting himself heart and soul to the construction of railways and locomotives in that progressive land. People say he is doing magnificently.

The proposed alterations in the laws of cricket were not made, and never will be, unless another Fuji Kawa turns up.

But that is not likely.



"THERE WAS A UNANIMOUS CONFIDENT APPEAL."

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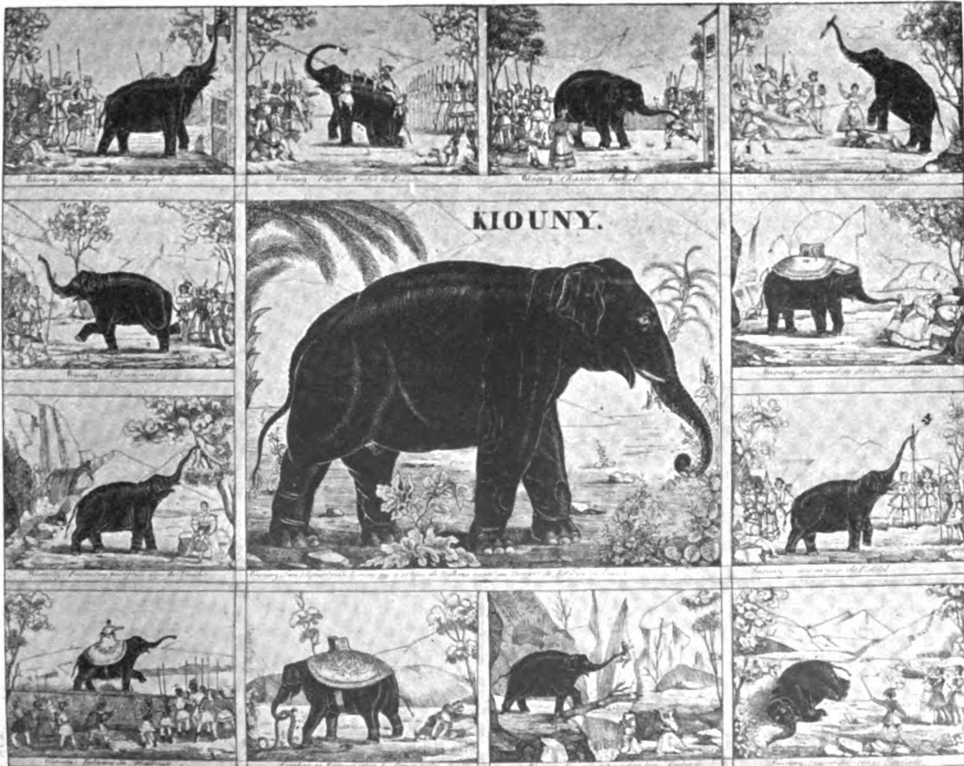
Side-Shows of the Past.

BY JOHN NIX.

F we may rely upon contemporary records the side-show business flourished exceedingly well in the days of Anne and the Georges. Freaks of Nature, performing animals of any kind, all things whatsoever that were extraordinary, queer, or curious, were in brisk demand by the sightseer. Our great-great-grandfathers, harder of head and stomach than ourselves, dearly loved to see a five-legged pig or a rope-walking goat. A good freak would "draw" London, and noble peers and men of fashion with their ladies patronized the side-shows and itinerant exhibitions. Such popular favour was not lost upon the showmen, who did their best and went their farthest to secure new wonders for their customers.

One of the strongest "attractions" in London a hundred years ago was a remarkable performing elephant named Kiouny, more popularly spelt "Chunee." For elephantine intelligence Chunee has had no equal, and no freak has enjoyed so much popularity, except, perhaps, the lamented Jumbo. Chunee was an actor, and his name stands as high in his line of performers as Garrick does in his. Like other players who have attained celebrity, Chunee had plays especially written to suit his particular style of acting. In the illustration on this page we are favoured with thirteen pictures of Chunee, as himself and as he appeared in different scenes in one of his plays. In the piece illustrated Chunee is, of course, the hero, and gives an excellent impersonation of a character distinguished for affection, loyalty, and courage displayed in the service of an Oriental Princess, to whom and her child Chunee is friend and protector, sacrificing his life whilst gallantly defending them from the attacks of murderous enemies. Scenes in the impressive story from the beginning to the tragic end are reproduced in the picture. It need not be



KIOUNY, OR CHUNEE, THE ELEPHANT WHICH PERFORMED IN PLAYS.

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GIOVANNI BATTISTA BELZONI, THE FAMOUS EGYPTIAN EXPLORER APPEARING AS A STRONG MAN.

doubted that Chunee played his part not merely with automatic accuracy of movement, but, as became a great artist, gave poignant expression to the emotions of love, pity, fear, anger, etc., which would be natural to such a character under such circumstances. When Chunee became too old to play he was exhibited at the Exeter 'Change Menagerie, which, in the days before the Zoological Gardens, was one of the sights of London and the only place where a collection of foreign animals could always be seen.

History relates few careers more remarkably varied than that of Giovanni Battista Belzoni, the famous Egyptian explorer. He was first a barber, next a Capuchin monk, and then a student of hydraulics. The range and grasp of his mind were scarcely less remarkable than his physical strength. He was 6ft. 6½in. high, broad in proportion, and exceedingly muscular. On many occasions he used his great strength as a means of livelihood by lifting large weights and balancing heavy irons. It was customary towards the close of Belzoni's performance for the showman to step forward and inform the audience that if four or five gentlemen would put sixpence apiece the strong man would carry them and as many more as could be got on to a board, pyramid fashion, round the arena. Our illustration, which, by the way, is from a contemporary drawing, shows Belzoni bearing eleven persons. The artist's record of the feat must not be taken too literally. Apart from the extreme disproportion of the carrier and the carried, it is doubtful whether an audience would yield eleven such small persons, nine of whom would bear a facial resemblance to Belzoni that is truly wonderful, and six, three, and two of whom respectively were dressed exactly alike.

The next illustration shows one William Martin, a famous lion tamer of bygone days,

WILLIAM MARTIN, THE FAMOUS WILD BEAST TAMER, PERFORMING WITH A TIGER.

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performing with one of his tigers. Martin owned one of the largest collections of wild animals extant in his day. He had from childhood studied the habits and characteristics of birds and beasts, and became quite renowned as a zoologist as well as a performer. He exhibited on the Continent as well as in London, and was a popular favourite in three countries. His physical strength was great, and he possessed the patience, tact, and resource essential to the tamer of wild beasts. One story of his prowess relates that, whilst on a visit to France, the partition dividing the cages of a tiger and a bear was suddenly removed, and the powerful brutes were about to attack each other. Martin resolved to separate them, and, to the horror of the onlookers, entered the cage. In the nick of time attendants were able to raise the fallen partition and thus seclude the tiger; but Martin was still left with the bear—a tremendous grizzly — which immediately encircled him in its fore-legs. The man threw up his hands and, whilst the animal was in the act of gripping him, drew a dagger and stabbed it to the heart.

SARTJEE, THE HOTTENTOT VENUS, A GREAT ATTRACTION IN LONDON ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The "Hottentot Venus" was a great attraction in London at the beginning of the last century. The extraordinary size and development of the Kaffir belle came to the knowledge of an enterprising side-show caterer, and she was forthwith brought over from Africa and exhibited to a delighted public. "Sartjee" was the name by which this black Venus was known, and thousands of persons, including a large number of ladies of distinction, paid two shillings each to see her at 225, Piccadilly. The price of admission was rather high for this class of exhibit, but was willingly paid. "Sartjee" died in Paris in 1816 whilst on a visit to that city.

Another early nineteenth-century exhibit which drew large crowds was the young woman whose portrait is the subject of the next illustration. The print from which the reproduction was made was used for the purposes of advertisement, accompanied by the statement that the young woman was in a most wonderful trance, practically dead yet a living being! The announcement, together with the picture, was irresistible to a sensation-loving public. The girl was seventeen years old, and her trance lasted fifteen weeks. She made a

"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY"—PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN WHO WAS IN A TRANCE FOR FIFTEEN WEEKS.

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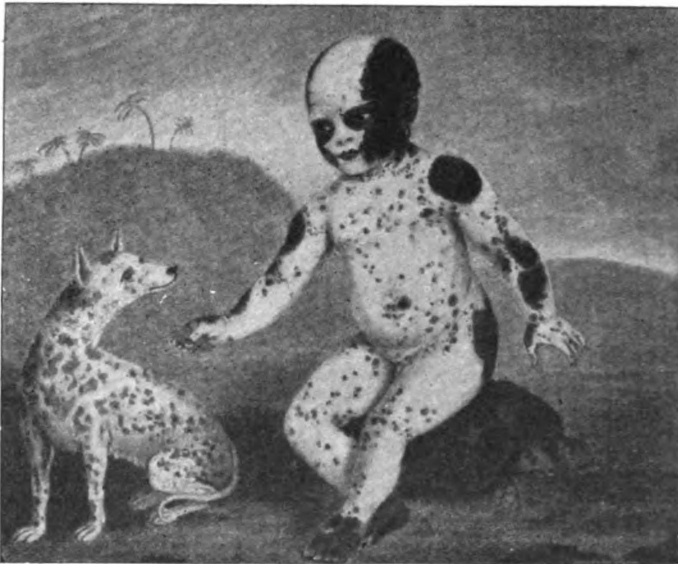
good "draw," although fasting women were fairly numerous during the last century.

The next illustration shows a spotted negro boy and a spotted dog. The child, described by the exhibitors as "The Wonderful Spotted Negro Boy from the Carribbee Islands," was exhibited at 41, Strand, in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was advertised as "the progeny of negroes on whose body is displayed the works of God, being beautifully covered all over by a variety of spots of the most beautiful black and transparent brown and white, of commanding angelic features, of a countenance the most fascinating, with limbs admirably proportioned, and is, in the opinion of every lady and gentleman who has seen this beautiful child, the greatest curiosity ever beheld."



"THE WONDERFUL SPOTTED NEGRO BOY FROM THE CARRIBBEE ISLANDS," EXHIBITED AT 41, STRAND.

This generous description of the curiosity did not fail to attract many sightseers, who were much amused by the freak. There were some sceptics, however, one of whom suggested that the application of a little soap and water to the boy's skin might affect the permanency of the colouring, which was the young gentleman's only claim to notice. With this suggestion the exhibitors of the boy did not see their way to acquiesce, contenting themselves with a general denial of the implication of fraud. ". . . . the slightest inspection," said they, "will convince the most incredulous that there is no foundation for such a supposition (of paint)." No doubt the proprietors of the show were not out of pocket by the incredulity of a few, since all those who wanted to see the child could do so on payment. The portrait of the boy here reproduced was drawn from life by D. Orme and engraved by P. R. Cooper.

There is no reason for disbelieving that had the soap and water been used the boy's skin would have appeared as black as any other negro's. Doubtless there were many other instances of frauds on the public in those days, for people were just as gullible, and showmen just as unscrupulous, as in our time. Lord Stowell, the eminent judge, made a point of seeing almost every show opened to the public, and he has recorded how he was once saved from being duped a third time by the honesty of the boy at the door. He was about to pay for admission to see "a new green monster serpent, newly arrived," when he was addressed thus by the youth in the pay-box, who recognised in his lordship an old customer: "We can't take your shilling, my lord; 'tis the serpent you have seen twice before in other colours; but you shall go in to see her." And his lordship pocketed the shilling and went in. Stowell used to boast that at some time or another he had visited every description of show which had been open to the London public during his lifetime.

Performing dogs and monkeys would hardly attract a large and fashionable audience nowadays, but in the reign of George III. a troupe of these animals went through performances which set the town talking of their intelligence and obedience. The dogs and monkeys appeared daily at the St. James's Theatre, each animal playing a part in a small farce. There is no reason to believe that the troupe was trained to a higher pitch of excellence than is attained in these days, but the thing was a novelty and delighted everybody. In a contemporary notice of the show one critic was afraid he could not do adequate justice to the performance, and proceeded to give a minute account of the things the animals did, over

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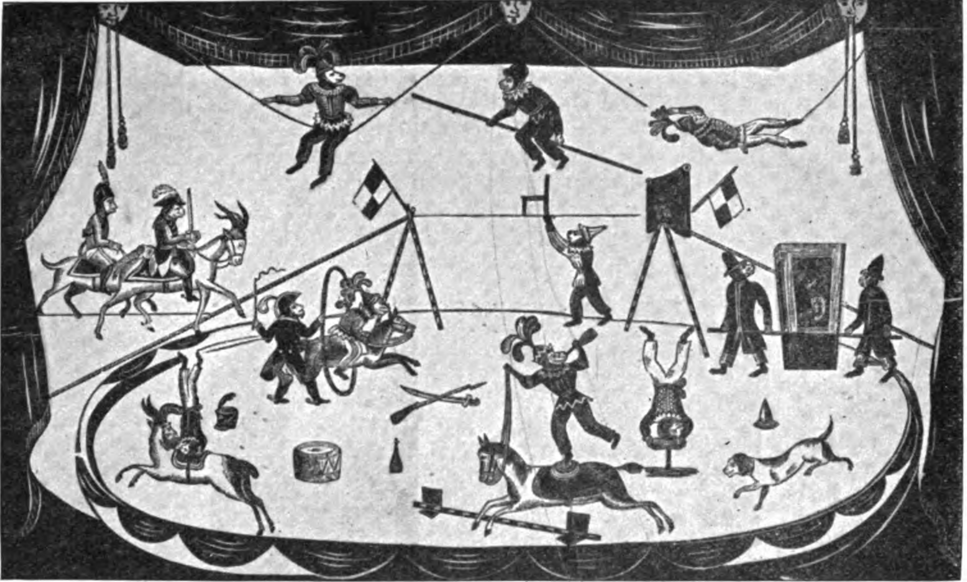
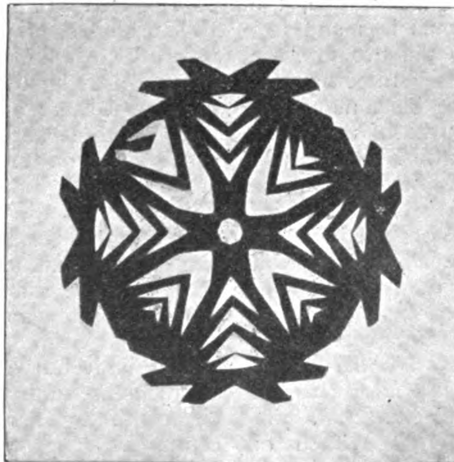


A CELEBRATED TROUPE OF PERFORMING DOGS AND MONKEYS.

which, he recorded, the audience went into raptures. To us the illustration is of more interest than the exploits of the dogs and monkeys. It is from a contemporary drawing and is a good example of the draughtsmanship of the average illustrator of the period.

An exhibit which "drew" almost better than anything else, in spite of its comparative commonness, was the armless or legless man. There seem to have been a good many of these unfortunate creatures two centuries ago, and the public was never tired of seeing them. At first the limbless ones were merely exhibited, but as time went on they had to do something more than be seen for a living. Their achievements usually consisted of writing, drawing, painting, sewing, and cutting cloth and fanciful designs in paper. Of the last we reproduce a specimen, which was cut by one John Murray, who, being armless, held the scissors between his toes. The smallness and clearness of the work says much for the steadiness of Murray's toes, as also does the firm signature which he attached to the same paper. Murray cut this particular design at Camberwell Fair, where he was a tremendous favourite. Armless wonders were an exceedingly remunerative exhibit, as the creatures themselves were aware. After touring the country for a few years their earnings often amounted to a considerable sum, and an old newspaper tells of an armless lady who had amassed the sum of £800, and was about to marry the proprietor of the show. The dowry doubtless weighed well, in the young man's mind, against the physical deficiencies of the lady, who, besides her armlessness, was haggish of countenance, weak of eye, and with a voice raucous as any hawker's. At the marriage there was some difficulty about placing the ring, owing to the lady not possessing a



John Murray

A DESIGN IN PAPER CUT OUT WITH THE TOES BY JOHN MURRAY, AN "ARMLESS WONDER" OF 100 YEARS AGO.

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finger on which to put it. However, the earnest solicitation of friends induced the minister to forego this part of the ceremony.

The last illustration selected for the purpose of this article depicts "The Greatest Wonder of the Age: the Gigantic American Ox, with five legs and seven perfect feet; weighs upwards of 200 stones; being the same that was inspected by upwards of 40,000 persons at the Highland Society's Cattle Show at Aberdeen, and allowed by all who saw it to be the greatest living curiosity ever exhibited." Thus the advertisement which told Londoners of the arrival of the freak in their city. Freak animals were a lucrative form of exhibit at cattle shows, fairs, and such-like rural gatherings. The ox became quite famous on account of the perfect formation of the superfluous leg and feet. As may be gathered from the quaint illustration, the animal possessed four normal legs and feet in the natural way, but to the two fore-legs was attached a third, possessing three separate hoofs or feet. These have been numbered for us by the kindly thought of the artist, who has also introduced into his drawing two human figures, the better that we may see the abnormalities of the ox. This freak of Nature enjoyed a wide celebrity, although it had several rivals to the claim of being "The Greatest Wonder of the Age." There were also at the time the ox was on show an American hen with three wings and four legs; a twin lamb with two bodies, eight legs, two tails, but only one head; and a sheep with a preternatural horn, 2ft. 7in. in length and weighing 15lb. Each of these, and especially the sheep, ran the ox pretty close in the race for the coveted title of "Greatest Wonder on Earth."

A GREAT FREAK—AN OX WITH FIVE LEGS AND SEVEN FEET.

As at present, the local fairs in the last century afforded wide opportunity for the display of these freaks, many of which nowadays are exceedingly laughable to us. Bartholomew's and Southwark Fairs were, of course, the great centres of attraction for side-shows from all parts of the country. The motley collection of these itinerant exhibitions which assembled here and at Smithfield will be best understood by a glance at any contemporaneous prints. Hogarth, it will be remembered, painted a well-known picture representing Southwark Fair in 1733. Here might be seen dramatic performances by the best players of the day, tumblers, rope-dancers, conjurers, giants, dwarfs, mountebanks, and a variety of other entertainments, and to these all London sightseers of both sexes and all ranks flocked in great numbers. In Hogarth's picture the different shows and notabilities are faithfully depicted. Elkanah Settle's droll of the "Siege of Troy," as given at Lee and Harper's booth; the curious Indian birds of Mr. Fawkes, the juggler; the waxwork exhibiting "the whole Court of France"; Müller, the Leipsic giant; Cudman, the rope-dancer; and Violante, the steeple-flier—all these and many others have been carefully set down. The "Fall of Bajazet" at Cibber and Bullock's booth is tragically illustrated by the collapse of the parade in front of the booth; whilst in the crowd a couple of bailiffs are arresting a buskined hero from the same company, who, with a beautiful drummeress, is beating up for an audience. Such gatherings as this were almost universal throughout the country at different times of the year during the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. They were the happy hunting-ground and chief source of revenue of the itinerant showman, who year after year paid his periodical visit to the different centres until he came to be regarded as an old friend by his patrons, who looked forward to his accustomed visit.

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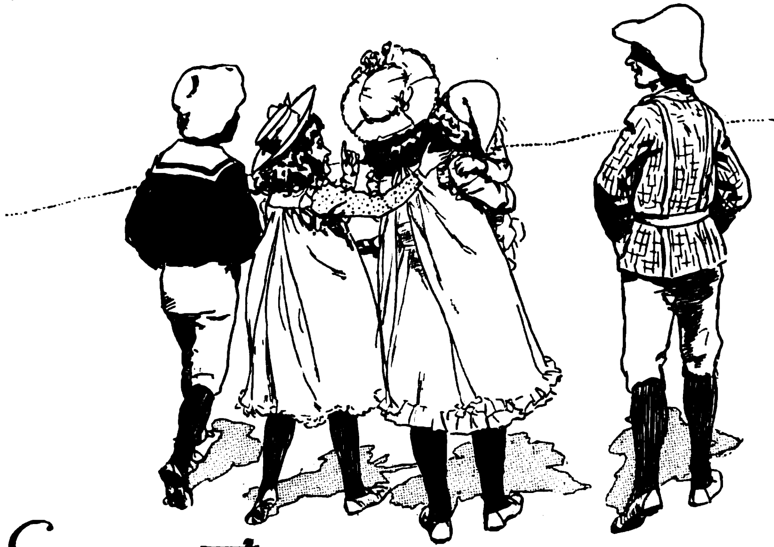

The Psammead, or the Gifts

By E. Nesbit.

III.—BEING WANTED.

HE morning after the children had been the possessors of boundless wealth, and had been unable to buy anything really useful or enjoyable with it, except two pairs of cotton gloves, twelve penny buns, an imitation crocodile-skin purse, and a ride in a pony-cart, they awoke without any of the enthusiastic happiness which they had felt on the previous day, when they remembered how they had had the luck to find a psammead, or sand-fairy, and to receive its promise to grant them a new wish every day. For now they had had two wishes, beauty and wealth, and neither had exactly made them happy. But the happening of strange things, even if they are not completely pleasant things, is more amusing than those times when nothing happens but meals, and they are not always completely pleasant, especially on the days when it is cold mutton or hash.

It had been decided that fifty pounds in two-shilling pieces was the right wish to have this morning. And the lucky children, who could have anything in the wide world by just wishing for it, hurriedly started for the gravel-pit to express their wishes to the psammead. Martha caught them at the gate and insisted on their taking the baby with them.

"Not want him, indeed! Why, everybody 'ud want him—a duck—with all their hearts, they would. And you know you promised your ma to take him out every blessed day," said Martha.

"I know we did," said Robert, in gloom; "but I wish the Lamb wasn't quite so young and small. It would be much better fun taking him out."

"He'll mend of his youngness with time," said Martha; "and, as for smallness, I don't think you'd fancy carrying of him any more, however big he was. Besides, he can walk a bit, bless his precious fat legs—a ducky! He feels the benefit of the new-laid air, so he does—a pet!"

With this and a kiss she plumped the

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Lamb into Anthea's arms and went back to her sewing-machine.

The Lamb laughed with pleasure and said, "Walky wif Panty," rode on Robert's back with yells of joy, tried to feed Jane with stones, and altogether made himself so agreeable that nobody could long be sorry that he was of the party.

It was settled that, as soon as they had wished for the money and got it, they would get Mr. Crispin to drive them in to Rochester again, taking the Lamb with them, if they could not get out of it. And they would make a list of the things they really wanted before they started. Full of high hopes and excellent resolutions, they went round the safe, slow cart-road to the gravel-pits, and as they went in between the mounds of gravel a sudden thought came to them, and would have turned their ruddy cheeks pale if they had been children in a book. Being real live children, it only made them stop and look at each other with rather blank and silly expressions. For now they remembered that yesterday, when they had asked the psammead for boundless wealth, and it was getting ready to fill the quarry with the minted gold of bright guineas—millions of them—it had told the children to run along outside the quarry for fear they should be buried alive in the heavy splendid treasure. And they had run. And so it had happened that they had not had time to mark the spot where the psammead was, with a ring of stones, as before. And it was this thought that put such silly expressions on their faces.

"Never mind," said the hopeful Jane, "we'll soon find him."

But this, though easily said, was hard in the doing. They looked and they looked, and though they found their seaside spades, nowhere could they find the sand-fairy.

At last they had to sit down and rest—not at all because they were weary or disheartened, of course, but because the Lamb insisted on being put down—and you cannot look very carefully after anything you may have happened to lose in the sand if you have an active baby to look after at the same time. Get someone to drop your best knife in the sand next time you go to the seaside, and then take your baby brother with you when you go to look for it, and you will see that I am right.

The Lamb, as Martha had said, was feeling the benefit of the country air, and he was as frisky as a sandhopper. The elder ones longed to go on talking about the new wishes they would have when (or if) they found the psammead again. But the Lamb wished to enjoy himself.

He watched his opportunity and threw a handful of sand into Anthea's face, and then suddenly burrowed his own head in the sand and waved his fat legs in the air. Then, of course, the sand got into his eyes, as it had into Anthea's, and he howled.

The thoughtful Robert had brought one solid brown bottle of ginger-beer with him, relying on a thirst that had never yet failed him. This had to be uncorked hurriedly; it was the only wet thing within reach, and it was necessary to wash the sand out of the Lamb's eyes somehow. Of course, the ginger hurt horribly, and he howled more than ever. And amid his anguish of kicking the bottle was upset, and the beautiful ginger-beer frothed out into the sand and was lost for ever.

It was then that Robert, usually a very patient brother, so far forgot himself as to say:—

"Anybody would want him, indeed! Only they don't. Martha doesn't, not really, or she'd jolly well keep him with her. He's a little nuisance, that's what he is. It's too bad. I only wish everybody *did* want him with all their hearts, we might get some peace in our lives."

The Lamb stopped howling now, because Jane had suddenly remembered that there is only one safe way of taking things out of little children's eyes, and that is with your own soft, wet tongue. It is quite easy, if you love the baby as much as you ought to.

Then there was a little silence. Robert was not proud of himself for having been so cross, and the others were not proud of him either. You often notice that sort of silence when someone has said something it ought not to, and everyone else holds its tongue and waits for the one who oughtn't to have to say it is sorry.

The silence was broken by a sigh—a breath suddenly let out. The children's heads turned as if there had been a string tied to each nose and someone had pulled all the strings at once.

And everyone saw the sand-fairy sitting quite close to them, with something as much like a smile as it could manage on its hairy face.

"Good morning," it said; "I did that quite easily. Everyone wants him now."

"It doesn't matter," said Robert, sulkily, because he knew he had been behaving rather like a pig. "No matter who wants him, there's no one here to, anyhow."

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"Ingratitude," said the psammead, "is a dreadful vice."

"We're not ungrateful," Jane made haste to say, "but we didn't *really* want that wish. Robert only just said it. Can't you take it back and give us a new one?"

"No; I can't," the sand-fairy said, shortly. "Chopping and changing—it's not business. You ought to be careful what you *do* wish."

"'POOF, POOF, POOF-Y,' HE SAID, AND MADE A GRAB."

Suddenly the Lamb perceived that something brown and furry was near him.

"Poof, poof, poof-y," he said, and made a grab.

"It's not a pussy," Anthea was beginning, when the sand-fairy leaped back.

"Oh, my left whisker!" it said; "don't let him touch me. He's wet."

Its fur stood on end with horror; and, indeed, a good deal of the ginger-beer had been spilt on the blue smock of the Lamb.

The psammead dug with its hands and feet and vanished in an instant amid a whirl of sand.

The children marked the spot with a ring of stones.

"We may as well get along home," said Robert. "I say, I'm sorry, but, anyway, if it's no good it's no harm, and we know where the sandy thing is for to-morrow."

The others were noble. No one reproached Robert at all. Cyril picked up the Lamb, who was now quite himself again, and off they went by the safe cart-road.

The cart-road from the gravel-pits joins the road almost directly.

At the gate into the road the party stopped to shift the Lamb from Cyril's back to Robert's. And as they paused a very smart open carriage came in sight, with a coachman and a groom on the box, and inside the carriage a lady—very grand indeed, with a dress all white lace and red ribbons, and a parasol all red and white—and a white fluffy dog on her lap, with a red ribbon round its neck. She looked at the children, and particularly at the baby, and she smiled at him. The children were used to this, for the Lamb was, as all the servants said, "a very taking child." So they waved their hands politely to the lady and expected her to drive on. But she did not. Instead, she made the coachman stop. And she beckoned to Cyril, and when he went up to the carriage she said:—

"What a dear, darling duck of a baby! Oh, I *should* so like to adopt it. Do you think its mother would mind?"

"She'd mind very much indeed," said Anthea.

"Oh, but I should bring it up in luxury, you know. I am Lady Chittenden. You must have seen my photograph in the illustrated papers. They call me a beauty, you know; but, of course, that's all nonsense. Anyway——"

She opened the carriage door and jumped out. She had the wonderfullest red, high-heeled shoes with silver buckles. "Let me hold him a minute," she said. And she took the Lamb and held him very awkwardly, as if she were not used to babies.

Then, suddenly, she jumped into the carriage with the Lamb in her arms and slammed the door, and said: "Drive on."

The Lamb roared, the little white dog barked, and the coachman hesitated.

"Drive on, I tell you," said the lady. And the coachman did, for, as he said afterwards, it was as much as his place was worth not to.

The four children looked at each other, and then with one accord they rushed after the carriage and held on behind. Down the dusty road went the smart carriage, and after it, at double quick time, ran the twinkling legs of the Lamb's brothers and sisters.

The Lamb howled louder and louder, but presently his howls changed to hiccuppy gurgles, and then all was still, and they knew he had gone to sleep.

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The carriage went on, and the eight feet that twinkled through the dust were growing quite stiff and tired before the carriage stopped at the lodge of a grand park. The children crouched down behind the carriage and the lady got out. She looked at the baby as it lay on the carriage seat, and hesitated.

"The darling; I won't disturb it," she said, and went into the lodge to talk to the woman there about a sitting of Buff Orpington eggs.

The coachman and footman sprang from the box and bent over the still sleeping Lamb.

"AT DOUBLE QUICK TIME, RAN THE TWINKLING LEGS OF THE LAMB'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS."

"Fine boy; wish he was mine," said the coachman.

"He wouldn't favour *you* much," said the groom; "too 'andsome."

"Wonder at her now, I do, really. Hates kids, got none of her own, and can't abide other folkses."

The children crouching in the white dust under the carriage exchanged uncomfortable glances.

"Tell you what," said the coachman, firmly. "Blowed if I don't hide the little nipper in the hedge and tell her his brother's took 'im! Then I'll come back for him afterwards."

"No, you don't," said the footman. "I've took to that kid so as never was. If anyone's to have him, it's me, so there."

"Stow your gab," the coachman rejoined. "You don't want no kids, and if you did one kid's the same as another to you. But I'm a married man and a judge of breed. I knows a first-rate yearling when I sees him. I'm a-goin' to 'ave him, an' least said soonest mended."

"I should 'a' thought," said the footman, sneeringly, "you'd a'most enough. Alfred, an' Albert, an' Louise, an' Victor Stanley, an' Helena Beatrice, an' another——"

The coachman hit the footman in the chin, the footman hit the coachman in the waistcoat, and next minute the two were fighting here and there, in and out, up and down, and all over everywhere, and the little dog jumped on the box of the carriage and began barking like mad.

Cyril, still crouching in the dust, waddled on bent legs to the side of the carriage farthest from the battlefield. He unfastened the door of the carriage—the two men were far too much occupied with their quarrel to notice anything—took the Lamb in his arms, and, still stooping, carried the sleeping baby a dozen yards along the road to where a stile led into a wood. The others followed, and there among the hazels and young oaks and sweet chestnuts, covered by high, strong-scented bracken, they all lay hidden, till the angry voices of the men were hushed at the angry voice of the red and white lady, and, after a

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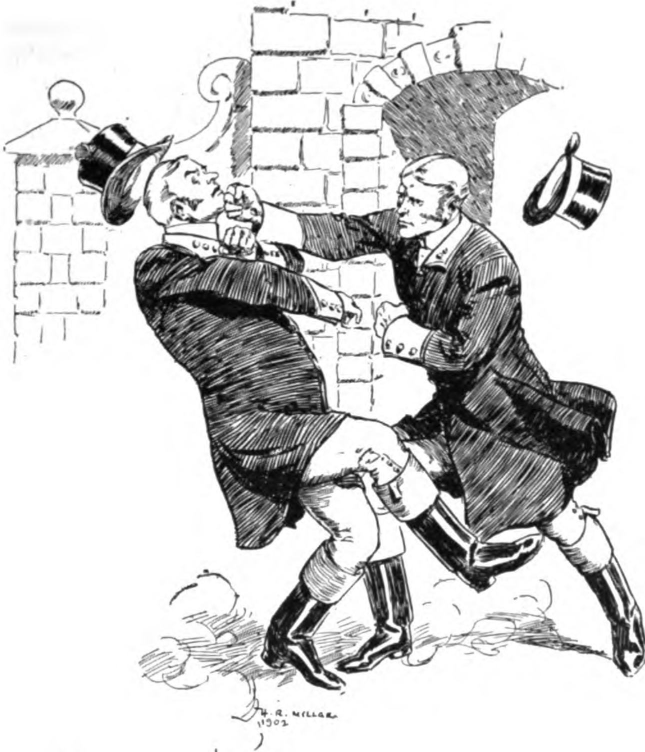

"THE NEXT MINUTE THE TWO WERE FIGHTING HERE AND THERE."

bears can come and eat you as soon as it gets dark," said Cyril, severely. Then she went off crying. It presently seemed wise to the brothers and sisters of the baby who was wanted by everyone to hide in the hedge whenever they saw anyone coming, and thus they managed to prevent the Lamb from arousing the inconvenient affection of a milkman, a stone-breaker, and a man who drove a cart with a paraffin barrel at the back of it. They were nearly home when the worst thing of all happened. Turning a corner suddenly they came upon two vans, a tent, and a company of gipsies encamped by the side of the road. The vans were hung all round with wicker-chairs and cradles and flower-stands and feather brushes. A lot of ragged children were industriously making dust-pies in the road, two men lay on the grass smoking, and three women were doing the family washing in an old red watering-can with the top broken off.

In a moment every gipsy, men, women, and children, surrounded Anthea and the baby.

"Let me hold him, little lady," said one of the gipsy women, who had a mahogany-coloured face and light hair. "I won't hurt a hair of his head, the little picture."

"I'd rather not," said Anthea.

"Let *me* have him," said the other woman, whose face was also mahogany and her hair jet black, in greasy curls. "I've nineteen of my own, so I have——"

"No," said Anthea, bravely; but her heart beat so that it nearly choked her.

Then one of the men pushed forward.

"'Swelp me if it ain't," he cried, "my own long-lost cheild! Have he a strawberry mark on his left ear? No? Then he's my own babby, stolen from me in hinnocent hinfancy. 'And 'im over, and we'll not 'ave the law on yer this time."

He snatched the baby from Anthea, who turned scarlet and burst into tears of pure rage.

The others were standing quite still; this

long and anxious search, the carriage at last drove away.

"My only hat!" said Cyril, drawing a deep breath, as the sound of wheels at last died away; "everyone *does* want him now, and no mistake. That sammyadd has done us again! Tricky brute. For any sake let's get the kid safe home."

So they peeped out, and finding on the right hand only lonely white road, and nothing but lonely white road on the left, they took courage and the road, Anthea carrying the sleeping Lamb.

Adventures dogged their footsteps. A boy with a bundle of fagots on his back dropped his bundle by the roadside and asked to look at the baby, and then offered to carry him, but Anthea was not to be caught that way twice. They all walked on, but the boy followed, and Cyril and Robert couldn't make him go away till they had more than once invited him to smell their fists. Then a little girl in a blue-and-white-checked pinafore actually followed them for a quarter of a mile crying for "the precious baby," and then she was only got rid of by threats of tying her to a tree in the wood with all their pocket-handkerchiefs. "So that the

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was much the most terrible thing that had ever happened to them. Even being taken up by the police in Rochester was nothing to this. Cyril was quite white and his hands trembled a little, but he made a sign to the others to shut up. He was silent a minute, thinking hard. Then he said:—

"HE SNATCHED THE BABY FROM ANTHEA."

"We don't want to keep him if he's yours. But you see he's used to us. You shall have him if you want him——"

"No, no," cried Anthea—and Cyril glared at her.

"Of course we want him," said the women, trying to get the baby out of the man's arms. The Lamb howled loudly.

"Oh, he's hurt," shrieked Anthea, and Cyril, in a savage undertone, bade her "stow it."

"You trust to me," he whispered. "Look here," he went on, "he's awfully tiresome with people he doesn't know very well. Suppose we stay here a bit till he gets used to you, and then, when it's bed-time, I give you my word of honour we'll go away, and let you keep him if you want to. And then when we're gone you can decide which of you is to have him, as you all want him so much."

"That's fair enough," said the man who was holding the baby, trying to loosen the red neckerchief which the Lamb had caught hold of, and drawn so tight round his mahogany throat that he could hardly breathe. The gipsies whispered together, and Cyril took the chance to whisper too. He said, "Sunset! We'll get away then."

And then his brothers and sisters were filled with wonder and admiration at his having been so clever as to remember this.

"Oh, do let him come to us," said Jane; "see, we'll sit down here, and take care of him for you till he gets used to you."

"What about dinner?" said Robert, suddenly. The others looked at him with scorn.

"Fancy bothering about your beastly dinner when your br—I mean the baby——" Jane whispered, hotly.

Robert carefully winked at her and went on. "You won't mind my just running home to get our dinner," he said to the gipsy. "I can bring it out here in a basket."

His brothers and sisters felt themselves very noble, and despised him. They did not know his thoughtful secret intention. But the gipsies did in a minute.

"Oh, yes," they said; "and then fetch the police, with a pack of lies about it being your baby instead of ours! D'j'ever catch a weasel asleep?" they asked.

"If you're hungry you can pick a bit along of us," said the light-haired gipsy woman, not unkindly. "Here, Levi, that blessed kid'll howl all his buttons off. Give him to the little lady, and let's see if they can't get him used to us a bit."

So the Lamb was handed back, but the gipsies crowded so closely that he could not

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possibly stop howling. Then the man with the red handkerchief said :—

"Here, Pharaoh, make up the fire, and you girls see to the pot. Give the kid a chance."

So the gipsies, very much against their will, went off to their work and their children were sent to play, and the Lamb, with his brothers and sisters, was left sitting on the grass.

"He'll be all right at sunset," Jane whispered; "but, oh, it is awful! Suppose they are frightfully angry when they come to their senses! They might beat us, or leave us tied to trees or something."

"No, they won't," Anthea said ("Oh, my Lamb, don't cry any more—it's all right—Panty's got oo, duckie!); they aren't unkind people, or they wouldn't be going to give us any dinner."

"Dinner?" said Robert; "I won't touch their nasty dinner. It would choke me!"

The others thought so, too, then. But when the dinner was ready — it turned out to be supper, and happened between four and five—they were all glad enough to take what they could get. It was boiled rabbit, with onions, and some bird rather like a chicken, but stringier about its legs. The Lamb had bread soaked in hot water and brown sugar sprinkled on the top. He liked this very much, and consented to let the two gipsy women feed him with it as he sat on Anthea's lap. All that long, hot afternoon Robert and Cyril and Anthea and Jane had to keep the Lamb amused and happy, while the gipsies looked eagerly on. By the time the shadows grew long and black across the meadows he had really "taken to" the woman with the light hair, and even consented to kiss his hand to the children and to stand up and bow, with his hand on his chest, "like a gentleman," to the two men. The whole gipsy camp was in raptures with him, and his brothers and sisters could not help taking some pleasure in showing off his accomplishments to an audience so interested and enthusiastic. But they longed for sunset.

"HE CONSENTED TO LET THE GIPSY WOMAN FEED HIM."

"We're getting into the habit of longing for sunset," Cyril whispered. "How I do wish we could wish something really sensible, that would be of some use, so that we should be quite sorry when sunset came!"

The shadows got longer and longer, and at last there were no separate shadows any more, but one soft, glowing shadow over everything—for the sun was out of sight behind the hill, but he had not really set yet. The people who make the laws about lighting bicycle lamps are the people who decide when the sun sets.

But the gipsies were getting impatient.

"Now, young 'uns," the red-handkerchief man said, "it's time you were laying of your heads on your pillowses—so it is. The kid's all right and friendly with us now, so you just hand him over and sling that hook o' yours, like you said."

The women and children came crowding round the Lamb; arms were held out, fingers snapped invitingly, friendly faces beamed with admiring smiles, but all failed to tempt the loyal Lamb. He clung with arms and legs to Jane, who happened to be holding

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him, and uttered the gloomiest roar of the whole day.

"It's no good," the woman said; "hand the little poppet over, miss. We'll soon quiet him."

And still the sun would not set.

"Tell her about how to put him to bed," whispered Cyril—"anything to gain time; and be ready to bolt when the sun really does make up its silly old mind to set."

"Yes, I'll hand him over in just one minute"—Anthea began talking very fast to gain time—"but do let me just tell you he has a warm bath every night and cold in the morning, and he has a crockery rabbit to go into the warm bath with him, and little Samuel saying his prayers in white china on a red cushion for the cold bath, and he hates you to wash his ears, but you must; and if you let the soap get into his eyes the Lamb——"

"Lamb kyes," said he—he had stopped roaring to listen.

The woman laughed. "As if I'd never bath'd a babby," she said. "Come, give us a hold of him. Come to 'Melia, my precious——"

"G'way, ugsie," replied the Lamb at once.

"Yes, but," Anthea went on, "about his meals; you must let me tell you he has an apple or a banana every morning, and bread and milk for breakfast, and an egg for his tea sometimes, and——"

"I've brought up ten," said the black-ringleted woman. "Come, miss—'and 'im over—I can't bear it no longer. I just must give him a hug."

"We ain't settled yet whose he's to be, Esther," said one of the men.

"It won't be you, Esther, with seven of 'em at your tail a'ready."

"I ain't so sure of that," said Esther's husband.

"And ain't I nobody to have a say neither?" said the husband of 'Melia.

Zillah, the girl, said, "An' me? I'm a single girl—and no one but 'im to look after—I ought to have him."

"Hold yer tongue!"

"Shut your mouth!"

"Don't you show me no more of your imperence!"

Everyone was getting very angry. The dark gipsy faces were frowning and anxious-looking. Suddenly a change swept over them, as if some invisible sponge had wiped away these cross and anxious expressions and left only a blank.

The children saw that the sun really *had* set. But they were afraid to move. And the gipsies were feeling so muddled, because of the invisible sponge that had washed all the feelings of the last few hours out of their hearts, that they could not say a word.

The children hardly dared to breathe. Suppose the gipsies, when they recovered speech, should be furious to think how silly they had been all day.

It was an awkward moment. Suddenly Anthea, greatly daring, held out the Lamb to the red-handkerchief man.

"Here he is," she said.

The man drew back. "I shouldn't like to deprive you, miss," he said, hoarsely.

"Anyone who likes can have my share of him," said the other man.

"After all, I've got enough of my own," said Esther.

"He's a nice little chap," said Amelia. She was the only one who now looked affectionately at the whimpering Lamb.

Zillah said: "If I don't think I must have had a touch of the sun. *I* don't want him."

"Then shall we take him away?" said Anthea.

"Well, suppose you do," said Pharaoh, heartily, "and we'll say no more about it."

And with great haste all the gipsies began to be busy about their tents for the night. All but Amelia. She went with the children as far as the bend in the road, and there she said:—

"Let me give him a kiss, miss; I don't know what made us go for to behave so silly; us gipsies don't steal babies, whatever they may tell you when you're naughty. We've enough of our own, mostly. But I've lost all mine."

She leaned towards the Lamb, and he, looking in her eyes, unexpectedly put up a grubby, soft paw and stroked her face.

"Poor, poor," said the Lamb. And he let the gipsy woman kiss him, and, what is more, he kissed her brown cheek in return—a very nice kiss, as all his kisses are, and not a wet one, like some babies give. The gipsy woman moved her finger about on his forehead as if she were writing something there, and the same with his chest and his hands and his feet. Then she said:—

"May he be brave, and have the strong head to think with, and the strong heart to love with, and the strong hands to work with, and the strong feet to travel with, and always come safe home to his own." Then she said something in a strange language no one could understand, and suddenly added:—

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"Well, I must be saying 'So long'—and glad to have made your acquaintance." And she turned and went back to her home—the tent by the grassy roadside.

The children looked after her till she was out of sight. Then Robert said, "How silly of her! Even sunset didn't put *her* right—what rot she talked!"

"Well," said Cyril, "if you ask me I think it was rather decent of her."

"Decent?" said Anthea. "It was very nice indeed of her. I think she's a dear."

"She's just too frightfully nice for anything," said Jane.

And they went home—very late for tea, and unspeakably late for dinner. Martha scolded, of course. But the Lamb was safe.

"I say it turned out we wanted the Lamb as much as anyone," said Robert, afterwards.

"Of course."

"But do you feel different about it now the sun's set?"

"THE GIPSY WOMAN MOVED HER FINGERS ABOUT ON HIS FOREHEAD."

"*No*," said all the others together.

"Then it's lasted over sunset with us."

"No, it hasn't. The wish didn't do anything to us. We always wanted him with all our hearts when we were our proper selves, only we were all pigs this morning, especially you, Robert."

Robert bore this with a strange calm.

"I certainly *thought* I didn't want him this morning," said he. "Perhaps I *was* a pig. But everything looked so different when we thought we were going to lose him."

And that, my dear children, is the moral of this story. Think of it, the next time you feel piggy yourself and want to get rid of any of your brothers and sisters. I hope this doesn't often happen, but I dare say it has happened sometimes, even to you!

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Some Wonaers from the West.

XI.—LOOPING THE LOOP ON A BICYCLE.

By Eric Hamilton.

ONE of the most sensational cycling feats on record was that recently performed by Mr. Robert B. Vandevoort, a young electrician of Brooklyn, New York. Few of the numerous recreative features of Coney Island, Atlantic City, and other popular American seaside resorts have appealed to the public taste so powerfully as the flip-flap or loop railway. Roughly speaking, the idea is to shoot down an incline and then round a complete circle, the car keeping the rails simply through the centrifugal force. Our illustration of the loop will most adequately convey an idea of its principle of construction, and as a hair-raising, sensational ride it would be difficult to beat. "Looping the loop" in America has become even more popular than shooting the chutes. To complete the journey in the special car designed for the purpose is a sufficiently exciting experience, but to accomplish the trip on a cycle is courting certain death. Mr. Vandevoort's accomplishment is unique, inasmuch as he is the only man who has ever successfully and safely performed the feat more than once. Other aspirants for sensational notoriety have made the attempt, but have only encountered disaster.

From a] MR. R. B. VANDEVOORT. [*Photo.*

The loop sensation was devised by Mr. A. T. Prescott, who controls the one at present in operation at Coney Island. Several years ago, when he was a boy fourteen years old, he built a model loop of wire, and used to derive great pleasure in making a billiard-ball travel right round the circle. At first he could not induce the ball to loop the loop, but by gradually increasing his starting incline, in order to obtain the requisite impetus upon the ball, and building his circle in proportion, he at last achieved success. But with the typical boyish characteristic, when he had succeeded in making it work satisfactorily he grew tired of it, relegated it to the rubbish-heap, and forgot its very existence.

Several years later he visited a popular seaside resort near Boston, and watched the popular enthusiasm with which crowds of people enjoyed shooting the chutes. They revelled in the sensational whirl down the incline, and he realized that the owners of the attraction were reaping a financial harvest from it. Instantly the idea of turning his quondam plaything to financial account flashed across his mind, and he determined to make the experiment. He went home, resurrected his old toy, and built a model from it with a loop twenty inches high. He constructed a little car, placed a glass of

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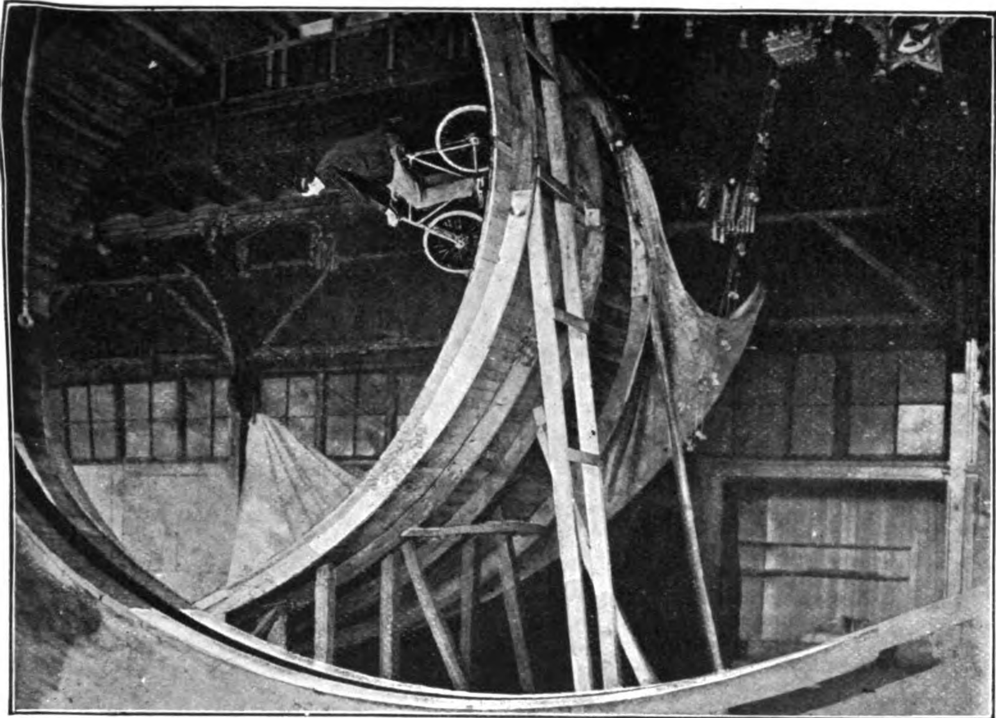

From a] IN THE LOOP. [*Photo.*

water upon it, and dispatched it through the loop. The experiment was a great success. Not a drop of water was spilled in the journey. Mr. Prescott thereupon patented his device and built a full-sized loop at Revere Beach, near Boston.

But his loop met with great opposition at first, especially from the sceptics and the medical fraternity. The former characterized it as a murdering machine, and the latter said that the shock to the nervous system of people who performed the journey would be dangerous. But Prescott laughed at their qualms, and to prove his confidence in its practicability and safety he, together with his carpenter, made the maiden trip. This initial journey took place on a moonlight night about ten o'clock. The inventor was so anxious to carry out the trial and was so sanguine of success that he could not wait until daylight to undertake it. Directly the work of erection was completed Prescott jumped into the car and urged his carpenter to accompany him. They gripped the sides of the car like grim death as it slowly started down the incline, rapidly gaining momentum as it proceeded. They held their breath as the car whizzed like lightning round the circle, and did not breathe freely again until it had come to a standstill on the top of the gradient at the other side of the loop. Although the journey had only occupied a few moments it seemed an age. Once the safety of the performance was exemplified to the public it leaped into popular favour, and is now one of the greatest money-making amusements that have ever been invented.

Immediately the loop had established itself in the popular estimation, a cyclist named Mack, aspiring to fame, made the hazardous attempt of riding round the loop. But he came a cropper instead. He had completed about three-quarters of the circle when he lost control of his machine, swerved violently off the track, and pitched into the canvas net placed on one side with terrific violence. The result was a broken ankle, which was sufficient to deter him from further attempts.

A month after Mack's unsuccessful effort another cyclist named Stewart attempted the journey, and looped the loop with conspicuous success. Stewart was so elated with his initial triumph that he essayed the trip again. But he was over-confident. He lost control of his cycle just as he was at the top of the loop, and was thrown down with such

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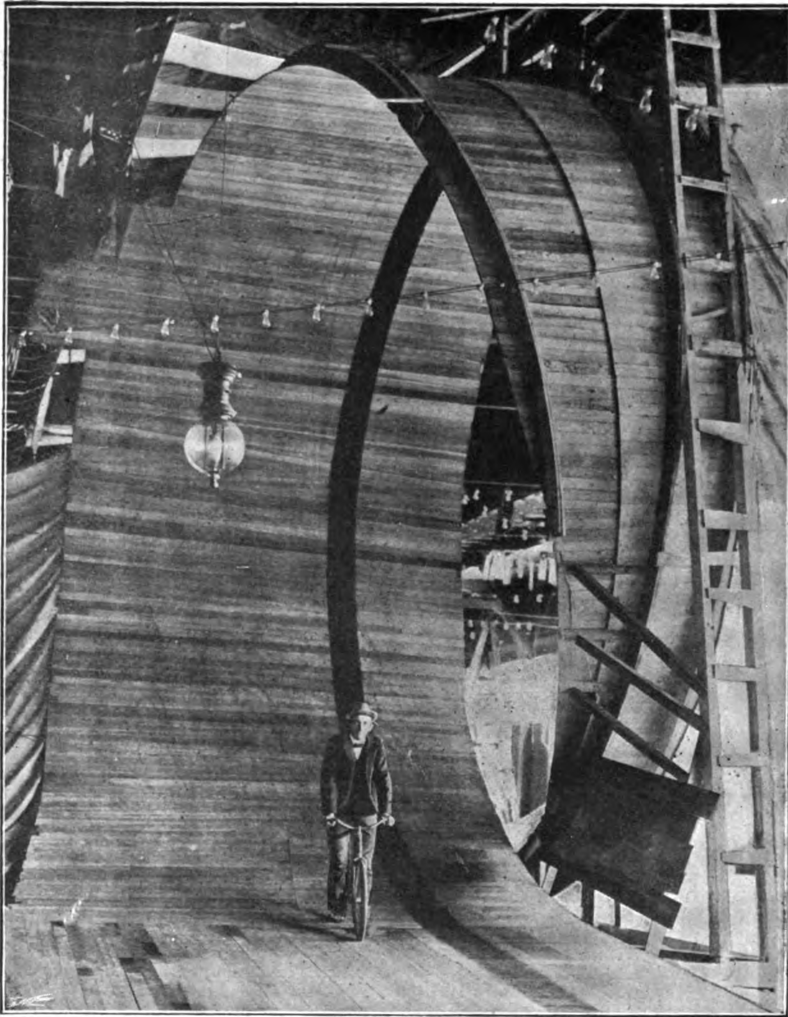

From a] JUST COMING OUT OF THE LOOP. [*Photo.*

violence that two boards were broken. This accident damped Stewart's enthusiasm so much that he never again attempted the feat.

It was at this juncture that Vandevoort came upon the scene. He was only an amateur cyclist, but he was so strongly tempted that he resolved to make the trip notwithstanding both Mack's and Stewart's disastrous failures. He had watched the latter's two performances, observed his mistakes, and determined to profit thereby. But he was not animated with the same anxiety that characterized his two predecessors. He mentally ran over the route several times, and carefully calculated when to steer the cycle to either the right or left.

Vandevoort, however, quickly realized that the most important qualifications to ensure success were a clear head, steady nerve, and complete presence of mind throughout the journey. He did not essay the trip straight away, but quietly indulged in steady practice. He painted a black line in the centre of the track right through the loop. At first he started twenty feet from the bottom of the incline and clung closely to the central black line. When he had thoroughly mastered the twenty feet start he set off from a few feet higher up, and gradually climbed the gradient as he mastered the journey until he had finally reached the top of the incline, forty feet above the ground. When he had satisfactorily reached this point he announced that he was ready to loop the loop.

Vandevoort had obtained a special cycle

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for the performance. Owing to the enormous strain to which the velocipede is submitted it was built of automobile tubing and weighed sixty pounds. The tyres are of the solid pattern, as pneumatic tyres are too dangerous, owing to their liability to burst, in which event a calamitous accident would result. There were no pedals, as it was imperative that the wheels should have absolutely free play, and the success of the feat depended upon the velocity with which the bicycle travelled down the starting incline. Therefore, in place of the pedals were two rests for the feet.

Before starting Vandevoort carefully examined every inch of the loop to make sure there were no loose boards or other obstacles which might throw him off the track. A doctor was in attendance in case of any emergencies, and also to observe what effect the ride exercised upon the nervous system of the cyclist.

Vandevoort then climbed to the top of the incline and, after requesting silence upon the part of the few privileged spectators, so that he might not be unnerved or his attention diverted from the track, he mounted his bicycle. Slowly he started, his body bent forward, his face set, and his eyes riveted upon the centre of the track. Like a flash he shot down the incline, steered his machine to the right correctly as he entered the loop, was whizzed round the circle by the force gathered in his descent of the incline, and was shot out like a cannon-ball at the other side. The complete silence which reigned was only disturbed by the humming noise of the tyres and the whistling of the air as Vandevoort swept through it; but it was finally broken by the daring cyclist crashing into the drag ropes, which he had placed at the exit of the loop to bring him to a standstill. The whole trip had only occupied a few seconds, and he had whirled round the loop like a flash of lightning.

The doctor immediately ran up to ascertain the results of the journey upon the rider. Vandevoort's pulse showed an acceleration of two beats upon what it was before he started, and his face was ghastly white. But there were no other ill-effects, and his pallor was probably attributable to the relaxation from the tremendous tension of his nerves during the trip.

The intrepid rider once more entered the loop and examined his course by the trail of his tyres. How nearly he met with disaster may be gauged from the fact that at one point his cycle went within three inches of the edge of the track. To accomplish the journey with safety it requires a quick eye, owing to the velocity at which the rider travels. If Vandevoort had not steered his cycle at the psychological moment of the entrance to the loop proper he would have been thrown out of the loop and probably killed. It was an exciting experience, and, as Vandevoort laughingly said when afterwards describing the performance, he simply "put his faith in his patron saint and let the machine go."

Now, however, the intrepid cyclist "loops the loop" on his cycle with the same equanimity that the ordinary rider coasts a hill. No other aspirants to fame, however, have yet attempted to emulate Vandevoort's sensational feat, probably remembering the fates of Mack and Stewart in this connection.

XLI.—A CURIOUS HOBBY

BY E. LESLIE GILLIAMS.

IN the little town of Sterling, Massachusetts, U.S.A., there lives a cabinet-maker of wonderful ingenuity and originality. This artist—for artist he is in his own line—a grey-haired old man of some seventy odd years, Sumner Reed by name, curio hunter by profession now, is working at the "building" of two of the most remarkable chairs ever made.

One of these chairs is well advanced towards completion, while the other is not much more than begun. "Wonder Jugs" Mr. Reed calls his two articles of unique furniture, and wonder jugs they are indeed. Fifty-eight years ago, when a boy of fourteen, Mr. Reed commenced work on his chairs, and he expects to keep on adding to them until he lays aside his tools for ever. As the veteran cabinet-maker is still in a state of excellent health, the work is likely to continue for some years.

The frames of the chairs are of heavy walnut, beautifully carved, but the interest does not lie in the designs wrought in the wood nor yet in the material itself, although walnut-wood is scarce enough in the States to make the frames of these remarkable chairs of great value.

The attention is riveted on the decorative features, if the term is permissible. Covering

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From a] MR. REED AND HIS TWO WONDERFUL CHAIRS. *[Photo.*

holder, a clock dial, and other articles too numerous to mention, make these two chairs things of wonder if not of beauty.

Only those who have made a "wonder jug" can appreciate the time and labour involved in such a task as Mr. Reed has undertaken. A "wonder jug" is any kind of an article upon which, by the aid of a strong adhesive substance, "any old thing" is made to cling without coming off. Mr. Reed's names for his chairs, the "twin wonder jugs," is therefore highly appropriate.

the beautiful walnut surfaces, and placed upon them with the idea of permanency, is a curious conglomeration of articles fitted into the carving and arranged over the smooth surface, not with a view to the artistic effect, but with an eye to utilizing every inch of space to the best advantage.

The chair which seems entirely covered with this curious decoration, and which even Mr. Reed acknowledges to be nearly completed, presents a most striking appearance. Is it the work of some prehistoric tribe—was it once the throne of some heathen god? These are the questions which naturally arise when the chair is first seen. Surely those queer bits of iron, glass, lace, tin, etc., have some significance; they must be symbolic of some ancient rites, religious or secular.

Mr. Reed dispels this illusion with a quizzical smile and an emphatic shake of the head. Every one of the curious articles arranged so fantastically on the chairs has been collected by Mr. Reed himself.

Carriage lamps, bridles, rosettes, whistles, cartridges, buttons, fans, locks, tea-kettle spouts, dolls' heads, small chains of different metals and beads, suspender buckles, parts of baby-carriages, sleigh and other kinds of bells, shells, odd scraps of silver, steel, and iron, bits of bright silk, a queerly carved pen-

When the entire surface of the chairs is completely covered with a fantastic arrangement of a myriad of articles varied and startling in their design, Mr. Reed is going to gild one chair and bronze the other. He hardly expects to live to put this last finishing touch to his work, for he anticipates spending his entire time in the collecting and arranging of the curios. He has commissioned a friend to throw this glamour of gilt over his chairs should he die before the work is finished. When completed the chairs are to be given to some museum. They will be a valuable acquisition to any collection of oddities, for they have no counterparts and cannot be duplicated. Besides which they will represent, when finished, over sixty years of labour.

Mr. Reed becomes reminiscent whenever he exhibits his wonderful chairs. Balanced on the very top of the tall back of the most nearly-completed chair is a tin canary bird. This songster is poised gracefully on the top of a much-nicked and battered top. A glance at these two toys brings a light to Mr. Reed's eye and a smile to his face. They are remnants of his boyhood days.

Sixty-six years ago, when Mr. Reed was a boy of six, his father brought him from a

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Western city a wonderful tin canary bird which would chirp and sing in a most natural manner when wound up. The boy was delighted with this wonderful toy, and it was then that he first conceived the idea of making some sort of an article upon which he could place keepsakes and thus preserve them.

The little bird formed the nucleus of what proved to be a wonderful collection of curiosities. The top was the second relic stowed away. Little by little the hoard increased until young Reed had about fifty articles, each one associated with some event in his life. After puzzling for a long time as to what would be the best method of preserving these curios, he decided to make a wonder chair, and fifty-eight years ago he commenced work on the one which is now nearly completed.

XLII.—A STEEL BANQUET.

By E. Leslie Gilliams.

The banquet given recently to Mr. Andrew Carnegie at the Carnegie Laboratory of the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, U.S.A., was one of the most novel and ingenious ever prepared. The steel magnate was greeted on all sides by the metal in which he has made his millions. The great room in which the feast was held looked more like a locomotive workshop than a banquet-hall. The decorations were of the most elaborate type, but they were also severe, for it was the students' idea to make the royal supper one of steel from start to finish.

Around the long table was fixed a steel track, on which there ran a movable modern blast-furnace, and other steel dishes. When the lights were turned on the table and the wall-hangings caught the rays and sent out myriads of dancing sparks. The delicate china and cut-glass which usually grace the festive board were replaced by novel dishes of steel, fashioned in the oddest shapes. Cups, plates, and goblets were of the finest and most highly-tempered steel. The sumptuous repast was served up in beautiful steel dishes, and beside each guest's plate there was an appropriate steel souvenir. The most remarkable feature of the banquet was, however, the curious-looking centre dishes and "punch-bowls."

From a] GENERAL VIEW OF TABLES WITH THEIR NOVEL DECORATIONS. [*Photo.*

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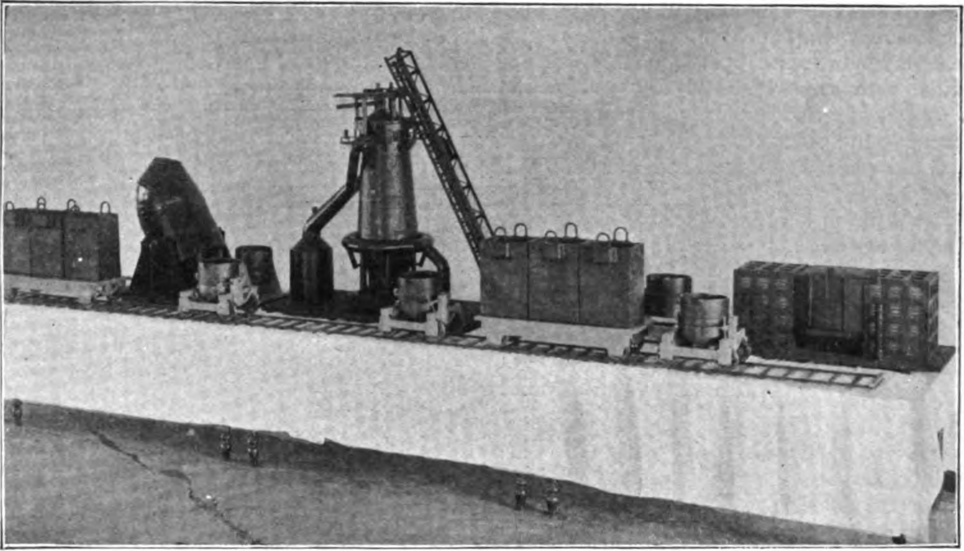
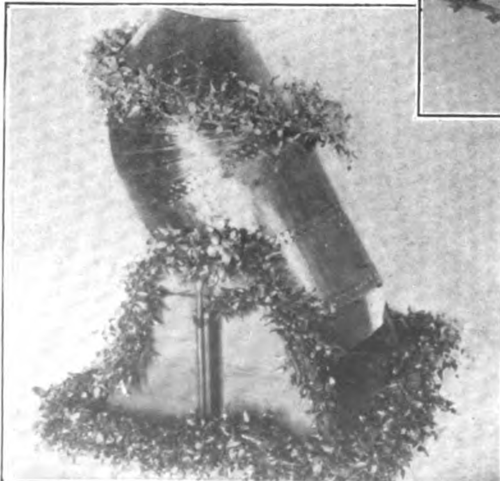


GROUP OF QUEER TABLE FURNISHINGS MANUFACTURED BY THE UNDERGRADUATES OF THE STEVENS INSTITUTE.
From a Photo.

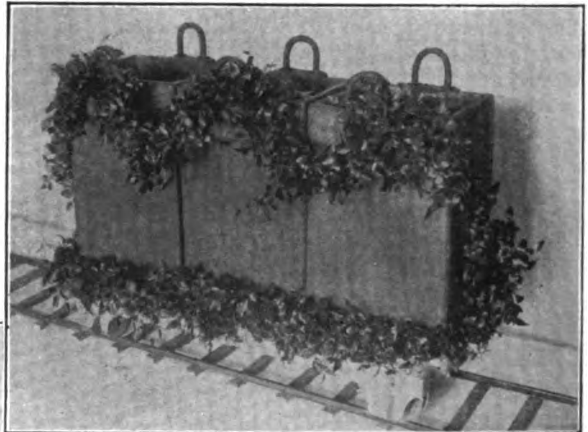
Mr. Carnegie, although he has been a guest of honour at many original entertainments, looked around him in astonishment when he first entered the banquet-hall of the Stevens Institute.

The punch-bowl attracted the steel magnate's attention as soon as he sat down—not that he knew it was a punch-bowl—no one but the designers knew the use of that queer dish. It was a model of a blast-furnace, perfect in every detail. It was about 4ft. high, and ran automatically along the track.



A BESSEMER CONVERTER HOLDING SWEETMEATS.
From a Photo.

Every eye was turned inquiringly upon Mr. Morton, president of the institute, as he sent the furnace on its journey. The man on his right stopped its course and, to the amazement of all, tilted it up and filled his glass with punch. This queer-looking punch-bowl, travelling around the table and stopping before each guest to be tapped, caused much amusement.



RAILROAD-CAR SUPPORTING INGOT MOULDS FILLED WITH ICE-CREAM.
From a] *[Photo.*

At one end of the table was an "open-hearth furnace," from which radiated very natural heat, but from which there came also a very unnatural savoury odour. All eyes were turned inquiringly in that direction when the counter-weighted door was

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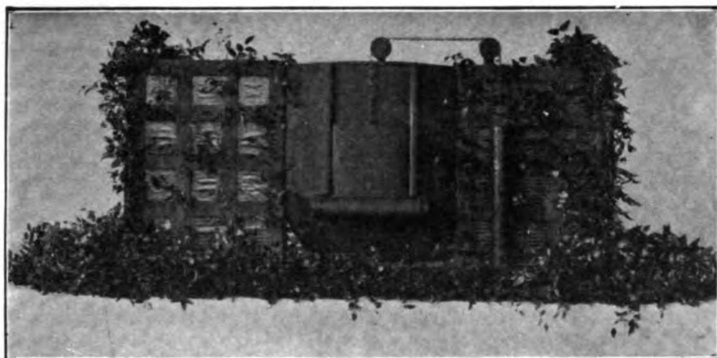


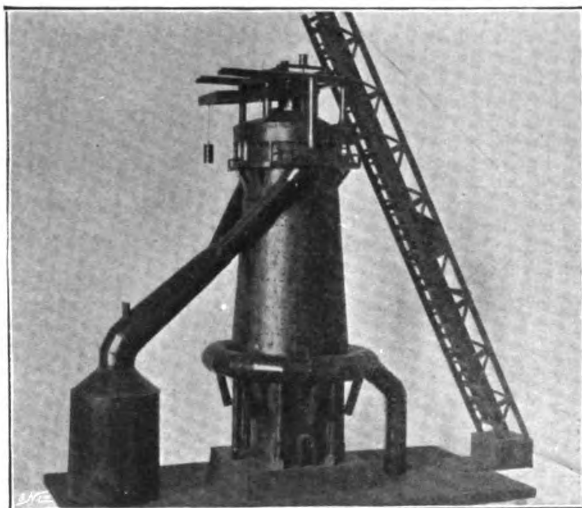
From a] AN "OPEN-HEARTH FURNACE" FOR COOKING OYSTERS. [*Photo.*

these Bessemer converters, there came forth pastry.

Salads and ices were served in "ingot moulds." These moulds travelled along the track, and each guest helped himself. The ice-cream was moulded into all manner of queer shapes, corresponding to various engineering models, for the main plan was never lost

raised. The furnace was red-hot inside, and an exclamation of surprise issued from many lips when fried oysters instead of molten metal were taken from within. Each new dish presented some new surprise, and there was much guessing as to what the various objects contained.

Small flat cars loaded with cake spikes found their way around the 40ft. of railroad track to each individual banqueter. Sweets were also served from a Bessemer converter, which, after a "blow," projected a shower of sparks, and was then tilted until confections and cakes streamed out into appropriate ladles. No wonder there was a general laugh when, instead of the armour-plate which generally issues from



MINIATURE BLAST FURNACE FOR HEATING PUNCH.
From a Photo.

sight of. "Steel and railroads" were the words the students kept constantly in mind when preparing for the banquet. Bread there was in every conceivable shape and form, from a whole locomotive to a railroad tie.

President Morton proposed a toast to their honoured benefactor and guest, and, after an appropriate speech, presented Mr. Carnegie with a beautiful silver casket, holding a portion of the first "T" rail ever manufactured.

Mr. Carnegie declared that he possessed no treasure which he valued more highly, and that its presentation would ever be a pleasant memory, making the banquet at the Stevens Institute an incident never to be forgotten.

TRUCK WHICH CONVEYED STEAMING PUNCH FROM FURNACE TO GUEST.
From a Photo.

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

WHAT INSTRUMENT IS THIS?

"Perhaps some of your STRAND readers know the name of the musical instrument shown in the accompanying photographs. It was recently found in an attic in Norristown, Pennsylvania, but no one knows its name or how it should be played. At present it is played by one person pressing on the bellows at each side while another pushes in the keys. There is a third bellows between the other two which is worked by them. The sound produced resembles that of an accordion."—Mr. L. Corson, 720, De Kalb Street, Norristown, Penn.

ALL HIS EGGS IN ONE VAN.

"This is a photograph, taken from my window at Cambridge, of a general provision cart, which upset in the road through the wheel breaking. The contents were thrown all over the path, and the gutter streamed with egg yolk. This photo. will seem the more curious when it is asked where the view is taken from, as will be seen by the wall in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture. The unique result is accounted for by the view being taken from a large bay window. The driver of the van was badly injured and was removed to the hospital. The tremendous crash and noise attracted the usual crowd, but I was not able to take the photo. until later, hence the small number of people standing around. Another van can be seen in the right-hand top corner of the picture, in readiness for the removal of the débris."—Mr. R. H. Meers, Shepherd's Green, Chislehurst.

A REMARKABLE LOAF.

"I send you a photograph which I took the other day of a very remarkable loaf of bread. At the Moravian Church here it is customary at the harvest thanksgiving for the members of the church to bring various offerings of fruit, bread, cakes, etc., which are piled up in the church and are then sold by auction. Among the offerings was this curious-looking loaf of bread."—Mr. T. E. Allhusen, Malvern, Jamaica.

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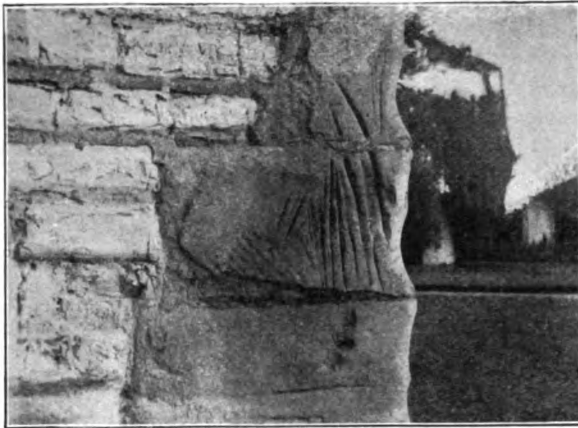


WHERE MONMOUTH'S MEN SHARPENED THEIR WEAPONS.

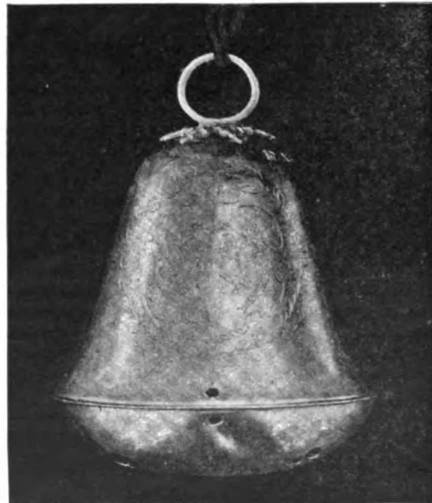
Our readers will no doubt remember an interesting Curiosity published in our issue for January, 1902, called "Slate *v.* Stone," showing the window-sill in a playground of a boys' school in Birmingham used by the scholars for sharpening their slate-pencils on. Here is somewhat of a parallel, though the indentations made in the respective stones owe their origin to vastly different motives. The photograph reproduced here shows a portion of the outside walls of Chedzoy Church, situate about three miles from Bridgwater, in Somerset. The photo. clearly shows the marks where the Duke of Monmouth's men sharpened their weapons before the Battle of Sedgemoor, in the reign of James II. The edges of the stones have been worn quite hollow. The cuts in the wall—clearly seen in the photo.—are quite deep, the largest being fully three-quarters of an inch.—Miss M. M. Taylor, 38, Hamilton Road, Ealing, W.

THE POWER OF THE FLOOD.

"This striking photograph shows a length of rail which was wrenched by floods from the permanent-way on the railway in the Rockies, near Grapecreek, Col., and twisted around two trees in the extraordinary manner shown."—Mr. R. A. Little, Canyon City, Col.

SCOTLAND'S OLDEST RACING TROPHY.

"Lanark Silver Bell, Scotland's oldest racing trophy, is said to have been given as a racing prize to the town of Lanark in 1160 by King William the Lion, fully 500 years before England's most ancient trophy, the Newmarket Whip, came into existence. This Lanark Bell appears to have been run for until the Commonwealth, when, horse-racing having been suppressed, it disappeared, and was only discovered again as recently as 1852 in the Lanark Town Council's repository. Since then it has been regularly contested for, the race being held at the Lanark meeting in autumn, under Jockey Club rules. The Bell, which has the burgh of Lanark arms engraved in front, stands fully 4in. high, and is a fine specimen of what was once a favourite form of prize, offered by many of the old Scottish burghs for the promotion of horse-racing. Of its antiquity there are many



proofs. It bears, for instance, the trade-marks of an Edinburgh goldsmith who lived in the reign of James VI. of Scotland, afterwards James I. of England; while besides there is engraved upon it a peculiar scroll, which antiquarians hold to be the manufacturer's mark, confirming the tradition, therefore, that the Bell was founded by King William. At one time it was the custom to attach shields bearing the names of the winners to the Bell, but these are now suspended to the pedestal upon which the Bell rests, but which is not shown in the photo. Of these shields only one is of a date prior to 1852; and this one is another proof of the antiquity of the Bell, as it bears the following odd inscription: 'Vin be me, Sir Jonhe Hamilton, of Trabroon, 1629.'"—Mr. A. Paterson, 40, Broomgate, Lanark.

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THE LAST OF THE BUFFALOES.

"The enclosed photograph shows 'the last of the buffaloes,' taken on the Great Prairie that lies between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains, in Canada. The bones are collected and brought in by the Indians. This great conglomeration of bones will show in what enormous numbers the American bison or buffalo once existed, though now become practically extinct before the advance of the white settler; and should man in the meantime not succeed in domesticating it, it will probably ere long share the fate of the great auk and the prehistoric mammoth."—Mr. Geo. S. Waterlow, Uplands, Fareham, Hants.

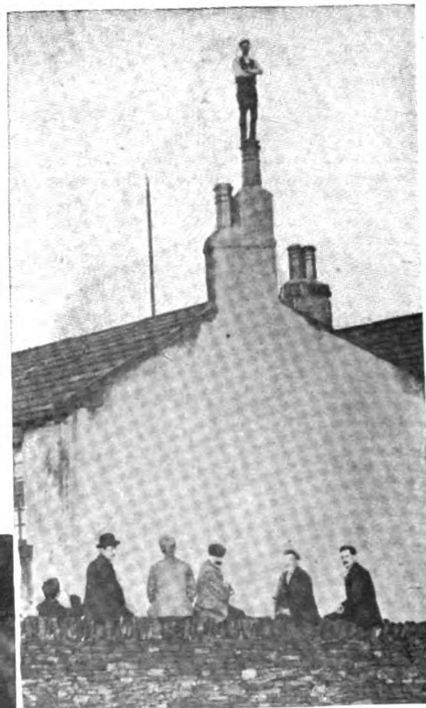
A LESSON IN PERSPECTIVE.

"The accompanying may truly be designated a puzzle picture, for not one in a hundred will guess what it represents. The photographer offered a small coin of the realm to any person of his acquaintance—other than the two or three who were with him when the photograph was taken—who should be able to say what it represented. The coin is still unclaimed. Among the objects suggested were a lunar phenomenon, a skirt-dance, a snail, a screw, a sea-shell, a dog fight, a stellar nebula, a whirling mop, a motor-car gone mad, and sundry other things equally removed from fact. To

take the reader into confidence, the picture is really a lesson in perspective under curious conditions. The photograph shows nearly a quarter of a mile of water-pipes, laid end to end, with some space between each two. The Birmingham municipal authorities are arranging for an increased water supply, and by the sides of some of the suburban roads lie many of the gigantic pipes which are destined to convey the water into the city. Each pipe is about 3ft. 6in. in diameter (inside) and 12ft. long. The particular lot photographed extended nearly a quarter of a mile, the distance between each two averaging a foot. The camera was placed on the floor, so to speak, and the fuzziness outside the largest circle really represents the interior of the first pipe. It will be noticed that a great many pipes appear in the picture, each becoming shorter and smaller to the eye as distance increases."—Mr. C. S. Sargisson, Birmingham.

THE MAN ON THE CHIMNEY-POT.

"Please accept photo. for your Curiosity page. I may say that it was taken last Boxing Day in dull weather, and it was



also windy. It was snapped at the Quarry Inn, Staincliffe, near Dewsbury, Yorks, by myself, and the name of the man on the chimney-pot is George Knowles. I hope you will think it worthy of a place in your interesting Curiosity section."—Mr. J. W. Lockwood, 11, Midgley Street, Woodhouse, Leeds.

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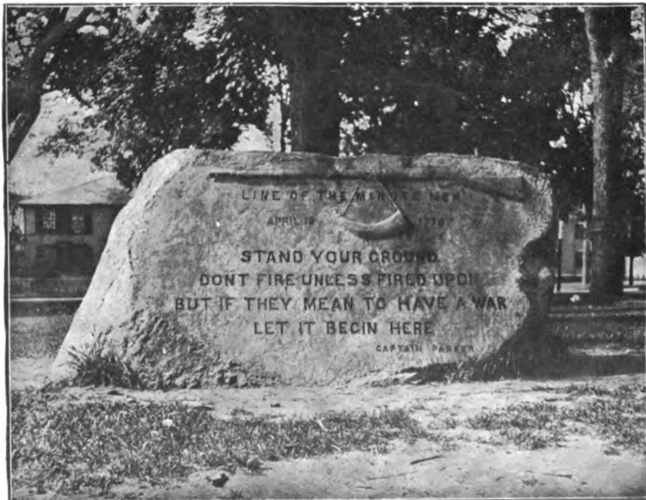
A CLEVER STAMP PICTURE.

"The stamp picture shown in the photograph took me six months to make, working at night after coming home from my usual work, say about fifteen hours every week; it measures 18in. from the foot of the vase to the top of the bud and 7¾in. across from arm to arm. The bowl of the vase is made of two-cent Columbian stamps, and the stand and neck of the vase are made of the same stamps and three-pfennig German stamps alternately. The flowers are made in their own colours with the stamps of almost every country in Europe, Africa, and America. This picture won the first prize in the class for postage-stamp work at the Artisans' Exhibition in Edinburgh last October, where I was fortunate enough to win also the second and third prizes." — Mr. Robert Callander, 16, Moncrieff Terrace, Edinburgh.

AN HISTORIC LANDMARK.

"Herewith an interesting photo. which I do not think has ever been published before. It represents the stone on Lexington Common, Mass., and marks the spot from which the first shot was fired in the Revolutionary War. In the distance to the left is the house into which the first bullet entered."—Mr. Thomas Burnside, Webster, Mass.



HUMAN "SCARE-CROWS."

"Everyone knows what 'scare-crows' are, and that farmers set them up in cornfields to drive away birds which eat the seed-corn. They are figures stuffed with straw and dressed to represent human beings. The figures in the accompanying photograph closely resemble two of such scare-crows, but in reality they are Roland and Edith Ellis, of Arlington, N.J., who

disguised themselves in these costumes to appear at a masquerade. The similarity to the scare-crows was so striking that their costumes won a prize for the most unique dresses."—Mr. D. Allan Willey, Baltimore.

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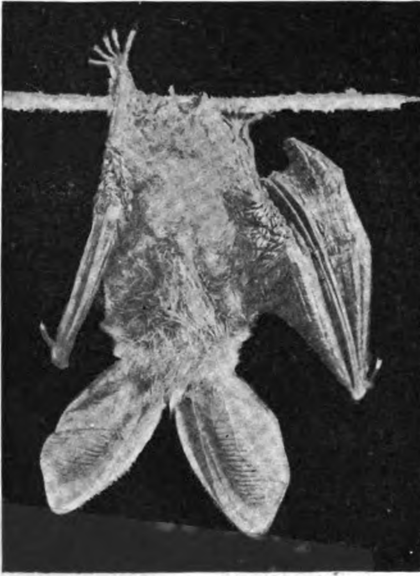
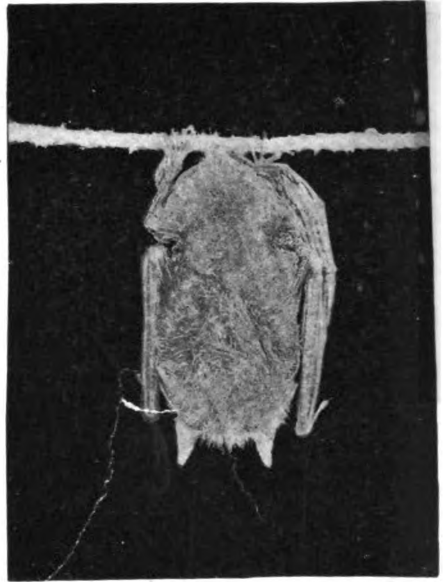
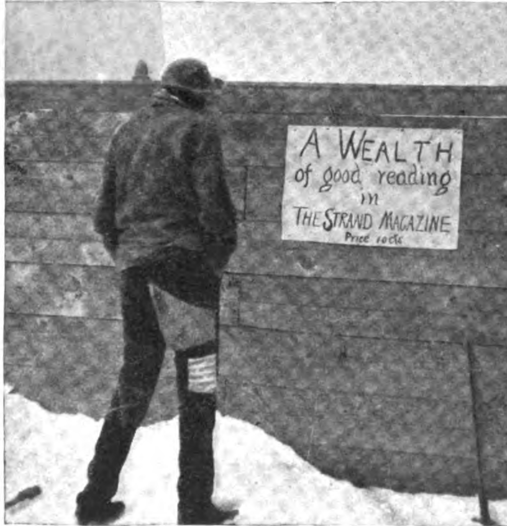




HOW A BAT SLEEPS.

"The two photographs I send you were taken by my friend, Mr. J. Edwards, of Colesbourne, a well known naturalist. The first shows a long-eared bat preparing to go to sleep, being a dorsal view taken from life. The second, which is also taken from life, shows the bat actually asleep, suspended head downwards from a cord. When the long-eared bat really goes to sleep he turns his ears inside out and tucks them away close to his body under his arms, leaving the horny inner ears exposed. The latter are the pale triangular ear-like bodies at the bottom of the illustration."—Mr. John Davis, Head Master, Christ Church High Grade School, Cheltenham.



A CLEVER ADVERTISEMENT.

"An enterprising newsdealer in Brooklyn, New York City, is pushing his sales of THE STRAND by the aid of a sign which he placed on a fence adjoining his shop. It is quite natural that the word 'wealth,' which stands out so prominently on the sign, should arrest the attention of a passing tramp and that he should stop to read further particulars. The tramp was evidently 'out of practice' in reading, for he occupied sufficient time for me to quickly and quietly get my camera into position and to fire a snap-shot at him."—Mr. Chas. H. Townsend, Jun., 865, Sterling Place, Brooklyn, New York.

SOLUTION TO PICTURE LETTER.

Written by the late Corporal Standish, D.E.O V.R., Kuruman, S. Africa.

The following solution will explain the interesting picture letter which we published in our last issue (May, 1902):—

B Company (bee-comb-pan-knee), D.E.O.V.R.,
Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles, Kuruman (Crew-man),
April 20, 1901. (Ape-reel) (twine-tie) nineteen hundred (cwt.) (hand) one.

DEAR GRACE,—Not a (hay) letter, not a line. I am awfully (awl-flea) upset at your silence. Trust you're (ewer) all well. I've little (lit-hill) news (noose), because (beak-oz.) we get (wicket) none (nun) here (ear). Boers still hanging out. Cannot tell (can-Natal) when I (one-eye) shall (shell) be (bay) back.

Hope (hoop) in time for (fir) dancing, but we're expecting (eggs-peck-tin) to be (Toby) sent to Vryburg (pronounced Fry-burg—burg being Dutch for mountain) next week (neck's-weak).

One great point about Kuruman (cur-row-man), you (yew) can go (kango—tobacco made in Transvaal) dirty. Well, one has to (aster); we've no soap (nose-Hope), which is (witches) a blessing in disguise.

Remember (ream-amber) me to your mater (meteor), Cecil (seize-sill) and Jim (Gem).

Present much (match) love (glove) to (tow) yourself (yawl-sea-elf).

I remain (eye-rim-mane), Yours sincerely (hewers-scenes-ear-lie), H. W. STANDISH.

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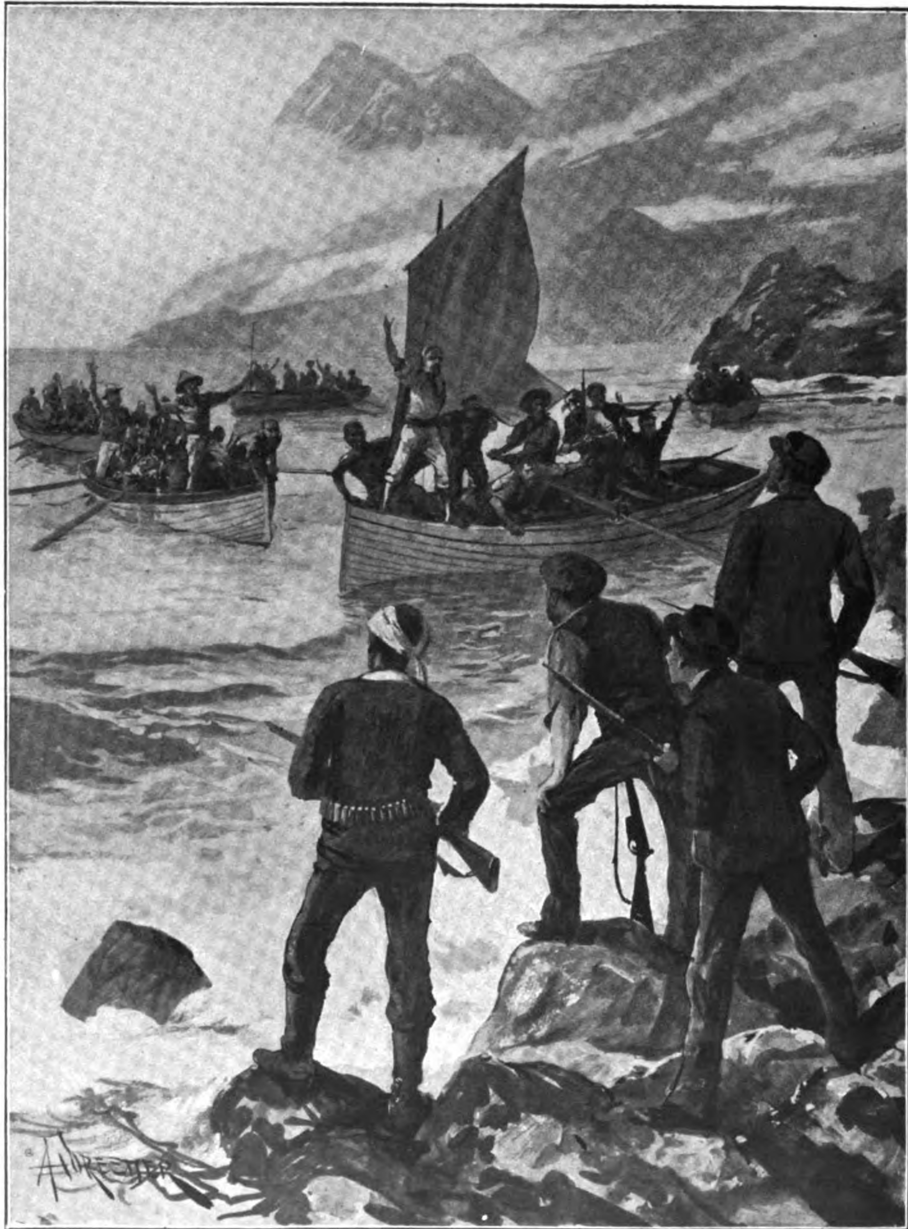

WATER!—WATER, MATE, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN!"

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

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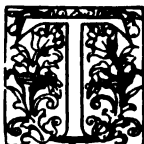
The House Under the Sea.

By Max Pemberton.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SECOND ATTACK ON CZERNY'S HOUSE.



HE shot was fired and answered at the lower gate. We had looked for that: for that we had been waiting during the watching hours. They would attack the lesser reef, we said, and our own good men, standing sentinels, would flash the news of it to us, and the gun would do the rest. Dark as it was, the blackest hour the island had given us, nevertheless by daylight we had trained our barrels upon the reef, and now took aim in all confidence. Twice we whistled shrilly to warn our men; twice we heard their answering voices. Then the gun belched forth its hail of shot and the challenge was thrown down.

"Give it to them, Dolly!" I cried, my brain afire at the call of action; "for every honest seaman's sake, give it to them, lad! We'll tell of this to-morrow—aye, Dolly, we'll tell a great story yet!"

He answered me with a boy's glad cry; I do believe it was like a game to him.

"Pass here, pass here!" he kept crying; "we have them every time! In with the shot, Seth—in with it! Don't keep them waiting! Oh, captain, what a night!"

The others said nothing; even Peter Bligh's tongue was still in that surpassing moment. The doubt of it defied words. We knew nothing, nor could we do aught but leave our fortune to the darkness of the night. The rogues who fell, the rogues who stood, the boats that came on, the boats that withdrew, of these we were ignorant. All was hidden from our eyes; the veil of the night cloaked from us the work we had done. If men cried in agony, if groans mocked angry boasts, if we heard the splashing of the oars, the hoarse command, the vile blasphemy, the rest was in imagination's keeping. The outposts of Czerny's crew, we said, had tried to rush the gate where our own men watched; but our own were behind the steel doors now and the gun's hail swept the barren rock. The dawn would show us the harvest we had reaped.

Now the volleys rolled their thunder right away to the hills of Ken's Island, and the whistling of the bullets was like the singing of unseen birds above our heads; there were oases of red flame in the waste of blackness; we heard oaths and cries, commands roared hoarsely across the water, voices triumphant and voices in despair; and then came the first great silence. Whatever had befallen on the rock, those who sought to force the lesser gate were, for the moment, driven back. Even little Dolly, mad at the gun like one whom no reason could restrain, heard me at last and obeyed my command.

"Cease firing, lad!" roared I, "cease firing! Would you shoot the sea? Yonder's the captain's whistle. It means that the danger's nearer. Aye, stand by, lads," I said, "and look out for it."

We swung the gun round so that it faced the basin before us, and, rifles ready, we peered again in the lowering darkness. About me now I could hear the deep breathing of my comrades, and see their crouching figures, and say that every nerve was tautened, every faculty awakened. Shielded by the night, those hidden boats were creeping up to us foot by foot. Whatever had been done at the lesser gate had been done as a ruse,

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I did not doubt. Czerny's goal was the greater door we held so desperately; his desire was to win possession of that house wherein lay life and treasure and lasting security.

I counted twenty, no man speaking, and then I raised my voice. Dimly, in the shadows, I made out the shape of a long-boat drifting to the brink; and to Dolly I said:—

"Let go—in Heaven's name, let go, lad!"

He stood to the gun with a cry of defiance and blazed into the darkness. The drifting boat lurched and sagged and turned her beam to the seas. I could distinguish the faces of men, ferocious and threatening, as they peered upward to the rock; I saw other boats looming over the dark water; I heard the ringing command, "In at them! Down with them!" and then, I think, for many minutes together I fired wildly at the figures before me, swung round now to this side, now to that; was unconscious of the bullets splintering the rock or of the lead shower pouring on us. The battle raged; we were at the heart of it. What should a man remember then but those who counted upon him?

"HE STOOD TO THE GUN WITH A CRY OF DEFIANCE AND BLAZED INTO THE DARKNESS."

Now, you have imagined this picture, and you seem to stand with me upon that spit of rock, that defiant crag in the great Pacific Ocean, with the darkness of heaven above and the darkness of the sea below, with the belching guns and the spitting rifles, the yells of agony and the crouching figures, the hearts beating high and the sweating faces; and just as the outcome was hidden from me and I knew not from minute to minute whether it were life or death to us, so will you share the meaning of that suspense and all the terror of it. From every side now the rain of shot was poured in upon us, the unceasing torrent came; above, below, ringing upon the iron shield, scattering deadly fragments, ploughing the waters, it fell like a wave impotent, a broken sea whose spindrift even could not harm us. For a good ring of steel fenced us about; we held the turret, and we laughed at the madness below.

"Round with the gun!" I would cry, again and again; "round with her, Dolly. Let them have it everywhere. No favours this night, my lad; full measure and overflowing—let them have it, for Miss Ruth's sake!"

His joyous "Aye, aye, sir!" was a thing to hear. No sailor of the old time, black with powder, mad on a slippery deck, fought, I swear, as we four in that shelter of the turret. Clear as in the sun's day were the waves about us while the crimson flame leaped out. Crouched all together, the sweat upon our foreheads, smoke in our eyes, the wild delight of it quickening us, we blazed at the enemy unseen; we said that right was with us.

There were, so far as I could make out, six boats set to the attack upon the great gate, and seventy or eighty men manning them. Acting together on such a plan as a master-mind had laid down for them, they

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tried to rush the rock from four points of the compass, trusting, it may be, that one boat, at least, would land its crew upon the plateau. And in this they were successful. Pour shot upon them as we might, search every quarter with the flying shells, nevertheless one boat touched the rock in spite of us, one crew leaped up in frenzy toward the turret. So sudden it was, so unlooked for, that great demoniacal figures seemed upon us even while we said that the seas were clear. Whirling their knives, yelling one to the other, some slipping on the slimy weed, others, more sure in foothold, making for the turret's height, the mutineers fell upon us like a hurricane and so beat us down that my heart sank away from me, and I said that the house was lost and little Ruth Bellenden their prey at last.

"Stand by the gun—by the gun to the last, if you love your life!" I cried to Dolly Venn. "Do you, Peter, old comrade, follow me; I am going to clear the rock. You will help me to do that, Peter?"

"Help you, captain! Aye," roared he, "if it was the ould divil himself in a travelling caravan, I'd help you!"

He swung his rifle by the barrel as he spoke the words and, bringing it down crash, he cleaved the skull of a great ruffian whose face was already glowering down from the turret's rim. Nothing, I swear, in all that night was more wonderful than the *sang froid* of this great Irishman (as he would call himself in fighting moods) or the merry words which he could find for us even then in the very crisis of it, when hope seemed gone and the worst upon us. For Peter knew well what I was about when I leapt from the turret and charged down upon the mutineers. A dozen men, perchance, had gained foothold on the rock. We must drive them back, he said; stand face to face with them, let the odds be what they might.

"Good luck to my arm this hour and light for the bald places!" cries he, leaping to the ground and whirling his musket like a demon. Seth Barker, do not doubt, was on his heels—trust the carpenter to be where danger was! I could hear him grunting even above that awful din. He fought like ten, and wherever he swung his musket there he left death behind him.

So follow us as we leap from the turret, and hurl ourselves upon that astonished crew. Black as the place was, tremulous the light, nevertheless the cabined space, the open plateau, was our salvation. I saw figures before me; faces seemed to look into my own; and as a battle-axe of old time, so my rifle's butt would fall upon them. Heaven knows I had the strength of three and I used it with three's agility, now shooting them down, now hitting wildly, thrust here, thrust there, bullets singing about my ears, haunting cries everywhere. Aye, how they went under! What music it was, those crashing blows upon head and breast, the loud report, the gurgling death-rattle, the body thrown into the sea, the pitiful screams for mercy! And yet the greater wonder, perhaps, that we lived to tell of it. Twelve against three; yet a craven twelve, remember, who feared to die and yet must fight to live! And to nerve our arms a woman's honour, and, to guide us aright, the watchword: "Home!"

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"Well done, Peter, well done!" I cried, wildly; and then, as though it were an answer to my boasts, something fell upon my shoulder like a great weight dropped from above, and I went down headlong upon the rock. Turning as I fell, I clutched a human throat, and, closing my fingers upon it, he and I, the man out of the darkness and the fool who had forgotten his eyes, went reeling over and over like wild beasts that seek a hold and would tear and bite when the moment comes. Aye, how I held him, how near his eyes seemed to mine, what gasping sounds he uttered, how his feet fought for foothold on the rock, how his hand felt for the knife at his girdle! And I had him always, had him surely; and seeking to force himself upward, the slippery rock gave him no foothold, and he slipped at last from my very fingers, and some great fish, hidden from me, drew him down to the water and I saw the waves close above his mouth. Henceforth there were but three men left at the gate of Czerny's house. They were three who, even at that time, could thank God because the peril was turned.

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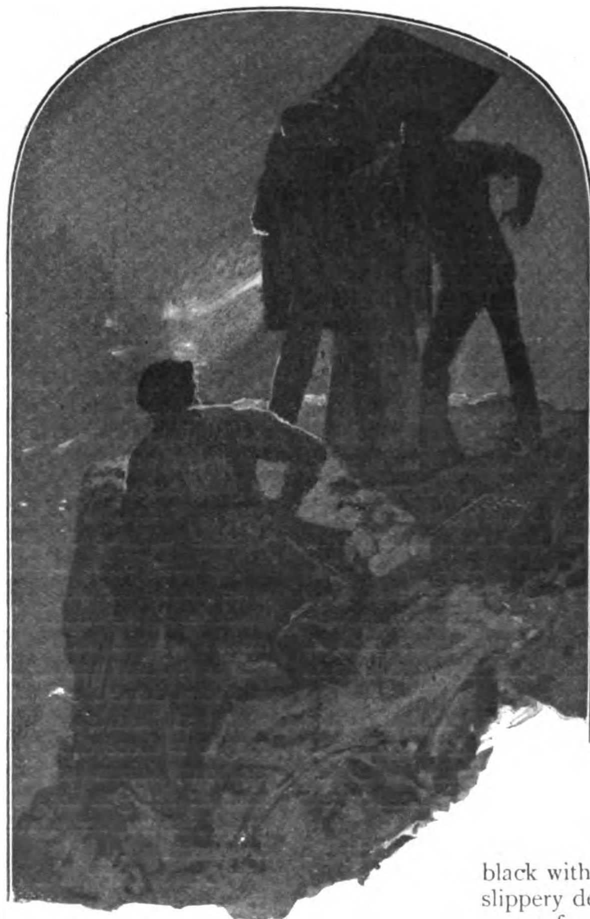

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muffled splash of oars. We lay all together in the turret, and very methodically, as seamen will, we stanched our wounds and asked, "What next?" That we had some hurt of such an affray goes without saying. My own shoulder was bruised and aching; the blood still trickled down Peter Bligh's honest face from the knife-wound that had gashed his forehead; Seth Barker pressed his hand to a jagged side and said that it was nothing. But for these scratches we cared little, and when our comrades hailed us from the lesser gate, their "All's well!" made us glad men indeed. In spite of it all, one of us, at least, I witness, could tell himself, "It is possible—by Heaven, it is possible—that we shall see the day!" That we had beaten off the first attack was not to be doubted. Wherever the mutineers had gone to, they no longer rowed in the loom of the gate. And yet I knew that the time must be short; day would not serve them nor the morning light. The dark must decide it.

"THE SLIPPERY ROCK GAVE HIM NO FOOTHOLD."

"They will come again, Peter, and it will be before the dawn," said I, when one thing and another had been mentioned and no word of their misfortune. "It's beyond expectation to suppose anything else. If this house is to be taken, they must take it in the dark. And more than that, lads," said I, "it was a foolish thing for us to go among them as we did and to fight it out down yonder. We are safer in the turret—safer, by a long way!"

"I thought so all the time, sir," answered Dolly Venn, wisely. "They can never get below if you cover the door; and I can keep the sea. It's lucky Czerny loop-holed this place, anyway. If ever I meet him, I shall quote poetry: 'He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel.' It would about make him mad, captain!"

"Aye," says Peter Bligh, "poetry is well enough, as my poor old father used to say; but poetry never reefed a to'gallan' sail in a hurricane and isn't going to begin this night. It's thick heads you need, lad, and good, sound sense inside of 'em! As for what the captain says, I do hold it, truly. But, Lord! I'm like a boy at a fair when the crowns are cracking, and angels themselves wouldn't keep me back."

"You'd affright them, Mister Bligh," puts in Seth Barker, "you'd affright them—asking your pardon—with your landgwich!"

"What!" cries Peter, as though in amazement; "did I say things that oughtn't to be said? Well, you surprise me, Barker, you do surprise me!"

Well, I was glad to hear them talk like this, for jest is better than the coward's "if"; and men who can face death with a laugh will win life before your craven any day. But for the prone figures on the rock, looking up with their sightless eyes, or huddled in cleft and cranny—but for them, I say, and distant voices on the sea, and the black shape of Ken's Island, we four might have been merry comrades in a ship's cabin, smoking a pipe in the morning watch and looking gladly for dawn and a welcome shore. That this content could long endure was, beyond all question, impossible. Never-

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theless, when next we started up and gripped our rifles and cried "Stand by!" it was not any alarm from the sea that brought us to our feet, but a sudden shout from the house below, a rifle-shot echoing in the depths, a woman's voice, and then a man's rejoinder; a figure appearing without any warning at the stairs-head, the figure of a huge man, vast and hulking, with long yellow hair, and fists clenched and arms outstretched—a man who took one scared look round him and then leaped wildly into the sea. Now this, you may imagine, was the most surprising event of all that eventful night. So quickly did it come upon us, so little did we look for it, that when Kess Denton, the yellow man, stood at the open gate and uttered a loud and piercing yell of defiance, not one among us could lift a rifle, not one thought of plan or action. There the fellow was, laughing like a maniac. Why he came, whence he came, no man could tell. But he leaped into the sea and the night engulfed him, and only his mocking laugh told us that he lived.

"Kess Denton!" cried I, my head dazed and my words coming in a torrent; "Kess Denton. Then there's mischief below, lads—mischief, I swear!"

Clair-de-Lune answered me—old Clair-de-Lune, standing in a blaze of light; for they had switched on the lamps below, and the vein of the reef stood out suddenly like some silver monster breathing on the surface of the sea. Clair-de-Lune answered me, I say, and his words were the most terrible I had heard since first I came to Ken's Island.

"The water is in!" he cried, "the water is in the house!"

I saw it as in a flash. This man we had neglected to hunt from the caverns below, striking at us in the supreme moment, had opened trap or window and let the sea pour in the labyrinth below. The water was flooding Czerny's house.

"Now," I cried, "you don't mean that, Clair-de-Lune? Then what of the men in the engine-room? How will it fare with Captain Nepeen?"

Doctor Gray stood behind the old Frenchman, and, limping up to my side, he leaned against the rock and began to speak of it very coolly.

"The water is in," he said, "but it will not flood the higher rooms, for they are above sea-level. We are saving what provisions we can, and the men below are all right. As for Nepeen, we must get him off in a boat somehow. It is the water I am thinking of, captain; what are we going to do for water?"

I sat upon the rock at his side and buried my face in my hands. All that terrible day seemed to culminate in this overwhelming misfortune. Driven on the one hand by the sea, on the other by these figures of the darkness, doomed, it might be, to hunger and thirst on that desolate rock, four good comrades cut off from us by the sea's intervening, the very shadows full of dangers, what hope had we, what hope of that brave promise spoken to little Ruth but three short hours ago?

"Doctor," I said at last, "if we are not at the bottom of it now, we never shall be. But we are men, and we will act as men should. Let the women stand together in the great hall until the sea drives them out. If water is our need, I am ashore to Ken's Island to-morrow to get it. As for Nepeen, we have a boat and we have hands to man it; we'll fetch Captain Nepeen, doctor," said I.

He nodded his head and appeared to be thinking deeply. Old Clair-de-Lune was the next to utter a sensible thing.

"The man flood the house," said he, "but no sure he get to ship. If he drown, Czerny know nothing. I say turn out the lamp—wait!"

"As true a word as the night has spoken," said I; "if Kess Denton does not reach the boats, they won't hear the story. We'll keep it close enough, lads, and Captain Nepeen will learn it soon enough. Do you whistle, Dolly, and get an answer. I hope sincerely it is all well with them still."

He whistled across the sea, and after a long minute of waiting a distant voice cried, "All's well!" For the hour at least our comrades were safe. Should we say the same of them when daylight came?

The dark fell with greater intensity as the dawn drew near. I thought that it typified our own black hour, when it seemed that fate had nothing left for us but a grave beneath the seas or the eternal sleep on the island shore.

Another hour passed, and the dawn was nearer. I did not know then (though I know now) what kept Czerny's crew in the shadows, or why we heard nothing of them. Once, indeed, in the far distance where the yacht lay anchored, gun-shots were fired, and were answered from some boat lying southward by the island; but no other message of the night was vouchsafed to us,

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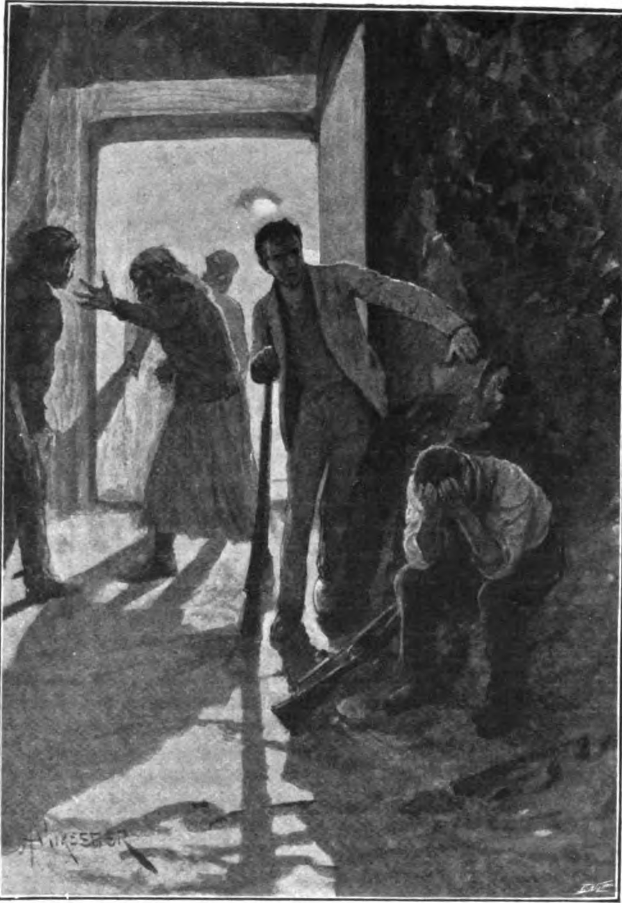

"I SAT UPON THE ROCK AT HIS SIDE AND BURIED MY FACE IN MY HANDS."

water's advance. We held the upper house; it was ours while we could breathe in it or find life's sustenance there.

Now, I saw Miss Ruth in the hour of dawn and she stood with us for a little while at the open gate and there spoke so brightly of to-morrow, so lightly of this hour, that she helped us to forget, and made men of us once more.

"They will not come again to-night, Jasper," she said; "I feel, I know it! Why should they wait? Something has happened, and something spells 'Good luck.' Oh, yes, I have seen that for the last hour. Things must be worse before they mend, and they are mending now. The gale will come at dawn and we shall all go ashore, you and I together, Jasper!"

"Miss Ruth," said I, "that would be the happiest day in all my life. You bring the dawn always, wherever you go, the good sunlight and God's blue sky! It has been day for me while I heard your voice and said that I might serve you!"

She would not answer me; but, as though to give my words their meaning, we had watched but a little while longer on the rock when suddenly out of the East the grey light winged over to us, and, spreading its wonder-rays upon the seas, it rolled the black veil back and showed us height and valley, sea and land, the white-capped breakers and the dim heavens beyond them. Many a dawn have I watched and waited for on the heart of the desolate sea, but never one which carried to me such a message as then it spake, the joy of action and release, the light of life and hope, the clarion call, uplifting, awakening! For I knew that in day our salvation lay, and that the terrible night was for ever passed; and every faculty being quickened, the mind alert, the eyes no longer veiled, I stretched out my arms to the sun and said, "Thank God!"

no other omen to be heard. In the gloom of the darkened house women watched, men kept the vigil and prayed for the day. Would the light never come; would that breaking East never speed its joyous day? Ah! who could tell? Who, in the agony of waiting, ever thinks aright or draws the truthful picture?

There was no new attack, I say, nor any sure news from the caverns below. From time to time men went to the stairs-head and watched the seas washing green and slimy in the corridors, or spoke of them beating upon the very steps of the great hall and threatening to rise up and up until they engulfed us all and conquered even the citadel we held. Nevertheless, iron gates held them back. Not vainly had Czerny's master-mind foreseen such a misfortune as this. Those tremendous doors which divided the upper house from its fellow were stronger than any sluice-gates, more sure against the

It was day, and the fresh sea answered its appeal. Coming quickly as day will in the

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great Pacific, we had scarce seen that vast rim of the East lift itself above the sparkling water when all the scene was opened to us, the picture of boats and water and wave-washed reef made clear as in some scene of stageland. As with one tongue, realizing a mighty truth, we cried, "The ship is gone; the ship has sailed!"

It was true, all true. Where at sundown there had been a yacht anchored in the offing, now at daybreak no yacht was to be seen. Darkness, which had been the ally of Czerny's men, had helped the man himself to flee from them to an unknown haven where their vengeance should not reach him. By night had he fled, and by day would he mock these, his creatures. Drifting there in the open boats, the rising seas beginning to wash in upon them, hunger and thirst their portion, the rebels were at no pains to hide their secret from us.

We knew that they had been called back by these overwhelming tidings of the master-trick, and we asked what heart they would have to sell their lives for the man who betrayed them?

Would they not look to us for the satisfaction the chief rogue denied to them? We, as they, were left helpless in that woeful place. Before us, as before them, lay the peril of hunger and of thirst, the death-sleep or the greater mercy. And who should ask them to accept it without a last supreme attempt, a final assault, which should mend all or end all? Driven to the last point, to the last point would they go to grasp that foothold of the seas, and to drive us from the rock whereon life might yet be had.

"Lads," I said, "the story is there as the man has written it. We have no quarrel with yon poor creatures nor they with us; but they will find one. We cannot help them; they cannot help us. We'll wait for the end —just wait for it."

I spoke with a confidence which time did not justify. Just as the dawn had put new life into us, so it had steeled the hearts of this derelict crew and nerved it for any desperate act. For long we watched the rogues rowing hither, thither; now in the island's shadows, now coming toward us, but never once raising a rifle or uttering a threat. In the end they came all together, waving a sail upon a pole; and while they appeared to row for the lesser gate they accompanied the act with soft words and a protest of their honesty.

"'Tis after a truce they are," says Peter Bligh, presently, "and that's a poor thing,

anyway. My poor father used to say, 'Knock 'em on the head first and sign the papers afterwards.' He was a kind-hearted gentleman, and did a lot of good in the world!"

"He must have done, Peter," said I; "he must have done a power of good, hearing the little you say about him. 'Tis a pity the old gentleman isn't here this day to preach his kindness to yonder rogues. They look in need of a friendly hand; indeed, they do."

Well, the laugh was turned on Peter; but, as a matter of fact, he spoke sense, and I understood as well as he did the risk of parley with the wreckers, even though they did not seem to have any fight left in them—a fact which old Clair-de-Lune was the first to observe.

"They not fire gun this morning," says the old man. "All starve, hungry. Czerny gone. What for they fight? They no stomach left."

"Meaning they've no heart in them," puts in Doctor Gray, at his side. "Aye, that's true, and a bit of human nature, too. You cannot fight every day any more than you can make love every day. It comes and goes like a fever. They had their square meal last night, and they are not taking any this morning. I should not be afraid of them if I were you, captain."

"I never was," said I, bluntly; "I never was, doctor. There's not enough on my conscience for that. But I do believe you speak truly. Making love is more in their line this watch. Ask Dolly Venn there. From what I saw between him and little Rosamunda down below, he's an authority on that point. Eh, Dolly, lad," said I to him, "you could make love every day, couldn't you?"

The lad flushed all over his face at the charge, and Peter Bligh, he said something about "Love one another" being in the Bible, "which must mean many of 'em, and not one in particular," says he. And what with the laugh and the jest, and the new confidence which the sight of those poor driven souls put into us, we came all together to the sea's edge, and, scarcely cocking a rifle at them, we hailed the long-boats and got their story.

"Ahoy, there! And what port d'you think you're making for?" cries Peter Bligh, in a voice that might have split the waters.

They replied to him, standing up in the boat and stretching out their sunburnt, hairy arms to us:—

"Water!—water, mate, for the love of Heaven!"

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"And how do you know," cries Peter back to them, "how do you know that we've water for ourselves?"

"Why, Barebones saw to that," says one of them, no doubt meaning Czerny thereby; "Barebones saw to that, though precious little of it the lubber drank!"

"He's off, is Barebones," says another; "oh, trust Barebones! Bones-and-Biscuits puts to sea last night, 'cause he's a duty to perform in 'Frisco, he 'as. Trust Bones-and-Biscuits to turn up righteous when the trumpet blows!"

And another, said he:—

"I wish I had his black head under my boot this minute! My mouth's all sand and my throat is stuck! Aye, mates," says he, "you'll moisten my poor tongue—same as is wrote in the Scriptures!"

There were other entreaties; some of them spoke to us in French, the most part in German. Of the boats that were left, two had rowed away for the lesser gate, but five drifted about our rock and drew so close that we could have tossed a biscuit to them. Never have I seen a crowd of faces more repulsive, or jowls so repellent. Iron-limbed men, fat Germans, sleek Frenchmen, Greeks, niggers, some armed with rifles, some with fearsome knives, they squatted all together in the open boats and roared together for pity and release. Then, for the first time, I was able to see how cruelly Czerny's gun had dealt with them in the darkness of the night. It was horrible to see the mangled limbs, the open wounds, the matted hair, the gaping faces of these creatures of a desperado's mad ambition. The boats themselves were splintered and hacked as though heavy hatchets had beaten them. I could wonder no longer that they called the truce; and yet, knowing why they called it, what was I to do? Let them set foot on the plateau, and we, but a handful at the best, might be swept into the sea like flies from a wall. I say that I was at my wits' end. Every merciful instinct urged me to give them water; every prudent voice cried, "Beat them off."

"If there's fight in that lot, I'm as black as yonder nigger!" said Peter Bligh, when he had looked at them a little while, very contemptuously. "Not a kick to-day among the lot of them, by Jericho. But you cannot give them water, captain," he goes on, "for you've little to give."

Clair-de-Lune, thinking deeper, was, nevertheless, for a stern refusal.

"Keep them off, captain, that's my advice," says he. "They very desperate, dangerous men. They drink water, then cut throat. Make ear deaf and say cistern all empty. They think you die, and they wait; but come aboard—no, not at all!"

Now, I knew that this was reason, and when Doctor Gray and Captain Nepeen added their words to the Frenchman's I stepped down to the water's edge and made my answer.

"I'll give you water willingly, men, if you'll show me where it is to be found," said I; "but we cannot give what we haven't got, and that's common sense! We're dry here, and if it's bad luck for one it's bad luck for all. The glass says rain," I went on; "we'll wait for it together and have done with all this nonsense."

They heard me to the end; but ignorant, perhaps, of my meaning they continued to whine, "Water, water," and when I repeated that we had no water, one of them, leaping up in the boat, fired his rifle point-blank at Captain Nepeen, who fell without a word stone-dead at my side.

"Good heavens!" said I, "they've shot the captain dead."

The suddenness of it was awful; just a gun flashing, a gasping cry, an honest man leaping up and falling lifeless. And then something that would never move or speak again. The crews themselves, I do believe, were as dazed by it as we were. They could have shot us, I witness, where we stood, every man of us, but, in God's mercy, they never thought of that; and turning on their own man they tore the rifle from his hand and, striking him down with a musket, they sent him headlong into the sea.

"Witness we've no part in it!" they roared. "Jake Bilbow did it, and he was always a bad 'un! You won't charge fifty with one man's deed! Down under with the arms, mates—we've no need of 'em!"

Well, we heard them in amazement. Not a man had moved among us; the body was untouched at our feet. From the boats themselves ruffians were casting their rifles pell-mell into the sea. Never at the wildest hazard would I have named this for the end of it. They cast their rifles into the sea and rowed unarmed about us. To the end of it, I think, they feared the gun with a fear that was nameless and lasting, nor did they know that the turret was empty—how should they?

It was a swift change; to me it seemed as though the day had conjured up this wonder. None the less, the perplexity of it remained, nor could I choose a course even under these

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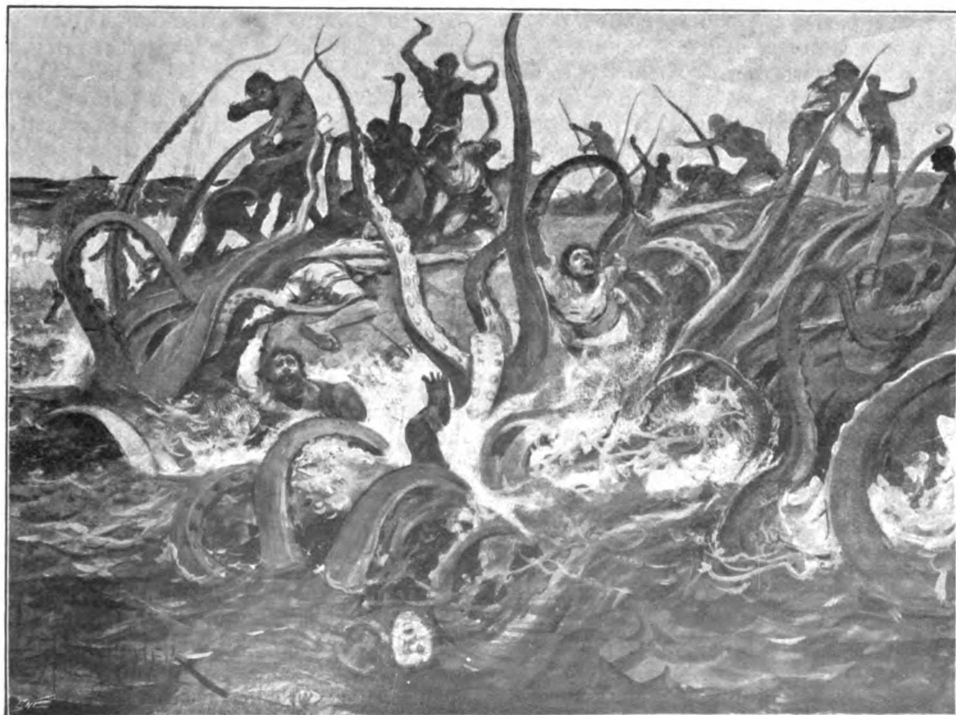
new circumstances. Of water I had none to give; our own condition, indeed, was little better than that of these unhappy creatures in the boats about me. The sea flooded the house below us; the great engine no longer throbbed; our women were huddled together at the stairs-head, seeking air and light; the fog loomed heavy on Ken's Island; no ship's sail brought hope to our horizon. What should I say, then, to the mutineers, how answer them? I could but protest: "We are as you; we must face it together."

Now, I have told you that both the greater and the lesser gate of Czerny's house were hewn in the pinnacles of rock rising up above the highest tides, and offering there a foothold and an anchorage; but you must not think that these were the only caps of the reef which thrust themselves out to the sea. For there were others, rounded domes of tide-washed rock, treacherous ledges, little craggy steeples, sloping shelves, which low water gave up to the sun and where a man might walk dry-shod. To such strange places the long-boats turned when we would have none of them. Convinced, maybe, that our own case was no better than theirs, the men, in desperation, and cramped with long confinement in the boats, now pushed their bows into the swirling waters; and following each other, as sheep will follow a leader, they climbed out upon the barren rocks and lay there in a state of dejection defying words. Nor had we any heart to turn upon them and drive them off. Little did the new day we desired so ardently bring to us. The sky, gloomy above the blackening, angry seas, was like a mock upon our bravest hopes. Let a few hours pass and the night would come again. This was but an interlude in which man could ask of man, "What next?" We feared to speak to the women lest they should know the truth.

The men crawled upon the sea-washed rocks, I say, and there the judgment of God came upon them. So awful was the scene my eyes were soon to behold that I take up my pen with hesitation even now to write of it; and as I write some figure of the shadows comes before me and seems to say, "You cannot speak of it! It is of the past, forgotten!" And, certainly, if I could make it clear to you how Czerny's men were for ever driven off from the gate of the house that Czerny built, if I could make it clear to you and leave the thing untold, that would I



"THE WHOLE WATER ABOUT THE REEF WAS NOW ALIVE."

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do right gladly. But the end was not of my seeking; in all honesty I can say that if it had been in my power I would have helped those wretched creatures, have dealt out pity to them and carried them to the shore; but it was written otherwise; a higher Power decreed it; we could but stand, trembling and helpless, before that enthralling justice.

They climbed on the rocks, forty or fifty of them, maybe, and lying in all attitudes, some stretched out full length, some with their arms in the flowing tide, some huddled close as though for warmth, they appeared to surrender themselves to the inevitable and to accept the worst; when, rising up out of the near sea, the first octopus showed himself, and a great tentacle, sliding over the rock, drew one of the mutineers screaming to the depths. Thereafter, in an instant, the whole terror was upon them. Leaping up together, they uttered piercing cries, turned upon each other in their agony, hurled themselves into the sea to reach the boats again. Ah! how few of them touched the befriending prows! The whole water about the reef was now alive with the devilish creatures; a hundred arms, crushing, sucking, swept the unsheltered rocks and drew the victims down. So near were they, some of them, that I could see their staring eyes and distorted limbs as, in the fishes' embracing grip, they were drawn under to the gaping mouths, or pressed close to that jellied mass which must devour them. The sea itself heaved and splashed as though to be the moving witness of that horrible attack; foam rushed up to our feet; a blinding spray was in the air; eyes protruded even in the green water; great shapes wormed and twisted, rending one another, covering the whole reef with their filthy slime, sending blinding fountains to the high pinnacles, or sinking down when their prey was taken to the black depths where no eye could follow them. What sounds of pain, what resounding screams, rent the air in those fearful minutes! I draw the veil upon it. For all the gold that the sea washes to-day in Czerny's house, I could not look upon such a picture again. For death can be a gentle thing; but there is a death no man may speak of.

At twelve o'clock the clouds broke and the rain began to fall upon a rising sea. The vapours still lay thick upon Ken's Island, but the wind was driving them, and they rolled away in misty clouds westward to the dark horizon.

I went below to little Ruth, and in broken words I told her all my story.

"Little Ruth, the night is passed, the day is breaking! Ah, little Ruth!"

She fell into my arms, sobbing. The sleep-time was past, indeed; the hour of our deliverance at hand.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH THE SUN-TIME COMES AGAIN.

I HAVE told you the story of Ken's Island, but there are some things you will need to know, and of these I will now make mention. Let me speak of them in order as they befell.

And first I should record that we found the body of Edmond Czerny, cold and dead, by that pool in the woods where so many have slept the dreadful sleep. Clair-de-Lune stumbled upon it as we went joyously through the sunny thickets and, halting abruptly, his startled cry drew me to the place. And then I saw the thing, and knew that here was God's justice written in words no man might mistake.

For a long time we rested there, looking down upon that grim figure in its bed of leaves, and watching the open eyes seeking that bright heaven whose warmth they never would feel again. As in life, so in death, the handsome face carried the brand of the evil done, and spoke of the ungoverned passions which had wrecked so wonderful a genius. There have been few such men as Edmond Czerny since the world began; there will be few while the world endures. Greatly daring, a man of boundless ambitions, the moral nature obliterated, the greed of money becoming, in the end, like some burning disease, this man, I said, might have achieved much if the will had bent to humanity's laws. And now he had reaped as he sowed. The cloak that covered him was the cloak of the Hungarian regiment whose code of honour drove him out of Europe. The diamond ring upon the finger was the very ring that little Ruth had given him on their wedding-day. The agony he had suffered was such as many a good seaman had endured since the wreckers came to Ken's Island. And now the story was told: the man was dead.

"It must have been last night," I said, at length, to Clair-de-Lune. "His own men put him ashore and seized the ship. Fortune has strange chances, but who would have named such a chance as this? The rogues turned upon him at last, you can't doubt it.

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And he died in his sleep—a merciful death."

The old man shook his head very solemnly.

"I know not," said he, slowly; "remember how rare that the island give mercy! We will not ask how he died, captain. I see something, but I forget it. Let us leave him to the night."

He began to cover the body with branches and boughs; and anon, marking the place, that we might return to it to-morrow, we went on again through the woods, as men in a reverie. Our schemes and plans, our hopes and fears, the terrible hours, the unforgotten days, aye, if we could have seen that the end of them would have been this!—the gift of the verdurous island, and the ripe green pastures, and the woods awakening and all the glory of the sun-time reborn! For so the shadow was lifted from us that for a little while our eyes could not see the light; and, unbelieving, we asked, "Is this the truth?"

"WE FOUND THE BODY OF EDMOND CZERNY, COLD AND DEAD."

I did not tell little Ruth the story of the woods; but there were whispered words and looks aside, and she was clever enough to understand them. Before the day was out I think she knew; but she would not speak of it, nor would I. For why should we call false sorrow upon that bright hour? Was not the world before us, the awakening glory of Ken's Island at our feet? Just as in the dark days all Nature had withered and bent before the death-giving vapours, so now did Nature answer the sun's appeal; and every freshet bubbling over, every wood a..ve with the music of the birds, the meadows green and golden, the hills all capped with their summer glory, she proclaimed the reign of Nature's God. No sight more splendid ever greeted the eyes of shipwrecked men or welcomed them to a generous shore. Hand in hand with little Ruth I passed from thicket to thicket of the woods, and seemed to stand in Paradise itself! And she—ah, who shall read a woman's thoughts at such an hour as that? Let me be content to see her as she was: her face grown girlish in that great release, her eyes sparkling in a new joy of being, her step so light that no blade of grass could have been bruised thereby. Let me hear her voice again while she lifts her face to mine and asks me that question which even now I hear sometimes:—

"Jasper, Jasper! is it real? How can I believe it, Jasper? Shall we see our home again—you and I? Oh, tell me that it is true, Jasper—say it often, often, or I shall forget!"

We were in a high place of the woods just then, and we stood to look down upon the lower valley where the rocks showed their rare green mosses, and every crag lifted strange flowers to the sun, and little rivulets ran down with bubbling sounds. Away on the open veldt the doll-like houses were to be seen, and the ashes of her bungalow. And there, I say, all the scene enchanting me, and the memory of the bygone days blotted from my mind, and no future to be thought of but that which should give me for ever the right

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to befriend this little figure of my dreams, I said:—

"It is true, little Ruth—God knows how true—that a man loves you with all his heart, and he has loved you all through these weary months. Just a simple fellow he is, with no fine ways and small knowledge of the world; but he waits for you to tell him that you will lift him up and make him worthy——"

She silenced me with a quick, glad cry, and, winding both her arms about my neck, she hid her face from me.

"SHE SILENCED ME WITH A QUICK, GLAD CRY."

"My friend! Jasper, dear Jasper, you shall not say that! Ah, were you so blind that you have not known it from the first?"

Her words were like the echo of some sweet music in my ears. Little Ruth, my beloved, had called me "friend." To my life's end would I claim that name most precious.

We were picked up by the American warship *Hatteras* ten days after the sleep-time passed. I left the island as I found it — its secrets hidden, its mysteries unfathomed. What vapour rises up there—whether it be, as Doctor Gray would have it, from the marshy bog of decaying vegetation, which breathes fever to the south; whether it be this marsh fog steaming up when the plants die down; or whether it be a subtler cloud given out by the very earth itself — this question, I say, let the learned dispute. I have done with it for ever; and never, to my life's end, shall I see its heights and its valleys again. The world calls me; I go to my home. Ruth, little Ruth, whom I have loved, is at my side. For us it shall be sun-time always: the night and the dreadful sleep are no more.

THE END.

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Calvé: Artist and Woman.

By Kathleen Schlesinger.

"*The perfection of art is to conceal art.*"—Quintilian.

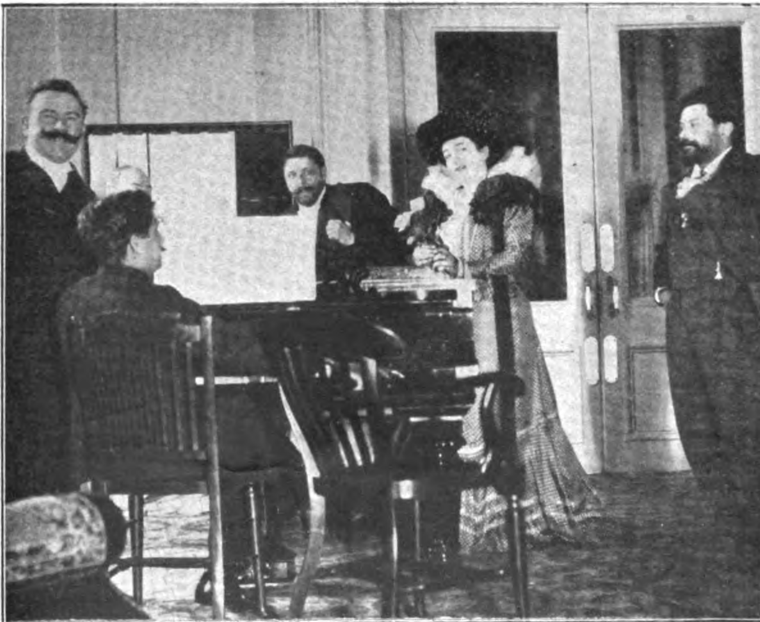
CHIEF among the enjoyments which Covent Garden afforded me last season was the opportunity of seeing Calvé in an entirely new light: Calvé at work on a new impersonation.

The rôle of Messaline was new to her, and her London admirers in front of the curtain thus had the delight of witnessing Calvé under the influence of a fresh conception, oblivious of all else, living only in the new world created by her art.

About M. de Lara's opera there was a diversity of opinion, but Calvé was supreme. To watch this incomparable artist at work is a revelation. Before she learns a note of the music of a new part Calvé studies the character thoroughly from every point of view, assiduously reading any books that can help her, until she has identified herself with her heroine; then, while she is mastering the technical part, the impersonation grows upon her—first a broad outline and later the details. She had reached this stage when the first concerted rehearsal took place in the *foyer* at Covent Garden; all the principals were present, and M. Flon, who never loses an opportunity of strengthening his grasp of the music he has to conduct. M. de Lara presided at the piano.

The principal scenes were gone through carefully with perseverance and enthusiasm. The composer always knew to a shade the tone-colour he wanted and the impression he wished produced. If the singer did not at once catch his meaning, the others often helped to make it clear. For instance, when Harès (M. Seveilhac, on the right in the photograph) had to sing the words, "Comme il fait nuit!" and did not at once seize the composer's intention, it was Calvé with her inimitable realism who prompted him and first imparted to the commonplace phrase its expression of pregnant horror and shuddering terror. All this is taken as a matter of course, and the give-and-take is accepted with perfect grace.

The next rehearsal was of quite a different kind. M. Bergé, a *co-répétiteur*, presided at the piano, and Calvé and M. Seveilhac studied their stage business with M. Almanz, who gave them a rough outline of their positions on the stage for the various scenes, in order to facilitate the scenic rehearsals later on and to render them less fatiguing.



MADAME CALVÉ REHEARSING "MESSALINE" AT COVENT GARDEN.
From a Photo. by K. Schlesinger.

Calvé entered with a radiant smile and

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greeted her colleagues warmly with the charming grace which is natural to her, and was at once ready to begin work.

After the first photograph, taken in the serious mood which work demands, I begged her to give me one of her smiles for the next. With a gleeful laugh, and her eyes twinkling with mischief, she said: "I will just tell M. Flon a merry little tale!"

The scenic rehearsals are, of course, the most interesting; the conception of the rôle begins to crystallize. Before, the glow of Messaline's passion was in Calvé's voice, now it is embodied and living: her face throughout is a study. Things do not always go right from the first; the scenery, by no means complete, is only indicated here and there, much being left to the imagination; sometimes some of the characters are perforce absent.

Calvé is all earnestness at these times, and throws herself so thoroughly into her work that she is quite exhausted when the rehearsal is over. She frequently steps up to the footlights and pleads, with one of her bewitching smiles: "I should like to go over that again!"

The composer, meanwhile, is all activity and walks miles: one moment he is standing at the back of the stalls critically listening and watching the effects he has planned—the next sees him wildly gesticulating among the chorus up stage, or pointing out that the action must take place farther to the right or nearer the footlights.

Except for the dress rehearsal, most of the singers wear morning dress. Calvé's exquisite Messaline costumes of clinging crêpe-de-chine, with borders of delicate designs painted by hand, each of which is worth a singer's ransom, would soon lose their freshness if worn at rehearsals. A long black cloak did duty on this occasion for the regal red mantle with which she conceals her horror-stricken face in the last act.

Sometimes an ill-wind blows and the air becomes sultry. When Calvé is annoyed there is generally just cause for it, as, for instance, when she has to sing a duet or go through a *tête-à-tête* scene by herself because the other singer has not appeared: her face then becomes sombre; she sings, but her soul is not in her song, the divine fire no longer burns. Absence from rehearsal is a grave injustice, a great discourtesy to all who are collaborating, and doubly so when opportunities for scenic rehearsals are necessarily limited; such a thing would not be tolerated in Germany, where art is taken very seriously and opera-house regulations are

CALVÉ AS "MESSALINE."
From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

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devoid of elasticity. There are no airs and graces about Calvé: she is absolutely natural and unaffected; and it speaks highly for her as a woman that after receiving ovations wherever she goes, and being the object of so much heroine-worship, she should remain quite unspoilt, simple, and modest. One never discovers in Calvé the least conceit or self-assertion, and she always speaks most humbly of her musical performance.

"Dear friend, I was very bad last night, was I not?" she asked M. Flon, somewhat as a child might who expected to be rebuked, on one occasion when she had made some little slip and kept the orchestra waiting.

"I really have no talent for music," she said to me one day when talking of her work. "I tried to learn the piano once, but it annoyed me and I gave it up. The mechanical means of expression act as a clog upon the interpretation.

"It is just the same in opera," she continued, her expressive face reflecting her feelings as she spoke; "the rhythm thwarts me and hedges me in. I should often like to dwell on a phrase or emphasize an action, but bars and beats keep me back or else hurry me on and interfere sadly with my conception of the rôle.

"No. I do not care so much for rich harmonies and intricate music. What I love

From a Photo. by] MADAME CALVÉ. [*Reutlinger, Paris.*

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is the simple music of the people; the songs —*les plain-chants*—of my native Aveyron; they stir me to my innermost soul, for they are the expression of the hardy race of mountaineers from which I am descended. As to the operas in which I sing, oh, yes, I am interested in all my rôles; I love them, for they form part of my life, but I often feel a longing for something higher and better—something that would satisfy my mind. I should prefer to be an actress. Then there would be none of the restraint that music imposes; I should be free to work out my conceptions.

"In fact"—and she insensibly lowered her voice—"if I were to lose my voice, as I have at times feared I might, I should really be rather glad, for then I could, without compunction, leave the operatic stage for the legitimate drama. As long as people like to hear me sing I feel bound to use the gift which has enabled me to help my family and relations for many years."

The truth is that Calvé is before all a born actress.

The divine Sarah, when asked whom she considered the finest actress in the world, replied, without a moment's hesitation, "Calvé is the greatest artist of us all!"

"Sometimes my friends accuse me of being mercenary for accepting these brilliant engagements to America, instead of remaining in my own country. But I tell them that I want the money—it means comfort and happiness to so many dear ones."

Calvé's voice is deeply moving; the limpid, bell-like upper register and the velvety, tender lower notes are used by her with consummate art in all sincerity; but would a blind man listening to her Carmen or Santuzza receive any ade quate impression of her impersonation? The thing is impossible. Not one movement, one swift glance or fleeting expression of her beautiful face can we afford to miss; her movements are not studied—nor is her Carmen always the same at every performance—they come naturally because Calvé is Carmen for the time being.

She enters, her lithe body swaying gracefully as she walks, a flower between her lips, perfidious and provoking. The subtlety of her singing of "L'amour est un oiseau rebelle!" known as the Habañera, and the ironical, menacing cynicism with which she emphasizes "l'amour" are wonderful. She reproduces to the life the typical Tsigana, the gipsy who pines for freedom, and is in turn sensuous, hard, cruel, passionate, bewitching, and perverse. From her first note she seizes upon the audience and holds it captive, spell-bound until the last.

I had gone to Calvé's dressing-room between the acts, and found her slipping into the black and silver spangled dress she wears in the last act. She chatted away in her merriest mood while adding the finishing touches to the loose knot of blue-black hair, and fastening in the coquettish

CALVÉ AS "SANTUZZA."
From a Photo. by Benque, Paris.

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flower which nestles in the nape of her neck.

"Je suis une vraie gamine, n'est-ce pas, comme Carmen? C'est que je fais des polissonneries terribles!" and her eyes sparkled with mischievous amusement. "I quite enjoy it, I assure you; it is great fun, and then, of course, it is Carmen!"

The friend who was helping her dress asked whether she would wear any rings.

"Why, of course," she replied; "Madame Torréador is a person of importance now, you know. She is quite a rich woman and has plenty of jewels."

While speaking Calvé absently put

CALVÉ AS "HERODIAS."
From a Photo. by Fontes, Paris.

on one or two rings, and then, looking critically at her hands:—

"No," she cried, "that will not do at all; they look too *distingué*. I must wear something more showy."

When I asked her where she learnt the bewitching dances of the gipsies, she replied:—

"When I was a child of seven I was sent to Spain to visit some of my father's relations. There was a camp of Tsiganas in the neighbourhood of the village; they fascinated me, and I watched them eagerly and picked up some of their dances. Many years later, when I returned to Spain to study Carmen among the cigarette-makers of Seville and the Tsiganas, the steps came back readily to me and I learnt all their graceful dances.

"I took Merimée's book with me and pondered over it day and night while living among the factory girls. I watched them

CALVÉ AS "CARMEN."
From a Photo. by Reutlinger, Paris.

with their lovers; studied them in joy, sorrow, and anger. I noted how their love is a mixture of passion, jealousy, and brutality; tenderness being exceedingly rare, and I remained among them until I could understand them thoroughly and feel as they did. Carmen is my most realistic study, and the next is Ophelia."

Calvé's Ophelia is quite a new creation, as far removed from that consecrated by tradition as the East is from the West. In her madness she is masterful, wild, and violent, and this is how Calvé accounts for her conception of Shakespeare's heroine:—

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"Ophelia was passionately in love, and her love drove her mad. When I was in Milan I met a celebrated specialist in mental diseases, and as I was then studying Ophelia I asked him what he thought of her case. 'How do you picture this dreamy, love-sick girl?' I asked him.

"He replied that it was the greatest mistake, in his opinion, to picture her gentle, and he offered to take me then and there to an asylum in Milan where a case similar to that of Ophelia had come under his notice. There we found a pale, fair girl — like an English girl—who on being deserted by her lover had lost her reason. She was a prey to fits of violence and terrible anger, but it was her terror that most affected me; it was pitiable, but intensely dramatic. She would offer visitors any object that she could get hold of, only to take it back suddenly in a fit of anguish. I left the mad-house profoundly impressed, and could not forget the scene, nor dissociate it from Ophelia."

CALVÉ AS "OPHELIA."
From a Photo. by Reutlinger, Paris.

Calvé does not know English well enough to read Shakespeare in the original, but she had "Hamlet" translated to her line by line, that she might know the play independently of the libretto.

Calvé first sang Hamlet in Italy during the eighties — in Rome, Naples, Milan, and Florence—then later in England, America, St. Petersburg, and Madrid; and it was not until May, 1899, that her Ophelia was made known to Parisians at the Grand Opéra. The main facts of Calvé's career are familiar to her admirers all the world over, but what follows, told as well as my memory serves me in Calvé's own words, is not generally known:—

"I was a lively, commonplace little mortal, with plenty of spirits and a love of fun. I romped with my brother and sisters, frolicked in the fields with the lambs, chased the butterflies, watched the maids milk the cows, peeped into the dairy, and helped to make butter and cheese.

"Did I care for toys? Oh, yes. I used to skip and play at ball and fly kites with my

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brother, and run races. To this day I dearly love snow-balling, in which I still indulge in America sometimes.

"Then there was my doll; I loved her very dearly and remember her well. You must not imagine she was a great beauty—one of those elegant Paris creations with lovely curls, a faultless complexion, and little pearly teeth. No; we were brought up like Spartans—our toys were of the simplest description and mostly home-made.

"Mine was a rag-doll, with a painted face and a red cotton handkerchief tied round her for a frock. I used to rock her to sleep, kiss and love her, and then sometimes, when I was in a naughty mood, I tossed her out of the window, only to run out immediately in an agony of remorse to pick up the poor darling tenderly and hug her passionately, vowing never to be unkind to her again. I went to a convent school at St. Affrique—in the great cheese district, you know—and there I used to sing with the other children, but I was no prodigy; my voice was in no way remarkable.

"Sometimes when we were together in recreation time the girls would gather round me and say, 'Do sing us something, Emma!' Then, as the mood seized me, I would sing a song of passionate sadness and set all the girls crying, or else I stood up and sang some song I had heard in the village, unconsciously mimicking the rough gestures and action of the peasants and their *patois*, or the drinking songs of the soldiers as they sat in the garden of the inn. I often got into trouble for this, for, of course, the good sisters were horrified at some of the ditties I repeated in my innocence.

"We sang *romances* and hymns, and acted little plays at the distribution of prizes, and my mother thought I had a pretty voice and a fine talent.

"When my father, who was an engineer, died and left very little money, I was fifteen, and there were many little mouths to feed. My mother, foreseeing the possibilities of a future for my voice, decided that I should go to Paris and study singing, but none of us had any thought of the theatre. As to me, I was very pious and mystic in my girlhood, and thought I had a vocation, and looked forward to taking the veil. However, I did not make any objection to go to Paris, for I was very docile, and was most anxious to help my family. If I had been told I was to be married I should have agreed to that just as readily.

"My mother's family, of which I am very proud, is descended from the grand old race of the Albigenses, who fought with stern determination, not for wealth and possessions, but for a mere idea and for their religion. My aunts and grandmother were all fervently religious, and were very fine characters and noble women, whose memory I cherish with the deepest veneration.

"One of my aunts in particular I shall never forget. She lived at La Bastide, and I always spent my holidays with her. She was very dear to me—like a second mother, in fact—and was a very noble woman. After I had made my first success in the world I longed to get back to my village home in Aveyron; my first visit was to have been to my aunt at La Bastide, but to my great grief only her grave remained and a life-long memory.

"My first real appearance in public was at Nice, at a charity concert. At the last moment the Vicomtesse de Vigier, the popular Mlle. Crivelli of the Opéra, failed the committee, and I was called upon at a moment's notice to take her place. Yes, of course I remember what I sang—'Etoile que j'aime.' The praise and compliments I received decided me to study singing in earnest, and I went to Paris and studied under Puget and Mme. Marchesi, and later Mme. Rosina Laborde, who made me work very hard. I was far from being an artist then—I only had a pretty voice; it was in Italy that the great awakening came, when I was thrown with great artists, and more especially with Duse. Just at that time I fell seriously ill, and during a long convalescence I suddenly understood the making of a real artist, and realized that in order to become one I must forget my voice, only to think of what I had to express.

"I felt a growing longing to stir in other people the emotion which possessed my own soul. I awoke at the same time to moral consciousness, and it seemed to me that I was born again for art and suffering."

One of Calvé's greatest embodiments of suffering is in the last act of "Sapho" (Massenet), when the heroine, convinced that the good of the man she loves demands the sacrifice of her love, sits down and writes a farewell letter to him as he lies asleep on the sofa beside her; then putting on her cloak (as in the photograph reproduced on the next page) she takes a last, long look at him and leaves him for ever.

Calvé's home in Aveyron, known as the Château de Cabrières, but which she familiarly styles her "farm," is perched high

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among the clouds on a precipitous rock in the heart of the Cévennes, and overlooks the valley of the Tarn and the thousand or more acres which form her estate. The old castle, built in the eleventh century, is an irregular pile of broad towers, flanked by a farm and many outbuildings.

In the distance tower three mountains forming part of her domain, which she has named Carmen, Cavalleria, and Navarraise, the three operas which have enabled her to buy her mountain home.

"When I am weary or out of health," said Calvé, "I hurry back to my home in the loveliest part of France. The crisp, invigorating breezes which blow across the Cévennes make me feel a different being after a short time. I spend my days roaming about, visiting the peasants who have known me all my life and talk to me *sans gêne*. Oh, how happy I am in that wild, picturesque country, away from all the excitement and strain of my professional life!"

From a Photo. by] CALVÉ AS "SAPHO." [*Reutlinger, Paris.*

The castle is furnished with simple elegance, the most striking feature in it being the fine music-room, which takes up two stories in the old house and has few equals so far as acoustics go. It might be called the Hall of Triumph, for all the souvenirs and tributes presented in homage to Calvé's art are treasured up there.

On the estate Calvé has built an orphanage in which forty little girls of the poorest class, who are sorely in need of care and good food, are received for a month or six weeks at a time and looked after with loving care by the kind sisters in charge, and by Calvé herself when she is at home. The girls are taught to sew and knit, or to help in the garden and dairy, so as to fit them for a useful life.

"They are so happy there, poor little things," said Calvé, "that they shed bitter tears when it is time for them to go home and make room for others."

When I asked Calvé whether she had sung in Germany she replied, "No, not yet."

"Do you, then, dislike Germany?"

"No," she cried, eagerly, "no! On the contrary, I greatly admire the intellect of the Germans. I love their literature and music. When I was studying the rôle of Marguerite I re-read Goethe's masterpiece, endeavouring to pierce his meaning, and it is Goethe's Gretchen I aim at impersonating, not the traditional Marguerite of the French opera. I went to Germany to see the burgher maidens in their home-life, and I studied the Gretchens of the Middle Ages from books and pictures. I have tried to carry out the idea in my dress; as white was only worn by queens and noble maidens in mediæval times, I dress in colours, brown, grey, green, anything but white.

"I love Wagner's music, because it is so full of thought and mysticism. But to comprehend him thoroughly one must know German first of all, and live for some time in the atmosphere of his works, which is so intensely German. I am very lazy at languages, and have never yet summoned up

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courage to learn German. I should have to retire from the stage for two years at least to learn the language and study one or two rôles, and at present I am not prepared to make the sacrifice. It is the grand figures of Brünnhilde and Kundry which appeal to me most because they are so mystic and dramatic. Those are the parts I should like to study, but I have not the physique for it. Look at the women who are great in those rôles, like Brema: the muscles of the throat are strongly developed and powerful. I am neither muscular nor physically strong. Once I had a great longing to sing Isolde, and I studied the first act in French; but after a month I had to give it up: I was worn out and my throat ached. However, some day, perhaps, I shall begin again, and I may play some of Wagner's heroines at the Opéra Comique, perhaps Isolde; who knows?"

CALVÉ AS "ANITA" IN "LA NAVARRAISE."
From a Photo. by Reutlinger, Paris.

The last discussion I had with Calvé, one which was never finished, was on the respective merits of opera and drama. Calvé had been telling me the delight which literature afforded her—the literature of all countries, but translated into French—Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, Schiller, and all the mystics, spiritualism, theosophy, occultism, which she seriously studies and whose teaching she believes; in fact, she attributes her marvellous success to the aid of unseen forces.

She reads many serious books and follows all the scientific discoveries of our day with the deepest interest.

"There is much more scope for art and intellect on the dramatic stage than on the operatic," Calvé urged. "The actress is more of a creator and puts more of her own observation, invention, thoughts, and feelings into her work."

"That is so in the lyrical drama," I contended, "but hardly in Wagner's dramas."

"Even there," Calvé rejoined, "there is less left to the creative genius of the actress, for the lines of interpretation are laid down in a great measure by the use of the leading motives, by the musical declamation, and by the comments and reflections of the orchestra; whereas in the spoken drama there is nothing to guide the actress but the bare words."

"But, on the other hand," I objected, "in the musical drama the singer is heavily handicapped in one respect."

"How so?" asked Calvé.

"Both actress and singer are great artists only when they lift the listener by their art out of his world into the imaginary world they have created on the stage. Music, although a powerful emotional adjunct, actually prevents the drama itself from appealing directly to the onlooker as a reality, as life, by interposing its own sensuous beauty or a tissue of subjective reflections. Only a supreme artist can bring home to the audience the full force of the drama—I might say *in spite of the music.*"

Just then we were interrupted and the discussion was put off till another day. I have not seen Calvé again since.

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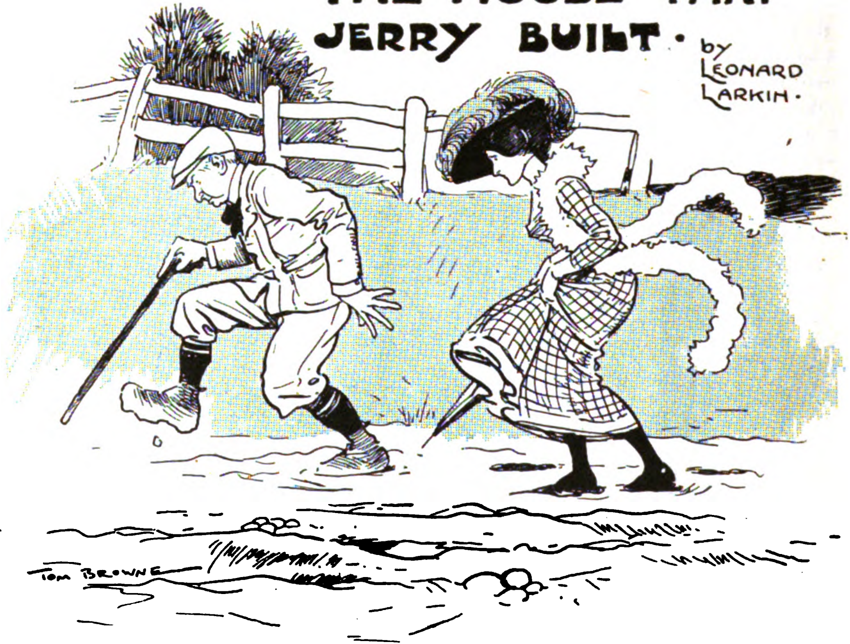

I VIEWED the house for the first time in the happiest and most hopeful circumstances. The sun shone and the birds twittered, and the clinker-strewn road with the broken fence on the other side seemed rather picturesque than otherwise. My wife was greatly pleased with everything. Far be it from me to call my wife fickle, but it is a fact that she has since changed her mind.

But on this occasion, when first my villa burst upon our gaze (if only it had never burst again in more surprising ways !), everything was seen at its best advantage. True, the "five minutes from the station" of the advertisement seemed a very modest estimate after we had floundered a mile through the mud of roads that were not yet there ; but we told each other that our natural eagerness had made the way seem longer than it was. In this we did an injustice to the advertiser's imagination : a faculty which had leaped far beyond the present possibilities of a raging motor-car on a smooth road ; an imagination that pierced the veil of years and contemplated the distant future when villa-tenants shall reach their railway-stations in flying-machines every morning. Five minutes may not be out of the question then.

The style of my villa's architecture was a style I have observed in many new suburbs. It has no very definite name, and I believe each speculative builder gives it a name in accordance with his own taste and fancy. As often as not he does not hesitate to call it the style of the late Queen Anne. The speculative builder is a prudent man, not desirous of getting into trouble, and he has probably ascertained that Queen Anne is dead.

It is a gallant and tempestuous style of art, in which every detail does its best most valorously to outstare all the others. It is clever, too. You may fancy that the door-step is stone ; but, no—it is an ingenious sort of composition which crumbles steadily and quietly, and no doubt has the advantage of being softer for tender feet. A rash observer would tell you that the gable was half-timbered ; but in reality the "timbers" are just streaks of brown paint over the plaster—much more easy to renew than timber, and handier to carry up a ladder. There are columns stuck about here and there, too, that you might suppose to be stone at least

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as solid as the doorstep; but you are sold again—they are not even that; they are wooden cylinders with iron bars up the centres, and no doubt there is some great advantage in this device if only I had time to think it out. As to the thin coat of plaster which makes the wall angles look also like stone, that has one very great advantage over the genuine material—from the speculative builder's point of view. It is an advantage shared by all the other substitutions I have named; but if you ask the speculative builder what this advantage is he will not tell you, though you may observe a twinkle in his eye. It is a trade secret. Every speculative builder is sworn not to betray trade secrets—sworn over a shovelful of *real* mortar, kept for the purpose. It is the only shovelful in the trade.

The builder of my villa is the landlord, though at first he tried his utmost to induce me to take that honourable title on myself. He expressed himself amazed to hear that I had no higher ambition than to be a mere tenant. A man of my eminence, he said—he had made up his mind about my eminence before he heard my name—a man of my eminence, distinction, wealth, and—I am sure he meant to have added—personal loveliness, owed it to his own dignity and self-respect to be landlord of his own house. Indeed, to do the thing properly and establish his credit beyond question, he ought also to be landlord of the house next door. And, by a singular coincidence, the house next door was for sale, too, the pair having been built together.

We "went over" the house in company with the builder; and here I must record a circumstance that fills me with admiration for that remarkable man. It is a fact that he opened every door in the house (including cupboard doors) and two of the windows, without breaking a single thing. Not one. Not a lock, a handle, a hinge, a frame, or a panel broke under the strain. In my foolish inexperience I thought little of this at the time, but now I marvel how he did it. It must be another trade secret.

I did *not* buy the house, nor the one next door. But I took my villa on a lease—a repairing lease. The builder thought it would be almost an insult to offer me any humbler tenancy than a repairing lease. And as to the liability—what repairs could a new house possibly require? So I escaped the insult and had the repairs instead.

"HE NEARLY CUT HIMSELF IN TWO."

The first repair was required the day we moved. The key broke in the front-door lock, and a man had to climb in at a window and unscrew the lock from the door. He unscrewed the lock, but first he nearly cut himself in two; for the sash-line chose the moment when he was climbing in at the window to break, and drop the sash on him. He said he was quite sure that several of his ribs were broken, and he strongly suspected that his spine was dislocated, at least; and he hinted that the remedy instantly needed was beer.

I am afraid that none of the removal-men understood the builder's trade secrets; they were not sufficiently gentle with my villa. They pulled all the handles off the doors and some of the fasteners off the windows through rashness in opening and shutting them. And they did not think out possibilities beforehand. There was a wardrobe, for instance, for which my villa had a constitutional antipathy, and the ensuing warfare between the two objects was what first brought home to me the full responsibility of a repairing lease; for the villa had altogether the worst of the

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battle, and got seriously wounded in every encounter.

The wardrobe would go in at the front door well enough, but that was tactical deception—a sort of strategic retreat on the part of the villa to draw its enemy into a disastrous position. The real line of defence was the stairs. They had been constructed most skilfully with a single view to the exclusion of that wardrobe. Wherever the way looked so plain and simple that there was a temptation to take the position with a rush, there some corner or projection was lying in wait to attack the invader in flank and wedge it fast. The wardrobe didn't seem to mind a bit, and at every fresh assault it took a piece out of its adversary somewhere; but it got "no forrarder," and at last it was taken prisoner altogether, with three of its corners jammed into three different holes in the plaster, and its under edge gripped by a splintery gash in the handrail.

"THE BALUSTERS GAVE WAY."

So it remained for several minutes; and then the balusters gave way. The removal-man who was dragged from under the *débris* assured me that his skull was fractured, and that it would take quite a lot of beer to save his life.

We abandoned the stairs and tried other points of attack. But my villa seemed invulnerable to this wardrobe, notwithstanding that the wardrobe was by far the stronger article of the two. It left its mark on the house at every onslaught, and retired unharmed and, I fancied, smiling—but it retired; whereas the villa, sadly mauled, and accumulating a horrible repair bill with every skirmish, still gallantly kept the assailant at bay. Till at last I began madly to wonder if it would not be cheaper, on the whole, to take the house down and build it up again round the wardrobe.

I was considering this appalling alternative when the foreman suggested that we might try the bedroom window. If only the men's constitutions could be built up first—beer being recommended for the purpose—he thought they could manage to hoist the wardrobe up the slope of a ladder, and so shove it obliquely through the window, the sash having been first removed.

I received the proposition with joy, and proceeded at once to build up the men's constitutions, which seemed to have run down very low indeed. We sent up a man, who had no difficulty in getting out the sash; indeed, it came out much sooner than he expected, bringing an assortment of fittings and fastenings with it, and subsiding on his head with a clamorous tinkle of broken glass; so that his constitution had to be taken in hand again and built up afresh. But the foreman's suggestion succeeded in the end, though, indeed, the wardrobe was a tight fit. It was shoved and hauled up the ladder with much labour and constitutional disturbance (beer again), and, hastening upstairs to meet

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it, I had the felicity of observing the victorious object coming triumphantly into the bedroom, bringing the whole of the window-frame with it, like a collar.

The wardrobe was all right, and there was a quiet twinkle about its keyholes that betokened complacent triumph. Fortunately it seemed a good-humoured piece of furniture; if it had lost its temper in the course of hostilities nothing could have saved my villa from total destruction.

The wardrobe had hit the house pretty hard, but the effect of the carpets was alarming, too; or, rather, not so much of the carpets as of the tacking of them down. For with the concussion the ceilings below began first to crack and then to sag gracefully like stretched curtains; so I had to stop the tacking and persuade the removal-men to put down the furniture very carefully and lightly. The nervous delicacy required to carry out these instructions was obtained by the administration of more beer; and by the exercise on my own part of great care in walking about the rooms, and the use of list slippers, I was able to keep the ceilings at the original curve for several days. Then I rashly started to knock nails in the walls to hang pictures on, and as I knocked the ceiling dropped on my head in uneasy instalments. More, the jar shook other things loose, such as mantelpieces and cupboard frames; and there was no balance of advantage after all, for the nails all came out when they felt the weight of the pictures, and brought down pieces of the wall with them. So I tried replacing them with longer nails, which made a considerable difference; the difference being that larger instalments of the ceiling fell more frequently on my head as I drove the nails in, and much bigger pieces of the wall accompanied them when they fell out again. I decided that the pictures would look better on the floor.

"AS I KNOCKED THE CEILING DROPPED ON MY HEAD."

The wear and tear of moving in had mellowed my villa considerably, and given it in most places a venerable air of antique dilapidation that compared favourably with that exhibited by the most genuinely ancient baronial hall I know. I tried to get as much consolation out of this reflection as I could, for I had a sort of presentiment that I should want some consolation when the bill came in.

I found out many curious things, and altogether generally improved my education, in the first few days of my tenancy; and before long I was a deal wiser, and poorer, and wetter, and dustier, and angrier, and generally deteriorated than before I came to my villa, and had several entirely new experiences in rheumatism, as well as an improved form of bronchitis. It was not the bath that caused the bronchitis, however. I do not know the scientific name of what I suffered from that, but if you have ever sat down in a new bath full of hot water, and shortly afterward discovered that the hot water has made the enamel stick better than the most expensive sort of glue, you will understand what I mean. I cannot say precisely whether I tore more enamel off the bath or the bath tore more skin off me, but I think we averaged it out fairly even, and honours were easy. But it was a long time before I was.

For a long while the joinery saved us the cost of a cheap barometer. It bulged up and stuck and burst itself in wet weather, and shrunk and gaped wide in dry. I can just remember a little toy villa that stood in my grandmother's breakfast-room, with two doors in it and two inhabitants, one of whom kept indoors in dry weather and the other in

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wet. My villa had a somewhat similar property, with the important difference that everybody stayed in when the weather was inclined to dampness, because none of the doors would open to let us out. After a time, however, these violent changes in the woodwork abated, and it settled down to a more or less permanent shrinkage and gaping, which had the advantage of enabling one to inspect the adjoining room without opening the door, and entirely freed our servants from that troublesome backache and cold in the eye that are prevalent in households where observation is restricted to keyholes.

The floor-boards shrunk, too, and let up such steady hurricanes from some subterraneous cave of winds that the carpets rose and fell like the property sea in a theatre, and the lighter articles of furniture were blown out of window or up the chimneys, while persons of less than eighteen-stone weight—but, there, I must be careful to avoid any statement that unbelievers might be tempted to misrepresent as exaggerated. Let it suffice to say that the articles lost though the cracks — when the hurricanes were in abeyance — grew steadily in size day by day, beginning with such things as studs and cuff-links, and going on to property of a larger gauge each day, till, what with the windows and chimneys on the windy days and the floor-chasms on the others, the household was gradually impoverished of everything smaller than a coal-scuttle. I bore it for long without taking up the boards, until at last the baby, unobserved for a moment, ventured too near an unusually large crack, and—but, steady again; there are people so ignorant of the possibilities of a speculative builder's villa that they would not believe even *that*.

At any rate, I took up the boards *then* and recovered most of my missing property —to say nothing of the baby. Also I discovered that whatever ill-wishers might say of my landlord they could not justly liken him to the foolish man that built his house upon the sand; for I saw nothing anywhere distantly approaching the appearance of sand, but more than one sense bore witness that my villa was established on a foundation of beef-tins and defunct cats. This striking fact no doubt accounted in some degree for the diversifications of the architecture of Queen Anne, which surprised me on mornings when I surveyed my villa from the road. Oblique zigzags and other lines of less definable shapes appeared upon the brickwork, and the windows began to change places. This, the landlord assured me, was nothing but "a little settlement"—a statement that relieved me a great deal, for I had suspected a large earthquake. "A little settlement," it appeared, was a sort of architectural thrush, measles, teething, whooping-cough, or what-not, that every respectable house went through in its infancy. I was glad to find it was nothing worse than that; but even an architectural whooping-cough can be disconcerting when it lets in a fresh expanse of landscape almost daily into one room after another.

"A LITTLE SETTLEMENT."

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But landscape was not the only thing that passed freely through the walls, inward and outward. Rain, hail, fog, wind, sleet, snow, smoke, and gas went to and fro regardless of bricks and mortar; the gas also went regardless of pipes; and cats and dogs will not surprise me soon. As to ghosts—well, if I saw a weird human figure coming through the wall of my villa, I should know at once that the settlement was getting worse, and this was a burglar. A real ghost would disdain to pass through such a wall as mine; the job would do him no credit at all.

I hear that settlement making extensions and improvements in the dead silence of night. A quiet, intermittent clicking and grinding is the sound, as a rule, only noticeable when the household is deep in slumber. But occasionally something particular happens—some fundamental beef-tin buckles or some dead cat turns in its grave —and there is a sharp crack, and I know that in the morning I shall find an extra window somewhere, or another and a wider laceration across the fair face of Queen Anne. I am continually strengthening that front wall, too, with fresh thicknesses of wall-paper.

I think it must be on such occasions as these that my chimneys grow crookeder. They were not very straight in the beginning; but now their sinuosities would break an eel's back. Sweeps' brooms get lost in them and have to be paid for and left there. And then they catch fire and attract fire-engines—which also have to be paid for. When I look back upon my tenancy—not a long one, either—it often seems to me that it would have been really cheaper on the whole to have adopted the builder's suggestion, bought my villa—and instantly pulled it down.

There is a sort of democratic quality about the house—an equal distribution of advantages among the deserving rooms, so to speak. Thus, when onions are being cooked, the drawing-room gets as much of the smell as the kitchen; and when the dining-room fire is lit the smoke comes out of the wrong ends of all the other chimneys. When the water-pipes burst, too—and they often do things of that sort—there is a very general and impartial distribution of the water; and as to gas, while the leaks and explosions take their turns very systematically in the different rooms, the smell is always so generally diffused that it has become indissolubly associated with the tenderest ties of home life; and never again can I experience the full flavour of domestic felicity without a good gas escape close under my nose.

Now, I wonder why it is that the mere mention of my nose should instantly remind me of the drains at my villa? Extraordinary, isn't it? Well, the drains were most conveniently laid, nice and close to the surface, and rising gradually as they led away from the house. There was never any difficulty about finding them. The gardener often finds them still with a spade or a rake—once he found one with a broom. No difficulty about knowing where to put them back, either, if you happened to fetch any up in digging—anywhere would do. It wasn't as though they'd been cemented at the joints, or led anywhere in particular. They had been put in in compliance with the prevalent superstition in favour of having drains of some sort, and such was the perfection of the system that if you pulled up a drain-pipe here and there and used it for a chimney-pot or anything of that sort it made no difference whatever.

I have left off having dinner-parties, not being a lawyer, and having some doubts as to the precise legal liability attaching to a tenant with a repairing lease whose guest gets killed in carrying out a dinner engagement. I had a little dinner once, by way of house-warming, soon after we came in, but I am not persevering. I was not so much disturbed by the tile that shot off the roof and laid a friend low in the front garden—not so much as he was, at any rate—because that is a thing that might happen to anybody, and people ought to look out for things like that, and, after all, he had not actually arrived. And although it was a little inconvenient to have the drawing-room hearth suddenly sink at the front and pitch the fireplace, with the fire in it, face downward on the hearth-rug, still that is the sort of thing that does happen when a young house catches a settlement; and we were going into the dining-room presently, in any case. But I had made a rather serious mistake in the dining-room. For fear of accidents I had knocked down the looser parts of the sagging ceiling with a broom, ignorant that I was weakening the main support of the floor above; for in my house the floors and ceilings were devised and constructed on a new and ingenious principle: the floor held up the ceiling from above, while the ceiling supported the floor from below. So that when the well-meaning but incautious nurse walked across the bedroom floor to inspect the sleeping baby, first a large piece of ceiling fell

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into the soup, and then the nurse followed it, in a tempestuous tangle of legs and arms and boards and plaster. And somehow I sort of got discouraged at last.

We went to bed somewhat discontented that night, and we took our umbrellas with us; for the tile that had cancelled the invitation of one of our guests was not the only one gone from the roof.

I am now having the house painted all over just to hold it together temporarily till I have had an interview with the builder. I am, in fact, anticipating another settlement—a final one. I have bought a large pole-axe.

"THEN THE NURSE FOLLOWED."

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A childless widow with a large income ought certainly to do more for those in need than she was supposed to do, and ugly rumours had reached his ears of poor relations neglected and great people cultivated.

AFTER enjoying the best of health for fifty years, Mrs. Vigogne had found it necessary to summon medical assistance, and this just as she was in the midst of her various preparations for Christmas and the New Year.

"Nothing serious—no cause for anxiety. All that is required are complete rest, avoidance of physical and mental strain, and a course of tonic treatment," had been the verdict of the astute doctor, not unaccustomed to deal with wealthy patients and like ailments. "Over-exerted yourself when a little below par, most probably, Mrs. Vigogne."

She had gracefully acknowledged to having perhaps overtaxed her strength in the way of shopping and what not during the late severe weather.

"There are so many demands upon one at this season, and one is glad to make it the occasion of reminding one's friends that they are kept in remembrance."

"Oh, yes, of course, very right and proper," had replied Dr. Warner, glancing from the faded face, with its stereotyped smile and expressionless eyes, towards a side table upon which was ranged a row of parcels large and small. Was she, after all, more liberal than she had the credit for being—one of those who do good by stealth?

Mrs. Vigogne considered herself in society, and to this her late husband's name and wealth gave her some claim. Nor was there anything on her own side to be ashamed of, could she have looked over the non-success in life of some of her relatives.

Unaccustomed to illness of any kind, she had been not a little alarmed by the sudden development of symptoms that reminded her she was mortal. She was unaware that it was but an ordinary attack of dyspepsia and that the remedy was summarily confided to the doctor's note-book in one expressive word.

More than ready to carry out his instructions in the matter of taking precautions, she installed herself in a boudoir adjoining her bedroom, giving orders for the house to be kept very quiet and no callers to be admitted. Moreover, in her anxiety to avoid again overtaxing her strength, she had engaged a young girl to act as secretary in the matter of attending to her somewhat extensive correspondence, and otherwise as a useful help—permanently should her services prove satisfactory.

This young lady was later than usual, and Mrs. Vigogne was becoming impatient at the delay, her eyes turning frequently from the clock on the mantelshelf to the door.

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Miss Blake must be given to understand that punctuality was very essential if she wished to keep her situation, she was telling herself. Yes, she must certainly receive a hint about that, as well as two or three other matters in which she was remiss. Mrs. Vigogne was not sure that she was all that her testimonial had ascribed to her. She had noticed a doubtful, questioning look in the young girl's eyes when a letter was being dictated to her, and she had occasionally repeated the words in an interrogative tone, which was objectionable in a subordinate. Moreover, she did not appear amenable to reproof at such times, a quick flush coming into her cheeks and a set expression to her lips, which looked very like temper, although she could not be said to be overtly rebellious.

"Nearly half an hour late, Miss Blake," she said, when presently the door opened and the young girl entered the somewhat overheated and perfumed room, its French windows opening to a balcony filled with plants. The house was situated in a short, somewhat dull, but eminently select street, leading to a square of such aristocratic supremacy as to confer a distinction upon its immediate neighbourhood.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Vigogne; I left home in good time, but it was raining so heavily, and the omnibuses were all so full, that I had to wait," a little nervously replied the young girl. Although too pale and anxious-looking for her years, she gave promise of being a beautiful woman in the future, and her earnest, reflective eyes and well-cut mouth and chin indicated that she was not without character and individuality.

"I hope your clothes are not damp," said Mrs. Vigogne, drawing her soft warm wrap about her and wheeling her chair nearer to the fire.

A hot flush rose to the young girl's cheeks, in her guilty consciousness that she did not possess a waterproof, as she replied:—

"I had an umbrella."

"Had you not better sit nearer the window?"

Miss Blake drew her chair to the end of the table near the window and quietly waited for further instructions.

"Be good enough to commence by separating the business letters—tradesmen's accounts and so forth, to be examined later—and pass me the rest one at a time, Miss Blake," said Mrs. Vigogne, with an expectant smile. The contents of some of them, at least, would be pleasant reading, she was thinking.

The young girl sorted the letters, put those which were evidently on business aside, and passed the first of the others that came to hand to Mrs. Vigogne.

She took the letter from its envelope and glanced at it, murmuring to herself, "Only from Harriet, I think. Yes, I see."

But as she proceeded to gather the contents a look of surprise came into her face.

"'I HOPE YOUR CLOTHES ARE NOT DAMP,' SAID MRS. VIGOGNE."

"MY DEAR MARIAN,—How can I sufficiently thank you for the very beautiful and valuable present you have sent me? It is so much more than I could possibly have hoped for. To speak of it as a trifle, too! It will be of the greatest assistance to me and my child; and it is all the more valued because it is given spontaneously, without any appeal to your kindness. Knowing, as you do, what my circumstances are, you will, I feel sure, not object to my disposing of your beautiful

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gift. Indeed, I have no doubt that this was in your mind when sending it to me. Hoping that the thought of the many comforts your kindness will purchase for me and my child in the hour of need will bring happiness to you in the New Year, and with my heartfelt gratitude, believe me, dear Marian, your affectionate cousin,—HARRIET."

"Beautiful and valuable present—valuable? What in the world did it mean? Gratitude for favours to come?" Mrs. Vigogne was asking herself, her thoughts reverting to the contents of the parcel she had sent to her widowed cousin. "Sell the trumpery chiffon fichu, which had only cost two and elevenpence three-farthings at one of the summer sales? Is she laughing at me? Oh, no, gratitude for favours to come, of course," putting the letter on to the little table by her side, with a half-derisive smile.

"The next, Miss Blake. Stay"—with a sudden foreboding. "Is there a letter bearing the Hants postmark?"

The young girl turned over the letters. "Yes, here is one."

"Give it to me."

Mrs. Vigogne hurriedly tore open the envelope and looked through the letter, her face paling as she read:—

"DEAR MRS. VIGOGNE,—Some mistake must have arisen, I think—at least, I hope it is only that—with regard to the packet I received from you. I do not like to believe that you could have so far forgotten what is due to me as to present me with a half-soiled chiffon fichu—one of those we together purchased at the July sale. Nor is the jest, as I suppose it was intended to be, about my admiration for such things in better taste. I must hope you will be able to explain what at present appears an uncalled-for affront, by return of post. I should be sorry, indeed, if our friendship is to be ended in this way, as it most certainly must unless I receive a satisfactory explanation and apology.—Yours, etc., AURELIA DUMOND."

"Lady Dumond! Good gracious, send a half-soiled fichu to *her!*" mentally ejaculated Mrs. Vigogne, with the remembrance of their confidences about "picking up" such little bargains to come in useful by-and-by for presentation—to poor friends and dependents understood. The fichu must have been put into Lady Dumond's parcel by mistake; and the brooch and pendant it had cost her so much to part with! Mrs. Vigogne sank back in her chair, catching in her breath with a gasp of dismay as the truth suddenly

broke upon her. Yes, it had been sent to her cousin Harriet, in such straits since the sudden death of her husband, and the fichu intended for her had gone to Lady Dumond, one of the proudest women in the three kingdoms!

The brooch and pendant had been one amongst a valuable collection of jewels which was bequeathed to her by her late husband with the rest of his property. There had been some question about these jewels, it being considered they were heirlooms that ought to go to his brother's son. The latter had, however, been advised that he might find it difficult to enforce his claim, since there was no authentic inventory; and the late Mr. Vigogne had been a connoisseur and collector, frequently adding to and exchanging the jewels. By making a stir in the matter his nephew might deprive himself of the rest of the property that the widow could dispose of as she pleased, and she had given him reason for hoping this would eventually be his.

The brooch and pendant were of exceptionally fine brilliants and sapphires, and had been intended as a graceful recognition of many a past hospitality and investment for many a future visit to the Dumonds. The value of the gift had been carefully calculated, and it had been sent with many a sigh of regret that nothing less would suffice.

The jewel would fetch at least eight or nine hundred pounds, and it might be already sold for less than half its value if her cousin had taken it to some jeweller who did not know its worth, or was inclined to trade upon her ignorance. Yes, it was too late! There was nothing to be done now beyond explaining the mistake to Lady Dumond and sending another jewel of equal value, which she could not bear to think of.

She silently held out her hand for another letter. "What next?" she was thinking. Surely there could be nothing much worse than what she had already received. In this she was a little premature.

"DEAR MRS. VIGOGNE" ("Aunt Marian" scored through),—"I am reluctant indeed to break off all further communication with you, but this you yourself oblige me to do by the extraordinary pains you have taken to bring it about. It was quite open to you to send me nothing, as my previous experience had taught me to expect, but the New Year's present of a sixpenny tie was quite an unnecessary piece of munificence. You might, at least, have spared yourself the expense of registering the precious gift. If this were all

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I could have passed it over, but the unwarrantable insult—there is no other word for it—offered to the lady I am about to make my wife, whom you have not seen and who has given not the slightest cause for offence, I cannot and will not look over. I return your letter to her, which you had the impertinence to enclose with mine, with the contempt it deserves, and must decline any further correspondence with one capable of writing it.—JAMES ARBUTHNOT."

An insult! A cheque for fifty guineas, enclosed in a prettily worded letter of congratulation upon the approaching event; hoping that her nephew's *fiancée* would purchase some little souvenir of the occasion in his aunt's name, and expressing the desire to very soon know more of one she had heard so highly spoken of. Moreover, in this she had been quite sincere. The marriage would be one of which she entirely approved. Her husband's nephew was clever, ambitious, already representing his county in the House, and giving promise of making some mark in the political world. The lady he was about to marry was the only child and heiress of a county magnate, and, if a few years older than her *fiancé*, was, in other respects, all that could be desired.

With trembling fingers Mrs. Vigogne unfolded the letter, torn contemptuously across, that her nephew had enclosed in his own. Yes, as she had feared, another mistake, and a still more serious one!

This was a letter she had written to a young girl engaged to a nephew of her own, and written in a different spirit from that intended for the bride-elect of James Arbuthnot. Edward Norman was a clerk in a solicitor's office, beginning upon a pittance and with very little prospect of rising to any eminence. Marriage for him meant ruin, decided Mrs. Vigogne. In very plain language she had written to the young lady, giving her opinion of the ill-advised, not to say disastrous, step they were about to take. She had even gone so far as to more than hint that she considered her nephew Edward was being drawn into a marriage by one more clever than scrupulous, ending with the warning that when the inevitable consequences came they must not look to her for help of any kind.

Worse than all, there was an allusion to the young girl's age being in itself an obstacle, and this would hardly be understood, as she had meant it, by James Arbuthnot's *fiancée* as referring to her other nephew's engagement. No, she felt there could be no explaining away an affront such as this.

And what had become of the shares she had sent to her nephew? That cheque for fifty guineas had represented but a fourth part of the value of the present she had sent to James Arbuthnot—the shares which, the last time they had met, he had told her might, if carefully manipulated, still be worth from two to three hundred in the market. Indeed, he had offered to give her a couple of hundred or so and take them off her hands; and, as he was a careful man who might be expected to have private information on the matter, she considered she was, in fact, presenting him with that sum. Instead of these shares he had received a sixpenny necktie!

Mrs. Vigogne turned towards Miss Blake and, not a little angrily, said:—

"There has been a series of mistakes respecting those letters and parcels sent off a few days ago, Miss Blake: mistakes that will place me in a position of great difficulty with some of my friends, and for which you are entirely to blame."

"How could that be, Mrs. Vigogne? I carefully carried out all your instructions."

"The letters must have been put into the wrong parcels. I particularly explained that they were to be numbered consecutively in the order I had placed them, beginning at the right hand, and that as you finished each letter I dictated it was to be enclosed in rotation."

"I did that, and marked those that were to be registered."

"Then how do you account for the mistakes that have arisen?"

"I cannot. Unless"—after a moment's hesitation—"you had removed the first parcel before I began, and, I think—— Yes, I remember now. There was a packet on the table by your side, and I afterwards saw you put it last in the row. If it was removed from the end on the right it must have thrown them all out in the numbering."

Mrs. Vigogne did remember. She had, in fact, been so reluctant to part with that brooch and pendant that she had put the parcel containing the case on the table by her side to take another look at it, and had forgotten to replace it until too late. She was obliged to acknowledge that she herself had made the mistake, although she did so a little grudgingly.

"Had you reminded me of that at the time it would have spared me a great deal of trouble and annoyance, Miss Blake. It was being an invalid which rendered it necessary for me to engage an assistant, and one naturally expects that a certain amount of

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" HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THE MISTAKES THAT HAVE ARISEN?"

him, ma'am. I told him that you did not see visitors, but he says it is very important he should see you, and he will only remain a few minutes."

The curate! Was he, too, mixed up in the complications — had that five shillingsworth of stamps gone to the wrong person?

"Oh, I cannot. Wait a moment, Susan; say I am not able to receive visitors just now, but I will make an exception in Mr. Craig's favour."

"Better know the worst," she was thinking.

A young man of about seven or eight and twenty, his genial face wearing just now a somewhat perplexed expression, entered the room.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mrs. Vigogne, but the vicar asked me to call. He does not quite know what to do with regard to the cheque you have sent him."

It was not for Mr. Craig to explain the reason why the vicar had begged him to undertake the task. In fact, Mr. Selborne a little shrank from going to her himself, although he did not hesitate to speak his mind when they did meet. He had indeed expressed himself rather strongly with regard to the little she did in the parish, where there were very many poor as well as rich, and she had quite as strongly resented what he said.

"In your letter you speak of enclosing your usual subscription, which has invariably been five shillings, and the vicar found a cheque for fifty guineas. I need hardly tell you how great would be the help of that sum to us just now. It warms one's heart to think of the blankets and coals and many a good dinner it would purchase," his face brightening with a smile. "But the cheque is made out for Miss Letitia Somers and not endorsed by her."

interest will be shown in work that is undertaken."

"I am very sorry."

"I have most reason to be sorry, I think."

Not only was the thought of the brooch and pendant rankling in her mind, but she was disturbed by some new feeling which she could not account for. Was it the consciousness that the letter returned to her ought not to have been written, and that Miss Blake had shown her at the time it ought not? If so, if she felt that in her disapproval of what she considered to be a *mésalliance* she had shown the lack of certain qualities she was desirous of having the credit for possessing, she was not the less annoyed at the young girl for perceiving it. Twice had Miss Blake repeated those words, "more clever than scrupulous," as though to ask if she really meant them.

"I fear you are not sufficiently experienced for the work you have undertaken, Miss Blake."

"I told you I had no previous experience, Mrs. Vigogne, but I am very desirous of doing my best," replied the young girl, whitening to the lips with the fear she was about to be dismissed.

There was a tap at the door and a servant looked in.

"Mr. Craig hopes you will be able to see

"It was intended for Miss Letitia Somers, Mr. Craig."

"In that case there is nothing left me but to return it, I suppose. The vicar feared there might be some mistake," a little ruefully taking out his pocket-book.

Mrs. Vigogne was gazing reflectively down at her jewelled fingers. What if she were to give him the fifty guineas after all? The sum was large, but little enough in comparison with the rapidly accumulating capital saved from her large income, and her intention of enriching her already rich nephew had been not a little weakened by his impertinent letter. Moreover, although she was hardly conscious of this, there was the feeling that the vicar's approbation would be welcome to her at this crisis. There was a not unpleasant little stir in her mind from another cause which she did not at that moment attempt to analyze.

"Here is the cheque, Mrs. Vigogne."

Again she hesitated. Then, hurriedly, as though afraid of altering her mind if she delayed, and half-surprised, half-proud of her generosity, she said, glancing, she knew not why, towards the young girl bending over the accounts: "I will not disappoint you, Mr. Craig. You shall have another cheque for the same amount. And"—with what was intended for a little side-blow at the vicar: a reminder of many a little speech of his that had annoyed her—"you must tell Mr. Selborne that you have succeeded where he might have failed."

"Oh, he won't in the least mind who succeeded, so that his poor get the benefit," cheerfully replied Mr. Craig.

"Be good enough to make out a cheque and give it me to sign, Miss Blake."

Mr. Craig's thanks as he took leave sounded very agreeably to Mrs. Vigogne's ears. It was a kind of pleasure to which she was unaccustomed. "He appears quite as elated as though I had given the fifty guineas to *him*," thought Mrs. Vigogne.

She sat silent awhile, glancing now and again towards the young girl, still engaged in making a list of the accounts, then presently said, perhaps with the desire to show what another besides Mr. Craig thought of her generosity:—

"Read this letter from my cousin, Miss Blake. I will ask you presently to reply to it for me."

"MR. CRAIG'S THANKS AS HE TOOK LEAVE SOUNDED VERY AGREEABLY."

She was not a little surprised as she read the evidently sincere expressions of gratitude. Had she judged Mrs. Vigogne unfairly?

"There was no mistake made about this letter, was there, Mrs. Vigogne?"

The latter was a little nonplussed; if she acknowledged there had been, the gratitude would also be a mistake.

"Well—no, on the whole — perhaps not."

"It must be so delightful to have the power to help people."

"If what one does is appreciated."

"Appreciated? Oh, that matters so little in comparison, does it not?"

"You do not care for appreciation, Miss Blake?"

"I am afraid I do more than I ought, since one has so often to do without it; but," with a little half-smile to herself, "I shall learn in time not to want the unattainable, I suppose."

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"Which means that you have had some disappointment?"

"Not exactly that, Mrs. Vigogne. Am I to write the letter now?"

"It would be as well, perhaps. Just a few lines to Mrs. Langly, at that address, stating that I am much gratified by her letter, and am hoping to see her here as soon as I am convalescent."

The young girl's pen travelled quickly over the paper, then, as she turned to take up an envelope, her eyes fell upon a letter she had not previously seen.

"This has not been opened, and it is not a business letter, Mrs. Vigogne," she said, noticing the crest on the envelope.

The latter took it a little doubtfully. "Not another mistake. Not that five shillings-worth of stamps returned with contempt, I hope," said Mrs. Vigogne, inclined to regard the straying of those stamps as almost a jest in comparison with other things that had lost their way.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have been advised that you may perhaps be able to assist me with regard to a difficulty in which I find myself placed, and this will, I trust, excuse my applying to you."

"Someone else wanting assistance!" she ejaculated. "There really seems to be no end to the appeals one gets of that kind!" She was about to throw the letter aside when her attention was caught by the next line, and she read on, a very different expression coming into her face.

"I have been given to understand that Miss Norman, who a short time since resided near Falmouth, is a niece of yours, and, as she has left the place and I am unable to discover her present address, I am hoping you may be able to give me some clue to it. I ought to explain that I am very desirous of winning her for my wife, and that it is her knowledge of this which causes her to keep out of the way, she having been led to believe that my people strongly object to the marriage. We know now by whom the mischief was made and the end that was in view. I will not trouble you by going farther into this. It is sufficient to say that Miss Norman was induced to think that if the marriage took place I should be disinherited by my father of all but a barren title. He has, in fact, neither the will nor the power to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, he is very desirous of welcoming the woman I love. I am quite as determined to find her as she is to keep out of the way, venturing as I do to think she returns my love, and it is this which has led her to prefer what she believes to be my welfare to her own.

"Immediately after her father's death she disappeared, and has, so far, baffled all attempts to find her. The vicar there gave me your address, and I have thought that perhaps Miss Norman might have communicated with you. More he would not say, being, I fancy, bound to secrecy in the matter.

"Can you assist me? I have called two or three times, but have been given to understand that you see no one just now. I did not leave a card in case Miss Norman should be with you, and if she saw my name she might take wing before I had time to give an explanation. Could you send me a line or, better still, grant me an interview, I should be grateful beyond words. Meantime, believe me, dear Mrs. Vigogne, truly yours, SEVERAN."

"Severan! Severan! Could he really be——?"

Mrs. Vigogne took up the book generally kept near at hand, and more interesting to her than any other.

"Yes, 'fifth earl—only son—Gloucestershire—Warwickshire—Berkeley Square.'"

She put the book on the low table by her side and sat gazing straight before her, dazzled and bewildered by the wonderful prospect opening out to her mental vision.

Her niece—the daughter of a poor lieutenant in the Navy—to be sought after in this fashion by one upon whom a duke would be proud to bestow his daughter! The Normans could boast of good blood, to be sure, but really! Lady Severan! Why, she would take precedence of a Dumond! *Dear* Mabel! Yes, of course she must be found as quickly as possible; in her heart of hearts having no doubt that she would be found when the right time came.

Mrs. Vigogne had been too long accustomed to study the weaker side of human nature to have much knowledge of the stronger. That any girl could possibly give up such a prospect for the motives her niece had the credit for she did not believe, although she might think it necessary to keep up the fiction, since this wonderful lover admired it so much.

To give some vent to her feelings, which she found it somewhat difficult to control in her pride and excitement, she turned towards Miss Blake, and said, endeavouring to speak in a matter-of-course tone:—

"This is a letter which I must make an

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effort to reply to myself, Miss Blake. When a peer of the realm addresses me, I suppose I ought to reply to him personally, especially when it is written upon a question of importance to me and my family. But I have no objection—I think I should like you to see the letter."

The young girl read it slowly through, more slowly than was necessary, Mrs. Vigogne thought, a little impatiently.

"Quite a romance in real life, is it not, Miss Blake?"

"It seems so."

"Such a match for her; I am really quite proud of my niece!"

"She, too, has reason for being proud and—humble—and—all sorts of things to have won such love as that, has she not?"

"I have not seen her since she was a little child, but it was said she was growing up quite pretty," musingly went on Mrs. Vigogne. "I really had no idea—she must be more than ordinarily beautiful!"

"She may be ambitious, perhaps, and would not be satisfied even with being beautiful! One of those girls who want to be loved for—oh, something or other, that goes to make us ourselves."

"I do not quite understand you, Miss Blake."

"I do not understand myself sometimes, Mrs. Vigogne. I was only thinking that your niece might not care to be a ladyship, and, in that case, would wish he were not a lord"—with a little laugh that sounded half a sob.

"No girl would be so foolish as that, I think."

"But if all girls wanted to marry lords there would not be enough to go round, and they would have to be fought for, or raffled for, or something of that sort, you know."

Mrs. Vigogne looked a little curious as well as surprised. She had not before seen the young girl in this mood. That Miss Blake had a mind of her own she knew; but she generally gave the impression of keeping a tight rein over her feelings, and she seemed suddenly to have become emotional, tears and smiles in her face at the same time. Her whole bearing was different! She presently remembered a little half-admission, as it had seemed to her. "Ah, yes, she had judged correctly. There had been a disappointment, and it was too much to expect her to rejoice over another's good fortune, perhaps."

"MR. NORMAN AND MISS WEST WISH TO SEE YOU, MA'AM."

The door was opened again and a servant looked in.

"Mr. Norman and Miss West wish to see you, ma'am."

"Really, Susan, when you know——"

"It's not a bit of use my saying you can't see them, for they are like the gentleman that's just gone, and won't be said 'no' to," a little crossly replied Susan, not choosing to take the blame.

"Tell them——" Mrs. Vigogne paused, suddenly remembering that Edward Norman could certainly not have come to revile her for sending him a sixpenny necktie. Nor could Miss West have received the letter intended for James Arbuthnot's *fiancée*. Instead of saying what she had meant to say, she added, "I will see them, Susan."

Her eyes turned curiously towards the door, when it was presently opened again to admit a tall, well-built, pleasant-looking young man and a fair, graceful girl of between seventeen and eighteen years of age.

"We felt we must come to thank you personally for your great kindness, Aunt Marian. A letter would not half explain the gratitude we feel. To begin with, this is my Helen, whom your goodness will enable me very soon to call my wife."

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Mrs. Vigogne was equal to the occasion now, and welcomed them graciously enough. They took the seats she indicated and, noticing that they glanced towards the young girl bending over her work at the writing-table, she said: "This young lady has been acting as confidential secretary for me during my illness."

Both bowed smilingly to her, and the courtesy was gracefully acknowledged, Miss Blake bowing as smilingly in return.

Understanding now that the letter—the writing of which had somewhat puzzled him—had been written by the young secretary, Edward Norman saw that he might speak freely.

"You have given us both the happiness we had almost given up hoping for, Aunt Marian; such generosity I did not expect, and had not the slightest grounds for expecting."

"You mean—that is, you are alluding to the shares?" seeing now that they must have gone to him. "You received them?"

"Yes, thank you a thousand times; they arrived safely, but, if you will excuse my saying so, they should have been registered, as some protection against loss. Your letter to Helen, too, so large-hearted in its kindness. I assure you she thinks it no less valuable."

"I do, indeed," said the young girl. "It was more than good of you to write to me in that way, Mrs. Vigogne."

"I feel that I know you as I have not before known you, Aunt Marian," said the young man, reddening a little with the consciousness of many a contemptuous thought of her meanness.

She, too, was looking a little conscious and confused by all this warmth of gratitude for what she had not intended to give, as she said:—

"The shares were for ——" She glanced at the two happy faces, and had not the heart to add, "James Arbuthnot."

"They were worth a thousand pounds when you sent them, but they would realize six or seven times as much as that now."

A thousand! James Arbuthnot had offered to give her a couple of hundred pounds, as though out of kindness—just to take them off her hands!

"They are going up by leaps and bounds, and already represent quite a little fortune. Did you not know they were likely to do this, Aunt Marian?" beginning to look a little anxious.

She returned his gaze for a moment or two, then quietly replied:—

"I gave them to you for what they may be worth, Edward, and," speaking more decidedly as she went on, "I shall be glad to know they have increased in value in your hands."

"They are a fortune now, and my governor, who knows what he is talking about, says they will soon be worth a very large one. He is in earnest, too, for he suggested that there will presently be a partnership vacant in the firm, and I might do worse than employ my capital that way, if I do not wish to be an idle man. You may guess what that means to me. Instead of grinding my life out for thirty shillings a week, I shall be a man of means with a nice place of my own to return to after business; and in time"—he broke off with a little laugh that rang pleasantly through the room—"well, there is no knowing where it will stop; for I like work, and am not the fellow to let the grass grow under my feet. You will see me at the top of the tree in no time, and have the pleasure of knowing that it is you I have to thank for it all. Be quick to get well and let us come again soon, then you will see. We must not stay any longer now. Indeed, we had the greatest difficulty in persuading your servant to let us in, but I felt sure it would not hurt you to listen to a few words of gratitude and to know how much good you have done for us, so I fought it out with her."

"Come and dine with me on Thursday—just a friendly little dinner to meet my cousin Harriet and, it may be, one other." After a moment or two's reflection she added: "Can you tell me anything about your Uncle William's daughter? Do you know where she is now, Edward? I have heard nothing from her since her father's death, but I believe she has left Cornwall."

"No, I have not seen her since she was quite a little child. You see, uncle lived so far off, and he was a little stand-offish, I fancy, for he only occasionally sent a line in reply to my letters, and I could never get to hear much of my cousin. I suppose the truth was—oh, well, one can pretty well guess. Poor people as well as rich ones have their defects, and are apt to be a little over-sensitive and meet pride with pride. I'm afraid they were very poor."

"I made my brother an allowance," said Mrs. Vigogne, less satisfied with the thought that it was but thirty pounds a year than she would have been a few days previously. What if some of her superfluous capital, the investing of which gave her so much trouble,

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might have prolonged his life or, at any rate, have enabled him to obtain the comforts that are so much needed in illness! "Had I known more was required, of course it would have been forthcoming. As to Mabel, I am very desirous she should be found as quickly as possible, for reasons I will explain to you more fully on Thursday."

"I shall find her, never fear. I made up my mind about that as soon as good fortune came to me. I shall make it my business to go to Cornwall and hunt her up. We mean to induce her to come and live with us and share the best we have. She won't be able to withstand Helen and me together, and she'll soon find we are in earnest."

"I am very desirous she should be found," repeated Mrs. Vigogne; "I hope you will be able to bring me some news of her when you come again. Good-bye."

They shook hands, and were about to pass the young girl sitting at the writing-table, with a smile and a bow, when she rose and put out her hand with a murmured "Good-bye," looking agitated, and as though she had some difficulty in keeping back the tears in her eyes.

Mrs. Vigogne looked curiously on, and as soon as the door closed the young girl said, with a somewhat nervous little laugh:—

"One forgets the conventionalities sometimes, and it is as well one should."

"You think so?"

"With some, yes, and—they seem so—everything that is kind."

"They are that, I believe, and they certainly make an attractive-looking young couple. But you are tired, cold, Miss Blake? Come nearer to the fire, child, you are so pale," said Mrs. Vigogne, in a tone and manner that would have surprised those who thought they knew her best and certainly surprised herself.

"No, thank you, I do not feel cold," hesitatingly.

"You are not thinking of what I said this morning, are you? I was a little annoyed, and spoke too decidedly under the impression that you were to blame for the mistakes that occurred. As I told you, I afterwards saw that I myself was to blame, and I do not now regret it, therefore you need give no more thought to the matter."

"It is not that. There is something I ought to tell you; it would have been better to do so at first; I see that now, but I was afraid. The truth is, I thought you so different from what you really are, and I did not want to appeal to you in any way."

"Appeal—you?"

"As things were, it might have appeared that. Now everything is changed for me."

A letter was brought in and presented to Mrs. Vigogne.

"Read it to me, Miss Blake; I am getting tired of letter-reading," she said, feeling that there could be nothing to come now which the young girl might not see.

As she opened it the five dozen stamps fell out.

"The stamps!" thought Mrs. Vigogne. "Now, where do they come from?"

"DEAR MRS. VIGOGNE,—My husband and I feel that we must not accept the enclosed for our boys' visit to the pantomime. Indeed, their uncle took them to Drury Lane last night, after they had dined with him at the Cecil—you know how nicely he does these little kindnesses—and therefore we must not let them go again this vacation. Hoping you have now recovered your cold,—Yours truly, AMY MARCHMONT."

"That those stamps should go there! As you know, I had written to engage a five-guinea box for those boys."

"Yes, here is the voucher," said the young girl, looking through the papers.

"Then the box must have remained empty while they were paying for another. Had they been inclined to give me credit for good intentions they might have supposed it was a mistake, especially since I have given them a box for the last three years. I shall not take the trouble to explain, at any rate for the present," telling herself it would only be the loss of a couple of dinners during the season.

"And now for your revelation, Miss Blake. Am I right in the supposition that it relates to a love quarrel and a reconciliation?"

"No, not a quarrel. It is——"

The door was opened once more and Susan looked in, a smile—brought by a golden argument that had been used—broadening over her face.

"Lord Severan begs to know if you can see him for a few minutes, ma'am."

"Lord Severan! Oh, yes, show him here, Susan," promptly.

A young man of about seven or eight and twenty, who, if not handsome, had a strong and kindly face, presently entered the room.

"I trust you will excuse my pertinacity, Mrs. Vigogne. The servant thought you might not be able to see me; but, as my errand is of great importance to me, I induced her to ask you. You received my letter?"

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"Yes"—adding to the young girl, as though to draw his attention to the presence of a stranger, "I will not detain you longer, Miss Blake. Indeed, you have done quite enough for to-day, I think."

Why, what in the world had come to her? Instead of quitting the room the young girl came blushing and smiling forwards.

He looked round and sprang towards her, holding out both hands.

"Mabel! You! This is good fortune indeed!"

plain, child. But why did you not take me into your confidence before?"

"I did not know you as I do now, and I did not want to talk about things."

"But how was it you came here?"

"The rector of our place is a friend of the vicar here, and wrote to ask him to recommend me in case he heard of any work that I could undertake. Mr. Selborne heard that you were seeking for someone to write for you, and I came." To Lord Severan she said: "I took the name of Blake, my mother's maiden name, in the hope of concealing my identity. Of course, I did not foresee your coming here."

"Don't you think I'm

"MABEL! YOU! THIS IS GOOD FORTUNE INDEED!"

a lucky fellow, Mrs. Vigogne? As I told Miss Mabel, I was bound to get my way."

She looked at him a moment, then put her hands into his.

"Gerald!"

Mrs. Vigogne sank back in her chair. All that had gone before seemed as nothing in comparison with this!

"I have been reading your letter," said Mabel to him, in a low, tremulous voice. "I know now that I need not have kept out of the way." Then her eyes filled with tears of happiness; she turned to Mrs. Vigogne: "I was just about to tell you when Gerald came in, Aunt Marian."

"Of course, I can see what is so very

"I want my way," said the happy girl, with gay defiance, "and I think I shall get it as long as I live."

"Because it will be mine. You see we understand each other, Aunt Marian?"

"Aunt has just seen as much love-making as she can bear for the present. Two have already been here."

Mrs. Vigogne looked at the two with proud eyes. She would have to act up to the character of the benevolent aunt to the end of her days now.

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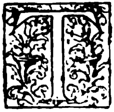
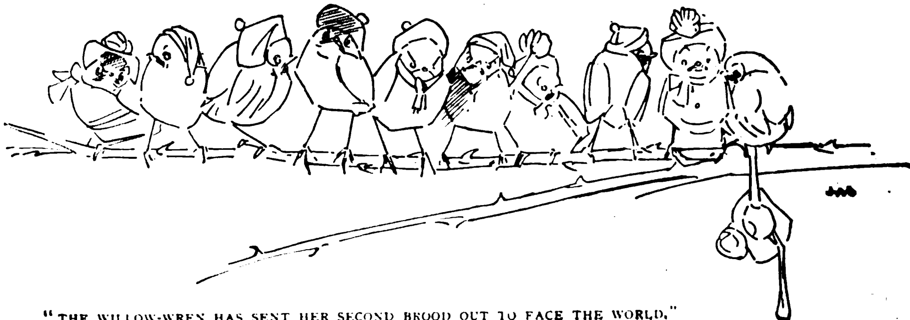
By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd.



THE cuckoo has passed from the stage of hoarseness to that of silence and is heard no more. The Live-long-day Popular Concerts are practically over now, for many of the singers are moulting, and they do not feel very well. Individuals who have not begun to change their clothes, the chaffinch, skylark, robin, and others, continue, but it is the aftermath of the concert season, and most of the birds sit about in the shade and gape for air in the stillness of noontide. The snake, either because he feels the heat or because it is time to do so, strips off his coat, now an overcoat, and leaves it lying under some bush, a limp and pallid thing like the ghost of its owner. The snake disrobes very thoroughly, taking off even the old spectacles which are attached to his hood. The viper, who has hatched her eggs in her own body, has her brood round her: very young vipers cannot protect themselves, and there is much reliable evidence to support the belief that, when danger threatens, their mother accommodates them with sanctuary in her own interior, welcoming the giddy young things with open mouth, and imploring them to come in one at a time lest they stick by the way. When she has got the whole dozen on board she writhes away into safety, and calls them up again to inquire how they liked it.

The moorhen looks round on her family, two broods and about fifteen all told, with pardonable pride. Well she may, for the elder children had helped her build, the



"THE WILLOW-WREN HAS SENT HER SECOND BROOD OUT TO FACE THE WORLD."

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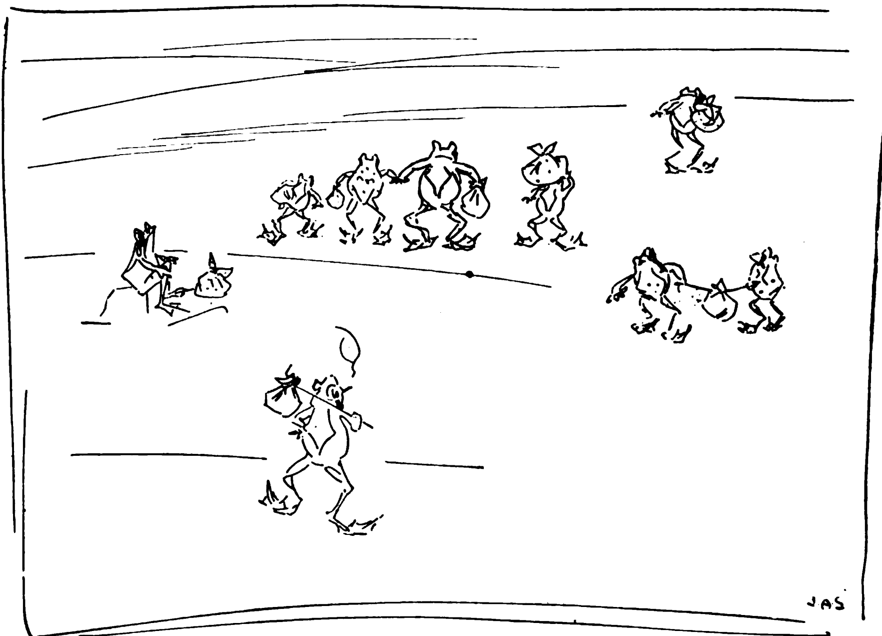
second nest she wanted, and as soon as their younger brothers and sisters chipped out they helped feed and look after them. No doubt they also tub and put them to bed and give them swimming lessons. The moorhen's wisdom is not confined to her method of bringing up children; when floods threaten she and her mate have been known to build higher the nest of sedge and flags on the water's edge that the eggs may not get wet. Their besetting sin is love of quarrelling. Moorhens are never on terms of common civility with their neighbours, and forget themselves so far as to kill and eat other people's children.

The swan, who has been sitting for five weeks on her eggs, now appears in public with her ugly children. Swans are jealous parents, and show fight if man or dog come near the brood; the young married swan has only three or four cygnets when, at the age of two or three years, she establishes her first nursery; as she grows older she faces family responsibility more boldly and thinks little of rearing ten or a dozen babies.

"ST. KESTREL."

The long-tailed tit's children are sitting in a row on some handy twig, gaping for more like so many fluffy Oliver Twists. If consulted, they would probably have preferred to stay longer in the nest, but that was wanted for the second family, and they had to turn out. The willow-wren has sent her second brood out to face the world, from the little domed nest on the ground. She is nervous and indiscreet when her children are big enough to wander about by themselves, and often tells you where they are by the way she screams to them to come to her for protection. The goldfinch is sitting on her second clutch, and is trying to induce her mate to sing; but he is beginning to tire of singing, as he is apt to do about this time, and will only open his beak when the spirit moves him. Also, the thistles are seeding, and if there is one thing the restless goldfinch enjoys more than another it is to swing on a thistle-top and pick the downy seeds.

The sparrow-hawk has got her four, five,



"YOUNG FROGS MUST EMIGRATE."

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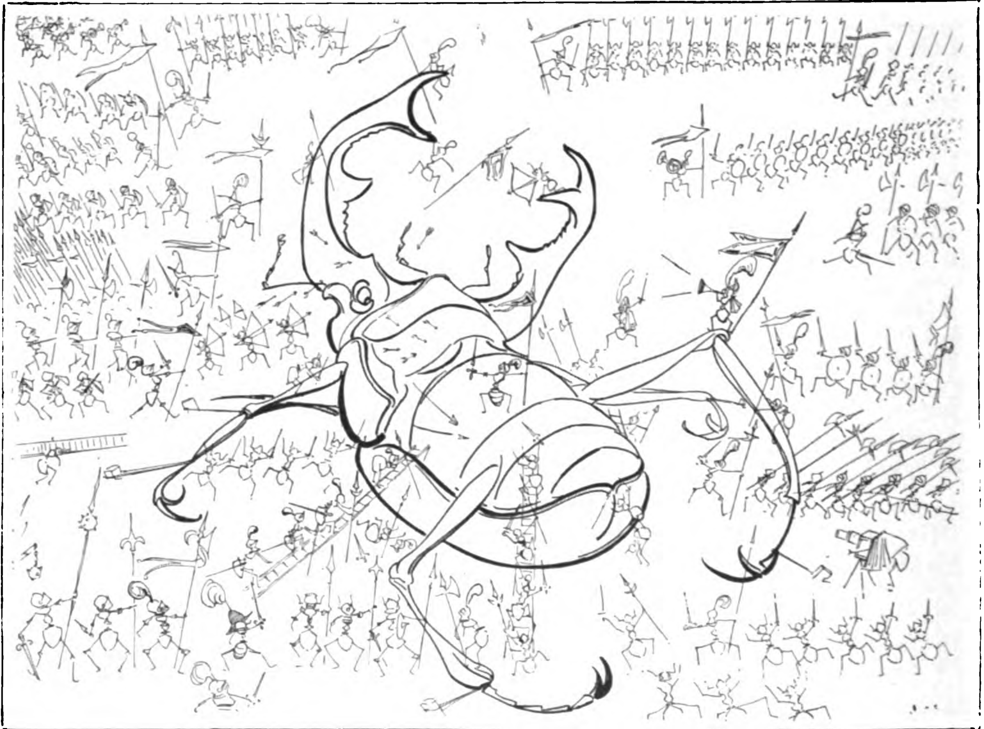
or six children out of the nest at last. Her nursery duties are particularly tedious, for the eggs take nearly seven weeks to hatch, whereas other birds of her size manage the business in half the time or less. The hungry family perch on the branches and worry their parents, who grow perfectly reckless as to how they fill the larder. They steal chickens from the poultry yard under the henwife's nose and defy the gamekeeper among his pheasant coops when lawful prey, wood-pigeons and the like, is scarce. So bad is

You don't imprison Brown or Jones if Thomson steal a hat,
And when your little dog does wrong you do not beat the cat.
I seldom kill a bird at all; and, faith, I cannot see
Why, when the sparrow-hawk kills chicks, you come and murder me!

Occasionally a kestrel contracts the evil habit of raiding poultry yard or pheasant field; but the normal life of this St. Kestrel is more than blameless, if the slaughter of vermin be meritorious.

Mrs. Swift, in the church tower, is educating her children: one of the first things young



"THE STAG-BEETLE GULLIVER AND THE LILIPUTIAN ANTS."

the character of the sparrow-hawk that other birds bearing the faintest resemblance to him, or to a hawk at all, pay for his sins with their lives. The nearly harmless kestrel, who hangs in mid-air as though suspended from a thread tied to a cloud, is always getting into trouble for the sparrow-hawk's misdeeds:—

A mouse for breakfast, mouse for lunch, for dinner yet a third,
Surely what's virtue in a cat is virtue in a bird?
When mice are scarce we're all at pains your fields of rats to rid,
And yet you shoot us down at sight for things we never did!

swifts learn is to fire themselves at a velocity of about 500ft. per second into a 3in. hole: this difficult accomplishment, one would think, cannot be acquired without many bumps and bruises. There are stir and bustle down by the horse-pond: the place is over-populated, and young frogs must emigrate and start life somewhere else. It is hard on frogs not out of pinafores and no bigger than a sixpence; but the emigration season is held glorious by ducks and other fowl, who snap up the little travellers in scores as they toil painfully across the rough and trackless desert—which to us appears to be the high

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"HE MET A FOX."

road—in searcn of the damp ditch which, rumour saith, is on the farther side. The stag-beetle digs his way out of the ground at the root of the oak in the warm evening and sails ponderously off into the world: the cockchafer and little beetles get out of his way and the caterpillars lie still as death, hoping to escape notice, for the stag-beetle is hungry. That lordly creature apparently expects twigs as well as cockchafers to get out of his way, for he is always coming to grief in the lanes: you may find him on his back in the road any morning.

It seems to be a point of honour with the stag-beetle that when he falls he shall fall on his back, and an inverted stag-beetle is as helpless as a "turned turtle." There he lies feebly clawing the air until the ants find him out—which they are sure to do soon—and when that happens his moments are numbered. Surrounding him in crowds, as the Liliputians swarmed round and over Gulliver, they treat the fallen beetle less considerately than the little folk treated that hero; in brief, they set to work and take him to pieces without waiting for him to die.

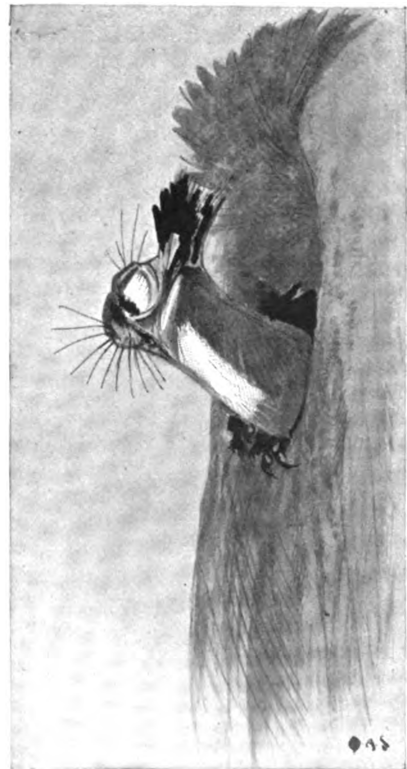
The hedgehog's children are abroad now, peering furtively about into the dusk. The young hedgehog is defenceless, for his spines are merely stiff hairs, and he can trot about and enjoy himself long before he can roll into a ball. He learns to perform this indispensable feat in time, but, as you can well suppose, it requires long practice before it can be accomplished at the lightning speed the experienced hedgehog displays when pounced upon by a fox or when fighting a viper. A state of repletion probably does not make for activity, so this is not altogether a fancy picture:—

The hedgehog's boy dined with a friend one day,
And dined too well—not wisely: people say,
Young hedgehogs are a little prone that way.

Well, coming home across the field that night
He met a fox and tried to roll up tight,
That prickly spines should baffle cunning might.

The hapless hedgehog! for the nonce too stout,
He couldn't roll up quick enough: no doubt
The fox saw promptly what he'd been about
And turned him upside down and inside out.

The squirrels have begun their children's

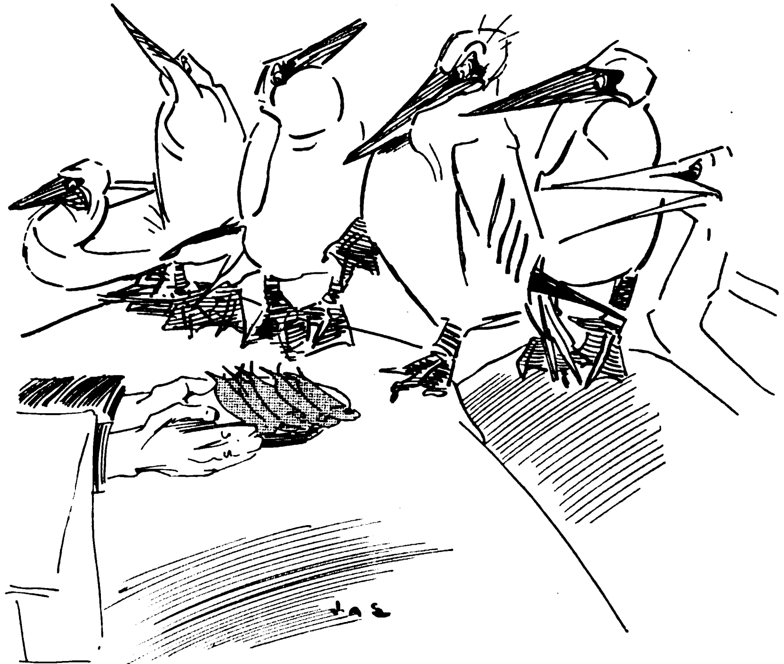


"ABUSE."

"QUIET MEDITATION."

education, which includes athletics, birds'-nesting, and scolding in all their respective branches. The squirrel is an unprincipled fellow: he thinks nothing of stealing the eggs of birds as big as the wood-pigeon, and occasionally adds insult to injury by eating them in the nest and omitting to clean the place up afterwards. He has been known to stoop to the worse depravity of catching young birds and eating them; but this conduct, be it said for the credit of the species, is not usual. Concerning trespassers he and his wife hold strong opinions, which they express with enviable fluency when their children are about. The squirrel's vocabulary of abuse is extensive, and, when roused, a mere boy squirrel can put a bargeman to shame. The young badgers are allowed to go out in the evening now and romp, somewhat ponderously, with their indulgent parents. Romping is not much in the middle-aged badger's line; he prefers quiet meditation, and meditates at great length when leisure permits. Neither he nor his wife has much time for it just at present: new beds have to be made, and the badger's bed is no trifle. He has a singularly ungraceful way of carrying in litter: he collects a heap of dry bracken and grass, or straw if available; throws himself over it and backs homewards, hugging the stuff under him with his arms. It is an undignified proceeding for the scion of an old county family, but he works at night, careless what the fox, owls, and bats think of him.

The storm petrel, a bird whose name is known to everybody if her person be familiar to few, has now hatched out her single egg. Sometimes the storm petrel, who assembles in a colony for breeding, makes a sketchy sort of nest in a


"A POOR CATERER."

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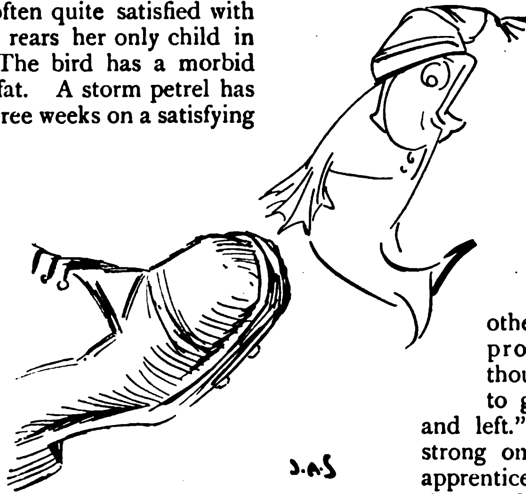
burrow, but she is often quite satisfied with the bare ground and rears her only child in Spartan simplicity. The bird has a morbid passion for anything fat. A storm petrel has been kept alive for three weeks on a satisfying diet of oil; presumably a young one would accept a tallow candle in the spirit of fervid gratitude a child displays towards a stick of sugar-candy. The guillemot's children are by this time old enough to be launched—literally speaking—and their parents bring them down from the rock-ledges on their backs. Sometimes the old bird brings down the infant by the scruff of the neck, but probably she adopts this drastic treatment only if he refuse to climb on her back. It must be said, in justification of the young guillemot, that the descent from rock-ledge to sea on the maternal back is a trip fraught with peril, as the most careful parent cannot help dropping her child occasionally. The gannet's egg has yielded a naked, black, unlovely monster with an insatiable appetite for fish. An author afflicted with statistical tastes calculated that the gannets on St. Kilda, estimated at 200,000 birds, ate 214,000,000 herrings in seven months. He allowed each bird five herrings a day — an allowance which in practical application would certainly have secured his summary dismissal as caterer. Gannets are enormous eaters, and when a shoal of herrings offers opportunity gorge themselves till they cannot rise from the water.



"DISCHARGED WITH A CAUTION."

The young grouse can fly well now; family affection or self-interest keeps the brood together, as it does in the case of some other birds: a beautiful provision of Nature, a thoughtful sportsman said, to give you a nice "right and left." Pheasant chicks are strong on the leg if still mere apprentices in the art of flying; they prefer to hide rather than try and escape by running. The young pheasant labours under the delusion that if it squat down and stretch out its neck it becomes invisible; amid favourable surroundings it may be overlooked, but a chick doing this in the open field looks foolish. The rabbit, by the way, cherishes the same mistaken theory in his innocent youth, and does not always outgrow it. The young partridges can fly, too, and thus relieve their affectionate parents of the necessity — doubtless painful to conscientious birds— of shamming lameness to draw off man or other enemy who may venture near the covey. The partridge is a child in artifice compared to the wild duck, who is a past-master in the arts of deception. Father and mother sham broken legs and wings as though the tricks were just patented, instead of having been practised ever since wild duck's enemies were created.

"NEW CLOTHES."

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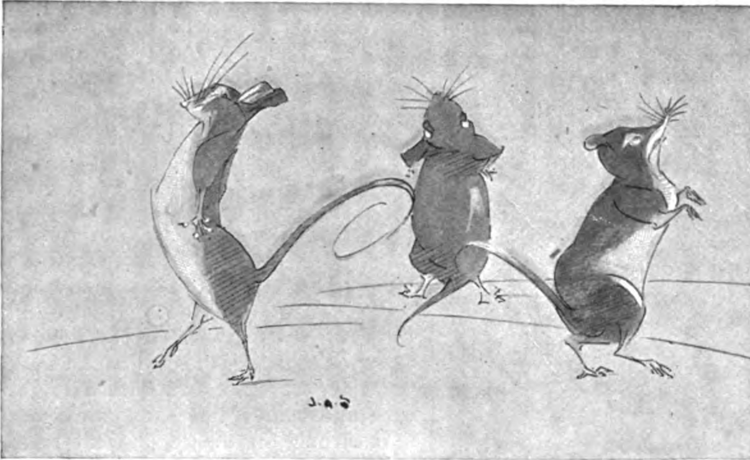
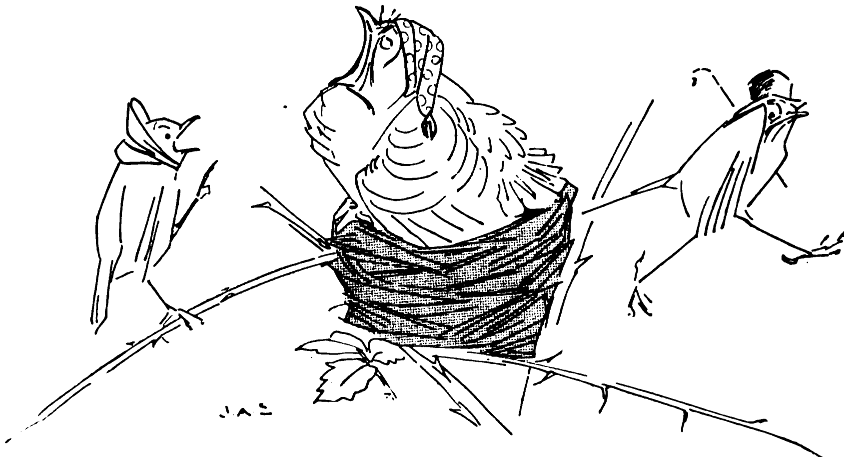


"NOT ON SQUEAKING TERMS."

The toad changes his clothes; he does not, like the snake, risk outraging the sense of propriety of chance passers-by stripping in the open: he retires to the privacy of his underground dressing-room and disrobes there. First he rubs his sides down with his elbows till his coat splits down the back; then, wishing no doubt it was made to unbutton in front, he rubs it into folds on is sides, when with his right hand he draws the left side clear, and *vice versâ*, so that it hangs like a bib. He draws off his pants, leg by leg, exactly as a man would do, and strips off his sleeves—eating each garment as he takes it off—and stands up newly clad from top to toe, perfectly happy and pleased with himself, as why should he not be?

> Give me the clo's a fellow grows
> With Nature's kindly aid.
> No tailor woes; one always knows
> They will be nicely made.

There are plenty of infant salmon abroad—far more than any trout fisherman wants—for the parr's curiosity concerning trout-flies is insatiable, and he takes flies not meant for him with the recklessness of a creature who knows he will be discharged, under the First Offenders' Act, with a pricked lip by way of caution. Salmon ova hatch out in from thirty-five to 148 days, according to the temperature of the water: cold means delay and warmth expedition. That is a lucky parr who reaches full-blown salmonhood: it is reckoned that four or five fish reach salmon's estate out of every 30,000 eggs laid. The salmon rejoices in a wealth of names applicable to stage of growth, condition, and sex; I have counted forty-two without including any of those names you call him when he won't rise.



"A MUSIC LESSON."

> However wet your things may get,
> Their shape they never lose;
> No fellow yet I ever met
> Lacked smartness in his shoes.

Dytiscus, passed through the various stages of existence, egg, larva, and pupa, has

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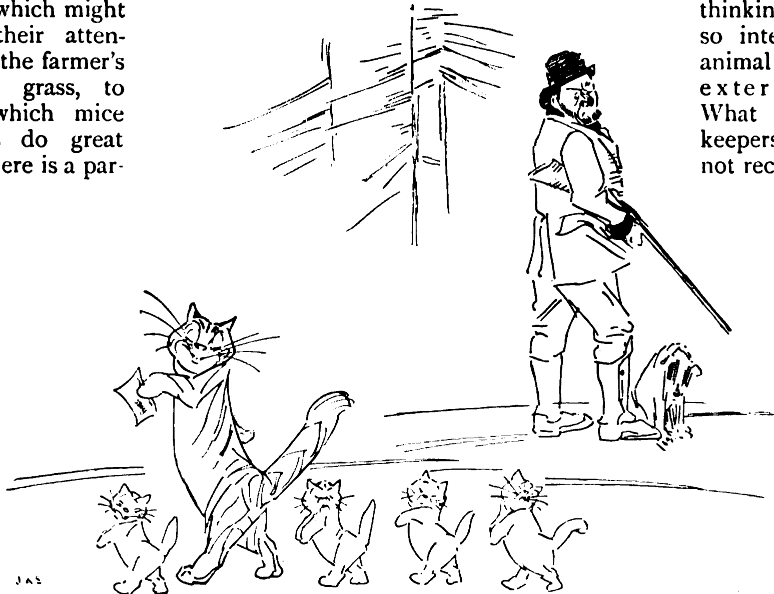
emerged from the underground cell wherein he underwent his final transformation, a fully equipped water-beetle. Dytiscus is one of the champion oarsmen of the insect world; he rows with his hind legs, which are flattened and furnished along the lower edge with stiff hairs, and a neat arrangement of joints enables him to "feather" his oars in the fashion approved by rowing men. Hydrophilus, the great water-beetle, is a very poor oarsman compared with his smaller cousin: he does not even attempt to keep time; feeding as he does chiefly on vegetable matter, it is less necessary for him to excel. Dytiscus catches other insects, some of which require chasing, so necessity has made him a professional, while hydrophilus remains a contented and indifferent amateur.

The wood-pigeons are nursing their second pair of twins, and so are the turtle-doves, if they have decided to rear two families this season, which is not always the case. Some young birds, the robins for instance, are trying to sing—to the gratification of their proud parents, who do not, so far as human knowledge goes, give them any education in harmony: imagine a hedge-sparrow trying to teach a young cuckoo his notes! Young field-mice, field-voles, and shrews of all ages of indiscretion from a month upwards are abroad in numbers. These animals are not on squeaking terms with one another: a pity, as the youthful mice and voles are fond of play, and in every field there are enough of them to get up games which might distract their attention from the farmer's corn and grass, to both of which mice and voles do great harm. There is a particularly big black mark in the agriculturist's calendar against the field-vole; from time to time he arises in the might of numbers, multiplying with incredible rapidity, and bringing ruin to whole parishes. The Roxburghshire farmers will not soon forget the "vole plague" of 1892–3, when a succession of dry springs and summers induced every vole in the country to marry young, bring up one family after another, and marry their sons and daughters off in feverish haste. Over a district of 90,000 acres or more, grazing and crops in turn were destroyed.

The wild cat's young family, reared largely on stolen game, is out on the trail. The study of the wild cat is fraught with vexation to the scientific man; that noble animal (the cat, I mean), for his sins, has been as nearly exterminated as game preservation can accomplish it; but the bond between the true wild cat and frail domestic cat is close. If the home-bred cat go to the woods she remains there, lending willing ear to the addresses of a cat with wild blood in his veins, or to those of an outlaw like herself. Her progeny, in a generation or two, take upon them the outward and inward semblance of the wild cat; and of such a forest-bred cat no man may say her grandmother was of blameless antecedents or was born and bred a proscribed bandit.

The late Duke of Westminster, a naturalist at heart, preserved the few true wild cats left on Reay Forest, thinking it a pity so interesting an animal should be exterminated. What his Grace's keepers thought is not recorded.



"FREE OF THE FOREST."

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THE MONEY-BOX

BY

W. W. JACOBS

AILORMEN are not good 'ands at saving money as a rule, said the night-watchman, as he wistfully toyed with a bad shilling on his watch-chain, though to 'ear 'em talk of saving when they're at sea and there isn't a pub within a thousand miles of 'em, you might think different.

It ain't for the want of trying either with some of 'em, and I've known men do all sorts o' things as soon as they was paid off, with a view to saving. I knew one man as used to keep all but a shilling or two in a belt next to 'is skin so that he couldn't get at it easy, but it was all no good. He was always running short in the most inconvenient places. I've seen 'im wriggle for five minutes right off, with a tramcar conductor standing over 'im and the other people in the tram reading their papers with one eye and watching him with the other.

Ginger Dick and Peter Russet—two men I've spoke of to you afore—tried to save their money once. They'd got so sick and tired of spending it all in p'r'aps a week or ten days arter coming ashore, and 'aving to go to sea agin sooner than they 'ad intended, that they determined some way or other to 'ave things different.

They was homeward bound on a steamer from Melbourne when they made their minds up; and Isaac Lunn, the oldest fireman aboard — a very steady old teetotaler —gave them a lot of good advice about it. They all wanted to rejoin the ship when she sailed agin, and 'e offered to take a room ashore with them and mind their money, giving 'em what 'e called a moderate amount each day.

They would ha' laughed at any other man, but they knew that old Isaac was as honest as could be and that their money would be safe with 'im, and at last, after a lot of palaver, they wrote out a paper saying as they were willing for 'im to 'ave their money and give it to 'em bit by bit, till they went to sea agin.

Anybody but Ginger Dick and Peter Russet or a fool would ha' known better than to do such a thing, but old Isaac 'ad got such a oily tongue and seemed so fair-minded about wot 'e called moderate drinking that they never thought wot they was letting themselves in for, and when they took their pay—close on sixteen pounds each—they put the odd change in their pockets and 'anded the rest over to him.

The first day they was as pleased as Punch. Old Isaac got a nice, respectable bedroom for them all, and arter they'd 'ad a few drinks they humored 'im by 'aving a nice 'ot cup o' tea, and then goin' off with 'im to see a magic-lantern performance.

It was called "The Drunkard's Downfall," and it begun with a young man going into a nice-looking pub and being served by a nice-looking barmaid with a glass of ale.

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Then it got on to 'arf pints and pints in the next picture, and arter Ginger 'ad seen the lost young man put away six pints in about 'arf a minute, 'e got such a raging thirst on 'im that 'e couldn't sit still, and 'e whispered to Peter Russet to go out with 'im.

"You'll lose the best of it if you go now," ses old Isaac, in a whisper; "in the next picture there's little frogs and devils sitting on the edge of the pot as 'e goes to drink."

Ginger Dick got up and nodded to Peter.

"Arter that 'e kills 'is mother with a razor," ses old Isaac, pleading with 'im and 'olding on to 'is coat.

Ginger Dick sat down agin, and when the murder was over 'e said it made 'im feel faint, and 'im and Peter Russet went out for a breath of fresh air. They 'ad three at the first place, and then they moved on to another and forgot all about Isaac and the dissolving views until ten o'clock, when Ginger, who 'ad been very liberal to some friends 'e'd made in a pub, found 'e'd spent 'is last penny.

"This comes o' listening to a parcel o' teetotalers," 'e ses, very cross, when 'e found that Peter 'ad spent all 'is money too. "Here we are just beginning the evening and not a farthing in our pockets."

They went off 'ome in a very bad temper. Old Isaac was asleep in 'is bed, and when they woke 'im up and said that they was going to take charge of their money themselves 'e kept dropping off to sleep agin and snoring that 'ard they could scarcely hear themselves speak. Then Peter tipped Ginger a wink and pointed to Isaac's trousers, which were 'anging over the foot of the bed.

Ginger Dick smiled and took 'em up softly, and Peter Russet smiled too; but 'e wasn't best pleased to see old Isaac a-smiling in 'is sleep, as though 'e was 'aving amusing dreams. All Ginger found was a ha'penny,. a bunch o' keys, and a cough lozenge. In the coat and waistcoat 'e found a few tracks folded up, a broken pen-knife, a ball of string, and some other rubbish. Then 'e set down on the foot o' their bed and made eyes over at Peter.

"Wake 'im up agin," ses Peter, in a temper.

Ginger Dick got up and, leaning over the bed, took old Isaac by the shoulders and shook 'im as if 'e'd been a bottle o' medicine.

"Time to get up, lads?" ses old Isaac, putting one leg out o' bed.

"No, it ain't," ses Ginger, very rough; "we ain't been to bed yet. We want our money back."

Isaac drew 'is leg back into bed agin. "Goo' night," he ses, and fell fast asleep.

"He's shamming, that's wot 'e is," ses Peter Russet. "Let's look for it. It must be in the room somewhere."

They turned the room upside down pretty near, and then Ginger Dick struck a match and looked up the chimney, but all 'e found was that it 'adn't been swept for about twenty years, and wot with temper and soot 'e looked so frightful that Peter was arf afraid of 'im.

"I've 'ad enough of this," ses Ginger, running up to the bed and 'olding his sooty fist under old Isaac's nose. "Now, then, where's that money? If you don't give us our money, our 'ard-earned money, inside o' two minutes, I'll break every bone in your body."

"This is wot comes o' trying to do you a favour, Ginger," ses the old man, reproachfully.

"Don't talk to me," ses Ginger, "cos I won't have it. Come on; where is it?"

Old Isaac looked at 'im, and then he gave a sigh and got up and put on 'is boots and 'is trousers.

"I thought I should 'ave a little trouble with you," he ses, slowly, "but I was prepared for that."

"You'll 'ave more if you don't hurry up," ses Ginger, glaring at 'im.

"We don't want to 'urt you, Isaac," ses Peter Russet, "we on'y want our money."

"I know that," ses Isaac; "you keep still, Peter and see fair-play, and I'll knock you silly arterwards."

He pushed some o' the things into a corner and then 'e spat on 'is 'ands, and began to prance up and down, and duck 'is 'ead about and hit the air in a way that surprised 'em.

"I ain't hit a man for five years," 'e ses, still dancing up and down—"fighting's sinful except in a good cause—but afore I got a new 'art, Ginger, I'd lick three men like you afore breakfast, just to git up a appetite."

"Look 'ere," ses Ginger; "you're an old man and I don't want to 'urt you; tell us where our money is, our 'ard-earned money, and I won't lay a finger on you."

"I'm taking care of it for you," ses the old man.

Ginger Dick gave a howl and rushed at him, and the next moment Isaac's fist shot out and give 'im a drive that sent 'im spinning across the room until 'e fell in a heap in the fireplace. It was like a kick from a 'orse, and Peter looked very serious as 'e picked 'im up and dusted 'im down.

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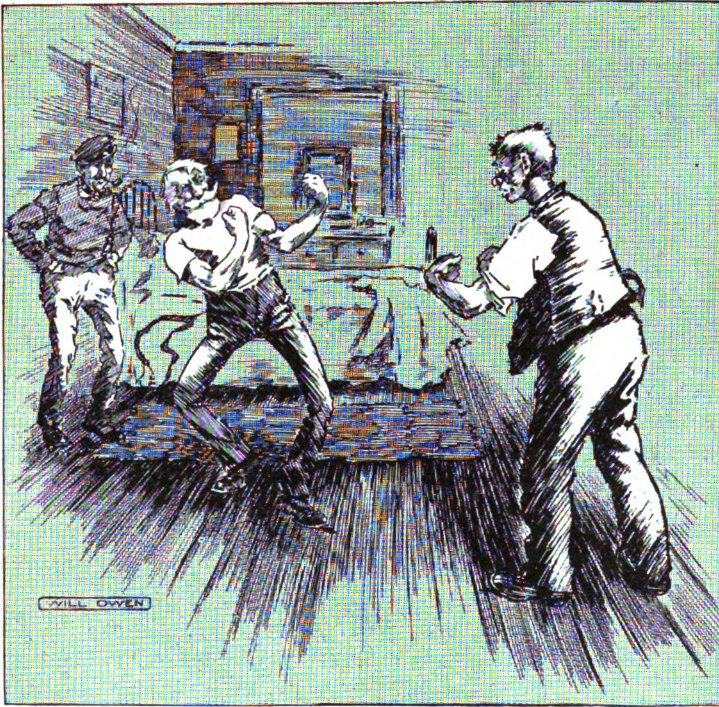

"'I AIN'T HIT A MAN FOR FIVE YEARS,' HE SES."

They all 'ad breakfast in a coffee-shop next morning, and arter it was over Ginger, who 'adn't spoke a word till then, said that 'e and Peter Russet wanted a little money to go on with. He said they preferred to get their meals alone, as Isaac's face took their appetite away.

"Very good," ses the old man. "I don't want to force my company on nobody," and after thinking 'ard for a minute or two he put 'is 'and in 'is trouser-pocket and gave them eighteenpence each.

"Wot's this for?" ses Ginger, staring at the money. "Matches?"

"That's your day's allowance," ses Isaac, "and it's plenty. There's ninepence for your dinner, fourpence for your tea, and twopence for a crust o' bread and cheese for supper. And if you must go and drown yourselves in beer, that leaves threepence each to go and do it with."

Ginger tried to speak to 'im, but 'is feelings was too much for 'im, and 'e couldn't. Then Peter Russet swallered something 'e was going to say and asked old Isaac very perlite to make it a quid for *'im* because he was going down to Colchester to see 'is mother, and 'e didn't want to go empty-'anded.

"You're a good son, Peter," ses old Isaac, "and I wish there was more like you. I'll come down with you, if you like; I've got nothing to do."

Peter said it was very kind of 'im, but 'e'd sooner go alone, owing to his mother being very shy afore strangers.

"Well, I'll come down to the station and take a ticket for you," ses Isaac.

Then Peter lost 'is temper altogether, and banged 'is fist on the table and smashed 'arf the crockery. He asked Isaac whether 'e thought 'im and Ginger Dick was a couple o' children, and 'e said if 'e didn't give 'em all their money right away 'e'd give 'im in charge to the first policeman they met.

"I'm afraid you didn't intend for to go

"You should keep your eye on 'is fist," he ses, sharply.

It was a silly thing to say, seeing that that was just wot 'ad 'appened, and Ginger told 'im wot 'e'd do for 'im when 'e'd finished with Isaac. He went at the old man agin, but 'e never 'ad a chance, and in about three minutes 'e was very glad to let Peter 'elp 'im into bed.

"It's your turn to fight him now, Peter," he ses. "Just move this piller so as I can see."

"Come on, lad," ses the old man.

Peter shook 'is 'ead. "I have no wish to 'urt you, Isaac," he ses, kindly; "excitement like fighting is dangerous for an old man. Give us our money and we'll say no more about it."

"No, my lads," ses Isaac. "I've undertook to take charge o' this money and I'm going to do it; and I 'ope that when we all sign on aboard the *Planet* there'll be a matter o' twelve pounds each left. Now, I don't want to be 'arsh with you, but I'm going back to bed, and if I 'ave to get up and dress agin you'll wish yourselves dead."

He went back to bed agin, and Peter, taking no notice of Ginger Dick, who kept calling 'im a coward, got into bed alongside of Ginger and fell fast asleep.

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"'WOT'S THIS FOR?' SES GINGER."

and see your mother, Peter," ses the old man.

"Look 'ere," ses Peter, "are you going to give us that money?"

"Not if you went down on your bended knees," ses the old man.

"Very good," says Peter, getting up and walking outside; "then come along o' me to find a policeman."

"I'm agreeable," ses Isaac, "but I've got the paper you signed."

Peter said 'e didn't care twopence if 'e'd got fifty papers, and they walked along looking for a policeman, which was a very unusual thing for them to do.

"I 'ope for your sakes it won't be the same policeman that you and Ginger Dick set on in Gun Alley the night afore you shipped on the *Planet*," ses Isaac, pursing up 'is lips.

"'Tain't likely to be," ses Peter, beginning to wish 'e 'adn't been so free with 'is tongue.

"Still, if I tell 'im, I dessay he'll soon find 'im," ses Isaac; "there's one coming along now, Peter; shall I stop 'im?"

Peter Russet looked at 'im and then he looked at Ginger, and they walked by grinding their teeth. They stuck to Isaac all day, trying to get their money out of 'im, and the names they called 'im was a surprise even to themselves. And at night they turned the room topsy-turvy agin looking for their money and 'ad more unpleasantness when they wanted Isaac to get up and let 'em search the bed.

They 'ad breakfast together agin next morning and Ginger tried another tack. He spoke quite nice to Isaac, and 'ad three large cups o' tea to show 'im 'ow 'e was beginning to like it, and when the old man gave 'em their eighteen-pences 'e smiled and said 'e'd like a few shillings extra that day.

"It'll be all right, Isaac," he ses. "I wouldn't 'ave a drink if you asked me to. Don't seem to care for it now. I was saying so to you on'y last night, wasn't I, Peter?"

"You was," ses Peter; "so was I."

"Then I've done you good, Ginger," ses Isaac, clapping 'im on the back.

"You 'ave," ses Ginger, speaking between his teeth, "and I thank you for it. I don't want drink; but I thought o' going to a music-'all this evening."

"Going to a *wot?*" ses old Isaac, drawing 'imself up and looking very shocked.

"A music-'all," ses Ginger, trying to keep 'is temper.

"A music-'all?" ses Isaac; "why, it's worse than a pub, Ginger. I should be a very poor

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friend o' yours if I let you go there—I couldn't think of it."

"Wot's it got to do with you, you grey-whiskered serpent?" screams Ginger, arf mad with rage. "Why don't you leave us alone? Why don't you mind your own business? It's our money."

Isaac tried to talk to 'im, but 'e wouldn't listen, and he made such a fuss that at last the coffee-shop keeper told 'im to go outside. Peter follered 'im out, and being very upset they went and spent their day's allowance in the first hour, and then they walked about the streets quarrelling as to the death they'd like old Isaac to 'ave when 'is time came.

They went back to their lodgings at dinner-time; but there was no sign of the old man, and, being 'ungry and thirsty, they took all their spare clothes to a pawnbroker and got enough money to go on with. Just to show their independence they went to two music-'alls, and with a sort of idea that they was doing Isaac a bad turn they spent every farthing afore they got 'ome, and sat up in bed telling 'im about the spree they'd 'ad.

At five o'clock in the morning Peter woke up and saw, to 'is surprise, that Ginger Dick was dressed and carefully folding up old Isaac's clothes. At first 'e thought that Ginger 'ad gone mad, taking care of the old man's things like that, but afore 'e could speak Ginger noticed that 'e was awake, and stepped over to 'im and whispered to 'im to dress without making a noise. Peter did as 'e was told, and, more puzzled than ever, saw Ginger make up all the old man's clothes in a bundle and creep out of the room on tiptoe.

"THEY PUT OLD ISAAC'S CLOTHES UP FOR FIFTEEN SHILLINGS."

"Going to 'ide 'is clothes?" 'e ses.

"Yes," ses Ginger, leading the way downstairs; "in a pawnshop. We'll make the old man pay for to-day's amusements."

Then Peter see the joke and 'e begun to laugh so 'ard that Ginger 'ad to threaten to knock 'is head off to quiet 'im. Ginger laughed 'imself when they got outside, and at last, arter walking about till the shops opened, they got into a pawnbroker's and put old Isaac's clothes up for fifteen shillings.

First thing they did was to 'ave a good breakfast, and after that they came out smiling all over and began to spend a 'appy day. Ginger was in tip-top spirits and so was Peter, and the idea that old Isaac was in bed while they was drinking 'is clothes pleased them more than anything. Twice that evening policemen spoke to Ginger for dancing on the pavement, and by the time the money was spent it took Peter all 'is time to get 'im 'ome.

Old Isaac was in bed when they got there, and the temper 'e was in was shocking; but Ginger sat on 'is bed and smiled at 'im as if 'e was saying compliments to 'im.

"Where's my clothes?" ses the old man, shaking 'is fist at the two of 'em.

Ginger smiled at 'im; then 'e shut 'is eyes and dropped off to sleep.

"Where's my clothes?" ses Isaac, turning to Peter.

"Closhe?" ses Peter, staring at 'im.

"Where are they?" ses Isaac.

It was a long time afore Peter could understand wot 'e meant, but as soon as 'e did 'e started to look for 'em. Drink takes people in different ways, and the way it always took

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Peter was to make 'im one o' the most obliging men that ever lived. He spent arf the night crawling about on all fours looking for the clothes, and four or five times old Isaac woke up from dreams of earthquakes to find Peter 'ad got jammed under 'is bed, and was wondering what 'ad 'appened to 'im.

None of 'em was in the best o' tempers when they woke up next morning, and Ginger 'ad 'ardly got 'is eyes open before Isaac was asking 'im about 'is clothes agin.

"Don't bother me about your clothes," ses Ginger; "talk about something else for a change."

"Where are they?" ses Isaac, sitting on the edge of 'is bed.

Ginger yawned and felt in 'is waistcoat pocket—for neither of 'em 'ad undressed—and then 'e took the pawn-ticket out and threw it on the floor. Isaac picked it up, and then 'e began to dance about the room as if 'e'd gone mad.

"Do you mean to tell me you've pawned my clothes?" he shouts.

"Me and Peter did," ses Ginger, sitting up in bed and getting ready for a row.

Isaac dropped on the bed agin all of a 'eap. "And wot am I to do?" he ses.

"If you be'ave yourself," ses Ginger, "and give us our money, me and Peter'll go and get 'em out agin. When we've 'ad breakfast, that is. There's no hurry."

"But I 'aven't got the money," ses Isaac; "it was all sewn up in the lining of the coat. I've on'y got about five shillings. You've made a nice mess of it, Ginger, you 'ave."

"You're a silly fool, Ginger, that's wot you are," ses Peter.

"*Sewn up in the lining of the coat?*" ses Ginger, staring.

"The bank-notes was," ses Isaac, "and three pounds in gold 'idden in the cap. Did you pawn that too?"

Ginger got up in 'is excitement and walked up and down the room. "We must go and get 'em out at once," he ses.

"And where's the money to do it with?" ses Peter.

Ginger 'adn't thought of that, and it struck 'im all of a heap. None of 'em seemed to be able to think of a way of getting the other ten shillings wot was wanted, and Ginger was so upset that 'e took no notice of the things Peter kept saying to 'im.

"Let's go and ask to see 'em, and say we left a railway-ticket in the pocket," ses Peter.

Isaac shook 'is 'ead. "There's on'y one way to do it," he ses. "We shall 'ave to pawn your clothes, Ginger, to get mine out with."

"That's the on'y way, Ginger," ses Peter, brightening up. "Now, wot's the good o' carrying on like that? It's no worse for you to be without your clothes for a little while than it was for pore old Isaac."

It took 'em quite arf an hour afore they could get Ginger to see it. First of all 'e wanted Peter's clothes to be took instead of 'is, and when Peter pointed out that they was too shabby to fetch ten shillings 'e 'ad a lot o' nasty things to say about wearing such old rags, and at last, in a terrible temper, 'e took 'is clothes off and pitched 'em in a 'eap on the floor.

"If you ain't back in arf an hour, Peter," 'e ses, scowling at 'im, "you'll 'ear from me, I can tell you."

"Don't you worry about that," ses Isaac, with a smile. "*I'm* going to take 'em."

"You?" ses Ginger; "but you can't. You ain't got no clothes."

"I'm going to wear Peter's," ses Isaac, with a smile.

Peter asked 'im to listen to reason, but it was all no good. He'd got the pawn-ticket, and at last Peter, forgetting all he'd said to Ginger Dick about using bad langwidge, took 'is clothes off, one by one, and dashed 'em on the floor, and told Isaac some of the things 'e thought of 'im.

The old man didn't take any notice of 'im. He dressed 'imself up very slow and careful in Peter's clothes, and then 'e drove 'em nearly crazy by wasting time making 'is bed.

"Be as quick as you can, Isaac," ses Ginger, at last; "think of us two a-sitting 'ere waiting for you."

"I sha'n't forget it," ses Isaac, and 'e came back to the door after 'e'd gone arf-way down the stairs to ask 'em not to go out on the drink while 'e was away.

It was nine o'clock when he went, and at ha'-past nine Ginger began to get impatient and wondered wot 'ad 'appened to 'im, and when ten o'clock came and no Isaac they was both leaning out of the winder with blankets over their shoulders looking up the road. By eleven o'clock Peter was in very low spirits and Ginger was so mad 'e was afraid to speak to 'im.

They spent the rest o' that day 'anging out of the winder, but it was not till ha'-past four in the afternoon that Isaac, still wearing Peter's clothes and carrying a couple of large green plants under 'is arm, turned into the road, and from the way 'e was smiling they thought it must be all right.

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"Wot 'ave you been such a long time for?" ses Ginger, in a low, fierce voice, as Isaac stopped underneath the winder and nodded up to 'em.

"I met a old friend," ses Isaac.

"Met a old friend?" ses Ginger, in a passion. "Wot d'ye mean, wasting time like that while we was sitting up 'ere waiting and starving?"

"I 'adn't seen 'im for years," ses Isaac, "and time slipped away afore I noticed it."

"I dessay," ses Ginger, in a bitter voice. "Well, is the money all right?"

"I don't know," ses Isaac; "I ain't got the clothes."

"*Wot?*" ses Ginger, nearly falling out of the winder. "Well, wot 'ave you done with mine, then? Where are they? Come upstairs."

"I won't come upstairs, Ginger," ses Isaac, "because I'm not quite sure whether I've done right. But I'm not used to going into pawnshops, and I walked about trying to make up my mind to go in and couldn't."

"Well, wot did you do then?" ses Ginger, 'ardly able to contain hisself.

"While I was trying to make up my mind," ses old Isaac, "I see a man with a barrer of lovely plants. 'E wasn't asking money for 'em, only old clothes."

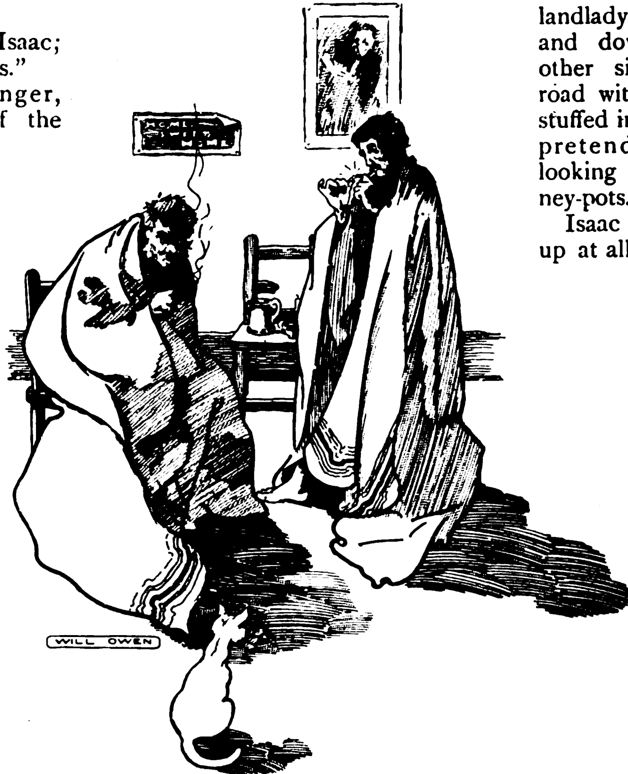
"*Old clothes?*" ses Ginger, in a voice as if 'e was being suffocated.

"I thought they'd be a bit o' green for you to look at," ses the old man, 'olding the plants up; "there's no knowing 'ow long you'll be up there. The big one is yours, Ginger, and the other is for Peter."

"'Ave you gone mad, Isaac?" ses Peter, in a trembling voice, arter Ginger 'ad tried to speak and couldn't.

Isaac shook 'is 'ead and smiled up at 'em, and then, arter telling Peter to put Ginger's blanket a little more round 'is shoulders, for fear 'e should catch cold, 'e said 'e'd ask the landlady to send 'em up some bread and butter and a cup o' tea.

They 'eard 'im talking to the landlady at the door, and then 'e went off in a hurry without looking behind 'im, and the landlady walked up and down on the other side of the road with 'er apron stuffed in 'er mouth, pretending to be looking at 'er chimney-pots.



"OLD ISAAC KEPT EM THERE FOR THREE DAYS."

Isaac didn't turn up at all that night, and by next morning those two unfortunate men see 'ow they'd been done. It was quite plain to them that Isaac 'ad been deceiving them, and Peter was pretty certain that 'e took the money out of the bed while 'e was fussing about making it. Old Isaac kept 'em there for three days, sending 'em in their clothes bit by bit and two shillings a day to live on; but they didn't set eyes on 'im agin until they all signed on aboard the *Planet*, and they didn't set eyes on their money until they was two miles below Gravesend.

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The Last Stand of the Decapods

By Frank T. Bullen, F.R.G.S.

PROBABLY few of the thinking inhabitants of dry land, with all their craving for tales of the marvellous, the gloomy, and the gigantic, have in these later centuries of the world's history given much thought to the conditions of constant warfare existing beneath the surface of the ocean. As readers of ancient classics well know, the fathers of literature gave much attention to the vast, awe-inspiring inhabitants of the sea, investing and embellishing the few fragments of fact concerning them which were available with a thousand fantastic inventions of their own naïve imaginations, until there emerged—chief and ruler of them all—the Kraken, Leviathan, or whatever other local name was considered to best convey in one word their accumulated ideas of terror. In lesser degree, but still worthy compeers of the fire-breathing dragon and sky-darkening "Rukh" of earth and sky, a worthy host of attendant sea-monsters were conjured up, until, apart from the terror of loneliness, of irresistible fury, and instability that the sea presented to primitive peoples, the awful nature of its supposed inhabitants made the contemplation of an ocean journey sufficient to appal the stoutest heart.

A better understanding of this aspect of the sea to early voyagers may be obtained from some of the artistic efforts of those days than from anything else. There you shall see gigantic creatures with human faces, teeth like foot-long wedges, armour-plated bodies, and massive feet fitted with claws like scythe-blades calmly issuing from the waves to prey upon the dwellers on the margin, or devouring with much apparent enjoyment ships with their crews, as a child crunches a stick of barley-sugar. Even such innocent-looking animals as the seals were distorted and decorated until the contemplation of their counterfeit presentment is sufficient to give a healthy man the nightmare, whilst such monsters as really were so terrible of aspect that they could hardly be "improved" upon were increased in size until they resembled islands whereon whole tribes might live. To these chimeras were credited all natural phenomena such as waterspouts, whirlpools, and the upheaval of submarine volcanoes. Some imaginative peoples went even farther than that by attributing the support of the whole earth to a vast sea-monster, while others, like the ancient Jews, fondly pictured Leviathan awaiting in the solitude and gloom of ocean's depths the glad day of Israel's reunion, when the mountain ranges of his flesh would be ready to furnish forth the family feast for all the myriads of Abraham's children.

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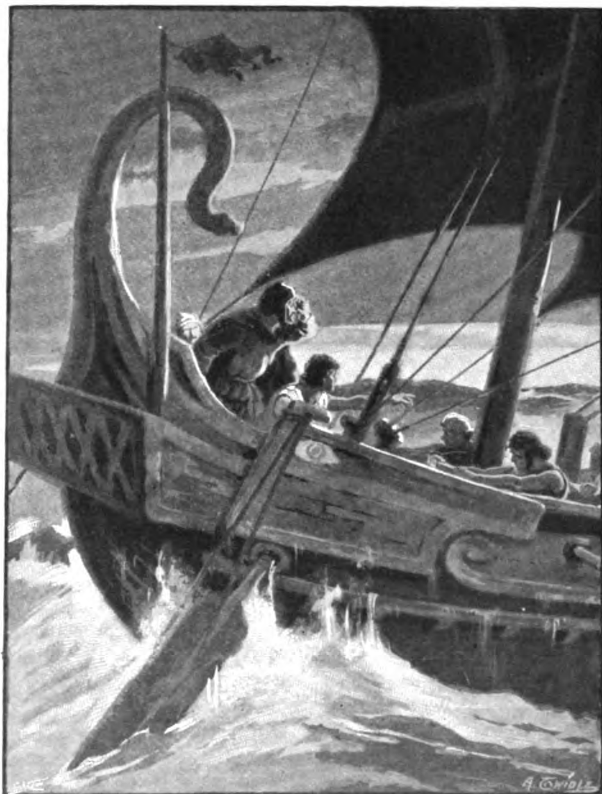
Surely we may pause awhile to contemplate the overmastering courage of the earliest seafarers who, in spite of all these terrors, unappalled by the comparison between their tiny shallops and the mighty waves that towered above them, set boldly out from shore into the unknown, obeying that deeply-rooted instinct of migration which has peopled every habitable part of the earth's surface. Those who remember their childhood's dread of the dark, with its possible population of bogeys, who have ever been lost in early youth in some lonely place, can have some dim conception—though only a dim one, after all—of the inward battle these ancients fought and won until it became possible for the epigram to be written most truly :—

The seas but join the nations they divide.



"THE EARLIEST SEAFARERS SET BOLDLY OUT FROM SHORE."

But after all we are not now concerned with the warlike doings of men. It is with the actualities of submarine struggle we wish to deal, those wars without an armistice, where to be defeated is to be devoured, and from the sea-shouldering whale down to the smallest sea insect every living thing is carnivorous, dependent directly upon the flesh of its neighbours for its own life, and incapable of altruism in any form whatever, except among certain of the mammalia and sharks. In dealing with the more heroic phases of this unending warfare, then, it must be said once for all that the ancient writers had a great deal of reason on their side. They distorted and exaggerated, of course, as all children do, but they did not disbelieve. But moderns, rushing to the opposite extreme, have neglected the marvels of the sea by the simple process of disbelieving in them, except in the case of *the* sea-serpent, that myth which seems bound to persist for ever and ever. Only of late years have the savants of the world allowed themselves to be convinced of the existence of a far more wondrous monster than the sea-serpent (if that "loathly worm" were a reality), the original kraken of old-world legends.

Hugest of all the mollusca, whose prevailing characteristics are ugliness, ferocity, and unappeasable hunger, he has lately asserted himself so firmly that current imaginative literature bristles with allusions to him, albeit oftentimes in situations where he could by no possibility be found. No matter, he has supplied a long-felt want, but the curious fact remains that he is not a discovery, but a reappearance. The gigantic cuttle-fish of actual, indisputable fact is in all respects except size the kraken; and any faithful representation of him will justify the assertion that no imagination could add anything to the terror-breeding potentialities of his aspect. That is so, even when he is viewed by the light of day in the helplessness of death, or disabling sickness, or in the invincible grip of his only conqueror. In his proper realm, crouching far below the surface of the sea in some coral cave or labyrinth of rocks, he must present a sight so awful that the imagination recoils before it. For, consider him but a little. He possesses a cylindrical body reaching, in the largest specimens yet recorded as having been seen,

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a length of between 60ft. and 70ft., with an average girth of half that amount. That is to say, considerably larger than a Pullman railway-car.

Now, this immense mass is of boneless, gelatinous matter capable of much greater distension than the body of a snake, so that in the improbable event of his obtaining an extra-abundant supply of food it is competent to swell to the occasion, and still give the flood of digestive juices that it secretes full opportunity to dispose of the burden with almost incredible rapidity. Now, the apex of this mighty cylinder—I had almost said "tail," but remembered that it would give a wrong impression, since it is the part of the monster that always comes first when he is moving from place to place—is conical; that is to say, it tapers off to a blunt point something like a Whitehead torpedo. Near this apex there is a broad fin-like arrangement looking much like the body of a skate without its tail, which, however, is used strictly for steering purposes only.

So far, there is nothing particularly striking about the appearance of this vast cylinder except in colour. This characteristic varies in different individuals, but is always reminiscent of the hues of a very light-coloured leopard; that is to say, the ground is of a livid greenish white, while the detail is in splashes and spots of lurid red and yellow, with an occasional nimbus of pale blue around these deeper markings. But it is the head of the monster that appals. Nature would seem, in the construction of this greatest of all mollusca, to have combined every weapon of offence possessed by the rest of the animal kingdom in one amazing arsenal, disposing them in such a manner that not only are they capable of terrific destruction, but their appearance defies adequate description.

The trunk at the head end is sheath-like, its terminating edges forming a sort of collar around the vast cable of muscles without a fragment of bone that connect it with the head. Through a large opening within this collar is pumped a jet of water, the pressure of which upon the surrounding sea is sufficiently great to drive the whole bulk of the creature, weighing perhaps sixty or seventy tons, *backward* through the water at the rate of sixteen to twenty miles per hour. Not in steady progression, of course, but by successive leaps. At will, this propelling jet is deeply stained with sepia, a dark brown, inky fluid, that, mingling with the encompassing sea, fills all the neighbourhood of the monster with a gloom so deep that nothing save one of its own species can see either to fight or whither to fly. The head itself is of proportionate size. It is rounded underneath and of much lighter hue than the trunk. On either side of it is set an eye of such dimensions that the mere statement of them sounds like the efforts of one of those grand old mediæval romancers whose sole object was to make their readers' flesh creep.

It is perfectly safe to say that, even in proportion to size, no other known creature has such organs of vision as the cuttle-fish, for the pupils of such a one as I am now describing are fully 2ft. in diameter. They are perfectly black, with a dead white rim, and cannot be closed. No doubt their enormous size is for the purpose of enabling their possessor to discern what is going on amidst the thick darkness that he himself has raised, so that while all other organisms are groping blindly in the gloom, he may work his will among them. Then come the weapons which give the cuttle-fish its power of destruction, the arms or tentacles. These are not eight in number as in the octopus, an ugly beast enough and spiteful withal, but a babe of innocence compared with our present subject. Every school-boy should know that *octopus* signifies an eight-armed or eight-footed creature, and yet in nine cases out of ten where writers of fiction and would-be teachers of fact are describing the deadly doings of the gigantic cuttle-fish they call *him* an octopus, whereas he is nothing of the kind. For in addition to the eight arms which the octopus possesses the cuttle-fish flaunts two, each of which is double the length of the other eight, making him a *decapod.* This confusion is the more unpardonable because even the most ancient of scribes always spoke of this mollusc as the "ten-armed one," while a reference to any standard work on natural history will show even the humbler cuttle-fish with their full complement of arms; that is, ten. But this is digression.

Our friend, then, has ten arms springing from the crown of his head, of which eight are about 40ft. in length and two are 70ft. to 80ft. The eight each taper outward from the head, from the thickness of a stout man's body at the base to the slenderness of a whip-lash at the end. On their inner sides they are studded with saucer-like hollows, each of which has a fringe of curving claws set just within its rim. So that in addition to their power of holding on to anything they touch

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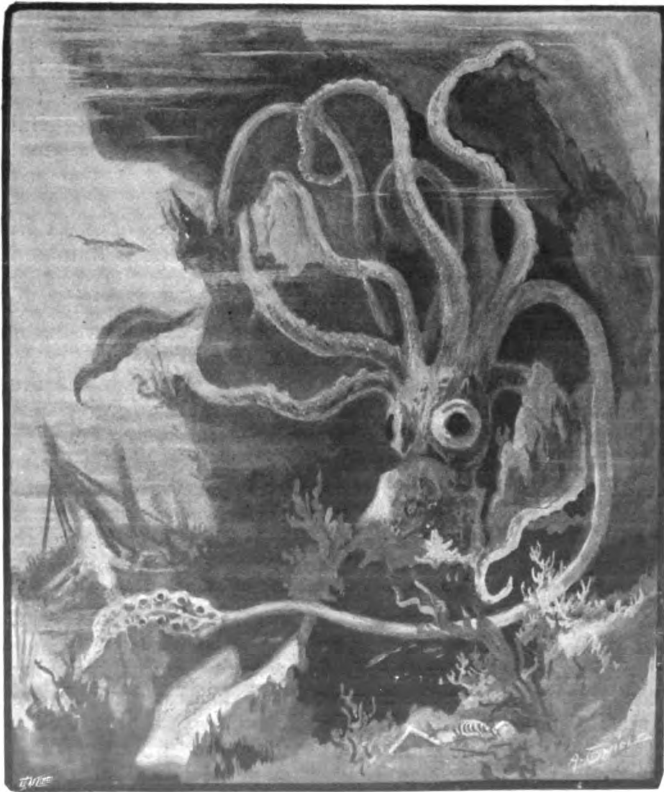
by a suction so severe that it would strip flesh from bone, these cruel claws, large as those of a full-grown tiger, get to work upon the subject being held, lacerating and tearing until the quivering body yields up its innermost secrets. Each of these destroying, serpent-like arms is also gifted with an almost independent power of volition. Whatever it touches it holds with an unreleasable grip, but with wonderful celerity it brings its prey inwards to where in the centre of all those infernal purveyors lies a black chasm whose edges are shaped like the upper and lower mandibles of a parrot, and these complete the work so well begun.

The outliers, those two far-reaching tentacles, unlike the busy eight, are comparatively slender from their bases to within 2ft. or so of their ends. There they expand into broad, paddle-like masses thickly studded with *acetabulæ*, those holding, sucking discs that garnish the inner arms for their entire length. So, thus armed, this nightmare monstrosity crouches in the darkling depths of ocean like some unimaginable web whereof every line is alive to hold and tear. Its digestion is like a furnace of dissolution needing a continual inflow of flesh, and nothing living that inhabits the sea comes amiss to its never-satisfied cravings. It is very near the apex of the pyramid of interdependence into which sea-life is built, but not quite. For at the summit is the sperm whale, the monarch of all seas, whom man alone is capable of meeting in fair fight and overcoming.



"THIS NIGHTMARE MONSTROSITY CROUCHES IN THE DARKLING DEPTHS OF OCEAN."

The head of the sperm whale is of heroic size, being in bulk quite one-third of the entire body, but in addition to its size it has characteristics that fit it peculiarly to compete with such a dangerous monster as the gigantic decapod. Imagine a solid block of crude india-rubber, between 20ft. and 30ft. in length and 8ft. through, in shape not at all unlike a railway carriage, but perfectly smooth in surface. Fit this mass beneath with a movable shaft of solid bone 20ft. in length studded with teeth, each protruding 9in. and resembling the points of an elephant's tusks. You will then have a fairly complete notion of the equipment with which the ocean monarch goes into battle against the kraken. And behind it lies the warm blood of the mammal, the massive framework of bone belonging to the highly-developed vertebrate animal, governed by a brain impelled by irresistible instinct to seek its sustenance where alone it can be found in sufficiently satisfying bulk. And there for you are the outlines of the highest form of animal warfare existing within our ken—a conflict of Titans, to which a combat between elephants and rhinoceri in the jungle is but as the play of school-boys compared with the gladiatorial combats of Ancient Rome.

This somewhat lengthy preamble is necessary in order to clear the way for an account of the proceedings leading up to the final subjugation of the huge mollusca of the elder slime to the needs of the great vertebrates

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like the whales, who were gradually emerging into a higher development, and, finding new wants oppressing them, had to obey the universal law and fight for the satisfaction of their urgent needs. Fortunately the period with which we have to deal was before chronology, so that we are not hampered by dates, and as the disposition of sea and land, except in its main features, was altogether different to what we have long been accustomed to regard as the always existing geographical order of things, we need not be greatly troubled by place considerations either.

What must be considered as the first beginning of the long struggle occurred when some predecessors of the present sperm whales, wandering through the vast morasses and among the sombre forests of that earlier world, were compelled to recognise that the conditions of shore life were rapidly becoming too onerous for them. Their immensely weighty bodies lumbering slowly as a seal does over the rugged land surface handicapped them more and more in the universal business of life, the procuring of food. Not only so, but as by reason of their slowness they were confined for hunting-grounds to a very limited area, the slower organisms upon which their vast appetites were fed grew scarcer and scarcer in spite of the fecundity of that prolific time. And in proportion as they found it more and more difficult to get a living, so did their enemies grow more numerous and bolder. Vast dragon-like shapes, clad in complete armour that clanged as the wide-spreading bat-wings bore them swiftly through the air, descended upon the sluggish whales, and with horrid rending by awful shear-shaped jaws, plentifully furnished with foot-long teeth, speedily stripped from their gigantic bodies the masses of succulent flesh. Other enemies weird of shape and swift of motion, although confined to the earth, fastened also upon the easily attainable prey that provided flesh in such bountiful abundance and was unable to fight or flee.

Well was it, then, for the whales that, living always near the sea, they had formed aquatic habits, finding in the limpid element a medium wherein their huge bulk was rather a help than a hindrance to them. Gradually they grew to use the land less and less as they became more and more accustomed to the food provided in plenty by the inexhaustible ocean; continual practice enabled them to husband the supplies of air which they took in on the surface for use beneath the waves; and, better still, they found that, whereas they had been victims to many a monster on land whose proportions and potentialities seemed far inferior to their own, here, in their new element, they were supreme—nothing living but fled from before them.

But presently a strange thing befell them. As they grew less and less inclined to use the dry land they found that their powers of locomotion thereon gradually became less and less until at last their hind legs dwindled away and disappeared. Their vast and far-reaching tails lost their length and their bones spread out laterally into flexible fans of toughest gristle, with which they could propel themselves through the waves at speeds to which their swiftest progress upon land had been but a snail's crawl. Also their fore-legs grew shorter and wider, and the separation of the toes disappeared, until all that was left of these once ponderous supports were elegant fan-like flippers of gristle, of not the slightest use for propulsion, but merely acting as steadying vanes to keep the whole great structure in its proper position according to the will of the owner.

All these radical physical changes, however, had not affected the real classification of the whales. They were still mammals, still retained in the element which was now entirely their habitat the high organization belonging to the great carnivora of the land. Therefore, it took them no long period of time to realize that in the ocean they would be paramount; that with the tremendous facilities for rapid movement afforded them by their new element they were able to maintain that supremacy against all comers, unless their formidable armed jaws should also become modified by degeneration into some such harmless cavities for absorbing food as were possessed by their distant relatives the mysticetæ, or toothless whales.

With a view to avoiding any such disaster they made good use of their jaws, having been taught by experience that the simple but effectual penalty for the neglect of any function, whether physical or mental, was the disappearance of the organs whereby such functions had been performed. But their energetic use of teeth and jaws had a result entirely unforeseen by them. Gradually the prey they sought, the larger fish and smaller sea-mammals, disappeared from the shallow seas adjacent to the land from whence the whales had been driven. And in order to satisfy the demands of their huge stomachs they were fain to follow their prey into deeper and deeper waters, meeting as they went with

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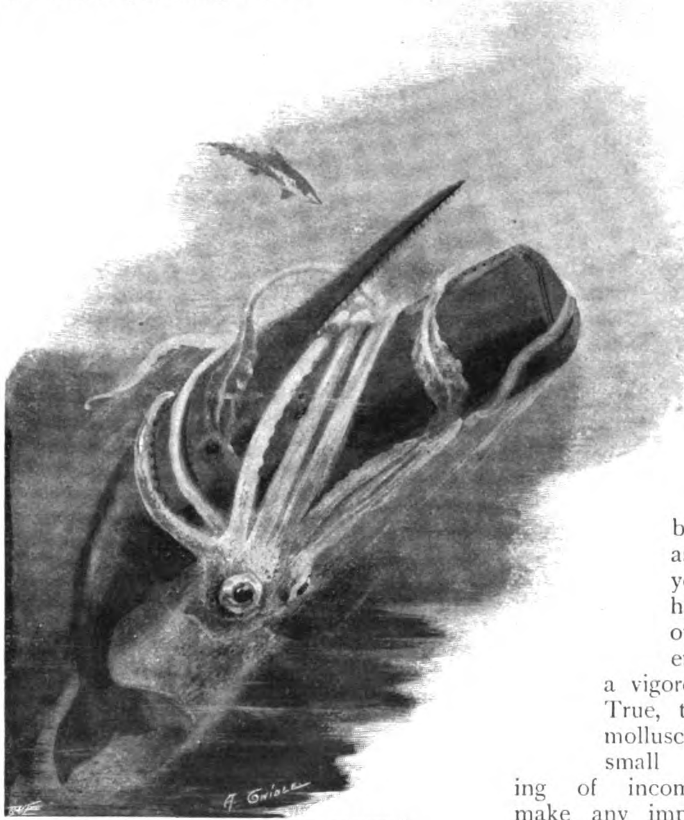
other and stranger denizens of those mysterious depths, until at last the sperm whale met the kraken. There in his native gloom, vast, formless, and insatiable, brooded the awful Thing. Spread like a living net whereof every mesh was armed, sensitive and lethal, this fantastic complication of horrors took toll of all the sea-folk, needing not to


"THE SPERM WHALE MET THE KRAKEN."

pursue its prey, needing only to lie still, devour, and grow. Sometimes moved by mysterious impulses one of these chimeras would rise to the sea-surface and bask in the beams of the offended sun, poisoning the surrounding air with its charnel-house odours, and occasionally finding within the never-resting, nervous clutching of its tentacles some specimens of the highest, latest product of Creation, man himself. Ages of such experiences as these had left the kraken defenceless as to his body. The absence of any necessity for exertion had arrested the development of a backbone ; the inability of any of the sea-people to retaliate upon their sateless foe had made him neglect any of those precautions that weaker organisms had provided themselves with ; and even the cloud of sepia with which all the race were provided, and which often assisted the innocent and weaker members of the same great family to escape, was only used by these masters of the sea to hide their monstrous lures from their prey.

Thus on a momentous day a ravenous sperm whale, hunting eagerly for wherewithal to satisfy his craving, suddenly found himself encircled by many long, cable-like arms. They clung, they tore, they sucked. But whenever a stray end of them flung itself across the bristling parapet of the whale's lower jaw it was promptly bitten off, and, a portion having found its way down into the craving stomach of the big mammal, it was welcomed as good beyond all other food yet encountered. Once this had been realized, what had originally been an accidental entrapping changed itself into a vigorous onslaught and banquet. True, the darkness fought for the mollusc, but that advantage was small compared with the feeling of incompetence, of inability to make any impression upon this mighty, impervious mass that was moving as freely amid the clinging embarrassments of those hitherto invincible arms as if they were only fronds of seaweed. And then the foul mass of the kraken found itself, contrary to all previous experience, rising involuntarily, being compelled to leave its infernal shades, and without any previous preparation for such a change of pressure to visit the upper air. The fact was that the whale, finding its stock of air exhausted, had put forth a supreme effort to rise, and found that although unable to free himself from those enormous cables he was actually competent to raise the whole mass. What an upheaval ! Even the birds that, allured by the strong carrion scent, were assembling in their thousands fled

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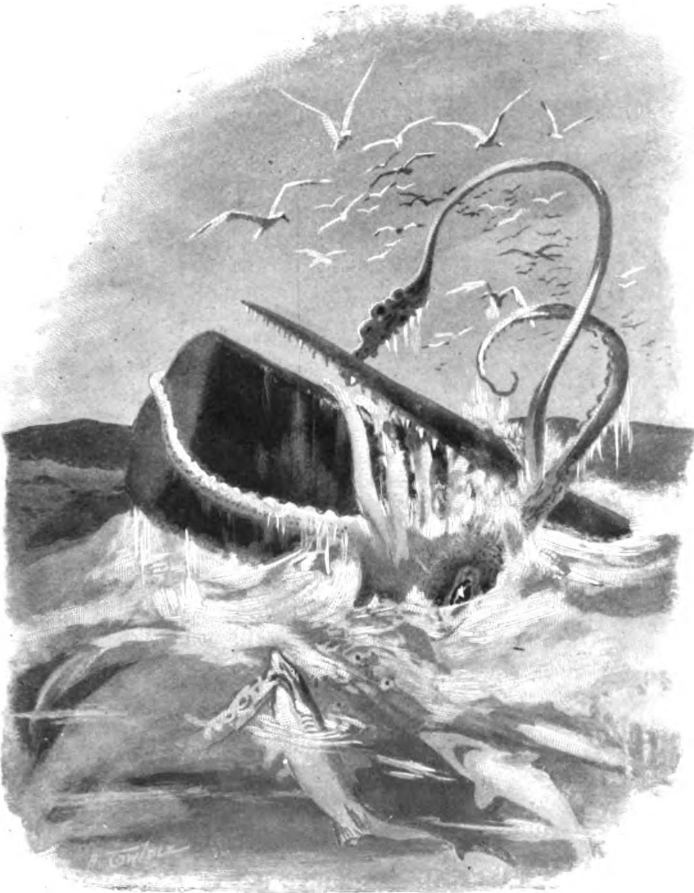
away from that appalling vision, their wild screams of affright filling the air with lamentation. The tormented sea foamed and boiled in wide-spreading whirls, its deep sweet blue changed into an unhealthy nondescript tint of muddy yellow. Then the whale, having renewed his store of air, settled down seriously to the demolition of his prize.



"THE WHALE SETTLED DOWN SERIOUSLY TO THE DEMOLITION OF HIS PRIZE."

Length after length of tentacle was torn away from the central crown and swallowed, gliding down the abysmal throat of the gratified mammal in snaky convolutions until even his great store-room would contain no more.

The vanquished kraken lay helplessly rolling upon the wave, while its conqueror in satisfied ease lolled near watching with good-humoured complacency the puny assaults made upon that island of gelatinous flesh by the multitude of smaller hungry things. The birds returned reassured, and added by their clamour to the strangeness of the scene where the tribes of air and sea, self-bidden to the enormous banquet, were making full use of their exceptional privilege. So the great feast continued, while the red sun went down and the white moon rose in placid beauty. Yet, for all the combined assaults of those hungry multitudes, the tenacious life of that largest of living things lay so deeply seated that when the rested whale resumed his attentions he found the body of his late antagonist still quivering under the attack of his tremendous jaws. Still, its proportions were so immense that his utmost efforts left store sufficient for at least a dozen of his companions, had they been there, to have satisfied their hunger upon. And satisfied at last he turned away, allowing the smaller fry, who had waited his pleasure most respectfully, to close in again and finish the work he had so well begun.

Now this was a momentous discovery indeed. For the sperm whales had experienced, even when fish and seals were plentiful, great difficulty in procuring sufficient food at one time for a full meal, and the problem of how to provide for themselves as they grew and multiplied had become increasingly hard to solve. Therefore, this discovery filled the fortunate pioneer with triumph, for his high instincts told him that he had discovered a new source of supply that promised to be inexhaustible. So, in the manner common to his people, he wasted no time in convening a gathering of them as large as could be collected. Far over the glassy surface of that quiet sea lay gently rocking a multitude of vast black bodies,

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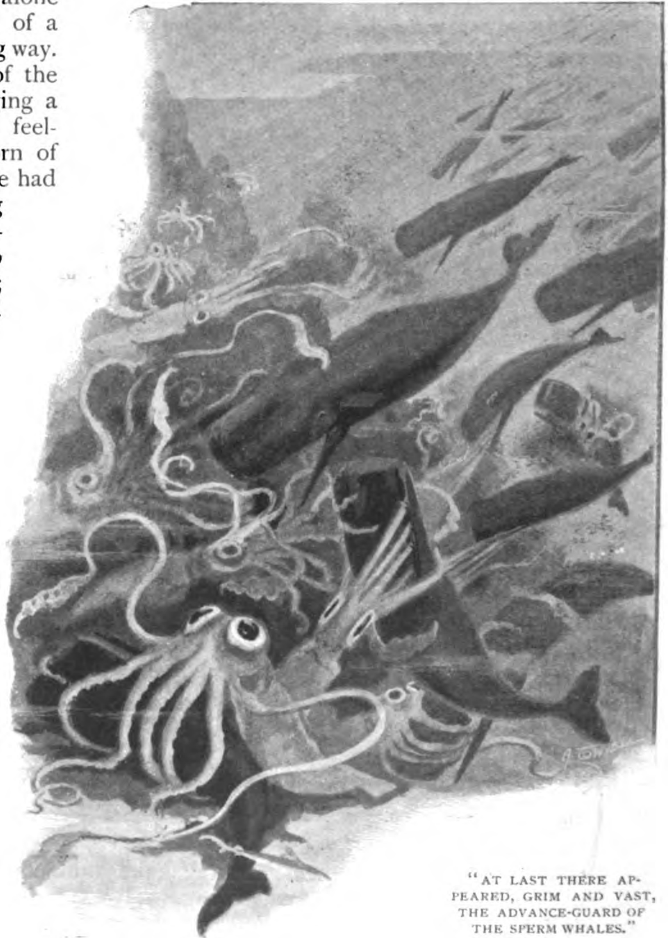
all expectant, all awaiting the momentous declaration presently to be made. The epoch-making news circulated among them in perfect silence, for to them has from the earliest times been known the secret that is only just beginning to glimmer upon the verge of human intelligence, the ability to communicate with one another without the aid of speech, sight, or touch: a kind of thought-transference, if such an idea as animal thought may be held allowable. And having thus learned of the treasures held in trust for them by the deep waters they separated and went, some alone and some in compact parties of a dozen or so, upon their rejoicing way.

But among the slimy hosts of the gigantic mollusca there was raging a sensation unknown before: a feeling of terror, of insecurity born of the knowledge that at last there had appeared among them a being proof against the utmost pressure of their awful arms, who was too great to be devoured; who on the other hand had evinced a greedy partiality for devouring them. How this information became common property among them it is impossible to say, since they dwelt alone each in his own particular lair, rigidly respected by one another, because any intrusion upon another's domains was invariably followed by the absorption of either the intruder or the intruded upon by the stronger of the two. This, although not intended by them, had the effect of vastly heightening the fear with which they were regarded by the smaller sea-folk, for they took to a restless prowling along the sea-bed, enwreathing themselves about the mighty bases of the islands and invading cool, coral caverns where their baleful presence had been till then unknown. Never before had there been such a panic among the multitudinous sea-populations. What could this new portent signify? Were the foundations of the great deep again about to be broken up and the sea-bed heaved upward to replace the tops of the towering mountains on dry land? There was no reply, for there were none that could answer questions like these.

Still the fear-smitten decapods wandered, seeking seclusion from the coming enemy and finding none to their mind. Still the crowds of their victims rushed blindly from shoal to shoal, plunging into depths unfitted for them, or rising into shallows where their natural food was not. And the whole sea was troubled. Until at last there appeared, grim and vast, the advance-guard of the sperm whales and hurled themselves with joyful anticipation upon the shrinking convolutions of those hideous monsters that had so long dominated the dark places of the sea.



"AT LAST THERE APPEARED, GRIM AND VAST, THE ADVANCE-GUARD OF THE SPERM WHALES."

For the whales it was a time of feasting hitherto without parallel. Without any fear,

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uncaring to take even the most elementary precautions against a defeat which they felt to be an impossible contingency, they sought out and devoured one after another of these vast uglinesses, already looked upon by them as their natural provision, their store of food accumulated of purpose against their coming. Occasionally, it is true, some rash youngster, full of pride and rejoicing in his pre-eminence over all life in the depths, would hurl himself into a smoky network of far-spreading tentacles, which would wrap him round so completely that his jaws were fast bound together, his flukes would vainly essay to propel him anywhither, and he would presently perish miserably, his cable-like sinews falling slackly and his lungs suffused with crimson brine. Even then, the advantage gained by the triumphant kraken was a barren one, for in every case the bulk of the victim was too great, his body too firm in its build for the victor, despite his utmost efforts, to succeed in devouring his prize. So that the disappointed kraken had perforce to witness the gradual disappearance of his lawful prize beneath the united efforts of myriads of tiny sea-scavengers, secure in their insignificance against any attack from him, and await with tremors extending to the remotest extremity of every tentacle the retribution which, he felt sure, would speedily follow.

This desultory warfare was waged for long until, driven by despair to a community of interest unknown before, the krakens gradually sought one another out with but a single idea—that of combining against the new enemy. For, knowing to what an immense size their kind could attain in the remoter fastnesses of ocean, they could not yet bring themselves to believe that they were to become the helpless prey of these new-comers, visitors of yesterday, coming from the cramped acreage of the land into the limitless fields of ocean, and invading the immemorial freeholds of its hitherto unassailable sovereigns.

From the remotest recesses of ocean they came, that grisly gathering, came in ever-increasing hosts, their silent progress spreading unprecedented dismay among the fairer inhabitants of the sea. Figure to yourselves, if you can, the advance of this terrible army! But the effort is vain. Not even Martin, that frenzied delineator of the frightful halls of Hell, the terrors of the Apocalypse, and the agonies of the Deluge, could have done justice to the terrors of such a picture. Only dimly can we imagine what must have been the appearance of those vast masses of writhing flesh, as through the palely gleaming phosphorescence of those depths they sped backwards in leaps of a hundred fathoms each, their terrible arms, close clustered together, streaming behind them like Medusa's hair magnified ten thousand times in size, and with each snaky tress bearing a thousand mouths instead of one.

So they converged upon the place of meeting—an area of the sea-bed nowhere more than 500 fathoms in depth, from whose rugged floor rose irregularly stupendous columnar masses of lava, hurled upwards by the cosmic forces below in a state of incandescence, and solidified as they rose, assuming many fantastic shapes and affording perfect harbourage to such dire scourges of the sea as were now making the place their rendezvous. For, strangely enough, this marvellous portion of the submarine world was more densely peopled with an infinite variety of sea folk than any other. Its tepid waters seemed to bring forth abundantly of all kinds of fish, crustacea, and creeping things. Sharks in all their fearsome varieties prowled greasily about scenting for dead things whereon to gorge; shell-fish, from the infinitesimal globigerina up to the gigantic tridacna, whose shells were a yard each in diameter; crabs, lobsters, and other freakish varieties of crustacea of a size and ugliness unknown to-day lurked in every crevice, while about and among all these scavengers flitted the happy, lovely fish in myriads of glorious hues, matching the tender shades of the coral groves that sprang from the summits of those sombre pillars beneath. Hitherto this happy hunting-ground had not been invaded by the sea-mammals. None of the air-breathing inhabitants of the ocean had ventured into its gloomy depths or sought their prey among the blazing shallows of the surface reefs, although no more favourable place for their exertions could possibly have been selected over all the wide seas. It had long been a favourite haunt of the kraken, for whom it was, as aforesaid, an ideal spot; but now it was to witness a sight unparalleled in ocean history. Heralded by an amazing series of under waves, the gathering of monsters grew near. They numbered many thousands, and no one in all their hosts was of lesser magnitude than sixty feet long by thirty in girth of body alone. From that size they increased until some, the acknowledged leaders, discovered themselves like islands, their cylindrical carcasses huge

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as that of an ocean liner and their tentacles capable of overspreading an entire village.

In concentric rings they assembled, all heads pointing outward, the mightiest within, and four clear avenues through the circles left for coming and going. Contrary to custom, but by mutual consent, all the tentacles lay closely arranged in parallel lines, not outspread to every quarter of the compass and all a-work. They looked indeed in their inertia and silence like nothing so much as an incalculable number of dead squid of enormous size neatly laid out at the whim of some giant's fancy. Yet communication between them was active, a subtle interchange of experiences and plans went briskly on through the medium of the mobile element around them. The elder and mightier were full of disdain at the reports they were furnished with, utterly incredulous as to the ability of any created thing to injure them, and as the time wore on an occasional tremor was distinctly noticeable through the whole length of their tentacles which boded no good to their smaller brethren. Doubtless but little longer was needed for the development of a great absorption of the weaker by the stronger, only that darting into their midst like a lightning streak came a messenger squid bearing the news that a school of sperm whales numbering at least a thousand were coming at top-speed direct for their place of meeting. Instantly to the farthest confines of that mighty gathering the message radiated, and as if by one movement there uprose from the sea-bed so dense a cloud of sepia that for many miles around the clear bright blue of the ocean became turbid, stagnant, and foul. Even the birds that hovered over those dark-brown waves took fright at this terrible phenomenon, to them utterly incomprehensible, and with discordant shrieks they fled in search of sweeter air and cleaner sea. But below the surface, under cover of this thickest darkness, there was the silence of death.

Twenty miles away, under the bright sunshine, an advance guard of about a hundred sperm whales came rushing on. Line abreast, their bushy breath rising like the regular steam-jets from a row of engines, they dashed aside the welcoming wavelets, every sense alert and full of eagerness for the consummation of their desires. Such had been their dispatch that throughout the long journey of 500 leagues they had not once stayed for food, so that they were ravenous with hunger as well as full of fight. They passed, and before the foaming of their swift passage had ceased the main body, spread over a space of thirty miles, came following on, the roar of their multitudinous march sounding like the voice of many waters.

Suddenly the advance guard, with stately elevation of the broad fans of their flukes, disappeared, and by one impulse the main body followed them. Down into the depths they bore, noting with dignified wonder the absence of all the usual inhabitants of the deep until, with a thrill of joyful anticipation which set all their masses of muscle a-quiver, they recognised the scent of the prey. No thought of organized resistance presented itself; without a halt or even the faintest slackening of their great rush they plunged forward into the abysmal gloom; down, down withal into that wilderness of waiting demons. And so, in darkness and silence like that of the beginning of things, this great battle was joined. Whale after whale succumbed, anchored to the bottom by such bewildering entanglements, such enlacement of tentacles that their vast strength was helpless to free them, their jaws were bound hard together, and even the wide sweep of their flukes gat no hold upon the slimy water. But the decapods were in evil case. Assailed from above while their groping arms writhed about below they found themselves more often locked in unreleasable hold of their fellows than they did of their enemies. And the quick-shearing jaws of those foes shredded them into fragments, made nought of their bulk, revelled and frolicked among them, slaying, devouring, exulting. Again and again the triumphant mammals drew off for air and from satiety, went and lolled upon the sleek, oily surface in water now so thick that the fiercest hurricane that ever blew would have failed to raise a wave thereon.

So through a day and a night the slaying ceased not, except for these brief interludes, until those of the decapods left alive had disentangled themselves from the *débris* of their late associates and returned with what speed they might to depths and crannies where they fondly hoped their ravenous enemies could never come. Henceforth they were no longer lords of the sea; instead of being as hitherto devourers of all things living that crossed the radius of their outspread toils, they were now and for all time to be the prey of a nobler creation, a higher order of being, and at last they had taken their rightful position as creatures of usefulness in the vast economy of Creation.

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Fighting the Sea.

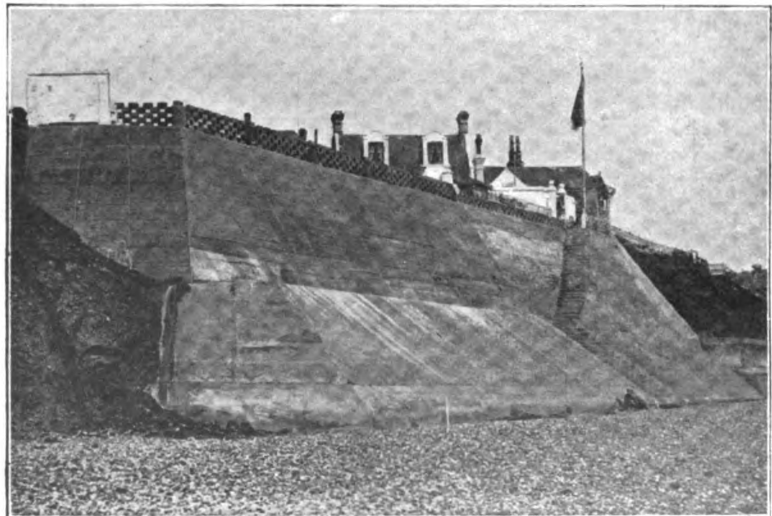
BY NICHOLAS EVERITT.

"*Auf Wind und Meer gebautes Glück ist Schwankend.*"—GUTZKOW.

From a] LOWESTOFT PIER DURING A GALE. [Photo.

EW people, perhaps, realize the enormous power exerted by great waves driven upon a shore before a gale. Only those who have seen the extreme ruin and devastation created upon defences apparently as solid as the living rock can obtain any idea of what this power really is, and what are the difficulties to be confronted by those whose duty it is to construct sea-barriers against the terrific battery of the waters. Next to actual experience, however, there is nothing which can convey so powerful an impression as such a series of photographs as those here reproduced. The tremendous force exerted by the crash of a big wave is shown in the most impressive manner possible to imagine. Whenever such a wave as that which appears in the photograph above reproduced encounters such an obstacle as that depicted in our second illustration, repeating its terrific blow with rhythmical precision, the result, as shown in the photographs which follow, is striking beyond words. This power of the waters may be studied with advantage at Lowestoft, where these photographs were taken. But fully to realize the special danger to which the whole of the East Anglian coast is subject from the wash or scour of the sea, it is necessary to understand what is called the "set" of the tides in the North Sea—an extremely interesting study.

Now, the great Atlantic tide wave with its enormous swell sweeps up along the west coast of Ireland and the Hebrides, and following a rule common to tides in general bears to the right round the north coast of Scotland and the Orkney and Shetland Isles, and there meeting the North Sea forces it southwards



From a] AN ASSUMED IMPREGNABLE RAMPART AGAINST THE WAVES, NEWLY FINISHED. COMPARE WITH THE NEXT ILLUSTRATION. [Photo.

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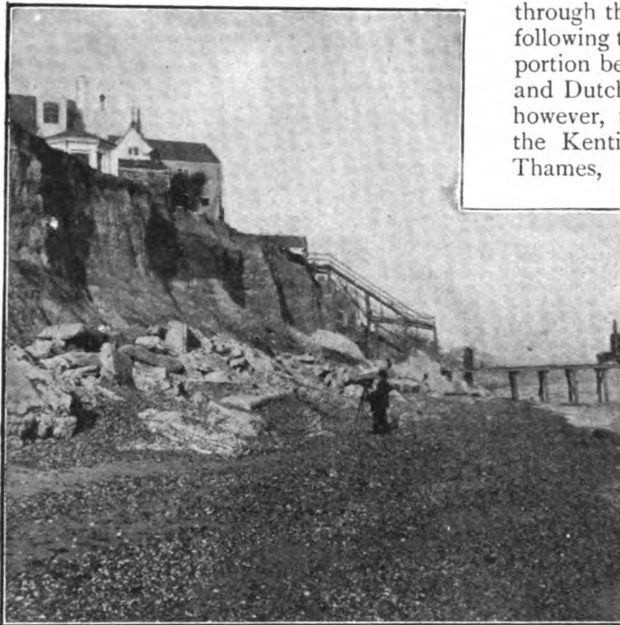


THE EFFECT OF A TWO DAYS' GALE ON THE DEFENCES SHOWN IN THE PRECEDING PHOTO.
From a Photo.

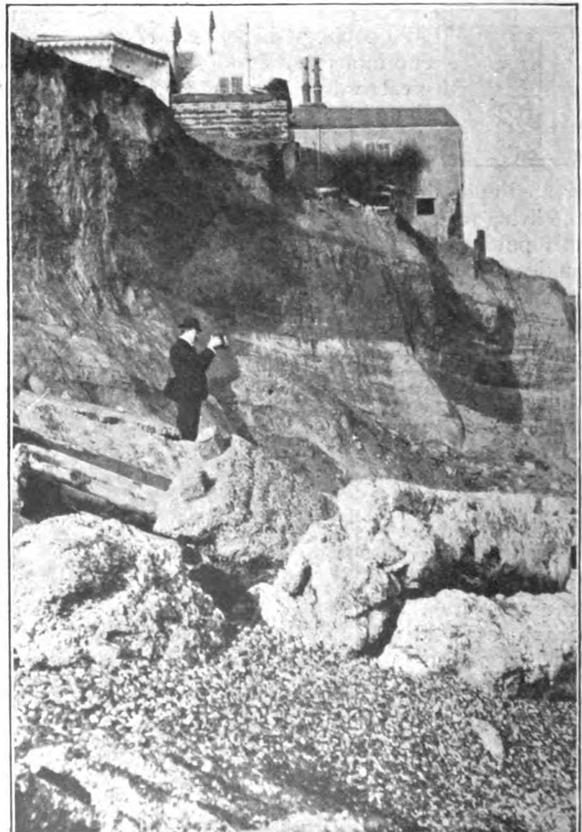
through the narrow Straits of Dover, where, following the rule before mentioned, the main portion bears to the right along the French and Dutch coasts. The western fringe of it, however, runs, though at less height, round the Kentish Foreland to the estuary of the Thames, where it meets the North Sea tide, which, nevertheless, is of somewhat different force, being exactly twelve hours older from the Atlantic than the Channel tide, which it meets.

Owing to this meeting of the two tides off the Thames estuary, and to the fact that northward of this the one tide is flowing when the other is ebbing, the average rise at the former place is very considerably greater than it is farther north—more than twice as high, for instance, as is the average rise at Lowestoft, where, indeed,

between the coast of the British Isles and that of Norway. On reaching the great Dogger Bank its progress is to a large extent diverted southeastward towards the English coast. South of the Dogger Bank, and even nearer to our coast, is the Wells Bank. These great banks, forming a more or less continuous line (though, of course, with an opening between), force the sea into the comparatively narrow channel lying between their western edge and the English coast as far as the mouth of the Thames.

The ebbing tide follows, of course, the opposite direction, and it will thus be seen that the tides of the North Sea, though apparently (to the uninitiated visitor to the east coast) ebbing and flowing directly from and on to the shore eastwards and westwards, in reality run or "set" up and down the coast.

It is not, however, with the North Sea tide only that we have to deal. Some part of the Atlantic tide is diverted by the south-west promontory of England and flows up the English Channel, where it becomes known as the Channel tide, and rushes with increasing force



A NEARER VIEW OF THE SAME, SHOWING HOW THE SOLID CONCRETE WAS BROKEN, WORN SMOOTH, AND ROLLED ABOUT, AND THE ENORMOUS MASS OF CLIFF EATEN AWAY BY THE WAVES.
From a Photo.

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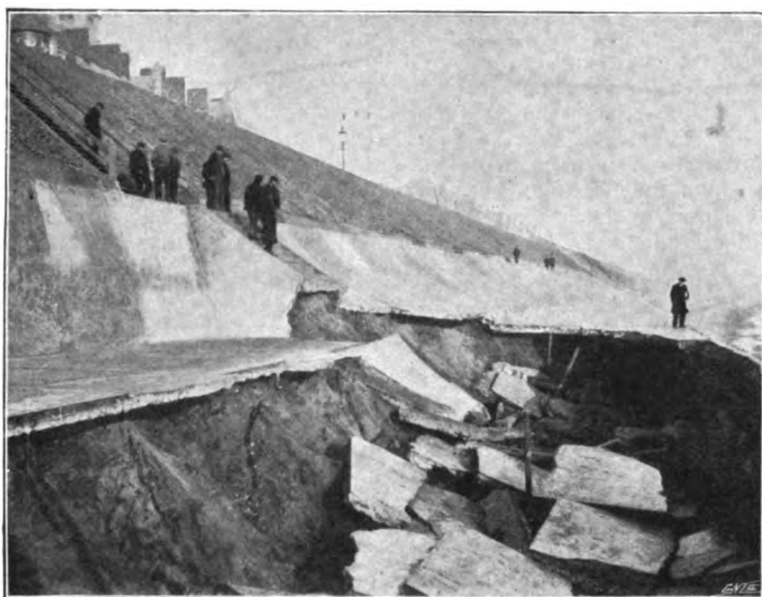


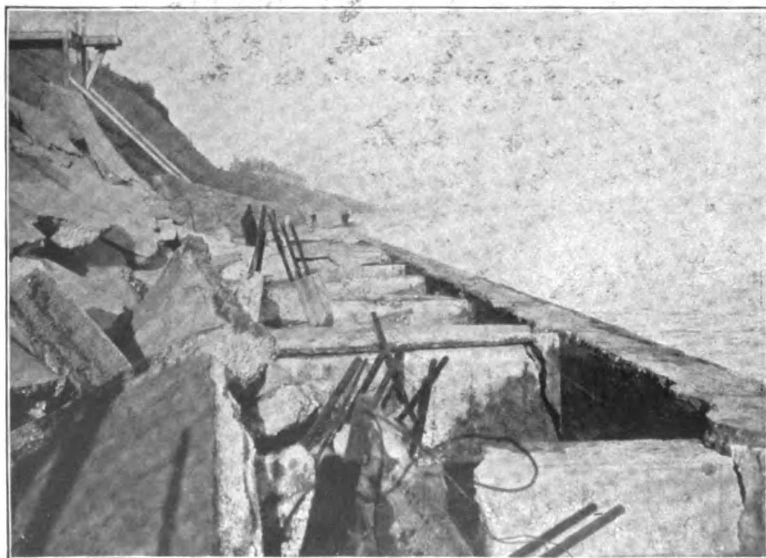
THE EFFECT OF A MODERATE NORTH-WESTER IN ABOUT TWO HOURS ON A CONCRETE ESPLANADE.
From a] [*Photo.*

part approximately at this section of the coast.

It will be noticed that the channel formed between these great banks and the mainland is somewhat of the bottle shape, and this also is that of the North Sea itself. It is evident, therefore, that the incoming or flood tide will be of greater force off that part of the coast now under consideration, and will hence cause a greater "scour" of the beach than will the outgoing or ebb tide. Consequently, the tendency is for the sand and shingle to move southwards.

That this is so is very evident from the fact that wherever you have a projection into the sea on this coast, there, with hardly an exception, you will find the beach makes up on the north of it, as witness the accumulation north of the harbour mouth at Great Yarmouth and, to a less extent, north of

it is practically high tide at the same time as it is low water on the opposite coast of Holland. When, however, we follow the English coast still farther north we discover that, owing to the jutting out of the Norfolk promontory right into the wake of the North Sea tide, that part of the coast-line that actually faces north is subjected to a rise nearly equal to that at the mouth of the Thames, whilst when we get round to the Wash we find, as would be expected from its peculiar formation and situation, the highest tide of all. Though, as we have seen, the rise at Lowestoft is comparatively small, averaging, perhaps, about 5ft., still the tide in the roadstead there runs quite as strongly as the higher rising tides farther north and south, if not stronger. This is accounted for by the channel caused by the Dogger and Wells banks, which finds its narrowest



A NEW WALL OF MOST SUBSTANTIAL CHARACTER WAS NO SOONER COMPLETED THAN THE SEA PLAYED BATTLEDORE AND SHUTTLECOCK WITH ITS MASSIVE CONCRETE SLABS.
From a Photo.

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the north pier at Lowestoft. This explains at once the consequences of building out a solid pier on this part of the coast and of the principle of the various sea groins. The action of both the pier and the groin is the same, but the former (being of much greater magnitude and projection), whilst it causes an accumulation or making up of the beach to the northward, denudes the beach immediately to the south of the shifting sand and shingle that would naturally have been brought there by the flowing tide without correspondingly protecting it from the force of that tide; hence the damage to the coast indirectly caused by large solid piers is often very considerable. The small groins, on the other hand, are often found of very great service, for their very smallness prevents them from interfering with each other's action, and when placed at frequent intervals they cause a number of small accumulations near enough together to protect the whole line of coast.

We have so far only glanced at the effects of ordinary tides unaffected by the influence of the wind, and to what extent the force of an incoming tide is increased by a gale only those who have watched the effects of one can realize.

Curious as it may seem, the wind which has the greatest tendency to increase the rise of the tide at Lowestoft is one blowing, to some extent, off the land—we mean a north-west wind. To understand the reason of this we have again to examine our two tides. A glance at the map will show that the flow of the North Sea tide as far as Lowestoft Ness is in the main south-east, whilst that of the Channel tide is easterly, with, as we have seen, a tendency to lean to the right southward on the coast of France.. When, then, we get a gale from the north-west across the Atlantic coincident with an incoming tide, the North Sea, with the huge volume of the main ocean behind, is driven with increased force and fury down our eastern coast, whilst at the same time and from the same cause the Channel tide, which ought then to be receding, is backed up by the excessive swell of the Atlantic, and this meeting the North Sea tide causes an enormous increase of water along the eastern coast.

The rise of neap tides at Lowestoft is about 3ft., and of spring tides, on an average under normal conditions, about 6½ft.; but the latter, under the influence of a big north-west gale, is sometimes increased to as much as 12ft. When it is remembered that the pressure of a body of water at rest is proportionate to its depth, and that the rate at which waves travel under the impetus of a gale may amount to anything from twenty to forty miles an hour, the force with which the sea breaks on to an obstruction as a cliff or sea-wall may to some extent be imagined.

This is perhaps not the place to inquire whether the authorities of Lowestoft have so far erected their defences on the soundest principles of engineering. But what the difficulties are which have to be encountered may be readily imagined by anyone who studies the illustrations of this article.

A WATER-LOGGED COLLIER RUNNING ASHORE DURING A GALE, THE CREW HAVING TAKEN TO THE RIGGING.
From a Photo.

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I.

IT was the height of the summer season, and on the crowded pier a little girl in a lace frock, who had frolicked with greater vigour than any of her kindred spirits on the threshold of life's day, paused for breath, tossing back her elaborate sun-bonnet, with its overpowering strings of broad white satin ribbon. A sigh of relief escaped her as the wind made merry with her curls.

"Take care your bonnet doesn't blow away," said a voice at her elbow, while a kindly hand, small and fragile, saved the frilled headgear from falling to the ground.

Victorine, of the lace and curls, looked up with a quick "Thank you."

She saw beside her a little girl of her own height and size, but the stranger could boast no dimples or wayward curls, no chiffons and laces.

Her sharp face had a pinched, unchildish look, which bespoke suffering.

A keen observer would have known at once the stern hand of the oppressor, either poverty or ill-health, played some part in the life of that thin little morsel of humanity. She was dressed in serviceable blue serge, her straw hat had seen better days, and yet every detail of her attire, every movement of the emaciated frame, every word and feature, stamped her as well bred.

"What is your name?" asked Victorine.

This was a question by which the little girl in the lace frock always manifested her interest in the unknown.

"Herminie Tempest," replied the child, leaning up against the rail dividing them from the musicians.

She looked curiously at Victorine, her eyes glowing suddenly at the sight of her turquoise necklace and the tiny gold bangles clasping the plump little arms. A miniature chain dotted with charms hung from her waist, and she wore a wee brooch with her name in pearls.

The children hardly knew why, but the delights of dancing round the bandstand faded to insignificance, and instead they lingered talking. Victorine discovered that Herminie had been ill; she was here for her health, and not simply because her people were tired out by the London season.

"What is it like to be ill?" asked Victorine, curiously.

"Oh, you lie in bed, and it's horrid!" Herminie declared.

At last the chiming of a great clock on the pavilion warned them they must part.

"Miss Maybourn, my governess, is beckoning me," whispered Victorine. "Can't we walk back together? Who is looking after you?"

Herminie pointed to an insignificant little maid.

"She is the servant at our lodgings; she likes coming on the pier. I will tell her I want to go home now."

The children trotting in front of their attendants managed to keep together.

"That is where I am staying," said Herminie, pointing across the road.

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"Oh, what a nasty little house!" cried Victorine, expressing her thoughts aloud.

"Yes, it is rather stuffy indoors," Herminie confessed, "but I go out a great deal, and then I don't smell the dinner cooking. It's always like that when you go away from home, but I did not mind it before I was ill. Is your place very stuffy, too?"

Victorine's big, round eyes opened widely.

"Oh, no! We are staying at the Hotel Imperial, and it's ever so big!"

She pointed to a palatial building on the esplanade, with gold balconies full of flowers.

Miss Maybourn drew nearer and Herminie darted away, rejoining the breathless little maid, panting after her under the shade of a dirty white cotton parasol.

"I hope you haven't been dull," said Victorine, with one of her coaxing smiles, as she took Miss Maybourn's hand; "but, you see, I made friends with that little girl. When you make friends with a person, you like to talk to them, don't you?"

"I thought she looked a very nice child," replied Miss Maybourn, who had noticed the inborn air of distinction which Herminie unconsciously possessed.

II.

THE following day being Sunday, Victorine, in a still more elaborate frock of exquisite lace, accompanied her mother to church.

Mrs. Ambleton made a truly remarkable figure, for she knew no moderation in dress, and advertised her great wealth by displaying the fabulous fancies of fashion to a daring extent. She took with her to church an ivory prayer-book, a jewelled scent-bottle, and an extremely pretty child, toying with each in turn, and rustling out before the sermon, well aware she had attracted the attention of many curious eyes.

Her husband, a stout man with a red beard, joined her on the esplanade, where, by mutual consent, the community paraded either to criticise their neighbours, exercise their limbs, or inhale the salt sea breezes.

"MRS. AMBLETON FELT AN EXCITED PULL AT HER ARM."

Victorine looked eagerly for her new friend, but despaired of finding her in the crowd.

Suddenly Mrs. Ambleton felt an excited pull at her arm, and a moment later she was aware that Victorine had publicly saluted, both by bowing, waving, and smiling, a shabbily-dressed little girl with a tall woman in rusty black.

In a few breathless words the child told how they had met.

Mrs. Ambleton's face grew red, even under its coating of powder.

"You must never mix with children of that stamp," she said. "I don't mind if you play with some of the smart little boys and girls in the hotel, but it is dreadful to talk to people on the pier! If you see her again, remember you are not to speak!"

A lump rose in Victorine's throat, so that

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she could not answer; a mist gathered before her eyes, yet the sun still shone brightly as before.

Meanwhile Herminie was vanishing in the distance, explaining to her mother, the Hon. Mrs. Tempest, why she had been so warmly recognised by the little girl in the lace frock.

"But, my dear, she is the child of that exceedingly vulgar-looking woman!" gasped Mrs. Tempest. "I know the mother well by sight, and have been told they own a large upholstery establishment in London. I don't like your having any acquaintance with such people. Pray do not talk to Victorine again."

Though terribly poor, Mrs. Tempest was exceedingly proud. Herminie felt a pang of disappointment, for the child, whose whole appearance suggested wealth and luxury, fascinated and dazzled her.

Mrs. Tempest thought how wan, tired, and ill she looked, and her own face grew paler, while her heart-beats quickened. To the lonely widow this one ewe lamb converted a grey, cheerless life into something worth the living. For Herminie's sake she bitterly resented the reverses of fortune which made the struggle so hard; for Herminie her heart bled.

"Is it wicked to have an upholstery place?" asked the child, with a very deep sigh.

"Wicked! Why, of course not! What ever put such an idea into your head?"

"Because I am not to talk to Victorine."

"Ah!" murmured Mrs. Tempest, "that is a very different matter, but you will understand some day."

Herminie wondered how soon "some day" would come, when all these queer problems might be made plain. She looked back, but Victorine was out of sight.

"I shall keep away from the pier," she inwardly resolved. "It would be horrid to be there and not to speak!"

Her spirits flagged, she walked slowly, and every time her mother asked if she were tired Herminie shook her head. She was afraid of making her mother sad; she knew the old feeling of illness, recognising its familiar touch, conscious of the enemy's return.

"Mother must not be bothered," she thought; "I shall be well, perhaps, to-morrow; I don't want her to feel anxious."

In the small, wasted frame there burnt brightly the spirit of endurance. She was too unselfish to complain, too unselfish even to tell her mother how fond she had grown, during one short hour, of the little girl in the lace frock.

III.

It was not till a week later that Victorine happened to see the lodging-house maid who had been with Herminie on the pier.

They were both looking into the same shop window, richly decked with fruits and flowers.

Victorine edged up against her, avoiding Miss Maybourn's eye.

"How is Herminie?" she asked.

The girl started. She was leaning forward, resting both hands on the round wooden knob of her cotton sunshade.

"She's mortal bad, thank you, missy. I was just wishing I could take her some of those fine, big grapes. Her mother is regularly distracted; she thinks the doctor here is not treating her right."

Victorine stared. Then she brushed the curls from her eyes, and had only time to exclaim, "I didn't know she was ill. Oh, I am so sorry!" before Miss Maybourn hurried her away.

For some moments Victorine did not speak. A very active little brain may be busily at work even under a sun-bonnet.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Miss Maybourn, presently, noticing the unusual wistfulness in the baby-face.

"I was thinking of all the money I've saved," answered Victorine. "It would buy such lots and lots of grapes. What do people like when they are ill? I should want a doll in a blue frock that would shut its eyes when it lay down, and a heap of picture-books. I have been keeping my money till my legs grew a little longer, and then I meant to buy a very tiny bicycle, because it would be ages before I could ride a big one. I think I'll try and forget I wanted a bicycle and get some things for Herminie instead. Mother won't mind, because if Herminie is in bed I can't play with her, and I need not say who the things came from."

Miss Maybourn remembered the distinguished-looking child who, despite her plain and somewhat worn attire, appeared so unmistakably well bred, and she could not find it in her heart to thwart Victorine.

She knew how eagerly the money had been treasured, and was sure the sacrifice needed a very strong effort—one which would strengthen Victorine's character, though the child certainly looked more like a French doll than a person capable of sacrifice.

"I don't believe," said the little voice, with

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a suspicious tremor in it, "that a bicycle can be as nice as it looks! I sha'n't want one at all for quite a long time, you know."

The rose-bud mouth was set firm, there were no dimples to be seen.

IV.

THE lodging-house door was never locked, and mysterious parcels with Herminie's name attached to them perpetually made their appearance in the narrow hall. Herminie was quite sure a fairy brought them and told her mother so, with eyes that brightened in spite of weakness and pain.

Mrs. Tempest, watching her sick child's pleasure, blessed the unknown donor, forgetting her pride in the warmth of her gratitude.

Such flowers! such fruit! such toys! After the first few days of anonymous offerings, Herminie asked regularly what the fairy had sent.

Herminie, with childish intuition, had just the faintest suspicion of who the fairy might be. Mrs. Tempest never thought of Victorine, the little daughter of that flashy Mrs. Ambleton, who boasted no patrician descent, but only the golden key to luxury.

Besides drawing lavishly from her money-box, Victorine found plentiful stores of fruit in the big private sitting-room they occupied on the first floor. This she was at liberty to use, and she had only to scramble on her father's knee and rummage openly in his pockets for him to yield his treasure with a good-natured smile.

"SHE BENT DOWN AND KISSED VICTORINE."

Victorine, with custom, grew bolder as she darted into the gloomy hall of what she still called "a nasty little house." Sometimes she even lingered a moment, just to prove her courage to Miss Maybourn, who waited anxiously outside.

She always felt nervous when the dainty figure of her charge vanished from sight, and sighed with relief at its reappearance.

One particularly bright morning Victorine kept her waiting longer than usual, and she could see through the open door the little white figure talking with a tall woman in black.

Mrs. Tempest had telegraphed for a specialist who saw Herminie in London. The child was worse and the mother grew desperate. She kept running to the door at every sound in her eagerness for a reply. It was thus she caught the fairy, red-handed.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

Her grey eyes were full of tears, she was white to the lips and trembling. Her pitiable look of distress instantly broke down Victorine's shyness. She held out a minute hand, and looked up sympathetically from the shade of her white bonnet.

"Oh, please don't cry!" whispered the little voice; "I have brought some things for Herminie, only I didn't want anyone to know. You see, my mamma said I wasn't to play with her; I may only talk to the children in the hotel, and not to the children on the pier."

The genuine concern in that small pink and white face touched Mrs. Tempest deeply. She bent down and kissed Victorine.

"You have been so kind, so kind!" she said, brokenly. "Dear little girl, why did you think of my Herminie?"

"I don't know," answered Victorine, "but I suppose I love her very much."

Mrs. Tempest remembered that Sunday morning. She could see again the child waving, and hear Herminie's plaintive question, "Is it wicked to have an upholstery place?"

"Telegram!"

The word fell with an ominous sound on

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Mrs. Tempest's ear. She tore the envelope open in a frenzy of anxiety.

"Dr. Fairholme has left for his holiday on the Continent," she read.

A groan escaped her.

Dr. Fairholme away! It seemed to seal Herminie's doom. He not only thoroughly understood her case, but was a personal friend and aware of their circumstances. He had shown them great kindness in the past, and Mrs. Tempest could have trusted him not to press her for the money.

She forgot Victorine as she turned away with a stifled sob.

"The London doctor can't come!" she said to the landlady, who appeared on the stairs, and her voice vibrated with a dull misery that filled Victorine with a sense of terror.

Without another word the child fled away, haunted by the sound of that melancholy voice, followed by the echo of a deep, low sob.

Silently she accompanied Miss Maybourn to the beach, and, seated under a breakwater, thought out many things.

Perhaps some guiding angel whispered in her ear, perhaps the song of the sea inspired the little mind. She was thinking especially of a gentleman with a pointed beard and a little bald patch on the top of his head, who had come the previous day to the Hotel Imperial.

Her father pointed him out to her mother as an extremely celebrated London physician. He occupied a suite of rooms next to theirs; he had a very grand, imposing air. Several times she had seen him through the open door, reading, or writing at a table strewn with papers.

Suddenly she grew tired of the beach, and begged Miss Maybourn to take her home.

"'IF YOU PLEASE,' SHE SAID, 'I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT HERMINIE.'"

Dr. Grainger felt he required rest. A great reader, he loved to fling himself into an arm-chair by the flower-laden balcony and enjoy the companionship of a good book.

It was stiflingly hot, and he had left the door of his sitting-room open.

So engrossed was he that the soft patter of little feet hastily approaching his chair failed to attract his attention.

It was not until a small hand gently tapped the back of his book that he looked up, to find a pair of pleading eyes gazing earnestly into his.

For the moment he wondered if he were fully awake, for the beautiful child in her dainty attire looked like some vision of the senses. The glowing cheeks and sunny curls made a pleasing picture, while those tiny fingers still rested with absolute confidence on the heavy volume.

"Oh, if you please," she said, "I want to tell you about Herminie."

"Herminie!" The name came echoing down a vista of long years. He had once known a "Herminie" in his early youth, a tall, proud girl who had scorned his love, a girl with eyes of marvellous depth and soft, rippling hair. He drew the child nearer; it was odd she was not afraid of him, a grey-haired stranger, with lines of deep study and thought searing his brow.

"Well?" he queried, touching her curls.

"Herminie is very ill," continued Victorine, breathlessly, "and they can't get a doctor from London to come and make her well, so I thought I would ask you to go. Miss Maybourn says they lodge in that nasty little house at the end of the parade because they have no money, and Herminie hasn't any pretty clothes, so I mustn't play with her.

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But I love her very much, though we only made friends one morning on the pier. Her mother was crying to-day, and I felt I wanted to help her ever so much, and that made me think of you. I asked Miss Maybourn if doctors cost a lot of money, and she said 'Yes, they are ruinous.' I shouldn't like poor Mrs. Tempest to be bothered about that, so I thought I would tell you I have three half-crowns left in my money-box. Would they do instead of Mrs. Tempest having to pay?"

A queer expression flitted over the doctor's face.

He remembered the "Herminie" he once knew and loved had married some years later a young and exceedingly reckless Captain Tempest against the wishes of her family. After that he heard nothing more of her; she had sunk into oblivion.

"Tell me the name of the house," he said, rising quickly and letting his book fall with painful force on Victorine's toes. She winced with the pain, but he never noticed her.

"Sea View Lodge," she gasped, as he snatched up his hat and vanished through the open door.

Victorine watched him, her eyes beaming with gratitude. She piped out "Thank you," but the room was empty; only the walls heard.

V.

THE great doctor, arriving at a critical moment of Herminie's illness, brought all his skill to bear upon her difficult and complicated case.

It seemed to Mrs. Tempest little short of a miracle that this friend of her youth, now so celebrated, should appear as if in direct answer to her prayer for Herminie's recovery.

"HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU?"

Night and day he attended the suffering child till the crisis passed and he pronounced her out of danger.

She was sleeping peacefully, and Mrs. Tempest for the first time found herself alone in the small drawing-room with Dr. Grainger.

"How can I ever thank you or show my gratitude?" she said, her voice trembling with deep emotion.

He looked in her face, seeing the same fathomless eyes and pure alabaster skin, while the same soft ripple played across her hair.

A tender expression, a certain quivering of her lips, a little, pathetic gesture gave him encouragement to answer boldly.

"I don't want gratitude, Herminie, I only want yourself."

She drew a step nearer, and her head drooped, such a proud, daintily shaped head, looking like a broken lily in a storm.

A moment later the tired spirit found its refuge in a lover's arms.

"Tell me," she said at last, "who was the friend that sent you to me—who told you I was here?"

"A tiny child who stole into my room like a fairy. She was staying at the Imperial, and left this morning with her parents. She used to watch so eagerly for news, though she told me she had only met Herminie once. After I saw her drive away I inquired for letters, and found an hotel envelope awaiting me—in it were three half-crowns!"

A smile of intense amusement dawned on his lips, and a kindly expression smoothed the lines which love might yet erase.

But the smile and the tender look just at that moment were all for the little girl in the lace frock.

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The New Musketry Practice in England.

BY ALBERT H. BROADWELL.

THE greatest lesson in warfare taught to any nation during the last thirty years has been learnt by Great Britain in South Africa; it has been a thorough lesson in shooting, and it is important to note, therefore, that the authorities at Aldershot, the great military camp in England, have not been slow in taking advantage of the experience of the past three years in teaching British soldiers how to shoot straight.

THE RUNNING MEN, SHOWING HOW THEY ARE WORKED FROM THE PIT.

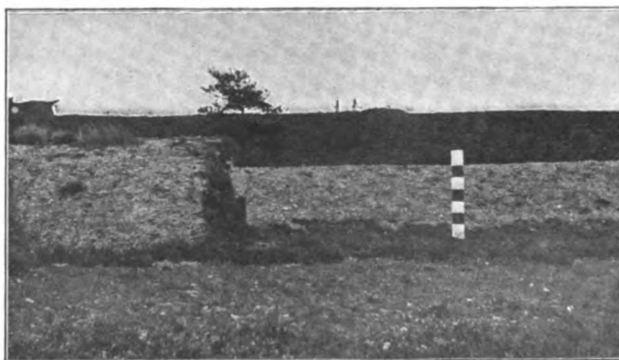
THE STRAND MAGAZINE for July, 1901, contained an article entitled "A British Commando," describing Dr. Conan Doyle's civilians' rifle club at Hindhead. Dr. Doyle may well be called the pioneer of civilian rifle clubs, for, ever since Lord Salisbury in his famous speech advised Englishmen to learn how to shoot, Dr. Doyle has given much of his spare time to the organization of a shooting club where bulls'-eyes rank before banking accounts.

The war in South Africa has demonstrated the fact that pretty sword exercises and cavalry charges *en masse* are things of the past so far as success in modern warfare is concerned, and *how to shoot* has become the great problem of the day.

What Dr. Doyle is doing for citizen rifle-shooting Aldershot is now doing for the Regulars on a more elaborate plan on the Ash Ranges at North Camp.

The Ash Ranges, under the supervision of Captain E. L. C. Feilden, to whom we are indebted for the arrangements which have made this article possible, have altered their appearance in a startling and eminently practical manner.

The British soldier has shot at regulation targets too long, and he is tired of the monotony of it. See him on the Ash Ranges, at Aldershot, to-day, and you will find him full of fun, of enthusiasm. Why? Because he sees a head in the heather and a moving enemy on the crest of the hill. Up they pop, down they go, in a twinkling; the sport is to get a shot home before they are gone. That is what Tommy never had before; it rouses his latent energies and awakens that spirit of sport which is ever ready to show itself when opportunity offers.



THE SAME FIGURES ON THE CREST OF THE HILL SOME 400 YARDS AWAY.

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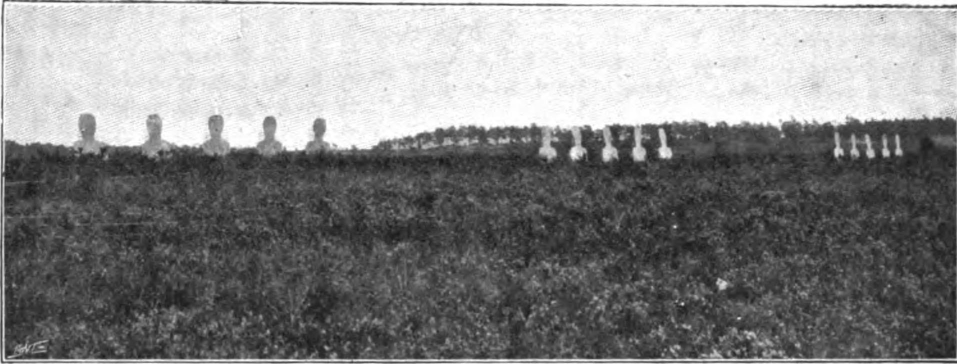
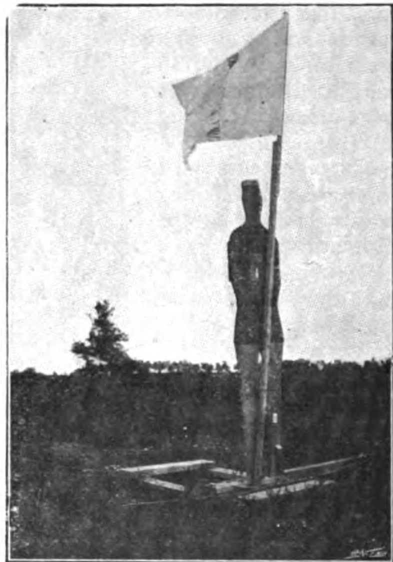


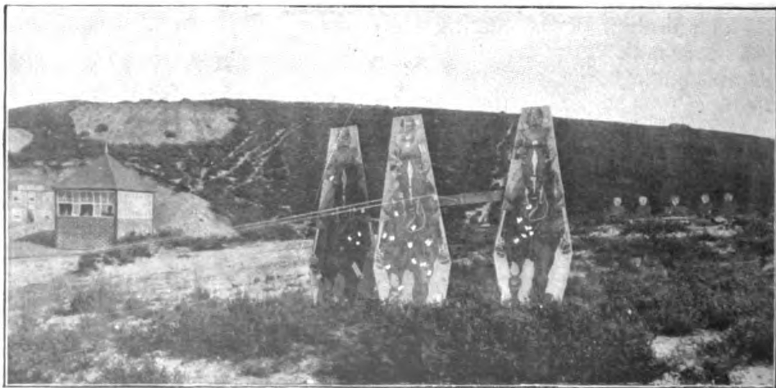
HEADS AND SHOULDERS AMONG THE HEATHER.

No better ground could possibly be found for the purpose, for the Ash Ranges comprise a series of kopjes and valleys which lend themselves admirably to the object in view. The various moving targets which are scattered over the field of operations are designed to represent the dispositions of a defending force prepared to meet an enemy invading the ranges from the south. In order to give our readers an idea of a field-day on the ranges we will imagine, for the time being, that we are part and parcel of the attacking force. Forward! march! We scatter and become units; that is to say, units of a long, straggling line

THE DUMMY MAXIM AND WORKING PIT.



THE SIGNALLER.



THE DUMMY CAVALRY—NOTE THE ROPES WHICH KEEP THE FIGURES STRAIGHT.

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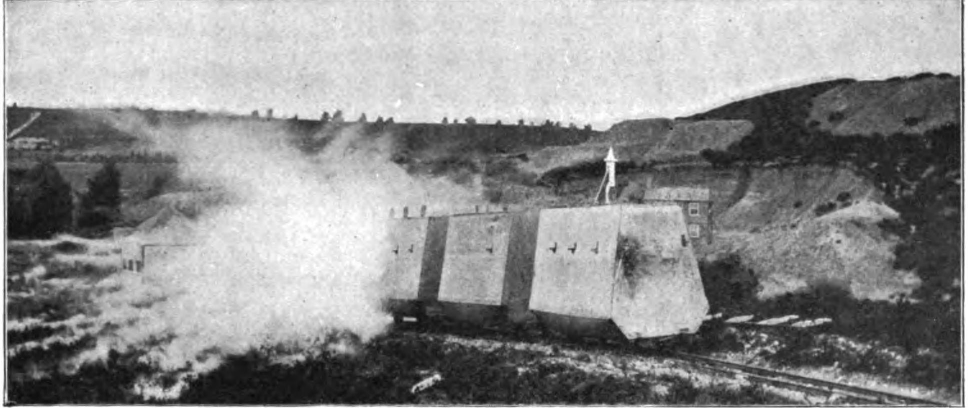
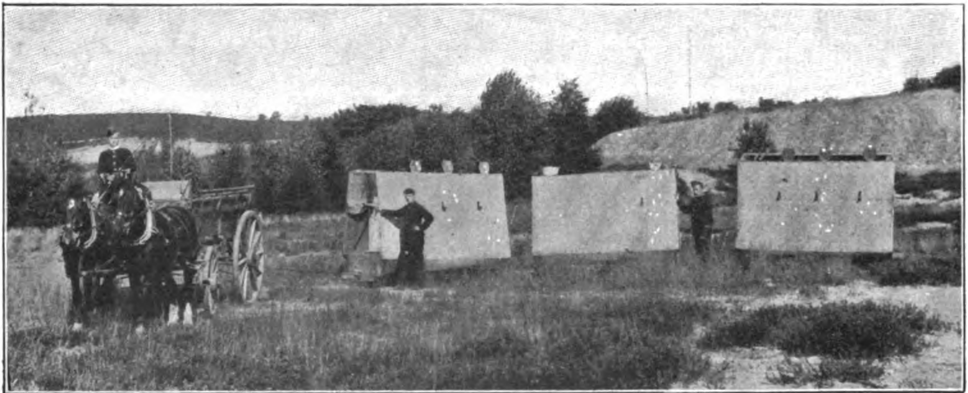
of creeping, ever-advancing foes! We avail ourselves of every particle of cover. What is that on the crest of the hill? The enemy? Who said the enemy? Why, yes, surely, there they are again. Watch those two men running along the crest of the hill—but before the words are out they are gone again!



THE DUMMY ARMOURED TRAIN SPITS FIRE.

Someone on our left has taken a pot-shot at them. A hit!—no, it isn't. They are there once more. Let us get nearer. On we creep; we reach the coveted hill; we make a dash for the top, and lo! before us are the dummy figures of the enemy. On our right we detect a Maxim ready to fire. The gunner pops up and down behind the breech. "Shoot him if you can, boys!"—and the peppering begins.



THE ARMOURED TRAIN "GOING HOME." THE WHITE PATCHES INDICATE THE HITS AFTER A FIELD-DAY.

Then, without a moment's notice, heads and shoulders appear in the heather, and before we can take aim they are gone again! The magazines are brought into use and we pepper away for our lives. The heads appear again and are lost to view a moment after.

We reach the hill. Behold a signaller! He waves his flag, evidently sending a message to his commander in rear, reporting our advance. He's gone—our excitement grows to a tremendous pitch. There he is again! Ping, ping, ping—he's down! But, alas, it is not the rifle that has done it, but the man in a protecting pit behind, who has worked the life-like dummy. We advance cautiously. Five hundred yards ahead there is a house—a Boer inn. We intend to capture it, but we are not there yet. We have first to face a cavalry charge. The intrepid horsemen are dummies too, but none the less are swift of motion. Note the ropes which give them life. We give the mounted men a lesson. Look at the white patches, each of which denotes a bullet mark, and you will say that we have made good practice to-day.

We must get to the inn at any price; it must be stormed. We crawl again, down hill, behind hillocks, across ditches and ravines. But what is this? Take cover. A roar and a rumble—it is the armoured

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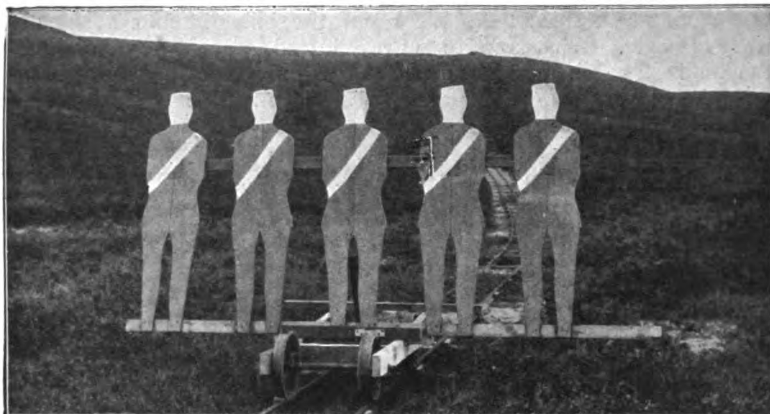
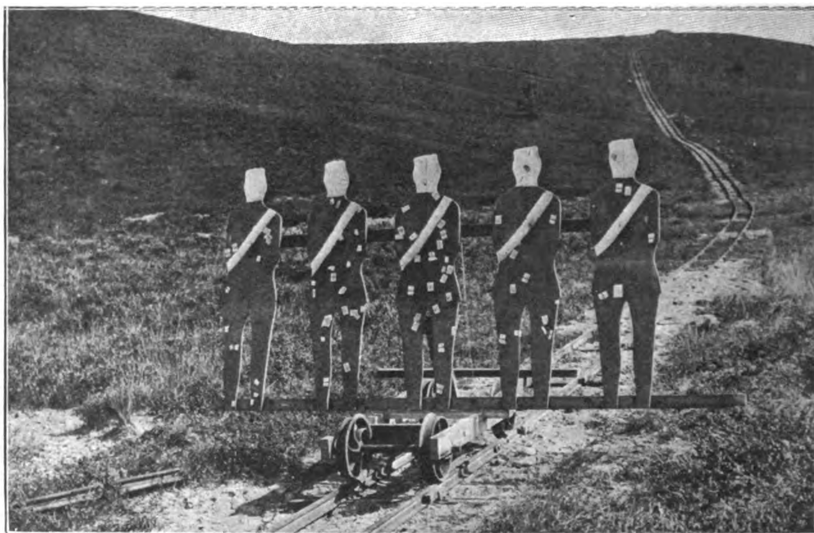

THE TRAIN-WRECKING PARTY BEFORE—

just as he gains shelter.

As we advance we obtain a glance of the back of this structure, and we note with satisfaction that we have left our mark on the walls—canvas walls—and on the dummy figures that appeared at short intervals at the windows. We climb another train! With a shriek it dashes across the valley and spits fire at us as it goes.


AND AFTER THEIR CHARGE DOWN THE HILL ON A TROLLY.

A party of the enemy has been sent to wreck the line as soon as the train has passed. They tear down the hill in front of us and disappear from view. They have had a bad time. Look at their poor bodies. But, see, they are up again for a few seconds near the signal-box. What is that loud explosion? Halloa! They have succeeded; yes, the line is blown up. They were gallant fellows, but they did not know the value of taking cover.

We do, and on we creep. There's a man coming out of the inn with a gun—probably the landlord. Steady, boys! Bang! bang!! We've got him! No, he turns tail and enters the house again. We do our best, however, and give him a parting shot in the back

THE BOER LANDLORD.

kopje and come under the fire of a battery, just visible in the far distance, craftily concealed under the shadow of a wood. We hear an explosion; it is the 15-pounders opening fire.

Halloa! One of its deadly messages drops and explodes less than twenty yards in front of us. Shrapnel covers our advance, but undaunted we move ahead, unswerving, towards the coveted goal.

We find out afterwards that the battery fire was not so deadly as might

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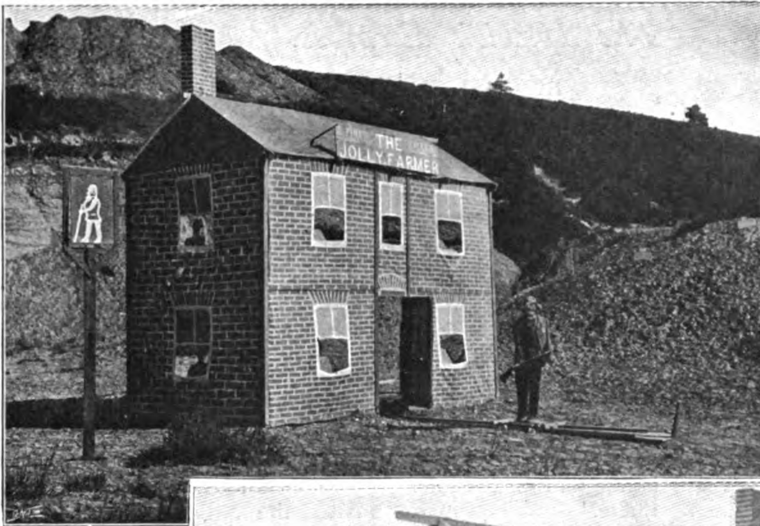
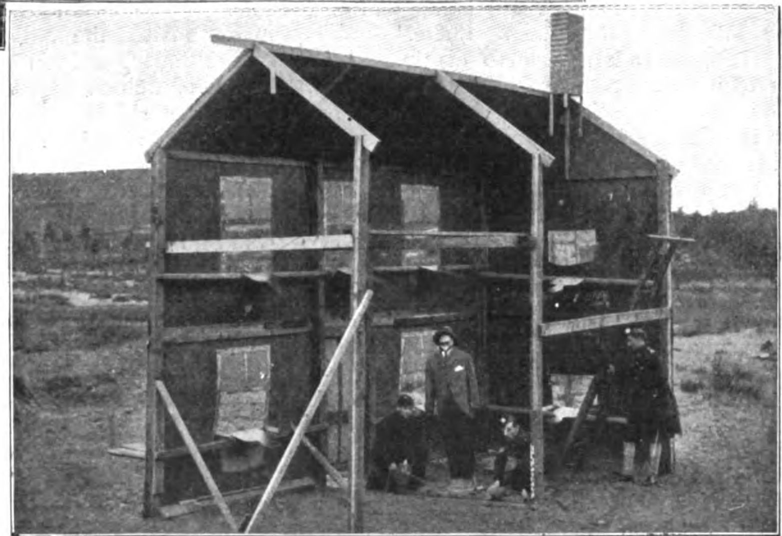


THE BOER INN.

require—unknown ranges, hidden targets, appearing and disappearing in unexpected places, representing an enemy, in place of the old-fashioned large black and white targets. It also gives an interest which was formerly lacking. Let us hope that some similar kind of range will be constructed in every district in the country, and follow the lead which Aldershot has given us.

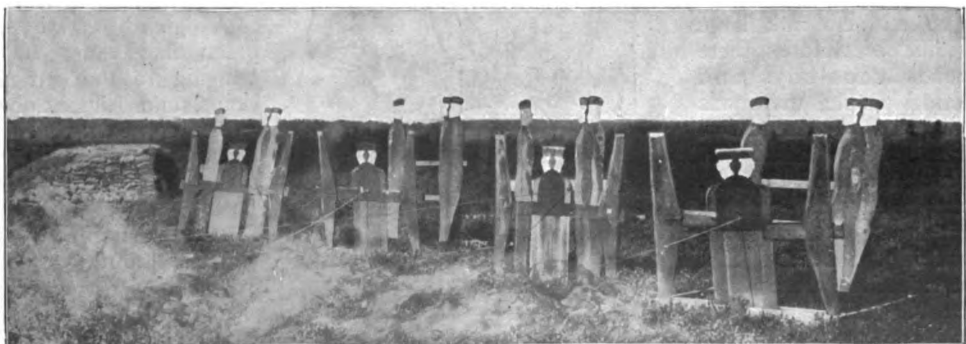


THE BOER INN—BEHIND THE SCENES.

have been anticipated by anyone who did not know that the bursting shells were nothing more than ground mines fired, as we advanced, by electricity.

So our illusion is over. We shake hands, for we have done uncommonly well, but we want to come again.

Taking the matter seriously, too much importance cannot be attached to this new style of field firing; it is what soldiers



THE DUMMY BATTERY.

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The Ipswich Express.

By G. H. Page.

"COULDN'T you find me a carriage with a lady in it?" said Lily Freeston, a little doubtfully, as the porter opened the door of a first-class carriage which was quite empty, and began to pack her dressing-bag and roll of rugs into the rack.

"Well, miss," said he, apologetically, "though there are a good many people going by this train, there are not many going first-class. But very likely some may come yet, for there's still twenty minutes before you're off, and I'll look out for any ladies, and if I can manage it I'll put them in here."

He spoke with an eye to his tip, and the grateful Lily at once gave him a shilling. Then he went off and forgot all about her in the doing of other jobs, and the carriage remained empty.

In a way Lily found it pleasant to be alone, and could she have felt certain of remaining alone during the whole two hours of her journey she would have been quite happy. But it was the uncertainty, the possibility of having to travel with some objectionable companion, which gave her a slight sense of uneasiness.

She chose her seat in the corner facing the engine, but she did not sit down at once. She stood instead at the open door, watching the crowd hurrying about the platform. There were plenty of people, as the porter had said, but all, obviously, were going second or third class. There were mothers with large families of children, there were schoolboys and young people, there was a group of Salvation lasses, a clergyman, and a much-flustered old lady, carrying a bird-cage in one hand and a band-box in the other. Her perturbation arose from the fact that she had not seen her trunk put into the luggage-van with her own eyes, and it was in vain that an irascible porter insisted that he, at least, knew he had done so with his own hands. The old lady was neither to be soothed nor to be intimidated. She appealed volubly to the station-master, who happened to be standing at hand.

"SHE WENT ON WITH THE NARRATIVE."

Lily could see her action, could see her gesticulation, while not hearing what she said. And the girl couldn't help smiling at the way in which the old lady waved the band-box and the bird-cage about, couldn't help wondering how the bird, beneath the green-baize cover, was enjoying his tempestuous experiences. Finally, it seemed to Lily that the station-master invited the old lady to accompany him to the luggage-van and verify the whereabouts of the box herself, for he walked off towards the rear of the train and the old lady trotted after him.

By this time most of the other passengers had taken their places and the platform was nearly empty. Only a nice-looking young man in a grey summer suit remained, and he kept looking now at his watch and now through each of the station entrances as he sauntered by them, as if he were awaiting the arrival of a friend.

"No, *she* won't come," said Lily to herself, as she watched him. "I'm afraid she was so long doing her hair—and of course she wanted to do it extra well to-day—that she missed the train. You will have to go without her or to wait for the next. But you look much too nice to go without her. I'm sure you'll wait for the next."

A guard carrying a green flag came along banging-to the carriage-doors, and Lily sat down in her corner, satisfied at last that she was going to make the journey alone; for after leaving Liverpool Street the train did not stop again until it reached Ipswich.

She did not anticipate being dull. First of all, the mere sensation of being carried along at

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the rate of sixty miles an hour was an amusement to her; then she liked looking out of the window at the hamlets and country houses flying past her and imagining little stories about the people who lived in them; and finally, when she should tire of this, she had plenty of magazines and papers with which to beguile the time.

She had also the letter home to her aunt which she had begun in the train coming up from Tunbridge, and she thought she would first go on with that. So she took her bag down from the rack, found her little writing-pad and pencil, and putting the point of the latter between her pretty lips to darken it went on with the narrative of her travel adventures where she had broken off:—

"I got across London from Charing Cross to Liverpool Street all right, and the cabman was very nice; and when I asked him 'How much?' he said: 'Well, since it's you, miss, we'll say five shillings,' which was very kind of him, wasn't it? and not a bit extortionate, as Jack said he would be, for it was really an immense way here, and through such crowded, horrid streets that it must have been most difficult to drive. Now I am in the Ipswich train in a carriage all to myself, for I couldn't find any other ladies to travel with, as you wished; but it doesn't really matter, for I don't feel a bit lonely or fright——"

At that instant the door was snatched open, a bag was flung in, and a tall, black-bearded man, with a big cigar in his mouth, dashed in after it. He stumbled over Lily's feet without a word of apology, shut the door behind him with a furious slam, and precipitated himself into the farthest opposite corner of the carriage. Lily looked at him in amazement and dismay. Really this was worse than anything she could have possibly foreseen. It was simply impossible for her to travel in a carriage with a man who smoked, for the smell of smoke always made her ill, always gave her a bad headache. She could not sit ten minutes in her cousin Jack's smoking-room without the atmosphere affecting her. To be shut up for two hours in the company of that big cigar was absolutely out of the question. Yet what was she to do? Was it possible for her to change carriages? She gave a despairing glance at her various possessions scattered over the seats, at her heavy dressing-bag, at her big bundle of wraps and rugs up in the rack opposite her, and which she could not even lift down herself. No, it was impossible that she could change carriages in time, and yet what on earth was she to do?

"HE PRECIPITATED HIMSELF INTO THE FARTHEST OPPOSITE CORNER."

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She could think of nothing better than an appeal to the stranger's good feeling, since he, at least, could get into another carriage without any difficulty. And, no doubt, he had made a mistake in entering this carriage instead of the next one. She remembered now to have noticed that the next compartment was a smoking-compartment, and probably in his hurry he had mistaken the doors.

He looked a gentleman, Lily decided, although she immediately discovered that he was a very odd-looking man, too; while certainly his mode of entrance had not been over-courteous. Still, she felt perfectly sure that he would be willing to move himself rather than put her to such inconvenience and discomfort.

"Pardon me," she said, with timid courage, "but I think you have made a mistake? This is not a smoking-carriage."

There was something really extremely odd in the appearance of this foreign-looking man, who might be French, who might be Italian; who wore a soft hat, a voluminous "bat's-wing" cape, and a sparse, stubbly black beard. There was something odd and repellent, too, in the damp white skin, the thick black eyebrows, the black, flickering, staring eyes, which were now fixed upon her, and which filled her with nervous trepidations.

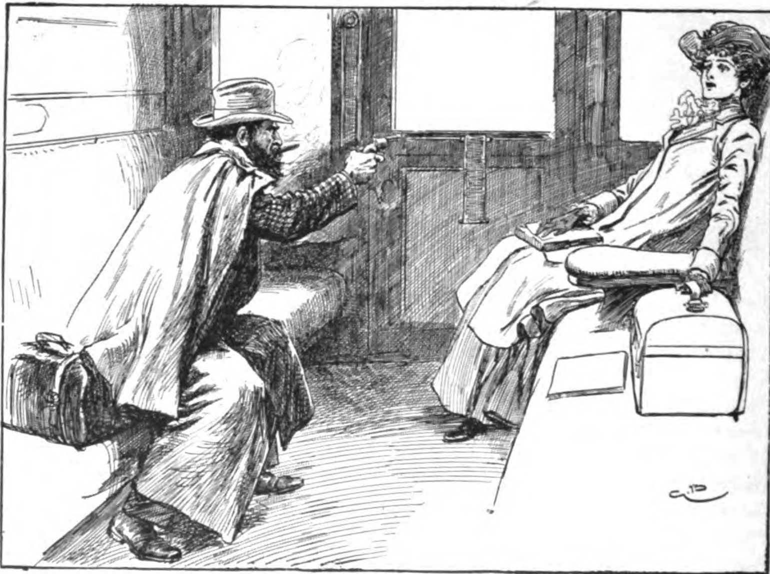
He took his cigar from his mouth when she had begun to speak, and one corner of his upper lip drew back in an ugly way, reminding her of some ill-tempered dog.

"You object to me smoking?" he asked, speaking with a strong foreign accent, in a hard, curious, unmodulated voice.

"Well—yes, I do," said Lily, bravely. "It makes me feel ill, and that is why I came into this carriage, which is not a smoking-carriage. But there is a smoking-compartment on that side, next door. You will have time to change, if you are quick. Please, please, be quick, and change!"

But the stranger merely put back his cigar between his teeth, and continued to turn on her a fierce and flickering gaze.

"You object to me smoking?" he repeated, just as before. "You make me observations? You tell me go into anuzzer carriage? Now, look he-aire."



"HE POINTED THE WEAPON STRAIGHT AT LILY'S FACE."

He slipped a hand into a pocket beneath his cloak and produced a tiny revolver, which he laid beside him on the arm of the seat, keeping his hand upon it.

"I allow no one in ze world to interfere wiz me, to make me remarks, and I carry this about wiz me," he pointed the weapon straight at Lily's face, "to give a lesson to those peoples who do not let me alone."

At first Lily had gone crimson with surprise at being spoken to in such a manner. Never in the world had any man answered her with such rudeness before. But when he produced the pistol, then she had felt the warm

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blood rush back from her beating head to her heart. She grew pale, she grew cold, she grew paler still. For suddenly she understood the awful truth. The man was mad! She was shut up alone in a carriage with a madman!

And at the very instant that she realized the full horror of the situation the train began to move slowly and smoothly out of the station.

Terror kept her rigid as a figure of stone, and it was well for her that it was so. For though the madman's eye was unsteady, though it flickered the whole time, still he never removed it from her; he kept his hand always on the handle of the little pistol by his side.

She understood, intuitively, that were she to scream, were she to open the door, were she to try to pull the cord of communication with the guard—were she, in fact, to make any attempt to obtain help, he would fire at once. The desire for violence was clearly expressed in his glance.

And probably, even although she sat perfectly quiet, he would kill her all the same. And she looked at the glittering muzzle of the tiny weapon, and wondered how soon her death-blow would spring out from it. Heavens! It was too horrible, too impossible, that she, Lily Freeston, so young and so happy, with so many people who were fond of her, with Aunt Mary thinking about her probably at that very moment, with her friend Maggie Parker expecting her at Ipswich, with so many pretty frocks in her trunk to be worn during her visit, that she should find herself in imminent peril of her life, shut up alone in a railway carriage with a madman.

It was like some horrible nightmare, and yet it was worse than any nightmare she had ever suffered from, for it was actual fact, it was actually true.

What could she do?

The advertisements on the walls of the station began to slide past her, those advertisements of soap, of blacking, of beer, which she knew so well, which she had read hundreds of times in hundreds of idle, empty moments, and amidst all the confused, troubled, agonized thoughts which seemed to struggle and shout together in her brain came the ridiculous little regret that this was the last time she would ever read these familiar advertisements, ever be bored by their monotonous reiterations. For in another minute she would be carried away from all aid, from all human proximity, out into the open country, alone with this madman, and whatever then happened her cries would be lost in the noise of the rushing train, which would not again stop until it reached Ipswich.

Her fingers trembled on the pencil which she still held poised over her unfinished letter, and suddenly an inspiration came to her—a Heaven-sent inspiration which thrilled her with a last faint hope of help, which comforted her with the idea of, at least, making her desperate circumstances known to some fellow-being.

She carried this idea out with a coolness and courage which were Heaven-sent too.

All this while, and it appears to be a certain while in the reading, although in point of time it passed in a very few seconds, she had her eyes raised to the madman's, who watched her interrogatively, expecting an answer to his information. Now she gave one.

"Very well," she said, gently, and she was astonished to detect no alteration in her voice, it sounded just as usual. "You shall go on smoking and I will go on with my letter."

Now the writing-pad consisted of detachable sheets, which could be turned back as each page was finished and all held together, or any separate page could be easily pulled out. Lily turned a page now, and wrote on the next one: "Pray help me, I am so frightened" (an unexpected termination this to the gay courage of her unfinished sentence to her aunt), and then added another couple of words, any words, nonsense words, and promptly scratched them through, as if she had made a mistake. Immediately, with a well-assumed little frown of vexation, she tore out the page and crumpled it up in her hand.

Now she rose with an air of indifference and let her glance fall out of the window. There were the long boards of the platform slipping by her, running away to converge in a single point in the distance; there was a porter—the very porter to whom she had given the shilling—rolling and rattling milk-cans from one part of the station to the other; there stood the young man in grey, still waiting, and talking now with the station-master. Everything was calm, placid, ordinary; everyone was absolutely indifferent to her peril. And yet she was being carried away from all security, from all calmness, to a horrible uncertainty, most likely to a violent death.

The young man in grey happened to raise

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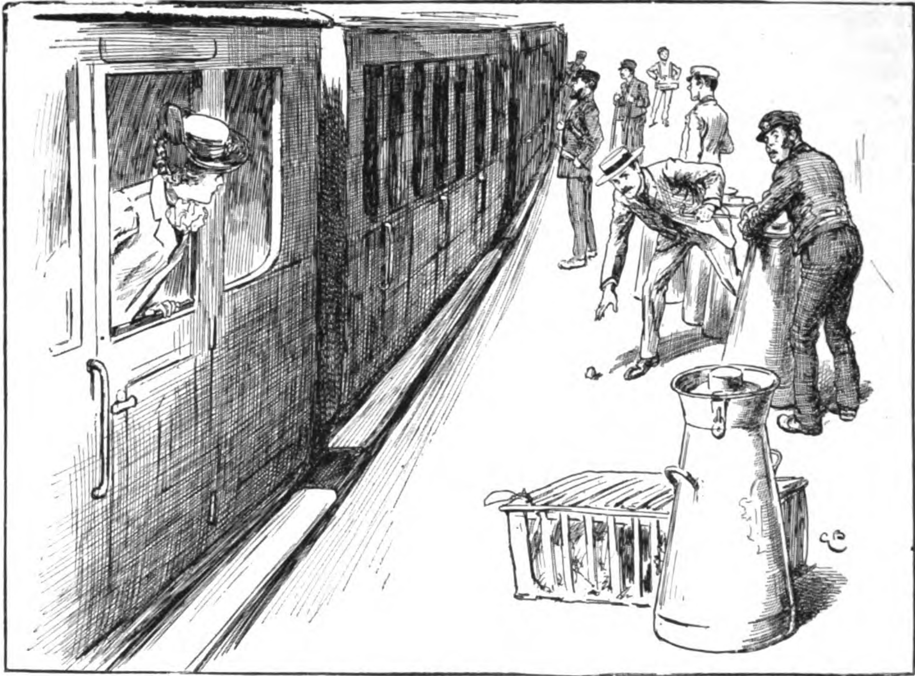

"SHE HAD SEEN THE YOUNG MAN PICK IT UP."

his eyes to hers, although he was a long way from her, far down the moving platform.

With apparent carelessness she threw the little ball of paper out and sat down again to write. But she had thrown it with a definite aim, she had seen it roll to the feet of the two men, she had seen the young man pick it up. He was smoothing it out in his fingers when the station passed out of sight.

So far her scheme had worked successfully. But what result would it have? Could it have any result? What would the young man do? What would the station-master do? Was it possible for them to do anything at all? They would probably think it some silly girl's joke.

Yet even if they believed her to be in need of help, what could they do?

And she sat pretending to continue her letter, while asking herself with anguish whether there were really any means of overtaking an express train, of stopping her? Perhaps they would telegraph on to the next station and have her stopped by signal, but perhaps the next station was ever so far off, and before they reached it she might be already dead.

An unconquerable fascination made her look up, to see the man in the corner watching her with a cruel malignancy while his fingers caressed the handle of the revolver; and she bent again over her writing-pad, on which she traced mechanically nonsense words, while she said to herself: "Now he will fire. Before I get to the end of the next line he will fire. How unhappy poor auntie will be when she hears the news! I suppose she will read of it in to-morrow's paper." And the girl felt her eyes fill with tears as she imagined her Aunt Mary's grief.

A shadow fell across the paper. The window was suddenly darkened. Someone was standing outside the carriage on the footboard looking in over the door.

It was the young man in grey, and when Lily recognised his fair, strong, and handsome English face, so much passionate relief and gratitude welled up into her wet blue eyes that he instantly saw he had done right in obeying the impulse which told him to spring upon the flying train. He had thrust Lily's paper into the hands of the station-master, had run along the platform, and leaped upon the footboard of one of the rear carriages as it whirled past him. The rest had been a mere matter of agility and nerve. Now, another glance into the carriage revealed to him the state of the case.

He turned the handle, stepped up, and sat down opposite the young girl.

"Well, I very nearly missed the train this

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time!" said he, with courteous carelessness. "Hadn't you given me up?"

Lily gave a little gasp, and then understood he was assuming the rôle of brother or friend to give himself the right of protecting her.

"Yes," she told him. "I had given up hope altogether," and there was real truth in the words.

"IT WAS THE YOUNG MAN IN GREY."

Watching his face intently, she read his wishes.

"Will you not come and sit over here?" she asked him, and began clearing her things away from the place beside her.

He changed places in the most natural way possible, and appeared to pay no attention at all to the traveller in the far corner. But Lily knew that the move had been made for the very purpose of observing him, and by a little sign she indicated to the young man in grey the pistol lying under the Frenchman's hand, and now half hidden by a fold of his cloak.

The man was still smoking, while he stared in front of him with an assumed air of mental preoccupation, although every now and then a glint from his flickering eye fell upon his companions in the carriage.

The train every moment was increasing in speed. The carriage swayed and rattled, the telegraph-posts leaped past in quick succession, an express coming from the other direction seemed one long line of glittering windows, one long, continuous roar.

Had the young man in grey seen the pistol? Lily could not be sure, for he gave no answering sign, and his manner was exceedingly bright and irrelevant.

"By Jove, that was a very close thing," said he. "And if I hadn't come by this train I don't think the girls would ever have forgiven me. They make such a point of it. But now I want you," he continued, "to keep a look-out on the opposite window. We are going to pass directly a very extraordinary sight. We are going to pass a house built without any front to it, by a man who is consumptive, and hopes to cure himself on the open-air system. It looks precisely like a dolls' house with the door open. You can see into all the rooms. There! There it is! Do you see it?" he cried eagerly, getting up to point it out, and Lily jumped up and looked with all her eyes, and the Frenchman half rose and looked too.

Was there such a house as the young man described? Lily could not tell, for the train had reached full speed, and the whole countryside wheeled and curved and spun into view, and reeled away again behind them, before she had time to detect any one particular thing. But in the same instant that her bewildered

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eyes searched vainly for this house, the young man in grey had sprung across the carriage, had stooped down and seized the pistol, and had flung it far out of the window over the Frenchman's head.

"STILL THE MEN WRESTLED, AND STILL THE TRAIN RUSHED FORWARD."

"Oh, take care!" cried Lily, for she saw him turn in a paroxysm of fury upon the young man in grey, and the next moment the two were locked in a fierce struggle on the carriage floor.

The train shrieked, and rattled, and banged, the two men wrestled with clenched teeth one to overpower the other, and Lily, standing as far out of the way as she could, pressed back her cries with trembling little hands.

Everything in the carriage was overset; newspapers, books, and papers were scattered on the floor. The maniac clutching hold of the bar of the net-rack to prevent his opponent from throwing him brought the whole affair down. Down with it came his own bag, insecurely fastened and hurriedly packed. Its mouth opened and it vomited forth a strange flood of heterogeneous contents: pomatum, socks, brushes, soap, medicine bottles full and empty, china dogs and shepherdesses looking like a hasty collection from a mantelpiece or chiffonnier, a large piece of bread, and quantities of fine cigars, which rolled into every corner of the carriage or were trodden under foot. And still the men wrestled, and still the train rushed forward, and Lily, very pale and tremulous, waited for the end. But she never felt one moment's doubt of the strength or capacity of the young man in grey. Nor, embarrassed as the maniac was by the heavy hanging cloak, was there ever any chance of his doing harm.

"If I could but manage to tie his legs," said the young man, who had now got him pinioned in a corner by the arms, "I think it would settle him," and he looked about him for some sort of ligature. "Haven't you got some rugs? Then take one of the straps. Now, try to pass it round his ankles here. Yes! Now once more, and pull tight. Tighter still! There, that's right. Give me the other strap, and we'll put it round his arms—so."

The man lay on the floor of the carriage securely bound. He lay quiet and silent, only his eyes gave sign of life. And with these eyes still burning with fury and madness he followed the movements of the young people.

Lily was filled with pity for him.

"Poor creature," she said, "how terrible! How wretched he looks! Do you think him in pain? Are those straps hurting him, perhaps? Do put this cushion under his

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head. But surely we are slowing down? We are going to stop."

And the train really was drawing up at an unimportant little station, where perhaps no express train had ever stopped before, and the officials of this station came running along the footboard even before she had stopped, looking into all the carriages. And there was a great commotion when they came to Lily's carriage, which looked almost as if it had been wrecked, and there were hurried questions and explanations, and much commiseration for the young lady.

But the train was bound to reach Ipswich at a fixed hour. There could be no delaying. Two guards were put into the carriage to take care of the unfortunate lunatic, and Lily's property was collected and carried by willing hands to another compartment. In less than five minutes the train was off again, and Lily and the young man in grey, sitting facing one another, were once more rushing through the green open country. But what a difference there was in the girl's feelings! How calm, how relieved, how happy she felt now!

"You must have had an awful moment when you first realized he was mad," said the young man.

"Oh, I felt as though my hair were going grey. Has it gone grey, perhaps?" she asked, anxiously. "For I have heard of such things happening."

"No; it's yellow—the colour of corn in the sun," said the young man, gravely.

"I'm so glad," exclaimed Lily, joyfully, "for I am going to a dance to-night, and it would have been horrid to have looked in the glass and found I had grey hair."

"I, too, to-night, am going to a dance," said the young man, "and I was to have escorted some ladies down from town who were going to it too; but as they did not turn up at the station I was going to wait for the next train, which starts twenty minutes later, as I supposed they had missed the express, when your message reached me."

"What made you see at once that it was serious? I was so afraid it might be thought just a joke."

"Oh, I had noticed you on the station long before, and I knew you were not the sort of girl to play that kind of joke," said the young man, gravely, and Lily blushed with a certain pleasure at his words.

"Poor auntie will be so dreadfully upset when she hears of my adventures. She was to have come with me, but I left her in bed this morning with neuralgia. She hated my having to travel alone; although, of course, we never could have imagined anything so dreadful as this."

"Have you friends to meet you at Ipswich?" asked the young man.

"Oh, yes, the Parkers will meet me. Maggie Parker is my greatest friend. And it is at their house that the dance is to be to-night."

"So you know the Parkers? That's splendid! For I, too, know them very well. And I, too, am going down expressly for that dance. It's jolly to think I shall see you again."

The delightful and amazing turn things were taking gave a new lustre to Lily's blue eyes and began to bring back some colour to her pale face. And while she sat in a kind of joy dream, glancing every now and then shyly at the handsome, open, sunburnt face of the young man in grey, Ipswich was reached and her attention was turned to a group of young people on the platform awaiting the arrival of the train.

"Oh, there are the Parkers!" cried Lily. "How nice! There are Maggie, and Ethel, and Joe."

And "Lily, dearest!" cried a girl, running forward, as she and the young man in grey got out of the train, "there you are! And where is Mrs. Walters? Neuralgia? Oh, I'm so sorry! And mother *will* be disappointed. But Frank has managed, I see, to find you out after all. Very clever of him, since we told him to look out for two ladies, one of whom would have white curls. How did you manage, Frank, to recognise Lily Freeston all by herself?"

Lily stared in helpless bewilderment, for the young man in grey was kissing the Parker girls all round in the most brotherly fashion.

"But don't you know it's Frank?" cried Maggie Parker, astonished in her turn. "You must have often heard us speak of Frank, our sailor brother, and he has run up from Portsmouth on purpose to come to our dance. Do you mean to say you have travelled all the way from London together and still require to be introduced?"

"Oh, we have a great deal to tell you," said Lieutenant Parker, "but I suggest that we don't tell it here or now. Miss Freeston is looking pale and tired. Let us take her home and restore her with some tea. After tea you shall hear the whole exciting story."

Lily was very grateful for the suggestion. For now that the danger was over and the reaction had set in, she was really feeling strangely tired and weak. And yet in her heart the sun was shining too, for she knew that for herself another and an exquisite story had begun.

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Dutch Humorous Artists.

By Arthur Lord.

[Attention is drawn to the fact that the present series of articles on the Humorous Artists of the World have already dealt with English artists in January, 1902; with those of Germany in April, 1901; with those of France in December, 1901; with those of America in March, April, and May, 1902; and with those of Australasia in June, 1902.]

LET us say at once that an artist receives little practical encouragement in Holland. He gets so little money for his work, and so little work for his money, that there is but small stimulus for him to devote his whole energy to art. It is true, moreover, that black-and-white artists who are capable of doing comic work of first-class quality find a like lack of encouragement for their efforts; and if the humorous artists are few and far between in the Netherlands, and the comic papers fewer, it is because there is little money in circulation in Holland and but a small public to buy.

MR. JOHAN BRAAKENSIEK.
From a Photo. by C. Vermeulen.

Under these somewhat depressing conditions there is yet a small band of labourers in the vineyard, and if, in opposition to these conditions, they have succeeded in turning out many humorous drawings which render the few existing comic papers attractive to their countrymen, it is an artistic history of which they may well be proud. The artist, and especially the humorous draughtsman, cannot be said to accept these conditions without a murmur, but it is a low murmur at the best. Their experience of it, and the experience of their fathers before them, has become proverbial, and at the present time the successful artist is the man who does something else.

Art and literature go hand in hand, and the following words from a little book called "Dutch Life in Town and Country," recently published by George Newnes, Ltd., may be

SLOW, BUT SURE.
DRAWN BY JOHAN BRAAKENSIEK.

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MR. JAN LINSE.
From a Photo. by Pöppinghausen, Rotterdam.

as truthfully applied to the existing artistic conditions in Holland as they are correct in describing the literary conditions. "It is a great drawback to literary effort in Holland," says the writer, "that the honoraria paid to authors are so low that most writers who happen not to be pecuniarily independent —and they are the majority—are unable to make a tolerable subsistence at home by the pen alone and are obliged to contribute to foreign publications, and some even resort to teaching." Unlike the literary man, however, the artist is handicapped by his inability to contribute to foreign humorous publications. Lacking the intimate knowledge of the ways of foreign peoples—which, after all, is the mainspring of humorous art—he is forced to contribute to the publications at home and to accept the prices which they are compelled by their own straitened circumstances to pay.

There are not more than a dozen papers in Holland devoted entirely or in part to humour and satire, and of these the principal ones are the *Amsterdammer Weekblad voor Nederland*, the *Humoristisch Album*, *Uilenspiegel*, and *De Ware Jacob*. These four represent the different forms of humour which the Dutchmen like. The first-named, popularly called the *Weekblad* or "De Groene" (from its green cover), is a well-known weekly, which has passed through a respectable existence of twenty-five years, and has attained in that time a position of considerable power. Its humour consists of a special cartoon each week by the celebrated Johan Braakensiek, mainly on political subjects like the South African War, and a page of foreign political cartoons either from the pen of Braakensiek or from foreign papers. The *Weekblad's* large cartoon, through the exceptional ability of its famous draughtsman, exercises no small influence on political thought in Holland, and the cartoon, lifted bodily from the paper, may often be seen placarded throughout Amsterdam in shops and restaurants, where all who care to see may see. But Braakensiek, as is shown by the drawing which we are privileged to reproduce from *Van Alles Wat*, a Braakensiek album published by Messrs. Holkema and Warendorf, of Amsterdam, is something more than a cartoonist. He is an exceptionally clever and humorous book illustrator, and is without question the foremost draughtsman in Holland.

The *Humoristisch Album* is a hearty old weekly of fifty years, devoted to the quieter forms of humour, and more nearly approaches our English comic papers in appearance and contents. *Uilenspiegel* is a satirical weekly, published in Rotterdam, which has been running for about five-and-thirty years. It is a little four-page sheet, mainly devoted to political cartoons, probably to differentiate it from the *Humoristisch Album*, published by

TOO MUCH FOR HIM.—Guide: "This is the famous place of the twenty-four echoes, and last year a gentleman who heard them suddenly went mad."
Lady Tourist: "How did that happen?"
Guide: "His mother-in-law called out to him, and when he heard twenty-four mothers-in-law at the same time it was too much for him."
DRAWN BY JAN LINSE FOR THE "HUMORISTISCH ALBUM."

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the same concern in Rotterdam. Its title may roughly be translated "Fun-Maker" or "Wag." *De Ware Jacob* is the baby in this family of fun purveyors. Recently established in Rotterdam, under the editorship of Mr. E. Gans, and published by the Nederlandsche Kiosken-Maatschappij, it has in its short career of about forty numbers rapidly taken a popular position, and contains the most modern and, in many respects, the most interesting humorous draughtsmanship of the day. In its prospectus it seriously expressed the determination to seek truth and to serve truth with good taste and some humour, to show respect for honest conviction, to combat anything which is untrue and ignoble, and, before everything, to be Dutch. "And in our country there is undoubted need of it," slyly remarked one of its contemporaries.

WELL BROUGHT UP.—"Isn't that medicine nice, Dorothy?" "Oh, yes, Mamma, but don't you think we ought to keep it for Papa?"
DRAWN BY JAN LINSE FOR THE "HUMORISTISCH ALBUM."

One of the oldest, most experienced, and most popular of Dutch humorous artists is Mr. Jan Linse, whose work has appeared principally, for many years, in the *Humoristisch Album*. He has lived for some time in Rotterdam, but he is now situated at The Hague, where he has a pretty home in the suburbs. We found Mr. Linse in a room filled with innumerable sketches, canvases, and half-completed pictures, and he willingly gave us some particulars of his interesting life. He has since sent us a little letter which lets in additional light upon the career of this favourite artist—a letter illustrated at the top by a group of three men in black, the man in the distance being by no great stretch of the imagination conceivably a truthful presentment of Linse himself. The conjecture is borne out by the amusing dialogue which the artist has written beneath his little sketch:—

"What curious chap is that who is always going about with a cap on his head when every respectable man wears a hat?"

"Why, don't you know him? That's Linse—Jan Linse, the *Humoristisch Album* man, the chap who used to draw for *Abraham Prikkie*, the *Spectator*, and for other humorous papers, and the illustrator of lots of books."

"Well, now, is that Linse? How old do you think he is?"

"Sixty, perhaps; but you wouldn't think it. He generally goes about with younger men, and it makes him feel young too. I can't understand how it is you don't know him, for he spends half of his life in the streets. It's his business. So far as I know he has had no University education, and ever since he was a child has been impressed by the satire and humour which are everywhere present in life. These impressions he began slowly to represent by means of pictures, and to see something funny gives him greater enjoyment than a dinner at the best restaurant in town. He *is* a funny chap. If he gives up drawing comic pictures for a while, either because he wants a change or because the Dutch editors pay so badly, you may find him doing business as an agent for wines, or sometimes as a commissionaire, showing strangers the sights of the town. He is a genuine Dutchman, and his chief drink is a glass of 'schiedam,' which he pretends

„Wat is dat voor 'n rare vent, die altijd met een pet op zyn hoofd loopt, als elk fatsoenlyk mensch een hoed draagt..?

PORTION OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY MR. JAN LINSE TO THE EDITOR.
MR. JAN LINSE'S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF (SEE TEXT).

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THE THEATRE HAT.—Mamma: "Jennie, your hat is in the way of the gentleman behind you. You might easily take it off."
Jennie: "But, mamma, if I put it in my lap I can't see myself."
DRAWN BY JAN LINSE FOR THE "HUMORISTISCH ALBUM."

he needs for inspiration. Anyway, if you want to have a laugh, just make his acquaintance."

From this clever little bit of fooling we might infer that all artists who draw comic pictures are not serious-minded, but Mr. Linse has his serious as well as his comic side. The demand for his work is never-ending, and in the few moments of leisure granted to him he uses the brush on more ambitious subjects than those appearing in the Rotterdam weeklies. By the younger men he is looked upon, perhaps, as one of the old school, but in these days of political caricature, with which the Dutch humorous papers are filled, it is pleasurable to find one man who can turn out a good comic picture and a good joke. In the majority of cases Mr. Linse supplies both joke and drawing, but often furnishes sketches to illustrate jokes sent to him by the editor, and occasionally redraws a funny sketch sent in by a less practised hand. This latter method, by the way, appears to be a common thing in Holland, for many of the drawings published appear without signature, and it is but kindness to attribute the absence of these signatures to the fact that artists usually refuse to take the credit for redrawing sketches by others. John Leech, it will be remembered, used sometimes to touch up the sketches of good jokes contributed by outsiders, but, in accordance with the custom of *Punch* artists, he never, according to Mr. Spielmann, signed the drawings so made.

To readers of *Uilenspiegel* the signature of "Orion" has long been familiar. In fact, it occurs so constantly that an outsider might be led to believe that "Orion" was the only artist engaged on the paper. However, there are others who appear in its pages frequently enough to give variety to the humour of that famous sheet. As for "Orion," he is a host in himself, and that he never seems to weary by sameness of subject is the best tribute to his versatility and power.

The name "Orion" is another name for Mr. Patrick Kroon, who, a native of Gelderland, obtained his first experience as an

A FATHER'S WOES.—"I notice that when you are at home you always have little wads in your ears, but never when you are out. Doesn't that seem the wrong way about?"
"Not at all, my dear sir. At home I have six musical daughters."
DRAWN BY JAN LINSE FOR THE "HUMORISTISCH ALBUM."

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artist by means of private lessons. He studied at the High School in Zutphen, passed from there in 1880, and went to Amsterdam for further lessons in draughtsmanship. He took a diploma as a teacher, and worked both at the figure and landscape, but, like many another clever man, in a country where art is not appreciated at its highest market value until the poor artist is dead, Mr. Kroon found the struggle for life so great that he had to do anything that came to his hand. "In Holland," he says — and in this he bears testimony to a fact more par-

MR. PATRICK KROON.
From a Photo. by J. C. Reesinck, Zutphen.

ticularly touched upon in a previous paragraph—"it is not yet possible for an artist to live entirely by his brush and pen." He did his first picture for *Uilenspiegel* in 1894, and also worked for the *Humoristisch Album*, his drawings for the first-named paper bringing him popularity and orders for more work. Mr. Kroon has contributed to other papers, but the three drawings per week which usually appear in *Uilenspiegel* take up the main portion of his time. He prefers to draw people and political caricatures, and his skill in handling heavy blacks —a characteristic of his present work—is acknowledged by his brother craftsmen, the best judges of artistic strength.

The signature of "Chris Kras Kzn," which has become widely known to Hollanders through the success of *De Ware Jacob*, is a *nom de guerre* adopted by a young journalist of Amsterdam who has gone into illustration merely for his own amusement. "Chris Kras" was born in Amsterdam in May, 1874, and after living at The Hague and at Haarlem settled down in Amsterdam. He was brought up to a commercial life, but after taking the course of the Amsterdam Commercial School and spending a few years in business he adopted journalism as his profession, and is now a valued member of the editorial staff of one of the largest daily papers in Holland.

A man in the throes of daily journalism has little time for other work, but, granted a fertile imagination and a facile pen, the journalist who possesses them has an advantage over slower and less imaginative brethren. "Chris Kras" possesses both, and the frequency with which his cartoons appear in *De Ware Jacob* shows that the pencil—his first love, as he says himself—is often in

"'AVE A RIDE, SIR?"
DRAWN BY PATRICK KROON.

his hand. He has published several books of cartoons on the South African War during the progress of that conflict, and a new volume of his, called "English Coronation Idylls," has just appeared in Amsterdam dealing with the more humorous phases of the memorable ceremonial with which the new century has been ushered in. Some of these drawings are exceptionally clever, and in nearly every case good-humoured.

Among other work done by this versatile artist may be mentioned various book illustrations, book covers, posters, and caricatures. It is with some difficulty that we have been able, from the abundance of material, to

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make a selection from the work of "Chris Kras," showing his comic genius. Nearly all his drawings have a political tendency, and would therefore be unfamiliar in subject to our public. Once in a while we get from him a sporting picture which is not only funny, but shows how keen is this artist in depicting all kinds of outdoor pleasure. He is an amateur athlete of considerable standing, and in 1892 won the first prize in the Holland-Catford Cycling Competition on the Paddington track in London.

"CHRIS KRAS KZN."
From a Photo. by Koene & Büttinghausen.

If "Chris Kras" finds his avocation in art and his vocation in journalism, Mr. J. H. Speenhoff, whose vocation is that of an artist, spends his odd time in writing plays. Several pieces written by him and produced at one of the Rotterdam theatres have been well received by the Holland public, and have marked him as one of the rising dramatists of the day; but it is as a humorous artist that Speenhoff has attained his widest recognition. His experience has been more or less cosmopolitan, for he has worked in Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Glasgow, and has varied the monotony of a successful artist's life by a three years' experience at sea. He

A CARNIVAL PROCESSION.
DRAWN BY "CHRIS KRAS KZN" FOR "DE WARE JACOB."

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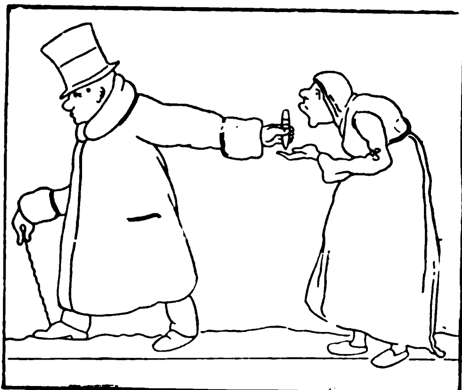
studied drawing at the Academy in Rotterdam and at Antwerp, and, in addition to his draughtsmanship in *De Ware Jacob*, has worked on *Woord en Beeld*, the Rotterdam *Dagblad*, and the Rotterdam *Weekblad*. He has illustrated many books, particularly "The War of the Worlds," by Mr. H. G. Wells, and has contributed many articles to Dutch publications which he has illustrated with his own hand. In a recent conversation Mr. Speenhoff remarked: "In many respects I follow Caran d'Ache and Degas in my drawing; but I look upon Mr. E. T. Reed, of *Punch*, as my master. Though our methods in drawing are different, the intellectual stimulus I get from Reed's work is very great."

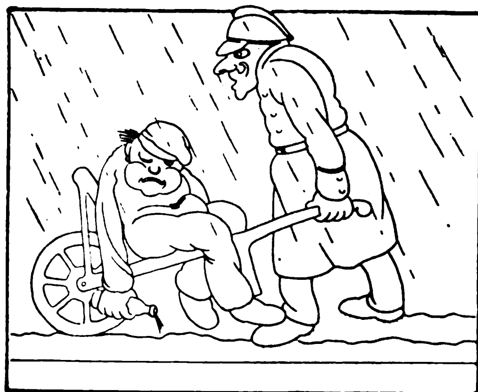
MR. J. H. SPEENHOFF.
From a Photo.

Speenhoff is a quick worker and prefers pen-and-ink. He is apt at versification, and can put a quatrain to a drawing with as pretty a facility as he can illustrate someone else's verse with his own pen—in fact, he is an all-round man, and as good a critic as he is an artist. It is whispered that a well-known gentleman near the Bosphorus was particularly cut up by some sketches done by Speenhoff for a paper called *Daoul*, but that episode recalls one only of many in which Speenhoff has made a hit. The artist himself is an intellectual-looking young man of thirty-two.

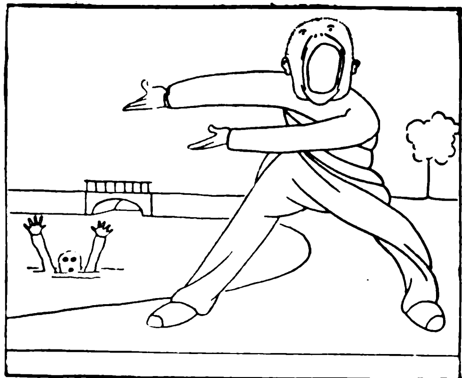
Mr. P. Das, of whose work we give an example, lives at The Hague, and was born near Leyden in 1881. He left the elementary school at the age of twelve and became apprenticed to an ordinary painter and decorator, who for two years encouraged him with painting lessons at The Hague Academy. He later took employment in a pottery manufactory, and left it to assist the



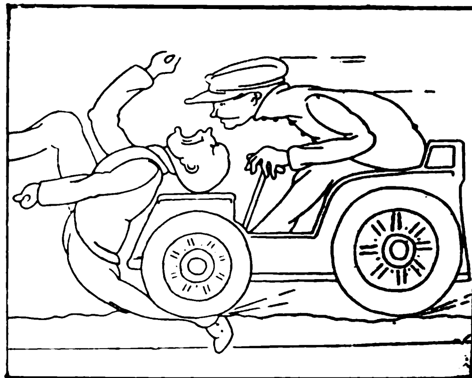
"Do good, and don't look back."



"Cunning need never go afoot."



"The best help is swift and silent."



"He who is deaf can feel the better."

PROVERBS ILLUSTRATED.—DRAWN BY J. H. SPEENHOFF FOR "DE WARE JACOB."

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well-known poster artist, Rünchel. At the age of nineteen he became chief decorator to a leading firm at The Hague, a position which he at present holds. Mr. Das contributes principally to *De Ware Jacob*, and his work is peculiarly humorous in quality, although very infrequent. His is another case of the man with real artistic instincts who, by force of circumstances in Holland, is compelled to sacrifice in mercantile work the talents which might so widely be recognised in the smaller world of art.

De Ware Jacob possesses on its staff several other clever artists, who, through the kindly encouragement of the paper's enterprising editor, have done much to enhance their own reputation and his. Occasionally is published a sketch of Mr. Willy Sluiter, who was a pupil of the Academy of Fine Arts in Rotterdam and The Hague Academy. Mr. Sluiter is, however, primarily a painter, and in the Paris Fair of 1900 obtained a bronze medal for his picture, "Horses on the Beach." The well-known Kées van Dongen, who has been for some years in Paris contributing to *Le Rire*, *Gil Blas*, *La Caricature*, and other papers, is now in Rotterdam, near which he was born and where he studied; and occasionally has a drawing in *De Ware Jacob*. Mr. van Dongen has worked in Steinlen's studio, and is a friend of that popular artist. Among the lady contributors may be mentioned Miss Nelly Bodenheim, who, however, possesses a greater reputation as a book illustrator than as a comic artist. Her clever books of nursery rhymes, "Handje Plak" and "Het Regent—Het Zegent," show real humour and an excellent faculty in the manipulation of blacks. Miss Bodenheim has been a pupil of Mr. Jan Veth, the celebrated Dutch portrait painter.

MR. P. DAS.
Sketched by himself.

Beside Jan Linse, the *Humoristisch Album* numbers among its contributors Mr. S. Crans, who resides at The Hague, and Mr. J. van Ooyen, who lives at Amsterdam. The latter is, we think, the more finished artist, although the influence of the French is noticeable in his work.

Among other papers in Holland which contain humorous drawings, either original or, by virtue of the beneficent workings of the copyright law, "lifted" from other papers, may be mentioned the *Amsterdamsche Courant*, the *Stuiversblad*, *Reintje de Vos*, *Wereldkroniek*, and *De Kijker*. The *Courant* issues an illustrated Sunday supplement, containing a few comic drawings which appear to have been made in Germany. The *Stuiversblad*, published in Amsterdam at a penny, looks like *Pick-Me-Up*, and is representative of the humour of the world because the humour of the world is in it. For this the scissors is responsible. Little more can be said of *Reintje de Vos*, a sixteen-page penny paper published in Rotterdam, which contains many sketches of German origin. The *Kijker* is a small Amsterdam paper devoted to amusement interests, which contains music-hall drawings interlarded with funnyisms. The *Hollandsche Illustratie* contains an occasional humorous picture, and the *Wereldkroniek* reproduces a few foreign political cartoons.

HOW HE RAISED HIMSELF IN HIS WIFE'S ESTIMATION.
DRAWN BY P. DAS FOR "DE WARE JACOB."

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Some Wonders from the West.

XLIII.—A WONDERFUL MARKSMAN.

From a] THE KEG SHOT, WITH GUN REVERSED. [*Photo.*

MR. C. K. SOBER, of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, is the most wonderful crack shot in the world. He performs marvellous feats not attempted by professionals, such as shooting accurately with a keg or barrel tied to his gun so as to prevent his "drawing a bead" on the target, *i.e.*, aiming through the sights; firing with the gun reversed over his head; sighting a bird with a hand mirror; and numerous other wonderful performances calling for marvellous skill.

This champion marksman has challenged, and still challenges, any crack shot in America or abroad, professional or amateur, to meet him in a contest. His skill with the gun is almost beyond belief. He shoots with precision from almost every conceivable position and with the gun in every variety of grasp—under him, over him, to right, to left, sitting and standing or lying down; with the gun above his head, between his feet, upside down, thrust through barrels, boxes, and tables—in every position except with the muzzle in his hand. With a rifle in any of these trick positions he can catch a bird on the wing as nicely as any crack shot who takes steady aim and sights in the usual manner.

Mr. Sober follows the sport solely for his own amusement, and it is a difficult task to induce him to give a public exhibition of his skill. Such exhibitions have been given at

From a] SHOOTING BACKWARDS THROUGH KEG BETWEEN THE KNEES. [*Photo.*

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From a] SHOOTING THROUGH SOAP-BOX BALANCED ON ONE FOOT. [Photo.

and bringing down the feathered victim.

A shot acknowledged by all expert sportsmen to be most difficult, and one in which Mr. Sober shows wonderful skill, is the completion of the keg series. Swinging the gun from his shoulder the champion thrusts the keg between his knees, and with the barrel of the gun behind him he bends nearly double to sight his game, and fires with accuracy at a bird in full flight.

With a box measuring 12in. by 12in. on his gun, Mr. Sober seats himself in a chair, and, balancing the boxed rifle on one foot, he fires single-handed.

Next comes his wonderful "table" shot.

rare intervals to his friends in Lewisburg, however—and marvellous displays of wonderful marksmanship they have proved.

This "gentleman crack shot," as he is termed, because of his decided refusal to turn his skill with the gun to commercial value, has arranged a chronological programme of his fancy shooting, commencing with the least difficult and working up to an exciting climax of wonderful shots.

The initial trick is shooting at birds on the wing with a 25lb. powder keg on his gun-barrels, the gun being upside down and held at about the level of his chin, as shown in our first illustration. Several birds having been brought down in this manner, Mr. Sober makes ready for the second number in his series of keg shots. He swings the gun above his head, and with the fire-arm in this position, still handicapped by the keg-covered barrels, sights his bird, takes aim, and fires, nearly always sending the shot true

From a] THE OVERHEAD TABLE SHOT. [Photo.

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The gun is thrust through a table weighing 14lb., raised over his head and held upside down. Mr. Sober is the originator of the trick, and he is the only man known to perform it successfully.

The flour-barrel tricks are also interesting, and call for well-developed muscle, steady nerves, and clever workmanship. There are several of the barrel tricks. The gun in the first one is thrust through the middle of an ordinary flour-barrel. The barrel and gun are then turned upside down, and raised high above the head while the shot is fired.

From a] THE OVERHEAD FLOUR-BARREL SHOT. [*Photo.*

Next Mr. Sober, sitting in a chair, balances the barrel upright on one foot, as shown in the illustration given below. Then the champion lies flat on his back on the ground, and turning barrel and gun upside down shoots over his head behind him at the clay pigeons, birds on the wing, or glass balls. But the last of these feats is the most wonderful, the gun being weighted by no fewer than three encumbering articles—a soap-box, a barrel, and a smaller keg on the top.

From the fact that for the past ten years Mr. Sober has hunted ruffed grouse almost entirely—that bird of all the feathered game in America that flushes and gets into full

From a] SHOOTING THROUGH BARREL BALANCED ON ONE FOOT. [*Photo.*

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From a] SHOOTING BACKWARDS THROUGH BARREL WHILE LYING ON THE BACK. [Photo.

flight most rapidly—he has acquired a marvellous skill in wing-shooting. Recently he made a straight run of thirty-two "downs" on ruffed grouse during a tramp through the forest around his home. Again, he brought down fifty out of fifty-five fired at. He has a record of 537 wild pigeons brought down in three days, and at no time did he kill more than one bird at a shot.

In a contest held near his home not long since, Mr. Sober broke 100 blue rocks out of 101 put up. He has killed ninety-six live pigeons out of 100 aimed at on the wing at twenty-one yards rise, and using one barrel only. At a match of twelve live bats to each man, at which seventeen shooters contested, Mr. Sober won with a score of eleven killed, it being the only match at bats in which he has contested. When he attends trap matches he invariably makes clean scores at glass balls, blue rocks, and live pigeons.

The most remarkable exhibitions of Mr. Sober's skill are, however, in the trick shooting, or, as he terms it, "rough-and-tumble shooting," in which his scores are fully equal to those made by many trap-shooters who fire from the shoulder and not in any way handicapped.

Through long practice of these feats—many of which he originated—Mr. Sober has become so expert that he claims he can perform more unique shots with the double-barrelled shot-gun than any other living man.

He performs at least one hundred feats, each shot being more marvellous than the preceding one, all from different positions or under new forms of handicap. Mr. Sober breaks glass balls or blue rocks from either shoulder, with handkerchiefs tied around both barrels of his gun, with the barrels thrust through objects of different sizes, varying from a cigar-box up to a flour-barrel, with his gun either side up, and in many other ways, with wonderful accuracy. He even springs his own trap and then breaks the target.

The first gun he used was an old flint lock owned by an elder brother, and with that the boy killed squirrels and rabbits by the

SHOOTING WITH GUN HANDICAPPED BY SOAP-BOX, LARGE KEG, AND SMALL KEG.
From a] [Photo.

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hundred (game was plentiful in Pennsylvania then), and with it he downed quails occasionally—on the wing as well.

The first gun he owned he bought for one dollar and a half, and it was a 28in. 20-gauge single barrel, which, Mr. Sober says, was made from pot-metal; but with it he did great work on quails and pheasants on the wing, and he still has that old gun. Next he had another single 28in. 14-gauge gun made to order, with which he did fine shooting also. His third gun was a double-barrelled 30in. 14-gauge that weighed 8lb., and with it he defeated the best shots in Pennsylvania at the trap in pigeon-shooting.

For shooting game he now uses a cylinder-bore 28in. barrels of either 10 or 12-gauge. His cover-shooting for some ten years has been confined to ruffed grouse, which he claims is the gamest bird in America; and in hunting them he uses pointer dogs which he has himself trained, now having four of them. He has no use for setters in that pursuit, for he says that they are too head-strong and fast and not sufficiently cautious.

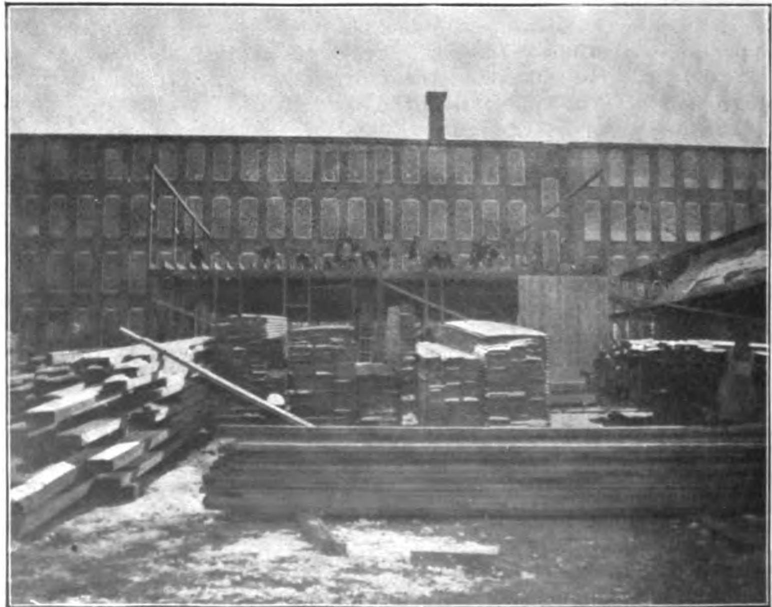
Mr. Sober has spent much of his time in the forest hunting out timber lands and superintending lumber operations, pursuits that have enabled him to follow his favourite course of shooting ruffed grouse almost constantly during the proper season. His record of the number of those birds killed by him during the past few years is astonishing. He has a total for eight years of 814 birds, or an average of over 101 each season.

XLIV.—A HOUSE BUILT IN FOUR AND A HALF HOURS.

THE methods and time occupied in carrying out building operations by ordinary workmen offer a striking contrast with those which have been proved possible in America. The idea of erecting a two-storied building measuring 80ft. in length by 50ft. in width in four and a half hours would cause old-fashioned artisans to stand aghast, yet this unique feat was accomplished a short while ago at Paterson, New Jersey.

As might be naturally supposed the achievement was the result of a wager. Mr. Peter S. Van Kirk, the head of a large firm of contractors and builders in that town, contemplated erecting a new workshop to accommodate his carpenters. The site of the building was at the corner of Fulton and River Streets, two important thoroughfares. When the designs for the building had been completed and everything was practically ready for commencing the work, the principal met a friend of his, a wealthy brewer, and casually mentioned that he was about to erect a new carpenters' workshop and expected to have it up in a few days. The brewer, evidently discrediting the possibility of workmen hastening to complete a contract, waggishly replied that the building might take as long to erect as the Passaic County Court House, which had occupied five years. To this Mr. Van Kirk retorted that, once he got started upon the work, it would take but a very short while to get it up.

The brewer, however, was still sceptical of



From a] ENGAGED ON FIRST FLOOR—BUILDING MATERIAL IN FOREGROUND. *[Photo.*

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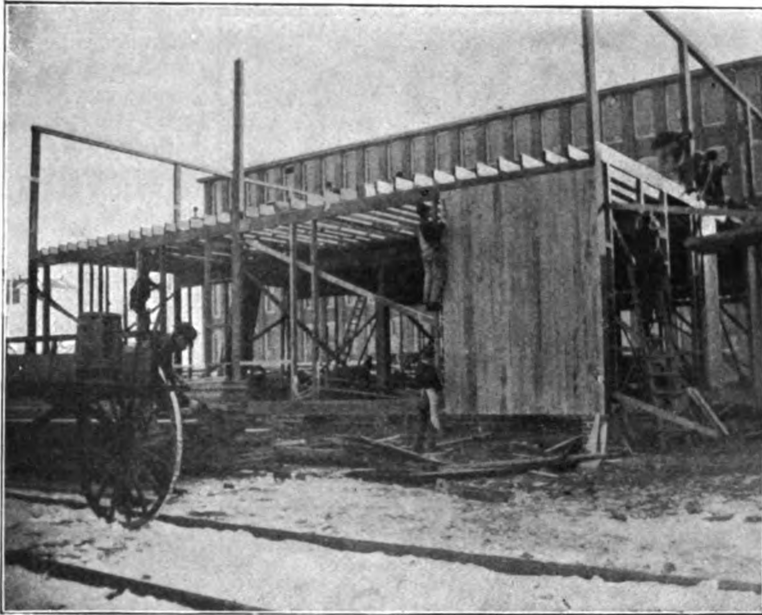
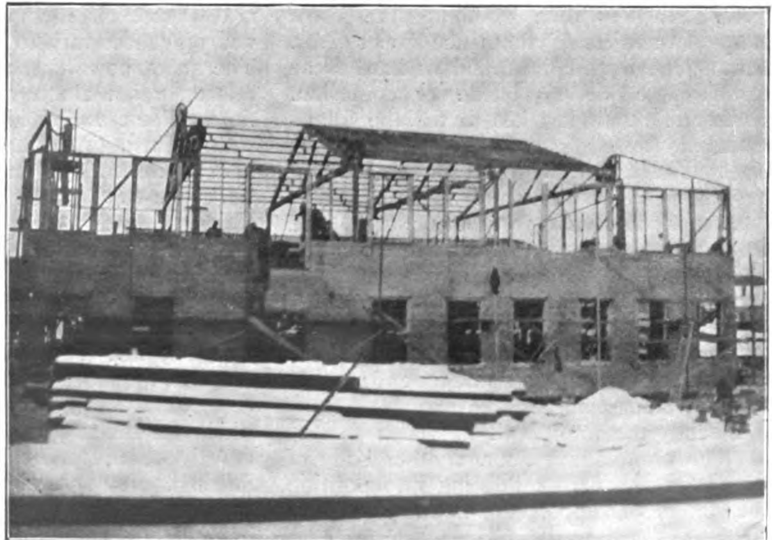


From a] REAR VIEW OF HOUSE SHORTLY AFTER COMMENCEMENT. *[Photo.*

the builder's prowess, and an animated discussion followed. One word led to another, and at last, exasperated by his friend's taunts, Mr. Van Kirk wagered that he would erect the workshop in less than half a working day with his own force of men—that is to say, he would not requisition the services of any men outside of his existing staff for this special occasion. The brewer accepted the challenge. The wager was for £200, and a supper for all the men employed upon the work. The terms of the wager stipulated that the building should measure 80ft. in length by 50ft. in width and be two stories high; the sides would be enclosed and rendered weather-proof, the roof placed in position, and windows and doors fixed — in short, the shop had to be completed for occupancy.

The bargain concluded, the contractor called his employés together and explained the wager. The men entered into the spirit of the contest and preparations were hurried forward for deciding the bet. The men were told just what to do, so that there should be no confusion or progress unduly impeded in any way. The ground upon which the workshop was to be built was cleared and all the necessary material brought upon the spot and prepared for erection. It may be as well to explain that the building was to be a frame structure—that is to say, it was to be built throughout of wood in the characteristic American fashion. Of course, it would have been absolutely out of the question to have raised such a large house in so short a space of time with ordinary bricks and masonry.

When all the materials had been conveyed to the scene of operations and everything was ready for the carrying out of the wager, the



From a] PUTTING ON THE ROOF. *[Photo.*

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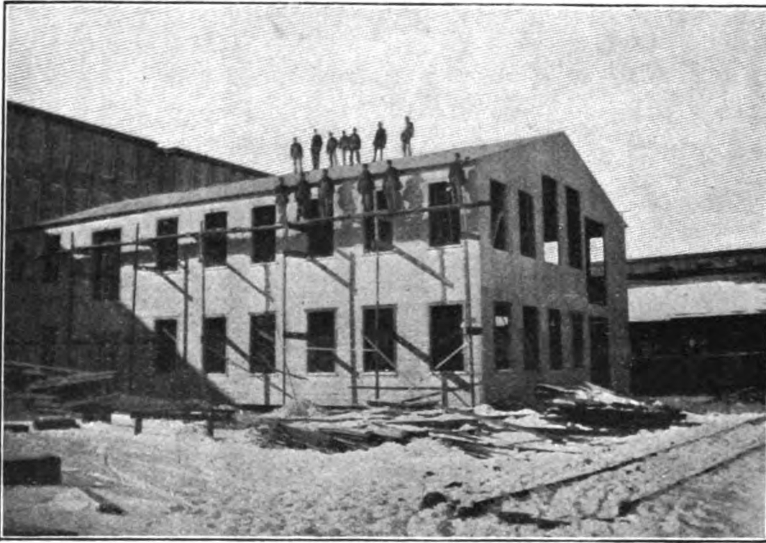

From a] THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOUSE COMPLETED IN LESS THAN THREE HOURS. *[Photo.*

not pause for a minute to permit of any photos. being taken. In our illustrations the number of men employed may appear to be insignificant, but this is explained by the fact that they were distributed throughout the building. Each man had been assigned a certain section of work to accomplish, and by this means there was no interference with each other's part of it.

two parties to the bet arrived to see that the work was fairly and properly accomplished. The news of the wager had spread over the town, and a large crowd of curiosity-piqued spectators also assembled to witness the spectacle. The weather was most unpropitious for the successful carrying out of the wager. A thick pall of snow covered the ground and a cold, bleak wind was blowing, while the sky was dull and overcast.

At midday Mr. Van Kirk called together and lined up all the men who were to participate in the contest. Punctually as the clock struck one the contractor shouted "Go." In less than a minute the whole gang of men had commenced operations. Although every man worked as hard as he could, there was no bustle or confusion. In less time than it takes to tell the framework was raised and the men were busily engaged in bolting the heavy timbers securely together. There was to be no scamping of the work. Everything was to be completed in just the same manner as if the building had been erected under normal conditions. As soon as the framework of one side had been fitted together other men set to work to attach the boards forming the wall. While this was in progress the framework of another side was being completed.

Directly the framework had been erected as high as the first floor, another body of workmen set to work hoisting into position the rafters to support the floor. The men went at it with a will. They were so bent upon breaking the record that they would

Directly the framework for the sides had been erected the rafters to the roof were swung into their places and the roofing was hurried forward. Simultaneously, therefore, workmen were busily employed in attaching the sides and the roof of the workshop. The windows and doors had to be fixed as the work progressed. The roof was covered with a rainproof substance. In less than three hours the building was finished so far as the exterior was concerned.

The men now entered the building and operations were commenced upon the floors and the fittings of the establishment. The rafters were already in position, so that it was only necessary to lay the floor-boards. The stairs, however, had to be arranged, and this operation alone occupied considerable time. The crowd outside followed the wager with enthusiastic excitement. Now that the men were working in the interior of the workshop out of sight they could only speculate among themselves by what actual time the work would be accomplished, and some lively betting among themselves was the result. They waited patiently for the announcement that the task was achieved and that Mr. Van Kirk had won his bet. Nor had they long to wait. At half-past five there was a rousing cheer from the workmen, which was taken up with equal avidity by the crowd, which testified that the work was finished. It was a record feat. The whole building had been put up and was ready for immediate occupation within the short space of four and a half hours!

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THE PSAMMEAD, or the GIFTS.

By E. Nesbit.

IV.—WINGS.

"LET'S wish for wings," said Anthea, when they had found the psammead, and were ready to have the day's wish.

"Oh, *do* let's," said Jane; "it would be like a bright dream of deliciousness." So the sand-fairy blew itself out, and next moment each child had a funny feeling, half heaviness and half lightness, on its shoulders. The sand-fairy put its head on one side and turned its snail's eyes from one to the other.

"Not such bad wings," it said, "but don't forget they only last till sunset. If you're flying too high when the sun goes down—well, I'll say no more." The wings were very big and gloriously beautiful, for they were soft and smooth, and every feather lay neatly in its place. And the feathers were of the most lovely mixed changing colours, like the rainbow, or iridescent glass, or the beautiful scum that sometimes floats on water that is not at all nice to drink.

"Oh! but can we fly?" Jane said, standing anxiously, first on one foot and then on the other.

"Look out," said Cyril, "you're treading on my wing."

"Does it hurt?" asked Anthea, with interest, but no one answered, for Robert had spread his wings and jumped up, and now he was slowly rising in the air. He looked very awkward in his knickerbocker suit—his boots, in particular, hung helplessly, and seemed much larger than when he was standing in them. But the others cared but little how he looked, or how they looked, for that matter; for now they all spread out their wings and rose in the air. Of course, you all know what flying feels like, because everyone has dreamed about flying, and it seems so beautifully easy, only you never can remember how you did it; and, as a rule, you have to do it without wings in your dreams, which is more clever and uncommon, but not so easy to remember the rule for. Now, the four children rose flapping from the ground, and you can't think how good the air felt running against their faces. Their wings were tremendously wide when they were spread out, and they had to fly quite a long way apart so as not to get in each other's way. But little things like this are easily learned.

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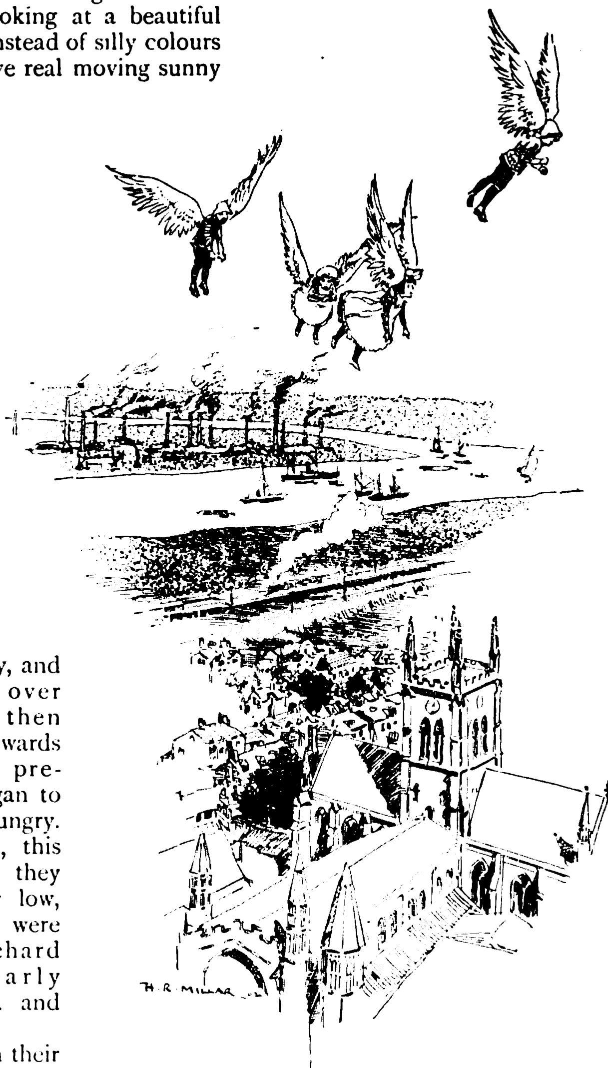
All the words in the English dictionary and in the Greek lexicon as well are, I find, of no use at all to tell you exactly what it feels like to be flying, so I will not try; but I will say that to look down on the fields and woods instead of along at them is something like looking at a beautiful live map, where, instead of silly colours on paper, you have real moving sunny fields and woods laid out one after the other. As Cyril said, and I can't think where he got hold of such a strange expression, "It does you a fair treat." It was most wonderful, and more like real magic than any wish the children had had yet. They flapped and flew and sailed on their great rainbow wings, between green earth and blue sky, and they flew right over Rochester and then swerved round towards Maidstone, and presently they all began to feel extremely hungry. Curiously enough, this happened when they were flying rather low, and just as they were crossing an orchard where some early plums shone red and ripe.



"THEY FLEW RIGHT OVER ROCHESTER."

They paused on their wings. I cannot explain to you how this is done, but it is something like treading water when you are swimming, and hawks do it extremely well.

"Yes, I dare say," said Cyril, though no one had spoken. "But stealing is stealing even if you've got wings."

"Do you really think so?" said Jane, briskly. "If you've got wings you're a bird, and no one minds birds breaking the Commandments. At least, they may *mind*, but the birds always do it, and no one scolds them or sends them to prison."

It was not so easy to perch on a plum-tree as you might think, because the rainbow wings were so *very* large; but somehow they all managed to do it, and the plums were certainly very sweet and juicy.

Fortunately, it was not till they had all had quite as many plums as were good for them that they saw a stout man, who looked exactly as though he owned the plum-trees, come hurrying through the orchard-gate with a thick stick, and with one accord they disentangled their wings from the plum-laden branches and began to fly.

The man stopped short, with his mouth open. For he had seen the boughs of his trees moving and twitching, and he had said to himself: "Them young varmint—at it again!" And he had come out at once—for the lads of the village had taught him in past seasons that plums want looking after. And when he saw the rainbow wings flutter up out of the plum-tree he felt that he must have gone quite mad, and he did not like the feeling at all. And when Anthea looked down and saw his mouth go slowly open, and stay so, and his face become green and mauve in patches, she called out: "Don't be frightened," and felt hastily in

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her pocket for a threepenny-bit with a hole in it, which she had meant to hang on a ribbon round her neck for luck. She hovered round the unfortunate plum owner, and said: "We have had some of your plums; we thought it wasn't stealing, but now I am not so sure. So here's some money to pay for them."

She swooped down towards the terror-stricken grower of plums and slipped the coin into the pocket of his jacket, and in a few flaps she had re-joined the others.

The farmer sat down on the grass, suddenly and heavily.

"THE FARMER SAT DOWN ON THE GRASS, SUDDENLY."

"Well, I'm blessed!" he said. "This here is what they call delusions, I suppose. But the threepenny"—he pulled it out and bit it—"*that's* real enough. Well, from this day forth I'll be a better man. It's the kind of thing to sober a chap for life, this is. I'm glad it was only wings, though. I'd rather see birds as aren't there and couldn't be, even if they pretend to talk, than some things as I could name."

He got up slowly and heavily and went indoors, and he was so nice to his wife that day that she was quite happy, and said to herself, "Law, whatever have a-come to the man!" and smartened herself up and put a blue ribbon bow at the place where her collar fastened on, and looked so pretty that he was kinder than ever. So perhaps the winged children really did do one good thing that day. If so, it was the only one — for really there is nothing like wings for getting you into trouble. But, if you are in trouble, there is nothing like wings for getting you out of it.

This was the case in the matter of the fierce dog who sprang out at them when they had folded up their wings as small as possible and were going up to a farm door to ask for a crust of bread and cheese, for, in spite of the plums, they were soon just as hungry as ever again.

Now, there is no doubt whatever that if the four had been ordinary wingless children that black and fierce dog would have had a good bite out of the brown-stockinged leg of Robert, who was the nearest. But at its first growl there was a flutter of wings, and the dog was left to strain at his chain and stand on his hind legs as if he were trying to fly too.

They tried several other farms, but at those where there were no dogs the people were far too frightened to do anything but scream; and at last, when it was nearly four o'clock, and their wings were getting miserably stiff and tired, they alighted on a church tower and held a council of war.

"We can't possibly fly all the way home without dinner or tea," said Robert, with desperate decision.

"And nobody will give us any dinner or even lunch, let alone tea," said Cyril.

"Perhaps the clergyman here might," suggested Anthea. "He must know all about angels——"

"Anybody could see we're not that," said

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Jane. "Look at Robert's boots and Squirrel's plaid necktie."

"Well," said Cyril, firmly, "if the country you're in won't sell provisions you take them. In wars, I mean. I'm quite certain you do. And even in other stories no good brother would allow his little sisters to starve in the midst of plenty."

"Plenty?" repeated Robert, hungrily; and the others looked vaguely round the bare leads of the church tower, and murmured, "In the midst of?"

"EVERYONE NOW TURNED OUT HIS POCKETS."

"Yes," said Cyril, impressively. "There is a larder window at the side of the clergyman's house, and I saw things to eat inside—custard pudding, and cold chicken and tongue, and pies, and jam. It's rather a high window, but with wings——"

"How clever of you!" said Jane.

"Not at all," said Cyril, modestly; "any born general—Napoleon or the Duke of Marlborough—would have seen it just the same as I did."

"It seems very wrong," said Anthea.

"Nonsense," said Cyril. "What was it Sir Philip Sydney said when the soldier wouldn't stand him a drink?—'My necessity is greater than his.'"

"We'll club our money, though, and leave it to pay for the things, won't we?" Anthea was persuasive, and very nearly in tears, because it is most trying to feel enormously hungry and unspeakably sinful at one and the same time.

"Some of it," was the cautious reply.

Everyone now turned out his pockets on the lead roof of the tower, where visitors for a couple of hundred years had cut their own and their sweethearts' initials with pen-knives in the soft lead. There was five and sevenpence halfpenny altogether, and even the upright Anthea admitted that that was too much to pay for four people's dinners. Robert said he thought eighteenpence.

And half a crown was finally agreed to be "handsome."

So Anthea wrote on the back of her last term's report, from which she first tore her own name and that of the school, the following letter:—

"Dear Reverend Clergyman,—We are very hungry indeed because of having to fly all day, and we think it is not stealing when you are starving to death. We are afraid to ask you for fear you should say 'no,' because, of course, you know about angels, but you would not think we were angels. We will only take the necessities of life and no pudding or pie, to show you it is not greediness but true starvation that forces us to make your larder stand and deliver. But we are not highwaymen by trade."

"Cut it short," said the others with one accord. And Anthea hastily added:—

"Our intentions are quite honourable, if you only knew. And here is half a crown to show we are sincere and grateful. Thank you for your kind hospitality.—From Us Four."

The half-crown was wrapped in this letter, and all the children felt that when the clergyman had read it he would understand every-

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thing as well as anyone could who had not seen the wings.

"Now," said Cyril, "of course, there's some risk; we'd better fly straight down the other side of the tower and then flutter low across the churchyard and in through the shrubbery. There doesn't seem to be anyone about. But you never know. The window looks out into the shrubbery. It is embowered in foliage, like a window in a story. I'll go in and get the things. Robert and Anthea can take them as I hand them out through the window—and Jane can keep watch — her eyes are sharp — and whistle if she sees anyone about. Shut up, Robert; she can whistle quite well enough for that, anyway. It ought not to be a very good whistle—it'll sound more natural and bird-like. Now, then—off we go!"

I cannot pretend that stealing is right. I can only say that on this occasion it did not look like stealing to the hungry four, but appeared in the light of a fair and reasonable business transaction. They had never happened to learn that a tongue—hardly cut into—a chicken and a loaf of bread, and a siphon of soda-water cannot be bought in shops for half a crown. These were the necessaries of life which Cyril handed out of the larder window when, quite unobserved and without hindrance or adventure, he had led the others to that happy spot. He felt that to refrain from jam, apple turnovers, cake, and mixed candied peel was a really heroic act—and I agree with him. He was also proud of not taking the custard pudding, and there I think he was wrong, because if he had taken it there would have been a difficulty about returning the dish. No one, however starving, has a right to steal china pie-dishes with little pink flowers on them. The soda-water siphon was different. They could not do without something to drink, and as the maker's name was on it they felt sure it would be returned to him wherever they might leave it. If they had time they would take it back themselves. The man appeared to live in Rochester, which would not be much out of their way home.

Everything was carried up to the top of the tower and laid down on a sheet of kitchen paper which Cyril had found on the top shelf of the larder. As he unfolded it Anthea said, "I don't think *that's* a necessity of life."

"Yes, it is," said he. "We must put the things down somewhere to cut them up, and I heard father say the other day people got diseases from germans in rain-water. Now, there must be lots of rain-water here—and when it dries up the germans are left—and they'd get into the things and we should all die of scarlet fever."

"THESE WERE THE NECESSARIES OF LIFE WHICH CYRIL HANDED OUT OF THE LARDER WINDOW."

"What are germans?"

"Little waggly things you see with microscopes," said Cyril, with a scientific air. "They give you every illness you can think of. I'm sure the paper was a necessary, just as much as the bread and meat and water. Now, then. Oh, my eyes, I am hungry!"

I do not wish to describe the picnic party on the top of the tower. You can imagine well enough what it is like to carve a chicken

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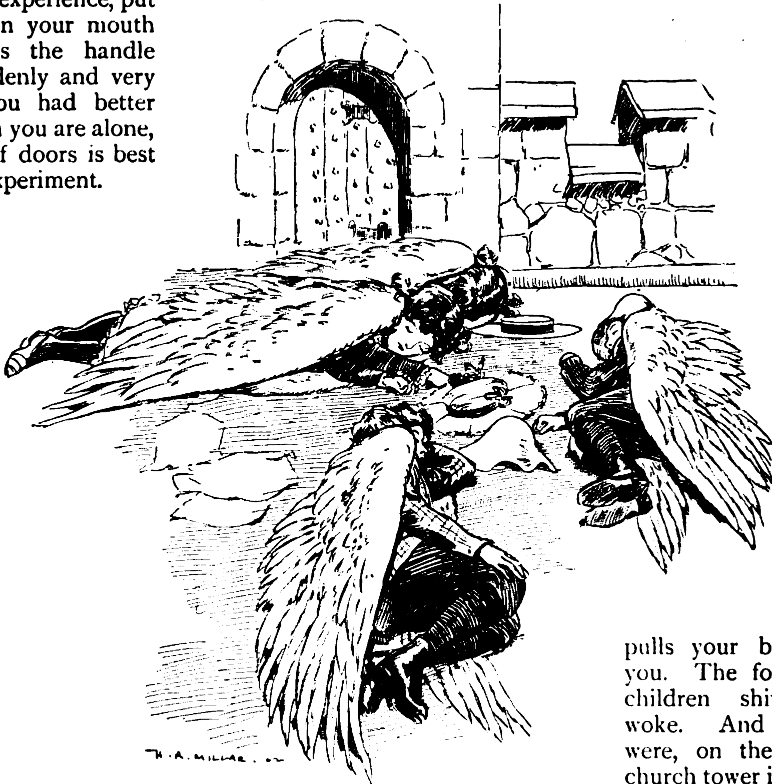
and a tongue with a knife that has only one blade—and that snapped off short about half-way down. But it was done. Eating with your fingers is greasy and not easy—and paper dishes soon get to look very spotty and horrid. But one thing you can't imagine, and that is how soda-water behaves when you try to drink it straight out of a siphon—especially a quite full one. But if imagination will not help you, experience will, and you can easily try it for yourself, if you can get a grown-up to give you the siphon. If you want to have a really thorough experience, put the tube in your mouth and press the handle very suddenly and very hard. You had better do it when you are alone, and out of doors is best for this experiment.



"THE CHILDREN SLEPT."

When the children had done dinner they grew strangely sleepy, and before it was a quarter of an hour after dinner they had all curled round and tucked themselves up under their large, soft, warm wings and were fast asleep. And the sun was sinking slowly in the west. (I must say it was in the west because it is usual in books to say so, for fear careless people should think it was setting in the east. In point of fact it was not exactly in the west either, but that's near enough.) The sun, I repeat, was sinking slowly in the west, and the children slept warmly and happily on, for wings are cosier than eider-down quilts to sleep under. The shadow of the church tower fell across the churchyard and across the vicarage and across the field beyond, and presently there were no more shadows—and the sun had set and the wings were gone. And still the children slept—but not for long. Twilight is very beautiful, but it is chilly, and you know, however sleepy you are, you wake up soon enough if your brother or sister happens to be up first and pulls your blankets off you. The four wingless children shivered and woke. And there they were, on the top of a church tower in the dusky twilight, with blue stars coming out by ones and twos and tens and twenties over their heads—miles away from home, with three and three half-pence in their pockets, and a doubtful act about the necessities of life to be accounted for if anyone found them with the soda-water siphon.

They looked at each other. Cyril spoke first, picking up the siphon:—

"We'd better get along down and get rid of this beastly thing. It's dark enough to leave it on the clergyman's doorstep, I should think. Come on."

There was a little turret at the corner of

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the tower, and the little turret had a door in it. They had noticed this when they were eating, but had not explored it, as you would have done in their place. Because, of course, when you have wings and can explore the whole sky, doors seem hardly worth exploring.

Now they turned towards it.

"Of course," said Cyril, "this is the way down."

It was. But the door was locked on the inside!

And the world was growing darker and darker. And they were miles from home. And there was the soda-water siphon.

I shall not tell you whether anyone cried, nor, if so, how many cried, nor who cried. You will be better employed in making up your minds what you would have done if you had been in their place.

When they grew calmer Anthea put her handkerchief in her pocket and her arm round Jane and said:—

"It can't be for more than one night. We can signal with our handkerchiefs in the morning. They'll be dry then. And someone will come up and let us out——"

"And find the siphon," said Cyril, gloomily, "and we shall be sent to prison for stealing."

"You said it wasn't stealing; you said you were sure it wasn't."

"I'm not sure *now*," said Cyril, shortly.

"Let's throw the beastly thing slap away among the trees," said Robert, "then no one can do anything to us."

"Oh, yes"—Cyril's laugh was not a light-hearted one—"and hit some chap on the head and be murderers as well as—as the other thing."

There was a pause. Then Cyril said, slowly: "Look here; we must risk that siphon. I'll button it up inside my jacket; perhaps no one will notice it. You others keep well in front of me. There are lights in the clergyman's house. They've not gone to bed yet. We must just yell as loud as ever we can. Now, all scream when I say 'three.' Robert, you do the yell like a railway engine, and I'll do the coo-ee like father's. The girls can do as they please. One, two, three!"

A four-fold yell rent the silent peace of the evening, and a maid at one of the vicarage windows paused with her hand on the blind-cord.

"One, two, three!" Another yell, piercing and complex, startled the owls and starlings to a flutter of feathers in the belfry below. The maid fled from the vicarage windows and ran down the vicarage stairs and into the vicarage kitchen, and fainted as soon as she had explained to the manservant and the cook and the cook's cousin that she had seen a ghost. It was quite untrue, of course, but I suppose the girl's nerves were a little upset by the yelling.

"One, two, three!" The vicar was on his doorstep by this time, and there was no mistaking the yell that greeted him.

"Goodness me," he said to his wife; "my dear, someone's being murdered in the church. Give me my hat and a thick stick and tell Andrew to come after me. I expect it's the lunatic who stole the tongue." And he rushed out, dragging Andrew by the arm.

A volley of yells greeted them. As it died into silence Andrew shouted: "Halloa, you there! Did you call?"

"Yes," shouted four far-away voices.

"They seem to be in the air," said the vicar; "very remarkable."

"Where are you?" shouted Andrew, and Cyril replied in his deepest voice, very slow and loud:—

"Church! Tower! Top!"

"Come down, then," said Andrew. And the voice replied:—

"Can't! Door locked!"

"My goodness!" said the vicar. "Andrew, fetch the stable lantern. Perhaps it would be as well to fetch another man from the village."

So Andrew fetched the lantern and the cook's cousin, and the vicar's wife begged them all to be very careful.

They went across the churchyard—it was quite dark now—and up the tower. And at the top of the tower there was a little door. And the door was bolted on the stair side.

The cook's cousin, who was a gamekeeper, kicked at the door and said:—

"Halloa, you there!"

The children were holding on to each other on the farther side of the door and trembling with anxiousness, and very hoarse with their howls. They could hardly speak, but Cyril managed to reply, huskily:—

"Halloa, you there!"

"How did you get up there?"

It was no use saying "We flew up," so Cyril said:—

"We got up, and then we found the door was locked and we couldn't get down. Let us out, do——"

"How many of you are there?" asked the keeper.

"Only four," said Cyril.

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"Are you armed?"

"Are we what?"

"I've got my gun handy—so you'd best not try any tricks," said the keeper. "If we open the door will you promise to come quietly down, and no nonsense?"

When all the bolts were drawn the keeper spoke deep-chested words through the keyhole.

"I don't open," said he, "till you've gone like. You won't believe us; but it doesn't matter. Oh, take us down!"

So they were taken down and all marched into the vicarage study, and the vicar's wife came rushing in.

The vicar had sunk into a chair, overcome by emotion and amazement.

"But how did you come to be locked up in the church tower?" asked the vicar.

"We went up," said Robert, slowly, "and

"THE KEEPER SPOKE DEEP-CHESTED WORDS THROUGH THE KEYHOLE."

over to the side of the tower. And if one of you comes at me I fire. Now——"

"We're all over the other side," said the voices.

The keeper felt pleased with himself, and owned himself a bold man when he threw open that door and, stepping out on to the leads, flashed the full light of the stable lantern on to the group of desperadoes standing against the parapet on the other side of the tower.

He lowered his gun and he nearly dropped the lantern.

"So help me," he cried, "if they ain't a pack of kiddies!"

The vicar now advanced.

"How did you come here?" he asked, severely. "Tell me at once."

"Oh, take us down," said Jane, catching at his coat, "and we'll tell you anything you we were tired, and we all went to sleep, and when we woke up we found the door was locked, so we yelled."

"I should think you did," said the vicar's wife, "frightening everybody out of their wits like this! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

"We *are*," said Jane, gently.

"But who locked the door?" asked the vicar.

"I don't know at all," said Robert, with perfect truth; "do, please, send us home."

"Well, really," said the vicar, "I suppose we'd better. Andrew, put the horse to, and you can take them home."

So you see they got off better than they deserved. Only Martha was very angry and swept them to bed in a whirlwind of reproaches. And they were condemned to spend the next day indoors. Only Robert—but that belongs to the Tale of the Castle.

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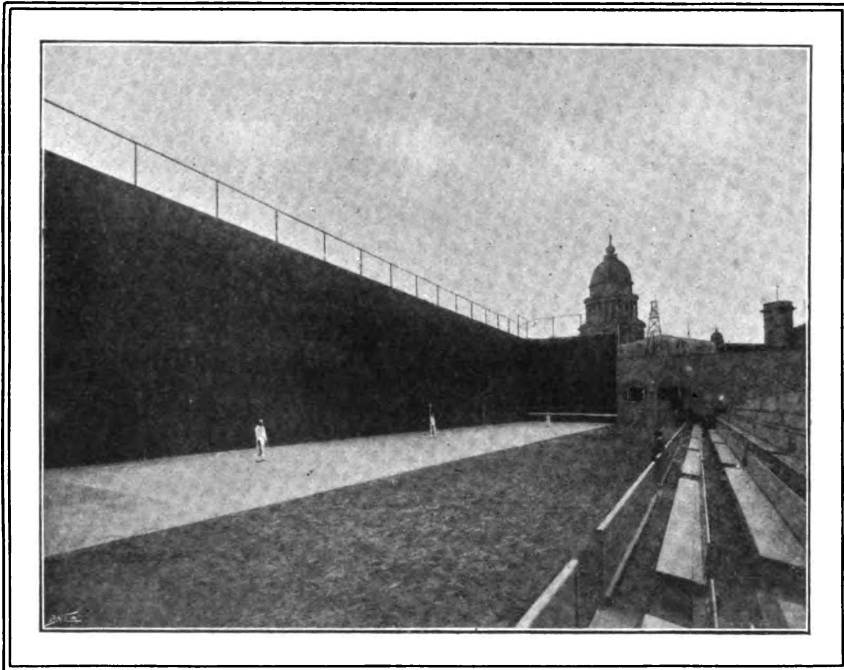
Vasco Pelota.

By Arthur Inkersley

ONE of the fastest and most exciting ball games in the world is Vasco Pelota, or basque ball. It originated in the Basque provinces of Spain, and thence was taken to Brazil and the Argentine Republic, where it achieved so great a popularity that the man who introduced it made a large fortune. From South America it found its way into Mexico, a splendid stone court being built in the city of Mexico at a cost of 200,000 silver dollars, or about £20,000. Though the Mexicans are not particularly addicted to sport, except bull-fighting and cock-fighting, the game excited so much public interest that in eight months after play began the promoters are said to have recouped the cost of the construction of the court and to have gathered in a handsome profit as well. Courts have since been constructed in other Mexican cities.

From Mexico to California is not a very far cry, and there has recently been completed in San Francisco a "cancha," or court, which, though smaller than some of those in other cities, is still 208ft. long and 35ft. wide. Walls enclose it on the two short sides and one of the long ones, the fourth side being left open. The court is of brick and the floor of concrete. The "frontis," or front wall, against which the play is directed, is 4ft. thick and faced with freestone, it having been found that brick will not stand the constant battering of the ball. The long side wall is 35ft. high, but the front wall and the "rebote," or back wall, are 40ft. in height. Above the walls for several feet is wire netting. The long side wall has upon it white lines 12¼ft. apart, which help the players, from their knowledge of the degree of skill and style of play of their opponents, to calculate where the ball is likely to be placed. The lines also help the spectators to judge of the merits of the various strokes made in a team match or tournament. On the front wall, at a height of 3ft. from the floor, is a strip of metal above which the ball must strike. On the floor of the court, at 48ft. and 84ft. from the frontis, lines are marked within which the service, to be good, must be made. To the right of the court is a strip of ground about half as wide as the court, and in front of the spec-



THE "CANCHA," OR COURT, IN WHICH VASCO PELOTA IS PLAYED.
From a Photo. by Phelps, San Francisco.

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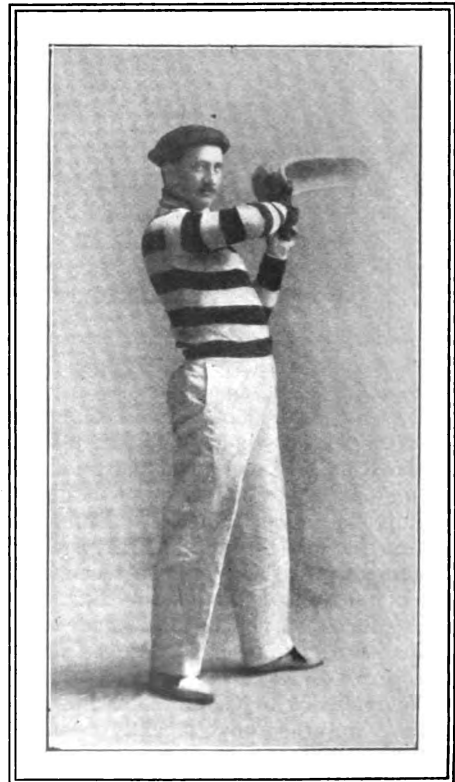
READY TO SERVE.
From a Photo. by Haussler, San Francisco.

or tournament, six or eight players generally take part, each man playing against the field. Numbers one and two play first; the loser drops out, and three steps in, until all have had their turn. The player who scores the greatest number of innings wins, and the one who scores the next highest number gets "place."

The characteristic feature of the game is the "chistera," a sickle-shaped implement of wicker-work, about 3ft. long and 7in. wide, with which the ball is played. It is fastened to the hand and wrist by a leather glove, and may be worn on either hand, but is almost invariably worn on the right. In it the ball is caught, either on the volley or at the first rebound from the floor. Catching the ball is called "resto." The ball is then hurled, as though from a sling, against the frontis in such a manner as to make it as hard as possible for the opponent to return it. The stroke generally employed is the back-hand one, the free hand being used to give greater force to the throw. The ball is hurled with surprising speed, and the play requires great quickness and agility. The definite allotment of the court to partators' seats. The players often run out upon this space to return balls which have bounded outwards. Here, too, sit the judges and the ball-keeper. The ball-keeper's duties will be explained later. The judges, on being appealed to by one of the players, decide the point at issue. Their decisions, which must be given promptly and are final, seem not often to be called for; though, when rivalry runs high between teams and the sympathies of the spectators are strong, more dispute probably arises than when exhibition games are being played among a people unfamiliar with the game and the men.

The "pelota," or ball, is made of fine rubber, with strands of thread wound round it, and has a double cover of chamois skin. It is about as large as a base-ball and weighs 5oz. In team play two or three men compose a team. In a team of two the "delantero," or leader, covers the first eight rectangles of the court, the trailer, or "zaguero," covering the last nine. Players must take the balls falling in their own rectangles, but during the progress of a game they may change positions. In a "quiniela,"



READY TO RECEIVE THE BALL.
From a Photo. by Haussler, San Francisco.

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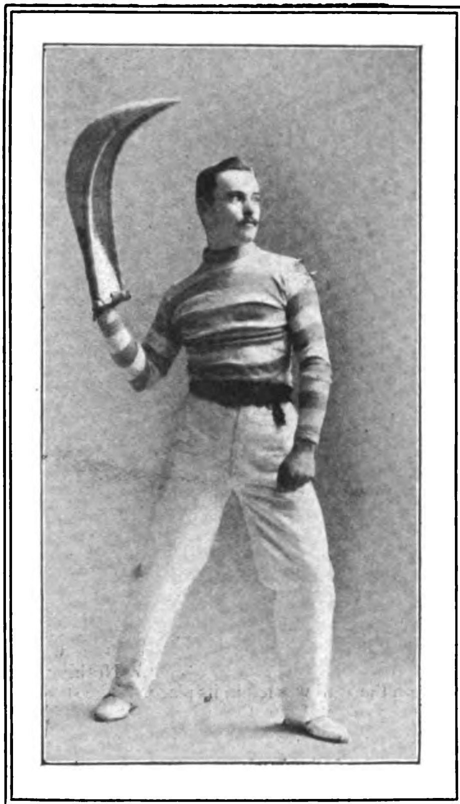


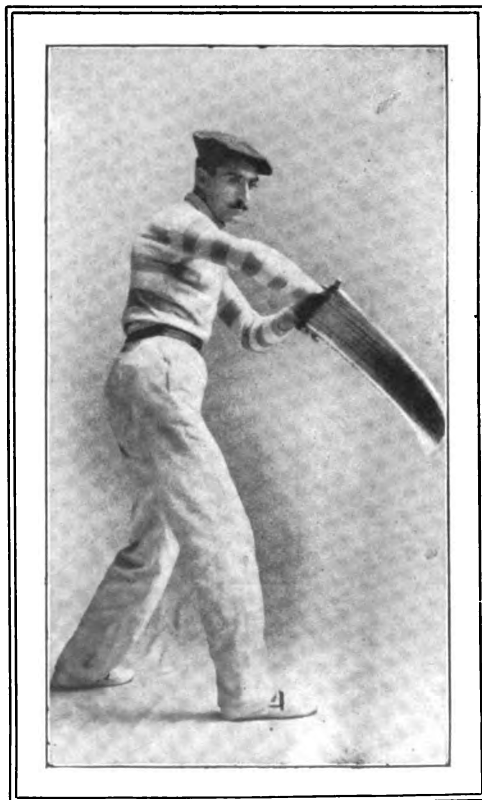
ANOTHER POSITION TO RECEIVE THE BALL.
From a Photo. by Haussler, San Francisco.

ticular players renders confusion between the partners almost impossible. Sometimes a leader may volley a ball which would fall to the trailer if allowed to reach the floor, but usually he leaves the stroke to his partner.

Before beginning an innings the ball-keeper offers a box containing a dozen balls to the player, who selects one. The leader of the team to which the service belongs shows the ball selected to the trailer of the opposite side, and, when the opponents have indicated that they are in position by saying "Lesto," or ready, the leader stands at the 90ft. base line, bounces the ball, catches it in his chistera, and hurls it with sufficient force to rebound from the frontis and strike the floor between the fourth and seventh lines. If the ball is "short" or "long" it is void; two void balls, or faults, give one point to the opposite side. Thirty points constitute a game.

The players wear white duck trousers and rubber-soled shoes, the teams being distinguished by the colour of their caps, sashes, shirts, or sweaters. The company now playing pelota in San Francisco consists of Señor A. Prido, manager; Señor Firmin Alonzo, assistant-manager; and eighteen players, of whom Firmin Yribarren is captain.

From a spectator's point of view Vasco Pelota is a magnificent game. Instead of being shut up in a confined space, as in a racquet or hand-ball court, which quickly becomes unbearably warm and stuffy, the spectators sit in the open air on seats arranged in tiers on the long side of the court. They can see every detail of a game which is exceedingly lively and interesting, the play being very fast and the points easily understood. Unlike base-ball, intercollegiate football, or many other games, pelota can be enjoyed at once by the inexpert, non-technical spectator. The game is exciting much attention in San Francisco, and, if it proves financially successful, will doubtless be introduced into other large cities of the United States, and there is no reason why it should not be brought to England, where there are thousands of athletic lovers of a game like "Sport Vasco," which affords more violent and healthful exercise in a short time than almost any other now in vogue.



RETURNING THE BALL.
From a Photo. by Haussler, San Francisco.

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

A BRIDGE BUILT THROUGH A HOUSE.

"This is a photograph of the Victoria Bridge, Perth, which crosses the River Tay. The northern end has been built through a house. A dispute arose as to the amount of the compensation to be paid for the house; but while litigation was going on the bridge was commenced, built through the house, and opened, and though it has been open about two years the ends of the house still stand and the interior of the rooms can be seen."—Mr. W. Dunscomb Vallance, 23, Brompton Square, S.W.

A GOLFING CURIOSITY.

Mr. Max Pemberton, the talented author of "The House Under the Sea," the last chapters of which appear in this issue, sends a remarkable golfing curiosity. The photograph shows a golf ball driven by A. Wyndham, Esq., straight on to one of the Westward Ho! rushes, which pierced it so that you could hold the ball up by the rush. It is a remarkable thing that a golf ball, which is nearly as hard as wood, should be thus spiked on to the point of a rush which is almost as brittle as glass. The photograph was taken by Herbert Wotton, Esq., the well-known Mid-Surrey golfer.

SCHOOLROOM "STACKING."

"I send you a photograph of my room as it looked one night when I came back from class. Every Freshman must have his room 'stacked' by the sophomores, so my turn came in due course. They climbed over the transom and literally stacked everything in one corner of the room. Every garment had at least one hard knot in it, and some of them had two or three. Over a thousand stamps I had collected, which were loose in a box, were scattered over the whole room. Six packs of playing-cards were also thrown in the 'stack.' My tooth-brush was put in the water-pitcher and coal-oil was poured over it. Nothing but the map on the wall was left in its place. The stackers hung out a sign from the window, 'Stack.' Of course, every student saw the sign and came up to see how the room looked. It was past twelve o'clock that night before I got my bed down so as to sleep on it. The 'stacking' is not done with any malicious intention; only for fun and pastime."—Mr. Gordon Stuart, Agricultural College, Michigan.

* Copyright, 1902, by George Newnes, Limited.

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AN EXPLOSION FREAK.

"This photograph apparently represents a coat thrown by its owner upon the branches of a tree. It reached its position, however, in a very peculiar manner, actually being blown over 500ft. by an explosion of nitro-glycerine at Snannopin, Pennsylvania. The coat was hanging in the engine-room of the nitro-glycerine factory, and was thrown into the air, yet, strange to say, not a hole was torn in it. Another strange freak of the explosion was to hurl a piece of box cover and lodge it in the same tree which supports the coat. The explosion occurred in what is known as the mixing-house, which wa torn into pieces the size of kindling wood."—Mr. D. Allan Willey, Baltimore.

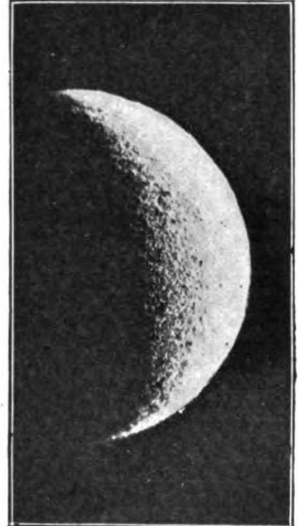
AN INGENIOUS DENTIST.

"This rather odd photograph is that of a cast taken by a dentist of Bordeaux of his own nose and face, and sent to me for the purpose of fitting eyeglasses to his nose.

Rather an ingenious idea and a very good substitute, since the man could not come to Paris himself."—Mr. E. B. Meyrowitz, Optician, 3, Rue Scribe, Paris.

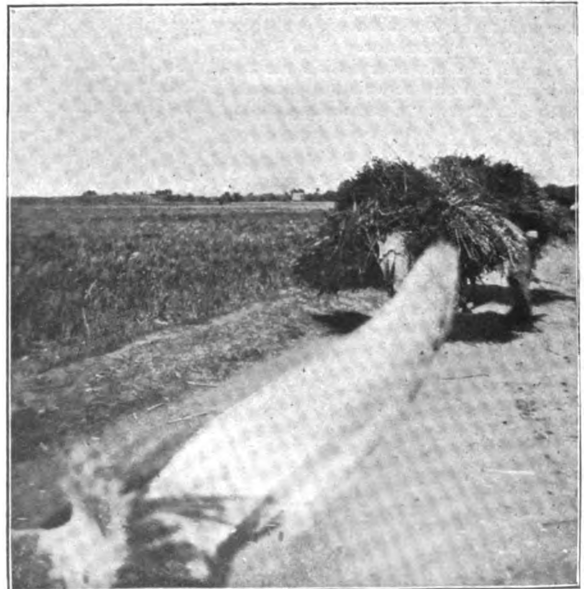
THE MOON IN A TENNIS-BALL.

"This photograph is apparently one of the crescent moon through a telescope; in reality, however, it is a photograph of a lawn-tennis ball fixed against a black piece of cloth in a dark room, the light being caused by burning a piece of magnesium wire, which must be kept in one place. By altering the position of the light a full, half, or crescent moon can be taken. The roughness of a tennis-ball cover is about equivalent to the formation of the surface of the moon, and the inequalities of the flannel present a curiously exact likeness to the appearance of the volcanic ranges as seen through a telescope of moderate magnifying power."—Mr. C. S. Lawrence, Willey Road, Stanstead, Caterham.



WHAT IS THIS?

"The white streak across the bottom half of this photo. is a donkey's ear; the object at the end of it is a camel ladened with dry sticks. I photographed the enclosed picture whilst on the back of a donkey, intending to take the back view of a laden camel, but the donkey moved his ear, thus causing this extraordinary photo." — Mr. Malcolm Campbell, Northwood, Chislehurst, Kent.



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IS THIS THE TINIEST LIVING BABY?

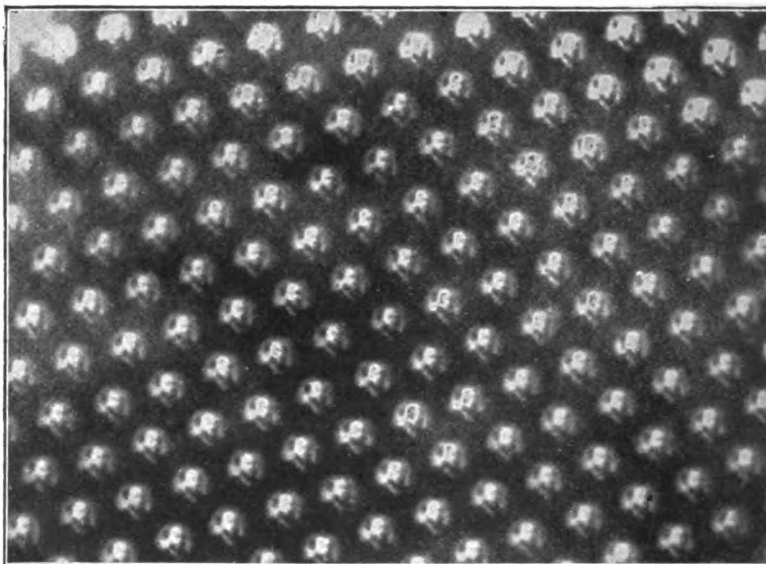
"This photograph is a portrait of little Elmer Clayton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clayton, of Los Angeles, who is surely one of the tiniest of living babies. He is healthy and lively, and at the age of two weeks weighed an ounce over two pounds, having gained a little over half a pound since birth. The picture shows him cuddled into a small dinner-plate, snugly as you please. The likeness of so dainty a gentleman may be of interest to your 'Curiosities' readers."—Mr. John L. Von Blon, Los Angeles, California.

A MONUMENT TO A HORSE.

"There are many monuments to horses scattered over England, but it is questionable whether any one of them can compete with that at Farley, Hampshire, in usefulness. Standing on the summit of a mound, which in itself is at a high elevation, the Farley Horse Monument has been a conspicuous landmark for many generations. There is a chamber inside the monument, and an inscription on the wall tells all that is known about the structure: 'Underneath lies buried a horse, the property of Paulet St. John, Esq., that in the month of September, 1733, leaped into a chalk-pit 25ft. deep a-foxhunting with his master on his back. And in October, 1734, he won the Hunters' Plate on Worthy Downs, and was rode by his owner and entered in the name of "Beware Chalk Pit."' That this inscription is still to be seen is due to the fact of its renewal in 1870 by the Right Hon. Sir William Heathcote, Baronet."—Mr. H. C. Shelley, Carlton Lodge, Palmerston Road, Bowes Park, N.

THE EYE OF A BEETLE.

"The eyes of insects may be described as hemispheres placed on each side of the head. The reason for this shape will be evident when we consider the difference existing between these and the eyes of the human subject. In man the eyes are adjustable, by their muscles, so as to traverse an angle of vision of some 60deg. to 80deg. The mechanism by which this is effected in man is entirely absent in insects, but is compensated for by a hemispherical arrangement of numerous lenses situated on the convexity of the cornea. This is well shown in the accompanying photo-micrograph of a vertical section of the eye of a dragon-fly. The lenses occupy the centres of hexagonal depressions within the corneæ, and each transmits an image of the surrounding scene, but not in a multiform character, as the images received are carried by the optical rods within the eye and are received as one image by the retina and are united in one conception. This hemispherical arrangement of the lenses allows the insect a wide range of vision, a provision doubtless favourable to vigilance. As a proof of this I enclose the portrait—or should I say portraits?—of a gentleman reflected through the corneal lenses of a beetle."—Mr. T. Charters White, 26, Belgrave Road, S.W.



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A REMARKABLE DOG.

"I send you a photograph of my old brown retriever dog, Shot, who was twenty-two years old last January. He has not missed a shooting season for many, many years, and his nose is absolutely as good as ever it was, if not better. He is very slightly affected in his sight, but absolutely deaf as a post, and works by signs from me only, as I fortunately always taught him to do. He is the cleverest dog imaginable at all sorts of shooting, and in the photo., which I took on his birthday in January last after shooting, you see him surrounded by the duck, snipe, and golden plover, and I may mention that he picked me up thirty-three grouse at one drive two years ago only, so you see he is as active as he looks."—Captain E. P. Brooke, Ravenscraig, Conway, North Wales.

THE HUMAN TELESCOPE.

"This interesting photo. is the invention of Mr. Jack Lynn, the well-known society entertainer and eldest son of the famous Dr. Lynn. The telescope is in two parts, and is fastened by an ordinary leather belt to any person or thing. By getting the front and back parts in line, one is able to see perfectly right through the obstacle and to focus and use the instrument as an ordinary telescope; in fact, objects are seen more distinctly when a block of stone or other opaque substance intervenes. This telescope was awarded the diploma at the Inventions Exhibition, April, 1901."—Mr. A. C. Lambe, 207, High Street, Stoke Newington, N.

CORMORANT'S NEST MADE OUT OF STEEL-WIRE.

"The nest shown in the accompanying photograph is a wonderful curiosity for two reasons: the locality in which it was found and the material of which it was constructed. A party of officers and men from one of the ships on the South African station went to visit the wreck of H.M.S. *Sybille* (which, it will be remembered, was wrecked off Lambert's Bay, on the south-west coast of Africa, about a year ago). One of the officers, who had climbed up into the 'look-out' at the mast-head, found there a cormorant's (*Phalacrocorax nigra*) nest containing five eggs. On closer inspection the nest was seen to be made up of bits of sea-weed firmly bound together and interwoven with cordage and stout steel-wire from the rigging. The nest and eggs are being sent to a London museum."

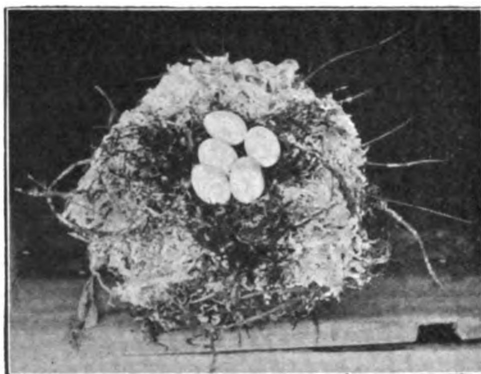

Photo. by Alfred Moysey, Esq., R.N. — Staff-Surgeon C. Marsh Beadnell, H.M.S. *Barracouta*, Simon's Bay, S.A.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

"Here is a striking example of tropical growth, being a creeper from a West African jungle, which had so entwined itself around a tree that the life was strangled out of the latter. There is now a hollow within the convolute creeper, and no remains of the tree which served as support in the first instance. The huge size of the creeper is also remarkable, as may be judged by comparing it with the chair on which it stands."—Mr. C. S. Sargisson, "Glenthorn," Strensham Hill, Moseley, Birmingham.

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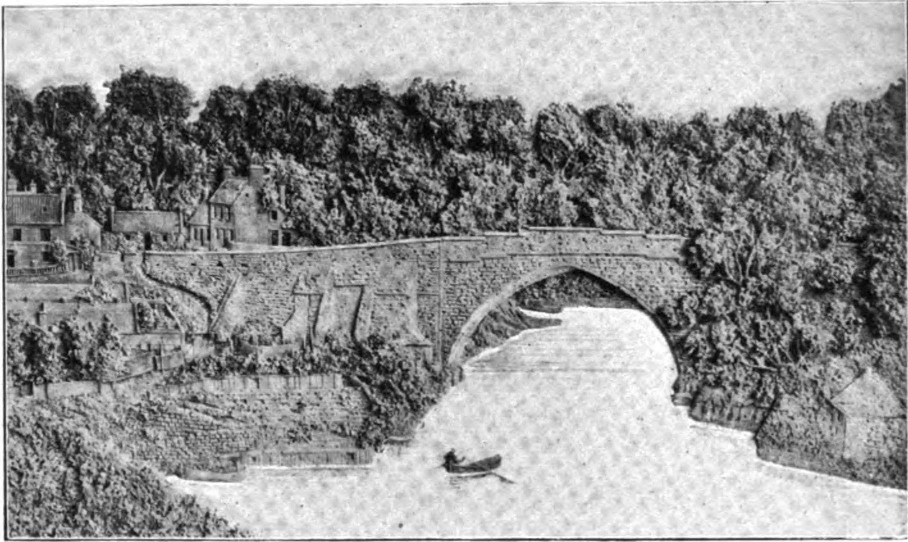


A PICTURE IN CORK.

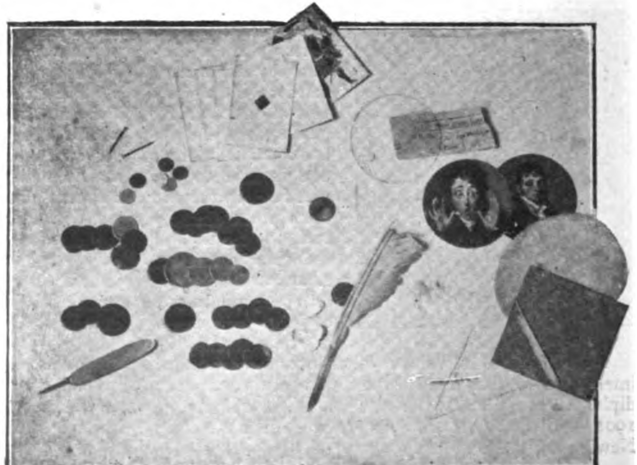
Cork is, perhaps, the most difficult substance in the world to lend itself to the knife of the sculptor. The above beautiful carving in this material occupied the artist for a period of four weeks, and was designed and executed to the order of Mr. John Smith, cork merchant, of Aberdeen. It is generally conceded to be one of the most beautiful cork pictures in the world, and depicts the Brig of Balgownie, which crosses the River Don, in Aberdeenshire, and which has been immortalized by Byron in the famous lines :—

Brig o' Balgownie, black as your wa',
A mare's a foal, a mither's a son,
Doon ye shall fa'.

That prophecy has never been fulfilled, however, for the bridge still stands its ground and remains one of the prettiest places in Aberdeen. The above picture comprises thousands of cork filings.

NAPOLEON'S MAGIC TABLE.

"This table is one of the greatest curiosities from the time of the Grand Emperor, who had it in his study at the Castle of St. Cloud. After the death of Napoleon it was bought in London by Baron Rehausen, Swedish Ambassador to the Court of St. James at that time. It is now owned through inheritance by one of the foremost families of the Swedish nobility. Inside the drawer of the table is pasted an old slip on which is printed a description, which in modernized English reads as follows : 'The Emperor Napoleon was highly delighted with this extraordinary work of art. It formed the surface of one of the tables in his study, and was always shown to all foreigners of distinction who visited the Imperial Court. It is a painting, whose resemblance to what it represents is the most illusive ever produced by the genius of man. One may look at this strange production of art in different lights—the pieces of money, the fragment of broken glass, the pen-knife, water, and cards retain an equally illusive appearance as the observer moves round the table—but it requires a very minute examination to discover all the truly magical wonders it possesses.' In these times, when relics of Napoleon I. are eagerly sought for, the present whereabouts and the picture of this masterpiece should certainly interest all connoisseurs."
—Mr. Alfred Lindgren, care of Aktiebolagst, Nordiska Kreditbanken, Stockholm.



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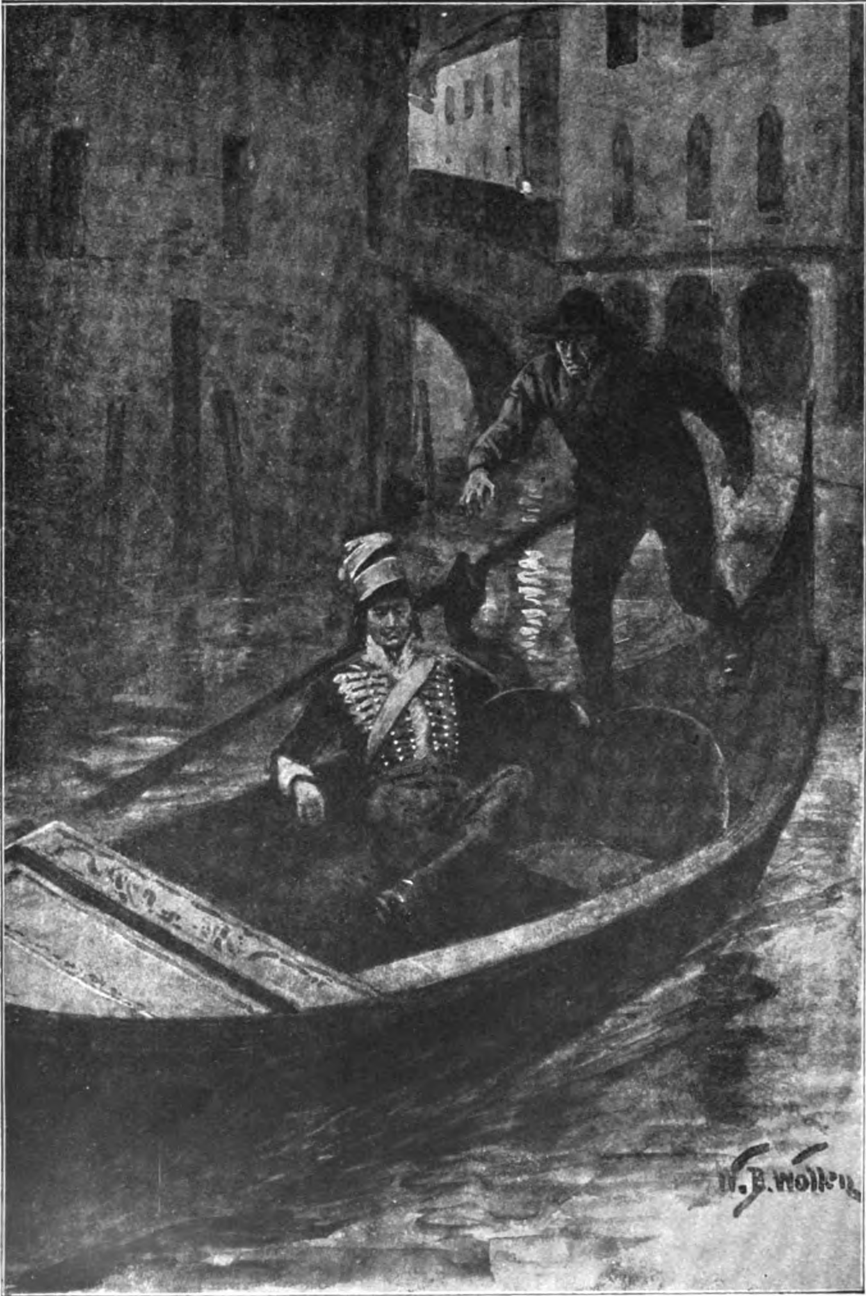

"THE GONDOLIER FELL UPON ME FROM BEHIND."

(*See page* 125.)

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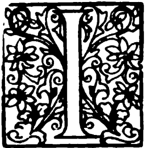
THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiv. SEPTEMBER, 1902. No. 140.

How Brigadier Gerard Lost His Ear.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.



IT was the old Brigadier who was talking in the café.

I have seen a great many cities, my friends. I would not dare to tell you how many I have entered as a conqueror with eight hundred of my little fighting devils clanking and jingling behind me. The cavalry were in front of the Grande Armée, and the Hussars of Conflans were in front of the cavalry, and I was in front of the Hussars. But of all the cities which we visited Venice is the most ill-built and ridiculous. I cannot imagine how the people who laid it out thought that the cavalry could manœuvre. It would puzzle Murat or Lassalle to bring a squadron into that square of theirs. For this reason we left Kellermann's heavy brigade and also my own Hussars at Padua on the mainland. But Suchet with the infantry held the town, and he had chosen me as his aide-de-camp for that winter, because he was pleased about the affair of the Italian fencing-master at Milan. The fellow was a good swordsman, and it was fortunate for the credit of French arms that it was I who was opposed to him. Besides, he deserved a lesson, for if one does not like a *prima donna's* singing one can always be silent, but it is intolerable that a public affront should be put upon a pretty woman. So the sympathy was all with me, and after the affair had blown over and the man's widow had been pensioned Suchet chose me as his own galloper, and I followed him to Venice, where I had the strange adventure which I am about to tell you.

You have not been to Venice? No, for it is seldom that the French travel. We were great travellers in those days. From Moscow to Cairo we had travelled everywhere, but we went in larger parties than were convenient to those whom we visited, and we carried our passports in our limbers. It will be a bad day for Europe when the French start travelling again, for they are slow to leave their homes, but when they have done so no one can say how far they will go if they have a guide like our little man to point out the way. But the great days are gone and the great men are dead, and here am I, the last of them, drinking wine of Suresnes and telling old tales in a café.

But it is of Venice that I would speak. The folk there live like water-rats upon a mud-bank, but the houses are very fine, and the churches, especially that of St. Mark, are as great as any I have seen. But above all they are proud of their statues and their pictures, which are the most famous in Europe. There are many soldiers who think that because one's trade is to make war one should never have a thought above fighting and plunder. There was old Bouvet, for example—the one who was killed by the Prussians on the day that I won the Emperor's medal; if you took him away from the camp and the canteen, and spoke to him of books or of art, he would sit and stare at you. But the highest soldier is a man like myself who can understand the things of the mind and the soul. It is true that I was very young when I joined the army, and that the quarter-master was my only teacher, but if you go about the world with your eyes open you cannot help learning a great deal.

Thus I was able to admire the pictures in Venice, and to know the names of the great men, Michael Titiens, and Angelus,

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"HERE AM I, TELLING OLD TALES IN A CAFÉ."

and the others, who had painted them. No one can say that Napoleon did not admire them also, for the very first thing which he did when he captured the town was to send the best of them to Paris. We all took what we could get, and I had two pictures for my share. One of them, called "Nymphs Surprised," I kept for myself, and the other, "Saint Barbara," I sent as a present for my mother.

It must be confessed, however, that some of our men behaved very badly in this matter of the statues and the pictures. The people at Venice were very much attached to them, and as to the four bronze horses which stood over the gate of their great church, they loved them as dearly as if they had been their children. I have always been a judge of a horse, and I had a good look at these ones, but I could not see that there was much to be said for them. They were too coarse-limbed for light cavalry chargers and they had not the weight for the gun-teams. However, they were the only four horses, alive or dead, in the whole town, so it was not to be expected that the people would know any better. They wept bitterly when they were sent away, and ten French soldiers were found floating in the canals that night. As a punishment for these murders a great many more of their pictures were sent away, and the soldiers took to breaking the statues and firing their muskets at the stained-glass windows. This made the people furious, and there was very bad feeling in the town. Many officers and men disappeared during that winter, and even their bodies were never found.

For myself I had plenty to do, and I never found the time heavy on my hands. In every country it has been my custom to try to learn the language. For this reason I always look round for some lady who will be kind enough to teach it to me, and then we practise it together. This is the most interesting way of picking it up, and before I was thirty I could speak nearly every tongue in Europe; but it must be confessed that what you learn is not of much use for the ordinary purposes of life. My business, for example, has usually been with soldiers and peasants, and what advantage is it to be able to say to them that I love only them, and that I will come back when the wars are over?

Never have I had so sweet a teacher as in Venice. Lucia was her first name, and her second—but a gentleman forgets second names. I can say this with all discretion, that she was of one of the senatorial families of Venice and that her grandfather had been Doge of the town. She was of an exquisite beauty—and when I, Etienne Gerard, use such a word as "exquisite," my friends, it has a meaning. I have judgment, I have memories, I have the means of comparison.

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Of all the women who have loved me there are not twenty to whom I could apply such a term as that. But I say again that Lucia was exquisite. Of the dark type I do not recall her equal unless it were Dolores of Toledo. There was a little brunette whom I loved at Santarem when I was soldiering under Massena in Portugal—her name has escaped me. She was of a perfect beauty, but she had not the figure nor the grace of Lucia. There was Agnes also. I could not put one before the other, but I do none an injustice when I say that Lucia was the equal of the best.

It was over this matter of pictures that I had first met her, for her father owned a palace on the farther side of the Rialto Bridge upon the Grand Canal, and it was so packed with wall-paintings that Suchet sent a party of sappers to cut some of them out and send them to Paris. I had gone down with them, and after I had seen Lucia in tears it appeared to me that the plaster would crack if it were taken from the support of the wall. I said so, and the sappers were withdrawn. After that I was the friend of the family, and many a flask of Chianti have I cracked with the father and many a sweet lesson have I had from the daughter. Some of our French officers married in Venice that winter, and I might have done the same, for I loved her with all my heart; but Etienne Gerard has his sword, his horse, his regiment, his mother, his Emperor, and his career. A debonair Hussar has room in his life for love, but none for a wife. So I thought then, my friends, but I did not see the lonely days when I should long to clasp those vanished hands, and turn my head away when I saw old comrades with their tall children standing round their chairs. This love which I had thought was a joke and a plaything—it is only now that I understand that it is the moulder of one's life, the most solemn and sacred of all things. . . . Thank you, my friend, thank you! It is a good wine, and a second bottle cannot hurt.

And now I will tell you how my love for Lucia was the cause of one of the most terrible of all the wonderful adventures which have ever befallen me, and how it was that I came to lose the top of my right ear. You have often asked me why it was missing. To-night for the first time I will tell you.

Suchet's head-quarters at that time was the old palace of the Doge Dandolo, which stands on the lagoon not far from the place of San Marco. It was near the end of the winter, and I had returned one night from the Theatre Goldini, when I found a note from Lucia and a gondola waiting. She prayed me to come to her at once as she was in trouble. To a Frenchman and a soldier there was but one answer to such a note. In an instant I was in the boat and the gondolier was pushing out into the dark lagoon. I remember that as I took my seat in the boat I was struck by the man's great size. He was not tall, but he was one of the broadest men that I have ever seen in my life. But the gondoliers of Venice are a strong breed, and powerful men are common enough among them. The fellow took his place behind me and began to row.

A good soldier in an enemy's country should everywhere and at all times be on the alert. It has been one of the rules of my life, and if I have lived to wear grey hairs it is because I have observed it. And yet upon that night I was as careless as a foolish young recruit who fears lest he should be thought to be afraid. My pistols I had left behind in my hurry. My sword was at my belt, but it is not always the most convenient of weapons. I lay back in my seat in the gondola, lulled by the gentle swish of the water and the steady creaking of the oar. Our way lay through a network of narrow canals with high houses towering on either side and a thin slit of star-spangled sky above us. Here and there, on the bridges which spanned the canal, there was the dim glimmer of an oil lamp, and sometimes there came a gleam from some niche where a candle burned before the image of a saint. But save for this it was all black, and one could only see the water by the white fringe which curled round the long black nose of our boat. It was a place and a time for dreaming. I thought of my own past life, of all the great deeds in which I had been concerned, of the horses that I had handled, and of the women that I had loved. Then I thought also of my dear mother, and I fancied her joy when she heard the folk in the village talking about the fame of her son. Of the Emperor also I thought, and of France, the dear fatherland, the sunny France, mother of beautiful daughters and of gallant sons. My heart glowed within me as I thought of how we had brought her colours so many hundred leagues beyond her borders. To her greatness I would dedicate my life. I placed my hand upon my heart as I swore it, and at that instant the gondolier fell upon me from behind.

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"IT APPEARED TO ME THAT THE PLASTER WOULD CRACK IF IT WERE TAKEN FROM THE SUPPORT OF THE WALL."

mere bundle. An instant later I heard once more the swishing of the water and the creaking of the oar. This fellow had done his work and had resumed his journey as quietly and unconcernedly as if he were accustomed to clap a sack over a colonel of Hussars every day of the week.

I cannot tell you the humiliation and also the fury which filled my mind as I lay there like a helpless sheep being carried to the butcher's. I, Etienne Gerard, the champion of the six brigades of light cavalry and the first swordsman of the Grand Army, to be overpowered by a single unarmed man in such a fashion! Yet I lay quiet, for there is a time to resist and there is a time to save one's strength. I had felt the fellow's grip upon my arms, and I knew that I would be a child in his hands. I waited quietly, therefore, with a heart which burned with rage, until my opportunity should come.

How long I lay there at the bottom of the boat I cannot tell; but it seemed to me to be a long time, and always there were the hiss of the waters and the steady creaking of the oar. Several times we turned corners, for I heard the long, sad cry which these gondoliers give when they wish to warn their fellows that they are coming. At last, after a considerable journey, I felt the side of the boat scrape up against a landing-place. The fellow knocked three times with his oar upon wood, and in answer to his summons I heard the rasping of bars and the turning of keys. A great door creaked back upon its hinges.

"Have you got him?" asked a voice, in Italian.

My monster gave a laugh and kicked the sack in which I lay.

"Here he is," said he.

When I say that he fell upon me I do not mean merely that he attacked me, but that he really did tumble upon me with all his weight. The fellow stands behind you and above you as he rows, so that you can neither see him nor can you in any way guard against such an assault. One moment I had sat with my mind filled with sublime resolutions, the next I was flattened out upon the bottom of the boat, the breath dashed out of my body, and this monster pinning me down. I felt the fierce pants of his hot breath upon the back of my neck. In an instant he had torn away my sword, had slipped a sack over my head, and had tied a rope firmly round the outside of it. There I was at the bottom of the gondola as helpless as a trussed fowl. I could not shout, I could not move; I was a

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"They are waiting." He added something which I could not understand.

"Take him, then," said my captor. He raised me in his arms, ascended some steps, and I was thrown down upon a hard floor. A moment later the bars creaked and the key whined once more. I was a prisoner inside a house.

From the voices and the steps there seemed now to be several people round me. I understand Italian a great deal better than I speak it, and I could make out very well what they were saying.

"You have not killed him, Matteo?"

"What matter if I have?"

"My faith, you will have to answer for it to the tribunal."

"They will kill him, will they not?"

"Yes, but it is not for you or me to take it out of their hands."

"Tut! I have not killed him. Dead men do not bite, and his cursed teeth met in my thumb as I pulled the sack over his head."

"He lies very quiet."

"Tumble him out and you will find he is lively enough."

The cord which bound me was undone and the sack drawn from over my head. With my eyes closed I lay motionless upon the floor.

"By the saints, Matteo, I tell you that you have broken his neck."

"Not I. He has only fainted. The better for him if he never came out of it again."

I felt a hand within my tunic.

"Matteo is right," said a voice. "His heart beats like a hammer. Let him lie and he will soon find his senses."

I waited for a minute or so and then I ventured to take a stealthy peep from between my lashes. At first I could see nothing, for I had been so long in darkness and it was but a dim light in which I found myself. Soon, however, I made out that a high and vaulted ceiling covered with painted gods and goddesses was arching over my head. This was no mean den of cut-throats into which I had been carried, but it must be the hall of some Venetian palace. Then, without movement, very slowly and stealthily I had a peep at the men who surrounded me. There was the gondolier, a swart, hard-faced, murderous ruffian, and beside him were three other men, one of them a little, twisted fellow with an air of authority and several keys in his hand, the other two tall young servants in a smart livery. As I listened to their talk I saw that the small man was the steward of the house, and that the others were under his orders.

There were four of them, then, but the little steward might be left out of the reckoning. Had I a weapon I should have smiled at such odds as those. But, hand to hand, I was no match for the one even without three others to aid him. Cunning, then, not force, must be my aid. I wished to look round for some mode of escape, and in doing so I gave an almost imperceptible movement of my head. Slight as it was it did not escape my guardians.

"Come, wake up, wake up!" cried the steward.

"Get on your feet, little Frenchman," growled the gondolier. "Get up, I say!" and for the second time he spurned me with his foot.

Never in the world was a command obeyed so promptly as that one. In an instant I had bounded to my feet and rushed as hard as I could run to the back of the hall. They were after me as I have seen the English hounds follow a fox, but there was a long passage down which I tore. It turned to the left and again to the left, and then I found myself back in the hall once more. They were almost within touch of me and there was no time for thought. I turned towards the staircase, but two men were coming down it. I dodged back and tried the door through which I had been brought, but it was fastened with great bars and I could not loosen them. The gondolier was on me with his knife, but I met him with a kick on the body which stretched him on his back. His dagger flew with a clatter across the marble floor. I had no time to seize it, for there were half-a-dozen of them now clutching at me. As I rushed through them the little steward thrust his leg before me and I fell with a crash, but I was up in an instant, and breaking from their grasp I burst through the very middle of them and made for a door at the other end of the hall. I reached it well in front of them, and I gave a shout of triumph as the handle turned freely in my hand, for I could see that it led to the outside and that all was clear for my escape. But I had forgotten this strange city in which I was. Every house is an island. As I flung open the door, ready to bound out into the street, the light of the hall shone upon the deep, still, black water which lay flush with the topmost step. I shrank back, and in an instant my pursuers were on me. But I am not taken so easily. Again I kicked and fought my way through them, though one of them tore

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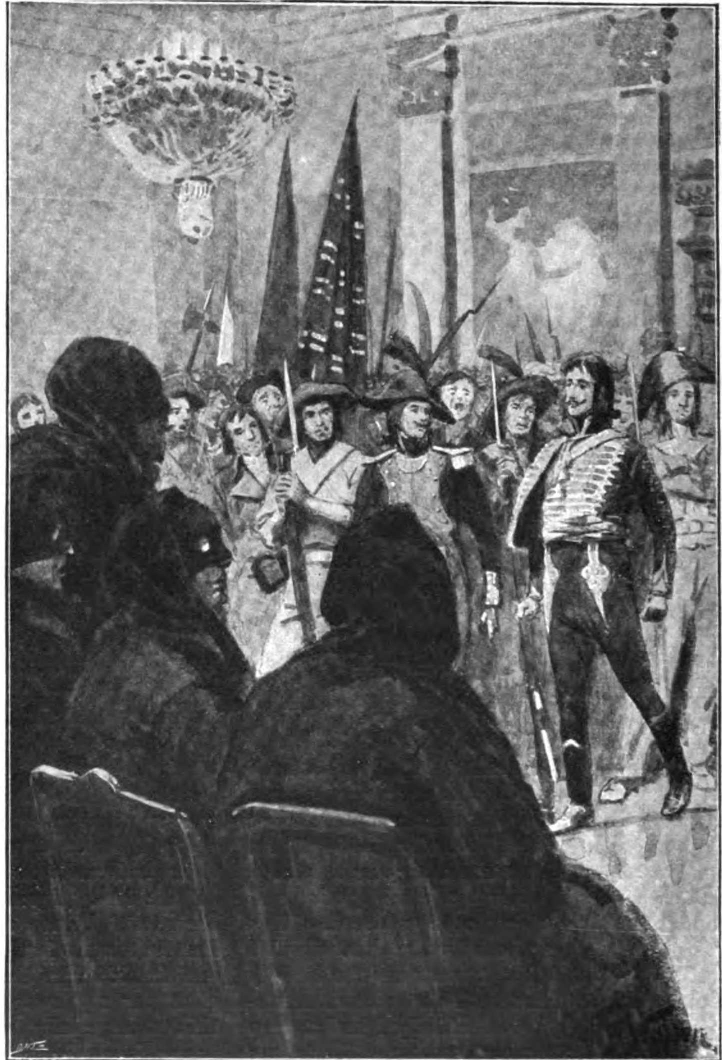
a handful of hair from my head in his effort to hold me. The little steward struck me with a key and I was battered and bruised, but once more I cleared a way in front of me. Up the grand staircase I rushed, burst open the pair of huge folding doors which faced me, and learned at last that my efforts were in vain.

The room into which I had broken was brilliantly lighted. With its gold cornices, its massive pillars, and its painted walls and ceilings it was evidently the grand hall of some famous Venetian palace. There are many hundred such in this strange city, any one of which has rooms which would grace the Louvre or Versailles. In the centre of this great hall there was a raised daïs, and upon it in a half circle there sat twelve men all clad in black gowns, like those of a Franciscan monk, and each with a mask over the upper part of his face. A group of armed men — rough-looking rascals — were standing round the door, and amid them facing the daïs was a young fellow in the uniform of the light infantry. As he turned his head I recognised him. It was Captain Auret, of the 7th, a young Basque with whom I had drunk many a glass during the winter. He was deadly white, poor wretch, but he held himself manfully amid the assassins who surrounded him. Never shall I forget the sudden flash of hope which shone in his dark eyes when he saw a comrade burst into the room, or the look of despair which followed as he understood that I had come not to change his fate but to share it.

You can think how amazed these people were when I hurled myself into their presence. My pursuers had crowded in behind me and choked the doorway, so that all further flight was out of the question. It is at such instants that my nature asserts itself.



"WITH DIGNITY I ADVANCED TOWARDS THE TRIBUNAL."

With dignity I advanced towards the tribunal. My jacket was torn, my hair was dishevelled, my head was bleeding, but there was that in my eyes and in my carriage which made them realize that no common man was before

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them. Not a hand was raised to arrest me until I halted in front of a formidable old man whose long grey beard and masterful manner told me that both by years and by character he was the man in authority.

"Sir," said I, "you will, perhaps, tell me why I have been forcibly arrested and brought to this place. I am an honourable soldier, as is this other gentleman here, and I demand that you will instantly set us both at liberty."

There was an appalling silence to my appeal. It is not pleasant to have twelve masked faces turned upon you and to see twelve pairs of vindictive Italian eyes fixed with fierce intentness upon your face. But I stood as a debonair soldier should, and I could not but reflect how much credit I was bringing upon the Hussars of Conflans by the dignity of my bearing. I do not think that anyone could have carried himself better under such difficult circumstances. I looked with a fearless face from one assassin to another, and I waited for some reply.

It was the greybeard who at last broke the silence.

"Who is this man?" he asked.

"His name is Gerard," said the little steward at the door.

"Colonel Gerard," said I. "I will not deceive you. I am Etienne Gerard, *the* Colonel Gerard, five times mentioned in despatches and recommended for the sword of honour. I am aide-de-camp to General Suchet, and I demand my instant release, together with that of my comrade in arms."

The same terrible silence fell upon the assembly, and the same twelve pairs of merciless eyes were bent upon my face. Again it was the greybeard who spoke.

"He is out of his order. There are two names upon our list before him."

"He escaped from our hands and burst into the room."

"Let him await his turn. Take him down to the wooden cell."

"If he resist us, your excellency?"

"Bury your knives in his body. The tribunal will uphold you. Remove him until we have dealt with the others."

They advanced upon me, and for an instant I thought of resistance. It would have been a heroic death, but who was there to see it or to chronicle it? I might be only postponing my fate, and yet I had been in so many bad places and come out unhurt that I had learned always to hope and to trust my star. I allowed these rascals to seize me, and I was led from the room, the gondolier walking at my side with a long naked knife in his hand. I could see in his brutal eyes the satisfaction which it would give him if he could find some excuse for plunging it into my body.

They are wonderful places, these great Venetian houses, palaces and fortresses and prisons all in one. I was led along a passage and down a bare stone stair until we came to a short corridor from which three doors opened. Through one of these I was thrust and the spring lock closed behind me. The only light came dimly through a small grating which opened on the passage. Peering and feeling, I carefully examined the chamber in which I had been placed. I understood from what I had heard that I should soon have to leave it again in order to appear before this tribunal, but still it is not my nature to throw away any possible chances.

The stone floor of the cell was so damp and the walls for some feet high were so slimy and foul that it was evident they were beneath the level of the water. A single slanting hole high up near the ceiling was the only aperture for light or air. Through it I saw one bright star shining down upon me, and the sight filled me with comfort and with hope. I have never been a man of religion, though I have always had a respect for those who were, but I remember that night that the star shining down the shaft seemed to be an all-seeing eye which was upon me, and I felt as a young and frightened recruit might feel in battle when he saw the calm gaze of his colonel turned upon him.

Three of the sides of my prison were formed of stone, but the fourth was of wood, and I could see that it had only recently been erected. Evidently a partition had been thrown up to divide a single large cell into two smaller ones. There was no hope for me in the old walls, in the tiny window, or in the massive door. It was only in this one direction of the wooden screen that there was any possibility of exploring. My reason told me that if I should pierce it—which did not seem very difficult—it would only be to find myself in another cell as strong as that in which I then was. Yet I had always rather be doing something than doing nothing, so I bent all my attention and all my energies upon the wooden wall. Two planks were badly joined, and so loose that I was certain I could easily detach them. I searched about for some tool, and I found one in the leg of a small bed which stood in

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the corner. I forced the end of this into the chink of the planks, and I was about to twist them outwards when the sound of rapid footsteps caused me to pause and to listen.

I wish I could forget what I heard. Many a hundred men have I seen die in battle, and I have slain more myself than I care to think of, but all that was fair fight and the duty of a soldier. It was a very different matter to listen to a murder in this den of assassins. They were pushing someone along the passage, someone who resisted and who clung to my door as he passed. They must have taken him into the third cell, the one which was farthest from me. "Help! Help!" cried a voice, and then I heard a blow and a scream. "Help! Help!" cried the voice again, and then "Gerard! Colonel Gerard!" It was my poor captain of infantry whom they were slaughtering. "Murderers! Murderers!" I yelled, and I kicked at my door, but again I heard him shout and then everything was silent. A minute later there was a heavy splash, and I knew that no human eye would ever see Auret again. He had gone as a hundred others had gone whose names were missing from the roll-calls of their regiments during that winter in Venice.

The steps returned along the passage, and I thought that they were coming for me. Instead of that they opened the door of the cell next to mine and they took someone out of it. I heard the steps die away up the stair. At once I renewed my work upon the planks, and within a very few minutes I had loosened them in such a way that I could remove and replace them at pleasure. Passing through the aperture I found myself in the farther cell, which, as I expected, was the other half of the one in which I had been confined. I was not any nearer to escape than I had been before, for there was no other wooden wall which I could penetrate and the spring lock of the door had been closed. There were no traces to show who was my companion in misfortune. Closing the two loose planks behind me I returned to my own cell and waited there with all the courage which I could command for the summons which would probably be my death-knell.

"HIS HANDS DARTED IN AND OUT OR WRITHED TOGETHER IN AN AGONY OF ENTREATY."

It was a long time in coming, but at last I heard the sound of feet once more in the passage, and I nerved myself to listen to some other odious deed and to hear the cries of the poor victim. Nothing of the kind occurred, however, and the prisoner was placed in the cell without violence. I had no time to peep through my hole of communication, for next moment my own door was flung open and my rascally gondolier, with the other assassins, came into the cell.

"Come, Frenchman," said he. He held his blood-stained knife in his great hairy hand, and I read in his fierce eyes that he only looked for some excuse in order to plunge it into my heart. Resistance was useless. I followed without a word. I was led up the stone stair and back into that gorgeous chamber in which I had left the secret tribunal. I was ushered in, but to my surprise it was not on me that their attention was fixed. One of their own number, a tall,

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dark young man, was standing before them and was pleading with them in low, earnest tones. His voice quivered with anxiety and his hands darted in and out or writhed together in an agony of entreaty. "You cannot do it! You cannot do it!" he cried. "I implore the tribunal to reconsider this decision."

"Stand aside, brother," said the old man who presided. "The case is decided and another is up for judgment."

"For Heaven's sake be merciful!" cried the young man.

"We have already been merciful," the other answered. "Death would have been a small penalty for such an offence. Be silent and let judgment take its course."

I saw the young man throw himself in an agony of grief into his chair. I had no time, however, to speculate as to what it was which was troubling him, for his eleven colleagues had already fixed their stern eyes upon me. The moment of fate had arrived.

"You are Colonel Gerard?" said the terrible old man.

"I am."

"Aide-de-camp to the robber who calls himself General Suchet, who in turn represents that arch-robber Buonaparte?"

It was on my lips to tell him that he was a liar, but there is a time to argue and a time to be silent.

"I am an honourable soldier," said I. "I have obeyed my orders and done my duty."

The blood flushed into the old man's face and his eyes blazed through his mask.

"You are thieves and murderers, every man of you," he cried. "What are you doing here? You are Frenchmen. Why are you not in France? Did we invite you to Venice? By what right are you here? Where are our pictures? Where are the horses of St. Mark? Who are you that you should pilfer those treasures which our fathers through so many centuries have collected? We were a great city when France was a desert. Your drunken, brawling, ignorant soldiers have undone the work of saints and heroes. What have you to say to it?"

He was, indeed, a formidable old man, for his white beard bristled with fury and he barked out the little sentences like a savage hound. For my part I could have told him that his pictures would be safe in Paris, that his horses were really not worth making a fuss about, and that he could see heroes—I say nothing of saints—without going back to his ancestors or even moving out of his chair. All this I could have pointed out, but one might as well argue with a Mamaluke about religion. I shrugged my shoulders and said nothing.

"The prisoner has no defence," said one of my masked judges.

"Has anyone any observation to make before judgment is passed?" The old man glared round him at the others.

"There is one matter, your excellency," said another. "It can scarce be referred to without re-opening a brother's wounds, but I would remind you that there is a very particular reason why an exemplary punishment should be inflicted in the case of this officer."

"I had not forgotten it," the old man answered. "Brother, if the tribunal has injured you in one direction, it will give you ample satisfaction in another."

The young man who had been pleading when I entered the room staggered to his feet.

"I cannot endure it," he cried. "Your excellency must forgive me. The tribunal can act without me. I am ill. I am mad." He flung his hands out with a furious gesture and rushed from the room.

"Let him go! Let him go!" said the president. "It is, indeed, more than can be asked of flesh and blood that he should remain under this roof. But he is a true Venetian, and when the first agony is over he will understand that it could not be otherwise."

I had been forgotten during this episode, and though I am not a man who is accustomed to being overlooked I should have been all the happier had they continued to neglect me. But now the old president glared at me again like a tiger who comes back to his victim.

"You shall pay for it all, and it is but justice that you should," said he. "You, an upstart adventurer and foreigner, have dared to raise your eyes in love to the grand-daughter of a Doge of Venice who was already betrothed to the heir of the Loredans. He who enjoys such privileges must pay a price for them."

"It cannot be higher than they are worth," said I.

"You will tell us that when you have made a part payment," said he. "Perhaps your spirit may not be so proud by that time. Matteo, you will lead this prisoner to the wooden cell. To-night is Monday. Let him have no food or water, and let him be led before the tribunal again on Wednesday night. We shall then decide upon the death which he is to die."

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It was not a pleasant prospect, and yet it was a reprieve. One is thankful for small mercies when a hairy savage with a blood-stained knife is standing at one's elbow. He dragged me from the room and I was thrust down the stairs and back into my cell. The door was locked and I was left to my reflections.

My first thought was to establish connection with my neighbour in misfortune. I waited until the steps had died away, and then I cautiously drew aside the two boards and peeped through. The light was very dim, so dim that I could only just discern a figure huddled in the corner, and I could hear the low whisper of a voice which prayed as one prays who is in deadly fear. The boards must have made a creaking. There was a sharp exclamation of surprise.

"Courage, friend, courage!" I cried. "All is not lost. Keep a stout heart, for Etienne Gerard is by your side."

"Etienne!" It was a woman's voice which spoke—a voice which was always music to my ears. I sprang through the gap and I flung my arms round her. "Lucia! Lucia!" I cried.

It was "Etienne!" and "Lucia!" for some minutes, for one does not make speeches at moments like that. It was she who came to her senses first.

"Oh, Etienne, they will kill you. How came you into their hands?"

"I PUT MY HAND TO EACH LITTLE VELVET SHELL."

"In answer to your letter."

"I wrote no letter."

"The cunning demons! But you?"

"I came also in answer to your letter."

"Lucia, I wrote no letter."

"They have trapped us both with the same bait."

"I care nothing about myself, Lucia. Besides, there is no pressing danger with me. They have simply returned me to my cell."

"Oh, Etienne, Etienne, they will kill you. Lorenzo is there."

"The old greybeard?"

"No, no, a young dark man. He loved me, and I thought I loved him until . . . until I learned what love is, Etienne. He will never forgive you. He has a heart of stone."

"Let them do what they like. They cannot rob me of the past, Lucia. But you—what about you?"

"It will be nothing, Etienne. Only a pang for an instant and then all over. They mean it as a badge of infamy, dear, but I will carry it like a crown of honour since it was through you that I gained it."

Her words froze my blood with horror. All my adventures were insignificant compared to this terrible shadow which was creeping over my soul.

"Lucia! Lucia!" I cried. "For pity's sake tell me what

these butchers are about to do. Tell me, Lucia! Tell me!"

"I will not tell you, Etienne, for it would hurt you far more than it would me. Well, well, I will tell you lest you should fear it was something worse. The president has ordered that my ear be cut off, that I may be marked for ever as having loved a Frenchman."

Her ear! The dear little ear which I had kissed so often. I put my hand to each little velvet shell to make certain that this sacrilege had not yet been committed. Only over my dead body should they reach them. I swore it to her between my clenched teeth.

"You must not care, Etienne. And yet I love that you should care all the same."

"They shall not hurt you—the fiends!"

"I have hopes, Etienne. Lorenzo is there. He was silent while I was judged, but he may have pleaded for me after I was gone."

"He did. I heard him."

"Then he may have softened their hearts."

I knew that it was not so, but how could I bring myself to tell her? I might as well have done so, for with the quick instinct of woman my silence was speech to her.

"They would not listen to him! You need not fear to tell me, dear, for you will find that I am worthy to be loved by such a soldier. Where is Lorenzo now?"

"He left the hall."

"Then he may have left the house as well."

"I believe that he did."

"He has abandoned me to my fate. Etienne, Etienne, they are coming!"

Afar off I heard those fateful steps and the jingle of distant keys. What were they coming for now, since there were no other prisoners to drag to judgment? It could only be to carry out the sentence upon my darling. I stood between her and the door, with the strength of a lion in my limbs. I would tear the house down before they should touch her.

"Go back! Go back!" she cried. "They will murder you, Etienne. My life, at least, is safe. For the love you bear me, Etienne, go back. It is nothing. I will make no sound. You will not hear that it is done."

She wrestled with me, this delicate creature, and by main force she dragged me to the opening between the cells. But a sudden thought had crossed my mind.

"We may yet be saved," I whispered. "Do what I tell you at once and without argument. Go into my cell. Quick!"

I pushed her through the gap and helped her to replace the planks. I had retained her cloak in my hands, and with this wrapped round me I crept into the darkest corner of her cell. There I lay when the door was opened and several men came in. I had reckoned that they would bring no lantern, for they had none with them before. To their eyes I was only a dark blur in the corner.

"Bring a light," said one of them.

"No, no; curse it!" cried a rough voice, which I knew to be that of the ruffian Matteo. "It is not a job that I like, and the more I saw it the less I should like it. I am sorry, signora, but the order of the tribunal has to be obeyed."

My impulse was to spring to my feet and to rush through them all and out by the open door But how would that help Lucia? Suppose that I got clear away, she would be in their hands until I could come back with help, for single-handed I could not hope to clear a way for her. All this flashed through my mind in an instant, and I saw that the only course for me was to lie still, take what came, and wait my chance. The fellow's coarse hand felt about among my curls—those curls in which only a woman's fingers had ever wandered. The next instant he gripped my ear and a pain shot through me as if I had been touched with a hot iron. I bit my lip to stifle a cry, and I felt the blood run warm down my neck and back.

"There, thank Heaven, that's over," said the fellow, giving me a friendly pat on the head. "You're a brave girl, signora, I'll say that for you, and I only wish you'd have better taste than to love a Frenchman. You can blame him and not me for what I have done."

What could I do save to lie still and grind my teeth at my own helplessness? At the same time my pain and my rage were always soothed by the reflection that I had suffered for the woman whom I loved. It is the custom of men to say to ladies that they would willingly endure any pain for their sake, but it was my privilege to show that I had said no more than I meant. I thought also how nobly I would seem to have acted if ever the story came to be told, and how proud the regiment of Conflans might well be of their colonel. These thoughts helped me to suffer in silence while the blood still trickled over my neck and dripped upon the stone floor. It was that sound which nearly led to my destruction.

"She's bleeding fast," said one of the

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"THE NEXT INSTANT HE GRIPPED MY EAR."

valets. "You had best fetch a surgeon or you will find her dead in the morning."

"She lies very still and she has never opened her mouth," said another. "The shock has killed her."

"Nonsense; a young woman does not die so easily." It was Matteo who spoke. "Besides, I did but snip off enough to leave the tribunal's mark upon her. Rouse up, signora, rouse up!"

He shook me by the shoulder, and my heart stood still for fear he should feel the epaulette under the mantle.

"How is it with you now?" he asked.

I made no answer.

"Curse it, I wish I had to do with a man instead of a woman, and the fairest woman in Venice," said the gondolier. "Here, Nicholas, lend me your handkerchief and bring a light."

It was all over. The worst had happened. Nothing could save me. I still crouched in the corner, but I was tense in every muscle, like a wild cat about to spring If I had to die I was determined that my end should be worthy of my life.

One of them had gone for a lamp and Matteo was stooping over me with a handkerchief. In another instant my secret would be discovered. But he suddenly drew himself straight and stood motionless. At the same instant there came a confused murmuring sound through the little window far above my head. It was the rattle of oars and the buzz of many voices. Then there was a crash upon the door upstairs, and a terrible voice roared: "Open! Open in the name of the Emperor!"

The Emperor! It was like the mention of some saint which, by its very sound, can frighten the demons. Away they ran with cries of terror—Matteo, the valets, the steward, all of the murderous gang. Another shout and then the crash of a hatchet and the splintering of planks. There were the rattle of arms and the cries of French soldiers in the hall. Next instant feet came flying down the stair and a man burst frantically into my cell.

"Lucia!" he cried, "Lucia!" He stood in the dim light, panting and unable to find his words. Then he broke out again. "Have I not shown you how I love you, Lucia? What more could I do to prove it? I have betrayed my country, I have broken my vow, I have ruined my friends, and I have given my life in order to save you."

It was young Lorenzo Loredan, the lover whom I had superseded. My heart was heavy for him at the time, but after all it is every man for himself in love, and if one fails in the game it is some consolation to lose to one who can be a graceful and considerate winner. I was about to point this out to him, but at the first word I uttered he gave a shout of astonishment, and, rushing out, he seized the lamp which hung in the corridor and flashed it in my face.

"It is you, you villain!" he cried. "You French coxcomb. You shall pay me for the wrong which you have done me."

But the next instant he saw the pallor of

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my face and the blood which was still pouring from my head.

"What is this?" he asked. "How come you to have lost your ear?"

I shook off my weakness, and pressing my handkerchief to my wound I rose from my couch, the debonair colonel of Hussars.

"My injury, sir, is nothing. With your permission we will not allude to a matter so trifling and so personal."

"MY INJURY, SIR, IS NOTHING."

But Lucia had burst through from her cell and was pouring out the whole story while she clasped Lorenzo's arm.

"This noble gentleman — he has taken my place, Lorenzo! He has borne it for me. He has suffered that I might be saved."

I could sympathize with the struggle which I could see in the Italian's face. At last he held out his hand to me.

"Colonel Gerard," he said, "you are worthy of a great love. I forgive you, for if you have wronged me you have made a noble atonement. But I wonder to see you alive. I left the tribunal before you were judged, but I understood that no mercy would be shown to any Frenchman since the destruction of the ornaments of Venice."

"He did not destroy them," cried Lucia. "He has helped to preserve those in our palace."

"One of them, at any rate," said I, as I stooped and kissed her hand.

This was the way, my friends, in which I lost my ear. Lorenzo was found stabbed to the heart in the Piazza of St. Mark within two days of the night of my adventure. Of the tribunal and its ruffians, Matteo and three others were shot, the rest banished from the town. Lucia, my lovely Lucia, retired into a convent at Murano after the French had left the city, and there she still may be, some gentle lady abbess who has perhaps long forgotten the days when our hearts throbbed together, and when the whole great world seemed so small a thing beside the love which burned in our veins. Or perhaps it may not be so. Perhaps she has not forgotten. There may still be times when the peace of the cloister is broken by the memory of the old soldier who loved her in those distant days. Youth is past and passion is gone, but the soul of the gentleman can never change, and still Etienne Gerard would bow his grey head before her and would very gladly lose this other ear if he might do her a service.

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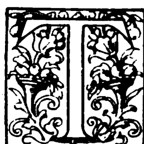
Pictures and Parodies.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

From the Painting by] "MUSCIPULA." [*Sir Joshua Reynolds.*



TO the humorist nothing is sacred. Anything, everything, he turns from its purpose to make it serve his end—laughter. That laughter may, nay often does, serve a useful purpose, for the humorist is invariably a man who devotes his talent to

> Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
> And catch the manners living as they rise.

The parodists of the poets are probably more numerous than the poets themselves, though not so well known, while the picture parodists have probably existed ever since the first prehistoric man took to drawing animals on bones or the rocky walls of his cave. A social or political, rather than a personal, bent has, for the most part, been the use to which the pictorial humorist has put the work he has parodied, and it is astonishing how often the touch of genius is given to making funny a subject which would not apparently lend itself to that sort of treatment.

Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Muscipula" (The Mousetrap) was early in 1840 turned to political purposes by James Doyle, whose work was published with the signature "H. B." He was inspired by an event which, though unknown to the ordinary student of history, created an intense excitement in the political world at the time. In his parody it is Lord John Russell who takes the place of the little girl, while the mouse in the trap is Sheriff Evans, one of the two Sheriffs of Middlesex, the hero of the event, and the cat which watches the proceedings is Sir Robert Peel. The case arose out of an action by Mr. Stockdale against the Sheriffs to recover £600 damages awarded by the jury, together with costs, from Messrs. Hansard, whose goods were sold to defray the costs. On a motion by Lord John Russell, the House of Commons voted that the levy of execution of £646 on the property of Messrs. Hansard was a breach of privilege of the House. When this was carried he moved further

PARODY BY JAMES DOYLE.

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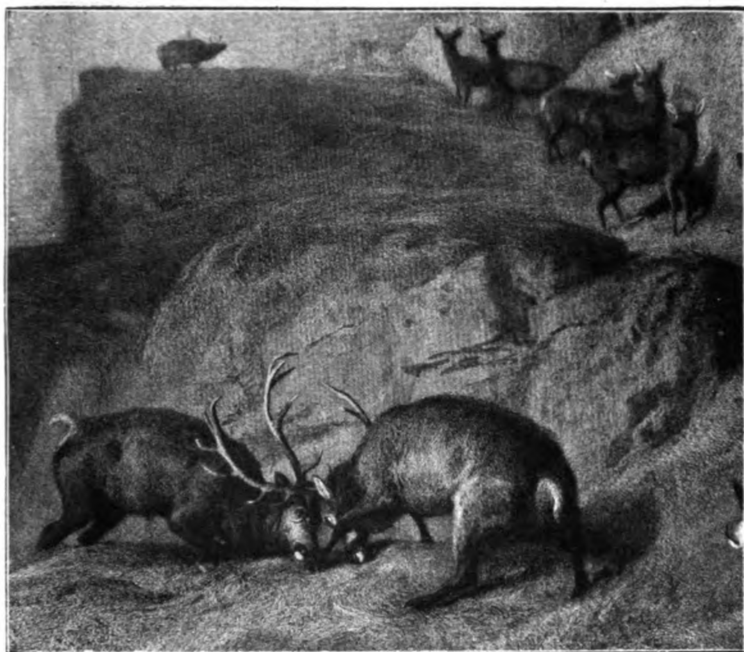


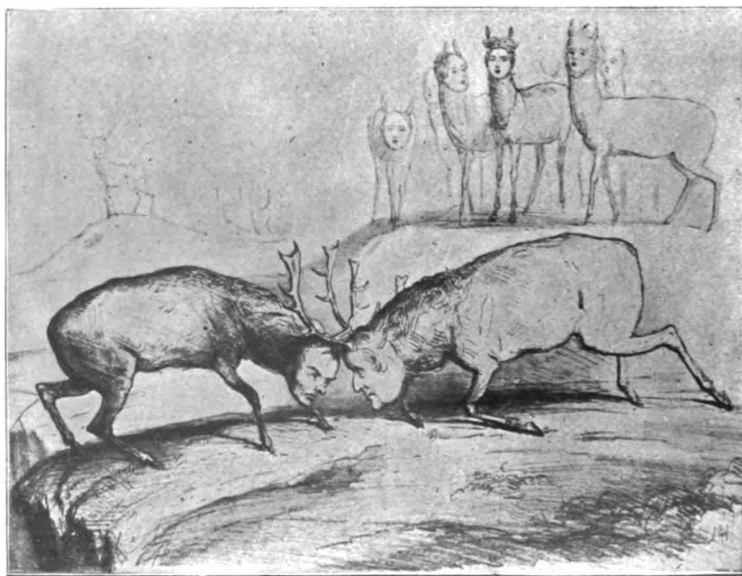
Portion of the Picture] "NONE BUT THE BRAVE DESERVE THE FAIR." [*by Sir E. Landseer.*

proceedings. Then the House divided, but the majority was against freeing the Sheriff, who held what were almost levées in his prison, and the *Times* used to print nearly every day the names of prominent men who visited him.

From early in January until the middle of April he remained a prisoner, until at last the House of Commons passed a resolution that he should be discharged from custody.

Landseer's "None But the Brave Deserve the Fair," which was described as "Mr. E. Landseer's admired picture seen in a new point of view," represents Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel fighting over what was known as the "Bedchamber Question" in 1838, while the Queen, recognised as one of the does crowned, and several ladies look at the conflict, in which the Duke of Wellington is also interested. Peel noticed that the two ladies most closely in attendance on Her

motions that the Sheriffs be ordered to refund the said £646 to Messrs. Hansard, and that they should be committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms. The case also came before the Court of Queen's Bench, which ordered them to pay the money to Stockdale, so that the unfortunate Sheriffs were on the horns of a dilemma. The House of Commons, however, carried the matter with a high hand, and both Sheriffs were imprisoned in the House. After a few days Mr. Wheelton, one of them, was released, but Mr. Evans remained in custody in spite of many attempts to get him freed. It was even declared that the confinement was injuring his health, and physicians were brought to the Bar of the House to give evidence on the point and to be examined by the members, Mr. Gladstone taking a not unimportant part in the



PARODY BY JAMES DOYLE.

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From the Painting by] "SCOTLAND FOR EVER!" [*Lady Butler.*

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Majesty were Lady Normanby and the sister of Lord Morpeth. He felt that it was impossible for him to work the Government while the wife and sister of the statesmen whose policy he wanted to change entirely were the Queen's closest companions. Somehow, however, he managed to convey to the Queen not that very reasonable point, but that he meant to insist on the removal of all her familiar attendants and household associates. Her Majesty told Sir Robert "she could not consent to a course she conceived to be contrary to usage and is repugnant to her feelings."

The question caused the greatest excitement throughout the country, and it was at this time that O'Connell referred to the Queen as "that young creature of only nineteen, as pure as she is exalted, who listened not to her head, but to the overflowing feelings of her young heart." Her Majesty had her own way.

"IRELAND FOR EVER."—PARODY BY TOM MERRY.

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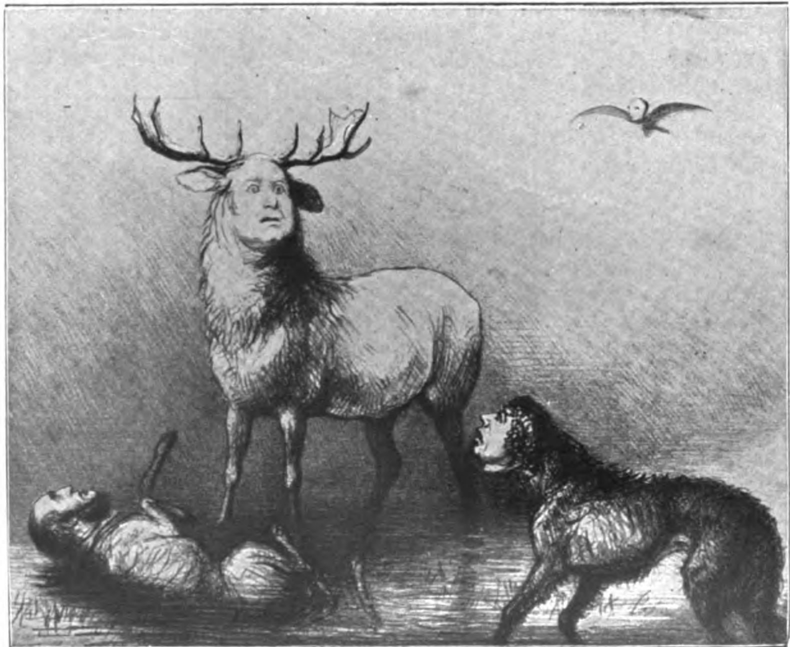
From the Painting by] "THE STAG AT BAY." [*Sir E. Landseer.*

When the *St. Stephen's Review* was being published, its cartoons, which were drawn by Mr. Tom Merry, attracted a great deal of attention, not only by reason of their merit, but also for the fact that, like the cartoons of the American periodicals and unlike those in our own weekly publications, they were printed in colour. Of the most brilliant examples of his skill which I have selected not the least conspicuous is his parody on Lady Butler's famous "Scotland for Ever," which he called "Ireland for Ever." In connection with the week's cartoon there was always published a little story illustrating it. The story of this one was that old Jonathan Hickman came to town for Easter, and promised to take Mrs. Hickman back a print of "Scotland for Ever." He bought the picture, and when he returned to his hotel he got talking with some people, and under the influence of a heated discussion he declared that "the Gladstonians had sunk every British interest for the sake of Ireland, and that Lord Salisbury had not done enough for the British farmer." Then he had three more whiskies and went to his room. There he conceived the desire of once more looking at his purchase, and opening the brown-paper parcel he found, under the influence of the spirit, that "the



PARODY BY JAMES DOYLE.

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From the Painting by] "GARRICK BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY." [*Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

Pitt, with Lord George Bentinck as the dog on his back, and Lord Beaconsfield, then, of course, Benjamin Disraeli, easily recognisable by his wealth of black curls, as the dog on the right.

It was the Corn Law which Peel introduced that led to the parody of "The Stag at Bay." He proposed a duty of ten shillings a quarter on corn when it was less than forty-eight shillings a quarter, the duty to be reduced by a shilling for every shilling corn rose until it reached fifty-three shillings a quarter, when the duty would remain at four shillings. This arrangement was to hold good for three years with other Customs duties, which the Opposition loudly denounced. In his speeches in this debate Disraeli called Peel a "trader on other people's intelligence, a political burglar of other men's ideas," and he declared that "the occupants of the Treasury Bench were political pedlars who had bought their party in the cheapest market and sold it in the dearest."

The debate lasted twelve nights, and the Government won by 337 votes to 240, but

horses had changed to pigs, and in place of the gallant Scotchmen it was a last charge of the Separatist Party, their shillelaghs poised in their hands, having carved on them ugly little heads which frowned and grinned in the most horrible fashion." So excellent are the likenesses that no one can fail to recognise them. Reading from left to right they are, in the front row, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Healy, Mr. John Morley, Sir William Vernon Harcourt, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Biggar, and Mr. O'Brien.

In view of the recent Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Doyle's parody of "The Stag at Bay," which he announced as having been "suggested by the beautiful picture of Edwin Landseer, Esq., R.A., exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1846," has something of a topical interest, though the three personages represented have long since passed away. The stag at bay is

"A GREAT ACTOR BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND COMEDY."—PARODY BY JAMES DOYLE.

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"UNCLE TOBY AND THE WIDOW WADMAN."
From the Painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A.

office, he himself hoping to get the Treasury after Lord Grey had gone out. The original was no doubt a favourite picture with Doyle, for eleven years after he used it again for a parody, with O'Connell as Comedy, Peel as Garrick, and Sir R. Inglis as Tragedy.

It is remarkable, when we remember how many years Sir John Tenniel contributed the political cartoon to *Punch*, that the number of famous pictures he parodied was exceedingly few. Among them was the picture of Uncle Toby and Widow Wadman in the sentry-box, after the well known picture by Charles R. Leslie, R.A. The scene from "Tristram Shandy" is that in which Uncle Toby, looking into the widow's eye, said: "I protest, madam, I can see nothing whatever in your eye." "It's not in the white," said Mrs. Wadman. "My Uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil."

For the purposes of *Punch* this was perverted with an ingenuity the more remarkable in that, as will be seen, very little has been altered. The date of the cartoon is April 22nd, 1893, and few people will require to be reminded that it was at that time the majority was not so large as was expected. This parody appeared on June 26th, 1846, the day after the Corn Bill was read for the third time in the Lords; and a very few days after the stag that had stood so proudly at bay was dragged down and the Ministry fell.

It was Reynolds's picture of David Garrick as "a great actor between Tragedy and Comedy" which Doyle parodied with such happy effect, representing William IV. between Lord Brougham as Comedy and Lord Grey as Tragedy in the early part of 1834. "The comic literature of more than a generation has no subject more fruitful than the vanity and restlessness of Lord Brougham," wrote Mr. Justin McCarthy, and here he is presented in a distinctly humorous light. The caricaturist happily crystallized in his sketch the position of the Sovereign between the two famous Ministers. Brougham at that time was scheming to separate Lord Grey from his followers that he and his party generally might retain

PARODY BY SIR JOHN TENNIEL.
MODERN ULSTER VERSION.—Mrs. Ulster: "Now, Mr. Bull, do you see any 'Green' in my eye?"
(By permission of the Proprietors of *Punch*.)

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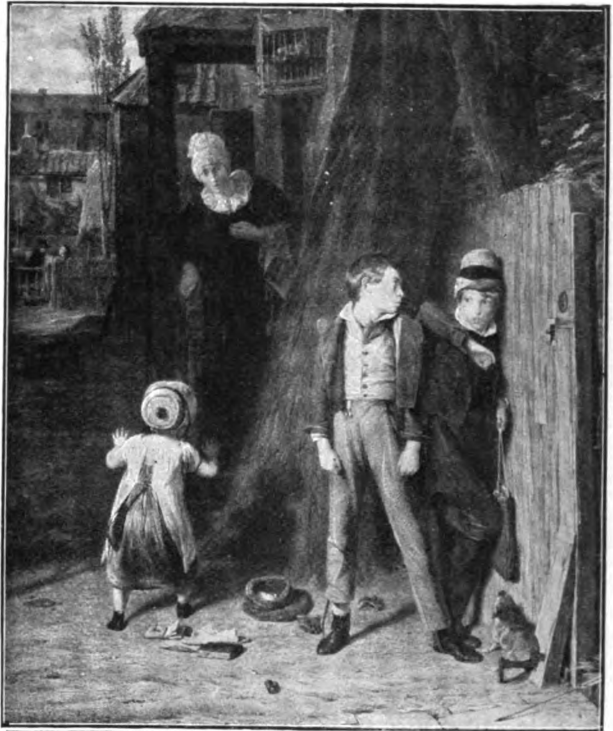
the Home Rule Bill had just been introduced into Parliament, and it was declared by some people in Ulster that the North would neither stand a Home Rule Parliament nor fail to support the Unionists of the South in their resistance to it. Seizing that idea, Sir John represented Ulster as the Widow Wadman asking John Bull, as Uncle Toby, "Do you see any green in my eye?"

It may be added in passing that the Uncle Toby of the original is supposed to be a portrait of Bannister, the comedian.

Mulready's "The Wolf and the Lamb" was another subject in which Lord Brougham figured, this time as the aggressive boy bullying Lord Melbourne, while the little girl represents Queen Victoria, and the old woman is



"THE WOLF AND THE LAMB."
From the Painting by W. Mulready, R.A.

PARODY BY JAMES DOYLE.

the Duke of Wellington. The parody appeared in 1838, at the time when Canadian affairs were occupying the attention of the country, and Lord Durham was sent out as Governor-General to the Colony. It was the policy of Lord Durham, who, as Mr. Justin McCarthy said, "made a country and marred a career," which offered Brougham the opportunity of venting his hatred on Lord Melbourne and his Ministry. The Prime Minister, indeed, made a very weak defence in the House of Lords when Brougham attacked him, going so far on one occasion as to say "the fellow was in such a state of excitement that if I had said a word he would have gone stark, staring mad."

"Cupid and Psyche" is

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"THE NUPTIALS OF CUPID AND PSYCHE."
From the Drawing by G. B. Cipriani, R.A.

PARODY BY JAMES GILLRAY.

a travesty of Bartolozzi's celebrated engraving from the drawing by Cipriani. Cupid in this case is the Earl of Derby, and Psyche Miss Farren, who, contrary to the general belief, was by no means the first actress to be raised to the peerage, for Miss Fenton, the original Polly in "The Beggar's Opera," had earlier become the Duchess of Bolton. For some reason Miss Farren, one of the greatest beauties of her time, was always an object of Gillray's determined hostility, and the Earl of Derby, on account of his political principles, was a frequent subject of Gillray's wit. Why the artist should have been opposed to the actress no one seems to know, for she was a most estimable woman in every way. Queen Charlotte herself became, as it were, a surety for Miss Farren's reputation to succeeding generations. Soon after she married the Earl the actress wrote to the Queen and asked whether she would be admitted to Her Majesty's Drawing Rooms, and the Queen replied that she would be very happy to receive her, as she had always understood that Miss Farren's conduct was most exemplary.

It will be noticed with what admirable humour Gillray has transformed the basket of love-apples with which the leading characters in the original are crowded into the Earl's coronet—a touch of real caricature which cannot be too highly commended.

"BUBBLES."—PARODY BY TOM MERRY.

Not less happy was the parody of Sir John Everett Millais's "Bubbles," a picture which is better known than almost any other in the world by reason of its having been used for the purpose of an advertisement. It was the outcome of the famous Hansard Union, which the *St. Stephen's Review* at the time declared to be "financially unsound," and represents the then Lord Mayor of London blowing bubbles.

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A STRANGE CASE OF ART AND CRAFT.

By Geo. Manville Fenn.

I.

MRS. DUNBY said "Thank goodness!" when the carriage rolled away from the great house at the corner of Quarrill Square, to be followed by two luggage-laden cabs in the charge of Thompson and Mrs. Repton, valet and maid to the Ehrenbergs, bound for Vienna, *viâ* Charing Cross.

The exclamation was on account of Ehrenberg being "a bit of a trial," and his lady's health in that personage's estimation terrible, while the departure for the Continent meant six weeks' perfect peace, inasmuch as the house was to be shut up, the servants placed upon board wages, no tradesmen to invade the place for painting or other repairs, no cleaning to be undertaken. In short, there was nothing to be done but cover the pictures, statues, furniture, and bric à brac in the big salon and long gallery.

There were periodical "cleanings," but when they did take place it was under Ehrenberg's own superintendence, for the old mansion was a perfect store of what the French call *objets de vertu*, "picked up" by their owner during his travels, sent home to be stood up, hung, or enclosed in cases, where they became, like the rest of the collection, "of fabulous value," and stayed there till they were in the course of time "placed"—in other words, sold at two, three, four, or five hundred per cent. profit. But let it not be supposed that Ehrenberg was a shopkeeper or tradesman. Nothing of the kind; he only, to use his own expression, "made a deal" sometimes, and the said deal might be a Vandyke, a Murillo, or Guido, an inlaid and chased suit of armour, a piece of genuine Greek sculpture, or a guaranteed mummy from the latest discovery in Egyptian tombs.

Let it suffice that those "in the know" declared Ehrenberg to be ground to the finest edge of sharpness, and that Mrs. Ehrenberg's diamonds were the envy and admiration of society, in which they freely mixed.

Mrs. Dunby, the housekeeper, then, said "Thank goodness!" in anticipation of a quiet rest, which was not likely to be disturbed unless she was called upon to receive an odd packing-case or two, containing something that her employer had "picked up" on his way, and she calmly and deliberately during the first week superintended the draping of statues, the covering of the gallery pictures, and the guarding of the treasure chambers generally against the insidious attacks of their great enemy in London, a combination of soot and dust.

Eight days had passed, the work was done, and Berry, the butler, informed Mrs. Dunby that as it was so fine he should take a run down to Brighton; and he went.

The door had hardly closed upon his exit when Rimmer, the under-butler, and Small, the footman, appeared out of uniform, as they termed it, and most respectfully asked leave to go up to Lord's for an hour or two to have a look at the great cricket match,

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Mrs. Dunby expressed her surprise at such an application being made to her the moment Mr. Berry's back was turned; but the housekeeper was old—the *Mrs.* did not mean matrimonial rank, being only used as a title which carried weight—and the under-butler and footman were both very fine men, a carefully-

"MRS. DUNBY EXPRESSED HER SURPRISE."

selected pair. Moreover, Mrs. D. was in a particularly good humour that morning, and she gave her consent.

Then it happened that the favoured menials had gone no farther towards Lord's Cricket Ground than the Running Linkman, which old-world hostelry, as everyone knows, is in the narrow street at the back of Quarrill Square, when a very new-looking pantechnicon van, painted bronze-green and drawn by a pair of sturdy-looking horses, drew up in front of the entrance steps.

It was a particularly good-looking van, bearing in gilt letters of running hand the proprietors' names, "HOFFMANN FRERES," and beneath, in smaller letters, "Berlin, Paris, London."

As the great van stopped, a heavy, quietly dressed, black-bearded man got down from beside the driver, and four others of the regular porter or furniture-remover type descended from their tail-board seat, upon which they had been swinging their legs, two of them casting loose a couple of well-filled nose-bags, which they carried to the front and adjusted over the muzzles of the sniffing horses. Meanwhile, the short, square, heavy-looking man went up to the door, rang, and stood extricating a thick, bronze-green, oblong book from his pocket, lettered like the van, "Hoffmann Frères," but with, in addition to the above-named cities, the words, "Continental carriers."

Mrs. Dunby opened the front door herself and let the sunshine into the gloomy, holland-draped hall, just as the visitor slowly drew a short, stubby pencil from the loops of leather which kept the book closed, holding it so that the inscription on the book could easily be read.

"Goot morning, mattam," he said, in a guttural German voice. "Mister Ehrenberg's?"

"Yes; what is it?" said the housekeeper, taking in book, man, followers, van, and horses in one quick, suspicious glance, which suggested her thoughts: "If you have come to fetch something, you'll go back without it."

"Ach! Id is right," replied the man, adjusting the spectacles he wore before opening the book and making a dash at a much-used slip of blotting-paper which flew

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out. Then, reading slowly: "For derlivery: von longue gase and dwo dall ubright gase. Vragile; mit great gare. Gonsign vrom Vienna."

"Oh!" said the housekeeper, shortly, and then in a sharper tone, which sounded as if garnished with suspicion, "and how much to pay?"

"Do bay?" said the man, looking over his glasses and wrinkling his forehead. "Noding. Garriage, Gondinental sdeamer, and vrom Volkestone to London, all baid."

"Ho! I have had no orders about receiving any packages. What have you brought?"

"Der dree gase, mattam."

"Yes, yes; but what is in them?"

"Ach! In de longue gase a bianovorty, very olt. Id is in von of our gase. Der von id game in vas broke all do bids in de sdeamer."

"Then it is damaged," said the housekeeper, shortly. "I shall not receive it."

"Nein, nein, mattam. Der biano is nod damage. Id is de gase vos broke. I shall unback id vor you do see. My beobles gif orders. Id is all right. You look here; id is insure, mattam."

He pointed to a printed note at the bottom of the consignment leaf, which the housekeeper read, and then seemed satisfied.

"Well, I suppose you had better leave them," she said.

The man gave his head a clumsy bob, intended, no doubt, for a polite bow, before tearing off from the counterfoil a duly filled-up delivery-note, which he handed to the housekeeper, with the pencil.

"B'r'aps mattam will sign," he said, and he stepped inside the hall to lay the open book ready for the receiver's signature.—"Dank you, mattam. Now where will you have de backages?"

"Bring them in here," was the reply.

"Ach! Zo? Bud dey dake up all de room."

"Never mind. Let me see."

The man nodded, buttoned up his book, and took out a key, which he shook significantly.

"We dake gare of de goods in our sharge," he said, and going out he gave some orders to the waiting men, who let down a couple of bars which crossed the back of the van, after which the foreman, or whatever he was, unlocked the doors, which were thrown open, and his people, with all the dexterity of those accustomed to handle chests and pieces of furniture, drew out a long deal case, getting it well between them, and bore it up into the hall, to place it where directed at the foot of a wide flight of stairs.

"As if he hadn't got enough pianos in the place!" muttered the housekeeper as the men tramped out again, followed by their foreman, who gave his orders in a short, stern voice to the pair, who entered the van, and between them turned down a tall, heavy case till the top could be taken by the two waiting by the tail-board, who supported it till the first pair got out of the waggon and lent their help, with the result that the four skilfully bore what was evidently a very heavy load into the hall, and then, in obedience to their orders, stood the case up on end.

The third case was brought in after the same fashion, and stood on the other side of the piano.

"Is that all?" asked the housekeeper.

"Yes, mattam, dat is everydings; but I mus' dake de insdrument out of our gase."

He turned sharply to one of his followers, and said, in German, "Where are the tools?" and the man went out to the van.

The housekeeper looked at the three cases pretty well blocking up the end of the hall, and then, as if making up her mind quickly and mastering a doubt, she said, imperiously:—

"I shall not have the case opened."

The foreman looked perplexed, and began to pass one hand through his beard.

"I am sorry, mattam, but my orders were to open dot gase and see dat der biano was in goot orter and none of der bolish gone off. Ach! Besides, I must dake back de emdy gase."

"Very well," said the housekeeper; "but the things can't stand there. Your men must carry them up into one of the rooms."

"Zo?" exclaimed the man, and, getting the porters together, he turned an inquiring look upon the housekeeper.

"Through that door at the head of that staircase."

"Ach! Dot is goot," said the man, with a little chuckle. "Blenty of room; all strade oop, and no gorners to go rount. Dese gases are very heavy, mattam. Now, my boys," he added, in German, "be quick."

It was an ascent of some eight or nine low, wide stairs to a big landing, where an arched doorway was partly hidden by heavy curtains, which in their turn were covered with holland. These were thrown back on either side with a loud jangling noise of brass rings gliding over a pole, showing a

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long gallery lit from the roof, and looking like a kind of avenue of awkward objects draped in holland, while as much of the walls as could be seen was evidently hung with pictures similarly treated.

"THE FOREMAN LOOKED PERPLEXED."

"You shoost dell me where you like de gase to stand, and my poys shall roll oop enough garped, don't you dink?"

"Yes, it will be as well," said the housekeeper, leading the way, followed by the men, who directly after folded back four-fold a portion of the magnificent Aubusson carpet.

"Dot will do," said the foreman, in a deep growl. "Dere is blenty of room, mattam," and then in German he pointed out where each case was to be placed.

Everything was done in so quick and business-like a way that the housekeeper almost smiled as she stood looking on from the landing, and saw the men in the hall take hold of one of the tall cases, tilting it towards her, and handling it easily in spite of its weight. One minute she noted the inscription "Top," in three languages, the next she saw three of the men lower the case down to the fourth, who had gone upon all fours at the foot of the stairs ready to receive the weight upon his broad back, and while his companions guided, eased, and steadied the burden, he crawled slowly up the stairs to the landing, where the case was up-ended, seized, and borne to its apportioned place.

"Dot is de best way to garry heffy gases, mattam," said the foreman, with a grim smile.

The fellow-package was treated in the same way and stood up facing the first, so that they looked like two square deal towers right and left of the holland avenue, and then the men went down to attack the piano-case.

"Some stadues, mattam, I dink," said the foreman.

"Are they quite safe like that?"

"Zo? Ach, you dink dey dumble over. Nein, nein. Doo heffy. You look dere."

As he spoke the man seized one of the tall cases and gave it a heavy thrust; but it did not stir.

"You zee," he said, "I gould not move them. My poys are fery sdrong. Look now."

He pointed to the piano-case coming up on four legs, as it were, balanced carefully on the back of another of the men; and a minute later it was placed between the others.

"Dools," said the foreman, and a couple of screw-drivers were produced from a carpet-bag, the lid of the case taken off, the front unscrewed in turn, and then the men drew

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out a beautifully inlaid early representation of a square piano, harpsichord, or clavichord, probably a couple of hundred years old. Its legs lay at one end of the case, and these were taken out, screwed in their places, and the instrument stood up, with the foreman carefully examining it all round, while three of the men replaced front and lid of the case and bore it back to the van.

"She is not efen sgratched," said the foreman, with a sigh of relief, and he tapped the top with his knuckles, bringing forth a discordant, jangling sound of loose wires.

"I not gif much for dot music, mattam," said the man, with a thick chuckle; "but dis engrafe wood—ach, lofely!"

"Old rubbish," said the housekeeper, shortly.

"Dot is what my old woman would say, mattam. But engrafe inlay wood! Ach, lofely! Your Jippingtale gome not near to it. Now, you!" he continued, to the remaining man, and the next minute the latter was busy with spirit-bottle and rubbers, touching up the old polished wood where necessary, and vastly improving the appearance of the instrument as he brought out the grain, while the foreman opened the front and displayed the worn and yellow ivory keys and the satin-wood lining decked with inlaid flowers.

"A JUG OF BEER WAS PARTAKEN OF IN THE HALL."

"Mattam like do dry de biano?" said the foreman, with a leer at the stern-looking housekeeper. "Nein? Mattam is right," he continued, thumping two or three keys and producing dismal, skeleton-like sounds. "Ach!" he said, grimly. "Like an old goffin in which zome old music was buried, and we dig it oop."

"Bah!" exclaimed the housekeeper. "There, be quick, please."

"My poy have nearly done, mattam. You like to look inside again at de vlowers all inlaid in wood?"

"No," said the housekeeper; "I have no taste for such old rubbish."

"Mattam is fery wise laty," said the man; "boot dere are voolish beobles who give one, dwo, dree hoondert bound for dot. Dere, I shut him oop. Dot will do, Hans, poy; de bolish is goot."

The man replaced his bottle and rubbers along with the screw-drivers in the carpet-bag, and went to join his companions, who were shutting up the van.

"Dot is all, mattam," said the foreman.

The reiterated "mattam," joined with the respect paid to her, mollified Mrs. Dunby, who approved more of the German polish than the French just applied to the old instrument, and she became condescending.

"You and your men would like some beer, I suppose?" she said, tartly.

"Doze dings was fery heffy, mattam, and my poys are Sharman. Dey vould be glad to trink your healt."

"Then you do not drink beer, but schnapps, I suppose?" said the housekeeper, with a smile.

"Nein, mattam, nod at all. I haf been deedodal effer since I gome to London."

"Oh!" said the housekeeper, and she sent one of the maids for a jug of beer, which was partaken of in the hall, and then after a "Goot morning, mattam," the foreman took his departure and the van was driven away, its gilt letters enlightening all whom it might concern upon the fact that Hoffmann Frères, of Paris, Berlin, and London, had delivered a heavy consignment of bric-à-brac at Ehrenberg's, and that was all.

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II.

THE maids said that Mrs. Dunby was in one of her tantrums next morning; and, in truth, that lady was not in an amiable state of mind. It was quite natural that Mr. Berry, the butler, had not returned from Brighton overnight, for it had been settled that he should pass four-and-twenty hours at the seaside; but that Rimmer and Small, upon whom she looked with favour, should have taken advantage of her kindness and, in the absence of master and fellow-servant, stopped out all night too, was unpardonable, and she said so in the hearing of the maids, and, in addition, uttered threats about reporting their conduct to Mr. Ehrenberg on his return.

"Which she just won't," said one of the housemaids; "but fleas in their ears when they do come back is nothing to it."

"My word, yes!" said another. "There will be a shindy!"

The said "shindy" occurred much sooner than the maids anticipated, for they had hardly spoken before there was a violent ringing of a bell.

"What bell's that?" said one.

"Picture-gallery," said the cook, who never answered bells, but had a very good ear for music. "You gells have been leaving your brushes and brooms there after sweeping up yesterday when the men went away."

"I didn't," said one housemaid.

"And I'll swear I didn't," said the other.

Jangle went the bell again, more violently than before.

"Why don't you answer the bell, Mary?" said the first speaker.

"Well, I'm sure, Sarah!" replied the other, tartly. "It's not my place to answer the picture-gallery bells. Where are the footmen?"

Jangle went the tintinnabulation again, and cook spoke wisdom.

"She's in a regular fantigue, my dears, and I'd go up together and share it, if I was you. There, don't stand haggling."

Cook had great influence with her fellow-servants, and her advice prevailed, the two housemaids entering by the open picture-gallery door just as Mrs. Dunby had placed her hand upon the bell handle with the intention of keeping it there till the summons was answered.

"Oh, there you are at last!" cried the irate housekeeper. "Now, then, if you please, have the goodness to explain that."

She stood in a tragedy-queen attitude, pointing at a holland-covered chiffonnier, upon which stood a port-wine bottle and a tumbler, the first empty and displaying its patch of whitewash, and beside it, impaled upon a pocket corkscrew, a dissipated-looking, sodden cork, the glass holding still about a tea-spoonful of port-wine crust, showing that the bottle had been drained.

The maids stared at the bottle and glass and then back at the housekeeper, before turning questioning eyes one upon the other.

"Well, why don't you speak?" cried their questioner.

"I dunno what you mean, ma'am," cried Mary.

"And I'm sure I don't neither," said Sarah.

"No lies, if you please," cried the housekeeper, angrily. "If you'll take my advice you'll be open and confess."

"Confess!" said Mary. "I've nothing to confess."

"And I'm sure I ain't," said Sarah.

"Shame upon you both! I've suspected it for long enough. Late at night, too, after I had gone up to bed!"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Dunby?" said Mary, simply.

"I mean that you two took advantage of Mr. Berry being out and the men-servants away to go down to the butler's pantry and steal that wine."

"That I'm sure we didn't," snorted Mary. "Nothing of the kind."

"It's false!" cried the housekeeper. "You two planned it, I'm sure, and had in I don't know who—the grocer's man or the butcher, or some other two friends of yours—to drink your master's wine; and as soon as he returns you may make up both your minds to be turned away without characters."

"Oh, very well," said Mary, loftily. "Don't mind what she says, Sarah, dear; good places are plentiful enough, and it won't be much of a loss to leave a situation where the housekeeper drinks."

"What?" cried the lady in question, turning pale.

"And has in a German furniture-moving man to half finish a bottle of master's port wine."

"How dare you!"

"And has so much herself that she forgets to put the bottle and glass away."

"You impudent hussy!" cried the housekeeper, almost foaming.

"Faugh! I saw you smiling at him yesterday, and him being sweet as sweet to you. Didn't you, Sarah?"

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"Well, I did see something, certingly," said Sarah; "and——"

"If you please, Mrs. Dunby," said cook, entering the gallery, looking sharply from one to the other, "the front-door bell rang, and here's that German furniture-moving man come back."

The two housemaids burst into a shriek of laughter and rushed out of the room, while

"Hoffmann Frères—Despatch, London. A mistake. The three cases not to be taken to my London house, but sent by S.W.R. to The Willows, Dalemond-on-Thames."

"Ha!" said the housekeeper, coldly. "But the cases are here."

"Yes, mattam."

"Then what do you propose to do?"

"What dis delegram say, mattam."

"HERE'S THAT GERMAN FURNITURE-MOVING MAN COME BACK."

the housekeeper's face became of the colour of fresh putty.

"Anything the matter, Mrs. Dunby?" said the cook.

"The matter? Oh!" cried the housekeeper.

Few words, but intense of the intensest, and she stalked into the hall, to find the foreman from Hoffmann Frères waiting, hat in hand, just inside the door.

"Goot morning, mattam," he said, with a respectful bow. "I am zorry to drouble you, but there is a great misdake."

"And pray who has made it?" said the housekeeper, icily, and with tightened lips.

"I subbose, mattam, it was de Herr Ehrenberg."

"My master?"

"Yes, mattam. If you would read dot delegram."

He placed the message in her hands, and she read:—

"Take them to Mr. Ehrenberg's country seat?"

"No, mattam. I haf brought de van and de gase, and we shall dake all de dings to Nine Elms."

Mrs. Dunby looked very cold and stern, but her heart seemed to be on fire and burning with the unjust injuries she had received, as she read the telegram over again.

"Very well," she said, coldly; "I suppose it is all right. Make haste, please, for I am busy."

"I dank you, mattam," said the foreman; and he went slowly to the door, which was opened for him, to sign to the waiting men with the van, who immediately began to open the back of the great, lumbering vehicle and draw out the empty case.

"I am fery zorry do drouble you all over again, mattam," said the foreman, politely.

"Never mind," replied the housekeeper, coldly; and then she stood on guard, as

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in duty bound, while the business of the previous day was reversed. She saw the heavy packages removed and the piano restored to its outer case, and neither of the statues could have been so stony as the aspect of Mrs. Dunby and her distance of manner towards the foreman, while when the two housemaids passed through the long gallery twice over—casually, of course—there was a flash from the housekeeper's usually dull eyes that was absolutely withering.

The moving took some time, for the men were very deliberate in their motions, and their foreman punctilious in the extreme over the relaying of the rolled-back carpet, and the filling up and signing of a printed form of receipt.

But at last all was done, the cases were in the van, locked up, the men in their seats upon the lowered tail-board, and the foreman by the driver, ready to raise his hat to the housekeeper as the party were driven away.

"Ha!" said Mrs. Dunby just then, with a snort, as she caught sight of two tall, picked footmen out of livery coming down the side of the square. "There's going to be something said about this."

Prophetic words. Ten minutes later Rimmer's ears tingled, and Small, in despite of his 6ft., felt worthy of his name.

"Old cat!" he said to his fellow-servant, later on. "I thought we'd pretty well got the length of her foot. Think she'll tell the gov'nor when he comes back?"

"You bet!" was the surly reply.

The week which followed was not pleasant for anybody; even Mr. Berry, the butler, did not seem benefited by his run down to Brighton, and the general consensus of opinion in the servants' hall was that matters would be made warm when "master" returned.

They were, and much sooner than was anticipated. For three days after there was a surprise—Ehrenberg came home in a cab, no notice having been sent so that the carriage might meet him and his lady; and consequently no preparations had been made. The shutters were still closed and the furniture remained decked in holland.

"Been awful," whispered Mrs. Ehrenberg's maid hastily to the housekeeper. "Nothing the matter, but she's pretended that she was getting worse, and he was obliged to bring her home."

There was nothing for it but for all the staff to set to work to make the place presentable for the travellers, and as soon as Ehrenberg had finished the scratch dinner and was sitting over his wine alone he sent for the housekeeper.

"Well, Dunby," he said, "is everything right?"

"Well, sir——"

"Stop!" cried the great collector, excitedly. "Don't tell me there has been a burglary amongst my gems?"

"Oh, dear, no, sir. Everything in the collection is all right. I was going to allude to the conduct of the servants during your absence."

"Is that all?" said Ehrenberg, calmly.

"Yes, sir; but it's very serious, sir, and I feel it my duty to speak."

"Go on, then, and get it over. You know I don't like to be bothered about these petty domestic troubles."

"Yes, sir, but this is very serious. I came down one morning, sir, to find that two of the women had been having visitors in the night, and there were traces of their carousing in the picture-gallery."

"What traces?" said Ehrenberg, glaring.

"An empty port-wine bottle, sir, and glass."

"In my gallery?"

"Yes, sir."

"Confound their insolence! But port wine? In the night? Where were the men? Were they in it?"

"No, sir; I am grieved to say that they had taken advantage of your absence and were out all night."

"Discharge the lot. A fresh staff of domestics, Mrs. Dunby. With such a collection of art treasures as mine I must have servants that I can trust."

"Yes, sir. I am sorry to complain, but the maids were most insolent to me."

"Then speak out when you are applied to for their characters."

"Yes, sir."

"That's all, then?"

"Yes, sir; I don't think that I have anything else to say."

"Then be off and let me finish my wine in peace, for I've had precious little since I've been away."

"I'm very sorry, sir. My mistress, then, has been so ill?"

"Rubbish! There, that will do."

"Oh, there is one thing, sir. The three great cases arrived from Vienna."

"The three great cases?'

"Yes, sir; by Hoffmann Frères; and I had them placed in the picture-gallery."

"Three great cases!" mused Ehrenberg. "And you had them placed in the gallery?"

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"Yes, sir; but the men came with your telegram saying that it was a mistake."

"Ah, of course!" cried Ehrenberg. "I felt that there was nothing to come here."

"Exactly, sir, and they took them away next day."

"Took them away next day?" said the collector; changing colour. "My telegram? Good heavens, woman! I sent no telegram. Where is it?"

"Here, sir," said the housekeeper, trembling, and she produced the delivery-note, the receipt for the packages, and the telegram, all neatly pinned together.

Ehrenberg glanced at them and thumped his fist on the table.

"A conspiracy!" he roared. "Woman, do you mean to tell me you received these three great cases and had them placed in the picture-gallery?"

"Yes, sir."

"And they were there all one night?"

"Yes, sir; I'm——"

"Silence!" roared Ehrenberg. "And they were fetched next day?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were they?"

"Statues, sir, in two cases, and a piano in the other."

"How do you know?"

"They opened the case and took the piano out."

"'A pianner, Sammy!'" groaned Ehrenberg, involuntarily quoting old Weller's words to his son. "Oh, woman, woman, you've ruined me!"

He upset his wine and ran out into the hall, bounded up the short flight of stairs, threw open the gallery door, and switched on the electric lights, to reveal a state of peace within, for the holland draperies met his eyes from end to end, and as the trembling housekeeper tottered in he dropped down upon a covered settee and began to mop his streaming forehead.

"A false alarm, Dunby," he said, huskily. "I was afraid that—I thought—I don't understand—yes, I do!" he roared, springing up and rushing to the nearest portion of the wall, to seize and whisk aside the hanging holland covering of a picture. "I knew it! I knew it!" he cried, piteously, as an empty massive gilt frame met his eyes. "My Velasquez — worth thousands!"

He went to the next drapery and dragged it aside.

"That heavenly Rubens!" he cried, and rushed on.

"MY VELASQUEZ—WORTH THOUSANDS!"

"My Guido!" he groaned.

Before another:—

"That glorious Vandyke!"

Then there was a yell of rage before the empty frame of a Botticelli, another where a Murillo should have been seen, and so on, and so on — everywhere a sharp knife had been in use, and the choice reputed works of the great artists had been neatly cut out and were gone.

"Get out of my sight before I murder you!" cried the collector, at last.—"No, stop!"

"Yes, sir. Oh, Mr. Ehrenberg, sir——"

"Don't talk to me! I'm a ruined man. Here, quick; send for the police!"

"Yes, sir," cried the woman, making for the door, glad to escape.

"Not the regular force.—Here, what am I saying? Send Berry in a cab, and tell him he's to bring back the sharpest sergeant from Scotland Yard."

The message was sent, and Ehrenberg calmed down over his wine, which he had finished and was well through a choice cigar before the lynx-eyed detective from the

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Metropolitan centre arrived, had a short conference with the collector, and then went over the place, saw the empty frames, and heard all that Mrs. Dunby had to say before being closeted in the study once more.

"Well, sergeant," said Ehrenberg, "what do you think of it all?"

"The same as you do, sir," was the reply.

"What do you mean, sir," cried Ehrenberg, stiffly.

"Why, it's all plain enough, sir. Whoever planned the job must have known of you and your doings quite well."

"Then you think it was the servants?"

"Tchah! Not they, sir! Not in 'em. Bit of artful craft, sir, planned by someone with brains and a bit o' capital to carry it out. There was the van painted and got up for the job; the old piano they brought; the way it was all rehearsed like a play beforehand. I should say, sir, that this scheme was made in Germany. Those Dutchmen have been pretty busy here lately, and the pictures have gone there to be sold."

"But the servants must have had something to do with it. Letting them in, for instance, that night."

"The housekeeper did that by day, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you see, sir? Those tall cases with the two statues in — live statues, sir, shut up ready to be let out."

"Who by?"

"The little wiry chap in the old piano, sir. Sure to be a wiry one come out of that, sir. That sounding - board was like the lid —on hinges, sir. He only had to lift it up and step out to open the tops of the two tall cases to let out his mates. Then they had it all to themselves. Sharp knives passed round the frames, pictures rolled up and tied with string. Plenty of room for the rolls in the corners of the cases, and in the piano, too. The job done, the two stepped into their places again and the third shut them up—locked 'em in, I dare say—and then went to bed in his piano to wait until called for. Beg pardon, sir, but it's all as plain as the nose on your face."

"Yes," said Ehrenberg, bitterly, as he involuntarily raised his hand to the rather prominent organ. "And now what do you mean to do?"

"Nothing, sir, but wait. The only thing I can suggest is to watch the sales if the pictures come to the hammer in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, or elsewhere; and all I can say as to that, sir, would be—is it worth while?"

Ehrenberg sat looking hard at the officer for some minutes, during which he ran over in his own mind the trifling sums he had paid for the different *chefs d'œuvre* of the great masters, and decided that the man was right.

"EHRENBERG SAT LOOKING HARD AT THE OFFICER."

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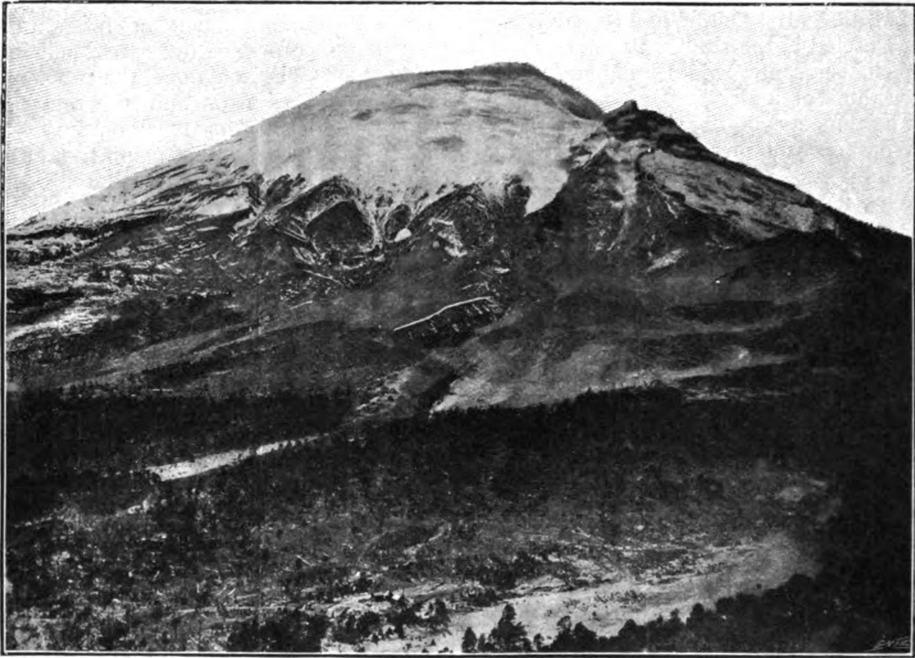
A Night in the Crater of a Volcano.

BY MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE.

Author of "Mexico as I Saw It," "Through Finland in Carts," etc.



From a] A GENERAL VIEW OF POPOCATAPETL. [*Photo.*

ONE of the most famous volcanoes of the world stands in the great plain of Mexico; it is over 17,000ft. high, and rises into a sugar-loaf point of snow. Far away in the more southern and tropical parts of the Republic Popocatapetl may be seen rearing his majestic head. It is possible to go to the summit, but not easy. Having done a little mountain climbing invariably makes one anxious to do more, so I quite hoped before leaving Mexico to accomplish the ascent of this famous giant. After many travels in many lands I feel that the view from the Castle of Chapultepec, formerly the stronghold of Montezuma, near Mexico City, is the grandest panorama my eyes have ever beheld; the castle is only 8,000ft. above the sea, so that, presumably, the view from the summit of one of the two famous volcanoes across the valley must be still more wonderful.

Amecameca is one of the quaint old Spanish towns of the Mexican Republic, and a run of a few hours along the Inter-Oceanic Railway brings travellers to this the nearest point for ascending Popocatapetl. What a dear old town it is!

My stay in the Republic was drawing to a close, the notes for my book were nearly completed, and there remained but two expeditions to make, when, unfortunately, one of those disasters to which one is liable in the tropics befell me. I was bitten by mosquitoes or poisoned by ivy—it matters not which—blood-poisoning was the result, and a terrible illness nearly claimed my bones to be left in that far-away land. Those expeditions, therefore, were never made, and Popocatapetl, so far as I am concerned, yet remains a *terra incognita*.

"I am extremely glad you couldn't go," remarked Mr. J. Fletcher Toomer, an English engineer well known in Mexico, where he lived for many years in charge of the great drainage tunnel which finds its outlet by passing through the mountain range surrounding the City of Mexico. I had so often been warned about the difficulties of Popocatapetl that I scornfully replied to this manager of mines and railways:—

"Well, I had quite meant to go, it was part of my programme, and had I been able to crawl it would have been done."

"Crawling about suits that height," he said, laughingly, "for verily it amounts to that. It is a tremendous undertaking for anyone, and I know it was nearly my death. But

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then I spent a night in the bowels of the earth."

"How?" I asked, in amazement.

"Well, it came about in this wise. There was some idea of working the sulphur in the bottom of the crater, bits of which had been brought up at different times by the Mexican Indians in a primitive way, and I was asked if I dared go down and make an investigation into the possibility of working the mine for practical business purposes."

"Had no one been down before?" I inquired.

"No white man so far as I know, and I don't suppose another is likely to go in a hurry, leastways to spend the night there, for it was not a pleasant experience."

"We started from Amecameca very early in the morning," said Mr. Toomer. "Of course, there was the usual delay with the Indian guides; the horses were not ready, the food was not prepared, and it was long past the appointed time before our little party was under way. At last we were all mounted and off for a ride of some hours, which ended in gradually ascending the mountain itself. Ten thousand feet above the sea we emerged beyond the timber-line, and in a little while reached a ranch called Tlacamas. It was a primitive enough little place, where there was a small sulphur refinery used for the product brought down the mountain by the Indians. This little hut was to be our night's shelter,

From a] THE ASCENT OF THE MOUNTAIN. [*Photo.*

From the south-east side, be it understood, the crater is accessible, but the height is so great, the climate so warm from which one ascends, and the air so rarefied that mountain sickness makes it impossible for many people, otherwise good climbers, to ascend this lofty peak; indeed, several of the cities of Mexico stand nearly 8,000ft. above the sea, and many folk cannot live even at such an altitude. After suffering a stifling sensation for an hour or two they have to return to the train and descend to the plains below.

It is a curious thing in Mexico, as in other tropical countries, that everything looks so near. The air is so clear, the sky so blue, that when standing in Amecameca I thought the giant peak was only a mile or two away; it seemed just beside me, so to speak, but in reality it was nothing of the kind.

and we slept amidst the fumes of sulphur, noticing that the very ferns and flowers could be thickly coated with the mineral after being dipped into the molten sulphur. It was only about five o'clock in the afternoon when we reached this spot, but when we asked our guide what programme he suggested his reply was that 'if the señor ate nothing after a little light five o'clock supper and did exactly as he was told he would reach the top to-morrow.' It sounded an easy programme, but we were hungry after a long, dusty ride and wanted a good meal; nevertheless, feeling that the man knew best, we implicitly obeyed his orders. We soon turned in, rolled ourselves up in our blankets, and slept on the floor quite happily.

"At half-past two the following morning, with the darkest of blue skies overhead and

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twinkling stars high up in the heavens, we rose, but we were not allowed to eat or drink ere proceeding on our way."

This to the stranger sounds unkind, but it is a curious fact that at such high altitudes one is rarely anxious for food, and I know that during the months I spent in Mexico I seldom felt the pangs of hunger, and was content with far less sleep than usual. The air acts like champagne, and, although very invigorating and delightful for a time, it tells in the end upon the constitution, and makes living in such altitudes difficult and dangerous to people not brought up from their youth to doing so.

THE HUT ON THE MOUNTAIN.
From a Photo.

"No boots," called the guide to Mr. Toomer, as he was completing his toilet; "no boots, señor. Your feet must be wrapped in strips of heavy flannel."

Suiting the action to the word, the swarthy Indian proceeded to bind his companion up until his feet looked exactly like sacked hams, outside which he placed native "guaraches," the sandals of the country. These shoes are made of a piece of raw hide cut flat and more or less the shape of the foot, and a few thongs of leather across the toes and round the heel bind them on. The natives never wear anything else than these sandals; sometimes they are ornamented with brown or white leather alternating across the toe in chess-board fashion, but they are more often plain, for the Mexican Indian is generally poor. He finds his sandals sufficient protection for his feet, as a rule, and many of the men of different tribes will jog-trot fifty miles a day with ease. They take letters and carry weights on their heads, are general carriers in fact, and, in spite of the heat, can endure great fatigue.

For ascending a mountain strips of flannel are fastened outside the sandal, however, to prevent the traveller from slipping.

How well I know those wound-up feet! When mountaineering in Switzerland or snow-shoeing in Norway the ordinary boot with a high heel is an impossibility, and the well-protected swathed foot is as necessary in the tropics as in the Arctic zone.

"Three hours' ride," continued Mr. Toomer, "through that deep sand so common in Mexico brought us to Las Cruces, which is not even a hut, but merely a rock beyond which point it is impossible for ponies to climb. The stars had disappeared, the deep indigo had turned to lighter blue, and the heat of the sun was already being felt in the valley below, but with us it was only pleasantly warm.

"'Walk very slowly,' said the guide; 'the señor must walk more slowly than he ever walked in all his life before, or the señor's heart will stop and he will not reach the top.'

"Not wishing the señor's heart to stop I took his advice, which was quite superfluous, for I quickly found that it would be impossible to walk at anything but a slow pace, to crawl in fact, stopping every few minutes to look at the view below. What a glorious panorama lay mapped out before us, making an excellent excuse for turning round to admire it constantly! For two hours we trudged along, getting up higher and higher, until we left the sand behind and found ourselves in the region of perpetual snow.

"'The señor must not go so quick,' exclaimed the Indian, buttoning his white shirt at the neck and pulling his blanket and red flannel zerape about him; 'the señor must stop again and look at the view,' and so I halted. He was right; the view was worth stopping for many times just to look at it. There were the shining domes of the City of Mexico far away in the distance, and below us lay the quaint old town of Amecameca. I felt that a little refreshment would be acceptable after the climb, but the head guide was quite determined that I should neither eat nor drink until the work was done.

"It seemed suddenly to grow cold,

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although the sun had been shining a moment before. Like a pantomime scene a sudden haziness surrounded us, a chill ran through me, the shining domes of the city disappeared, it grew perceptibly colder, even Amecameca became indistinct, and then in a moment, as if some magic wand waved around us, we were in a blinding blizzard of snow. How it snowed! How cold it was! We waited for the furies to spend themselves; half an hour, and it seemed to get worse—an hour, and the guide declared it was impossible to proceed. This was not cheerful when we had come so far, but there was nothing for it but to turn and go back again to the little ranch at Tlacamas and spend the night there, he said."

Those who have done any mountaineering will sympathize with the enterprising engineer, who, after all his struggles with elevation and climate, had to turn back.

On their return to the hut the stern guide allowed them to partake of much-needed refreshment, which they thoroughly enjoyed. The next morning they were up quite as early as on the preceding day, and as the weather seemed more propitious they started on their way; but they got very little farther than on their first attempt, before they were overtaken by another blizzard and were again cruelly forced to return to the rough little hut. The third day, unfortunately, did not bring better luck, for the snow was descending in masses at the hour appointed for the start, and consequently they never left their primitive quarters at all.

It must have been very annoying, heart-breaking almost, to make two attempts and wait a third day in idleness, but these are the sort of drawbacks that happen to travellers. In Mexico it is not so bad as elsewhere, as the native Indians are the most interesting people. They believe in witches and devils, have the quaintest ideas about evil spirits and many other subjects, and to a man like Mr. Toomer, who is an excellent Spanish scholar as well as an interested traveller, they open out and do their best to amuse. The different tribes speak various languages of their own, but Spanish being the language of civilized society, many of the Indians are able to converse in that tongue. So, although it sounds dull to be shut up in a room 15ft. by 10ft. with half-a-dozen natives for several days, while storm raged without, Mr. Toomer, no doubt, had quite an interesting time.

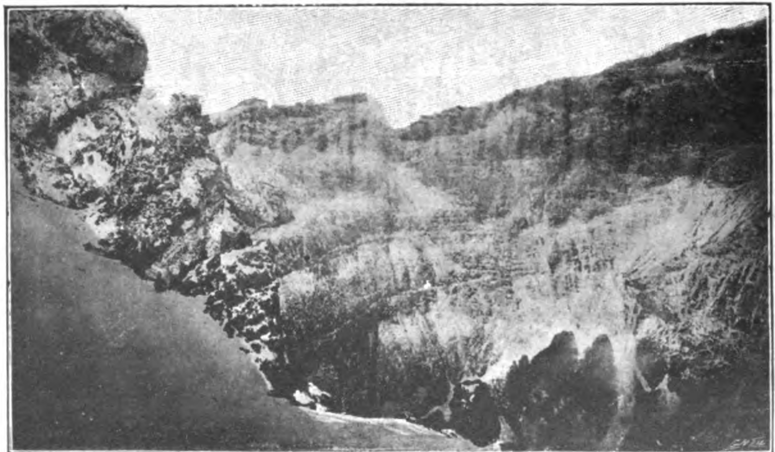
Happily, luck attended the party on the fifth day, and they reached the top in safety.

The famous volcano of Popocatapetl raises its proud head nearly 18,000ft. above the sea, and the crater is 1,575ft. in diameter, and supposed to be something like 1,300ft. deep. Figures give but a poor idea of size to the uninitiated; suffice it to say that the basin is of enormous dimensions.

"What did it look like when you stood at the top?" I asked the adventurous traveller.

"From the edge on which we stood we peered down some 300ft., forming a sheer precipice of basalt rock, at the bottom of which there was a ledge 3ft. or 4ft. wide running round part of the basin. From there the *débris* of ages had rolled continuously down the crater until it had filled it up into a funnel shape, leaving its sides at an angle of about forty-five degrees. All this rock and scoria, the snow and ice of thousands of years, had frozen, for to all practical purposes the volcano is extinct; that is to say, there have been no eruptions for centuries, although smoke and steam and bubbling fire continue, and have been more noticeable since the eruption at Martinique.

"At the mouth of the crater stood an old windlass or winch, a very crude sort of



From a] THE MOUTH OF THE CRATER. [*Photo.*

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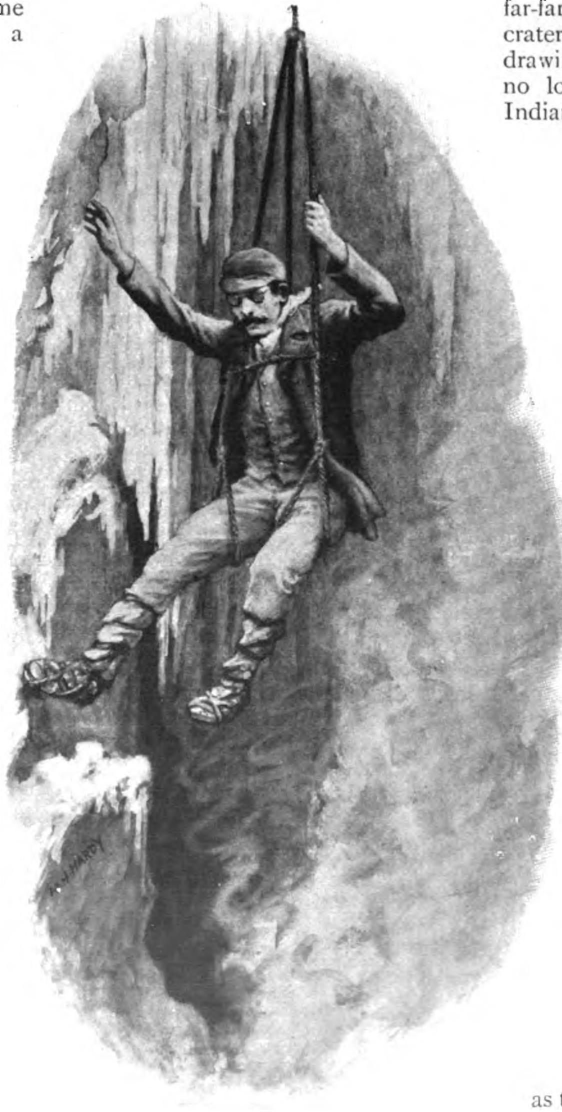
arrangement, erected by the Indians for the purpose of letting down their most daring friends to fetch the raw sulphur.

"Hanging from the windlass was an old rope, made of native fibre; the whole concern was extremely dilapidated in appearance, and the rope did not look particularly strong, but as there was no other means of reaching the bottom I had to trust myself to it and make the venture. The Indians placed a sort of sling round my body, under my arms, and round my thighs, in which I sat, and then, telling me to swing myself out into space, they proceeded to let me down. It was a curious sensation. The squeaks of that old windlass above were echoed in the cavernous depth of the crater. I dangled in the air and swayed from side to side, bumping now and again against gigantic icicles, and only preventing injuries by kicking out with my feet or a push with my hands.

"What an awful distance it looked below! There was nearly 1,000ft. of cavern beneath me over which I was swinging. Down, down, down I went until the men and the windlass above became mere specks, the air seemed to grow warmer, and I almost wished I had never come



"I DANGLED IN THE AIR."

Then my feet touched the rocky ledge and I could stand again. I was quickly joined by the two Indians who were to continue the journey with me, the rest of the party remaining above. They were armed with picks and hatchets, and at once proceeded to cut steps in the frozen snow to enable us to reach the bottom of the crater. I suppose they must have made about a thousand of those steps, which I scrambled along after them as soon as there was foothold.

"By the time we reached the bottom it was about three o'clock, so I had time for three hours' investigation of the far-famed deposits of the crater. Night was now drawing on, and we could no longer see the other Indians, who had retired to the edge of the crater before they started back to a place of shelter for the night. They were to return to fetch us and wind us up in the morning."

What an extraordinary position for an Englishman to be in! He was to spend the night alone with two swarthy descendants of the Aztec race—of which there are still half a million representatives in Mexico—down, far away down in the interior of the earth! The Indians had been there before, but had never dreamed of doing anything so weird as to pass a night below. Such a performance as that appeared to them

madness, and was only shared by them after considerable bribery. The Mexican Indian, however, will do a good deal for the dollars with which he can procure pulque—the native drink—or gamble. He is a kindly soul unless fired by drink, and then he can become a veritable fiend. Never, never have I seen people so excitedly drunk as in Mexico, where the milk of the maguey plant seems to fire their brains and distort their fancies.

It must have been a creepy sort of experience to roll up in a blanket and prepare to rest, especially as the Indians had arranged to stay reluctantly, and were consequently not in the best of tempers. It must have been horribly weird with each hour of the darkening night to watch the blow-holes of fire and flame grow brighter, to peer into the darkness around, the black inky distance, to listen to the hissing fire and watch the flickering flames throwing strange shadows. There are several of these blow-holes of spouting fire, and, as Mr. Toomer remarked :—

"Their pulsating pouf, pouf, pouf sounded like the heavy breathing of some prehistoric monster, whose breath, sulphurous and yellow, faded away in dim clouds of mist above the blazing caldron. It was easy to conjure up all sorts of weird things in that strange spot. Now and then we heard a rumble or a crash as some great boulder or block rolled down the sides of the crater and found its last resting-place in the cone-like bottom where we sat. One of these would have been our death had we not sought protection beneath two gigantic crags which stand in the middle of the basin."

"How dared you sleep?" I asked.

"Sleep? One could hardly sleep much, in spite of fatigue, in such surroundings; the sulphur was too strong for that. Every moment it seemed to become stronger, and my lungs laboured more and more against the fumes. It was horribly cold, and yet when standing near the blow-holes the heat was tremendous; besides, the fumes of the sulphur were almost insupportable. One seemed to be peering into the infernal regions, to hear the wail of the lost soul in Hades and the shriek of the fiend. An extra puff from a blow-hole, of which there are probably forty or fifty, or a snort, the rumble and the crash of rock, made it more weird than words can describe; the depression from the sulphur and fatigue were telling on me, and I began to feel that, if another snowstorm came on and those Indians could not return to wind us up, my strength would hardly hold out.

"I cannot depict the horror of that thought!

"The first streaks of daylight dawned, the first faint flicker of a new-born day gleamed above our heads. I continued my investigations and took measurements of the crater, inspected the sulphur deposits round the blow-holes, turned over some of the stones forming the bottom of the crater, which exposed the yellow flour sulphur beneath which was solid rock sulphur, and tired, but happy, felt my work was completed, and then —oh, joy of it!—we saw, 1,300ft. above our heads, the Indians who had returned to fetch us waving their arms, to show us they were there. The night was over, the work accomplished, but how dizzy and strange I felt as I clambered with difficulty up those snow steps which the Indian guides had cut, to the spot where the loose rope was waiting.

"'The señor is not well,' cried one of the guides, 'the sulphur has been too much'; and he and his companion quickly pushed my body through the noose, and then I felt myself ascending, ascending. What was this terrible feeling of depression? It seemed to be growing every moment. Was I losing consciousness, or what? Then in my half-stupefied condition I realized that the Indians had not fixed the noose properly, and the cords were pressing upon my chest and were being tightened by my own weight, to the discomfort of my poor labouring lungs. It seemed as though I should never reach the top. How slowly those men on the ledge worked the winch! Things began to swim, and the icicles—which had been bad enough going down—were a thousand times worse coming up, for their sharp, jagged points caught me in my ascent, and my legs were too tightly bound to enable me to keep off from the edges of the crater. My ears began to sing, the walls of the crater seemed to be closing in upon me, those blow-holes below roared more distinctly, and then they seemed to stop: everything seemed to stop, a sort of hazy dulness came upon me, a suffocating feeling that I could not breathe, and then! . . . .

"I found myself lying on the snow on the edge of the crater, near the winch, an Indian standing over me pouring aguardienta—a Mexican stimulant—down my throat. The physical fatigue, the mental strain, the want of food and sleep, the sulphurous fumes, and the altitude had been too much for me; but not for long, and by the time the other two guides reached the ridge I was all right again. How beautiful it all looked, how

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clear, how bright, and even at the altitude of so many thousand feet the air seemed pure and fresh compared to the stifling atmosphere of the sulphur caldron below."

The story was simply told—Mr. Toomer claimed no credit to himself for any part of the adventure. He undertook a piece of work and did it—that was all, according to his account; but was it all? Did it not show the pluck of the man, the powers of endurance, the dogged determination of the Englishman to accomplish whatever lay before him? It is such men as this of whom a country is proud; it is our engineers who have done so much towards planting the British flag in many lands and have brought respect and admiration in its wake.

The tall, well-made man before me told his tale so simply, yet I felt what agony of mind had lain behind, what physical torture those sulphur fumes meant. I knew his capacity, for only a year earlier I had seen him jump overboard a grounded steamer in one of those rivers of Southern Mexico, in which I was travelling with sixteen gentlemen — including Mexican ministers, engineers, etc., on an inspection trip—and, taking a long pole in his hand, help and direct the native sailors to get our boat off a sand-bank on which she had stuck. He worked for hours in the water, which sometimes reached his armpits, directing here, arranging there, or giving a hand himself somewhere else. He worked harder than any native — he, a European in a tropical land. He is not a man easily daunted, or he would never have spent a night in the crater of a volcano.

"How did you ever get down the mountain again?" I inquired.

"Oh, that was easy enough; the horror was over, the mission accomplished, and the delightful and perhaps the most exciting moment was then to begin. Placing ourselves on little native grass mats, just the sort of mat that the Indian uses for carrying his load of sulphur, we tobogganed to the bottom. An Aztec placed himself in front of me, I sat immediately behind him with my legs round his body, and with a wild whoop we were off. The pace was splendid, it was like an express train as we sped over the freshly-fallen snow, and in a few minutes had actually passed the snow-line. It had taken us five hours to go up, it

"WE TOBOGGANED TO THE BOTTOM."

took us five minutes to come down, and then we were speeding somewhat less quickly intc the sand. A few minutes only, and we had descended several thousand feet; but, as we got lower, bumps and thumps over the sand with its rocky excrescences made it necessary to relinquish the mat and walk. Thoroughly revived by the fresh air and exhilarating descent, we were heartily ready for a meal after the weird wonders of a night spent in the crater of a volcano."

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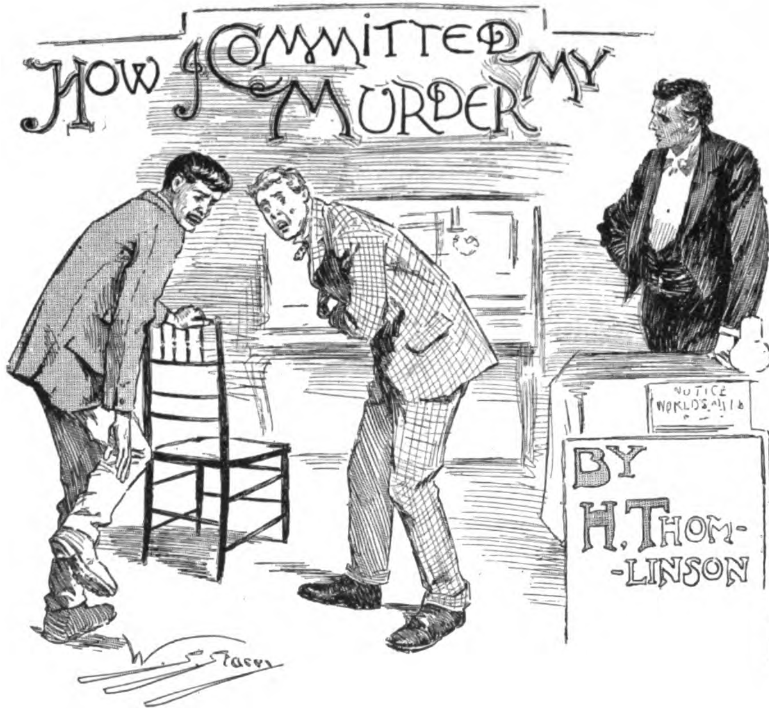

NY break in the monotony of life in the little seaside village of Pygwyllion was rare, and when posters were put up stating that Professor Schlafmacher, of Berlin, the renowned hypnotist, would give a lecture in the schoolroom, and exemplify his powers on any who cared to go upon the stage, there was considerable excitement amongst all the population. All, that is to say, except Captain John Tompkins and myself, Robert Jones, both late of the merchant service. We had each, on our retirement, settled down in this remote little place, where I had purchased a small cottage, whilst Tompkins boarded in the schoolmaster's house. We had not previously known each other, but we naturally soon became acquainted, and our having been in the same profession, together with a community of taste in tobacco and other matters, had in the course of seven years ripened the acquaintance into a close friendship, and a day seldom passed in which we were not to be seen in one another's company. Tompkins and I had, of course, seen a good deal of the world in our way, and we rather prided ourselves on being hard-headed, practical men of experience, who could see as far as most people and were not to be imposed on. Therefore, when the rest of the village was anxiously looking forward to the approaching lecture we remained calm and unmoved, took our pipes, grog, and walks as usual, and betrayed no excitement.

We talked about it to one another, though. "Ever seen any of this hypnotism, Bob?" asked Tompkins. I said I had once been to a performance where a man had pretended to mesmerize a woman, and made her tell how many shillings someone in the audience —a confederate, no doubt — had in his pocket, and so on. "All arranged beforehand, of course," I concluded.

"Nothing genuine, eh?"

"Well, not quite that, perhaps. He got two girls up on the stage and gave them

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some beans, which he said were chocolate creams, and just as they were going to eat them he told them they were black beetles, and, by Jove! you should have seen them drop those beans and jump on the chairs and shake themselves. I think that was genuine. They looked a mighty weak-minded lot."

"That sort of thing wouldn't do with you and me, would it, Bob?"

"Not much," said I. "I should like to come across the man who could hypnotize either of us, Jack!"

"It wouldn't be a bad joke to go and see the show, would it?" said he.

"All right," said I. "Let's go." And so, when the afternoon arrived, to the astonishment probably of many of the audience, Tompkins and myself put in an appearance.

Punctually to the moment the lecturer stepped on to the platform. He was a man of about forty-five, or perhaps fifty, and there was nothing remarkable about him except his eyes, which had a peculiar expression of depth which I cannot attempt to describe. I had never seen any eyes like them. He spoke in very good English with somewhat of a foreign accent, and his manner was perfectly quiet and free from affectation. In a few opening remarks he explained that he trusted we should not regard him as wishing to impose on us by any deception, but simply as the exponent of certain powers possessed, more or less, by all, but little known and less cultivated, which were capable of working the greatest benefits to the world when properly exercised. Any confederation was, as we could see for ourselves, impossible, since the whole audience were practically known to one another, and it was from them only that the subjects of his experiments would be taken. He begged us to judge what we might see with impartiality, and then to ask ourselves whether he was in any sense exaggerating the tremendous possibilities which might result from a more general and intelligent recognition of his science.

The lecturer then asked that some of the audience would come on to the stage. As there seemed to be some hesitation in complying with this, he said, "Perhaps there is some lady present who will play us a little tune upon the piano? Will anyone be so kind?"

Hereupon a little girl, the daughter of the schoolmaster, stepped forward, after some urging from her mother, and was helped on to the platform by the professor. He opened the piano and placed a seat for her. But here a hitch occurred. It appeared that the intending performer could not recollect her piece, and her music was at home.

"Ach! that is very awkward," said the professor. "But, tell me, is your music in a book?"

She said it was, in a book "about so big" (holding out her hands), and with a green cover.

There were some books on a shelf near the piano, and the professor, taking down one of about the size described, with a brown cover, on which was inscribed in large letters, "Copy-Book," placed it before her, and, touching her head lightly with his hand, said, "Is this not the same book as yours? Yes? That is very fortunate. Will you please find the place, for you see I do not know which is your tune?" The little girl turned over six or seven pages rapidly, and then, keeping her eyes fixed on a statement, in large text hand, that "Honesty is the best policy," played her little tune through carefully and correctly. When she had finished the lecturer thanked her politely, and, taking her hand, led her to the steps.

"I think," he then said, "that the piano will perhaps be in the way of the performances presently. Will anyone be so good as to help me to move it back a little?"

Two hulking youths at once started forward; but, to our great astonishment, no sooner had they mounted the platform than one immediately thrust his hand into his waistcoat after the manner of a sling, whilst the other limped to the nearest chair and, sitting down, put one foot on his knee and nursed it most tenderly; the faces of both wearing an expression of intense pain.

"Dear me," said the professor, "this is very sad, and so very sudden! Please let me look at your foot." He went to the youth on the chair, and after looking at him a moment said, "My young friend, you are either very foolish or you play a little joke on me. You have not hurt this foot at all. It is the other one that pains you." Instantly the young man dropped the foot to the ground with a crash of his heavy boot, and seizing the other one placed it most gingerly over the other knee, whilst he groaned heavily.

"That is better," said the professor; "and now, my friend, let me see your wrist. Ach! yes! I must make you a proper sling for it." He turned away for an instant, and then, facing them again, said, pointing to a corner of the stage, "Will you please move the piano over there? I think that will be the

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best place." Both youths at once jumped up, and the instrument was placed in the desired position; after which they returned to their seats in the room, apparently wondering what on earth there could be to excite the roars of laughter in which the audience indulged.

I cannot give an account of all the experiments. Suffice it to say that people were made to shiver with cold, or wipe their foreheads from heat; that they shot imaginary bears with walking-sticks, and ran from visionary mad dogs. Those sang, or at least tried to, who never sang before; and the sexton, a preternaturally solemn person,

"THE SEXTON, A PRETERNATURALLY SOLEMN PERSON, DANCED A HORNPIPE ON THE TABLE."

danced a hornpipe on the table. Tompkins and I regarded it all with openly superior smiles. The professor had got a wonderfully soft lot!

After about an hour the lecturer again addressed us. Though such exhibitions might seem, he said, to some of us to have something of the marvellous about them, there was, he assured us, nothing of the sort in reality. All the results which we had seen were caused merely by the imposition of his will for the time on the person operated on. The strength of the will-power, like the strength of the muscles, could be greatly developed by constant practice. At the same time, as a very strong man might at some period or other be confronted with one still stronger, so it might happen that the trained hypnotist might meet with a subject with will-power equal to or greater than his own, over whom he might fail to exercise any influence. Such an occurrence at a lecture like the present was, of course, inconvenient; but any genuine professor of hypnotism who, as it were, challenged a whole audience must be, of course, prepared to face the possibility. Admitting the power of the operator to be sufficient, he desired to call our attention to the fact that as it was possible, as we had seen, to induce sensations of pain, it was also possible in many cases to remove it by the same agency, often permanently. Such cures were, however, not suitable for public exhibition, and he was happy to think, judging from their appearance, that his present audience were not in need of such treatment. This was, however, a most important part of his science, and one which ought to receive far more attention than had been at present accorded to it. Time was drawing on, and he must shortly leave; but he had still some minutes to spare, and would be pleased to see a few more of the audience on the stage, if any were disposed to come.

"Bob," whispered Tompkins, "I'm going up."

"Right, old man," said I. "I'm with you."

The professor bowed politely as we appeared on the platform, but looked at us, I thought, doubtfully, as at possibly difficult subjects.

"Kindly be seated, gentlemen," he said.

We took chairs on either side of the stage, and facing one another. The professor kept us waiting whilst he was apparently looking for something in his pockets. He

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didn't seem to find it, and I got so tired of waiting to be operated on that I closed my eyes. I fancy that, strangely enough, I must have dozed off for a moment, for I woke up with a start just in time to see Tompkins open his eyes and stare at me. Just then the professor spoke.

"I am extremely sorry, gentlemen, but I find that I have mistaken the time. Allow me to ask your pardon, and to express my great regret for the trouble I have given you; I trust you will excuse me."

Of course, we returned to our seats, and the professor, after briefly thanking the audience for their attention, hurried out to his cab and drove off to the nearest station.

"Thought he wouldn't tackle us, Bob," said Tompkins, when we got outside. "Wouldn't have done to fail just at the end. All bunkum about the time, you know. Had a quarter of an hour more, easy."

I agreed with him. Indeed, it was such a palpable case of running away that I felt quit sorry for the professor.

If I live to be a hundred I shall never forget the awakening the following morning: the first drowsy feeling that something had gone wrong, the clearer impression that the something was very serious, and then the full recollection of the whole horror. Could it be but a dream? Alas! no. Too well did I recall the dreadful details. I sat up in bed, and the whole ghastly sequence of events repeated itself.

I had gone to bed, and to sleep, but had woke again. I had looked at my watch. It was just after eleven. I felt wide awake, and after tossing about restlessly a short time I determined, finding sleep impossible, to go out for a stroll. I dressed, and let myself quietly out. I walked on slowly, without thinking where I was going, till I found myself on the small wooden pier that runs out into the bay—a favourite resort of Tompkins and myself. What was my astonishment to see Tompkins standing there. He explained that he, like myself, could not sleep, and preferred strolling out to a wakeful night in bed. I was very glad to see him, and we walked up and down and smoked together. The night was fairly light, but somewhat cloudy. Our conversation turned presently on the lecture that afternoon.

"You did get just a little bit queer when you were on the stage, though, didn't you?" said Tompkins.

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Why, you shut your eyes," said he.

"I didn't," said I—but I knew this was not true.

"I saw you," said he.

"I saw you open yours," said I.

"You didn't," said he.

"'WHY, YOU SHUT YOUR EYES,' SAID HE."

"I did," said I.

"That's a lie," said he. And then some devil got hold of me, and—we were walking by the edge of the pier and Tompkins was on the outside—I gave him a push, and over he went into two fathoms of water.

He couldn't swim, and I can't either, and he fell too far out for me to reach him, even had I tried. But I didn't. I must have been mad, I suppose. I just stood there and saw him go under once, twice, and the third

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time. The clock struck twelve as he sank finally. And then I had walked home and gone to bed.

This was the recollection the morning brought me—I had committed a foul and dastardly murder. I had slain one who was as a brother to me, and the brand of Cain was on me for ever.

How I got up and dressed I don't know. My brain was all in a whirl, the one clear idea being that I must try to conceal my crime. There were no witnesses. No one had seen me go out or come in, and if Tompkins's body were found there was no reason for supposing he had been thrown in by anybody at all. He might very easily have fallen in. No; I had only to keep cool and collected, and no suspicion could possibly attach to me. If anyone were suspected, it would certainly not be his best friend.

I nerved myself, therefore, to swallow some breakfast, after which I took my hat and coat and told my servant I was going over for the day to the neighbouring town, where I had a little business to attend to. I actually forced myself to turn back, as if by an afterthought, and say that if Captain Tompkins should call he was to be told that I might not be home till late, but would see him in the morning. Once clear of the village I walked as if my life depended on it. Where I went I hardly know. I believe I had some food somewhere, but it was mostly walk, walk all day. I knew I must return at night, and intuitively I made my way back in the evening.

And then, as I neared the village, came the awful feeling that I must go down to the pier and see if Tompkins's body were there. It was late for Pygwyllion—about ten—and there would be no one about. The more I resisted this gruesome impulse the stronger did it grow. The hideous attraction that the scene of his crime has for the murderer was upon me, and I was compelled to yield to it.

I went down to the pier, and stood there with my eyes wide open for any observer, and my ears alert for any sound. There was neither one nor the other. Except for the soft plash of the water all was silent as the grave. I hesitated for an instant, and then stole softly on to the pier. The structure, as explained, was of wood and built on piles, and near its outer end there were steps at either side leading down to a sort of lower platform, used for a landing from boats. It was my idea to go down to this platform, where I might see the body if, as was very possible, it had been washed in amongst the piles. I climbed carefully and quietly down the slippery steps—and there, standing against the railing and looking down into the water, was a dark form.

The figure turned its head at the sound of my footsteps. Its face was of a ghostly pallor, and its features were the features of Tompkins. The eyes appeared to me to gleam with concentrated hate as it gazed at me, and I felt each individual hair of my head assume an erect position as I stared in turn at the awful apparition.

"Why are you here?" whispered the spectre, in scarcely audible tones, which seemed to tremble with rage. "Why are you here?"

I hardly know how I forced myself to reply, but I managed to stammer out, "I c—c—came to look for you."

"To look for me!" echoed the apparition. "Yes! I have always heard so. There is no peace for the murderer. None! Haunted! Always haunted! Haunted till he dies from the terror. Yes! day and night I shall see you. No darkness can shut from the eye of the murderer the presence, the constant presence, of his victim's spirit. Oh! the horror of it!"

I gave a dismal groan. It was awful.

"I'll go to the police," I began; but the spectre interrupted me.

"I shall do that," it said. "You forget that they wouldn't see you; no one sees you but me. You're dead, you know: since last night, when I threw you over the pier. I saw you go down three times; and I never even tried to save you, when perhaps I might have done so. But I'll give myself up in the morning. I'd rather be hanged than haunted. And when I am perhaps you'll be at rest."

The sudden relief I felt was almost too much for me. It was evident that it was not Tompkins's spirit, but Tompkins in the flesh that I had found, and I was therefore not a murderer in fact, although I certainly had been one in intention. On the other hand, it was clear that Tompkins, having in some way got out of the water (although I could have sworn I saw him drown), had lost his wits from the shock and become insane. This, however, was my salvation, for so long as he imagined himself to be the murderer and not the intended victim, as he really was, he certainly would not bring any charge against me. It was evidently my cue to avoid in any way disturbing this illusion, and, indeed, to foster it carefully. I should have to explain to him that I was not dead,

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but had escaped in some extraordinary way. Thereupon Tompkins would fall on my neck and shed tears of joy, whilst I should magnanimously forgive him and he would remain indebted to me for life. It seemed perfectly simple. I began at once, in a solemn voice.

"Why did you throw me off the pier last night?"

"Torture me not," cried Tompkins, in a tone of agony. "I know you will haunt me till I'm hanged, but don't keep on like this. I—er—that I learnt to swim—er—last week, and that I—er—dived, just to frighten you—and climbed out when you went away?"

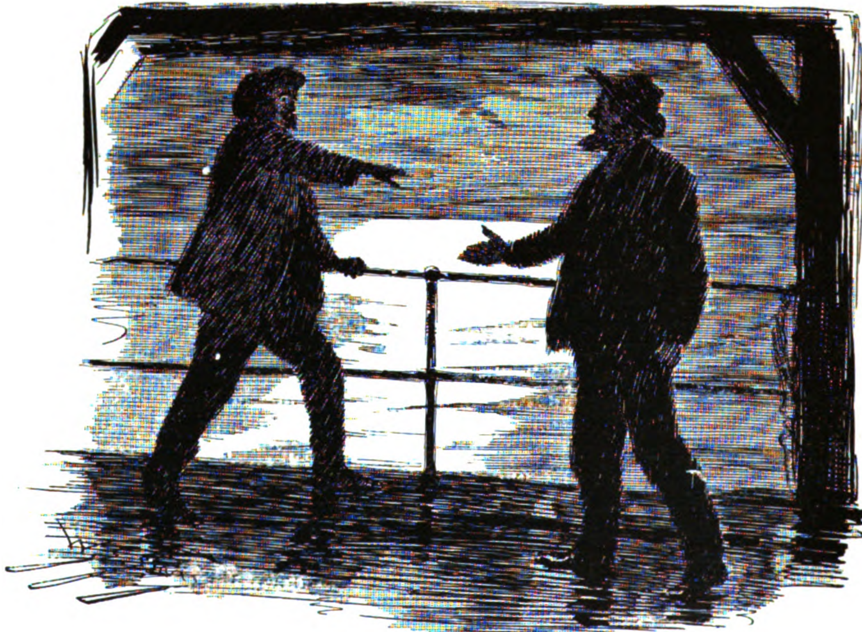
"Don't mock me," cried Tompkins, reproachfully. "I murdered you. You're dead; and I'm going to give myself up."

"I'm not dead," I said.

"You are," he persisted.

"Feel my hand," said I, and I made a step towards him.

He recoiled in horror. "Keep off!" he almost screamed. "I won't! I can't!



"'KEEP OFF!' HE ALMOST SCREAMED."

It's not regular. You oughtn't to speak. Dead people don't talk, you know."

"Answer me," I replied. "I command you."

"You know very well," said he. "We quarrelled about that show yesterday, and you told me I'd been to sleep on the stage, and I told you it was a lie; and then you said—— but what is the use of going over it again? I threw you in, and you're dead."

"What would you give to know I was alive?" said I.

"Give? Why, anything. But you're as dead as Moses, you know. You can't swim—I mean, you couldn't when you were alive."

"Tompkins," I said, "would you be surprised to hear that I'm not dead? That You're only an appearance. You ought to vanish now and let me go home, and then come in the night again and stand over me. You shouldn't go on this way."

"Look here," I said, rather loudly, for I was getting irritated—a man who insists on calling himself a murderer when the body is alive and wanting to shake hands with him is an annoying person—"don't call me an appearance. I'm as solid as you are. What's this?" and I sprang on him suddenly and gave him a couple of smart blows on the chest.

Now this kind of thing is not usually soothing in effect, but the look of intense relief that came over Tompkins's face as he received the thumps I have never seen equalled. The deadly pallor fled; and, if

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he did not literally fall on my neck, he wrung my hands till they ached, and the moonlight showed something very like tears in his eyes.

Soon, however, his face fell. "Bob, old man," he said, sadly, "I *meant* to drown you. It's no credit to me that you're alive. I shall go and give myself up for attempted murder."

"Don't be an idiot," I returned. "You haven't any proof. You don't suppose I'm going to charge you, do you?"

"You must," he said.

"Must, be blowed," said I. "There is no harm done. That sort of thing is quite common—amongst friends. A little temper, that's all. Why, I might have done it to you, instead."

"Aren't you going to do anything, then?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Yes," I said, "I am. I'm going home to have a drink, and you're coming with me."

And so it happened that, ten minutes later, two retired merchant skippers, each of whom regarded himself as the would-be murderer of the other, might have been seen marching amicably up the little street of Pygwyllion, arm in arm, to the residence of one of them, on liquid refreshment bent.

On arriving at my cottage I called to my old servant, Mary, to bring whisky and glasses. Now, Mary had lived with us during my wife's lifetime, and remained with me ever since, and on the strength of long service claimed privileges, one of which was to find fault with me whenever she pleased—which, to tell the truth, was pretty frequently. She always insisted on remaining up till I was at home and, as she considered, safe for the night, and held ideas about late hours which she made no scruple of expressing. Possibly my tone of voice was lacking in that humility suitable to a return home somewhat later than usual, and exhibited inappropriate cheerfulness. When a man suddenly finds that he has not committed a murder of which he believed himself guilty, and that, moreover, he is not to be called to account even for the attempt, there is undoubtedly something inspiriting in the situation, and it is possible that my voice may have been unduly jubilant. At any rate, old Mary appeared to think so. She set the bottle and glasses on the table with as much banging as was consistent with their safety, and delivered herself of the following:—

"A nice hour for a respectable gentleman to come home, Captain Jones, certainly! And I suppose you'll be sitting up the best of the night now. You'd better make the most of the whisky; there's no more. And for goodness' sake don't forget to bolt the door after you've let Captain Tompkins out. Perhaps he'll sleep on the sofa, though. And when you do go to bed I hope you'll make less noise than you did last night, keeping me awake with your snoring and grunting and talking in your sleep till the clock struck twelve. And now I'll wish you good-night."

"Did you hear that, Bob?" said Tompkins, when she had gone. "Old lady had the nightmare badly. Why, at twelve o'clock last night you were just drow—I mean diving—down by the jetty."

"Never mind that, old man," said I. "It's all over. Take some grog."

Now, what glorious luck! I thought to myself. If my dear friend here should ever, which Heaven forbid, find out the rights of the matter, what a witness for an alibi! Unsolicited testimony to my being at home. And the old girl would swear to it with the best conscience.

"Bob, old chap, here's your health, and Heaven bless you for a kind-hearted fellow!"

Just then old Mary put her head in at the door and snapped out, as she threw a letter on the table, "This came for you this evening; I forgot it."

When the door was closed I took the letter up and examined it. It was addressed in a strange hand, and bore the postmark of a town some miles distant. On opening the envelope an inner cover appeared, on which was the following inscription:—

"To Captains Jones and Tompkins,
"Pygwyllion.

"The writer begs that the enclosed may be read by the above-named gentlemen in the presence of each other."

The letter itself I here give in full:—

"Gentlemen,—In adopting the profession of a hypnotist, I did so not so much as a means of making money as from a desire to benefit my fellow-creatures, and to bring about a more extended belief in the marvellous powers of an art in relation to which such general ignorance prevails. With this end in view it has been my custom often to visit small towns and villages where the very existence of the science was perhaps unknown. It has been my good fortune to open the eyes of many to the enormous benefits offered to the human race by the legitimate practice of my profession, and I am thankful to say that I have in many cases effected radical cures

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when the patient had been given up by the faculty. Towards honest, if sceptical, inquiry I have always been patient; but to the pig-headed, obstinate self-sufficiency of half-educated people—like yourselves, gentlemen—I have sometimes, as in your case, administered a sharp lesson. I will explain myself. When you came on the stage last night you did so in obedience to the exercise of my will, although you did not think so; and I may here inform you that you proved yourselves two of the easiest subjects to influence that I have met with. The smallest exertion only on my part was necessary. I must call to your recollection that you both felt a momentary sensation of sleepiness, after which I apologized for dismissing you. That instant, gentlemen, allowed me to impress on your minds (which in such matters are abnormally weak) the idea that each of you had murdered his friend by throwing him off the jetty. But this is not all. I willed that this impression should not come into force until you were asleep last night. Whether this has happened as I intended I leave it to yourselves to say. I fear you may, perhaps, have been inconvenienced, but I can assure you that after the receipt of this letter you need fear no further interference in your affairs from me.

"I will merely add that I should strongly advise you not again to oppose your puny and untrained wills to a power the extent of which your very narrow intellects are quite incapable of realizing. In the hands of an unscrupulous operator the results to you might be much more serious than those caused by "Yours faithfully,

"KARL SCHLAFMACHER,

"Professor of Hypnotism."

We looked at one another, but for some time nothing was said. When at length Tompkins broke the silence his remark seemed to be somewhat wanting in relevancy.

He said, "Bob, my boy, pass the grog."

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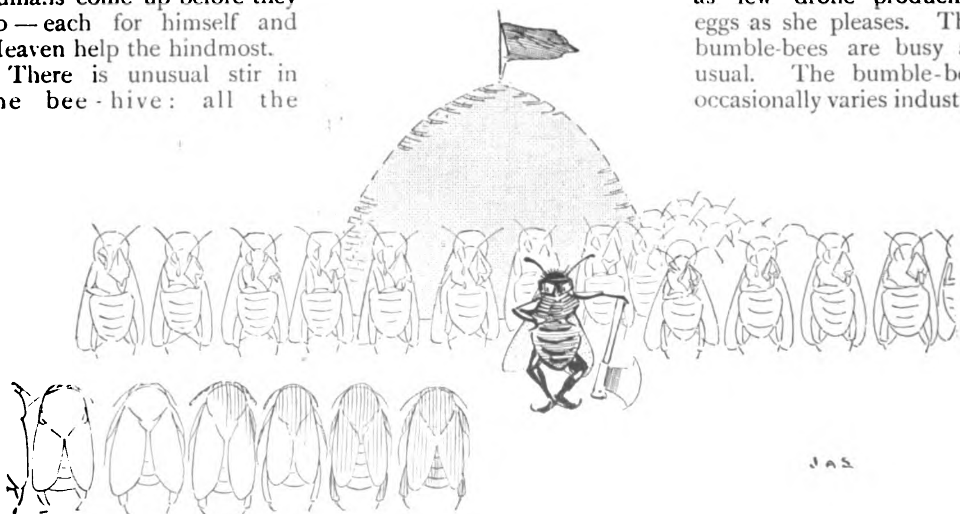
BY E. D. CUMING AND J. A. SHEPHERD.

A FAR-AWAY gun-shot reminds the wild duck that shooting begins to-day, 1st August: and with a warning word she calls the whole fleet of nine inexperienced flappers and convoys them to safety in among the reeds.

"The Twelfth" comes round, and the maternal grouse, collecting her brood about her, makes for the steep hillside; her idea, apparently, is to give the sportsmen a "gruelling" over rough, steep ground, that they shall not be able to shoot straight. It must be a nervous moment for the family when mamma peeps over the heather and comes down, saying: "That wretched old liver and white pointer scents us; he's standing like a rock!" but they wait until the humans come up before they go — each for himself and Heaven help the hindmost.

There is unusual stir in the bee-hive: all the workers, females who don't lay eggs, are moving around with an air of eager sententious rectitude tempered by display of pocket-handkerchief; and all the drones, males who do not work, but without whom the species would die out in one season, are standing about in sullen resignation. The word has gone forth and the drones are to be executed to-day. "It is our duty," say the worker bees, firmly but tearfully; and they take the drones, one after another, sting them to death, and throw their bodies out of doors for disposal as beetles, ants, and mice may think fit. It is strange that such a barbarous practice should obtain in highly-civilized society, the more so when we remember that the queen bee, in the exercise of an enviable prerogative, can lay as many or as few drone-producing eggs as she pleases. The bumble-bees are busy as usual. The bumble-bee occasionally varies industry



"EXECUTION OF THE DRONES.

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"EXIT BUMBLE."

driving whip with a rag lash; and from this instrument and the use the owner makes of it the angler obtains his name.

Why Nature, when she furnished us with both a rod and line,
Could not complete the outfit nor afford us chance to ask it,
Has always been a mystery to me and friends of mine,
Who have to go a-fishing without landing-net or basket.

We do our little best, of course; each by some rocky shelf
Sits dangling out his little bait where little fishes swim.
Each contemplative angler is a basket for himself,
And never ceases fishing till he's filled him to the brim.

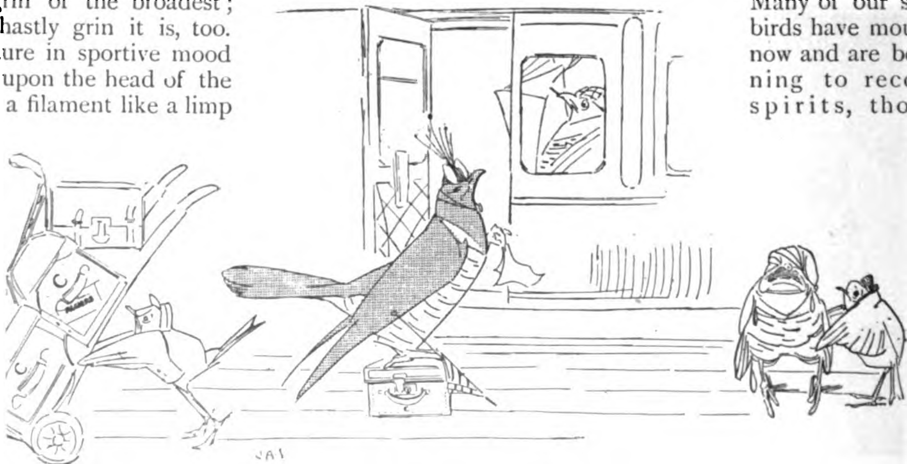
He has an equally cordial welcome for a dead cat or a ship's mop. His inhospitable portals are always open, and this, when he comes beachwards, works

with over-indulgence, but habitual intoxication is unknown; for this excellent reason, that he who weakly yields to the seduction of such strong waters as the honey-dew on the lime-leaf falls drunk and incapable to the ground and dies without a chance of reformation.

The only reason for referring here to the angler is that most people make acquaintance with his remains in August. The angler looks as though he had escaped from a sailor's nightmare or the property-room at Drury Lane. Starting from a very presentable tail the fish widens steadily, to concentrate all his physical powers in a grin of the broadest; a ghastly grin it is, too. Nature in sportive mood set upon the head of the fish a filament like a limp

his undoing. The receding waves carry quantities of sand into his mouth and the tide goes out leaving him stranded, a pitiable example of sand ballast misapplied.

The cuckoos are packing up to go south; they have so much confidence in the nurses who took charge of their children that they need not wait. The young cuckoos will find their own way to Africa as their parents and grandparents did. The good people of Borrowdale, in Cumberland, are said to have attempted to detain the cuckoo for the winter by building a wall; which proceeding, if true, said more for the hearts than the heads of the Borrowdalians. Many of our songbirds have moulted now and are beginning to recover spirits, though



"THE CUCKOO'S FAREWELL TO HER YOUNG."

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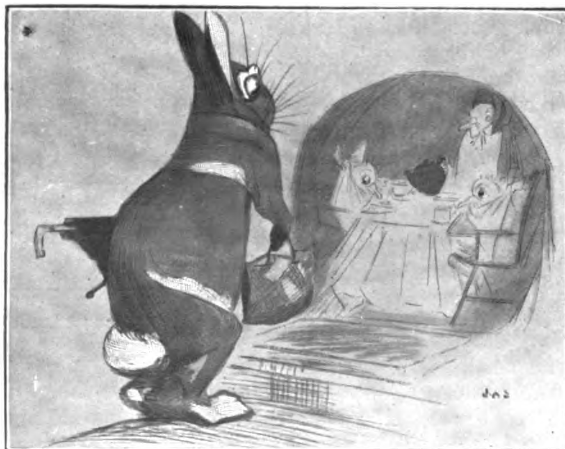
"THE YOUNG ROBINS ARE PUTTING ON THEIR RED WAISTCOATS."

there is little singing done. Birds who leave early for the south put off changing their clothes till they reach their destination, preferring, like sensible people, to travel in shabby comfort; the cuckoos, for instance, do not change before they go, nor does the swallow. The flight feathers of the wings are shed in pairs, and as a bird must be fully equipped for such a long journey it must postpone moulting if it has to leave early in the autumn. The young robins are putting on their red waistcoats and the appropriate airs and graces; till his first moult the young cock wears a spotted waistcoat. Late individuals of various species have eggs or children to occupy their time. The ring-ouzels are still weighed down with nursery cares if they decided to rear a second brood; the house-martin and the yellow-hammer are engaged with family number two; the stock-dove who, like the shelduck and puffin, has a fancy for billeting herself on a rabbit, may still be tending her twins in the burrow. It must be an irritating thing for the rabbit to come home and find the lodger giving her children tea in the passage, so that he cannot get beyond his own hall-door mat. The kittiwake gulls, dilatory creatures, have probably still some children in arms to look after.



"THE LODGER GIVING HER CHILDREN TEA IN THE PASSAGE."

The octopa—pardon the convenient inaccuracy—has hatched out the ropes of eggs she has been watching over so jealously for the last fifty days in the rocky retreat she calls her nest; the youngsters are lively, but, being no larger than fleas at birth, are likely to escape notice for some time to come. The maternal octopus gives herself up so whole-heartedly to her nursery duties, which consist chiefly of sitting still and blowing water over the egg-ropes, that her health suffers; and by the time the children are born she is not the creature she was when, newly wedded, she left

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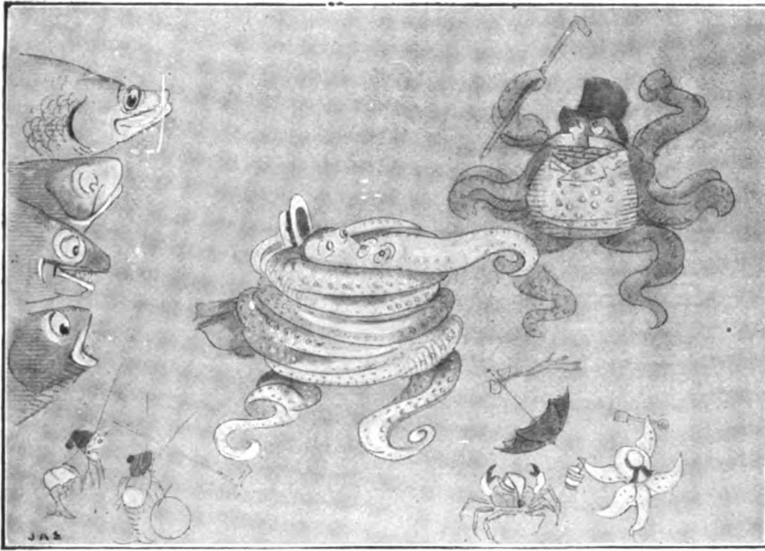
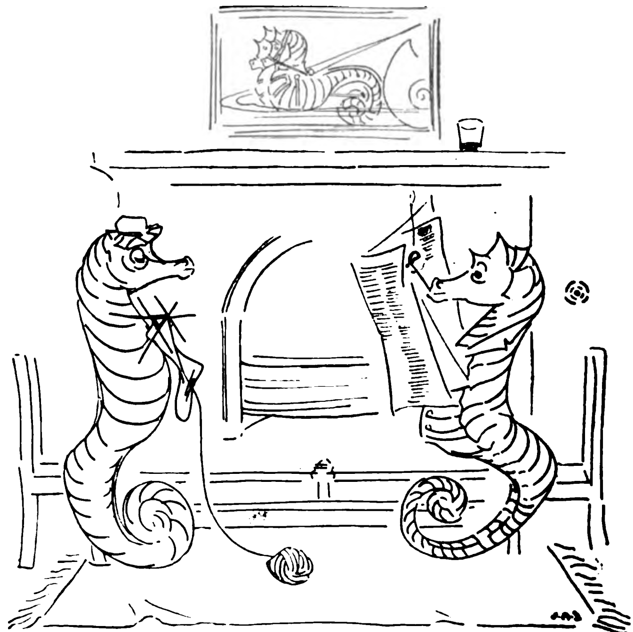


"THE OCTOPUS IN LOVE—THE EMBRACE."

home with her husband in June. The sternest octopus papa must feel himself at a loss if once a wayward daughter and her lover hurl themselves into each other's arms :—

> What can I do? Eight arms on either side
> Make more a Gordian than a lovers' knot.
> I can't undo it, hard as I have tried,
> I *must* consent to give him what he's got.
>
> Bless you, then, children! Stem those floods of—tears,
> Conscience must prick you very hard, I think;
> *Don't* fog the water round you thus, my dears,
> Surely betrothals are not sealed with—ink.

The octopus, as a rule, is sparing of his ink, and does not discharge it without good reason. His relative, the cuttlefish, on the other hand, will envelop himself in a cloud of the very best sepia if you even look at him—this extravagance is the outcome of shyness. Stranded on the beach you may occasionally find the shrunken remains of one of the pipe-fish—a strange creature, like a young eel in plate armour with a long tube-like snout ending in the smallest of unclassically-cut mouths. The male pipe-fish is the victim of Woman's Rights. When his wife lays her eggs (only a couple of hundred, but pipe-fishes have few foes, thanks to their mail, and their nursery methods forbid needless profusion) she makes them over to her husband, who arranges them in rows along his underside and keeps them till they hatch out. The pipe-fish is not intelligent. He will wind his prehensile tail about any buoy-rope or drifting stick without the elementary precaution of inquiring what the thing is: and holds on in foolish faith till lifted into boat or stranded on shore. The hippocampus, or sea-horse—one of Nature's most successful efforts in the grotesque, by the way—is even more advanced than the pipe-fish. The sea-horse is equipped with a sac under his tail, and when the sea-mate lays her eggs she packs them into that



"QUIET IN DOUBLE HARNESS."

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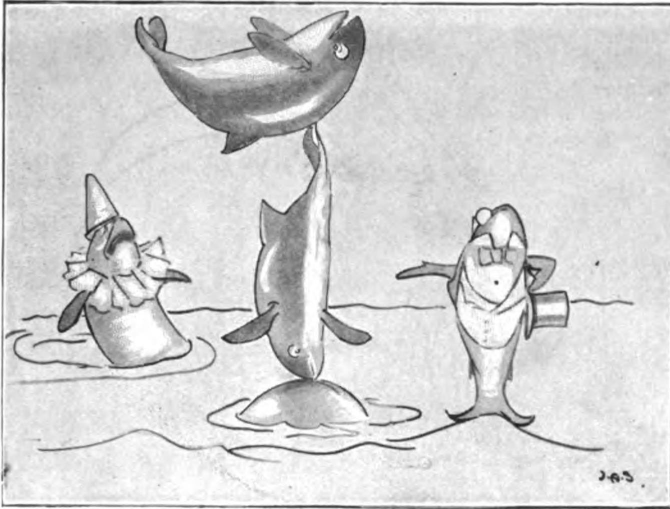

"DAILY PERFORMANCES BY THE PORPOISES DURING THE SEASON."

and leaves to her mate all the responsibility of hatching. Although the sea-horse is thus imposed upon by his wife, the pair appear to be on the most affectionate terms. They hold on to weeds by their tails and cling lovingly to one another: Dr. Day has even seen them rubbing their heads in a sea-horse kiss, and has heard them coughing exchange of endearments. The amiable porpoise is playing leap-frog with a party of friends within hail of the beach: porpoise existence appears to be one giddy whirl of gratuitous acrobatic performance for the benefit of visitors to the seaside: this animal—the meekest porpoise would resent being called a fish—does not go out to sea, preferring the excitements, and fish, of inshore waters, and is equally cheerful and irrepressible whether you meet him off Greenland or in the tepid Mediterranean.

The wasps are abroad in their hundreds: the wasp is an intelligent fellow, as witness the discretion which bids him come out of a hole in pear or plum business end first; but his selfishness is something monumental. When he finds food, though there be enough to supply a thousand wasps for the whole summer, he never tells a friend — but you can read his character for yourself any morning on the breakfast table:—

"MR. WASP DROPS IN TO BREAKFAST."

What says my brother? In the jam you sink,
You grow more feeble? Death is very near?
Your fate's my warning, but I rather think
That I may safely taste the jam from here.

Let me avoid the spots that sticky feel—
Peace, brother, peace! Refrain from sob and groan;
I am at breakfast, don't disturb my meal.
Light on my breast lie sorrows not my own!

It is a curious thing, but birds appear to enjoy immunity from wasp sting. Blackbirds, tits, and martins eat them greedily; the two former will hang on to the paper-like nest and devour the insects by the dozen.

The hen lobster's eggs generally hatch out in July or August: for a time she carried them—12,000 or more—about with her, stuck upon the underside of her body, but as the "berry" swelled locomotion became difficult, and she regretfully buried them in the sand. She is an exemplary parent, and sometimes keeps about her such of her family as survive the perils of infancy till they attain to a length of six inches, by which time they are hardened enough to face the world on their own account. The hen lobster produces a family and gets a new dress in alternate years: this latter sounds like a hardship, but no question of hen lobster's rights is involved, though the cock does get a new suit every August. Changing his or her coat of mail is a serious business; when the old one is coming off the patient is sick, sorry,

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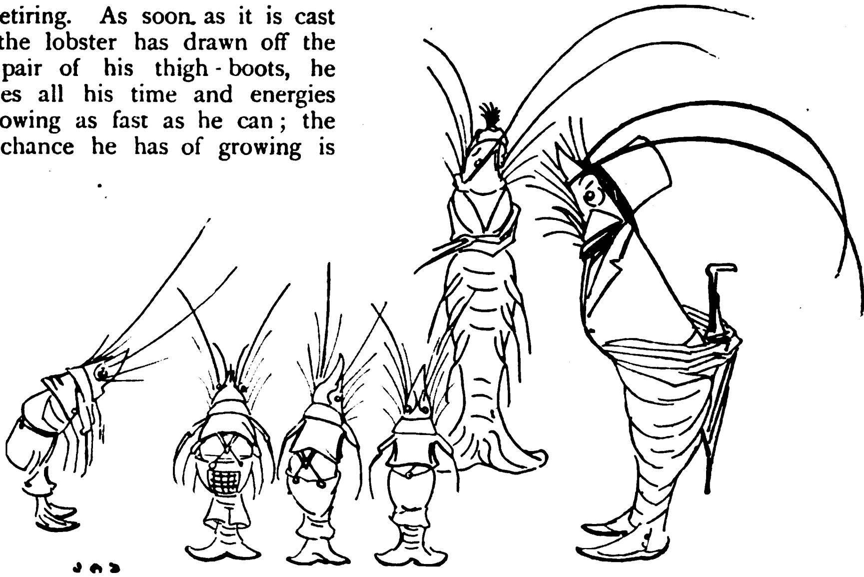
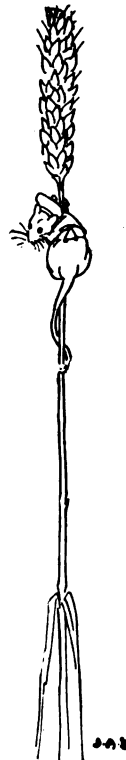
and retiring. As soon as it is cast and the lobster has drawn off the last pair of his thigh-boots, he devotes all his time and energies to growing as fast as he can; the only chance he has of growing is



"THE YOUNG PRAWNS REQUIRE NEW SHELL-JACKETS EVERY TWELVE DAYS—MORE EXPENSE FOR FATHER PRAWN."

after laying off his old coat and before the new mail shall harden, so he grows with a will. As soon as the new coat is hard he begins to make up for lost meals, feeding ravenously. The lobster seems to suffer from nerves—at all events, fishermen who are on intimate terms with him say that a loud clap of thunder or the boom of a ship's gun will make him shed a claw; all crustaceans set little value on their limbs, as they can grow new ones to replace those lost. The lobster suffers a good deal when his armour gets too small for him, but as that happens only once a year we may keep our sympathy for the unfortunate young prawns, who grow so fast that they require new shell-jackets every twelve days.

The field-cricket, who has been shrilling with tireless energy since he got up in the spring, shows symptoms of weariness about the beginning of August: his song is less continuous, less strident; and gradually he gives up singing for the year. Now is the summer of discontent for the harvest-mouse, who, by the way, is the only British mammal who possesses an even partially prehensile tail; he uses that organ as a fifth hand, more particularly when descending the wheat stem in a hurry. Much addicted to weaving his beautiful ball of a nest among the stems of standing corn, and fond of climbing to the ears of wheat on which he sits to lunch and enjoy the scenery, the harvest-mouse views the reaping-machine with pardonable disapprobation. He doubtless owes his name to the fact that harvesting operations are so generally instrumental in revealing, and bringing ruin to, his domestic hearth: the chances are in favour of there being babies in the nest whenever it be brought to light, for, like the rest of his kind, he is an enthusiastic family man who loves to surround himself with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to the fifth and sixth generation. When the corn is stooked the tawny and barn owls come from far and near to range the fields, self-appointed special constables in the agricultural interest. Every mouse is *de facto* an offender, and if he fall into the clutches of the law as personified by an owl his fate is sealed. The pheasant sometimes amuses himself by killing and eating mice; it is an injudicious practice, as the dead mouse frequently sticks in his gullet and chokes him.



"ON DUTY."

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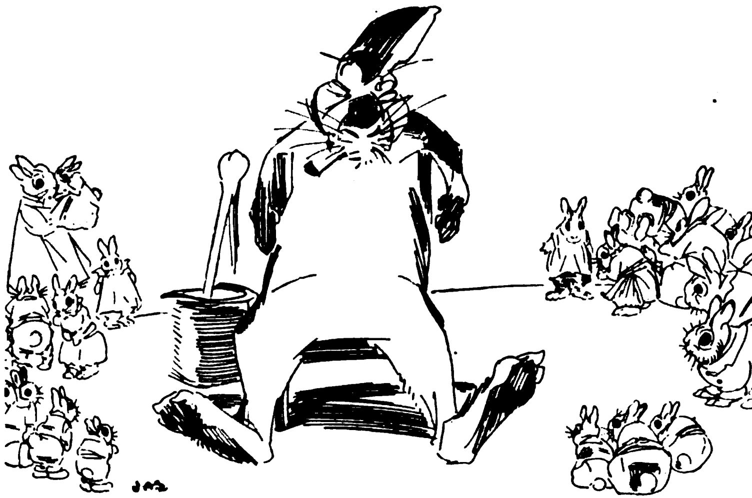


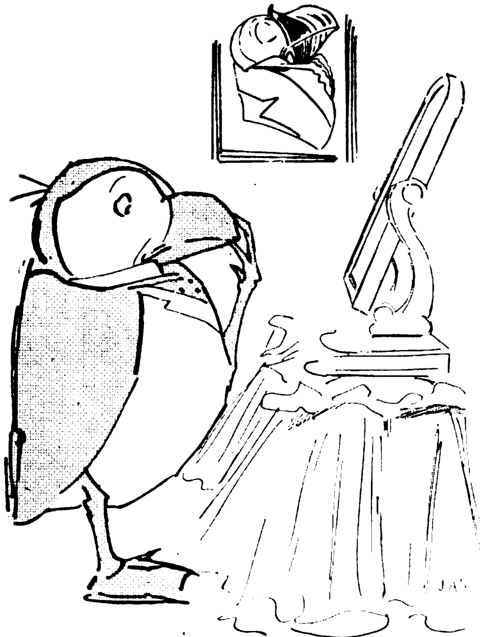
"THE BUCK RABBIT'S RETURN."

he cannot plead over-work, for his wife does everything; she even tears off her own clothes to make her babies warm and comfortable.

The 23rd of August comes round and the punctual puffins leave the breeding grounds to fly seaward and distribute themselves on distant rocks and islets: the puffin has more reason than most birds to withdraw from society during the autumn moult. There is no great difference between the clothes he takes off and the dress he will put on, it is true: but there is that wonderful bill to be considered. Nature bestows upon him the beautiful red and blue arrangement with chaste yellow stripes as a wedding gift that he may be pleasing in the eye of hen puffins—it doesn't say much for their taste, but let that pass. The breeding season over, Nature, with callous disregard of the cock's feelings and without reflecting on the shock it must give his wife, takes off the puffin's bill in pieces, as though it were after all a false nose to hide the neutral-tinted and insignificant snub beneath. Consider, I pray you, the emotions of the young puffin whom this loss befalls for the first time.

The guillemots are leaving their rock-ledges also, to scatter for the autumn and winter: there is, in point of fact, a general breaking up for the holidays, the education of the young birds being finished. The herons leave the heronry and

Stoats and weasels at this season occasionally get up hunting parties of fifteen or twenty — perhaps two families combine for sport — and display reckless courage; a party of twenty weasels has been known to attack a collie dog, either from sheer bravado or downright savagery; they are, as we know, prone to kill from wanton love of slaughter, and twice twenty weasels would hardly know how to dispose of a 50lb. dog when they had worried him to death. The rabbit is still engaged on private affairs, which indulgence itself can hardly admit as urgent, in view of the fact that they have been recurrently on hand ever since March. The conduct of the buck-rabbit suggests that he regards these superabundant children with disapproval; for if, in despite of his wife, he makes his way into the nursery he is likely to kill a few of them. There is no excuse for this behaviour; the mind of the most intellectual rabbit is hardly likely to be influenced by the doctrine of Malthus,



"NATURE TAKES OFF THE PUFFIN'S BILL IN PIECES."

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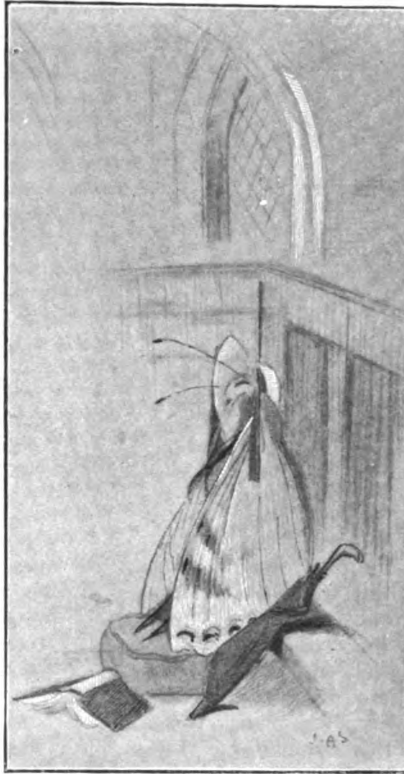
resort to the marshes and streams. The curlews send their children to the waterside to learn the science of mud-probing, and go thither themselves, keeping apart from the young people, however. Thanks to their long bills the curlews live better and keep in fatter condition in winter than other mud-larking species who cannot explore so deeply.

The end of the month draws near and the swifts go. There is no preparation, no assemblage of travelling companions: the company about the steeple have been growing more restless and soaring in loftier realms than usual for a few days, and one evening the silence tells you they are gone. Cruel is the fate of the backward young swift who has not learned to fly perfectly by the time his people start for the south; he is left behind to die of cold and starvation, if he cannot find his way to Africa all by himself. The young swallows and the house-martins of the first brood are congregating on the roofs to discuss in eager twitterings the wonders of the new country their parents have described.



"SLEEPING THROUGH SERMONS FOR NINE MONTHS."

The great caterpillar of the Death's Head moth seeks seclusion underground in August to pass into the chrysalis state. The peacock butterfly emerges from the chrysalis to enjoy a few weeks' gaiety before retiring for the winter. The active career of most butterflies in the winged state of existence is short; the large tortoiseshell who came out in the middle of July is quite content to go to bed for the winter in the middle of August; and, like other butterflies who hibernate in the complete state, will get up about May to lay eggs and die. Some of the butterflies, as we might expect of such giddy, undomestic creatures, have no idea of home comfort, and spend the winter in the chilliest fashion. A small tortoiseshell was observed by a parson one Sunday in August to enter his church during the service and settle on the ceiling; and there the clerico-entomological eye marked the insect, Sunday after Sunday, hanging to the naked beam for nine months, a sound sleeper.

The Red Admiral appears in August: his steadiness of character is open to criticism, for he is rather addicted to going out at night when well-conducted butterflies are in bed. The Painted Lady is expected at this season too, but she is so irregular in her habits that entomologists impatiently declare it impossible to lay down any precise rules for her metamorphoses; she is even more irresponsible than other butterflies.

"THE PAINTED LADY."

Blundell's Improvement

VENIA TURNBULL in a quiet, unobtrusive fashion was enjoying herself. The cool living-room at Turnbull's farm was a delightful contrast to the hot sunshine without, and the drowsy humming of bees floating in at the open window was charged with hints of slumber to the middle-aged. From her seat by the window she watched with amused interest the efforts of her father—kept from his Sunday afternoon nap by the assiduous attentions of her two admirers—to maintain his politeness.

"Father was so pleased to see you both come in," she said, softly; "it's very dull for him here of an afternoon with only me."

"I can't imagine anybody being dull with only you," said Sergeant Dick Daly, turning a bold brown eye upon her.

Mr. John Blundell scowled; this was the third time the sergeant had said the thing that he would have liked to say if he had thought of it.

"I don't mind being dull," remarked Mr. Turnbull, casually.

Neither gentleman made any comment.

"I like it," pursued Mr. Turnbull, longingly; "always did, from a child."

The two young men looked at each other; then they looked at Venia; the sergeant assumed an expression of careless ease, while John Blundell sat his chair like a human limpet. Mr. Turnbull almost groaned as he remembered his tenacity.

"The garden's looking very nice," he said, with a pathetic glance round.

"Beautiful," assented the sergeant. "I saw it yesterday."

"Some o' the roses on that big bush have opened a bit more since then," said the farmer.

Sergeant Daly expressed his gratification, and said that he was not surprised. It was only ten days since he had arrived in the village on a visit to a relative, but in that short space of time he had, to the great discomfort of Mr. Blundell, made himself wonderfully at home at Mr. Turnbull's. To Venia he related strange adventures by sea and land, and on subjects of which he was sure the farmer knew nothing he was a perfect mine of information. He began to talk in low tones to Venia, and the heart of Mr. Blundell sank within him as he noted her interest. Their voices fell to a gentle murmur, and the sergeant's sleek, well-brushed head bent closer to that of his listener. Relieved from his attentions, Mr. Turnbull fell asleep without more ado.

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Blundell sat neglected, the unwilling witness of a flirtation he was powerless to prevent. Considering her limited opportunities, Miss Turnbull displayed a proficiency which astonished him. Even the sergeant was amazed, and suspected her of long practice.

"I wonder whether it is very hot outside?" she said, at last, rising and looking out of the window.

"Only pleasantly warm," said the sergeant. "It would be nice down by the water."

"I'm afraid of disturbing father by our talk," said the considerate daughter. "You might tell him we've gone for a little stroll when he wakes," she added, turning to Blundell.

Mr. Blundell, who had risen with the idea of acting the humble but, in his opinion, highly necessary part of chaperon, sat down again and watched blankly from the window until they were out of sight. He was half-inclined to think that the exigencies of the case warranted him in arousing the farmer at once.

It was an hour later when the farmer awoke, to find himself alone with Mr. Blundell, a state of affairs for which he strove with some pertinacity to make that aggrieved gentleman responsible.

"Why didn't you go with them?" he demanded.

"Because I wasn't asked," replied the other.

Mr. Turnbull sat up in his chair and eyed him disdainfully. "For a great, big chap like you are, John Blundell," he exclaimed, "it's surprising what a little pluck you've got."

"I don't want to go where I'm not wanted," retorted Mr. Blundell.

"That's where you make a mistake," said the other, regarding him severely; "girls like a masterful man, and, instead of getting your own way, you sit down quietly and do as you're told, like a tame—tame——"

"Tame what?" inquired Mr. Blundell, resentfully.

"I don't know," said the other, frankly; "the tamest thing you can think of. There's Daly laughing in his sleeve at you, and talking to Venia about Waterloo and the Crimea as though he'd been there. I thought it was pretty near settled between you."

"So did I," said Mr. Blundell.

"You're a big man, John," said the other, "but you're slow. You're all muscle and no head."

"I think of things afterwards," said Blundell, humbly; "generally after I get to bed."

Mr. Turnbull sniffed, and took a turn up and down the room; then he closed the door and came towards his friend again.

"I dare say you're surprised at me being so anxious to get rid of Venia," he said, slowly, "but the fact is I'm thinking of marrying again myself."

"*You!*" said the startled Mr. Blundell.

"Yes, me," said the other, somewhat sharply. "But she won't marry so long as Venia is at home. It's a secret, because if Venia got to hear of it she'd keep single to prevent it. She's just that sort of girl."

Mr. Blundell coughed, but did not deny it. "Who is it?" he inquired.

"Miss Sippet," was the reply. "She couldn't hold her own for half an hour against Venia."

Mr. Blundell, a great stickler for accuracy, reduced the time to five minutes.

"And now," said the aggrieved Mr. Turnbull, "now, so far as I can see, she's struck with Daly. If she has him it'll be years and years before they can marry. She seems crazy about heroes. She was talking to me the other night about them. Not to put too fine a point on it, she was talking about you."

Mr. Blundell blushed with pleased surprise.

"Said you were *not* a hero," explained Mr. Turnbull. "Of course, I stuck up for you. I said you'd got too much sense to go putting your life into danger. I said you were a very careful man, and I told her how particular you was about damp sheets. Your housekeeper told me."

"It's all nonsense," said Blundell, with a fiery face. "I'll send that old fool packing if she can't keep her tongue quiet."

"It's very sensible of you, John," said Mr. Turnbull, "and a sensible girl would appreciate it. Instead of that, she only sniffed when I told her how careful you always were to wear flannel next to your skin. She said she liked dare-devils."

"I suppose she thinks Daly is a dare-devil," said the offended Mr. Blundell. "And I wish people wouldn't talk about me and my skin. Why can't they mind their own business?"

Mr. Turnbull eyed him indignantly, and then, sitting in a very upright position, slowly filled his pipe, and declining a proffered match rose and took one from the mantelpiece.

"I was doing the best I could for you,"

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he said, staring hard at the ingrate. "I was trying to make Venia see what a careful husband you would make. Miss Sippet herself is most particular about such things —and Venia seemed to think something of it, because she asked me whether you used a warming-pan."

Mr. Blundell got up from his chair and, without going through the formality of bidding his host good-bye, quitted the room

"SHE ASKED ME WHETHER YOU USED A WARMING-PAN."

and closed the door violently behind him. He was red with rage, and he brooded darkly as he made his way home on the folly of carrying on the traditions of a devoted mother without thinking for himself.

For the next two or three days, to Venia's secret concern, he failed to put in an appearance at the farm—a fact which made flirtation with the sergeant a somewhat uninteresting business. Her sole recompense was the dismay of her father, and for his benefit she dwelt upon the advantages of the Army in a manner that would have made the fortune of a recruiting-sergeant.

"She's just crazy after the soldiers," he said to Mr. Blundell, whom he was trying to spur on to a desperate effort. "I've been watching her close, and I can see what it is now; she's romantic. You're too slow and ordinary for her. She wants somebody more dazzling. She told Daly only yesterday afternoon that she loved heroes. Told it to him to his face. I sat there and heard her. It's a pity you ain't a hero, John."

"Yes," said Mr. Blundell; "then, if I was, I expect she'd like something else."

The other shook his head. "If you could only do something daring," he murmured; "half-kill somebody, or save somebody's life, and let her see you do it. Couldn't you dive off the quay and save somebody's life from drowning?"

"Yes, I could," said Blundell, "if somebody would only tumble in."

"You might pretend that you thought you saw somebody drowning," suggested Mr. Turnbull.

"And be laughed at," said Mr. Blundell, who knew his Venia by heart.

"You always seem to be able to think of objections," complained Mr. Turnbull; "I've noticed that in you before."

"I'd go in fast enough if there was anybody there," said Blundell. "I'm not much of a swimmer, but——"

"All the better," interrupted the other; "that would make it all the more daring."

"And I don't much care if I'm drowned," pursued the younger man, gloomily.

Mr. Turnbull thrust his hands in his pockets and took a turn or two up and down the room. His brows were knitted and his lips pursed. In the presence of this mental stress Mr. Blundell preserved a respectful silence.

"We'll all four go for a walk on the quay on Sunday afternoon," said Mr. Turnbull, at last.

"On the chance?" inquired his staring friend.

"On the chance," assented the other; "it's just possible Daly might fall in."

"He might if we walked up and down five million times," said Blundell, unpleasantly.

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"He might if we walked up and down three or four times," said Mr. Turnbull, "especially if you happened to stumble."

"I never stumble," said the matter-of-fact Mr. Blundell. "I don't know anybody more sure-footed than I am."

"Or thick-headed," added the exasperated Mr. Turnbull.

Mr. Blundell regarded him patiently; he had a strong suspicion that his friend had been drinking.

"Stumbling," said Mr. Turnbull, conquering his annoyance with an effort—"stumbling is a thing that might happen to anybody. You trip your foot against a stone and lurch up against Daly; he tumbles overboard, and you off with your jacket and dive in off the quay after him. He can't swim a stroke."

Mr. Blundell caught his breath and gazed at him in speechless amaze.

"There's sure to be several people on the quay if it's a fine afternoon," continued his instructor. "You'll have half Dunchurch round you, praising you and patting you on the back—all in front of Venia, mind you. It'll be put in all the papers and you'll get a medal."

"And suppose we are both drowned?" said Mr. Blundell, soberly.

"Drowned? Fiddlesticks!" said Mr. Turnbull. "However, please yourself. If you're afraid——"

"I'll do it," said Blundell, decidedly.

"And mind," said the other, "don't do it as if it's as easy as kissing your fingers; be half-drowned yourself, or at least pretend to be. And when you're on the quay take your time about coming round. Be longer than Daly is; you don't want him to get all the pity."

"All right," said the other.

"After a time you can open your eyes," went on his instructor; "then, if I were you, I should say, 'Good-bye, Venia,' and close 'em again. Work it up affecting, and send messages to your aunts."

"It sounds all right," said Blundell.

"It *is* all right," said Mr. Turnbull. "That's just the bare idea I've given you. It's for you to improve upon it. You've got two days to think about it."

Mr. Blundell thanked him, and for the next two days thought of little else. Being a careful man he made his will, and it was in a comparatively cheerful frame of mind that he made his way on Sunday afternoon to Mr. Turnbull's.

The sergeant was already there conversing in low tones with Venia by the window, while Mr. Turnbull, sitting opposite in an oaken armchair, regarded him with an expression which would have shocked Iago.

"We were just thinking of having a blow down by the water," he said, as Blundell entered.

"What! a hot day like this?" said Venia.

"I was just thinking how beautifully cool it is in here," said the sergeant, who was hoping for a repetition of the previous Sunday's performance.

"It's cooler outside," said Mr. Turnbull, with a wilful ignoring of facts; "much cooler when you get used to it."

He led the way with Blundell, and Venia and the sergeant, keeping as much as possible in the shade of the dust-powdered hedges, followed. The sun was blazing in the sky, and scarce half-a-dozen people were to be seen on the little curved quay which constituted the usual Sunday afternoon promenade. The water, a dozen feet below, lapped cool and green against the stone sides.

At the extreme end of the quay, underneath the lantern, they all stopped, ostensibly to admire a full-rigged ship sailing slowly by in the distance, but really to effect the change of partners necessary to the afternoon's business. The change gave Mr. Turnbull some trouble ere it was effected, but he was successful at last, and, walking behind the two young men, waited somewhat nervously for developments.

Twice they paraded the length of the quay and nothing happened. The ship was still visible, and, the sergeant halting to gaze at it, the company lost their formation, and he led the complaisant Venia off from beneath her father's very nose.

"You're a pretty manager, you are, John Blundell," said the incensed Mr. Turnbull.

"I know what I'm about," said Blundell, slowly.

"Well, why don't you do it?" demanded the other. "I suppose you are going to wait until there are more people about, and then perhaps some of them will see you push him over."

"It isn't that," said Blundell, slowly, "but you told me to improve on your plan, you know, and I've been thinking out improvements."

"Well?" said the other.

"It doesn't seem much good saving Daly," said Blundell; "that's what I've been thinking. He would be in as much danger as I should, and he'd get as much sympathy; perhaps more."

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"Do you mean to tell me that you are backing out of it?" demanded Mr. Turnbull.

"No," said Blundell, slowly, "but it would be much better if I saved somebody else. I don't want Daly to be pitied."

"Bah! you are backing out of it," said the irritated Mr. Turnbull. "You're afraid of a little cold water."

"No, I'm not," said Blundell; "but it would be better in every way to save somebody else. She'll see Daly standing there doing nothing, while I am struggling for my life. I've thought it all out very carefully. I know I'm not quick, but I'm sure, and when I make up my mind to do a thing, I do it. You ought to know that."

"That's all very well," said the other; "but who else is there to push in?"

"'BAH! YOU ARE BACKING OUT OF IT,' SAID THE IRRITATED MR. TURNBULL."

"That's all right," said Blundell, vaguely. "Don't you worry about that; I shall find somebody."

Mr. Turnbull turned and cast a speculative eye along the quay. As a rule, he had great confidence in Blundell's determination, but on this occasion he had his doubts.

"Well, it's a riddle to me," he said, slowly. "I give it up. It seems—— *Halloa!* Good heavens, be careful. You nearly had *me* in then."

"Did I?" said Blundell, thickly. "I'm very sorry."

Mr. Turnbull, angry at such carelessness, accepted the apology in a grudging spirit and trudged along in silence. Then he started nervously as a monstrous and unworthy suspicion occurred to him. It was an incredible thing to suppose, but at the same time he felt that there was nothing like being on the safe side, and in tones not quite free from significance he intimated his desire of changing places with his awkward friend.

"It's all right," said Blundell, soothingly.

"I know it is," said Mr. Turnbull, regarding him fixedly; "but I prefer this side. You very near had me over just now."

"I staggered," said Mr. Blundell.

"Another inch and I should have been overboard," said Mr. Turnbull, with a shudder. "That would have been a nice how d'ye do."

Mr. Blundell coughed and looked seawards. "Accidents will happen," he murmured.

They reached the end of the quay again and stood talking, and when they turned once more the sergeant was surprised and gratified at the ease with which he bore off Venia. Mr. Turnbull and Blundell followed some little way behind, and the former gentleman's suspicions were somewhat lulled by finding that his friend made no attempt to take the inside place. He looked about him with interest for a likely victim, but in vain.

"What are you looking at?" he demanded, impatiently, as Blundell suddenly came to a stop and gazed curiously into the harbour.

"Jelly-fish," said the other, briefly. "I never saw such a monster. It must be a yard across."

Mr. Turnbull stopped, but could see nothing, and even when Blundell pointed it out with his finger he had no better success. He stepped forward a pace, and his suspicions returned with renewed vigour as a hand was laid caressingly on his shoulder. The next moment, with a wild shriek, he shot suddenly over the edge and disappeared. Venia and the sergeant, turn-

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ing nastily, were just in time to see the fountain which ensued on his immersion.

"Oh, save him!" cried Venia.

The sergeant ran to the edge and gazed in helpless dismay as Mr. Turnbull came to the surface and disappeared again. At the same moment Blundell, who had thrown off his coat, dived into the harbour and, rising rapidly to the surface, caught the fast choking Mr. Turnbull by the collar.

"Keep still," he cried, sharply, as the farmer tried to clutch him; "keep still or I'll let you go."

"Help!" choked the farmer, gazing up at the little knot of people which had collected on the quay.

A stout fisherman who had not run for thirty years came along the edge of the quay at a shambling trot, with a coil of rope over his arm. John Blundell saw him and, mindful of the farmer's warning about kissing of fingers, etc., raised his disengaged arm and took that frenzied gentleman below the surface again. By the time they came up was very glad for his own sake to catch the line skilfully thrown by the old fisherman and be drawn gently to the side.

"WITH A WILD SHRIEK HE SHOT SUDDENLY OVER THE EDGE."

"I'll tow you to the steps," said the fisherman; "don't let go o' the line."

Mr. Turnbull saw to that; he wound the rope round his wrist and began to regain his presence of mind as they were drawn steadily towards the steps. Willing hands drew them out of the water and helped them up on to the quay, where Mr. Turnbull, sitting in his own puddle, coughed up salt water and glared ferociously at the inanimate form of Mr. Blundell. Sergeant Daly and another man were rendering what they piously believed to be first aid to the apparently drowned, while the stout fisherman, with both hands to his mouth, was yelling in heart-rending accents for a barrel.

"He—he—push—pushed me in," gasped the choking Mr. Turnbull.

Nobody paid any attention to him; even Venia, seeing that he was safe, was on her knees by the side of the unconscious Blundell.

"He—he's shamming," bawled the neglected Mr. Turnbull.

"Shame!" said somebody, without even looking round.

"He pushed me in," repeated Mr. Turnbull. "He pushed me in."

"Oh, father," said Venia, with a scandalized glance at him, "how can you?"

"Shame!" said the bystanders, briefly, as they watched anxiously for signs of returning life on the part of Mr. Blundell. He lay still with his eyes closed, but his hearing was still acute, and the sounds of a rapidly-approaching barrel trundled by a breathless Samaritan did him more good than anything.

"Good-bye, Venia," he said, in a faint voice; "good-bye."

Miss Turnbull sobbed and took his hand.

"He's shamming," roared Mr. Turnbull, incensed beyond measure at the faithful manner in which Blundell was carrying out his instructions. "He pushed me in."

There was an angry murmur from the bystanders.

"Be reasonable, Mr. Turnbull," said the sergeant, somewhat sharply.

"He nearly lost 'is life over you," said the stout fisherman. "As plucky a thing as ever I see. If I 'adn't ha' been 'andy with that there line you'd both ha' been drownded."

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"Give—my love—to everybody," said Blundell, faintly. "Good - bye, Venia. Good-bye, Mr. Turnbull."

"Where's that barrel?" demanded the stout fisherman, crisply. "Going to be all night with it? Now, two of you——"

Mr. Blundell, with a great effort, and assisted by Venia and the sergeant, sat up. He felt that he had made a good impression, and had no desire to spoil it by riding the barrel. With one exception, everybody was regarding him with moist-eyed admiration. The exception's eyes were, perhaps, the moistest of them all, but admiration had no place in them.

"You're all being made fools of," he said, getting up and stamping. "I tell you he pushed me overboard for the purpose."

"Oh, father! how can you?" demanded Venia, angrily. "He saved your life."

"He pushed me in," repeated the farmer. "Told me to look at a jelly-fish and pushed me in."

"What for?" inquired Sergeant Daly.

"Because——" said Mr. Turnbull. He looked at the unconscious sergeant, and the words on his lips died away in an inarticulate growl.

"What for?" pursued the sergeant, in triumph. "Be reasonable, Mr. Turnbull. Where's the reason in pushing you overboard and then nearly losing his life saving you? That would be a fool's trick. It was as fine a thing as ever I saw."

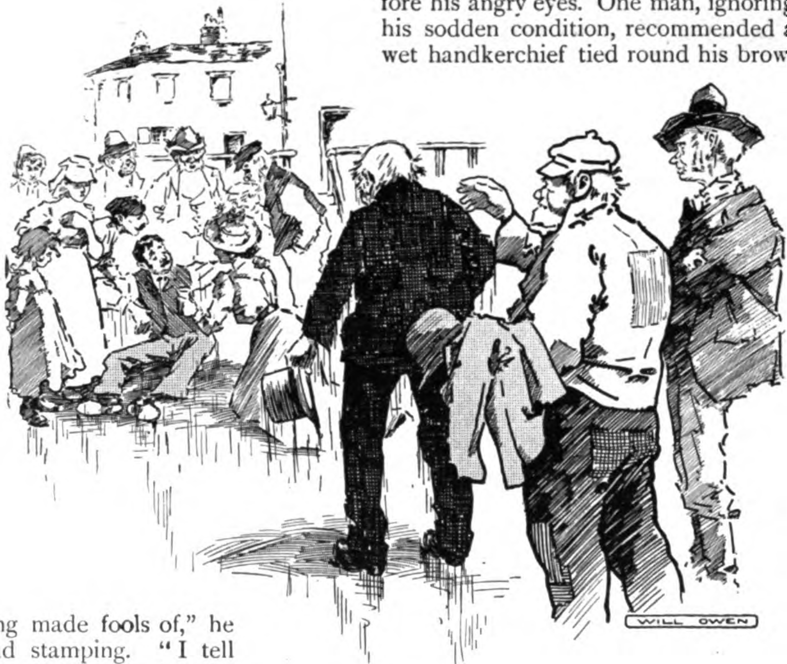
"What you 'ad, Mr. Turnbull," said the stout fisherman, tapping him on the arm, "was a little touch o' the sun."

"What felt to you like a push," said another man, "and over you went."

"As easy as easy," said a third.

"You're red in the face now," said the stout fisherman, regarding him critically, "and your eyes are starting. You take my advice and get 'ome and get to bed, and the first thing you'll do when you get your senses back will be to go round and thank Mr. Blundell for all 'e's done for you."

Mr. Turnbull looked at them, and the circle of intelligent faces grew misty before his angry eyes. One man, ignoring his sodden condition, recommended a wet handkerchief tied round his brow.



"YOU TAKE MY ADVICE AND GET 'OME AND GET TO BED."

"I don't want any thanks, Mr. Turnbull," said Blundell, feebly, as he was assisted to his feet. "I'd do as much for you again."

The stout fisherman patted him admiringly on the back, and Mr. Turnbull felt like a prophet beholding a realized vision as the spectators clustered round Mr. Blundell and followed their friends' example. Tenderly but firmly they led the hero in triumph up the quay towards home, shouting out eulogistic descriptions of his valour to curious neighbours as they passed. Mr. Turnbull, churlishly keeping his distance in the rear of the procession, received in grim silence the congratulations of his friends.

The extraordinary hallucination caused by the sunstroke lasted with him for over a week, but at the end of that time his mind cleared and he saw things in the same light as reasonable folk. Venia was the first to congratulate him upon his recovery; but his extraordinary behaviour in proposing to Miss Sippet the very day on which she herself became Mrs. Blundell convinced her that his recovery was only partial.

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Sponges.

By Fred Westbury.

REECE is at the present day the most prolific country in the supply of sponges, those essentially modern and most indispensable assistants to cleanliness. Ægina is the centre of the sponge trade. Next in importance comes Hydra, in the Greek Archipelago, and Symi and Calymnos, in the Turkish Archipelago. But it is characteristic of our race, and pleasing to note, that the sponge trade in that particular corner of the globe is ruled by Englishmen.

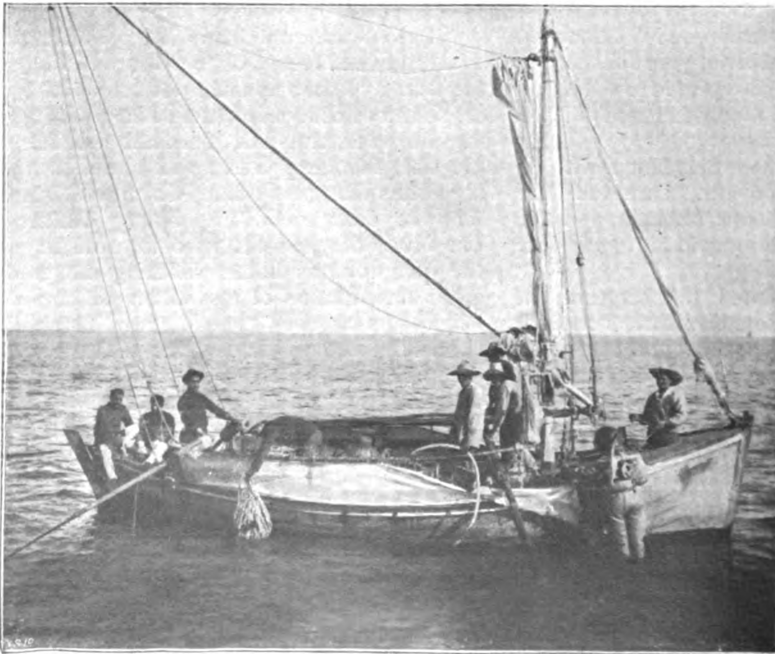
Mr. R. Cresswell, the founder of the house of Cresswell Brothers and Schmitz, the principal firm engaged in the sponge industry, was undoubtedly one of those men who have done so much to spread our influence in outlandish parts, and that, let it be said, through sheer pluck and energy.

To start with, a fleet of sponge-fishers had to be organized, and we see in our first illustration a sponge-boat, showing the diver just rising to the surface; on the left of the picture some men are in the act of drawing out the proceeds of the diver's work. It is a small net, well filled with sponges. The two relief divers are seated at the stern. The air-pump is worked by the men near the mast, while the life-line or signal-rope is held by the man in the bows.

When Mr. R. Cresswell first started in business he knew but little of the elements which, put together, form the Greek as a whole. He thought that it would be in keeping with English principles of commercial methods if the fishing were done systematically.

With that idea he fitted out a large brig, which, by the way, he named the *Cresswell*. The Greek fishermen, however, did not fall in with British methods. They preferred to remain independent and take all risks upon themselves; they did not care to work for a pre-arranged salary or wage. Needless to add, Mr. Cresswell was glad to fall in with their views, and the reason why will be found in what follows.

When these good people were paid regular wages sponges became correspondingly scarce at the bottom of the sea, although the salaries fell due just the same. At their own request, however, Mr. Cresswell organized a new system which worked out to payment by result. Strange to say, sponges were found almost everywhere—they poured in by the thousand. The new rule had evidently affected the sponge-growing power to a tremendous extent; catches such as were little dreamt of formerly were brought up from those unknown depths where some time before no sponges could be found.



DIVER RISING TO THE SURFACE. HIS CATCH IN THE NET ON THE LEFT IS BEING HAULED IN.

The sponge fishery in Tunis is most active in the months of December, January, and February, as, during the other seasons, the spot where the sponges are found is covered with dense masses of seaweed. The tempests of November and December clear away the

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latter, and allow the sponges to be seen. The fishery has, however, two seasons—one commencing in March and finishing in November; the other occupying the rest of the year. In the summer season the production is small, because diving apparatus is then necessary, and can only be employed where there is a rocky or other firm bottom; but the Arabs search along the coasts, feeling for the sponges with their feet beneath the masses of tangled weeds, those which they find being generally of an inferior kind, as they cannot go into any depth of water. The success of the work of sponge-getting depends upon the sea being calm, and there are not more than forty or fifty days during the winter season which are favourable.

In our next illustration we see a number of Greek sponge fishermen packing their catch for the London market. The finding, washing and drying, and packing of sponges in these islands is presided over by Mr. G. H. R. Brown, the agent of Messrs. Cresswell, who is the only Englishman resident at the sponge fisheries. His father founded the Ægina station, and it is significant to state that more sponges are now imported to England from that port than from any other.

GREEK SPONGE FISHERMEN PACKING THEIR CATCH FOR THE LONDON MARKET.

A large stock of sponges is kept in London. In Red Lion Square, the head-quarters of Messrs. Cresswell, there are enough sponges to supply the whole of the United Kingdom for considerably over a year. Sponges are re-exported from here to every corner of the earth, thus proving that other countries cannot excel England in this particular branch of trade.

The diver goes down either in diving-dress, or stripped. The latter is carried down by a broad, flat stone of marble of about 25lb. in weight, which he holds at arms' length in front of him, and which he uses to guide his flight, to protect his head when he first strikes, and to keep him down when he walks on the bottom. Fifteen to twenty fathoms is the average depth; but for depths beyond this up to forty fathoms, which are reached in the Mediterranean, more preparation is necessary. The man, standing in the boat, inflates his chest to the utmost for about ten minutes, and when the blood is thoroughly oxygenated by this means he seizes the stone and plunges headlong into the sea.

The tremendous pressure of the water, at a depth of even fifteen fathoms, is such as to cause bleeding at the nose and mouth when divers begin the season, and only the most expert attempt greater depth. Two minutes is the usual duration of the dive, and three and a half the utmost extent of endurance.

The skin of the shoulders is, in habitual divers, burnt off by the action of the sun and salt water, and the hair is of a greenish or greenish-brown tint during the summer, returning to its natural colour only in the winter-time, after diving has ceased to be profitable. Each diver has a net bag hanging down in front, and held in place by a cord extending around the neck. Into this he puts the sponges as he pulls them from the bottom, and when it is full, or before, in case he has remained too long upon the bottom, he jerks the rope and is quickly pulled to the surface.

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"Like the coral fishers, who never allow anyone to accompany them or to witness their fishing operations, sponge-divers are very exclusive in the matter of curious visitors. My cousin, Mr. G. H. R. Brown, of Ægina," says Mr. Cresswell, "is, I believe, the only Englishman who has been through an entire season of sponge-diving with the Greeks themselves. The reason for his being accorded the privilege, however, is not far to seek. He has always lived amongst them, and is regarded as a blood-brother. Moreover, they will work for him at a nominal rate, whereas their zeal for an ordinary English employer would be conspicuously absent. It thus happens that we can own and fit out boats successfully which in former times would have caused us great loss.

A TREASURE OF THE DEEP—MANUFACTURED ABOUT 200 B.C.

"We should like to point out," said my informant, "that these men are well aware of the hardships and dangers of the diving trade. They undertake their task entirely of their own free will, or, I should add, of necessity. Their native islands are very bare. Agriculture is in its most primitive state, hence the inhabitants are only too glad to revert to sponge-fishing for a living.

"The summer fishing begins shortly after Easter and ends about October or November, according to the state of the weather. From November to the end of March the winter fishing is in full swing.

"In summer the boats go out hundreds of miles from their native shores, but in winter the fishermen do not venture far out, and only dive in comparatively shallow waters. As a matter of fact, the sponge-fishing fleet is managed on much the same lines as the trawling system in the North Sea, and Ægina is our Grimsby of the sponge trade.

MILK-WHITE CORAL SHOWING SPONGE IN ORIGINAL POSITION.

"Our divers have made some queer finds," continued Mr. Cresswell; "for instance, we have in our possession some remarkable amphoræ which date as far back as 200 B.C. They are the envy of lovers of antiquity, and needless to add are also extremely valuable."

We reproduce one of these wine-jars. It is beautifully shaped, and wonderfully incrusted with tiny shells of every hue — marvellous designs, which only Nature can invent and produce. Crowned with the halo of antiquity, this find forms a subject of interest and wonderment —sufficient to be treated alone and separately by some expert and lover of the fine arts of ancient Greece. It is interesting to note how, regardless of the multitude of shells and other inhabitants, these relics of ancient times have been monopolized to a great extent by beautiful sponges, which have chosen their birth-place on the very edge of the graceful curves, modelled no doubt by some great expert many centuries ago. A beautiful mass of white coral with a sponge attached to it has also been photographed; unfortunately, however, the picture gives but a faint idea of the magnificent handiwork of Nature in her most graceful mood. This particular piece of coral was found by sponge-divers near Turk's Island, Bahamas, West Indies.

This brings us to another quarter of this wide world where sponges are also found in profusion — the great sponging grounds which lie to the east, west, and south of New Providence. Here about 500 vessels are

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A WEEK'S CATCH LANDED ON THE JETTY.

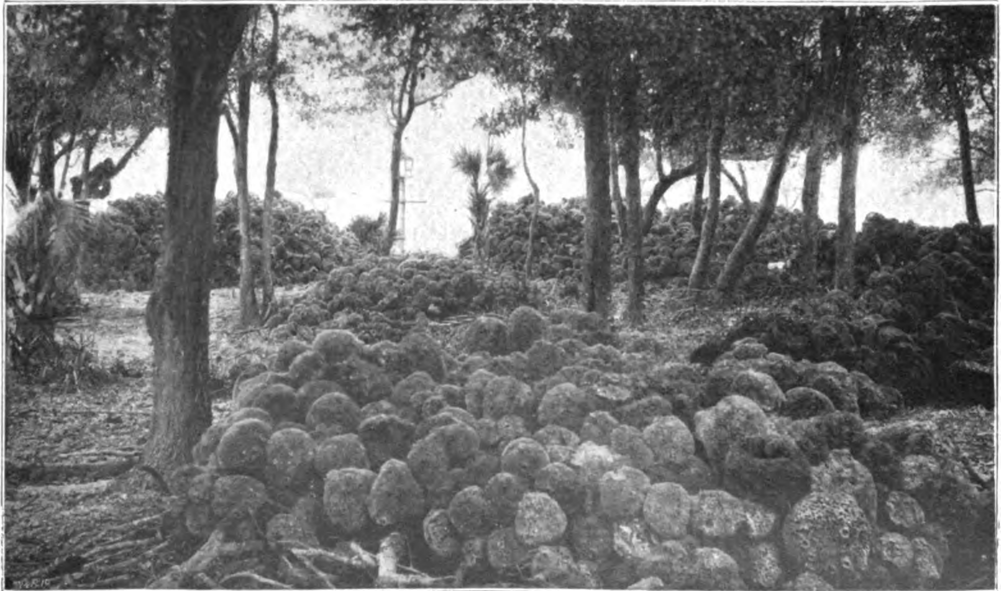
the sponge trade, and we have here two pictures of great interest. They are different views of divers landing their prize on the quay. They show how sponges are landed and counted by the officials in charge. In both cases they are the result of a week's effort, and the crews are pleased at their work.

In Greek waters divers constantly engaged in the trade, 3,000 men find employment, and through it £20,000 to £30,000 sterling is actually circulated and spent in the Colony. Although often far from the shore, and at a depth of 20ft., 40ft., or even 60ft., the sponge may easily be descried through the transparent waters on the clear, sandy bottom, from which they are raked or grappled up.

Sunny Florida is another centre of

are allowed to perform their duties either with or without diving apparatus. In the West Indies, however, the diving apparatus is not allowed. This is on account of the tremendous depth of the waters. The coral reefs are the boundaries of almost immeasurable depths, and consequently the use of the diving apparatus would prove extremely dangerous.

The next picture is a very striking one: it shows piles upon piles of sponges to be



CATCHES OF ALL SIZES AND SHAPES LANDED ON THE FLORIDA COAST.

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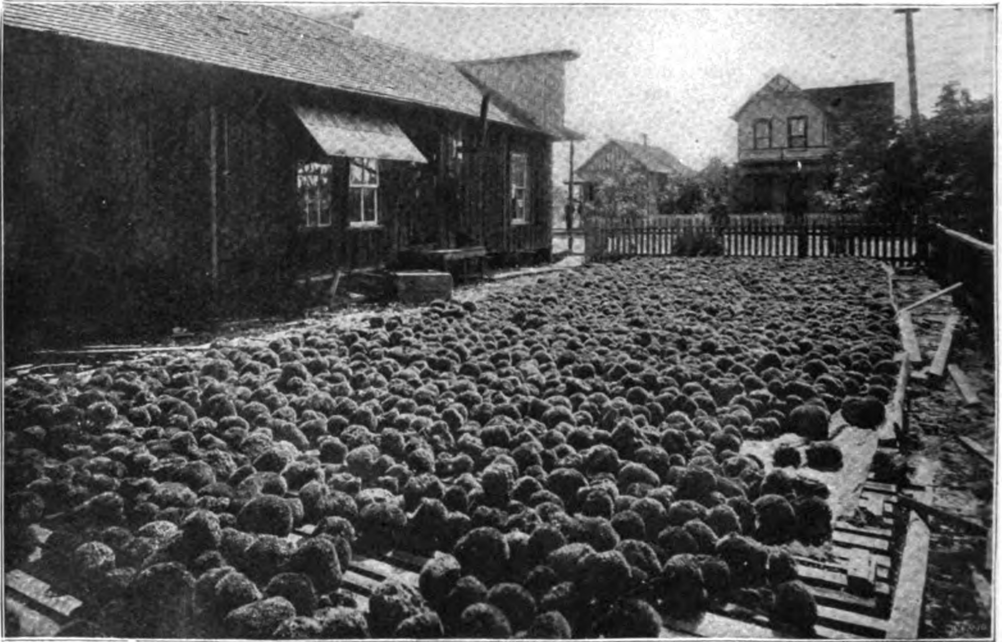

DRYING SPONGES AFTER SORTING AND TRIMMING—COAST OF FLORIDA.

counted by thousands. It gives a view of Sponge Land at Tarpon Springs, Florida. Catches of all sizes and quantities are brought ashore by the fishermen, ready for sorting. Farther on we see the same sponges laid out to dry, a preliminary process to their being finally shipped for English shores.

The last illustration of all is a peculiar one. The negro sponge fishermen of West Bahama and Florida are taking their Sunday rest. Masses of sponges are piled up in the foreground, whilst farther back a negro of splendid physique is seen preaching a sermon to his fellow-workers.

NEGRO SPONGE FISHERMAN PREACHING TO HIS FELLOW-WORKERS—COAST OF FLORIDA.

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Water Polo.

BY ALBERT H. BROADWELL.

Photos. specially taken by A. J. Johnson.

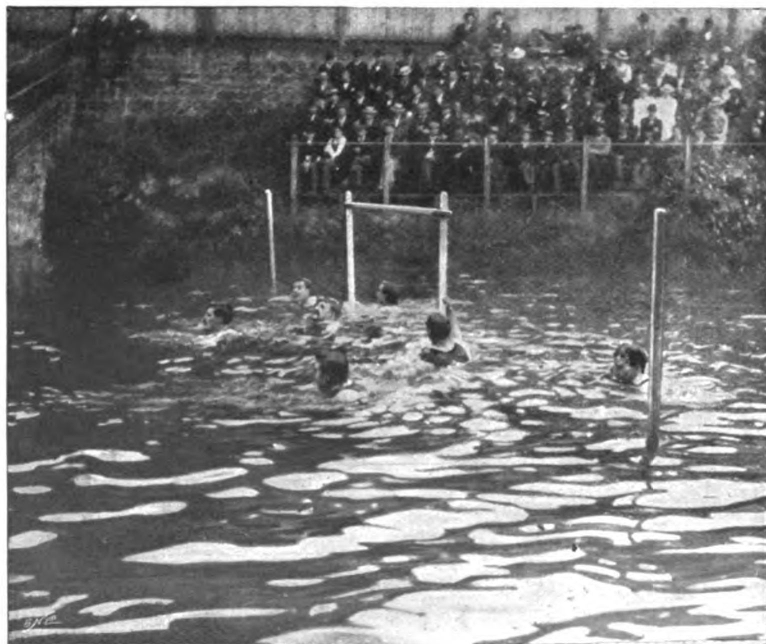
THE CYGNUS POLO TEAM.

SEVEN minutes each way, or fourteen minutes with three minutes' interval at half-time, is the total duration of a water polo match. Short though the allotted time may seem, the excitement is fast and furious, and so is the swimming.

The Cygnus Swimming Club of Tunbridge Wells, captained by Mr. W. Tyrrell Biggs, who also acts as hon. secretary, owns one of the finest open-air baths in the kingdom, and it was through the kindness of Mr. Biggs and the other members of the Cygnus team that we were enabled to obtain the wonderful snap-shots reproduced herewith — a series which gives an excellent idea of the game wherever played, as the rules of different clubs do not differ materially.

The members of the "Cygnus," according to rules, number seven; we reproduce a group of the team, with Mr. Biggs in the centre.

The game as a whole is not unlike a football match. The "kicking" is done with the fist, and speed in swimming is essential. The goal-posts are 10ft. apart, the cross-bar being about 3ft. above the water. There are a referee, who stands on shore midway between the goals, and two goal-scorers, who stand one at each end of the "field." In the picture below the players are shown in the act of "lining up" preparatory to a start.



"LINING UP."

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"GO."

Look at the picture entitled "Go," and here you have one of the most important moves in the game. The snap-shot was taken a few seconds after the referee had thrown the ball into the centre of the field, shouting "Go." It shows the whole by obtaining the ball first. It may be seen floating between the first and second man on the left-hand side of the picture. The following illustration shows that it has been reached, and is being "dribbled" towards the opponents' goal.

"NEARING THE GOAL."

of one side and two of the opposing side nearing the ball at top speed.

Who will reach it first? The tension is great—for an advantage may readily be gained

In "Nearing the Goal" the head of the ever watchful goal-keeper can be seen, photographed as it was bobbing up and down like a cork between the goal-posts. Will a

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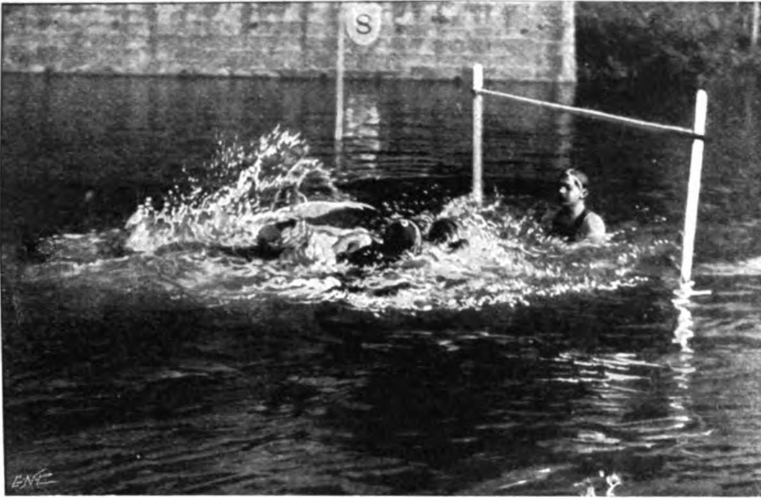

"THE GOAL-KEEPER IS WELL OUT OF THE WATER."

dexterous blow send the ball flying through his posts, or will he be able to parry in time? The next picture shows that he need not fear; the ball is being "dribbled" over to the other side, and then has reached the opposing goal, where the fight is of a most exciting nature. The goal-keeper is well out of the water; he cannot afford to lose sight of the ball for a moment; a hit—whizz—and up goes the ball—bang — and it is parried with wonderful accuracy right over the heads of the combatants towards the middle of the "field"; there it is caught again and brought back; whizz again and, hurrah! the parry comes too late; the goal-keeper's arm has failed him, it falls back as though ashamed of itself, and a goal is scored.

We would call special attention to this particular illustration: the ball can be seen actually flying through the goal-posts — a piece of snap-shotting which does considerable credit to the man with the camera.

"GOAL!"

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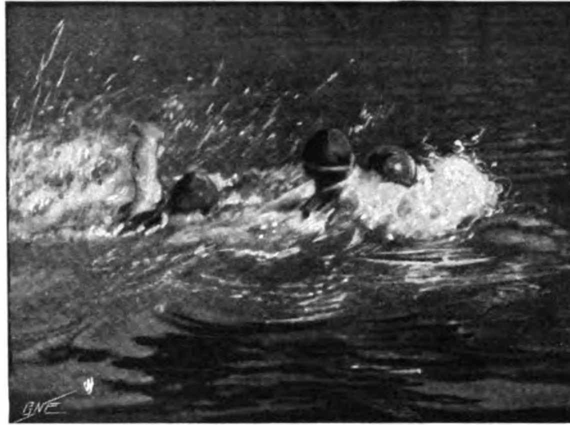
It may not be uninteresting to quote here one or two of the more important rules of the game. For instance, as regards starting, we note that very specified arrangements are forthcoming, namely: "The players shall enter the water and place themselves in a line with their respective goals. The referee shall stand in a line with the centre of the course, and having ascertained that the captains are ready, shall give the word 'go,' and immediately throw the ball into the water at the centre. A goal shall not be scored after starting or re-starting until a ball has been handled by an opposing player or by a player on the same side, who shall be within half distance of the goal attacked; the ball must be handled by more than one player before a goal can be scored." As will be perceived from the above, the rules in water polo are as stringent as those in football or cricket. Furthermore, "when a goal has been scored, the time from the scoring of the goal to the re-starting of the game, or time occupied by disputes or fouls, shall not be reckoned as in the time of play," which excellent provision therefore insures a full fourteen minutes' play.



A SCRIMMAGE.

Now let us return to the match:—

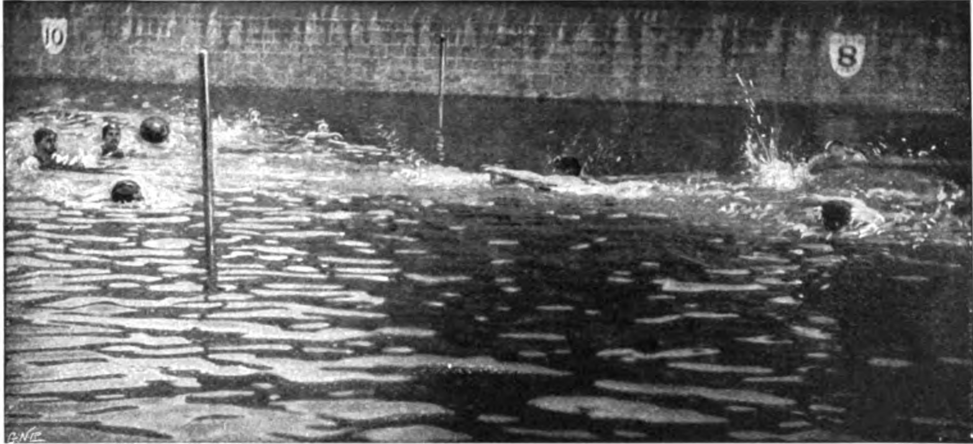
"Half-time" says the referee's whistle. Our heroes may rest for three minutes if they choose; they are eager for a fresh start, however, and we witness some exciting scrimmages. Look at the three pretty snap-shots taken whilst the fight for the coveted possession of the ball was strongest. It is almost impossible to follow the bobbing thing as it is submerged, caught, snatched away, and submerged again. But the camera's eye is quicker than the spectator's; it gives undeniable proof of excitement and hard work.

The illustration on the next page shows a splendid "pass" from one player to another of his own side in the distance. Here again the ball is caught by the camera in mid-air not more than a second after it

MORE SCRIMMAGES.

had left the fist which has sent it on its errand of victory.

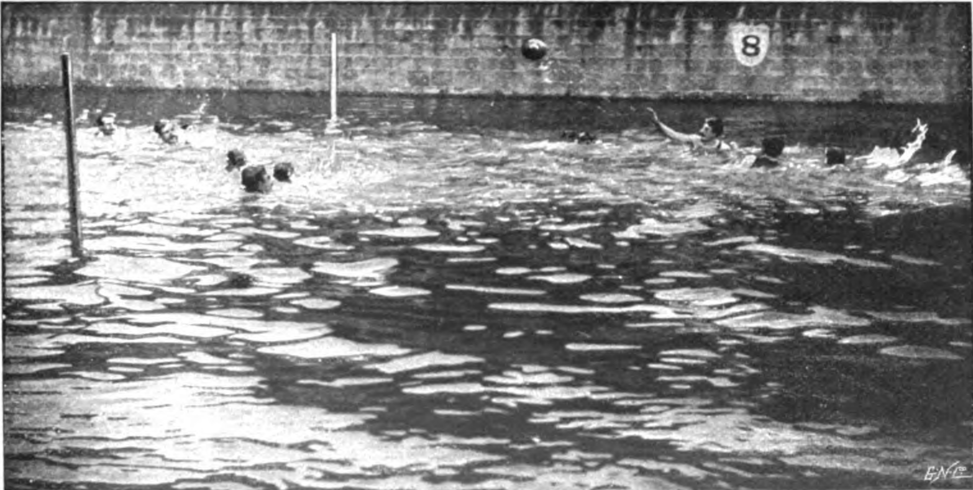
It may here be added that the ball is an ordinary "Association" ball. The rule says: "The ball should be waterproof, with no strapped seams outside, and no grease or other objectionable substance on the surface"; while another interesting rule says: "In baths, no grease, oil, or other objectionable substance shall be rubbed on the body."



A "PASS."

In the picture entitled "A Long Throw from a Scrimmage" the right arm of the player in the centre may be distinctly seen fully stretched out after the blow. The posts, which are shown standing out of the water, are the boundary posts; they are used to mark the half-way line and also the penalty lines on the sides of the field.

"Should a player send the ball out of the field of play at either side, it shall be thrown in any direction from where it went out by one of the opposing side, and shall be considered a free throw," says the "Out of Play" rule, and there is no doubt that this provision is a very useful one; the field of play being necessarily somewhat limited, the case of the ball getting outside the proper boundaries becomes a somewhat frequent occurrence.



"A LONG THROW FROM A SCRIMMAGE."

The illustration on the next page, justly entitled "A Grand Throw," gives an excellent

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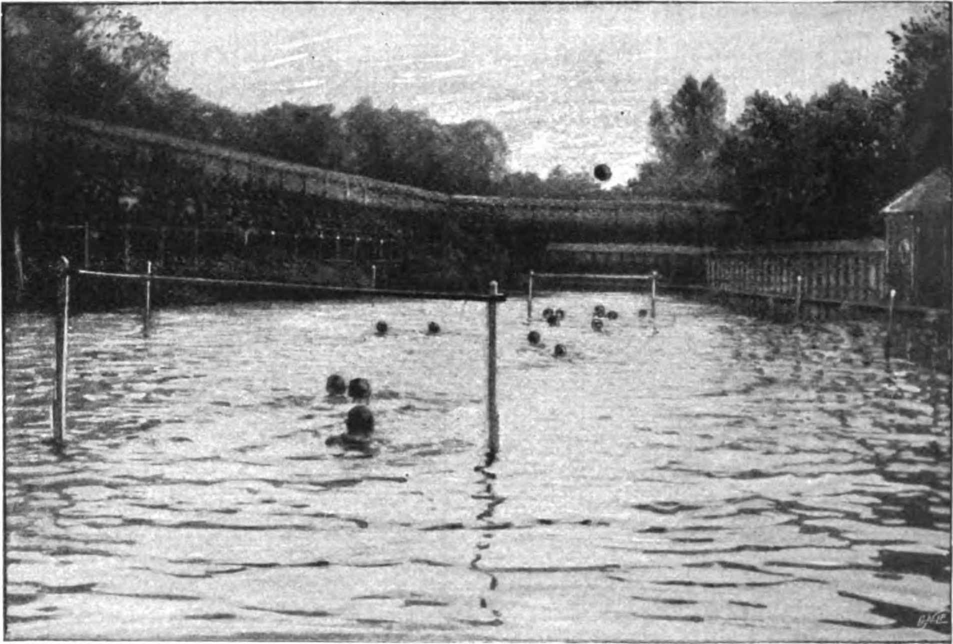
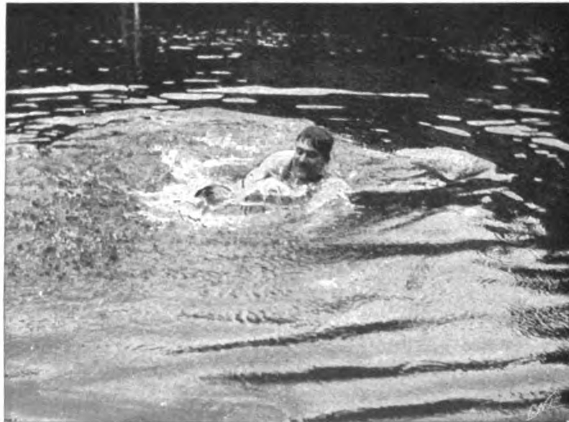


"A GRAND THROW."

idea of the whole bath, and, consequently, of the "field of play" also. The throw, which is a magnificent one, was, however, of no avail. In the photograph the ball is shown in mid-air in the act of passing over the goal-posts of the opposing side, and as the rule says that "a goal shall be scored by the entire ball passing beyond the goal-posts and *under* the cross-bar," this pretty piece of work is useless, save for the wild enthusiasm and applause of the excited spectators.

We now come to an amusing little picture which illustrates a "foul." The playfulness and good humour of the combatants were shown repeatedly throughout the match. We cannot say that we have ever seen the slightest inclination to roughness or ill-feeling, though the little episode shown here is not of the mildest kind imaginable. There are really two players at work here, but, alas! one of them has to be kept out of harm's way until the ball is rescued by a third man, coming on at full speed, but not shown in the picture. The successful party seems highly amused at his exploit; a happy smile indicates his feelings. Does the other man smile too? We doubt it.



"FOUL!"

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Lady Drysdale's Theft.

Edgar Jepson.

THE two women were dressed in black of a very different quality; and the woman with the baby was a widow. She wore the cheap black, but the baby's clothes did not match it—they were white clothes with black bows about them, and the stuff was fine. He was a clean and rosy, fair-haired baby, accepting everything with unwondering blue eyes, since everything alike passed understanding; but he drew his mother's attention to things of interest, the red automatic machines and the white horses drawing trucks in a siding, with a waggle of his arm and an inarticulate, but quite comprehensible, murmur on two notes, a low note and then a higher, prolonged, "Ah—eh—h—h!" His mother gave him but a distracted attention; for the most part her sad eyes gazed down the vista of the railway at a vision of a South African battle-field. When at his murmur she turned her face to him, it lost its sad dreaminess and shone with the divine passion; she almost smiled when she spoke to him.

Lady Drysdale watched the baby with eyes which never left him, eyes filled with the last covetous hunger; sometimes there gleamed in them an envy very near a veritable hatred of his mother. Now and then she twisted her hands in a very passion of greed. Twice she made a step towards him and checked herself, staring round a little wildly. In the violence of her desire she actually dared not trust herself to speak to him. Lost in her unhappiness, his mother saw nothing of it.

Presently the train came in, and Lady Drysdale watched the mother climb into a third-class compartment "for ladies only," and bidding the wondering porter, who had opened the door of a first-class compartment for her, bring in her wraps and dressing-bag, climbed in after them and, with a happy sigh, sat down in the corner farthest from the mother and child. The train started. The mother sat in a spiritless dejection, holding the baby so that he could stand and look out of the window. Now and again, when he drew her attention to something of interest with more than usual emphasis, she roused herself to talk to him awhile, but she soon fell back into her unhappy reverie. Lady Drysdale's gaze never left him, and once or twice he looked at her with familiar eyes, as though he knew her quite well, and every look thrilled her.

Then she played her trump-card: she took her dressing-bag down from the rack and, opening it, revealed the shining row of silver-stoppered bottles.

The baby had turned at her movement, and at the shining sight his eyes opened very wide; he murmured "Ah—eh—h—h!"

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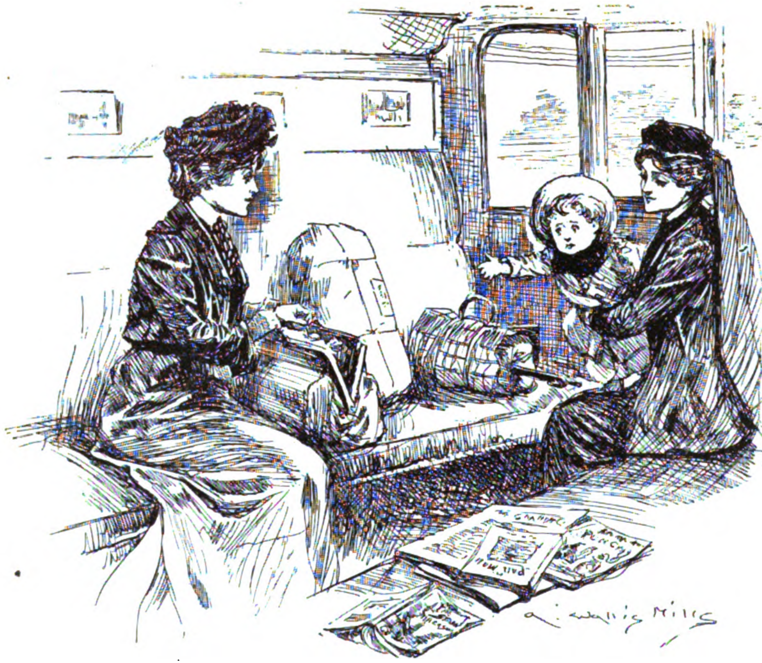

"HE BEGAN TO STRUGGLE AGAINST HIS MOTHER'S ARM."

and began to struggle against his mother's arm. She looked round, saw the open dressing-bag, and held him tighter.

"Ah—eh—h—h! Ah—eh—h—h!" he said. His lower lip went down, and he burst into a roar of anguished disappointment.

"Oh, let him come! Let him come!" cried Lady Drysdale, eagerly.

"He will bother you," said his mother, reluctantly.

"No, no," said Lady Drysdale, earnestly.

His mother set him on the floor, and he rushed wildly down the carriage and tumbled up against Lady Drysdale's knee. Her hands shook so that she could scarcely lift him on to the seat beside her; he nearly dived into the bag in his eagerness to handle the bright treasures. She gave him bottle after bottle, until he wallowed in bottles, clamouring his shrill joy. His mother watched him a little while, and then fell back into her unhappiness. Lady Drysdale took him on to her knee, a bottle in either hand, and he tried to explain to her, in his inarticulate fashion, the intimate connection of these shining things with the ultimate mysteries; life and education had blunted her understanding.

Presently it was time for him to be fed, and his mother took a bottle of some baby food out of her shabby little bag, poured some into a mug, invested him with a napkin, and fed him. After it he ate a sponge-cake and a banana—travelling had not spoiled his appetite. Lady Drysdale took him on her knee and gave him the banana in bites of the proper size. When, after being filled, he went to sleep in Lady Drysdale's arms, with the freemasonry of mothers the two women began to exchange confidences. They cried over the death of Lady Drysdale's little boy, whom she had lost just nineteen months before at the exact age of the sleeping child, and who, she said again and again, was extraordinarily like him, of the same colouring, the same eyes, and the same ways. Then they cried over the death of the widow's husband, an Imperial Yeoman killed in South Africa. At last the baby's mother was moved by Lady Drysdale's sympathy to confide to her her horrible dread of the future. She was on her way to London to live with her people; London did not suit the boy, and she was tortured by the fear of his pining away there. Moreover, her stepmother did not like her, and hated children; she would be unkind to him. Lady Drysdale pressed him closer to her, and schemes for saving him began to float through her mind.

She was silent, thinking hard. Suddenly there came a grinding, grating jar, and the carriage swayed and jerked. Lady Drysdale was conscious of curling instinctively round the child to shield him, of being flung here and there; then came a great crash, and all was still. She was roused from the shock by the screams of the child, and she found herself lying, still curled round him, on the top of his mother. The carriage seemed to be on its side, and they lay in a heap across the lower windows of it. Shaken and dazed, she drew herself off the child's mother, and began hurriedly, with trembling fingers, to

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feel his head and arms and legs and ribs: none of his bones were broken, and he screamed with a reassuring vigour. She set him down and turned to his mother. She lay, deathly white, in a huddled heap. Lady Drysdale tried to lift her into an easier position; her head hung limp on her shoulders; she put her hand behind it, and found the back of it all crushed. She wiped her hand on the cushion, and thrust it into the injured woman's dress over her heart; there was not a beat.

In the first shock of horror she was stricken with panic, and, catching up the child, in a furious desire to be out of this chamber of death, she screamed again and again for help. Presently two men looked down through the windows above her head and opened the door. She thrust up the child into their hands, and when they had set it down they caught her wrists and began to haul her up. Using the supports of the rack as steps, she relieved them of some of her weight and was dragged out. She sank down sobbing beside the child; and the two men, bidding her not give way, went on to the next compartments to haul more people out.

She soon recovered enough to start soothing the child. At the sight of some blood on his mouth her heart sank with the fear of internal injury. It was only a cut lip. The soothing him composed her, and she began to think clearly, gazing round at the scene. The train had run off the line; the engine, wantoning in its freedom, had ploughed its way up to an elm tree and tried to butt it down. Three carriages lay on their sides; their passengers were hobbling or crawling about on the upper sides of them; some were still dragging people up out of the compartments. Three carriages still stood on the metals, and the two others stood in a crooked slant on the embankment. The passengers from these were streaming about the fallen ones. The air was filled with a mingled clamour; the engine in a cloud of steam was sizzling shrilly; the passengers were shouting inquiries, suggestions about getting down, and theories of the cause of the catastrophe at one another; women were in hysterics.

It seemed to Lady Drysdale that she and the boy might have been in a desert for all the notice anyone took of them; and, frightened by the din, he clung to her, clutching her tightly, his little body shaken by great sobs after his crying. She had but realized their loneliness when a sudden idea sprang up in her mind and filled it on the instant with a very rage of possession. Why should she not take the boy? She began quickly to consider the matter and her chances of getting him. His father was dead. . . . His mother was dead. . . . No one wanted him. . . . At any rate, his mother had made it plain to her that his grandfather and grandmother, who alone had a right to him, did not want him. . . . They would neglect or misuse him. . . . She wanted him. . . . Oh, how she wanted him! . . . He was the living image of her dead child. . . . Heaven had given him to her instead of her lost darling. . . . Besides, she had a right to him, for she had saved his life. . . . And, again, she could give him the proper care and love. . . . She would take him! . . . Right or wrong, she would take him!

In this cursory and disjointed fashion she settled the moral question, and turned to the practical matter of stealing him. She looked round carefully and, under the impulse of her purpose, stealthily. The passengers were still busy with their injuries and theories of the cause of the catastrophe. She made up her mind to sever all connection between herself and the wrecked train, and she scanned the country. A couple of hundred yards from the line a high road ran parallel with it; beyond rose a great slope of woods and fields, up the slope ran a white footpath. The slope seemed familiar to her; at any rate, her path with the child lay over it. Somewhere on the other side was a railway other than the North-Western which would carry them to London.

She went to the edge of the carriage roof, called imperiously to an excited old gentleman, and handed the boy down to him. He was too excited to refuse or even protest. He held him gingerly, gasping. She lowered herself over the edge of the carriage and, getting a foot-hold on the rim of the lamp-hole, jumped from it to the ground and relieved him of his burden.

"This is the result of carelessness—gross carelessness!" stuttered the old gentleman. "I tell you, madam, they have neglected to look after the metals. I call it perfectly———"

"Where are we?" said Lady Drysdale, cutting him short.

"They tell me we are two miles north of King's Langley. Such wanton carelessness is quite inconceivable! I can't understand———"

She turned her back on him and walked alongside the fallen carriages towards the end of the field. She knew where she was; the

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"SHE CALLED IMPERIOUSLY TO AN EXCITED OLD GENTLEMAN."

winter before her marriage her people had been kept in town and she had come down here twice a week to hunt. Over the slope, ten miles across country, she could strike the Metropolitan at Rickmansworth and take a train to Baker Street. No one could connect her and the boy with the wrecked train if they landed in London at Baker Street.

Whenever they passed one of the noisy, argumentative groups the baby clutched her and nestled his face against her cheek. Every time he did it he set her heart hammering against her ribs and hardened her in her purpose. She turned up the hedgerow towards the high-road, climbed over three fences, and came into it opposite the footpath up the slope. She crossed the stile and began to mount it quickly, casting timorous glances behind her to see if she were followed; once she thought that she saw people pointing at her from the wrecked train. She set her teeth, hugged the boy to her, and pressed on the quicker. She could not feel her bruises for the joy of having him.

She walked for nearly an hour, then she had to stop; a baby of nineteen months is no light weight, and for all that she was strong and in good condition, her arms and legs and back were aching. She climbed over a stile into a meadow, far over the brow of the slope; set him down, threw herself down beside him, and abandoned herself to her joy in him. She hugged him, kissed him, nuzzled him, laughed over him, and cried over him. He took her tenderness in very good part and made no complaint; indeed, when at last she lay still, he clambered about her with chuckles of infinite delight; always he looked at her with familiar eyes.

Presently he turned his attention to Nature, and made little rushes at flowers near them, invariably falling flat on the object of his desire. He had been trained to bravery; he did not howl at a tumble; he only grunted and pulled himself up again. He knew, too, what to do with a flower when he had plucked it: he sniffed at it. She watched him in an absorbed, unfathomable joy; the intolerable hunger which had gnawed her was blunted.

She was loth to tear herself away from her delightful watching; but at last she rose and moved slowly down the path, letting him toddle before her, or leading him by the hand. He would go a little way with thoughtful dignity, pointing out things of interest with a waggling arm, and saying, "Ah—eh—h—h!"; then he would make a wild rush at a flower, and she would save him from the ditch. She walked in a vast content, drinking in with greedy eyes and ears his every look, movement, and murmur. For the first time since her loss the sun was really shining, and she heard the birds singing.

The path ended in a lane running downwards between high hedges; and on the instant, with a cry of delight, the boy sat down in the thick dust and began to play with it. With this sport to his hand there was no keeping him on his feet, and she

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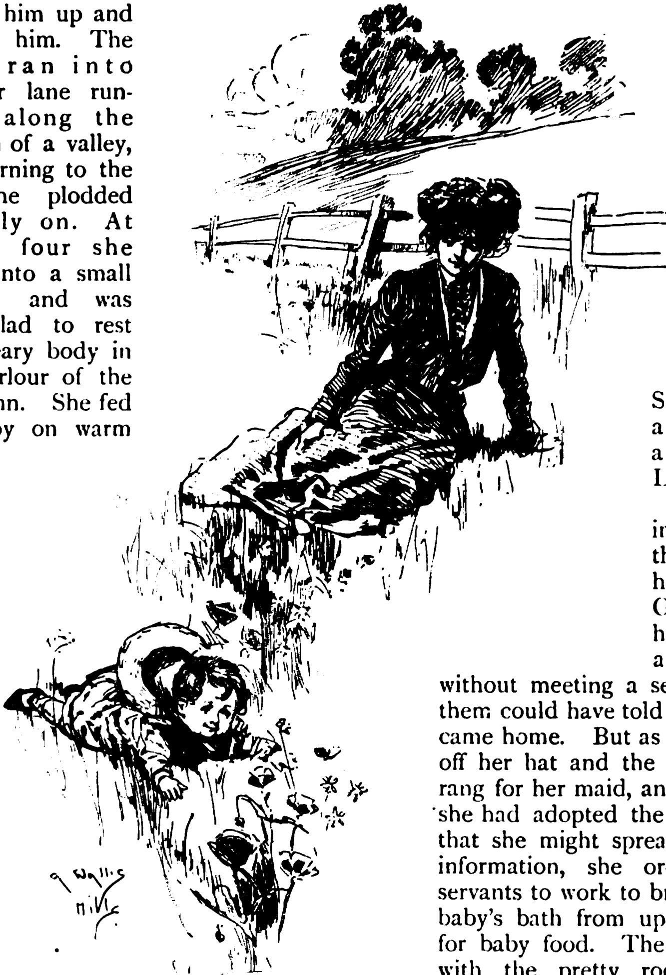
picked him up and carried him. The lane ran into another lane running along the bottom of a valley, and turning to the left she plodded steadily on. At about four she came into a small village, and was very glad to rest her weary body in the parlour of the little inn. She fed the boy on warm milk and bread and butter; and it was such a delight to her that she could have wished him to go on eating and drinking for ever. The landlady came in once or twice and called him a pretty dear and a fine child; Lady Drysdale resented her interest, but she was careful to gratify her rustic curiosity with a story of how she had brought the boy down from London to Rickmansworth to spend a day in the country, and had wandered with him hither. While she took her own tea the boy enjoyed a splendid time with a large cat—the cat rather endured than enjoyed it. After tea she played with him a little; then, since the landlady could not persuade the baker, who owned the only trap in the village, to drive her to Rickmansworth, she took the boy and went to him herself.



"SHE WATCHED HIM IN AN ABSORBED, UNFATHOMABLE JOY."

There are not many men who could refuse Lady Drysdale anything in their power to give her, if she put herself about to coax it out of them; certainly the simple but grumpy baker was not one of them; and in twenty minutes she was being jolted along to the station. She had to wait there but a very few minutes for a train, and reached London at six.

She changed her cab in Oxford Street, that there might be no tracing her from Baker Street to Grosvenor Square; let herself into her house, and gained her room without meeting a servant, so that none of them could have told exactly at what hour she came home. But as soon as she had taken off her hat and the boy's hat and coat she rang for her maid, and after telling her that she had adopted the boy, a Berkshire child, that she might spread that quite inaccurate information, she ordered her to set the servants to work to bring down the cot and baby's bath from upstairs, and to send out for baby food. The boy appeared pleased with the pretty room, and showed his approval by tearing the draping round the toilet-table, in the intervals of waggling his arm and murmuring "Ah—eh—h—h!" at all the bright things on it.

Lady Drysdale prepared his food herself, and then she set about giving him his bath. In the middle of it the fancy came to her that he was her little dead baby come back to her; he was so like him, not only in his little body, but in his ways of splashing the water, of playing with the soap and the sponge, of crowing his delight; besides, never had he looked at her as at a stranger. She thrust the fancy away from her, but it would come back. When she had fed him and rocked him to sleep, and sat watching him, she played with the fancy. Could such things be? Why could not such things be? As her baby died, this one had been born. The tearing clutch of little dead hands was loosening from her heart.

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Presently she heard her husband come in and up the stairs, not three steps at a time, as he had used to come on the chance of finding their boy still awake, but slowly. He opened the door and looked in, and at the sight of the cot he started, and stared with all his eyes. She beckoned him, and, coming softly, he stood by the cot staring down at the sleeping child in a bewildered fascination.

"Good heavens!" he said, softly. "It's the boy!"

In a low voice she told him of her theft and her precautions. He listened in a dull wonder, staring at the child. When she had done, he said nothing; he only gazed and gazed. She shook his arm in a feverish impatience, and said in a husky, grasping voice, "I must have him, Dick! I must—I must! I tell you he is mine!"

"'GOOD HEAVENS!' HE SAID, SOFTLY. 'IT'S THE BOY!'"

"By the Lord, you shall!" said Lord Drysdale, waking up.

The next day Lady Drysdale and the boy were on their way to Munich. Her husband stayed behind to watch events. The baby's unfortunate mother was identified by her stepmother, and when that lady found no baby awaiting her care she was exceedingly guarded in her inquiries about him. In the end she seemed to take it very easily for granted that he had fallen into charitable hands, and even seemed pleased to be rid of the responsibility. She told the railway officials that the child could not have been travelling with his mother. Lord Drysdale contrived to see her—a thin-lipped, narrow-faced, small-eyed woman; and the sight of her face sent him to Munich justified, in his own eyes, in keeping the child out of her clutches. The boy, with a wagging arm and his murmur of "Ah-eh--h-h!" points out to his new parents things of interest in the European capitals; soon he will have grown out of the recognition of anyone who knew him in England. His new parents are devoted to him. It is wonderful, almost past believing, how he has filled the gap in their lives: possibly it is the likeness. Lady Drysdale's feelings about him are very curious: often she tells herself that he is her dead baby come back to her. Perhaps she believes it—a mother's heart is, after all, the mystery of mysteries.

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A Chicago Woman's Dolls.

BY JEREMY BROOME.

FROM high to low, from Queen to peasant, there is a passion for collecting, and at various times we have had pleasure in giving to our readers a glimpse at some of the more famous and curious collections in existence. These have taken many forms. A man here goes in for medals or coins, a woman there for shells, decorated plates, or ornamental fungus, and everyone, at some time or other, has started a collection of curious objects, found near home or picked up in travels abroad. The "fad" for collecting is, after all, a "fad," but it is interesting and educative, and should anything arise to prevent its pursuit the world would lose half the enjoyment of life.

A GENTLEMAN OF MARKEN.

A DUTCH FISHERMAN.

Doll collections are not uncommon. We have all heard of the pleasure taken by the late Queen Victoria in the dolls of her childhood and of the famous collection made by the popular Queen of Roumania, "Carmen Sylva." The interest of both collections lay in the fact that many of the dolls were made by Royal hands. The special interest of the collection dealt with in this article is, if one or two big words may be allowed, geographic and sociologic. It is a collection of dolls gathered in all parts of the world, from the Occident to the Orient, each doll being dressed in the costume of the country from which it came. The faces may not always accurately represent correct native types, but the dresses may be fairly relied upon for accuracy. From this point of view it is not improbable that the collection is unique.

We are able to select a few only of the interesting dolls represented in this collection, which, by the way, belongs to Mrs. Washington Hesing, of Chicago, so great is the number of these little puppets. There are over a hundred, or were when our photographer was allowed by Mrs. Hesing to take his pictures. There are peasant dolls from northern countries up to the frigid zone, and dolls from the sunny south. A lady from a Turkish harem is to be found side by side with dolls from Africa or China and Japan, and dolls from Italy and Spain are near neighbours in this collection to little puppets from the South Sea Isles. The four corners of the earth, in fact, have

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A DUTCH FISHERWOMAN.

ears, and an alpaca skirt with a long calico bodice. The ordinary Dutch peasant-girl is also shown with an elaborate lace head-dress fastened at the temples with diamond-

AN ORPHAN-GIRL OF AMSTERDAM.

contributed representatives to the collection: the Slav joins hands with the half-caste, the Caucasian with the Mongol; yet racial animosity, in the big glass case which encloses the collection, is a thing unknown.

Peasants, it seems, are the more important members of the collection, possibly because peasant costumes are always more attractive than the habiliments of society. The dress of the Dutch is well shown by a half-dozen dolls, some of them being reproduced on this page. A Marken gentleman wears flannel knickerbockers cut very full, and a high silk hat, with a kerchief about his neck. A Dutch fisherman wears long flannel trousers with a short waistcoat and a jacket ornamented with large silver buttons. He, too, wears a silk hat, and with his wife is said to have come from Amsterdam. She wears a straw hat with a lace cap underneath which covers her

A DUTCH PEASANT-GIRL.

studded gold ornaments. The Amsterdam orphan-girl represents an oft-seen figure in the streets of the leading Dutch city. As is well known, the orphan costume of Holland is in one respect very like the motley of a clown, red on one half and black on the other. The two colours may be imagined, therefore, in the costume of our little Amsterdam maiden.

The dolls vary in size, the largest being about the size of a child of ten years. Some of them are 3in. in height. Those showing the different nationalities of Europe are about 12in. high, and this uniformity gives a special interest to the European collection, although it would perhaps be better if the dolls could accurately show the disparity of size which exists in European peoples.

Switzerland is represented by a little girl with flaxen hair, surmounted by a large black hat of lace; and from

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Sweden and Norway have come two dolls, one of which, the Swedish, is particularly pretty both in face and figure. Both costumes illustrate the fondness of Scandinavian women for beads, and both show the cleanliness and neatness for which they are famous.

From Scandinavia to Lapland is not a far cry, and in the figures of the Laplander and female Lapp we get typical costumes. These two were brought from Hammerfest, the most northerly town of the world, and both wear trousers of flannel, the woman wearing a serge blouse and the man

A PRETTY SWISS PEASANT.

A NORWEGIAN GIRL. A SWEDISH GIRL.

A GENTLEMAN AND LADY FROM LAPLAND.

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AN ITALIAN DOLL OVER 200 YEARS OLD.

is a terra-cotta lady about 10in. high and over 200 years old. It came from the convent of San Martino, just outside Naples, and in its costume of coarse silk, representing a peasant woman of the fifteenth century, is said to be one of the most perfect pieces of terra-cotta workmanship that ever left Italy. It is believed that there is but one other doll like it in existence, the companion doll being the peasant husband, now owned by a Roman lady. Our reproduction, as in the case of the other illustrations in this article, fails to give any idea of colour — perhaps the pleasantest feature of the collection —but the costume and general appearance of the figure are clearly shown. Our little Italian peasant-woman is far from being beautiful, but who ever saw an ordinary Italian peasant who was?

A GERMAN NURSE-GIRL AND BABY.

A FRUIT-SELLER OF HAMBURG.

being wrapped in furs. The head-dresses of the two are very curious. In fact, the appearance of the dolls reminds us of the story told by Linnæus, the naturalist, who was sent by the Swedish Government to Lapland. His guide at one time was dispatched to seek assistance, and on his return was "accompanied by a person whose appearance was such that I did not know whether I beheld a man or a woman. Her stature was very diminutive, her face of a darkish brown from the effects of smoke, her eyes dark and sparkling, her eyebrows black. She addressed me with mingled pity and reserve in the following words: 'Oh, thou poor man! What hard destiny can have brought thee hither, to a place never visited by anyone before? This is the first time I ever beheld a stranger. Thou miserable creature! How didst thou come, and whither wilt thou go?'"

Perhaps the rarest of Mrs. Hesing's dolls

Let us now to Germany. In Mrs. Hesing's collection the dominions of the Kaiser are represented by three dolls—a German nurse-girl and baby, an ordinary German peasant, and a Hamburg fruit-seller. The old-fashioned peasant costume has by no means disappeared from Germany, but to see them one has to leave the beaten tracks of the tourist. In the interior, say in the Black Forest, the Bavarian Highlands, or the

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Spree Forest, the older peasants are rarely to be seen in up-to-date attire. Our little nursemaid hails from Mecklenburg. Her short skirts are stiff and full, and a pretty apron is tied about her waist. On her head is the customary nursemaid's cap with a big starched bow in front. The Hamburg fruit-girl is a pretty little doll with a gaily-ornamented costume and a rather frowsy head of long hair. Costumes like this may even now be seen in Hamburg, but not with the frequency of days gone by. Old customs have a tendency to die out quickly in commercial ports.

The glass case in which Mrs. Hesing keeps her dolls is about 5½ft. high, made of ebony, with glass sides, shelved with glass plates. The collection is the result of over twelve years' work, and its value can hardly be estimated. Of course, all the dolls in this case have not been collected personally by their owner, for, if it were so, Mrs. Hesing could rightly be looked upon as one of the world's most famous travellers, so great is the variety and so wide the dissimilarity in geographic distribution of the dolls. Mrs. Hesing's friends know well her hobby, and when these friends have been in distant parts they have taken pains to gratify her by picking up here and there a doll and sending it to her as a gift. This, naturally, has increased the unique value of the collection.

A PRETTY FRENCH MILKMAID.

It may be of interest to mention that most of the dolls treasured by the American children of to-day come from Germany. Sonneberg, the centre of the doll-making industry, is a town of some 12,000 inhabitants, most of whom are engaged throughout the year in the manufacture of the little figures which are such a source of delight to the children of the world.

In 1899 the German doll-makers made a special effort to please their American customers, and doubtless many of our readers will remember the curious figures representing Filipinos, Cubans, and American soldiers and sailors which were so much in evidence during the winter of that year. The inhabitants of the Philippine Islands, according to the Sonneberg designers, are a race of huge savages of the most ferocious type, and their Cuban brothers, if not quite so formidable in size, are fully as terrifying to look upon, whilst the representatives of the United States army and navy seemed strangely Teutonic in appearance, both as regards their uniforms and features. Another figure which had a great vogue, and upon which much care had evidently been expended, showed Colonel Roosevelt, very fierce of aspect, in the uniform of the Rough Riders. This latter figure, of course, was intended to appeal to the patriotism of the youthful American, who was not expected to object to his hero being "made in Germany."

Such brotherly feeling exists between Germany and France that we are here prone to put the two countries together. And dainty are the dolls which have come from beautiful France. Here is a proud and happy "bonne" from Paris, with a box of bon-bons on her right arm and a richly-attired baby on her left. She is dressed in a costume which shows she belongs

A FRENCH NURSE AND BABY.

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to an aristocratic family, and has just worn at the christening a beautiful wine-coloured dress, cut slightly *en train* and trimmed with black velvet. A long mantle, matching the colour of the gown, reaches to her feet, and her lace head-dress, with jewels and wide satin ribbon choux-fashion, sets off the buxom figure of the happy nursemaid. Our little milkmaid seems likewise proud of her profession. She wears a striped red and black calico dress with a straw bonnet and a big red kerchief. On her shoulders is the familiar wooden yoke with pendent milk-pails. Beautiful Brittany is full of figures such as this.

A TYROLEAN BEAUTY AND HER HUSBAND.

The fact that every doll in the collection can be dressed and undressed, thus showing the details of the various costumes of the countries from which the dolls come, is another point of interest. Children, it is well known, look askance at a doll whose clothes cannot be taken off, and we can imagine what revels the Chicago children might have if they were allowed the run of the little models in this great glass case, and could disrobe and robe them at will. It would be fun, certainly, for them, and it would be an object-lesson as well in the art of dress.

Our little Tyroleans, supposedly man and wife, are a happy duo. In the black velvet and large, green, feather-cocked hats so often seen by the traveller in castle-dotted Tyrol, these diminutive creatures of inanimate plaster of Paris are almost perfect reproductions of Tyrolean peasantry. The gentleman is evidently fond of buttons and the lady of beads.

AN ALGERIAN BEAUTY. A LADY OF JERUSALEM.

We now come to an assorted lot. Would we could see more of the Algerian lady, for her ornamented forehead and piercing eyes bespeak an entrancing nose and mouth beneath. But, alas! this sensuous beauty of a sunny land has half-concealed her features under a veil of gauze, and we are left in disappointment. Whatever the doubt may be about her

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face, there is little doubt about her yellow satin bloomers and the size of her feet. The Jerusalem woman is less reserved about her facial appearance, and wears a modest look under a head dress ornamented with coin-like spangles. The embroidery on her gown is neat and costly. Our Alaska Indian shows how different is the Arctic from the Levant. There we find a costume made from vegetable material grown in a fertile land. Here we get clothes made of skin torn from the bodies of predatory animals. The Jerusalem lady wears her own hair, but the hair of the Alaskan warrior is gravely in doubt. He is long-limbed and stalwart, and face, figure, and dress all show his descent from the native tribes of the far North-West.

AN ALASKA INDIAN.

There are, we may add, some very interesting dolls in the collection which we are unable to illustrate. There is, for instance, a set of Russian dolls representing the costumes of Novgorod, Smolensk, and Tcherkaro women, with their well-known shawl head-dress and white embroidered flannel, as well as some Russian male peasants and a few Cossacks. There are a Dahomey woman, picked up in Alexandria; a lay sister of charity, in the costume worn in Chicago; a doll monkey from the South Sea Islands; and a couple of Norwegian wood-gatherers, with packs on their heads and snow-shoes on their feet. There is one little figure—a small wax doll about 5in. high—which Mrs. Hesing has preserved for over forty years. The delicate wax features retain the perfection and naturalness of early days—a compliment to the care and skill of the doll-makers of the last half-century.

A SIOUX BABY.

The collection has but once passed out of Mrs. Hesing's hands for the purposes of exhibition. Many offers have been made to her by people who have arranged exhibits of women's work, but, owing to the frailty of the collection and the trouble necessary to pack up each doll for transport, these offers have been regretfully declined.

The Sioux baby of the collection comes from the Standing Rock reservation of North Dakota, and is made of chamois and deer-skin. The curious thing about this doll is that it is perfectly flat, and by no means suggests the rotundity of figure so common in Indian children. To judge from this doll one might think that Sioux babies were systematically starved. What a contrast to the old coloured "mammy," whose black and jolly face may be said to lighten up the conclusion of this article! With her gaudy calico dress and apron and her home-made cap "mammy" looks the figure of perfect peace, satisfied with the condition under which she lives, and a constant reminder that a pleasant face is the best welcome in the world.

A JOLLY OLD "MAMMY."

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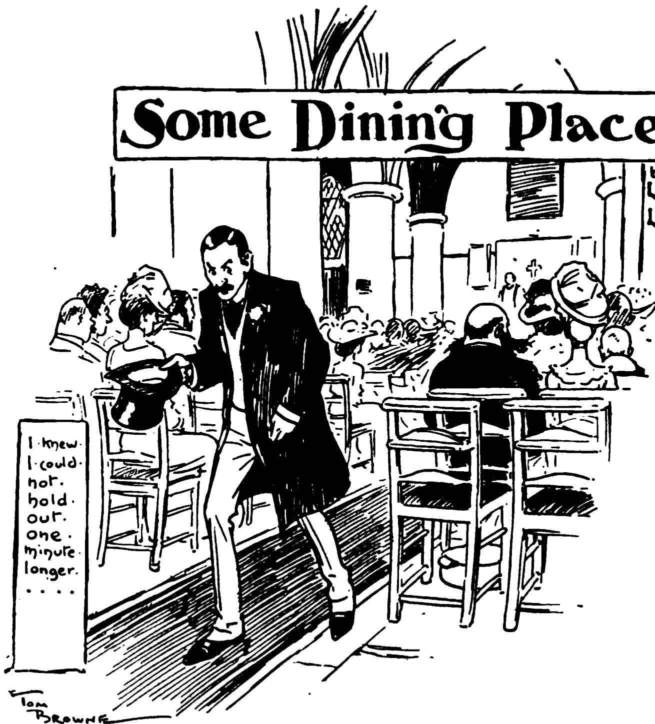

NOW, here is a subject I can talk about with some authority. In the course of a career chequered beyond the average I have dined as variously as most men, and at as varied an assortment of places; also I have failed to dine at all of them in turn, owing to "leaving my purse on the piano," as they say in the East-end when they wish to give harduppedness a respectable flavour. I have dined at the ——, but there, why should I mention their names, and so advertise them for nothing? Did they ever give me a dinner on such terms, or anything like? Not a bit of it; then let them seek the pages at both ends of this magazine if publicity is what they want. I have dined, then, at the —— and the —— and the —— and one or two others: places where I have paid for my dinner with a sum that has fed me for a month in leaner times. These are the only earthly spots where in one's working hours it is possible to reproduce the bewildered consternation of a nightmare. Were you never, in a dream, dismayed at finding yourself somehow walking down Bond Street at 4 p.m. in your nightshirt, and nothing else whatever—not so much as a watch-chain or a boot-lace? Well, one evening, go into one of these noble institutions in morning clothes, and you will feel exactly like that.

I don't think I shall say very much about such magnificent places as these. In the first place, there would be no instruction in it, for who more familiar with these halls of dazzling light than the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE? And in the second and last place, the whole performance, from *hors d'œuvres* to coffee, and beyond—even to the paying of the bill and the waiter's bow—is, in strict fact, dull. It is rather too decorous to be amusing. Reader, are you one of those unfortunates who are sometimes seized with an almost overpowering impulse to misbehave on solemn occasions—a mad desire to shout and turn a somersault in the middle of your own wedding service, or christening, or vaccination, or what not? I am. I have hurried out of church in the middle of a sermon because there was a large bald head in the seat before me, and I knew I could not hold out one minute longer against the horrible temptation to bang it

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with a hassock. It is terrible. Well, just in the same way I suffer at these aristocratic dining places, where you get a good dinner at about the price of a decent coat. I somehow long, burn, madly crave, just when my *perdrix aux truffés* or *beignet soufflé* is approaching in solemn state, to bawl aloud for a penn'orth of whelks. I have a sort of morbid, unwholesome craving to know what would happen. But the outrage would be something surpassing in enormity anything possible with a hassock in a church, and my courage has always failed at the critical moment. Some day, after an extra glass of Burgundy or something, I shall do it. I shall—I know I shall; and I cannot guess what will become of me then. I think I shall feel a little like a criminal whom a judge has condemned to be hanged, neglecting to mention the date. But I shall have one moment of wild, delirious joy first. Nobody can deprive me of that.

But, of course, I have had my penn'orth of whelks. Oh, yes. Not at the ——well, the places I won't advertise for nothing; but in the New Cut on Saturday night, in Shoreditch High Street, and in Camden Town. It is an experience well worth the penny, if you don't mind what happens to your stomach. If you do, it is best to begin with pepsine powder. I don't quite know the precise quantity necessary to digest a penn'orth of whelks, but I should think that about a quarter of a hundredweight ought to be enough, if you get it strong.

Whelks are eaten with vinegar, pepper, and a flavouring of naphtha-smoke. It is customary to take them standing, and at all the more *recherché* stalls they are served in saucers of three or four inches diameter. Fashionable circles have long been divided on the question of strict etiquette in consuming whelks. Formerly it was considered *de rigueur* to fish them up between the finger and thumb, though even then some leaders of society preferred plunging the muzzle boldly into the saucer and gobbling. It is now, however, generally conceded that the correct mode is to throw the head back and shovel the lot into the mouth—previously distended to the proper size — care being taken to rescue the saucer at the critical moment. The whelk is a courageous animal, full of fight, and very difficult to conquer; only experts can swallow him without a severe struggle. A whelk which had accidentally tumbled from a saucer in Camden Town was run over by a van, and it cost the whelk-merchant a week's profits to square the carman for his wheel. It may be remembered that a little while ago, at the Zoological Gardens, an ostrich died in whose stomach were found several pocket-knives, a few keys, some marbles, and a hymn-book. If that ostrich had been given a penn'orth of whelks it would have died sooner.

Perhaps the whelk-stall is not strictly a dining place, even for a poor man, though, indeed, a poor man can get an indigestion there for a penny that will compare favourably with the noblest indigestion of the millionaire. A real dining place, somewhere intermediate between the whelk-stall and the —ah! I very nearly let that advertisement slip—the places where you pay in sovereigns, is the old City chop-house, now very nearly extinct. I am old enough—not so *very* old, though, ma'am—but old enough to remember the chop-house in its early form. There you chose your chop or steak raw. As you entered you faced two vast dishes—sometimes they were wooden trays—each polished to brilliance, and laid out with chops and steaks of every degree of thickness and thinness, fatness and leanness; there was every sort of variety in them except one: the quality was the same for all, and it was the very best. Such chops and steaks are hard to find now, though they *are* to be got. Well, lying by each dish or tray was a fork, or rather a sceptre—a lordly sceptre ending in a prong. You picked up a sceptre and, allowing it to hover gracefully for a moment over the dish while you considered, you drove the prong at last into the chop or steak of your choice; then, with the chop-laden sceptre sloped imposingly before you, rather like a Roman Eagle heading a Legion, you marched up the aisle, between the two rows of high-backed pews where the customers sat, to the blazing grill. Here the cook dexterously deprived you of the chop and took your instructions as to whether you wished it well done or the reverse. This, of course, supposing you were a stranger. He knew the precise turn and touch for every regular customer. So much accomplished, you marched back with your bare sceptre, placed it ready to hand for the next customer, chose your pew, and waited. Your dinner (or your lunch) was the chop or steak, plain potatoes, a hunk of admirable bread, as much cheese as you pleased to cut, and a pint of beer. If you were above beer—few were—you had half a pint of sherry from the wood, and I should think that an order for claret would have caused almost as much consternation in this old chop-house as one

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for whelks at the —— Ah! nearly did it again. Knives, forks, plates, cruet—all were as simple and plain as you like, and all clean enough to make you blink. Mustard was the great condiment; it came in half-pint pots, fresh as the moment, and the customers took it in vast doses. When all was over, you presented the civil waiter with the sum of one penny for himself, and sometimes, if you were more pleased with the chop than usual, you placed a like amount at the disposal of the cook, and you went forth into the street (even the streets of the City were more amusing then) with a great deal of content. And now, as a man who has eaten in all sorts of places, from a whelk-stall to the —— (no, no, I was on guard then), I wish publicly and solemnly to declare that I have never eaten a better meal than one could get any day for a shilling and a few coppers at one of these old chop-houses, where you hunted your dinner in its wild state with a fork, and saw it cooked before your eyes.

There *was* an earlier style of chop-house than this, even—quite the aboriginal sort, I suppose. I can only just remember it as a boy. There the plan was even more elementary—the savagery was put back another age, so to speak. You did not hunt the untamed chop in the artificial enclosure—the park, as you might say—of the chop-house itself; you tracked it down to its native lair in the butcher's shop, and there had it cut to your order. Your prey once captured and securely caged in paper, you carried it to the chop-house, and there had it grilled at a charge of a penny. This, however, was the very early charge, before my time. Later, with the advance of wealth and the growth of luxury and extravagance, you paid twopence for cookery, cruet, knife, fork, and plate. Potatoes, drink, and bread and cheese still further aggravated the ruinous total. There was a narrow court off Throgmorton Street, where a chop-house maintained these ancient principles in the days of my very early youth, having the convenience of a butcher's shop exactly opposite—about five yards off. I remember it because it was in that butcher's shop that my father and I successfully captured two chops, one of which was the only one I ever personally consumed on this ancient British plan; and I wish I were certain of a chop half as good as that one for my lunch to-day. Now, was that in Angel Court or in Copthall Court? I can't be sure—but I think it must have been Angel Court.

"YOU MARCHED UP THE AISLE BETWEEN THE TWO ROWS OF HIGH-BACKED PEWS WHERE THE CUSTOMERS SAT."

Perhaps I was wrong in supposing that the chop-house of this sort was the absolute aboriginal. Possibly at some remote period there may have been a chop-house where you brought your own sheep and had it killed, and paid a penny for the loan of a spade to dig up your potatoes; but that kind of chop-house I do *not* call to mind.

How well I remember many of those mysterious foreign establishments, though, about Soho, where they give you a dinner of ten courses with a bottle of wine and a tooth-pick for eighteenpence or thereabout! These places may be divided into two classes: the first, the real and genuine wonders, where the courses are not quite so many as I have said, and where the charge is a little more; and the second, the humbugs, kept to entrap the ignorant. Very often a restaurant

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of the first sort passes gradually into the second category. It begins with a small *clientèle* of the artistic and literary class, English and foreign, and it provides a capital little luncheon or dinner, perfectly cooked, and good sound claret or Chianti, at surprisingly low prices. Its customers are few, they know good cookery and good wine, and they form a small coterie or circle. By-and-by they bring their friends, and after a little the secret leaks out and outsiders begin to drop in now and again; then the outsiders increase in numbers and the original customers drop off. And ere long these latter go altogether, having discovered a fresh place as good as No. 1 used to be, and as quiet. As for No. 1, it waxes prosperous, and the proprietor finds that he can presume on his reputation. He screws up his prices and he complicates his menu, at the same time as he screws down the quality of his fare and complicates his claret with things as little like grape-juice as possible. So that in time the place is a mighty property, and utterly "blown upon" for those who know, but swarmed nightly with the would-be knowing who mistake a printed menu they can't understand for a good dinner—which perhaps they couldn't understand either, if they had it.

One of the best and cheapest of these places—it is not good now, though still cheap—was my habitual lunching place fifteen years ago. A Frenchman kept it, and he kept it clean, and he fed you marvellously *à la carte*. You could have soup and nothing else if you chose—which would cost you threepence. It was admirable soup, too—a very different thing from the gruesome extract of stock-pot that costs a shilling in the City dining place. A sole—simply fried, but it takes something like genius to fry a sole as it should be done—was fivepence, always. How this was managed I don't know, unless that excellent Frenchman was dexterous enough to steal his soles ready cooked for each customer; I never quite accepted the superstition prevalent at the time, that he bred them in a private ocean on the roof. So with everything else. By some extraordinary mechanism the process of cooking made things cheap; for raw in the market they would have cost you twice as much. Now, why was that? Cooking things doesn't make them cheap at the——well, you know where I mean. It doesn't even make them cheap at home. If I were to go to my butcher or fishmonger and announce that, the articles left in the morning being now cooked, I should be obliged by the return of half the money paid for them, I don't believe I should get it. Somehow, I feel sure that their dull, mechanical minds would fail to grasp the argument. And as to my wine-merchant letting me have claret at tenpence a bottle merely on condition that I drank it before I paid for it, as at the establishment of my friend the Frenchman—well, I can only say that if he ever gave way to such habits he has quite conquered them now.

But nothing could be more illusory than the cheapness of the bad—and popular—Soho dining place. Things are done on the cheap with the most amazing ingenuity. Nothing is wasted—not even the used toothpicks, I should say. I know they use the butcher's skewers to scrape into horseradish, and I feel pretty sure that half the asparagus—the half that has no heads—consists of worn-out skewers also, boiled and boiled and served and served again and again with the real asparagus—if it is real asparagus that they buy in tins—till it is unrecognisable as mere timber. The soup, too, is plainly nothing but the greasy hot water in which the plates have been washed. A shovelful of greengrocer's sweepings makes it "Julienne," flour makes it something else, and as for *croûte au pot*, and the little bits of toast in other soups—why, customers leave bits of bread about everywhere. So that there is the advantage of having all the soup in one tub, and all the dirty plates kept compactly in the same receptacle, which is also handy to stand bottles of claret in, which are ordered to be warmed. You will often notice how greasy these bottles seem when brought to table. All the meat tastes the same—like boiled veal hashed in brown grease; but it is not veal. What it is exactly I cannot definitely say, never having been told. But Englishmen as a nation are proverbial admirers of that noble animal the horse, so perhaps it doesn't matter.

But the bad Soho dining place is better than the bad modern dining place in the City. This has every inconvenience of the old chop-house and not one of its excellences. Oh, that bad City dining place! Sometimes the proprietor is Italian, and you can always ascertain if this is the case by smelling the food, to which Italian proprietorship always communicates a peculiar rankness not easy to describe, but instantly recognisable if you have run against it once. These places usually have cellar-gratings in the pavement, and

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"THE BAD—AND POPULAR—SOHO DINING PLACE."

through these gratings a certain atmosphere rises. I have heard it conjectured that this atmosphere might be cut with a knife; but I have never tried, not having a knife I cared to risk. If I really wished to cut it I should try a saw—one belonging to somebody else. The cellar-gratings, you will observe, are firmly bolted into the stone; nothing else would keep them there. This atmosphere, against which any innocent citizen with a wife and family dependent on him may dash himself unaware, forms one of the greatest perils of the London streets. It is as bad as the soup inside the shop, and a great deal thicker.

The soup, by the way, is always of one sort in these places. It could easily be made by anybody with a barrel of bones and fat and the requisite patience to keep the contents ripening for six months before making the soup. When it is made it is any soup you please. Put it in a plate with a lump of bone in the middle, and it is ox-tail. Fish out the bone and substitute a lump of gristle, and it is mock-turtle. Throw away the gristle and pitch in cayenne pepper till the diner's hair rises on end and his eyes stand out like hat-pegs, and it is mulligatawny; and so on.

The potatoes are of one sort, too—the sort that when boiled present on one side the tender, delicate hue of a costermonger's black eye. There is a secret method of cooking them, too, known only in these places, whereby they are rendered more durable than when raw, and are given the general characteristics and appearance of fine old mottled soap. The general one-sortedness of these establishments extends also to the waiters—and their clothes. It is quite plain that they are not born in those dress clothes, else some of them would fit. But I am convinced that they put them on in early life and never take them off again, even to sleep. And just as the waiters keep the same clothes all their lives, so these dining places keep the same waiters; though I once did hear of one being dismissed who was suspected of washing his hands.

But come, let us get to cheaper—and cheerfuller—dining places. Did you ever dine at a "stodge-shop"? Cabmen used to dine at stodge-shops before the time of cabmen's shelters. The stodge-shop is to some extent eclipsed and pushed aside nowadays by the flaming sausage "emporiums" with a sign of a galloping pig, and, as chief advertisement, a sizzle and a smell of onions that penetrates the very bricks in the next street. The stodge-shop of old relied for its attraction

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not on a smell of onions, but on a great display of steam. It had a sort of window-seat of tin, with oval hollows all over it, each to accommodate a joint or pudding. Near the witching hour of noon these joints and puddings would appear, and, gracious heavens, how they would steam! A leg of pork here, a lump of beef there, a shoulder of mutton farther along, puddings all over the place, all steaming like forty washing days. And the amazing thing was that, the longer the joints stayed and the more they were cut and sliced away, the more they steamed! A boiled leg of pork would sink and shrink under the carving-knife, would show more and more of its foundation of bone, and, presumably, grow cooler and cooler, but with everlasting courage it still steamed the more furiously; till at last, after a busy hour, a mere bone would remain, steaming volumes. And when the bone itself was taken away the tin tray would steam still—unless somebody below turned off the supply in the service-pipe at the correct moment. The stodge-shop dinner was good in its way, but a trifle rough. None of your money went in refinements—serviettes, for instance, or salt-spoons. You got it in solid beef or pork, cut thick, with plenty of fat; you got it in solid, pallid pudding, with a lonesome currant at intervals, that seemed to have gone astray on its journey to some other pudding; you got it in carrots, turnips, and potatoes, a trifle uneven in the cooking, perhaps, but solid as the rest, and filling for the money. You got it, sometimes, even in the literature adorning the window. At the moment I can recollect but one specimen of this literature, a noble burst of poetry that ran thus:—

> We treats you well
> And serves you quick,
> And never forgets
> To cut it thick.

"THEY ARE NOT BORN IN THOSE DRESS CLOTHES."

But there was many another lyric of a quality equally stirring.

I fear I am not over-enthusiastic in the matter of the stodge-shop—I like best to recall its exterior aspect and its mysterious steam. Internally (in a double sense) I found it a little overpowering. The stewed-eel shop I like a little better, though stewed eels I am not very fond of, having frequently seen eels alive in—well, in other circumstances, less tempting. But there is a pleasant and business-like cleanliness about the stewed-eel shop that rather pleases me. "Jossop" is the name given to the gelatinous mass that results from the stewing of eels, in the neighbourhoods where its consumption at shop-counters is in favour. The word is said to be derived, by a poetical inspiration, from the sound that salutes the ear when a long row of customers is busy, each with his spoon and basin of stewed eels. Jossop is nutritious, but gluey; indeed, it is recommended for that very reason in the inscriptions which announce that it "Sticks to your ribs," and that "This is the stuff for broken ribs, a penny a basin!"

Then there is the pie-shop; long may it wave! It is one of the most ancient of our eating institutions, and the mutton-pies of London have been a thing of mystery long before the trouser-buttons were found in the sausages of Mr. Sam Weller's anecdote. Personally, I love mystery, and I hope that no meddlesome official—food inspector, or what not—will ever lift the crust which conceals the secret of the penny meat-pie. As it is, the scope of conjecture for the imaginative remains as wide as ever, and the customer's thoughts as he consumes his pie are directed into useful channels of comparative and speculative natural history: a thing which every promoter of secondary education will wish to encourage.

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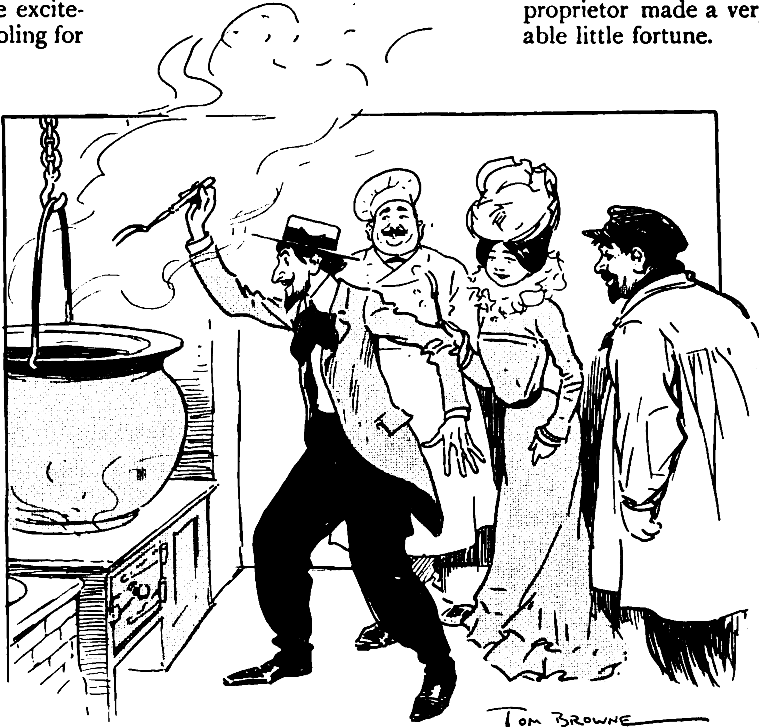
But there are dining places, cheap and dear, outside London, though you might not think so, to read what I have been writing. A sort that I remember with pleasure is the Dublin cockle-shop. Being Irish, it is called a cockle-shop because you go there to eat prawns; and Dublin prawns, being Irish, too, are a sort of small lobster or crayfish. Now, I believe that in Dublin the cockle-shops are not regarded as dining places, strictly speaking; but when I was in Dublin I dined, supped, lunched, and stayed all day in a cockle-shop, and that is what I advise others to do, keeping strictly to Dublin prawns and Dublin stout.

The cheapest dining place I ever heard of in Paris was one in which for the sum of one single penny — ten centimes—you could obtain all the excitement of gambling for your dinner, all the pride of winning it by a feat of dexterity, and, perhaps, the dinner itself. By way of receipt for the penny paid in advance you were given a fork with which you advanced to the side of a vast caldron, full of savoury liquor, in which all sorts of things were stewing — at any rate, so you were told: fowls, joints, rabbits, ribs of beef—anything you like to imagine, all bobbing and tumbling under the surface. You flung your fork dart-wise into the broth, and anything you could stick it firmly into was your own. If you missed—as most people did—you got nothing but a very inadequate plateful of the broth. The customers came in flocks, and flung in so many forks which didn't come out again that the broth became, in the main, a sort of fork soup, and the proprietor made a very respectable little fortune.



"YOU FLUNG YOUR FORK DART-WISE INTO THE BROTH."

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The Incendiary.

BY EDWIN PUGH.

I.

AN accident suggested the idea to him. He had come in late one evening, slightly fuddled. It was dark in the shop, so he lit the gas. He used a wax match and flung it down carelessly. Then he went into the back parlour to prepare his evening meal. He was engaged at the fire when an odd buzzing sound smote on his ears, and then a pungent odour of smoke filled his nostrils. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the glass panels of the door leading to the shop were bright with a flickering gleam which certainly did not emanate from the crackling wood in the grate. He set down the kettle on the hob with a shaking hand and stumbled, terror-stricken, into the shop. A livid sheet of flame rushed out to meet him, and he perceived that a heap of loose paper on the floor had ignited. For a moment he was daunted. Then, suddenly sobered, he swept a muddle of heavy books from the counter, kicked them on to the blazing pile, and so extinguished it. The whole thing was done and over in a few seconds; and then he was leaning breathlessly against the wall, fanning the smoke away from his face with nerveless hands, whilst the sweat streamed down his forehead into his eyes. Little sullen threads of fire still ran and pulsed through the reeking, scattered heap. He stamped them out. And still fear was upon him, so that he turned the charred fragments over and over with his toe until not a spark remained. Then he crept back into his parlour, utterly spent, and sat down heavily and rested his head on his hands.

He was a moody, silent man for the rest of that evening.

About nine o'clock his son Lance came lounging in — the son whom he loved even better than he loved gin; the son who had always been at once the pride and the plague of the old man's life. He was a boy some twelve or thirteen years old, big and strong and not ill-looking, though of a dour, sullen countenance. His looks did not belie his nature. To use a homely phrase, there was no doing anything with Master Lance.

He had had more chances than usually fall to the lot of boys of his class and he had abused them all. He was not inherently bad, but idle and feckless. He hated the constraint and discipline of lessons and study. Twice his father had sent him to decent schools in the country in the hope of weaning him from his growing love of the loose life of the streets. From the first school he had been expelled, after only a few weeks' sojourn, on the score of gross and incorrigible insubordination. From the second school, which was in sterner hands, he had run away; had come climbing into the house by way of a back window in the dead of night and stolen softly to his bedroom, where he was discovered next morning. Nor could his father, either by force or persuasion, induce him to return to the school. In vain he stormed and wheedled, threatened and pleaded. The boy listened, scowling, in stubborn silence. And the old man, his will sapped by self-indulgence, his parental authority undermined by the example of his own disreputable life, had been forced to give up the struggle from sheer weariness of spirit. So it came about that young Lance

"THE BOY LISTENED, SCOWLING, IN STUBBORN SILENCE."

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Mounsey got into the habit of loafing away his days, and was fast by way of becoming an idle wastrel.

But to-night the old man, instead of chiding the boy as he had intended, merely commanded him straightway to bed.

It was some days later that he surprised Lance at the breakfast-table by once more broaching to him the subject of his education.

"To-morrow," said he, speaking abruptly after a lengthy silence between them, "your old master is coming to take you back to school again. I have given him explicit instructions to keep you well under watch and ward this time. I have told him——" The boy mumbled unintelligibly. "Not a word!" his father exclaimed. "You go. I have been weak. But I am determined now. You go. Once for all, understand that. And if you attempt to escape again, or if you——"

"I *sha'n't* go," said the boy.

But on the morrow a stern-faced man stalked into the shop and claimed Lance with such an air of implacable resolution that the boy was cowed at last.

"I shall not go," said he, nevertheless.

His old schoolmaster, having had his instructions, did not deign to argue or coax. He went to the door of the shop and beckoned. Two stalwart young men came in answer to the summons and laid strong hands on Lance.

"Don't hurt him!" cried the father, whilst the boy kicked and struggled in a puny fury of rage.

"Mr. Mounsey," said the schoolmaster, "pray remember our compact. The boy comes to me to be dealt with as I see fit, or he does not come at all. I must have the absolute discretion you promised me."

"Yes—yes, I know. Quite right," stammered the father. "But—he is my only one."

Lance, finding his struggles unavailing, was suddenly still. The flash of anger died from his face. But he glared at his father fiercely and bared his teeth in a defiant sneer.

"They'll not keep me," he muttered. "I'll run away as I did before. You see if I don't."

The father's face twitched painfully. He approached his son.

"Lance," said he, gently, "it is for your own good I am sending you away. You have brought it on yourself. You *must* learn — if you are to make your way in the world." His voice grew unsteady. "Good-bye, my son. Obey this gentleman and he will be kind to you. You will, of course, not be unnecessarily harsh," he added, turning an imploring face to the schoolmaster.

"You know my methods," was the curt reply. "I alter them in favour of none of my charges. You have put the boy in my hands. I will take him under certain conditions, which you know as well as I do. If you have altered your mind——"

"No, no!" wailed the unhappy father. "But take him away, please, at once. I can't bear to see him so roughly handled. Won't you say good-bye to me, Lance?"

"No," snarled the boy. "I hate you!"

"WON'T YOU SAY GOOD-BYE TO ME, LANCE?"

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II.

He went away, and the father was left alone. He would have realized his loneliness the more acutely, perhaps, but the two days that followed the boy's departure were unusually busy ones for him. The idea which the small conflagration in the shop had suggested to him was full-grown now and had become a set purpose. He made his preparations diligently. First, he bought some gallons of paraffin oil—not from the shop at the corner, however; that would have been too transparent. No; he travelled afar late at night, and came slinking back under cover of the dark with his heavy cans. He poured the oil on the wooden stairs; soaked some scores of the books in it; dashed it on dusty curtains, on bedclothes and hangings; made libations with it on the bare flooring, and covered the puddles with a loose litter of newspapers and magazines. In the repairing of old books he was wont to use a kind of coarse muslin. He had a large stock of this flimsy stuff in the house, tightly rolled on pieces of board. He draped the walls with yards on yards of this muslin, laid trails of it from parlour to attic, winding it about the banisters, stretching it in loosely-twisted coils from one piece of furniture to another. All day he toiled in the empty, resounding house, exploring disused rooms that he had well-nigh forgotten the existence of. And at the end of the second day the fell work was done.

He surveyed his elaborate arrangements and was satisfied. His plans seemed to him masterly in their completeness. He had got the boy out of the way into a place of safety. The fire, once started, would spread with immitigable rapidity in that old, dry, worm-eaten dwelling; long before the engines could possibly arrive all the evidences of his crime would be effectually destroyed. There was nobody to pry on his proceedings, nobody to suspect his integrity. He had been insured many years; he owed no large sums in the neighbourhood. Nobody but himself had even an inkling that he stood on the brink of ruin—nobody need ever know that circumstance now. But the thing that pleased him most, by reason of its consummate cleverness, was a cunning piece of acting performed by him that day.

A neighbour had called with a small commission.

"Smell o' paraffin!" exclaimed the neighbour, sniffing.

Old Mounsey leered across the counter, swaying to and fro. "Just upset a lamp—filling it," said he.

"Catch the house a-fire one o' these days," the neighbour warned him.

"Not me," old Mounsey hiccoughed.

"Drunken beast!" the neighbour remarked, quite audibly, as he quitted the shop.

Old Mounsey chuckled.

But he was not chuckling as he descended the stairs in the small hours of the following morning. His face was pallid and damp; his limbs quaked. He stood among his books in the dark shop, listening eagerly to a distant, faint crackle that sounded from above. He had doffed his clothes, wore only slippers and a pair of trousers in addition to his nightshirt. But he dared not stir yet from the place, ardently as he longed to escape from the growing peril overhead. He must wait until the fire got a firm hold on the timbers. To raise the alarm too soon would be to bring the neighbours rushing in; his infamy would be at once discovered.

It was eerie work, though, to cower and shiver in that darkened shop, knowing what he did of what was happening upstairs. He had seen the little blue flames running jerkily hither and thither; had heard the dull, muffled report of the wind-touched blaze that had sprung up near the landing-window as he came hurrying down. He listened, and was so deadly afraid he could hardly keep his balance.

Outside, a wayfarer passed with erratic tread—some roysterer who hummed a merry tune on his homeward way. Was any glare yet visible in the street? He could overhear the pumping of his own heart's blood. The fevered thoughts rioting in his brain seemed almost articulate. Something fell on the floor above with a loud clatter. There was a slow, rending sound—the ante-room door had slipped from its rusty hinges; he had reckoned they would not long withstand the heat. Dared he raise the alarm yet?

On the glass panels of the parlour-door a tremulous, rosy gleam was playing now. That was caused by the draught from the yard as it fanned the smouldering muslin on the kitchen stair-rail.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

The fire was kindling apace.

All his impulse was to escape pell-mell into the street. But he must not yield to panic. He must wait a little longer. He put an iron hand of restraint upon himself.

His thoughts ticked fast.

Now it seemed to him that his elaborate

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preparations were but clumsy devices after all. What if the fire presently died out altogether? What if they found that rotten woodwork still soused in oil and dripping wet, untouched by the blaze?—the muslin, too, so ingeniously draped and entwined, with never so much as a scorch upon it? He called to mind one hasty tangle that he had woven between the cellar and the scullery—the scullery had a stone floor—they would find him out. He wiped his forehead with a cold, clammy hand.

A sudden fierce roar rent the purring silence. A broad, pale flare lit up the shop, burst, and a hundred living tongues of flame went dancing across the floor, writhing up the walls to the ceiling.

He shrieked, fumbled at the door-fastenings, and fled into the street.

III.

At the opening of the door a gust of cold, brisk air streamed in, fanning the fire to fury. A cloud of smoke, riddled with sparks and thickly shot with flickering forks of flame, billowed out behind him into the street—a street so dark, after the dazzle of light within, that old Mounsey felt as if he had been smitten blind. He tottered forward, tripped on the kerb, and rolled into the road. There, for a moment, he lay half-stunned, sprawling on the damp earth.

He rose, trembling, mechanically brushed the dirt from his hands, and staggered to the opposite pavement. Then he turned and surveyed the red ruin he had wrought.

There was little display of fire as yet; but black, rolling columns went pouring up, and all the windows showed as caverns filled with a hollow, fluctuating flare. He stood as one transfixed, unable to stir, listening to the roar of the flames and the crackling of the blazing beams. His wide eyes pringled and watered in the driving reek.

Slowly he grew conscious of a gathering tumult in the street.

Windows were pushed up with rude violence. There was a continuous drawing of bolts, a flinging open of doors. He heard many voices mingled in startled inquiry. Children whimpered, and their mothers soothed them in low, crooning tones.

Someone clutched the old man's elbow, and he saw that he was surrounded by an eager, questioning crowd. But the confusion of tongues was so great he could not make out what was said to him. He cowered before the rabble in vague affright.

"Poor old man!" said a woman.

After that it seemed to him that but another moment passed, and then in an instant the street was thickly thronged. He was bandied about from hand to hand, his thoughts spinning wildly as the thoughts of one in delirium. At last he found refuge on a doorstep, where he sank down, gasping and panting, his cheek against some cold iron railings.

A man with a rumpled

"A GUST OF COLD, BRISK AIR STREAMED IN, FANNING THE FIRE TO FURY."

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head came out and offered him a glass of water. But even as he stretched forth his hand to take it he was suddenly aware of a swift change in the spirit of the crowd.

Hitherto the general feeling had been one of mere vulgar delight in a sensational spectacle. That feeling was now swept away by the inrush of a new mood—a mood so poignantly acute with emotion he could not but share in its intensity, stunned as his faculties were. He strove dully to understand the mystery of this change. He gazed about, looked haggardly from face to face, tried to catch what the people were saying. He saw no sign of menace, such as he dreaded to see, in any of the countenances turned toward him, but only an expression of pitying horror. Clamant voices, that had lately been raised in unmeaning shouts, were abruptly subdued to a low, inarticulate murmur.

He wrung his hands in a frenzy of nameless fear, rose to his feet, looking up.

And as he looked up a deeper hush fell on the watching multitude. Shuddering women, with averted eyes, wailed in chorus piteously, and that was the only human sound. But before that infinitely plaintive outcry the dull, triumphant roaring of the fire seemed suddenly to tremble and wane, even as the darkness trembles before a kindling light.

In the midst of them all the incendiary, every vestige of life and colour drained from his staring face, stood motionless and erect.

His eyes were fixed on an upper window. There, blackly outlined against a leaping red glare, the figure of his son was revealed. Faithful to his threat, the wilful boy had broken bounds and returned home, as on that former occasion; he had got into the house by way of the back-yard and gone straightway to his own room to sleep, worn out by the rigours of his arduous flight. This was his awakening. He was leaning over the sill with arms passionately outstretched. His face worked, his lips were moving, but terror had struck him dumb. At last, by a supreme effort, he wrung out a cry of "Father!" that soared up, clear and shrill, above all other sounds.

The cry seemed to snap the spell that bound the old man's senses. He woke from his stupor of horror. He thrust through the thin fringe of gazers that stood between him and the burning house. They tried to hold him back, but he broke from their clutches and plunged headlong into the smoke. The open door of the shop engulfed him.

Within the shop the heat at once began to sear his flesh, the noisome fumes to choke and blind him. But the wind from without was blowing the flames back, and the flooring, though it was so hot it blistered his feet through his thin slippers, still held firmly together. Through the haze he could see, by the fitful light beyond, the open framework of a door that led to the rooms above. He bore toward it, quivering as the drifting sparks flayed his face and hands, shutting tight his lips to keep out the oily vapour that stung his nostrils and eye-lids. He turned at the door, groped through the confined blackness of the narrow hall, and came to the foot of the stairway. The muslin he had draped about the banisters was all shrivelled to filmy shreds; many of the upright spars were reduced to a winking red char. But here and there one stood intact upholding the handrail still. The stairs themselves, however, were but a glowing rottenness of cindered wood. He set his foot upon the bottom step and it crumbled, bringing down the whole flight in a golden rain of fire. A gaping chasm yawned before him, an abysmal gulf belching forth dust and smoke. That way was impassable. But he might yet reach the yard by way of the parlour. He remembered that there were level leads above the outhouses, just beneath the sills of the upper windows. He groped through the fire-lit fog into the stone-paved scullery. The clothes dropped in tinder from his limbs; his fingers were pared of skin to the very bone; his singed hair blistered his scalp. The dry heat scorched his tortured flesh and cracked his lips. The smoke and dust filled his parched throat so that he could scarcely breathe. Falling beams broke in a dust of red embers on his devoted head. Once he fell headlong over a rafter underfoot and came down heavily, cutting his naked shoulder against a jagged door-jamb. But he did win to the open yard at last, blackened and bruised and bleeding, his eye-balls pricking in his head, his senses almost gone. He drew in a sweet draught of air—sweet after the atmosphere of the house, despite the soot-motes and the sparks with which it was heavy-laden. There was a crazy ladder at the bottom of the yard. He found it, though all things had grown dim to his smarting, inflamed vision, and propped it clumsily against the outer wall of the scullery. It began to slip the moment he set foot upon it. But so swiftly did he swarm up its loose rungs that, though

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it slanted sideways as he mounted, he was on the leads before it finally fell crashing into the yard. The window was open; but he narrowly escaped following the ladder before he lighted on it, so dense was the mantle of smoke that wrapped the walls about.

"Lance, I'm coming!" he tried to call out; but could utter no sound.

A monstrous, curling flower of flame still intervened between him and the bedroom. He covered his face with his torn hands and passed through the very heart of it. He blessed the heat that had stripped the scanty garments from his limbs; the fire might scorch and blister his naked flesh, but it could not cling about and follow him as it would have done had he been fully clothed.

The door of the bedroom was shut. He burst it open. Within, the smoke was dense and pungent, but there was little fire—only one blazing hollow near the wall where a rafter had given way. Again he endeavoured to call out; in vain. His strength was well-nigh spent. He sank slowly on his hands and knees and fumbled his way across the room toward the square of paler gloom that marked where the window lay. There, prostrate on the floor, he found his son.

Dizzily he crooked one arm over the sill and so raised the body up. It stirred feebly against his bare breast. His heart throbbed. New vigour came to him. Twice he nearly gained his feet, and twice he failed and fell back again. At the third attempt he was successful. But his brain was swimming. Sight and sense alike were almost gone.

Into the mist of his clogged brain a faint, glad sound was borne. His dying eyes, looking up, caught a filmy glimpse of a shining helmet. He thought it was the helmet of an angel of the Lord. Two strong hands reached down from Heaven and caught up his precious burden into safety. But no dull echo of the cheer that arose from the crowd below, as the fireman descended the ladder with the still living form of the boy, was ever fated to sound in the ears of the dead father. He fell with the roof upon him, and was buried in the fiery ruins.

They raised a carved white stone to his memory. But perhaps the blackened walls of the house, within which they found his body, were a fitter memorial to the manner of his death than all the splendours of his marble tomb

"DIZZILY HE CROOKED ONE ARM OVER THE SILL."

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Seaside Pictures.

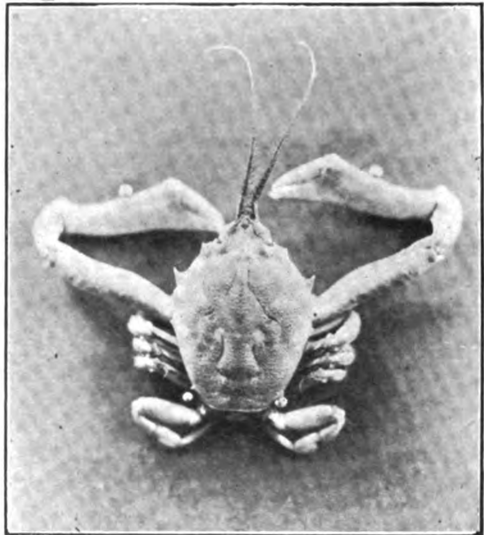
A SAND-FAIRY.

WE will commence this article, which is designed to set before the reader a remarkable collection of quaint and curious seaside pictures, with one which can only by a kind of "bull" be called a seaside picture at all, as it was, in fact, taken on the shore of a lake. "This idea was conceived," says Mr. H. C. Brewer, Clinton, Ont., Canada, "and the photograph taken by my son Hugh, aged thirteen years old, on the beach at Bayfield, a summer resort on the shore of Lake Huron, Ontario, Canada, ten miles from the town of Clinton, where we reside. The picture shows his sister buried up to her neck in sand."

It is frequently a matter of wonder as to where all the visitors to fashionable watering-places find accommodation during the season. It is evident from our next photo., sent to us by Mr. R. S. Archer, Craigleith, Lowwood Road, Birkenhead, that the difficulty is solved at Llandudno by utilizing the bathing-machines, the one in question being "for 85 ladies."

"FOR 85 LADIES."

This crab was found upon the beach at Seabrook, Hythe, and shows upon its back a very good representation of the human face. The features are not only outlined upon the crab's shell, but the nose and lips stand out, while the mouth and eyes are indented fairly deeply. The crab was only pinned upon a board in the same position in which it died, and has not been posed in any way. One lady friend of the contributor declares it is a woman's face, and certainly the position of one claw does suggest the setting right of a refractory hairpin. The shell is of pale pink colour, and the indentations are lined in white, which gives a more natural appearance in the actual thing than the photograph suggests. The photo. is by Mr. W. W. Guenee, of Seabrook, and was contributed by Mr. J. E. Franklin, Rosslyn House, Seabrook, Hythe.



A CRABBED EXPRESSION.

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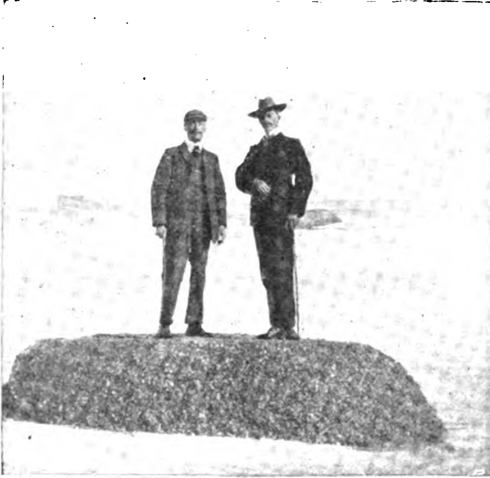
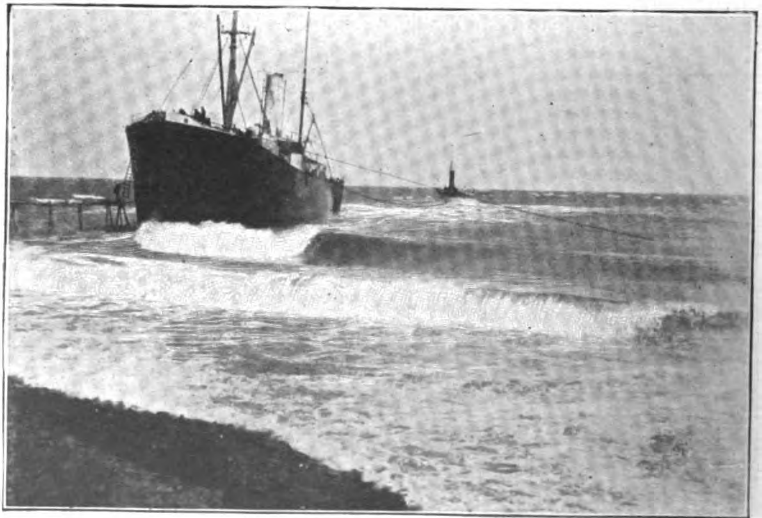


A PHOTOGRAPHER'S LITTLE JOKE.

The two photographs here reproduced were taken by a friend of the gentlemen portrayed. After the first photo. had been taken he perceived a big wave approaching and immediately asked them to wait while he took another. At the critical moment he released the shutter, and the result of his little joke is here strikingly shown. The sender, who prefers to be known only by initials, is H. J. B., "Glenville," Glengariff Road, Sea Point, Cape Town.

At two o'clock on the morning of April 16th, during a strong gale and thick weather, a steamer stranded on the coast of the Sea of Marmora. Her captain naturally wished to communicate with the shore in order to send for assistance, but owing to the darkness and the heavy seas it was considered unsafe to attempt doing so by boat. At daybreak, however, what was the astonishment of the crew to discover that they were right alongside the end of a small wooden jetty which the vessel in stranding had actually touched, but not damaged in the slightest. A rope ladder was promptly lowered, and one of the officers was sent on shore to the nearest village to wire to the vessel's agent at Constantinople. Salvage steamers soon arrived, and the vessel was refloated on the following day, after 400 tons of cargo had been thrown overboard. Her position was now very serious, and there was great danger of her becoming a total wreck owing to the waves causing her to bump heavily on the stony bottom. But even if that had occurred, the crew would have found no difficulty in saving their lives and property by means of the jetty alongside of which their vessel had stranded. The steamer was the *Flanders*, of Antwerp, bound from Ibrail for Salonica.



A LUCKY STRANDING.

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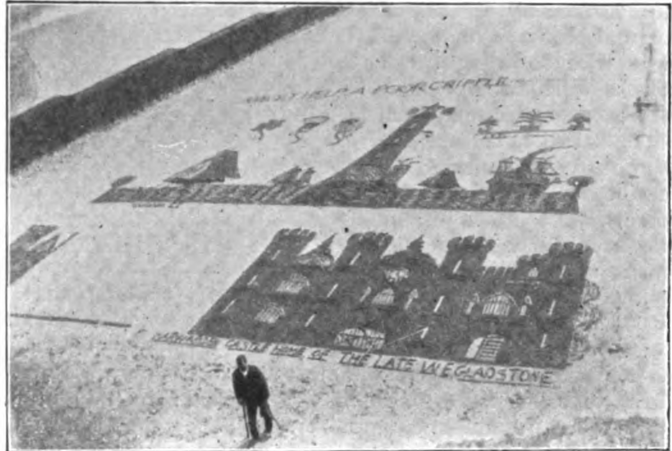
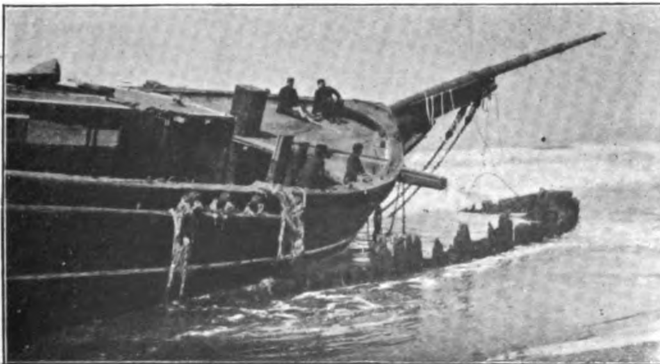
A CARVEN SEA-SHELL.

Our next photograph depicts an extremely novel method of carving, and speaks volumes for the patience and skill of the operator. The writing is executed in relief, each line and letter being beautifully legible, in spite of the fact that it is over half a century old and that the shell was for some years a plaything in our contributor's family. It is the work of an Italian cameo-cutter, a profession by no means overcrowded, on account of the high order of precision and artistic taste necessary in such a calling. This photograph was sent by Mrs. Williams, Honor Oak Park, S.E.

The accompanying photograph illustrates two remarkable shipwrecks on the Pacific Ocean beach below the celebrated Cliff House and Seal Rocks, near the entrance to the Golden Gate of San Francisco's great harbour. Almost a quarter of a century ago the big barque *King Philip* was driven ashore in a storm, and beached far above the waves by an unusually high tide. She had sailed from her last port on a Friday, the sailors' hoodoo day, and had been completely wrecked on a Friday. More than twenty-four years later the schooner *Reporter*, plying between the same ports as the *King Philip* had been doing, and also engaged in the lumber trade, sailed from her last port on a Friday, and was completely wrecked on March 13th, to complete the ill-omened combination of sailors' superstitions. For weeks she lay with a broken back, a helpless thing, more than a hundred yards out in the combing breakers. Then, one night, she mysteriously rose on some mighty swell, and came in and settled precisely within the ribs of the *King Philip*, bow within bow and stern within stern, as nicely as though men and machinery had placed her there within the wonderful coffin.—Sent by Mr. Archie Rice, San Francisco.



A DRAWING IN SAND.



TWO REMARKABLE WRECKS.

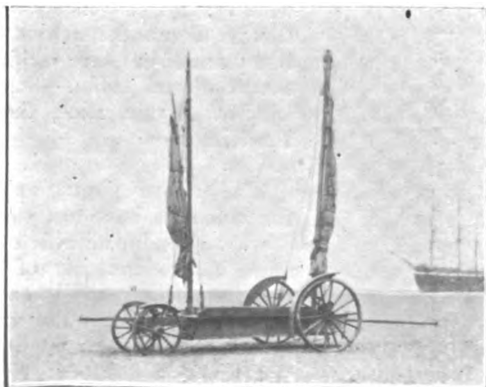
The above photograph, for which we have to thank Mr. A. Brandon, Redfields, Winchfield, Hants, is of a drawing in the sand, executed by a poor cripple with a knife curved like a scythe. He stated that it took him about an hour and a quarter

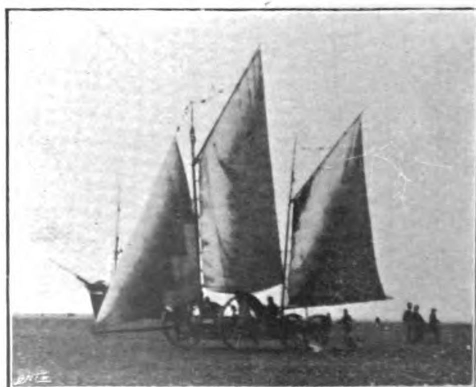
to finish. The inscriptions run thus: "Kindly Help a Poor Cripple (all my own work)," and underneath the pots of flowers, "Three Pots a Shilling," and beneath the castle, "Hawarden Castle, Home of the late W. E. Gladstone."

Here is a necklace consisting of forty-one stones, graduated according to their size and threaded on a cord. As, however, it weighs 7lb., it is hardly convenient as a lady's adornment. The stones are very curious, owing to the fact that the perforations through them have been caused by the action of the sea and the contact with sand and sharp pieces of flint. It might seem that picking up so many of these natural beads on the beach was like looking for a blacksmith's shop in Venice, yet they were gathered inside of two hours on the shore at Hastings. No doubt our readers who set themselves the task will be as successful as the gentleman who sends us the photograph, Mr. V. H. Woolrich, Pittsburg, Pa., U.S.A.

A PEBBLE NECKLACE.

The article in a recent number of THE STRAND on "Sailing on Land" has called to mind an amusement which was once common in Southport, viz.: sand-yachting. The local name of the Southport sail-carriages was "Flying Dutchmen," and they might be described as fishing-boats with flat bottoms, mounted on four wheels. The accompanying illustrations will show what they looked like. In the first there is a view of a Flying Dutchman with sails furled, and in the second the sails are spread ready for a run. Photographs of a Flying Dutchman are extremely rare, and even among men who owned these boats there is scarcely one to be found. With a fine stretch of sand in front of the Promenade, Southport was an ideal place for the use of these boats, though it was never professed that they were capable of anything like the speed mentioned in the article in THE STRAND. True, they possessed a much greater sail area than the Californian boat, but it was not considered advisable to run much more than a mile in one direction, and so the speed which they might have attained on a long run was never tested. Usually they would go at the rate of eight miles an hour, and the trip was exhilarating enough for the ordinary passenger even at that speed, especially when, with a dexterous turn of the rudder and a shifting of the sails, the boat was instantly put about and the return journey was commenced. There was method in these short runs, for the charge was similar to that of a donkey ride—threepence—and on a breezy day the owner would make a very good day's wage for himself and his assistant. Harry Furniss, in his famous





THE "FLYING DUTCHMEN" OF SOUTHPORT.

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This is intended to be thrown overboard at sea, so that when found it will serve to indicate the direction of the ocean currents through which it has passed.

Ship's Name
Date and hour
Latitude
Longitude
State of Wind
State of Sea
Ship going from
Ship going to
Signature

The above should be filled in with a black lead pencil, because ink is so soon destroyed if the paper gets wet.

The bottle in which it is placed should be securely corked and weighted with sand, so as to float well down in the water. Roll the paper in order to get it in.

It is desired that the person throwing this overboard should sign it with full signature and rank.

The person finding this is requested to write on it when and where it was found, together with his name and address, and then fold it, showing the address on the outside (no envelope is needed); and post it. By so doing you will serve the cause of science.

The glass of the bottle should be clear enough to let the paper be seen.

FOUND IN A BOTTLE.

picture of Southport sands, published in *Punch* in October, 1891, showed, among other things peculiar to Southport, a couple of Flying Dutchmen careering along before a strong wind. So strong, in fact, was the wind that several of the passengers were being blown bodily into space, and where they would land was quite problematical. Just at that time the Flying Dutchmen were falling rapidly into disuse. The first marine lake had been constructed, and this rather limited the area over which they could perform their evolutions. A year or two later the second marine lake absorbed another slice of the playground, and finally, when the two lakes were joined and the marine drive was constructed, the doom of the Flying Dutchmen was sealed. For several years the body of one of the old boats was to be seen within the marine drive enclosure close by the pier, but it has now vanished and the place thereof knows it no more, nor will do, unless some individual of a speculative turn of mind and a desire to preserve some of the local colouring sees fit to construct other boats on the same lines. There is no reason why this should not be made a profitable investment, seeing that with past experience as a guide a comfortable, safe, and speedy boat could be planned. It is not a little curious that Southport's lost carriage should turn up again in far-away California, where it is being put to practical use, and where its designers are able to get such a "good run for their money." So writes Mr. J. S. Dickin, of Southport.

The form here reproduced, it will be observed, was thrown overboard from the P. and O. steamship *Victoria*, on July 30th, 1896, between St. Helena and Ascension Island. The following report was issued at the Sydney Observatory on March 24th, 1899: "This paper was found in Mexico and sent by the Mexican Consul at Galveston, Texas, to Sir Julian Pauncefote, British Representative; by him it was sent to the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., and by him to the Governor of N.S.W.; he sent it to Mr. Brunker, Chief Secretary, and he sent it on to the Premier; thence it went to the Minister for Public Instruction, and thence to me. It was found in the Laguna Madre, State of Tamaulipas, Mexico, date not given.—(Signed) H. C. Russell." It is estimated that up to the time it was found it had travelled about 6,300 miles in 850 days.

Our last photo. represents the humorous aspect of the subject of this article. It depicts cave-dwellers (*Troglodytes Gregorii*) recently "shot" on the coast of Wales, as Mr. F. Gregory Jones, 5, Waterford Road, Oxton, Cheshire, informs us.

"CAVE-DWELLERS."

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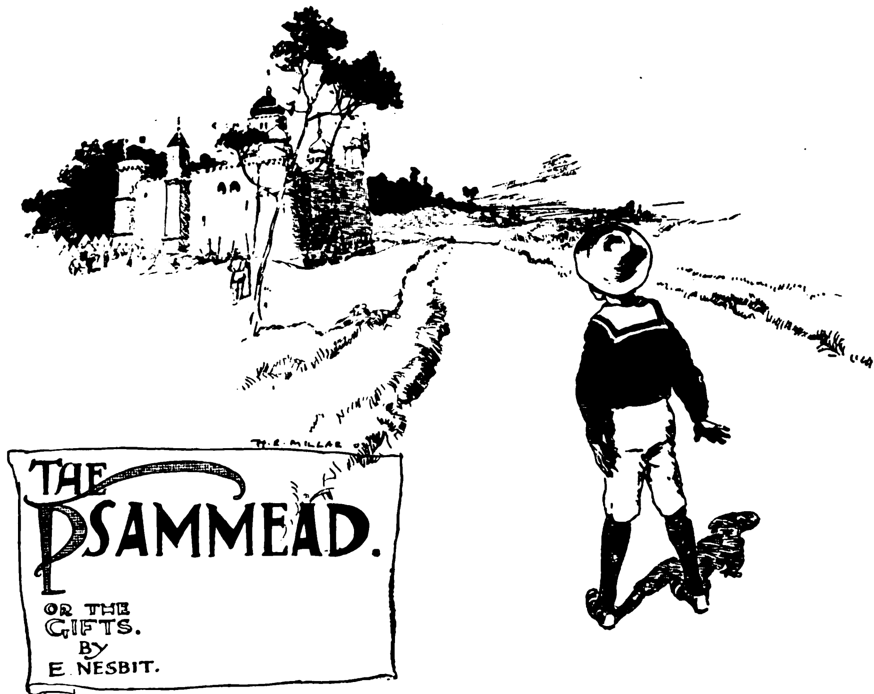

V.—THE BESIEGED CASTLE.

THE others were "kept in." Only Robert was allowed to go out "to get something." This, of course, was a wish from the sand-fairy. There was no time to arrange anything with the others before he went, and when he had found the fairy he found also that he had no ideas. So at last he said :—

"Look here, can't you let the others have a wish without their coming here for it? Just make it come true, whatever they wish in the house."

The psammead said "Yes." And Robert tore home, full of sudden anxiousness. Because, of course, the others wouldn't know, and they would very likely say "I wish it was dinner-time," or "I wish you wouldn't fidget so," without knowing that it would come true, and then a whole day's wish would be wasted.

He ran as fast as he could, but when he turned the corner that ought to have brought him within sight of the ornamental ironwork on the top of the house he stopped short. There *was* no house, the garden railings were gone, and, yes—the others *had* wished—without any doubt they had. And they must have wished that they lived in a castle. For there the castle stood, black and stately and very tall and broad, with battlements and shot windows and eight great towers, and where the garden and the orchard had been there were white things dotted.

Robert walked slowly on, and as he got nearer he saw that these were tents and men in armour were walking about among the tents—crowds and crowds of them.

"Oh, crikey!" said Robert, fervently. "They *have!* They've wished for a castle and it's being besieged! It's just like that sand-fairy. I wish we'd never seen the beastly thing!"

Two men in steel caps were coming towards him. They had high brown boots on their long legs, and they came towards him with such great strides that Robert remembered the shortness of his own legs and did not run away. He knew it would be useless to himself, and he feared it might be irritating to the foe. So he stood quite still, and the two men seemed quite pleased with him.

"By my halidome," said one, "a brave varlet this."

Robert felt pleased at being *called* brave, and somehow it made him *feel* brave. He passed over the "varlet." It was the way people talked in historical romances for the

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young, he knew, and it was evidently not meant for rudeness. He only hoped he would be able to understand what they said to him. He had not been always able to quite follow the conversations in the historical romances for the young.

"His garb is strange," said the other. "Some outlandish treachery, belike."

"Say, lad, what brings thee hither?"

Robert knew this meant, "Now, then, youngster, what are you up to here, eh?" so he said:—

"If you please, I want to go home."

"Go, then!" said the man in the longest boots; "none hindereth and naught lets us to follow. Zooks," he added, in a cautious undertone, "I misdoubt me but he beareth tidings to the besieged."

"Where is thy home, young knave?" inquired the man with the largest steel cap.

"Over there," said Robert, and directly he had said it he knew he ought to have said "Yonder!"

"Ha! sayest so," rejoined the longest boots; "come hither, boy. This is matter for our leader."

And to the leader Robert was dragged forthwith—by the reluctant ear.

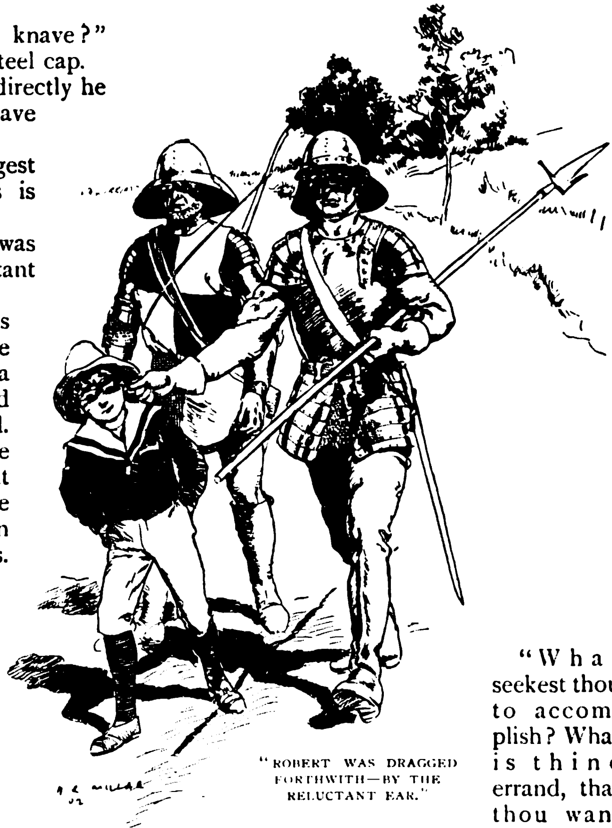
The leader was the most glorious creature Robert had ever seen. He had armour, and a helmet, and a horse, and a crest and feathers, and a shield, and a lance, and a sword. His armour and his weapons were all, I am almost sure, of quite different periods. The leader was exactly like the pictures Robert had so often admired in the historical romances. The shield was thirteenth century, while the sword was of the pattern used in the Peninsular War; the cuirass was of the time of Charles I., and the helmet dated from the Second Crusade. The arms on the shield were very grand — three red running lions on a blue ground—the tents were of the latest brand approved by the War Office, and the whole appearance of the camp, army and leader, might have been a shock to some. But Robert was dumb with admiration, and it all seemed to him perfectly correct, because he knew no more of heraldry or archæology than the gifted artists who drew the pictures for the historical romances. The scene was indeed "exactly like a picture." He admired it all so much that he felt braver than ever.

"Come hither, lad," said the glorious leader, when the men in Cromwellian steel caps had said a few low, eager words. And he took off his helmet, because he could not see properly with it on. He had a kind face and long, fair hair. "Have no fear—thou shalt take no scathe."

Robert was glad of that. He wondered what scathe was, and if it was nastier than the senna-tea which he had to take sometimes.

"Unfold thy tale without alarm," said the leader, kindly; "whence comest thou, and what is thine intent?"

"My what?" said Robert.



"ROBERT WAS DRAGGED FORTHWITH—BY THE RELUCTANT EAR."

"What seekest thou to accomplish? What is thine errand, that thou wanderest here alone among these rough men-at-arms? Poor child, thy mother's heart aches for thee e'en now, I'll warrant me."

He wiped away a manly tear, exactly as a leader in an historical romance would have done, and said:—

"Fear not to speak the truth, my child; thou hast naught to fear from Wulfric de Talbot."

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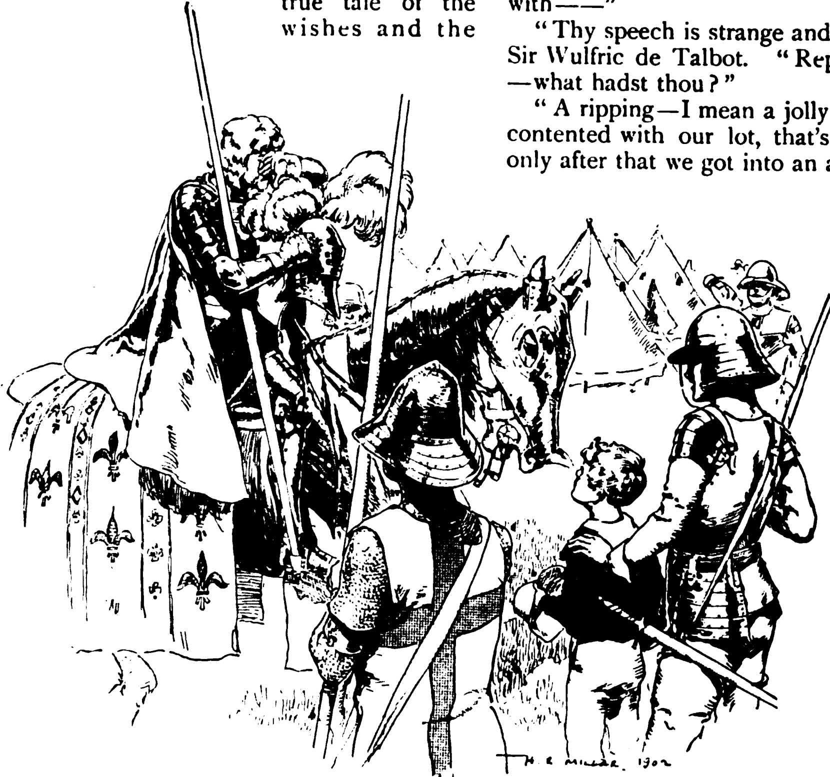
Robert had a wild feeling that this glorious leader of the besieging party, being himself part of a wish, would be able to understand better than Martha, or the gipsies, or the policeman in Rochester, or the clergyman of yesterday, the true tale of the wishes and the



"HE WIPED AWAY A MANLY TEAR."

psammead. The only difficulty was that he knew he could never remember enough "quothas" and "beshrew mes" and things like that to make his talk sound like the talk of a boy in an historical romance. However, he began boldly enough with a sentence straight out of "Ralph de Courcy; or, The Boy Crusader." He said:—

"Gramercy for thy courtesy, fair Sir Knight; the fact is, it's like this, and I hope you're not in a hurry, because the story's rather a breather. Father and mother are away, and when we were down playing in the sand-pits we found a psammead."

"I cry thee mercy! A sammyadd?" said the Knight.

"Yes—a sort of—of fairy, or enchanter—yes, that's it, an enchanter, and he said we could have a wish every day, and we wished to be beautiful."

"Thy wish was scarce granted," muttered one of the men-at-arms, looking at Robert, who went on as if he had not heard.

"And then we wished for money—treasure, you know—but we couldn't spend it. And yesterday we wished for wings and we got them, and we had a ripping time to begin with——"

"Thy speech is strange and uncouth," said Sir Wulfric de Talbot. "Repeat thy words—what hadst thou?"

"A ripping—I mean a jolly—no—we were contented with our lot, that's what I mean, only after that we got into an awful fix."

"What is a fix? A fray, mayhap?"

"No, not a fray. A—a—a tight place."

"A dungeon? Alas! for thy youthful fettered limbs," said the Knight, politely.

"It wasn't a dungeon. We just encountered undeserved misfortunes," Robert explained. "To-day we are punished by not being allowed to go out. "That's where I live"—he pointed to the castle—"the others are in there, and they're not allowed to go out. It's all the psammead's—I mean the enchanter's—fault. I wish we'd never seen him."

"He is an enchanter of might?"

"Oh, yes—of might and main!"

"And thou deemest that it is the spells of the enchanter whom thou hast angered that have lent strength to the besieging party," said the gallant leader; "but know thou that Wulfric de Talbot needs no enchanter's aid to lead his followers to victory."

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"No, I am sure you don't," said Robert, with hasty courtesy; "but all the same it's partly his fault, but we're most to blame. You couldn't have done anything if it hadn't been for us."

"How now, bold boy?" said Sir Wulfric, haughtily; "thy speech is dark and scarce courteous. Unravel me this riddle."

"Oh," said Robert, desperately, "of course you don't know it, but you're not real at all. You're only here because the others must have been idiots enough to wish for a castle, and when the sun sets you'll just vanish away and it'll be all right."

The captain and the men-at-arms exchanged glances—at first pitying, and then sterner as the longest-booted man said:—

"Beware, noble my lord; the urchin but feigns madness to escape from our clutches. Shall we not bind him?"

"I'm no more mad than you are," said Robert, angrily; "only I was an idiot to think you'd understand anything. Let me go—I haven't done anything to you."

"Whither?" asked the Knight, who seemed to have believed all the enchanter's story till it came to his own share in it. "Whither wouldst thou wend?"

"Home, of course." Robert pointed to the castle.

"To carry news of succour? Nay."

"All right, then," said Robert, struck by a sudden idea. "Then let me go somewhere else." His mind sought eagerly among the memories of the historical romance.

"Sir Wulfric de Talbot," he said, slowly, "should think foul scorn to—to keep a chap—I mean one who has done him no hurt—when he wants to cut off quietly—I mean to depart without violence."

"This to my face? Beshrew thee for a knave!" replied Sir Wulfric. Yet the appeal seemed to have gone home. "But thou sayest sooth. Go where thou wilt," he added, nobly, "thou art free. Wulfric de Talbot warreth not with babes. And Jakin here shall bear thee company."

"All right," said Robert, wildly. "Jakin will enjoy himself, I think. Come on, Jakin. Sir Wulfric, I salute thee."

He saluted after the modern military manner, and set off running to the sand-pit, Jakin's long boots keeping up easily. He found the fairy. He dug it up, he woke it up. He implored it to give him one more wish.

"I've done two to-day already," it grumbled, "and one was as stiff a bit of work as ever I did."

"Oh, do, do, do, do, *do!*" said Robert, while Jakin looked on with an expression of open-mouthed horror at the strange beast that talked and gazed with snails' eyes at him.

"Well, what is it?" snapped the psammead, with cross sleepiness.

"I wish I was with the others," said Robert. And the psammead began to swell. Robert lost consciousness for an instant. When he opened his eyes the others were crowding round him in a dark room, with thick stone walls and no furniture.

"We never heard you come in," they said. "How awfully jolly of you to wish it to give us our wish!"

"Of course, we understood that was what you'd done."

"But you ought to have told us. Suppose we'd wished something silly?"

"Silly?" said Robert, very crossly, indeed. "How

"'OH, DO, DO, DO, DO, DO!' SAID ROBERT."

much sillier could you have been, I'd like to know? You nearly settled me, I can tell you."

Then he told his story, and the others admitted that it certainly had been rough on him. And they praised his courage and cleverness so much that he presently got back his lost temper and felt braver than ever and consented to be captain of the besieged force.

"We haven't done anything yet," said Anthea, comfortably; "we waited for you. We've collected a lot of daggers and stones and we're going to shoot at them through these little loopholes with the bow and arrows uncle gave you, and you shall have first shot."

"I don't think I'd begin," said Robert, cautiously. "You don't know how real they are. They won't attack till sunset; I heard Jakin say so. We can spend the day getting ready for the defence."

They explored the castle thoroughly—and really the day passed very pleasantly. It was hard to believe that there could be real danger. It was in the afternoon that they happened to be on the highest tower, whence they could see all round the castle, and could see, too, that beyond the moat on every side the tents of the besieging party were pitched. Rather uncomfortable shivers ran down the children's backs as they saw that all the men were very busy cleaning or sharpening their arms, restringing their bows, and polishing their shields. A large party came along the road with horses dragging along the great trunk of a tree, and Cyril felt quite pale because he knew this was for a battering-ram.

"What a good thing we've got a moat," he said, "and what a good thing the drawbridge is up! I should never have known how to work it."

"Of course it would be up in a besieged castle."

"You'd think there ought to have been soldiers in it, wouldn't you?" said Robert.

"You see, you don't know how long it's been besieged," said Cyril, darkly. "Perhaps most of the brave defenders were killed quite early in the siege and all the provisions eaten, and now there are only a few intrepid survivors—that's us—and we are going to defend it to the death."

"How do you begin? Defending to the death, I mean?" asked Anthea.

"We ought to be heavily armed, and then shoot at them when they advance to the attack, and drop stones on them, and daggers."

"They used to pour boiling lead down on besiegers when they got too close," said Anthea. "Father showed me the holes on purpose for pouring it down through at Bodiam Castle. And there are holes like it in the gate-tower here."

"I think I'm glad it's only a game. It *is* only a game, isn't it?" said Jane.

But no one had time to answer.

For suddenly there came the loud, fierce cry of a trumpet.

"You see it *is* real," said Robert, "and they are going to attack."

All rushed down again to the little dark room over the gate-house and looked out of the windows.

"Yes," said Robert, "they're all coming out of their tents and moving about like ants. There's that Jakin dancing about where the bridge joins on. I wish he could see me put my tongue out at him! Yah!"

The others were far too pale to wish to put their tongues out at anybody. They looked at Robert with surprised respect. Anthea said, "You really *are* brave, Robert."

And again the trumpet sounded.

"Rot!" Cyril's pallor turned to redness now, all in a minute. "He's been getting ready to be brave all the afternoon, and I wasn't ready, that's all. I shall be braver than he is in half a jiffy."

A trumpeter came forward to the edge of the moat and blew the longest and loudest blast they had yet heard. When the blaring noise had died away a man who was with the trumpeter shouted:—

"What ho, within there!" And his voice came plainly to the garrison in the gate-house.

"Halloa, there!" Robert bellowed back at once.

"In the name of our Lord the King, and of our good Lord and trusty leader, Sir Wulfric de Talbot, we summon this castle to surrender—on pain of fire and sword and no quarter. Do ye surrender?"

"No!" bawled Robert, "of course we don't! Never, never, never!"

The man answered back:—

"Then your fate be on your own heads."

"Cheer," said Robert, in a fierce whisper; "cheer to show them we aren't afraid, and rattle the daggers to make more noise. One, two, three! Hip, hip, hooray! Again, Hip, hip, hooray! One more, Hip, hip, hooray!" The cheers were rather high and weak, but the rattle of the daggers lent them strength and depth.

And as the cheers died away Robert heard

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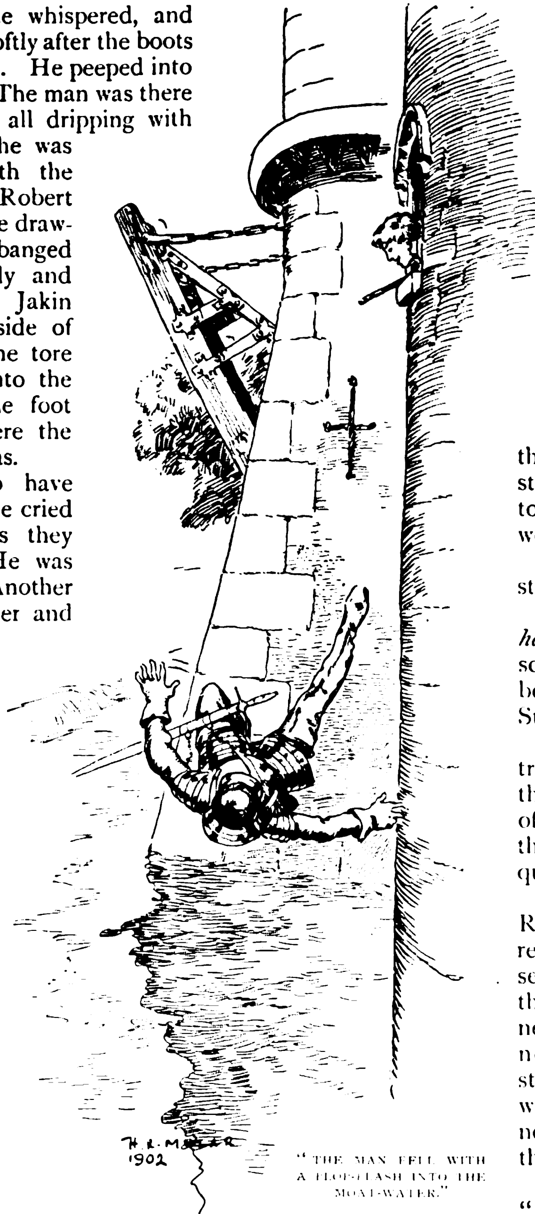
feet on the stairs outside—heavy feet and the clank of steel. No one breathed for a moment. The steel and the feet went on up the turret stairs. Then Robert sprang softly to the door. He pulled off his shoes.

"Wait here," he whispered, and stole quickly and softly after the boots and the spur clank. He peeped into the upper room. The man was there and it was Jakin, all dripping with moat-water, and he was fiddling about with the machinery which Robert felt sure worked the drawbridge. Robert banged the door suddenly and bolted it just as Jakin sprang to the inside of the door. Then he tore downstairs and into the little turret at the foot of the tower, where the biggest window was.

"We ought to have defended *this!*" he cried to the others, as they followed him. He was just in time. Another man had swum over and his fingers were on the window-ledge. Robert never knew how the man had managed to climb up out of the water. But he saw the clinging fingers and hit them as hard as he could with an iron bar that he caught up from the floor. The man fell with a plop-plash into the moat-water. In another moment Robert was outside the little room, had banged its door, and was shooting home the enormous bolts and calling to Cyril to lend a hand.



"THE MAN FELL WITH A PLOP-PLASH INTO THE MOAT-WATER."

Then they stood in the arched gateway, breathing hard and looking at each other.

There was a creaking above, and then something rattled and shook—the pavement they stood on seemed to tremble. Then a crasn told them that the drawbridge had been lowered to its place.

And now the drawbridge rang and echoed hollowly to the hoofs of horses and the tramp of armed men.

"Up, quick," cried Robert; "let's drop things on them."

Even the girls were feeling almost brave now. They followed Robert quickly, and under his directions began to drop stones out through the long, narrow windows. There was a confused noise below and some groans.

"Oh, dear," said Anthea, putting down the stone she was just going to drop out. "I'm afraid we've hurt somebody!"

Robert caught up the stone in a fury.

"I should just hope we *had!*" he said. "I'd give something for a jolly good boiling kettle of lead. Surrender, indeed!"

And now came more tramping and a pause, and then the thundering thump of the battering-ram. And the little room was almost quite dark.

"We've held it," cried Robert; "we *won't* surrender! The sun *must* set in a minute. Here, they're all jawing underneath again. Pity there's no time to get more stones! Here, pour that water down on them. It's no good, of course, but they'll hate it."

"Oh, dear," said Jane, "don't you think we'd better surrender?"

"Never!" said Robert. "We'll have a parley, if you like, but we'll never surrender. Oh, I'll be a soldier when I grow up, you just see if I don't. I won't go into the Civil Service, whatever anyone says."

"Let's wave a handkerchief and ask for a

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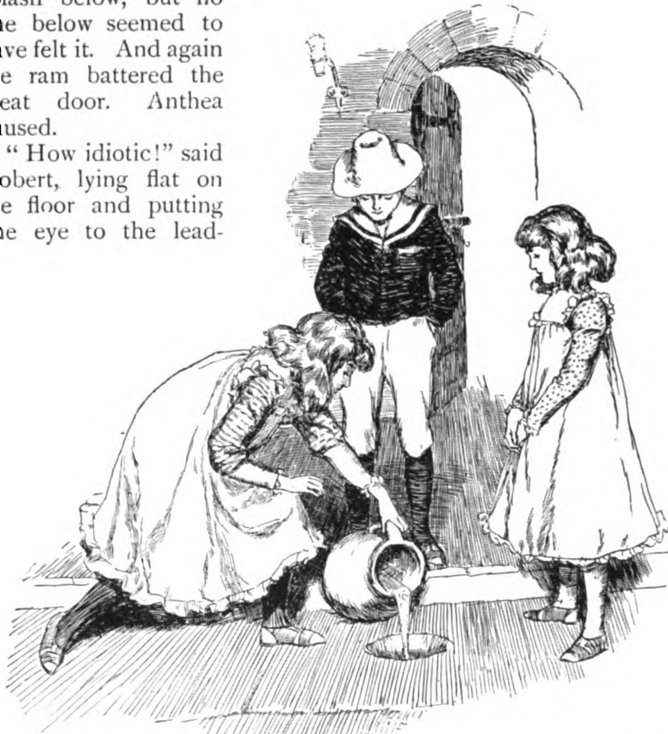
parley," Jane pleaded. "I don't believe the sun's going to set to-night at all."

"Give them the water first, the brutes," said the bloodthirsty Robert. So Anthea tilted the pot over the nearest lead-hole and poured. They heard a splash below, but no one below seemed to have felt it. And again the ram battered the great door. Anthea paused.

"How idiotic!" said Robert, lying flat on the floor and putting one eye to the lead-hole; "of course, the holes go straight down into the gate-house—that's for when the enemy has got past the door and the portcullis and almost all is lost. Here, hand me the pot——" He crawled into the three-cornered window-ledge in the middle of the wall, and taking the pot from Anthea poured the water out through the arrow-slit. And as he began to pour the noise of the battering-ram and the trampling of the foe and the shouts of "Surrender!" and "Talbot for ever!" all suddenly stopped and went out like the snuff of a candle, the little dark room seemed to whirl round and turn topsy-turvy, and when the children came to themselves, there they were, safe and sound, in the big front bedroom of their own house—the house with the ornamental iron top to the roof. They all crowded to the window and looked out. The moat and the tents and the besieging force were gone, and there was the garden with its tangle of dahlias and marigolds and asters and late roses, and the spiky iron railings and the quiet white road.



"ANTHEA TILTED THE POT OVER THE NEAREST LEAD-HOLE."

Everyone drew a deep breath.

"And that's all right!" said Robert; "I told you so! And I say—we didn't surrender, did we?"

"Aren't you glad now I wished for a castle?" asked Cyril.

"I think I am *now*," said Anthea, slowly. "But I wouldn't wish for it again, I think."

"Oh, it was simply splendid," said Jane, unexpectedly. "I wasn't frightened a bit."

"Oh, I say!" Cyril was beginning—but Anthea stopped him.

"Look here," she said, "it's just come into my head. This is the very first thing we've wished for that hasn't got us into a row. And there hasn't been the least little scrap of a row about this. Nobody's raging downstairs, we're safe and sound—we've had an awfully jolly day—at least, not jolly exactly, but you know what I mean. And we know now how brave Robert is—and Cyril, too, of course," she added, hastily, "and Jane as well. And we haven't got into a row with a single grown-up."

The door was opened suddenly and fiercely.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," said the voice of Martha, and they could tell by her voice that she was very angry indeed; "I thought you couldn't last through the day without getting up to some dodgery! A person can't take a breath of air on the front door-step but you must be emptying the wash-hand jug on to their heads! Off you go to bed, the lot of you, and try to get up better children in the morning. Now, then, don't let me have to tell you twice. If I find any of you not in bed in ten minutes I'll let you know it, that's all. A new cap and everything. Off you go!"

And off they went. And that was the end of the besieged castle.

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Dickens as an Artist.

By Leonard W. Lillingston.

DICKENS'S illustrators had a by no means easy time of it. His requirements were exacting even beyond what is ordinary between author and artist. He was apt, as he himself said, "to build up temples in his mind not always makable with hands." A passage in his biography goes farther than that. We are assured that the great novelist himself said that he was invariably disappointed in the illustrations. So much disappointed was he, according to another authority, that he would have preferred his books to have been published without them!

May not the true explanation of this disappointment be found in the three drawings by Dickens which accompany this article? His fingers itched, even though more or less unconsciously, to do the work himself.

There is nothing in these sketches to indicate a pronounced artistic inaptitude. Upon some of us all the drawing-lessons in the world would be thrown away. These, crude as they are, betray no such disability. And as to their crudity, it should be remembered that they are, on the face of it, sketches and not finished drawings—an entirely different matter.

The portfolio of any professed artist would yield a crop of first designs almost as primitive in execution as these of Dickens.

"TWO MILES AN HOUR!"

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But I do not propose to set up that Dickens was a great artist, only to suggest that he was not wanting in the artistic sense. We are enabled to fix the date approximately of one of these sketches at least, that which includes "Mr. Dibdin's High-Mettled Racer."

This highly popular song of Dibdin's was published in 1831, with ten illustrations by Robert Cruikshank. It must have enjoyed an uncommon vogue, which probably lasted for some years. The great Ducrow staged an equestrian entertainment entitled "The High-Mettled Racer; or, the Life, Death, and Restoration of the Favourite Hunter," in which his celebrated Hanoverian horse, Brigand, played the title-rôle. The song is as poor a piece of versification as Dibdin ever perpetrated, and he perpetrated many; it is, perhaps, a little difficult at this date to understand its more than transient popularity. But it was a sporting song, and if we are a nation of sportsmen now, we were still more so then. The sketch was probably made between 1831 and 1837—that is, either shortly before or at the same time with the publication of "Sketches by Boz."

We may at once acquit Dickens of any unfulfilled intention of drawing an ideal steed. Does he not himself refer disparagingly to the animal in the description beneath—"Two Miles an Hour; or, How to Frighten a Jackass"? By the way, the jackass is, perhaps, the least like to nature of them all. I am constrained to admit that at first sight it favours a hyena more than a jackass. The equestrian, too, must have his joke, or it would not be Dickens. "Vell, I declare," says he, "nankeen breeches are famous for riding in." Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has hinted at the probability that our descendants will have to read "Pickwick" with a glossary at their elbow. It is quite likely. And here is another proof of its likelihood; for evidently this was some subtle satire of the time on the Cockney equestrian and his nankeen breeches. Alas, that time should have so dulled the point of it! By the way, the artist evidently had in mind the last line of verse three of the song, which runs: "The high-mettled racer's a hack on the road."

I am inclined to think that the steed between the shafts is the better one. One need say no more of the pair behind the shafts except that they look "all werry jolly and comfortable." The conveyance, I suppose, might be described as a kind—of a sort—of a phaeton. For myself I can think of Dickens in connection with only one conveyance, "the neatest, pwettiest, gwacefullest thing that ever wan upon wheels—painted wed, with a cweam piebald," the property of Lord Mutanhed.

The second word in the text accompanying the next drawing has, I must confess, proved somewhat puzzling. Having spent several hours in trying to decipher it to my satisfaction, I am, perforce, obliged to leave the final solution of the problem to the readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE. An expert in autographs, and in the Dickens autograph in particular, leans to the view that the title is "The 2 Faquirs and the Ducks." True, the spelling of "fakir" varies a good deal, as the dictionaries witness. But are these gentlemen below intended for fakirs? I should rather suggest that they are Red Indians; their head-gear alone seems to me sufficiently convincing.

For the rest the expression on the features of the one in front—we only see him in profile, remember—appears to be intended to convey the intensest indignation and surprise. "And that Duck," he says, "holds the Soul of my Mother." The face of his companion, on the other hand, wears a smirk of cynical indifference as though he had long since outgrown such "a creed outworn" as

"THE FAKIRS AND THE DUCKS."

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that of the transmigration of souls, and had been merely egging on his comrade into a theological discussion. Viewed in this light his "My father inhabits that Drake" is a mere piece of hypocrisy. The miller, with his stick firmly planted on the ground, and breathing an air of defiance in general, is quite indifferent to the doctrine of transmigration. "You may claim their *Souls*," says he, "But you don't do me out of their *Bodies*."

The third and last sketch is, as a drawing, perhaps the least interesting of the three; but in another sense it far surpasses the others in interest, for in the left-hand corner of the sketch are the initials of the artist. They are a quite characteristic Dickens autograph, as, indeed, is the autograph throughout all three. The "C" and "D" of this particular sketch are, however, especially noteworthy. The Cheesewring is, of course, well known to visitors to Cornwall as one of its many Druidical remains. The name is said to be derived from the shape, suggesting a cheese-press. The Cheesewring consists of six stones superimposed one upon another. The top one was formerly, in all probability, a "Logan" or rocking-stone, now out of equipoise. The pile is about 32ft. high.

THE CHEESEWRING.

I cannot find any trace of Dickens having visited Cornwall prior to the famous excursion in 1843, when he was accompanied by Clarkson Stanfield, Maclise, and Forster. "It was such an unexpected and continued attraction for us," writes Forster, "that we were well into the third week of absence before we turned our faces homeward. Railways helped us then not much, but where the roads were inaccessible to post-horses we walked." And Dickens himself wrote to his friend Felton: "Placid star of morning! While yet the glow of its enjoyment was upon me. Such a trip as we had into Cornwall just after Longfellow went away. . . . Sometimes we travelled all night, sometimes all day." It is possible that Dickens sketched the stone on this trip. But I am inclined to the belief that he did not, and that the three sketches were made about the same time. And he may well have been to Cornwall before. Or, again, it is not unlikely that the Cheesewring was copied from one of the many engravings of it in existence, then as now.

It remains to be said that Alfred Bryan, the artist, whose letter accompanies the drawings, apart from other connection with Dickens and his work, himself drew a series of full-length studies of the principal characters from Dickens.

The photographs are directly reproduced from the original drawings now in the possession of Mr. W. T. Spencer, of 27, New Oxford Street, the well-known Dickens expert, by whose courtesy they were placed at the disposal of the writer for the purposes of this article. They are so far unique, for no other Dickens drawings have as yet been discovered.

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

CRICKETING KANGAROOS.

"The two pet kangaroos shown here belong to a constable in Caboolture, Queensland, who has trained them as cricketers. The photo. was taken by Mr. Ranking, one of the stipendiary magistrates of Brisbane, who describes them as two typical members of an Australian eleven." — Mr. W. S. Paul, Royal Colonial Institute, Northumberland Avenue.

"PEACE HATS."

"The accompanying photograph represents a number of hats collected by the police from the open space in front of the London Royal Exchange on Peace Monday, June 2nd. On that morning enthusiastic crowds blocked the streets around the Exchange and Mansion House, with the result that traffic had to be suspended for the time. Not content with waving flags, shouting, and singing, to celebrate the good news of the war being over, some gentlemen were seen throwing their silk hats into the air, while others, wishful to retain their own headgear, showed their enthusiasm by removing and flinging up other people's hats. After the crowd had somewhat dispersed the battered tiles were taken in charge by the police, and are here shown in their cell under the portico of the Royal Exchange." — Mr. Herbert E. Grubb, 18, West Street, Bromley, Kent.

AN ENORMOUS FLEECE.

"Here is a photograph of an immense fleece of Irish wool, shorn near this town. I have photographed it hanging on an old tree, after the manner of the Golden Fleece at Colchis, and Jason (on a ladder) is employed in holding it in position. The fact that both he and his ladder are completely covered will give some idea of the size of this fleece." —Mr. H. W. Smith, Moutrie, Athlone, Ireland.

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WHICH WAY IS HE GOING?

"Here is an extremely interesting optical illusion. The horseman in the picture appears to be riding in either direction. As a matter of fact, however, the photo. was taken from behind."—Mr. H. C. Barton, 20, Vanbrugh Park, Blackheath, S.E.

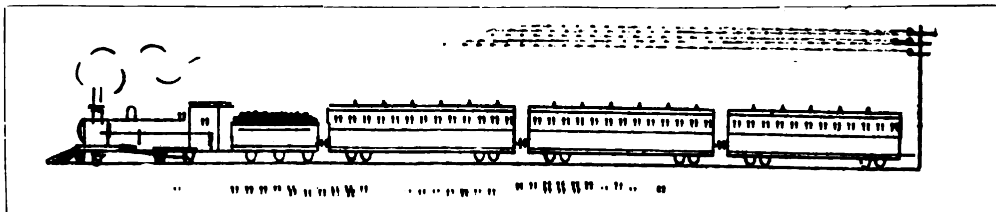
WHEN A BALLOON BURSTS.

"This photograph illustrates the bursting of a hot-air balloon. While the photographer was about to photograph this balloon, just before the intended ascent, it ruptured, emitting the volumes of black smoke and gas so well shown in the photograph. This balloon had

been used by the aeronaut a great many times for the purpose of giving ascents at the various county fairs, and from the great number of patches one would conclude that the huge bag had ruptured or had been rent many times. This bursting of the balloon occurred on the Fair grounds at Chagrin Falls."—Mr. Chas. J. Aldrich, M.D., 612, Prospect Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

PICTURE TYPEWRITING.

"I send you the sketch of an engine, tender, and three coaches drawn by myself entirely with a Remington typewriter, not a stroke of any kind being added by hand. For those not familiar with the typewriter, I will explain that: (1) the general outline is a continuation to various lengths of the '—' (dash) used in underlining, the different angles being produced by shifting the paper in the machine; (2) the windows and buffers are inverted commas; (3) the wheels and roof-lamps were formed by placing a strip of paper over the carriage body and striking 'O' and 'A' respectively in such a manner as to show only a portion of each letter in the drawing; (4) the dome of the engine is an inverted 'U'; (5) six brackets in different positions indicate steam; (6) the somewhat excessive quantity of coal in the tender is a composition of 'dashes' and 'full stops'; and, lastly, the telegraph wires and posts are made of dots and dashes."—Mr. Ernest G. Denning, 2, Dean Street, Cape Town.



HOW A SHAFT WENT THROUGH A POST.

"This photograph shows the bottom of a telegraph post through which a hole is pierced. This was done by a runaway team a month or two ago. One horse went each side of the post, and the end of the shaft came down before they got to the post. The shaft went 4ft. through the post, and had to be pulled out backwards by the team. Neither of the

horses was injured, and, strange to say, the shaft was not damaged in the slightest degree, but is still in use. The post is also almost as good as ever."—Mr. B. L. La Roy, Coldwater, Ont.

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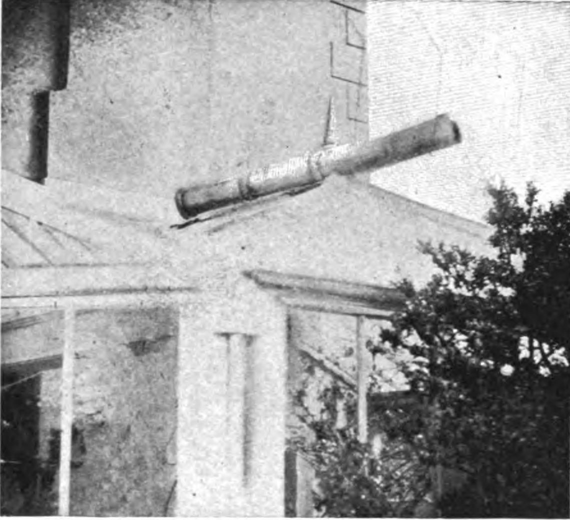

LUCKY FOR THE GREENHOUSE.

"This picture illustrates a curious accident that happened here recently. This tin chimney-pot, about 7ft. long, fell a distance of 25ft. on to the spike of the conservatory, which pierced it right through, not a pane of glass being cracked or the house otherwise injured."—Mrs. Remfry, Firsleigh, Torquay.

A SHATTERED SUPERSTITION.

"There is a superstition among the cowboys of the Western United States that a rattlesnake will not cross a hair lariat. That is one of the reasons that a lariat made of hair is a prized possession. The plains of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California are infested with rattlesnakes, and the cowboy who spreads his blanket for a night's rest is liable to awaken and find a bedfellow in the person of a rattler, attracted by the warmth of his body. The cowboy who is fortunate enough to possess a hair lariat seeks the earth couch with a feeling of security, for he encircles his bed with coils of the hair rope, trusting in the efficacy of the charm to keep away his deadly enemy. Not long ago a 'tenderfoot' arrived at the ranch of a large cattle-owner in Arizona. He came there to study Nature and the ways of the festive cowboy. He brought his camera with him for purposes of his own. He heard of the superstition connected with the hair lariat, and expressed doubts regarding its effectiveness as a protector from snakes. He determined to put the matter to a test, however, so taking a couple of white rats he anchored them near a rattlesnake's den as bait with which to coax the snakes from the rocks. Around the rats he coiled the hair lariat, and later, when the rattlers had crawled from their den, he bombarded them with stones. Then he used the camera. He secured indisputable evidence that the lariat is not a bar to the progress of the rattlesnake."—Mr. Arthur J. Burdick, 123, North Broadway, Los Angeles, California.

NOT A PROFESSIONAL GIANT.

"Edward Beaupre, a young French giant, is 7ft. 11in. high and weighs 360lb. His neck is 2ft. around, his hands from wrist to middle finger-tip are 12½in., his shoes are No. 22, and from tip to tip of

outstretched hands he measures 100in. The giant's early life was spent with his people at Willow Bunch, North-West Territory. Of late years he has led the life of a cowboy and ranch hand in Montana, where he was 'discovered.' Beaupre has never been on exhibition, and has no desire to be. He was of age January 9th last. He is French, and speaks that language fluently. His people were country folks, and of no more than average dimensions. From babyhood, however, he was a monster. Beginning his unusual growth at three, in nine years he was 6ft. 6in. high, and at seventeen had reached the 7ft. 1in. mark. He has not yet ceased to grow. Last year he added 1½in. to his stature."—Mr. M. W. Newberry, Press Club, San Francisco.

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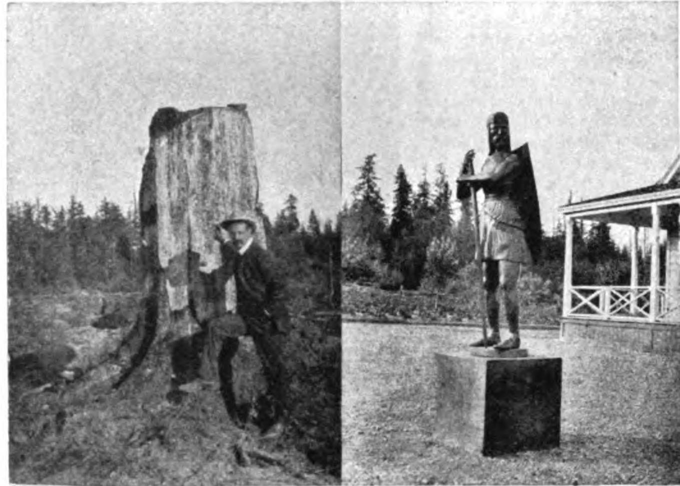
A CURIOUS WOODEN STATUE.

"The cedar stump shown in my first photo. was carved into the statue shown in the second by Mr. George Stewart, a patriotic Scot of seventy-six years of age, at Bonnie Brae Farm, South Saanich, B.C., and represents Sir William Wallace, the hero of Scotland. It is 6ft. 6in. in height from the top of the pedestal, which, according to tradition, was the height of this redoubtable warrior."—Mr. J. W. Stewart, P.O. Box 480, Victoria, B.C.

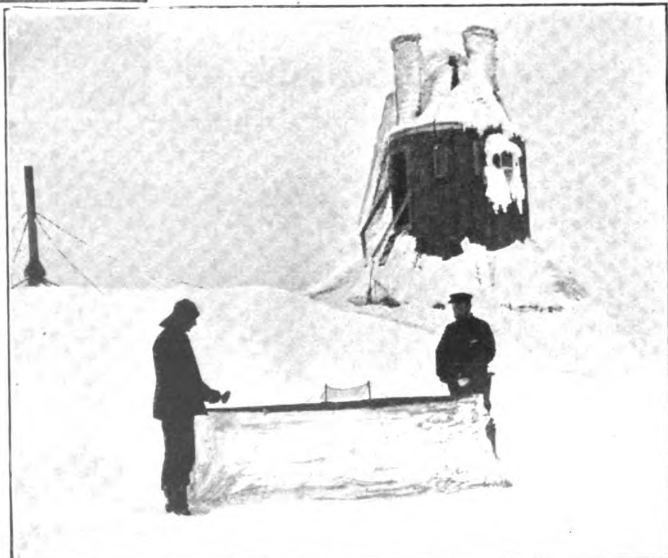


"LEACC."

"The accompanying photograph is of a restaurant at Felixstowe, owned by a certain Mr. Stokes, who may be seen in the picture enjoying his morning paper outside his establishment. Being an enterprising man, he painted the words on the side of the house himself. For over a year past the mysterious word 'LEACC' was a source of wonder to the inhabitants and visitors of Felixstowe. Determined, however, to solve the problem, I waylaid the youthful scion of the house of Stokes and asked him the explanation. He replied that his father intended to put up 'CYCLE ACCOMMODATION,' and had begun in the middle, leaving no space between the end of 'cycle' and the beginning of 'accommodation.' Apparently daunted by the magnitude of the task, and remembering the proverbial brevity of life, he relinquished it. His unfinished sign has, however, proved a better advertisement to him than could have done the most elaborate example of the sign-painter's talent." — Mr. F. P. Walker, King's School, Canterbury.

PING-PONG AT ITS GREATEST HEIGHT.

"This photograph, taken in mid-winter at the highest point in His Majesty's home domains, shows two of the meteorologists enjoying a game of ping-pong alongside the observatory on the summit of Ben Nevis. The photo. was taken when the snow reached an average depth of 7ft., and during the progress of the game the temperature was as low as 18deg. Fahr. The table, composed as it was of a solid block of snow, covered with baize, served its purpose admirably, and the game, if not played under the most favourable climatic conditions, can at least boast of 'high' scoring."—Mr. Robert H. Macdougall, Ben Nevis Observatory.



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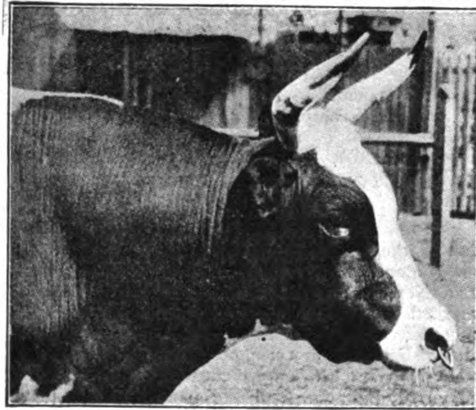
A NOVEL SPEAKING-TUBE.

"The pump shown in the accompanying photo. has a double use, for in addition to obtaining water from it our friend also uses it as a speaking-tube, and is able to carry on conversation with his wife in a distant part of the house."—Mr. A. M. Bexfield, 6, Victoria Place, Grosvenor, Bath.

AN ILLUSION IN BLACK AND WHITE.

"I send you a cutting from the *Melbourne Australasian;* it is considered curious in regard to the markings on the cow's face and body, which clearly represent a young hippo calf, while the horns look like the legs of an acrobat turning a somersault."—Mr. G. Chitty-Baker, Box 123, G.P.O., Perth, W.A.



A QUEER BRIDGE.

"The accompanying photograph shows a man apparently walking on water. In reality he is crossing a special form of wire bridge, consisting of three iron or steel wires, two close together forming a footway, and one 4ft. or 5ft. higher taking the place of a hand-rail. This bridge, which is specially adapted for small streams, has the advantages that it cannot be swept away by a flood and is inexpensive. Some care has to be exercised in crossing, as one cannot proceed forwards in the usual manner, but must sidle across, balancing oneself by means of the third wire. The photograph was taken on the Esk, near Loch Lee, Glen Esk, Kincardineshire, Scotland."—Mr. William G. Melvin, 136, Hamilton Place, Aberdeen.

A WEDDING-DRESS OF TEETH.

"Among the American Indians the teeth of the elk have a reputation for bringing good luck. O. L. Richards, of El Reno, Oklahoma, has a robe or dress ornamented with over 1,000 of the teeth, which is probably the only one of the kind in the United States. It is said to have been made nearly a century ago by squaws of the Cheyenne tribe, and over forty of these women have worn it while being married to the warrior of their choice, as it was supposed to bring future happiness. The photograph shows Mr. Richards attired in the dress. The teeth are so rare that they are extremely valuable, being worth nearly ten shillings each. The garment shown is ornamented with 1,024 of them."—Mr. D. A. Willey, Baltimore.

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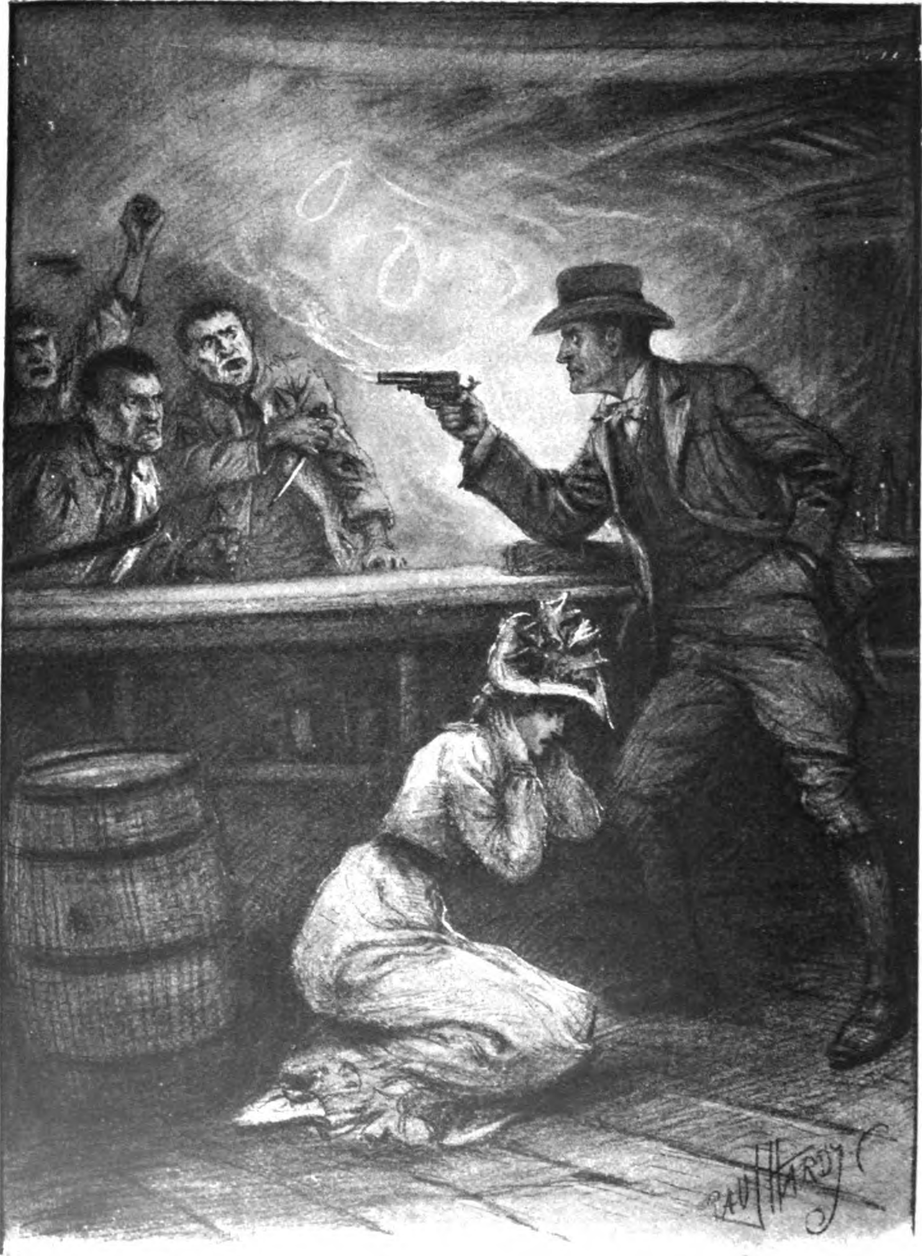

"'GENTLEMEN,' HE SAID, 'THIS IS A SIX-SHOOTER."

(*See page* 247.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

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At the Sign of the Three Snakes.

By R. E. Vernede.

It was only about five o'clock on an October afternoon, yet Mr. Weatherly Gilliat had just come to the conclusion that he was lost. All around him the moors stretched, uphill and down, and the purple and yellow of the gorse and heather, that had only recently begun to turn to an autumnal brown, were at this comparatively early hour being merged rapidly in the grey of a mist. Mr. Gilliat had calculated on finding some village or habitation before dusk, and the mist had turned things dusky an hour too early. Not that it greatly mattered. He was travelling at his leisure where the road took him, and the discovery that one could be lost in England merely gave him a higher opinion of the country. He had not conceived it possible.

He was a young man, slight and well-made, with the lazy, capable look characteristic of some Americans. Anyone would have taken him for at least as good as he was—an engineer on his holidays—despite the carelessness of his attire. That one need not dress on the moors was what Mr. Gilliat was thinking at that moment. "Suit-case at Clovelly," he murmured to himself, "wherever Clovelly may be. I imagine I'll strike some cottage hereabouts." He felt in his jacket-pocket to make sure he hadn't dropped his tooth-brush. It was there all right, mixed up with his revolver. The revolver was a

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fad of Mr. Weatherly Gilliat's, having once been a necessity out West. A man who could win a prize for revolver-shooting at a cowboys' sports has got accustomed to carrying a six-shooter. Mr. Gilliat hardly noticed his. If he had ever needed it his fingers could have closed on it and fired in about the same time as it takes most men to put their hands in their pockets. So far he had only used it to shoot a swimming vole from the opposite bank of a stream for the edification of an old-world river inspector.

He was high up on the moors when he decided to try and strike a cottage; and in pursuance of that object he set out with long strides. The set of the moor was towards a valley hid by trees, and it was just under the first of the trees that he caught sight of someone ahead of him.

"Hi!" shouted Mr. Gilliat.

The person stopped, and he quickened his steps.

"Can you tell me, now——" he began, and stopped himself.

It was not a farm labourer, as he had imagined, but a young lady. Not even a dairy-maid. He could tell that even in the half light. She was very simply dressed and carried something in her hand. Under the curved straw hat was a very pretty face with an unmistakable air of dignity, though a little troubled perhaps.

"Yes?" she said, inquiringly.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Gilliat, lifting his hat. "I imagine I must have startled you."

"Not at all."

Dignity struggled with perturbation as she spoke.

"I thought——" He hesitated. He could not very well say that he thought she was a farm-hand. "It's a poor light, and"—he continued—"I believed I might ask you for a direction."

No one can be more chivalrous in his manner than an American, and the girl's perturbation vanished while he spoke. She even smiled, not being so concerned about her dignity.

"I quite understand," she said. "I wish I could help you; but the fact is I'm just beginning to think that I've lost my own way. I'm—I'm really very much afraid I have."

It came in a burst of confidence, the latter part of the speech, and revealed the cause of her anxiety.

"I'm most sorry," he hastened to reply.

"It's dreadful, isn't it?" she said, trying to make light of it. "All my own fault, too. But we've only just come here. My aunt has taken rooms at a cottage, and I came out to paint, but in what direction I came from I really don't know."

"It's the moor's fault," said Mr. Gilliat, seriously; "the monotony. I might say I have travelled a good deal, but I'm outside my direction now."

"Then we're both lost," she said. "Oh, dear!"

She stood there, the picture of perplexity. Unusually graceful perplexity, too, Mr. Gilliat

"'THEN WE'RE BOTH LOST,' SHE SAID."

thought, and made haste to assure her that there could be no possible difficulty in rediscovering her road. Perhaps she would permit him to make inquiries on her behalf.

"But—where?" she said.

"The nearest house I can strike."

"It will be taking you out of your way?"

Mr. Gilliat explained his circumstances. He had no way in particular, and in any event would deem it an honour if he might assist her.

"Well, you may," she said, "if you can. The village I came from is called Berley, that I know; but I must have walked four or five miles, without thinking about the time, before I began to paint. Whether

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Berley lies north or south or east or west, I really haven't a notion now. I've been walking about for nearly an hour to try and find someone to ask."

"Have you been this way?" The young man pointed down into the valley.

"No."

"It looks as good as any other?"

"Quite."

"Let us try, then."

They walked on together. The trees cleared very soon, and the prickly gorse began again. Exchanging names, Mr. Gilliat found that he was walking with Miss Trethewy, and that she lived in London. He confessed—not without pride—that he was an American.

"Then you've never been on these moors before?"

"Nothing like them. They're prickly."

The gorse was very prickly, and it was mainly for his companion that Mr. Gilliat felt it. He wondered that she made so little fuss, and was longing to tell her so when they came on to a broad, rugged track. Just ahead of them in an angle of the valley stood a house.

"I shall be able to get back before my aunt is frightened, after all," said Miss Trethewy, seeing it, "if you will be kind enough to ask them the way."

"But you must drive," insisted the young man; "you'll be losing your way again." He was beginning to take a personal interest in the matter, and could not bear to think of her wandering through those prickly, desolate places alone. "You will let me drive you back?"

Miss Trethewy considered. To tell the truth, she would very gladly be driven, for she was feeling a little nervous. Besides, it would be ungracious to refuse, and her aunt's alarm if she were later than the dinner-hour would be rememberable.

"If you can get a trap," she said, "I think I should be very much obliged."

"I believe I'll go in and ask," said Mr. Gilliat.

It was not until he had made the offer that the American noticed the appearance of the house, and when he did his face fell. It hardly looked as if it could stable a trap, so remote and ramshackle was its appearance. A signboard with the sign beaten out of it by time and weather proclaimed that it was an inn, the lettering, so far as Mr. Gilliat could figure it up, running to the name of "The Three Snakes." But the windows were shuttered and the door barred, and the weedy path that went along the entrance might have been untrodden for fifty years.

"Nice old-world English hotel," said Mr. Gilliat, thoughtfully, surveying the blank establishment. "Wants white-washing." A lean fowl scuttled away into the gorse as he spoke and, somewhere at the back, a pig grunted mournfully. "I believe this'll be the bar."

He beat lustily on the worm-eaten door.

"Perhaps it's uninhabited," suggested Miss Trethewy.

"I imagine not. Heard someone sipping a mint-julep," returned the American, with his ear to the keyhole. "Deaf, I dare say." Again he battered. There was a shuffling of feet inside, followed by the steps of someone slowly advancing to the door.

"No hurry," shouted Mr. Gilliat, annoyed by the extreme tardiness of the approach. "Don't break your legs running. Have another drink first. We're all in England."

He apologized to the girl for his sarcasms at the expense of her country, while the person inside fumbled at the fastenings.

"They are very slow here," she admitted. "Oh!"

The exclamation was due to the appearance of the landlord. It might have been the curious light of the tallow candle that he carried in one hand which gave him so unpleasant an appearance, but certainly it was enough to make her shrink back. He was not unlike a lean fowl himself, bald, and skinny-fingered, and his cheeks hung in pouches. He had the most rascally small eyes—lidless and very peering. He seemed to take them in at a glance, and gibbered some unintelligible dialect to someone behind him, evidently.

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Gilliat, affably; "I'll get out my dictionary next time I come along. But, say, mister, do you keep a cart?"

"What you'm want?" The old man settled himself to a kind of English.

"That's right," said Mr. Gilliat, encouragingly. "We want something right straight away. Not so much a tombstone, as you might be imagining from our coming here—though it looks a fine place for a cemet-urry—but a cart. Got a cart?"

"We're very anxious to drive to Berley—at once," supplemented Miss Trethewy. The old man directed his attention from Mr. Gilliat, whom he did not seem to understand, to the girl.

"You'm wishing to drive t' Berley?" he asked. "You're strange to thiccy parts?"

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"That's it," said Mr. Gilliat. "Vurry strange. Say, have you got a cart?"

"Iss, iss," said the old man. He shouted something behind him again, and motioned them to come in. Alone, the girl would not have entered for a fortune, but Mr. Gilliat's ease inspired her.

"It won't be long, will it?" she said, appealingly, as they entered.

The landlord was sidling along ahead of them, the candle throwing little splashes of light on the discoloured interior. She went on:—

"Because this is such a horrid place. You—you won't go away?"

The American turned to her cheerfully.

"Not much," he said. "I'm sorry it's so poor here. But that cart'll be the quickest thing to get you home, Miss Trethewy; I'll tell him to hurry."

The old man had ushered them into a sort of bare tap-room, and he set down the candle on the counter. Mr. Gilliat hastened to offer the girl a chair, and that done he rounded on the landlord, who was staring at them.

"Run along now and get out that four-in-hand. We're strange to these parts, as you say, but we don't want to get used to them. They ain't picturesque enough — nothing historical. Anyway, we want that trap in about three minutes. See?"

"Iss, iss." The old man slunk away, disturbed by Mr. Gilliat's pertinacity.

"I hope he won't be long," repeated Miss Trethewy; "I feel perfectly frightened."

He consoled her jokingly. For his own part he thought he had never met anyone more charming, but that made him only the more anxious to effect what she wished. Several minutes he contrived to make pass by his lively conversation, and at the end of them, seeing that she could hardly restrain her anxiety, he got up to go and see after the landlord.

"SAY, HAVE YOU GOT A CART?"

"I'll go, too," she said.

"Right."

Just as they had decided to make a move there was a noise of approaching feet outside. Then the door was flung open and three men trooped in. Behind them the scarecrow landlord crept along, carrying another candle.

"Cart ready?" cried Mr. Gilliat.

For answer the landlord grinned, and passed his light to one of the men who were entering. He did not come in himself, but pulled the door to behind them. Mr. Gilliat heard a key turned in the lock, but sat still. The girl had half risen with a little cry of alarm. She had never seen such ruffianly-

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looking men, and she also had heard the scraping of the key.

"What is it?" she whispered.

"Can't say," said Mr. Gilliat; "don't you be frightened."

For a moment she entertained the supposition that the young engineer might be in league with them—these horrible men—but a glance at him reassured her. He was sitting quite still in a lazy position, but with alert eyes. Still, he could do nothing to protect her against three assailants. That they were such was pretty plain. The rearward man had set down the candle and stood with his back to the door. The other two were sidling along towards them.

"Heard if that cart's ready?" Mr. Gilliat's question, put in a disinterested tone, broke the silence. The man at the door gave a jeering laugh.

"Look here, guv'nor," he said, "sink the cart. We don't want no mistake. Me an' my mates is poor men and wants money. Understand me? No vi'lence needed, but wot you got and miss has got, you're going to hand up—strite."

The girl shuddered all over. The man's voice was so coolly menacing. She had the feeling that she was beyond help—in some alien horrible country. All at once she caught sight of the dress of one of them, and whispered to Mr. Gilliat:—

"They're convicts! They've broken out of prison! We read of it in the papers coming down. One's a murderer."

The American nodded. He had suspected something of the kind as soon as he saw them.

"They won't hurt," he whispered to her; and then, raising his voice:—

"Nice place, the Three Snakes; I guess they called it after you."

He had not changed his position except to put his hand in his pocket.

The spokesman of the three muttered a violent oath and took a step forward.

"No kiddin', mate," he said. "We ain't got the time. It's out with it, or——" He slipped something down from his sleeve and produced an iron bar. "There's a warder up there's felt it," he said, savagely; "you 'ave yer choice."

"Wal," said Mr. Gilliat, speaking broad, "I guess it's this——"

He fumbled in his pocket. Next moment there was a loud report, a yell from the man at the door, and the iron bar rattled on the floor. A stream of smoke issued from the American's pocket as he sprang up. Miss Trethewy was on her feet, as pale as ivory, and he took her by the hand and crossed to the other side of the counter before the men had recovered from their astonishment.

"Stoop behind it," he said, and she did so. The man who had been spokesman was hanging on to his right arm, yelling horribly. The other two started to rush the counter. Mr. Gilliat faced them comfortably, with his elbow upon it. He had taken his revolver from his pocket, and eyed it lovingly.

"Like old times," he murmured.

"Drop 'im, boys," said the wounded man, with an oath, seeing the others stop short before the shining barrel.

In the moment of their hesitation Mr. Gilliat spoke:—

"Gentlemen," he said, "this is a six-shooter, as you may see. One of the bullets is fired, as our friend at the door knows. Subtract one from six—leaves five. There's only, so far as I can see, two snakes left, and the landlord. If there were seven of you I shouldn't advise, but out West, when I got first pull on a man, he generally calculated to put up his hands."

He paused, and the man at the door shouted out again:—

"Drop 'im, boys."

What happened next, Miss Trethewy stooping in the shelter of the bar-counter could not quite make out. The men must have made a rush, for two more reports rang out and the smoke filled the room. She heard horrible cries and curses, and the voice of the landlord squeaking at the door, and outside a sound of galloping horses. As the smoke cleared away she saw the young man still lounging against the counter as before, his mouth set a little harder perhaps, the revolver still in his hand.

"Any more coming along?" he asked.

Two of the men were supporting themselves against the wall, and one had fallen flat. They made no answer. Mr. Gilliat raised his voice for the benefit of the landlord outside:—

"Say, mister, is that trap ready yet?"

Quite suddenly the door was burst open, and half-a-dozen men appeared, dragging the landlord between them.

"They're policemen," said Miss Trethewy, overjoyed.

Policemen they were, and very much astonished to find what was going on inside. The inspector in charge explained to Mr. Gilliat that they had only just tracked the three men to the inn, though they had

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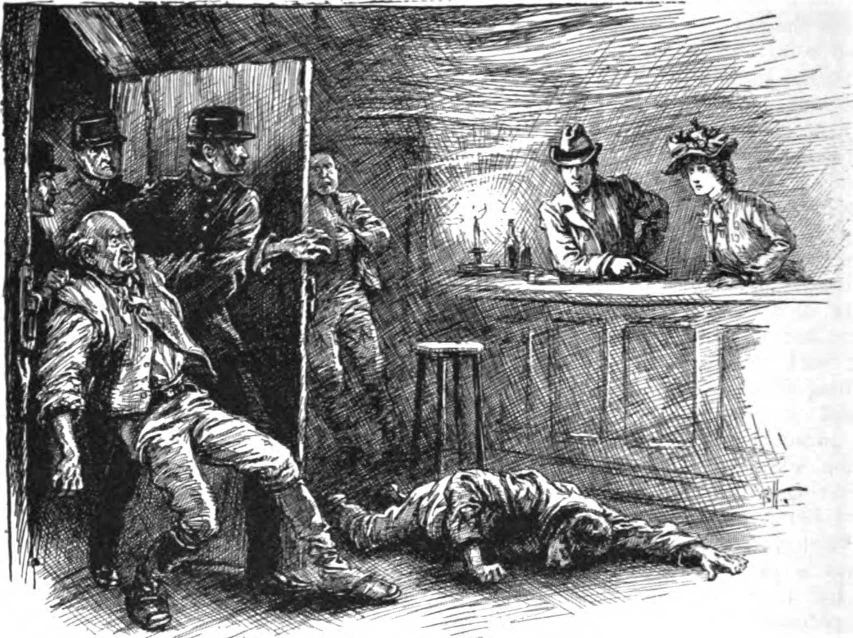

"'THEY'RE POLICEMEN,' SAID MISS TRETHEWY."

escaped from the convict prison two days before.

"Lucky we found you in time," he said, as his men secured their prisoners, after a general explanation.

"Very," said the American. "I imagine I'd have had to put that trap to myself if you hadn't struck our track. As it is, the old gentleman that runs the house'll put it up for me."

"We shall want him afterwards."

"You shall have him," said Mr. Gilliat.

But it was after dinner-time before Miss Trethewy got back again to the cottage that her aunt had taken at Berley, so late that Mr. Gilliat had to accept the offer of a room for the night next door. He was very glad to, he said. The place was more historical than he had supposed.

"Perhaps you will stay until you've got through that troublesome business of giving evidence at the prison?" suggested Miss Trethewy's aunt, whose gratitude for her niece's rescue was almost hysterical. "We should be so delighted—and my son, who is coming down."

Mr. Gilliat looked at the girl. She had recovered from her paleness, and had roses enough in her cheeks. He was not at all sure that she did not look prettier than the prettiest American girl he'd seen.

"I'd like to stay—greatly," he said.

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"Would You be an Actress?"

"IF you had your time over again, would you still elect to be an actress, taking into account your knowledge of the hardships, disappointments, and drawbacks incidental to a career on the stage?" That was the question which we sought to get answered by the actresses whose names are familiar to the great body of playgoers.

MISS LILY HANBURY.
From a Photo. by Window & Grove.

MISS MARION TERRY.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"If a woman has talent for the stage," said Miss Lily Hanbury, "it offers her, in my opinion, a greater opportunity than any other calling for the making of an income. On the stage a woman is man's equal so far as her wage-earning capacity goes, and in a few conspicuous instances, which will readily occur to everyone, she may even be his superior. The same can certainly not be said with regard to other artistic professions like writing or painting, for women do not command the same returns as men—at all events, so early in their career. Mark, I say so early in their career, otherwise people will point to one or two conspicuous successes in writing like Lucas Malet, Marie Corelli, and Sarah Grand, and to Rosa Bonheur in painting. Painting and writing still remain, for the most part, man's work, and it is especially apparent when one leaves consideration of the most successful craftsmen and comes to the more ordinary talent.

MISS DOROTHEA BAIRD.
From a Photo. by Elliott & Fry.

"This consideration is certainly one of the reasons which induce me to say that were my time to come over again I should certainly go on the stage. Again, some people say that stage life is not compatible with domesticity. I never can see why a woman cannot combine the two. There is little difference, to my mind, whether one spends the evening at the theatre or going from party to party as most society women

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do and getting home at all hours of the night. The strain on their nerves, too, must be as great as the strain on the nervous system of an actress, and I acknowledge that that is great. Still, according to my experience, it is not always equally great. Some plays make a demand on you throughout the run; but in others you get used to it, and the work thus becomes much easier. When I was playing Chorus in 'Henry V.,' for instance, I never felt comfortable at all during the run, a fact to which the peculiar conditions under which I appeared no doubt contributed, for I had to sit or stand alone on a platform raised above the stage.

"To my mind, too, stage life is a very happy life. It is always a gratification to please people, and that gratification is essentially the actor's. True, every light involves a shadow, and against the pleasant things one has to put the unpleasant remarks when one doesn't succeed. Still, it is possible to shut oneself away from some of these unpleasant things, and that, in my opinion, is always desirable. I think that, as the footlights throw a certain glamour over a woman when she is on the stage, she should not minimize that effect by being seen too much off the stage, for that is apt to detract from her power over the public. The whole question is, however, a very delicate one. Many people talk about the temptations of the stage as being a great reason why women, if they had their chance over again, should not choose the life. For my own part I have been connected with the theatre since I was a child of fourteen. I have never had anything but the greatest courtesy either from those connected with the stage or the members of the audience who frequent the theatre. I may, therefore, be allowed to believe that there are no more temptations on the stage than there are off it."

From a Photo. by] MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL. [*Elliott & Fry.*

"Personally, I should say, if I had to choose a thousand million times over, I should choose the stage," was Miss Dorothea Baird's characteristically enthusiastic reply. "My reason is, however, not based on any question of success which I may have won as an actress, but on the enjoyment I have had out of the work itself. That enjoyment has been very great indeed. I don't think that the hardships of life on the stage ought to deter any woman from a theatrical career if she has an inclination to it, provided she is fairly strong, for health has a great deal to do with withstanding those hardships. I know in my own case when I began the strain knocked me up frightfully, but in time, as I grew stronger, I was quite able to overcome the fatigue. Similarly, I would not say that, because a girl did not evince a great deal of aptitude at once, she was necessarily unsuited to a theatrical career, for some people who have seemed rather dull at first and less apt than their comrades have developed into bigger things than those who began by being very easy on the stage and appeared full of promise. There is one thing, I am certain, which will help everyone who would choose as I would — the kindness which exists in the theatre. I know I have met with more real kindness on the stage than anywhere else, and from actors and actresses more than from any other people. Feeling as I do about the stage, my advice to a would-be actress would not be 'keep away,' but 'go on if you are really keen about it.' Of course, the theatre is enormously overcrowded just now, but I suppose

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that in time it will end, like everything else, in a survival of the fittest. One wants to care a great deal about acting to enjoy the work, for it is work and not amusement. If I had a daughter I should not mind her going on the stage if she had to work, but my daughter could hardly be ready to take up acting for about twenty years, and it is hard to say whether acting will be a lucrative profession at that time. Perhaps, from present appearances, it might not be, and that fact would necessarily colour one's views; but choosing for myself again to-day my answer would undoubtedly be a most emphatic 'Yes.'"

"I cannot understand anyone being anything else than an actress if she is born one." Those were the words of Miss Marion Terry, and she continued: "I think it is a most magnificent profession in every way, if taken seriously. Please note that I say taken seriously, for acting is very hard work and not a pastime. It is full of heartbreaks, worries, and anxieties. There are any number of them to contend with. One has often to give up many things for the sake of the work. There are often times when one would rather do other things and go to other places than the theatre to act, but the hour comes and one has to go. Sometimes one doesn't feel well enough, but still one has to go. Sometimes those we love are ill and we want to stay at home and help nurse them, but we have to put away all such wishes and go and do our work at the theatre. I said just now that acting must be taken seriously. It doesn't do only to study the words of the part; one has to study the *character* of the part one is called upon to impersonate, and all the other characters in the play as well. Study of character is as important as the words. I could talk on this subject for hours, but I should always say the same thing—that I would decide upon being an actress, never mind how many times I was allowed to alter my decision."

From a Photo. by] MISS ROSINA BRANDRAM. *[Ellis & Walery.*

Mrs. Patrick Campbell being in America, it was impossible to get her answer direct; but on authority, which we would not venture to quote if it were not absolutely unimpeachable, we can say that her view of the question is as follows. When she was quite a little girl in the nursery she used to play with some cousins, and they used, child-like, to discuss the future and what they would like to be in the coming years. "I would like to be a Queen," one would say; while another, desiring still greater state, would declare, "I want to be an Empress." When the actress-to-be had her turn, her verdict was, "I would rather be an actress than any Empress in the world," and, however much the others might change their views, she always remained constant to her choice. To-day if she were asked she would reply in exactly the same words, only now the word "actress" means "artist" to her.

"All things considered, I wouldn't go on the stage," were the emphatic words of Miss Rosina Brandram, whose experience is almost unique in London, for, although actors and actresses move from theatre to theatre with, to them, anxious intervals of nothing to do, she has been associated with the Savoy from the time it was opened. "In the first place," she continued, "it is very uphill work getting a position, and in the next, unless you have a great deal of strength, it is a severe strain and constant hard work. At least, I consider it so. That the life is one of false excitement everybody knows. The strain comes when one is rehearsing a new opera and acting at night. In the case of ill-health, when you do not feel up to the mark, you still play rather than disappoint the public. Acting under such circumstances puts a strain on one's frame and brain, for one naturally exerts oneself to the utmost. In taking up a

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From a Photo. by] MISS FORTESCUE. [*Wm. Whiteley, Ltd.*

public career one knows one must sacrifice oneself to the public and the manager. But, as I said just now, if I had my time over again I would not do it, for I am very domesticated; I love my home and everything to do with home life, and am perfectly happy with my work, my books, and my pets, and I want nothing else. On the other side of the picture there is the fact that there is no greater pleasure in the world than to be able to go on a platform and amuse and get the thanks of the audience. Then one feels grateful for the gifts God has given to one."

"If I had children, women children, they shouldn't have to work at all," was Miss Fortescue's epigrammatic reply. "If I had men children they should work the greater part of the days of their life, but neither the women nor the men children should work on the stage. If I had to start young people on a career, the boys should be sailors and the girls should go into commercial life. The sailor's life is the ideal training to make a 'man,' for it teaches him to obey without question, and obedience is the first law of Nature. It develops his resourcefulness in the most extraordinary manner. It teaches him self-dependence, and he gets the nonsense knocked out of him by the finest set of gentlemen on God's earth. If at eighteen, when he had had about two years' experience of what it meant really to be a sailor, and was able to appreciate the full possibilities of the life, he said, 'I have a well-founded dislike of the sea,' he would still not be disqualified for any other career in the world, and he would take into it qualities which would be useful for his equipment throughout his life, and he would have laid up a stock of health which would be of inestimable value to him. As far as girls go, I object to girls doing work at all; but, if they had to, I should put them, as I said, into commercial life. My reason for this is that I think it is the outlook in which, reasonably speaking, there are the best chances of making a good deal of money. From both sexes I eliminate the few, the very few—I have never found one—the geniuses who decide everything for themselves and want no laws made for them.

"From what I have said about choosing a career for young people you will probably be surprised if, being a woman, I should practise what I preach, and if I had my time over again I should start in commercial life. The whole aspect of the stage has changed completely of late years, and the conditions are quite different from what they were when I first entered the theatrical profession. The stage, indeed, is rapidly becoming 'morganeered' like everything else, only, of course, in a minor way. Personally, I have nothing to grumble at in my career, for if the stage has not given me 'more than I desire,' it has given me 'more than I deserve.' Of course, there are heart-breaks, and disappointments, and anxieties in connection with the professional life of the theatre. What profession is there in which they do not exist? My reason for saying women should not have to work is that I would not have any woman know anything of heart-breaks and disappointments and miseries. I may be singular, but I do not believe that adversity and suffering are good for people. The people in my experience who strive most to bring about the happiness of others are those

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who have been most happy themselves, the most generous are those who have known the least struggling, and those who are the tenderest of other people's reputations are those of blameless lives themselves.

"The great thing in choosing a career is, it seems to me, first to find something which supplies a necessity of the time. I am one of those terrible people who believe that the theatre is not a necessity. It may be a pleasant or an unpleasant luxury according to the way you look at your pleasures, but it is not a necessity. Now, enterprises which supply books, furniture, carpets, hangings, dresses, hats, and other things that I may name, all supply goods which people are not going without, while the people who supply theatrical commodities come in after these—in English-speaking countries. For this reason, if I had the placing of people in the world, I should make them sell the things that are the necessaries of the majority, not the luxuries of the minority. But perhaps I may make one more observation, and that the only one of any matter at all. That is to recall to your mind the proverb about 'bachelors' wives' and 'old maids' children.' If children had fallen to my share they would probably have led me by the nose as others are, and my opinions might then have been of some value, having been gained in the only school of use in such affairs—the school of experience."

"I can't imagine doing anything else if I had my time over again," said Miss Winifred Emery. "You see, I was born for it. I don't mean to insinuate by that with any supernatural talent, but because I come of a theatrical family. My father said when I was born, 'Well, I suppose she will be an actress when she grows up'; and at school it was my great boast, 'I am going on the stage when I grow up.' I really never had a choice of anything else, and, apart altogether from the fact that were I to have my time over again the same conditions would prevail, I say most emphatically I would go on the stage.

MISS WINIFRED EMERY. MISS EVELYN MILLARD.

From Photos. by Elliott & Fry.

"On the other hand, I don't want my daughters to be actresses. The reason, however, is not anything to do with the life, but from utter selfishness on my part. I think I have had enough stage life, and I should like to devote myself to home life and friends. If my daughters went on the stage I should have to go on with my old life in theirs, and that, I confess, I do not want to do. If, however, it became necessary that they should earn their own living, I don't consider they could do anything better than devote themselves to the stage. True, on the stage

we have disappointments and heart-burnings; almost as many, perhaps, when we get on as at the beginning. Still, everybody has them, and it would be very bad if we didn't, for we should become dreadfully spoilt and over-bearing. A great many of the disappointments and heart-burnings on the stage come, in my opinion, from the fact that people start with preconceived opinions of what they want to do instead of what they are best fitted for, and fret and fume because they are given what they are best fitted for instead of what they want. I know that, as a child, when people asked me what I should like to play when I grew up—comedy or tragedy—I always replied 'Tragedy!' And when, afterwards, I found that no one seemed to care for my efforts in that direction, I was terribly disappointed, and a lot of the enthusiasm for my work left me for ever. But I am resigned now to play the parts which people have chosen for me, and so I think I am escaping a good many of the disappointments I should otherwise have attributed to my life as an actress!"

"If I had my time over again," Miss Millard writes, "I would still choose the stage as a profession, for I have a great love for the work—the acting—which goes far to compensate for the hard work, the disappointments, and the strain it imposes on one. If, however, I were asked if I should like to see a child of mine on the stage, I would say I would use all my influence to prevent it; as, though one feels one could endure the nervous strain and tension oneself, I am sure one could not calmly see it wearing on anyone one loved. I also consider that after a certain number of years it tells greatly on the health."

MISS EVA MOORE.
From a Photo. by the London Stereoscopic Co.

"If I had to work for my living as I had to when I went on the stage," were Miss Eva Moore's words, "I should certainly do what I have done. I speak with a certain knowledge, for I tried other things before I tried the stage, and I didn't find them half so interesting. Of course, one has to take into consideration the additional fact that one is apt to like work in which one has been more or less successful. My earlier work was that of a governess. I was not highly educated enough to be governess to grown-up children, and thus able to command a salary worth while having, so I had to content myself with teaching younger children. If I could have been governess to elder girls or taken important classes in a school I should not have tried the stage, for my bringing up did not tend that way. It is useless to deny, however, that if I had kept on governessing I should, even under the best conditions, never have been able to make so much money as on the stage. This admission may be regarded as an im-

prudent one in so far as it may encourage girls to go on the stage who have no aptitude for the work. If they do, they are doomed to disappointment, for there is far more money to be earned as a competent governess—even for younger children—than there is as an incompetent actress. There is no more trying and wearying calling than that of the woman on the stage who has no special ability, and who has to keep herself out of her earnings. Personally, if I had had an income I should never have dreamt of working, as I think it is a mistake for women to work if they don't have to. Perhaps people will ask why, in view of this admission, I go on working. The reason is simply that, after having worked for many years, work becomes part of one's life, fosters an ambition, and therefore one has to go on. The stage resembles governessing in one respect: it needs no capital to enable one to make a start. If a woman wants to be an artist she has to spend years in preliminary training; if she wishes to be a writer she must be able to support herself while she is producing the work. Her ordinary education, however, is all she needs to be either a governess or an actress. That is the reason why so many women take to the stage; why, in my opinion, we hear so much about the overcrowding of the dramatic profession; and why so many women find so much disappointment in it."

"Oh, yes, certainly," was Miss Irene Vanbrugh's answer to my question. "I should go on the stage if I had to choose again. My reason is that it is a most interesting life and a most interesting art. When I became an actress I was quite prepared to give up everything else for the stage, and I should do it again. I believe it is a great thing for a woman to have some particular interest in life, and I am strongly inclined to say that no one who is not suited to the stage could stay on it for more than two or three years. There are some cases in which dramatic talent does not manifest itself early, or where the opportunities for its manifesting itself are lacking, and one sees women staying on for a long time. If they have the grit to stick for so long in spite of the drawbacks and the setbacks which are inevitable to a theatrical career they are bound to do well in time, as they would be bound to do well in any other calling if they had the same perseverance. That complete self-devotion argues in my mind an innate belief in oneself, and a consciousness of ability which must produce its effect sooner or later. One often hears people say, 'Oh, I will give my life up for the stage,' but when it comes to going to a rehearsal or an afternoon tea-party they elect for the party and let the rehearsal take care of itself. These are the people who, in accordance with my experience,

MISS IRENE VANBRUGH.
From a Photo. by H. Walter Barnett.

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complain of the hard life of the stage, and are constantly bemoaning the fact that they never get a chance. In this connection I will recall a case in point. When I was almost a beginner I was given a tiny part of twenty lines. Three girls who were walking on in the crowd were given my part to understudy. Very soon after the play began I got ill and couldn't act. Of the three girls only one had taken the trouble to study the part. Naturally, she played it all the time I was out of the bill, and that was the starting-point in her career. One of the others actually came to me when I returned and bemoaned the fact that she never got a chance. When the chance was given to her she had not taken it. The fact, as it seems to me, is that the stage is an admirable career for a woman who has the talent and who is willing to work. It is not an admirable career for women who either lack the peculiar talent it requires or who desire a supposedly pleasant place in which to idle during rehearsals and to idle in the evening."

MISS ALMA MURRAY.
From a Photo. by Martin & Sallnow.

Equally emphatic in favour of the stage was Miss Alma Murray, who, after an over-long absence from the stage, has recently returned to take her old position among the leading actresses of the day. "Certainly I would be an actress were my time to come over again, for I love the work. Every woman with an artistic impulse in her must have her field of work, and if that field is in the land of the theatre she will devote herself to it, no matter what may be the drawbacks. Personally, I believe that those drawbacks are greatly overrated. Many people say that the stage is such a bad atmosphere. It is no worse than any other atmosphere. I have been connected with the stage from the time I was quite a child, and I have never seen any results in the theatre which would not have been obtained outside it under the same conditions. Acting being the thing I love, I should take it up again just as, now, I go on with it, for if one is disappointed with the results it is surely quite easy to cease acting by abstaining from going on the stage. Some people say that a stage career is incompatible with home life. I, however, don't believe that any real woman need give up any part of her domesticity by being an actress. It is quite possible to combine a life on the stage with a home life, and I myself, having both, have lost neither. On the contrary, I have gained, for I believe that, properly dealt with, the theatre is as strong an educational influence as the church itself. The play is the thing, and if properly acted the audience sees the influence of one character on another, and so learns human nature on a broad scale rather than on the narrow lines on which most people's lives are necessarily laid."

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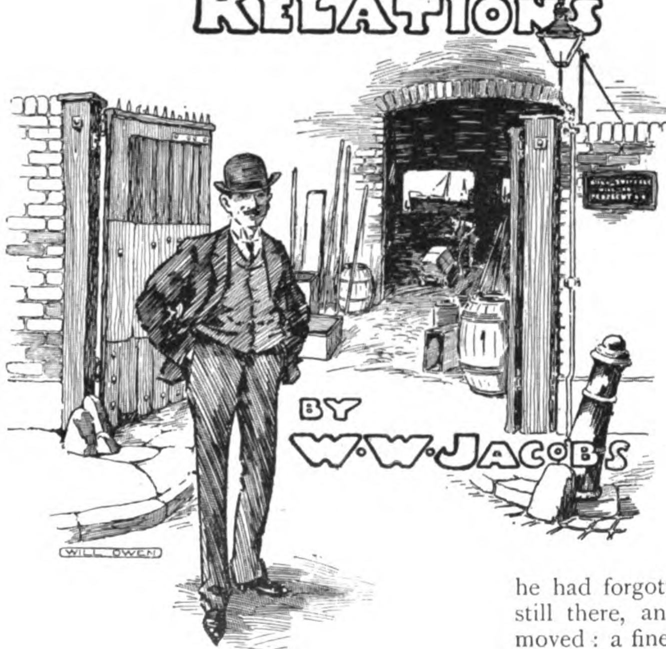
ESTABLISHING RELATIONS



MR. RICHARD CATESBY, second officer of the ss. *Wizard*, emerged from the dock - gates in high good-humour to spend an evening ashore. The bustle of the day had departed, and the inhabitants of Wapping, in search of coolness and fresh air, were sitting at open doors and windows indulging in general conversation with anybody within earshot.

Mr. Catesby, turning into Bashford's Lane, lost in a moment all this life and colour. The hum of distant voices certainly reached there, but that was all, for Bashford's Lane, a retiring thoroughfare facing a blank dock wall, capped here and there by towering spars, set an example of gentility which neighbouring streets had long ago decided crossly was impossible for ordinary people to follow. Its neatly-grained shutters, fastened back by the sides of the windows, gave a pleasing idea of uniformity, while its white steps and polished brass knockers were suggestive of almost a Dutch cleanliness.

Mr. Catesby, strolling comfortably along, stopped suddenly for another look at a girl who was standing in the ground - floor window of No. 5. He went on a few paces and then walked back slowly, trying to look as though he had forgotten something. The girl was still there, and met his ardent glances unmoved: a fine girl, with large, dark eyes, and a complexion which was the subject of much scandalous discussion among neighbouring matrons.

"It must be something wrong with the glass, or else it's the bad light," said Mr. Catesby to himself; "no girl is so beautiful as that."

He went by again to make sure. The object of his solicitude was still there and apparently unconscious of his existence. He passed very slowly and sighed deeply.

"You've got it at last, Dick Catesby," he said, solemnly; "fair and square in the most dangerous part of the heart. It's serious this time."

He stood still on the narrow pavement, pondering, and then, in excuse of his flagrant misbehaviour, murmured, "It was meant to be," and went by again. This time he fancied that he detected a somewhat supercilious expression in the dark eyes—a faint raising of well-arched eyebrows.

His engagement to wait at Aldgate Station for the second-engineer and spend an evening

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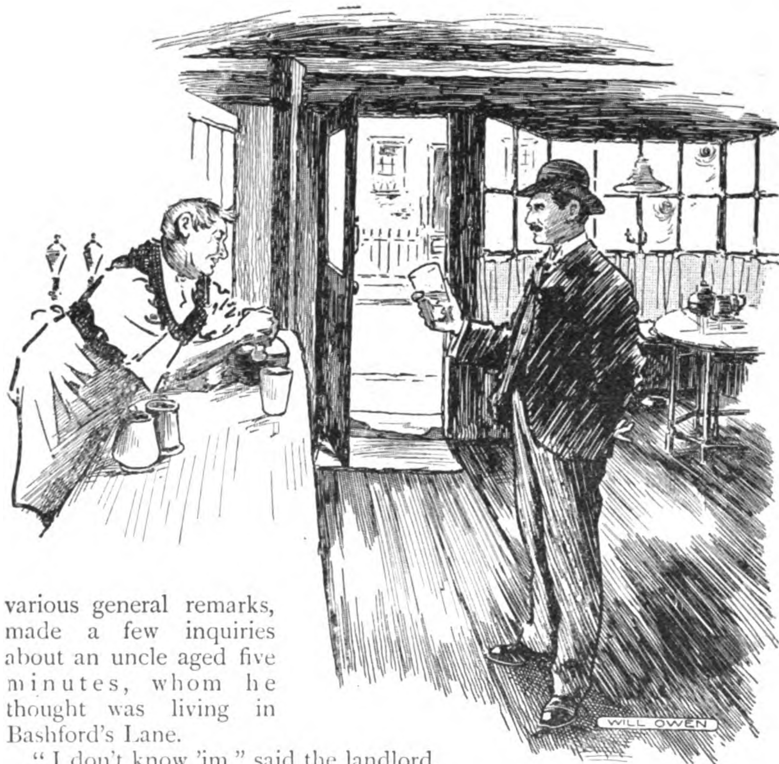
together was dismissed as too slow to be considered. He stood for some time in uncertainty, and then turning slowly into the Beehive, which stood at the corner, went into the private bar and ordered a glass of beer.

He was the only person in the bar, and the landlord, a stout man in his shirt-sleeves, was the soul of affability. Mr. Catesby, after various general remarks, made a few inquiries about an uncle aged five minutes, whom he thought was living in Bashford's Lane.



"MR. CATESBY MADE A FEW INQUIRIES."

"I don't know 'im," said the landlord.

"I had an idea that he lived at No. 5," said Catesby.

The landlord shook his head. "That's Mrs. Truefitt's house," he said, slowly.

Mr. Catesby pondered. "Truefitt, Truefitt," he repeated; "what sort of a woman is she?"

"Widder-woman," said the landlord; "she lives there with 'er daughter Prudence."

Mr. Catesby said "Indeed!" and being a good listener learned that Mrs. Truefitt was the widow of a master-lighterman, and that her son, Fred Truefitt, after an absence of seven years in New Zealand, was now on his way home. He finished his glass slowly and, the landlord departing to attend to another customer, made his way into the street again.

He walked along slowly, picturing as he went the home-coming of the long absent son. Things were oddly ordered in this world, and Fred Truefitt would probably think nothing of his brotherly privileges. He wondered whether he was like Prudence. He wondered——

"By Jove, I'll do it!" he said, recklessly, as he turned. "Now for a row."

He walked back rapidly to Bashford's Lane, and without giving his courage time to cool plied the knocker of No. 5 briskly.

The door was opened by an elderly woman, thin, and somewhat querulous in expression. Mr. Catesby had just time to notice this, and then he flung his arm round her waist, and hailing her as "Mother!" saluted her warmly.

The faint scream of the astounded Mrs. Truefitt brought her daughter hastily into the passage. Mr. Catesby's idea was ever to do a thing thoroughly, and, relinquishing Mrs. Truefitt, he kissed Prudence with all the ardour which a seven years' absence might be supposed to engender in the heart of a devoted brother. In return he received a box on the ears which made his head ring.

"He's been drinking," gasped the dismayed Mrs. Truefitt.

"Don't you know me, mother?" inquired Mr. Richard Catesby, in grievous astonishment.

"He's mad," said her daughter.

"Am I so altered that *you* don't know me, Prudence?" inquired Mr. Catesby, with pathos. "Don't you know your Fred?"

"Go out," said Mrs. Truefitt, recovering; "go out at once."

Mr. Catesby looked from one to the other in consternation.

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"I know I've altered," he said, at last, "but I'd no idea——"

"If you don't go out at once I'll send for the police," said the elder woman, sharply. "Prudence, scream!"

"I'm not going to scream," said Prudence, eyeing the intruder with great composure. "I'm not afraid of him."

Despite her reluctance to have a scene—a thing which was strongly opposed to the traditions of Bashford's Lane—Mrs. Truefitt had got as far as the doorstep in search of assistance, when a sudden terrible thought occurred to her: Fred was dead, and the visitor had hit upon this extraordinary fashion of breaking the news gently.

"Come into the parlour," she said, faintly.

Mr. Catesby, suppressing his surprise, followed her into the room. Prudence, her fine figure erect and her large eyes meeting his steadily, took up a position by the side of her mother.

"You have brought bad news?" inquired the latter.

"No, mother," said Mr. Catesby, simply, "only myself, that's all."

Mrs. Truefitt made a gesture of impatience, and her daughter, watching him closely, tried to remember something she had once read about detecting insanity by the expression of the eyes. Those of Mr. Catesby were blue, and the only expression in them at the present moment was one of tender and respectful admiration.

"When did you see Fred last?" inquired Mrs. Truefitt making another effort.

"Mother," said Mr. Catesby, with great pathos, "don't you know me?"

"He has brought bad news of Fred," said Mrs. Truefitt, turning to her daughter; "I am sure he has."

"I don't understand you," said Mr. Catesby, with a bewildered glance from one to the other. "I *am* Fred. Am I much changed? You look the same as you always did, and it seems only yesterday since I kissed Prudence good-bye at the docks. You were crying, Prudence."

Miss Truefitt made no reply; she gazed at him unflinchingly and then bent towards her mother.

"He is mad," she whispered; "we must try and get him out quietly. Don't contradict him."

"Keep close to me," said Mrs. Truefitt, who had a great horror of the insane. "If he turns violent open the window and scream. I thought he had brought bad news of Fred. How did he know about him?"

Her daughter shook her head and gazed curiously at their afflicted visitor. She put his age down at twenty-five, and she could not help thinking it a pity that so good looking a young man should have lost his wits.

"Bade Prudence good-bye at the docks," continued Mr. Catesby, dreamily. "You drew me behind a pile of luggage, Prudence, and put your head on my shoulder. I have thought of it ever since."

Miss Truefitt did not deny it, but she bit her lips, and shot a sharp glance at him. She began to think that her pity was uncalled-for.

"Tell me all that's happened since I've been away," said Mr. Catesby.

Mrs. Truefitt turned to her daughter and

"I'M JUST GOING AS FAR AS THE CORNER."

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whispered. It might have been merely the effect of a guilty conscience, but the visitor thought that he caught the word "policeman."

"I'm just going as far as the corner," said Mrs. Truefitt, rising, and crossing hastily to the door.

The young man nodded affectionately and sat in doubtful consideration as the front-door closed behind her. "Where is mother going?" he asked, in a voice which betrayed a little pardonable anxiety.

"Not far, I hope," said Prudence.

"I really think," said Mr. Catesby, rising—"I really think that I had better go after her. At her age——"

He walked into the small passage and put his hand on the latch. Prudence, now quite certain of his sanity, felt sorely reluctant to let such impudence go unpunished.

"Are you going?" she inquired.

"I think I'd better," said Mr. Catesby, gravely. "Dear mother——"

"You're afraid," said the girl, calmly.

Mr. Catesby coloured and his buoyancy failed him. He felt a little bit cheap.

"You are brave enough with two women," continued the girl, disdainfully; "but you had better go if you're afraid."

Mr. Catesby regarded the temptress uneasily. "Would you like me to stay?" he asked.

"I?" said Miss Truefitt, tossing her head. "No, I don't want you. Besides, you're frightened."

Mr. Catesby turned, and with a firm step made his way back to the room; Prudence, with a half-smile, took a chair near the door and regarded her prisoner with unholy triumph.

"I shouldn't like to be in your shoes," she said, agreeably; "mother has gone for a policeman."

"Bless her," said Mr. Catesby, fervently. "What had we better say to him when he comes?"

"You'll be locked up," said Prudence; "and it will serve you right for your bad behaviour."

Mr. Catesby sighed. "It's the heart," he said, gravely. "I am not to blame, really. I saw you standing in the window, and I could see at once that you were beautiful, and good, and kind."

"I never heard of such impudence," continued Miss Truefitt.

"I surprised myself," admitted Mr. Catesby. "In the usual way I am very quiet and well-behaved, not to say shy."

Miss Truefitt looked at him scornfully. "I think that you had better stop your nonsense and go," she remarked.

"Don't you want me to be punished?" inquired the other, in a soft voice.

"I think that you had better go while you can," said the girl, and at that moment there was a heavy knock at the front-door. Mr. Catesby, despite his assurance, changed colour; the girl eyed him in perplexity. Then she opened the small folding-doors at the back of the room.

"You're only—stupid," she whispered. "Quick! Go in there. I'll say you've gone. Keep quiet, and I'll let you out by-and-by."

She pushed him in and closed the doors. From his hiding-place he heard an animated conversation at the street-door and minute particulars as to the time which had elapsed since his departure and the direction he had taken.

"I never heard such impudence," said Mrs. Truefitt, going into the front-room and sinking into a chair after the constable had taken his departure. "I don't believe he was mad."

"Only a little weak in the head, I think," said Prudence, in a clear voice. "He was very frightened after you had gone; I don't think he will trouble us again."

"He'd better not," said Mrs. Truefitt, sharply. "I never heard of such a thing—never."

She continued to grumble, while Prudence, in a low voice, endeavoured to soothe her. Her efforts were evidently successful, as the prisoner was, after a time, surprised to hear the older woman laugh—at first gently, and then with so much enjoyment that her daughter was at some pains to restrain her. He sat in patience until evening deepened into night, and a line of light beneath the folding-doors announced the lighting of the lamp in the front-room. By a pleasant clatter of crockery he became aware that they were at supper, and he pricked up his ears as Prudence made another reference to him.

"If he comes to-morrow night while you are out I sha'n't open the door," she said. "You'll be back by nine, I suppose."

Mrs. Truefitt assented.

"And you won't be leaving before seven," continued Prudence. "I shall be all right."

Mr. Catesby's face glowed and his eyes grew tender; Prudence was as clever as she was beautiful. The delicacy with which she had intimated the fact of the unconscious Mrs. Truefitt's absence on the following evening was beyond all praise. The only

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depressing thought was that such resourcefulness savoured of practice.

He sat in the darkness for so long that even the proximity of Prudence was not sufficient amends for the monotony of it, and it was not until past ten o'clock that the folding-doors were opened and he stood blinking at the girl in the glare of the lamp.

"Quick!" she whispered.

Mr. Catesby stepped into the lighted room.

"The front-door is open," whispered Prudence. "Make haste. I'll close it."

She followed him to the door; he made an ineffectual attempt to seize her hand, and the next moment was pushed gently outside and the door closed behind him. He stood a moment gazing at the house, and then hastened back to his ship.

"Seven to-morrow," he murmured; "seven to-morrow. After all, there's nothing pays in this world like cheek—nothing."

He slept soundly that night, though the things that the second-engineer said to him about wasting a hard-working man's evening would have lain heavy on the conscience of a more scrupulous man. The only thing that troubled him was the manifest intention of his friend not to let him slip through his fingers on the following evening. At last, in sheer despair at his inability to shake him off, he had to tell him that he had an appointment with a lady.

"Well, I'll come, too," said the other, glowering at him. "It's very like she'll have a friend with her; they generally do."

"I'll run round and tell her," said Catesby. "I'd have arranged it before, only I thought you didn't care about that sort of thing."

"Female society is softening," said the second-engineer. "I'll go and put on a clean collar."

Catesby watched him into his cabin and then, though it still wanted an hour to seven, hastily quitted the ship and secreted himself in the private bar of the Beehive.

He waited there until a quarter past seven, and then, adjusting his tie for about the tenth time that evening in the glass behind the bar, sallied out in the direction of No. 5.

He knocked lightly, and waited. There was no response, and he knocked again. When the fourth knock brought no response, his heart sank within him and he indulged in vain speculations as to the reasons for this unexpected hitch in the programme. He knocked again, and then the door opened suddenly and Prudence, with a little cry of

"I'LL GO AND PUT ON A CLEAN COLLAR."

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surprise and dismay, backed into the passage.

"You!" she said, regarding him with large eyes.

Mr. Catesby bowed tenderly, and passing in closed the door behind him.

"I wanted to thank you for your kindness last night," he said, humbly.

"Very well," said Prudence; "good-bye."

Mr. Catesby smiled. "It'll take me a long time to thank you as I ought to thank you," he murmured. "And then I want to apologize; that'll take time, too."

"You had better go," said Prudence, severely; "kindness is thrown away upon you. I ought to have let you be punished."

"You are too good and kind," said the other, drifting by easy stages into the parlour.

Miss Truefitt made no reply, but following him into the room seated herself in an easy-chair and sat coldly watchful.

"How do you know what I am?" she inquired.

"Your face tells me," said the infatuated Richard. "I hope you will forgive me for my rudeness last night. It was all done on the spur of the moment."

"I am glad you are sorry," said the girl, softening.

"All the same, if I hadn't done it," pursued Mr. Catesby, "I shouldn't be sitting here talking to you now."

Miss Truefitt raised her eyes to his, and then lowered them modestly to the ground. "That is true," she said, quietly.

"And I would sooner be sitting here than anywhere," pursued Catesby. "That is," he added, rising, and taking a chair by her side, "except here."

Miss Truefitt appeared to tremble, and made as though to rise. Then she sat still and took a gentle peep at Mr. Catesby from the corner of her eye.

"I hope that you are not sorry I am here?" said that gentleman.

Miss Truefitt hesitated. "No," she said, at last.

"Are you — are you glad?" asked the modest Richard.

Miss Truefitt averted her eyes altogether. "Yes," she said, faintly.

A strange feeling of solemnity came over the triumphant Richard. He took the hand nearest to him and pressed it gently.

"I—I can hardly believe in my good luck," he murmured.

"Good luck?" said Prudence, innocently.

"Isn't it good luck to hear you say that you are glad I'm here?" said Catesby.

"You're the best judge of that," said the girl, withdrawing her hand. "It doesn't seem to me much to be pleased about."

Mr. Catesby eyed her in perplexity, and was about to address another tender remark to her when she was overcome by a slight fit of coughing. At the same moment he started at the sound of a shuffling footstep in the passage. Somebody tapped at the door.

"Yes?" said Prudence.

"Can't find the knife-powder, miss," said a harsh voice. The door was pushed open and disclosed a tall, bony woman of about forty. Her red arms were bare to the elbow, and she betrayed several evidences of a long and arduous day's charing.

"It's in the cupboard," said Prudence. "Why, what's the matter, Mrs. Porter?"

Mrs. Porter made no reply. Her mouth was wide open and she was gazing with starting eyeballs at Mr. Catesby.

"*Joe!*" she said, in a hoarse whisper. "*Joe!*"

Mr. Catesby gazed at her in chilling silence. Miss Truefitt, with an air of great surprise, glanced from one to the other.

"*Joe!*" said Mrs. Porter again. "Ain't you goin' to speak to me?"

Mr. Catesby continued to gaze at her in speechless astonishment. She skipped clumsily round the table and stood before him with her hands clasped.

"Where 'ave you been all this long time?" she demanded, in a higher key.

"You—you've made a mistake," said the bewildered Richard.

"Mistake?" wailed Mrs. Porter. "Mistake! Oh, where's your 'art?"

Before he could get out of her way she flung her arms round the horrified young man's neck and embraced him copiously. Over her bony left shoulder the frantic Richard met the ecstatic gaze of Miss Truefitt, and, in a flash, he realized the trap into which he had fallen.

"*Mrs. Porter!*" said Prudence.

"It's my 'usband, miss," said the Amazon, reluctantly releasing the flushed and dishevelled Richard; "'e left me and my five eighteen months ago. For eighteen months I 'aven't 'ad a sight of 'is blessed face."

She lifted the hem of her apron to her face and broke into discordant weeping.

"Don't cry," said Prudence, softly; "I'm sure he isn't worth it."

Mr. Catesby looked at her wanly. He was beyond further astonishment, and when Mrs. Truefitt entered the room with a laudable attempt to twist her features into an expression of surprise, he scarcely noticed her.

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"It's my Joe," said Mrs. Porter, simply.

"Good gracious!" said Mrs. Truefitt. "Well, you've got him now; take care he doesn't run away from you again."

"I'll look after that, ma'am," said Mrs. Porter, with a glare at the startled Richard.

"She's very forgiving," said Prudence. "She kissed him just now."

"Did she, though," said the admiring Mrs. Truefitt. "I wish I'd been here."

"I'LL LOOK AFTER THAT, MA'AM."

"I can do it agin, ma'am," said the obliging Mrs. Porter.

"If you come near me again——" said the breathless Richard, stepping back a pace.

"I shouldn't force his love," said Mrs. Truefitt; "it'll come back in time, I dare say."

"I'm sure he's affectionate," said Prudence.

Mr. Catesby eyed his tormentors in silence; the faces of Prudence and her mother betokened much innocent enjoyment, but the austerity of Mrs. Porter's visage was unrelaxed.

"Better let bygones be bygones," said Mrs. Truefitt; "he'll be sorry by-and-by for all the trouble he has caused."

"He'll be ashamed of himself—if you give him time," added Prudence.

Mr. Catesby had heard enough; he took up his hat and crossed to the door.

"Take care he doesn't run away from you again," repeated Mrs. Truefitt.

"I'll see to that, ma'am," said Mrs. Porter, taking him by the arm. "Come along, Joe."

Mr. Catesby attempted to shake her off, but in vain, and he ground his teeth as he realized the absurdity of his position. A man he could have dealt with, but Mrs. Porter was invulnerable. Sooner than walk down the road with her he preferred the sallies of the parlour. He walked back to his old position by the fireplace, and stood gazing moodily at the floor.

Mrs. Truefitt tired of the sport at last. She wanted her supper, and with a significant glance at her daughter she beckoned the redoubtable and reluctant Mrs. Porter from the room. Catesby heard the kitchen-door close behind them, but he made no move. Prudence stood gazing at him in silence.

"If you want to go," she said, at last, "now is your chance."

Catesby followed her into the passage without a word, and waited quietly while she opened the door. Still silent, he put on his hat and passed out into the darkening street. He turned after a short distance for a last look at the house and, with a sudden sense of elation, saw that she was standing on the step. He hesitated, and then walked slowly back.

"Yes?" said Prudence.

"I should like to tell your mother that I am sorry," he said, in a low voice.

"It is getting late," said the girl, softly; "but, if you really wish to tell her—Mrs. Porter will not be here to-morrow night."

She stepped back into the house and the door closed behind her.

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The Arcadian Calendar

BY E. D. CUMING AND

J. A. SHEPHERD.

September

"FIRST SEPTEMBER: Partridge Shooting begins." The methods of the partridge have changed since the reaping machine and sowing drill came into fashion; in the old days of long and ragged stubble and irregularly growing turnips he could not run, so waited till he felt bound to rise on the wing. Nowadays he sees the shooting party approach and puts his best foot foremost down the straight furrows between the turnips or across the closely shaven stubble. There be those who say our bird has learned the trick of running from the French partridge, the oft-anathematized red-leg, which is possible:—

Ah, non. fellow-sportsbird, *mon frère de la chasse*,
If you shall permeet, I shall say of few things
That shall prove you how partritch is—how you say?—*ass*
What fly from the *chasseur* away on the wings.

It is so much bettaire to *ron* through the crop,
Ron *most queek* on yours legs! Now I go to tell why:
The Français say always "I shoot ven he stop,"
And the Anglais say always "I shoot ven he fly."

It must be allowed that there is weight in

"RON MOST QUEEK ON YOURS LEGS!"

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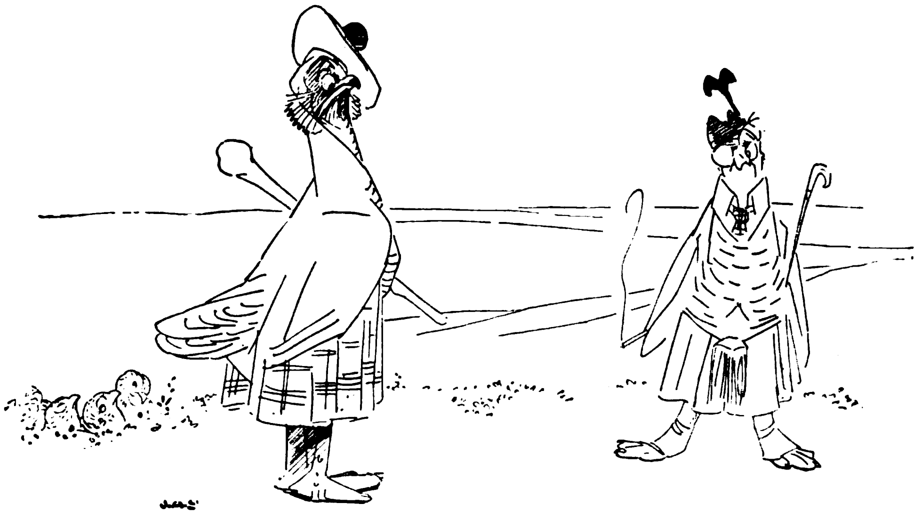
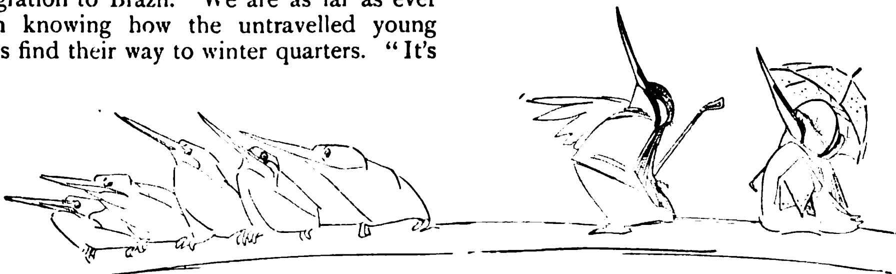


"WARNED OFF."

the argument: anyhow, the French bird often does our partridge a good turn; he rushes by and so gives him timely warning to be off.

On the moors by this time grouse-driving has begun, to the indignation of the old cocks. Those discreet patriarchs, hearing men advance, take it for granted safety lies in prompt flight, and discover when too late that this time the approaching humans were harmless, and death comes from the turf butts over which they are being driven. The slaughter of old cocks is very necessary, because the jealous senior will not allow a young cock to take up his quarters within five hundred yards of him if he can help it; *he* knows what those young fellows are, and won't have them hanging about the premises. Hence, unless the tough old cocks are killed off, the desirable youngsters bred on your moor betake themselves to your neighbour's.

The young cuckoos become conscious of a strange craving to be up and flying south: the hedge-sparrow foster-parents cannot help them; as well might the village labourer's son seek advice from his father concerning emigration to Brazil. We are as far as ever from knowing how the untravelled young birds find their way to winter quarters. "It's instinct," we say, contentedly. Useful word "instinct." The fly-catchers mark the decrease in insect supplies and go: the nightjar and wryneck go, too. Where? Well, take the fly-catcher. "In winter," says Mr. Howard Saunders, one of our soundest authorities, "it visits India, Arabia, and Africa to Cape Colony." Merely pausing to point out that the eminent authority does not mean that each individual takes a Cook's circular tour ticket, we may say it is probable that the birds, broadly speaking, go to the most accessible warm climate. There is no reason why fly-catchers, which summer in England, should winter in India; travelling expenses are nothing to them, of course; but, on the other hand, taking no interest in Indian scenery, history, or social questions, they may just as well go to Africa, which is the nearest country with a respectable winter climate. It is about this time that the kingfishers harden their hearts and banish their children. The kingfisher thinks that prince-fishers—if we may call them so—cannot learn habits of self-reliance too



"THE KINGFISHERS HARDEN THEIR HEARTS AND BANISH THEIR CHILDREN."

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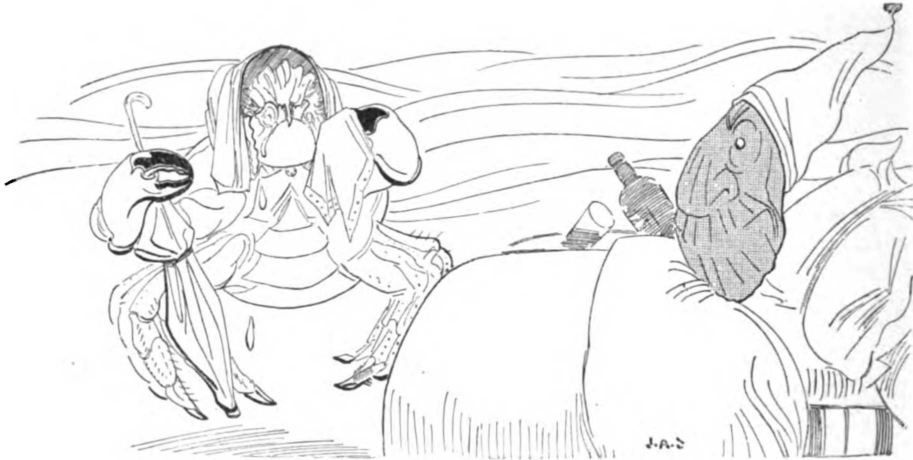


"'I THOUGHT I'D CALL,' BEGAN THE CRAB."

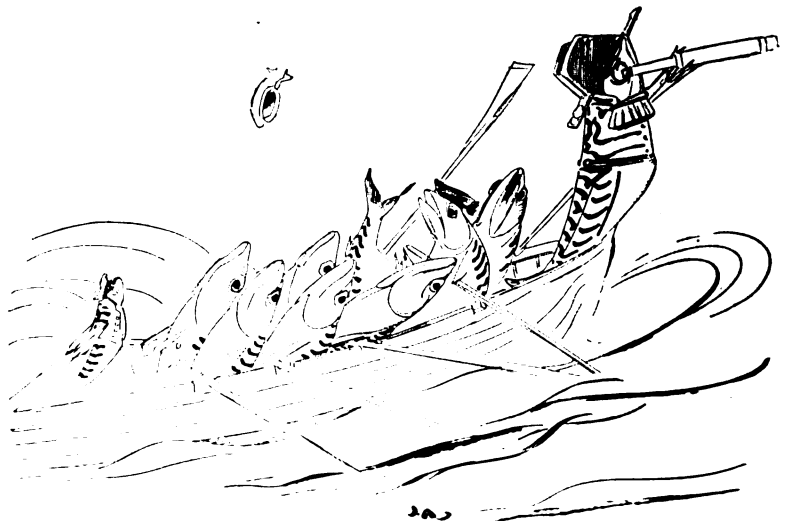
early in life, also he will brook no rivals near his throne, so the family is scattered up stream and down with paternal blessings, which sound remarkably like imprecations, each member receiving assurances of his or her parents' undying affection, and promises of condign punishment if they dare come back. The children seem to have more faith in the latter; at all events, they stay away.

The oyster season is begun again. The oyster gets three months' holiday by law and a fourth by custom. They ought to have more; prolific to prodigality, oysters are reckless parents, dismissing their spawn or "spat" to the mercy of every fish that passes. The authorities are not agreed concerning the dimensions of the oyster's original family, but apparently a million, more or less, are of no great account. Few of the spat ever begin life in earnest, much less find their childish shells safely ensconced on the peaceful, but treacherous, dredger-threatened oyster-bed. When oysters come in crabs go out.

"I thought I'd call," began the crab. "We heard you were in bed,
And not expecting long to live; and as we're free from dread
Of crab-pots now, I came to see—before the dredger ends—"
Sobs choked the crab, she stammered, of "the sympathy of friends."

"Friends!" shrieked the oyster, starting up. "There's not in all the sea
A fish that swims, or sinks, or crawls, that is a friend to me.
Fish never spared a child of mine, I know of only five
Who grew to adult oysterhood—and men ate those alive.

Give us ten years of fishless peace secure from all our foes,
And what d'you think would happen then?" The crab said, "Goodness knows."
"I'll tell you," said the oyster, and she took her little slate,
And sucked a stumpy pencil as she tried to calculate.



"THE MACKEREL PUT OUT TO SEA."

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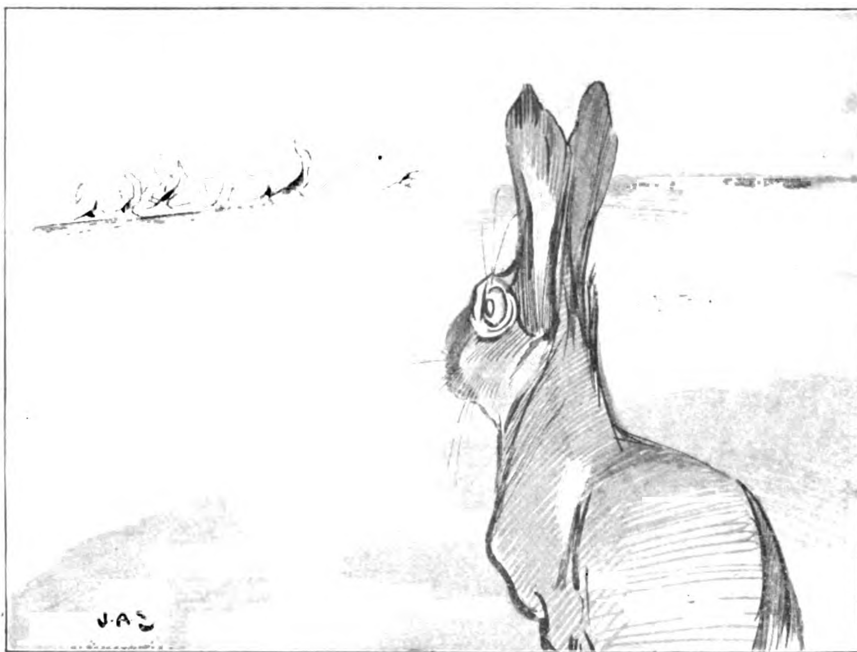
"In ten years' time—if all grew up—I find that there would be
Oysters enough to fill the earth, the rivers, lakes, and sea.
The shells would lie from Pole to Pole, a depth of fathoms three.
Oh, would it not be glorious that oyster world to see?"
"Well, no," the thoughtful crab replied, "there'd be no room for me."

The oyster did not overstate the case: the price of oysters may be a subject of regret, but statisticians are agreed that their unchecked multiplication is not to be desired unless they are to monopolize this planet.

The mackerel, who have spent the summer on the coast, put out to sea; they appear to be punctual in their movements as far as observations in Plymouth Sound reveal. Pontopriddan has a terrible story to illustrate the turpitude of the mackerel: a shoal, he says, once surrounded a Norwegian sailor who was bathing; by sheer weight of numbers they pushed him into deep water, and while they pushed bit him so severely that, though rescued, the poor man died from loss of blood. Without reflecting on the veracity of Pontopriddan or his informant, one feels it would be satisfactory to hear the mackerel's account of the affair. The mackerel goes bad very quickly; for which reason an Act of Parliament was passed in 1698 to permit him to be cried in the London streets on Sundays.

The spinster glow-worm turns out her lamp, for the gentlemen are all married and dead, and economy forbids the waste of brightness on the empty air. The great bat or noctule, who, owing to his affection for the higher regions of the air, is thought rarer than is actually the case, comes down, folds himself up, and goes to bed till next April: seven or eight months' calm, refreshing sleep fortify him for the fatigues of five or four months' activity. The slim, secretive eel chooses a dark night and glides away down stream with as much caution as though eloping with a ward in Chancery. The authorities are divided concerning the subsequent proceedings of eels: whether Mrs. Eel lays five million or ten million eggs; whether she lays them in the depths of the sea; in the depths of estuarial mud; dies after laying the eggs; doesn't die afterwards—all these are subjects of debate. If an experienced family eel could be coaxed into the witness-box, several great minds would be set at rest: but the eel preserves an attitude of masterly reserve.



"COURSING BEGINS."

The 15th of September brings repose to the otter, who has been hunted since the middle of April, and brings trouble to the hare. Coursing begins on this day, and

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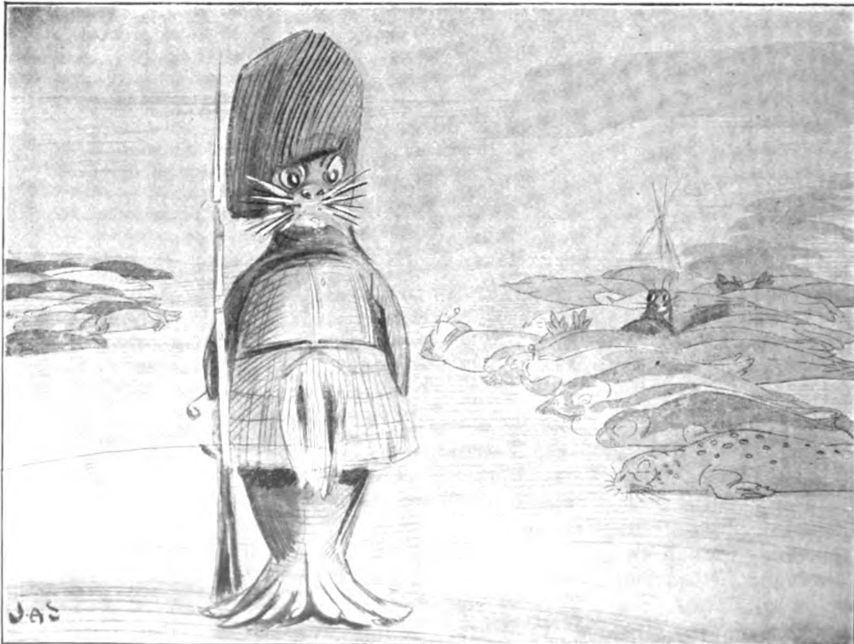
some few packs of harriers begin hunting within the next fortnight; most packs, however, postpone their opening day till about mid-October, if not till the 1st of November.

The rabbits are freed from nursery duties some time in September; young ones have been found in November, but that was exceptionally late, and probably very mild weather tempted a particularly motherly rabbit to tempt fate with an untimely litter. The harvest-mouse sometimes produces a family as late as this, but others of the genus (saving always the house-mouse) have done with domestic affairs for the year.

"THE OTTER'S REPOSE."

The seals marry in September. In hot weather they spend much time in drowsy meditation on the rocks, and would spend more in this harmless occupation if men would leave them alone. Fishermen say they appoint a sentry to keep a look-out before they settle down thus: there is nothing improbable in this, but the authorities accept the statement with reserve, having remarked that the members of a sleeping party look up from time to time. It may be that these wakeful seals are merely keeping an eye on the sentry: but this conjecture has not been received with approval by those who give natural history details the guinea-stamp that secures currency. Towards the end of the month the stag turns angrily to thoughts of love, and rambles over the hills all night bellowing; some natures cannot love greatly without hating greatly, and of



"ON GUARD."

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"A SUGGESTION."

such is the disposition of the stag. He is spoiling for a fight, and thanks to his loud advertisement usually finds a friend to oblige, when the two engage in earnest. They fight to the death if need be, while the hinds stand by to see the end and fall into the train of the victor. The stalking season ends during the first week in October, and for a month the deer are left undisturbed to fight and marry. The carrion crows are at this season prone to leave the moors, where perhaps more shooting is in progress than they care to encourage by their presence, and resort to the shores. Crows are fond of shell-fish, mussels particularly; and when the bird finds a mussel he can't open by ordinary means, he weighs the situation intelligently, soars aloft with the obstinate thing in his bill, and picking out a good hard rock drops it thereon, to descend smiling and eat it. Family parties of herons haunt the waterside: their manners are reposeful, but they mean business, for the birds of the year are learning the elements of the anglers' gentle craft:—

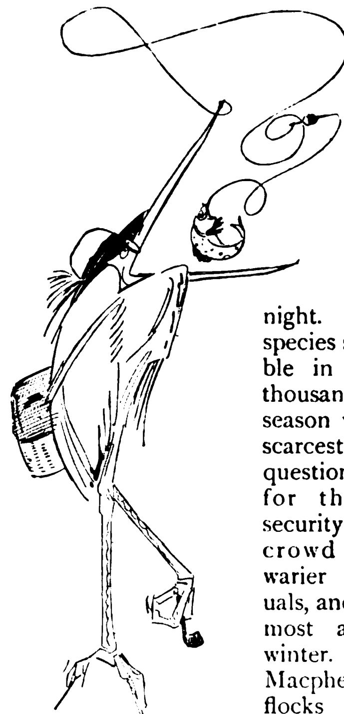
Now bear in mind the rules you learned when you were taught your drill,
That dinner, unlike victories, is won by standing still.
Open your eyes and shut your beak, pretend that you are stuffed—
And don't forget refraction's law; that way are catches muffed.

Your head between your shoulders sink; the attitude is lent a
Look of disarming dreaminess if on the gastric centre
You rest your beak in readiness to make your downward stroke.
When fishes come strike clean and hard; it's slovenly to poke.

And when you've got your fish be sure you gulp him down at once,
Don't trifle with him lest he drop and make you look a dunce;
I'd not accept to drop my prey, so foolish I should feel,
An 18-carat gold-fish or a sterling silver eel.

It must be said that the heron does not confine himself to fish dinners: he eats frogs, water-voles, and other dainties, not always choosing with discretion. Herons have been found dead, choked by water-voles which were several sizes too large for their throats.

The starlings, always sociable, collect in flocks for the winter: these flocks resort regularly every night to the same place to roost; there is one such starling roost in a plantation on Cramond Island, in the Firth of Forth, about a mile from the mouth of the River Almond. Not a bird builds there in spring, and not one is to be seen there in the daytime, but in the autumn and winter evenings they come in thousands to pass the night. Why some species should assemble in hundreds or thousands for the season when food is scarcest is an open question: it may be for their greater security; birds in a crowd are always warier than individuals, and bird foes are most active in the winter. Mr. H. A. Macpherson says that flocks of starlings spend the whole



"EXPLANATION."

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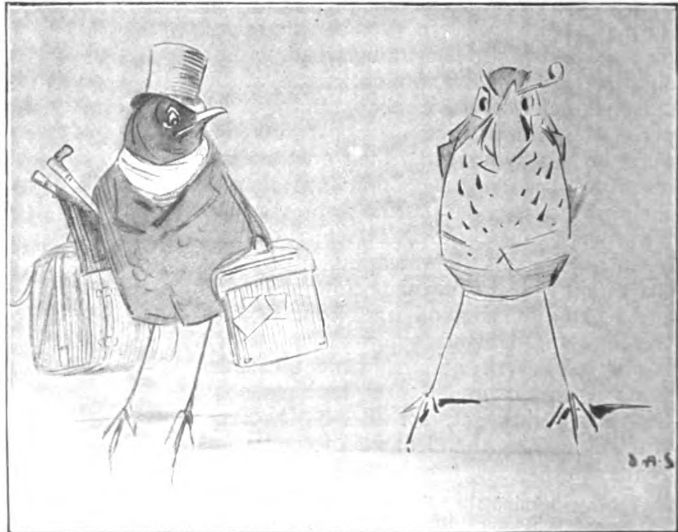
"BACHELOR STARLINGS."

summer on the Cumberland salt-marshes; he believes these to be bachelors who come there to enjoy themselves in idle frivolity instead of marrying and bringing up families like respectable starlings. These bachelor flocks break up in October, no doubt to join other flocks. The wild duck begins to put on again the smart winter clothes he gave up wearing in spring, when he had seen his wife settled for the season. Blackgame "pack" about the end of the month. Mr. J. G. Millais says the old cocks and greyhens, or old cocks alone, make up parties by themselves, leaving the birds of the year to form assemblies with friends of their own age, and a very sensible plan too. The old greyhens do not always "pack": they sometimes winter singly or in small parties. At this season blackgame find attractions on arable land during the day, resorting to the higher moors to sleep. The blackcocks have another tournament of a somewhat perfunctory kind in the autumn. There is no object in these exercises so far as man knows, but perhaps the birds merely want to keep their hands in, with a view to the real *lek* in the early spring. The grouse separate about mid-September, the cocks going off by themselves or in small parties, and the hens in coteries of from five to seven.

The emigration movements go on throughout September: the corncrake — pardon, landrail — notwithstanding his corpulence, gets under way about the end of the month. The Kalmucks told J. F. Gmelin, the naturalist, that the southward-bound cranes carried each a corncrake on his back: just the sort of thing a fat corncrake would enjoy if the crane consented to fall in with his views. There is nothing improbable in the story: a short-eared owl was once seen to land on the Yorkshire coast carrying on its back a golden-crested wren, whom it had, no doubt, overtaken at sea wing-weary and exhausted, and had given a lift. The North American Indians tell similar stories of such assistance lent by big birds to little ones. The ring-ousel goes—the one representative of our thrushes who does not consider this



RING-OUSEL: "WELL, GOOD-BYE, I'M OFF—BUT WON'T YOU COME?"
THRUSH: "NO, THANKS; OLD ENGLAND IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME."

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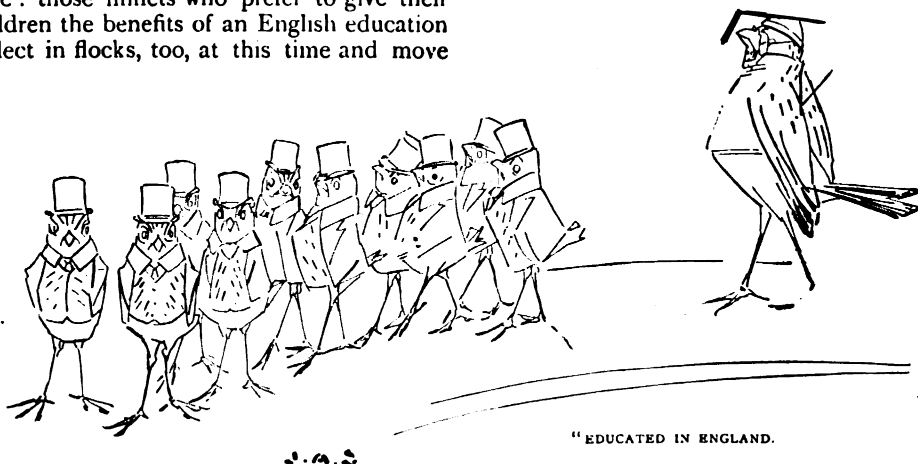
country good enough for him in the winter, though there is reason to believe that some of our song-thrushes also go abroad. The redstart and willow-wren say good-bye, and the garden-warbler leaves about the end of the month: the garden-warbler goes as far as Cape Colony, but whether the birds found there come from England or some other part of Europe is not known. Birds' ideas of what constitutes an enjoyable climate differ: linnets who bring up their families in Scandinavia are satisfied to winter in the milder climate of England, and begin to come over to us in vast flocks about this time: those linnets who prefer to give their children the benefits of an English education collect in flocks, too, at this time and move



"EDUCATED IN ENGLAND.

southward—some go abroad, others do not. The golden-crested wrens, smallest of European birds, have a high opinion of this country as a winter resort: they come over from Norway and Sweden and elsewhere in countless thousands: continuous flocks extending right across England, St. George's Channel, into Ireland, have been recorded: the marvel is how such tiny birds can remain on the wing long enough to perform such a journey: it is more than three hundred miles between the nearest points of the Norwegian and Scottish coasts, but many of these adventurous travellers disdain the risks of over-sea journeying, and swarms come straight to the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire sea-board, four hundred miles at least. Judging from the numbers of birds of many species which perch to rest on the rigging of vessels in the North Sea, they often find the trip more exhausting than they expected: and as ships and obliging big birds are not always where they are wanted, the loss of life must be considerable. The golden plover breeds with us, but is far commoner in more northerly latitudes; the young golden plovers arrive in large flocks now, in advance of their parents, who remain to finish moulting, and haunt the sea-shores; many, of course, go inland, but the bill of fare on the beach at low tide has great attractions. The ruff, formerly a fairly common bird in marshy districts, but now practically exterminated in England as a breeding species by drainage and collectors, comes to us after moulting. The cock does well to leave behind him the wonderful ruff whence he derives his name: his extravagant style of dress in the breeding season marked him out for slaughter. Inconspicuously attired like his wife he is tolerably safe.

The dragon-flies render their last duty to their species and lay their eggs preparatory to dying. Some of the earlier kinds are dead already, but the large majority complete their allotted span of three months in September, and egg-laying is therefore general. Some dragon-flies are equipped with that neat instrument called an ovipositor, with which the owner can make holes in the leaf or stem of a water-plant to receive eggs: those who have not got an ovipositor drop their eggs casually into the water and trust to luck to look after them. The degree of confidence wild creatures repose in luck demands the attention of the Anti-Gambling League. The Death's Head moth, whom we saw last month in caterpillar guise retreating into the earth to become a chrysalis, emerges in its might. The moth's wings attain their full size—five inches across in some specimens—in a couple of hours; it must be a dizzying sensation to grow at such a rate as that. The Death's

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Head is gifted above other moths: it has a voice—a weird and ghastly little squeak—which has been compared to that of a sick mouse. The insect presumes upon its size and accomplishments as a speaker to attack bee-hives and steal honey, which it does with impunity, as the bees are afraid of it. We can hardly tax the bees with cowardice, for many among country people are afraid of the Death's Head, too; the device on his thorax, the name he derives therefrom, and that unearthly voice, the more unearthly as coming from a moth, combine to render the Death's Head an object of superstition and dislike. The honey harvest is gathered in September. The principles of the bee deteriorate sadly at this season. Mr. Pettigrew says reproachfully that bees are thievish all the summer; but in September robbers are constantly prowling about, and hive burglary and theft of honey are deplorably common.

The invasion of this country by winter visitors is only beginning in September: on the other hand, the vast majority of the birds who do not mean to stay with us leave during the latter half of the month, more particularly if the weather is become cold and disagreeable. The sand-martins are gone, and though some of the house-martins are busy rearing a third brood they probably wish they had been content with two, and were free to join the daily increasing throngs of their fellows who, with the swallows, are collecting on telegraph wires and roofs preparatory to starting. Swallows and martins make a greater business about leaving for the winter than any other species; they linger twittering for days as though sorry to go, as perhaps they are:—

Good-bye! Our pleasant stay is only ended
  Because the nights grow cold and flies grow few.
We'll take your summer south and get it mended,
  And bring it back next spring as good as new.

Last week that snap of frost showed something broken:
  You don't approve of summer stopping thus.
Accept of our regard for you a token,
  And leave the slight repairs required to us.

Why, when in spring the birds go north in legions,
  Not beg them take your winter, wretched thing,
And regulate it in the Arctic regions?
  It now gets mixed with autumn and with spring.

Young foxes have by this time discovered that life is not all chicken and rabbit; hounds are cub-hunting and teaching those whom it most nearly concerns that safety lies in flight; the timorous cub who declines to learn this lesson and dodges about in covert teaches hounds in his own person that fox-flesh is a thing of great desire. The ardent sportsman who said that if he saw a May fox killed and could begin cubbing in July he could worry through the rest of the year somehow did not ask much more than he can get in some countries. Given an early harvest there are packs which turn their attention to the cubs in August, but cub-hunting is not general until September. The squirrels are enjoying feasts of beech-mast and other nuts; and the dormouse, hedgehog, and other hibernating creatures are agreeably occupied in eating as much as they possibly can, that they may presently retire to bed in a state of fortified fatness.

"FORTIFIED FATNESS."

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The Great Boycott

At The Hotel D'Angleterre

By Mrs. C. N. Williamson.

IT was at dinner that the Horror first burst upon the guests of the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Métretat, in Brittany.

The season of Métretat had only just begun, but already all the usual people were there; for Métretat was different from other watering-places, and the Angleterre was different from other hotels. Both were exclusive, in the most esoteric sense of that abused term; both were at this time of the year given up to the English. One of the leaders of a certain set which had a hereditary right to look down upon persons merely "smart" had "discovered" Métretat some years before, and had discreetly confided its charms to a few of the brightest and best; consequently a colony of exactly the right people had practically annexed Métretat and the one hotel of the place. Rooms were engaged during one season for another, so that, if intrusive strangers dared try to break the charmed circle, the landlord was able to thwart the attempt by announcing that the house was full.

To spend August and September at the Hôtel d'Angleterre was like being a member of a big country-house party, for everybody knew everybody else, and most of the forty-five or fifty people called each other by their Christian names, or, still better, nicknames invented as a souvenir of some funny adventure, or to fit some pleasant little peculiarity. If strangers contrived to get in they were not really strangers, but guests, or, at least, friends of someone in the set; everyone knew all about them and (unless they were particularly amusing, in which case ancestors could be dispensed with) who their great-grandfathers had been.

There was nothing of the mushroom, *nouveau riche* element among the guests who came each summer to the little, old-fashioned, sleepy village on the rocky coast of Brittany. There was no ostentation, no outshining one another in dress. The women wore short serge skirts and blouses or white piqué frocks till dinner-time, when they changed to the simplest possible gowns; and it was an unwritten law that there should be no jewellery, and no bodices revealing more than an inch of white skin below the collar-bone. As for the golfing or walking men, they lived in knickerbockers until sundown, while the boating and fishing men apparently valued their flannels according to their shabbiness.

The season at the Hôtel d'Angleterre had

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been in full, comfortable, lazy swing for about a week in the sixth August of its possession by the British; and, the dinner-gong having sounded, as usual, at eight o'clock one exquisite blue evening, the party had assembled. As it was a party of friends it was considered pleasant to have several tables, each capable of seating about a dozen. Thus the people who knew one another best could sit together, and when somebody at one table had anything to say to somebody at another he simply turned in his chair and called across the room. Consequently there was a great buzz and chatter; but everybody seemed to know what everybody else was talking about, and all were interested in the same subjects.

"What a shame Kit Vance should have got the flu!" remarked Lord Strathallin (known as "Woodsey"), nodding at one of two unoccupied places at his table. "She and Tom will be a big loss; they're both so ripping. Hope old Dupont won't be such a beast as to let their rooms to any bounding outsiders."

"He wouldn't dare," Lady "Jack" Avery reassured him from across several candle-lit, flower-decked tables.

At this instant the door of the dining-room opened, which it had no business to do, as everyone was in his or her proper place, and the soup was being taken away. There was a shrill rustle of new, rich silk linings, a luscious swish of heavy satin, a burst of white heliotrope scent, a tintinnabulation of many bangles, and a girl came into the room.

So insistently was she heralded to shocked ears and nostrils that, instinctively, eyes turned for confirmation of the announcement, remained fixed upon the vision for a frozen second, then met one another under raised brows for a long, expressive gaze.

Sudden, chill silence had fallen, and the waiters understood its meaning with awe which was half a fearful joy. None of their number envied the dignified head-waiter, whose duty it was to conduct the intruder to her seat. But he did it in a way worthy of a soldier of the Old Guard leading a forlorn hope; while, thrillingly conscious of the effect she was creating, but completely misconstruing its cause, the girl sailed, joyously rustling and tinkling, up the room. The head-waiter advanced to one of the only two unoccupied places (those which should have been sacred to the memory of Sir Thomas Vance and Katherine his wife, unavoidably absent), and drew out the chair next to Lord Strathallin.

The girl, with a hopeful, agreeably anticipating expression on her pretty face, sat down, unfolded and spread out her serviette with a coquettish flourish, then beamed about her with the friendly beginning of a smile. Nobody returned it. Nobody looked at her. It was as if the whole company, surprised into the vulgarity of a stare for a brief moment, had combined in the defensive system of ignoring the invasion. The murmur of pleasantly modulated voices had risen again, and continued with one accord as if there had been no interruption. There was talk of things that had happened at Cowes last week, before people had come on here; gossip of news from those who preferred Scotland even to dear little Métretat; chat of the day's events, golf and fish stories, with an undercurrent of croquet; and excited discussion concerning bridge, past, present, and to come.

The girl listened for a while, eating her dinner, glancing from face to face, dress to dress, taking in everything, and appearing radiantly satisfied still with herself and her surroundings; though occasionally, as fish gave place to roast, and roast to entrée, a faintly puzzled expression lifted the charmingly pencilled dark eyebrows, which contrasted so strikingly with the bright, gold-dusted brown of the wavy hair.

Finally, when she had made due allowance for English stiffness to a stranger, which must be thawed by the sun of the stranger's smile, she could bear her splendid isolation no longer. She listened to the description of a glorious game of bridge, enthusiastically described across her to Lord Strathallin by a pretty, youngish woman in a simple black dress. In a pause which this lady made for breath, the patient new-comer considered that her chance had arrived.

"Is bridge an easy kind of game to learn?" she cheerfully thrust into the opening. "I've heard such a lot of it, over in Denver. I'm an Amurrican."

The woman in black trained a slow, very slow, gaze upon the speaker, permitting it to dwell upon the pink and white face for a moment, or rather to pass through it, as if it were an obstruction which hid a more attractive object beyond. "Really?" she remarked, and removed the gaze.

The girl's complexion became more dazzlingly brilliant than before, thus, at all events, justifying itself as a natural product. She swept a hasty glance around, received an impression of other eyes, fixed and fish-like, noted with a spasm of hope that they were

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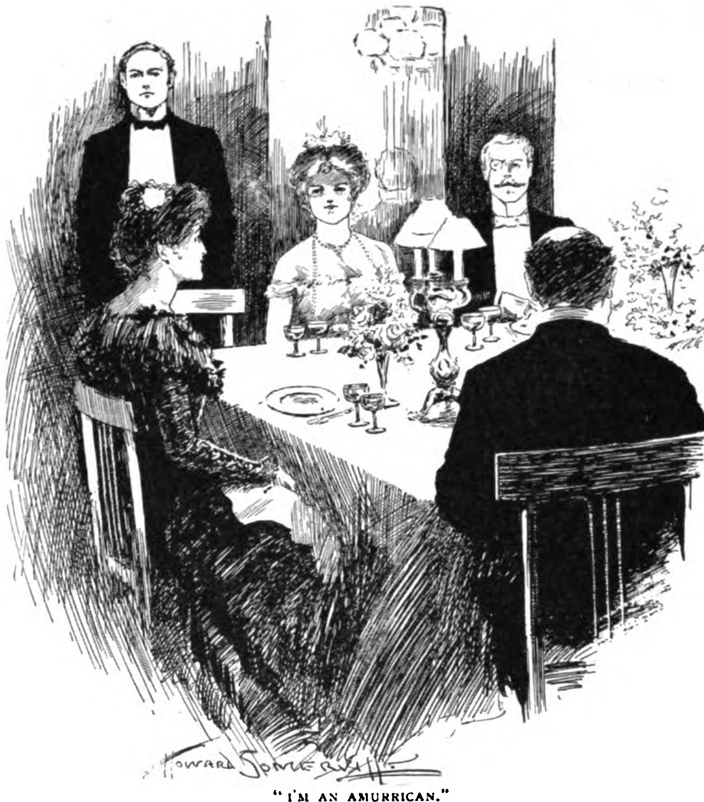

"I'M AN AMURRICAN."

however, he knew what his country expected of him, and would not disappoint it.

He looked at the girl, whose accent had proclaimed her "Amurrican" before her words confessed it. He looked at the diamond butterfly perched on high above yellow-brown masses of hair; at the necklace of large, glistening pearls twined round her firm young throat, and falling in a second strand to her slim waist; at the three or four quaintly-fashioned ornaments (one of which was a tiny American flag in diamonds, rubies, and sapphires) scintillating among the laces on her girlish bosom; at the low-cut bodice of her peach-blossom satin dress; looking not in ostentatious disapproval, but with a finely-marked, critical indifference. "I beg your pardon," he said; "I don't think I quite know what you mean."

The girl's question was not one to be repeated, with a tag of explanation attached. She blushed very red, and wriggled her pretty shoulders in a shrug which aimed at disdain, but indicated distress. "It doesn't matter at all," she retorted; and gave herself up wholly to the green peas, which she eked out as a valuable screen for emotion, by eating one at a time. She had come last into the dining-room, but she was the first to leave it, sweeping from the room, with her head very high; and, when a waiter had closed the door behind her, contemptuously amused glances were exchanged. She was a vulgar little horror, that was clear. Pretty, oh, yes, in a meretricious way, but quite too terrible; covered with jewels like an idol; altogether distinctly a creature, and to be frowned relentlessly down. If one were even civil in a weak moment, she was evidently the kind to take advantage; and if she were not to remain a flamboyant weed in this pleasant garden, she must be firmly discouraged from the first. Indeed, it was monstrous that Dupont should

women's, and then hurriedly turned towards Lord Strathallin as if—being a man—he might be looked upon as a port to be sought in storm.

"My goodness!" she exclaimed in a half whisper, accompanied by a winning appeal from under long lashes, "*is* that lady snubbing me, do you suppose?"

As it happened, the lady in the plain black dress was a bright, particular star in that set which came to Métretat each year to enjoy its own exclusive society. Why this high place had been accorded her, nobody knew precisely, for she was neither beautiful, titled, rich, nor superlatively agreeable. But she did and said things in an original way, and somehow she had made herself indispensable. Lord Strathallin had just been admitted to her friendship, and he had no mind to sacrifice it for a strange young person who, on her entrance to the room, had been audibly christened a "Horror" by Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth. The girl was incredibly pretty, though the worst possible form, and if he had been addressed by her when no eyes were there to see he would have answered with a certain pleasure. As it was,

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have taken her in; he was well aware that this was not to be considered an ordinary hotel, and if he knew what was for his own good in the end he would not begin to fill up any chance vacancy with rank outsiders, who would simply ruin everything and make Métretat impossible to the very people who had annexed it.

Everybody wondered whether the Horror had been sufficiently crushed to slink off in a proper state of annihilation to her basely acquired quarters, or whether enough brazen impudence remained to carry her into the big, square hall, where the coterie elected to drink coffee after dinner. But the American flag is not easily to be torn from its standard by a foe, even in overwhelming numbers. Indomitably, defiantly, it waved over the particular sofa in the corner and the table adjacent which had come to be looked upon as Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth's property.

That corner—the pleasantest in the hall, and made beautiful by a tall lamp with a ruffly, red silk shade, given to the hotel by Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth—was promptly tabooed. As if a river had been turned from its normal course, the tide of evening frocks and dinner jackets flowed in one compact wave towards an opposite end of the hall, lampless, but uncontaminated. The pretty girl in pink satin sat remote, shimmering and scintillating like a jewel cast up by the sea on a desert island. She drank black coffee, and read (or seemed to read) a paper-covered novel with absorbed interest; and she "stuck it out," as somebody expressed it, at least until after the crowd had drifted elsewhere, to ping-pong, to bridge, to billiards, or to dance in the large, bare music-room, according to taste and age. After that, no one knew or cared what became of her, since she had ceased to offend with her undesired and undesirable presence.

"THE PRETTY GIRL IN PINK SATIN SAT REMOTE."

Dicky Wickham, or "Wicky Dickham," as he was more often called, a mild, elderly bachelor who was popular because he always did what he was asked, and had also some very pretty little tricks, was told off by a couple of half-amused, half-annoyed girls to "tackle Dupont" and ask him why in the name of goodness, etc., etc.

He was gone for twenty minutes, and then returned primed with information. Dupont appeared to be grieved, but not penitent. He had actually defended himself. alleging that, after all, the Angleterre was an hotel, subject to the laws which govern other houses of public entertainment. If he had rooms disengaged, he insisted that he could not turn customers away. He had even ventured to suggest that, if his patrons wished the whole hotel reserved for themselves and their friends, they should club together and pay the price, with *pension*, for any rooms which happened to be vacant. The benighted man had further—when heated by controversy—gone so far as to hint that, as most of his guests stipulated for reduced terms on account of long tenancy, his season was not really so profitable as if the hotel were filled with people who came and went. As for the young person in question (Dupont had referred to her as a lady), she had arrived that afternoon with her maid, and had demanded a suite with two

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bedrooms and a private sitting-room, for the remaining weeks of August. Such a suite Dupont had on his hands, owing to the detention in England of Sir Thomas and Lady Vance. In deference to the prejudice of his distinguished patrons against strangers and foreigners Dupont had named a very large price, which the young lady had agreed to pay without an instant's hesitation. She appeared to be *comme il faut;* when she had written her name, "Miss Jenny Calmour," in the visitors' book she had remarked, as if by way of furnishing a reference, that her father was John Calmour, the "canned-soup man, you know." Dupont had vaguely associated the name and canned-soupiness with millions, and had felt himself justified as a landlord. This was the story which explained the apparition of the Horror; and though all grumbled as with one voice, the more just-minded (these were men) reluctantly pronounced that Dupont was within his rights, and unless the invader could be routed she must be endured.

Thus the siege began.

Miss Jenny Calmour, very pink as to the cheeks, defiantly bright as to the eyes, appeared in public in the most elaborate costumes, which she changed invariably three times a day, and she never wore the same one twice. Her hats were large, picturesque, and abundantly covered with drooping feathers or flowers; her shoes were exceedingly small, pointed of toe and high of heel, and usually they matched her dress in colour. Yet nobody gave her a glance; she might have been a ghost, invisible to the human eye, to be looked *through*, never at. Nevertheless, the women knew what she had on, and knew that, if Métretat had been Biarritz or Ostend and she had been a young Princess, everything would have been in good taste. But it *was* Métretat; therefore everything was execrable, and the "boycott of American canned goods," as Jack Avery dubbed it, continued unabated.

While all the world of the Hôtel d'Angleterre and the few villas owned by the right sort of people (there were no longer any others at Métretat) went bathing, golfing, walking, or boating, or played famous matches of croquet or tennis, Miss Jenny Calmour, exquisitely dressed and smelling of white heliotrope, picked her lonely way along the beach with a book in her hand, her haughtily erect little head shaded with a chiffon and lace parasol to match her frock, or took drives inland in the one landau which the modest watering-place possessed. At night, when the hotel rang with a merry confusion of laughter, ping-pong, the tinkle of music, and of feet that danced in time, Miss Jenny Calmour sat in the corner which had once been Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth's and was now hers, proudly introspective, or plunged in the inevitable Tauchnitz.

In this manner passed seven golden August days, and if the American girl had opened her lips for any other purpose than eating or breathing, it had been only in intercourse with servants or tradespeople. One morning, while Métretat bathed in a warm, blue sea under sparkling sunshine, she was seen (although nobody looked her way) to go to the village post-office, an expression of peculiar firmness graven on her dimpled chin. She wrote out a telegram in English and sent it. It was memorable at the post-office, because the message covered two forms and cost 18frs. During the afternoon of the same day a *petit bleu* was handed to her while she was drinking tea on the otherwise deserted balcony. She brightened on reading it and put it in her pocket. That evening at dinner her appetite, which had failed somewhat of late, was observed by the waiter assigned to her table to have improved.

The following morning she drove in her landau to the distant railway station, and Lord Strathallin (who saw her on his way to the links) wondered if she were going away, vanquished—luggage and maid to follow.

But she had not turned her back on Métretat; she had merely met a train. From it stepped a big man, with crisply curling grey hair, a smooth-shaven red face, well-featured and shrewd, with the chin of Napoleon and the eye of a financier. He was tall beyond the common run of men, and the pronounced check of his travelling clothes made him loom even larger than he really was. He looked expectantly up and down the platform, and showed a set of teeth white and sound as hazel nuts when a pink muslin vision flashed into sight with a cry of "Poppa!"

The big man had with him for luggage only a bag, which he styled his "grip." He took his daughter cheerily by the arm, swinging the "grip" with his free hand; and so they marched side by side to the waiting landau.

"I suppose we couldn't send this thing up to the hotel and walk, could we? I guess, though, you ain't dressed for a tramp?" said John Calmour, of tinned-soup fame.

"Yes, but I am, poppa; I'd just love to,"

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replied the girl. And the landau went off with the "grip" on the back seat, looking like a very big nutshell with a very small kernel.

There was a short cut from the railway-station which diverged from the main road, passed the golf-links, and then dipped down to a path along the rocks that overhung the sea. By the time that the father and daughter had talked about her telegram to him and his to her, his sudden journey from London (where he had been transacting important business), and the girl had thanked him at least a dozen times for making it, they had reached a rocky seat out of sight from everyone except fishermen and gulls.

"Let's sit down and look around," said the big man. "This is kind of refreshing. Seems a nice place, Métretat." (He pronounced the last syllable to rhyme with "cat.") "I bet you sent for me in such a dickens of a hurry because I was tomfool enough to write that the London climate in August took it out of a fellow, and you wanted to get me here, eh?"

"I did want to get you here," admitted Jenny, digging the ferrule of her smart parasol into a hole in the rock. "But it wasn't only that. I guess I was homesick. It seemed to me, yesterday, that I should just have a *fit* if I couldn't see you right away, poppa."

He threw a sudden, sharp glance at the downcast profile. Something in the tone of the girl's voice had struck him as unusual.

"You're looking a bit peaked, Sissy," he said. "Ain't the air what it was cracked up to be?"

"Sissy" swallowed audibly, once, twice; and the third attempt to dispose of a certain obstruction in the throat ended in a sob. Her little nose turned suddenly pink, and great round tears, like those shed by a child, came tumbling from between the long lashes.

John Calmour's face grew three shades redder than before. "Why, little gurl—why, little gurlie!" he repeated. "*Crying?* It must be something mighty bad to make you do that. I haven't seen you so much as pipe your eyes for a coon's age—not since you were ten, anyhow. What is it, my pretty? Tell the old man, and if there's anything he can do you can just count on him every time. Why, that's what he's *for*, ain't it? I guess you're the only thing he's got on this blessed earth, and he's bound to look after you."

Jenny's hands covered her face, which showed flushed and moist, like a wet rose, between the slim fingers. A big, red-brown hand was patting her Leghorn hat, in convenient interstices among the nodding gardenias; and a vein was throbbing hard in each of John Calmour's temples.

"Oh, poppa, I am a born idiot, but I—I—just can't *help* it," sobbed the girl who had held her head so high before the enemy. "I had to send for you. I couldn't stand it any longer, here all alone. It's been awful. I've been 'most ready to die; but I guess"—with a spasm of defiant pride—"nobody knows it."

"For the land's sake, honey, tell your old dad what's been the matter."

"It's — it's the people," Jenny wept, with her cheek on his shoulder, much to the detriment of the hat. "They're wicked, cruel Beasts."

"TELL YOUR OLD DAD WHAT'S BEEN THE MATTER."

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John Calmour's jaw squared itself, intensifying a lurking suggestion that the bulldog phase had left a stronger impression than any of his other incarnations. "Oh, *that's* it, is it?" he growled. "It's the people. So they've been beasts to you, have they? Women jealous?"

"Not they," cried Jenny. "They despise me. They think I'm the dirt under their feet."

"Do they?" said Calmour, in a quiet voice, which men knew when hundreds of thousands were hanging on a word of his. "Tell me all about it, pretty."

Then Jenny told him. She began at the beginning and worked slowly up, punctuating with stifled sobs or pathetic little sniffs.

"I thought it would be so lovely here," she said. "I read in a society paper, while I was with you at the Carlton in London, poppa, all about the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Métretat, how 'unique' it was (that's the paper's word), and the house full of people of the very tip-topest set in England. When you had to stay on, and told me I must take Josephine and go off somewhere to the country to amuse myself, it seemed as if Métretat would be just the right place. I thought it would be fun to know a lot of English lords and ladies, and I had whole heaps of pretty dresses and things to show off. I was sure I should have a nice time. The first night at dinner, when nobody spoke to me, and made fishes' eyes if they happened to look my way by mistake, I supposed that was English manners, and they were only shy and stiff till they knew me. But I soon found out *that* was a mistake! Oh, poppa, I never was snubbed before, but I've had enough this one week to last me all my life."

"Why should they snub you?" queried Calmour, with a dangerous flickering of the nostrils, like a vicious horse.

"Because I'm an Amurrican, for one thing, and because they all know each other and call each other 'Mouse,' and 'Bat,' and every kind of queer nickname, even the quite old ones; and they're just wild at having a strange girl among them. They love the Angleterre and think it belongs to them. They've been trying to freeze me out, poppa, as hard as they could, but I *wouldn't* give in, though all the time inside I've felt as sick as sick, and sometimes it was all I could do not to burst out crying and jump up from the table and run away. Not that I care a red cent for any of them; it isn't that. Oh, I don't know exactly *what* it is; but it's the awfullest experience I ever had, feeling that they thought—because I was different from them, somehow, and here all alone without any momma, like the other girls—that I was a horrid creature. I wouldn't hurt a fly, poppa, you know it; and I don't want really to do them any harm; but—but I *should* like to make them sorry."

"Maybe you shall," said John Calmour. "You say they love this Angleterre hotel and think it belongs to 'em. I suppose it would be a blow to the lot if they were packed off?"

"They'd be out of their wits with rage," said Jenny.

"Well, we'll see," said her father.

"Poppa, whatever *do* you mean? I know by your face you've got a plan."

Calmour whistled, and looked introspective for a moment. Then he said: "They want to chase you away, don't they? What I mean is, that *you're* going to chase them instead."

It was luncheon time at the Hôtel d'Angleterre when Miss Calmour returned with her father, and the two had that meal served in her private sitting-room. Soon after, John Calmour, large, calm, and smoking a cigar, strolled into the *bureau* where sat the landlord, M. Dupont, a shrewd, somewhat melancholy little Breton. The American had made no inquiries yet regarding accommodation for the night, but M. Dupont had one or two unoccupied bedrooms, and intended, if the millionaire wished to stay, to make him comfortable. The little man had a suitable respect for millionaires, and he rose as the large figure in checked flannel lounged through the doorway.

Both said good-day in English, upon which language M. Dupont prided himself, not without cause. Then the Breton waited deferentially for the expected request for a room; or perhaps he prepared to shed reproaches with a responsibility-disclaiming though regretful shrug, in case Mr. Calmour brought up the subject of the boycott.

Having puffed in silence at his cigar for a long moment, the big man's steel-grey eyes caught those of the landlord as if they pounced upon a prey. "How much will you take for this hotel, cash down on the nail?" he abruptly demanded, in his pleasant, though slightly nasal, voice.

"I beg monsieur's pardon," returned the Breton, not sure whether he had understood, or whether the American were joking.

"I'm making you an offer for this hotel," went on John Calmour. "I want to buy it."

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"But, monsieur, it is not for sale."

"My experience has been, as a business man, that most things are for sale if the price runs up high enough. Now, I want your hotel, and when I want a thing I'm willing to pay for it. I've calculated that for the place as it stands, with the goodwill, you might expect to get, say, about 125,000dols. You can have my cheque for that sum, mounseer, as quick as I can write it, if you are on to make the deal."

Dupont fairly gasped, but he was sufficiently master of his faculties to do a rapid sum in mental arithmetic. A hundred and twenty-five thousand American dollars bounded up to a goodly amount when converted into francs. But, then, he had never heard of business being done by lightning.

"I thank you, monsieur," he said. "It is something to reflect upon."

"That's where you're wrong, sir," returned John Calmour. "It's to take or to leave. The hotel's no use to me unless I can have it two hours before dinner to-night, because there'd be some little arrangements to make."

The Breton started. "Mon Dieu, but it is impossible!"

"No, it ain't, if you look at it calmly. There's lots of time. I'll give you twenty minutes to decide, if necessary; but I'd sooner have it fixed up at once. That's my way of doing business, and it's panned out pretty well so far as I've gone. See here; to pay for the extra inconvenience to you, mounseer, I don't mind throwing in another 10,000dols."

Poor Dupont clutched at his damp forehead with his damp fingers. "If you please, monsieur, I will take the twenty minutes," he implored.

"I thought you were going to say you'd take the money. But all right; I'll just sit here and finish my cigar while you make up your mind."

The Breton sank into his chair at the desk. Calmour also sat down, crossed his legs, and watched the smoke-rings, which he made very successfully—as he did most things.

Never had Dupont been obliged to think so quickly; but he collected his forces like a general surprised in the night.

His season, he reminded himself, existed (on paper) from June till October. The place, however, scarcely paid expenses till July. Even then custom was but casual and uncertain until early August, when the English came. After that time the hotel was practically full through September; but, as he had assured Mr. Wickham the other night, the long-staying patrons paid the least. If he made 20,000frs. profit in a year he was lucky; sometimes he made less; and the work was wearing. He was past middle age and it would be agreeable to retire. Here was the chance for which, in bad hours, he had ardently wished. It might never come again; and this mad millionaire's offer was far more than he would have expected to get had he thought of selling out. But, then, the suddenness!

"My guests, monsieur!" he exclaimed, aloud. "How could I explain——"

"Don't worry about that. *I'll* explain. I don't mean to turn the folks out. All you've got to do is to say 'Done' and pocket my cheque. You can wire to my bankers in London, if you want, and make sure I'm the man I pretend to be. Then you can pack up your baggage at your own convenience, and go on a spree to Paris, if it suits you. You look kind of tired, as if a vacation would do you good."

When the twenty minutes were up John Calmour had out his cheque-book.

That evening there was a more elaborate dinner than usual, and, for some reason, champagne was served to everybody. No one understood why this was, but when the waiters intimated that the wine was free nearly everybody drank it, to the extent of several glasses each.

Nothing else of an unusual nature had occurred, so far as was known in the hotel, except that there had been two new arrivals. One was the Horror's father, who, having brought no evening things in his "grip," disgusted the coterie by dining in his travelling clothes. The other was an exceedingly good-looking young man, for whom, by means of a little crowding at the table, room had been made next Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth. Judging from the reception he met with, he must have known almost everybody in the hotel and have been liked by all. Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth and many others called him Bill; Dicky Wickham and a few others addressed him as Lord Everest; he looked a good deal at Jenny Calmour, pronounced the dinner excellent, the champagne a perfect marvel for an "hotel treat," and talked much with his intimates at the table of a cotillon which apparently he had come over from England to help make a success. The boycott of Jenny was extended to her father, and the two, in intervals between their own private murmurs, had plenty of time to

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listen to the conversation, which concerned favours for the coming cotillon; the people who had been invited from the Métretat villas, and one or two other neighbouring watering-places where, it seemed, there really were a "few human beings who would do, at a pinch, for a cotillon."

When the fruit had come on (delicious little wild strawberries from somewhere in the north, at which novelty there was a general buzz of delight), John Calmour rose from his seat. Instead of leaving the table, as people who noticed his move supposed that he would do, he stood still in his place, coolly surveying the room, a hand on the back of his chair.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, in the loud voice of one about to call attention to the first words of a speech.

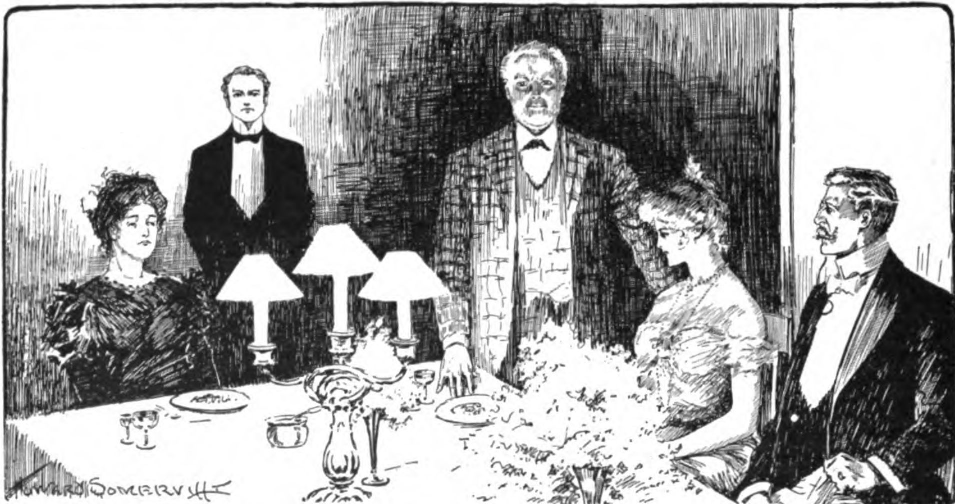
Everyone looked up, astonished and resentful at the audacious interruption. "Is the man intoxicated?" Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth was heard to ask in a stage-whisper.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he repeated. "I am glad to have gathered, from certain expressions I could not help hearing, that Mounseer Dupont, your late landlord. I dare say he won't forget to send them in. As regards the future, I must explain that an Amurrican is something like an Arab. Who eats his salt is sacred, no matter how badly they may have behaved before the salt went around. That being the case, I don't wish or intend to speak out my feelings about the way in which you English people, men and women, have treated a young girl placed by accident alone and unprotected in your midst. She wasn't good enough to associate with you when this was an hotel; but now that it's her father's country house it is by her request that I invite you all to remain under my roof as my guests as long as you please."

He paused. Two or three men sprang up; and there were murmurs of "No, no," "Absurd," "Impossible," all over the room.

John Calmour gave them a moment, then, when he received no more definite response, he began again.

"I have invited you to stay as my guests," he repeated. "Those who choose to accept are welcome. Those who don't will no doubt think it delicate to move on some-



"I HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT THE ANGLETERRE, AS AN HOTEL, CEASED TO EXIST AT EXACTLY A QUARTER PAST THREE."

the dinner and the champagne have met with your approval. This is a satisfaction to me, as I have to inform you that the Angleterre, as an hotel, ceased to exist at exactly a quarter past three this afternoon. It is now my private house, and you have been entertained at dinner as my guests. The meal will not be charged in your bills, which, by the way, up to the hour I mentioned, are payable to

where else as soon as they can. While they remain in this house, I must remind them, they eat my bread, and I and my daughter are their host and hostess. Come, Jenny; I've said all I've got to say. Let you and me go into the hall and have coffee, which will be ready for the others if they like to follow."

He gave his daughter an arm, and they

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went away together without a backward glance.

"B—y *Jove!*" ejaculated somebody, it was never quite known who. But the exclamation gave relief. It broke the spell.

"What's the tall party driving at?" asked Lord Everest of the company in general; and everybody began to tell the story at once, each one with a slightly different version. Yet the conclusion reached by all was identical. The Horror was the horror; her father was a fiend; and there was nothing to do save beat a retreat, immediately and with such dignity as might be preserved in the scramble. But there was no disguising the fact that it was a blow—a heavy blow. It seemed almost too bad to be true, though it must be true, or that brute would not have dared his impudent harangue. To go—to be turned out, bag and baggage, at an hour's notice, from their own, very own private Eden, at the beginning of the season, with the weather perfect and their plans made—such charming plans, too!—and all because they had very properly shown this vulgar ruffian's daughter her place, and kept her in it. It was enough to drive one to manslaughter—for it wouldn't be murder.

Everest listened intently to the jumble of explanation and execration; then, when a few of his friends had paused for breath, he shocked the company by bursting into ribald laughter.

"Good old boy! I'm hanged if I don't respect the chap!" he broke out. "If you want my opinion, he's served you all jolly well right; you deserve what you've got. And you've eaten his dinner! Jove! what a *coup!* It's Titanic. The man must have paid £20,000 at least for his revenge. But I'll bet he doesn't grudge the money. Oh, these Yankees! They're marvellous!"

Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth rose. "I think," she remarked, with dignity, "we should be wiser to go and see that our servants begin packing, rather than sit squabbling here. As for you, Bill, you are as bad as—as bad as a pro-Boer."

"Wait a minute, everybody," said Everest. "Of course, I don't know what anybody else is going to do, but I've been invited to visit this amazing old Johnny, and I intend to accept his invitation. I expect to enjoy myself as well as I ever did in my life, and I shouldn't be surprised if the cotillon came off yet. Anyone else think of stopping on? Because, if so, when I go out into the hall for a chat with him, I may as well tell our host how many people there'll be in his house-party."

"I'd rather die than stay," announced Mrs. Llynn-Gryffyth.

Lady "Jack" Avery laughed hysterically. "Bill's right," she giggled. "It will be a glorious lark. *I* never did anything to the girl. I'll stop as chaperon. She'll need one."

"It's like losing an eye-tooth to give up the golf," sighed Dicky Wickham.

"And the bathing," "And the fishing," came in murmurs from other quarters.

"Let's take him at his word. It will be the joke of the century!" exclaimed Strathallin.

Everest turned and glanced at him, his brown, laughing face suddenly grave. "Look here, I'm responsible for the proposal," said he. "None of you would have thought of it if it hadn't been for me. I'm the only innocent one of the lot, therefore I'm the only man who can engineer the thing with decency. Those of you who are going in for this joke have got to give me their word to behave themselves afterwards as they would in a friend's house, or I'll be shot if I'll have anything to do with it."

In five minutes Everest had three times five candidates and as many promises. Armed with these he went forth, while the banished ones slipped away, and John Calmour's fifteen future guests remained in the *salle à manger* to await the return of the herald.

He went out into the big hall. In the corner, under the red-shaded lamp, sat the master of the house—and the situation—his daughter by his side. Everest crossed to them with a smart, soldierly step.

"Let me congratulate you, Mr. Calmour—on your house, you know," he said. "Awfully jolly house to stop in, and very good of you to ask us. I got here only to-night, just in time to dress for dinner. Will you introduce me to Miss Calmour? I'm Lord Everest—Bill, my friends call me, because people are always sending me such a lot, I suppose."

Solemnly, but with a twinkle in his eyes, which he did not remove from the young man's face, the millionaire formally introduced Lord Everest to his daughter Jenny. The girl looked up. Her martyrdom had not entirely destroyed her sense of humour, and she broke into a laugh. Everest laughed, too—a nice, friendly, young-sounding laugh.

"I'm no end obliged to Mr. Calmour for asking me, you know," he said, drawing up a chair. "So are we all, though—er—some of

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"I'M LORD EVEREST—BILL, MY FRIENDS CALL ME."

us have engagements at Dinard to-morrow; but with fifteen or sixteen stopping on the house won't seem empty, will it? Is it true you are going to give a cotillon next week, Miss Calmour? I do hope it is. I heard so, and brought some rather pretty favours with me from Paris in the hope that you'd accept them from me. You will, won't you? And—it's rather selfish, I'm afraid, to try and cut in before any other chap; but you're sure to be asked by a dozen men at least, and I shall lose my chance. May I lead the cotillon with you?"

"I should love it," said Jenny, laughing and dimpling. "Can I, poppa?"

"I guess it will be all right," said Calmour.

So the great boycott ended and the great joke began. Right royally it was carried out on both sides. The cotillon was a huge success, and Jenny reigned among her guests like a young queen. People said that Everest's game had been clear from the first. He would eventually propose to the girl because her father was a millionaire, and she would accept him because he was an earl. As to the facts, everybody was right; but as to the motives, they were wrong. When Lord Everest proposed to Jenny Calmour, after four weeks of the queerest visit ever made, it was because he was very much in love with her, and thought her the dearest as well as the prettiest little girl he had ever seen. She accepted him because, in her opinion, he was one of the two perfect men in the world; and poppa was the other.

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With a Camera in a Keddah;

OR, HOW ELEPHANTS ARE CAUGHT ALIVE.

BY JOHN SWAFFHAM.

THERE are, I hope, not many people in England who have not read the story of Little Toomai, who was called Toomai of the Elephants, and of Kala Nag, the fighting elephant of the keddahs who had served the Government of India for forty-seven years after he was taken and trained, and of "Machua Appa, who was so great that he had no other name but was just Machua Appa, chief of the native drivers in the keddahs of the Elephant Department of the Government of India."

Once, long ago, men hunted elephants in India as now they hunt them in Africa, only the white man's powder and shot was not then in the hand of every native hunter, so that the elephant survives to this day, not in twos and threes as in Africa, but in dozens and in hundreds. In old times, also, the natives dug great pits, but because the elephant is a heavy beast he was often killed, more often still maimed by the fall. Hence the practice was not very general.

However, it had a certain vogue, being the easiest and least risky way in which an unarmed man could take the greatest of beasts. If, too, you wished to have the dead body only, the drawbacks in the way of maiming or damage to the animal ceased to exist. Any possible danger in dealing with the enraged and trapped victim was obviated by planting a huge stake with a sharp point in the centre of your pit. Transfixed on this, his struggles soon caused such a flow of blood that he died without further bother.

The keddah system of driving a herd into a stockade and there impounding the live beasts is no new invention. The hunters have used it for hundreds of years, just as, only two centuries ago, the men of Athole used to make great drivings of the deer in the country where now are Forest Lodge and Fealar—the great moors which lie under Cairntoul and Ben-y-Gloe, in the heart of the Grampians. Here, on great occasions, the Duke used to organize drives. The deer were driven into a place fenced with high wattles and then dispatched at leisure. Simi-

From a] THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS—DIGGING THE TRENCHES. [*Photo.*

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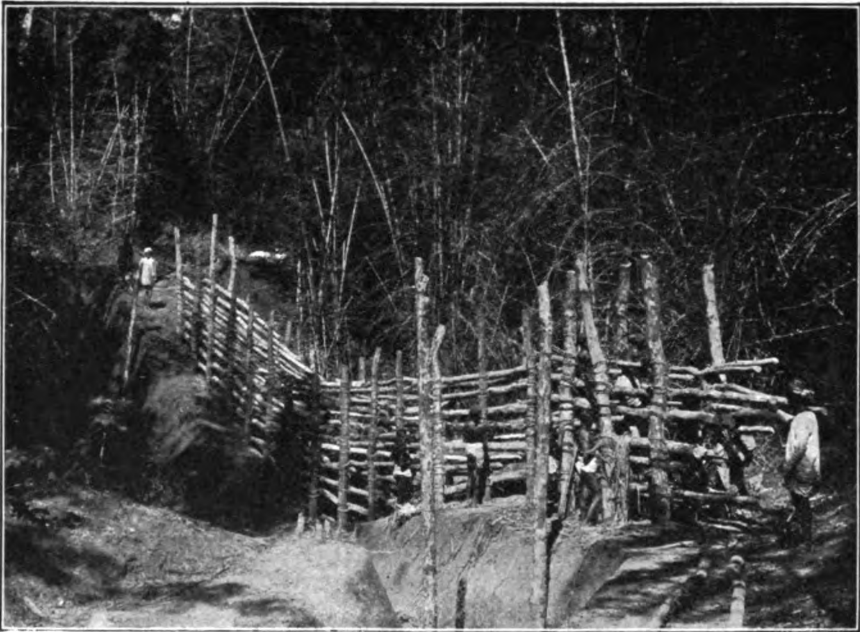

From a] BUILDING A NATIVE STOCKADE. [*Photo.*

larly, the hill Rajahs would hunt the elephant herds when they came down annually to the plain jungles; but the matter was haphazard and go-as-you-please. Now, the sircar preserves the elephant so strictly that to kill him, unless he be a "rogue," involves a heavy fine. A whole department of Government has been organized with the one duty of taking him alive. This is the keddah service, and I would give you here a sketch of the working of a keddah.

A whole book has been written on the subject — Sanderson's "Thirteen Years Among the Wild Beasts in India"—a book

A KEDDAH TRENCH, WITH LINING AND CROSS THWARTS OF BAMBOO TO PREVENT SUBSIDENCE OF THE LOOSE EARTH SIDES.
From a Photo.

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curiously interesting for many reasons, not least because it shows how chance works to bring a man to the place for which, in the result, it must seem that he was created. In 1864 Sanderson went out, a young man with no particular aptitudes, to grow coffee in Mysore. Almost immediately the plant failed after its periodical manner, and the young man was at a loose end. After various changes of scene, and within nine years, he had successfully carried out his first keddah and was embarked on his life's career.

The principle of a keddah is somewhat like that of the old duck-decoys which used to be so common in Norfolk and the Fen counties. Both are founded upon the curious foolishness of creatures which are, in many respects, among the wisest of created things. A duck comes into a decoy because he is incurably curious. He knows that a dog is his worst enemy, but seeing a dog jumping in and out between wicker screens arranged along the bank of a narrow channel, he at once swims up to see what manner of game the dog is playing. A net is dropped across the broad end of the "funnel," and the duck's curiosity has cost him his life. An elephant is wiser than the duck: he is the wisest of all wild animals. Hence his troubles come upon him not through a foolish curiousness, but because of the less futile, though nearly as imbecile, habit of crass superstition. Like the bird, he knows that man is his enemy. Yet when surrounded by a single ring of men he shrinks from the moral effort required to face it and break out. More, he knows himself in the toils, and the least use of reason would show him that to be surrounded and yet to have an easy path of escape left open are two incompatible things. Nevertheless, he takes the path of easy escape and finds himself in the keddah.

I may give you an illustration of this folly on the part of "my lord." When Sanderson Sahib was alive any elephant which broke lines was shot dead. Escaping servitude in life he found liberty with death. Sanderson passed away and his chief Hindu assistant stepped into his place. Like many, if not most, natives, this man has a superstitious dread of actually taking life. As a result elephants escaped and communicated their discoveries to the herds, who now continually break away at the critical last moment. Perhaps part of the decline may be due to the absence of the genius which Sanderson brought to his task, but that failure to maintain his shooting policy may be justly held accountable for many

From a] BARRICADING A STREAM WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE KEDDAH LINES. *[Photo.*

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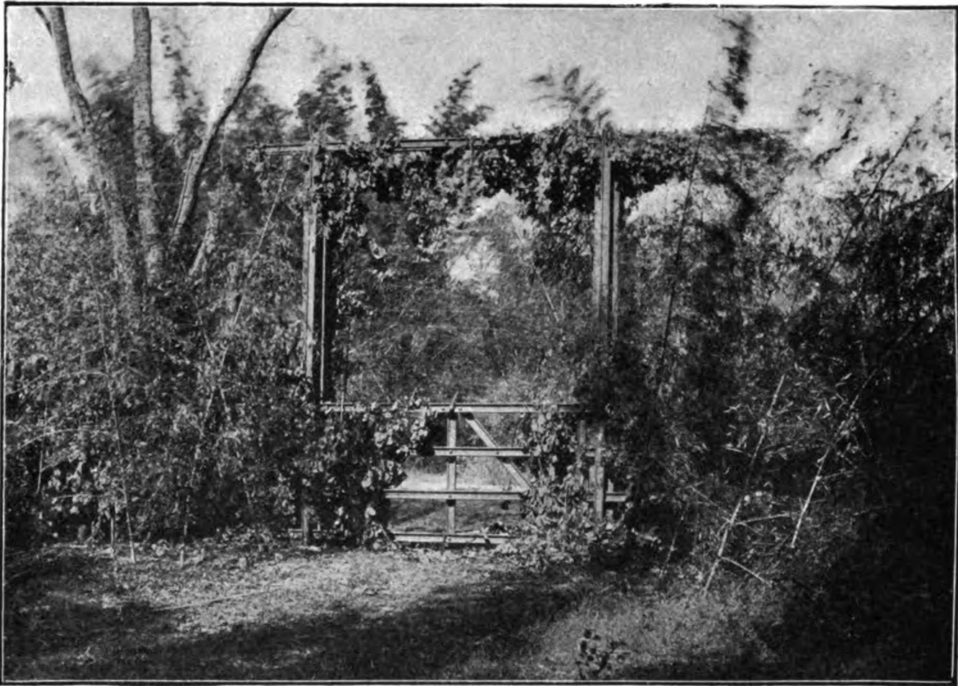


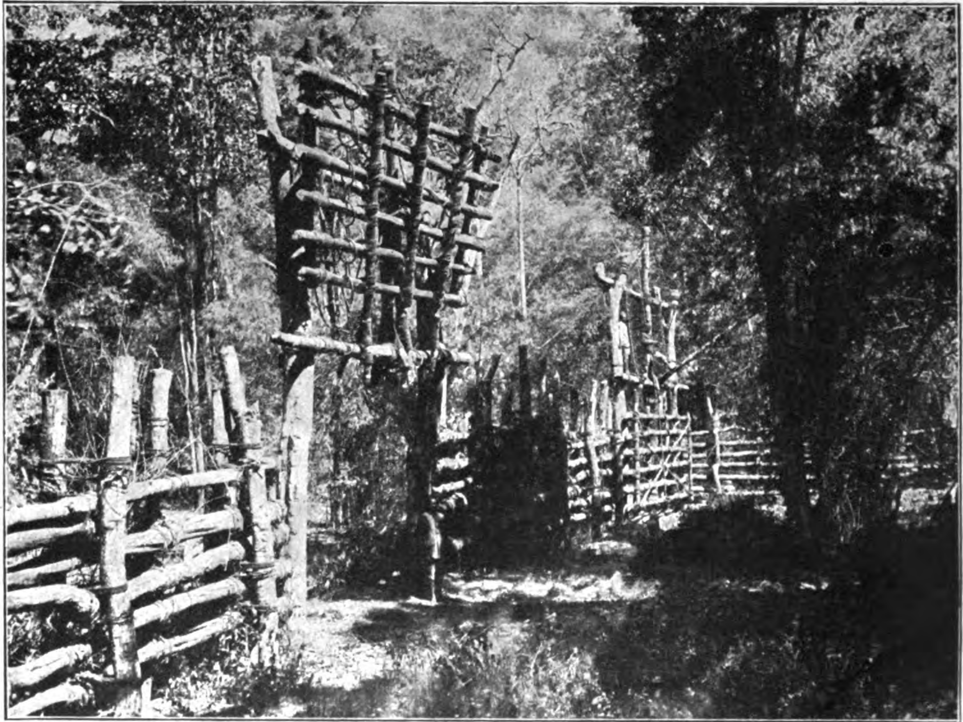
From a] SANDERSON'S IRON DROP-GATE AS IT CLOSED BEHIND THE HERD. [*Photo.*

fiascos is clearly shown by my story. In a keddah drive some few years since a huge tusker "broke out" and escaped. Next year the same tusker was with the doomed herd, but now he did not break away. On the contrary, he led his fellows right towards the entrance of the stockade, but then the splendid intelligence of his race flashed out. Sluing right round in the gate entrance so that none could pass, he faced the herd. Urged on by the cries and closing in of the beaters, his companions came up one by one. But he never moved. The gate to which hundreds of beaters had driven their prey could be entered by none. All day he butted away his less sagacious comrades who desired to come into the trap, and at night he led the whole herd in a wild stampede for freedom. Nothing in all the world, not even a battery of heavy guns, could stop the stampede of a score and more elephants when the distance from start to the pale is only a few hundred yards. So the labour of months was wasted and a whole herd went free. Therefore there are now in those jungles three dozen and more of elephants who know the secret of the keddah path. No moral need be drawn.

At certain seasons of the year the elephant herds leave the high hills to feed and find shelter in the lower jungle grounds. Thence by night they raid the village fields, but all day they lie hid in half impenetrable forest. These are the days devoted to their hunting, and for weeks before the necessary preparations have been begun. Now the trackers follow the herds, and while word comes down from time to time of a move here or a shift of ground there, the work at the place chosen for the keddah is pushed to feverish completion. Hundreds of all but naked coolies are digging trenches, building great wattle fences of bamboo, barricading the streams which cross their lines, erecting the great drop-gates, building the inner "tying-up stockades," and setting up the tall crow's-nest look-outs, from which the drive shall be overlooked and the gate ropes cut at the great moment. True, the elephant could shiver the fences and tear down the barricades, but because he is the strongest of all the beasts of the forest he is also the most suspicious. A single thread of wire or a ditch covered over with rafts seems to him uncanny and suggestive of traps. Always, knowing his bulk, he will test the ground on which he is to tread if anything give him the least cause to fear lest it prove unstable. A ditch, then, may not be faced though death be at his heels; a barricade of stakes with chains between must be avoided at any cost.

Indeed, almost any artificial obstacle will hold him, provided only it be strong enough, for, though he should not fear it, it has only to be higher than he can step across, and it becomes as good as a stone wall. An elephant is incapable of jumping anything, or of moving more than two of his feet off the ground at the same moment.

The great circular enclosure goes right through the jungle, broken only where the drop-gates hang overhead in a screen of greenery and young fronds of the bamboo. At the far end from this entrance the ground is, however, cleared. Here and there great stumps of trees stand up, and this part is fenced off—a keddah within the keddah, the "tying-up stockade."



From a] A NATIVE KEDDAH GATE. *[Photo.*

Knowing that the jungle has been surrounded for some days by anything up to an odd thousand of beaters whose only direction is to converge on the gate-end of the keddah, let us go back to the herd in the jungle. They have been uneasy for days; why, exactly, it would be hard for them to tell. There was a breath of hidden danger in the free air. Now there is more than a hint, a something surely wrong. So the wise one leading the herd moves off at its shuffle, which looks so lazy and slow, but is indeed fast, and one to endure, if necessary, leagues beyond need of thought. Suddenly there is a very present alarm, for the danger is here indeed.

All round the jungle is lined with human figures; here, maybe, a matchlock sputters out noisy flame, everywhere there are cries and the beating of tom-toms. The great beasts are annoyed, frightened, but dignified, as befits their kingship of the jungle. With only a turn in direction the shuffle continues. Then slowly it appears that the enemy is only on three sides—the fourth is clear! At this, if panic touched their hearts, apparent calm returns. They still move, but now leisurely.

The enemy does not press. By day, if you go too near, he makes much noise; at night he has a circle of fires to fright you; if truth were known, the fire dispels his own fears also. So for days, weeks perhaps, it may be more than a month, the hundreds of the beaters glide inward and the great beasts of the herd retreat before them. Use will sanction all things, and now, if they be not hustled, there is every chance of success to the hunters. Thus the crux comes, and suddenly the wisest of the hunted are aware of a new and silent foe, one who never moves but is there always, green as the

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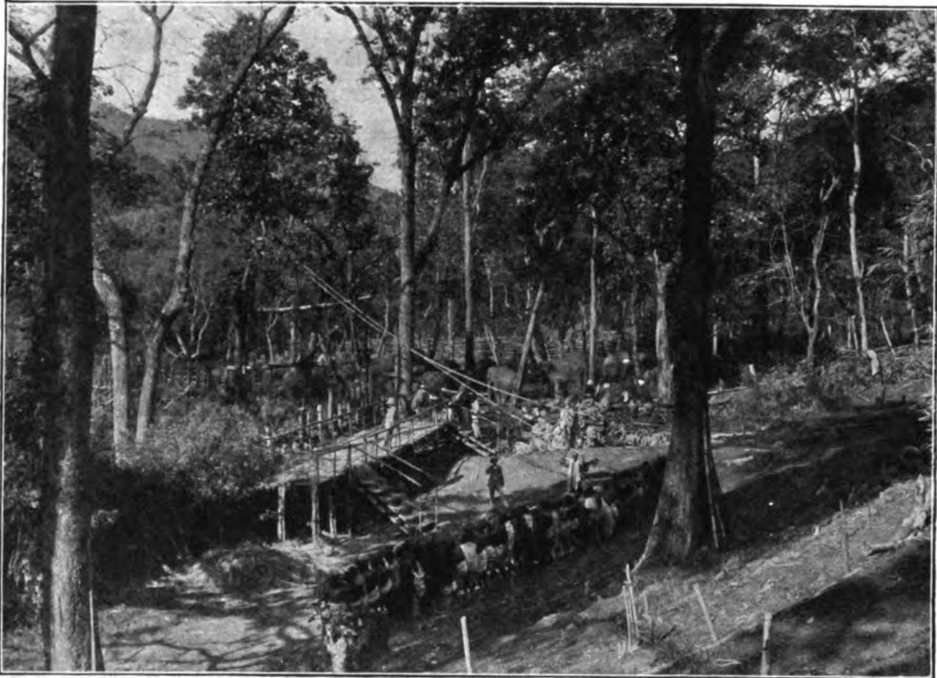

From a] COOLIES HAULING UP THE GATE OF THE INNER TYING-UP STOCKADE. [Photo.

forest itself, built of the daily bamboo, but still a menace. Then the final order to close in is given. The immovable foe is in front, not quite understood, but between its arms is yet the jungle, the undergrowth and the great trees of home. Behind the moving foe is a serried wall of shouting, tom-tom-ing fiends, and the herd flies into the gulf. There is a narrow place where not more than two may walk abreast, and the leaders halt. But beyond, the fence leaps apart as hitherto it has narrowed. On, on, the herd presses from behind, and nervously, well knowing their folly, the leaders pass in. The rout stream in to the last. Then crash—axes have fallen on the sustaining ropes and the great gate plunges down.

"My lords" are afraid in earnest, but the end has not yet begun. Only the gate has dropped and with it the curtain on Act I.

In Act III. the elephant will go forth—that is, if he has not died of a broken heart—orderly though sullen, a servant of the sircar, and a bond-slave to the will of his mahout. But before that is Act II., always a valley of tribulation, sometimes a tragedy of tragedies.

When the elephant has passed into the keddah, partly beguiled, I should have said, by the enticements of certain traitorous relations long since the servants of their masters' every order, a gate in the tying-up stockade opens, and the tame keddah elephants file in with their riders. Mostly these are females, but with them will be several tuskers, royal fighters and revelling in the fray. The science of man has added yet more to their brute strength, and now, if any of the wild herd is obstreperous, these great beasts will batter him to pitiful submission, granting no mercy except on absolute surrender.

The herd which has been captured may be large or small; say there are now three score or seventy animals impounded, all in a state of more or less alarm. In such a number there will not be above five or six to give violent trouble, and these the trained keddah tuskers have pounded to submission. The most troublesome of all may probably be a cow with a calf. According to her size and boisterousness, two to four tame elephants will "corner" her. On each are a driver and the keddah assistants with their huge ropes. When she is so jammed between the trained animals as to be unable to resist, a great noose will be slipped round her neck and made fast to a forest tree in front. Meanwhile other hunters have slipped down the sterns of their mounts, and have roped her hind legs to the stumps of other trees. Her calf is noosed and dragged off by main force, kicking and squealing, to a similar pillory hard by.

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From a] WHEN MORNING WAKES IN THE JUNGLE—A HERD OF ELEPHANTS AT DAWN. [Photo.

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Thus the business goes on, until all the herd is left rocking in impotent rage, bound fore and aft, straining and wrestling with the bonds, or glowering in angry despair. It is wild work and not without its risks, this binding of the herd. The ropers, running under their bellies and dodging their heavy tramplings, have need of all their nerve and skill. Sometimes the wisdom of their trained beasts alone saves them, as when a man flying before the onslaught of an enraged mother is suddenly whisked off his legs in the trunk of a keddah elephant, and finds his safety on the huge beast's neck. For it is a strange trait that in all the turmoil and fury of his despair the wild elephant has never been known to lift a trunk and tear the rider from the back of a tame animal.

From a] THE VAGUE UNREST. [*Photo.*

Naturally the work of binding all the herd is not complete in one nor yet in two days. When all are shackled and made fast the victims are left till exhaustion consequent on impotent rage, endless struggles, and temporary starvation reduce them to the calm of surrender. Yet it is not every one which will thus give way. Some will die of pure heart-break for very shame of their capture. Others chafe their huge legs into terrible sores, which are irritated with the sand and flies to so gruesome a condition that only careful dressing with soothing ointments will save the sufferer's life. Occasionally one tears away the thick horny pad which is the elephant's foot, and a bullet brings merciful death.

The elephant who yields shows his submission in various ways. The one who covers his head with soil and dead leaves taken up in the trunk is pitifully human in the appeal of his misery. At this period great heaps of fodder—perhaps their dearest luxury, green sugar-cane—are piled before the great beasts, whose appetites are never proof against the bribe. In his natural state the elephant's existence may be described as one long meal, and even if freshly tethered he will interrupt his frantic struggles for a mouthful, after which he at once returns to the interrupted effort to be free. For a member of his race to refuse food is an almost infallible sign of serious illness. As soon as the last individual of a herd has been tethered two men are allotted to care for and to tame him. In a very few days the victim allows himself to be handled, a girth of rope is passed round his middle, and his future driver climbs upon his back and head. Finally tethered to tame elephants before

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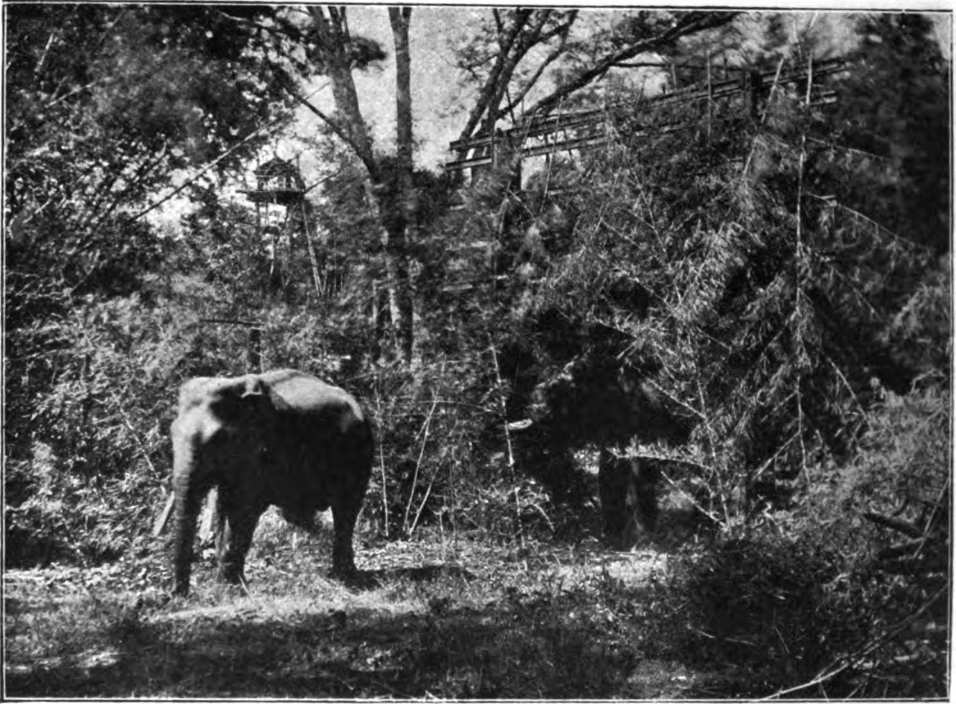
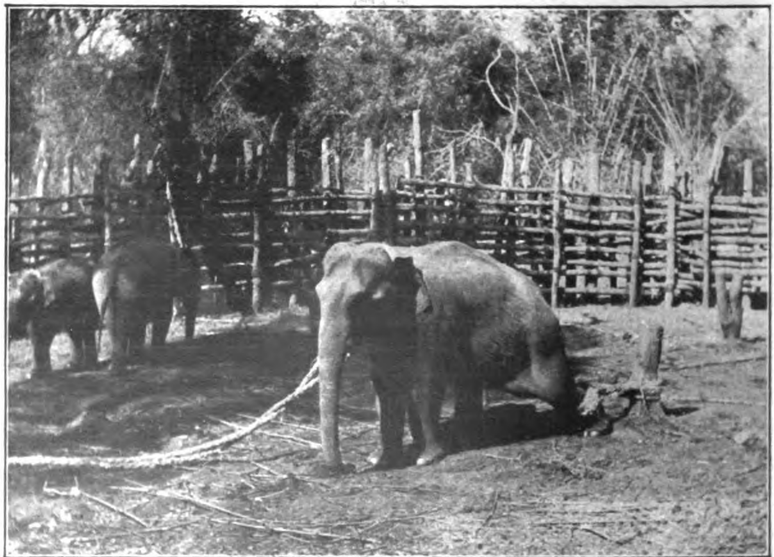


ELEPHANTS PASSING INTO THE KEDDAH UNDER SANDERSON'S IRON DROP-GATE, WHICH HAS BEEN SCREENED WITH BAMBOO FRONDS.
From a] [*Photo.*

and behind, or, if still obstreperous, flanked on each side as well, the captives are drafted out of the keddah and hobbled in "the lines," where, side by side with the trained animals, they await further training. One of the first acts in this is perhaps the greatest conscious luxury in an elephant's whole life. Were he wild it would be the act of every evening, but now he has not been near water for weeks. In the natural state he has his daily bath, and it is this which is now restored to him, despite the ropes which still bind him before and behind. Up and down goes his trunk, and the water sluices back and sides till he stands there knee-deep in the river, no more the dun-coloured animal of the dust and turmoil of the keddahs, but a huge, shining blackness.

Two or three months after their capture the elephants march out in long lines, roped still, but each with his own mahout astride



From a] "I WILL TRY ME THESE BONDS." [*Photo.*

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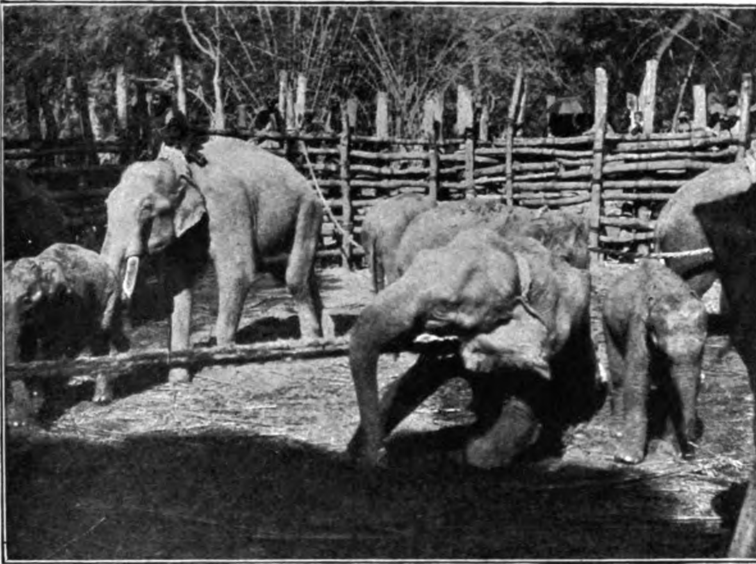

From a] "SHALL ONE BIND ME WITH ROPES?" [*Photo.*

his neck. From the line as they go some are turned off here to the stud of a neighbouring Rajah, there some are sold at auction. Finally, the remnant comes to the railway, and special trucks scatter them all over the Presidencies.

The value of a newly-tamed elephant varies from £80 to £2,000. Only the most magnificent beasts will fetch anything like the latter figure, which is based on the Oriental's love of display. Such an elephant is destined for the State procession of one of the great Rajahs. In one of his earliest keddahs Sanderson records a capture of sixteen bulls, thirty cows, three tuskless bulls, and nineteen calves. Of these nine of the youngest died, and one cow grew unmanageable in the keddah and was shot. The cost of the operations was £1,556, and a complete sale at market prices would have totalled to over £6,500. Nowadays, mainly for reasons stated before, the captures are seldom so large. Moreover, many attempts prove quite abortive. Thus, although the price of elephants has risen greatly, the keddah establishment of the Government of India is glad to pay its way and little more. Nevertheless the captured animal breeds freely, and the wild herds are said to be regularly increasing. It may therefore be hoped that this battle of the giants will continue for many years to come.

From a] "KISMET!" [*Photo.*

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The Lovable Miss Lingfield.

By Winifred Graham.

I.

ORKING HALL was a delightful place to stay at. So thought Alice Lingfield, who dearly loved her friends, the Sutcliffes, while she revelled in the beauty of the quaint old house and its extensive grounds.

The surrounding hills, the unlimited green of trees and pastures, making such a restful landscape to charm the eye, appealed forcibly to this town girl, whose soul delighted in simple joys, rural freedom, and the poetry of country scenes.

Alice Lingfield seemed to attract affection to an almost embarrassing degree; there was a brightness and fascination apart from her beauty which proved wholly irresistible.

She had high spirits, she was popular, but, oh! how tender and loving she could be with children! The little brood of fair-haired girls at Dorking Hall simply worshipped the ground she trod on.

They followed her about, they gathered round her knee, ever grouping themselves in her wake like bridesmaids to a white-robed bride.

Penelope, the eldest, a warm-hearted child of eight years old, who, the previous winter, had been heard to call herself "a hunting woman," was Alice Lingfield's special friend and admirer. The four smaller girls, ranging to a person aged three, toddled persistently after the lovable guest, receiving so much favour and encouragement that their fidelity could scarcely prove a matter of surprise.

But to one heart alone these baby creatures brought bitterness and sorrow.

Robert Macalister, commonly known as "Bob," found in those tiny tyrants enemies to his peace of mind.

At Dorking Hall he had relied upon golden opportunities. In London, of course, his divinity was, naturally enough, surrounded by tiresome bees who hummed about the fairest flower of the season, basking in the honeyed sweetness of her frank, girlish smiles.

The country at least should prove different, Bob had told himself when he joyfully accepted Mrs. Sutcliffe's invitation to Dorking Hall. Now he found that children were even more difficult to deal with than the hated rivals of ball-rooms. Penelope, slim, fairylike, and sensitive, could not possibly be snubbed—Bob's good nature would have revolted at the mere thought; while the bonny, picturesque little damsels, Hazel, Molly, Dolly, and Diana, made a quartette which overwhelmed even the strategy of a desperate, though shy, lover.

The days at Dorking Hall were numbered; innumerable engagements would call Alice back to the gay town, and he would be no nearer—no nearer. The bright tone of the country grew clouded; Bob's laughter had a forced note.

Alice never found the children in the way. The sight of them, the touch of their little hands, and the music of their merry voices were a perpetual joy to her eyes, her ears, her senses.

Even Bob, resentful as he felt, saw a certain wonder in it as he came upon Alice seated on a mossy bank surrounded by her court.

"By Jove, they make a pretty picture!" he said to himself, pausing unperceived by an old stone image.

Alice, in her simple white dress, looked the very incarnation of young mother Spring, with tender shoots at her feet and in her arms.

There was a somewhat pensive expression in her eyes as they rested on the small flock of sunny-faced children. Dolly and Molly sprawled on the grass, a pair of chubby, freckled twins, with exquisite dimples and fat flaxen curls. Diana, the baby, nestled close to her, crumpling a daisy-chain which Hazel had been at great pains to make, while Penelope, standing erect, outshone her sisters in grace and beauty as a brilliant comet dwarfs the lesser stars.

Penelope was speaking in her musical voice; she had no idea that she was pretty, much less that her words bore all the mellow softness of a sweet-toned bell.

"You see," she said, "it's very awkward

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"'BY JOVE, THEY MAKE A PRETTY PICTURE!' HE SAID."

for those poor children in London who have no clothes to wear, and never get anything to eat, about taking holidays in the country. They want a lot of money for trains, and carriages, and buns. I am going to try and help them; that is why I have a collecting card."

"A very good idea," answered Alice. The conversation ceased as Bob's shadow fell across the path. He threw himself down at Alice's side, and began plucking at the grass in a nervous, irritable manner.

To be so near—and yet so far away—within reach of her hand, but beyond the range of her keen sympathy, which settled in a great flood of loving warmth on the children at her knee, was more than flesh and blood could stand.

"Don't they make you hot?" he said, as Hazel — lucky infant — dragged down Alice's pretty face and kissed ner soft pink cheek.

"Oh! no," she laughed, rearing her graceful neck in its cool open collar of soft transparent lace; "it is my last day but one with these ducks of things, and I can't spare a minute of them! I shall miss the country terribly, but I shall miss the children more. Time enough to think of the heat when I am back in London."

There was just the suspicion of a mischievous twinkle in Alice's eyes, which made her seem like a child herself for the moment. Bob only noticed the air of wonderful refinement and the perfect profile of this woman who held his heart.

"You know," he continued, "it's the Derby to-morrow. Mrs. Sutcliffe suggested that you and I should ride up to Epsom Downs and get a bird's-eye view of the race."

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"Delightful!" said Alice; "I should like nothing better. Penelope and I planned to go the evening I arrived; you've been counting the days to it, haven't you, Pen?"

Bob's face fell. He ground his teeth with vexation. Far away on those heights he had resolved to tell her the truth, but again she carelessly tossed the golden ball of opportunity far above his reach.

"Isn't it a bit rough for Penelope?" he said, ruthlessly, casting a sidelong glance at the child, and feeling a twinge of conscience as he caught her expression of eager anticipation.

Penelope answered the question quickly, with a little gasp.

"I rode there last year on Billy, and he was quite, quite good!" she persisted, flushing to her temples at the mere idea of being left behind.

She had talked of this ride day after day to Alice, and dreamt at night of the wonderful race, the deafening cheers, the fluttering colours of the jockeys, the straining horses, the long green course. Surely, on Alice Lingfield's last day, the cup of happiness must sparkle to its very brim! Penelope felt a little shudder run through her at the thought of possible disappointment.

Bob subsided and allowed his shoe-laces to be persistently untied and knotted by the twins, who found a strong fascination in shoe-gear, both when worn on the feet of guests or reposing under dressing-tables.

He longed to know what was passing in Alice's mind. Was she thinking of him as she sat with her imperious little chin resting on her disengaged hand? The other lay in Hazel's possession, who, it seemed to Bob, purposely tormented him by her unchecked blandishments.

He was envious and, therefore, bad-tempered. In reality her thoughts, as he half suspected, were with the little ones. The attitudes of delicious abandon so characteristic of childhood appealed to her artistic eye, and the freshness of these young lives brought a maternal thrill to the girl's soul, which she only faintly understood.

If love were very near her at that moment, love of a deep and passionate nature, she was aware only of the tender flow of childish affection, which fanned her spirit like a cool breeze on a summer's day.

But Bob sat plotting, with one eye on Penelope.

"It's merely a case for a bribe," he thought, and lightly jingled the coins in his pocket as an accompaniment to this soothing idea.

II.

"I DO hope it will be fine to-morrow!" said Penelope, as she looked out of the window last thing before going to bed, smiling up at the clear sky and bright stars. "You know," she continued, "it's the best day of the whole year; there are other races, but the Derby will be far the nicest, because I shall ride to see it with Miss Lingfield!"

She lay awake a long while thinking of Alice and her sweet ways, wondering if in the whole world there could be anyone else so beautiful and delightful, excepting, of course, Penelope's own mother, who, in a way, was a little bit like Miss Lingfield.

At dawn the child crept out of bed, and laughed with glee to see the sun rising with a promise of bright things to come.

Very early, before Hazel, Molly, Dolly, and Diana thought of opening an eyelid, Penelope scampered into her clothes and ran off to the garden. She felt like the lark, full of song, as she skipped over the dewy grass and trilled forth a cheery good-morning to the flowers.

Someone else was restless too, and had come out early to breathe the air—someone who, like Penelope, gazed at the stars before going to bed and thought of Alice Lingfield.

"Halloa!" said a man's voice. "This is lucky. I wanted to see you."

"Good-morning, Mr. Macalister," replied Penelope, holding out a small hand.

She hardly knew why, but something in his tone filled her with a certain misgiving.

"I wanted to see you!" Why should he want to see her, unless, unless——

The words recurred to her mind suddenly: "Isn't it a bit rough for Penelope?"

"We have a lovely day for our ride!" she stammered, turning her flushed little face up to the sky.

"Yes," he replied, "it's about the ride I've been thinking. I want you not to come, and—and I'll give you this if you will just say you don't care to go with us."

He held out a very large, imposing coin, upon which Penelope fixed her eyes with an expression of horror.

"How much is it?" she asked, in a strangled tone.

"Five shillings," he replied. "You can buy yourself a beautiful doll with that."

A long, painful pause—the child turned strangely pale—a struggle seemed going on in her mind, for her lips twitched and her hands clenched convulsively.

The man and the small girl faced each other, a certain breathless anxiety in their

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"A STRUGGLE SEEMED GOING ON IN HER MIND."

attitudes. It meant much to both, the issue of this bargain.

"How many pennies are there in five shillings?" she asked at last, feeling in the pocket of her short cotton frock for a card, which she carried always now, in the hope of collecting stray pence for the poor children in need of country air. Each space, ticked off, represented a penny. She regarded the card with tear-dimmed eyes.

"Sixty," he replied, not noticing her emotion.

"Sixty!" She repeated the word with a gasp. It sealed her fate—like a dark door closing with a bang upon the looked-for hours of pleasure. Only the sacrifice of her own amusement, and those unhappy little mortals in the densely crowded cities would some of them be the better for a few hours' sunshine.

The bright beams playing on the flowers seemed defying her to refuse the proffered coin, while the very rays reflected their sparkle on the silver bribe! Yet Penelope stood paralyzed, and her clenched hand still hung against her side.

"It is Alice Lingfield's last day," sang the birds. "To-morrow she will be gone."

But Penelope turned a deaf ear to these subtle twitterings, nor would she allow herself to listen to the call of the hills.

With an effort she thrust from her mind the thought of that vast multitude on the usually silent downs. The swaying swings and rollicking merry-go-rounds viewed in the distance, the seething mass of mysterious humanity, held for the child unlimited enchantment. The wonder of it fired her imagination and produced intense excitement.

She had described the scene to Alice in stirring words, firmly convinced that the sight would be as novel to Miss Lingfield as to herself.

Penelope did not try to analyze his reasons for not wanting her, the petrifying fact was enough in itself, and then the heavy piece of money must be fairly gained.

She moved a step nearer and let her trembling little fingers close over the five-shilling piece.

"I don't want a doll," she said, "but I—I—shall use it for something else."

As she spoke she quickly concealed the card, for fear he might guess the generous motives hidden behind her half-whispered words.

That "something else" meant sacrifice, denial, and the glorious light which can shine in the innocent eyes of a child may bring a certain matured nobility to the youngest features. Robert Macalister sighed with relief—a smile broke over his face. He strolled away and began to whistle. Penelope walked slowly, very slowly, back to the house, biting her lips.

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III.

NOBODY knew what was the matter with the child, for Penelope did not want to go out riding—she appeared listless, weary, crushed. Alice felt quite worried about her as she rode away, since the little figure stood watching her go with such a pitiful droop of the shoulders and an expression as of quiet resignation to fate.

Penelope even forgot to play with Hazel, Molly, Dolly, and Diana, who found the ruling spirit missing from their games.

"Miss Lingfield will think I did not care to go with her—that is the worst part of all," Penelope told herself, as she roamed about the garden. "I could bear any disappointment if only it had not hurt her. She looked back three times as she rode away with Mr. Macalister, and at each look I felt I must run and say why I was staying behind."

Penelope paused by the mossy bank where only yesterday they had discussed the ride. Now it looked strangely lonely without Alice's bright figure.

The child, with a pang that cut deeply into her sensitive soul, stood silently trying for the first time to reason out the man's motive for his odd, inexplicable action.

Her troubled reverie was broken by light footsteps. Mrs. Sutcliffe had come in search of her little daughter.

"Penelope," she said, drawing the slight figure to her side, "you have never had a secret from me. Tell me, darling, what is on your mind? Do you imagine I can't see that you have been crying?"

Gradually, with gentle words, Mrs. Sutcliffe drew the whole story from the child. As she listened an expression of great amusement crept over her face.

"Mother, why are you laughing? I suppose you are glad about the sixty spaces being filled up on my card. You want the poor children to be happy. If I thought Miss Lingfield wasn't hurt and vexed I should laugh, too. When the horses came round she shook her head at me and called me a 'deserter.' She thinks I don't love her any more. That was why I cried directly they were out of sight."

"You can't understand, little woman," said Mrs. Sutcliffe; "but your heart is in the right place. And you need not worry about Alice. You children have monopolized her terribly, all five of you, for the last few days, and, of course, you could not be expected to see that someone else loved her too and was greedy enough to want her all to himself. If you were older you would know this naughty mother of yours has been a very cunning matchmaker."

Mrs. Sutcliffe laughed again, imparting her merriment to Penelope, who, still not quite understanding, felt suddenly reconciled and happy.

The younger children, patrolling the grounds, joined their mother on the sunny bank, their favourite spot, and looking at them Mrs. Sutcliffe realized how great a part these innocents had played in Alice's romance.

That Alice Lingfield and Bob Macalister were positively made for each other Mrs. Sutcliffe had decided from the very first, but Bob needed spurring to action by despair. Adown an easy path his feet might long have dawdled in the rosy byways of flirtation.

Thus she had watched with joy the girl's pre-occupation in the children's society.

"He won't be able to stand it much longer," Mrs. Sutcliffe had thought day by day; "sooner or later he must wrest her from them by force!"

Penelope hardly knew why, but she awaited Alice's return with a sensation of suppressed excitement. Her mother's words had set her thinking. Was Mr. Macalister, perhaps, the someone else who loved Miss Lingfield too?

Across the hills, down to the valley came soft breezes, whispering their tender story of love abroad, light-footed and airy. Mrs. Sutcliffe felt the very day breathed rapture, as she pictured the riders side by side under the clear sky.

At last came the sound of horses' hoofs in the drive, and as Alice alighted, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling, her lips parted, she unconsciously told the glorious news of her freshly discovered love. One glance at Bob's face confirmed the revelation, and Mrs. Sutcliffe knew their visit to Dorking Hall had been crowned with success.

"We have had such a lovely ride!" said Alice, as Penelope flew into her arms with the air of knowing and understanding far more than she was supposed to know or understand. It had been a day of awakening, a day of surprise; all the clouds were drifting away under Alice's sunny radiance, her happy, sparkling mood.

The twins struggled each to wrest from the other her riding-whip, the stronger of the two hugging it close to her baby heart, simply because it was Alice's, and therefore deserving of love. Hazel and Diana were in her train and Penelope hung on her arm adoringly.

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Once more the children gathered close, drawn by the mute affection they could not express in words. Like a blooming rose surrounded by fair buds she stood amongst the little ones, and Bob no longer grudged them her smiles.

When Alice was dressing for dinner that night Penelope crept to her room and hovered at her side, watching her as she arranged the long coils of hair which crowned her daintily-shaped head.

"I have brought you a bunch of white azalea," said the child, "to put in your sash, because mother says you will soon be a bride. I once went to a wedding, and the bride smiled at all the people, and afterwards we dressed up with mother's lace shawl over our heads and pretended we were being married too. Are you glad Mr. Macalister loves you?"

Penelope put the question quickly, a note of sudden anxiety shaking her voice.

Alice laid down the silver glass in which she had been examining her neatly coiffured head. She turned a pair of liquid eyes on the little figure and caught Penelope to her heart.

"Glad!" she whispered. "Oh! Pen, I'm so glad—I can't tell you—and, dearest, it's all your doing! You must have guessed he loved me, for you made it easy, you gave me my happiness, you best of fairy schemers!"

"I didn't guess—I did it for the poor children," gasped Penelope, not offering to explain her enigmatical words. "But wasn't it lucky it made you happy too? I feel just as if my heart would burst — it thumps and thumps!"

She pressed her little hands together, pausing for breath.

"A bride!" she repeated, dwelling on the words. "We must all of us play at weddings to-morrow!"

"ARE YOU GLAD MR. MACALISTER LOVES YOU?"

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The Craze for Panama Hats.

THE VILLAGE OF TOLIMA, COLOMBIA, FROM WHENCE COME THE FINEST PANAMA HATS.
From a Photo. by Vander Weyde, New York.

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS for a straw hat! Enough with which to take a three months' holiday, enough to keep your son a year at college, enough to buy a small farm. And yet so astute a financier as Mr. Lyman Gage, ex-Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, recently paid that sum for an extra-fine Panama hat, and reckoned, moreover, that he had made a good bargain. King Edward VII. also is reported to have paid a Bond Street hatter £90 to secure "the best Panama in London"; while Jean de Reszke, the noted tenor, has paid the topmost price—something under £120—to procure a similar object in America. Ex-Mayor Van Wyck, of New York, is chuckling over his success in securing a Panama which dealers have told him is superior in quality to either King Edward's or the one owned by Jean de Reszke. He paid only £50.

These instances of extravagance are not mentioned as a reflection upon the perpetrators, but merely to illustrate the extent of "the Panama hat craze," one of the most expensive fashions ever adopted by men. Expensive, because a Panama of even medium quality cannot be had for less than £5, and if you aim at having one that may be tucked away in a vest pocket like a lead pencil, or slipped through a finger-ring, the price is, to most persons, prohibitive. In spite of this costliness, however, Panama hats are being dispatched from South America absolutely in ship-loads, and about half the population of Ecuador are engaged in supplying hat luxuries for the men of Europe and America.

The craze began last year, and appeared to be only transient; but enterprising merchants foretold that this summer would find a demand far greater than the supply, and they accordingly put in their orders about six months ago. Since then the Panama hat industry has become more lucrative than any other in that part of South America adjoining the Isthmus, and with the prospect of making a fortune in a few years many planters have abandoned the raising of coffee and rice. The mountain passes of the Andes, from Chimborazo northward, are crowded, day and night, with long columns of pack-mules and ox-carts bearing their precious burden to Panama, which is the clearing-house for hats. The streets of Panama itself are flanked with the establishments of hat-brokers, and half the city is engaged, one way or other, in helping to further this American "craze."

In all the pages of history you will, perhaps, find no account of a fad that was at the same time so costly as this one and yet so generally adopted, not even when plumed knights and velvet-clothed courtiers trod the

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earth. In their heyday a considerable sum of money was, no doubt, paid for the picturesque "Gainsborough," expensively decorated, which was affected by the men of that period; but it is safe to say that not even the extravagant Louis XIV. paid for his head-dress the price of the best Panama.

In our time it has been almost the exclusive privilege of women to spend large sums of money on hats, and it is not uncommon to hear of a Parisian "creation" selling for a thousand dollars. With the fashion, nowadays, of occasionally wearing diamonds or other precious gems on a head-dress, there is practically no limit to the depth that a woman might plunge in indulging in this luxury. The fad of wearing real lace that is affected to-day is also a costly one. A smartly-dressed woman whose ambition is to be in the swim of society will often wear two or three yards of Irish point-lace that costs, perhaps, £80 a yard. It is this sort of thing that gives a father or a husband heart-disease, a tragedy that has been so useful to joke-writers and knock-about comedians.

But the tables are now reversed, and humorists to be up-to-date must regild one of their stock commodities. It is the women now who gasp with astonishment when the head of the house comes home with a little wisp of straw which he cheerfully proclaims has cost him something like a hundred pounds. Not only that, but he has the effrontery to boast of the purchase and goes strutting about because Brown or Jones has a Panama hat that is woven in two pieces while his, proud man, has never a seam!

At first sight the Panama hat "craze" would appear to be a lavish folly taken up because of a wild desire to "be in style." But there are good causes for the Panama's popularity, the chief one being that the common straw hat, with its stiff brim, so universally worn in this country and abroad, is a fragile affair, breaks easily, and has little to recommend it excepting lightness of weight; while a good Panama may be worn a lifetime, can be blocked to any shape, and is exceedingly comfortable to the head. It is, in short, a summer luxury, and only its costliness has prevented it from being universally worn.

TOLIMA NATIVES WEAVING PANAMA HATS.
From a Photo. by Vander Weyde, New York.

Among the false notions regarding Panama

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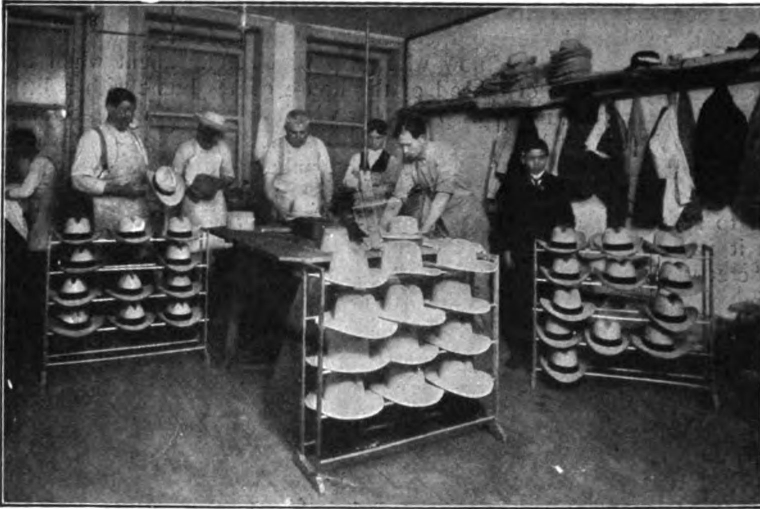


FINISHING THE HATS IN THE FACTORY.
From a Photo. by Vander Weyde, New York.

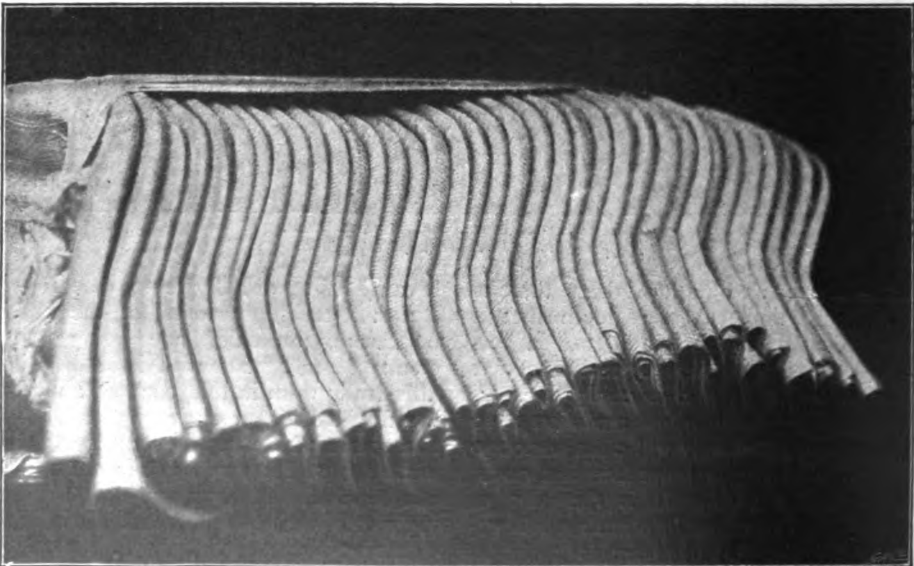
hats in the village of Monte Cristo, Ecuador, and took them back to Paris. They attracted attention on the boulevards there, and when queried about them the Frenchmen curtly replied, "Chapeaux de Panama."

Another illusion that prevails generally is that the natives weave these precious hats under water, but the photographs shown here conclusively disprove

hats—and there are prevalent a great many—is that of its origin. The name, in the first place, would lead one to believe that the fabric is manufactured in Panama, whereas the fact is that Ecuador, Colombia, and Guayaquil produce two-thirds of all the Panamas in the market. The city of Panama is merely a shipping port for these hats, which are brought from other places. It is the metropolis of the northern part of South America. The name was originally coined by some French merchants who bought straw

that. The rumour probably started from the method of soaking the raw material in water prior to their being woven. There is nothing extraordinary about this, the object being merely to soften the "straw," so that it will be pliable and easy to handle.

To call the Panama a straw hat is, by the way, an anomaly, for it is not made of straw at all, the material used in its manufacture being either the stem of palm leaves or a rare sort of grass that grows in South America. The natives are very deft in



A BALE OF PANAMA HATS.
From a Photo. by Vander Weyde, New York.

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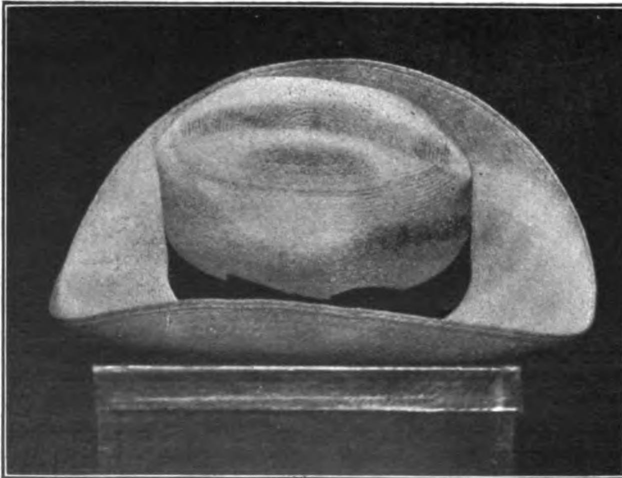
curing and weaving both these products. The palm they tear in shreds with their teeth until it spreads out fan-shape. After a long soaking the palm stem is taken out of the water and nailed on a rough-looking block, at which the workman sits for weeks at a time, carefully putting in place shred after shred.

It is this length of time and tediousness in labour that account for the high price placed on Panama hats. An idea of the real situation in Panama may be had from the following letter received by S. M. Jackson and Co., of New York, from their South American agent: "Replying to your valued inquiry of April 25th," said this correspondent, "regarding which we have had to make inquiries, we find that the 'finest' hat required by you would necessitate four months to manufacture, and would cost between 80dols. and 100dols. in gold" (£16 to £20). When a hat costs 100dols. in its unfinished condition at the place of manufacture it is not to be wondered at that the same hat, after going through the American Customs house, where a 35 per cent. duty is exacted, should retail at 500dols., or £100.

There is one distinction in Panamas of the utmost importance, a distinction which, if noticed, stamps the wearer as a possessor of the real thing, or, on the other hand, a pretender. Your genuine, high-priced Panama is made in one piece and has no lining, while the inferior style of hat, made for the most part in Antioquia, Colombia, is woven in two pieces and has a lining. The latter is regarded with contempt by the South Americans, though they often pass in the United States for the "real thing" and are priced accordingly.



"ONE-PIECE" PANAMA HAT OF THE FINEST QUALITY.
From a Photo. by Vander Weyde, New York.

The perfect Panamas are woven by the women of Ecuador, and those that live in the two provinces of Tolima and Suarez, Colombia. The men can rarely be induced to work, no matter how considerable the pay, and contractors have about ceased trying to galvanize them with energy. But the women are more industrious, and plod along week after week tearing the palm leaf with certain nicety and then weaving in the shreds, one hat at a time.

The value of a hat depends entirely upon its texture and pliability. One that costs £100, for example, should be so closely woven as to appear practically smooth to the naked eye. It is, of course, made in one piece, and if the owner has not been cheated he should be able to squeeze his hat through a finger-ring. But a hat capable of this treatment is about as rare as a blue diamond.

There is no telling where the Panama hat "craze" will end, or the amount of money that has been spent thereon this season. The masculine population seem to have gone quite mad over it, and dealers are taking advantage of the moment to reap a harvest, especially in America. "In other years," said a Broadway hatter, "I would have sold several thousand stiff-brim Mackinaws in the first part of the season, but this season I have sold less than a hundred. Only Panamas are wanted. Women, too, have caught the infection, and you will find that before the summer is half over fashion will decree that to be up-to-date a woman must own a Panama."

Some After-Dinner Speakers.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY FURNISS.

IN everything variety is charming, but, alas! we have many charming speeches and far too little variety. It is too much the habit to select the same speakers time after time; a man makes one good speech, and he is on the strength of it asked to make fifty. In all probability he repeats himself, particularly if he poses as a humorist; this performance becomes mechanical, the trick consists in saying the same thing in different ways. Earl Granville, giving some advice to a friend, who has since won the reputation of a very great speaker, said to him: "There is nothing so tiresome as the constant reappearance of the same man and the constant repetition of the same voice. Out of your toasts select one for a speech, and into that speech pour all the information, all the argument, all the eloquence, all the wit, all the pathos you can possibly scrape together, and for God's sake don't make neat and appropriate speeches between every other toast. Dismiss them with a sentence. If there is a point in that sentence, so much the better; but if not, let it be one sentence without a point."

LORD RATHMORE.

If the late Earl gave this advice to his own countryman, what would he have thought of those irrepressible after-dinner speakers, the Americans, who "orate" on every possible occasion? As regards their after-dinner speaking, I would prefer to give the opinion of one of the greatest men in England than give my own. This opinion, from no less a person than Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, was given in the presence of Mr. Chauncey Depew, Sir Henry Irving, and others well able to discuss the point: it was that Americans are not better after-dinner speakers than the English.

I think myself that the average American can speak better than the average Englishman, but I have heard much better speaking on special occasions in England than I have heard in similar conditions in America, and I have had ample opportunity of making the contrast.

Take haphazard a room full of Americans and a room full of Englishmen, and you will find nearly every American will say something and say it well; but, on the other hand, few Englishmen can speak well. That is not the point. I am referring to set after-dinner speaking, and there is no doubt as to the superiority of the English over the Americans.

The best after-dinner speaking I ever heard was at a dinner where half-a-dozen speakers — all English — made far more eloquent and more witty speeches than I have ever heard at half-a-dozen American show banquets. At the one I have in mind Lord Rathmore was at his best. Sir Frank Lockwood, Sir Edward Clarke, Mr. Pinero, and Lord Russell excelled themselves. All the speakers confined themselves to their subject. Now this the Americans seldom do, as I have just pointed out. They give a string of anecdotes, good, bad, and indifferent, and wind up with an eloquent peroration in flamboyant style. There is decidedly too much playing to the gallery and too little "playing the game," as we would say, in

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order to drag in a story. The best friends of the speaker are bowled over without the least compunction. This is not playing cricket, but it is what I have witnessed Chauncey Depew and all American show dinner orators play at. It is what their friends expect and enjoy. We have a higher motive, and we therefore have better speeches.

The stock toasts, dealing with national subjects, are dealt with on both sides of the Atlantic by outpourings of platitudes, and seldom with a grain of sincerity. In that the Americans are superior to the English. They "orate" on their country's greatness at every opportunity, and when it is said they are better speakers you will find it is generally held so by those who are carried away by such rhetoric. As a specimen of the best American oratory I cannot select a better example than the following brief speech, the first made by the Hon. Joseph Choate in this country as United States Ambassador:—

THE HON. JOSEPH CHOATE.

"I accept this cordial welcome," said the new Ambassador, "not for myself, but for that friendly nation which I have been appointed to represent. The ports of New York and Southampton are now closely united by these great steamships—which fly between them like shuttles in the weaver's loom, connecting them by imperishable bonds. This mutual commerce and interchange of travel will do more to strengthen the ties that already unite the two countries than anything else can do; and if the men and women of England could visit the United States as freely as our countrymen flock to your shores, so that we could know each other better, that good understanding and fraternal feeling between the two peoples could never fail. Southampton has a special significance for all Americans, for it was from this ancient port, which for centuries before had witnessed the embarkation of all sorts of expeditions, that in the year 1620 our Pilgrim Fathers set sail in the *Mayflower* on that historic voyage which was to end in the planting of a new nation, which proved to be the first great departure of the English race from its island home and island life. Springing from this stock a Republic of seventy millions of people, allied in blood, in institutions, in interest, and in the hopes of the future, stretches forth across the Atlantic the right hand of fellowship, and is ready to meet the mother country more than half-way in everything that shall tend to promote the common good of the two nations and the general welfare of mankind. To-day the representative of the descendants of the hundred heroes and heroines of the *Mayflower* traverses the same seas in a single week in a mighty cruiser, just converted from a swift engine of war into a welcome messenger of peace, herself an emblem of that sea-power upon which the destinies of the Anglo-Saxon race depend. As I go to present my letter of credence from the President to your illustrious Sovereign, who, after more than sixty years, still reigns supreme in the hearts of her subjects and commands the affectionate admiration of my own countrymen as their ever-faithful and steadfast friend, I accept your cordial greeting as a harbinger of that practical friendship which is henceforth to control and govern the conduct of the two nations."

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Americans have a trick in after-dinner speaking. They lead up to a story, or two or three, as the case may be, and when you are laughing at that story they sit down. An American, in fact, saves himself the trouble of making a speech by telling a story. English speakers are too serious, Americans too frivolous. The clever manner in which they drag in a story seems to be the clever part of their after-dinner oratory. A Depew or a Horace Porter will drag in half-a-dozen good stories, and throw off a peroration as a sort of solid food after several pleasant, but not very substantial, *entrées*.

By the way, there is a well-known story attributed, I believe, to General Horace Porter, who was referred to by the chairman in the following way:—

"We have here to-night General Horace Porter, and I call upon him for a speech. The gentleman is like a slot machine: you put in a dinner and out comes a speech."

The witty and gallant General rose, and replied with a quick fire of satire which killed the vulgar chairman on the spot:—

"The chairman has thought fit to liken me to a slot machine. May I return the compliment, and say that he is like one also? He puts in a speech and up comes your dinner."

GENERAL HORACE PORTER.

I have no doubt, however, that Americans are better at an impromptu speech than the English. To speak impromptu is dangerous. One may kill himself by making an exhibition of imbecility or kill his friends by an exhibition of boredom. I rather appreciate the remark of the Irishman who, suddenly called to fight, took to his heels, and when stopped said:—

"It's better to be a coward for five minutes than to be a dead man all your life-time."

But the American is always ready with a story, and therefore always ready with a speech. Now, this last witticism was introduced into a speech at one of the most important dinners in New York, at which I was present, by Mr. Depew himself, so you see in clever hands a joke need not be a new one. An American after-dinner speech is like one of the sky-scraper buildings in the country: there is a frame of commonplace built upon a foundation of common sense. With marvellous rapidity story after story is formed until the height of eloquence is reached. The crust of ornamental compliments cannot hide the irony it covers, and these piles of stories are so alike you cannot tell one from the other.

Let me show you how the trick is done.

A gentleman at a dinner would have a little story such as this, and would introduce it in this way:—

"Mr. Chairman, did you know my feelings at the present moment and realize how very ragged they are, you would probably have pity upon me, as the benevolent lady had for the tramp in tatters, when she said to him:—

"'My man, your clothes seem to be very ragged; can I do anything to mend them for you?' To which he replied:—

"'Well, ma'am, I have a button, and I would be very glad if you would sew a coat on to it.'

"Well, sir, I have a story, and I shall be very glad if anyone will sew a speech on to it."

The joke is almost as worn out as the coat, but the Americans seem to enjoy a joke the oftener they hear it.

A gentleman at a dinner is called upon to take the place of another on the toast list—that is, to make a speech earlier in the evening than he is put down for on the

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toast list; ten to one he will begin with this:—

"I feel I have no right here, for my time has not yet come. I am reminded of the story of the little boy in the village playing on a doorstep all by himself, who, when good-natured passers-by said: 'Why, little boy, play all by yourself? Why not join the others inside?' replied: 'I mustn't. I am going to play the baby, and I'm not born yet.'"

Now, in the case of being called upon unexpectedly, the following will be acceptable at any gathering of Americans:—

"I do not understand why I am called upon to speak to this toast. The reasons, no doubt, are various, but I am not convinced, and I know there is something in the compliments paid me, so I'll not spoil the compliments by asking for a reason. If I examine that reason, I would probably be as the man who said: 'When that clock hand stands at two and it strikes six I shall know the time is seven.' I am afraid I must finish —my glass is run—I have taken up all the time one should with a worthless speech. Thanks, but I'm not going to imitate the parson in the little Presbyterian village, who when preaching placed an old half-hour-glass on the pulpit; then, when the sand was out, he would lean over to his congregation and say: 'Have another glass and linger with me still.' I don't know if it were the same parson who, when he died, had engraved on his tombstone the simple words, 'My glass is run,' and some mischievous urchin added one stroke to the last letter, and it read, 'My glass is rum.' Whatever my glass is, I drink to you, and I'll have another glass and linger with you still."

Numerous instances are recorded of speakers mixing their metaphors, and either through ignorance or nervousness saying the wrong thing. One instance: A certain Duke, presiding at the farewell dinner to Mr. John Hare, who was starting for America to play in Mr. Pinero's "Problem Plays" (Mr. Pinero was vice-chairman of the banquet), made the theme of his speech an attack upon the production of these very plays! I remember many others. One I read about in America is too good to omit.

General Fosse, an American officer and supporter of negro emancipation, once made a very animated address on behalf of the coloured population. A dinner was given subsequently to the General, when one of the sable guests, being called upon for a toast, was desirous of conveying the idea, by the sentiment he should give, that the General, though he was a *white* man, was nevertheless full of sympathy for the negroes. He therefore rose and gave "Massa General Foss; he have *white* skin, but very *black* heart."

Sir Henry Irving always makes interesting after-dinner speeches, and it is needless to say they are delivered in artistic style. His speeches are carefully prepared and printed in very large block type, easily read at a distance. Herein lies the triumph of the actor. These slips are artfully placed on the table out of the sight of the audience; and while one of the speaker's hands rests artistically on his hip, the other toys with a fruit-knife, and with it pages of the speech are turned over as they are read. So perfectly is this acted, so gracefully does the body sway, and so well-timed are the pauses in the speech that only those seated in close proximity to Sir Henry are aware he is reading his speech. If one cannot trust to memory this system is preferable to the prompter system, which some actors prefer from sheer force of habit. A

SIR HENRY IRVING.

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friend on the prompt side is entrusted with the copy of the speech and acts the rôle of the prompter in the theatre. It is curious how some speakers cannot shake off this habit. This was most noticeable in the House of Commons, when the late Lord Russell sat in Parliament as Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Attorney-General. He requiring a level-headed legal mind for Solicitor-General called in Mr. J. Rigby, direct from court practice to the front bench in Parliament. Mr. Rigby was duly knighted and called upon to answer questions and make speeches, but force of habit debarred him from doing either in the stereotyped Parliamentary fashion, *i.e.*, standing at the table sideways to the Speaker. He had invariably been accustomed to address the judge while facing him, so in like manner he must now perforce face the Speaker. In such matters the etiquette of Parliament is most punctilious. No one standing on the floor, while addressing the House, is allowed to place either foot beyond the edge of the mat running parallel to the seats. Should he so transgress, loud calls to order are immediately heard; yet here was a member of the Ministry not only overstepping the red-bordered mat, but taking several steps round the corner of the table, and—shade of Erskine!—standing in front of the mace addressing the Speaker. The House accepted the humour of the situation and laughed heartily, which was the only thing to do under the circumstances, for the Solicitor-General could not manage to get a word out until he stood in the House as he did in the court, *i.e.*, in front of the Bench.

LORD LEIGHTON.

Another curious illustration of the force of habit was the system adopted by Lord Leighton, late President of the Royal Academy. It may be true that "The pencil speaks the tongue of every land," and it is equally true that Lord Leighton very nearly did the same thing. But artists as after-dinner speakers are sadly disappointing. That linguist and otherwise accomplished President I have mentioned had the reputation of being an orator. He certainly, in a weak falsetto voice, whined through long-winded platitudes and prettily-turned sentences; his speeches were exactly the same as his art: correct in outline, florid and conventional in colour, flat and thin in technique, pleasing, smooth, graceful, gorgeously framed—and soon forgotten. Lord Beaconsfield, on being asked at the Royal Academy banquet by an admirer of Leighton what he thought of that artist's speech, replied, with a shrug: "H'm, the French pastry of oratory." Rough, ready, delightful, and natural, Sir John Millais, on the other hand, made no effort and no success as a speaker. When he first took the chair at the banquet, poor fellow! his fatal disease was already troubling him. He had to appeal to his audience for indulgence as he was no orator, and was furthermore suffering from hoarseness, yet by a strange coincidence facing him on the walls was his large ghost picture, called "Speak! Speak!" Lord Leighton did not read from a manuscript, but, having written out his speech, learnt it by heart, and then, through force of habit, actually fancied that he saw it on the wall, and ***read*** it word for word in imagination. "That accounts for my moving my head from side to side while I am speaking," he informed a friend of mine. There is no doubt artists can remember the form of what they read as they can remember all forms, but it is a curious fact that others besides artists have in their "mind's-eye" some form upon which they build their speeches. Charles Dickens —in the opinion of those lucky enough to have heard the great author one of the best after-dinner speakers both as regards matter and delivery—likened his speech to a cart-wheel. "The outset was the tyre, he being the hub. From the hub to the tyre he would run as many spokes as there were subjects to be treated, and during the progress of the speech he would deal with each spoke separately, elaborating them as he went round the wheel; and when all the spokes dropped out one by one, and nothing but the tyre and space remained, he would know that he had accomplished his task and that his speech was at an end." So wrote his friend and manager of his

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reading tours, the late Mr. Dalby, and adds: "It was my fortune on many occasions to accompany Mr. Dickens when he took the chair at public dinners or meetings, and, remembering on all such occasions his plan of action, I have been amused to observe him dismiss the spoke from his mind by a quick action of the finger, as if he were knocking it away."

CHARLES DICKENS.

John Bright, "Silver Tongue," one of the greatest speakers of our time, after making a remarkable speech, happened to leave his notes on the table. An admirer eagerly seized them. "Now I shall discover this extraordinary man's method." I forget the actual words, but they were few and something like "cats," "fuzz-wuzzy," "Caliban," "Lachesis," "abracadabra," "snuff," "toads." Needless to say, he was not particularly enlightened.

An easy method by which to escape any effort in after-dinner speaking is to repeat the same words time after time. Our greatest cricketer, as is well known, does not make speeches with as much facility as he makes runs; and when he was on tour in Australia as captain of the English team had to return thanks time after time. He merely repeated a dozen or so words of simple gratitude precisely the same on each occasion, and in that way established another record. After I had an action brought against me by the late George Augustus Sala for some chaffing remarks made in an after-dinner speech, whenever called upon I excused myself from making another, being nervous that in paying a compliment to some thin-skinned person present I might again find myself in the Law Courts. I had a stereotyped speech which served for some time.

LORD ROSEBERY.

Our cleverest dramatist, Mr. Pinero, imitates Sir Henry Irving's method exactly, but he is even more deceptive in order to conceal the fact that he reads his speech. He more than once stops abruptly, looks quickly to a far corner of the table, evidently fixing his piercing eye upon some particular diner, says, "What do I hear that gentleman say?" (Pause.) "Well, if he means by that interruption," etc., and replies to the imaginary gentleman in a delightful, supposititious impromptu. That is clever and decidedly legitimate, for, after all, a speech should be an entertainment, and effect, however produced, is everything, particularly if speeches are endowed with that literary merit as such speakers as I write of possess; it is just as well they should be carefully prepared beforehand and guided by elaborate notes.

Of Lord Rosebery I would say his matter is better

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than his manner. To me he never seems to feel what he says; his face remains a mask, neither the mouth nor the eye being that of an orator.

Mr. Augustine Birrell is now the popular humorist after dinner, particularly when political. Mr. G. B. Shaw is as amusing, audacious, and unconventional in speech as he is in his writing.

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

I must class with the last two humorists an after-dinner speaker who has lately sprung into popularity. I refer to Mr. M. H. Spielmann, the well-known art critic, author of "The History of *Punch*," editor of the *Magazine of Art*, etc. I have heard many speakers on both sides of the Atlantic, but none better than he—witty, literary, with a capital delivery and easy manner. I first heard him speak as chairman of the New Vagabond Club. Out of this vagabond jester's wallet I filch a few crumbs of wit:—

"We are vagabonds. As Alexander Smith says, 'Nature makes us vagabonds; the world makes us respectable.' Let me say at once, therefore, so that there should be no mistake, that there is a disreputable type of vagabond from whom we entirely dissociate ourselves. We all of us know the type and its species—the 'perverted vagabond'—the man with all our few vices and none of our many virtues. He is the sham Bohemian, the man who professes to be 'a close friend,' and is never so close as when he is asked for money. He is a 'hanger-on,' for whom literature is as much a 'hand to mouth' profession as dentistry. But, ladies and gentlemen, even a worm will turn—if you keep it long enough, and we turn against the smirchers of our name and order." Then, *à propos* of including "lady vagabonds" as a complete change in the policy of the club, he tells a capital story: a case of an old gentleman comfortably installed in a non-smoking railway compartment at Paddington, when an Eton boy entered, pulled out a big cigar, and was just going to strike a light when the old gentleman broke out: "Young sir, this isn't a smoking carriage." The boy struck his match as he replied: "Precious soon will be!" Another capital story I recall in that rich feast of the best humour: "There is an Oriental saying, 'Who is the happier—the man with a million of money or a man with nine daughters? The man with nine daughters, because he doesn't want any more.'"

MR. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

To those who are fortunate enough to hear

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Mr. Spielmann speechify, however, this would not apply; for, like Oliver Twist, they would certainly "ask for more."

It is not often that the toast of "The Navy" is responded to by a witty representative of our "Handy-men." Of course, Lord Charles Beresford is always interesting and amusing; but then he has some set, serious purpose in speaking. For a witty, unofficial, nautical after-dinner speaker I would suggest Admiral Sir William Kennedy: his stories are always fresh and amusing. I select two. The following is an episode in his career he amused the Authors' Club with. A retired boat swain of the Royal Navy bought a little house within sound of the sea, in which he lived. Each morning he was called at 4 a.m. by a boy, who received sixpence a week for this service. The neighbours, curious to know the reason of this apparently purposeless call, interrogated the boy.

MR. M. H. SPIELMANN.

Neighbours: "Why do you call him at 4 a.m., and what occurs?"

Boy: "I calls him at 4 a.m., and says he to me, says he, 'How's the weather?' I answers, 'A dark and stormy morning,' and has orders to add, 'and the captain wants you immediately on deck.' He answers, 'Tell the captain to go to Jericho,' and he rolls over and falls asleep again."

Another story—The Sea Lawyers. While stationed on the coast of Newfoundland the admiral, then a captain, and his first lieutenant were made Justices of the Peace, in order that they might adjudicate on the cases and disputes of the inhabitants in remote parts of the iron-bound coast where J.P.'s never ventured to voyage. The inhabitants were accustomed to store up the questions and cases until a man-of-war arrived and then bring them before the captain. At one part of the coast a complicated question of title to land was awaiting decision. It had been brought before several naval captains, all of whom had failed to understand it or settle it. When H.M.S. *Druid* arrived on the spot the inhabitants came down, eager to have the knotty point settled. The captain and his first lieutenant sat on the quarter-deck, the inhabitants grouped around, and the case was argued from early morning to evening. Each hour it became more entangled and complicated; the seamen knitted their brows, and at the close of the arguments said that as it was a case of great importance they would take time to consider and give their decision next morning. The inhabitants left, and came down next morning, rejoicing to think that the case would at last be settled, but only to see H.M.S. *Druid* disappearing below the horizon.

ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM KENNEDY.

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The Would-Be Assassin.

By Edwin Pugh.

HE Sons o' Freedom were unanimously agreed that England was in a bad way. They called themselves the Bermondsey Branch of the Sons o' Freedom; but they were, in fact, the whole tree—and a leafless, fruitless tree, too. They met in a small room over the bar of the Box o' Nails public-house, and their induction ceremony was as funny as an indifferently modelled plaster skull could make it. They were mostly gin-bitten loafers who had never done an honest day's work in their lives. They always knew what the Government was going to do long before the Government had decided to do something else. Their watchword was "Progress," and their motto: "Those who live only in the past should be made a part of the past." They were noisy and unclean and ignorant. And only one of them was, in any sense, sincere.

That one was the secretary, Bertie Spell.

He was a young man with a sallow, greasy face and an epileptic laugh. He could stand on a chair and rave as if his foot were on the neck of the world. He could spout raw treason until he was the only one in the room who was not tired.

"All very well to talk," said Bob Fields, the president, one sultry autumn evening. "But fine words butter no parsnips." He sucked ferociously at his pipe. "What we want is a man who'll *do* something."

Bertie Spell looked somewhat abashed. He ceased to saw the air with his soft, dirty hand.

"What is there to do?" he asked. "We agitate."

"Agitate ourselves. Yuss. And what for? What's the good of it?" He rose with a snarl. "I'd give all the agitators in the world for one man with a knife."

Bertie pursed his lips. "Times are not ripe for that sort o' thing."

"I believe you. They're rotten."

"All very fine to talk! But what would *you* do?"

"Me? 'Tain't for me to do nothing. The brain plans and the hand strikes. I'm the chairman o' the organization committee o' this society, remember. You don't go putting a general on outpost duty."

"No," said Bertie Spell, vaguely. "Still, I hardly see——"

"Too busy talking to see anything," grunted Fields.

Bertie Spell hung his head. Fields seized the opportunity to exchange a solemn wink with his mates. Baiting the secretary was good fun, and easy as cadging.

"What we ought to do," said one, McGarron, "is to make an example o' somebody."

"How do you mean?" he was asked.

"A little blood-letting. Healthy for the constitution. I say no more," McGarron replied.

"Shoot——?"

"Shoot! Stab! Blow up! *I* don't care! Why should we leave all that sort o' thing to foreigners? Ain't we as good men as them there Eyetalians? Well, then!"

"Who would you begin with, Mac?" asked little Spider Hayes.

"I'd begin wi' one o' them there half-baked Imperialist blokes, that's who I'd begin with."

"Harringay?"

"Ah, or Cantelupe," suggested the chairman. "Think what it'd be to stop his gallop. But what's the use o' talking? We're all too good at that. 'Specially young Bertie there."

"Fact o' the matter is," said little Spider Hayes, "there ain't a man among us wi' the backbone of a herring."

Bertie Spell lifted his head. His high cheekbones shone damp. "Would you do it, Spider?"

"Do what?"

"Shoot Cantelupe."

"Only let him walk in here. I'd show you, then."

"Drop him a card, Spider. He'd be bound to call," guffawed McGarron.

"You know what I mean, Mac," said Spider Hayes, darkly.

They were all portentously solemn in an instant. "Oh, we know what you *mean*." they said.

"But," exclaimed Spell, as if he were

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uttering his thoughts, "why should you expect me to—to act, rather than anybody else?"

"We don't expect you to act," said Fields. "That's our worriment."

"After all, if you are the president, I'm the secretary."

"No need to keep chewing it, Bertie."

They talked of other things. But Spell sat silently apart.

"Drink up, Bertie," said McGarron.

He drank and spoke rather huskily. "Anybody here know anything about pistols?" he asked. "I've never handled one in my life."

"Nothing to know," said Spider Hayes. "You just get your pistol, pop some cartridges into it, and there you are."

"What do they cost?"

"Get an all-right second-hand one for five or six bob," replied McGarron, winking furiously.

Bertie Spell said nothing further on the matter.

On the following evening he arrived late. He shook hands formally all round, performed the usual hocus-pocus with the skull, then stalked to the head of the table. He struck the sloppy board with his fist.

"Brethren," he called out, loudly, in thin, nasal tones, "I have got something to show you."

He thrust his hand into the breast of his coat and began to struggle with the torn lining of his pocket.

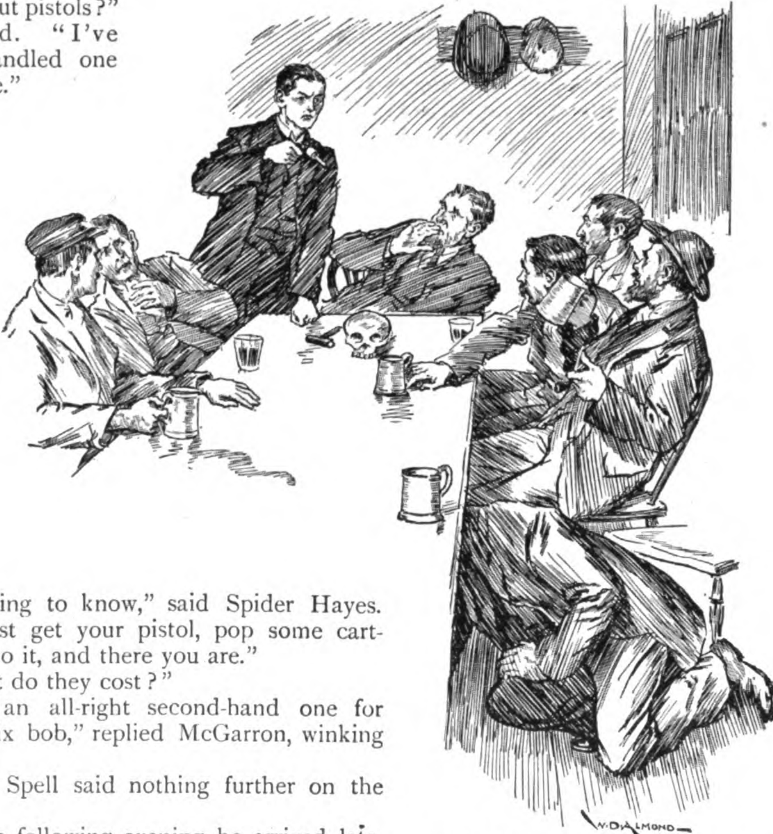
"What is it? Conjuring trick?" asked McGarron.

The others watched him curiously. At last he succeeded in extricating something bulky and shiny from the muddle of rags in which it had become entangled. The thing was a pistol. He rested the muzzle of it on the table, crossed his legs, and regarded them fixedly.

"Here," said he, "is the weapon."

He uncrossed his legs, snapped the trigger, and pointed the pistol at Spider Hayes. Spider promptly disappeared under the table.

"Put it down, you fool!" shouted Fields. "It might go off."



"SPIDER PROMPTLY DISAPPEARED UNDER THE TABLE."

Bertie pointed it at him, and he joined Spider.

"It won't go off—yet!" said Bertie Spell, in the best style of melodrama. "It isn't loaded," he added, a little lamely.

Spider and the president reappeared.

"Why didn't you say so?"

"Playing the goat like that!"

They resumed their seats, grumbling.

"With this weapon," Bertie Spell announced, "I mean to strike the first blow at the tyranny which triumphs over us."

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"Hear, hear!" they cried, coughing to mask their grins.

"With this weapon," Bertie continued, "I mean to rid the world of that monster of iniquity, Cantelupe!"

They battered on the table with their pots.

"Yesterday," the fatuous youth went on, "I was scorned, laughed at, derided, made the butt of jests. To-day I come before you a foredoomed martyr to the cause of freedom." He indulged in much more similar bombast.

They circled and hummed about him. For he brought a breath of determined sincerity into their deliberations that made them feel, somehow, holy and dedicate. Almost he persuaded them that they were indeed a band of desperate patriots. They did not believe that he was truly serious, of course. They regarded the whole display as a piece of timely, excellent mumming, and no more than that. But the pistol looked colourably like real treason, and they were elated. The weapon passed from hand to hand and was gingerly inspected. The trigger was cocked and pulled, and the chambers revolved with a murderous click, click.

"How many traitors, now, could you account for wi' that?" little Spider Hayes inquired.

"Five," answered Bertie Spell. "Supposing you didn't miss any."

"It'd work out at about a bob a traitor," mused McGarron.

For a week Bertie basked in the lustre of the pistol. He breathed a rarefied air of adulation that intoxicated him. But at the end of the week Fields, who had grown gloomy in eclipse, remarked rather pointedly:—

"Well, we've had the grand *ongtray* of clowns. Now, when's the circus going to begin?"

"Meaning the shooting?" said McGarron.

"Meaning the shooting," Fields assented, solemnly.

"I haven't bought any cartridges yet," stammered Bertie Spell. "I'm going to, though. And then——"

"And then—what?" asked Fields, unpleasantly.

"You will see," said Bertie. "I say nothing."

"Seems to me you say a lot," Fields growled. "All jaw, you are, like a sheep's jimmy."

Bertie Spell was discomfited. "Can't do everything in a minute," he protested. "The thing—details, you know—wants planning out. I'm game enough, as I'll prove to you. But what I want to know is, how am I to get at him?"

"That's easily arranged," said McGarron. "Every week-end he goes down to Bullen Priors, in Darkshire, where he's got a sort of a castle, blight him! All you've got to do is to go down there, too, next Saturday, and wait for him at the station."

"And what then?" asked Bertie, tremulously.

"What then? Why, you just shoot him. That's all."

"But there would be a lot of people about."

"What's that matter? All the better."

"But——" Bertie moistened his lips. "I should be arrested. If I killed him I should be hanged."

"Of course you would," they responded, cheerfully. "Still, all the hanging in the world wouldn't bring Cantelupe back to life. You must think o' that."

"Mark you," said Bertie, "I don't mind killing him. I'm going to kill him. Question is, why shouldn't I kill him without risking being hanged myself? Why shouldn't I waylay him in some quiet lane and do the deed? I could leave one of the society's cards on his body to show why I'd done it."

"Cheese it!" exclaimed Spider Hayes. "We should have the police down on us."

"Well," said Bertie, "I don't want to collar all the glory myself, you know. No reason why you shouldn't share in it too."

This remark, for some occult reason, did not please them, however. They exchanged alarmed glances. Bertie Spell was displaying a grim earnestness of manner that made them wonder whether, after all, his talk was but mere empty vapouring. In spite of themselves they began to feel a certain awful respect for the boy. But Fields, jealously fearful of this rising tide of favour that threatened to rehabilitate his rival in the esteem of the meeting, distributed winks, thick and fast, to reassure them.

"I put it to you," said he, "ain't we had about enough o' this here tomfoolery? We know very well what it all amounts to. Our young friend and brother has amused himself at our expense long enough, I reckon. I suggest we closure the subject for good and all."

Bertie Spell, white and trembling, indignantly protested in a speech that bristled with cant Parliamentary terms. This was worse than the obstructive methods of a das-

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tardly Opposition, he maintained. Were they, the Sons o' Freedom, to ape the shallow artifices of that corrupt House whose very existence they had banded themselves together to abolish? He requested the hon. president to withdraw the offensive term, "tomfoolery."

"That's all gay, Bertie," said Fields. "'Ere, what's Mr. Spell done that his glass should be empty?"

A truce to hostilities was called and ratified. Bertie, maudlin tears in his eyes, shook hands with Fields across the table.

"But, by the sacred emblem of the skull," he declared, "I'll show you whether I'm a wind-bag or a man!"

Next day he bought cartridges, and carried a loaded pistol to the Box o' Nails. During a pause in the talk he suddenly rose and pointed the pistol at a vase on the shelf. He pulled the trigger. There was a dull snap, but no report. His fellow-members adjured him solemnly to put his weapon up.

"Blame the thing!" he muttered, and tried again.

This time he fired successfully. The vase fell in shattered fragments to the floor, and the room was filled with smoke.

"Thus shall Cantelupe fall!" said he.

"'Ere, be careful!" Fields exclaimed. "No need to break up the 'appy 'ome."

"'THUS SHALL CANTELUPE FALL!' SAID HE."

"What I suggest is this," said Spider Hayes: "put the instrument o' vengeance on the mantelpiece where we can all see it, and then drink to the 'ealth of our noble brother, Albert Spell."

This suggestion was popularly acclaimed and forthwith adopted.

"Spell!" they roared. "Spell!"

The contents of the glasses gurgled down their throats.

It was in the golden glow of a misty November morning, some four or five days later, that Bertie Spell alighted from the train at Bullen Priors and made his way up the winding, hilly High Street toward Glebe Place, Cantelupe's country residence. He called in at the Olde Lion for a dram, and inquired of the landlord, artlessly, if the famous Minister was staying in that neighbourhood. The landlord answered "Yes," and proceeded to give details of Cantelupe's life in retirement.

"He is just like one o' we," said the worthy host. "Potterin' in his garden, maunderin' about the lanes, wi' his dogs an' his fly-net, or mayhap a greenheart rod—— you'd never take him for the great man he be up to Lunnon."

Bertie thanked him and, with new agitating tremors in his breast, pursued his way.

He found Glebe Place readily. It was an old greystone manse, built on a wild, weed-infested patch of upland. A high wall enclosed it. There was a tiny lodge beside a great gate of scrolled ironwork. Bertie Spell peered through the gate. A rubbly carriage-drive led straight to the door of the house; but, saving the presence of a strutting peacock and a host of humbler birds, there was no sign of life visible. So Bertie decided to await contingencies.

He withdrew to a belt of trees that overshadowed the lane, and sat down on a fallen trunk and took out his pistol. He had by this time grown accustomed to the

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look and heft of the weapon; but he was still, nevertheless, a little afraid of the deadly thing. His hand trembled as he toyed with it. Once he dropped it on the damp, dead leaves, and a frightened cry escaped him. He restored it to the pocket of his shabby overcoat. For two or three hours he loitered there in the wood; and the hope grew in him momentarily that Cantelupe would not appear. He had taken only an excursion ticket and must return that day at nightfall.

It was afternoon when, at last, he heard the iron gates of Glebe Place clang harshly together. He stepped cautiously to the edge of the thicket and gazed out through a trailing vine on the narrow road.

An old gentleman in a tweed suit was strolling leisurely away from him. His head was bent over a book, which he held close to his eyes, as if he were short-sighted. A big, shaggy dog, that had followed him from the house, lay rolling in the dusty highway. The old gentleman turned and whistled, and Bertie Spell recognised in the puckered, pink and white face the features of the hated Cantelupe. Never before had he seen the great man in the flesh, but many caricatures had made his features familiar to him. He had a feeling of mild, unreasonable surprise at finding that Cantelupe was not tricked out in some absurd disguise, such as the comic papers delighted to present him in; that he was neither old woman nor clown, neither rat, mole, dog, ass, pig, ape, but just a conventionally-clad English gentleman, betraying an obvious feebleness of old age in every precise, deliberate movement. The dog got up and trotted after its master. Bertie Spell, having considered the situation, followed on also.

But he still kept in the friendly shelter of the trees. It was parlous boggy underfoot and damp overhead, for there had been a heavy dew. At each step he shook down a shower of sparkling drops. The brambles clung to his clothes and tore his hands. His boots sank deep in the slushy soil, rotten with decaying pine-cones, husks of nuts, and skeletons of leaves. Still, at each stride he gained on Cantelupe; for the old man went very, very slowly.

When he was come almost abreast with his quarry Bertie plunged deeper into the belt of wood, made a wide *détour* that brought him upon an open common, then struck toward the road again some three furlongs farther down. The covert was too sparse to conceal him now; so, taking heart of necessity, he climbed down into the road.

It was a lonely spot. The tortuous way wound north and south between high, powdery banks, all covered with hanging ferns and grasses. There was no one in sight, no sign of human habitation. Bertie Spell lurked behind a tree and waited.

Presently Cantelupe appeared, still poring over his book, the great, shaggy dog ambling heavily beside him. Bertie Spell was afflicted with symptoms of collapse: a dryness of the throat, a weakness in the knees, heat at the stomach, chill at the extremities. A dank moisture that broke out on him made the air feel icy cold about his head. He was within an ace of retreating into the wood again and abandoning his enterprise. But he remembered in time his daring vows, and the manifold humiliations that any pusillanimity on his part would entail now.

It is hard to follow the workings of such a mind. Perhaps he did, indeed, imagine himself to be a hero. Perhaps, in the muddy recesses of his inner consciousness, there lived a sincere sentiment of perverted altruism which made the killing of Cantelupe seem to him an act of righteous retribution. Certainly vanity and a weak, overweening desire to gild his own poor name and cut a romantic figure of sacrifice before the world played their part in nerving him to perform what he had threatened. He stepped into the middle of the road and cocked his trigger.

Cantelupe, all unaware of what awaited him, came steadily on. The dog ran ahead and nosed at Bertie's knees. Bertie felt that there was no further time to waste. Cantelupe was not more than twelve yards away. He lifted the pistol to a level with his eyes, took hurried aim, and fired.

There was a little, dull snap, but no report.

Frenziedly he readjusted the trigger, pulled it again—and again the weapon missed fire.

Cantelupe was so close to him now that he had no time to make a third attempt. He could see the old man's rheumy eyes and venous forehead over the top of the book. To avoid an actual collision he stepped aside. The dog growled.

Cantelupe lowered his book. "Down, Queen!" He stared at Bertie Spell. "Halloa, young man! What do you want?"

He blinked at Bertie owlishly.

"Pardon me. I'm so blind. Do I know you?"

He drew a pair of spectacles from his pocket, adjusted them on his nose, then scanned Bertie's shrinking figure from sodden,

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"HIS GAZE RESTED PARTICULARLY ON THE PISTOL."

The porter swung back the iron gates, and they went up the weed-grown carriage drive to the house. In the spacious stone hall Cantelupe asked Bertie :—

"What will you drink? Whisky? H'm! Brandy? H'm!"

"Brandy," said Bertie Spell, who felt that he needed it.

"Bring some Courvoisier up to my museum," said Cantelupe to a footman. "Come on, young man."

He led Bertie Spell upstairs to the most marvellous room that he had ever beheld. There were glass cases ranged round the walls from floor to ceiling. They were stored with a wondrous collection of strange treasures—precious and rare antiquities, miracles of beauty from sea and mine, costly ornaments from the uttermost ends of the earth, curious products of alien civilizations, living, moribund, and dead.

"Have a look round while I examine this pistol, mister," said Cantelupe. "Ah, thank you," as a footman entered with a jingling tray. "Will you please help yourself?"

Bertie Spell helped himself with fine liberality.

"It's the best dream-brandy I ever tasted," he reflected.

Cantelupe had taken the pistol to the window and placed it under a powerful lens.

"What's it loaded with ball-cartridge for? Wrong size, too," he quavered, peevishly. "You've jammed it, you silly man."

Bertie, drying his palms on his trousers, knew not what to answer. Cantelupe extracted the cartridges carefully, one by one, as if absent-mindedly.

"H'm!" he said, at last. "Er—really, young man, I have so many fire-arms, the place is a perfect armoury. People seem to think they can shoot all their rubbish here and get a price for it. Still, as this is a Sévérac, and those French pieces are hard to get——" He faced about. "How much do you want for it? I'll pay your expenses

dripping hat to muddy boots. His gaze rested particularly on the pistol.

"I see," said he. "Well, let me have a look at it."

As one in a dream Bertie handed the pistol to him.

"H'm! h'm!" the old man doddered. "You were taking it up to The Place, I suppose. H'm! I don't know that I want it. But I'll look at it. I'll look at it. H'm!" He was examining the pistol closely. "Looks like—— But I can't see here. I must put it under a glass. Are you living in the village?"

"No, sir," faltered Bertie Spell, giddy with perplexity.

"Visitor? H'm! Excursionist? H'm! Perhaps you'd better come up to The Place with me, then. You're not a dealer?" he inquired, suspiciously.

"No, sir."

"Glad to hear it. Can't stand dealers. Come along."

They retraced their steps adown the lane, Cantelupe carrying the pistol and walking at an enhanced pace; Bertie Spell shuffling beside him with a head like a humming-top.

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down here and back, of course. Came by excursion, didn't you? Well, how much?"

"Really, sir, it was not my intention——"

"Pouf! Don't tell me you came down here for the sake of the fresh air. The pistol betrays you. What's your price?"

"I paid five shillings for it, sir," Bertie Spell blurted forth.

Cantelupe put the pistol down abruptly. "You paid how much?"

"Five shillings, sir."

The Minister groaned.

"Why is it I can never pick up these bargains?" he exclaimed, testily. "Where did you get it?"

"At a pawnbroker's in the Borough, sir."

Cantelupe nodded disconsolately.

"I suppose you know how much it's worth?"

"No, sir."

"Man," cried Cantelupe, "are you a rascal or a fool? Why don't you haggle with me? I could beat you down with an easy conscience then. But if you really don't know the value of it—— Oh, but you do! Come, now, no more nonsense. How much do you want for it?"

Bertie Spell, bewildered and defeated, stammered out, "I would rather leave it to you, sir."

"Come here," said Cantelupe. "Turn your face to the window, hold up your head, man." He subjected Bertie to a keen scrutiny. "You seem to be an honest fellow," he said. "You should be intelligent, too, if I am any judge of a face. You drink too much, though." He paused, pondered. "I'll give you six pounds for the piece, and your expenses. I really couldn't offer you more than that. What?"

He counted out six pounds and ten shillings on the table. Bertie Spell, wondering when he would wake up, pocketed the money.

"'NOW BE OFF WITH YOU,' SAID CANTELUPE, LAUGHING GLEEFULLY AS HE PICKED UP THE PISTOL AGAIN."

"Now be off with you," said Cantelupe, laughing gleefully as he picked up the pistol again, and gloated over it. "Be you fool or rascal, that's the last doit you'll get out of me."

He offered Bertie his small, tenuous hand. "I am much obliged to you, sir," he said. "If you should happen to come across any other things of this sort——"

He, the great and wicked Cantelupe, himself escorted Bertie Spell to the door.

"Good-bye," he said, shaking hands again. "Don't forget me, Mister—er—whatever your name is."

The iron gates clanged behind Bertie Spell, and he was on the tree-lined road again.

"Forget you!" he said aloud, as he trudged toward the station, rattling the gold in his pocket. "Forget you!" He took out the coins one by one and tested them with his teeth. "Long may he wave!" he cried. "He's as good as his money."

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The Humour of Sport.

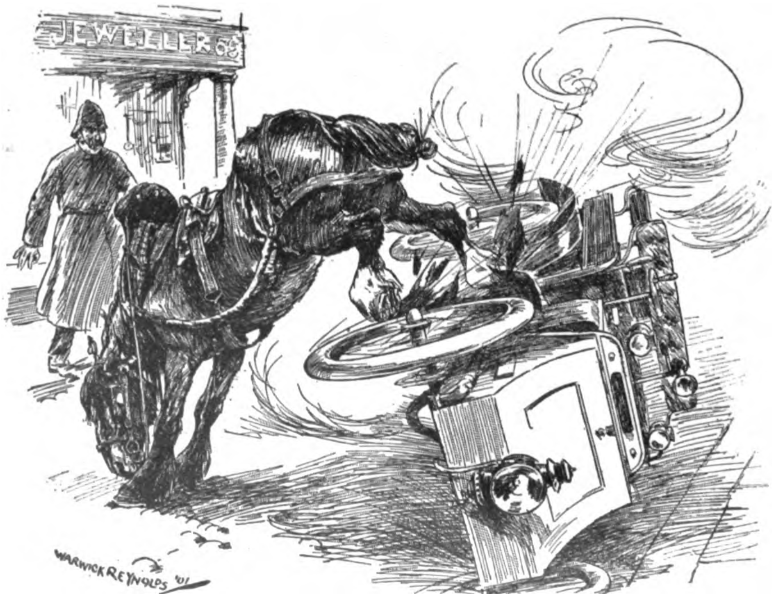
I.—AUTOMOBILISM.

BY JAMES WALTER SMITH.

THE joke-maker and comic draughtsman have discovered in automobilism a veritable El Dorado. Within the last two years, since the motor-car became popular and the joke-makers themselves became more full of knowledge of the subject, the humorous journals of this and other countries have been increasingly full of pleasantries, verbal and pictorial, hitting off the infirmities of motor-cars and the foibles of those who drive them. The result is a budget of fun which, being collected together, should cause a hearty laugh, and in this laughter the two classes into which the world is divided—those who mote and those who don't—should be able to join.

Inasmuch as our old friend Bucephalus, or, as he is better known, the common or garden horse, was probably the first to get an acute sensation on sight of the first automobile, so have the fun-makers done their best to try to tell us what the horse has thought upon this matter. Just what he did think is still open to doubt, otherwise there would have been one subject only for the artist to depict, but we may take it for granted that when the first motor-car came his way the horse realized that it was all up with his profession. The cab-horse had visions of a grazing-ground in which he should end his peaceful days, the plough-horse gave a gratified sigh as he looked forward to the day of a horseless plough, and the coster's donkey brayed with increasing vehemence and pricked up his ears at the passing whirr as the picture of 'Arry on a mechanical barrow flitted before his mental vision. One startled equine, as may be seen in our illustration, coming across a runaway and upturned motor, expressed his disdain of the whole thing by getting to work at once with his hind legs. Even the "bobby" stood by in astonishment as the outraged but respectable farm-horse emphasized his protests with the pointed remark, "You can go, but, hang it, you can't kick," whereas another, shown on the next page, took the automobile for a live waggon, and was content merely with a fit of hysterics.

The third picture illustrates the old-time saying that familiarity breeds contempt. It was not long before the equine world forgot its first impression and deter-



THE HORSE (to a runaway upturned motor): "You can go, but, hang it, you can't kick.
DRAWN BY WARWICK REYNOLDS FOR "THE KING."

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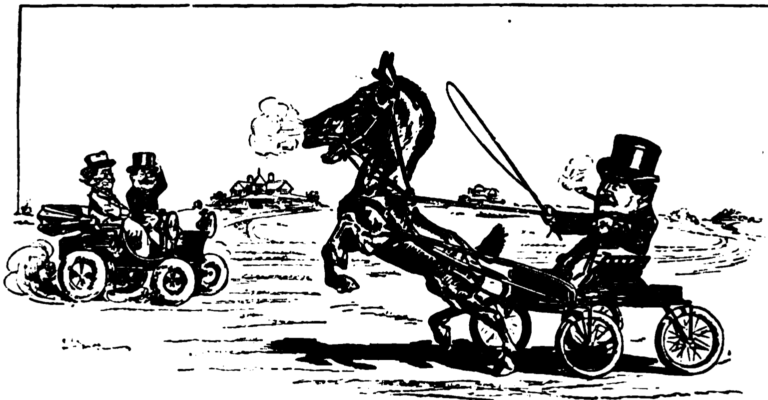

THE HORSE (seeing his first motor-car): "Look at this—a live waggon! Isn't that enough to give one hysterics?"

DRAWN BY J. S. PUGHE FOR "PUCK."

during 1901." Again, one chauffeur asks another: "Have any bad luck during your trip yesterday?" "Oh," was the answer, "I ran over a man, but I don't think I hurt the machine at all." In another case, where an automobile had broken down, the chauffeur was busy trying to discover the trouble. The impatient owner of the machine at last broke out: "Hurry up, Felix; there are a lot of people crossing the street whom we are missing."

mined to treat the new invader with a withering scorn. To-day he allows a whizzing automobile to pass him by without tremor, knowing that sooner or later he will experience the felicity of "towing in" one of the despised machines. In the motor-car *v.* horse contest the race is not always to the swift. The point was briefly put by one of our American friends in his picture of a city girl and an old farmer on a country road. "Mercy!" cried the timid miss, "here comes an automobile! Is your horse afraid of them?" With reassuring words the farmer replied: "Oh, no, miss; he's drawed so many of 'em up the hills hereabout that he's lost all respect for 'em."

Humorous artists have made a deal of fun at the recklessness of the chauffeur, and the jokes built up on this foundation have been even more numerous than the pictures. "Who got the annual booby prize from the automobile club?" asked one motorist of another. "Oh," was the reply, "Slowgo got it. He ran over only fourteen people

With their fondness for animal jokes, the American artists have depicted many scenes in which the effect of automobilism is shown upon the members of that kingdom. One of these, representing the horseless cab on its first trip in the jungle, will be found, upon close examination, to be a very happy and comprehensive skit upon the history of automobilism. The artist is a little rough on the sport when he makes the monkey the

FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT.—Miss Manhattan (timidly): "Mercy, here comes an automobile! Is your horse afraid of them?"
Uncle Wayback (reassuringly): "Oh, no, miss; he's drawed so many of 'em up the hills hereabout that he's lost all respect for 'em."

DRAWN BY S. D. EHRHART FOR "PUCK."

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When the Horseless Cab Strikes the Jungle.
DRAWN BY B. J. L. FOR "JUDGE."

chauffeur, but he shows the rapidity with which the more intelligent members of the animal kingdom have grasped its pleasures; the appearance of the cab, moreover, has caused dire consternation. The ostrich promptly buries its head in the water, the tiger loses his tail under the forward wheel, the kangaroo leaps affrighted from the path of the reckless cab; birds, boars, lions, zebras, and Polar bears wildly scatter, while the simian policeman remonstrates forcibly with an obstreperous rhinoceros; the sun meanwhile looking on in derision at the genesis of jungle automobilism and the exodus of the jungle screechers. Our readers will probably agree that the above is one of the most amusing illustrations in this article.

No, this is not a collection of tubercular microbes escaping from the Congress, but merely the Montgomery Smiths in their motor-car enjoying the beauties of the country.
DRAWN BY STARR WOOD. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

The hideous, though harmless, masks and general costumes with which the motorists bedeck themselves have likewise been considerably ridiculed by the humorist. One

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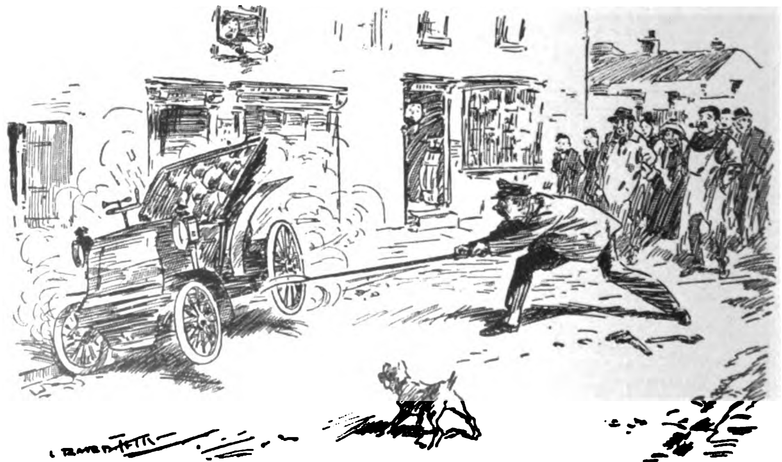
"Sua Cuique Voluptas."—A Study in Expression.
DRAWN BY G. D. ARMOUR. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

summons in the distance, whereas the chauffeur, with a sort of Mephistophelian delight upon his countenance, spurs on his engine of destruction with a carelessness of "bobbies" born of practice.

It is all right for the joke-makers to poke fun at breakdowns and repairs, but if the artist were sitting on top of an iron fly-wheel, a gasolene tank, a water-jacket, a pump, rods, levers, gear-wheels, valves, a throttle, a thumping engine, boiler-tubes, fire, water-tank, electric battery, a condenser, a reversing switch, a piston, and the thousand and one intricate parts of which various motor-cars—steam, electric, gasolene, and otherwise—are made, he would have something to think of, and when a breakdown did occur he would well deserve to be scoffed at as he scoffs at others. The expert motorist needs all his wits about him at such a moment, should have a practical knowledge of machinery, and should be competent to deal with any accident that might occur. Thanks to mechanical improvements in the automobile, accidents and repairs are becoming increasingly infrequent, and if improvement goes on as it has been going the humorist who has discovered his highest

of the fun-makers, in his drawing of two motorists on their plunging steed, assures us that his drawing shows, not a collection of microbes escaping from a tuberculosis congress, but merely the Montgomery Smiths enjoying the beauties of the country.

He who starts out on his first motor-car trip is very likely to get an automobile face, and the artist who made the study in expression, happily entitled "Sua cuique voluptas," or "Every man has his own pleasures," has cleverly depicted those pleasures. The man on the left of the carriage looks as though he were in for a non-stop run with a police



Owner of Violently Palpitating Motor-car: "There's no need to be alarmed; it will be all right as soon as I've discovered the what d'ye call it."
DRAWN BY L. RAVEN HILL. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

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ENOUGH TO MAKE A HORSE LAUGH.
DRAWN BY S. D. EHRHART FOR "PUCK."

satisfaction in portraying the motor and motorist in the accident and repairing stage will soon find his occupation gone. The people, too, are getting used to it, and it will not be long before the automobile enthusiast will make his repairs without the running fire of comment from an admiring crowd. The owner of the violently palpitating motor-car who cries out to the yokels: "There's no need to be alarmed; it will be all right as soon as I've discovered the what d'ye call it," is, of course, an amateur with a keen but misplaced appreciation of the virtues of a pitch-fork. It is one of the first lessons in automobilism that no man should interfere, by means of pitchforks or otherwise, with the running-gear of a car, unless he is well prepared with renewal parts for the car — and himself.

He who is *en automobile*, from the mere man who suffers a side-slip on a greasy road —"enough," as one artist shows, "to make a horse laugh"—down to our old friend the brewer, who has happily discovered a new possibility in the attractiveness of the automobile, and makes the most refreshing use of it, must be prepared to meet all sorts of derision. One equine member of a newly-organized coaching club bolstered up its

THE NEW HOT WEATHER MOTOR-CAR.—The inventor describes a ride in this car as "a delightful method of creating and killing a thirst at the same time."

DRAWN BY PERCY KEMP FOR "THE KING."

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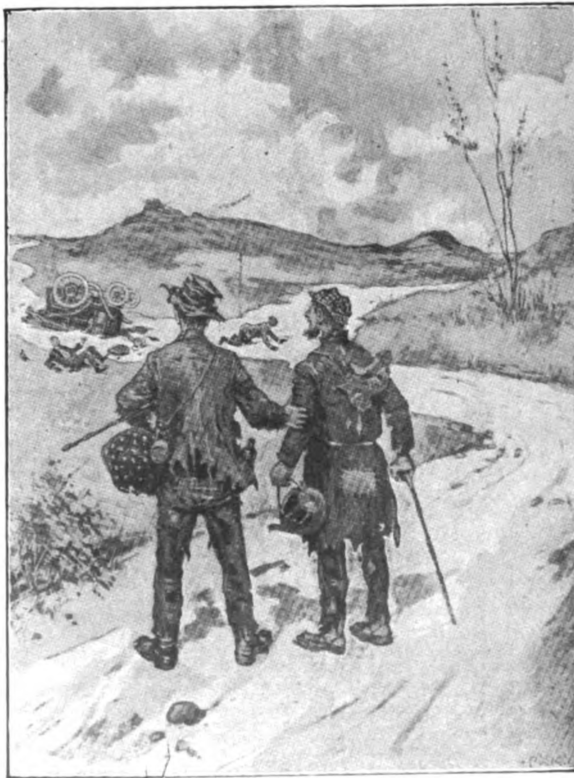
FARMER (in cart): "Hi, stop! Stop, you fool! Don't you see my horse is running away?"
Driver of Motor-Car (hired by the hour): "Yes, it's all very well for you to say stop, but I've forgotten how the blooming thing works."
DRAWN BY G. H. JALLAND. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

class dignity by making a new rule to the effect that when an automobile goes lame it must get another automobile to haul it home. A noted automobile club made its runs more interesting by arranging before the start that each member should put so much into a pool. After the run the pool was divided amongst those whose automobiles had not broken down. Talking of repairs, the motor-car that runs away may live to run another day, provided the owner does not become suddenly disgusted with the whole business. The career of the motor-car which is causing the farmer in our illustration so much uneasiness will probably end in a visit to the nearest repairing-shop. Many an enthusiast takes occasion after such a catastrophe as is here foreshadowed to order a new machine of an improved pattern and increased horse-power in order to sell the old one at a loss satisfactory to himself. He may, however, take to pedestrianism, for we believe thoroughly with the tramp in our illustration, who said, "There's nuffin like walkin' if yer can afford it."



THE TRIALS OF WEALTH.—"Say, mate, there's nuffin like walkin' if yer can afford it."
DRAWN BY H. E. PIRKIS FOR "THE KING."

To judge by some of the accidents, according to a recent wit, *automoblesse n'oblige pas*, and the light-hearted way in which these accidents are joked about may appear to some people as if the present-day humorist had little conscience and less propriety. On behalf of the humorist, however, be it said

A BEAUTY.—"Did you hear about Grigsby's auto? It ran away with him, went over an embankment, turned a somersault, hit a tree, killed Grigsby, and wasn't injured a particle!"
"Gad! That's a beauty. What make is it?"

DRAWN BY W. H. GALLAWAY FOR "PUCK."

that these jokes, by constant repetition, may bring the motorist to a better sense of his responsibilities. It is not cavalier-like to get personal pleasure at the expense of danger to others. What a hard-hitting comment on excessive speed is the little jesting dialogue that follows: "See that man with the hard face? He's killed his man." "Indeed! Chauffeur or motorman?"

If our pictures may be said to show anything, they show the joys of motoring as well as the mortifications. Life is after all a series of ups and downs, with a certain percentage of the population travelling along a straight and narrow path, and automobilism partakes of a troublous as well as a non-troublous existence. But the troubles which to an outsider would be overwhelming seem to possess a certain form of gratification to the motor enthusiast. "Did you hear about Grigsby's auto?" said one keen motorist to another. "It ran away with him, went over an embankment, turned a somersault, hit a tree, killed Grigsby, and wasn't injured a particle!" "Gad! That's a beauty," was the answer. "What make is it?" Our artist has recorded the actual scene of this little passage of humour, while an old farmer in the distance tries to pry a "stalled" motor-car out of the ruts.

Another of the joys of motoring is shown in our picture below, which, the artist

THE JOYS OF MOTORING.—No, this is not a dreadful accident. He is simply tightening a nut or something, and she is hoping he won't be much longer.

DRAWN BY L. RAVEN HILL. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

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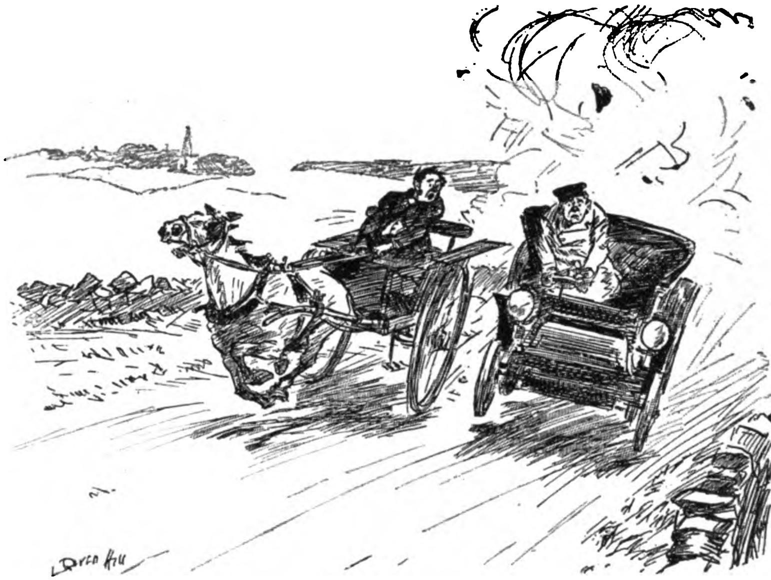

BROTHERS IN ADVERSITY.—Farmer: "Pull up, you fool! The mare's bolting!" Motorist: "So's the car!"
DRAWN BY L. RAVEN HILL. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

assures us, does not depict a dreadful accident. The gentleman with the very obvious pair of legs is "simply tightening a nut or something," while the eternal woman, as the foreigner says, stands by "hoping he won't be much longer." To find yourself and your fair company on a lonely turnpike as evening comes on is indeed a joy.

Sometimes you can't stop when you want to. "Pull up, you fool!" cries the farmer in our picture, "the mare's bolting!" "So's the car!" cries the brother in adversity, as his motor-car violently bumps along with imminent danger to himself, his property, and the neighbouring fence.

The private and pointed opinions of some motorists upon countries through which they have passed, if these opinions were collected, would form many volumes of interesting reading. It is one thing to spin along a straight road in a perfect working car, but it is another thing to get into a hilly country when your gasolene gives out. Gasolene cars, by the way, are not so good for hill-climbing as steam automobiles, but if you use gasolene and you are in difficulty you can always depend upon your mechanic to help you out. One of the *Punch* artists, who may have had experience of the country, gives us a glimpse of the trouble in Morocco which awaits the motorist. The car, no doubt, makes a deep impression wherever it goes, but Alfonso has to pay the piper for his employer's fun. Seriously, the French, who have done much touring in their possessions, coveted and otherwise, on the shores of the Mediterranean, agree that Morocco is a country which motorists should leave to politicians and other sportsmen.

DIARY OF AN AUTOMOBILIST ABROAD.—"Tangier, Friday.—Our car makes a deep impression in Morocco. Alfonso, my mechanic, who accompanies me, thinks it is not a good country for motoring."
DRAWN BY G. D. ARMOUR. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

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Motorist (a novice) has been giving Chairman of local Urban Council a practical demonstration of the ease with which a motor-car can be controlled when travelling at a high rate.

DRAWN BY G. H. JALLAND. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

To the general public — and in this category may be included those penniless or superior-minded individuals who own not, or do not care to own, a motor-car, as well as those whom seductive advertisements describe as "being about to purchase"— automobilism presents many peculiar and varying phases. The husband in the following story belonged to the penniless, and therefore sceptical, class. "I dreamed last night," said his wife, "that you had given me an automobile." "H'm, yes," answered the knowing one, "you must have had a horseless nightmare; and, by the way, my dear, dreams usually go by contraries!" Another good wife remarked to her spouse, "You seem pleased that my doctor recommended a five-mile walk." "Yes, my dear," was the reply, "I was afraid he would recommend an automobile."

The urban councils, which for many months have had under consideration the question of speed, will hardly be convinced of the ease with which a motor-car can be controlled when travelling at a high rate by the practical demonstration given in one of our pictures. It is to be noted that the motorist who has been plunged suddenly over a fence into a stream, top-hat and all, has been designated a novice by the draughtsman. This particular accident has, however, happened in the best-regulated motoring families, and it usually happens to a gasolene car if you yourself drive an electric, or to an electric if you yourself swear by gasolene. At all events, this sort of accident invariably happens to the other fellow, and if it does happen to you, you either keep quiet about it or pay the artist not to put you in a picture. There is such widespread and well-founded fear amongst automobilists regarding a sudden surprise of this sort, either because it develops the automobile face or kills you entirely, that it is sometimes a wonder why so many people have been found ready to take the risk.

We desire especially to thank the proprietors of *Puck* and *Judge* for the privilege of reproducing the drawings from their respective publications used in the illustration of this article.

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LOST TOMMY JEPPS

BY ARTHUR MORRISON.

I.

AT Stratford Main Railway Station there are about half-a-dozen platforms, with stairs and an underground passage to join them; and on Bank Holiday all these platforms, as well as the stairs and the passage and the booking-offices, are packed so closely with excited people that there seems to be no room for one single walking-stick more, even a thin one. The fortunate persons in front stick to the edge of the platform somehow by their heels, in defiance of all natural laws. When a train arrives, the people in the booking-office rush at the passage, the people in the passage rush at the stairs, the people on the stairs rush at the platform, and nothing seems left for the people on the platform but slaughter and destruction, beginning with the equilibrists at the edge. And yet nobody gets killed. Half the people seem to be on the wrong platforms, but are wholly unable to struggle through to the right ones; and I believe the other half are on the wrong platforms too, but don't know it. And yet everybody seems to get somewhere, eventually.

Jepps's family party was one of a hundred others in Stratford Station, and in most respects very like ninety-five of them at least. There was Thomas Jepps himself, head of the family by courtesy, but now struggling patiently at its tail, carrying the baby always, and sometimes also carrying Bobby, aged four. There was Mrs. Jepps, warm and short of temper; there were Aunt Susan, rather stout, and Cousin Jane, rather thin; and there was Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt, warmer than 'Tilda Jepps and stouter than Aunt Susan, and perpetually losing something, or losing herself, or getting into original difficulties in the crowd. And then, beside the baby and Bobby, there were Tommy and Polly, whose ages were eight and five respectively, though it was Polly who tyrannized. It was the way of this small woman to rate her bigger brother in imitation of her mother's manner; and Tommy, who had the makings of a philosopher, was, as a rule, moodily indifferent to the scolding of both, so long as he judged himself beyond the radius of his mother's arm and hand.

"What 'a' you bin an' done with the tickets now?" demanded Mrs. Jepps of her husband in the midst of the wrestle in the booking-office.

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"Me?" asked Jepps, innocently, from behind the baby's frills. "Me? I—I dunno. Ain't you got 'em?"

"Yes," piped Tommy, partly visible beneath the capacious lunch-bag of Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt. "Yes, mother's got 'em!"

"You look after your little brother an' don't go contradictin' me!" snapped Mrs. Jepps. "Of course I ain't got 'em," she went on to Jepps. "You've bin an' lost 'em, that's what you've done!"

"Don't contradict mother," Polly echoed, pragmatically, to her wicked brother. "You be a good boy an' look after Bobby. That's what you've got to do. Ain't it, mother?"

"Oh, don't worrit me!" answered the distracted parent. "Where's them tickets? Did he give 'em to you, Aunt Susan?"

Aunt Susan hadn't seen them, and passed the question on to Cousin Jane. Cousin Jane, with a reproachful look at the unhappy Jepps, declared that he had never given them to *her*, whatever he might say or fancy; and her sister's young man's aunt gasped and stared and swayed in the crowd, and disclaimed all knowledge of the tickets; also she announced that whatever had become of them she expected to be taken to Southend, and that whatever happened she wasn't going to pay again. Poor Jepps defended himself weakly, but he was generally held to have spoiled the day's pleasure at the beginning. "I think you've got 'em, really, 'Tilda," he protested; "look in your purse!"

"Yes," piped Tommy once more, this time from behind Aunt Susan; "I see mother put 'em in her purse!"

Mrs. Jepps's plunge at Tommy was interrupted by Jepps. "You might look, at least," he pleaded.

"Look!" she retorted, tearing open her bag and snatching the purse from within. "Look yourself, if you won't believe your own wife!" She spread the purse wide, and displayed—the tickets; all in a bunch, whole tickets and halves mixed together.

"He'd better not let me get hold of him," said Mrs. Jepps, a moment later, nodding fiercely at Tommy. "Aggravatin' little wretch! He'll drive me mad one o' these days, that's what he'll do!"

With that the family was borne full drive against the barrier, and struggled and tumbled through the gate, mingled with stray members of other parties; all to an accompaniment of sad official confusion in the matter of what ticket belonged to which. But there was no easy rallying in the subway. The crowd pressed on, and presently Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt got into a novel complication by reason of her umbrella (which she grasped desperately in the middle) somehow drifting away horizontally into the crowd at her full arm's length, so that in a moment she was carried irresistibly up the first steps of the wrong staircase, clinging to her property with might and main, trailing her lunch-bag behind her, and expostulating with much clamour. Jepps, with the baby, watched her helplessly; but Tommy, ducking and dodging among the legs of the crowd, got ahead of her, twisted the umbrella into a vertical position, and, so releasing it, ducked and dodged back again. Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt was very angry, and the crowd disregarded her scolding altogether—laughed at it, in fact; so that Tommy, scrambling back triumphantly through the crush, came very handy for it.

"If I was yer mother I'd give you a good sound hidin', that's what *I'd* do," said Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt.

Tommy began to feel resentful, philosopher as he was. And when his mother, having with difficulty been convinced that the staircase she insisted on was another wrong one, and that the one advised by Tommy was right, forthwith promised him one for himself when she got him home, he grew wholly embittered, while his sister Polly openly triumphed over him. And so, with a few more struggles and family separations (Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt was lost and recovered twice), the party at length found itself opposite an open third-class carriage door, and climbed in with all the speed it might.

"Ah, well," said Aunt Susan, "here we are at last, an' no more bother till we get to Southend, any'ow."

"There'll be a lot afore you get there in this train, mum," observed a cynical coster, who had been greatly impressed—on the toes—by Aunt Susan's weight.

"What!" exclaimed Cousin Jane; "this is the Southend train, ain't it?"

"No, mum," replied the coster, calmly; "it ain't."

Mrs. Jepps caught at the door, but it was too late. The train was gathering speed, and in a few seconds it was out of the station. "There," said Mrs. Jepps, desperately, "I knew it was the wrong platform!"

"Then you was wrong again, mum," pursued the sardonic coster; "'cos it was the right 'un. But this 'ere's the wrong train."

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"'WHAT!' EXCLAIMED COUSIN JANE; 'THIS IS THE SOUTHEND TRAIN, AIN'T IT?'"

"Mother!" squeaked Polly, viciously, "Tommy says—go away, I *will* tell—Tommy says he knew it was the wrong train when we got in."

"What! You young—you didn't! How did you know?"

"Read it on the board," said Tommy, sulkily. "Board in front of the engine. C.O.L, Col, C.H.E.S.T. chest, E——"

"Take him away, somebody," yelped Mrs. Jepps. "Take the little imp out o' my sight or I'll kill him—I know I shall! Knew it was the wrong train an' let us get in! I—oh!"

"Why," pleaded Tommy, in doleful bewilderment, "when I told you about the tickets you said I was drivin' you mad, an' when I told you about the platform you said you'd whop me when you got me home, an' now 'cos I didn't tell you about the train——"

"He's a saucy young varmint, that's what *he* is," interrupted Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt, whose misfortunes were telling on her temper as well as reddening her face. "Lucky for him he ain't a child o' mine, that's all. I'd show him!"

"So would I!" added Cousin Jane.

"He's a perfect noosance to bring out," said Aunt Susan; "that's what he is!"

"You're a naughty, wicked boy, Tommy!" said his superior little sister.

Tommy's spirits sank to the lowest stage of dejection. There was no understanding these grown-up people and no pleasing them. They were all on to him except his father, and even he seemed sadly grieved, in his mild fashion.

The cynical coster had been chuckling in a quiet, asthmatic sort of way, rather as though some small but active animal was struggling in his chest. Now he spoke again.

"It's all right, mum," he said. "Don't be rough on the kid. You can change at Shenfield, jest as good as if you come in the right train all the way."

This was better, and the spirits of the party rose accordingly; though their relief was balanced by a feeling of undignified stultification.

"Givin' us all a fright for nothing," said Aunt Susan, with an acid glare at the unhappy Tommy. "It's a pity some children ain't taught to keep their mouths shut!"

"Why, so I did, an' mother said she'd——"

"Be quiet, now!" interrupted Mrs. Jepps. "Be quiet! You've done quite enough mischief with your clatter. Catch me bringing you out again on a holiday, that's all!"

And so for the rest of the journey Tommy remained in the lowest depths of despondency; never exhibiting the smallest sign of rising to the surface without being instantly shoved down again by a reproof from somebody.

The cynical coster got out at Romford,

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with another asthmatic chuckle and an undisguised wink at Tommy. The train jogged along through Harold Wood and Brentwood to Shenfield Junction, and there the party found the Southend train at last. With the people already there they more than filled the compartment, and Tommy had to stand, a distinction which cost him some discomfort; for when he stood by the door he was blamed for interfering with Polly's and Bobby's enjoyment of the landscape, and when he moved up the carriage his efforts to maintain his equilibrium seriously disturbed the repose of Aunt Susan's corns.

The day was bright, and Southend was crowded thick everywhere with holiday-makers. Mrs. Jepps rallied her party and adjured Tommy. "Now you, Tommy, see if you can't begin to behave yourself, an' take care of your little brother an' sister. S'pose a man was to come and take *them* away! Then I s'pose you'd wish you'd been a better boy, when it was too late!"

"I'd make him wish it a quicker way than that!" said Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt, spitefully; for she had not yet got over her earlier misfortunes.

As the words left her mouth a horrible squeak rent her ears, and a long pink "trunk"—one of those paper tubes which, when blown, extend suddenly to a yard long and as suddenly retreat into a little curl—shot over her shoulder into her eye, and was gone again. With a gasp and a bounce she let go umbrella and lunch-bag together; and, while a grinning boy went dancing and trumpeting away in the crowd, a trickle of fragrant liquor, which would have smelt much the same if it had been gin, issued from the lunch-bag and wandered across the pavement. And Tommy Jepps, startled in the depth of his gloom, hastily stuffed his fist against his mouth, and spluttered irrepressibly over the knuckles. For indeed in his present state of exasperation Tommy had little sympathy for the misfortunes of so very distant a relation as Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt.

"WITH A GASP AND A BOUNCE SHE LET GO UMBRELLA AND LUNCH-BAG TOGETHER."

Tommy's father was mildly horrified, and murmured deprecatingly from among the baby's frills. "Tommy!" he said, in an awe-struck whisper. "Tommy! Nothing to laugh at!"

"Get out o' my sight," cried Mrs. Jepps, making a miss at Tommy's head with her own bag. "Get out of my sight before I——"

Tommy got out of it with all possible celerity, and took his place in the extreme rear of the procession which formed as soon as the lunch-bag had been recovered and cleared of broken glass. The procession, with a score of others like it, went straggling along the High Street towards the beach, where the crowd was thicker than ever.

There were large open spaces, with shows, and swings, and roundabouts, and stalls, and cocoa-nut shies, and among these the Jepps column wound its way, closing up and stopping here and tailing out lengthily there. It stopped for a moment before a shooting-gallery, and then lengthened out in the direction of a band of niggers; arrived opposite the niggers it closed up once more, and Mrs. Jepps looked about to survey her forces. There was Jepps, perspiring freely under the burden of the baby, for the day was growing hot; there were Aunt Susan, Cousin Jane, and Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt, whose shorter name was Mrs. Lunn, red and ruffled; there were Polly and Bobby; but — Mrs. Jepps gave a second glance round before she would believe it—there was *not* Tommy.

Mrs. Jepps's chin dropped suddenly, and she began darting and dodging, looking this

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way and that, among the crowd. "Tommy!" she cried, "You Tommy!" with a voice still a little angry, but mainly anxious. "Mercy on us, where's the child gone?"

Jepps came back, with blank alarm on so much of his face as was visible above the baby and its clothes, and the rest of the party started dodging also. But all to no purpose. Their calls were drowned in the general hubbub, and their questings to and fro were fruitless; Tommy was lost!

"Oh! my child!" cried Mrs. Jepps; "my lovely, darling boy! What shall I do? He's lost! He's been stole! The best child as ever was!"

"Such a little dear!" said Cousin Jane.

"Such a jool of a duck!" said Aunt Susan, affected almost to tears.

"Oh, oh!" gasped Mrs. Jepps, with signs of flopping and fainting; "an'—an'—you called him a noosance!"

"An' you called him an imp!" retorted Aunt Susan. "You should ha' treated him better when you had him."

"If he was a child of mine," said Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt, sententiously, "I'd ha' been a little more patient with him."

Jepps was off to the nearest stall to ask the stall-keeper if he had seen a boy. It seemed that the stall-keeper had seen a good many boys that morning. But had he seen Jepps's own boy? This conundrum the stall-keeper gave up without hesitation.

But Jepps's example did something, and presently the whole party scattered for the hunt. Jepps was left with the baby in his arms and the other two children about his knees, and he had strict orders not to lose any of them nor to wander far from a certain indicated point, near which the rest of the party might find him on occasion. He was not allowed to join in the search because somebody must take care of the children and Mrs. Jepps felt that she would die of suspense if condemned to wait inactive.

Mrs. Jepps was anything but inactive, and the other ladies were as busy as Mrs. Jepps. Before they separated they seized on a wandering apple-woman, who was confused and badgered into a cloudy admission that she *had* seen a boy with a man somewhere a little while ago, or perhaps rather before that, and, her replies being considered evasive, she was unanimously suspected of complicity.

It speedily grew apparent that small boys with men, together with small boys plain, were rather numerous in the many crowds; and one mistaken pursuit followed another for a sad long time, while Aunt Susan narrowly escaped a visit to the police-station on a charge preferred by the indignant parent of a child whom she chased and seized violently from behind, because of a supposed resemblance to Tommy when viewed from that aspect.

So it came to pass that, Aunt Susan having rejoined Mrs. Jepps, the two, fatigued and a trifle hysterical, returned to where they had left Jepps. As they turned the last corner, a red-headed man, with his hat in his hand, came running past them and vanished in the crowd, while they almost immediately perceived Jepps in the distance striving his utmost to raise a gallop, while Polly and Bobby hung to his coat-tails, and the baby tumbled and struggled in his arms.

"STOP HIM!"

"Stop him!" cried Jepps, choking with the breathlessness of his trot and the flapping of the baby's cape over his mouth. "Stop him! It's him! He's stole my——"

"The villain!" cried Mrs. Jepps, turning and charging the crowd. "Stop him! He's stole my child!"

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"Stop him!" gasped Jepps again. "He snatched my——"

But Mrs. Jepps and Aunt Susan were deep in the crowd, chasing and grabbing this time at red-headed men. Red-headed men, however, were scarce in that particular corner just at the moment, and the scarcest of all was the particular red-headed man who had rushed past them.

Jepps, gasping still, came up with his wife and Aunt Susan in the midst of a knot of people, answering the inquiries of curious sympathizers as he came along.

"Was it a good 'un?" asked another family man, with another baby in his arms, just as Jepps reached his wife.

"Yes," answered Jepps, "a real good 'un!"

"The best in the world!" sobbed Mrs. Jepps.

"I won it in a raffle," Jepps added.

"What?" cried Aunt Susan, "won it in a raffle? What do you mean? Is this a time for sich jokes, Thomas?"

"Jokes?" bleated poor Jepps. "It ain't no joke! He stole my watch, I tell you! Snatched it while I was a-trying to keep baby quiet!"

"Your watch!" Mrs. Jepps exclaimed. "Your watch! Thomas Jepps, you ain't fit to be trusted neither with a watch nor a family, you ain't!"

II.

TOMMY had lagged behind a little at the rifle-gallery, a place where you shot into a sort of tunnel with a target at the other end. The tunnels — there were four of them — interested him deeply, and he walked round to the side of the establishment to see how they were built. They were long, tapering metal tubes, it seemed, painted red. Tommy walked along to the very end, hoping to see something of the target mechanism, but that was boxed in. Here, at some little distance from where his wandering started, his attention was arrested by a man in a little crowd, who offered to eat a lighted newspaper for the small subscription of two shillings. It seemed to Tommy that so handsome an offer must be closed with at once, so he pushed into the crowd.

And that was how Tommy Jepps was lost. For each individual member of that crowd agreed with Tommy, feeling convinced that some of the others would be sure to subscribe so reasonable a sum without delay, so that the subscription was a long time beginning. And when at last it did begin it grew so slowly that at last the champion fire-swallower of the world and elsewhere was fain to be content with eighteenpence, at which very reasonable sum his contract was completed. Having witnessed this, Tommy's eyeballs retired to their normal place in his head, and his mouth, which had been wider open than the fire-swallower's, closed slowly. The crowd opened out, and Tommy, who had been effectually buried in it for half an hour, awoke to the realization that the rest of his party were nowhere to be seen.

For the moment it seemed a rather serious thing. Then, with a pause of reflection, he saw his misfortune in quite another light. He looked cautiously about him, and, after a little more consideration, he resolved that he would not be found—just yet, at any rate. He had enjoyed the society of his family for some time, and he resolved on a temporary change.

Tommy was not only a philosopher, but a sagacious boy of business. He had come out for a day's pleasure, but he must attend to business first; and one piece of business must needs be transacted to make things quite secure. So he started off back to the railway-station, keeping a wary eye for his relations as he went.

The station was just a little less crowded now, though it was busy enough still. Tommy had not quite settled how, exactly, he should set about his business, but he kept his eyes open and looked out for a friend. Grown-up people, as a rule, were difficult to negotiate with; you never could tell for certain what they would do or say next, and it was apt to be something unpleasant when it came. But there was a sort of grown-up persons—Tommy could never have described them—who were quite excellent, and always behaved like bricks to boys. And they were not such a rare sort of people, either. So he kept watch for some person of this kind, resolved to ask help and advice. Presently he saw one—a stout, red-faced man in a staring tweed suit, with a big gold watch-chain. Several other stout men were with him, and they were all laughing and chuckling together at a joke one of them had made about half an hour before.

"Please, sir!" said Tommy, craning his neck up at the red-faced man.

"Eh! Halloa!" said the man, almost falling over him. "Well, young 'un, what's up?"

"Please, sir, will they give me another ticket home, and who ought I to go and ask for it?"

"Another ticket home? What for? Lost your own?"

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"No, sir—mother's got it. But I've lost mother."

"O—o—o—oh! Lost your mother, eh? Well, would you know your way home if you had the ticket?"

"Yes, sir. But"—this with a sudden apprehension—"but I don't want to go home yet."

"No? Why not?"

"I come out to have a holiday, sir."

"Stratford, sir."

"That's all right," said the loser, moving off with his hand in his pocket. "I was a bit rash. It might ha' been Manchester!"

"That's saved me one d," observed the red-faced man, spinning his shilling again, and dexterously transferring it to Tommy's startled palm. "You go an' buy the town, you desp'rit young rip! An' take care you don't go losing the last train!"

"PLEASE, SIR, WILL THEY GIVE ME ANOTHER TICKET HOME?"

The red face broadened into a wide grin, and some of the stout men laughed outright. "So you're goin' off on the spree all by yourself, are you?" said the red-faced man. "That's pluck. But if you go asking for another ticket they'll keep you in the office till your mother comes for you, or take you to the police-station. *That* wouldn't be much of a holiday, would it?"

Tommy was plainly dismayed at the idea, and at his doleful face several stout men laughed aloud. "Come, Perkins," said one, "it's only one and a penny, half single. I'll toss you who pays!"

"Done!" replied the red-faced man. "Sudden death—you call," and he spun a shilling.

"Heads!" called the challenger.

"Tails it is," was the answer. "You pay. What station, young 'un?"

Tommy was almost more amazed than delighted. This was magnificent—noble. As soon as he could, he began to think. It was plain that being lost had its advantages—decided advantages. Those stout men wouldn't have looked at him a second time in ordinary circumstances, but because he was lost—behold the shilling and the railway ticket! Here was a discovery: nothing less than a new principle in holiday-making. Get lost, and make your holiday self-supporting.

He did not buy the town, but began modestly with a penn'orth of bulls'-eyes, to stimulate thought. He sucked them pensively, and thought his hardest: thought so hard, indeed, that in his absence of mind he swallowed a bull's-eye prematurely, and stood staring, with a feeling as of a red-hot brick passing gradually through his chest, and an

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agonized effort to remember if he had heard of people dying through swallowing bulls'-eyes whole. The pain in the chest presently passed off, however, and he found himself staring at a woman with a basket of apples and oranges.

"Apples, three a penny," said the woman, enticingly. "Oranges, a ha'penny each. There's nice ripe 'uns, my dear!"

"I've lost my mother," replied Tommy, irrelevantly.

"Lost yer mother!" responded the woman, with much sympathy. "Why, I wonder if you're the little boy as I was asked about? Has yer father got pale whiskers an' a round 'at, an' a baby which knocks it off, an' yer mother an' three other ladies an' yer little brother an' sister?"

Tommy nodded—perhaps rather guiltily.

The woman swung her basket on her arm and gave him an energetic push on the shoulder. "You go straight along down there, my dear," she said, pointing, "an' then round to the left, an' yer father's waiting by the second turning. Don't forget! Here—have an apple!" And she thrust one into his hand. "And an orange," she added, impulsively, stuffing one into his jacket-pocket.

This was really very satisfactory. He had half expected the apple, but the orange was quite an extra—in fact, the whole contribution had been wrung from the honest apple-woman by the pathetic look occasioned by the swallowing of the bull's-eye. Tommy went off in the direction she indicated, but somehow made the mistake of turning to the right instead of to the left at the critical point, being much occupied with thought. For he was resolving to look, all day, as pathetic as could be expected of a boy with a holiday all to himself, and an entirely new invention to make it pay.

And, indeed, the invention paid very well. Tommy perambulated the crowded beach on a system of scouting devised for the occasion. He made a halt at each convenient booth or stand, and from behind it carefully reconnoitred the crowd in front. No doubt he was searching anxiously for his sorrowing relatives; but somehow, though he altogether failed to meet them, he never seemed disappointed.

And meantime, as I have said, the invention worked excellently. He did not always set it in motion by the mere crude statement that he had lost his mother—he led up to it. He asked people if they had seen her. In this way he procured a short sea voyage, by interesting the mother of an embarking family which did not quite fill the boat. He had his railway ticket, he explained, and could get home, but meantime he must make his holiday as best he might. That excellent family yielded a penny and a bun, as well as the experience in navigation. A similar family was good for a turn on a roundabout.

"Got no change," said the roundabout man, as roundabout men do. For it is their custom, if possible, to postpone giving change, in the hope of their patrons emerging from the machine too sick and giddy to remember it. "Got no change. I'll give it you when you come off."

"Not you," retorted paterfamilias, made cunning by experience. "You'll be too busy, or forget, or something. Here's a boy what's looking for his mother; we'll make up the tanner with him."

So the morning went; and Tommy acquired a high opinion of the generosity of his fellow-creatures, and a still higher one of his own diplomacy. Not that it always succeeded. It failed sometimes altogether. There was a cocoa-nut shy proprieter, for instance, whose conduct led Tommy to consider him a very worthless person indeed. He began by most cordially inviting Tommy to try his luck—called him a young sportsman, in fact. Tommy was much gratified, and selected a stick.

"Money first," said the man, extending a dirty palm.

"Lost my mother," replied Tommy, confidently, having come to regard this form of words as the equivalent of coin of the realm.

"What?" The man's face expressed furious amazement.

"Lost my mother," Tommy repeated, a little louder, surprised to find anybody so dull of comprehension.

"'Ere, get out!" roared the outraged tradesman, who was not educated to the point of regarding a cocoa-nut shy a necessity of life for a lost boy. "Get out!" And he snatched the stick with such energy that Tommy got out with no delay.

He was so far cast down by this ruffian's deplorable ignorance of the rules of the game that his next transaction was for cash.

He saw a man selling paper "trunks" of the sort that had so seriously startled Mrs. Lunn on the family's first arrival, and he greatly desired one for himself. But the trunk-merchant was an unpromising-looking person—looked, in fact, rather as though he might be the cocoa-nut man's brother. So

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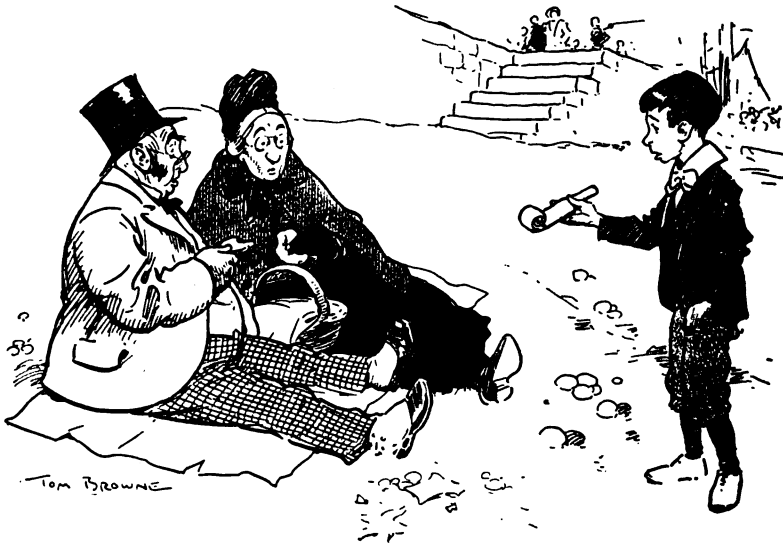
Tommy paid his penny, and set out to amuse himself.

The toy was quite delightful for a while, and utterly confounded and dismayed many respectable persons. But after a little time it began to pall; chiefly, perhaps, because it interfered with business. If you wish to appeal to the pity of any lady or gentleman in the character of a lost child, it is not diplomatic to begin by blowing a squeaking paper "trunk" into that lady's or gentleman's face. It strikes the wrong note, so to speak: doesn't seem to lead up to the subject. So presently Tommy tired of the "trunk," and devised a new use for it. For he was a thrifty boy, and wasted nothing.

He looked about to find some suitable person to whom to offer the article for sale, and at length he fixed on a comfortable old lady and gentleman who were sitting on a newspaper spread on the sand, eating sandwiches. Now to the superficial it might seem that a stout and decorous old couple of about sixty-five years of age, and thirty-two stone total weight, were not precisely the most likely customers on Southend beach for such an implement as Tommy had to offer.



"PLEASE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY THAT?"

But Tommy was not superficial, and he knew his business.

"Please would you like to buy that?" he asked, looking as interesting and as timid as he could manage. "Only a ha'penny. It cost a penny."

"Why, bless the child!" cried the old lady; "we don't want a thing like that!" And the old gentleman sat speechless—partly because his mouth was full of sandwich.

"I've lost my mother," said Tommy.

For a moment more the old couple continued to stare, and then the old lady realized the pathos of the situation in a flash. Tommy suddenly found himself snatched into a sitting position beside her and kissed. And the next moment he was being fed with sandwiches.

"Poor little chap!" said the nice old lady. "Poor little chap! Lost his mother and tried to sell his toy to buy something to eat! Have another sandwich, my dear."

Tommy did not really need the sandwiches, having been eating a good deal all day, and being even now conscious of sundry pockets distended by an apple, a paper of bulls'-eyes, several biscuits, and a large piece of toffee. But he wished to be polite, so he ate as much as he could and answered the old lady's questions to the best of his ability. He told her his name, his age, where he lived, and what sums he could do. He assured her that he knew his way home and had his ticket safe; and he eased her mind wonderfully by his confidence that he could find his mother very soon, and particularly because of his absolute certainty of meeting her, at latest, at the railway-station. And finally, not without difficulty, he tore himself away, bearing with him not only the

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rejected "trunk," but also added wealth to the amount of fourpence.

He did very well with the "trunk"—very well indeed. He never got quite so much as fourpence again; but he got some pennies, one twopence, and several halfpennies. He continued to select his customers with care, and rarely made a mistake. Some selections were unfortunate and unproductive, however, but that he quite expected; and it surprised him to find what a number of benevolent persons, made liberal by a fine Bank Holiday, were ready to give a copper for a thing and then let him keep it. But he never fell into the inartistic error of offering his stock-in-trade to any person in the least likely to use it. Persons of sufficient age and dignity were easily to be found by a boy of discrimination, even on Southend beach.

But everything must come to an end at last, and so did the trunk. Having carefully observed a large, good-tempered-looking woman sitting under an umbrella, and having convinced himself that she was not likely to need a paper trunk for personal entertainment, he proceeded to business in the usual manner.

"Lost yer mother?" said the woman, affably. "All right, you'll soon find her. Here's yer ha'penny."

And with that this unscrupulous female actually *took* the trunk, and handed it over to some children who were playing hard by.

Tommy felt deeply injured. He had no idea those children were hers. It was shameful, he thought, to take advantage of a lost boy in such an unexpected fashion as that. And he had really begun quite to like that trunk, too.

But it had paid excellently, on the whole; and, at any rate, with his accumulated capital, he could make an excellent holiday for the rest of the day: to say nothing of what he might still come in for on the strength of his distressful situation.

So he went on combining business with pleasure, till he was driven to absolute flight by an excellent but over-zealous old gentleman who insisted on taking him to the police-station. It was a narrow squeak, and it was a most fortunate circumstance that the zealous old gentleman was wholly unable to run. As it was, the adventure so disconcerted Tommy that he concluded to relinquish business altogether for a time, and seek some secluded spot where he might at leisure transfer some of his accumulated commissariat from his bursting pockets to a more interior situation.

The cliffs at Southend, as you may know, are laid out as public gardens, traversed by precipitous paths, embushed with shrubs, and dotted with convenient seats. But Tommy did not want a seat. He was, in fact, a little tired of keeping a constant look-out, and since there were his own party, the apple-woman, whom he had espied in the distance twice since their first encounter, and the zealous old gentleman, all at large somewhere in Southend, he judged it safest to lie under a convenient bush, in some place commanding an interesting view, and there begin a leisurely picnic.

He found a capital bush, just behind one of the seats; a thick bush that no eye could penetrate from without, yet from between the twigs of which he had an excellent view of the sea and some part of the gardens. It was almost as good as a pirate's cave, which was very proper, for, on the whole, he felt something of a pirate himself to-day. He began his picnic with toffee.

Presently his attention was drawn to a man who came up the path with a very laboured air of casual indifference, although he was puffing visibly as he came, as if he had been running. He was a red-headed man, and, as he walked, he glanced anxiously over his shoulder. The seat before Tommy's retreat was empty, and the man threw himself upon it, so that his legs obstructed Tommy's view. And then, to Tommy's utter amazement, the man's hand came stealing out behind him into the bush, and there deposited on the ground, absolutely under Tommy's nose—two watches!

The hand was withdrawn as stealthily as it came, and the man began with some difficulty to whistle a tune. And now up the same path there came another man, plainly following the first: a tall, well-set-up man who walked like a policeman, which, indeed, was exactly what he was—a policeman in plain clothes.

"Well, Higgs," said the new-comer, suspiciously, "what's your game to-day?"

"Game?" whined the red-headed man, in an injured tone. "Why, no game at all, guv'nor, not to-day. Can't a bloke come out for a 'oliday?"

"Oh, of course," replied the other; "anybody can come out for a holiday. But there's some as does rum things on their holidays. I've got my eye on you, my fine feller!"

"S'elp me, guv'nor, it's all right," protested the red-headed man, rising and moving off a little way. "I'm on'y 'avin' a 'oliday,

guv'nor! You can turn me over if you like!"

Now Tommy did not know that to turn a man over meant to search him, but he did not stop to wonder. For what occupied the whole of his attention now, even to the exclusion of the very toffee in his mouth, was the astounding fact that one of the watches was his own father's!

There was no mistake about it. There were initials on the silver case—not his father's initials, for, indeed, he had won the watch in a raffle; but Tommy knew the letters well enough. Plainly the man had stolen it; and, in fact, three links of a broken chain were still hanging to the bow; and Tommy knew the chain as well as he knew the watch.

"YOU CAN TURN ME OVER IF YOU LIKE!"

Tommy was a boy of business, a philosopher, and a practical person. He knew nothing of the second watch, whether it was the red-headed man's or another's. But he did know that this with the broken chain was his father's—he had had it in his hands a hundred times. So with no more ado he put it in his trousers pocket, on top of the bag of bulls'-eyes, and then quietly withdrew from the bush, leaving the red-headed man and his enemy talking some yards away on the opposite side.

"I can't go home without him!" cried Mrs. Jepps that evening in the booking-office of Southend Station. "My darling child! I can't! I can't!"

"But come an' ask the station-master," reasoned her husband. "He might ha' come here to see about gettin' home. We never thought o' that!"

A small boy, who had been mistakenly trying to weigh himself by clinging desperately to the arm of the machine used for luggage, let go as he recognised the voices, and came out of the dim corner, looking uncommonly bulky about the pockets.

"Halloa, mother!" said Tommy, "I've been waiting for you since—well, I've been waiting a long time!"

This time Mrs. Jepps really did faint. But it was not for long. When she came to herself, with water from the waiting-room bottle in her hair and down her back, she recovered her customary energy with surprising rapidity. "Tommy, you wicked, ungrateful little wretch!" she said, "a nice holiday you've made o' this for me! Wait till I get you home, that's all!"

"Why, Tommy," said his father, "wasn't there no party as stole you, after all?"

"I don't believe parties steal boys at all," said Tommy; "but parties steal watches." And with that he hauled out what Jepps had never expected to see again.

This phenomenon completed the demoralization of the party; it also dissipated the storm that was gathering about Tommy's head.

"Lawks, child!" cried all the ladies at once. And Cousin Jane's sister's young man's aunt clung for support to the nearest object, which was a porter.

"Come!" squeaked Tommy, with a new importance in his voice, rattling the money in his trousers pockets. "Got your tickets? Keep close to me, an' I'll show you the right train."

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The American Cartoonist and His Work.

BY ARTHUR LORD

E who first wrote of the political cartoon as a "picture editorial" writ better than he knew. He invented a term which expresses the thing exactly. Since the days of Hogarth and Gillray there have been "cartoons," "caricatures," "political sketches," or "pencillings," as *Punch* once called them, but no one has been able to classify all varieties of work and style under one distinctive head. Here, however, we have a double-barrelled title which shoots unerring to the mark.

MR. HOMER DAVENPORT.
From a Photo. by Bushnell.

It is a term pretty in its connotation. It carries us back to the time when the influence of the editorial first began to wane and something equally potent began to take its place. That "something" was the political or social cartoon, daily or weekly enforcing a lesson which might well have been enforced in type had not the public got tired of written sermons. Editors were not slow to recognise that the printed picture contained more power for good than a column of double-leaded lines. The man in the street, it was noted, would stop to look at the picture before he tossed his paper into the mud, and the audience to which the picture appealed became almost as numerous as the people in the street. The cartoon took unto itself a cumulative increase in power, and the improved mechanical appliances in newspaper illustration made it well-nigh impossible for any modern newspaper, pressed as its editorial columns are by the competition in, and acquisition of, news, to succeed in bringing home moral lessons to the public without the aid of the editorial drawn by an artist's hand. The change from old conditions to new occurred with greatest rapidity in the United States, where the editors are as prompt in observing what the public wants as the public is quick in showing what it likes, and it is with these "picture editorials" and their American makers that this series of articles has to deal.

This "young baby among the nations" is still growing and trying to learn how to be strong. The little old men are beginning to wonder what size he will be when he grows up.

DRAWN BY HOMER DAVENPORT FOR THE "NEW YORK JOURNAL."

There are many who look upon Mr. Homer Davenport as the leading cartoonist in the United States. This noted draughtsman possesses many of the qualities which should entitle him to the most prominent consideration; yet it is well that the real question of his pre-eminence should be left open to doubt. He works, it is true, for one of the most widely circulated papers in America. His fertile brain and facile pen have full swing. He attacks with uncommon straightforwardness, and at times a positive

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brutality, all the evils of the day, either social or political, and his cartoons go direct to the heart and intellect of the American people. His picture editorials speak with no uncertain voice, and if the results of one's preaching were to entitle any cartoonist to the position of pre-eminence in the cartooning ranks, then Davenport would be first and all others behind.

But in work of this sort something more than mere effectiveness should be considered. There are numerous workers on the American pictorial Press who, if somewhat less skilful than Davenport in hitting the bull's-eye of public appreciation, are in every way better draughtsmen. They wield their pencils with more technical accuracy, and each cartoon they draw is a lesson in the best newspaper art. Davenport makes no pretence to being a great artist. He has lacked the training which others happily possess, and his success is due rather to his brutal effectiveness in the objective treatment of a subject than to his technical manipulation of line.

He is a rapid worker, and has been known to discard half-a-dozen drawings before satisfying his own criticism. He has improved in his work conspicuously while he has been on the *Journal*, and if he still finds it impossible correctly to draw the human form in a variety of action, he has come dangerously near making Presidents. As Gillam invented the "tattooed man" in the Blaine campaign of twenty years ago, so has Davenport given to Hanna a dollar-marked store suit which has become inseparably associated with the name of our great political organizer. Recently his cartoons in the *Journal* have enforced moral lessons, such as the evils of whisky, gambling, church bigotry, etc., and one of these, called "Conquerors and Enslavers of Mankind—Whisky Leads the Horde," we are able to reproduce. A more powerful cartoon, perhaps, was that called "Whisky—That's All," which represented a woman and three or four children standing by the coffin of husband and father in a poverty-stricken room. Here was a moral lesson enforced with a poignancy which, according to the opinion of many judges, should be totally outside the province of the newspaper cartoon. Davenport and the paper he works for evidently thought otherwise, and it is not for us to say that they were incorrect.

CONQUERORS AND ENSLAVERS OF MANKIND—WHISKY LEADS THE HORDE.
DRAWN BY HOMER DAVENPORT FOR THE "NEW YORK JOURNAL."

Davenport was born in a small Oregon town in 1867, and in his thirty-five years of life has been at different times a jockey, railroad fireman, and circus clown. He possesses no school education. In 1892 the *San Francisco Examiner* gave him employment, and in 1895 Mr. Hearst took him to New York, where he has since lived and worked. It was against him and his cartoons that the attempt was made in 1897 to pass the Anti-Cartoon Bill in New York. Besides the Hanna suit, which we have already mentioned, Davenport invented the well-known giant Trust figure in 1899, and from a Republican point of view it is not entirely to his credit that he nearly made Bryan President.

In an article recently published in a San Francisco weekly Mr. Davenport has told the interesting story of his own career.

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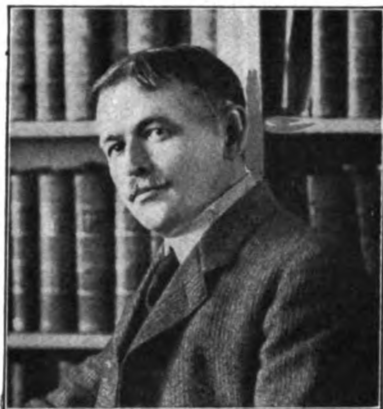
Much of this is an elaboration of the main facts just cited, but the artist has something to say about his methods which should here be re-told. "With me," he writes, "as with all cartoonists, I suppose, there is that feeling within the soul that there is a great cartoon of national and international importance that will some day be drawn. I am striving to that end, and I hope some day to achieve my ambition.

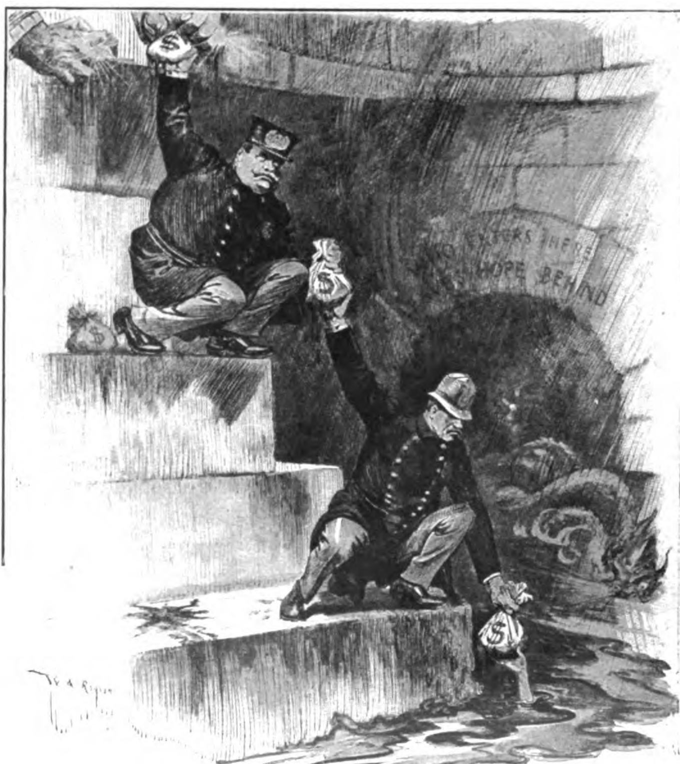


From a] MR. W. A. ROGERS. *[Photo*

"I love," he continues, "to draw strong cartoons, in the line of brute force, but I prefer those of the pathetic order, and I am satisfied that between the two lies the real power of cartooning. Humorous cartoons are pleasing and restful, but they don't leave the lasting impression that should go with serious work. My work has been a great pleasure to me, and the greatest reward it ever brought me was when Admiral Dewey, sobbing like a child, told me that my cartoon, 'Lest We Forget,' drawn in his behalf when the people of the nation were abusing him, prompted him to content himself in America when he was seriously thinking of going abroad to make his home."

The name of Mr. W. A. Rogers is possibly best known to our readers through the cartoons which for many years have appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. There are those who hold that Rogers is greater even than Thomas Nast, who worked for the same periodical. Nast could not draw a human foot correctly; Rogers can. He is a thorough artist as well as an effective moral preacher, and some of his attacks upon bad government in New York City have passed into municipal history.

The cartoon which we reproduce, called "How High Up Does It Go?" probably made the strongest impression of anything Rogers ever did, and it was so distinctly serious in tone that it appealed particularly to the intellectually-minded, who hold that cartoonery should be something else than buffoonery. When published in *Harper's Weekly* this cartoon was commented upon widely by the public Press, and a large number of letters flowed in upon the publishers from many parts of the United States complimenting both paper and artist upon the masterly and compelling qualities of this memorable attack upon municipal corruption. For those who, in their knowledge of the evils of to-day, have forgotten



HOW HIGH UP DOES IT GO?
DRAWN BY W. A. ROGERS FOR "HARPER'S WEEKLY."

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the evils of yesterday, it may be well to say that Rogers in this cartoon pictures a sewer flowing with filth, a series of stone steps leading upwards, with a policeman on the lower step, a captain of police on the step above, and higher up a pair of clutching jewelled hands. As the captain passes his bags of money to the hands above he deducts his part of the spoil, the policeman receiving the bags from a woman's hand stretched out from the eddies of filth in the sewer. Municipal degradation could have gone no farther in the days when this cartoon was made, and we doubt if anyone beside Rogers could have so fitly exposed such degradation to the public view.

Another of Rogers's cartoons, called "Father Knickerbocker's Peril," showed a good little "Goo-goo," or good Government club, refusing to help poor Father Knickerbocker out of the clutches of the Tammany tiger because he did not approve of the others who were trying to rescue him. The little "Goo-goo" is now forgotten, but the moral of the cartoon remains. President Roosevelt told Rogers a short time ago that he considered it about the best thing the artist had ever done.

FATHER KNICKERBOCKER'S PERIL.—Conscientious Little Goo-Goo: "I can't help you, papa; there are some naughty boys on the rope."
DRAWN BY W. A. ROGERS FOR "HARPER'S WEEKLY."

Another effective cartoon is that called "The Turk and the Christians," intending to show that the stake does not always go to the winner. It was published in *Harper's Weekly* during the Greco-Turkish War, and excited considerable attention. Rogers was born in Springfield, Ohio, in 1854, and, after being educated in the common schools, was employed in business offices until his eighteenth year. He was on the staff of the *New York Daily Graphic* in 1872–3, and

THE TURK AND THE CHRISTIANS.—The stake does not always go to the winner.
DRAWN BY W. A. ROGERS FOR "HARPER'S WEEKLY."

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was engaged by *Harper's Weekly* in 1877; for which paper he has worked almost continuously since.

The wide difference that exists between humorous and serious cartoon work is admirably shown by a comparison between the examples of Davenport and Rogers, which we have just passed, and the following examples from the pens of McCutcheon and Bowman. At first glance it might appear that the difference was a mere distinction between East and West, for McCutcheon and Bowman possess the Western spirit, whereas Davenport and Rogers speak with the more serious language of the East. The two Western men are genuinely funny, and their work shows the quality of caricature as it is more familiarly known. There is a burlesque broadness about it that appeals — and we hope it may be said without offence to the Western mind — to the less developed intellect of the new and enterprising homogeneous civilization.

They look at things in a new way in this wonderful West of ours. They see the comic side of life. They are just a little vulgar, but it is a vulgarity which does not wholly annoy, and if there is a suspicion of shoddiness in the social side of life, it is that same shoddiness which the cartoonist delights to bring before the public. McCutcheon, in his remarkable series of cartoons published in the *Chicago Record-Herald* at the time of Prince Henry's visit, called "The Cartoons that Made Prince Henry Famous," went almost as far as it is possible to go in exposing the pretensions of the vulgar rich, their perfervid hunt for recognition by those of Royal houses, and the tendency to toadyism which at such a time is, in certain classes, let loose. It is said that Prince Henry was so pleased and impressed by McCutcheon's cartoons that, at the request of the Imperial German Consul, the originals were presented to him and were sent framed to Kiel.

MR. JOHN T. MCCUTCHEON.
From a Photo. by A. Cox.

ENTERTAINING PRINCE HENRY.—A little exhibition of democratic simplicity at a New York luncheon.
DRAWN BY J. T. MCCUTCHEON FOR THE "CHICAGO RECORD-HERALD."

A mere glance at the selection we have made from this entertaining series shows the good and bad qualities of McCutcheon's style. He possesses splendid ability in depicting action, and his manipulation of crowds is noteworthy. He possesses a rough and ready facility in facial expression, and

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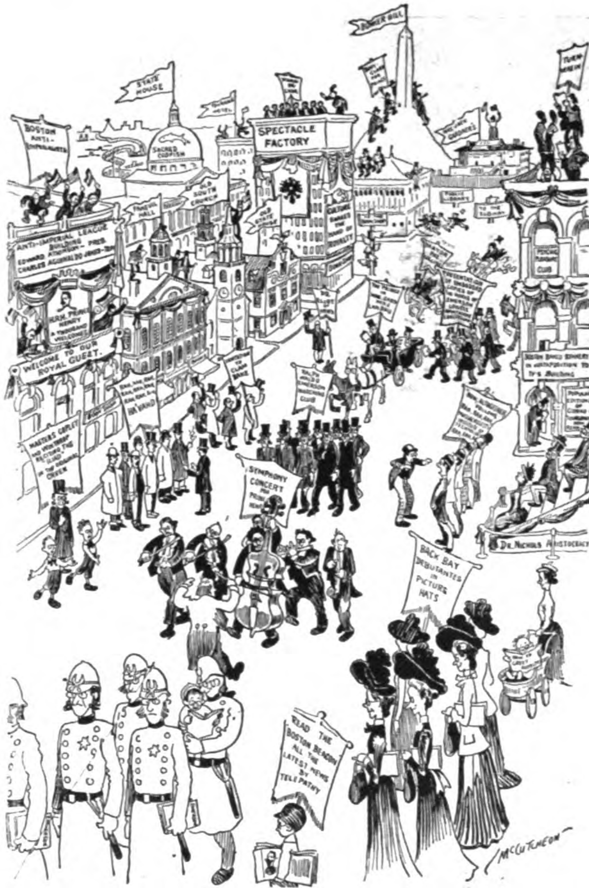

ENTERTAINING PRINCE HENRY.—"Boston."
DRAWN BY J. T. MCCUTCHEON FOR THE "CHICAGO RECORD-HERALD."

topical illustrator. McCutcheon's faults are due perhaps to this same pressure under which cartoonists labour. There is an unfinished appearance about his work, an exaggeration of detail, and a slight tendency towards that vulgarity in subject treatment which we have mentioned as common to Western draughtsmanship. Were his cartoons, however, less full of faults they would not be half so funny.

An early cartoon—"At Last Mr. Harrison Has Come Out of the Wood"—is in many ways the best thing McCutcheon ever did, and we are glad to know that the artist himself looks upon it as his best. The episode which brought it into being is now almost forgotten, except by those who follow political movements closely, but the political movement of the late Mr. Harrison shown in this cartoon is interesting from the first footstep to the last. We speak under correction, but we are prompted to believe that the figure of cowboy Teddy, with his pistol and sombrero, is the first appearance of that famous figure in political illustration. Another of McCutcheon's cartoons, "Oom Paul Calls on Some Gentlemen of Europe," is one of those on the subject of the South African War which can do much in the least possible number of lines. The captions in his cartoons are among his happy hits; and that he thought of the Prince Henry series and carried it to such a successful conclusion in the short time allowed him by the exigencies of newspaper illustration and the feverish haste of the German Prince's tour is the best evidence of his ability as a

AT LAST MR. HARRISON HAS COME OUT OF THE WOOD.
DRAWN BY J. T. MCCUTCHEON FOR THE "CHICAGO RECORD-HERALD."

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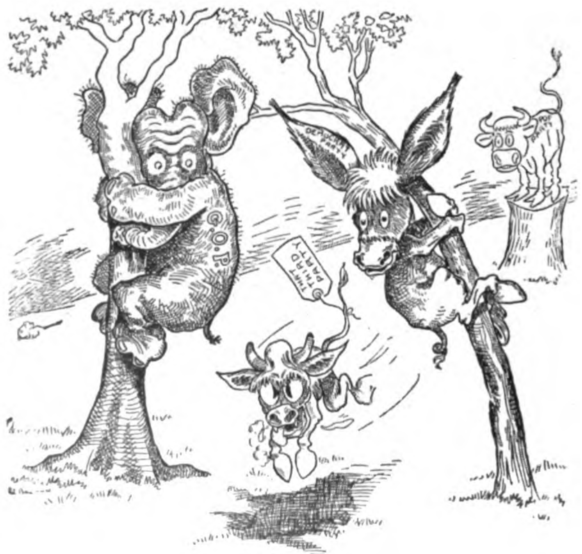
OOM PAUL CALLS ON SOME GENTLEMEN OF EUROPE.
DRAWN BY J. T. MCCUTCHEON FOR THE "CHICAGO RECORD-HERALD."

attracted attention and was widely reprinted in the early days of that struggle.

The *Record-Herald* is to be congratulated on having in McCutcheon one whose pen is ever ready either for writing or illustration. We may call him a cartoonist, but he is a correspondent as well. He has been connected with the *Record-Herald* since 1889, when he was nineteen years of age, and became prominent through his cartoon work in the campaign of 1896. In his cartoons of this time he introduced a queer and wonderful little dog which trotted beside caricatures of Bryan and Hanna, and formed a conspicuous part in various drawings of parades and other political satires. In 1897, through an invitation from the Treasury Department, McCutcheon started on a tour round the world on the revenue cutter *McCulloch*, and reached Hong Kong in time to join Admiral Dewey before the American fleet went to Manila. He was on board that vessel during the Battle of Manila Bay, served until April, 1900, as a correspondent in the Philippines and the Far East, then went to the Transvaal to represent his paper on the Boer side, and returned to America in 1900, again to take up cartoon work. Since that time he has been constantly engaged in illustration, and to-day possesses one of the best-known names as a highly-paid, up-to-date, and forceful caricaturist.

McCutcheon is essentially good-natured in all that he does. Mr. R. C. Bowman, of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, belongs also to the ever-spreading good-natured school. This artist, who began at the age of nineteen on the *Arkansas Traveller*, has devoted about twelve years to caricature, and he possesses theories about his work which many a less-known man might take to heart, with accruing advantage to himself and the public. Bowman believes —and the strength of his belief is shown in the specimens of his work here reproduced — that a cartoon can be to the point without being malicious, and that it is not necessary to make ogres of men in order to show that you differ with them politically. A running glance at his various cartoons shows that Bowman has pronounced ideas of right and wrong, and that he takes his stand conscientiously on all



"GREAT GUNS! WHAT IS IT?"
DRAWN BY R. C. BOWMAN FOR THE "MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE."

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matters of social and political import, but you will hunt in vain for any trace of partisan spleen. During the five years he has been with the *Tribune* his output has been as enormous as its scope has been varied, and the friendships he has made have been not only among those of his own party, but also among his political foes. The man who laughs most heartily at a cartoon when that cartoon is good-humoured is very often the subject of the cartoon himself. Where Davenport, in short, would make an enemy, Bowman would make a friend, so great is the difference in the styles of the two men.

Bowman is a careful student of politics, and his picture editorials always present a strong argument. He possesses a rare originality and spontaneous humour, and that his drawings are well thought out is proved by their simplicity in detail. It is not too much to say that in connection with the work of Bartholomew, of the *Minneapolis Journal*, which will be treated of in our next article, the topics of the times are more effectively illustrated by these two cartoonists than by any others in the United States. Bowman is a humorist and not a satirist, and has attained his success through close adherence to well-defined principles of directness, simplicity, and gentleness. The *Tribune* reader opens his paper with the knowledge that he is going to get a laugh, and the man made fun of may open his copy with the knowledge that he is not going to squirm.

OUR NEXT GREAT WORK—THE PACIFIC CABLE.
DRAWN BY R. C. BOWMAN FOR THE "MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE."

Look, by the way, at Bowman's cartoons, and see if you can find the dog. The Bowman dog has become famous. This remarkable little canine, which the cartoonist introduces into nearly all his work, is full of expression, and the keynote to the story is often to be found in the antics of the pup. If he is scared, in common with the elephant and the donkey, at the advent of the Third Party, you will find him running into the distance with marvellous alacrity. He rests, with wonder-eyed demureness, beside Carnegie and Morgan while John Bull tacks down his island, and when the battleship *Kentucky* arrives off the coast of Turkey he is—well, find him for yourself. If the small boys of Minneapolis, as it is said, may be seen chalking Bowman's dog on side-walks and fences, it is a proof of the popularity of the cartoonist which needs no further to be proved.

Bowman has a great fondness for children, and we believe it is his highest ambition to become a successful writer of child verse. He has already published one volume which contains verses of this sort, that may reasonably be compared with the late Eugene Field's. He is also a "chalk talker," and in-

With both Andy Carnegie and J. Pierpont Morgan in England at the same time, Johnny Bull proceeds to tack down his island.
DRAWN BY R. C. BOWMAN FOR THE "MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE."

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Nov. 28, 1900.—The Battleship "Kentucky" Arrives off the Coast of Turkey.
DRAWN BY R. C. BOWMAN FOR THE "MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE."

dulges now and then in a funny lecture which he illustrates with his own hand. In our photograph we may see him, an able-bodied, happy, and good-natured gentleman, standing by the side of his blackboard as if in lecture pose, and from the appearance of the man and the examples of his work reproduced in this article we may easily understand the quality of the reputation made by him throughout the great and enterprising West.

Incidentally, in our treatment of the men, we have dropped a hint or two as to the qualifications necessary for successful cartoon work. In so far as nearly every paper of importance in the United States goes in for this form of illustration, and as nearly all the principal journals are partisan, it is obvious that the competition between newspapers for the services of the best draughtsmen is intense, and the successful cartoonist is the man who most effectively expresses the political tenets of his paper. On newspapers independent in politics the cartoonist's office is no sinecure, and often the artist has to sacrifice his own independence of thought in order to make his work correspond with the "ideals" of the managing editor. Where, however, the cartoonist's honest feelings coincide with the party feelings of the paper he represents we get the happiest of results, for no man preaches so effectively as when he preaches what he really believes. We know of cases where Republican cartoonists have done extremely clever work for Democratic journals, just as we may find cases where editorial writers with Democratic leanings have been engaged at high salaries to write Republican editorials, but success in such cases is the exception rather than the rule.

From a Phot. by] MR. R. C. BOWMAN. [*A. H. Opsahl.*

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THE PSAMMEAD, or the GIFTS.

VI.—BIGGER THAN THE BAKER'S BOY.

IT all began with a fight that Robert had with the baker's boy, who was a large one, and very cheeky even for the size he was. Robert began it, it is true, by light-heartedly lassoing the baker's boy with a skipping-rope when they met him on their way to the sand-pit to get the day's wish from the psammead. But the baker's boy behaved in a most cowardly and ungentlemanly way Instead of fighting with fists, he pulled Robert's hair and kicked him. However, he won, for Jane hung on to Cyril so that he couldn't help Robert without hurting her, and Anthea was poor-spirited enough to cling to the baker's boy and offer abject apologies in Robert's name. The fray ended in the boy's chasing Robert along the road down to the pit and kicking him into a heap of sand.

Cyril was angry with Jane. Robert was furious with Anthea. The girls were perfectly miserable, and nobody was pleased with the baker's boy. There was, as French authors say, "a silence full of emotion."

Then Robert dug his toes and his fingers into the sand and wriggled in his rage. "He'd better wait till I'm grown up—the cowardly brute. Beast—I hate him! But I'll pay him out. Just because he's bigger than me!"

"You began," said Jane, incautiously.

"I know I did, silly, but I was only rotting—and he kicked me—look here."

Robert tore down a stocking and showed a purple bruise touched up with red.

"I only wish I was bigger than him, that's all."

He dug his fingers in the sand and sprang up, for his hand had touched something furry. It was the psammead, of course. "On the look-out to make sillies of us, as usual," as Cyril remarked later. And, of course, the next moment Robert's wish was granted, and he was bigger than the baker's boy—oh, but much, much bigger. He was bigger than the big policeman who used to be at the crossing at the Mansion House years ago—the one who was so kind in helping ladies over the crossing—and he was the biggest man *I* have ever seen, as well as the kindest. No one had a foot-rule in their pocket, so Robert could not be measured; but he was taller than your father would be if he stood on your mother's head, which I am sure he would never be unkind enough to do. He must have been 10ft. or 11ft. high, and as broad as a boy of that height ought to be. His Norfolk suit had fortunately grown too, and now he stood up in it, with one of his enormous stockings turned down to show the gigantic bruise on his vast leg. Immense tears of fury still stood on his flushed giant face. He looked so surprised and he was so large to be wearing an Eton collar that the others could not help laughing.

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"The sammyadd's done us again," said Cyril.

"Not us—*me*," said Robert. "If you'd got any decent feeling you'd try to make it make you the same size. You've no idea how silly it feels," he added, thoughtlessly.

"'THE SAMMYADD'S DONE US AGAIN,' SAID CYRIL."

"And I don't want to; I can jolly well see how silly it *looks*," Cyril was beginning, but Anthea said:—

"Oh, *don't!* I don't know what's the matter with you boys to-day. Look here, Squirrel, let's play fair; it is hateful for poor old Bobs, all alone up there. Let's ask the sammyadd for another wish, and if it will I do really think we ought to be made the same size."

The others agreed, but not gaily; but when they found the psammead it wouldn't.

"Not I," it said, crossly, rubbing its face with its feet. "He's a rude, violent boy, and it'll do him good to be the wrong size for a bit. What did he want to come digging me out with his nasty wet hands for? He's a perfect savage. A boy of the Stone Age would have had more sense."

Robert's hands had, indeed, been wet—with tears.

"Go away and leave me to get dry in peace, do," the psammead went on. "I can't think why you don't wish for something sensible — something to eat or drink, or good manners, or good tempers. Go along with you, do."

It almost snarled as it shook its whiskers, and turned a sulky brown back on them. The most hopeful felt that further parley was vain.

They turned again to the colossal Robert.

"Whatever shall we do?" they said, and they all said it.

"First," said Robert, grimly, "I'm going to reason with that baker's boy. I shall catch him at the end of the road."

"Don't hit a chap littler than yourself, old man," said Cyril.

"Do I look like hitting him?" asked Robert, scornfully. "Why, I should *kill* him. But I'll give him something to remember. Wait till I pull up my stocking." He pulled up his stocking, which was as large as a small bolster-case, and strode off. His strides were 5ft. or 6ft. long, so that it was quite easy for him to be at the bottom of the hill ready to meet the baker's boy when he came down swinging the empty basket, to meet his master's cart which had been leaving bread at the cottages along the road.

Robert crouched behind a haystack in the farmyard that is at the corner, and when he heard the boy come whistling along he jumped out at him and caught him by the collar.

"Now," he said, and his voice was about four times its usual size, just as his body was four times its. "I'm going to teach you to kick boys smaller than you."

He lifted up the baker's boy and set him on the top of the haystack, which was about

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"HE LIFTED UP THE BAKER'S BOY AND SET HIM ON THE TOP OF THE HAYSTACK."

16ft. from the ground, and then he sat down on the roof of the cowshed and told the baker's boy exactly what he thought of him. I don't think the boy heard it all—he was in a sort of trance of terror. When Robert had said everything he could think of, and some things twice over, he shook the boy and said:—

"And now get down the best way you can," and left him.

I don't know how the baker's boy got down, but I do know that he missed the cart and got into the very hottest of hot water when he turned up at last at the bake-house. I am sorry for him, but, after all, it was quite right that he should be taught that English boys mustn't use their feet when they fight, but their fists. Of course, the water he got into only became hotter when he tried to tell his master about the boy he had licked, who had turned into a giant as high as a church, because no one could possibly believe such a tale as that. Next day the tale was believed—but that was too late to be any good to the baker's boy.

When Robert rejoined the others he found them in the garden. Anthea had thoughtfully asked Martha to let them have dinner out there, because the dining-room was rather small, and it would have been so awkward to have a brother the size of Robert in there. The Lamb, who had slept peacefully during the whole stormy morning, was now found to be sneezing, and Martha said he had a cold and would be better indoors.

"And really it's just as well," said Cyril, "for I don't believe he'd ever have stopped screaming if he'd once seen you the awful size you are!"

Robert was indeed what a draper would call an "outsize" in boys. He found himself able to step right over the iron gate into the front garden.

Martha brought out the dinner—it was cold veal and baked potatoes, with sago pudding and stewed plums to follow.

She, of course, did not notice that Robert was anything but the usual size, and she gave him as much meat and potatoes as usual and no more. You have no idea how small your usual helping of dinner looks when you are four times your proper size. Robert groaned and asked for more bread. But Martha would not go on giving more bread for ever. She was in a hurry because the keeper intended to call on his way to Benenhurst Fair, and she wished to be dressed smartly before he came.

"I wish *we* were going to the fair," said Robert.

"You can't go anywhere that size," said Cyril.

"Why not?" said Robert. "They have giants at fairs, much bigger ones than me."

"Not much, they don't," Cyril was beginning, when Jane screamed "Oh!" with such loud suddenness that they all thumped her on the back and asked whether she had swallowed a plum-stone.

"No," she said, breathless from being thumped, "it's not a plum-stone. It's an idea. Let's take Robert to the fair and get them to give us money for showing him! Then we really *shall* get something out of the old sammyadd, at last!"

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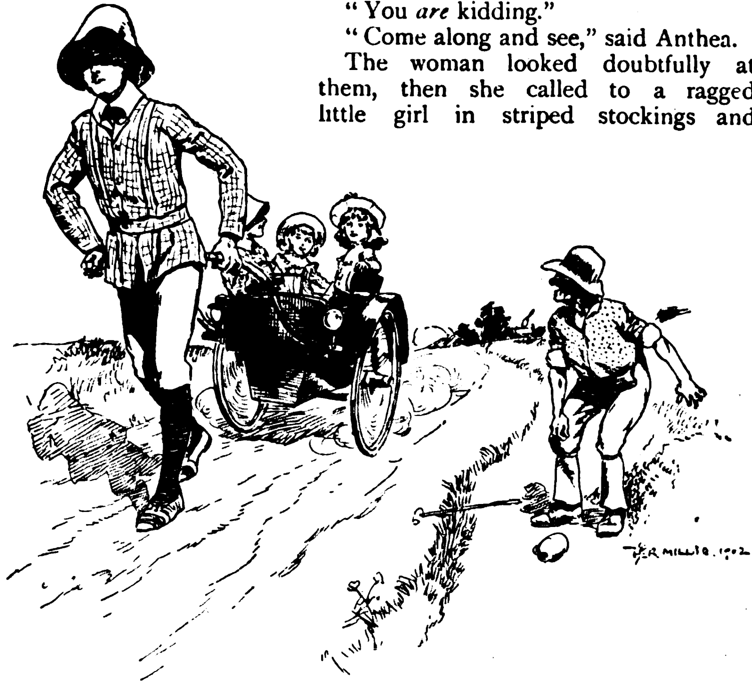
"Take me, indeed," said Robert, indignantly. "Much more likely me take you!"

And so it turned out. The idea appealed irresistibly to everyone but Robert, and even he was brought round by Anthea's suggestion that he should have a double share of any money they might make. There was a little old pony-trap in the coach-house—the kind that is called a governess-cart. It seemed desirable to get to the fair as quickly as possible, so Robert, who could now take enormous steps, and so go very fast indeed, consented to wheel the others in this. It was as easy to him, now, as wheeling the Lamb in the mail-cart had been in the morning. The Lamb's cold prevented his being of the party.

It was a strange sensation, being wheeled in a pony-carriage by a giant. Everyone enjoyed the journey except Robert and the few people they passed on the way. These mostly went into what looked like some kind of standing-up fits by the roadside. Just outside Benenhurst Robert hid in a barn, and the others went on to the fair.



"IT WAS A STRANGE SENSATION, BEING WHEELED IN A PONY-CARRIAGE BY A GIANT."

There were some swings, and a hooting-tooting, blaring merry-go-round, and a shooting-gallery, and cocoa-nut shies. Resisting an impulse to win a cocoa-nut—or, at least, to attempt the enterprise—Cyril went up to the woman who was loading little guns before the array of glass bottles on strings against a sheet of canvas.

"Here you are, little gentleman," she said. "Penny a shot."

"No, thank you," said Cyril. "We are here on business, not pleasure. Who's the master?"

"The what?"

"The master—the head—the boss of the show."

"Over there," she said, pointing to a stout man in a linen jacket who was sleeping in the sun; "but I don't advise you to wake him sudden. His temper's contrairy, especially these hot days. Better have a shot while you're waiting."

"It's rather important," said Cyril. "It'll be very profitable to him. I think he'll be sorry if we take it away."

"Oh, if it's money in his pocket," said the woman. "No kid, now. What is it?"

"It's a *giant*."

"You *are* kidding."

"Come along and see," said Anthea.

The woman looked doubtfully at them, then she called to a ragged little girl in striped stockings and a dingy white petticoat that came below her brown frock, and leaving her in charge of the "shooting-gallery" she turned to Anthea and said: "Well, hurry up. But if you *are* kidding you'd best say so. I'm as mild as milk myself, but my Bill, he's a fair terror, and——"

Anthea led the way to the barn. "It really *is* a giant," she said. "He's a giant little boy, in Norfolks like my brother's there. And we didn't bring him right up to the fair because people do stare so, and they seem to go into kind of standing-up fits when they see him. And we thought perhaps you'd like to show him and get pennies, and if you like to pay us something you can, only it'll have to be rather a lot because we promised him he should have a double share of whatever we made."

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The woman murmured something indistinct of which the children could only hear the words, "swelp me," "balmy," and "crumpet," which conveyed no definite idea to their minds.

She had taken Anthea's hand, and Anthea could not help wondering what would happen if Robert should have wandered off or turned his proper size during the interval. But she knew that the psammead's gifts really did seem to last till sunset, however inconvenient their lasting might be, and she did not think, somehow, that Robert would care to go out alone while he was that size.

When they reached the barn and Cyril called "Robert!" there was a stir among the loose hay, and Robert began to come out. His hand and arm came first; then a foot and leg. When the woman saw the hand she said, "My!" but when she saw the foot she said, "Upon my civvy!" And when, by slow and heavy degrees, the whole of Robert's enormous bulk was at last completely disclosed, she drew a long breath and began to say many things, compared with which "balmy" and "crumpet" seemed quite ordinary. She dropped into understandable English at last.

"What'll you take for him?" she said, excitedly. "Anything in reason. We'd have a special van built—leastways, I know where there's a second-hand one would do up handsome—what a baby elephant had as died. What'll you take? He's soft, ain't he? Them giants mostly is; but I never see—no, never. What'll you take? Down on the nail. We'll treat him like a king and give him first-rate grub and a doss fit for a bloomin' dook. He must be soft or he wouldn't need you kids to cart him about. What'll you take for him?"

"They won't take anything," said Robert, sternly. "I'm no more soft than you are—not so much, I shouldn't wonder. I'll come and be a show for to-day if you'll give me——"—he hesitated at the enormous price he was about to ask—"if you'll give me fifteen shillings."

"Done," said the woman, so quickly that Robert felt he had been unfair to himself, and wished he had asked for thirty. "Come on, now, and see my Bill, and we'll fix a price for the season. I dessay you might get as much as two quid a week reg'lar. Come on—and make yourself as small as you can, for gracious sake."

This was not very small, and a crowd gathered quickly, so that it was at the head of an enthusiastic procession that Robert entered the trampled meadow where the fair was held, and passed over the stubbly yellow, dusty grass to the door of the biggest tent. He crept in, and the woman went to call her Bill. He was the big sleeping man, and he did not seem at all pleased at being awakened. Cyril watching through a slit in the tent saw him scowl and shake a heavy fist and a sleepy head. Then the woman went on speaking very fast. Cyril heard "Strewth" and "Biggest draw you ever, so help me!" And he began to share Robert's feelings that fifteen shillings was indeed not nearly enough. Bill slouched up to the tent and entered. When he beheld the magnificent proportions of Robert he said but little. "Strike me pink!" were the only words the children could afterwards remember, but he produced fifteen shillings, mainly in sixpences and coppers, and handed it to Robert.

"We'll fix up about what you're to draw when the show's over to-night," he said, with hoarse heartiness. "Lor' love a duck, you'll be that happy with us you'll never want to leave us. Can you do a song now, or a bit of a breakdown?"

"Not to-day," said Robert, rejecting the idea of trying to sing "As Once in May," a favourite of his mother's, and the only song he could think of at the moment.

"Get Levi, and clear them bloomin' photos. out," said Bill. "Clear the tent—stick up a curtain or suthink," the man went on. "Lor', what a pity we ain't got no tights his size! But we'll have 'em before the week's out. Young man, your fortune's made. It's a good thing you came to me and not to some chaps as I could tell you on. I've known blokes as beat their giants and starved 'em too, so I'll tell you straight you're in luck this day if you never was afore. 'Cos I'm a lamb, I am—and I don't deceive you."

"I'm not afraid of anyone's beating *me*," said Robert, looking down on the "lamb." Robert was crouched on his knees, because the tent was not big enough for him to stand upright in, but even in that position he could still look down on most people. "But I'm awfully hungry; I wish you'd get me something to eat."

"Here, 'Becca," said the hoarse Bill, "get him some grub—the best you've got, mind." Another whisper followed, of which the children only heard "down in black and white"—"sealed and stamped first thing to-morrow."

Then the woman went to get the food—it

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was only bread and cheese when it came, but it was delightful to the large and empty Robert—and the man went to post sentinels round the tent, to give the alarm if Robert should attempt to escape with his fifteen shillings.

"As if we weren't honest," said Anthea, indignantly, when the meaning of the sentinels dawned on her.

"WHEN THE GIRL CAME OUT SHE WAS PALE AND TREMBLING."

Then began a very strange and wonderful afternoon.

Bill was a man who knew his business. In a very little while the photographic views, the spy-glasses you look at them through, so that they really seem rather real, and the lights you see them by, were all packed away. A curtain—it was an old red and black carpet, really—was run across the tent. Robert was concealed behind it and Bill was standing on a trestle-table outside the tent making a speech. It was rather a good speech. It began by saying that the giant it was his privilege to introduce to the public that day was the eldest son of the Emperor of San Francisco, compelled through an unfortunate love affair with the Duchess of the Fiji Islands to leave his own country and take refuge in England—the land of liberty, where freedom was the right of every man, no matter how big he was. It ended by the announcement that the first twenty who came to the tent-door should see the giant for threepence apiece. "After that," said Bill, "the price is riz, and I don't undertake to say what it won't be riz to. So now's yer time."

A young man squiring his sweetheart on her afternoon out was the first to come forward. For that occasion his was the princely attitude—no expense spared—money no object. His girl wished to see the giant? Well, she should see the giant, even though seeing the giant cost threepence each, and the other entertainments were all penny ones.

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The flap of the tent was raised—the couple entered. Next moment a wild shriek from the girl thrilled through the crowd outside. Bill slapped his leg. "That's done the trick," he whispered to 'Becca. It was, indeed, a splendid advertisement of the charms of Robert. When the girl came out she was pale and trembling, and a larger crowd than before was round the tent.

"WHEN YOUR TIME'S UP COME TO ME."

"What was it like?" asked a bailiff.

"Oh, horrid—you wouldn't believe," she said. "It's as big as a barn, and that fierce. It froze the blood in my bones. I wouldn't ha' missed seeing it for anything."

The fierceness was only caused by Robert's trying not to laugh. But the desire to do that soon left him, and before sunset he was more inclined to cry than to laugh, and more inclined to sleep than either. For by ones, and twos, and threes people kept coming in all the afternoon, and Robert had to shake hands with those who wished it and to allow himself to be punched, and pulled, and patted, and thumped, so that people might make sure he was really real.

The other children sat on a bench and watched and waited, and were very bored indeed. It seemed to them that this was the hardest way of earning money that could have been invented. And only fifteen shillings. Bill had taken four times that already, for the news of the giant had spread, and tradespeople in carts and gentle-people in carriages came from far and near. One gentleman with an eye-glass, and a very large yellow rose in his button-hole, offered Robert, in an obliging whisper, £10 a week to appear at the Royal Aquarium. Robert had to say "No."

"I can't," he said, regretfully. "It's no use promising what you can't do."

"Ah, poor fellow, bound for a term of years, I suppose. Well, here's my card. When your time's up come to me."

"I will — if I'm the same size then," said Robert, truthfully.

"If you grow a bit, so much the better," said the gentleman.

When he had gone, Robert beckoned Cyril and said:—

"Tell them I must and will have an easy. And I want my tea."

Tea was provided, and a paper hastily pinned on the tent. It said:—

"CLOSED FOR HALF AN HOUR WHILE THE GIANT GETS HIS TEA."

Then there was a hurried council.

"How am I to get away?" said Robert. "I've been thinking about it all the afternoon."

"Why, walk out when the sun sets and you're your right size. They can't do anything to us."

Robert opened his eyes. "Why, they'd nearly kill us," he said, "when they saw me get my right size. No, we must think of

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some other way. We *must* be alone when the sun sets."

"I know," said Cyril, briskly, and he went to the door outside which Bill was smoking a clay pipe and talking in a low voice to 'Becca. Cyril heard him say, "Good as havin' a fortune left you."

"Look here," said Cyril; "you can let people come in again in a minute. He's nearly finished his tea. But he *must* be left alone when the sun sets. He's very queer at that time of day, and if he's worried I won't answer for the consequences."

"Why, what comes over him?" asked Bill.

"I don't know; it's—it's a sort of a *change*," said Cyril, candidly. "He isn't at all like himself—you'd hardly know him. He's very queer indeed. Someone'll get hurt if he's not alone about sunset." This was true.

"He'll pull round for the evening, I s'pose?"

"Oh, yes—half an hour after sunset he'll be quite himself again."

"Best humour him," said the woman.

And so, at what Cyril judged was about half an hour before sunset, the tent was again closed "whilst the giant gets his supper."

The crowd was very merry about the giant's meals and their coming so close together.

"Well, he can peck a bit," Bill owned. "You see, he has to eat hearty, being the size he is."

Inside the tent the four children breathlessly arranged a plan of retreat.

"You go *now*," said Cyril to the girls, "and get along home as fast as you can. Oh, never mind the beastly pony-cart, we'll get that to-morrow! Robert and I are dressed the same. We'll manage somehow like Sydney Carton did. Only you girls *must* get out, or it's all no go. We can run, but you can't—whatever you may think. No, Jane, it's no good Robert going out and knocking people down. The police would follow him till he turned his proper size and then arrest him like a shot. Go—you must. If you don't I'll never speak to you again. It was you got us into this mess, really, hanging round people's legs the way you did this morning. *Go*—I tell you."

And Jane and Anthea went.

"We're going home," they said to Bill. "We're leaving the giant with you. Be kind to him." And that, as Anthea said afterwards, was very deceitful, but what were they to do?

When they had gone Cyril went to Bill.

"Look here," he said, "he wants some ears of corn; there's some in the next field but one. I'll just run and get it. Oh, and he says can't you loop up the tent at the back a bit. He says he's stifling for a breath of air. I'll see no one peeps in at him. I'll cover him up and he can take a nap while I go for the corn. He *will* have it; there's no holding him when he gets like this."

The giant was made comfortable with a heap of sacks and an old tarpaulin. The curtain was looped up and the brothers were left alone. They matured their plan in whispers. Outside the merry-go-round blared out its comic tunes, screaming now and then to attract notice. Half a minute after the sun had set a boy in a Norfolk suit came out past Bill.

"I'm off for the corn," he said, and mingled quickly with the crowd.

At the same instant a boy came out of the back of the tent past 'Becca, posted there as sentinel.

"I'm off after the corn," said this boy also. And he, too, moved away quietly and was lost in the crowd. The front-door boy was Cyril, the back-door boy was Robert—now, since sunset, once more his proper size. They walked quickly through the field and along the road, where Robert caught Cyril up. Then they ran. They were home as soon as the girls were, for it was a long way, and they ran most of it. It was, indeed, a *very* long way, as they found when they had to go and drag the pony-trap home next morning, with no enormous Robert to wheel them in it as if it were a mail-cart, and they were babies and he was their gigantic nursemaid.

I cannot possibly tell you what Bill and 'Becca said when they found that the giant had gone. For one thing, I do not know.

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*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

THE "YOUNGEST-LOOKING" MAN FOR HIS AGE.

Most people asked to give the age of the gentleman whose photograph we reproduce would say that he probably would be not more than forty, yet the sitter, Mr. R. Troughton, 16, Rydal Terrace, Kendal, is over sixty years of age; to be exact, just sixty-one and a half. He is able to claim the unique distinction of being the youngest-looking man for his age in Great Britain. Some time ago the Editor of *Tit-Bits* offered a prize of five guineas to the reader of that paper who should prove to be the youngest-looking man over sixty years of age. Photographs were sent from all parts of the country, and the number of "youthful" men, of ages varying from sixty to ninety, in the United Kingdom, came as quite a revelation. The winner of the prize had several close rivals, and is certainly to be congratulated; if he only feels as young as he looks, Mr. Troughton should live to acquire the distinction of becoming a centenarian.—Mr. J. Henry Hogg, Kendal.

THE OLD MAN IN THE MIRROR.

"Among the odd photographs that you have published in your Curiosity section there are few that are so puzzling as the one I send you. After photographing a dressing-table I found that I unconsciously took my own portrait. Bending low, however, in doing so, the top only of my head is visible, and assumes a grotesque shape, somewhat resembling an irate old gentleman."—Miss Cecily Deane Roe, 5, Boulevard de Grancy, Lausanne, Switzerland.

SMARTNESS IN THE AMERICAN POSTAL SERVICE.

"This envelope was mailed to me late one Sunday night and reached me promptly next morning before 8 a.m., and I think it shows the efficiency of our postal service. The profile of the face makes the letters 'A. Craven,' and was deciphered in the post-office here and delivered without delay."—Mr. Alfred Craven, Chattanooga, Tenn.

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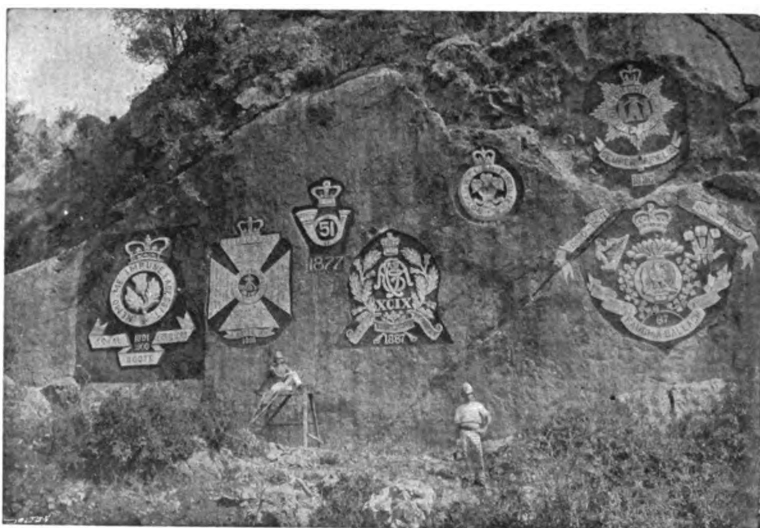
THE FORTUNE-SEEKER'S FAILURE.

"During the spring of 1898 hundreds of prospectors were hurrying toward the gold-fields of the Yukon by the Edmonton route. A large number fitted out at this city, and among the crowd of fortune-seekers was a returned miner named Smith, who built this conveyance. Knowing this route to be a wet and sandy trail, he thought that he could roll on ahead of the waggons, as his load would not sink in the swamps. Inside the barrels were clothing and dry goods, and on top he carried his provisions. He travelled nine miles with his rolling waggon, when his barrels fell apart, and he was compelled to make the remainder of the trip in a cart."—Mr. G. S. Bennett, 116, King Street West, Toronto.

ARTISTIC TOMMY.

"Here is a photo. of the regimental crests of different regiments which have been stationed at a small place called Cherat, on the Indian frontier. The crests are all cut out of the face of a cliff by 'Tommy,' and are a lasting memento of the regiments' stay in Cherat. The crests, reading from left to right, are: Royal Scots Fusiliers, Rifle Brigade, 51st Regiment, Wiltshire Regiment, Royal



Welsh Fusiliers, the Devons, and Royal Irish Fusiliers, all of whom have upheld their names in the late war in South Africa."—Mr. A. Tait, Househillmuir, Reitshill, by Glasgow.

TRIPLET NESTS.

"The extraordinary robin's nest—or rather nests, for there are three of them—of which I send you a photograph taken by myself, was built in an old baking-tin in a hop oast at Bethersden, near here, being found with the eggs distributed as shown in the print. It is not at all likely that it is the work of more than one pair of birds, owing to the extremely pugnacious habits of the robin."—Mr. Charles Stokes, 22, Kent Avenue, Ashford, Kent.

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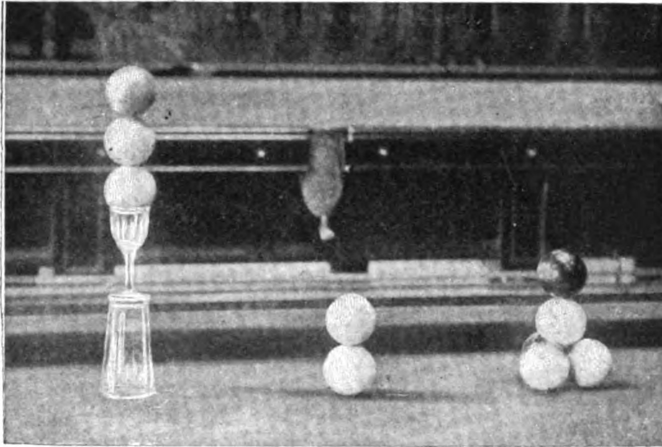

A CLEVER BALANCING FEAT.

"The tricks shown in the photo. were done on an ordinary full-size billiard-table. The balls are those in use daily by the members of our club. They are very clever balancing feats, and done without any outside aid at all. Our steward will guarantee to do them any time within the half-hour."—Mr. J. W. Whitehead, Hon. Secretary St. Anne's District Club, St. Anne's-on-the-Sea.

CANOEING IN WINTER.

"In the winter of 1898, which was noted for its quantities of snow, a small party of us, four in number and all boys, planned a trip to a summer resort which is some sixty miles north of Montreal, and in the Laurentide Mountains. We thought, among other things, that we would like to have some sliding, but unfortunately had forgotten to bring a toboggan along with us, and after attempting with boards, barrel-staves, and several other contrivances, someone suggested a canoe. In this, using paddles to guide ourselves with, we had some very exciting slides. The sensation, I can assure you, was quite novel." — Mr. W. Earle Walker, 35, Common Street, Montreal.

A STRANGE DWELLING-PLACE.

"I send you the picture of what was, for about three months, the home of William Birkheimer, with whom fortune had for years dealt

unfavourably. As can be seen, the 'home' is nothing more or less than an old iron cylinder, 3ft. in diameter and 8ft. long. Its ends are covered with pieces of cloth, etc., to protect its occupant from the inclemency of the weather. Inside it is padded with leaves, etc., to make it comfortable as a sleeping-room. The unfortunate man was struck by a train the day following that on which the picture was taken, and died as a result of his injuries. The enclosed is probably the only picture taken of the 'home' and its occupant. The cylinder, robbed of its embellishments, may still be seen in the Gulley, Mill Street, Belleville, N.J. The whole thing excited not a little interest in these parts until the accident of which I have spoken occurred."—Mr. Joshua J. Turner, 20, Ralph Street, Belleville, N.J.

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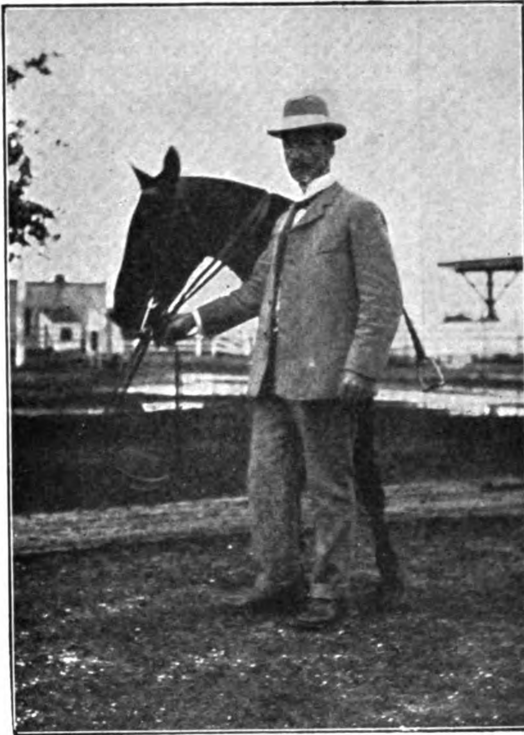
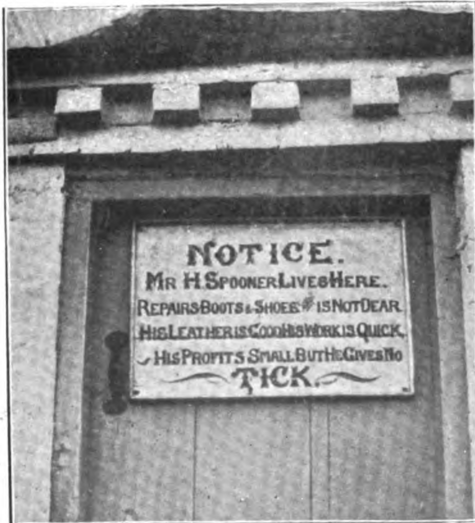


HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

"I send you a most extraordinary photograph, taken by myself, of a brother officer holding his horse; when I printed the photo. the result shown came out. Perhaps some of your readers can tell how this happened."—Capt. W. G. Eden, British Remounts Commission, New Orleans.



"HE GIVES NO TICK."

"I was cycling through a hamlet called Crossbush, near Arundel, Sussex, and saw on the door of one of a row of cottages the notice, a photo. of which I send you. It is certainly unique, and the owner of the cottage was much amused at my taking it."—Miss K. Fox, Redcliffe, St. Catherine's Road, Littlehampton.

AN AUTOGRAPH HAT.

"The photo. I send you is of an autograph hat in my possession. Although many curious

articles have been used for autographs, I have never known of a hat being used for that purpose before. It has on it the names of all the students who have passed through this institution. It measures 10in. in height by 16in. in diameter."—Mr. Rex Tucker, South African School of Mines, Kimberley, S.A.

HOW'S THAT?

"My brother took a snap-shot of me at the wicket. I send you a print of it, and I think you will agree with me that it is a good example of 'snap-shotting.' The bails and ball are in the air, and the stump can be clearly seen in the act of tumbling over. The photo. was taken with a 'Frena' camera at 1-80th of a second."—Mr. Walter H. Jansen, 10, Broughton Road, Stoke Newington, N.

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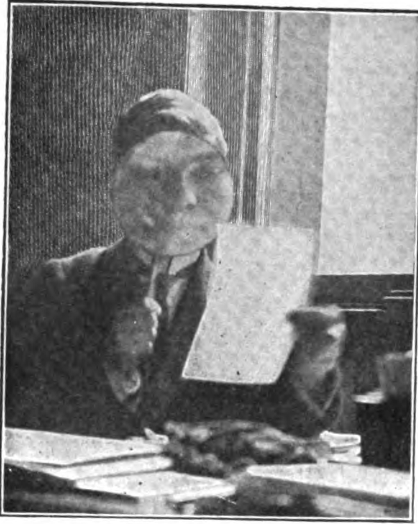
NOT SUFFERING FROM "SWELLED HEAD."

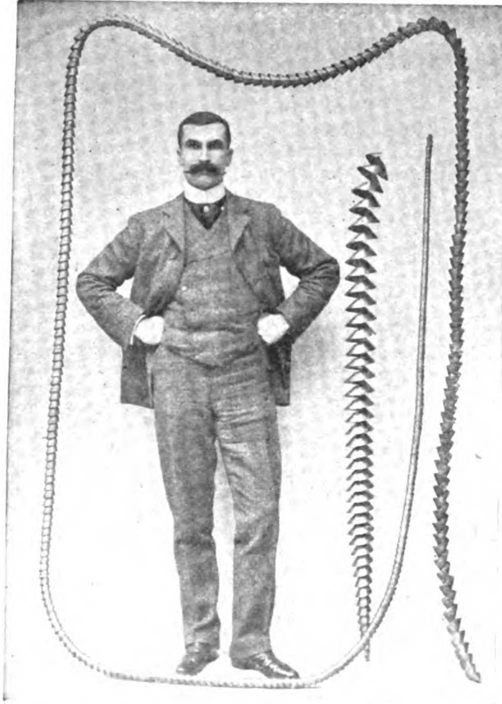
"The young man whose photograph I send you does not suffer from a 'swelled head.' He is not a martyr to toothache, and is not afflicted with any superfluity of fat. He was only looking through a magnifying glass when I snapped him, and we are friends no longer."—Mr. A. M. Stephen, 132, Sabine Road, Lavender Hill.



A CRICKET CURIOSITY.

"The cricket-stump shown in my photograph was split in rather a curious manner. In trying to make a late cut over the wicket

I failed to hit the ball, and brought my bat down sharply on the off stump. The portion of the bail resting on the stump was driven into it, splitting it as shown in the photograph, the portion of the bail remaining firmly wedged in the split."—Mr. H. R. Dortridge, 42, Amhurst Park, Stamford Hill, N.



SNAKES OF STEEL.

"The two snaky-looking objects are merely steel cuttings brought off by automatic tools used in the manufacture of the 'Napier' motor carriages. It shows the remarkable tenacity of the modern steel used for this purpose. The long steel cutting is no less than 21ft. in length."—Mr. S. F. Edge, 14, Regent Street, W.

NOT A FREAK.

"I took this photo. from the top of a ladder, looking down, which makes the large head and shoulders and the small feet. It is out of focus on account of my being so close."—Mr. Carlton P. Schaub, 632, Lincoln Avenue, St. Paul, Minn.

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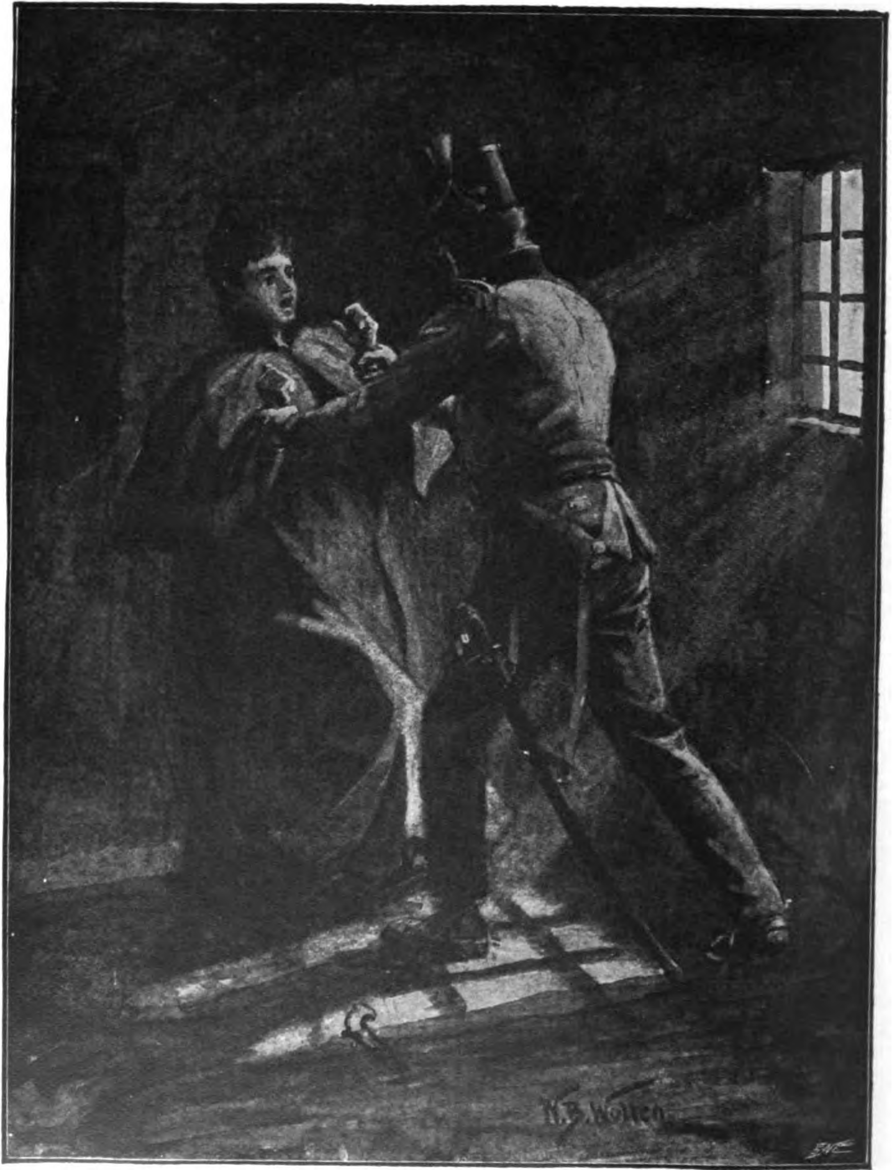

"'YOU ARE MY PRISONER,' HE SAID."

(*See page* 366.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiv. NOVEMBER, 1902. No. 142.

The Night's Reversals.

By R. E. Vernède.

I.

UT of the smoke and noise of the guns, in among the rain-sodden flanks of the Pyrenees, all day the English troops, buffeted and irrepressible, had driven on and up, till by sunset they were well on to La Rhune. The battle had died away now, and to Lieutenant George Trethewy, as he rode his rounds of inspection under the moon, the day's events were already things forgotten in a vast desire of sleep. True, his ears still buzzed, like sea-shells, with the rattle of musketry no longer heard; he still remembered dimly the sweating scramble and that last rush on the French rear-guard in which his own horse had been killed under him, and he had disarmed and taken prisoner in the thick of the *mêlée* a grey-haired colonel whose mount repaid him for the loss of his own chestnut. He was riding the animal now, and the colonel was prisoner in the rear, and the French were in full retreat to their own country, to lie snug towards Bayonne and the more level lands beyond the Nivelle. But Trethewy's appreciation of the day's chances was of the dullest, and having challenged the last outlying sentinel, a grumbler half asleep, he was about to canter back to his own damp blanket for repose when a sudden whistle of a peculiar strain shrilled out of the darkness below him.

So sudden and peculiar was it that the lieutenant forgot his drowsiness. He lifted himself in his stirrups and peered forward into the night. Far below he could see the river, a silver wind in the moonlight, but the sides of the mountain were in shadow impenetrably dark. He cried: "Who goes there?" in a hope that this untoward whistler would declare himself. But only a second whistle was the answer, and, as if in obedience to it, the horse he rode arched his neck, thrust forward his head so as to get the bit in his teeth, and bolted.

A moment sufficed for the whole affair. Then Trethewy became absurdly conscious that he was being run away with—away from the English camp—down the steepest of hillsides towards some mysterious whistler. He tugged at the reins vainly, loosened and jerked, adjured the beast and reviled him; then tightened his knees sullenly and let him go. A picket—the last of the line—challenged him and fired as he swept by. Soon he was among loose stones, the horse sliding, all feet together, and ahead once more a whistle shrilled. But it was changed to another note, and to this the horse drew up on his haunches and began bucking demoniacally. For a moment Trethewy gathered himself together to stick on, but his fatigue was great and the thumping on the hard rock intolerable. He rolled out of his saddle and fell heavily. The tinkling of river-water not far off was the last sound he remembered.

He woke with a stunned feeling. Someone in a dark military cloak was standing over him fingering the horse's bridle, and Trethewy himself was bound.

"Why," he asked, dazed, "what is this?"

"You are my prisoner!"

"But how?"

"The good horse knows my whistle, and you are no rider. That is how!"

His captor, an officer of the French apparently, spoke in broken English with some contempt.

"But——" began Trethewy.

"Silence!" said the other. "You shall not talk—you shall follow. Come quick. Across the river there will be no spying English pickets."

The lieutenant got to his feet with difficulty. Shame at being taken single-handed by a Frenchman would have covered him at

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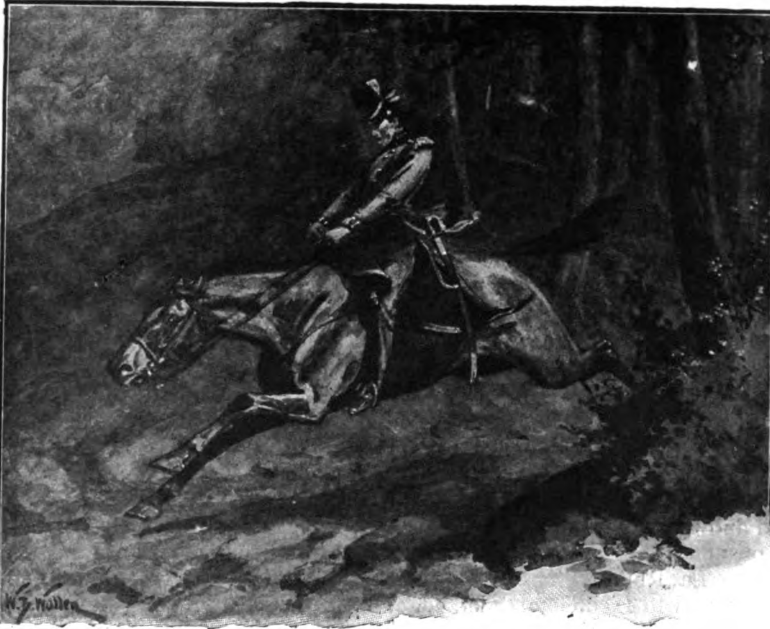

"A PICKET—THE LAST OF THE LINE—CHALLENGED HIM AND FIRED AS HE SWEPT BY."

any other time, but his head was in a whirl, and he hardly resented it when his captor mounted the horse and made him follow with a rope round his waist.

They made for the river thus, and at the side of the broad stream, flat and full with the rains, the whistle was given and returned. Next moment a punt was paddled from under the shelter of a tree by a girl, and they embarked.

Not a word was exchanged until the passage had been made, but as the girl ran the punt inshore she heaved a quick sigh of relief.

"Oh, mam'selle," she cried in French, "how I have been afraid!"

Lieutenant George Trethewy discovered that he had been taken prisoner and bound by a lady. He started to his feet in a frantic disgust, only to realize that, whoever had taken him, had made him fast.

"Rest quiet!" she said, admonishingly, having observed him start, "or you shall be shot."

"Immediate!" added the other maid.

Trethewy rested quiet until he was ordered out of the punt. His shame was almost choking him. To think that he, an English officer, should have been captured by a girl masquerading in a military cloak! Captured, bound, and led like a pig by a string to where she would! And the lady and her maid discussing him to his face in fluent French, while the maid searched the flap of the saddle that was on the horse for something.

"How sullen he looks, mam'selle!"

"These English are so," said mam'selle, in a superior manner. "Also I did not spare him, Marie. He has trudged, trudged, all the time you waited in the boat."

"Would he be an officer, mam'selle?"

"I dare say," said mam'selle. "But he is no matter. Are the despatches there? — that is the question. For I would not have the Comte, my father, reprimanded for riding to the battle with things of such importance in his saddle. Not that he has ever been taken prisoner before."

"No, indeed," said Marie. "It must have been a trap of these English that M. le Comte fell into, otherwise—but the papers are here, mam'selle."

She handed out a bundle of papers.

"That is well," said mam'selle. "And now, what is to be done?"

She looked Trethewy up and down, thoughtfully.

"Surely we shall return to the army and to mam'selle's uncle?"

Marie spoke in some alarm, as if afraid of some new vagary on the part of her mistress.

"But the prisoner?"

"Let him go."

Trethewy's heart leapt at the suggestion; but mam'selle, his captor, had no such intention.

"No," she said; "I must take back my prisoner. He may contain some useful information. M. le Général will adore me for bringing him."

"But we have only one horse, and if the despatches should be retaken?"

"I have thought of it," said mam'selle. "They must arrive, certainly; the prisoner if possible." She paused and put back a curl that had crept out from under the military

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hat that she wore, worriedly. "See, Marie, it is now past midnight, and our troops seven miles away at least. Very well, you shall take Roland and ride with the despatches."

"Alone?"

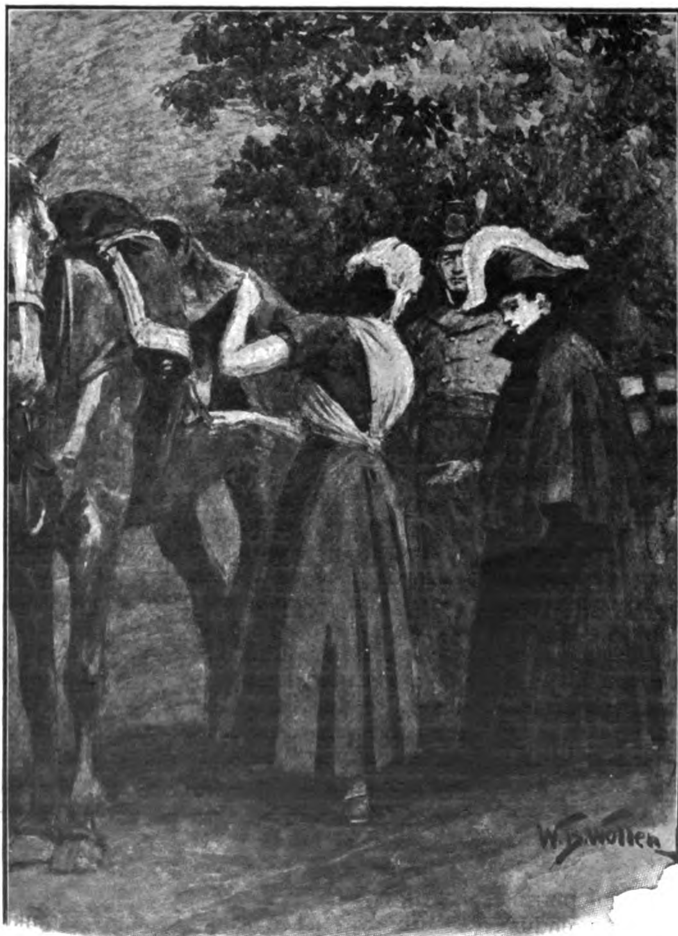
"And I shall wait here with the prisoner until they have sent help."

"But——"

"That is my decision."

She turned a deaf ear to Marie's expostulations, at the double risk, at her own terror at the thought of riding alone, at the danger of mam'selle's prisoner overpowering her.

"Absurd!" she said, haughtily. "He is still stunned and tired infallibly. As for you—are you not also the daughter of a soldier, and have you not the honour to ride with the French army? Then you shall first see me to this woodman's cottage that we found empty among the trees, and afterwards take Roland and ride."



"THE LADY AND HER MAID DISCUSSED HIM TO HIS FACE IN FLUENT FRENCH."

She would hear no more. .. she had seemed in the least doubtful Trethewy would have sunk his pride and abjectly besought her to release him. But he could perceive that she had a secret gratification in the idea of bringing in her prisoner, and when did women ever play the game of war fair? He found himself presently pushed into the shed outside a small cottage in a clearing, and the latch drawn. Presumably mam'selle had made her head-quarters in the cottage itself. He heard Marie whimpering a little as she mounted the horse, Roland, and the pad of hoofs at the start. This grew fainter, and died away in the distance. Mam'selle in the cottage and he in the shed were alone in the valley of the Nivelle between the two armies.

II.

Sparkles of the setting moon played through the chinks of the shed in which Lieutenant Trethewy lay, a prey to black dismay. Death by torture would be preferable a thousand times to being led prisoner into the French camp by a girl. For this would mean to become the butt and laughing-stock of Europe. He could refuse to budge, of course. But then, supposing the English came by? To be found in her charge by his own comrades would be as bad, or worse. He groaned aloud at the very thought of it. Would she release him if he besought her on his knees? Again he was compelled to decide no. She would not understand the indignity of his position. She would refuse haughtily. No heathen goddess could be so merciless as this Amazon of the self-possessed voice and the imperious manner, unconscious of what humiliation she was giving to a man. The more he thought of it the more a hatred of her grew in him. He felt he could strangle her without pity, could hardly endure to live without strangling her. All the

while he was tied, and the knots were tight as he could have made them himself. Women understand knots. He rolled himself over in an agony of spirit, and hit on a woodman's chopper.

A few minutes later, by a persistent sawing of his wrist-ropes against the blunt steel, he had freed himself and unlatched the door easily enough. He was stiff and sore in body and spirit, and sleep danced before his eyes like a mist, but the desire to revenge himself kept them open. He would show her also what it was to be a prisoner.

Very cautiously he crept into the hut. Mam'selle was sleeping in her cloak, and in the moonset, that came more fully through the unglassed window-frame than it had come through the chinks of the hut, he could see her plainly—the rise and fall of her bosom, and the not unbuckled sword sticking out absurdly by her ankles, the black curls of her hair streaming from under her cap like sea-scud, the closed eyelids and closed lips, set sweet and even in her sleep. She was beautiful, then?

The fact brought a change in Trethewy's mind. Having hated her bitterly and intending to humiliate her in her turn, he suddenly became ashamed of himself. What kind of revenge would it be, after all? None. A man could humiliate a woman so any day without trouble. In the present case it would not wipe out what was past. If she had meant to humble him, she had done it. But had she meant any such thing? He began to doubt it now. She merely had acted in a natural way, as a soldier's daughter might. He found her unconsciousness charming, her self-reliance most gallant, her beauty adorable, if only he were not so sleepy. And while he was resolving to leave her undisturbed her eyes opened.

Next moment a pistol was at his head. Ducking, he heard the crack of it and a bullet whizzing by his ear into the wooden wall beyond him. Then he had her by the wrists.

"You are my prisoner!" he said.

Strength to strength she could do nothing, but did not realize it. Her eyes flashed fire and she kicked vehemently, and strained till the little wrists seemed cracking. Then, sinking back, she made no further attempt.

"Do you surrender?" asked Trethewy, amusedly.

"It is the fortune of war," she said, in a resigned voice, with something of purring content in it, as of one proud to endure whatever vicissitude so fine a thing as war might entail. For the life of him the young man could not restrain his laughter.

"War—with a girl!" he said, regretting it in an instant. Tears of indignation were in her eyes now.

"You are most impertinent," she said. That was all, but Trethewy contracted his grin, blushing. She seemed somehow, despite the grudge he owed her, to have put him in the wrong.

"You will admit the laugh is on my side now?" he said, half-heartedly.

"M'sieur may laugh as he pleases," she said, with a feigned soldierly indifference. "Am I to be bound?"

"Certainly," he said, gravely. "One cannot afford to take risks."

He saw that he had hit on the right method to propitiate her, for she brightened perceptibly, even while she kept up her *rôle* of the warrior indifferent to the mere chances of a campaign. He tied her wrists gingerly.

"And now?" she inquired.

"We must return to the army—the British," said Trethewy. "The general will adore me for bringing him a prisoner."

She did not notice the travesty of her words, but stepped out at his command obediently. The moon was sunk now, and a little wind of the dawn was blowing over the grey, cold river. Trethewy rowed across in silence, his prisoner in the stern. Looking at her stealthily from time to time he saw brows set in a frown of reflection and lips compressed to keep them from quivering. Dawn was rising by the time they set foot on the opposite shore, and as they set out for La Rhune a saddle of pink was set on the brown bare back of the mountain. Between it and them lay a great scrubland that climbed slowly, and Trethewy wondered to himself if mam'selle could accomplish the distance. Also, it occurred to him that he should cut almost as ridiculous a figure marching into camp with this prize as he would have cut if the *rôles* had been reversed.

Quite unconscious of his small pride in holding the upper hand, mam'selle walked on boldly. She was not so depressed as he was. He recollected that it was, in her opinion, the fortune of war, and the phrase again made him smile. For fear she should notice it and fire up in her turn he opened a conversation:—

"How was it I came to fall into your hands, if I may ask?"

"Surely," she said, beaming frankly, "simply enough. I follow the army with

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"DAWN WAS RISING BY THE TIME THEY SET FOOT ON THE OPPOSITE SHORE."

my father, the Comte de Fauliane, who had the misfortune in the retreat to be wounded, as we supposed, and captured with important despatches in a secret flap of his saddle."

"I think," said Trethewy, "I had the honour to receive the surrender of M. le Comte."

"Indeed!"

"The wound was slight."

"The enemy must have in that case surrounded him in very superior numbers."

"Doubtless," said Trethewy, politely. She had so evident a pride in her father that he did not like to mention that he had himself, single-handed, disarmed the gallant colonel.

"I am glad to learn," resumed mam'selle, "that the wound was not considerable. The despatches, by the way, are now in safety."

"So far you have bested me," Trethewy admitted. "But how was it planned?"

"Why," she said, "I concluded that the despatches must be retaken, and, suspecting that Roland might be straying somewhere about your camp, I remained behind in the hut over the river, with my maid, in the hope of calling him. He is a dear horse, that I have trained to my whistle."

"Very wonderfully."

She laughed with pleasure.

"You, m'sieur, had the ill-luck to be mounted on him when I called. That explains the situation in which you found yourself. Not the more agreeable side of contest, indeed. I was compelled to bind you."

Trethewy felt his ears tingle at the recollection.

"But you have your revenge," she continued. "No doubt it is equally necessary?"

There was a tinge of sarcasm in this, and perhaps a suggestion of entreaty. In any case, Trethewy felt himself a brute.

"There is no need," he said, hurriedly; "no need whatever for you to have your hands tied if you wish not."

"For choice," she said, "I would certainly be unbound."

Anyone less disconcerted than Trethewy might have suspected something from her smooth deliberateness. But he cut the rope through apologetically, and blushed to see mam'selle chafing the red marks on her wrists.

She dropped behind to do it, and Trethewy, not liking to be inquisitive, walked on slowly. He was asking himself if he had not better tell her she was at liberty. He was not quite sure that he wanted her to be.

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"I must still consider you my prisoner," he said, without looking round.

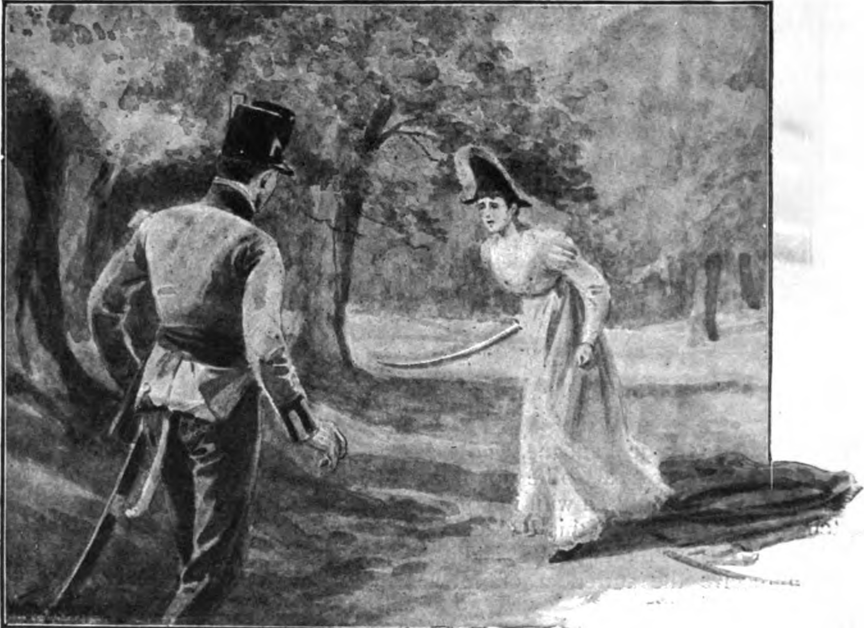
"Monsieur may consider what he pleases."

As he turned with a misgiving at the change in her voice, she threw off the great cloak with a sudden movement and drew the sword at her side.

"But," she cried, "I was the first blade after my father in the army of Ney, monsieur. Defend yourself!"

And she came at him like a fury.

spirits sank to zero at the thought, and he gave back, parrying clumsily. A prick in his left arm made his blood run and cleared his brain. His despondency had been mere folly; he had been making tragedy out of an extravagant farce. Seeing her presently as only a girl again he began to laugh, and in proportion to his laughter he gained ground. Foot by foot he drove her back. She grew pale and panted, and he came on without mercy.



"SHE CAME AT HIM LIKE A FURY."

III.

THEY were in a little coppice of naked beeches, through which the breeze went soughing dismally. The ground, being on one of the lower terraces of the hill, was level enough, but sodden, and for a little Trethewy's heart sank. It was like a woman, he thought, so to have taken advantage of his clemency, so to have renewed the whole hateful business just when it was nearing its end.

He realized, being thus confronted, the immensity of his fatigue, and her attitude recalled all the humiliations of the night. Even to defend himself degraded him, but that was not the worst. She was fresh, agile as a cat, full of joy to be free, and she had declared herself to be the best sword in the army of Ney. Suppose she were? Suppose she disarmed him in equal fight? His

The pain of his wounded arm and the recollections of her ingratitude made him cruel enough to play with her a little, dog and cat, till she lost breath completely. Then with a sharp turn of the wrist he flicked the sword out of her hand.

She stood there quivering. A faintness of his own warned Trethewy that he had delayed to disarm her long enough.

"Do you yield yourself?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Then you are my prisoner," he said. And having said it he turned the point of his sword into the ground to support his heaviness, then fell forward in a faint. Mam'selle knelt beside him, bandaging dexterously with a torn kerchief, when he recovered his senses, or some of them. For the first thing that he thought of was that she had got the better of him, had taken

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him prisoner again. He felt weaker than a child, and a child's spite filled him.

"Leave me alone," he said.

"But you are wounded," she said, smiling at him encouragingly.

"Nonsense."

"It is true."

She shook her head at him gravely, and he began to recollect better what had occurred.

"I am wounded in spirit," he said, rudely, "to think that I should have had such trouble to disarm a girl."

"Also in the arm," she persisted.

He was annoyed that she no longer resented his taunt.

"A mere prick," he said, hastily. "You took me unawares. I did not think that my generosity in unbinding you would be so rewarded."

At this she rose. She had finished her bandage.

"You are unfair," she said, indignantly; "you had not asked my parole. It was my duty to try and escape."

"Oh, of course," jeered Trethewy.

"You did not think it worth while to ask a girl for her parole."

"Certainly not; girls have no part in fighting."

"Yet I wounded you."

"The deuce!"

He felt indescribably sulky, and he wanted to know what was her intention. He could not resist it, whatever it might be.

"What are you going to do now?" he asked.

"I am your prisoner," she said, haughtily.

Trethewy lifted himself a little, not understanding.

"But—but——" he stammered.

"But what?"

"I imagined myself to be yours," he said, weakly.

"That is what I supposed," she said. "And that is why you are not quite so polite as you have been—since we met. For you are chivalrous, except that you think a girl may not be treated with the respect due to a combatant. You think that we do not play the game. Only, monsieur, I at least recollect that I surrendered myself when you might have killed me."

"I see."

"Therefore I am still your prisoner."

She said it with so sweet and solemn a dignity that not for worlds would Trethewy have given way to the temptation to laugh again. Never had he encountered a seriousness so charming, a humour so seductively unconscious. His spirits swung to the other extreme, so that his heart went up like a rocket. But he had no claim to his prisoner now.

"I retract my words," he said. "I have never known the game played so courteously. Only I have no right to avail myself of your forbearance. You might have escaped. I would not deprive you of your liberty for anything."

"You are very kind," she said. "I may go back, then?"

"When you will," he said, hoping forlornly that it would not be soon.

He waited for her reply eagerly.

"I have considered it," she said, slowly; "and it seems that my duty lies with my father. So that, with permission, I will accompany you to the camp of the English. I think, also, that I may be able to assist you a little up the hill."

Trethewy got to his feet slowly and took her hand.

"I think you an angel, mam'selle," he said, as they began to toil upwards; and since she did not seem open to compliments in that direction he added—"as well as the best soldier and swordsman I have met."

She flushed with pleasure then—as she had done when he flattered her by wishing to run no risks!

"I hope we may not always be enemies," she said.

"I hope not," said Lieutenant Trethewy. "I get too many wounds."

He paused, half jesting, half serious, not wholly bold.

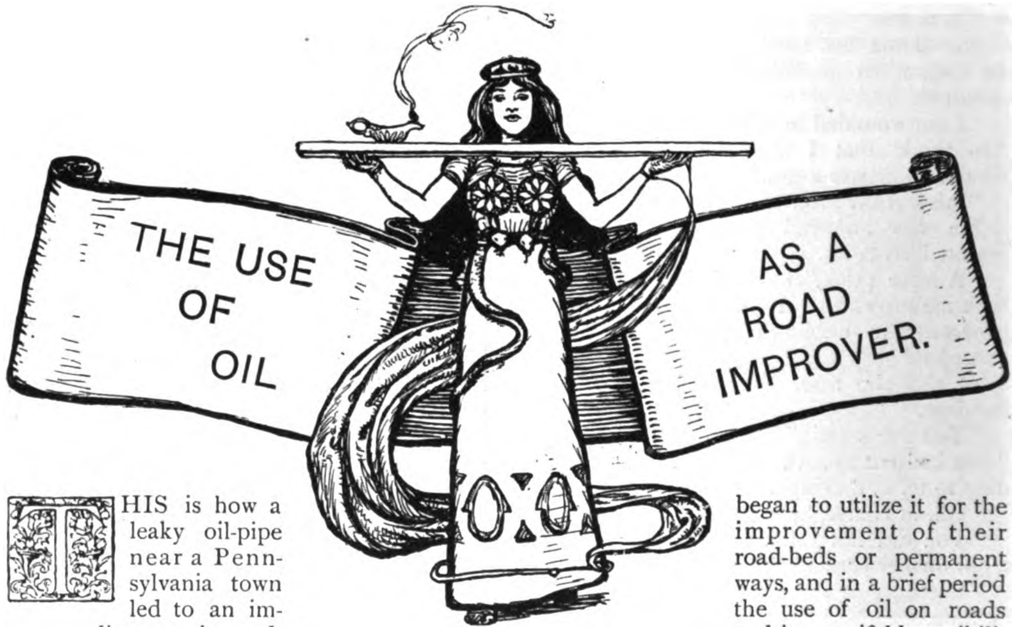
She looked at him inquiringly, not understanding.

"That in the arm does not so much matter," he ventured; "on the other hand, a wound in the heart——"

She quickened her pace and the colour in her cheeks deepened.

"Is only healed in one way."

She answered nothing. On the tops of La Rhune, high up, a bugle sounded the *réveillé*.



By John Nix.

THIS is how a leaky oil-pipe near a Pennsylvania town led to an important discovery in road-making. According to the story, a civil engineer in Iowa got hold of a newspaper clipping from this Pennsylvania town telling him how that same leaky pipe, situated near a place in the road that was impassable with mud during the spring and autumn rains, saturated the ground about with oil. It was noticed soon after that the mud dried up, the surface of the earth became hard, and that which had been a miserable road became, by virtue of the effect of the oil, a good one, causing wonderment in and comment by the citizens of the town and the road-makers of the country round.

In such ways discoveries are made. Experiments with oil—by which we mean the crude oil or petroleum—on other roads were quickly undertaken. The Iowa engineer applied to an oil company for some crude oil with which to carry on his own experiments, and received a tank containing 130 barrels, with the best compliments of the company, and eight barrels of this oil were used on a muddy road near Keokuk with considerable success. The news of the discovery went quickly over the land. Road-making experts began seriously to test its value, railways began to utilize it for the improvement of their road-beds or permanent ways, and in a brief period the use of oil on roads and its manifold possibilities became generally recognised.

The secret of the discovery is contained in the old saying that oil and water will not mix. The earth is porous enough to retain oil poured over it, and thus cause it to shed water. In other words, when the oil goes into the ground the moisture departs and the earth becomes compact; so compact, in fact, that on many of the road-beds of the American railways the surface of the earth is like a sheet of cement, and in several cases slabs of hard earth 5ft. or 6ft. long and 4ft. in width have been picked up.

The first railway, we believe, to make use of oil on its road-bed was the Long Island Railroad of New York, and from Mr. H. B. Fullerton, the special agent of the passenger department of that railroad, we have received some interesting memoranda, giving the results of several years' experiments, as well as a few photographs showing the train with the oil-tanks, sprinklers, etc., in actual use upon that line. The first photograph gives a general idea of the oiling operations. The railway sends this train over its 400 miles of track, evenly distributing thin jets of petroleum alongside the track, thus laying the

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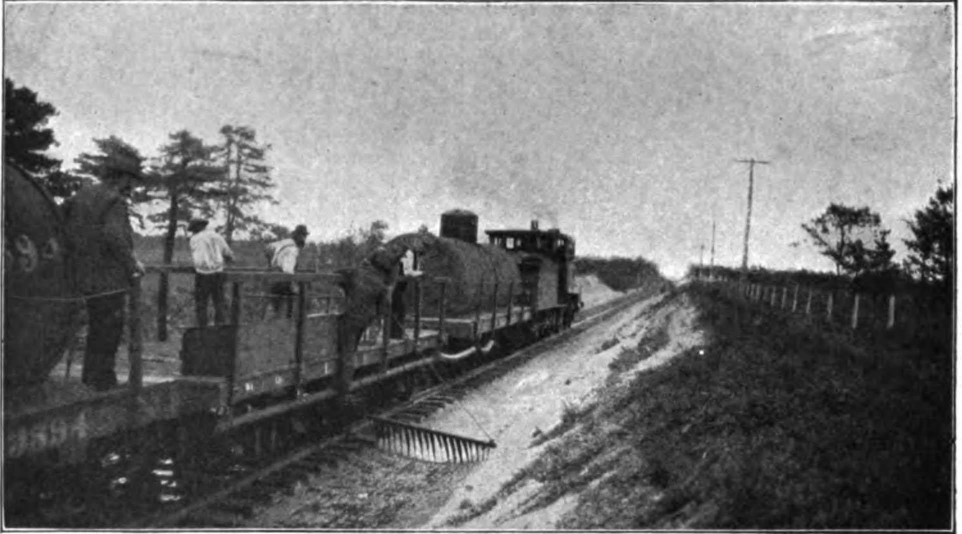
dust, which is such a cause of irritation to the traveller in summer, and improving the stability of its road-beds with every additional application. The motive power is, of course, one of their ordinary locomotives. The supply car shown in our photograph behind is shown in the illustration with the sprinkler or oil-spreader at the side of the rail, as well as the men who operate it. The high light below the car or truck is a reflection from the oil which has been spread between the rails.



OIL-TRAIN AND SPRINKLER AT WORK, SHOWING ENGINE AND SUPPLY-TANK.

the engine is the familiar oil-car used in the United States for transportation of petroleum, such car containing 60,000 gallons. The supply tank is connected with the oiling-car by means of heavy rubber hose. This hose

A few more words are necessary to explain the other photographs in this series. Our second illustration shows the long line of tank-cars of which the train is made up. These tanks are moved forward to their proper

THE TANK-CARS, FILLED WITH OIL, WITH CUTTING, AT SIDE, COVERED WITH OIL.

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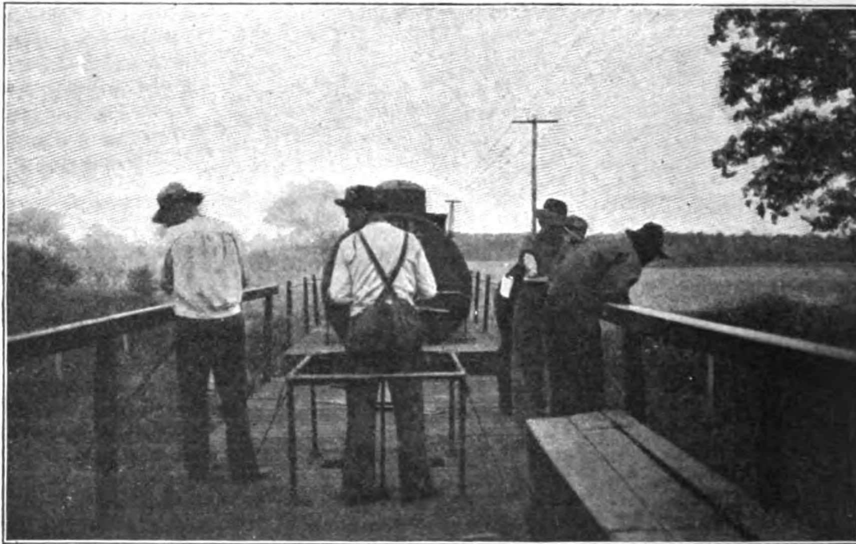
place behind the engine when the oil in the forward tank-car is exhausted. The view, which in this illustration we are able to get from the rear end of the train, shows the slope of the small cutting over which the oil has been distributed, and the openings between the lines of oil are in places distinctly made evident. The spreading of the oil, however, tends to cover these divisions up, and the light, oil-covered soil becomes one homogeneous mass. In this illustration we may also observe the employés bending over the side of the truck, and operating a sprinkler as the train moves along at the rate of about four miles per hour. Our third illustration shows the top of the truck with the control valve in the centre, and the chain that enables the sprinkler to be raised or lowered as cuttings are encountered or passed. The last illustration gives a side view of the sprinkler with the valves and piping necessary for the work.



TOP VIEW, SHOWING CONTROL VALVE, OPERATED BY MAN IN CENTRE, WITH CHAIN AT SIDE FOR RAISING AND LOWERING SPRINKLER.

As the primary use of this oil on the Long Island Railroad is to lay the dust, it is, of course, unnecessary to utilize the oil-train during seasons of rainfall or snowfall—that is to say, in spring, autumn, and winter, when natural conditions tend to keep down the dust. The oil is ordinarily applied late in May or early in June, at the beginning of the warm, dry season, and so perfect have been the results that the railroad is able to complete a day's run with practically none of the dust nuisance. The rear car of one of the passenger trains rarely shows any evidence of dust. Where stone ballast, slag, or gravel is found it is, of course, unnecessary to apply the oil, but where ballast has been disturbed for any reason the oil is again put on. Experience has taught the railroad that after three or four years' use of oil the ballast is penetrated completely to the bottom of the sleepers, and experiments have shown that on four applications on sandy soil the depth penetrated by the oil is over 8in., soil which contains a large quantity of sand being best benefited by the petroleum.

The average quantity of petroleum over a territory of light soil runs about 3,000 gallons to the mile, the thickness of the oil on each sprinkling running about 1½in. The cost per gallon is about three cents, or 1½d., and the cost of the flat car or truck for sprinkling runs from one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars. No skilled help is needed beyond the regular trained hands, and the apparatus on the sprinkler car is readily controlled and worked by the regular section hands in the service of the company. The oil runs freely, experiments proving that a slotted pipe is much more satisfactory than a perforated one, and as the oil flows freely at about sixty degrees it has been found unnecessary to use steam to accelerate the flow. After the oil has been once applied the quantity is reduced gradually with each successive application, and, in time, the use of the oil is naturally given up. The Long Island

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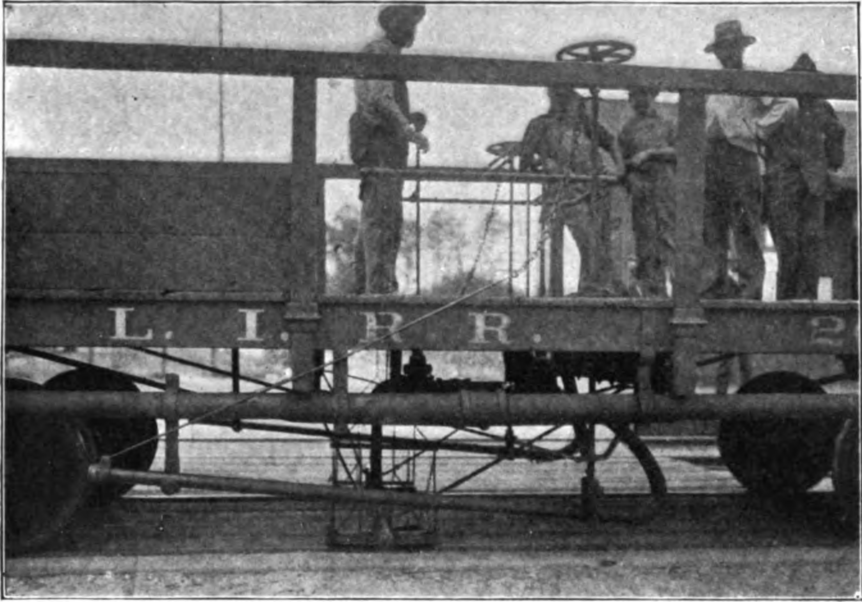

SIDE VIEW OF SPRINKLER, SHOWING VALVES AND PIPING.

Railroad, for instance, will shortly abandon its use, as their road-bed is now in a condition no longer to require the application of oil.

Beyond being an absolute cure for the dust nuisance, oil also prevents the growth of vegetation, which on many road-beds is a serious matter, and, although statistics are not yet available, the preservative action of the oil on the sleepers is practically proved. The effect of the oil in preventing the "heaving" of the road-bed in winter has also been marked, owing to the fact that where oil has been used water has been turned away and injury from frost is reduced to a minimum. Objections have been raised to the smell of the petroleum, and no doubt there is a considerable odour when the oil is applied, especially in the heat of summer; but this odour disappears absolutely in two or three days. It might seem, also, as if the oil would damage the dainty fabrics worn by lady passengers, but as the oiled surface of the sand and light loam is solidly caked, and as the railroad company has never received complaints of such injury, it has been accepted as proved that the oiled surface is not loosened by the passage of trains.

The value of the application of oil for general road improvement has already been touched upon. A report from the British Vice-Consul in San Francisco chronicles the success of recent experiments in Golden Gate Park for laying the dust on roads. The public at first complained that particles of oil-soaked dirt were thrown by carriage wheels and horses' hoofs upon clothing and carriage rugs, but the objections have been overborne by the success of the experiments. The report bears out the value of oil as a dust layer, and stress is laid upon the decrease in public expense. The county and road supervisors agree that the application of petroleum has to a large extent solved the problem of building macadam roadways at a minimum of cost, as the oil mixes well with the dirt and gravel, and makes a smooth, hard surface resembling asphalt pavement.

Account must here, of course, be taken of the fact that the recent discoveries of oil in California have greatly cheapened that commodity, but even where the price of oil is high it is practically admitted that the use of it is cheap in the long run. The movement for its general adoption will spread through other countries than the United States. Experiments on English roads are, we believe, now being arranged. A little leak in an oil-pipe, as we have said, brought it about. But how times have changed! Had any railway fifty years ago poured oil upon its troubled road-bed its shareholders would have risen in a storm of wrath against an apparent waste of money, and had any municipality sent out road-sprinklers filled with oil the taxpayers would have been indignant at another burden on their bending backs.

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A Matter of Duty.

BY HAROLD OHLSON.

E had been silent for several minutes when a rook startled us with a hoarse cry. Lady Emily suggested that someone must have pinched him.

"Amuse us, Johnny," continued my sister, lying back languidly in her chair. "It's too hot to do anything."

"Shall I dance or sing?"

"I didn't say *frighten* us. Tell a story."

"Something to make us laugh," added my young cousin, Frederick, with whose parents my sister and I were staying at the time.

"If I do—it must have a moral," I replied.

"Then you don't mind if I go to sleep?" murmured Lady Emily.

"I should expect it," said I.

I considered the matter for a few moments, and then began:—

"There was once a good young man——"

"I don't believe it," interrupted Lady Emily, shaking her head vigorously.

"He was an embodiment of all the virtues," I persisted.

"It's an autobiography," whispered Frederick.

"If I am to be insulted——"

"No, dear," said my sister, soothingly. "Of course, it can't be that. Don't be insulted."

So I continued.

"There was also a bad young woman."

Lady Emily brightened.

"That's much more interesting," she remarked.

"One day—one fatal day—they met," I continued, in low, impressive tones.

"Is it a funny story, Massingham?" asked Frederick, a trace of anxiety in his voice.

"No," said I, sternly.

My sister had been thoughtful.

"Which day was that?" she inquired.

"Yesterday," said I.

"He's not a good young man."

"I may have emphasized a point by stretching it. Besides, you know, I was comparing him with the bad young woman."

"This is, I suppose, an innuendo?"

"It's a long word," said I, sadly.

"What's the game?" inquired Frederick.

"The bad young woman," I continued, "attempted to steal the young man's heart from the girl who possessed it."

"I didn't," said Emily, indignantly.

Frederick whistled softly.

"You mean Hamilton? He did seem a bit struck yesterday."

"And he is, to all intents and purposes, engaged to our worthy rector's daughter."

"I didn't know that," retorted Emily. "Besides, men are so ridiculous, and—and they don't mean anything."

"You ought to know," I murmured.

"The girl's away just now," remarked Frederick.

Then the nobility of my sister's nature asserted itself. It may have been assisted by the fact that she did not like Mr. Hamilton.

"What shall I do?" she inquired, "to cure him of this—this——"

"Foolishness," I suggested.

"Inconstancy," corrected Emily.

"Shall I tell the guv'nor not to have him here?" asked Frederick.

"Obstacles like that will only make him worse."

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"Then, perhaps, if you go in the other direction, you may cure him by a large dose of your society," I suggested.

Lady Emily thought for a moment; then she said:—

"You mean that nastily, Johnny, and I shall hate you for at least five minutes. However, it is what I am going to do. I shall let him be with me if he wishes, but I shall not be my usual self—sweet and gentle——"

"No—hang it all," ejaculated my youthful cousin.

"It is not my place to run away," said Emily, with dignity; "besides, I'm enjoying myself far too much."

"His former love is returning in a few days, so he must not only have ejected you from his heart, but it must be swept and garnished ready to receive her back into it again. She must never know he ever thought of you."

"'YOU OUGHT TO GO AWAY FROM HERE—THAT WOULD BE BEST,' SAID I."

Frederick nodded vigorously. I coughed.

"But I shall snub him, and fly in tempers, and contradict him, and be generally horrid."

"Poor wretch!" murmured Frederick.

"You ought to go away from here—that would be best," said I.

A slight frown appeared on my sister's face.

"Otherwise," I continued, "she'll probably be too proud to have anything to do with him, and be miserable ever after."

Lady Emily rose.

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"I'll do my best," she said, adding, as she turned to leave us, "I'm not a—a cat, you know."

It was a couple of days afterwards that I revived the topic with my sister. Exactly what had happened in that time I did not know, but I observed that Mr. Hamilton still sought Lady Emily's society, and did not by any means appear cured of his sudden infatuation.

"MR. HAMILTON STILL SOUGHT LADY EMILY'S SOCIETY."

I had retired to the garden after dinner to smoke a cigar when Lady Emily joined me.

"It's no good, Johnny," she said, sinking wearily into a chair at my side. "I shall have to go away."

"It would be for the best, I am sure."

"I've snubbed him, dodged him, shocked him, and still he won't leave me alone. Of course, it's very flattering, and I think I'm a noble woman to do it, Johnny."

"A pattern," I cried.

"Wanting to be cut out," sighed Emily.

"Can't you improvise a—er—a prior attachment? There have been one or two cases in the past——"

"Certainly not."

"Well, if you don't care for truth, try fiction. A lover in a far land, for example."

"Do I appear to be pining?"

I allowed the objection.

"He's awfully jealous of Frederick," said Emily, thoughtfully. "If only I could make him believe! Of course, I can't say anything about it, and we mustn't pretend too much because other people would think it strange, but if I could make him believe I was engaged to Freddie he might go away from here. He talked gloomily about going abroad yesterday, when I had been especially nasty."

"I don't see how it is to be done. He'll want strong proof."

"Come for a walk and let us think," said Emily.

I left my sister to seek a hat, and, seizing the first that came to hand in the hall (a terrible thing of Frederick's, which he termed a real Turkish smoking-cap; scarlet with a blue tassel), rejoined her.

We were standing together under the trees when suddenly, to my intense astonishment, Lady Emily threw her arms round my neck and laid her head on my shoulder.

"Mr. Hamilton's watching—hug me—he'll think it's Freddie—you've got on his awful hat," came in a hurried whisper from the neighbourhood of my collar.

I was a little out of practice, but I did my best. I soon discerned the figure of Hamilton standing among the trees some little distance away. For a few

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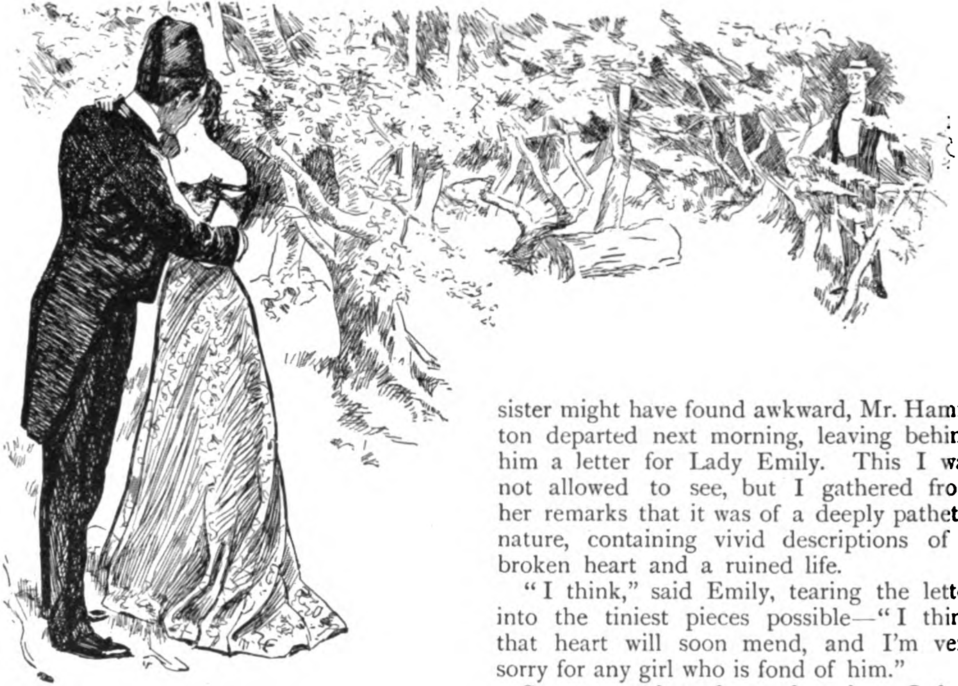

"I SOON DISCERNED THE FIGURE OF HAMILTON STANDING AMONG THE TREES."

moments it remained motionless, then it vanished.

"That's all right," said Emily, disengaging herself. "It was an inspiration! Thank goodness you were wearing that hat. And I say, Johnny, you didn't do it half badly."

I bowed my thanks.

"Praise from one so well qualified to judge——"

"You're a wretch," said Lady Emily.

The ruse was entirely successful, for without insisting on an explanation, which my sister might have found awkward, Mr. Hamilton departed next morning, leaving behind him a letter for Lady Emily. This I was not allowed to see, but I gathered from her remarks that it was of a deeply pathetic nature, containing vivid descriptions of a broken heart and a ruined life.

"I think," said Emily, tearing the letter into the tiniest pieces possible—"I think that heart will soon mend, and I'm very sorry for any girl who is fond of him."

Some months afterwards, when I had almost forgotten the matter, a letter arrived from Frederick announcing the marriage of Mr. Hamilton to his first love.

"She's a hundred times too good for him, I'm sure," said Lady Emily.

She was standing before a mirror, nailing her hat on to her head (an operation I can never behold without a shiver), and I came behind and looked over her shoulder.

"Was there no excuse for him?" I said, pointing to the mirror.

We stood in silence for a moment, Lady Emily reflectively chewing a hat-pin. Then I observed that she was smiling.

"That's rather nice of you, Johnny," she said, presently.

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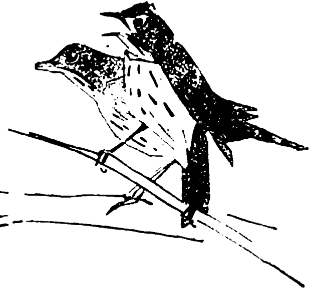
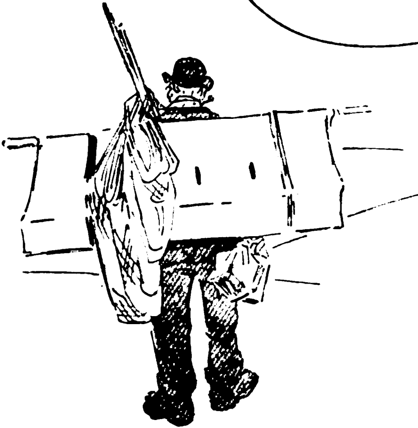
The Arcadian Calendar





October

By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd.

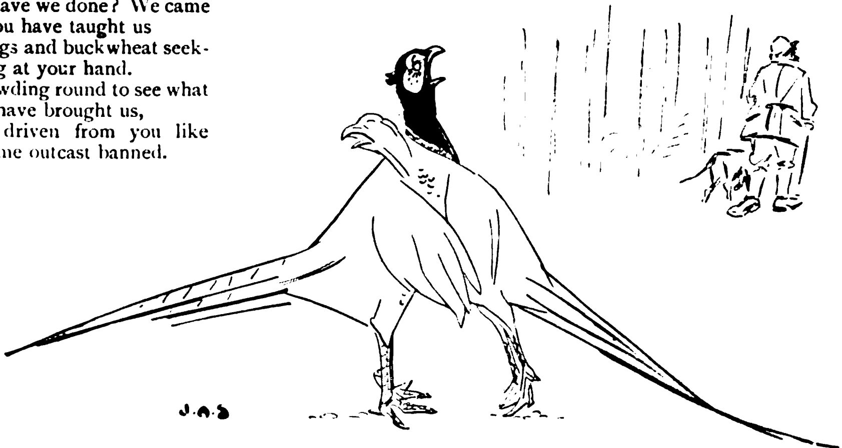
"That was a gun! Some cat or stoat who sought us
  Has paid the debt that all such vermin owe.
Think what you'd feel supposing he had caught us
  And cease to shake your stick and bid us go!

"Another gun! You really don't expect us
  To face the perils of this wood alone;
You know it is your duty to protect us,
  You're only joking when you say 'Begone'!"

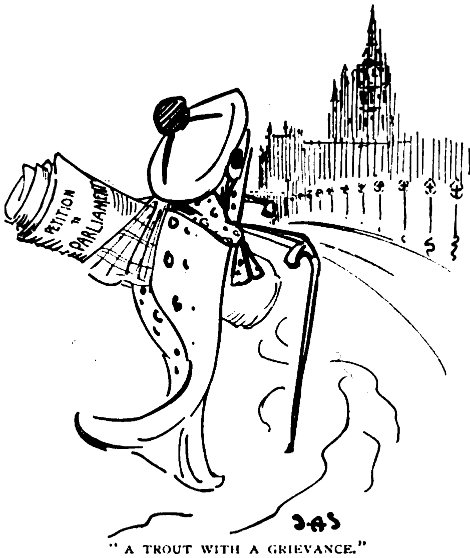
THE First of October brings a rude awakening for the young pheasant brought up by hand; for though shooting-parties are events of the future, birds are wanted for the market, and he who heretofore held the gamekeeper his own familiar friend, bound to him by patent foods, raisins, and a hundred tender ties, is sorely puzzled by the change in his affairs:—

"What have we done? We came
  as you have taught us
Blessings and buckwheat seek-
  ing at your hand.
Now, crowding round to see what
  you have brought us,
We're driven from you like
  some outcast banned.

Time was when the pheasant was reared to have his neck wrung like any tame villatic fowl: his lot on the whole is pleasanter nowadays. The 2nd of October ushers in the season of peace to English and Welsh trout in the majority of rivers: the soul of the Scottish trout must be consumed with bitterness when he considers the favouritism which accords a season of rest to the southern trout and denies the same to him. The hard case of the Scottish trout justifies appeal to Parliament, the more so because the breeding season is now begun:



DESERTED—"WHAT HAVE WE DONE?"

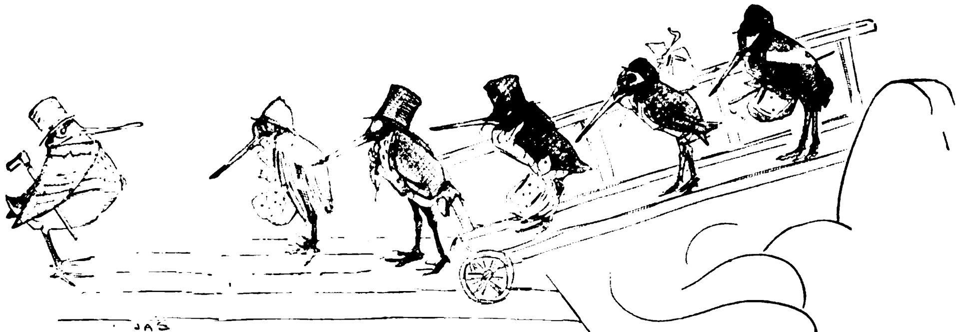


"A TROUT WITH A GRIEVANCE."

in some few streams the trout are already married, but the matrimonial movement reaches full swing in October and goes on all through winter till February.

Migration continues and reaches its height this month: return to us the woodcock, who, for the sake of journeying in company, lay aside their solitary habit and come in flocks under cover of night; but no sooner do they reach land than they hastily bid one another good-bye and scatter in all directions. The snipe come, too, and take up their quarters in bogs, marshes, and similar damp, delectable places; they are so thin and hungry on arrival that fat, well-to-do resident snipe might object to them as pauper aliens. The poor immigrants do not take long to recover themselves: in a week they are as plump as the best, and grow so capricious and restless you are never sure of finding them for two days together in the same place.

Old golden plover, delayed after their children's departure by the necessity for getting their winter suits, arrive in flocks and settle down. Golden plover are very talkative birds: light sleepers, you may hear them on the darkest night chattering in low tones in the ploughed fields where they love to roost; on bright moonlight nights they do not go to bed at all, but stay up feasting on the seashore. They are bosom friends of the starlings, who chum with them in winter, and no doubt show them where the largest and best stocks of grubs and edibles are to be found. The geese, pink-footed, bean, and grey lag, come back to us. They don't time their departure from the north to arrive by night. Mr. Millais saw them one autumn day arriving on Loch Leven: they descended from the upper ether as down a spiral stairway, having made their journey at an immense height in the air. The same observer has watched wild geese feeding at close quarters: they posted sentries on the outskirts of the flock, and when a sentry thought he had done his turn of duty he went and stirred up another goose, the next on the roster, and, having told him the pass-word and given over his orders, began feeding himself. The lapwings gather together in flocks: birds who thus congregate in winter have exceptional opportunities of cultivating acquaintances and arranging well-considered matches for next spring. The chaffinches don't do this: the hen birds declare they have had enough of the men for one year and assemble in large parties by themselves. The few cocks who join these feminine mass meetings no doubt sympathize with their views. Isolation does not appear to weigh heavily on the deserted males; they are as sprightly and cheerful in winter as in summer.



"PAUPER ALIENS."

The weather grows wet and chilly, and the rats, disgusted with the discomforts of country

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"AN OPEN VERDICT IS ALWAYS RETURNED."

life, shut up their summer residences and "come up to town"—to the outhouses and drains—to spend the winter.

It is about this time that the coroner's work among the shrews becomes so heavy; numbers of this quarrelsome community are found lying dead all over the country in autumn. An open verdict is always returned: the body of deceased bears no marks of violence; there is nothing to show that he owes his death to the wide antipathies of his kin; and human science so far has done nothing to elucidate the mystery which baffles the shrew coroner's jury. In the good old days people explained it easily enough; dead shrews, they pointed out with truth, were always found on a road (they were, and are, to be found elsewhere, of course, if you look), demonstrating to finality that they were constitutionally unable to go across a road in the autumn, and that the attempt to do so proved fatal. Mr. Topsell no doubt had the autumnal plenty of dead shrews in mind when he impressed upon his readers that the remedy prepared from its tail for "the sores of any man which came by the biting of a greedy and ravenous dog" depended for its infallibility on the shrew being alive when its tail was cut off.

The haddock's wistful gaze and that of the whiting encounters your eye roving over the fishmonger's slab, for this month finds these fish, among others, at their best. It was the haddock, so legend runneth, from whose mouth St. Peter obtained the money necessary to pay the tax-gatherer; the fish must have wriggled a good deal, for the apostle pinched him so hard that the haddock bears the marks of his finger and thumb on his shoulders to this day. But for these tokens we should not know it was the haddock who furnished that coin.

The humble, succulent whelk is devoting her attention to family affairs. The whelk deposits her eggs in a mass (which sailors are said to use as soap on occasion) and thinks no more about them.

"THE WISTFUL HADDOCK COMES TO LONDON."

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"THE SOLDIER CRAB."

She has indeed enough to think about when the hermit crab is around. Nature dealt cruelly with the soldier or hermit crab, arming him with mail in front and leaving him soft and vulnerable behind. Hence this crab rectifies Nature's omission with his own right claw and shelters the unprotected end of his person in a shell; his tail being thoughtfully supplied with hooks so that he can keep hold of it. If he can find an empty shell that fits he takes that; if he can't he turns out the rightful owner by force of arms; whence one of his popular names: and sits lonely in the purloined dwelling wrapped in claws and contemplation; whence his other popular name:—

He had "got his discharge," was a "beggar at large,"
And he wanted a suitable dwelling,
So he knocked at a shell which he saw would do well
If the tenant would leave at his telling.
But the whelk, who was stout, said he wouldn't come out
Whatever the soldier might do;
"Is it not," he said, "fudge to suppose I shall budge
For a stalk-eyed crustacean like you?"

Then the soldier arose, and he seized by the nose
His sturdy, but feeble, old victim.
Holding Queensberry rules binding only on fools,
He thumped him, and pinched him, and kicked him.
But it boots not to tell of the fight for the shell,
And how might gave the palm to the sinner.
When the battle was done, and the soldier had won,
He sat down to dead whelk for his dinner.
So you see it's a flaw in a natural law
(Or whatever it please you to term it)
Lets that soldier get in and grow fat in his sin,
And, far worse, be revered as a "hermit."

The authorities are not agreed whether the soldier eats the evicted whelk. Let him have the benefit of the doubt, as he must be hungry after the fight. Mr. P. Rufford once saw a small soldier hauled out of a shell which was too big for him by jealous neighbours. A big one seized him by the claw and another held on to the shell, and when they two failed to drag him out a third came along and helped to haul on the shell. Which points to high intelligence as well as low principles in the hermit crab.

The unlovely skate is in season: the female skate is an unrecognised friend of childhood on the beach, as it is she who provides the "pixy purses," those little leathery black cases with a handle at each corner which strew the seashore in summer. The skate puts her eggs in these purses with an eye to their greater safety. The dog-fish makes a purse like the skate's, but furnished with longer handles. The cod is now in his prime: a fish with such a magnificent digestion as the cod ought always to be in the most flourishing health: he disposes of a crab, shell and all, almost as easily as he does of his own and other fishes' tender children. The salmon in many rivers, the Scottish Dee,

"WRAPPED IN CLAWS AND CONTEMPLATION."

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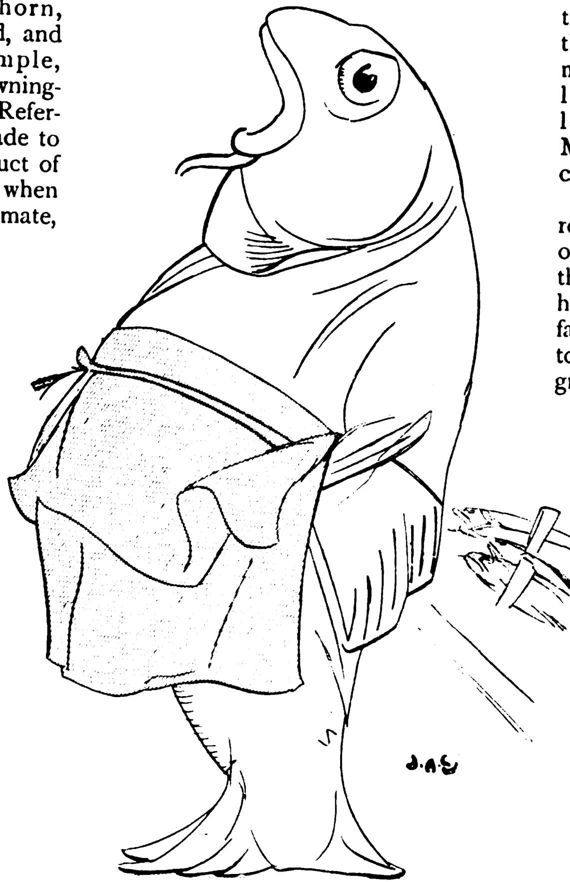
the Spey, Findhorn, Helmsdale, Tweed, and Severn, for example, arrive on the spawning-beds in October. Reference has been made to the heartless conduct of the hen salmon when bereaved of her mate, but, truth to tell, the cock's behaviour has little to recommend it. When his wife has finished putting her eggs in the trench, which she dug without a tail's turn of assistance from him, he lets her go without a sigh, and loafs about quite ready to marry the next hen salmon that comes along; if she bring a husband with her he picks a quarrel with him.



"THE COD IS NOW IN HIS PRIME."

The gudgeon, though considered always fit for the table, is at his best now. The gudgeon is a fish of restful and pensive disposition and will lie still for hours together. A century and a half ago, or less, the gudgeon suffered from the reputation he had as a cure for consumption: the patient had to swallow him alive.

The quail, who for many years past has been developing anti-British views, attributable to the spread of cultivation and consequent disappearance of the rough grass lands wherein she delights, leaves us for the south in October. A few apparently mean to be faithful to us throughout the winter, but their fidelity is regulated by the temperature: if the barometer is falling and the thermometer is low at this season, the quails make no apology for leaving. "By-bye; look you up next May," they say, casually, and go.

The bumble-bees retire: the males and others to their graves; the queen bees, who have to produce families next spring, to their beds underground or elsewhere. The ants, having collected the usual supply of aphis eggs which will hatch out next spring to be the spoiled pets of the colony, shut their doors and pull down the blinds. The outside of the ant-heap suggests that it is deserted: that there ought to be a notice up, "Keys with," etc.; but the place is not to let: the ants have merely gone to bed for the winter. The field cricket puts up his shutters and goes to bed too; if, indeed, he has not gone sooner, for he made an end of singing in August, and if he went to bed then few people would be much the wiser. The flies on the window are beginning to grow stiff and tottery, but warm rooms discourage thoughts of bed just yet, and they remain out to enjoy the climate produced by fire and gas; while the wasps, all but the queens, whose duty to the species keeps them alive, creep away into hiding to die off unmourned. The dragon-fly's eggs now produce the spidery nymphs which dwell on the mud of the stream-bed throughout

"THE QUEEN BEE RETIRES."

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"THE FLIES SIT UP A LITTLE LONGER."

the winter: which situation the nymph must find dull.

The robin breaks up his establishment, divorces his wife, and drives away his children, who are now quite able to look after themselves. Some of our robins winter abroad, but the wiser remain with us. Many robins born in Northern Europe go to Italy for the cold months; but not all of them come back. The Italians have no sentiment about the robin, and eat him in scores—as indeed they do any other small bird who is injudicious enough to give them the chance.

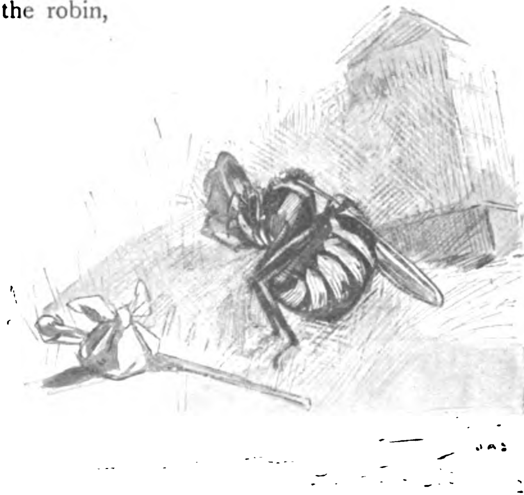
The days grow shorter and colder, and the elderly dormouse, measuring with critic's eye his autumnal rotundity, lights his bedroom candle, so to speak, and trots off:—

When I was young and hale and rather festive
I never was in haste to go to bed;
I never thought to seek the sleep digestive
Until November days were done and dead
When I was young.

Now I am old and stiff and very sober
I count me gay to venture out to tea;
And rheumatism comes in mid-October
To hint that bed's the proper place for me
Now I am old.

Poor old dormouse! it is hard to feel the weight of advancing months and have to go to bed six weeks before your own sons, whose higher vitality enables them to stay up and enjoy themselves so much longer.

The Bird Emigration Office is open all day and all night now; an elaborate series of observations, made by the keepers of light-



"UNMOURNED."

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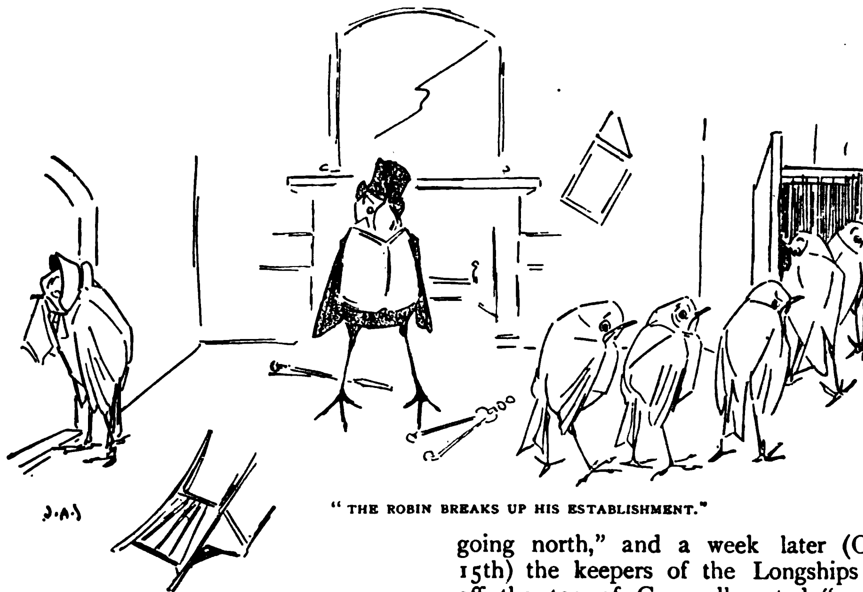
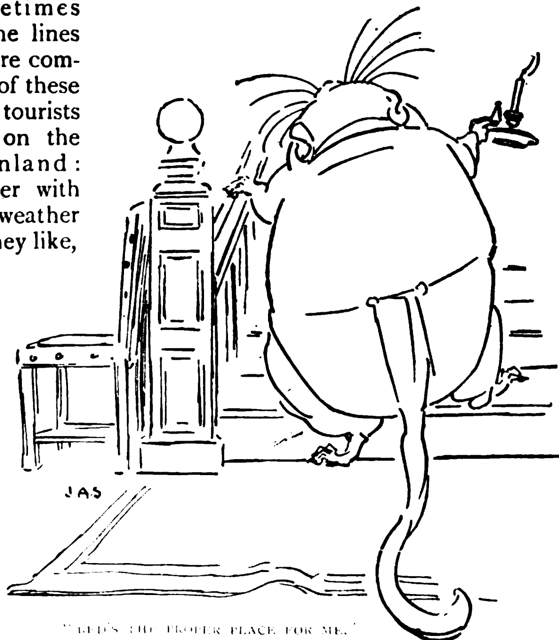


"THE ROBIN BREAKS UP HIS ESTABLISHMENT."

houses and lightships all round the coast of Britain, has shown us in which directions the birds move at all seasons of the year, but their movements in October are perplexing. At this season, for example, skylarks in enormous flocks, vast flights of rooks, sparrows, robins, chaffinches, greenfinches, and starlings, among other species, are arriving on our eastern shores from a south-easterly direction—Holland, Belgium, and France—and going *northward* up the coast, sometimes actually crossing the lines of travellers who are coming *south!* Many of these northward-bound tourists leave their party on the way and turn inland: perhaps they winter with us; perhaps, if the weather turns colder than they like, they book their passages for the south and move on again. But how are we to explain such items as this? On October 9th the keepers of the Rhinns of Islay Light, on the west coast of Scotland, recorded "thousands of puffins going north," and a week later (October 15th) the keepers of the Longships Light, off the toe of Cornwall, noted "scores of puffins going south all day." And while the keepers of the lights on the east and south-east coasts of England are recording the arrival of great flocks of skylarks from the Continent daily, they of Holyhead are noting the arrival of great flocks of skylarks from Ireland. It would really seem as though England were a sort of central tourist depôt whither birds from all parts come to decide where they shall pass the winter.



"BED'S THE PROPER PLACE FOR ME."

The bird-catcher is abroad at this season all over Europe, and his nets save huge numbers of birds the trouble of making winter arrangements. Last October, between the 10th and 14th of the month, the three keepers of the Cape Gris-Nez Light, a few miles south of Calais, caught over 5,900 birds, chiefly larks, thrushes, and corncrakes. The light attracts the birds, nets do the rest; and on this occasion the law stepped in and obtained details

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"OUTWARD BOUND."

ornamental waters in the London parks. The kittiwakes find attractions high up the estuaries also. The wood-pigeon, disgusted, perhaps, by the treatment accorded him in the country districts, where the sportsman adds insult to injury by putting him down under "Various" in the game book after shooting him, sometimes takes up his residence in town. The Londoners make much of him, and his reception in the parks compares more than favourably with that he gets in the cornfields —which is not surprising when you remember that 1,020 grains of corn have been taken out of one wood-pigeon's crop:—

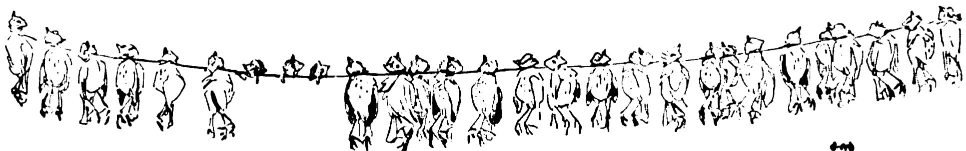
and a fine of fifty francs or thereabouts. In France, Belgium, and Germany the blackbirds and thrushes arrive in such numbers that the bird-catchers make their capture a regular industry during the migration movement; but before we criticise we must remark the strings and festoons of larks in our own poulterers' and game-dealers' shops.

Thousands of birds of all species kill themselves against the glass of the lights in the passage across the Channel and North Sea, but when making a really long journey they travel at an immense height. An astronomer once saw birds and identified the species against the moon, on which his telescope was turned. They were, he estimated, two miles above the earth. On fine nights the birds travel in silence; on dark or misty nights they call continually to one another, no doubt with the object of maintaining touch.

The black-headed gulls take off the brown hoods, which they do not wear in winter, and assemble in estuaries and tidal waters. If it be stormy they come inland, and of late years it has become increasingly fashionable in a certain section of black-headed gull society to spend the winter months on the

At first the sparrows marvelled that a bird so highly bred
Should condescend to mix with them "as pleasant as could be";
"'E oughter 'ave 'is country 'ouse and privit park," they said;
"An' 'ere 'e is a-pickin' crumbs the same as you an' me!
"'E seems a decent feller, too, for all 'is swagger clo's;
I wonder might us take 'im roun' and show 'im all the sights;
There's a sparrer on the keb-ra..k as tells me as 'e knows—
Leastways, a keb-'or e told 'im—where the swells is drove o' nights."

The pigeon said "With pleasure!" so they showed him round the town
One morning very early when the world was in its tub,
And begged him very earnestly to get his name put down
For "'lection" to the Bachelors', or White's, or Boodle's Club.



"TO A SKYLARK!"

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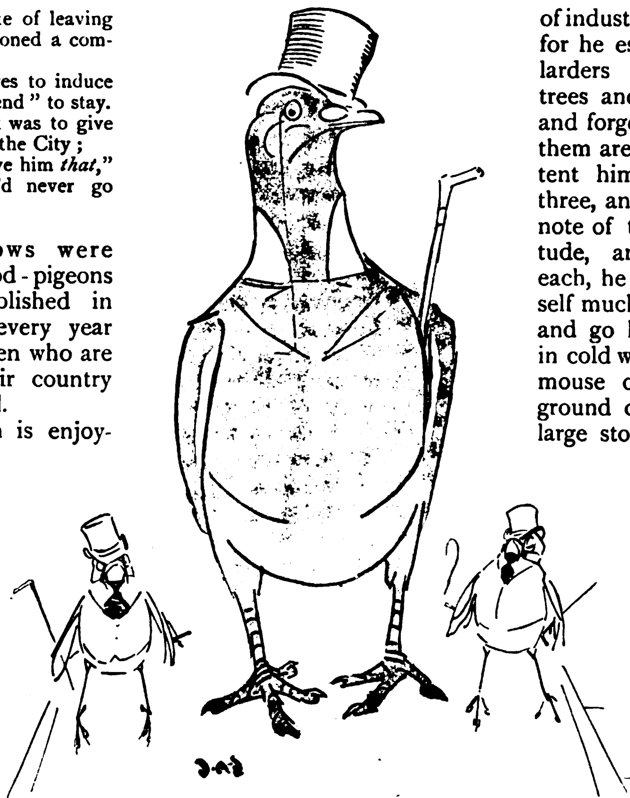
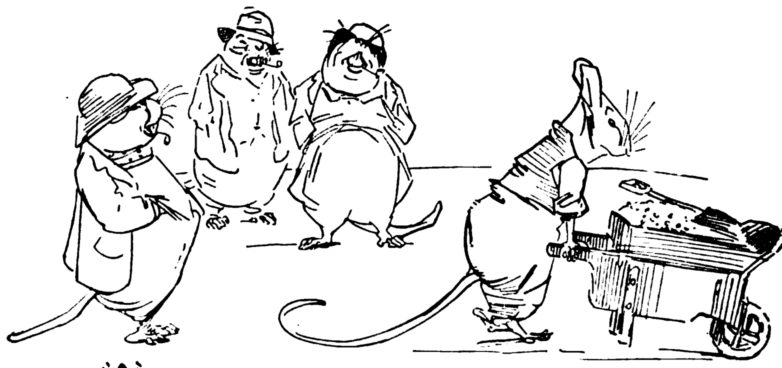
And when he spoke of leaving town they summoned a committee
To ponder measures to induce their "noble friend" to stay.
A happy thought it was to give the Freedom of the City;
"If we should give him *that*," they said, 'he'd never go away."

The sparrows were right; the wood-pigeons are quite established in London, and every year bring up children who are as tame as their country cousins are wild.



"THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY."

The nuthatch is enjoying himself now the hazel nuts are ripe; he might try for a month to break a nut with his unaided beak, but he knows his limitations and is far too wise to waste time and trouble that way. He selects a nut with the skill of an expert, wedges it carefully into some crack in branch or gate-post, and converts his whole person into a pick-axe, bringing all his strength to bear on the blows he gives with the tip of his beak. The squirrel is very busy collecting nuts, acorns, and beechmast and storing the same: he is a glaring example of industry without method, for he establishes a dozen larders in holes in the trees and in the ground, and forgets where most of them are: were he to content himself with two or three, and make a careful note of the latitude, longitude, and elevation of each, he would save himself much trouble hereafter and go hungry less often in cold weather. The field-mouse opens his underground cellar and collects large stocks of grain and sundries: beans, peas, acorns, beechmast—anything that will keep. His winter quarters are generally made under a corn-stack or in a burrow; but occasionally a field-mouse of unusual originality takes an old bird's nest and fits it up to suit his needs. The field-vole loafs about with his hands in his pockets and a straw in his mouth and jeers at his hard-working cousin at this season; the vole does not lay up a winter store: he finds it pleasanter to sleep through the cold weather.



"THE LOAFING VOLE AND THE INDUSTRIOUS MOUSE.

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The Sorceress of the Strand.

By L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace.

STORY I.—MADAME SARA.

EVERYONE in trade and a good many who are not have heard of Werner's Agency, the Solvency Inquiry Agency of all British trade. Its business is to know the financial condition of all wholesale and retail firms, from Rothschild's to the smallest sweetstuff shop in Whitechapel. I do not say that every firm figures on its books, but by methods of secret inquiry it can discover the status of any firm or individual. It is the great safeguard to British trade and prevents much fraudulent dealing.

Of this agency I, Dixon Druce, was appointed manager in 1890. Since then I have met queer people and seen strange sights, for men do curious things for money in this world.

It so happened that in June, 1899, my business took me to Madeira on an inquiry of some importance. I left the island on the 14th of the month by the *Norham Castle* for Southampton. I got on board after dinner. It was a lovely night, and the strains of the band in the public gardens of Funchal came floating across the star-powdered bay through the warm, balmy air. Then the engine bells rang to "Full speed ahead," and, flinging a farewell to the fairest island on earth, I turned to the smoking-room in order to light my cheroot.

"DO YOU WANT A MATCH, SIR?"

"Do you want a match, sir?"

The voice came from a slender, young-looking man who stood near the taffrail. Before I could reply he had struck one and held it out to me.

"Excuse me," he said, as he tossed it overboard, "but surely I am addressing Mr. Dixon Druce?"

"You are, sir," I said, glancing keenly back at him, "but you have the advantage of me."

"Don't you know me?" he responded. "Jack Selby, Hayward's House, Harrow, 1879."

"By Jove! so it is," I cried.

Our hands met in a warm clasp, and a moment later I found myself sitting close to my old friend, who had fagged for me in the bygone days, and whom I had not seen from the moment when I said good-bye to the "Hill" in the grey mist of a December morning twenty years ago. He was a boy of fourteen then, but nevertheless I recognised him. His face was bronzed and good-looking, his features refined. As a boy Selby had been noted for his grace, his well-shaped head, his clean-cut features; these characteristics still were his, and although he was now slightly past his first youth he was decidedly handsome. He gave me a quick sketch of his history.

"My father left me plenty of money," he said, "and The Meadows, our old family place, is now mine. I have a taste for natural history; that taste took me two years ago to South America. I have had my share of strange adventures, and have collected valuable specimens and trophies. I am now on my way home from Para, on the Amazon, having come by a Booth boat to Madeira and changed there to the Castle Line. But why all this talk about myself?" he added, bringing his deck-chair a little nearer to mine. "What about your history, old chap? Are you settled down with a wife and kiddies of your own, or is that dream of your school days fulfilled, and are you the owner of the best private laboratory in London?"

"As to the laboratory," I said, with a

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smile, "you must come and see it. For the rest I am unmarried. Are you?"

"I was married the day before I left Para, and my wife is on board with me."

"Capital," I answered. "Let me hear all about it."

"You shall. Her maiden name was Dallas; Beatrice Dallas. She is just twenty now. Her father was an Englishman and her mother a Spaniard; neither parent is living. She has an elder sister, Edith, nearly thirty years of age, unmarried, who is on board with us. There is also a step-brother, considerably older than either Edith or Beatrice. I met my wife last year in Para, and at once fell in love. I am the happiest man on earth. It goes without saying that I think her beautiful, and she is also very well off. The story of her wealth is a curious one. Her uncle on the mother's side was an extremely wealthy Spaniard, who made an enormous fortune in Brazil out of diamonds and minerals; he owned several mines. But it is supposed that his wealth turned his brain. At any rate, it seems to have done so as far as the disposal of his money went. He divided the yearly profits and interest between his nephew and his two nieces, but declared that the property itself should never be split up. He has left the whole of it to that one of the three who should survive the others. A perfectly insane arrangement, but not, I believe, unprecedented in Brazil."

"Very insane," I echoed. "What was he worth?"

"Over two million sterling."

"By Jove!" I cried, "what a sum! But what about the half-brother?"

"He must be over forty years of age, and is evidently a bad lot. I have never seen him. His sisters won't speak to him or have anything to do with him. I understand that he is a great gambler; I am further told that he is at present in England, and, as there are certain technicalities to be gone through before the girls can fully enjoy their incomes, one of the first things I must do when I get home is to find him out. He has to sign certain papers, for we sha'n't be able to put things straight until we get his whereabouts. Some time ago my wife and Edith heard that he was ill, but dead or alive we must know all about him, and as quickly as possible."

I made no answer, and he continued:—

"I'll introduce you to my wife and sister-in-law to-morrow. Beatrice is quite a child compared to Edith, who acts towards her almost like a mother. Bee is a little beauty, so fresh and round and young-looking. But Edith is handsome, too, although I sometimes think she is as vain as a peacock. By the way, Druce, this brings me to another part of my story. The sisters have an acquaintance on board, one of the most remarkable women I have ever met. She goes by the name of Madame Sara, and knows London well. In fact, she confesses to having a shop in the Strand. What she has been doing in Brazil I do not know, for she keeps all her affairs strictly private. But you will be amazed when I tell you what her calling is."

"What?" I asked.

"A professional beautifier. She claims the privilege of restoring youth to those who consult her. She also declares that she can make quite ugly people handsome. There is no doubt that she is very clever. She knows a little bit of everything, and has wonderful recipes with regard to medicines, surgery, and dentistry. She is a most lovely woman herself, very fair, with blue eyes, an innocent, childlike manner, and quantities of rippling gold hair. She openly confesses that she is very much older than she appears. She looks about five-and-twenty. She seems to have travelled all over the world, and says that by birth she is a mixture of Indian and Italian, her father having been Italian and her mother Indian. Accompanying her is an Arab, a handsome, picturesque sort of fellow, who gives her the most absolute devotion, and she is also bringing back to England two Brazilians from Para. This woman deals in all sorts of curious secrets, but principally in cosmetics. Her shop in the Strand could, I fancy, tell many a strange history. Her clients go to her there, and she does what is necessary for them. It is a fact that she occasionally performs small surgical operations, and there is not a dentist in London who can vie with her. She confesses quite naïvely that she holds some secrets for making false teeth cling to the palate that no one knows of. Edith Dallas is devoted to her—in fact, her adoration amounts to idolatry."

"You give a very brilliant account of this woman," I said. "You must introduce me to-morrow."

"I will," answered Jack, with a smile. "I should like your opinion of her. I am right glad I have met you, Druce, it is like old times. When we get to London I mean to put up at my town house in Eaton Square for the remainder of the season. The Meadows shall be re-furnished, and Bee and

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I will take up our quarters some time in August; then you must come and see us. But I am afraid before I give myself up to mere pleasure I must find that precious brother-in-law, Henry Joachim Silva."

"If you have any difficulty apply to me," I said. "I can put at your disposal, in an unofficial way, of course, agents who would find almost any man in England, dead or alive."

I then proceeded to give Selby a short account of my own business.

"Thanks," he said, presently, "that is capital. You are the very man we want."

The next morning after breakfast Jack introduced me to his wife and sister-in-law. They were both foreign-looking, but very handsome, and the wife in particular had a graceful and uncommon appearance.

We had been chatting about five minutes when I saw coming down the deck a slight, rather small woman, wearing a big sun hat.

"Ah, Madame," cried Selby, "here you are. I had the luck to meet an old friend on board—Mr. Dixon Druce—and I have been telling him all about you. I should like you to know each other. Druce, this lady is Madame Sara, of whom I have spoken to you. Mr. Dixon Druce—Madame Sara."

She bowed gracefully and then looked at me earnestly. I had seldom seen a more lovely woman. By her side both Mrs. Selby and her sister seemed to fade into insignificance. Her complexion was almost dazzlingly fair, her face refined in expression, her eyes penetrating, clever, and yet with the innocent, frank gaze of a child. Her dress was very simple; she looked altogether like a young, fresh, and natural girl.

As we sat chatting lightly and about commonplace topics, I instinctively felt that she took an interest in me even greater than might be evinced from an ordinary introduction. By slow degrees she so turned the conversation as to leave Selby and his wife and sister out, and then as they moved away she came a little nearer, and said in a low voice:—

"I am very glad we have met, and yet how odd this meeting is! Was it really accidental?"

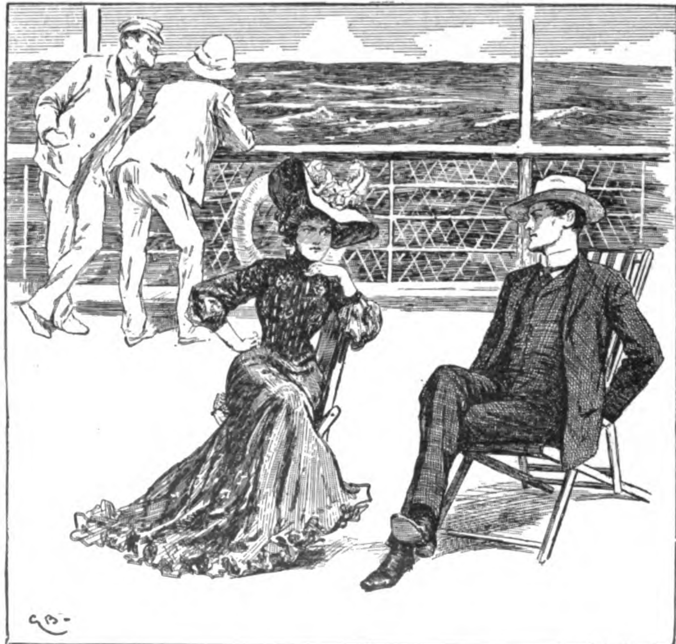
"I do not understand you," I answered.

"I know who you are," she said, lightly. "You are the manager of Werner's Agency; its business is to know the private affairs of those people who would rather keep their own secrets. Now, Mr. Druce, I am going to be absolutely frank with you. I own a small shop in the Strand—it is a perfumery shop—and behind those innocent-looking doors I conduct that business which brings me in gold of the realm. Have you, Mr. Druce, any objection to my continuing to make a livelihood in perfectly innocent ways?"

"None whatever," I answered. "You puzzle me by alluding to the subject."

"I want you to pay my shop a visit when you come to London. I have been away for three or four months. I do wonders for my clients, and they pay me largely for my services. I hold some perfectly innocent secrets which I cannot confide to anybody. I have obtained them partly from the Indians and partly from the natives of Brazil. I have lately been in Para to inquire into certain methods by which my trade can be improved."

"And your trade is——?" I said, looking at her with amusement and some surprise.



"I SHOULD ADVISE YOU, MR. DRUCE, EVEN IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY, NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THEM."

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"I am a beautifier," she said, lightly. She looked at me with a smile. "You don't want me yet, Mr. Druce, but the time may come when even you will wish to keep back the infirmities of years. In the meantime can you guess my age?"

"I will not hazard a guess," I answered.

"And I will not tell you. Let it remain a secret. Meanwhile, understand that my calling is quite an open one, and I do hold secrets. I should advise you, Mr. Druce, even in your professional capacity, not to interfere with them."

The childlike expression faded from her face as she uttered the last words. There seemed to ring a sort of challenge in her tone. She turned away after a few moments and I rejoined my friends.

"You have been making acquaintance with Madame Sara, Mr. Druce," said Mrs. Selby. "Don't you think she is lovely?"

"She is one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen," I answered, "but there seems to be a mystery about her."

"Oh, indeed there is," said Edith Dallas, gravely.

"She asked me if I could guess her age," I continued. "I did not try, but surely she cannot be more than five-and-twenty."

"No one knows her age," said Mrs. Selby, "but I will tell you a curious fact, which, perhaps, you will not believe. She was bridesmaid at my mother's wedding thirty years ago. She declares that she never changes, and has no fear of old age."

"You mean that seriously?" I cried. "But surely it is impossible?"

"Her name is on the register, and my mother knew her well. She was mysterious then, and I think my mother got into her power, but of that I am not certain. Anyhow, Edith and I adore her, don't we, Edie?"

She laid her hand affectionately on her sister's arm. Edith Dallas did not speak, but her face was careworn. After a time she said, slowly:—

"Madame Sara is uncanny and terrible."

There is, perhaps, no business imaginable—not even a lawyer's—that engenders suspicions more than mine. I hate all mysteries—both in persons and things. Mysteries are my natural enemies; I felt now that this woman was a distinct mystery. That she was interested in me I did not doubt, perhaps because she was afraid of me.

The rest of our voyage passed pleasantly enough. The more I saw of Mrs. Selby and her sister the more I liked them. They were quiet, simple, and straightforward. I felt sure that they were both as good as gold.

We parted at Waterloo, Jack and his wife and her sister going to Jack's house in Eaton Square, and I returning to my quarters in St. John's Wood. I had a house there, with a long garden, at the bottom of which was my laboratory, the laboratory that was the pride of my life, it being, I fondly considered, the best private laboratory in London. There I spent all my spare time making experiments and trying this chemical combination and the other, living in hopes of doing great things some day, for Werner's Agency was not to be the end of my career. Nevertheless, it interested me thoroughly, and I was not sorry to get back to my commercial conundrums.

The next day, just before I started to go to my place of business, Jack Selby was announced.

"I want you to help me," he said. "I have been already trying in a sort of general way to get information about my brother-in-law, but all in vain. There is no such person in any of the directories. Can you put me on the road to discovery?"

I said I could and would if he would leave the matter in my hands.

"With pleasure," he replied. "You see how we are fixed up. Neither Edith nor Bee can get money with any regularity until the man is found. I cannot imagine why he hides himself."

"I will insert advertisements in the personal columns of the newspapers," I said, "and request anyone who can give information to communicate with me at my office. I will also give instructions to all the branches of my firm, as well as to my head assistants in London, to keep their eyes open for any news. You may be quite certain that in a week or two we shall know all about him."

Selby appeared cheered at this proposal, and, having begged of me to call upon his wife and her sister as soon as possible, took his leave.

On that very day advertisements were drawn up and sent to several newspapers and inquiry agents; but week after week passed without the slightest result. Selby got very fidgety at the delay. He was never happy except in my presence, and insisted on my coming, whenever I had time, to his house. I was glad to do so, for I took an interest both in him and his belongings, and as to Madame Sara I could not get her out of my head. One day Mrs. Selby said to me:—

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"Have you ever been to see Madame? I know she would like to show you her shop and general surroundings."

"I did promise to call upon her," I answered, "but have not had time to do so yet."

"Will you come with me to-morrow morning?" asked Edith Dallas, suddenly.

She turned red as she spoke, and the worried, uneasy expression became more marked on her face. I had noticed for some time that she had been looking both nervous and depressed. I had first observed this peculiarity about her on board the *Norham Castle*, but, as time went on, instead of lessening it grew worse. Her face for so young a woman was haggard; she started at each sound, and Madame Sara's name was never spoken in her presence without her evincing almost undue emotion.

"Will you come with me?" she said, with great eagerness.

I immediately promised, and the next day, about eleven o'clock, Edith Dallas and I found ourselves in a hansom driving to Madame Sara's shop. We reached it in a few minutes, and found an unpretentious little place wedged in between a hosier's on one side and a cheap print-seller's on the other. In the windows of the shop were pyramids of perfume bottles, with scintillating facet stoppers tied with coloured ribbons. We stepped out of the hansom and went indoors. Inside the shop were a couple of steps, which led to a door of solid mahogany.

"This is the entrance to her private house," said Edith, and she pointed to a small brass plate, on which was engraved the name —"Madame Sara, Parfumeuse."

Edith touched an electric bell and the door was immediately opened by a smartly-dressed page-boy. He looked at Miss Dallas as if he knew her very well, and said:—

"Madame is within, and is expecting you, miss."

He ushered us both into a quiet-looking room, soberly but handsomely furnished. He left us, closing the door. Edith turned to me.

"Do you know where we are?" she asked.

"We are standing at present in a small room just behind Madame Sara's shop," I answered. "Why are you so excited, Miss Dallas? What is the matter with you?"

"We are on the threshold of a magician's cave," she replied. "We shall soon be face to face with the most marvellous woman in the whole of London. There is no one like her."

"And you—fear her?" I said, dropping my voice to a whisper.

She started, stepped back, and with great difficulty recovered her composure. At that moment the page-boy returned to conduct us through a series of small waiting-rooms, and we soon found ourselves in the presence of Madame herself.

"Ah!" she said, with a smile. "This is delightful. You have kept your word, Edith, and I am greatly obliged to you. I will now show Mr. Druce some of the mysteries of my trade. But understand, sir," she added, "that I shall not tell you any of my real secrets, only as you would like to know something about me you shall."

"THIS IS MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM."

"How can you tell I should like to know about you?" I asked.

She gave me an earnest glance which somewhat astonished me, and then she said:—

"Knowledge is power; don't refuse what I am willing to give. Edith, you will not object to waiting here while I show Mr. Druce through my rooms. First observe this room, Mr. Druce. It is lighted only from the roof. When the door shuts it automatically locks itself, so that any intrusion from without is impossible. This is my sanctum sanctorum—a faint odour of perfumes pervades the room. This is a hot day, but the room itself is cool. What do you think of it all?"

I made no answer. She walked to the other end and motioned to me to accompany her. There stood a polished oak square table, on which lay an array of extraordinary-looking articles and implements—stoppered bottles full of strange medicaments, mirrors, plane and concave, brushes, sprays, sponges, delicate needle-pointed instruments of bright steel, tiny lancets, and forceps. Facing this table was a chair, like those used by dentists. Above the chair hung electric lights in powerful reflectors, and lenses like bull's-eye lanterns. Another chair, supported on a glass pedestal, was kept there, Madame Sara informed me, for administering static electricity. There were dry-cell batteries for the continuous currents and induction coils for Faradic currents. There were also platinum needles for burning out the roots of hairs.

Madame took me from this room into another, where a still more formidable array of instruments were to be found. Here were a wooden operating-table and chloroform and ether apparatus. When I had looked at everything, she turned to me.

"Now you know," she said. "I am a doctor—perhaps a quack. These are my secrets. By means of these I live and flourish."

She turned her back on me and walked into the other room with the light, springy step of youth. Edith Dallas, white as a ghost, was waiting for us.

"You have done your duty, my child," said Madame. "Mr. Druce has seen just what I want him to see. I am very much obliged to you both. We shall meet to-night at Lady Farringdon's 'At-home.' Until then, farewell."

When we got into the street and were driving back again to Eaton Square, I turned to Edith.

"Many things puzzle me about your friend," I said, "but perhaps none more than this. By what possible means can a woman who owns to being the possessor of a shop obtain the *entrée* to some of the best houses in London? Why does Society open her doors to this woman, Miss Dallas?"

"I cannot quite tell you," was her reply. "I only know the fact that wherever she goes she is welcomed and treated with consideration, and wherever she fails to appear there is a universally expressed feeling of regret."

I had also been invited to Lady Farringdon's reception that evening, and I went there in a state of great curiosity. There was no doubt that Madame interested me. I was not sure of her. Beyond doubt there was a mystery attached to her, and also, for some unaccountable reason, she wished both to propitiate and defy me. Why was this?

I arrived early, and was standing in the crush near the head of the staircase when Madame was announced. She wore the richest white satin and quantities of diamonds. I saw her hostess bend towards her and talk eagerly. I noticed Madame reply and the pleased expression that crossed Lady Farringdon's face. A few minutes later a man with a foreign-looking face and long beard sat down before the grand piano. He played a light prelude and Madame Sara began to sing. Her voice was sweet and low, with an extraordinary pathos in it. It was the sort of voice that penetrates to the heart. There was an instant pause in the gay chatter. She sang amidst perfect silence, and when the song had come to an end there followed a *furore* of applause. I was just turning to say something to my nearest neighbour when I observed Edith Dallas, who was standing close by. Her eyes met mine; she laid her hand on my sleeve.

"The room is hot," she said, half panting as she spoke. "Take me out on the balcony."

I did so. The atmosphere of the reception-rooms was almost intolerable, but it was comparatively cool in the open air.

"I must not lose sight of her," she said, suddenly.

"Of whom?" I asked, somewhat astonished at her words.

"Of Sara."

"She is there," I said. "You can see her from where you stand."

We happened to be alone. I came a little closer.

"Why are you afraid of her?" I asked.

"Are you sure that we shall not be heard?" was her answer.

"Certain."

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"She terrifies me," were her next words.

"I will not betray your confidence, Miss Dallas. Will you not trust me? You ought to give me a reason for your fears."

"I cannot—I dare not; I have said far too much already. Don't keep me, Mr. Druce. She must not find us together."

As she spoke she pushed her way through the crowd, and before I could stop her was standing by Madame Sara's side.

The reception in Portland Place was, I remember, on the 26th of July. Two days later the Selbys were to give their final "At-home" before leaving for the country. I was, of course, invited to be present, and Madame was also there. She had never been dressed more splendidly, nor had she ever before looked younger or more beautiful. Wherever she went all eyes followed her. As a rule her dress was simple, almost like what a girl would wear, but to-night she chose rich Oriental stuffs made of many colours, and absolutely glittering with gems. Her golden hair was studded with diamonds. Round her neck she wore turquoise and diamonds mixed. There were many younger women in the room, but not the youngest nor the fairest had a chance beside Madame. It was not mere beauty of appearance, it was charm — charm which carries all before it.

I saw Miss Dallas, looking slim and tall and pale, standing at a little distance. I made my way to her side. Before I had time to speak she bent towards me.

"Is she not divine?" she whispered. "She bewilders and delights everyone. She is taking London by storm."

"Then you are not afraid of her to-night?" I said.

"WHY ARE YOU AFRAID OF HER?"

"I fear her more than ever. She has cast a spell over me. But listen, she is going to sing again."

I had not forgotten the song that Madame had given us at the Farringdons', and stood still to listen. There was a complete hush in the room. Her voice floated over the heads of the assembled guests in a dreamy Spanish song. Edith told me that it was a slumber song, and that Madame boasted of her power of putting almost anyone to sleep who listened to her rendering of it.

"She has many patients who suffer from insomnia," whispered the girl, "and she generally cures them with that song, and that alone. Ah! we must not talk; she will hear us."

Before I could reply Selby came hurrying up. He had not noticed Edith. He caught me by the arm.

"Come just for a minute into this window, Dixon," he said. "I must speak to you. I suppose you have no news with regard to my brother-in-law?"

"Not a word," I answered.

"To tell you the truth, I am getting terribly put out over the matter. We cannot settle any of our money affairs just because this man chooses to lose himself. My wife's lawyers wired to Brazil yesterday, but even his bankers do not know anything about him."

"The whole thing is a question of time," was my answer. "When are you off to Hampshire?"

"On Saturday."

As Selby said the last words he looked around him, then he dropped his voice.

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"I want to say something else. The more I see"—he nodded towards Madame Sara—"the less I like her. Edith is getting into a very strange state. Have you not noticed it? And the worst of it is my wife is also infected. I suppose it is that dodge of the woman's for patching people up and making them beautiful. Doubtless the temptation is overpowering in the case of a plain woman, but Beatrice is beautiful herself and young. What can she have to do with cosmetics and complexion pills?"

"You don't mean to tell me that your wife has consulted Madame Sara as a doctor?"

"Not exactly, but she has gone to her about her teeth. She complained of toothache lately, and Madame's dentistry is renowned. Edith is constantly going to her for one thing or another, but then Edith is infatuated."

As Jack said the last words he went over to speak to someone else, and before I could leave the seclusion of the window I perceived Edith Dallas and Madame Sara in earnest conversation together. I could not help overhearing the following words:—

"Don't come to me to-morrow. Get into the country as soon as you can. It is far and away the best thing to do."

As Madame spoke she turned swiftly and caught my eye. She bowed, and the peculiar look, the sort of challenge, she had before given me flashed over her face. It made me uncomfortable, and during the night that followed I could not get it out of my head.

"SHE BOWED, AND THE PECULIAR LOOK SHE HAD BEFORE GIVEN ME FLASHED OVER HER FACE."

I remembered what Selby had said with regard to his wife and her money affairs. Beyond doubt he had married into a mystery —a mystery that Madame Sara knew all about. There was a very big money interest, and strange things happen when millions are concerned.

The next morning I had just risen and was sitting at breakfast when a note was handed to me. It came by special messenger, and was marked "Urgent." I tore it open. These were its contents:—

"MY DEAR DRUCE,—A terrible blow has fallen on us. My sister-in-law, Edith, was taken suddenly ill this morning at breakfast. The nearest doctor was sent for, but he could do nothing, as she died half an hour ago. Do come and see me, and if you know any very clever specialist bring him with you. My wife is utterly stunned by the shock.—Yours, JACK SELBY."

I read the note twice before I could realize what it meant. Then I rushed out and, hailing the first hansom I met, said to the man:—

"Drive to No. 192, Victoria Street, as quickly as you can."

Here lived a certain Mr. Eric Vandeleur, an old friend of mine and the police surgeon for the Westminster district, which included Eaton Square. No shrewder or sharper fellow existed than Vandeleur, and the present case was essentially in his province, both legally and professionally. He was not at his flat when I arrived, having already

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gone down to the court. Here I accordingly hurried, and was informed that he was in the mortuary.

For a man who, as it seemed to me, lived in a perpetual atmosphere of crime and violence, of death and coroners' courts, his habitual cheerfulness and brightness of manner were remarkable. Perhaps it was only the reaction from his work, for he had the reputation of being one of the most astute experts of the day in medical jurisprudence, and the most skilled analyst in toxicological cases on the Metropolitan Police staff. Before I could send him word that I wanted to see him I heard a door bang, and Vandeleur came hurrying down the passage, putting on his coat as he rushed along.

"Halloa!" he cried. "I haven't seen you for ages. Do you want me?"

"Yes, very urgently," I answered. "Are you busy?"

"Head over ears, my dear chap. I cannot give you a moment now, but perhaps later on."

"What is it? You look excited."

"I have got to go to Eaton Square like the wind, but come along, if you like, and tell me on the way."

"Capital," I cried. "The thing has been reported, then? You are going to Mr. Selby's, No. 34A; then I am going with you."

He looked at me in amazement.

"But the case has only just been reported. What can you possibly know about it?"

"Everything. Let us take this hansom, and I will tell you as we go along."

As we drove to Eaton Square I quickly explained the situation, glancing now and then at Vandeleur's bright, clean-shaven face. He was no longer Eric Vandeleur, the man with the latest club story and the merry twinkle in his blue eyes: he was Vandeleur the medical jurist, with a face like a mask, his lower jaw slightly protruding and features very fixed.

"This thing promises to be serious," he replied, as I finished, "but I can do nothing until after the autopsy. Here we are, and there is my man waiting for me; he has been smart."

On the steps stood an official-looking man in uniform, who saluted.

"Coroner's officer," explained Vandeleur.

We entered the silent, darkened house. Selby was standing in the hall. He came to meet us. I introduced him to Vandeleur, and he at once led us into the dining-room, where we found Dr. Osborne, whom Selby had called in when the alarm of Edith's illness had been first given. Dr. Osborne was a pale, under-sized, very young man. His face expressed considerable alarm. Vandeleur, however, managed to put him completely at his ease.

"I will have a chat with you in a few minutes, Dr. Osborne," he said; "but first I must get Mr. Selby's report. Will you please tell us, sir, exactly what occurred?"

"Certainly," he answered. "We had a reception here last night, and my sister-in-law did not go to bed until early morning; she was in bad spirits, but otherwise in her usual health. My wife went into her room after she was in bed, and told me later on that she had found Edith in hysterics, and could not get her to explain anything. We both talked about taking her to the country without delay. Indeed, our intention was to get off this afternoon."

"Well?" said Vandeleur.

"We had breakfast about half-past nine, and Miss Dallas came down, looking quite in her usual health, and in apparently good spirits. She ate with appetite, and, as it happened, she and my wife were both helped from the same dish. The meal had nearly come to an end when she jumped up from the table, uttered a sharp cry, turned very pale, pressed her hand to her side, and ran out of the room. My wife immediately followed her. She came back again in a minute or two, and said that Edith was in violent pain, and begged of me to send for a doctor. Dr. Osborne lives just round the corner. He came at once, but she died almost immediately after his arrival."

"You were in the room?" asked Vandeleur, turning to Osborne.

"Yes," he replied. "She was conscious to the last moment, and died suddenly."

"Did she tell you anything?"

"No, except to assure me that she had not eaten any food that day until she had come down to breakfast. After the death occurred I sent immediately to report the case, locked the door of the room where the poor girl's body is, and saw also that nobody touched anything on this table."

Vandeleur rang the bell and a servant appeared. He gave quick orders. The entire remains of the meal were collected and taken charge of, and then he and the coroner's officer went upstairs.

When we were alone Selby sank into a chair. His face was quite drawn and haggard.

"It is the horrible suddenness of the thing which is so appalling," he cried. "As to

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Beatrice, I don't believe she will ever be the same again. She was deeply attached to Edith. Edith was nearly ten years her senior, and always acted the part of mother to her. This is a sad beginning to our life. I can scarcely think collectedly."

"SHE JUMPED UP FROM THE TABLE AND UTTERED A SHARP CRY."

I remained with him a little longer, and then, as Vandeleur did not return, went back to my own house. There I could settle to nothing, and when Vandeleur rang me up on the telephone about six o'clock I hurried off to his rooms. As soon as I arrived I saw that Selby was with him, and the expression on both their faces told me the truth.

"This is a bad business," said Vandeleur. "Miss Dallas has died from swallowing poison. An exhaustive analysis and examination have been made, and a powerful poison, unknown to European toxicologists, has been found. This is strange enough, but how it has been administered is a puzzle. I confess, at the present moment, we are all nonplussed. It certainly was not in the remains of the breakfast, and we have her dying evidence that she took nothing else. Now, a poison with such appalling potency would take effect quickly. It is evident that she was quite well when she came to breakfast, and that the poison began to work towards the close of the meal. But how did she get it? This question, however, I shall deal with later on. The more immediate point is this. The situation is a serious one in view of the monetary issues and the value of the lady's life. From the aspects of the case, her undoubted sanity and her affection for her sister, we may almost exclude the idea of suicide. We must, therefore, call it murder. This harmless, innocent lady is struck down by the hand of an assassin, and with such devilish cunning that no trace or clue is left behind. For such an act there must have been some very powerful motive, and the person who designed and executed it must be a criminal of the highest order of scientific ability. Mr. Selby has been telling me the exact financial position of the poor lady, and also of his own young wife. The absolute disappearance of the step-brother, in view of his previous character, is in the highest degree strange. Knowing, as we do, that between him and two million sterling there stood two lives—*one is taken!*"

A deadly sensation of cold seized me as Vandeleur uttered these last words. I glanced at Selby. His face was colourless and the pupils of his eyes were contracted, as though he saw something which terrified him.

"What has happened once may happen again," continued Vandeleur. "We are in the presence of a great mystery, and I counsel you, Mr. Selby, to guard your wife with the utmost care."

These words, falling from a man of Vandeleur's position and authority on such matters, were sufficiently shocking for me to hear, but for Selby to be given such a solemn warning about his young and beautiful and newly-married wife, who was all the world to

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"I COUNSEL YOU, MR. SELBY, TO GUARD YOUR WIFE."

him, was terrible indeed. He leant his head on his hands.

"Mercy on us!" he muttered. "Is this a civilized country when death can walk abroad like this, invisible, not to be avoided? Tell me, Mr. Vandeleur, what I must do."

"You must be guided by me," said Vandeleur, "and, believe me, there is no witchcraft in the world. I shall place a detective in your household immediately. Don't be alarmed; he will come to you in plain clothes and will simply act as a servant. Nevertheless, nothing can be done to your wife without his knowledge. As to you, Druce," he continued, turning to me, "the police are doing all they can to find this man Silva, and I ask you to help them with your big agency, and to begin at once. Leave your friend to me. Wire instantly if you hear news."

"You may rely on me," I said, and a moment later I had left the room.

As I walked rapidly down the street the thought of Madame Sara, her shop and its mysterious background, its surgical instruments, its operating-table, its induction coils, came back to me. And yet what could Madame Sara have to do with the present strange, inexplicable mystery?

The thought had scarcely crossed my mind before I heard a clatter alongside the kerb, and turning round I saw a smart open carriage, drawn by a pair of horses, standing there. I also heard my own name. I turned. Bending out of the carriage was Madame Sara.

"I saw you going by, Mr. Druce. I have only just heard the news about poor Edith Dallas. I am terribly shocked and upset. I have been to the house, but they would not admit me. Have you heard what was the cause of her death?"

Madame's blue eyes filled with tears as she spoke.

"I am not at liberty to disclose what I have heard, Madame," I answered, "since I am officially connected with the affair."

Her eyes narrowed. The brimming tears dried as though by magic. Her glance became scornful.

"Thank you," she answered; "your reply tells me that she did not die naturally. How very appalling! But I must not keep you. Can I drive you anywhere?"

"No, thank you."

"Good-bye, then."

She made a sign to the coachman, and as the carriage rolled away turned to look back at me. Her face wore the defiant expression I had seen there more than once. Could she be connected with the affair? The thought came upon me with a violence that seemed almost conviction. Yet I had no reason for it—none.

To find Henry Joachim Silva was now my principal thought. Advertisements were widely circulated. My staff had instructions to make every possible inquiry, with large money rewards as incitements. The collateral branches of other agencies throughout Brazil were communicated with by cable, and all the Scotland Yard channels were used. Still there was no result. The newspapers took up the case; there were paragraphs in most of them with regard to the missing step-brother and the mysterious death of Edith Dallas. Then someone got hold of the story of the will, and this was

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retailed with many additions for the benefit of the public. At the inquest the jury returned the following verdict:—

"*We find that Miss Edith Dallas died from taking poison of unknown name, but by whom or how administered there is no evidence to say.*"

This unsatisfactory state of things was destined to change quite suddenly. On the 6th of August, as I was seated in my office, a note was brought me by a private messenger. It ran as follows:—

"Norfolk Hotel, Strand.

"DEAR SIR,—I have just arrived in London from Brazil, and have seen your advertisements. I was about to insert one myself in order to find the whereabouts of my sisters. I am a great invalid and unable to leave my room. Can you come to see me at the earliest possible moment?—Yours,

"HENRY JOACHIM SILVA."

In uncontrollable excitement I hastily dispatched two telegrams, one to Selby and the other to Vandeleur, begging of them to be with me, without fail, as soon as possible. So the man had never been in England at all. The situation was more bewildering than ever. One thing, at least, was probable—Edith Dallas's death was not due to her step-brother. Soon after half-past six Selby arrived, and Vandeleur walked in ten minutes later. I told them what had occurred and showed them the letter. In half an hour's time we reached the hotel, and on stating who I was we were shown into a room on the first floor by Silva's private servant. Resting in an arm-chair, as we entered, sat a man; his face was terribly thin. The eyes and cheeks were so sunken that the face had almost the appearance of a skull. He made no effort to rise when we entered, and glanced from one of us to the other with the utmost astonishment. I at once introduced myself and explained who we were. He then waved his hand for his man to retire.

"You have heard the news, of course, Mr. Silva?" I said.

"News! What?" He glanced up to me and seemed to read something in my face. He started back in his chair.

"Good heavens!" he replied. "Do you allude to my sisters? Tell me, quickly, are they alive?"

"Your elder sister died on the 29th of July, and there is every reason to believe that her death was caused by foul play."

As I uttered these words the change that passed over his face was fearful to witness. He did not speak, but remained motionless. His claw-like hands clutched the arms of the chair, his eyes were fixed and staring, as though they would start from their hollow sockets, the colour of his skin was like clay. I heard Selby breathe quickly behind me, and Vandeleur stepped towards the man and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Tell us what you know of this matter," he said, sharply.

Recovering himself with an effort, the invalid began in a tremulous voice:—

"Listen closely, for you must act quickly. I am indirectly responsible for this fearful thing. My life has been a wild and wasted one, and now I am dying. The doctors tell me I cannot live a month, for I have a large aneurism of the heart. Eighteen months ago I was in Rio. I was living fast and gambled heavily. Among my fellow-gamblers was a man much older than myself. His name was José Aranjo. He was, if anything, a greater gambler than I. One night we played alone. The stakes ran high until they reached a big figure. By daylight I had lost to him nearly £200,000. Though I am a rich man in point of income under my uncle's will, I could not pay a twentieth part of that sum. This man knew my financial position, and, in addition to a sum of £5,000 paid down, I gave him a document. I must have been mad to do so. The document was this—it was duly witnessed and attested by a lawyer—that, in the event of my surviving my two sisters and thus inheriting the whole of my uncle's vast wealth, half a million should go to José Aranjo. I felt I was breaking up at the time, and the chances of my inheriting the money were small. Immediately after the completion of the document this man left Rio, and I then heard a great deal about him that I had not previously known. He was a man of the queerest antecedents, partly Indian, partly Italian. He had spent many years of his life amongst the Indians. I heard also that he was as cruel as he was clever, and possessed some wonderful secrets of poisoning unknown to the West. I thought a great deal about this, for I knew that by signing that document I had placed the lives of my two sisters between him and a fortune. I came to Para six weeks ago, only to learn that one of my sisters was married and that both had gone to England. Ill as I was, I determined to follow them in order to warn them. I also wanted to arrange matters with you, Mr. Selby."

"One moment, sir," I broke in, suddenly.

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"Do you happen to be aware if this man, José Aranjo, knew a woman calling herself Madame Sara?"

"Knew her?" cried Silva. "Very well indeed, and so, for that matter, did I. Aranjo and Madame Sara were the best friends, and constantly met. She called herself a professional beautifier—was very handsome, and had secrets for the pursuing of her trade unknown even to Aranjo."

"Good heavens!" I cried, "and the woman is now in London. She returned here with Mrs. Selby and Miss Dallas. Edith was very much influenced by her, and was constantly with her. There is no doubt in my mind that she is guilty. I have suspected her for some time, but I could not find a motive. Now the motive appears. You surely can have her arrested?"

Vandeleur made no reply. He gave me a strange look, then he turned to Selby.

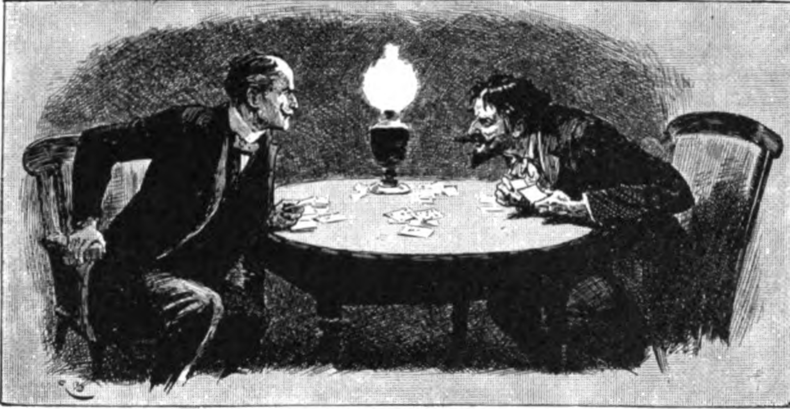
"Has your wife also consulted Madame Sara?" he asked, sharply.

"Yes, she went to her once about her teeth, but has not been to the shop since Edith's death. I begged of her not to see the woman, and she promised me faithfully she would not do so."

"Has she any medicines or lotions given to her by Madame Sara—does she follow any line of treatment advised by her?"

"No, I am certain on that point."

"Very well, I will see your wife to-night in order to ask her some questions. You must both leave town at once. Go to your country house and settle there. I am quite serious when I say that Mrs. Selby is in the utmost possible danger until after the death of her brother. We must leave you now, Mr. Silva. All business affairs must wait for the present. It is absolutely necessary that Mrs. Selby should leave London at once. Good-night, sir. I shall give myself the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow morning."



"I HAD LOST TO HIM NEARLY £200,000!"

We took leave of the sick man. As soon as we got into the street Vandeleur stopped.

"I must leave it to you, Selby," he said, "to judge how much of this matter you will tell to your wife. Were I you I would explain everything. The time for immediate action has arrived, and she is a brave and sensible woman. From this moment you must watch all the foods and liquids that she takes. She must never be out of your sight or out of the sight of some other trustworthy companion."

"I shall, of course, watch my wife myself," said Selby. "But the thing is enough to drive one mad."

"I will go with you to the country, Selby," I said, suddenly.

"Ah!" cried Vandeleur, "that is the best thing possible, and what I wanted to propose. Go, all of you, by an early train to-morrow."

"Then I will be off home at once, to make arrangements," I said. "I will meet you, Selby, at Waterloo for the first train to Cronsmoor to-morrow."

As I was turning away Vandeleur caught my arm.

"I am glad you are going with them," he said. "I shall write to you to-night *re* instructions. Never be without a loaded revolver. Good-night."

By 6.15 the next morning Selby, his wife, and I were in a reserved, locked, first-class compartment, speeding rapidly west. The servants and Mrs. Selby's own special maid were in a separate carriage. Selby's face

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showed signs of a sleepless night, and presented a striking contrast to the fair, fresh face of the girl round whom this strange battle raged. Her husband had told her everything, and, though still suffering terribly from the shock and grief of her sister's death, her face was calm and full of repose.

A carriage was waiting for us at Cronsmoor, and by half-past nine we arrived at the old home of the Selbys, nestling amid its oaks and elms. Everything was done to make the home-coming of the bride as cheerful as circumstances would permit, but a gloom, impossible to lift, overshadowed Selby himself. He could scarcely rouse himself to take the slightest interest in anything.

The following morning I received a letter from Vandeleur. It was very short, and once more impressed on me the necessity of caution. He said that two eminent physicians had examined Silva, and the verdict was that he could not live a month. Until his death precautions must be strictly observed.

The day was cloudless, and after breakfast I was just starting out for a stroll when the butler brought me a telegram. I tore it open; it was from Vandeleur.

"Prohibit all food until I arrive. Am coming down," were the words. I hurried into the study and gave it to Selby. He read it and looked up at me.

"Find out the first train and go and meet him, old chap," he said. "Let us hope that this means an end of the hideous affair."

I went into the hall and looked up the trains. The next arrived at Cronsmoor at 10.45. I then strolled round to the stables and ordered a carriage, after which I walked up and down on the drive. There was no doubt that something strange had happened. Vandeleur coming down so suddenly must mean a final clearing up of the mystery. I had just turned round at the lodge gates to wait for the carriage when the sound of wheels and of horses galloping struck on my ears. The gates were swung open, and Vandeleur in an open fly dashed through them. Before I could recover from my surprise he was out of the vehicle and at my side. He carried a small black bag in his hand.

"VANDELEUR IN AN OPEN FLY DASHED THROUGH."

"I came down by special train," he said, speaking quickly. "There is not a moment to lose. Come at once. Is Mrs. Selby all right?"

"What do you mean?" I replied. "Of course she is. Do you suppose that she is in danger?"

"Deadly," was his answer. "Come."

We dashed up to the house together. Selby, who had heard our steps, came to meet us.

"Mr. Vandeleur!" he cried. "What is it? How did you come?"

"By special train, Mr. Selby. And I want to see your wife at once. It will be necessary to perform a very trifling operation."

"Operation!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; at once."

We made our way through the hall and into the morning-room, where Mrs. Selby

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was busily engaged reading and answering letters. She started up when she saw Vandeleur and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"What has happened?" she asked.

Vandeleur went up to her and took her hand.

"Do not be alarmed," he said, "for I have come to put all your fears to rest. Now, please, listen to me. When you visited Madame Sara with your sister, did you go for medical advice?"

The colour rushed into her face.

"One of my teeth ached," she answered. "I went to her about that. She is, as I suppose you know, a most wonderful dentist. She examined the tooth, found that it required stopping, and got an assistant, a Brazilian, I think, to do it."

"And your tooth has been comfortable ever since?"

"Yes, quite. She had one of Edith's stopped at the same time."

"Will you kindly sit down and show me which was the tooth into which the stopping was put?"

She did so.

"This was the one," she said, pointing with her finger to one in the lower jaw. "What do you mean? Is there anything wrong?"

Vandeleur examined the tooth long and carefully. There was a sudden rapid movement of his hand, and a sharp cry from Mrs. Selby. With the deftness of long practice, and a powerful wrist, he had extracted the tooth with one wrench. The suddenness of the whole thing, startling as it was, was not so strange as his next movement.

"Send Mrs. Selby's maid to her," he said, turning to her husband; "then come, both of you, into the next room."

The maid was summoned. Poor Mrs. Selby had sunk back in her chair, terrified and half fainting. A moment later Selby joined us in the dining-room.

"That's right," said Vandeleur; "close the door, will you?"

He opened his black bag and brought out several instruments. With one he removed the stopping from the tooth. It was quite soft and came away easily. Then from the bag he produced a small guinea-pig, which he requested me to hold. He pressed the sharp instrument into the tooth, and opening the mouth of the little animal placed the point on the tongue. The effect was instantaneous. The little head fell on to one of my hands—the guinea-pig was dead. Vandeleur was white as a sheet. He hurried up to Selby and wrung his hand.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, "I've been in time, but only just. Your wife is safe. This stopping would hardly have held another hour. I have been thinking all night over the mystery of your sister-in-law's death, and over every minute detail of evidence as to how the poison could have been administered. Suddenly the coincidence of both sisters having had their teeth stopped struck me as remarkable. Like a flash the solution came to me. The more I considered it the more I felt that I was right; but by what fiendish cunning such a scheme could have been conceived and executed is still beyond my power to explain. The poison is very like hyoscine, one of the worst toxic-alkaloids known, so violent in its deadly proportions that the amount that would go into a tooth would cause almost instant death. It has been kept in by a gutta-percha stopping, certain to come out within a month, probably earlier, and most probably during mastication of food. The person would die either immediately or after a very few minutes, and no one would connect a visit to the dentist with a death a month afterwards."

What followed can be told in a very few words. Madame Sara was arrested on suspicion. She appeared before the magistrate, looking innocent and beautiful, and managed during her evidence completely to baffle that acute individual. She denied nothing, but declared that the poison must have been put into the tooth by one of the two Brazilians whom she had lately engaged to help her with her dentistry. She had her suspicions with regard to these men soon afterwards, and had dismissed them. She believed that they were in the pay of José Aranjo, but she could not tell anything for certain. Thus Madame escaped conviction. I was certain that she was guilty, but there was not a shadow of real proof. A month later Silva died, and Selby is now a double millionaire.

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The Humour of Sport.

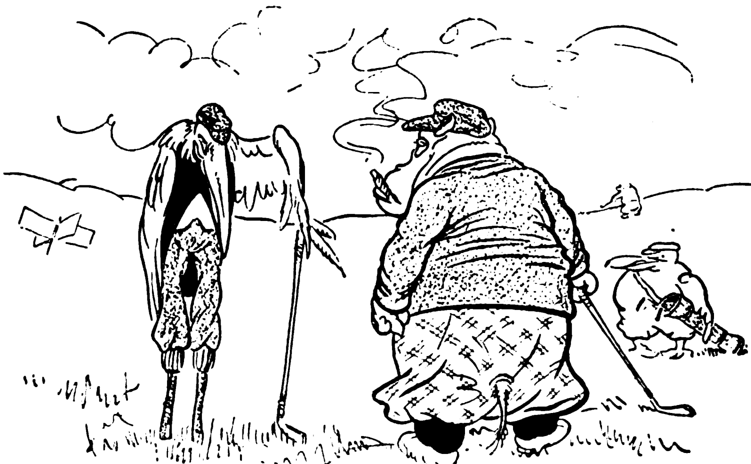
II.—GOLF.

By James Walter Smith.

MUCH of the humour of golf comes from the outside. The insider — he who plays—never makes fun of the Ancient and Royal Game. This is as it should be. There is no game which is, or deserves to be, taken more seriously. According to one cynic, it requires two years to learn the terms of the game, another two years to differentiate the clubs and to learn the use of each, and still another year to find out that no golfer is a hero to his caddie. By the time this five years' apprenticeship is served, continues our cynic, you are fit to begin to learn the game, have perhaps become a careless though hardened dispenser of strong language, and have learned to handle a cleek with some *aplomb* before the lady with whom you may be engaging in a hole-to-hole tournament.

" In my humble opinion a man looks at his very best in golfing kit."
DRAWN BY E. MITCHELL. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "GOLF ILLUSTRATED."

To the tyro at golf we fancy that the subject of dress presents many perplexities. He who would play golf, even though he be a hippopotamus, is subject to rigid rule; but the choice of cloth or style of knickerbockers is merely a question of checks and length. The blazing red golf jacket, which a few years ago made the links a seeming paradise for any neighbouring bull, has apparently gone out of fashion, and the golfer now clothes himself in quiet cloth of quiet pattern that does not wake his brother-players up at night. A golf suit covers a multitude of deficiencies in many a player, but we agree with the gentleman in our illustration when he says that a man looks his very best in it.



Natural Advantages.—The Adjutant: "I am almost sorry that knickerbockers are so fashionable."
The Hippo: "To tell the truth, so am I."
DRAWN BY A. Z. BAKER FOR "PUCK."

Once the question of dress is settled and the caddie-bag picked out, the actual difficulties of the game begin. Golf is like any other game that demands close study. Its nomenclature is puzzling, but he who takes earnestly to the game need worry but little over the

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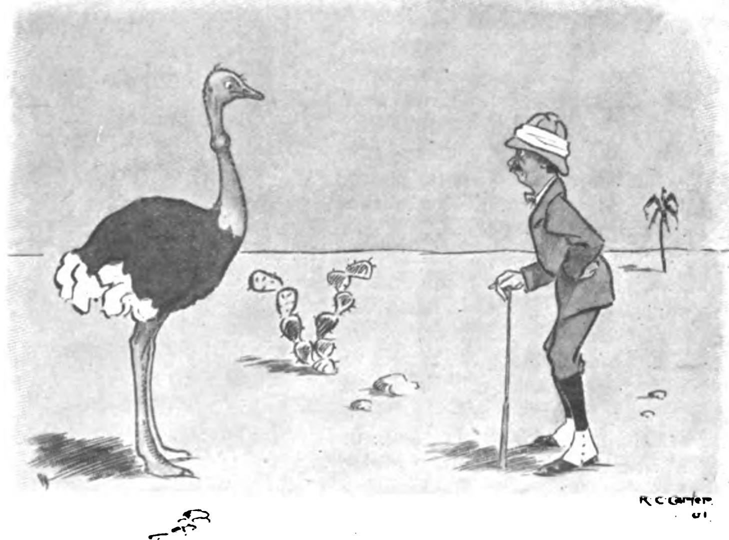
IT TAKES TIME.—Miss Weston: "And have you played much golf, Mr. Jones?"
Mr. Jones: "Well—er—no, I can't say I've played much, but I've walked round the links several times, and I'm beginning to understand the language."
DRAWN BY BERNARD WESTMACOTT FOR "THE KING."

at a later one. A veteran of many years' standing, for instance, might well stand aghast in front of an ostrich which had swallowed the ball. "I wonder what I do now?" says the player. The ostrich, knowing that he has hold of a good thing, says nothing to interfere with digestion, or to help the poor player out of his quandary.

The attractiveness of the game and its accessories puts many perils in the path of the animal kingdom. Just as an ostrich might swallow a golf ball with gusto, or a goat eat up a pair of fancy-coloured golf breeches, so might a rabbit swallow a little round white object on the links, thinking it to be a mushroom. The humorist's treatment of a gastric catastrophe such as this may appear slightly far-fetched, but there is much wisdom in the remark of Mrs. Rabbit to her husband: "Well, you jack, if you're so near-sighted you can't tell a mushroom from a golf ball, you've got to suffer, that's all!" Mayhap the disappearance of golf balls is due to such causes as these, but we prefer to think that they disappear through human agency.

In the reports of the game we look in vain for some reference to that very important and ubiquitous personage whom the Frenchman on the next page has very naturally mixed up with the tee. Who else but the caddie could be meant? Were it not for that saucy, tar-fingered little gentleman, who,

sin of confusing a brassie with a mashie, either in the abstract or when they are in actual use. The young man who hadn't played much, but had walked over the links several times trying to understand the language, doubtless had much to learn. To him the lingo constituted a real puzzle, but the perplexities of the preliminary stage in golf are nothing compared with the puzzles that have to be solved



GOLF IN THE DESERT.—Golfer (observing his ball in ostrich's neck): "I wonder what I do now?"
DRAWN BY R. C. CARTER FOR "THE KING."

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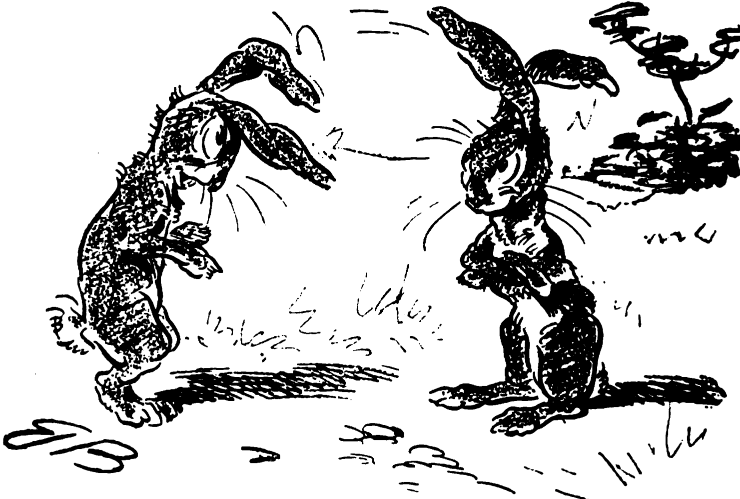

Acute Mistaken Identity.—"Say, wife, I swallowed a little round white mushroom this morning, and it feels like lead in my stomach."
"Well, you jack, if you're so near-sighted you can't tell a mushroom from a golf-ball, you've got to suffer, that's all!" DRAWN BY A. Z. BAKER FOR "PUCK."

in addition to a genuine knowledge of the game, knows that old golf balls fetch 3s. 9d. the dozen, half the fun in the game would be gone. From the seventy-year-old caddies at St. Andrews down to the little "coons" who officiate on the American links, these picturesque figures form a great and ever-growing class. They give advice when it is asked—sometimes when it is not—and that advice is based upon the best of experience. Sometimes they are very much in the way, but, as in the case of the young lady with an uncongenial partner, one prefers to have the caddie in the way. They say exactly what they think, and think a deal more than they utter. "I'm tired of you laughing at my game," once remarked a wrathful golfer. "If I hear any more impudence from you I'll hit you over the head." "All right," replied the caddie; "but I'll bet you don't know what would be the right club to do it with." Another story comes from St. Andrews. Says an eighteen man on his first round to his caddie, "There's an infernal lot of bunkers and hazards here!" "Oh, aye," was the reply, "but ye've been in them a' but twa." Is it any wonder that, at such a moment, the resisting power of man breaks its limit, and results in the torrent of blue abuse that has made the golfer's vocabulary famous? The stories told of caddies would fill a book. Golfers still delight to tell of the beginner who remarked to his faithful attendant that a drive and a putt would carry him to the next hole. The drive was made and the ball rolled a few yards into the distance, when the caddie drily remarked: "Noo for a —— o' a putt!" If the non-golfer finds no fun in this story he should buy a glossary of golf terms. Golfers also tell of the stranger who, struck by the appearance of a player in front whom his caddie seemed to know, asked the name of this apparently distinguished person. "That's Lord X——," replied the caddie. Then, drawing attention to an imperfect pair of

Quite Excusable.—Monsieur: "Vat is it—zee leetle—zee leetle mont for zee ball?"
Pitying Amazon: "The tee."
Monsieur: "Zee thé? Mon Dieu! Zen you carry zee thé in zee caddie, n'est-ce pas?"
DRAWN BY HOWARD SOMERVILLE FOR THE "SKETCH."

OUR CADDIES.—"Now, where HAS that little boy got to?"
DRAWN BY R. C. CARTER. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "GOLF ILLUSTRATED."

nether garments he himself wore, added: "Him an' me's great freens—they's his breeks."

The friendships thus struck up between golfer and caddie are not unusual. In fact, there are caddies and caddies, and with some of them one can advantageously make friends. A good caddie is like a good gillie, watchful of his employer's interest and a partner in his success. If his advice be sought, he can often tell the player not only the proper direction to play, but also the proper club to use and the line of the putt. Moreover, unless very wicked, he is usually in evidence and attentive to his duties. An abnormally stout party, as our picture proves, sometimes has a little difficulty in finding his boy, but these disappearances are happily of rare occurrence. He was much in evidence when the Major played after a heavy lunch, but showed a lack of breeding by his laughter. The first requirement of a caddie is that he keep a straight face, no matter what he sees.

We can conceive, however, that there are moments in the game when the presence of a caddie complicates affairs, especially *les affaires du cœur*. We have already had one example of this. Another good one runs as follows: "Here's a quarter, caddie," says the young man to the boy, as he starts off with his arm around a fair golfer's waist; "you want to forget this." "Don't worry, sir," replies the caddie, "I've forgot more about that kind of business than you ever knew." With such opportunities at hand it is not surprising that caddies turn many a good penny on the links, for the feminine influence on the game has become very potent in the last decade. A foursome between the two sexes is therefore a sure source of income to the lucky young gentlemen who carry the clubs. They, at least, are satisfied with their calling. "Here's sixpence, my poor lad," once said a kind golfer. "Instead of living this way, why don't you learn a trade?" "I wad, sir, if I kent of a better yin than this," was the quick reply.

Another trying thing about golf is the realization of opportunities

ABSENT-MINDED.—How the Major played golf after a heavy luncheon.
DRAWN BY R. J. RICHARDSON FOR "THE KING."

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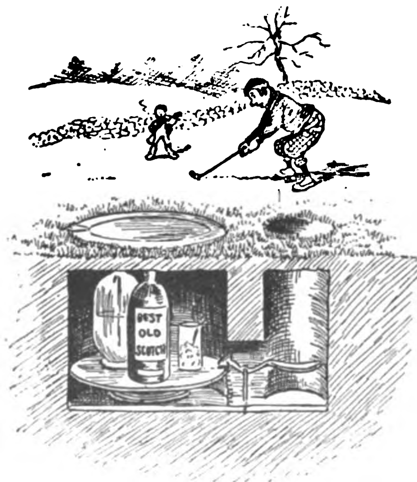
lost, these lost opportunities being the result of ignorance, with the realization coming after defeat. If you happen to see a youth on the links, sitting despondent beside a fair lady, avoid jumping to the natural conclusion that his condition is due to a feminine negative. Ten to one it is due to a realization that he might have won his match had he used a lofting-iron instead of a cleek.

IT DEPENDS.—He: "The caddie is sometimes in the way, don't you know."
She: "Oh, yes; but sometimes one prefers to have him in the way."
DRAWN BY S. D. EHRHART FOR "PUCK."

Let us not, however, forget that the game has its beauties. A thirty-six-hole match was recently played in Scotland, and was reported as follows: "At the first hole A. had the honour, and from a bad lie his second over-ran the green. B., on the green with his second, took 2 more to get down, but A. missed his putt, and this cost him a hole: 4—5. A. over-drove the green, and, his approach falling short, B., who lay dead with his second, holed out in 3 to the champion's 4." Another report tells how one of the players "took the game in hand and was 4 up at the turn. Both were in difficulties at the tenth, which went to A. in 5 to 6. Halving the eleventh in 5, a lovely 3 gave A. the twelfth, his opponent taking 5. B. was now only 2 up, but the 'Spectacles' bunker trapped the younger player, who lifted, and B. secured the thirteenth in 4. With a stroke at the fourteenth the same player got dormy, and winning the fifteenth secured the trophy." We quote these reports merely to show to the outsider who understands not, yet looketh on, that the method of scoring is one of the beautiful things about golf. It is sad to think that the quick thirst-quencher, patented by an American paper, has not yet been adopted on English links



HOLE YOUR BALL AND GET ONE.
Judge's patent quick thirst-quencher will save walking back to the club-house and encourage good playing. **Send for Catalogue.**
DRAWN BY H. C. GREENING FOR "JUDGE."

EASY FOR HIM.—"Here's a quarter, caddie. You want to forget this."
"Don't worry, sir. I've forgot more about that sort of business than you ever knew!"
DRAWN BY S. D. EHRHART FOR "PUCK."

for the benefit of players who get "dormy" or upset so unmercifully the theory of fractions. Were the invention better known there would be no short matches. Everyone would be playing in thirty-six-hole contests.

What the future may bring forth is open to conjecture. Golf may disappear altogether, as other sports and pastimes have disappeared before it. It may develop a race of giants, strong in mind and speech, like the Colonel in our illustration below, who had been upset by the fair cyclist. Let us not indulge too long, however, in such fancies. Let us be content with the quiet enjoyment of the game, the ruddy complexion that bespeaks the presence of health, and the love of Nature aroused by the nearness of wood or sea. To follow a little ball across a field may seem ridiculous to other people. To the earnest golfer it is more than a mere chase for that which is sometimes lost. It means exercise, a clear brain, and a longer life, and even in its most perilous moments it is a good game for two.

BOY (to lady who has been unfortunate enough to upset Colonel Bunker): "You'd better ride on before 'e gets 'is breath, miss."
Young Lady: "Why?"
Boy: "Because I've 'eard 'im play golf!"
DRAWN BY C. E. BROCK FOR "PUNCH."

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A THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

By Florence Warden.

Author of "A Patched-up Affair," "The House on the Marsh," "The Inn by the Shore," "The Master Key," etc., etc.

IF either of the three partners in the celebrated firm of goldsmiths, silversmiths, and jewellers, Messrs. Johnstone, Blake, and Barlow, had heard himself spoken of as a tradesman, he would no doubt have been highly offended by the appellation. Their house at Manningpool was probably the most important of its kind in the provinces; and there was certainly no firm in London itself which held its head higher or looked down upon the rest of the trade from more lofty an eminence.

Only two of the original partners were now left, and both were very old men. Indeed, Mr. Johnstone's age was not exactly known, and was popularly computed to be anything between ninety and a hundred. The old gentleman lived in a princely mansion a few miles out of Manningpool, and as he was very infirm he seldom left his own grounds. But his intellect was as keen as ever, and he still took an active interest in the business and received weekly reports in person from the manager of the establishment.

Mr. Barlow, the second of the original members of the firm, was, perhaps, not quite so old as Mr. Johnstone, but as he was a martyr to gout he never appeared at Manningpool, and took less part in the conduct of affairs than the senior partner.

The third member of the firm was Mr. Blake, who was a son of the original Blake. He was a comparative baby of thirty-five or so, and since he was a shrewd and enterprising man, who threw himself as heartily into business as he did in his leisure hours into sport, he was really, though the two old gentlemen would not have admitted it, of much more account than they in the management of the concern. He was, moreover, a man of personal dignity and charm, and the latter quality, being conspicuously absent from both his colleagues, was an asset not without its value.

If only he could have had his own way, Mr. Blake would have instituted sweeping reforms in the slightly musty old place of business, which must on no account be called a shop.

It was an establishment (that was the proper word) with an appearance of decorous gloom which would have frightened away any frivolous person who contemplated such a trifling purchase as a five-pound watch or a brooch set in anything less than diamonds. Brown wire blinds, on which the name of the firm could just be distinguished in gilt letters respectably rusty with age, shrouded the firm's treasures from the vulgar gaze; while the heavy marble pillars which supported the roof of the hall, and the solemn dignity of the hoary-headed gentleman who received customers — no, no, "clients" — in the entrance, at once assured visitors at the first glance that they would be served only with goods of the highest possible quality—at the highest possible price.

In vain Mr. Blake pleaded for the abolition of the wire blinds, for the display in the windows of a couple of magnificent challenge cups, or of a glorious tiara and a handful of pearls worth a prince's ransom. Both Mr. Johnstone and Mr. Barlow repelled the notion as they would have done an attack on their religion.

So Mr. Blake was forced to content himself with the superannuation of the antiquated gentleman who held the responsible position of manager, and persuaded his partners to replace him by his son, a young man of excellent character and considerable attainments, who had been at Oxford, where he had taken his degree of M.A., so that even Mr. Johnstone could scarcely look upon his introduction as a disgrace to the firm.

Young Merryon Dales, indeed, was a little sore at having to settle down in life in his father's old situation. Though the work was not hard, it was dull; and though the post was likely to be a permanent one, the salary was not large. Both the elder partners had insisted that he should begin at a lower salary than his father had enjoyed, and not all Mr. Blake's remonstrances had succeeded in making them give way on this point.

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"Never mind," said Mr. Blake to young Dales, on making known this decision to him. "It's most unfair, but it sha'n't go on long. You know these old fossils treat me as if I were just out of the nursery; but when we've worked up the business a bit—as you and I shall do—I'll have my way and you shall get your rise at once."

Dales was grateful, and he at once set about proving that he was worthy of his employer's good opinion. In spite of the wire blinds the energy and ability of the young partner and the still younger manager began to have their effect; and business, which had begun to ebb from the old-fashioned house, flowed back to it in ever-increasing volume.

Mr. Blake used to laugh with young Dales at the surprise of the "fossils" at this state of affairs.

"You shall get your increase of salary on my wedding-day," said he.

"What! Are you going to be married, Mr. Blake?"

The junior partner laughed.

"Well, it might come to that," said he, "if old Barlow's pretty grand-daughter would be kind to me."

"Then we may look upon the wedding as a foregone conclusion, for I can't imagine any woman being anything else where you are concerned," said Dales.

For he looked upon the broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured Bernard Blake, with his bright black eyes and easy, virile movements, as the ideal of a ladies' man. And most of the ladies thought so too.

"DALES LOOKED AT THE WORDS WITH A SHOCK."

"She's a sort of little princess, though," said Mr. Blake, "who would expect to keep up great state. Now, without wishing to stint myself, I think it safer to be content with small beginnings."

It was Dale's turn to laugh.

"If I may say so, your way of life is not exactly mean or miserable. There isn't a handsomer pair in Manningpool than the chestnuts you drive in your phaeton."

"Ah, there's my weakness. But if I have to support a wife's weaknesses as well, you know, I might have the fossils down upon me like a hundred of bricks before I'd been six months a husband."

The manager laughed as Mr. Blake drew on his driving-gloves and went off. Without being ostentatiously smart, the turn-out he drove was reckoned one of the most perfect in the neighbourhood, and he was as happy behind his chestnuts as he was laborious behind his desk.

Things were going on pleasantly and prosperously with the firm when it fell one morning to the manager's lot to make a very startling and unpleasant discovery.

There was extensive and well-secured cellarage under the business premises of the firm, and in the very heart of it was a strong-room, some 12ft. square and 10ft. high, where the most valuable property in jewels and money was stored safely every evening, only to be taken out, under the manager's own eye, on the following morning.

The offices of the firm were on the ground floor and the showrooms above. Merryon Dales's place was at his desk in his own office downstairs; but Mr. Blake, who had an office there also, used to superintend the whole business of the place, and, when an important customer came, he never left matters to the salesmen, but devoted himself personally to the satisfaction of the visitor's wants. In this way he was popularly said to have brought in many thousands of pounds to the firm by his energy and powers of persuasion and diplomacy.

On the morning in question one of the young salesmen came to Merryon Dales with a note from Mr. Blake. It was only two lines, scribbled hastily on the inside of an envelope and then fastened down to avoid inspection by the messenger. It contained these words:—

"Where is the necklace with the trefoil pendant? Can't find it."

Dales looked at the words with a shock. The necklace in question was one of the most valuable jewels in the stock, consisting as it did of a magnificent triple row of

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diamonds, with a pendant containing three very large emeralds set in smaller diamonds.

He went upstairs himself and saw Mr. Blake busy with a customer—a rich man, who had recently attained to a peerage—who was frequently at the place. Dales waited his opportunity and spoke to Mr. Blake :—

"The necklace was in the third case on——"

"Yes—yes, I know where it *was;* what I want to know is where it *is,*" answered Mr. Blake. "It hasn't been here this morning. Was it taken out of the strong-room?"

Dales reflected a moment. It was his habit to check off the principal objects as they were put in and out of the strong-room from a rough list of his own making. But this morning he admitted to himself that he did this work somewhat perfunctorily, and as he tried to recall the incident he had to own frankly that he did not remember either checking the case containing the necklace that morning or seeing it taken out.

Feeling very uncomfortable, he confessed this to Mr. Blake, who frowned slightly, and asked him to bring up the young man who had taken the jewellery out, as soon as the customer had gone.

In a few minutes, therefore, these three, Dales, Mr. Blake, and the young assistant, were all shut up together in the partner's office, and then it was discovered that neither Walker, the assistant, nor Dales could remember to have seen the necklace that morning.

Both confessed that, although they always took note of the things they put into the safe at night, it had become a matter of habit to take them out mechanically in the morning. And the more they talked the matter over, the more sure did they both become that they had put the necklace in the strong-room the night before, but had not taken it out again in the morning.

A visit to the strong-room was the next proceeding, but without result. There was no appearance of anything having been touched, nor of any injury having been done to the lock.

All three men began to look grave and anxious, as every inquiry they made strengthened the impression upon their minds that the necklace was put safely into the strong-room and that nobody had seen it since.

Walker, the assistant, a very young man with a fair skin and hesitating, girlish manner, was overwhelmed with a sense of danger and disgrace. Dales, though he concealed it better, was in almost as great a state of misery as he. Mr. Blake, although he tried to take the matter lightly and to assure them that it was all right, that some explanation of the mystery would presently be forthcoming, was evidently not less disturbed than his subordinates; and Dales had a most uncomfortable feeling that he himself was considered by the junior partner to be in some way concerned with the jewel's disappearance.

"We must inform the police," said Mr. Blake, "without any delay; although we hope the matter may be cleared up this very day, we can't afford the risk that may be incurred by the loss of an hour. And you and I, Dales, had better go to Mr. Johnstone's place at once. We'll call at the police-station on our way out."

Without a moment's loss of time, therefore, these two got into a cab and drove, first to the police-station, where full particulars were given, together with the fact that there appeared to be no clue to the mystery, and then out to Mr. Johnstone's place beyond the suburbs.

Mr. Johnstone heard the tale in silence. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"A first result of your new, up-to-date methods," said he. "Such a thing has never happened before in the whole course of the firm's existence. And I cannot believe it would have happened now if you had been content to keep on my old servants and assistants, instead of bringing into the business a lot of young folk, who care nothing for the honour and well-being of the old firm."

"You are unjust, Mr. Johnstone," cried Mr. Blake, with spirit. "And since you are speaking in the presence of one of the young folk, as you call them, one who has worked hard and intelligently in our service, I think you ought to be more careful of your words."

"Mr. Dales knows that I make no imputation upon him, I'm sure," said Mr. Johnstone, gruffly indeed, but not without dignity and courtesy. "The fact remains that this is the first time such a thing has happened. There are only two keys known to exist which will open the safe, I believe?"

"Yes. I have one here, on my watch-chain," said Mr. Blake, showing a tiny gilded key which he wore inside his pocket. "And Mr. Dales has the counterpart, which, I believe, he wears on his."

Merryon produced his key, which he assured them never left his chain.

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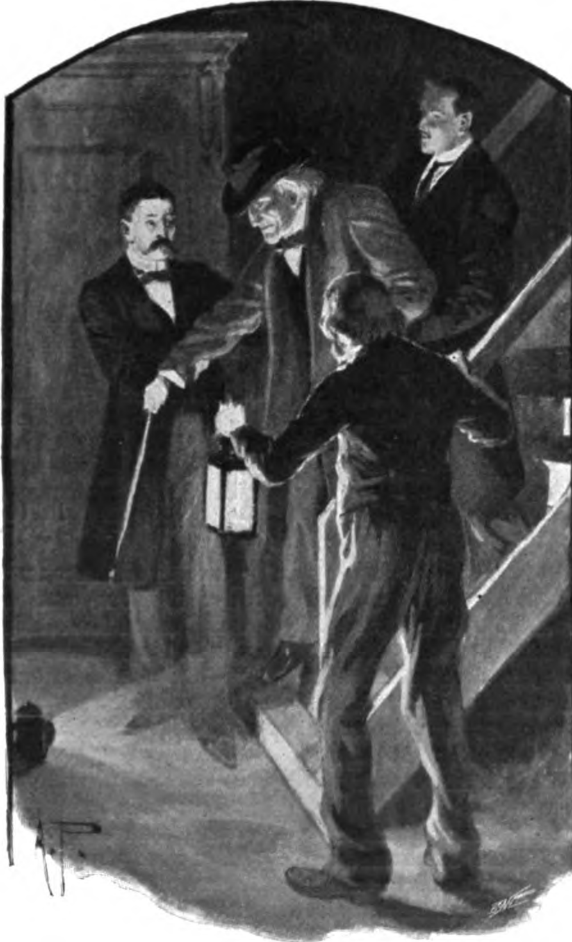
"One or other of these keys must have been borrowed at some time and a copy made," said Mr. Johnstone, with decision, "if what you say about the lock being intact is correct. However, that matter I'll judge for myself. You've kept your cab? I'll go back with you."

Within an hour they were helping the infirm old gentleman down the steps into the cellar under the firm's place of business, and there, by the light of some lamps which were brought, he satisfied himself that no attempt had been made to tamper with the lock of the strong-room.

Then the energetic old gentleman interviewed the police-inspector who called at Mr. Blake's instance, and a consultation ensued, in which, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Johnstone, who said that the suggestion was useless, it was decided that a watcher should be placed outside the strong-room door, in order to catch the thief if he should project further depredations.

This proposal was duly carried out, and a detective was stationed in the basement every night for some months. But neither that nor any of the other means tried by the firm and by the police resulted in the discovery of the slightest clue to the mystery.

Meanwhile Merryon Dales remained uneasy under the feeling that it was upon himself that Mr. Blake's suspicions were fixed, while the poor young assistant, Walker, would have withdrawn from the service of the firm if he had been allowed to do so, so strongly did he feel that he was the person whom Mr. Johnstone suspected of the theft.



"THEY WERE HELPING THE INFIRM OLD GENTLEMAN DOWN THE STEPS INTO THE CELLAR."

It was quite six months after the loss of the necklace, and some weeks after the final withdrawal of the detective from the useless task of watching the door of the strong-room, when Mr. Johnstone gave to Merryon Dales, on one of his weekly visits to report affairs, a note for the remaining partner, with directions to him to deliver it with his own hands into Mr. Barlow's.

Merryon was rather surprised, and Mr. Johnstone, fixing his keen eyes upon his face, condescended to explain.

"It's an idea I've got about the loss of the necklace," said he. "I can't tell Mr. Blake; he's in London. Besides, he would think me an old fool if I did tell him. So it must be Mr. Barlow; but mind, you are not to let the letter get into the hands of anybody but himself—*anybody!* Give me your word as to that."

Much puzzled by the emphasis with which Mr. Johnstone spoke, Merryon, however, promised readily enough to obey his wishes; and that very evening he went to Mr. Barlow's house, not unwillingly, for he was anxious to catch a glimpse of that pretty grand-daughter of whom Mr. Blake had spoken, and who was indeed the beauty of the neighbourhood.

Not that Manningpool saw much of her, for she spent a great deal of her time in

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London, and the rest shut up in her grandfather's house and grounds, which were farther in the country than Mr. Johnstone's.

All that Merryon had seen of her was an occasional glimpse of a very beautiful, fair face, as she drove rapidly through the streets of Manningpool on her way to or from the railway station.

It was with some natural excitement, therefore, that he saw Miss Barlow herself coming towards the house when, having asked to see Mr. Barlow, he had been shown into the drawing-room, while the man went at once out to the lawn where the beautiful girl was strolling among her rose-trees. The moment the servant spoke to her Miss Barlow came towards the drawing-room window with rapid steps, and Merryon Dales had a perfect opportunity of seeing her. She was so beautiful, so much more beautiful than he had supposed, that the young man's heart leaped up within him at the sight. Perfectly dressed in a gown of embroidered lawn of creamy tint, with a big, shady hat trimmed with poppies, Nella Barlow looked and moved like a queen. She was rather tall and very slight, and her hair was just too dark to be called golden, while her fine black eyebrows gave depth to her big blue eyes and character to her lovely face. On her fingers were half-a-dozen most beautiful rings, and a string of magnificent pearls encircled her neck. It occurred to Merryon that, if he had seen these splendid jewels by daylight on the young relative of any other jeweller, he would have considered the display ostentatious; but he was already, at this first full sight of her, so much impressed that he could admit no wrong in what she did.

Miss Barlow came straight in and graciously gave him her hand. There was something queenly about the gesture, however, something which made him understand that she was accustomed to be worshipped. But, again, this fact seemed, in her, only graceful and natural and right.

"You come from the office?" said she; "and from Mr. Johnstone?"

"Yes. I have a letter from him for Mr. Barlow."

She held out her hand.

"I'll take it to him," said she.

In an instant Merryon was putting his hand into his pocket, so much dazzled that he had forgotten his employer's injunction. Before he had drawn out the letter, however, he remembered, grew very red, stammered, and finally said:—

"I beg your pardon; I have to deliver it to Mr. Barlow himself with my own hand."

She raised her eyebrows.

"But to give it to me is the same thing," said she. "My grandfather sees nobody, nobody at all, except Mr. Blake."

"Mr. Blake couldn't come; he's away in London on the firm's business."

"Then I'm afraid you must give the letter to me, however low an opinion you may have of my trustworthiness as a messenger."

Merryon bit his lip.

"Miss Barlow," he said, humbly, and with a voice as hoarse as a raven's, "you don't understand. It was Mr. Johnstone's injunction to me to give the letter into your grandfather's own hands——"

"And it's my injunction to you to give it into mine," said she, smiling, and once more holding out her hand with such a graceful mingling of command and entreaty that again Merryon felt it almost impossible to resist her.

He did resist, though, bending his head so that he might not be tempted to meet the beautiful blue eyes which, in their delicate feminine power, he would have found too irresistible.

"I must keep my word," said he, in a low voice.

"Don't you know that my grandfather is a martyr to gout and does not leave his room?" asked Miss Barlow, with less indignation with his obstinacy than he had expected.

"I know nothing, but—that I must fulfil my commission as it was given."

"So that if you cannot see my grandfather you will have to take the letter back?" said Miss Barlow, mockingly.

"Yes," said he, simply.

She turned away impatiently, and saying, "Have your way then," led the way out of the room and up the stairs to a door at which she knocked.

"It's I, grandpapa, and a gentleman from Mr. Johnstone, who has a letter for you."

A gruff and petulant voice said:—

"Oh, come in."

And there, seated in an arm-chair before the window, with one gouty foot on a stool in front of him, sat a very old gentleman wrapped in a cotton dressing-gown, frowning over his spectacles.

Merryon felt awkward, for Mr. Barlow looked annoyed at his entrance. He bowed and explained his mission.

"Just like old Johnstone and his fads," was Mr. Barlow's grumbling comment, as he almost snatched the letter out of his hand.

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He read it through with many grunts, while Merryon, whom he had not asked to be seated, stood awkwardly by, Miss Barlow having withdrawn from the room.

"Tomfoolery! All tomfoolery!" muttered the old gentleman as he finished the letter, tore it up into small pieces, and tossed the scraps into a waste-paper basket by his side. "However, he can do as he likes."

To Merryon, who knew nothing of the contents of the letter, these remarks were enigmatic indeed. Mr. Barlow pointed to a desk a little way off.

"If you'll open the right-hand drawer, young man," said he, "you will find a bunch of old keys. Take them to Mr. Johnstone, and tell him to find the right one if he can."

Following his instructions, Merryon soon took out the bunch of rusty keys, whereupon Mr. Barlow nodded and glanced towards the door.

"Good day," said he, simply.

And Merryon bowed again, wished him "good day," and went out, highly disgusted with his reception.

A charming voice, laughing softly, made him start.

"You found grandpapa rather cross, I'm afraid?"

"Not more cross than I'd been prepared to expect," said Merryon, rather stiffly.

Pretty Miss Barlow, who had come out of a room near at hand, looked rather crestfallen at this retort.

"I'm sorry if you thought me disagreeable, as you imply," said she, "but I'm in a difficult position. My grandfather indulges me in every possible way, but in return I have to transact all the business I can for him, so as to keep him free from all irritation and worry."

Her tone was so sweet, so humble, that Merryon was disarmed.

"I wouldn't have given you even the little trouble of taking me upstairs to him if I could have helped it," he said, gently.

"Oh, it was no trouble. I didn't mean that."

By this time she had led the way downstairs.

"You will have some tea," said she, leading the way back into the drawing-room, where the tea-tray had been brought in with two cups.

He could not resist; and when he started on his way back to Mr. Johnstone's, where he had promised to call that very evening, he was in a sort of trance from the effects of Miss Barlow's dazzling beauty.

When he reported the result of his visit to Mr. Johnstone, and handed him the keys, not forgetting to mention Mr. Barlow's exclamation as he read the letter, the senior partner laughed softly.

"Tomfoolery!" said he. "A nice man to talk about tomfoolery, an old idiot who wastes a fortune on the extravagant whims of a girl!"

"But she's such a handsome, charming girl, sir!" expostulated Merryon.

The old man shrugged his shoulders.

"Tell me," said he, anxiously, "he didn't read the letter before her, did he?"

"No; he and I were alone in the room. Then he tore it up."

"Good, good. Now, you see this key?" Mr. Johnstone had picked out one, heavier, clumsier than the rest, and detached it from the ring.

"USE IT TO THREATEN, BUT DON'T FIRE."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it belongs to a little wine-cellar down under our place of business; you've passed

it many a time and never noticed it, I dare say. It's been closed up these ten years, ever since Mr. Barlow left off visiting the old place. It contains some wine laid down there by Mr. Barlow, and the entrance has been boarded up. I want you to remove the boards yourself, without saying anything to anybody whatever, and to keep watch there yourself—yourself, mind—for the space of one month from now."

"But, sir——" began Merryon, aghast.

"No 'buts,' please. If you won't do it, say so, and I'll do it myself. You young men have no enterprise, no——"

"Sir, don't be so hasty. If I could do any good I'd watch for a year. Do you suppose I'm not as anxious as anyone to find out the mystery about the robbery? But how can I hope to be more successful than a trained detective? And after all this time?"

"Do you suppose I don't know what I'm doing? Will you do as I wish you to do, or will you leave it to me?"

"I'll do it," said Merryon, quietly.

"Very well. Then I'll give you this revolver," and as he spoke Mr. Johnstone took out a neat little weapon from under a newspaper in front of him and placed it in the young manager's hand. "But mind, *don't fire*. Use it to threaten, but don't fire; and don't be surprised at what you see. That's all. And now I won't keep you any longer. Good evening."

"Good evening," said Merryon, like a man in a dream, as he went out.

Was the old gentleman getting a little confused in his brain at last? On the whole Merryon was inclined to think so. And certainly it was with no faintest idea that his watch would be more successful than that of the professional detective had been before him that he made his way down to the cellars of the firm's place of business that night, found the nailed-up door of the disused wine-cellar, pulled away the rotten boards which were fastened across it without much difficulty, inserted the old key into the lock, and walked into the little, musty-smelling hole which Mr. Johnstone had dignified by the name of cellar. He had strictly obeyed Mr. Johnstone's instructions not to let the least inkling of his intention leak out to anyone. Even to Mr. Blake, who had been late at the office that day—and who had wished to take the manager part of the way home in his dog-cart—he had said not a word of the singular commission with which he had been entrusted. This, however, was the result rather of accident than of design, for he knew well that he might have taken the junior partner into his confidence without impropriety. But Mr. Blake had been busy with the writing of a letter which, by the fact that he was enclosing a photograph of himself in it, Merryon gathered was not of a dull, business sort. And the manager had had no time to say much more than "good evening" to him.

It was a very easy matter for the manager to get down into the basement without anyone seeing him, for he made it a rule to slip out very quietly, sometimes by the front way and sometimes by the back, that the employés might not know exactly where to expect his departure, or at what time. He had supposed that the avoidance of the night watchman, who was always on the premises from nine o'clock at night till nine in the morning, would be a more difficult matter. But he had an opportunity of discovering that the manner in which that old and trusted retainer performed his duties was more perfunctory than the partners supposed.

John Hyde simply curled himself up for a sleep on a big leather settee in one of the show-rooms, and not even a sound of Merryon's efforts to tear down the boards from before the old cellar door disturbed his slumbers.

With little fear of having any meeting to look forward to, Merryon sat down on his improvised seat, crossed his legs, and leaned back against the wall of the little cellar. The door was ajar; no slightest sound or movement of anyone in the basement could escape him.

He had sat there in his uncomfortable post for a long time, and was getting as stiff as he was sleepy, when he was startled to hear footsteps coming quickly along the brick floor outside his hiding-place. Not the steps of old John Hyde, the watchman, that was certain. He had already made his one nightly descent into the basement, proclaiming his approach by stertorous breathing and by the creaking of his boots. No, this was a light footstep, that could only be heard by the closest listening. Merryon sat up, wondering.

The next minute he had stood up, transfixed with horror. For, in the long, dark passage outside, that lay between his hiding-place and the door of the strong-room, Merryon discerned, by the faint rays of early morning light that came through the ventilator in the wall, the figure of a woman.

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What woman it was he well knew, little as he could see of her. Dressed in dark clothes and muffled up with a veil as she was, Merryon recognised the graceful, queenly movements of Miss Barlow. She crept forward in a hurried manner, and was close to the strong-room door, when a movement on the part of Merryon, who was scarcely master of himself under the influence of the surprise and horror he felt, startled her and caused her to draw back hastily, and to retreat into the blackness of the open space to the left, where she at once became lost to view.

Merryon was sick and cold with amazement, with perplexity. It was not possible to believe that Miss Barlow was a thief, and yet if she had been, like himself, on the watch, she would surely not have fled away like a hare at the first sound she heard.

"THE NEXT MOMENT HE STOOD UP, TRANSFIXED WITH HORROR."

Certain as he felt that she was as innocent of the theft as himself, Merryon felt shy and uncomfortable when, on the following day, he presented himself at Mr. Johnstone's, as he had arranged to do if he should see or hear anything in the course of his midnight watches.

"Well," said Mr. Johnstone to him, in triumph, the moment he caught sight of the young manager's face. "You've seen something. I can tell that by your looks."

Merryon began to stammer.

"No, indeed, sir, you're mistaken. That is to say, I have seen—well, I fancy I've seen someone down there; but it was another spy, I'm sure, and not a thief."

Mr. Johnstone smiled grimly.

"Who was it?" he said.

"I—I'd rather not say, sir."

"You may as well," said the old gentleman, drily. "Since you are sure it was not the thief, where's the harm?"

Merryon was silent.

"Didn't I tell you," said Mr. Johnstone, solemnly, after a short silence, "that it would surprise you to find out who the person was? I tell you the person you saw *was* the thief, and one of the most artful, cunning, and unprincipled thieves in England, too."

"I'll never believe it, sir," said Merryon, boldly.

The old man looked at him keenly.

"You'll have to believe it presently," said he.

Merryon was aghast.

"But—but—if it should be so—which I'll never believe," said he, at last, "you wouldn't—couldn't prosecute! Think of the scandal, of the pain you would bring to your partners—the slur upon the firm."

"We must chance that—risk that," said Mr. Johnstone, in his hardest, driest tone. "I've never been a party to the concealment of a felony, and I never will be."

Merryon went towards the door, scarcely able to guide his steps. Suddenly he stopped short.

"Sir," said he, "I should like to go out to Mr. Barlow's place, and to—to say a word to—to—to warn him."

"He won't see you. He was incensed at my sending you to him last time. But, well, you'll see his grand-daughter, and that will be more to the point still. Very well, I give you leave to go. But—I don't envy you your mission!"

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The old man shrugged his shoulders and spoke in a tone of mockery. Merryon only bowed and went out.

What could he say? What could he believe? His head swam, his whole being seemed to be in a tumult of strife. Could he believe ill of that beautiful, queenly woman—one, too, who seemed not to have a wish or a whim ungratified? In the midst of his doubts and his torments one thing stood out clearly: his determination to say some word that might serve as a warning to the girl—might save the awful disgrace of exposure and ruin which seemed to be hanging over them all.

On the following day he was at Mr. Barlow's. He was furnished with the excuse of bringing under his notice a new improvement which was being brought out in connection with the lighting of their factory. Although it was wholly unnecessary that the old gentleman should be informed of this, yet he liked to hear of the changes made, and Miss Barlow listened to all the details of the plan with an attentive ear, in order that she might carry the news to her grandfather.

She was at least as nervous as Merryon himself when she met him, and the young manager wondered what were the thoughts which were passing through her mind.

More and more impossible it seemed to him to believe that she was the guilty wretch Mr. Johnstone described, as he looked at the lovely face, the delicate hands, the perfect figure, upon which a gown of pale grey silk, trimmed about the shoulders with a cascade of fine lace relieved by pearls, hung so gracefully. And yet it was clear that she was embarrassed in his society, that she watched him furtively when she could, and that occasionally a look of something even stronger than fear would appear in her eyes if he turned towards her suddenly, or asked her a question with any abruptness. She was an enigma, this handsome, self-possessed, luxury-loving young woman, who lived shut up in the country with her grandfather, and received his guests herself graciously and charmingly, without relation or chaperon.

It was after a slight pause in the conversation between these two, over the tea-cups, that Miss Barlow threw at him a strange, shy, furtive glance, and then said:—

"You are much in Mr. Johnstone's confidence, Mr. Dales, I understand?"

"I believe I may say I am, and I'm very proud of it," said he, simply, wondering what was coming next.

Miss Barlow was twisting the ends of her lace fichu nervously.

"I hope you deserve it," said she, quickly. "And yet I hope that if you were called upon to discharge a painful duty—a very painful duty—you would mingle mercy with your justice. If, for instance, you were to obtain evidence bringing home a serious crime to one whom—whom you had felt some slight interest in, perhaps, you—you would be considerate, wouldn't you? You would consider the circumstances—the temptation? You wouldn't be too hard—too unrelenting?"

As she spoke she drew nearer and nearer to him, and spoke with more and more fervour and charm of persuasive voice and earnest manner. Merryon was shocked, bewildered. Obviously and unmistakably she was trying to secure his neutrality—if not his active participation—in a crime.

Refusing to meet her lovely eyes, he said, in a low voice, but tremulously:—

"I—should—do my duty."

Miss Barlow sprang up in unmistakable anger.

"Oh, your virtue is quite too incorruptible!" she cried, in fierce mockery. "Robespierre was a reed compared to you! I congratulate the firm on their treasure of a manager! It makes up for much!"

Merryon had risen also, and was trembling from head to foot. But he stood his ground.

"I cannot believe," said he, in a low voice, "that you really think the worse of me for serving my employers well. I will not believe it."

"You have suspicions, I suppose?" said she, abruptly.

"I—I don't wish to have them!"

"And if your suspicions were correct, you would have no blind eye?"

He found courage to raise his eyes to her face, and to say, firmly:—

"I should have no blind eye. I should be, as you say, incorruptible as Robespierre."

He had expected a fresh outburst of her anger, and was surprised to see something like a flash of admiration in her eyes, which were candid enough in her various moods. After looking him steadily in the face for the space of a second, she made a slight gesture, as if washing her hands of the matter, and turned away with a rather forced smile.

"Then I have no more to say," said she, coldly. "And I must apologize for detaining you so long. Your time is valuable, I know."

She was curt, almost rude. But Merryon,

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in spite of his doubts, in spite of his better judgment, found an added charm in the struggle which was evidently going on within her — the struggle between some strong agitation within and the attempt to be as calm outwardly as if she were a statue.

He went away in a state of perplexity and torment impossible to describe. He had this one consolation: he should certainly have no further need to keep watch in the basement of the firm's place of business.

He told Mr. Johnstone so, without vouchsafing any explanation of his reason for thinking thus. But the senior partner, with his usual obstinacy, took no note of his protest, but insisted on the watch being kept up.

"If I'm wrong, I'll apologize to you," said the old gentleman. "If you're wrong, you shall apologize to me."

So again for three nights Merryon watched from the old wine-cellar, stiff, cold, impatient, and irritable at the old man's obstinacy. And on the third night Mr. Johnstone's suspicions were proved correct.

Merryon was dozing, as indeed he had begun to do pretty frequently, in the certainty that he was watching in vain, when he was suddenly aroused into full wakefulness by the unmistakable sound of the creaking of a door. Springing up, perhaps not quite master of his prudence in the startling circumstances, he dashed out of his hiding-place and discovered, even in the darkness, that the door of the strong-room was open. Without giving himself time for a moment's reflection, he sprang forward and, hearing a movement inside the strong-room, shut the door. It closed with a snap. There was a sound as of some weight hurling itself against it, and then there came to Merryon's ears a sort of sigh, so low, so blood-curdling, that he felt quickly for the key on his watch-chain, with an intuition that he was on the eve of some awful tragedy.

Before he could find the lock, in the darkness which was almost complete, he heard a double report, and knew that he was too late.

A spasm of agony seized him and rendered him for a few seconds incapable of movement. Then, to his unutterable relief, for the dead, solemn silence was terrible to bear, he heard footsteps approaching him from the staircase, and saw a light thrown, flickering and trembling, on the brick walls. The next moment John Hyde, the old watchman, appeared at his side, carrying his lantern in his hand, and full of concern.

By the light, held high, Merryon managed to open the door of the strong-room, though the dead silence within prepared him for the worst.

What terrible fear he had at his heart he would not acknowledge even to himself. But as he saw the black mass that a few moments before had been a breathing, living fellow-creature on the floor of the strong-room, it is certain he was all unprepared for the discovery he made when, kneeling on one knee, old John Hyde raised the lifeless form and revealed to the manager's amazed eyes the dead face of the junior partner of the firm—Bernard Blake!

The unhappy manager uttered an exclamation of despair. At the same moment he felt a light touch on his arm.

"Hush!" said a woman's voice, "it was not your fault. You couldn't help yourself. I can bear witness to that."

"OLD JOHN HYDE RAISED THE LIFELESS FORM."

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Merryon turned, too much stunned to be capable of more surprise.

"I—I didn't know you were there, Miss Barlow," he stammered, stupidly.

"Of course not. I didn't mean that you should. But I have watched as well as you, for the last three weeks. And I knew—I guessed—how it would end."

She was calm with the calmness of despair.

"What—does it—mean?"

They were just outside the door of the strong-room. The watchman had put down his lantern, and was running up the stairs as fast as he could in search of the doctor, who could do nothing, as they all knew, but certify the death by suicide of the unhappy man on the strong-room floor.

"It means, unhappily," said Miss Barlow, down whose cheeks the tears were running fast, "that the man who stole before has tried to steal again, and, being discovered, made away with himself."

"But I can't believe—did you suspect?" stammered Merryon.

"It was Mr. Johnstone who suspected first, as you know. He communicated his suspicions to my grandfather, and he to me. I wouldn't—couldn't believe; but, with my grandfather's sanction, I took upon myself to watch. I have let myself in, night after night, by a way you don't know of, from the cellar of the adjoining house. My grandfather, I must tell you frankly, suspected *you*. I did not."

Merryon was silent, sick at heart, and horribly miserable. The utter unexpectedness of the discovery he had made was appalling.

It came out later that the life of extravagance which the junior partner led had made it impossible for him to be satisfied with his own handsome share of the profits of the firm. Miss Barlow having rejected the suit which would have brought him a fortune, he had, in an evil hour, yielded to the temptation of entering the strong-room at night, taking out the celebrated necklace, and disposing of the stones in Paris and elsewhere, as it was easy for him to do on his various business journeys on behalf of the firm.

Mr. Johnstone received the news of the tragedy without surprise. The shrewd old man had had doubts of the integrity of the dashing young partner at a very early date. And his keenness of insight was established, not only by his doubts of Bernard Blake, but by the perfect trust he had always had in the integrity of the young manager, Merryon Dales, to whom he, with Mr. Barlow's consent, at once offered that place in the firm which had been occupied by the dead man.

Merryon was overwhelmed.

He made two formal visits—the one to Mr. Johnstone to thank him, the second to Mr. Barlow. The latter he did not see.

Not that that mattered much, for he saw Mr. Barlow's grand-daughter, who looked him full in the face and said, quietly, after the first words were over:—

"You suspected *me*, Mr. Dales!"

Merryon, taken aback, told the truth.

"I did, Miss Barlow."

"And pray what particular circumstance about me made you think I was a thief?" she asked, with a certain mutinous haughtiness which was inviting instead of repellent.

For it induced Merryon suddenly to take heart of grace and to say:—

"I didn't only suspect you to be a thief. I knew you were one!"

At the first moment Miss Barlow looked amazed; then she reddened and began to understand.

"Those compliments are rather old-fashioned," she said, at last.

"As old-fashioned as love at first sight itself," retorted Merryon.

"We won't talk about those subjects; they're silly," said Miss Barlow.

But in spite of these airs of superiority she seemed rather to invite than to repel any fresh attempt to lead the conversation into those channels where the man in love would have it flow.

And when she at last let Merryon Dales take his leave, she detained him so long on one trifling pretext or another that he was seized with another inspiration, and suddenly kissed her.

"I'd been expecting that," said she.

But her manner was not so calm as her words would have led one to imply. And it dawned upon Merryon, with a new and delightful surprise, as he went homewards with the sound of her voice ringing in his ears, and the touch of her hand tingling on his arm, that she had perhaps been in love with him just as long as he had been in love with her.

And that was the real truth of the matter.

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The American Cartoonist and His Work.

II.

By Arthur Lord.

IN our last article we spoke of the advantage to the cartoonist of a knowledge of the mechanical processes in daily use on a newspaper, as well as the possession of the news instinct. Mr. Leon Barritt, who may well be termed a free-lance amongst cartoonists, owes much of his success to his possession of this knowledge and instinct. He has risen from the ground up. That is, he began by selling papers, and from newsboy's work he became reporter, business manager, and proprietor of a newspaper, gaining in his earlier newspaper experience a thorough knowledge of wood and photo. engraving, and a political knowledge which has proved of inestimable advantage. The files of New York papers during the past decade reveal the versatility of Barritt's work. He has contributed to the New York *World*, *Journal*, *Herald*, *Telegram*, *Advertiser*, *Mail and Express*, *News*, *Recorder*, *Tribune*, and the Brooklyn *Eagle* and *Standard Union*. His fund of cartoons has been apparently inexhaustible, for he has often turned out two to five cartoons in a day. This facility was almost fatal to artistic merit, but now that Barritt is confining his efforts to one cartoon a day in the New York *Tribune*, his work, both in art quality and satirical conception, undoubtedly ranks with the best efforts of his contemporaries.

MR. LEON BARRITT.
From a Photo. by Van der Weyde, New York.

Barritt is another of the self-taught men. He was born fifty years ago, and while a boy took advantage of the opportunities offered by the Catskills, where he was born, for practising landscape drawing and for caricaturing the curious characters of the neighbourhood. The year 1887 found him in New York as a regular contributor to the New York *Press*. He combines very happily the news sense of the editor with the humorist's wit, and his conceptions are transferred to paper with great rapidity and subtlety. He, too, may be classed amongst the good-natured cartoonists. His simple conceptions are clearly and forcibly executed, and are weapons of unusual power in the fight for good municipal government in the United States.

"The Papers Did It"—(Richard Croker).
DRAWN BY LEON BARRITT FOR THE "NEW YORK TRIBUNE."

One who recently wrote of Barritt said: "He is a man of ideas rather than a great car-

THE PIPE OF PEACE—WILL THEY ACCEPT IT?
DRAWN BY LEON BARRITT FOR THE "NEW YORK TRIBUNE."

toonist. His mannerisms are not pleasing, his style is stiff, and the technique raw. But behind this austere mask of art there is always the thought, always the suggestion making for good. A five years' course in a school of art would have brought about one of two conditions in the art of Barritt: it would have made him a better draughtsman or a less ideaful cartoonist. Perhaps his fear of the latter condition made him content with being a man of ideas and an indifferent artist." We venture to print this criticism of Barritt's work in order to show how opinions differ. Comparing the best among the large number of Barritt's cartoons with the best examples of several other men, we are convinced he is not only "ideaful," but possesses a daintiness of touch and softness of style that place him in the front rank. The cartoon reproduced on this page, called "The Pipe of Peace—Will They Accept It?" is the least effective of his efforts, and should be compared with the cartoon on Sugar to show the differences in quality which exist in Barritt's style.

Although Mr. C. R. MacAuley has written *finale* to his career as a cartoonist in order to go in for literature and more serious illustration, the work done by him on the Philadelphia *Inquirer* and New York *Herald* previous to March, 1901, deserves consideration in an article such as this. MacAuley started his career by winning a prize offered by the Cleveland *Press* in 1891 for the best cartoon submitted on the subject of Thanksgiving, and two weeks after was offered, and accepted, the position of cartoonist on the Cleveland *World*. Previous to this MacAuley had studied law, with little thought of taking up any branch of art as a profession. He stayed in Cleveland for a year and then went to New York, where he met with considerable success, and worked at one time or another on every paper there

"SPEAK!"—An apt illustration of the power of mind over matt-r.
DRAWN BY LEON BARRITT FOR THE "NEW YORK TRIBUNE."

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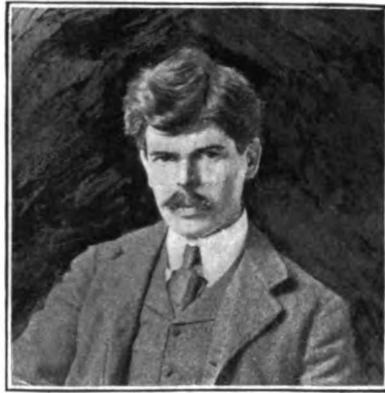
published. He then went to the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, thence to the New York *Herald* to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Charles Nelan, and during the *Inquirer* period drew a series of cartoons on the subject of the Boer War which, through general republication in England and Canada, attracted probably more attention than the work of any other American cartoonist on this subject. One of his cartoons, showing the British lion with a telephone receiver at each ear, was the most widely copied of any cartoon MacAuley had done, and by many of our readers will here be recognised as an old familiar friend. "Always," writes Mr. MacAuley, "I have deprecated the trend of American cartoons towards gross and, I regret to say it, vulgar caricature. Whether the cartoonist created a demand for that sort of thing which the editor was forced to recognise, or whether the editor himself was at fault (if fault it were), I am unable to say; but the fact remained that we were perforce obliged to employ the gnarled and loaded bludgeon to the almost entire exclusion of the dainty, keen, and more effective thrust of the rapier."



MR. C. R. MACAULEY.
From a Photo.

In these sentences the artist has directly touched upon one of the crying abuses of all American cartoon work. It is not for us to decide whose fault it is that grossness and vulgarity have achieved a hold upon the American newspaper cartoon—a hold which, let us hope, will be but temporary. We merely content ourselves with the statement that he who uses the bludgeon may, by chance, get the largest salary, but he who uses the rapier is the man who gets the better reputation. If cartoonists are in the world to make money instead of reputation, the best way to attain the desired end seems to be to adopt a vulgarity of treatment which is popular, lamentable though it be.

Much amusement might be caused if we were to tell in detail how the leading

THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY.
DRAWN BY C. R. MACAULEY FOR THE "PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER."

A GREAT CEREMONY—THE JOINING OF THE OCEANS.
DRAWN BY C. R. MACAULEY FOR THE "PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER."

cartoonists in America began life. Davenport, as we have said, was once a circus clown; Opper, who is now on the staff of the New York *Journal*, began life in a village store; Hy. Mayer, who now and then does a telling cartoon, started as a clerk; and Zimmerman, when he went to America, found employment as a pastrycook. The discouragements under which these and many

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A CHESTERFIELDIAN LION.—Owing to the fact that the length of my tail is limited and the frequency with which it has been twisted, I regret that you will not find room for another knot.
DRAWN BY C. R. MACAULEY FOR THE "PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER."

others commenced to earn their living gave them, no doubt, a practical and broad-minded view of life which they found exceedingly valuable in their later careers, for it is rarely that one comes across a cartoon-maker to-day who can be classed among the narrow-minded. These discouragements also tended to develop a strong sense of the humorous in daily existence. Mr. Orville P. Williams, who is now the chief cartoonist of the Boston *Herald*, began, it is true, as an artist, but owing to the failure of his father's health "had," as he says, "to quit and take up the woollen business in which my father was engaged." Mr. Williams adds, with significance: "Having but little heart for the business, my career was a large and elegant 'fizzle.'" He thereupon turned to cartoon work, and since then has made a gratifying success, which bespeaks great credit for a young draughtsman such as he. Mr. Williams is now twenty-six years old, and, although born in Maine, was educated in the Boston public schools.

MR. ORVILLE P. WILLIAMS.
From a Photo. by S. R. Honey, Junr.

CHORUS ON THE FENCE—"WHAT WILL THE HARVEST BE?"
DRAWN BY ORVILLE P. WILLIAMS FOR THE "BOSTON HERALD."

That Williams cares not for the bludgeon is sufficiently proved by the delicacy of his work here reproduced. One or two of these cartoons are already well known to the people of the United States, owing to their repetition in papers outside of Boston. That showing Russia and France hoeing together in the Chinese potato patch, with the Kaiser enviously watching from the top of a ladder perched against

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ASHAMED OF IT.
DRAWN BY ORVILLE P. WILLIAMS FOR THE "BOSTON HERALD."

the sign in the background, tells an excellent little story, although few cartoons could exceed in merit that which represents Uncle Sam and his ink-stained hat standing in an attitude of reproof before the bad and wicked boys from France, Italy, Germany, and Austria. The *Herald*, in the person of its cartoonist, has had several sly digs at the foreign Powers who tried so energetically to prove that during the Spanish-American War each was Uncle Sam's best friend.

A good cartoonist should, of course, be a good newspaper man. Compelled as he is to anticipate an event before it happens, and to prepare a cartoon to-day on some subject which people will be thinking of tomorrow, he must also be somewhat of a prophet. Many of the best men have gone into cartoon work after having served an apprenticeship in the newsroom, and the training there received has been of incalculable benefit to them in their political draughtsmanship. It is needless to add, also, that he who best knows how his cartoon will look on the printed page, and who discounts the mechanical deficiencies of the fast-running press in bringing out the full quality of the artist's technique, possesses an additional advantage over his less skilful fellows. The pen and ink sketch may be a beautiful work of art when it leaves the

WARNING LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.
DRAWN BY ORVILLE P. WILLIAMS FOR THE "BOSTON HERALD."

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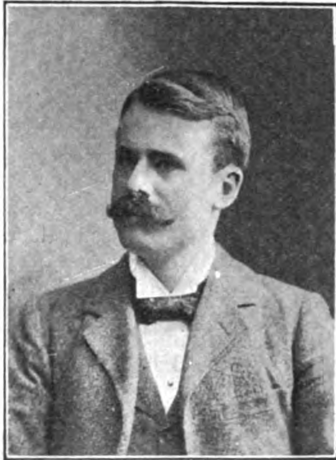
artist's hands, but this drawing has to run the gauntlet of the photographer, electrotyper or stereotyper, and printer before it is given to the public; and as all mechanics are full of frailty, just so far do they fail under pressure in doing justice to the finer details of the cartoonist's handiwork. The niceties of drawing are lost in daily journalism, and the cartoon which looks best on the printed page is that drawn in broad, skilful strokes, without the introduction of unnecessary fineness of line. Where the artist has received some training in the mechanical methods by which a newspaper is turned out, so much the better is his work.



MR. CLAUDIUS MAYBELL.
From a Photo. by Dana, Brooklyn.

Mr. Claudius Maybell, of the Brooklyn *Eagle*, is full of ideas, and possesses unusual felicity in expressing them. He is somewhat of a theorist about his work. According to him the art of cartooning is similar to the art of oratory, and the cartoonist, in addition to draughtsmanship, should possess the same education that an orator possesses. In stating that "a modern Hogarth would be the ideal cartoonist," Mr. Maybell says: "The cartoon consists of two distinct parts—first the idea, and second the illustration, each requiring a special training. He is only half a cartoonist who cannot supply his own ideas. I try to make the cartoon a pictorial metaphor, so that the meaning is independent of any caption. When otherwise a cartoon is merely a 'conversation picture.'"

IT'S A TICKLISH JOB FILING THE BEAR'S TEETH.
DRAWN BY CLAUDIUS MAYBELL FOR THE "BROOKLYN EAGLE."

If we apply these tests to the work of Maybell selected for reproduction in this article, we think it will be admitted that the cartoonist stands the test. There was little need for the artist to give titles to his work when the cartoons were drawn, for each tells its story with simplicity and force. That showing Uncle Sam as a sailor on a much-begunned

THE IMPENDING DELUGE.—About time to begin to build the Ark.
DRAWN BY CLAUDIUS MAYBELL FOR THE "BROOKLYN EAGLE."

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LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO PROTECT.
DRAWN BY CLAUDIUS MAYBELL FOR THE "BROOKLYN EAGLE."

battleship, with a telescope in his hands, vainly seeking to discover the American merchant marine in the far distance, when the said merchant marine is dangerously close to the battleship's bow, is singularly effective, and the foreign immigration cartoon contains a valuable lesson to every native American citizen.

Maybell is a Westerner, having been born in Portland, Oregon, in 1872. He studied for three years at the San Francisco School of Design, and worked on newspapers there and in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York, finally becoming connected with the Brooklyn *Eagle*, which has done great credit to itself in giving Maybell a chance to make a reputation.

Another well-known cartoonist is Mr. F. T. Richards, some specimens of whose work we reproduce. Mr. Richards got his first instruction in art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia (where he was born), and later entered the studio of Edmund B. Bensell, where he served three years as an illustrator. "I have always considered these three years," he writes, "to have been the most valuable of any during my early career. I drew constantly on the wood block—a method that has gone entirely out of use now—and the necessity of having work finished in a limited time and the variety of subjects that came to hand proved a valuable though arduous discipline."

In 1890, after some training in pen drawing, Mr. Richards went to New York and there met Mr. John A. Mitchell, of *Life*. "It is," Mr. Richards says, "to Mr. Mitchell's generous treatment and able criticisms that I owe whatever merit my later work may possess."

MR. F. T. RICHARDS.
From a Photo.

That it possessed merit was shown by the fact that he was represented in the American exhibit at the Paris Exhibition of 1900, and by the offer of the position of cartoonist on the New York *Herald* in May, 1901, a position that Mr. Richards still holds.

An exciting period in Mr. Richards's career now began. The anti-Tammany campaign and the opportunities it gave for cartoon treatment

THE NEW NATIONAL LEADER.
DRAWN BY F. T. RICHARDS FOR THE "NEW YORK HERALD."

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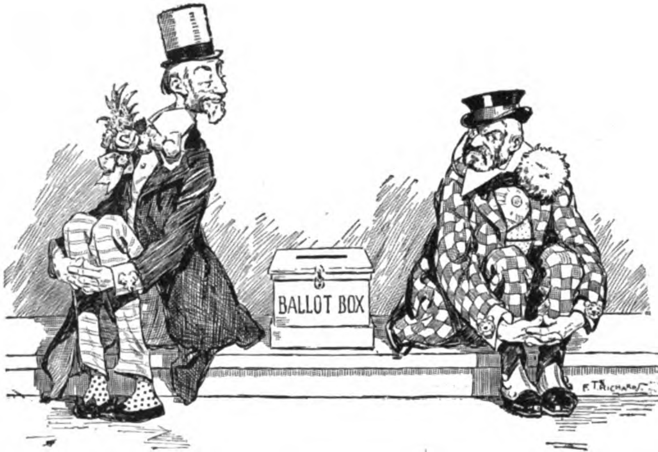

WAITING.
DRAWN BY F. T. RICHARDS FOR THE "NEW YORK HERALD."

demanded the best abilities from all, and the New York illustrators went into the fight with an energy and competitive spirit that made that period one of the most important of recent times. Amongst those who came out of the ordeal with flying colours many think that Richards stands first. One notable cartoon, representing the Democratic forces in full retreat from the Manhattan Moscow, with Boss Croker as Napoleon, pleased the people mightily and brought to the artist a significant commendation from one who could best appreciate it, namely, the successful candidate for mayor, Mr. Low. Like that of other cartoonists, the style of Richards varies considerably with the subject, the finish, of course, being dependent upon the demands of time. The three illustrations here presented vary somewhat in quality, "The New National Leader" and "Waiting" showing attention to detail not to be noted in the artist's treatment of the honeysuckle and the bee story. The first of these was suggested by the rumours that Mr. Croker contemplated stepping beyond the confines of State politics in order to enter the political arena as a national leader. It will be remembered that the Democratic party promptly showed its disapproval of this plan; Richards as promptly showed the disapproval of the donkey.

In the cartoon entitled "Waiting" the artist attempted to show the confidence of Mr. Platt in the result of the ballox-box on the Monday before the municipal campaign was last fought in New York. That supreme look of knowing faith was not misplaced, and proved the artist to be somewhat of a political prophet. Whether the prophecy in the last cartoon will come true remains to be seen.

"YOU ARE THE HONEYSUCKLE. I AM THE BEE."
DRAWN BY F. T. RICHARDS FOR THE "NEW YORK HERALD."

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Some Wonders from the West.

XLV.—A RUNAWAY CAR.

By Clifford L. Higgins.

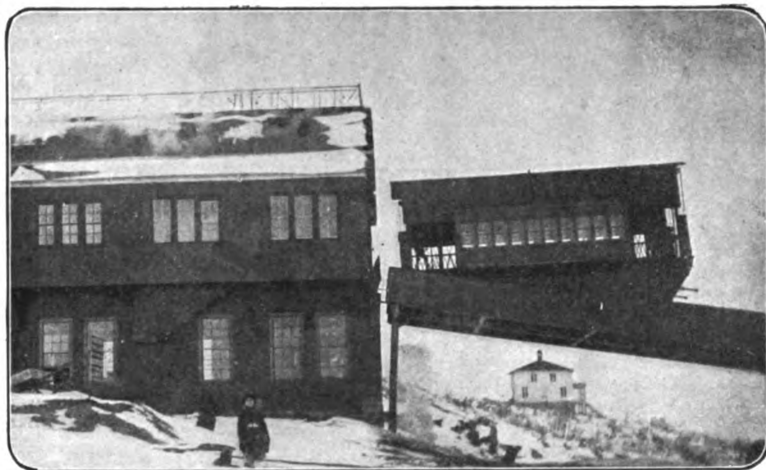
ULUTH, Minnesota, called by its admirers the "Zenith City by the Unsalted Sea," is stretched out like an immense shoe-string along the shores of Lake Superior. Immediately behind the city and beginning almost at the shore of the lake is a line of hills 600ft. high, stretching the full length of the city. Built upon the hillsides, each house, directly above another, gives every resident an opportunity to view from his front porch one of the most beautiful and impressive sights in the North-West. Old Lake Superior in its fury or in its calmness is always strikingly impressive. The St. Louis River winding its way down the hill-sides, turning here and there through islands thick with wild wood and lakes of wild rice, where there abide fish and game in abundance, is a natural panorama that never wearies the eye. Farther down can be seen this beautiful river as it broadens out where along its banks are situated the great coal and ore docks, numerous grain elevators, and many railroad warehouses; and lying beside them are some of the best steamships afloat. This is indeed a place where rail and waters meet. The waters of this river pass through the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River, and thence into the Atlantic Ocean, while scarcely sixty miles away over this height of land is the Mississippi River gathering its waters for its jaunt to the Gulf of Mexico.

The summit of the hills of Duluth attracts thousands of visitors and tourists during the summer months, where they loiter for hours viewing with amazement the beautiful spectacle before them.

The best point upon the hill-top from which to view this magnificent scene was the Pavilion, a large frame structure in which vaudeville shows were given. In order to reach this building the visitor could ride up on a large car running on a steel incline-track, which in a distance of 3,600ft. rose to a height of 625ft. above the bottom.

There were two tracks, and as one car went up the other descended. Each car was partly built of steel, and weighed about twenty-seven tons. The cables which held the cars were made of 1 5-8th in. steel wire, and there were two of them. Of course, nearly every person that ever rode up on the car had discussed the question of what would happen if the car should break loose, and many theories were offered at various times.

But on the morning of May 28th, 1901, the question was settled. About 8.30 a.m. fire was discovered in the power-house at the top of the hill. A fire-engine was hastily summoned and put aboard the car then at the bottom, and the car was run up to the top. There great difficulty was experienced in getting the engine off, as the men and horses had to drive through flames to get outside the power-house.



VIEW OF THE POWER-HOUSE AND CAR READY TO START, TAKEN BEFORE THE FIRE.
From a Photo. by Clifford L. Higgins.

After they had fought the fire in the power-house a few moments the wind suddenly carried it across to the Pavilion, only 25ft. away. As this was entirely frame-work and contained much scenery, etc., of an inflammable nature it was wrapped in flames in a few moments.

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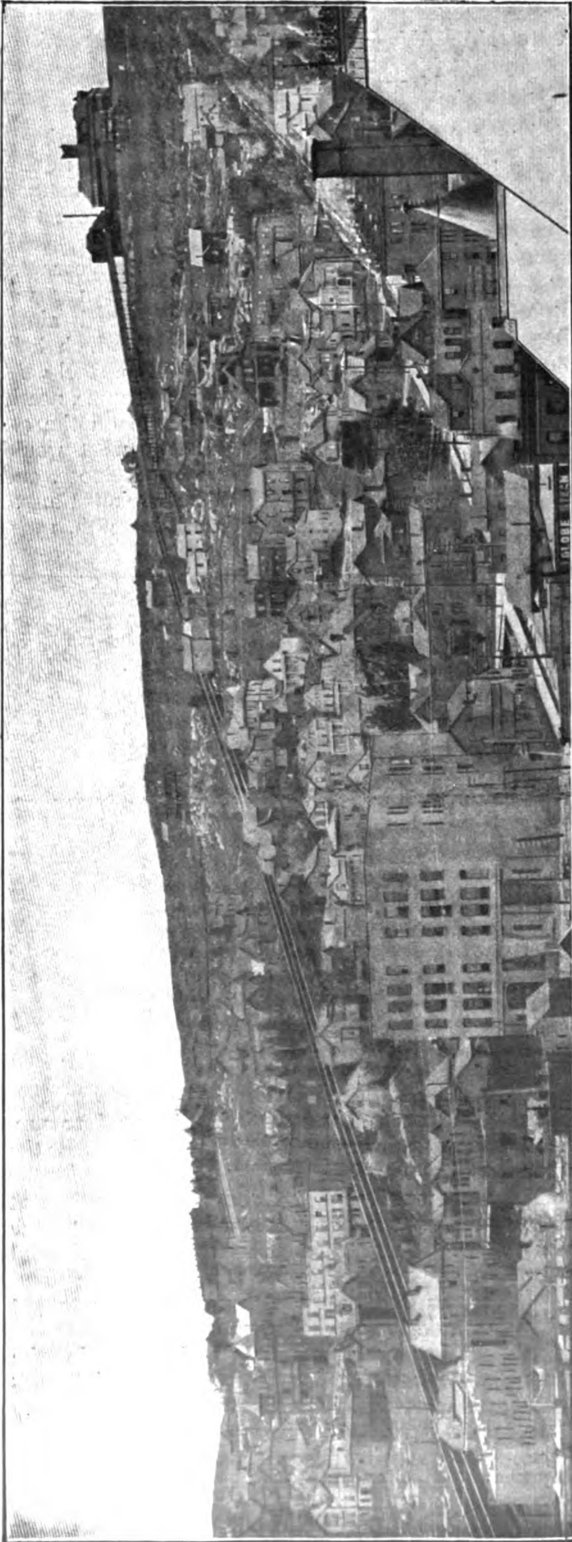


From a GENERAL VIEW OF THE TRACK DOWN WHICH THE BURNING CAR RAN. [*Photo.*

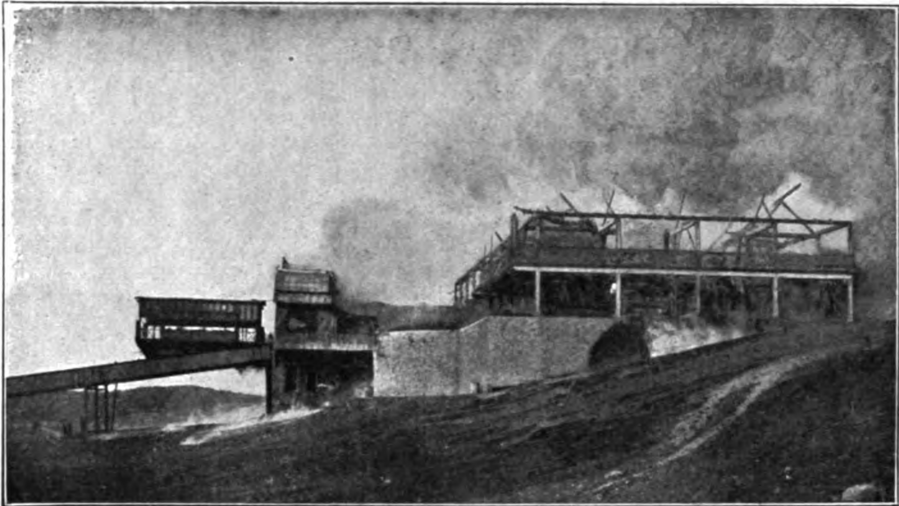
There was no city water to be had at that height, and the only available supply was a 10,000-gallon tank, which was soon exhausted. Meanwhile nearly every person in the city was watching the fire from vantage points down town, and even from the neighbouring city of Superior, across the river on the Wisconsin shore.

Thousands of eyes were fixed on the burning building and on the big car, as it stood at the top silently awaiting its time to make the most thrilling run that any person ever saw or could imagine.

As the flames grew hotter and hotter about it the car finally caught fire and began to burn. Gradually the Pavilion fell, and then piece by piece the iron superstructure of the power-house.

Of course, one question was on every lip, and that was, "Will the car get loose?" The engineer and two of his men, finding that the fire was gaining on them, turned their attention to the boilers, which were full of water to keep them from exploding, and then they tried to prevent the car from breaking loose. By that time it had grown so hot around the car that they could scarcely get near it, but they finally succeeded in getting three turns of the slack end of the big cable about an iron cross-beam of the track; but on account of the size of the cable, and the few moments available, they could not make a very secure job of it. All their tools were in the burning building, and they could not even get a wrench to break a joint in the line to derail the car.

Just as the last part of the power-house roof fell in the heat about the cable became intense, and suddenly the first cable melted. Half a minute later the other cable, unable to stand the awful strain, let go, and the car ran down about 4ft., with a snap jerked the tied end backwards round the beam, and with a crash started down the hill. At that instant probably 5,000 voices said in unison, "There she goes!" All eyes were riveted on



From a Photo. by] THE POWER-HOUSE ON FIRE—THE CAR NOT YET HAVING BROKEN LOOSE. [*C. Hall.*

the burning, flaming meteor as it started on its awful flight. During the first half of the run the car was somewhat retarded by the end of the cable striking the hard-wood cross-ties and breaking them, but as the car passed over the steeper part of the hill its speed increased, and the last half was made at a terrific rate. As it crossed the last street before it reached the bottom it seemed nothing more than a gigantic sky-rocket of smoke. The bottom of the incline was just on the edge of the sidewalk of the main business street, and the track runs into a pit, so that the floor of the car is just on the level with the sidewalk. The car body is large at the lower end and small at the upper end, being shaped like a wedge.

As the car hit the bottom there was an awful crash, and a puff of flame and smoke that went about 50ft. high. The wedge-shaped steel body embedded itself in the face of the granite wall about 3ft., and was literally smashed to pieces. The top, however, shot out across the street and down the avenue, scattering itself to pieces as it went, and carrying with it a large wooden waiting station, which it completely demolished and set on fire.

There were many houses and buildings alongside the track at the bottom, and the occupants of all these hurriedly moved out when told of the danger. Policemen kept everyone away from the bottom and stopped the street cars which had to pass in front of it. As the car made its awful run a number of women fainted at the sight. Many people had Kodaks and cameras, and yet during the run of the car not one picture was secured which showed it.

When the car struck and went to pieces, it not only threw burning brands all over the

THE RUINS OF THE POWER-HOUSE AND THE TOP OF THE TRACK, WHERE THE CAR STARTED.
From a Photo. by Clifford L. Higgins.

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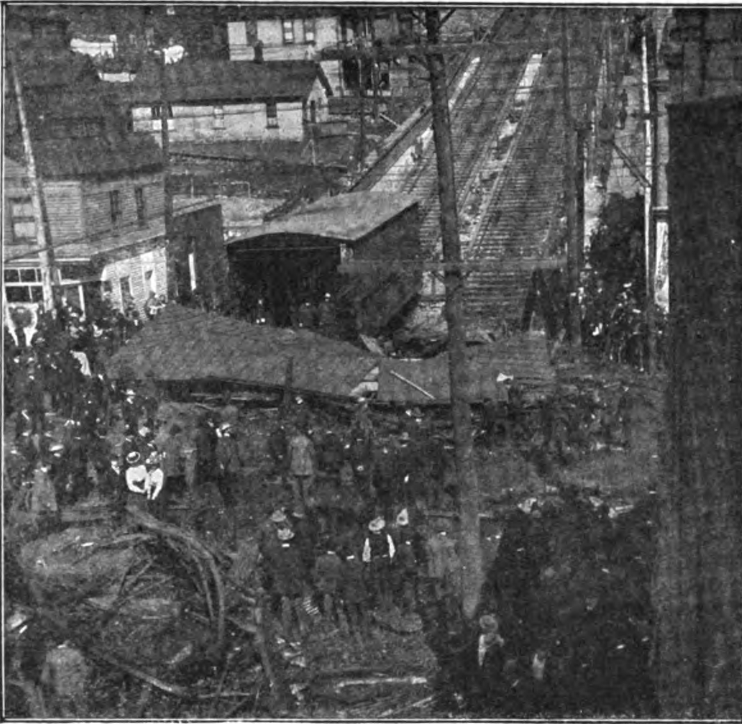

VIEW OF THE CAR AND WRECKAGE.
From a Photo. by C. Hall.

the wreckage. All sorts of rumours of people being killed were heard; but, wonderful to state, in reality no one was even injured.

Wild and varied were the estimates as to how long it took the car to make its last run down, but the watch of a cool-headed man who saw the entire run gave forty-three seconds as the actual time taken to cover the 3,600ft. descent.

street and sidewalks, but set the *débris* of the wooden waiting station on fire. People became so excited by the flight of the car that, when it struck, three alarms were turned into the fire headquarters at the same time from different places. Everyone rushed to the scene of the wreck, and the police had a hard task in holding the crowd back to enable the firemen to quench the fire and clear away

GENERAL VIEW OF THE SCENE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TRACK.
From a Photo. by Clifford L. Higgins.

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XLVI.—THE BURGESS TWINS.

AUBURN, New York, is the home of the most remarkable twins in the country, if not in the world. They are respectively Ray and Roy Burgess, and so exactly do they resemble each other that even their own mother finds it difficult at times to tell which is which.

The main characteristics of feature and form to which the great majority of people owe their individuality in appearance are exactly similar in the Burgess twins. Both have dark brown hair, grey eyes, slightly flattened noses, moderately thick lips, long ears, and rounded chins. In weight Roy has had the advantage at several different times, although at present both weigh exactly 144lb. Both are 5ft. 9in. in height.

From a] RAY AND ROY BURGESS, AGED 3. [Photo.

While children the twins enjoyed their wonderful similarity and played all sorts of pranks on their parents, teachers, and playmates. Having put behind them their childhood and entered the practical business world they have found their lack of individuality a great drawback and the source of many serious annoyances.

Roy found himself constantly called to account for some act of his brother's, while Ray frequently was obliged to settle Roy's account with some irate creditor, simply because he could not prove that he was himself and not his other half.

In consequence of these frequently occurring mishaps the twins decided to separate, and some time ago Roy went to the town of Keene, New Hampshire, where he expects in his work as agent for some standard piano to enjoy the novel experience of having an identity of his own.

Ray is still in Auburn, employed as printer on a local paper, but he has also planned to go where he will be a separate and distinct person, where he will have the use of his own individuality and not always be known as one of the Burgess twins.

It was while still attending school that the twins enjoyed to the fullest their likeness to each other. The teachers despaired of ever distinguishing one from the other; both boys dressed exactly alike, and both were in the same class at school. The principal tried to induce them to wear

From a] RAY BURGESS, AGED 16. [Photo.

From a] ROY BURGESS, AGED 16. [Photo.

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different coloured neckties, but their mother insisted that both should be clothed exactly alike.

Finally one teacher suggested that one boy should wear a small piece of blue ribbon on the lapel of his coat and the other a red ribbon. This was tried, but the teachers failed to remember whether Ray or Roy wore the blue, and when this question was settled the boys changed bows and "confusion worse confounded" reigned, so this plan had to be abandoned.

One boy was an excellent mathematician, the other excelled in drawing; one read beautifully, the other could not be tripped in spelling. But whether it was Ray or Roy who deserved the honour of being a lightning calculator or which boy should be termed the artist of the class could never be determined by the bewildered teachers.

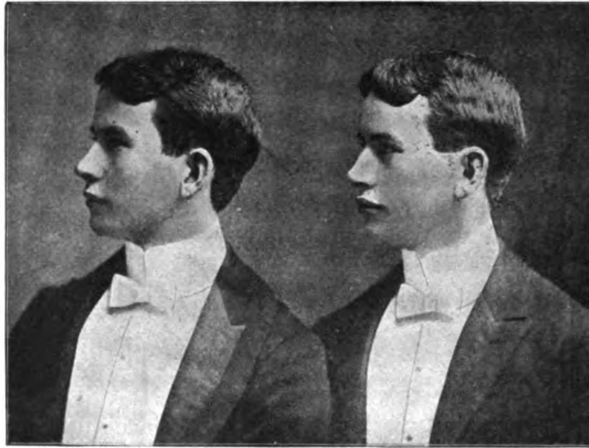
Both boys write exactly alike, their penmanship bears as remarkable a resemblance as do they to each other, and at examination times their instructors always felt sure that the one who had the gift for solving problems did both his and his brother's tests, while the one who could draw anything, from a block of wood to the most intricate floral design, handed in two examination papers, one headed Roy and the other Ray.

When the reading class was called there was a suspicion prevalent among scholars and teachers that the brothers played "checkers" with the class, and that the one who had in him the making of an elocutionist read twice, once for himself and once for his brother who lacked this talent.

Roy is the leader, being full of mischief and ready to dare anything, but he keeps this characteristic carefully hidden; his grey eyes express just the same innocence and reticence as do those of his more retiring brother. At school, if one got into trouble, the teachers being unable to decide which was the culprit, and deeming it unwise to allow the guilty as well as the innocent to escape justice, usually impartially punished both boys—not such a very bad scheme either—for if Roy was generally the one to set the ball rolling, Ray never hesitated to give it a helpful push.

While at school the twins were debarred from participating in such games as hide and seek, hunt the hounds, etc., because it was always impossible to tell which had been captured; and as each would vow it was the other hot dispute would ensue, in which Roy frequently received two black eyes, while Ray escaped scot free.

Among the boys each had his own friends, and Roy's chum was seldom on speaking terms with Ray, while the latter's champion generally went around with the chip on his shoulder lying in wait for Roy. Despite this loyalty many funny things frequently occurred. The brothers have always been the best of friends, and, like all American lads, are ready for a joke at any time.



From a] RAY AND ROY AS THEY APPEAR TO-DAY. *[Photo.*

They tell with great relish how they have times without number fooled their friends. Ray still bears a tiny scar on his left knee which he received in a tussle with a certain Bob Smith, who was his sworn ally, while endeavouring to wipe out an old score of his brother's. Smith will not believe to this day that he fought the wrong fellow, and it is impossible to offer him proof positive, because Roy also carries a scar on his left knee which he received while playing football.

The fact of having such an exact double is laughable to those not concerned, but the Burgesses say that it becomes rather monotonous to be constantly greeted with, "I say, who are you, Roy or Ray?" so Roy has made a dash for freedom; and unless his friends in Auburn recognise him as an individual with a personality of his own, and treat him as such and not as simply Roy's brother, Ray says he too will leave the town and go where it is not known that he is a twin or, as he expresses it, "only half a boy."

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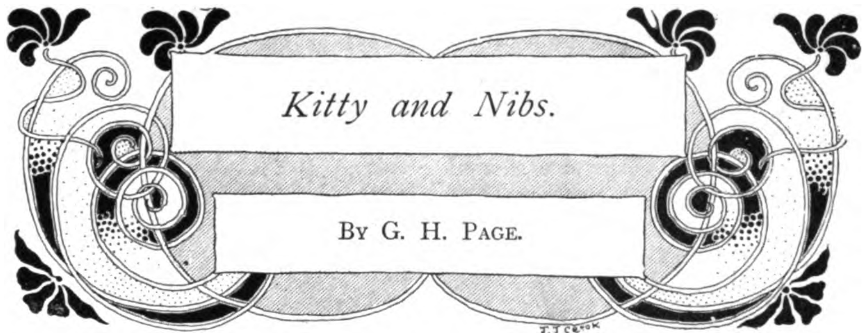

IN the little dining-room of a little house in a small London square four persons sat at breakfast—Clara and Isabel Hiles, two elderly maiden ladies, and Katherine and Cyril Boisragon Frere, known as Kitty and Nibs for short. The united ages of Nibs and Kitty made twelve.

It was a beautiful June morning, and outside the windows of the little room there was a glint of green trees and sunshine. The chittering of sparrows rose and fell on the ear. But within the room the mental atmosphere was more oppressive than usual, and the natural gaiety of the children was stifled into silence.

Unable to talk, they amused themselves by taking big bites out of their bread and butter, and then holding up the remaining piece to exhibit to each other the notched, semicircular hole cut out by their tiny teeth. Nibs took such a huge bite that the slice of bread and butter seemed to frill right round to his ears, and Kitty was convulsed with suppressed merriment. Nibs was an unfailing source of amusement and admiration to Kitty.

The little Freres were practically orphans, for their mother was dead and their father was far away in India. They had been put to live with the Misses Hiles, who boarded them and looked after them, but did not love them, for ten pounds a month.

Lately, however, the monthly cheque had not been forthcoming, nor was there any news from Captain Frere; and as week by week went by, and Kitty and Nibs continued to eat heartily and to require two helpings of pudding, and to kick out the toes of their shoes and to wear out the knees of their stockings, the faces of the Misses Hiles grew longer every day, and longer, too, the amount debited against Captain Frere's name in the red account-book, which Miss Isabel posted up scrupulously every night.

But now something had occurred which made the old ladies terribly anxious for the children's room rather than their company. Coronation week was drawing near. The Misses Hiles had received the offer of some boarders who would pay highly to be in town during the festivities. It was such an offer as no old ladies with narrow means and the love of gain could possibly refuse. Even had Captain Frere been paying regularly for the children it would have been hard to refuse. But considering that he was paying nothing at all; that, on the contrary, he was very much in their debt; that every mouthful of food the children took came actually now out of the Misses Hiles's pockets—no, really it was more than flesh and blood could tolerate.

"The children must go, that's flat," said Miss Isabel Hiles to her elder sister on the night that they received the proposed boarders' letter of terms.

"But where can they go to?" objected Miss Hiles, whose mind worked heavily.

"Well, they've got relations, I suppose? Didn't Captain Frere tell us of an aunt of theirs, his sister, living somewhere near Hampton Court? But I suppose she didn't approve of his marriage or something, since she has never taken any notice of her own nephew and niece. However, she'll have to take notice of them now, and time

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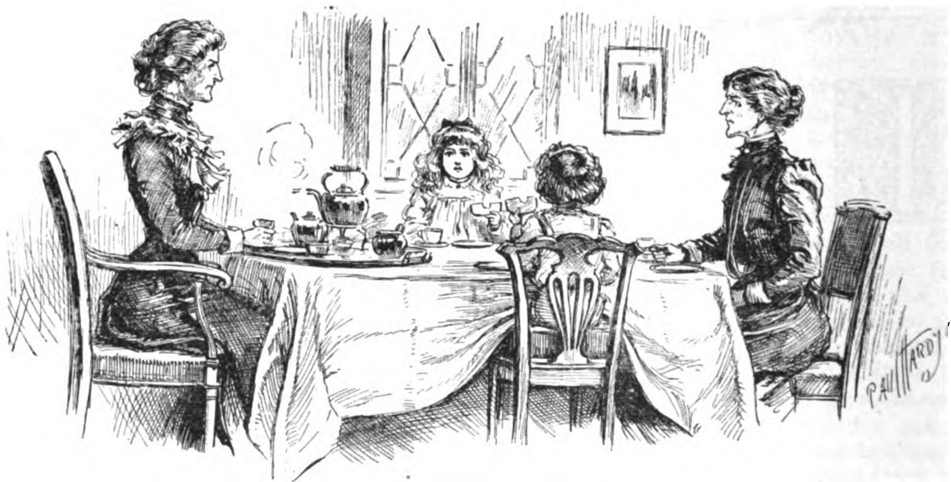
too. We'll speak to Kitty to-morrow and see if she can remember her aunt's address."

So, at breakfast next morning, Miss Isabel attacked Kitty on the subject which lay nearest her own interests.

"Stop those vulgar, dirty tricks, children," she said, sharply, in allusion to the "bites" competition. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Kitty, a big girl like you!" (Kitty was seven.) "Nibs, we know, is always a little guttersnipe, with no idea of manners." (There was open warfare between Miss Isabel and Nibs, who, aged five, showed himself stoically indifferent to the lady's taunts.) "Now, I want you to tell me about



"I WANT YOU TO TELL ME ABOUT YOUR AUNTIE."

your auntie. You remember your auntie, don't you? You've got her picture upstairs?"

Kitty did possess a photograph in a pretty silver frame which she had had ever since she was "quite a little girl." It represented a very kind-faced lady, whom dad had taught her to call auntie. Now that she had no one else to kiss, "'cept, of course, Nibs"—but then he was only a little boy and didn't count much in the kissing way—she used to kiss the picture every night before going to bed; but she had never seen auntie, and had the most confused, indefinite ideas concerning her.

So when Miss Isabel added, "Try to remember your auntie's address, Kitty. What is the name of the house or road she lives in?" Kitty remained silently gazing at Miss Hiles from troubled blue eyes.

"Come, come, child! Don't stare like a stuck pig!" said that lady, sharply. "You must have heard the address, I'm sure. Just think a little."

Now Kitty's eyes began to widen with tears and her sensitive mouth to tremble, but she managed to answer, bravely, "My auntie lives in Hampton Court"; and then, because she felt so dreadfully near crying, and because Miss Hiles was looking at her so unkindly, she took another bite of bread and butter to cover her embarrassment, and, forgetting it was forbidden, held the hole up for Nibs's inspection with a watery smile.

Miss Hiles, leaning forward, slapped her hand smartly for this disobedience, which was a relief to her own feelings, while Kitty broke into loud weeping from nervousness rather than pain.

Nibs was furious.

"You're a horrid old woman!" he cried, valiantly. "Why are you so cross to Kitty? I'll cut your head off with my sword!"

He slipped from his chair to find the weapon, and Miss Isabel informed him that he was a very naughty, rude, ungrateful little boy, and that she would lock him up in the black hole, and that the bears would certainly come and eat him up.

"There no bears," said Nibs, "'cept in India. And if you locked the door how would they get in?" Then other ideas stirred in his baby brain. "Oh, I wish we was in India, don't you, Kits? I hate this horrid old house and all the horrid old people in it."

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"And we don't intend to keep you in it much longer, I can tell you!" cried Miss Hiles, forgetting that her adversary was a child of five, almost ten times her junior in age. "We've put up with your bad manners and big appetites long enough, considering your papa doesn't pay a sixpence for you. Look at the loaf, Clara, though you'll need your glasses to see it. Those children get through a loaf a meal, I declare. However, I'll write before five to-day to tell Miss Frere—her name would be Miss Frere, of course?—to expect them, and I'll take them to Waterloo to-morrow by the blue 'bus in time for the 12.15 train."

"But how will you manage their boxes?" Miss Clara wanted to know.

"We shall keep their boxes here until Miss Frere sends for them and settles up," answered Miss Isabel, grimly. "They owe us close on twenty-nine pounds already, besides a pair of boots for the boy and quite a sovereign's worth of little things for Kitty. We shall keep their boxes."

So a letter was directed that day to "Miss Frere, Hampton Court"—a letter that was destined to be returned through the Dead Letter Office a week later, marked "Insufficient Address"—and next morning Miss Hiles took the children by omnibus to Waterloo, where she bought them half-single tickets, and gave these into Kitty's charge.

"Be sure you take care of them and don't drop them. Hold them in your hand the whole time. And don't get out of the train till you get to Hampton Court. There can be no mistake, because the train stops there altogether and goes no farther. Besides, your auntie will, of course, be there to meet you. I have written to tell her at what time you will arrive."

"Are we coming back again to live with you?" asked Kitty, dubiously.

"No, you're going to live with your auntie now," said Miss Hiles, "so give a nice kiss to poor Miss Isabel, who has been so kind to you, and say good-bye!"

Kitty allowed herself to be embraced, but Nibs dodged it successfully.

"I'll say good-bye," said he, "but I won't kiss you, and I hope I won't see you not never no more."

"You're a rude, naughty, ungrateful little gutter boy!" cried Miss Hiles, shrilly, as the train steamed out of the station, and for a long time her resentment against Nibs stifled the faint compunctions she felt for the thing she had done. For suppose Miss Frere were not at the station after all? What would

"'YOU'RE A RUDE, NAUGHTY, UNGRATEFUL LITTLE GUTTER BOY,' CRIED MISS HILES."

become of the children with only half-tickets and not a penny in their pockets? Well, anyhow, it was no affair of hers. She could not be expected to support Captain Frere's children for the rest of their lives. She resolutely turned her thoughts to the memory of an advertisement she had read of cotton blouses to be had in the Brompton Road for 1s. 3¾d.; and in her pursuit of these miracles of bad taste, bad work, and sweating prices she managed to banish Kitty and Nibs very comfortably from her mind.

Meanwhile the children, sitting opposite each other in a third-class carriage, were perfectly happy. It was delightful to travel, it was delightful to be together, it was most delightful to be away from Miss Hiles.

They had on their best clothes, Kitty a

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clean white frock, Nibs a Jack Tar suit of duck. The blue collar of this, to be sure, was much faded in the laundry, while the lace on Kitty's skirt was badly torn in the goffering. And Nibs's sailor hat was greatly battered, for he sometimes used it as a pail in which to carry water and sometimes as a hod for gravel or stones; while Kitty's was sun-browned, and the once pink ribbon which trimmed it was no longer pink, but a yellowish white.

Then they possessed no gloves, and there were no buttons to Nibs's shoes, the straps of which flapped loose, and Kitty was constantly obliged to smooth down her frock over her knees to conceal a new hole in her already much-mended stocking.

At a casual glance you would never have taken them for the children of gentlefolks.

But the other passengers in the carriage, engrossed each in his own affairs, took no notice of them at all.

The train rushed out through the ugly South London suburbs until it reached the comparative beauty of Wimbledon and Surbiton. Here most of the passengers got out, and the children's carriage remained empty but for one preoccupied elderly man, and when the train stopped again at the next station but one he got out too.

Kitty and Nibs looked at each other inquiringly. Was this Hampton Court? It seemed as though it must be, for the train stood quite still and no porter came along to bang the open doors.

"Let's get out," said Nibs, the venturesome.

Kitty, the prudent, leaned from the doorway and saw the other end of the platform quite black with people leaving the station and nobody at all getting into the train, while every carriage door stood wide open, from engine to guard's van.

Yes, this must be Hampton Court. So she sprang lightly off the step and Nibs scrambled after her, and the two little creatures walked up the platform hand in hand, Kitty always carefully holding the tickets. But where was "auntie"? No kind-faced lady like the lady in Kitty's portrait stood there to welcome them. The children looked about in vain.

Nibs wanted to follow the other people out of the station; he felt sure they would find her outside. But Kitty decided that they must wait for her where they were. So they waited patiently and without any fear, and presently discovered they were the only two passengers left. Everybody else had gone away. It began to be a little lonesome.

The collector who had been taking tickets at the exit now came towards them, counting those already collected over in his hand.

He spied the children.

"Did you come by this train, my dears?" said he.

Kitty handed him her tickets.

"Half-singles from Waterloo, eh? Did you come alone? And where are you going to now?"

"We're waiting for our auntie," said Kitty, in her neat, deliberate little voice, sounding the consonants very clearly and putting a tiny, dot-like pause between every word.

"All right! Sit here until she comes. But I'll say good-bye, for I'm off to my dinner. I hope auntie will be quick and not keep you waiting too long for yours."

He laughed heartily at this witticism and so did the children, and for another half-hour they continued very happy. They explored the waiting-rooms, examined the luggage waiting to go by the next train "up," looked at the open picture-papers hanging from a line over the bookstall, and for a long time watched some cattle packed into trucks on the other side of the permanent way. The poor things' pathetic eyes were turned wistfully from the interior of the whitewashed trucks to the green fields they would never tread again.

Nibs discovered he was hungry.

"I say, Kits, when do you think auntie'll come?"

"Just directly," Kitty thought. "You mustn't be so impatient, Nibs. She's got a long, long way to walk and heaps of things to do—to buy our dinners and, perhaps, some pretty toys for us, and to have our beds made and our room swept out, and oh! lots and lots of other things too!"

"What, you children here still?"

It was two o'clock and the ticket-collector had come back.

"Your auntie must have forgotten you, I'm thinking. Where does she live, eh?"

The children looked at each other and looked at the collector, but said nothing.

"What's her name?" he tried again.

"Her name is Auntie," said Kitty, with charming distinctness.

"Where do you come from?" asked the perplexed collector.

"From London, and from India before that," said Nibs, "and where before that I don't remember."

"But what is your address in London?"

The children did not know.

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Just then a train came in and the collector had to go to his post. The children watched the carriages disgorge their passengers, watched these hurry to the exit as if they were trying to catch a train instead of just leaving one, watched the crowd hanging black round the collector like bees round their queen; and then in a few moments more there was the station empty again of anyone but their two selves—two poor little selves beginning to feel very tired and disconsolate.

A porter came sauntering up.

"Halloa!" said he, from a little distance.

"Halloa!" responded Nibs.

"Wot you two kids doin' here?"

"Kid yourself!" cried Nibs, aggressively.

"Wotser nime, your auntie?" asked the porter.

"Just what the blessed mites don't know, nor where she lives neither."

"Werjer come from? London? Then werjer live in London?" asked the porter, who was a cockney himself and sharp.

"We live with Miss Hiles," said Kitty.

"Yus. But wot street jer live in?"

"It's not a street," said Kitty; "it's a square."

"But it's got a nime. Belgrive Squire, Heaton Squire, Grosvenor Squire?" he interrogated, proud of his knowledge. But poor little Kitty did not know the name of Miss Hiles's square.

"Rum go," the porter opined. "Single

"'KID YOURSELF!' CRIED NIBS, AGGRESSIVELY."

The porter was much amused.

"We're waiting for auntie," explained the pacific Kitty.

"Yes, and they've been waiting for her ever since 12.45," said the collector, joining the porter.

tickets and no luggage? Looks fishy. Not the first time unnatcheral parients have tried to shove off their young 'uns this way neither. No, not by a long chalk. Why, when I wos at Gorsple Oak——"

"Stow it," said the collector; "here's

the guv'nor coming, and we'd better tell him."

"The guv'nor" was the station-master, before whom the ticket-collector proceeded to lay the case.

Now, he was only really the station-master's substitute while the station-master himself was taking his holiday. And this substitute was a timid, rigid, unimaginative man. He was rather afraid of children, having none of his own, and he was intensely afraid of taking on himself any responsibility. He listened to the porter's "unnatcheral parients" theory, and he saw himself saddled for life with the two poor little things. But even this prospect did not appal him so much as did the prospect of his wife's anger if he should have the temerity to take them home. Such a thing was quite out of the question, and

Poor Kitty, now completely frightened and disheartened, only shook her head.

"Disgraceful plant!" grumbled the deputy station-master. "People like that deserve the treadmill. Don't believe there's any aunt at all. However, they can sit here and give her the chance of turning up, and if she don't I'll send 'em up to Waterloo by the last train. Look out their tickets, Perkiss. We'll send the tickets up with 'em as a means of identification. Now then, look sharp, there's the 3.53 signalled."

A long and beautiful summer day was passing over the land. White, sharp-edged, sun-suffused clouds stood up like mountains in the blue sky and were reflected in the river flowing placidly between low banks. Boating parties were beginning to unpack their tea-baskets. The deep-toned, red-

"HAVE YOU ANY MONEY, MY DEAR?"

his face grew sour and his manner short as the difficulty of the position forced itself on his attention.

"What station did they come from?" he snapped.

"Waterloo, sir," said the friendly collector.

"Return tickets?"

"Single halves."

"Any money?"

"Have you any money, my dear?" asked the collector, of Kitty.

brick palace in its stately gardens breathed a note of romance and old-world story into the air. Within a stone's throw of the children hundreds of people were enjoying themselves: there was no one without some sort of a home, some sort of ties. Only the two poor, forlorn little creatures sat there on a bench in the dusty, ugly station, nobody's business, nobody's care, hungry, tired, and with all their bubbling gaiety at last quenched.

The ticket-collector went away to his tea,

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and brought back with him a couple of buns. He gave them to the children, who had had nothing to eat since breakfast, but Nibs's little mouth was so parched with thirst he could not eat. The porter procured him some water in a tin mug.

Other trains came in and went out. There were moments of bustle and movement on the station, and then again long, long periods when there was nothing to distract the mind.

The cattle trucks were moved away to a distant siding.

The shadows stretched out slenderly, and the sun began to redden as it went down.

The children sat dozing, huddled up in a corner of the bench. Nibs's head was in Kitty's lap, and had anyone been concerned to examine Kitty's sweet little face he would have found that she had cried herself to sleep.

"The speshull's signalled!" shouted the porter to the ticket-collector; "she'll be coming in here on the right."

Nibs stirred himself up.

"I dreamded of ayah," he told Kitty. "She telled me I was her pukka Baba Sahib, just as she used to. I wish she was here. I wish we could take a train to India!"

"Here, kids!" cried the porter, "doncher wanter come an' see the black soldiers, eh? There's a lotter Injun troops camped here in the park for the Corynation, an' ter-day they've bin up in town enjying of theirselves at Madam Toosord's or sumweres."

The children roused themselves without enthusiasm, for they barely understood what he said; but they followed him politely to a distant platform, arriving just in time to see gliding up to it a very long train.

The doors flew open and Nibs thought he must be dreaming still.

For what were these tall, turbaned forms with silver crescents or iron circlets gleaming in the muslin's folds; with blue and scarlet and orange tunics; with black, curled beards and braided hair; with wholesome dark brown skins; what could they be but dream people connected with home and dad and India, with the far-away happy times and places where everyone was always kind to children, and he was ayah's pukka Baba Sahib?

He squeezed Kitty's hand convulsively.

"Look, look, Kits!" he cried, his little face on fire.

But the sedate and gentle Kitty was all pink with excitement, too.

For these wild-looking warriors, Jats and Sikhs and smooth-faced Pathans, these ugly, fierce-eyed, little Gurkhas with kookrie-knives slung at their waists, who all seemed to the gathering crowd of loafers so awe-inspiring and so strange, to Kitty seemed the most natural, the most familiar, the most beautiful sight in the world. With fixed and radiant eyes she watched the platform fill with glowing uniforms, and the ranks form up as the well-known word of command fell on her ear. She was back again in the mysterious East, or, rather, a rose from the mysterious East had suddenly blossomed out upon the humdrum, colourless station.

"March!" called out the officer; but at that same instant came a child's unrestrained cry of joy.

"Bhimi! Bhimi Dessah!"

Nibs had rushed forward and was embracing a big Sikh round the knees.

"Oh, Baba Sahib!"

The man squatted down on his heels so as to bring his face on a level with the child's.

"Where has the Baba Sahib been all this long time?" he asked, affectionately. "And how tall and pukka he has grown! And is this the Mem Missy?"

"Oh, Bhimi, will you please take care of us?" pleaded Kitty. "We're so unhappy and so hungry! And auntie has never come to meet us, and we've been here all day!"

Saluting, the tall Sikh turned to say a few words with his officer, and it ended in Bhimi receiving permission to bring the children into camp.

The procession of Indians which marched out of the station that day and over the bridge along the Barge Walk was curiously completed by a big Sikh who carried in his arms a chattering little English boy, and led a happy little English girl by the hand.

"It appears, sir," explained Captain Lawson, when he reached camp, to the commanding officer, "that Bhimi Dessah used to be in Captain Frere's regiment at Peshawur, and these children are the little Freres. Funny thing to have sent them down here by themselves to-day, whoever did it. Don't understand that part of it at all."

"Well, they can't stay in camp anyhow," said Major Chalmers. "But I'm going over to dine with Lady Ollard in the Palace, and I'll take them with me to ask her advice. She's an awfully good sort, and passionately fond of children. She'll understand what to do with them, I know. Let Bhimi and someone else be ready to carry them over in an hour's time. The poor mites must be tired to death."

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"'WHERE HAS THE BABA SAHIB BEEN ALL THIS LONG TIME?' HE ASKED, AFFECTIONATELY."

But, revived by pleasant Indian sweets and other camp cookery, Kitty and Nibs were lively as little bats when the time came to go, and danced and skipped by Bhimi's side as they traversed the camp, crossed a bit of the Home Park, entered the beautiful Palace gardens, and so into the Palace itself, and to Lady Ollard's rooms.

"Why, this *is* my auntie!" cried Kitty, to the kind-faced lady who came to greet Major Chalmers in the drawing-room.

"Who do you say, Major? The little Freres? Bob's children? Oh, darlings, darlings, how glad I am you have come!"

And while she covered them with kisses she told the Major, "My poor brother has been ill for weeks and weeks, and I only heard of it this morning for the first time. When he thought he was going to die his one desire was that I should take care of his children. Unfortunately, there had been something between us—but that's a sad old story now and must be forgotten. And now auntie is going to take care of her darlings, is she not?" said Lady Ollard, kissing the beaming little faces again and again.

"But Bhimi must ster—stay and take care of us, too?" said Nibs, very earnestly, and he always stuttered a little when very much in earnest. He put his tiny, fair hand on Bhimi's dark one and held him tight. "It will save you a good bit, auntie, for you see I'm very heavy to carry, and Bee—Bhimi will carry me to bed."

So for that evening, anyhow, Bhimi stayed.

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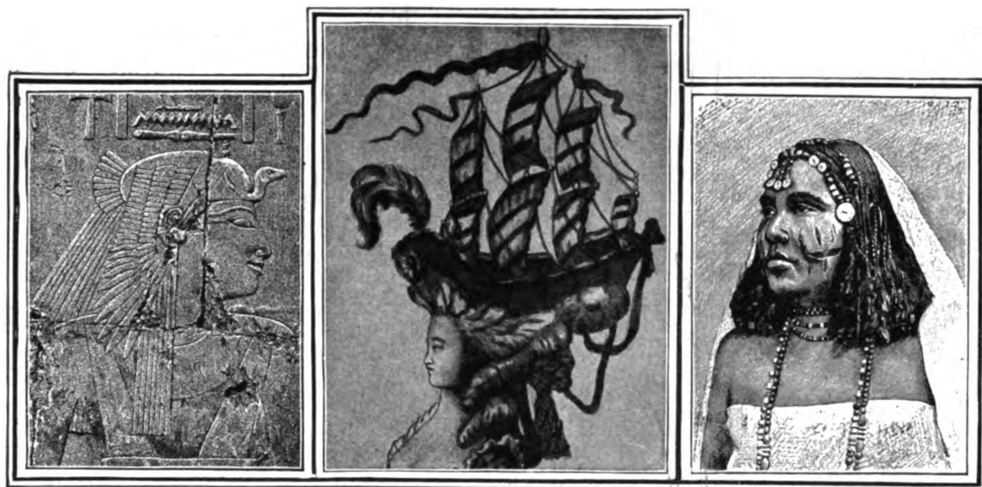
Martyrs of Fashion.



THREE IDEALS OF HEADDRESS.

TO take care of her person, to correct certain imperfections which disfigure a pretty face, to dress with taste, to obey the exigencies of fashion is, for a woman, not only a permissible coquetry, but almost a conventional duty. At the same time, if to that extent the art of the toilette is quite legitimate, as much cannot be said for the means taken by some women to give themselves the appearance of a beauty denied to them by Nature. To what learned, complicated, and strange recipes they have recourse, to what sufferings they subject themselves light-heartedly, is hardly believable; and beyond question the price paid is a very heavy one for the acquisition of a fictitious beauty—which deceives nobody.

Is it not the dream of almost all women to be beautiful and to remain young? And who thinks of reproaching them for it? What moralist would be so severe as to blame them? To take particular care of her toilette, to select what adornments may assist in giving an agreeable expression to her visage, and to correct whatever faults it may have—nothing is less blamable, nothing is more natural; only the question here is one of extent, a matter of degree. By the side of this wholly allowable coquetry there is another, at which we cannot refrain from smiling, unless we are inclined to feel pity for those who are under its influence: it consists in the complete substitution of artifice for Nature in carrying out a labour of vanity and falsehood which, when all is done, misses its end, since the effect it produces is of the most repugnant kind.

To fashion or cultivate her beauty, then, becomes an art in which all the arts are employed, a science to which all the sciences lend their aid—in which chemistry and medicine, surgery and painting, physics, statuary, and mineralogy all have parts to play.

But it is not only time, trouble, and money that have to be paid in such a case; patience, resignation, and endurance are also demanded. Who is there who does not know the sufferings to which some women will condemn themselves, duped by a mirage of beauty? Who does not know to what lengths they will carry the cruelties of self-martyrdom? Let us call up this spectacle, let us look upon this self-inflicted torture of coquetry pushed to mania, and see how much strength of will may be put at the service of frivolity.

The first merit which calls admiring attention to a woman, and has at all times been celebrated by the poets, is freshness of complexion. The women of Corinth took a bath of perfumed olive oil for two hours daily. In Rome the vapour-bath, followed by douches and massage, occupied the mornings of elegant ladies. Nero's wife, the Empress Poppæa, invented baths of asses' milk, in which she indulged twice a day. Flocks of several hundred asses followed the Court wherever it went, to insure the toilette of the Empress.

Under the Directory Madame Tallien tried baths of crushed strawberries and raspberries. But what is the sort of bath that has not

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been contrived? Baths of grape and olive skins, of Bordeaux wine, and of champagne have been used. A French doctor recommended baths of fresh blood, and in hundreds of towns bathing-places were provided in the public slaughter-houses. Other votaries of fashion were advised to bury themselves inside the bodies of dead animals, and even in manure-heaps. Modern science has replaced these strange prescriptions by baths of glycerine, and by ammoniacal, electric, and chemical baths.

But even those revolting expedients for giving a beautiful hue to the skin were, perhaps, less matters of torture than the wearing through the night of masks, sometimes rigid, sometimes repulsive. In Rome the usage of the mask was so general that it was called the domestic, or husband's, mask. It was fabricated by special slaves every evening, with a paste made of bean flour, or with a mucilaginous product found in the nests of certain sea-birds; or, again, with the sweat of lambs.

In France the domestic mask was in use down to the seventeenth century. We owe to Henry III., who wore it, the recipe for a mask made of flour and white of eggs. This composition hardened on the face during the night, and was softened in the morning with a lotion of chervil. Haricot bean flour, fresh cream, honey, and olive oil entered into the preparation of these masks, which moulded themselves to the features. The chroniclers have left many ironical descriptions of these "stone faces," in which the features of these "elegants" were encased at nightfall, to be broken on the return of daylight and give to view—at least for a few hours—a complexion intact and youthful.

Let us not, however, too strongly accuse of fantasies the "elegants" of other days, with their "stone faces." In the dressing-room of some voluntary victim of coquetry in 1902, what are those freshly-cut and carefully-secreted beefsteaks, lividly raw and red, with powder-boxes near them? Presently, with much of mystery, those steaks will be adjusted with minute care by a lady's-maid to the cheeks of her mistress, held in their places with a bandage, and not removed before the next morning. This energetic recipe is said to be a more effective refresher of the complexion than chemical baths or "beauty pills" poisoned with arsenic; at any rate, the application of it demands courage, mystery, and discretion.

But, defiant of masks, fleshly compresses, and arsenical potions, little deformations will show themselves: tiny indiscreet folds of the skin at the corners of the mouth; the epidermis shrinks about the eyes; the surface of the forehead loses its smoothness; the first wrinkle threatens to assert itself. Treatment at once energetic and immediate is called for. Quickly a veritable arsenal is laid under contribution to eradicate this minim of defect. Behold a series of instruments of hardwood and metal, that look like models of garden implements! They are all for use in the processes of "face massage." For one or two hours daily for weeks—it may be for months—a practitioner employs these tools upon the face of his patient with minute care. Each one of the muscles that may act upon the unfortunate pucker in the skin must be massaged in accordance with the importance of the part it plays. Frictions of alcohol and the application of wet bandages terminate each operation. The wrinkle got rid of, partial masks maintain the smoothness of the epidermis so laboriously obtained, until renewed massage becomes requisite a little later on.

The electric treatment is more delicate still: it demands the application of a continuous or intermittent current to the extremities of each of the muscles to be fortified. Five or six electrodes may be applied simultaneously to a face that is becoming wrinkled. The intensity of the currents being very weak, innumerable *séances* are necessary; and, even if not made painful, the operation is, at least, a very tedious one. Add to this that it has to be accompanied by interior medication—that the patient must be fattened or made thinner, according to the state of the epidermis. The suppression of a wrinkle, therefore, may represent three months of assiduous care, of two hours a day, by mechanical or electrical treatment.

So far, only the preservation intact of Nature's work has been dealt with; now we come upon something more difficult—the remedying of some of its errors, their curtailment or total elimination. Numerous stories have been told to us of savages scalping their prisoners, of their putting them to death at slow fires; it is to similar tortures a woman will unhesitatingly submit herself who has made the distressing discovery that her upper lip is developing a moustache, or is shadowed by a too positive growth of down, or that her cheeks are being invaded by a hairy excrescence. Depilatory operations are always painful—often dangerous.

The Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans had

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for this disagreeable growth on the visage the same aversion as ourselves: they tore out both down and hair by very energetic means, extirpating them either with tweezers or by placing on the spot a plaster composed of pitch and quicklime. All the so-called "depilatory" preparations have a caustic base, like the *rusma* of the Orientals, and burn and injure the skin to a certain depth.

Modern operators practise extraction also. An extremely fine point of hard wood is dipped in crystallizable acetic acid, then applied to the skin beside the hair to be destroyed, which is gently drawn by tweezers. Several applications are made, at intervals of a few minutes; the skin softens, and the point penetrates. The skin then gives way to the least strain put upon it. Whatever the skill of the artist may be, however, the operation is a most painful one—so painful that the extraction of five or six hairs at a sitting is as much as a patient can endure.

Electricity may here be introduced. Into the hair itself is inserted a needle of nickelled platinum, through which a conductor causes a current of 4,000 or 5,000 ampères to circulate for a variable period. Scars often result from this energetic mode of treatment. Besides which, the caprice of electricity, which has its irony, has to be counted with; it may happen that, though it destroys the hair itself, it strengthens the root from which it has sprung and causes a growth of new down, finer and more abundant than ever. The red-hot iron is always the supreme resource—and the supreme torture.

IN THE ROOMS OF A PARISIAN "BEAUTIFIER."
From a Photo. by Baules.

This light down was a mere suspicion—a mere shadow; but imagine that a pimple may appear on this epidermis, or perhaps a wart, or streaks and patches of red spread over it! And remember that it is the finest skins that are most exposed to misadventures of that sort! Let surgery come to our assistance; let it cut, slash, tear, and uproot. With a silken thread it strangles excrescences—burns them with acids, or tears away by fragments stains of the skin. This very delicate operation goes on for weeks. Josephine Beauharnais had the patience to allow sixty freckles to be removed from her face with the aid of the knife.

But all these operations appear pale and commonplace by the side of the heroism displayed two years ago by a celebrated actress, to whom truly belongs the martyr's crown. Driven to desperation by seeing her beauty compromised by a series of superficial alterations in her complexion, she decided to have the skin of her face completely changed! She found doctors who undertook the performance of this strange operation, which extended over seven weeks—seven weeks of uninterrupted suffering. All the skin of her face was chemically burned, then detached bit by bit. At the end of two months of suffering the old epidermis had entirely disappeared and been replaced by a skin as rosy, thin, and tender as that of a new-born child! So disconcerting was the aspect of this baby-like complexion to a woman of thirty that the desperate actress found herself more ill-looking after the operation than she had thought herself to be before undergoing it,

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and had to seclude herself for a month to allow her new skin to age a little. At the end of four months, however, the result was perfect; the best friends of the heroic actress all declaring that she was "unrecognisable," so completely was she rejuvenated and transformed!

We have suppressed undesirable hairs, blotches, and warts: let us now add to them! We have been at much pains to do all this; and we will now do as much in an opposite direction.

It was in the seventeenth century that the use of "patches" was inaugurated. They were cut out of thin black silk or sarcenet, gummed on the back, in the forms of crescents, suns, stars, and comets. They resembled on a face the signs of the Zodiac. They were an indispensable accessory to the play of the features. The placing of them on the temples, near the eyes, and at the corners of the mouth was a special art. A woman of quality always wore from eight to ten, and never went out without her box of patches for the replacing of those that fell off, or for the addition of fresh ones, as occasion might require.

A LADY OF FASHION OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY APPLYING HER "PATCHES."
From an] [*Old Print.*

Each one of these patches had a characteristic name: at the corner of the eye, "the impassioned"; in the middle of the cheek, "the gallant"; near the lips, "the coquette"; on a pimple, "the concealer." When she had these all properly placed, a fashionable lady looked as if she had met with some accident to her skin. Even to-day we see ladies who have had little pieces of brown india-rubber inserted under their skin to imitate moles or "beauty-spots."

That is only the beginning. We are now going to witness the whole work of ornamenting a face, of which there is not a feature that cannot be learnedly modified. First, the eye. In antiquity the art of enlarging and darkening the pupil was already known. Ovid says: "The surroundings of the eyes should be slightly darkened, a fine powder blown under the lids to make them appear brilliant and larger, the eyelashes tinted with sepia, the arc of the eyebrows lengthened."

To-day the transformation is not merely superficial. By the absorption of certain poisonous substances—atropine and belladonna, amongst others — a dilation of the pupil is obtained, making it look more expressive and luminous. Around the eye so enlarged some skilful touches with a pencil, prolonging the external opening of the lids; and the application of a flesh-paint, the basis of which is lamp-black, to the lashes, will give a look of brightness to the eyes. Besides all this there needs, for enframing these perfected eyes, well-designed eyebrows and thick lashes. Partial extirpation of the hair of the brows and repeated massages may serve to modify their curve.

At the Court of Peter the Great the Russian women of fashion adopted a radical means, that of having their eyebrows entirely extracted, substituting for them a thick layer of black-lead, perfectly designed. Sometimes artificial eyelashes, slightly moistened with collodion, are placed under the natural lashes, which they enlarge. Of course, this work of art must be minutely renewed every day; the effect of belladonna is only momentary; paints become dimmed, and the false eyelids are never of a solidity to be altogether trustworthy.

The face is now to become a veritable palette, on which are all the tones of white,

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of blue, and of red, to simulate a young and brilliant complexion.

White, called silver or pearl-white, furnishes the first coat and groundwork of the picture. Is it generally known that the elementary essential of all whites is alabaster, pounded and pulverized in special mills mostly installed at Paris? Our "elegants" exhaust every year a quarry of fine marble for the making-up of their faces. The white is spread with a pad of cotton-wool or soft brush, more thickly on the parts where there are wrinkles, or where they may be threatening to appear. The red, chosen from among seventeen shades between rose and vermilion, is laid on lightly in layers and graduated from the top of the cheeks to the beginning of the neck. Finally, with pastels made of powdered talc and indigo, the artist traces in simple lines the course of the veins. One may suppose that the picture is then finished. But what varieties and subtleties enter into this making-up! A visage intended to shine under the rays of powerful lights cannot be treated in the same way as one intended to be seen in the light of day: there is a red for the evening, a red for the theatre, and another for the town, for the country, for the sea! There is one make-up for fêtes and another for simple entertainments!

AN UP-TO-DATE PROCESS—MODELLING THE EYEBROWS BY MEANS OF THE ELECTRIC NEEDLE.
From a Photo.] [*by Baules.*

Even painting has for some years given place to a process highly mysterious and jealously secreted by its practisers: that of enamelling. It substitutes for the outfit of paints a small solid envelope, transparent and coloured, which covers the face with a coat of enamel. While the most successful make-up of paint cannot long resist exposure to heat, and must be renewed at least once a day, enamel lends the face a brightness that may endure for several weeks. Its inconvenience is the ceramic stiffness, the immobility in which it holds all the features while giving them a brilliant appearance. Its application, moreover, is a long and painful operation. To fix, cold, upon the skin the colouring powers, recourse must be had to acids of a dangerous character. Part of the enamelling must be done in darkness, and two or three days of interrupted treatment are indispensable for rendering the application definitive.

Grave accidents, chronic affections of the skin, often result from enamelling that has been too energetically performed. But the very risk seems to add temptation to this mysterious operation; and who would not brave it to obtain the pearly splendour which turns the visage into a piece of art pottery? Scraped, massaged, polished, electrified, a halo of blue about the large and flashing eyes, the whole face brilliant, this work of art has now to be crowned with a harmoniously-adapted head of hair.

At times when fashion requires that its followers shall have hair of a dark blonde or mahogany colour, what is to be done with black hair but dye it? And what can be done with a thin or failing crop of hair but strengthen it by useful additions, enrich and thicken it?

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IN THE TIMES OF POWDERED HAIR—PROTECTING THE FACE WITH A PAPER CONE WHILE THE HAIRDRESSER APPLIES THE POWDER.
From an] [*Old Print.*

The Orientals and Egyptians, preferring black hair, obtain it by the use of a lotion composed of Indian ink and rose-water. The young Jewesses used gold-dust to brighten their hair, and it is from them came the fashion of powdered hair. In Rome the "elegants" used dyes of gold colour, greens, and blues. Some of their recipes were very strange. There was one in which the juice of hellebore was mixed with honey and pounded rats' heads. In old France simple powder was at first sufficient; under Charles IX. it was violet, red under Louis XIII. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries white only was used. Mercier, in 1783, protested against the frightful quantity of starch which this fashion caused to be consumed, affirming that cities like London and Paris swallowed up as much meal daily as would have sufficed for the nourishment of ten thousand hungry people.

Modern chemistry lends itself to the most fantastic variations. Who knows what part chance may play in scientific discoveries? It is not less so in regard to capillary art. A doctor visiting a potash manufactory noticed the admirable golden hues of the hair of all the workwomen. A dye with a potash base was immediately combined, producing the Venetian blonde so greatly in vogue of late years. The same effect was formerly attained by exposing the hair to the sun, as shown in the following illustration from an old print. By accident also was the discovery made that the first greying of chestnut hair may be stayed by a lotion of tea. All grades of colour, from black to blonde, are obtained from preparations more or less dangerous, the least peril incurred being the weakening of the growth of hair and the provocation of premature baldness.

The most beautiful heads of natural hair do not equal certain marvellous wigs. In all times women have occasionally worn wigs. "Let us picture to ourselves," wrote M. de Saporta, "Mary Stuart on the scaffold: the executioner raises his axe, decapitates the poor Queen, and, seizing by its long hair the head dripping with blood, cries with all his might: 'God save Queen

TURNING THE HAIR "VENETIAN BLONDE," BY SPREADING IT TO THE SUN OVER A BROAD BRIM WITHOUT A CROWN.
From an Old Print.

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Elizabeth!' But the distresses of all kinds endured by Mary had stripped her of the blonde tresses of which she had once been so proud: the executioner grasped nothing but a wig, while the head, denuded of its covering, fell noisily on to the floor of the scaffold. For the rest, the Queen of England's head was no better furnished than that of her victim, and her red wig is not less famous."

The eighteenth century must be reached to find that the art of wig-making has attained the highest pitch of perfection—and ridiculousness. Then appeared the head-dresses called "opera-boxes," which increased the height of a woman's face to 72in. from the bottom of her chin to the top of her piled-up hair; or those, more extravagant still, called puffs, in which the hair was raised stage above stage, stretched upon frames. In 1774 the Duchesse de Chartres appeared at the opera, her head dressed with a pyramidal puff on which were seen the Duc de Beaujolais, her eldest son, in the arms of his nurse, a parrot pecking at a cherry, a little negro, and ciphers made of hairs, even of the Duc de Chartres and of Princes.

ONE OF THE LATEST METHODS—REMOVING WRINKLES BY MEANS OF THE ELECTRIC ROLLERS.
From a Photo. *by Baulez.*

Though less exacting, our present fashions demand an abundance of hair which has been discreetly augmented by fictitious additions. France alone consumes yearly more than 400,000lb. weight of hair in the making of some 30,000,000 wigs. It is the most costly of artificial beauties, for it has first to be purchased, then kept in order by being dressed daily by the aid of a multitude of products and numerous auxiliaries. The outlay on certain elegant heads of hair would serve to maintain fifteen persons—bald or not.

Now we come to the mouth. On the lips is placed a freshening pigment; on the gums a special rose. The tongue is scraped and rubbed with soft velvet. The teeth are ornamented and fabricated at will. The Annamite women carefully cover their teeth with a salve composed of bone-charcoal, sawdust, and honey; this is an elegance among savages. How much more civilized appears to us the recent fashion of rich American ladies, who, in cavities cut or filed in the hollows of their teeth, set rubies, pearls, diamonds, so that a sparkle underlines every smile of their opened lips?

It is now the turn of the ear-modeller. The practice of moulding the ears, which has again become fashionable, is a very old one: the improved shape is effected by training the outer shell of the ear by binding it over pieces of wood of different forms; a cunning ointment is laid over all, and even the least æsthetic ears do not resist this treatment.

And now we come to the nose-maker. Nothing is rarer than a well-made nose; and need it be said of what importance the nose is? To-day noses are remade, re-fashioned, augmented, the curve of them changed at pleasure. Electric massage, the introduction of cylindrical and expanding sponges into the nostrils, are powerless to effect this prodigy; to achieve it, the skin must be moulded from beneath. The form of the nose chosen, Greek or aquiline, straight or upturned, is carefully moulded in plaster of Paris, with exact dimensions; of this a plaster mould is applied to the nose to be

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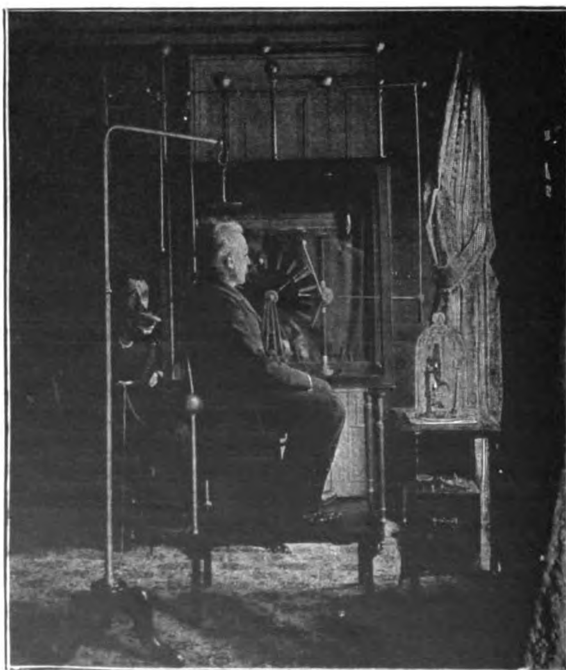
transformed, at the base of which, beneath the skin, a fine syringe charged with pure vaseline is introduced. The process of injection is then carried out, the vaseline penetrates under the skin, which it raises and presses closely against the mould; the pressure on the syringe is maintained until the vaseline injected becomes firm. The mould is then removed, and the nose, recently depressed and ill-shapen, exactly resembles the model, only a little discoloured. A trifling daub of red, with some blue veins pencilled, completes this veritable creation, this triumph of modern cosmetics.

Perhaps you may now declare yourself satisfied with your face. It has cost you quite enough. But, no! Beauty is a matter of proportions. All is lost if you are too big or too little, if you have feet too long, hands too short, a neck too long, a figure too heavy or too thin. What then? You are too tall; your height must be lessened. Your limbs are too long; very well, they must be shortened; too short, they must be lengthened. Let us resign ourselves again heroically to the torture, therefore: an inch has to be taken from the length of our neck, or as much added to it.

To accomplish this there are infallible means. How many processes are there for reducing fat, from the endless band in which women of middle age are swathed to the modern electric corset furnished with invisible batteries! Your limbs are too short? Swedish gymnastics will lengthen and stretch them, by means of apparatus very much resembling some ancient instruments of punishment. The size of a hand cannot be much diminished, but by repeated massages its heavy form may be modified, its fingers better arranged, and their nails freed from flesh. These are objects of great care and energetic treatment. When an ill-formed or ill-placed nail resists the action of polishers and artificial enamel, some "elegants" do not hesitate to submit to have it wholly removed by the burning of its base with acid; the new nail is then, from its birth, treated with infinite care. An actress in London with rare courage is reported to have had the nails on both hands replaced in this way. In Paris alone more than 3,000 specialists are engaged in the fabrication and preservation of beautiful hands.


ELECTRICITY AS THE NEWEST CURE FOR BALDNESS.
From a Photo. by Baules.

Is that the end? Not yet. The idea of leaving motion, gesture, attitude, to chance! One must learn to walk, to smile, to execute the least gesture according to a harmonious rhythm. The commonest gesture is taught and repeated that is calculated to increase the effect of the least acquired grace. In fine, when nothing of Nature has been left, the pupil has acquired the full mastery; the work is complete.

And that work is, veritably, the creation of a new being, artificial and elegant, in whom nothing remains, or at least is visible, of the imperfections imposed by Nature. But are these artificial *chefs d'œuvre* worth as much as the sincere and imperfect work of Nature? Painted and enamelled, tinted and moulded to admiration, the heroines of coquetry may at least reproach themselves with having been too successful. They have committed the fault of passing the boundary at which care of the person ceases to be justifiable, and are after all much less attractive than a healthy milkmaid.

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My Old Bikes.

By Leonard Larkin.

In my old bicycling days—when I was a young man—every bicyclist was an enthusiast. Nobody but an enthusiast could have endured it for a week. When I say we were all enthusiasts, I mean that is what we called ourselves; other people called us maniacs. And in fact, when I look back upon the troubles and flounderings and hard work on hard saddles and hard roads—oh, so hard sometimes!—of those days, I feel a growing tolerance for the opinion of those other people. Still, I can scarcely go so far as to call myself a maniac outright. Let us compromise: call me an enthusiac.

My first enthusiasm battered me against, and under, and all round a wooden "boneshaker." I suppose there must be many people alive now who have never even seen a boneshaker. It is not a very beautiful thing to see, but it is worse to feel; it is so uncompromising, so hard, and so full of metallic corners, and so emphatic in its way of impressing itself on you. The worst position in which to feel a boneshaker is between the boneshaker and a macadam road with your leg—but, there, let me first describe my own original boneshaker.

It was an assertive vehicle—a boneshaker that wouldn't be ignored. Its hue was the hue of mustard, picked out with crimson lines. It was so brilliant as to be positively painful to anybody without blue spectacles, and it was about as silent as a tinker's cart. It was about as heavy as that, too, and my progress along the street—when I succeeded in making any—aroused public attention like a runaway Lord Mayor's Show. The wheels possessed an extraordinary property of bumping and jumping and banging on the very smoothest surface—even on a polished floor—for no apparent cause; just as though half-a-dozen bricks had been lashed at intervals round the rim of each wheel. To ride this amazing engine one sat on a stuffed saddle of no particular shape, such shape as it had being produced by the eccentricities of the stuffing, which I suspect to have been geological in character. The handle-bar was some distance in front, at about the level of the chin, so that it would have been just possible to look over it at things ahead if one could have spared any attention from more immediate troubles. The pedals were well in front, too, and one's knees rose a good deal higher than one's waist at the top of each revolution; and on the front fork grew an elegant pair of iron brackets on which to hang up your legs when not required, going downhill. When the whole equipage turned round and assaulted me—it often did that—those elegant leg-hooks had a way of nipping my leg with deadly precision against the backbone, in such a way as made it impossible to move without imminent risk of breaking the limb. In these absorbing circumstances I was wont to lie sprawling on the Queen's highway and appeal for rescue to the scoffing pedestrian. The scoffing pedes-

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trian was not always there to be appealed to, however; in that case it was my privilege to repose in the mud with an agonized leg pinned fast, and throbbing with extra pangs whenever I moved a finger, till the prayed-for scoffer chanced along. At those times the blissful solitude of a country lane had its disadvantages. And, moreover, the scoffers were clumsy. Nine times out of ten they laid hold of the wrong part of the heap and made things worse; and after all the practice I gave them, too.

My next bike—at the time they usually called them velocipedes—was a "Phantom." This was an improved boneshaker. In place of the iron tyre a strip of rubber was nailed round the wheel, the spokes were wire, looped in staples, and there was a weird and startling arrangement of iron rods hinged to couple the two wheels, so that *both* steered together. That is to say, when I swung the front wheel to the right, the couplings slewed round the back wheel toward the left, and made the turn precisely twice as sudden as I had expected. Sometimes I only ran into the kerb, but usually I sat briskly on the road and contemplated a distant pile of Phantom. That was when I was lucky; at the unlucky corners the ghostly conveyance seized my leg exactly in the manner of my old bone-shaker, except that it was provided with additional weapons of entanglement in the connecting rods. These and the leg-rests between them fixed me up so effectually that it was commonly necessary to assemble two scoffing pedestrians and a rejoicing boy to analyze the mixture; so that the Phantom's superiority over the plain boneshaker was demonstrated arithmetically as something like 2½ to 1. These little exhibitions, as a rule, brought about sudden alterations in the design of the bicycle, the commonest being the bending of the connecting rods. The result of this was that the thing would no longer steer at all except in a succession of eccentric circles and parabolas such as no comet ever performed without breaking its tail in the middle; and the entire turn-out became useless, except as the nearest available means of suicide. The india-rubber tyre was a great improvement, too. Nobody understands what a difference the rubber tyre made who did not come straight from the boneshaker to the Phantom, as I did. We enthusiacs, deafened and shaken loose at the joints with the thunderous rattle and clatter of the iron wheel, hailed it with joy. Many respectable persons, who until that time had regularly occupied the centre of country roads for the practice of somnambulism, were less delighted with the comparative silence of our approach, and chastised us with umbrellas. Even the umbrellas were bigger and heavier in those spacious times.

chastised with umbrellas.

The Phantom gave way to the first of a series of tall, or "ordinary" (not at all ordinary nowadays), bicycles. They were not so very tall at first, however; we did things by degrees when I was an enthusiac. There was a long dispute between the enthusiacs who maintained that both wheels should be of the same size, and the others who were prepared to shed their blood—and did it, too, in many a complicated cropper—in defence of the eternal principle that the

front wheel should be big and the back wheel small. Slowly—in virtue of superior recklessness, perhaps—the latter prevailed. The front wheels rose an inch at a time and the back wheels sank; and some philanthropist took away the connecting rods of the Phantom and buried them decently.

Now, as the front wheel grew and the back wheel shrank, the saddle got closer and closer to the head of the machine and more directly over the centre of the front wheel; and so the tendency arose to a bounding light-heartedness on the part of the hinder half of the affair, and a reverse tendency on the part of the big wheel, which acquired a habit of stopping suddenly to consider before surmounting a pebble or like obstruction in the road, while the little wheel soared merrily in the air behind, and the enthusiac passed on in front all by himself, till the sudden application of his countenance to the surface of the thoroughfare called his attention to his separation from his bicycle and the elevation of his heels. This process, being, unlike some others, much easier to perform than to describe at length, was shortly entitled a cropper, a howler, a mucker, a buster, or a purler.

This constant recurrence of the "cropper" was the main trouble with the tall bicycle, and many weird inventions were devised for its abolition. The common effect of these inventions was to multiply the croppers by about six, and as the plain bicycle, with no patent safety attachments, already made a pretty general average of a cropper in twenty miles for a good rider, the patent safety improvements were a trifle too exciting to be commercially successful. The amazing ease with which a cropper was accomplished with the tall bicycle cannot be realized by the rider of the modern machine, which won't throw you over even if you try to make it. You were perched, remember, on the exact top of a wheel about 5ft. high, with an inconsiderable little roller of a trailing wheel to weigh down behind, and nothing whatever to hold you up in front. The smallest check or jolt to the big wheel upset the balance of the whole arrangement, and then you were flung forward with your face to the ground, hammer-fashion, and a nice, straight iron handle-bar close across your waist to imprison your legs, and make quite certain that it should be your face, and no less tender spot, that first reached the surface of this unyielding planet. So that the incautious enthusiac who rode against a stone, or a walnut-shell, or a dead leaf, or a shadow, or anything else, ran a good chance of obliterated features. But we enthusiacs didn't mind—or, at least, we said we didn't. These little scrambles were half the fun, we used to say; though I cannot distinctly remember anybody taking up the sport solely for the sake of the croppers.

Many of the sanguine inventors who set out to conquer the cropper aimed at restraining the soaring ambition of the back wheel. Some of the earliest tried with a weight. Ah, me! how well I remember—especially in frosty weather—a tall bicycle I had fitted with an infallible cropper-preventer of this sort! An iron rod reached out backward over the back wheel and ended a good way behind in a prong like a tuning-fork. A massive chunk of lead was so made as to slide on or off this pronged end, and you could graduate your degree of safety by the use of bigger or smaller chunks of lead. The idea was, of course, that this weight, so far behind, would have so great a leverage as to hold down all that bucking, jumping framework with the back wheel, so that the big wheel might stop to consider about surmounting a brick without turning out the enthusiac over its head like coals from a sack. It was a capital idea, and looked charming, not only on paper, but on the machine; it never left off looking charming, in fact, till you tried it. Then you found that, although the arrangement was heavy enough and effectual enough to be a sad drag on the travelling, some amazing operation of Nature made it no hindrance to croppers whatever—almost an encouragement, in fact. What actually happened was this: you hit your stone, or your feather, or shadow, or whatever it might happen to be, and signified the same in the usual manner by coming the customary howler. The whole terrestrial cosmogony heaved up and hit you all over the face, and amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds you realized that you were *down*. With this sensation the common or roadside cropper of the unimproved bicycle ended; but in this perfected non-buster machine the finisher was to come. You felt that you were *down*, and the worst was done, whatever it was. And then, in that instant of time—*crash!* The chunk of lead took you in the back of the head like a cannon-ball, and knocked out the rest of your brains. For indeed that long rod with the prong acted as a catapult of marvellous accuracy, and as the machine turned its somersault it fired the chunk of lead at your occiput

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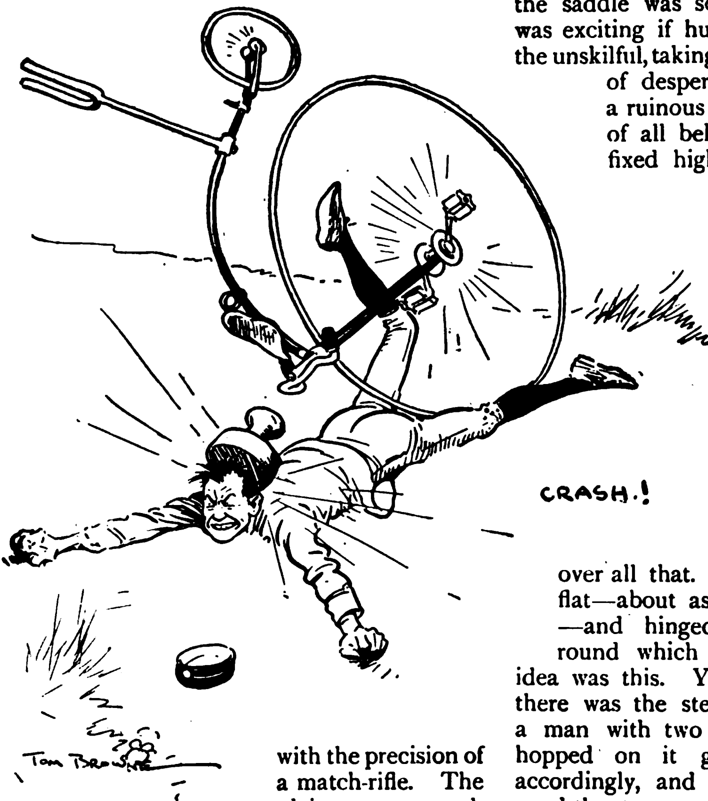

the saddle was sodden with rain, this feat was exciting if hurried; and the struggles of the unskilful, taking the form of fifty yards or so of desperate hops, punctuated with a ruinous flounder, were the derision of all beholders. If your step were fixed high you couldn't get on it from the ground except at an appalling peril of burst raiment (we wore them tight in those days). And if it were low enough to step on easily, when you were there you were confronted with the task of scrambling into a saddle about on a level with your chin, with a greater risk of split costume than ever. Now the spring step was to get over all that. The step was round and flat—about as big, say, as a half-crown—and hinged to the top of a rod round which the spring coiled. The idea was this. You took your bicycle, and there was the step, so low and handy that a man with two wooden legs might have hopped on it gracefully. You hopped accordingly, and as your weight came forward the step turned on its hinge and released the spring, and, presto! you were gently wafted upward into the saddle. Charming! And then, of course, the step remained high and handy again, and when you wished to dismount you just put your foot back on it and it just as obligingly eased you down till it automatically caught fast again, and you stepped easily off, the pride and envy of the populace. Delightful! And it worked, too—yes, I can assure you that it worked. It worked exactly as the inventor intended, so long as the spring was tempered precisely—to a quarter of an ounce—to the rider's weight, and so long as the rider's weight remained the same. *But*, if the spring chanced to be a trifle too strong or too weak, or if you lent the machine to a friend, or sold it, or if you took an extra potato at lunch, or carried a toothpick with you, or wore a thinner pair of gloves, or had your hair cut, or did anything else to vary your weight, then—well, then it worked, too, but it worked differently. Suppose you were a shade too light for the spring. You hopped airily on the step, you bent gracefully forward till the spring was released, and then—*bang!* Do you remember "Zazel," the lady who was

with the precision of a match-rifle. The plain, common, vulgar, dangerous, tall bicycle pitched you over, and, perhaps, jumped on you when you were down; the improved, non-croppering vehicle not only threw you down and jumped on you, but finished you off Goliath fashion with the guaranteed safety attachment; and the more safety you had purchased, with the greater expenditure of lead, the more completely your skull was shattered. On the whole, I was disappointed with this improvement. I avoided all warranted infallible unpurlable bicycles for some time, and took my croppers plain.

I went in for other improvements, however, and one of them was a patent spring step. A flash of memory tells me that the inventor's name was Dedicoat—a most ingenious gentleman who devised quite a number of clever things. But I think the spring step was his masterpiece. I tried two of them. You must know that one of the more interesting awkwardnesses of the tall bicycle was the trouble of mounting. You had to get the procession moving first, and then swarm up the backbone into the saddle and catch the pedals before the thing lost steerage-way. Uphill, in sticky mud, and particularly when

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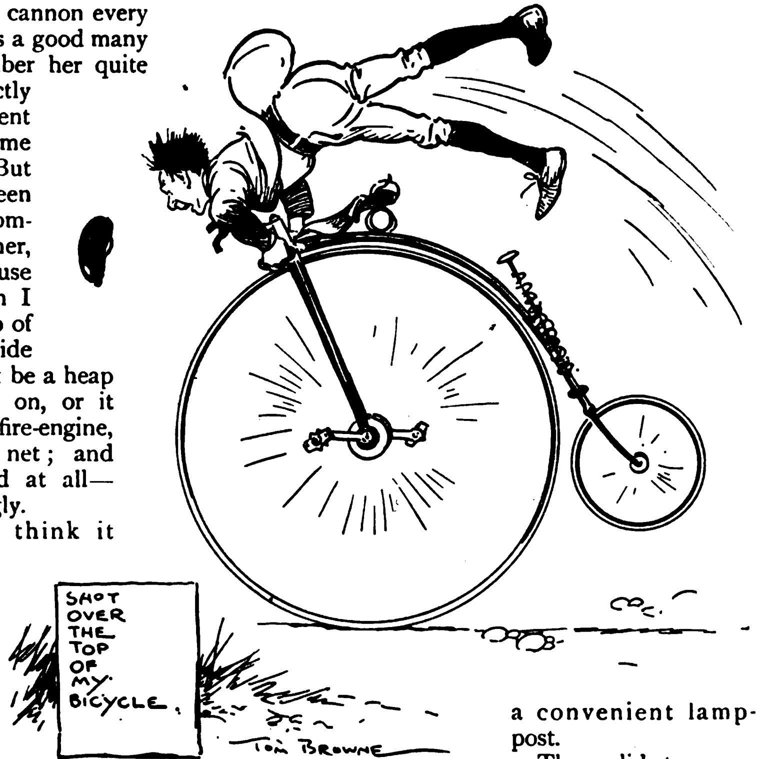
fired head first out of a cannon every night at the music-halls a good many years ago? I remember her quite well, and I know exactly how she felt; the patent spring step treated me just like that, often. But I would rather have been Zazel. She had a comfortable net to catch her, and roars of applause every time; but when I was shot over the top of my bicycle into the wide world beyond, it might be a heap of clinkers I alighted on, or it might be a passing fire-engine, but it was never a net; and people didn't applaud at all—they laughed unfeelingly.



But perhaps you think it wouldn't be quite so bad for a rider a little too *heavy* for the spring. Wouldn't it, though? I can tell you about that, too, for I tried a weaker spring after about twenty purely honorary appearances in the character of Zazel. On the weaker spring your graceful hop had, at first, no effect whatever. The hinge released the spring, but that was all; the step remained where it was, and the saddle remained where *it* was—too near the wrong end of you. So you sprang off the step and made a scramble for it; and with that—*bang!* The moment your weight was off the step it shot up and hacked out a large piece of ankle, or, perchance, ploughed two long, dangling strips, one out of your stocking and the other out of your calf. It was worse than Zazelling. And it was not only in the mounting that you got it, either. Suppose you went on, regardless of your mutilations, and presently decided to dismount. You put your foot back on the step, slipped out of the saddle, and — bang! once more. The spring collapsed under your weight, you came down astride the backbone with an instant conviction that you were split in halves, your foot jerked off the step, and with a final bang the diabolical contrivance shot up again and tore away any small remnant of calf that might still be clinging to your left leg. It was a wonderful invention, but as a means of mounting a bicycle I somehow got to prefer a convenient lamp-post.

The solid tyres we used then were fixed in the rims with cement. It didn't always hold very well, and sometimes a yard or so of tyre would go loose on the road. On these occasions it was our pleasing practice to burn old newspapers under the rim, or to borrow red-hot pokers to melt the cement. It wasn't a thing you could keep secret, either; people used to cough and bang their windows down. What the cement was made of I never knew, but it diffused a perfume that would lift the hat off your head. It was the most powerful incense I ever smelt—it incensed people a mile off.

Of course, the inventor came along to improve this, too. He ran a wire through the centre of the tyre and joined the ends with a screw, thus compressing the rubber till it gripped the rim tight. The first advantage of this improvement was that you couldn't get the tyre off if you wanted to repair a spoke; the next, that when a speck of rust attacked the wire and ate it through, the tyre jumped off altogether without any warning and caused a pretty complicated smash; and last and best, when the wire *was* broken nothing would hold the rubber on at all—not the incensingest cement in the market.

Brakes were interesting things, too. At

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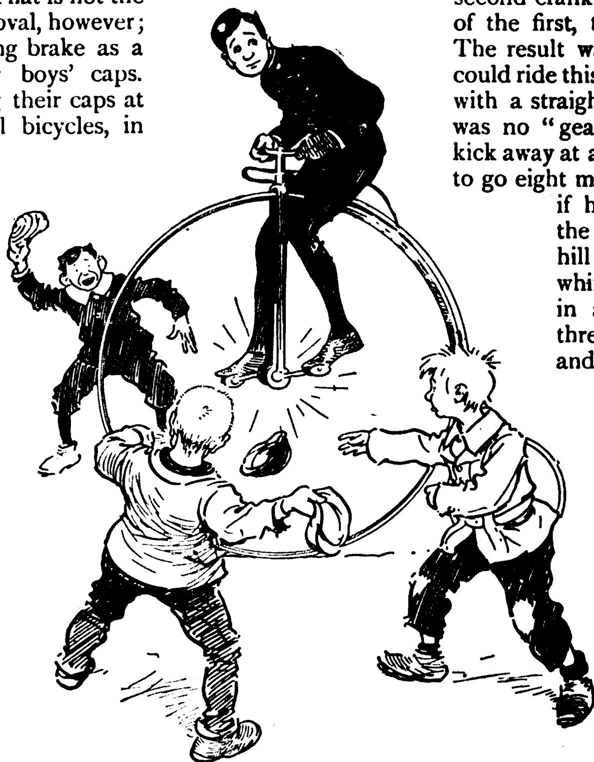
first they acted on the back wheel, and they were worked by a string which you wound up on your handle-bar. Amid the hosts of other troubles it never struck us to consider the winding round and round of a loose handle-bar an inconvenience. These brakes were excellent so long as they were not wanted; when they were the string broke. But I remember one of the string brakes with great pleasure. It did not act on the back wheel, but on the road, and it was called "Carter's Trailing Brake." It was wonderfully effectual in checking the machine. It was a lever across the back wheel, which drove a spike into the road and dragged it along. I cannot say that it improved the road, but it sent a deal of it into the air in the shape of dust and stones, which was very soothing to the eyes of anybody coming behind. That is not the reason of my approval, however; I liked the trailing brake as a sort of trawl for boys' caps. Boys used to fling their caps at the wheels of tall bicycles, in the pious hope of lodging them in the spokes and causing a cropper. But if you rode over a cap and put the trailing brake on, that sportive boy came out one cap behind in the score.

The lump of lead behind was far from being the only attempt to abolish the cropper. There was one thing somebody was always inventing—it must have been invented three or four times a year, at least. That was a tall bicycle with a lot of little wheels all round, like a young family, to be stuck out in all directions and so keep you approximately upright. With this machine you occupied four times the road-space of the common bicycle and had a lot more wheels to tumble over, all for very little extra cost. Also there was another safety invention in the shape of a variable "rake"—which meant the slope of the front forks—set going, like the old brake, by cords. Sometimes it acted at the right time, usually it didn't; but most generally the strings broke, the whole thing came unstuck, and you were either flung forward in the same old familiar orbit over the handles as you went down a hill, or you were violently jerked out backward as you were labouring up one. And so, by many disappointments and a multiplicity of muckers, we came to the safety bicycle at last.



BOYS · USED · TO · FLING THEIR · CAPS · AT THE · WHEELS.

But I rode many other safeties before I arrived at the comfortable machine now in use. Perhaps the very simplest was the "Pony." That was nothing but the "ordinary" bicycle made very small, with a second crank hanging at the end of the first, to carry the pedal. The result was that a tall man could ride this very short machine with a straight leg; but as there was no "gearing up" he had to kick away at a most amazing rate to go eight miles an hour. And if he took his feet off the pedals going downhill those double cranks whirled round like flails in a large circle and threatened to hammer and batter his legs off unless he hung hem up very high out of the way — over his ears might have done, perhaps. Something was devised later to prevent this whirling, but other safeties came along and superseded the "Pony."

Of the quaint tricycles I have used there is no space to tell here, nor of the 'Otto," an ingenious vehicle, wherein the rider sat between two large wheels, right and left, *above* the centre, to the equal peril of his nose and the back of his head. But perhaps I may tell you tales of my adventures on these another time.

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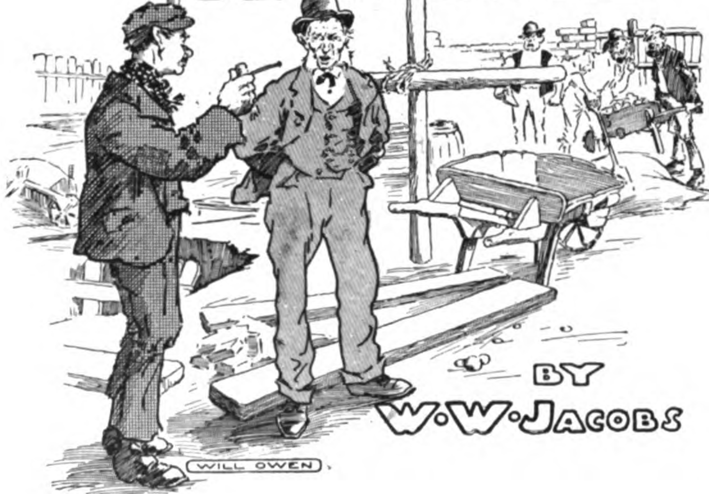

MR. JOHN BLOWS stood listening to the foreman with an air of lofty disdain. He was a free-born Englishman, and yet he had been summarily paid off at eleven o'clock in the morning and told that his valuable services would no longer be required. More than that, the foreman had passed certain strictures upon his features which, however true they might be, were quite irrelevant to the fact that Mr. Blows had been discovered slumbering in a shed when he should have been laying bricks.

"Take your ugly face off these 'ere works," said the foreman; "take it 'ome and bury it in the back-yard. Anybody'll be glad to lend you a spade."

Mr. Blows, in a somewhat fluent reply, reflected severely on the foreman's immediate ancestors, and the strange lack of good-feeling and public spirit they had exhibited by allowing him to grow up.

"Take it 'ome and bury it," said the foreman again. "Not under any plants you've got a liking for."

"I suppose," said Mr. Blows, still referring to his foe's parents, and now endeavouring to make excuses for them—"I s'pose they was so pleased, and so surprised when they found that you *was* a 'uman being, that they didn't mind anything else."

He walked off with his head in the air, and the other men, who had partially suspended work to listen, resumed their labours. A modest pint at the Rising Sun revived his drooping spirits, and he walked home thinking of several things which he might have said to the foreman if he had only thought of them in time.

He paused at the open door of his house and, looking in, sniffed at the smell of mottled soap and dirty water which pervaded it. The stairs were wet, and a pail stood in the narrow passage. From the kitchen came the sounds of crying children and a scolding mother. Master Joseph Henry Blows, aged three, was "holding his breath," and the family were all aghast at the length of his performance. He recovered it as his father entered the room, and drowned, without distressing himself, the impotent efforts of the others. Mrs. Blows turned upon her husband a look of hot inquiry.

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"I've got the chuck," he said, surlily.

"What, again?" said the unfortunate woman.

"Yes, again," repeated her husband.

Mrs. Blows turned away, and dropping into a chair threw her apron over her head and burst into discordant weeping. Two little Blows, who had ceased their outcries, resumed them again from sheer sympathy.

"Stop it," yelled the indignant Mr. Blows; "stop it at once; d'ye hear?"

"I wish I'd never seen you," sobbed his wife from behind her apron. "Of all the lazy, idle, drunken, good-for-nothing——"

"Go on," said Mr. Blows, grimly.

"You're more trouble than you're worth," declared Mrs. Blows. "Look at your father, my dears," she continued, taking the apron away from her face; "take a good look at him, and mind you don't grow up like it."

Mr. Blows met the combined gaze of his innocent offspring with a dark scowl, and then fell to moodily walking up and down the passage until he fell over the pail. At that his mood changed, and, turning fiercely, he kicked that useful article up and down the passage until he was tired.

"I've 'ad enough of it," he muttered. He stopped at the kitchen-door and, putting his hand in his pocket, threw a handful of change on to the floor and swung out of the house.

Another pint of beer confirmed him in his resolution. He would go far away and make a fresh start in the world. The morning was bright and the air fresh, and a pleasant sense of freedom and adventure possessed his soul as he walked. At a swinging pace he soon left Gravelton behind him, and, coming to the river, sat down to smoke a final pipe before turning his back for ever on a town which had treated him so badly.

The river murmured agreeably and the rushes stirred softly in the breeze; Mr. Blows, who could fall asleep on an upturned pail, succumbed to the influence at once; the pipe dropped from his mouth and he snored peacefully.

He was awakened by a choking scream, and, starting up hastily, looked about for the cause. Then in the water he saw the little white face of Billy Clements, and wading in up to his middle he reached out and, catching the child by the hair, drew him to the bank and set him on his feet. Still screaming with terror, Billy threw up some of the water he had swallowed, and without turning his head made off in the direction of home, calling piteously upon his mother.

Mr. Blows, shivering on the bank, watched him out of sight, and, missing his cap, was just in time to see that friend of several seasons slowly sinking in the middle of the river. He squeezed the water from his trousers and, crossing the bridge, set off across the meadows.

His self-imposed term of bachelorhood lasted just three months, at the end of which time he made up his mind to enact the part of the generous husband and forgive his wife everything. He would not go into details, but issue one big, magnanimous pardon.

Full of these lofty ideas he set off in the direction of home again. It was a three days' tramp, and the evening of the third day saw him but a bare two miles from home. He clambered up the bank at the side of the road and, sprawling at his ease, smoked quietly in the moonlight.

A waggon piled up with straw came jolting and creaking towards him. The driver sat dozing on the shafts, and Mr. Blows smiled pleasantly as he recognised the first face of a friend he had seen for three months. He thrust his pipe in his pocket and, rising to his feet, clambered on to the back of the waggon, and lying face downwards on the straw peered down at the unconscious driver below.

"I'll give old Joe a surprise," he said to himself. "He'll be the first to welcome me back."

"Joe," he said, softly. "'Ow goes it, old pal?"

Mr. Joe Carter, still dozing, opened his eyes at the sound of his name and looked round; then, coming to the conclusion that he had been dreaming, closed them again.

"I'm a-looking at you, Joe," said Mr. Blows, waggishly. "I can see you."

Mr. Carter looked up sharply and, catching sight of the grinning features of Mr. Blows protruding over the edge of the straw, threw up his arms with a piercing shriek and fell off the shafts on to the road. The astounded Mr. Blows, raising himself on his hands, saw him pick himself up and, giving vent to a series of fearsome yelps, run clumsily back along the road.

"Joe!" shouted Mr. Blows. "J-O-O-OE!"

Mr. Carter put his hands to his ears and ran on blindly, while his friend, sitting on the top of the straw, regarded his proceedings with mixed feelings of surprise and indignation.

"It can't be that tanner 'e owes me," he mused, "and yet I don't know what else it can be. I never see a man so jumpy."

He continued to speculate while the old

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"'JOE!' SHOUTED MR. BLOWS. 'J-O-O-OE!'"

from the chair full length to the floor.

"Go on," said Mr. Blows, bitterly; "keep it up. Don't mind me."

Mrs. Blows paid no heed; her face was white and her eyes were closed. Her husband, with a dawning perception of the state of affairs, drew a mug of water from the tap and flung it over her. She opened her eyes and gave a faint scream, and then, scrambling to her feet, tottered towards him and sobbed on his breast.

"There, there," said Mr. Blows. "Don't take on; I forgive you."

"Oh, John," said his wife, sobbing convulsively, "I thought you was dead. I thought you was dead. It's only a fortnight ago since we buried you!"

"*Buried me?*" said the startled Mr. Blows. "*Buried me?*"

"I shall wake up and find I'm dreaming," wailed Mrs. Blows; "I know I shall. I'm always dreaming that you're not dead. Night before last I dreamt that you was alive, and I woke up sobbing as if my 'art would break."

"Sobbing?" said Mr. Blows, with a scowl.

"For joy, John," explained his wife.

Mr. Blows was about to ask for a further explanation of the mystery when he stopped, and regarded with much interest a fair-sized cask which stood in one corner.

"A cask o' beer," he said, staring, as he took a glass from the dresser and crossed over to it. "You don't seem to 'ave taken much 'arm during my—my going after work."

"We 'ad it for the funeral, John," said his wife; "leastways, we 'ad two; this is the second."

Mr. Blows, who had filled the glass, set it down on the table untasted; things seemed a trifle uncanny.

"Go on," said Mrs. Blows; "you've got more right to it than anybody else. Fancy 'aving you here drinking up the beer for your own funeral."

horse, undisturbed by the driver's absence, placidly continued its journey. A mile farther, however, he got down to take the short cut by the fields.

"If Joe can't look after his 'orse and cart," he said, primly, as he watched it along the road, "it's not my business."

The footpath was not much used at that time of night, and he only met one man. They were in the shadow of the trees which fringed the new cemetery as they passed, and both peered. The stranger was satisfied first, and, to Mr. Blows's growing indignation, first gave a leap backwards which would not have disgraced an acrobat, and then made off across the field with hideous outcries.

"If I get 'old of some of you," said the offended Mr. Blows, "I'll give you something to holler for."

He pursued his way grumbling, and insensibly slackened his pace as he drew near home. A remnant of conscience which had stuck to him without encouragement for thirty-five years persisted in suggesting that he had behaved badly. It also made a few ill-bred inquiries as to how his wife and children had subsisted for the last three months. He stood outside the house for a short space, and then, opening the door softly, walked in.

The kitchen-door stood open, and his wife in a black dress sat sewing by the light of a smoky lamp. She looked up as she heard his footsteps, and then, without a word, slid

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"I don't understand what you're a-driving at," retorted Mr. Blows, drinking somewhat gingerly from the glass. "'Ow could there be a funeral without me?"

"It's all a mistake," said the overjoyed Mrs. Blows; "we must have buried somebody else. But such a funeral, John; you would ha' been proud if you could ha' seen it. All Gravelton followed, nearly. There was the boys' drum and fife band, and the Ancient Order of Camels, what you used to belong to, turned out with their brass band and banners—all the people marching four abreast and sometimes five."

Mr. Blows's face softened; he had no idea that he had established himself so firmly in the affections of his fellow-townsmen.

"Four mourning carriages," continued his wife, "and the—the hearse, all covered in flowers so that you couldn't see it 'ardly. One wreath cost two pounds."

Mr. Blows endeavoured to conceal his gratification beneath a mask of surliness. "Waste o' money," he growled, and stooping to the cask drew himself another glass of beer.

"Some o' the gentry sent their carriages to follow," said Mrs. Blows, sitting down and clasping her hands in her lap.

"I know one or two that 'ad a liking for me," said Mr. Blows, almost blushing.

"And to think that it's all a mistake," continued his wife. "But I thought it was you; it was dressed like you, and your cap was found near it."

"H'm," said Mr. Blows; "a pretty mess you've been and made of it. Here's people been giving two pounds for wreaths and turning up with brass bands and banners because they thought it was *me*, and it's all been wasted."

"It wasn't my fault," said his wife. "Little Billy Clements came running 'ome the day you went away and said 'e'd fallen in the water, and you'd gone in and pulled 'im out. He said 'e thought you was drownded, and when you didn't come 'ome I naturally thought so too. What else could I think?"

Mr. Blows coughed, and holding his glass up to the light regarded it with a preoccupied air.

"They dragged the river," resumed his wife, "and found the cap, but they didn't find the body till nine weeks afterwards. There was a inquest at the Peal o' Bells, and I identified you, and all that grand funeral was because they thought you'd lost your life saving little Billy. They said you was a hero."

"You've made a nice mess of it," repeated Mr. Blows.

"The rector preached the sermon," continued his wife; "a beautiful sermon it was, too. I wish you'd been there to hear it; I should 'ave enjoyed it ever so much better. He said that nobody was more surprised than what 'e was at your doing such a thing, and that it only showed 'ow little we knew our fellow-creatures. He said that it proved there was good in all of us if we only gave it a chance to come out."

"'THEY DRAGGED THE RIVER,' RESUMED HIS WIFE, 'AND FOUND THE CAP.'"

Mr. Blows eyed her suspiciously, but she sat thinking and staring at the floor.

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"I s'pose we shall have to give the money back now," she said, at last.

"Money!" said the other; "what money?"

"Money that was collected for us," replied his wife. "One 'undered and eighty-three pounds seven shillings and fourpence."

Mr. Blows took a long breath. "'Ow much?" he said, faintly; "say it agin."

His wife obeyed.

"Show it to me," said the other, in trembling tones; "let's 'ave a look at it. Let's 'old some of it."

"I can't," was the reply; "there's a committee of the Camels took charge of it, and they pay my rent and allow me ten shillings a week. Now I s'pose it'll have to be given back?"

"Don't you talk nonsense," said Mr. Blows, violently. "You go to them interfering Camels and say you want your money—all of it. Say you're going to Australia. Say it was my last dying wish."

Mrs. Blows puckered her brow.

"I'll keep quiet upstairs till you've got it," continued her husband, rapidly. "There was only two men saw me, and I can see now that they thought I was my own ghost. Send the kids off to your mother for a few days."

His wife sent them off next morning, and a little later was able to tell him that his surmise as to his friends' mistake was correct. All Gravelton was thrilled by the news that the spiritual part of Mr. John Blows was walking the earth, and much exercised as to his reasons for so doing.

"Seemed such a monkey trick for 'im to do," complained Mr. Carter, to the listening circle at the Peal o' Bells. "'I'm a-looking at you, Joe,' he ses, and he waggled his 'ead as if it was made of india-rubber."

"He'd got something on 'is mind what he wanted to tell you," said a listener, severely; "you ought to 'ave stopped, Joe, and asked 'im what it was."

"I think I see myself," said the shivering Mr. Carter. "I think I see myself."

"Then he wouldn't 'ave troubled you any more," said the other.

Mr. Carter turned pale and eyed him fixedly.

"P'r'aps it was only a death-warning," said another man.

"What d'ye mean, '*only* a death-warning,'?" demanded the unfortunate Mr. Carter; "you don't know what you're talking about."

"I 'ad an uncle o' mine see a ghost once," said a third man, anxious to relieve the tension.

"And what 'appened?" inquired the first speaker.

"I'll tell you after Joe's gone," said the other, with rare consideration.

Mr. Carter called for some more beer and told the barmaid to put a little gin in it. In a pitiable state of "nerves" he sat at the extreme end of a bench, and felt that he was an object of unwholesome interest to his acquaintances. The finishing touch was put to his discomfiture when a well-meaning friend in a vague and disjointed way advised him to give up drink, swearing, and any other bad habits which he might have contracted.

"IN A PITIABLE STATE OF 'NERVES' HE SAT AT THE EXTREME END OF A BENCH."

The committee of the Ancient Order of Camels took the news calmly, and classed it with pink rats and other abnormalities. In

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reply to Mrs. Blows's request for the capital sum, they expressed astonishment that she could be willing to tear herself away from the hero's grave, and spoke of the pain which such an act on her part would cause him in the event of his being conscious of it. In order to show that they were reasonable men they allowed her an extra shilling that week.

The hero threw the dole on the bedroom floor, and in a speech bristling with personalities consigned the committee to perdition. The confinement was beginning to tell upon him, and two nights afterwards, just before midnight, he slipped out for a breath of fresh air.

It was a clear night, and all Gravelton with one exception appeared to have gone to bed. The exception was Police-constable Collins, and he, after tracking the skulking figure of Mr. Blows and finally bringing it to bay in a doorway, kept his for a fortnight. As a sensible man Mr. Blows took no credit to himself for the circumstance, but a natural feeling of satisfaction at the discomfiture of a member of a force for which he had long entertained a strong objection could not be denied.

Gravelton debated this new appearance with bated breath, and even the purblind committee of the Camels had to alter their views. They no longer denied the supernatural nature of the manifestations, but, with a strange misunderstanding of Mr. Blows's desires, attributed his restlessness to dissatisfaction with the projected tombstone, and, having plenty of funds, amended their order from a plain stone at ten guineas to one in pink marble at twenty-five.

"That there committee," said Mr. Blows to his wife, in a trembling voice, as he heard of the alteration—"that there committee seem to think that they can play about with my money as they like. You go and tell 'em you won't 'ave it. And say you've given up the idea of going to Australia and you want the money to open a shop with. We'll take a little pub. somewhere."

Mrs. Blows went, and returned in tears, and for two entire days her husband, a prey to gloom, sat trying to evolve fresh and original ideas for the possession of the money. On the evening of the second day he became low-spirited, and going down to the kitchen took a glass from the dresser and sat down by the beer cask.

Almost insensibly he began to take a brighter view of things. It was Saturday night and his wife was out. He shook his head indulgently as he thought of her, and began to realize how foolish he had been to entrust such a delicate mission to a woman. The Ancient Order of Camels wanted a man to talk to them—a man who knew the world and could assail them with unanswerable arguments. Having applied every known test to make sure that the cask was empty, he took his cap from a nail and sallied out into the street.

Old Mrs. Martin, a neighbour, saw him first, and announced the fact with a scream that brought a dozen people round her. Bereft of speech, she mouthed dumbly at Mr. Blows.

"I ain't touch—touched her," said that gentleman, earnestly. "I ain't—been near 'er."

The crowd regarded him wild-eyed. Fresh members came running up, and pushing for a front place fell back hastily on the main body and watched breathlessly. Mr. Blows, disquieted by their silence, renewed his protestations.

"I was coming 'long——"

He broke off suddenly and, turning round, gazed with some heat at a gentleman who was endeavouring to ascertain whether an umbrella would pass through him. The investigator backed hastily into the crowd again, and a faint murmur of surprise arose as the indignant Mr. Blows rubbed the place.

"He's alive, I tell you," said a voice. "What cheer, Jack!"

"Ullo, Bill," said Mr. Blows, genially.

Bill came forward cautiously, and, first shaking hands, satisfied himself by various little taps and prods that his friend was really alive.

"It's all right," he shouted; "come and feel."

At least fifty hands accepted the invitation, and, ignoring the threats and entreaties of Mr. Blows, who was a highly ticklish subject, wandered briskly over his anatomy. He broke free at last and, supported by Bill and a friend, set off for the Peal o' Bells.

By the time he arrived there his following had swollen to immense proportions. Windows were thrown up, and people standing on their doorsteps shouted inquiries. Congratulations met him on all sides, and the joy of Mr. Joseph Carter was so great that Mr. Blows was quite affected.

In high feather at the attention he was receiving, Mr. Blows pushed his way through the idlers at the door and ascended the short flight of stairs which led to the room where the members of the Ancient Order of Camels

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were holding their lodge. The crowd swarmed up after him.

The door was locked, but in response to his knocking it opened a couple of inches, and a gruff voice demanded his business. Then, before he could give it, the doorkeeper reeled back into the room, and Mr. Blows with a large following pushed his way in.

The president and his officers, who were sitting in state behind a long table at the end of the room, started to their feet with mingled cries of indignation and dismay at the intrusion. Mr. Blows, conscious of the strength of his position, walked up to them.

"MR. BLOWS, CONSCIOUS OF THE STRENGTH OF HIS POSITION, WALKED UP TO THEM."

"*Mr. Blows!*" gasped the president.

"Ah, you didn't expec' see me," said Mr. Blows, with a scornful laugh. "They're trying do me, do me out o' my lill bit o' money, Bill."

"But you ain't got no money," said his bewildered friend.

Mr. Blows turned and eyed him haughtily; then he confronted the staring president again.

"I've come for—my money," he said, impressively—"one 'undereighty pounds."

"But look 'ere," said the scandalized Bill, tugging at his sleeve; "you ain't dead, Jack."

"You don't understan'," said Mr. Blows, impatiently. "They know wharri mean; one 'undereighty pounds. They want to buy me a tombstone, an' I don't want it. I want the money. Here, stop it! *D'ye hear?*" The words were wrung from him by the action of the president, who, after eyeing him doubtfully during his remarks, suddenly prodded him with the butt-end of one of the property spears which leaned against his chair. The solidity of Mr. Blows was unmistakable, and with a sudden resumption of dignity the official seated himself and called for silence.

"I'm sorry to say there's been a bit of a mistake made," he said, slowly, "but I'm glad to say that Mr. Blows has come back to support his wife and family with the sweat of his own brow. Only a pound or two of the money so kindly subscribed has been spent, and the remainder will be handed back to the subscribers."

"Here," said the incensed Mr. Blows, "listen me."

"Take him away," said the president, with great dignity. "Clear the room. Strangers outside."

Two of the members approached Mr. Blows and, placing their hands on his shoulders, requested him to withdraw. He went at last, the centre of a dozen panting men, and becoming wedged on the narrow staircase spoke fluently on such widely different subjects as the rights of man and the shape of the president's nose.

He finished his remarks in the street, but, becoming aware at last of a strange lack of sympathy on the part of his audience, he shook off the arm of the faithful Mr. Carter and stalked moodily home.

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Japanese Sand Pictures.

Illustrations from Photographs by George Newnes, Limited.

WE are all familiar enough with the uses to which the sand and the stones of the sea-shore are put at popular watering-places by children of both sexes, various sizes, and all ages up to—say sixty, if you like, or even seventy. We have probably even read of crude attempts at modelling the figures of prostrate animals and human beings with the same material at the same places, or may even have seen photographs of the results; but not many people in this country are familiar with, or have even heard of, the charming art of "Bon-seki," or, more strictly speaking, "Bon-kei," as it is practised in Japan.

The Japanese artist in sand and stones does not need a whole sea-shore for his effects. His field of operations is a little black lacquer tray, usually oval, but sometimes round and sometimes square. On this he flings down his sand and pebbles of various degrees of fineness and coarseness, touches them here and there with a feather or a bit of stick, and, lo! a charming little landscape or sea-piece, with rippling water, graded distances, and driving mists.

MR. KADO RIOKO AT WORK ON A SAND PICTURE.

This pretty accomplishment had its origin 450 years ago. At that time Murata Shuko, a Buddhist priest of great learning and taste, was appointed master of ceremonies to the great Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa. Shuko was the first to formulate a code of regulations for the famous tea-ceremony. This observance—an extraordinary product of Japanese social refinement—cannot be fully explained here, for reasons of space, but it may be said that the discussion among friends of matters of literature, art, and curiosity was one of its chief objects, and Shuko originated the artistic arrangement on trays of curious and beautiful stones in such a manner as to suggest gardens and natural scenery. This was called *bon-seki*—*bon* being the Japanese word for a tray and *seki* for stones. Rather more than a hundred years later a noble amateur named Hoso-kawa Yusai added sand to the stones, and so the art was developed, reaching its height, perhaps, in the early part of the nineteenth century. Of late the accomplishment has become more the property of ladies, and coloured and dyed sands have been introduced, though the style in which these are used is considered to be an inferior one.

So much for history. Now for a few of the pictures themselves, obligingly made for the inspection of readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE by Mr. Kado Rioko (or, as we should say in the usual European order of names, Mr. Rioko Kado, the latter being the surname), a Japanese artist now in England.

In fairness to Mr. Kado it must be said, to begin with, that his sand pictures are shown under every disadvantage. In the first place photography at best can give no

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adequate translation of the delicate shades and touches in the originals, and especially of the quaint half-realism of the rocks and hills standing in relief; and in the second place Mr. Kado had with him none of the proper tools for his work, and the whole thing had to be improvised from materials at hand. Thus, instead of the jetty black lacquer trays, polished like mirrors, that are the proper backgrounds for *bon-kei*, black varnished *papier-maché* boards, made for drying photographic prints, were used. No equal substitute could be found in this country for the extremely fine hair-sieve through which the finest of the sand is sprinkled for effects of light mist, cloud, and distance; and so with other matters, including the sand itself. But Mr. Kado made light of all difficulties, and with the ready adaptability of his race he set to work with whatever came handiest, and made his tools as he wanted them, at the same time as his pictures.

He put a round tray on the table before him, and, looking about for some substitute for a sieve, he seized on one of those cardboard cylinders which are used for the postal transmission of rolled papers, drawings, or pictures. He cut a few inches off the end of this, and tied a small rag of cotton cloth over the end of the piece, and there was his sieve. Just to test its action, in the minute or two while the camera was being prepared, he flung a little fine white sand through it upon the tray. Then, with an ordinary feather in one hand and a little coarse darker sand in the other, he threw in a little sketch of a stream winding between sandy banks, and rippling over stones as it went. A drag of the feather through the fine sand, a rub or two of the fingers that held the coarser material, and the thing was done. It was a mere trifle, but the liquid suggestion of the running stream, the tiny breaks of spray where it encountered the stones were surprising, and none the less for the spontaneous way in which they seemed to spring up in the spilt sand like magic at the touch of the feather. But the tray was ten inches or more in diameter, and in the necessary photographic reduction to bring the sketch within the compass of the page much of the delicacy has been lost, and the breaks of spray are almost invisible.

"A STREAM WINDING BETWEEN SANDY BANKS."

But now the sieve had been tried and the feather had been tried, and both worked fairly well; also the camera had been tilted lens downward, as it must stand to photograph the pictures, which would vanish at a breath of air and would run together in a disastrous heap if tilted. So Mr. Kado took a black *papier-maché* drying-board and dropped on it, near the top, a small circular disc of cardboard. Then he took his lately-invented sieve and flung fine sand round and over it and all about the board—seemingly at random; though, in fact, there was perfect method in every movement of the hand. This done, there lay before us nothing but a black surface of about sixteen inches by twelve, sprinkled over with blotches of white sand, with a cardboard disc among it. What was it to be? What would become of it?—to alter the words of the well-known advertisement. The artist left us little time for doubt. He took his magic feather and, with a dozen quick, bold sweeps, there lay a raging ocean under a black sky; an ocean tumbling and roaring (almost) over rocky breakers, and bursting into spray where the waves tore over the sharp points and ledges. And again the wonder is the spontaneous manner in which the picture seems to spring up out of nothing under the feather. There is no laborious drawing and shaping of outlines and touching-in of details of wave and surf; a single movement of the feather creates each great billow, rise and crest and fall, outline, body, detail, and all, and to touch it once more would be to ruin it. But the picture lacks a single touch to finish it. With a dexterous movement the cardboard

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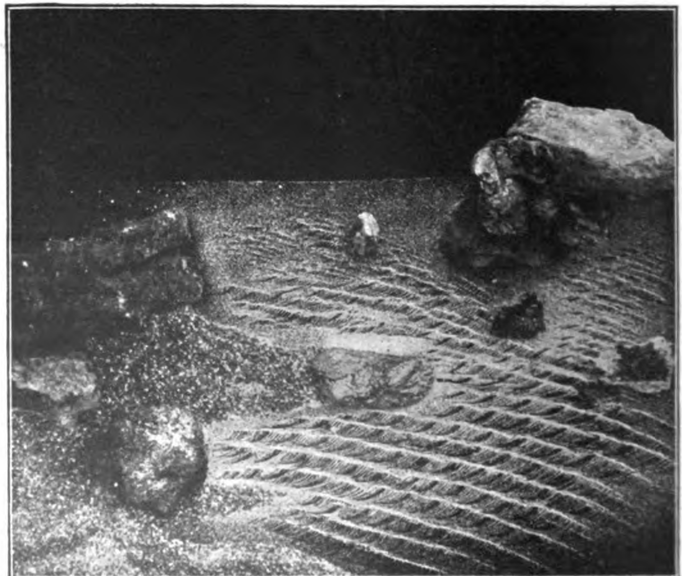
"THE FULL MOON OVER AN ANGRY SEA."

disc is whisked away, and there is the full moon over an angry sea: a black moon, really—call it an eclipse of the moon, if you like—for, of course, the groundwork is black, and the picture is, in a sense, a negative. A very striking picture, too, produced in a few seconds, and ready to vanish as fast as it came.

These two sketches have been in sand alone, and stones—*seki*—have not been used. Now, Mr. Kado has with him none of the curious and beautifully-coloured stones used in *bon-seki* in Japan, but he is quite equal to the difficulty. He takes a large piece of common rock-salt--a piece selected for its diversity of colour —and hits it with a poker. The result is an assortment of "rocks" of all shapes and many sizes and colours, and with these at hand he takes another black board and flings on it more fine sand.

This is to be no picture of raging ocean, but a peaceful seaside view. When the fine white sand is evenly sprinkled all across the lower part of the board, Mr. Kado produces a coarser mixed sand, black and reddish brown and white, with many bright spangles of quartz among it—quite a beautiful sand merely as it lies in a heap. This he throws down on the left of the picture, shaping it into little capes and promontories. Then he turns to his fragments of rock-salt and selects seven or eight pieces of varied form and colour. These he places here and there on the board before him, quickly and confidently, but with a sure eye for picturesque composition. The picture is taking shape, though, as yet, it might be a view of a great sandy desert, with strange, barren rocks rising here and there. But again the magic feather comes into play and, dancing lightly over the white sand, leaves merry ripples behind it. Ten or twenty seconds of this and a calm seascape lies before us, with a small inlet or bay, where the little waves lap pleasantly on a sandy shore broken by weatherworn and ocean-tinted old rocks. The feather, as it comes rippling in, held at the angle shown by the wave-crests, leaves a little of the white sand untouched all along the margin, and so is produced the effect of a veritable sea-shore, with the coarser shingle washed up beyond the fine sand, over which the little waves expend themselves.

The effect of the whole is one which, unfortunately, no photograph can do justice to, depending so much as it does on colour;



"A CALM SEASCAPE."

"A BOLD HEADLAND OF WHITE CLIFF PUSHING OUT INTO THE SEA."

but no better photograph would be possible than the one given. The conspicuous rock on the right is white and worn on its more exposed parts, grey and brown and green in the parts less washed by the sea; while the large stratified rock to the left is black and green and, it would almost seem, weedy all over. The other and smaller rocks, more worn by the beating of the unresting sea, are smoother, rounder, and more even in colour, save where, here and there, some patch of weed seems to cling—a blotch of green. And all this with fragments of a simple piece of rock-salt, shattered with a poker—fragments cunningly selected each for its place, sometimes broken again where the colour looks promising, and artfully placed in relation to the light and to each other. The coarser shingle is full of colour, black and red and white, and it sparkles with little specks of silvery quartz, as though the sea had left it wet in the sunshine; while the little waves lie out farther and farther and smaller and smaller, till they vanish and merge in the distant horizon.

But now Mr. Kado takes the circular tray again, for a change, ruthlessly sweeps off the trial sketch of the stream, and starts another little coast scene on that. The fine sand goes down, then the coarse, with its sparkling quartz, and then one single rock only. Once more the feather comes into play, but not now with dancing ripples, for the sea, though smooth still, comes in with a stronger current, combing over the sand with a more eager swell. As the sea, so the hand travels with the feather, lifting in wave after wave against the shore, with no crest or break. But this view is not finished with the waves and the sea-horizon. There is to be a promontory in the distance—a bold headland of white cliff pushing out into the sea. So the sand-artist takes fine white sand in a spoon, and pours it so accurately in a little heap along the sea-line that there lies the distant cliff, sharp and clear against the black, and actually modelled in ridges and folds like a cliff of real rock or chalk. And with a flick or two of the feather to brush aside any chance grain of sand that may have fallen out of place, the picture is finished.

Bon-seki is, strictly speaking, an arrangement on a tray of stones only. *Bon-kei* is a view built with various sands and stones. *Bon-gwa* is a picture made with sand alone, and sand of one degree of fineness only. The view of the stormy sea under the moon which we have seen was *bon-gwa*. To illustrate the difference Mr. Kado takes another board, sprinkles it with sand, and once more, with a few bold sweeps of his feather, gives us

"THIS PICTURE IS 'BON-KEI' BECAUSE OF THE ADDITION OF THE LITTLE STONES."

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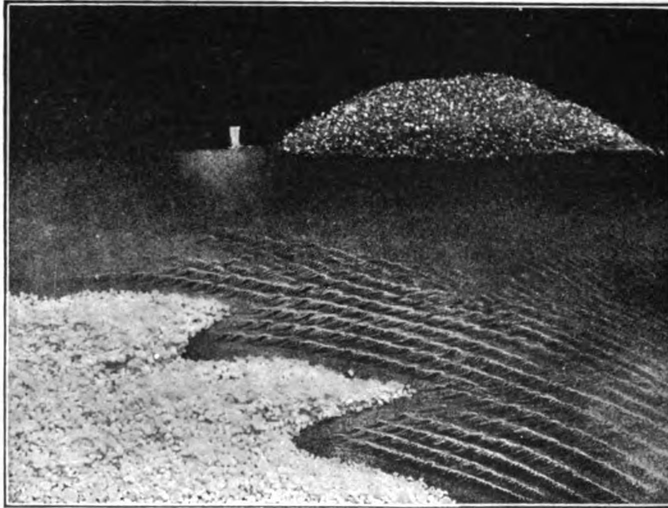
a stormy sea under the moon. Not the same sea—for a Japanese artist will never repeat his work—but a sea perhaps a little less angry, though swelling and tempestuous enough, with driving cloud and the eclipsed moon. There it lies, a *bon-gwa*, a picture of fine sand only. But now the artist takes half-a-dozen tiny white pebbles—coarse sand, almost—and drops them about the curling surf in the middle of the picture. The picture is now *bon-kei*, because of the addition of those little stones, which represent flying specks of foam.

The pictures already made have been entirely ideal—Mr. Kado now takes a board to reproduce an actual view. The fine sand is sprinkled as before over the lower two-thirds of the space, up to a fine horizon-line. A handful of small white pebbles is dropped at the left-hand bottom corner, and spread out to make capes and inlets. The feather comes into use once again, and the water is gently rippled—more gently, even, than in the case of the first of the rocky views. Then Mr. Kado turns to his sparkling and diversified coarse sand, and taking a quantity in a small piece of paper carefully pours out before our eyes an island—an island rising from the sea to a high oval elevation in the centre—an island that everybody familiar with the famous places of Japan will recognise at once. One more touch is needed, however. The artist drops a pinch of his finest white sand over the horizon-line, and, doubling a small piece of paper, he whisks half of it away again, leaving behind a white junk-sail, swelling in the wind; and that finishes a picture of the celebrated Island of Enoshima as seen from the shore, with a sail in the distance.

It is an excellent choice that represents Enoshima in the variegated, sparkling sand, for the real Enoshima, though its sides are rocky and tree-grown, is the greatest place for wonderful sea-shells and sea-stones in the world. It is a sacred island, too, under the immediate patronage of Benten, the goddess of love and good fortune; and it has weird and mysterious caves, into which the sea washes—washes against the feet of stone gods and goddesses carved out of the rock ages ago. But once out of the gloomy caves Enoshima is the sunniest and most sparkling place in the world—the sea sparkles, the sands, the shells, and the rocks; so that you see how well-chosen the quartzy sand was to represent this delightful island—the Island of the Tortoise, as it is sometimes called.



"THE CELEBRATED ISLAND OF ENOSHIMA AS SEEN FROM THE SHORE."

One more picture and Mr. Kado's exposition is done. This is to be pure *bon-gwa*, and very simple. Simple to look at, that is; anybody who supposes it to be simple to execute is recommended to take his black board, his sand and his feather, and copy it. The fine sand falls delicately over the black surface, and the artist, using his feather no more in the wave fashion, but point forward and edge downward, like a knife, draws a sharp and bold outline, clearing away all sand outside it. Then a faint, misty sprinkling of more sand, and a quick sweep or two of the feather below finishes the picture, and

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there is tne snow-covered summit of the extinct volcano, the great Fuji, the sacred mountain of Japan, pointing upward into the black sky, with mist and cloud veiling its lower slopes. Again we have to deplore the inadequacy of photography and the necessity for reducing the picture, for, though the picture is plain black and white, nothing but itself can show its mysterious gradations and delicate shades of mist in the lower parts.

"THE GREAT FUJI, THE SACRED MOUNTAIN OF JAPAN."

Mr. Kado, under all his disadvantages in the matter of tools and material, made his little pictures with a neat rapidity and ease that were rather astonishing. It was equally surprising and pleasing to see the pictures come suddenly into being out of shapeless films of sand at the firm touch of the feather, or by reason of the apparently careless flinging down of a few stones and a little gravel on the tray or board. And we cannot recommend a more interesting pastime to any reader who may suppose the thing to be as easy as it looks than this same making of sand and stone pictures on a black surface. In case anybody should be disposed to make the attempt we may say that the feather in use in Japan for the purpose is a pinion of either the wild duck, the crane, or the eagle; though to such an expert as Mr. Kado no feather comes amiss. The other tool most commonly used, beside the fine sieve, is a small piece of flat wood of a narrowly triangular shape, something like the blade of an oar, used for clearing away superfluous sand from a sharp outline. This is called a *yoshita*, but it will probably work as well (in this country, at any rate) if you call it a scraper. When Mr. Kado needed a *yoshita* he took hold of the first piece of paper that came near, and doubled it once or twice. The sand may be of as many sorts as you please, though the finest should be very fine indeed if good and delicate results are aimed at — finer, in fact, than the finest silver sand sold. For a tray anything black and smooth and perfectly flat will do, and curious, rocky-looking stones should be collected, unless the ambitious beginner feels equal to producing his rocks by the sudden application of a kitchen poker to a lump of rock-salt.

The feather, by the way, is used in its whole length as a rule, and not merely at the point, though this will be necessary for some details. The drawing of serried, rippling waves is performed by the whole length, the feather being held at the angle to be shown by the lines of the wave-crests, and so carried with a proper wavy motion clean across the surface.

We do not expect that these scanty hints will enable readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE to produce sand and stone pictures to rival those of Toriyama Shizan or Mimasu no Ya—two of the celebrated practitioners of the early part of the nineteenth century—but, at any rate, they may be of some little help to anybody disposed to amuse himself in a novel and pleasing manner.

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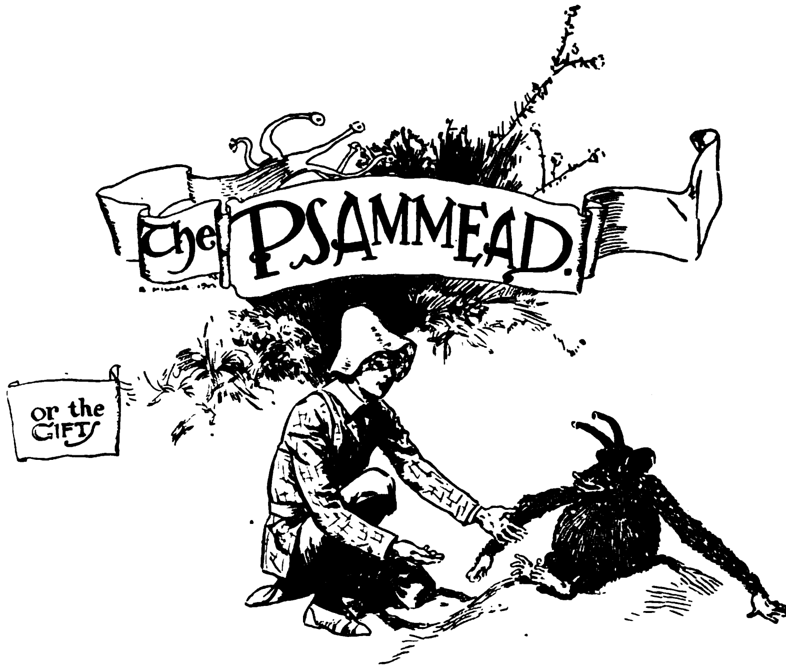

By E. Nesbit.

VII.—THE ELDER BROTHER.

YRIL had once pointed out that ordinary life is full of occasions on which a wish would be most useful. And this thought filled his mind when he happened to wake early on the morning after the morning after Robert had wished to be bigger than the baker's boy, and had been it. The day that lay between these two days had been occupied entirely by getting the governess-cart home from Benenhurst.

Cyril dressed hastily; he did not take a bath because tin baths are so noisy and he had no wish to rouse Robert, and he slipped off alone, as Anthea had once done, and ran through the dewy morning to the sand-pit. He dug up the psammead very carefully and kindly, and began the conversation by asking it whether it still felt any ill-effects from the contact with the tears of Robert the day before yesterday. The psammead was in a good temper. It replied politely.

"And now what can I do for you?" it said. "I suppose you've come here so early to ask for something for yourself—something your brothers and sisters aren't to know about—eh? Now, do be persuaded for your own good! Ask for a good fat megatherium and have done with it."

"Thank you—not to-day, I think," said Cyril, cautiously. "What I really wanted to say was—you know how you're always wishing for things when you're playing at anything?"

"I seldom play," said the psammead, coldly.

"Well, you know what I mean," Cyril went on, impatiently. "What I want to say is: won't you let us have our wish just when we think of it, and just where we happen to be, so that we don't have to come and disturb you again?" added the artful Cyril.

"It'll only end in your wishing for something you don't really want," said the psammead, stretching its brown hands and yawning. "It's always the same since people left off eating really wholesome things. However, have it your own way. Good bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Cyril, politely.

"I'll tell you what," said the psammead, suddenly, shooting out its long snail's eyes; "I'm getting tired of you—all of you. You have no more sense than so many oysters. Go along with you."

And Cyril went.

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"What an awful long time babies *stay* babies!" said Cyril, after the Lamb had taken his watch out of his pocket while he wasn't noticing, and with coos and clucks of naughty rapture had opened the case and used the

"HE OPENED THE CASE AND USED THE WHOLE THING AS A GARDEN SPADE."

whole thing as a garden spade, and when even immersion in a washhand basin had failed to wash the mould from the works and make the watch go again. Cyril had said several things in the heat of the moment, but now he was calmer, and had even consented to carry the Lamb part of the way to the woods. Cyril had persuaded the others to agree to his plan and not to wish for anything more till they really did wish it. Meantime it seemed good to go to the woods for nuts, and on the mossy grass under a sweet chestnut tree the five were sitting. The Lamb was pulling up the moss by fat handfuls, and Cyril was gloomily contemplating the ruins of his watch.

"He does grow," said Anthea. "Doesn't oo, precious?"

"Me grow," said the Lamb, cheerfully—"me grow big boy, have guns an' mouses—an'—an'——." Imagination or vocabulary gave out here. But any way it was the longest speech the Lamb had ever made, and it charmed everyone, even Cyril, who tumbled the Lamb over and rolled him in the moss to the music of delighted squeals.

"I suppose he'll be grown up some day," Anthea was saying, dreamily looking up at the blue of the sky that showed between the long, straight chestnut leaves. But at that moment the Lamb, struggling gaily with Cyril, thrust a stoutly-shod little foot against his brother's chest, there was a crack, and the innocent Lamb had broken the glass of father's second-best Waterbury watch, which Cyril had borrowed without leave.

"Grow up some day," said Cyril, bitterly, plumping the Lamb down on the grass. "I dare say he will — when nobody wants him to. I wish to goodness he would——"

"*Oh*, take care," cried Anthea, in an agony of apprehension. But it was too late. Like music to a song her words and Cyril's came out together.

Anthea: "Oh, take care."

Cyril: "Grow up now."

The faithful psammead was true to its promise, and there, before the horrified eyes of its brothers and sisters, the Lamb suddenly and violently grew up. It was a most terrible moment. The change was not so sudden as the wish changes usually were. The baby's face changed first. It grew thinner and larger, lines came in the forehead, the eyes grew more deep-set and darker in colour, the mouth grew longer and thinner; most terrible of all, a little dark moustache appeared on the lip of one who was still, except as to the face, a two-year-old baby in a linen smock and white open-work socks.

"Oh, I wish it wouldn't—oh, I wish it wouldn't—you boys might wish as well." They all wished hard, for the sight was enough to dismay the most heartless. They all wished so hard, indeed, that they felt quite giddy and almost lost consciousness; but the wishing was quite vain, for when the

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wood ceased to whirl round their dazzled eyes were riveted at once by the spectacle of a very proper-looking young man in grey flannels and a straw hat—a young man who wore the same little black moustache which just before they had actually seen growing upon the baby's lip. This, then, was the Lamb—grown up! Their own Lamb! It was a terrible moment. The grown-up Lamb moved gracefully across the moss and settled himself against the trunk of the sweet chestnut. He tilted the straw hat over his eyes. He was evidently weary. He was going to sleep. The Lamb—the original, little, tiresome, beloved Lamb—often went to sleep at odd times and in unexpected places. Was this new Lamb in the grey flannel suit and the pale green necktie like the other Lamb, or had his mind grown up together with his body?

That was the question which the others, in a hurried council held among the yellowing bracken a few yards from the sleeper, debated eagerly.

"Whichever it is it'll be just as awful," said Anthea; "if his inside senses are grown up, too, he won't stand our looking after him; and if he's still a baby inside of him, how on earth are we to get him to do anything? And it'll be getting on for dinner-time in a minute——"

"And we haven't got any nuts," said Jane.

"Oh, bother nuts," said Robert, "but dinner's different; I didn't have half enough dinner the day before yesterday. Couldn't we tie him to the tree and go home to our dinners and come back afterwards?"

"A fat lot of dinner we should get if we went back without the Lamb!" said Cyril, in scornful misery. "And it'll be just the same if we go back *with* him, in the state he is now. Yes; I know it's my doing; don't rub it in! I know I'm a beast and not fit to live; you can take that for settled and say no more about it. The question is, what are we going to do?"

"Let's wake him up and take him into Rochester or Maidstone and get some grub at a pastrycook's," said Robert, hopefully.

"Take him?" repeated Cyril. "Yes—do! It's all my fault, I don't deny that, but you'll find you've got your work cut out for you if you try to take that young man anywhere. The Lamb always was spoilt, but now he's grown up he's a demon, simply. I can see it; look at his mouth."

"Well, then," said Robert, "let's wake him up and see what *he'll* do. Perhaps *he'll* take *us* to Maidstone and stand sam. He ought to have a hat of money in the pockets of those extra special bags. We *must* have dinner, any way."

"SHE DID IT GENTLY BY TICKLING HIS NOSE WITH A TWIG."

They drew lots with little bits of bracken. It fell to Jane's lot to waken the grown-up Lamb.

She did it gently by tickling his nose with a twig of wild honeysuckle. He said "Bother the flies" twice, and then opened his eyes.

"Halloa, kiddies!" he said, in a languid

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tone, "still here? What's the giddy hour? You'll be late for your grub!"

"I know we shall," said Robert, bitterly.

"Then cut along home," said the grown-up Lamb.

"What about *your* grub, though?" asked Jane.

"Oh, how far is it to the station, do you think? I've a sort of notion that I'll run up to town and have some lunch at the club."

Blank misery fell like a pall on the four others. The Lamb—alone—unattended—would go to town and have lunch at a club! Perhaps he would also have tea there. Perhaps sunset would come upon him amid the dazzling luxury of club-land, and a helpless, cross, sleepy baby would find itself alone amid unsympathetic waiters, and would wail miserably for Panty from the depths of a club arm-chair! The picture moved Anthea almost to tears.

"Oh, no, Lamb, ducky, you mustn't do that," she cried, incautiously.

The grown-up Lamb frowned. "My dear Anthea," he said, "how often am I to tell you that my name is Hilary, or St. Maur, or Devereux—any of my baptismal names are free to my little brothers and sisters, but *not* 'Lamb'—a relic of foolish and far-off childhood."

This was awful. He was their elder brother now, was he? Well, of course he was, if he was grown up. Thus, in whispers, Anthea and Robert.

But the almost daily adventures resulting from the psammead wishes were making the children wise beyond their years.

"Dear Hilary," said Anthea, and the others choked at the name. "You know father didn't wish you to go to London. He wouldn't like us to be left alone without you to take care of us! . . . Oh, deceitful beast that I am!" she added to herself.

"Look here," said Cyril, "if you're our elder brother why not behave as sich, and take us over to Maidstone and give us a jolly good blow-out, and we'll go on the river afterwards."

"I'm infinitely obliged to you," said the Lamb, courteously, "but I should prefer solitude. Go home to your lunch—I mean your dinner. Perhaps I may look in about tea-time—or I may not be home till after you are in your beds."

Their beds! Speaking glances flashed between the wretched four. Much bed there would be for them if they went home without the Lamb.

"We promised mother not to lose sight of you if we took you out," Jane said, before the others could stop her.

"Look here, Jane," said the grown-up Lamb, putting his hands in his pockets and looking down at her, "little girls should be seen and not heard. You kids must learn not to make yourselves a nuisance. Run along home now, and perhaps if you're good I'll give you each a penny to-morrow."

"Look here," said Cyril, in the best "man to man" tone at his command, "where are you going, old man? You might let Bobs and me come with you, even if you don't want the girls."

This was really rather noble of Cyril; for he never had cared much about being seen in public with the Lamb, who, of course, after sunset would be a baby again.

The "man to man" tone succeeded.

"I shall just run over to Maidstone on my

"THERE, SURE ENOUGH, STOOD A BICYCLE."

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bike," said the new Lamb, airily, fingering the little black moustache. "I can lunch at the Crown—and perhaps I'll have a pull on the river—but I can't take you all on the machine, now, can I? Run along home like good children."

The position was desperate. Robert exchanged a despairing look with Cyril. Anthea detached a safety-pin from her waistband, a pin whose withdrawal left a gaping chasm between skirt and bodice, and handed it furtively to Robert, with a grimace of the darkest and deepest meaning. Robert slipped away to the road. There, sure enough, stood a bicycle—a beautiful new free-wheel. Of course, Robert understood at once that if the Lamb was grown up he *must* have a bicycle. This had always been one of Robert's own reasons for wishing to be grown up. He hastily began to use the pin—eleven punctures in the back tyre, seven in the front. He would have made the total twenty-two but for the rustling of the yellow hazel leaves, which warned him of the approach of the others. He hastily leaned a hand on each wheel and was rewarded by the "whish" of what was left of air escaping from eighteen neat pinholes.

"Your bike's run down," said Robert, wondering how he could so soon have learned to deceive.

"So it is," said Cyril.

"It's a puncture," said Anthea, stooping down and standing up again with a thorn which she had got ready for the purpose. "Look nere."

The grown-up Lamb — or Hilary, as I suppose one must now call him—fixed his pump and blew up the tyre. The punctured state of it was soon evident.

"THE PUNCTURED STATE OF IT WAS SOON EVIDENT."

"I suppose there's a cottage somewhere near where one could get a pail of water?" said the Lamb.

There was — and when the number of punctures had been made manifest it was felt to be a special blessing that the cottage provided "teas for cyclists." It provided an odd sort of tea-and-hammy meal for the Lamb and his brothers and sisters. This was paid for out of the fifteen shillings which had been earned by Robert when he was a giant; for the Lamb, it appeared, had, unfortunately, no money about him. This was a great disappointment for the others, but it is a thing that will happen even to the most grown up of us. However, Robert had enough to eat, and that was something. Quietly but persistently the miserable four took it in turns to try and persuade the Lamb (or St. Maur) to spend the rest of the day in the woods.

There was not very much of the day left by the time he had mended the eighteenth puncture. He looked up from the completed work with a sigh of relief, and suddenly put his tie straight.

"There's a lady coming," he said, briskly; "for goodness' sake get out of the way. Go home—hide—vanish somehow. I can't be seen with a pack of dirty kids." His brothers and sisters were indeed rather dirty, because earlier in the day the Lamb, in his infant

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state, had sprinkled a good deal of garden soil over them. The grown-up Lamb's voice was so tyrant-like, as Jane said afterwards, that they actually retreated to the back-garden and left him with his little moustache and his flannel suit to meet alone the young lady, who now came up the front garden wheeling a bicycle.

The woman of the house came out and the young lady spoke to her. The Lamb raised his hat as she passed him, and the children could not hear what she said, though they were craning round the corner by the pig-pail and listening with all their ears. They felt it to be "perfectly fair," as Robert said, "with that wretched Lamb in that condition."

When the Lamb spoke in a languid voice, heavy with politeness, they heard well enough.

"A puncture?" he was saying. "Can I not be of any assistance? If you would allow me——?"

There was a stifled explosion of laughter behind the pig-pail; the grown-up Lamb (otherwise Devereux) turned the tail of an angry eye in its direction.

"You're very kind," said the lady, looking at the Lamb. She looked rather shy, but, as the boys put it, there didn't seem to be any nonsense about her.

"But, oh," whispered Cyril, behind the pig-pail, "I should have thought he'd had enough bicycle-mending for one day, and, if she only knew that really and truly he's only a whiny-piny, silly little baby!"

"He's *not*," Anthea murmured, angrily. "He's a dear, if people only let him alone. It's our own precious Lamb still, whatever silly idiots may turn him into, isn't he, Pussy?"

Jane doubtfully supposed so.

Now the Lamb—whom I must try to remember to call St. Maur—was examining the lady's bicycle and talking to her with a very grown-up manner indeed. No one could possibly have supposed, to see and hear him, that only that very morning he had been a chubby child of less than two years breaking other people's Waterbury watches. Devereux (as he ought to be called for the future) took out a gold watch when he had mended the lady's bicycle, and all the on-lookers behind the pig-pail said "Oh!" because it seemed so unfair that the baby, who had only that morning destroyed two cheap, but honest, watches, should now, in the grown-upness Cyril's folly had raised him to, have a real gold watch, with a chain and seals!

Hilary (as I will now term him) withered his brothers and sisters with a glance, and then said to the lady, with whom he seemed to be quite friendly:—

"If you will allow me, I will ride with you as far as the cross-roads—it is getting late, and there are tramps about."

No one will ever know what answer the young lady intended to give to this gallant offer, for directly Anthea heard it made she rushed out, knocking over the pig-pail, which overflowed in a turbid stream, and caught the Lamb (I suppose I ought to say Hilary) by the arm. The others followed, and in an instant the four dirty children were visible beyond disguise.

"Don't let him," said Anthea to the lady, and she spoke with intense earnestness; "he's not fit to go with anyone!"

"Go away, little girl!" said St. Maur (as we will now call him), in a terrible voice. "Go home at once."

"You'd much better not have anything to do with him," the now reckless Anthea went on. "He doesn't know who he is. He's something very different from what you think he is."

"What do you mean?" asked the lady, not unnaturally; while Devereux (as I must term the grown-up Lamb) tried vainly to push Anthea away. The others backed her up and she stood solid as a rock.

"You just let him go with you," said Anthea, "you'll soon see what I mean! How would you like to suddenly see a poor little helpless baby spinning along downhill beside you with its feet up on a bicycle it had lost control of?"

The lady had turned rather pale.

"Who are these very dirty children?" she asked the grown-up Lamb (sometimes called St. Maur in these pages).

"I don't know," he lied, miserably.

"Oh, Lamb! how *can* you," cried Jane, "when you know perfectly well you're our own little baby brother that we're so fond of? We're his big brothers and sisters," she explained, turning to the lady, who, with trembling hands, was now turning her bicycle towards the gate, "and we've got to take care of him. And we must get him home before sunset, or I don't know whatever will become of us. You see, he's sort of under a spell—enchanted; you know what I mean."

Again and again the Lamb (Devereux I mean) had tried to stop Jane's eloquence, but Robert and Cyril held him one by each leg, and no proper explanation was possible.

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"YOU SEE, HE'S SORT OF UNDER A SPELL."

different from the affected tones of the dreadful grown-up Lamb (one of whose names was Devereux)—saying, "Me loves Panty. Wants to come to own Panty."

"Oh, let's get home, for goodness' sake," she said. "You shall say whatever you like in the morning — if you can," she added, in a whisper.

It was a gloomy party that went home through the soft evening. During Anthea's remarks Robert had again made play with the pin and the bicycle tyre, and the Lamb (whom they had to call St. Maur, or Devereux, or Hilary) seemed really at last to have had his fill of bicycle-mending. So the machine was wheeled.

The lady rode hastily away, and electrified her relatives at dinner by telling them of her escape from a family of dangerous lunatics. "The little girl's eyes were simply those of a maniac. I can't think how she came to be at large," she said.

When her bicycle had whizzed away down the road Cyril spoke gravely.

"Hilary, old chap," he said, "you must have had a sunstroke, or something. And the things you've been saying to that lady! Why, if we were to tell you the things you've said when you are yourself again—say to-morrow morning—you wouldn't even understand them, let alone believe them! You trust to me, old chap, and come home now, and if you're not yourself in the morning we'll ask the milkman to ask the doctor to come."

The poor grown-up Lamb (St. Maur was really one of his Christian names) seemed now too bewildered to resist.

"Since you seem all to be as mad as the whole worshipful company of hatters," he said, bitterly, "I suppose I *had* better take you home. But you're not to suppose I shall pass this over. I shall have something to say to you all to-morrow morning."

"Yes—you will, my Lamb," said Anthea, under her breath, "but it won't be at all the sort of thing you think it's going to be."

In her heart she could hear the pretty, soft, little, loving voice of the baby Lamb—so

The sun was just on the point of setting when they arrived at the White House. The four elder children would have liked to linger in the lane till, the complete sunsetting turned, the grown-up Lamb (whose Christian names I will not further weary you by repeating) had changed back into their own dear, tiresome baby brother. But he, in his grown-upness, insisted on going on, and thus he was met in the front garden by Martha.

Now, you remember that as a special favour the psammead had arranged that the servants in the house should never notice any change brought about by the wishes of the children.

Therefore Martha merely saw the usual party, with the baby Lamb, about whom she had been desperately anxious all the afternoon, trotting beside Anthea on fat baby legs. The children, of course, still saw the grown-up Lamb (never mind what names he was christened by), and she rushed at him and caught him in her arms, exclaiming:—

"Come to his own Martha, then—a precious poppet."

The grown-up Lamb (whose names shall now be buried in oblivion) struggled furiously. An expression of intense horror and annoyance was seen on his face. But Martha was stronger than he. She lifted him up and carried him into the house. None of the children will ever forget that picture. The neat grey-flannel-suited, grown-up young man, with the green tie and the little black

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moustacne—fortunately he was slightly built and not tall—struggling in the sturdy arms of Martha, who bore him away helpless, imploring him as she went to be a good boy now, and come and have his nice bremmilk! Fortunately the sun set as they reached the doorstep, the bicycle disappeared, and Martha was seen to carry into the house the real live, darling, sleepy, nearly two-year-old Lamb. The grown-up Lamb (nameless henceforth) was gone for ever!

"Because," said Cyril, "as soon as ever the Lamb's old enough to be bullied, we must jolly well begin to bully him for his own sake, so that he mayn't grow up like *that.*"

"You sha'n't bully him," said Anthea, stoutly, "not if I can stop it."

"We must tame him by kindness," said Jane.

"You see," said Robert, "if he grows up in the usual way there'll be plenty of time to correct him as he goes along. The awful thing to-day was his growing up so suddenly. There was no time to improve him at all."

"He doesn't want any improving," said Anthea, as the voice of the Lamb came cooing through the open door, just as she had heard it in her heart that afternoon:—

"Me loves Panty. Wants to come to own Panty!"

"THE GROWN-UP LAMB STRUGGLED FURIOUSLY."

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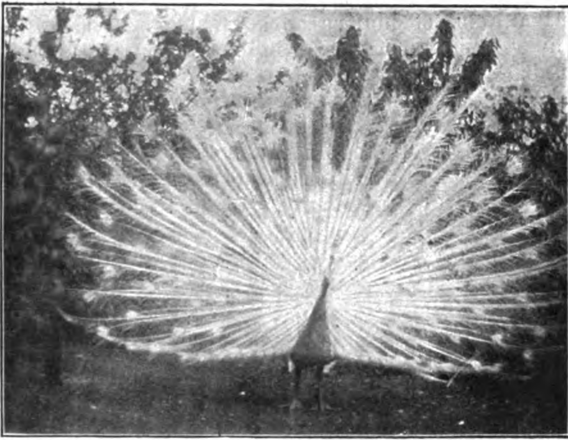
*Curiosities.**

[We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.]

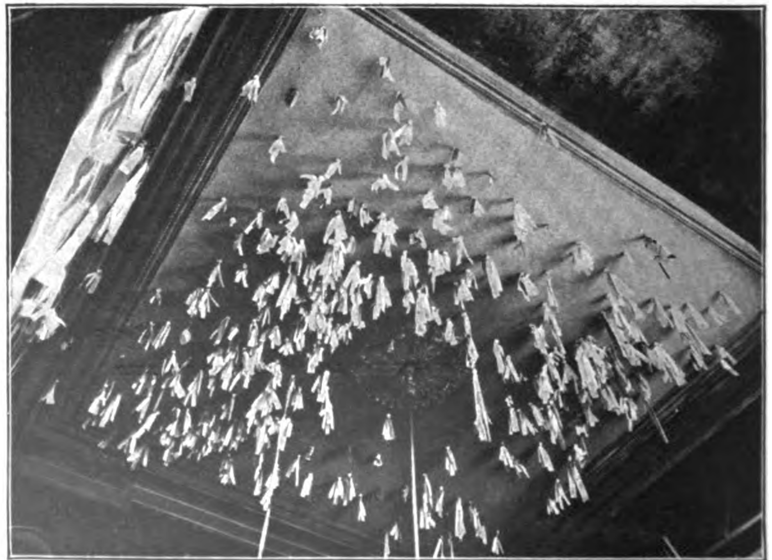


A WHITE PEACOCK'S TAIL.

"I send you a beautiful picture of a white peacock's tail, which I think may interest your readers. It was only after a week's patient daily waiting that I managed to secure it."—Mr. Thomas Cosano, 16, Bristo Place, Edinburgh.

A CURIOUS CORONATION COLLECTION.

"The accompanying photograph is that of a novel method of obtaining contributions to the Coronation collection for the London hospitals, there being enclosed in each of the pieces of paper on the ceiling a coin of the realm. The intending donor has to cut a piece of cardboard, about the size of a shilling, through the centre of which a tack is driven. Two or three strips of coloured paper are then pressed crossways on to the point of the tack, and allowed to hang down over the edge of the cardboard. A coin is placed under the piece of cardboard and the strips drawn over the edge and then twisted until the coin is held tight. The whole is then thrown point upwards to the ceiling, where it remains until removed by the collectors. In some of the papers shown in the illustration as many as twelve or thirteen pennies were placed, and in a small flag there were two half-crowns. The different coloured papers have quite a pretty effect. This collection was made at the Railway Hotel, Beckenham Road, Penge."—Mr. Cecil Zambra, photographer, 2, Lucas Road, Penge, S.E.



HE *DID* "LOOK PLEASANT."

"I submit to you a print from a flash-light negative that I obtained some time ago. It is an original idea, and the gentleman photographed suggested that I might as well have given a time exposure instead of taking the picture so rapidly. Perhaps some of your readers can follow his meaning! At all events, I am not quite sure that everyone could tell how the picture was taken."—Mr. Chas. H. L'Hommedieu, 319, Fifteenth Street, Buffalo.

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A TERRIER FOSTER-MOTHER.

"Mr. George Ullrich is the owner of a dog that is a most remarkable example of brute intelligence. Mr. Ullrich, who is a poultry raiser on a small scale, noticed, a few days ago, that one of his sitting hens was in the habit of frequently leaving her nest and remaining away for a long time. Fearing that he might lose a brood of chickens through the hen's neglect, he set about to make arrangements for keeping the eggs warm during her absence, and to that end decided to transfer the nest to the basement, alongside the furnace. Upon entering the hen-house, however, he discovered that his wishes had been anticipated by his pet dog, Princess, a female fox-terrier, which he found crouching on the eggs. He endeavoured to induce the animal to leave the nest, but she refused to do so until the hen returned to her duties. This state of affairs continued until the eggs were hatched. The moment the hen would leave the nest the dog would dash into the hen-house and 'sit' upon the eggs until the clucking biddy had finished her outing and was ready to assume her rightful place. As soon as the chicks were out of the shell, Princess asserted her right to share with the hen the care of the progeny."—Mr. John W. Hanson, Hammond, Ind.

WHAT ARE THESE?

"The curious objects shown in my photograph are not designs for trimming or patterns for ornamental work, but steel shavings caused by a Westinghouse break on a Great Eastern locomotive, on the ordinary steel rails of the line."—Mr. D. Graham, 95, Forburg Road, Stoke Newington.

A REMARKABLE RENTAL.

"Herewith a photograph of a very curious receipt, which has to be settled each year by the landlord of the inn mentioned. I cannot as yet ascertain the origin of this extraordinary document, which it would be interesting to learn. I also send a photograph of the Crown

No. 1

CORPORATION CHIEF AND FEE FARM RENTS.

Leicester, 22 July 1902

Received of Mr. Mr George Swift the sum of Fourpence & a damask Rose for a Year's Rent due to the Leicester Corporation, at Michaelmas 1902, for Premises situate in Loseby Lane (Crown Thistle Inn)

Rent	
Acq.	4
£	– 0 4

For Borough Treasurer.

and Thistle Inn, which your readers will note is a quaint, old-fashioned place."—Mr. Chas. E. Clark, 27, Castle Street, Leicester.

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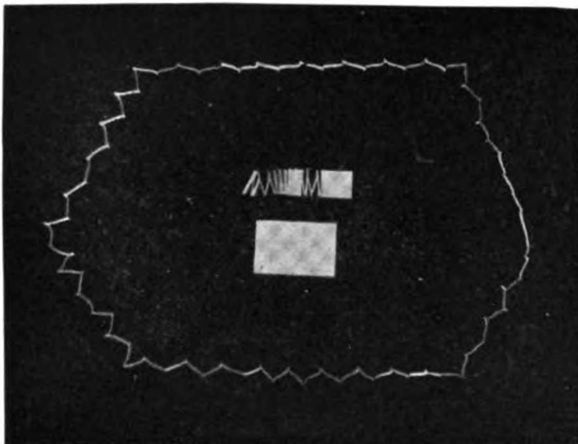


HOW TO STEP THROUGH A VISITING CARD.

"It sounds ridiculous to say that an ordinary visiting card may be so cut that a grown man or woman may step through it; but the enclosed photo. shows the method by which this seeming impossibility may be actually accomplished."—Mr. W. Dingwall Fordyce, 34, Great King Street, Edinburgh.

A FORTUNATE LITTLE LADY.

"I send you a photo. of myself in the play-room with some of my dolls. Please do not think that the picture represents my whole family of dolls, because about forty of them only appear in the photo., though I have nearly eighty. I wonder if any of your other girl readers can boast of so large a collection? My brother arranged the dolls round me and then he took the photo."—Miss B. Priest, 246, Bristol Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

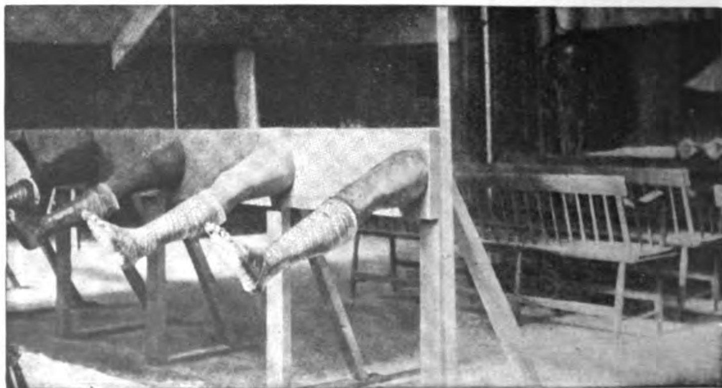
AN EXTRAORDINARY ILLUSION.

"I enclose a photograph which represents Private H. P. Lee, 37th Squadron, 10th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry, cooking our dinner in South Africa. You will

see that there is a complete face in his hat."—Mr. Norman M. Lawrance, 14, Alexandra Road, Bedford.

A CURIOSITY IN A MEDICAL SCHOOL.

"This somewhat weird-looking photograph need not alarm any of your readers. The lower limbs represented in the picture are purely artificial, though they are beautifully modelled to represent the actual limbs of a human being. The reason for this will be easily understood when it is mentioned that the students of Harvard Medical School are taught how to bandage these wooden models before they are allowed to dress the damaged limbs of real patients."—Mr. Allen H. Blacke, 18, Prentiss Street, N. Cambridge, Mass.



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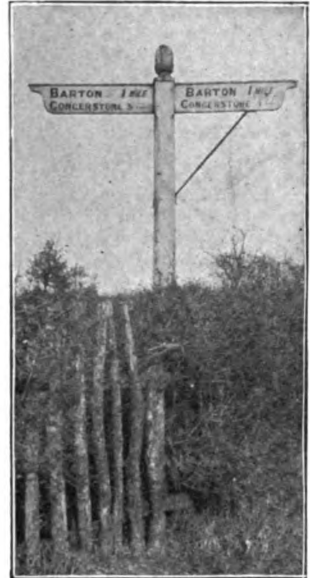
A QUAINT CHURCH BELL.

"The huge bell shown in my photograph is to be found in a small churchyard in Glen Finnan, Inverness-shire. It takes the place of a church bell, as there is no belfry to the building. An inscription in Latin is written around it, the interpretation of which is as follows: 'O, all ye hills and valleys, praise ye the Lord,' which seems a most appropriate one, the bell being situated among the most lovely mountains and glens of Scotland."—Mr. D. J. Unwin, Dowdeswell Court, Andoversford, R.S.O.

A PUZZLING SIGN-POST.

"This is not a 'freak photo.,' but a photograph of a sign-post in the village of Nailstone, near Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. The Barton is Barton-in-Beans, and Congerstone, three miles, is near Gopshall Hall, the country seat of Earl Howe. It is quite correct, as both roads, though going in exactly opposite directions, eventually meet on the outskirts of the village, but the wording is very puzzling to a stranger." — Mr. A. D. Taylor, 4, William Street, Attleborough, Nuneaton.



A DIAMOND EAR-RING ON EVERY NAIL.

This is the hand of Titenia, a variety actress on the American stage, who has devised a new way of wearing jewels. Not only does she adorn herself with bracelets, a thumb-ring, and rings on three of her fingers, but she also has a big jewel moored by chains to the middle of the back of her hand and a diamond ear-ring hanging from every nail. Each finger-nail is allowed to grow long, and is then bored with a little round hole, into which is inserted a diamond ear-ring. The effect is startling. The photograph is by Joseph Hall, of Broadway, New York, and is forwarded by Mr. Arthur Inkersley, of San Francisco.

SOMETHING NEW IN DOLLS.

Mrs. Scott Cooper, of 605, N. San Joaquin Street, Stockton, Cal., has evolved something distinctly original and extremely novel in the way of dolls. Three samples of her work are shown herewith. The heads are carved from oak-balls with a common jack-knife, and Mrs. Cooper has shown a remarkable talent for that class of work. The lady, who is quite well known on the American stage, has a great deal of artistic talent, tending mostly towards modelling and carving. The eyebrows of these dolls are made of hair from a clothes-brush, as are also their other hirsute adornments. The ears are made of separate oak-balls, pasted on with putty.

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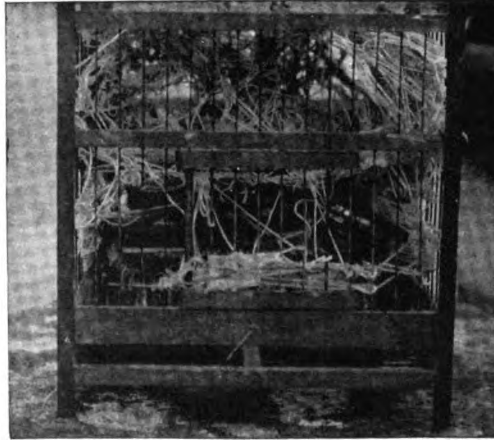
A WEAVER BIRD.



"I am sending you a photograph of a cage in which is kept a red-billed weaver bird, a native of Central Africa. It has been kept and domesticated by Miss Lydia Mathews, 19, Sarton Street, Wandsworth. By some means or other it recently secured the end of a ball of knitting cotton, dragged it into its cage, and wove several apartments for itself. It has filled one cage and is now busy with another. It is a matter of difficulty to show in a photograph how distinct from each other the various compartments really are, and how cleverly the various partitions are fashioned."—Miss N. Carter, 38, Belle Vue Gardens, Allfarthing Lane, Wandsworth.

"THE CHAINED CEDAR."

"I forward you a photograph, taken by myself, of a tree in Bretby Park, the property of the Earl of Carnarvon. It is known as 'The Chained Cedar,' and the legend attached to it is that when one of the branches falls off a member of the family dies immediately afterwards; and as this has often occurred, the branches are now supported by chains, which may just be distinguished in the photograph." — Mr. Raymond Nadin, 20, Ashby Road, Burton-on-Trent.

CAPTURING AN OCTOPUS.

"I enclose the snapshot of an octopus caught by myself and friend last May in Western Australia, also an account of the same, which is taken from the *Norseman Times*, which says: 'Some excitement has been caused by the capture of a large octopus by Messrs. A. S. Faulkner and J. B. Teede. It appears that they were bathing, as usual, off Dempster's jetty before breakfast, when suddenly they saw a huge octopus making for them. Swimming for their lives they first managed to reach the jetty before the octopus, the powerful tentacles sweeping the steps which they but a second before had left. Mr. Teede went along the beach, followed by the huge creature in shallow water, while Mr. Faulkner rushed into the sea and attacked it with an oar. Between them it was eventually overpowered and secured. It was found to measure 10ft. across. Even when dying the large tentacles held tenaciously to any object within reach. No one here had ever seen such a huge

octopus before. Photographers availed themselves of the opportunity to secure prints of this unique catch.'"—Mr. A. S. Faulkner, Wood Lodge, Flees, Salop.

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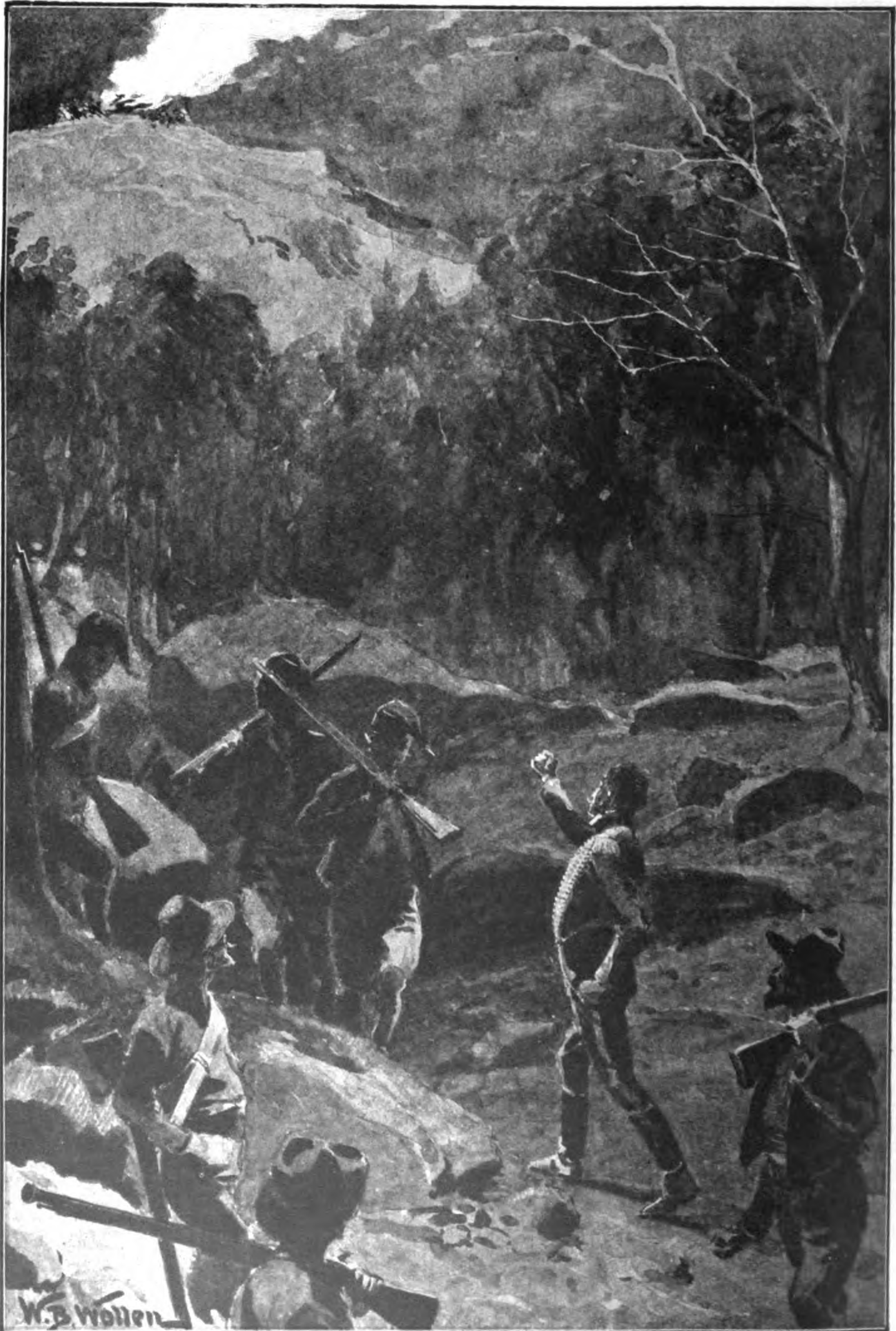

"WE COULD SEE THAT IMPASSIVE BODY AMID THE FLAMES, AND THE BLACK FIGURES AS THEY DANCED ROUND THE PILE."

(*See page* 495.)

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THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol. xxiv. DECEMBER, 1902. No. 143.

The Adventures of Etienne Gerard.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

II.—HOW THE BRIGADIER SAVED THE ARMY.

I HAVE told you, my friends, how we held the English shut up for six months, from October, 1810, to March, 1811, within their lines of Torres Vedras. It was during this time that I hunted the fox in their company, and showed them that amidst all their sportsmen there was not one who could outride a Hussar of Conflans. When I galloped back into the French lines with the blood of the creature still moist upon my blade the outposts who had seen what I had done raised a frenzied cry in my honour, whilst these English hunters still yelled behind me, so that I had the applause of both armies. It made the tears rise to my eyes to feel that I had won the admiration of so many brave men. These English are generous foes. That very evening there came a packet under a white flag addressed "To the Hussar officer who cut down the fox." Within I found the fox itself in two pieces, as I had left it. There was a note also, short but hearty as the English fashion is, to say that as I had slaughtered the fox it only remained for me to eat it. They could not know that it was not our French custom to eat foxes, and it showed their desire that he who had won the honours of the chase should also partake of the game. It is not for a Frenchman to be outdone in politeness, and so I returned it to these brave hunters, and begged them to accept it as a side-dish for their next *déjeuner de la chasse*. It is thus that chivalrous opponents make war.

I had brought back with me from my ride a clear plan of the English lines, and this I laid before Massena that very evening.

"THIS PLAN I LAID BEFORE MASSENA THAT VERY EVENING."

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I had hoped that it would lead him to attack, but all the marshals were at each other's throats, snapping and growling like so many hungry hounds. Ney hated Massena, and Massena hated Junot, and Soult hated them all. For this reason nothing was done. In the meantime food grew more and more scarce, and our beautiful cavalry was ruined for want of fodder. With the end of the winter we had swept the whole country bare, and nothing remained for us to eat, although we sent our forage parties far and wide. It was clear even to the bravest of us that the time had come to retreat. I was myself forced to admit it.

But retreat was not so easy. Not only were the troops weak and exhausted from want of supplies, but the enemy had been much encouraged by our long inaction. Of Wellington we had no great fear. We had found him to be brave and cautious, but with little enterprise. Besides, in that barren country his pursuit could not be rapid. But on our flanks and in our rear there had gathered great numbers of Portuguese militia, of armed peasants, and of guerillas. These people had kept a safe distance all the winter, but now that our horses were foundered they were as thick as flies all round our outposts, and no man's life was worth a sou when once he fell into their hands. I could name a dozen officers of my own acquaintance who were cut off during that time, and the luckiest was he who received a ball from behind a rock through his head or his heart. There were some whose deaths were so terrible that no report of them was ever allowed to reach their relatives. So frequent were these tragedies, and so much did they impress the imagination of the men, that it became very difficult to induce them to leave the camp. There was one especial scoundrel, a guerilla chief named Manuelo, "The Smiler," whose exploits filled our men with horror. He was a large, fat man of jovial aspect, and he lurked with a fierce gang among the mountains which lay upon our left flank. A volume might be written of this fellow's cruelties and brutalities, but he was certainly a man of power, for he organized his brigands in a manner which made it almost impossible for us to get through his country. This he did by imposing a severe discipline upon them and enforcing it by cruel penalties, a policy by which he made them formidable, but which had some unexpected results, as I will show you in my story. Had he not flogged his own lieutenant——but you will hear of that when the time comes.

There were many difficulties in connection with a retreat, but it was very evident that there was no other possible course, and so Massena began to quickly pass his baggage and his sick from Torres Novas, which was his head-quarters, to Coimbra, the first strong post on his line of communications. He could not do this unperceived, however, and at once the guerillas came swarming closer and closer upon our flanks. One of our divisions, that of Clausel, with a brigade of Montbrun's cavalry, was far to the south of the Tagus, and it became very necessary to let them know that we were about to retreat, for otherwise they would be left unsupported in the very heart of the enemy's country. I remember wondering how Massena would accomplish this, for simple couriers could not get through, and small parties would be certainly destroyed. In some way an order to fall back must be conveyed to these men, or France would be the weaker by fourteen thousand men. Little did I think that it was I, Colonel Gerard, who was to have the honour of a deed which might have formed the crowning glory of any other man's life, and which stands high among those exploits which have made my own so famous.

At that time I was serving on Massena's staff, and he had two other aides-de-camp, who were also very brave and intelligent officers. The name of one was Cortex and of the other Duplessis. They were senior to me in age, but junior in every other respect. Cortex was a small, dark man, very quick and eager. He was a fine soldier, but he was ruined by his conceit. To take him at his own valuation he was the first man in the army. Duplessis was a Gascon, like myself, and he was a very fine fellow, as all Gascon gentlemen are. We took it in turn, day about, to do duty, and it was Cortex who was in attendance upon the morning of which I speak. I saw him at breakfast, but afterwards neither he nor his horse was to be seen. All day Massena was in his usual gloom, and he spent much of his time staring with his telescope at the English lines and at the shipping in the Tagus. He said nothing of the mission upon which he had sent our comrade, and it was not for us to ask him any questions.

That night, about twelve o'clock, I was standing outside the Marshal's head-quarters when he came out and stood motionless for half an hour, his arms folded upon his breast, staring through the darkness towards the east.

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So rigid and intent was he that you might have believed the muffled figure and the cocked hat to have been the statue of the man. What he was looking for I could not imagine; but at last he gave a bitter curse, and, turning on his heel, he went back into the house, banging the door behind him.

Next day the second aide-de-camp, Duplessis, had an interview with Massena in the morning, after which neither he nor his horse was seen again. That night, as I sat in the ante-room, the Marshal passed me, and I observed him through the window standing and staring to the east exactly as he had done before. For fully half an hour he remained there, a black shadow in the gloom. Then he strode in, the door banged, and I heard his spurs and his scabbard jingling and clanking through the passage. At the best he was a savage old man, but when he was crossed I had almost as soon face the Emperor himself. I heard him that night cursing and stamping above my head, but he did not send for me, and I knew him too well to go unsought.

Next morning it was my turn, for I was the only aide-de-camp left. I was his favourite aide-de-camp. His heart went out always to a smart soldier. I declare that I think there were tears in his black eyes when he sent for me that morning.

"Gerard!" said he. "Come here!"

With a friendly gesture he took me by the sleeve and he led me to the open window which faced the east. Beneath us was the infantry camp, and beyond that the lines of the cavalry with the long rows of picketed horses. We could see the French outposts, and then a stretch of open country, intersected by vineyards. A range of hills lay beyond, with one well-marked peak towering above them. Round the base of these hills was a broad belt of forest. A single road ran white and clear, dipping and rising until it passed through a gap in the hills.

"This," said Massena, pointing to the mountain, "is the Sierra de Merodal. Do you perceive anything upon the top?"

I answered that I did not.

"Now?" he asked, and he handed me his field-glass.

With its aid I perceived a small mound or cairn upon the crest.

"What you see," said the Marshal, "is a pile of logs which was placed there as a beacon. We laid it when the country was in our hands, and now, although we no longer hold it, the beacon remains undisturbed. Gerard, that beacon must be lit to-night. France needs it, the Emperor needs it, the army needs it. Two of your comrades have gone to light it, but neither has made his way to the summit. To-day it is your turn, and I pray that you may have better luck."

It is not for a soldier to ask the reason for his orders, and so I was about to hurry from the room, but the Marshal laid his hand upon my shoulder and held me.

"You shall know all, and so learn how high is the cause for which you risk your life," said he. "Fifty miles to the south of

"GERARD, THAT BEACON MUST BE LIT TO-NIGHT."

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us, on the other side of the Tagus, is the army of General Clausel. His camp is situated near a peak named the Sierra d'Ossa. On the summit of this peak is a beacon, and by this beacon he has a picket. It is agreed between us that when at midnight he shall see our signal fire he shall light his own as an answer, and shall then at once fall back upon the main army. If he does not start at once I must go without him. For two days I have endeavoured to send him his message. It must reach him to-day, or his army will be left behind and destroyed."

Ah, my friends, how my heart swelled when I heard how high was the task which Fortune had assigned to me! If my life were spared, here was one more splendid new leaf for my laurel crown. If, on the other hand, I died, then it would be a death worthy of such a career. I said nothing, but I cannot doubt that all the noble thoughts that were in me shone in my face, for Massena took my hand and wrung it.

"There is the hill and there the beacon," said he. "There is only this guerilla and his men between you and it. I cannot detach a large party for the enterprise and a small one would be seen and destroyed. Therefore to you alone I commit it. Carry it out in your own way, but at twelve o'clock this night let me see the fire upon the hill."

"If it is not there," said I, "then I pray you, Marshal Massena, to see that my effects are sold and the money sent to my mother." So I raised my hand to my busby and turned upon my heel, my heart glowing at the thought of the great exploit which lay before me.

I sat in my own chamber for some little time considering how I had best take the matter in hand. The fact that neither Cortex nor Duplessis, who were very zealous and active officers, had succeeded in reaching the summit of the Sierra de Merodal showed that the country was very closely watched by the guerillas. I reckoned out the distance upon a map. There were ten miles of open country to be crossed before reaching the hills. Then came a belt of forest on the lower slopes of the mountain, which may have been three or four miles wide. And then there was the actual peak itself, of no very great height, but without any cover to conceal me. Those were the three stages of my journey.

It seemed to me that once I had reached the shelter of the wood all would be easy, for I could lie concealed within its shadows and climb upwards under the cover of night. From eight till twelve would give me four hours of darkness in which to make the ascent. It was only the first stage, then, which I had seriously to consider.

Over that flat country there lay the inviting white road, and I remembered that my comrades had both taken their horses. That was clearly their ruin, for nothing could be easier than for the brigands to keep watch upon the road, and to lay an ambush for all who passed along it. It would not be difficult for me to ride across country, and I was well horsed at that time, for I had not only Violette and Rataplan, who were two of the finest mounts in the army, but I had the splendid black English hunter which I had taken from Sir Cotton. However, after much thought, I determined to go upon foot, since I should then be in a better state to take advantage of any chance which might offer. As to my dress, I covered my Hussar uniform with a long cloak, and I put a grey forage cap upon my head. You may ask me why I did not dress as a peasant, but I answer that a man of honour has no desire to die the death of a spy. It is one thing to be murdered, and it is another to be justly executed by the laws of war. I would not run the risk of such an end.

In the late afternoon I stole out of the camp and passed through the line of our pickets. Beneath my cloak I had a field-glass and a pocket pistol, as well as my sword. In my pocket were tinder, flint, and steel.

For two or three miles I kept under cover of the vineyards, and made such good progress that my heart was high within me, and I thought to myself that it only needed a man of some brains to take the matter in hand to bring it easily to success. Of course, Cortex and Duplessis galloping down the high road would be easily seen, but the intelligent Gerard lurking among the vines was quite another person. I dare say I had got as far as five miles before I met any check. At that point there is a small wine-house, round which I perceived some carts and a number of people, the first that I had seen. Now that I was well outside the lines I knew that every person was my enemy, so I crouched lower while I stole along to a point from which I could get a better view of what was going on. I then perceived that these people were peasants, who were loading two waggons with empty wine-casks. I failed to see how they could either help or hinder me, so I continued upon my way.

But soon I understood that my task was

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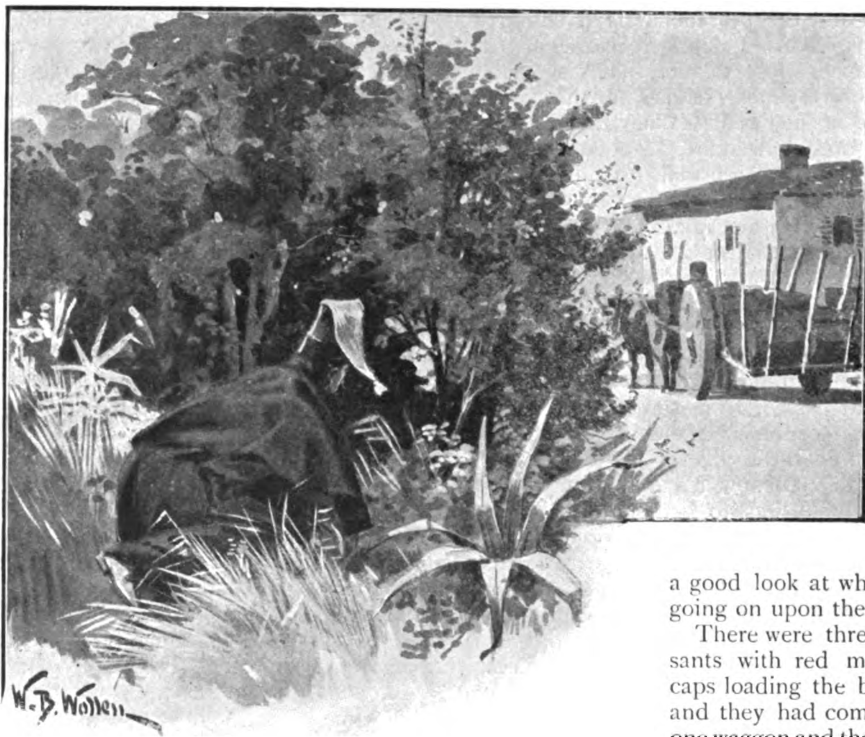
not so simple as had appeared. As the ground rose the vineyards ceased, and I came upon a stretch of open country studded with low hills. Crouching in a ditch I examined them with a glass, and I very soon perceived that there was a watcher upon every one of them, and that these people had a line of pickets and outposts thrown forward exactly like our own. I had heard of the discipline which was practised by this scoundrel whom they called "The Smiler," and this, no doubt, was an example of it. Between the hills there was a cordon of sentries, and though I worked some distance round to the flank I still found myself faced by the enemy. It was a puzzle what to do. There was so little cover that a rat could hardly cross without being seen. Of course, it would be easy enough to slip through at night, as I had done with the English at Torres Vedras, but I was still far from the mountain and I could not in that case reach it in time to light the midnight beacon. I lay in my ditch and I made a thousand plans, each more dangerous than the last. And then suddenly I had that flash of light which comes to the brave man who refuses to despair.

You remember I have mentioned that two waggons were loading up with empty casks at the inn. The heads of the oxen were turned to the east, and it was evident that those waggons were going in the direction which I desired. Could I only conceal myself upon one of them, what better and easier way could I find of passing through the lines of the guerillas? So simple and so good was the plan that I could not restrain a cry of delight as it crossed my mind, and I hurried away instantly in the direction of the inn. There, from behind some bushes, I had a good look at what was going on upon the road.



"FROM BEHIND SOME BUSHES I HAD A GOOD LOOK AT WHAT WAS GOING ON."

There were three peasants with red montero caps loading the barrels, and they had completed one waggon and the lower tier of the other. A number of empty barrels still lay outside the wine-house waiting to be put on. Fortune was my friend—I have always said that she is a woman and cannot resist a dashing young Hussar. As I watched, the three fellows went into the inn, for the day was hot and they were thirsty after their labour. Quick as a flash I darted out from my hiding-place, climbed on to the waggon, and crept into one of the empty casks. It had a bottom but no top, and it lay upon its side with the open end inwards. There I crouched like a dog in its kennel, my knees

drawn up to my chin, for the barrels were not very large and I am a well-grown man. As I lay there out came the three peasants again, and presently I heard a crash upon the top of me which told that I had another barrel above me. They piled them upon the cart until I could not imagine how I was ever to get out again. However, it is time to think of crossing the Vistula when you are over the Rhine, and I had no doubt that if chance and my own wits had carried me so far they would carry me farther.

Soon, when the waggon was full, they set forth upon their way, and I within my barrel chuckled at every step, for it was carrying me whither I wished to go. We travelled slowly, and the peasants walked beside the waggons. This I knew, because I heard their voices close to me. They seemed to me to be very merry fellows, for they laughed heartily as they went. What the joke was I could not understand. Though I speak their language fairly well I could not hear anything comic in the scraps of their conversation which met my ear.

I reckoned that at the rate of walking of a team of oxen we covered about two miles an hour. Therefore, when I was sure that two and a half hours had passed—such hours, my friends, cramped, suffocated, and nearly poisoned with the fumes of the lees—when they had passed, I was sure that the dangerous open country was behind us, and that we were upon the edge of the forest and the mountain. So now I had to turn my mind upon how I was to get out of my barrel. I had thought of several ways, and was balancing one against the other when the question was decided for me in a very simple but unexpected manner.

The waggon stopped suddenly with a jerk, and I heard a number of gruff voices in excited talk. "Where, where?" cried one. "On our cart," said another. "Who is he?" said a third. "A French officer; I saw his cap and his boots." They all roared with laughter. "I was looking out of the window of the posada and I saw him spring into the cask like a toreador with a Seville bull at his heels." "Which cask, then?" "It was this one," said the fellow, and sure enough his fist struck the wood beside my head.

What a situation, my friends, for a man of my standing! I blush now, after forty years, when I think of it. To be trussed like a fowl and to listen helplessly to the rude laughter of these boors—to know, too, that my mission had come to an ignominious and even ridiculous end — I would have blessed the man who would have sent a bullet through the cask and freed me from my misery.

I heard the crashing of the barrels as they hurled them off the waggon, and then a couple of bearded faces and the muzzles of two guns looked in at me. They seized me by the sleeves of my coat, and they dragged me out into the daylight. A strange figure I must have looked as I stood blinking and gaping in the blinding sunlight. My body was bent like a cripple's, for I could not straighten my stiff joints, and half my coat was as red as an English soldier's from the lees in which I had lain. They laughed and laughed, these dogs, and as I tried to express by my bearing and gestures the contempt in which I held them their laughter grew all the louder. But even in these hard circumstances I bore myself like the man I am, and as I cast my eye slowly round I did not find that any of the laughers were very ready to face it.

That one glance round was enough to tell me exactly how I was situated. I had been betrayed by these peasants into the hands of an outpost of guerillas. There were eight of them, savage-looking, hairy creatures, with cotton handkerchiefs under their sombreros, and many-buttoned jackets with coloured sashes round the waist. Each had a gun and one or two pistols stuck in his girdle. The leader, a great bearded ruffian, held his gun against my ear while the others searched my pockets, taking from me my overcoat, my pistol, my glass, my sword, and, worst of all, my flint and steel and tinder. Come what might I was ruined, for I had no longer the means of lighting the beacon even if I should reach it.

Eight of them, my friends, with three peasants, and I unarmed! Was Etienne Gerard in despair? Did he lose his wits? Ah, you know me too well; but they did not know me yet, these dogs of brigands. Never have I made so supreme and astounding an effort as at this very instant when all seemed lost. Yet you might guess many times before you would hit upon the device by which I escaped them. Listen and I will tell you.

They had dragged me from the waggon when they searched me, and I stood, still twisted and warped, in the midst of them. But the stiffness was wearing off, and already my mind was very actively looking out for some method of breaking away. It was a narrow pass in which the brigands had their outpost. It was bounded on the one hand by a steep mountain side. On the other the ground fell away in a very long slope, which

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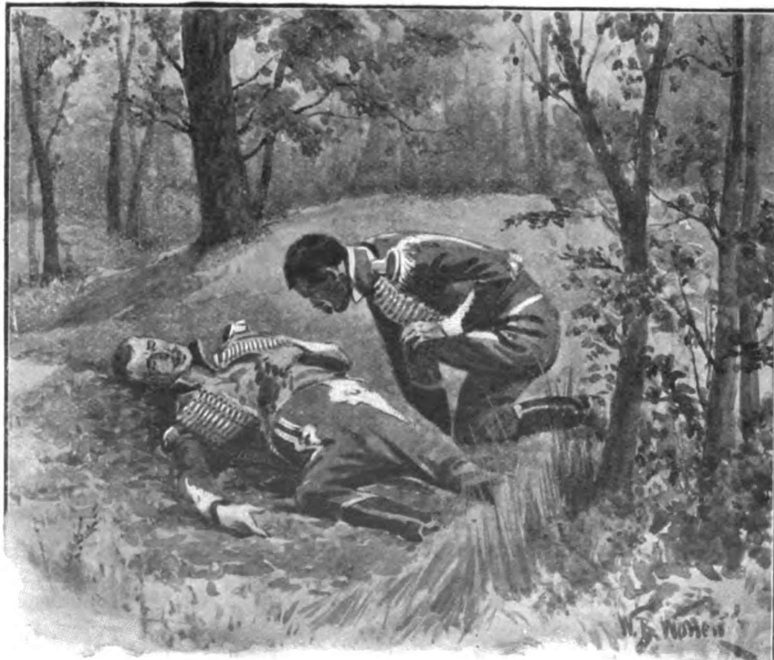
ended in a bushy valley many hundreds of feet below. These fellows, you understand, were hardy mountaineers, who could travel either up hill or down very much quicker than I. They wore abarcas, or shoes of skin, tied on like sandals, which gave them a foothold everywhere. A less resolute man would have despaired. But in an instant I saw and used the strange chance which Fortune had placed in my way. On the very edge of the slope was one of the wine-barrels. I moved slowly towards it, and then with a tiger spring I dived into it feet foremost, and with a roll of my body I tipped it over the side of the hill.

Shall I ever forget that dreadful journey—how I bounded and crashed and whizzed down that terrible slope? I had dug in my knees and elbows, bunching my body into a compact bundle so as to steady it; but my head projected from the end, and it was a marvel that I did not dash out my brains. There were long, smooth slopes, and then came steeper scarps where the barrel ceased to roll, and sprang into the air like a goat, coming down with a rattle and crash which jarred every bone in my body. How the wind whistled in my ears, and my head turned and turned until I was sick and giddy and nearly senseless! Then, with a swish and a great rasping and crackling of branches, I reached the bushes which I had seen so far below me. Through them I broke my way, down a slope beyond, and deep into another patch of underwood, where striking a sapling my barrel flew to pieces. From amid a heap of staves and hoops I crawled out, my body aching in every inch of it, but my heart singing loudly with joy and my spirit high within me, for I knew how great was the feat which I had accomplished, and I already seemed to see the beacon blazing on the hill.

A horrible nausea had seized me from the tossing which I had undergone, and I felt as I did upon the ocean when first I experienced those movements of which the English have taken so perfidious an advantage. I had to sit for a few moments with my head upon my hands beside the ruins of my barrel. But there was no time for rest. Already I heard shouts above me which told that my pursuers were descending the hill. I dashed into the thickest part of the underwood, and I ran and ran until I was utterly exhausted. Then I lay panting and listened with all my ears, but no sound came to them. I had shaken off my enemies.

When I had recovered my breath I travelled swiftly on, and waded knee-deep through several brooks, for it came into my head that they might follow me with dogs. On gaining a clear place and looking round me, I found to my delight that in spite of my adventures I had not been much out of my way. Above me towered the peak of Merodal, with its bare and bold summit shooting out of the groves of dwarf oaks which shrouded its flanks. These groves were the continuation of the cover under which I found myself, and it seemed to me that I had nothing to fear now until I reached the



"IT WAS DUPLESSIS."

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other side of the forest. At the same time I knew that every man's hand was against me, that I was unarmed, and that there were many people about me. I saw no one, but several times I heard shrill whistles, and once the sound of a gun in the distance.

It was hard work pushing one's way through the bushes, and so I was glad when I came to the larger trees and found a path which led between them. Of course, I was too wise to walk upon it, but I kept near it and followed its course. I had gone some distance, and had, as I imagined, nearly reached the limit of the wood, when a strange, moaning sound fell upon my ears. At first I thought it was the cry of some animal, but then there came words, of which I only caught the French exclamation, "Mon Dieu!" With great caution I advanced in the direction from which the sound proceeded, and this is what I saw.

On a couch of dried leaves there was stretched a man dressed in the same grey uniform which I wore myself. He was evidently horribly wounded, for he held a cloth to his breast which was crimson with his blood. A pool had formed all round his couch, and he lay in a haze of flies, whose buzzing and droning would certainly have called my attention if his groans had not come to my ear. I lay for a moment, fearing some trap, and then, my pity and loyalty rising above all other feelings, I ran forward and knelt by his side. He turned a haggard face upon me, and it was Duplessis, the man who had gone before me. It needed but one glance at his sunken cheeks and glazing eyes to tell me that he was dying.

"Gerard!" said he; "Gerard!"

I could but look my sympathy, but he, though the life was ebbing swiftly out of him, still kept his duty before him, like the gallant gentleman he was.

"The beacon, Gerard! You will light it?"

"Have you flint and steel?"

"It is here."

"Then I will light it to-night."

"I die happy to hear you say so. They shot me, Gerard. But you will tell the Marshal that I did my best."

"And Cortex?"

"He was less fortunate. He fell into their hands and died horribly. If you see that you cannot get away, Gerard, put a bullet into your own heart. Don't die as Cortex did."

I could see that his breath was failing, and I bent low to catch his words.

"Can you tell me anything which can help me in my task?" I asked.

"Yes, yes; De Pombal. He will help you. Trust De Pombal." With the words his head fell back and he was dead.

"Trust De Pombal. It is good advice." To my amazement a man was standing at the very side of me. So absorbed had I been in my comrade's words and intent on his advice that he had crept up without my observing him. Now I sprang to my feet and faced him. He was a tall, dark fellow, black-haired, black-eyed, black-bearded, with a long, sad face. In his hand he had a wine-bottle and over his shoulder was slung one of the trabucos or blunderbusses which these fellows bear. He made no effort to unsling it, and I understood that this was the man to whom my dead friend had commended me.

"Alas, he is gone!" said he, bending over Duplessis. "He fled into the wood after he was shot, but I was fortunate enough to find where he had fallen and to make his last hours more easy. This couch was my making, and I had brought this wine to slake his thirst."

"Sir," said I, "in the name of France I thank you. I am but a colonel of light cavalry, but I am Etienne Gerard, and the name stands for something in the French army. May I ask——"

"Yes, sir, I am Aloysius de Pombal, younger brother of the famous nobleman of that name. At present I am the first lieutenant in the band of the guerilla chief who is usually known as Manuelo, 'The Smiler.'"

My word, I clapped my hand to the place where my pistol should have been, but the man only smiled at the gesture.

"I am his first lieutenant, but I am also his deadly enemy," said he. He slipped off his jacket and pulled up his shirt as he spoke. "Look at this!" he cried, and he turned upon me a back which was all scored and lacerated with red and purple weals. "This is what 'The Smiler' has done to me, a man with the noblest blood of Portugal in my veins. What I will do to 'The Smiler' you have still to see."

There was such fury in his eyes and in the grin of his white teeth that I could no longer doubt his truth, with that clotted and oozing back to corroborate his words.

"I have ten men sworn to stand by me," said he. "In a few days I hope to join your army, when I have done my work here. In the meanwhile——." A strange change

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came over his face, and he suddenly slung his musket to the front: "Hold up your hands, you French hound!" he yelled. "Up with them, or I blow your head off!"

"'HOLD UP YOUR HANDS, YOU FRENCH HOUND!' HE YELLED."

You start, my friends! You stare! Think, then, how I stared and started at this sudden ending of our talk. There was the black muzzle and there the dark, angry eyes behind it. What could I do? I was helpless. I raised my hands in the air. At the same moment voices sounded from all parts of the wood, there were crying and calling and rushing of many feet. A swarm of dreadful figures broke through the green bushes, a dozen hands seized me, and I, poor, luckless, frenzied I, was a prisoner once more. Thank God, there was no pistol which I could have plucked from my belt and snapped at my own head. Had I been armed at that moment I should not be sitting here in this café and telling you these old-world tales.

With grimy, hairy hands clutching me on every side I was led along the pathway through the wood, the villain De Pombal giving directions to my captors. Four of the brigands carried up the dead body of Duplessis. The shadows of evening were already falling when we cleared the forest and came out upon the mountain-side. Up this I was driven until we reached the headquarters of the guerillas, which lay in a cleft close to the summit of the mountain. There was the beacon which had cost me so much, a square stack of wood, immediately above our heads. Below were two or three huts which had belonged, no doubt, to goatherds, and which were now used to shelter these rascals. Into one of these I was cast, bound and helpless, and the dead body of my poor comrade was laid beside me.

I was lying there with the one thought still consuming me, how to wait a few hours and to get at that pile of fagots above my head, when the door of my prison opened and a man entered. Had my hands been free I should have flown at his throat, for it was none other than De Pombal. A couple of brigands were at his heels, but he ordered them back and closed the door behind him.

"You villain!" said I.

"Hush!" he cried. "Speak low, for I do not know who may be listening, and my life is at stake. I have some words to say to you, Colonel Gerard; I wish well to you, as I did to your dead companion. As I spoke to you beside his body I saw that we were surrounded, and that your capture was unavoidable. I should have shared your fate had I hesitated. I instantly captured you myself, so as to preserve the confidence of the band. Your own sense will tell you that there was nothing else for me to do. I do not know now whether I can save you, but at least I will try."

This was a new light upon the situation. I told him that I could not tell how far he spoke the truth, but that I would judge him by his actions.

"I ask nothing better," said he. "A word of advice to you! The chief will see you now. Speak him fair, or he will have you sawn between two planks. Contradict nothing he says. Give him such information as he wants. It is your only chance. If you can gain time something may come in our favour. Now, I have no more time. Come at once, or suspicion may be awakened." He helped

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me to rise, and then, opening the door, he dragged me out very roughly, and with the aid of the fellows outside he brutally pushed and thrust me to the place where the guerilla chief was seated, with his rude followers gathered round him.

A remarkable man was Manuelo, "The Smiler." He was fat and florid and comfortable, with a big, clean-shaven face and a bald head, the very model of a kindly father of a family. As I looked at his honest smile I could scarcely believe that this was, indeed, the infamous ruffian whose name was a horror through the English Army as well as our own. It is well known that Trent, who was a British officer, afterwards had the fellow hanged for his brutalities. He sat upon a boulder and he beamed upon me like one who meets an old acquaintance. I observed, however, that one of his men leaned upon a long saw, and the sight was enough to cure me of all delusions.

"Good evening, Colonel Gerard," said he. "We have been highly honoured by General Massena's staff: Major Cortex one day, Colonel Duplessis the next, and now Colonel Gerard. Possibly the Marshal himself may be induced to honour us with a visit. You have seen Duplessis, I understand. Cortex you will find nailed to a tree down yonder. It only remains to be decided how we can best dispose of yourself."

It was not a cheering speech; but all the time his fat face was wreathed in smiles, and he lisped out his words in the most mincing and amiable fashion. Now, however, he suddenly leaned forward, and I read a very real intensity in his eyes.

"Colonel Gerard," said he, "I cannot promise you your life, for it is not our custom, but I can give you an easy death or I can give you a terrible one. Which shall it be?"

"What do you wish me to do in exchange?"

"If you would die easy I ask you to give me truthful answers to the questions which I ask."

A sudden thought flashed through my mind.

"You wish to kill me," said I; "it cannot matter to you how I die. If I answer your questions, will you let me choose the manner of my own death?"

"Yes, I will," said he, "so long as it is before midnight to-night."

"Swear it!" I cried.

"The word of a Portuguese gentleman is ient," said he.

"Not a word will I say until you have sworn it."

He flushed with anger and his eyes swept round towards the saw. But he understood from my tone that I meant what I said, and that I was not a man to be bullied into submission. He pulled a cross from under his zammara or jacket of black sheepskin.

"I swear it," said he.

Oh, my joy as I heard the words! What an end—what an end for the first swordsman of France! I could have laughed with delight at the thought.

"Now, your questions!" said I.

"You swear in turn to answer them truly?"

"I do, upon the honour of a gentleman and a soldier." It was, as you perceive, a terrible thing that I promised, but what was it compared to what I might gain by compliance?

"This is a very fair and a very interesting bargain," said he, taking a note-book from his pocket. "Would you kindly turn your gaze towards the French camp?"

Following the direction of his gesture, I turned and looked down upon the camp in the plain beneath us. In spite of the fifteen miles, one could in that clear atmosphere see every detail with the utmost distinctness. There were the long squares of our tents and our huts, with the cavalry lines and the dark patches which marked the ten batteries of artillery. How sad to think of my magnificent regiment waiting down yonder, and to know that they would never see their colonel again! With one squadron of them I could have swept all these cut-throats off the face of the earth. My eager eyes filled with tears as I looked at the corner of the camp where I knew that there were eight hundred men, any one of whom would have died for his colonel. But my sadness vanished when I saw beyond the tents the plumes of smoke which marked the head-quarters at Torres Novas. There was Massena, and, please God, at the cost of my life his mission would that night be done. A spasm of pride and exultation filled my breast. I should have liked to have had a voice of thunder that I might call to them, "Behold it is I, Etienne Gerard, who will die in order to save the army of Clausel!" It was, indeed, sad to think that so noble a deed should be done, and that no one should be there to tell the tale.

"Now," said the brigand chief, "you see the camp and you see also the road which leads to Coimbra. It is crowded with your

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"DOES THIS MEAN THAT MASSENA IS ABOUT TO RETREAT?"

fourgons and your ambulances. Does this mean that Massena is about to retreat?"

One could see the dark moving lines of waggons with an occasional flash of steel from the escort. There could, apart from my promise, be no indiscretion in admitting that which was already obvious

"He will retreat," said I

"By Coimbra?"

"I believe so."

"But the army of Clausel?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Every path to the south is blocked. No message can reach them. If Massena falls back the army of Clausel is doomed."

"It must take its chance," said I.

"How many men has he?"

"I should say about fourteen thousand."

"How much cavalry?"

"One brigade of Montbrun's Division."

"What regiments?"

"The 4th Chasseurs, the 9th Hussars, and a regiment of Cuirassiers."

"Quite right," said he, looking at his note-book. "I can tell you speak the truth, and Heaven help you if you don't." Then, division by division, he went over the whole army, asking the composition of each brigade. Need I tell you that I would have had my tongue torn out before I would have told him such things had I not a greater end in view? I would let him know all if I could but save the army of Clausel.

At last he closed his note-book and replaced it in his pocket. "I am obliged to you for this information, which shall reach Lord Wellington to-morrow," said he. "You have done your share of the bargain; it is for me now to perform mine. How would you wish to die? As a soldier you would, no doubt, prefer to be shot, but some think that a jump over the Merodal precipice is really an easier death. A good few have taken it, but we were, unfortunately, never able to get an opinion from them afterwards. There is the saw, too, which does not appear to be popular. We could hang you, no doubt, but it would involve the inconvenience of going down to the wood. However, a promise is a promise, and you seem to be an excellent fellow, so we will spare no pains to meet your wishes."

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"You said," I answered, "that I must die before midnight. I will choose, therefore, just one minute before that hour."

"Very good," said he. "Such clinging to life is rather childish, but your wishes shall be met."

"As to the method," I added, "I love a death which all the world can see. Put me on yonder pile of fagots and burn me alive, as saints and martyrs have been burned before me. That is no common end, but one which an Emperor might envy."

The idea seemed to amuse him very much. "Why not?" said he. "If Massena has sent you to spy upon us, he may guess what the fire upon the mountains means."

"Exactly," said I. "You have hit upon my very reason. He will guess, and all will know, that I have died a soldier's death."

"I see no objection whatever," said the brigand, with his abominable smile. "I will send some goat's flesh and wine into your hut. The sun is sinking, and it is nearly eight o'clock. In four hours be ready for your end."

It was a beautiful world to be leaving. I looked at the golden haze below, where the last rays of the sinking sun shone upon the blue waters of the winding Tagus and gleamed upon the white sails of the English transports. Very beautiful it was, and very sad to leave; but there are things more beautiful than that. The death that is died for the sake of others, honour, and duty, and loyalty, and love—these are the beauties far brighter than any which the eye can see. My breast was filled with admiration for my own most noble conduct, and with wonder whether any soul would ever come to know how I had placed myself in the heart of the beacon which saved the army of Clausel. I hoped so and I prayed so, for what a consolation it would be to my mother, what an example to the army, what a pride to my Hussars! When De Pombal came at last into my hut with the food and the wine, the first request I made him was that he would write an account of my death and send it to the French camp. He answered not a word, but I ate my supper with a better appetite from the thought that my glorious fate would not be altogether unknown.

I had been there about two hours when the door opened again, and the chief stood looking in. I was in darkness, but a brigand with a torch stood beside him, and I saw his eyes and his teeth gleaming as he peered at me.

"Ready?" he asked.

"It is not yet time."

"You stand out for the last minute?"

"A promise is a promise."

"Very good. Be it so. We have a little justice to do among ourselves, for one of my fellows has been misbehaving. We have a strict rule of our own which is no respecter of persons, as De Pombal here could tell you. Do you truss him and lay him on the fagots, De Pombal, and I will return to see him die."

De Pombal and the man with the torch entered, while I heard the steps of the chief passing away. De Pombal closed the door.

"Colonel Gerard," said he, "you must trust this man, for he is one of my party. It is neck or nothing. We may save you yet. But I take a great risk, and I want a definite promise. If we save you, will you guarantee that we have a friendly reception in the French camp and that all the past will be forgotten?"

"I do guarantee it."

"And I trust your honour. Now, quick, quick, there is not an instant to lose! If this monster returns we shall die horribly, all three."

I stared in amazement at what he did. Catching up a long rope he wound it round the body of my dead comrade, and he tied a cloth round his mouth so as to almost cover his face.

"Do you lie there!" he cried, and he laid me in the place of the dead body. "I have four of my men waiting, and they will place this upon the beacon." He opened the door and gave an order. Several of the brigands entered and bore out Duplessis. For myself I remained upon the floor, with my mind in a turmoil of hope and wonder.

Five minutes later De Pombal and his men were back.

"You are laid upon the beacon," said he; "I defy anyone in the world to say it is not you, and you are so gagged and bound that no one can expect you to speak or move. Now, it only remains to carry forth the body of Duplessis and to toss it over the Merodal precipice."

Two of them seized me by the head and two by the heels and carried me, stiff and inert, from the hut. As I came into the open air I could have cried out in my amazement. The moon had risen above the beacon, and there, clear outlined against its silver light, was the figure of the man stretched upon the top. The brigands were either in their camp or standing round the beacon, for none of them stopped or questioned our little

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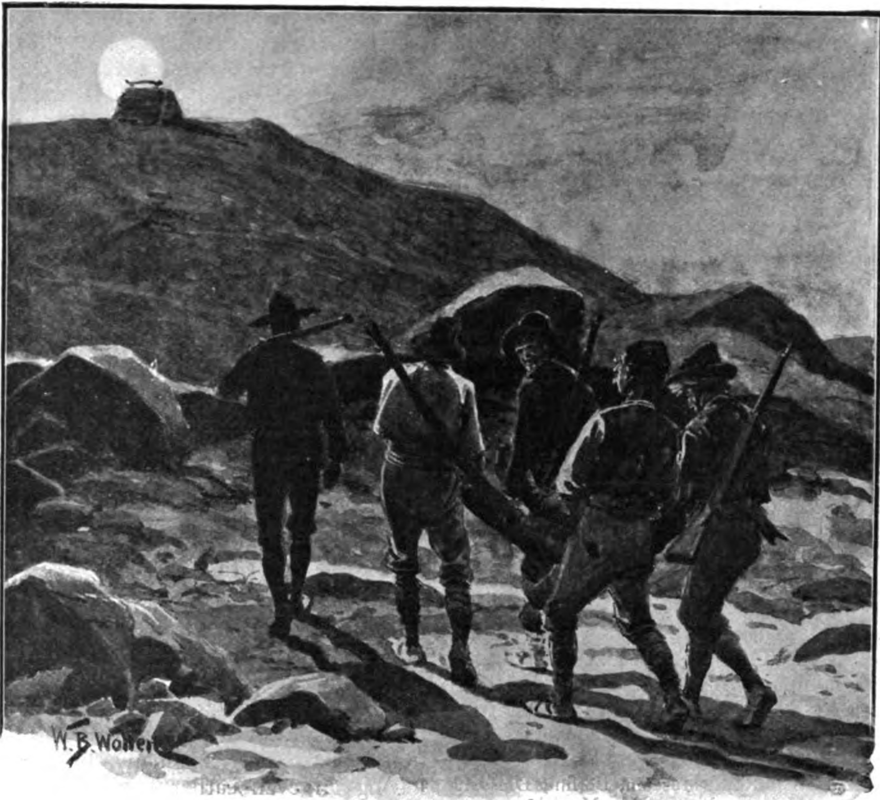

"THERE, CLEAR OUTLINED AGAINST THE SILVER LIGHT, WAS THE FIGURE OF THE MAN STRETCHED UPON THE TOP."

party. De Pombal led them in the direction of the precipice. At the brow we were out of sight, and there I was allowed to use my feet once more. De Pombal pointed to a narrow, winding track.

"This is the way down," said he, and then, suddenly, "Dios mio, what is that?"

A terrible cry had risen out of the woods beneath us. I saw that De Pombal was shivering like a frightened horse.

"It is that devil," he whispered. "He is treating another as he treated me. But on, on, for Heaven help us if he lays his hands upon us!"

One by one we crawled down the narrow goat track. At the bottom of the cliff we were back in the woods once more. Suddenly a yellow glare shone above us, and the black shadows of the tree-trunks started out in front. They had fired the beacon behind us. Even from where we stood we could see that impassive body amid the flames, and the black figures of the guerillas as they danced, howling like cannibals, round the pile. Ha! how I shook my fist at them, the dogs, and how I vowed that one day my Hussars and I would make the reckoning level!

De Pombal knew how the outposts were placed and all the paths which led through the forest. But to avoid these villains we had to plunge among the hills and walk for many a weary mile. And yet how gladly would I have walked those extra leagues if only for one sight which they brought to my eyes! It may have been two o'clock in the morning when we halted upon the bare shoulder of a hill over which our path curled. Looking back we saw the red glow of the embers of the beacon as if volcanic fires were bursting from the tall peak of Merodal. And then, as I gazed, I saw something else—something which caused me to shriek with joy and to fall upon the ground, rolling in my delight. For, far away upon the southern horizon, there winked and twinkled one great yellow light, throbbing and flaming, the light of no house, the light of no star, but the answering beacon of Mount d'Ossa, which told that the army of Clausel knew what Etienne Gerard had been sent to tell them.

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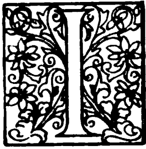
Gems of the World's Galleries.

The Most Precious Pictures According to Official Opinion.

By Frederick Dolman.



IN THE STRAND MAGAZINE about two years ago a number of representative English artists were called into conference on the question as to which was the greatest of the world's pictures. The opinions were most interesting, perhaps, because of the bias of the individual temperament, although in the aggregate they may be said to have represented the cultured judgment of the time. In the preparation of the present article I have appealed to the official view on a matter of similar interest—the most important works which the nations now possess for themselves in the great national collections, addressing my question to the curator or director of the following representative galleries:—

FRANCE ..	The Louvre, Paris.
GERMANY..	The Royal Museum, Berlin; Dresden Gallery; Pinakothek, Munich.
ITALY	Borghese Palace, Rome; Academy of Fine Arts, Venice; Uffizi Gallery and Pitti Palace, Florence.
BELGIUM ...	Antwerp.
HOLLAND..	Royal Picture Gallery, La Hague; Rijks Museum, Amsterdam.
AUSTRIA ..	The Belvidere, Vienna.
SPAIN	The Prado Museum, Madrid.
UNITED STATES	The Metropolitan Museum, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago.

The Louvre is the greatest of the European picture galleries, having 2,500 works by nearly all the leading masters. But the collection has been formed in rather haphazard fashion during three centuries, although before Napoleon had carried to Paris his rich spoils of war it contained fewer than 600 pictures. According to present-day taste the standard of excellence at the Louvre greatly varies, and a large proportion of the collection falls below that which has been established in such modern galleries as those of London and Berlin. Its director, M. A. Koemppen, had, therefore, not the supreme difficulty which might be supposed in answering my question. Whilst stating in his letter that "there are many pictures in the museum of the Louvre which, as its *chef d'œuvre*, might be reproduced in THE STRAND MAGAZINE," the director at once proceeds to mention as his own choice "La Gioconda," by Leonardo da Vinci. This picture, it may be remembered, was selected by Mr. Hacker, A.R.A., as an example of female beauty in art (*vide* "The Most Beautiful Women in Painting," STRAND MAGAZINE, December, 1900), and the interesting circumstances under which it was painted were then recalled. Francis I., the founder of the Louvre in 1541, purchased the portrait about fifty years after it was painted for 4,000 gold florins, but the director could give me no estimate of its present-day value, "the value in money of a work of art depending so much upon various circumstances."

The Prado Museum at Madrid ranks next to the Louvre in point of size, the collection numbering nearly as many pictures, and having an even earlier origin. Begun by Charles V., the collection was increased by Philip II. and Philip IV. The building it now occupies, however, is comparatively modern, having been built about 1785 as a museum of natural history and academy of sciences. Occupying a splendid site close to the Salon del Prado, it ranks, next to the Royal Palace from which the pictures were removed, as the chief architectural feature of the Spanish capital.

From the many fine specimens of the art of Titian, Raphael, Veronese, Tintoretto, Velasquez, Vandyck, Rubens, and Teniers which the Prado Gallery contains, the director, Señor José Villegar, wrote that preference should be given for my article to the "Meninas" of Velasquez, although he admitted his inability to place even an approximate price upon the picture. "Las Meninas" ("The Maids of Honour") was painted by the great Spanish artist at the Court of Philip IV. in 1656, when Velasquez was fifty-seven years of age and at the height of his renown. In the picture "the painter stands at his easel in one of the chambers of the palace. Though the King and Queen are not in sight, their figures being supposed to be placed beyond the canvas, we see them

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in the reflection of a mirror suspended on the farther wall. The little Princess, Margarita Maria, some four or five years old, occupies a prominent position in the foreground. She is attended by her maids of honour—one of whom kneels to hand the Princess a cup of water. Near to this group are shown two well-known dwarfs, Barbola and Pertusato, sporting with a huge mastiff. A flood of light streams in from an open door far down the room, where Don Joseph Nieto, the Queen's quartermaster, has just raised a curtain. Two other personages of the Court converse apart, barely distinguishable in the darkness of the shadows."

The King is said to have been delighted with the picture, and there is a tradition that when it was shown to him in its finished state he impulsively seized the brush and painted in, on the artist's figure, the cross of Santiago, which was the badge of knighthood in Spain. This honour was conferred upon Velasquez, but not, it is believed, till some years later, when he himself put the decoration into the picture.

The Rijks Museum at Amsterdam has no fewer than 1,700 pictures; but the Royal Picture Gallery at The Hague, with 600, is about the smallest of the leading European collections.

"The most important and celebrated picture," said the director of the Rijks Museum, B. W. F. van Riemdyk, without the slightest hesitation, "is 'The Night Watch,' by Rembrandt. A picture such as this is not to be valued; it is priceless. It never was sold and never shall be."

"The Night Watch" is about the most misleading title which ever got attached to a picture. In point of fact, Rembrandt's great masterpiece has no reference to the night and only a slight connection with a watch. The picture was thus named by French writers early in the eighteenth century, and Sir Joshua Reynolds gave currency to the error in England. At that time the picture was so "obscured by oil and varnish" as to make its real meaning a matter of considerable doubt. But in 1758 it was skilfully cleaned by an artist named Van Dyck, who discovered the shield containing the names of some of the persons represented. From this clue it was established that the subject of the work was "The Sortie of the Company of Franz Banning Cock," a portion of the Civic Guard of Amsterdam emerging from its barracks. Captain Banning Cock, with his lieutenant, is in the forefront of the picture, and other prominent figures are an ensign with the colours of the city of Amsterdam—orange, white, and blue—and a drummer with a dog at his heels, whilst behind them, crowding at the doors, are sergeants with the halberds and guards with arquebuses and pikes. Altogether there are twenty-eight figures in the picture, the predominant colour of which is given by the citron-yellow uniform, with a blue sash, of the captain, other rich and harmonious effects being obtained from the black velvet

"LAS MENINAS." BY VELASQUEZ.
The most valuable Picture in the Prado Gallery, Madrid.

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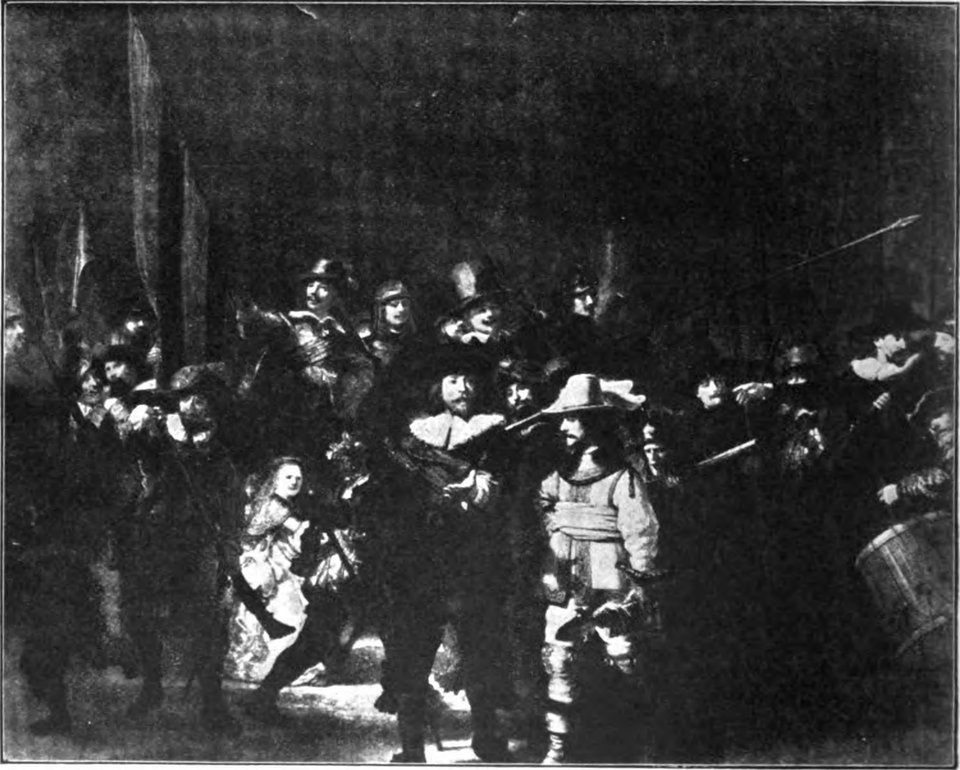
of the captain, the green uniform of the drummer, and the reds of the musketeers. The darkness of the background, which induced the blunder of which I have spoken, is believed to be entirely due to some accident or neglect in the care of the picture.

"The Sortie of the Banning Cock Company," it is recorded, gave great dissatisfaction to Captain Banning Cock, from whom Rembrandt received the commission, although when it was painted in 1642 the artist, at the age of thirty-five, was already famous and commanding large prices. So little was it to his liking, indeed, that the captain shortly afterwards had his portrait, with those of his company, painted again by another artist. Of this picture all trace has disappeared, whilst Rembrandt's work, more or less carefully preserved generation after generation under circumstances which can now be only conjectured, is to-day prized as the greatest of Amsterdam's many art treasures. It is probable that Captain Banning's discontent arose from the picture's want of fidelity in portraiture. The bad portrait has, perhaps, become the great picture, palpitating with human interest and truth, for, in the words of an English critic, in looking at "The Sortie of the Banning Cock Company" one "can almost hear the beating of the drum and the barking of the dog."



"THE NIGHT WATCH." BY REMBRANDT.
The most valuable Picture of the Rijks Gallery, Amsterdam.

The director of The Hague Gallery mentioned more than one work in replying to my question, but gave the first place to Paul Potter's "The Young Bull." This was one of the pictures carried off to the Louvre, and when there was regarded as the fourth most valuable picture in the great French collection. The Dutch animal-painter had only about ten years of achievement, dying at the age of twenty-eight, after having produced about 140 works. "The Young Bull," which measures 7ft. 10in. by 11ft. 4in., is his only life-size picture of the kind, and was produced in 1647, when he was about midway in his brief career. It is not known for whom the great canvas was painted, but there is a record of its sale in 1649 for 630 florins; when taken away by Napoleon the Dutch vainly offered to ransom it for 60,000

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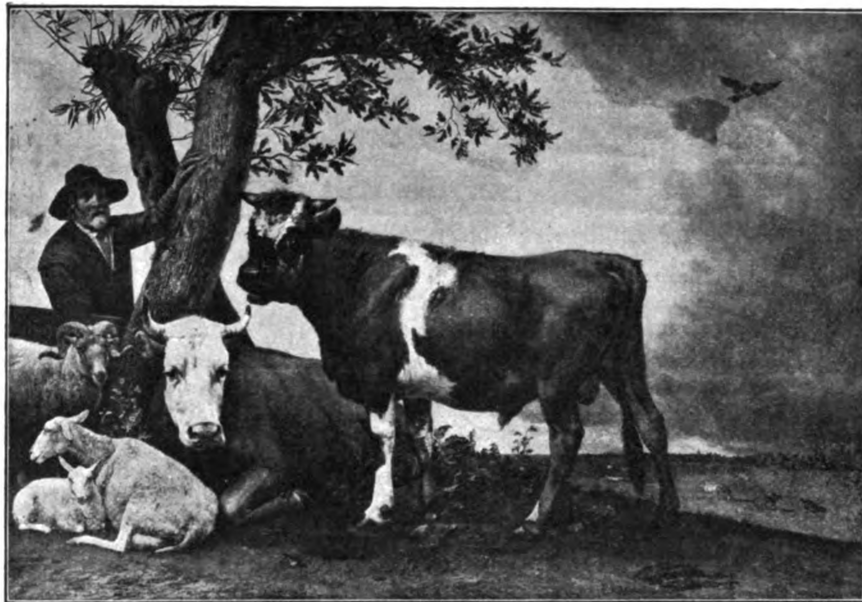

"THE YOUNG BULL." BY PAUL POTTER.
The most valuable Picture in The Hague Gallery.

florins. The bull in the picture has as his companions a cow, a ram, a sheep and lamb, and a shepherd, with a background somewhat monotonous in its distribution of light. The judgment of the official expert in this case certainly corresponds with popular taste, for most visitors to The Hague Gallery, whether native or foreign, first make their way to the room in which "The Young Bull" is exhibited.

The Belvidere Gallery at Vienna was once

THE ALTAR-PIECE OF ILDEFONSO. BY RUBENS.
The most valuable Picture in the Vienna Gallery.

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the residence of the renowned Prince Eugène. The palatial building is now the home of 1,700 pictures, including specimens of Rubens, Dürer, and the Italian masters, that give great distinction to the Austrian capital as an art centre. The director, Dr. Glück, gave me a list of seven as its most valuable masterpieces, but finally expressed his own belief in the supremacy of Rubens's "Ildefonso Altar." The picture thus called was painted for the church of the Order of St. Ildefonso at Brussels, whence at some time or other it was removed to Vienna. The work is in three parts. In the centre the Virgin is depicted presenting to the saint the chasuble of the Order, and on the left and right wings respectively are the Infanta Isabella with St. Clara and the Archduke Albert kneeling in the dress of the Order. This work, which was one of several produced by Rubens for the decoration of Brussels churches, is believed to date from about 1630, when the Flemish master was between fifty and sixty years of age.

THE ALTAR-PIECE OF ST. BAVON. BY HUBERT AND JOHN VAN EYCK.
The most valuable Picture in the Berlin Gallery.

Another altar-piece is considered by its director to be the most valuable possession of the gallery at Berlin. This is the joint work of Hubert and John Van Eyck, the two Flemish painters who flourished early in the fifteenth century. It was placed on the altar of St. Bavon, in Ghent, in 1432, with a coloured inscription on the framework setting forth that the picture was begun by Hubert Van Eyck and completed by his younger brother John. Having "The Worship of the Lamb" as the nominal subject, the painting, in a series of panels, really depicts the whole Christian story as it was regarded generally in the fifteenth century. Apart from its excellence, "The Worship of the Lamb" is noteworthy as the first picture executed wholly in oils. It is believed to have represented ten years' labour on the part of the two brothers, and in its inception was regarded by Hubert Van Eyck as the greatest effort of his life; in point of fact, it is the only work which can now be definitely traced to his brush, whereas the story of several of John Van Eyck's pictures has been handed down to the present generation.

The Berlin Gallery, which now numbers about 900 pictures, may be said to date from

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1821, when the collection of Mr. Solly, an Englishman, was purchased by the Prussian Government for what was then considered the very large sum of £110,000. This was followed by the building of a gallery to which, in 1829, was removed a selection of works from the Royal collections in Berlin and Potsdam. The galleries of Munich (1,450 pictures) and Dresden (2,400) are much larger than that of the capital, but they have not been filled with the same regard for a uniform standard of artistic value.

"THE MELON EATERS." BY MURILLO.
The most valuable Picture in the Munich Gallery.

The director of the Dresden Gallery, Dr. K. Woermann, fulfilled my confident expectation by at once nominating Raphael's "Madonna"—usually called the "Sistine Madonna"—for, as visitors to the gallery will remember, this work is given a room all to itself. The Dresden "Madonna" was chosen by Mr. G. F. Watts, R.A., as his example of the greatest achievement in art (STRAND MAGAZINE, August, 1900), and in the article where this opinion was quoted some particulars will be found concerning this great picture.

The letter with which Dr. Reber, the director of the Pinakothek, Munich, favoured me suggested that, on the whole, the most valuable and representative picture in the collection under his charge is Murillo's "The Melon Eaters." Although a famous example of the Spanish master, measuring 50in. by 42in., little is known concerning the history of this picture, and Murillo's biographers have failed to record the circumstances under which it was painted. It was originally in the Mannheim Gallery.

"The great triptych, 'The Descent from the Cross,' the chief work of Quentin

"THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS." BY QUENTIN MASSYS.
The most valuable Picture in the Antwerp Gallery.

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"FLORA." BY TITIAN.
The most valuable Picture in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

Massys," writes M. Pierre Koch, the curator of the Antwerp Museum of Fine Arts, "may perhaps be considered the most precious picture in our gallery—its value is inestimable."

Massys, whose works are comparatively little known in this country, was a Flemish painter, a native of Louvain, whose life was spent chiefly at Antwerp. Born in 1466, he painted the triptych for the chapel of the joiners' guild in Antwerp Cathedral about 1508. The joiners' guild, it is recorded, paid the artist 300 florins for the work, which amount was increased to 1,500 florins when the Antwerp magistrates purchased it for the town in 1580.

Of the Italian galleries the Uffizi and Pitti at Florence have undisputed pre-eminence. By some authorities, indeed, they are said to form together the finest collection in the world, this verdict being based upon the absence of actual inferiority and the small proportion of even mediocrity in the 1,900 works which they contain. Both collections are housed in palaces of mediæval splendour, and are under the direction of the same gentleman, Signor E. Nidalf. As the most valuable picture in the Uffizi he mentioned Titian's "Flora," and in the Pitti Raphael's "La Madonna della Seggiola."

Titian's world-renowned "Flora" is the picture of a lady whose identity has never been established, although by some writers she is supposed to have been Laura D'Este, the wife or mistress of Duke Alphonso of Ferrara. The title "Flora" may have a double meaning, as regards the lady's name and also the roses, jessamine, etc., which she is handing to her unseen lover. The work, which depicts the lady's head and shoulders life-size, was executed by Titian about 1523. It was taken out of the Duke of Ferrara's "Gardaroba" and placed in the Uffizi Gallery as long ago as 1793. Unfortunately, it has suffered a good deal from the hands of time, although its colouring is still beautiful.

Raphael's "Madonna della

"THE MADONNA IN A CHAIR." BY RAPHAEL.
The most valuable Picture in the Pitti Gallery, Florence.

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Seggiola," or "Madonna in a Chair," has likewise suffered, being about the same age, although its worst injuries have probably been inflicted in the vain effort to restore its original beauty. The picture is believed to have been painted either for the Pope, Leo X., or for some member of the great Medici family, and it was exhibited as far back as 1589 in the Palace of the Uffizi.

The picture gallery at the Borghese Palace in Rome is still in private ownership; but it is destined eventually to become the property of the Italian nation, and in the meantime it is like a public institution in the facilities which are given for its public use, whilst it is incomparably superior to the many private collections still to be found in the Eternal City. "The picture in this gallery," writes Signor Gio. Piancastelli, the director, "I advise you to reproduce in your article is 'The Sacred and Profane Love,' by Tiziano Vecelli, which is well known *urbi et orbi*, even too much known to be reproduced again, but the one that characterizes the gallery better than any other. It is very difficult to value it. I can tell you only that there have been offers up to £200,000."

As was the case with Raphael's Dresden "Madonna," Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love" figured in THE STRAND's article on "The World's Greatest Pictures." It was the choice of Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., with whom I discussed the circumstances under which it was painted (STRAND MAGAZINE, August, 1900.)

The Accademia di Belle Arti at Venice, now located in one of the old guild houses, is the stronghold, so to speak, of Titian's work. Although its 650 pictures include many great examples of other masters, I felt almost certain that the director, Signor N. Barozzi, would mention either a Titian or a Tintoretto in reply to my question. His answer was in favour of "The Assumption of the Virgin," by the former master, the work which in 1518 placed Titian at the head of the then flourishing school of Venetian artists. It was painted for the high altar of the church of Santa Maria di Friari in Venice, and occupied him for two years. When the picture was raised to the altar the church was thronged with a crowd of people who were lost in admiration of the beauty of its colouring. Although in excellent preservation, the picture is said to be much less beautiful in its present position at the Academy than when it was still adorning the church.

"THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN." BY TITIAN.
The most valuable Picture in the Academy, Venice.

What have we in our National Gallery to be placed in the same category with these gems of the greatest price in the national galleries of France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Holland, and Spain? The answer is hardly a matter of opinion, I suppose, for everybody remembers the sensational vote of £70,000

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in Parliament for the purchase of Raphael's "Ansidei Madonna" from the Duke of Marlborough—the highest price ever paid in any country for a single picture. This work, which was bought by the nation in 1884, was acquired by the first Duke in the course of one of his campaigns for a comparatively small sum. It was painted by Raphael on a commission from the Ansidei family of Perugia, who presented it to the church of S. Fiorenzo in that city for the decoration of the altar. There is little doubt but that the work was produced about 1506 or 1507, when Raphael was only twenty-three and in his second or "Florentine" manner, as it is called, although for a long time the date in the corner of the picture on the border of the Virgin's robe was read as MDV., instead of MDVI. or MDVII.

In recent years the American millionaire has loomed largely in European art sales, and some of the most costly pictures have crossed the Atlantic. But these are not yet to be found in the public galleries of the United States. The most costly picture of which the Metropolitan Museum, New York, can boast is J. L. E. Meissonier's "1807," for which 66,000dols. was paid a few years ago. As Mr. G. H. Store, the director, in giving me this information, points out, however, the picture has greatly appreciated in value, and it is estimated by experts that if "1807" were put up to auction in Paris to-day it would fetch at least 200,000dols. — or £40,000. The gallery of which this is the *chef d'œuvre* was built in 1880 in the midst of the great Central Park, at a cost of 500,000dols.

"THE JUBILEE." BY ADRIAEN VAN OSTADE.
The most valuable Picture in the Art Institute, Chicago.

Chicago, the constant rival of New York, built its Art Institute about the same time, giving the building a fine site on the lake front. "I rather think," replied Mr. W. M. R. French, the director, to my question, "the most costly picture in our collection is 'The Jubilee,' by Adriaen van Ostade, which we bought of the Princess Demidoff, of Florence, for 40,500dols." "The Jubilee," a canvas which is 18in. by 16in., is signed and dated 1675. It is a highly characteristic and important example of the Flemish master, about 400 of whose oil paintings are extant, but it is not a picture to which any particular story is attached, and nothing is known of its antecedents, I believe, before it came into the possession of the Russo-Italian family of the Demidoffs at Florence.

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The Sorceress of the Strand.

By L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace.

II.—THE BLOOD-RED CROSS.

IN the month of November in the year 1899 I found myself a guest in the house of one of my oldest friends — George Rowland. His beautiful place in Yorkshire was an ideal holiday resort. It went by the name of Rowland's Folly, and had been built on the site of a former dwelling in the reign of the first George. The house was now replete with every modern luxury. It, however, very nearly cost its first owner, if not the whole of his fortune, yet the most precious heirloom of the family. This was a pearl necklace of almost fabulous value. It had been secured as booty by a certain Geoffrey Rowland at the time of the Battle of Agincourt, had originally been the property of one of the Dukes of Genoa, and had even for a short time been in the keeping of the Pope. From the moment that Geoffrey Rowland took possession of the necklace there had been several attempts made to deprive him of it. Sword, fire, water, poison, had all been used, but ineffectually. The necklace with its eighty pearls, smooth, symmetrical, pear-shaped, of a translucent white colour and with a subdued iridescent sheen, was still in the possession of the family, and was likely to remain there, as George Rowland told me, until the end of time. Each bride wore the necklace on her wedding-day, after which it was put into the strong-room and, as a rule, never seen again until the next bridal occasion. The pearls were roughly estimated as worth from two to three thousand pounds each, but the historical value of the necklace put the price almost beyond the dreams of avarice.

It was reported that in the autumn of that same year an American millionaire had offered to buy it from the family at their own price, but as no terms would be listened to the negotiations fell through.

George Rowland belonged to the oldest and proudest family in the West Riding, and no man looked a better gentleman or more fit to uphold ancient dignities than he. He was proud to boast that from the earliest days no stain of dishonour had touched his house, that the women of the family were as good as the men, their blood pure, their morals irreproachable, their ideas lofty.

I went to Rowland's Folly in November, and found a pleasant, hospitable, and cheerful hostess in Lady Kennedy, Rowland's only sister. Antonia Ripley was, however, the centre of all interest. Rowland was engaged to Antonia, and the history was romantic. Lady Kennedy told me all about it.

"LADY KENNEDY TOLD ME ALL ABOUT IT."

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"She is a penniless girl without family," remarked the good woman, somewhat snappishly. "I can't imagine what George was thinking of."

"How did your brother meet her?" I asked.

"We were both in Italy last autumn; we were staying in Naples, at the Vesuve. An English lady was staying there of the name of Studley. She died while we were at the hotel. She had under her charge a young girl, the same Antonia who is now engaged to my brother. Before her death she begged of us to befriend her, saying that the child was without money and without friends. All Mrs. Studley's money died with her. We promised, not being able to do otherwise. George fell in love almost at first sight. Little Antonia was provided for by becoming engaged to my brother. I have nothing to say against the girl, but I dislike this sort of match very much. Besides, she is more foreign than English."

"Cannot Miss Ripley tell you anything about her history?"

"Nothing, except that Mrs. Studley adopted her when she was a tiny child. She says, also, that she has a dim recollection of a large building crowded with people, and a man who stretched out his arms to her and was taken forcibly away. That is all. She is quite a nice child, and amiable, with touching ways and a pathetic face; but no one knows what her ancestry was. Ah, there you are, Antonia! What is the matter now?"

The girl tripped across the room. She was like a young fawn; of a smooth, olive complexion—dark of eye and mysteriously beautiful, with the graceful step which is seldom granted to an English girl.

"My lace dress has come," she said. "Markham is unpacking it—but the bodice is made with a low neck."

Lady Kennedy frowned.

"You are too absurd, Antonia," she said. "Why won't you dress like other girls? I assure you that peculiarity of yours of always wearing your dress high in the evening annoys George."

"Does it?" she answered, and she stepped back and put her hand to her neck just below the throat—a constant habit of hers, as I afterwards had occasion to observe.

"It disturbs him very much," said Lady Kennedy. "He spoke to me about it only yesterday. Please understand, Antonia, that at the ball you cannot possibly wear a dress high to your throat. It cannot be permitted."

"I shall be properly dressed on the night of the ball," replied the girl.

Her face grew crimson, then deadly pale.

"It only wants a fortnight to that time, but I shall be ready."

There was a solemnity about her words. She turned and left the room.

"Antonia is a very trying character," said Lady Kennedy. "Why won't she act like other girls? She makes such a fuss about wearing a proper evening dress that she tries my patience—but she is all crotchets."

"A sweet little girl for all that," was my answer.

"Yes; men like her."

Soon afterwards, as I was strolling on the terrace, I met Miss Ripley. She was sitting in a low chair. I noticed how small, and slim, and young she looked, and how pathetic was the expression of her little face. When she saw me she seemed to hesitate; then she came to my side.

"May I walk with you, Mr. Druce?" she asked.

"I am quite at your service," I answered. "Where shall we go?"

"It doesn't matter. I want to know if you will help me."

"Certainly, if I can, Miss Ripley."

"It is most important. I want to go to London."

"Surely that is not very difficult?"

"They won't allow me to go alone, and they are both very busy. I have just sent a telegram to a friend. I want to see her. I know she will receive me. I want to go to-morrow. May I venture to ask that you should be my escort?"

"My dear Miss Ripley, certainly," I said. "I will help you with pleasure."

"It must be done," she said, in a low voice. "I have put it off too long. When I marry him he shall not be disappointed."

"I do not understand you," I said, "but I will go with you with the greatest willingness."

She smiled; and the next day, much to my own amazement, I found myself travelling first-class up to London, with little Miss Ripley as my companion. Neither Rowland nor his sister had approved; but Antonia had her own way, and the fact that I would escort her cleared off some difficulties.

During our journey she bent towards me and said, in a low tone:—

"Have you ever heard of that most wonderful, that great woman, Madame Sara?"

I looked at her intently.

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"'IT MUST BE DONE,' SHE SAID."

"I have certainly heard of Madame Sara," I said, with emphasis, "but I sincerely trust that you have nothing to do with her."

"I have known her almost all my life," said the girl. "Mrs. Studley knew her also. I love her very much. I trust her. I am going to see her now."

"What do you mean?"

"It was to her I wired yesterday. She will receive me; she will help me. I am returning to the Folly to-night. Will you add to your kindness by escorting me home?"

"Certainly."

At Euston I put my charge into a hansom, arranging to meet her on the departure platform at twenty minutes to six that evening, and then taking another hansom drove as fast as I could to Vandeleur's address. During the latter part of my journey to town a sudden, almost unaccountable, desire to consult Vandeleur had taken possession of me. I was lucky enough to find this busiest of men at home and at leisure. He gave an exclamation of delight when my name was announced, and then came towards me with outstretched hand.

"I was just about to wire to you, Druce," he said. "From where have you sprung?"

"From no less a place than Rowland's Folly," was my answer.

"More and more amazing. Then you have met Miss Ripley, George Rowland's *fiancée?*"

"You have heard of the engagement, Vandeleur?"

"Who has not? What sort is the young lady?"

"I can tell you all you want to know, for I have travelled up to town with her."

"Ah!"

He was silent for a minute, evidently thinking hard; then drawing a chair near mine he seated himself.

"How long have you been at Rowland's Folly?" he asked.

"Nearly a week. I am to remain until after the wedding. I consider Rowland a lucky man. He is marrying a sweet little girl."

"You think so? By the way, have you ever noticed any peculiarity about her?"

"Only that she is singularly amiable and attractive."

"But any habit—pray think carefully before you answer me."

"Really, Vandeleur, your questions surprise me. Little Miss Ripley is a person with ideas and is not ashamed to stick to her principles. You know, of course, that in a house like Rowland's Folly it is the custom for the ladies to come to dinner in full dress. Now, Miss Ripley won't accommodate herself to this fashion, but *will* wear her dress high to the throat, however gay and festive the occasion."

"Ah! there doesn't seem to be much in that, does there?"

"I don't quite agree with you. Pressure has been brought to bear on the girl to make her conform to the usual regulations, and Lady Kennedy, a woman old enough to be her mother, is quite disagreeable on the point."

"But the girl sticks to her determination?"

"Absolutely, although she promises to yield and to wear the conventional dress at the ball given in her honour a week before the wedding."

Vandeleur was silent for nearly a minute; then dropping his voice he said, slowly:—

"Did Miss Ripley ever mention in your

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presence the name of our mutual foe—Madame Sara?"

"How strange that you should ask! On our journey to town to-day she told me that she knew the woman—she has known her for the greater part of her life—poor child, she even loves her. Vandeleur, that young girl is with Madame Sara now."

"Don't be alarmed, Druce; there is no immediate danger; but I may as well tell you that through my secret agents I have made discoveries which show that Madame has another iron in the fire, that once again she is preparing to convulse Society, and that little Miss Ripley is the victim."

"SHE IS PREPARING TO CONVULSE SOCIETY."

"You must be mistaken."

"So sure am I, that I want your help. You are returning to Rowland's Folly?"

"To-night."

"And Miss Ripley?"

"She goes with me. We meet at Euston for the six o'clock train."

"So far, good. By the way, has Rowland spoken to you lately about the pearl necklace?"

"No; why do you ask?"

"Because I understand that it was his intention to have the pearls slightly altered and reset in order to fit Miss Ripley's slender throat; also to have a diamond clasp affixed in place of the somewhat insecure one at present attached to the string of pearls. Messrs. Theodore and Mark, of Bond Street, were to undertake the commission. All was in preparation, and a messenger, accompanied by two detectives, was to go to Rowland's Folly to fetch the treasure, when the whole thing was countermanded, Rowland having changed his mind and having decided that the strong-room at the Folly was the best place in which to keep the necklace."

"He has not mentioned the subject to me," I said. "How do you know?"

"I have my emissaries. One thing is certain—little Miss Ripley is to wear the pearls on her wedding-day—and the Italian family, distant relatives of the present Duke of Genoa, to whom the pearls belonged, and from whom they were stolen shortly before the Battle of Agincourt, are again taking active steps to secure them. You have heard the story of the American millionaire? Well, that was a blind—the necklace was in reality to be delivered into the hands of the old family as soon as he had purchased it. Now, Druce, this is the state of things: Madame Sara is an adventuress, and the cleverest woman in the world—Miss Ripley is very young and ignorant. Miss Ripley is to wear the pearls on her wedding-day—and Madame wants them. You can infer the rest."

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

"Go back and watch. If you see anything to arouse suspicion, wire to me."

"What about telling Rowland?"

"I would rather not consult him. I want to protect Miss Ripley, and at the same time to get Madame into my power. She managed to elude us last time, but she shall not this. My idea is to inveigle her to her ruin. Why, Druce, the woman is being more trusted and run after and admired day by day. She appeals to the greatest foibles of

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the world. She knows some valuable secrets, and is an adept in the art of restoring beauty and to a certain extent conquering the ravages of time. She is at present aided by an Arab, one of the most dangerous men I have ever seen, with the subtlety of a serpent, and legerdemain in every one of his ten fingers. It is not an easy thing to entrap her."

"And yet you mean to do it?"

"Some day—some day. Perhaps now."

His eyes were bright. I had seldom seen him look more excited.

After a short time I left him. Miss Ripley met me at Euston. She was silent and unresponsive and looked depressed. Once I saw her put her hand to her neck.

"Are you in pain?" I asked.

"You might be a doctor, Mr. Druce, from your question."

"But answer me," I said.

She was silent for a minute; then she said, slowly:—

"You are good, and I think I ought to tell you. But will you regard it as a secret? You wonder, perhaps, how it is that I don't wear a low dress in the evening. I will tell you why. On my neck, just below the throat, there grew a wart or mole—large, brown, and ugly. The Italian doctors would not remove it on account of the position. It lies just over what they said was an *aberrant* artery, and the removal might cause very dangerous hæmorrhage. One day Madame saw it; she said the doctors were wrong, and that she could easily take it away and leave no mark behind. I hesitated for a long time, but yesterday, when Lady Kennedy spoke to me as she did, I made up my mind. I wired to Madame and went to her to-day. She gave me chloroform and removed the mole. My neck is bandaged up and it smarts a little. I am not to remove the bandage until she sees me again. She is very pleased with the result, and says that my neck will now be beautiful like other women's, and that I can on the night of the ball wear the lovely Brussels lace dress that Lady Kennedy has given me. That is my secret. Will you respect it?"

I promised, and soon afterwards we reached the end of our journey.

A few days went by. One morning at breakfast I noticed that the little signora only played with her food. An open letter lay by her plate. Rowland, by whose side she always sat, turned to her.

"What is the matter, Antonia?" he said. "Have you had an unpleasant letter?"

"It is from——"

"From whom, dear?"

"Madame Sara."

"What did I hear you say?" cried Lady Kennedy.

"I have had a letter from Madame Sara, Lady Kennedy."

"That shocking woman in the Strand—that adventuress? My dear, is it possible that you know her? Her name is in the mouth of everyone. She is quite notorious."

Instantly the room became full of voices, some talking loudly, some gently, but all praising Madame Sara. Even the men took her part; as to the women, they were unanimous about her charms and her genius.

In the midst of the commotion little Antonia burst into a flood of tears and left the room. Rowland followed her. What next occurred I cannot tell, but in the course of the morning I met Lady Kennedy.

"Well," she said, "that child has won, as I knew she would. Madame Sara wishes to come here, and George says that Antonia's friend is to be invited. I shall be glad when the marriage is over and I can get out of this. It is really detestable that in the last days of my reign I should have to give that woman the *entrée* to the house."

She left me, and I wandered into the entrance hall. There I saw Rowland. He had a telegraph form in his hands, on which some words were written.

"Ah, Druce!" he said. "I am just sending a telegram to the station. What! do you want to send one too?"

For I had seated myself by the table which held the telegraph forms.

"If you don't think I am taking too great a liberty, Rowland," I said, suddenly, "I should like to ask a friend of mine here for a day or two."

"Twenty friends, if you like, my dear Druce. What a man you are to apologize about such a trifle! Who is the special friend?"

"No less a person than Eric Vandeleur, the police-surgeon for Westminster."

"What! Vandeleur—the gayest, jolliest man I have ever met! Would he care to come?"

Rowland's eyes were sparkling with excitement.

"I think so; more especially if you will give me leave to say that you would welcome him."

"Tell him he shall have a thousand welcomes, the best room in the house, the

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best horse. Get him to come by all means, Druce."

Our two telegrams were sent off. In the course of the morning replies in the affirmative came to each.

That evening Madame Sara arrived. She came by the last train. The brougham was sent to meet her. She entered the house shortly before midnight. I was standing in the hall when she arrived, and I felt a momentary sense of pleasure when I saw her start as her eyes met mine. But she was not a woman to be caught off her guard. She approached me at once with outstretched hand and an eager voice.

"This is charming, Mr. Druce," she said. "I do not think anything pleases me more." Then she added, turning to Rowland, "Mr. Dixon Druce is a very old friend of mine."

Rowland gave me a bewildered glance. Madame turned and began to talk to her hostess. Antonia was standing near one of the open drawing-rooms. She had on a soft dress of pale green silk. I had seldom seen a more graceful little creature. But the expression of her face disturbed me. It wore now the fascinated look of a bird when a snake attracts it. Could Madame Sara be the snake? Was Antonia afraid of this woman?

The next day Lady Kennedy came to me with a confidence.

"I am glad your police friend is coming," she said. "It will be safer."

"Vandeleur arrives at twelve o'clock," was my answer.

"Well, I am pleased. I like that woman less and less. I was amazed when she dared to call you her friend."

"Oh, we have met before on business," I answered, guardedly.

"You won't tell me anything further, Mr. Druce?"

"You must excuse me, Lady Kennedy."

"Her assurance is unbounded," continued the good lady. "She has brought a maid or nurse with her—a most extraordinary-looking woman. That, perhaps, is allowable; but she has also brought her black servant, an Arabian, who goes by the name of Achmed. I must say he is a picturesque creature with his quaint Oriental dress. He was all in flaming yellow this morning, and the embroidery on his jacket was worth a small fortune. But it is the daring of the woman that annoys me. She goes on as though she were somebody."

"She is a very emphatic somebody," I could not help replying. "London Society is at her feet."

"I only hope that Antonia will take her remedies and let her go. The woman has no welcome from me," said the indignant mistress of Rowland's Folly.

I did not see anything of Antonia that morning, and at the appointed time I went down to the station to meet Vandeleur. He arrived in high spirits, did not ask a question with regard to Antonia, received the information that Madame Sara was in the house with stolid silence, and seemed intent on the pleasures of the moment.

"Rowland's Folly!" he said, looking round him as we approached one of the finest houses in the whole of Yorkshire. "A folly, truly, and yet a pleasant one, Druce, eh? I fancy," he added, with a slight smile, "that I am going to have a good time here."

"I hope you will disentangle a most tangled skein," was my reply.

He shrugged his shoulders. Suddenly his manner altered.

"Who is that woman?" he said, with a strain of anxiety quite apparent in his voice.

"Who?" I asked.

"That woman on the terrace in nurse's dress."

"I don't know. She has been brought here by Madame Sara—a sort of maid and nurse as well. I suppose poor little Antonia will be put under her charge."

"Don't let her see me, Druce, that's all. Ah, here is our host."

Vandeleur quickened his movements, and the next instant was shaking hands with Rowland.

The rest of the day passed without adventure. I did not see Antonia. She did not even appear at dinner. Rowland, however, assured me that she was taking necessary rest and would be all right on the morrow. He seemed inclined to be gracious to Madame Sara, and was annoyed at his sister's manner to their guest.

Soon after dinner, as I was standing in one of the smoking-rooms, I felt a light hand on my arm, and, turning, encountered the splendid pose and audacious, bright, defiant glance of Madame herself.

"Mr. Druce," she said, "just one moment. It is quite right that you and I should be plain with each other. I know the reason why you are here. You have come for the express purpose of spying upon me and spoiling what you consider my game. But understand, Mr. Druce, that there is danger to yourself when you interfere with the

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schemes of one like me. Forewarned is forearmed."

Someone came into the room and Madame left it.

The ball was but a week off, and preparations for the great event were taking place. Attached to the house at the left was a great room built for this purpose.

Rowland and I were walking down this room on a special morning; he was commenting on its architectural merits and telling me what band he intended to have in the musicians' gallery, when Antonia glided into the room.

"How pale you are, little Tonia!" he said.

This was his favourite name for her. He put his hand under her chin, raised her sweet, blushing face, and looked into her eyes.

"Ah, you want my answer. What a persistent little puss it is! You shall have your way, Tonia—yes, certainly. For you I will grant what has never been granted before. All the same, what will my lady say?"

"FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"But you will let me wear them whether she is angry or not?" persisted Antonia.

"Yes, child, I have said it."

She took his hand and raised it to her lips, then, with a curtsy, tripped out of the room.

"A rare, bright little bird," he said, turning to me. "Do you know, I feel that I have done an extraordinarily good thing for myself in securing little Antonia. No troublesome mamma-in-law—no brothers and sisters, not my own and yet emphatically mine to consider—just the child herself. I am very happy and a very lucky fellow. I am glad my little girl has no past history. She is just her dear little, dainty self, no more and no less."

"What did she want with you now?" I asked.

"Little witch," he said, with a laugh. "The pearls—*the* pearls. She insists on wearing the great necklace on the night of the ball. Dear little girl. I can fancy how the baubles will gleam and shine on her fair throat."

I made no answer, but I was certain that little Antonia's request did not emanate from herself. I thought that I would search for Vandeleur and tell him of the circumstance, but the next remark of Rowland's nipped my project in the bud.

"By the way, your friend has promised to be back for dinner. He left here early this morning."

"Vandeleur?" I cried.

"Yes, he has gone to town. What a first-rate fellow he is!"

"He tells a good story," I answered.

"Capital. Who would suspect him of being the greatest criminal expert of the day? But, thank goodness, we have no need of his services at Rowland's Folly."

Late in the evening Vandeleur returned. He entered the house just before dinner. I

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observed by the brightness of his eyes and the intense gravity of his manner that he was satisfied with himself. This in his case was always a good sign. At dinner he was his brightest self, courteous to everyone, and to Madame Sara in particular.

Late that night, as I was preparing to go to bed, he entered my room without knocking.

"Well, Druce," he said, "it is all right."

"All right!" I cried; "what do you mean?"

"You will soon know. The moment I saw that woman I had my suspicions. I was in town to-day making some very interesting inquiries. I am primed now on every point. Expect a *dénouement* of a startling character very soon, but be sure of one thing—however black appearances may be the little bride is safe, and so are the pearls."

He left me without waiting for my reply.

The next day passed, and the next. I seemed to live on tenter-hooks. Little Antonia was gay and bright like a bird. Madame's invitation had been extended by Lady Kennedy at Rowland's command to the day after the ball—little Antonia skipped when she heard it.

"I love her," said the girl.

More and more guests arrived—the days flew on wings—the evenings were lively. Madame was a power in herself. Vandeleur was another. These two, sworn foes at heart, aided and abetted each other to make things go brilliantly for the rest of the guests. Rowland was in the highest spirits.

At last the evening before the ball came and went. Vandeleur's *grand coup* had not come off. I retired to bed as usual. The night was a stormy one—rain rattled against the window-panes, the wind sighed and shuddered. I had just put out my candle and was about to seek forgetfulness in sleep when once again in his unceremonious fashion Vandeleur burst into my room.

"I want you at once, Druce, in the bedroom of Madame Sara's servant. Get into your clothes as fast as you possibly can and join me there."

He left the room as abruptly as he had entered it. I hastily dressed, and with stealthy steps, in the dead of night, to the accompaniment of the ever-increasing tempest, sought the room in question.

I found it brightly lighted; Vandeleur pacing the floor as though he himself were the very spirit of the storm; and, most astonishing sight of all, the nurse whom Madame Sara had brought to Rowland's Folly, and whose name I had never happened to hear, gagged and bound in a chair drawn into the centre of the room.

"So I think that is all, nurse," said Vandeleur, as I entered. "Pray take a chair, Druce. We quite understand each other, don't we, nurse, and the facts are wonderfully simple. Your name as entered in the archives of crime at Westminster is not as you have given out, Mary Jessop, but Rebecca Curt. You escaped from Portland prison on the night of November 30th, just a year ago. You could not have managed your escape but for the connivance of the lady in whose service you are now. Your crime was forgery, with a strong and very daring attempt at poisoning. Your victim was a harmless invalid lady. Your knowledge of crime, therefore, is what may be called extensive. There are yet eleven years of your sentence to run. You have doubtless served Madame Sara well—but perhaps you can serve me better. You know the consequence if you refuse, for I explained that to you frankly and clearly before this gentleman came into the room. Druce, will you oblige me—will you lock the door while I remove the gag from the prisoner's mouth?"

I hurried to obey. The woman breathed more freely when the gag was removed. Her face was a swarthy red all over. Her crooked eyes favoured us with many shifty glances.

"Now, then, have the goodness to begin, Rebecca Curt," said Vandeleur. "Tell us everything you can."

She swallowed hard, and said:—

"You have forced me——"

"We won't mind that part," interrupted Vandeleur. "The story, please, Mrs. Curt."

If looks could kill, Rebecca Curt would have killed Vandeleur then. He gave her in return a gentle, bland glance, and she started on her narrative.

"Madame knows a secret about Antonia Ripley."

"Of what nature?"

"It concerns her parentage."

"And that is——?"

The woman hesitated and writhed.

"The names of her parents, please," said Vandeleur, in a voice cold as ice and hard as iron.

"Her father was Italian by birth."

"His name?"

"Count Gioletti. He was unhappily

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"WE QUITE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, DON'T WE, NURSE?"

married, and stabbed his English wife in an access of jealousy when Antonia was three years old. He was executed for the crime on the 20th of June, 18—. The child was adopted and taken out of the country by an English lady who was present in court—her name was Mrs. Studley. Madame Sara was also present. She was much interested in the trial, and had an interview afterwards with Mrs. Studley. It was arranged that Antonia should be called by the surname of Ripley—the name of an old relative of Mrs. Studley's—and that her real name and history were never to be told to her."

"I understand," said Vandeleur, gently. "This is of deep interest, is it not, Druce?"

I nodded, too much absorbed in watching the face of the woman to have time for words.

"But now," continued Vandeleur, "there are reasons why Madame should change her mind with regard to keeping the matter a close secret—is that not so, Mrs. Curt?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Curt.

"You will have the kindness to continue."

"Madame has an object—she blackmails the signora. She wants to get the signora completely into her power."

"Indeed! Is she succeeding?"

"Yes."

"How has she managed? Be very careful what you say, please."

"The mode is subtle—the young lady had a disfiguring mole or wart on her neck, just below the throat. Madame removed the mole."

"Quite a simple process, I doubt not," said Vandeleur, in a careless tone.

"Yes, it was done easily—I was present. The young lady was conducted into a chamber with a red light."

Vandeleur's extraordinary eyes suddenly leapt into fire. He took a chair and drew it so close to Mrs. Curt's that his face was within a foot or two of hers.

"Now, you will be very careful what you say," he remarked. "You know the consequence to yourself unless this narrative is absolutely reliable."

She began to tremble, but continued:—

"I was present at the operation. Not a single ray of ordinary light was allowed to penetrate. The patient was put under chloroform. The mole was removed. Afterwards Madame wrote something on her neck. The words were very small and neatly done—they formed a cross on the

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young lady's neck. Afterwards I heard what they were."

"Repeat them."

"I can't. You will know in the moment of victory."

"I choose to know now. A detective from my division at Westminster comes here early to-morrow morning—he brings handcuffs—and——"

"MADAME WROTE SOMETHING ON HER NECK."

"I will tell you," interrupted the woman. "The words were these:—

"'I AM THE DAUGHTER OF PAOLO GIOLETTI, WHO WAS EXECUTED FOR THE MURDER OF MY MOTHER, JUNE 20TH, 18—.'"

"How were the words written?"

"With nitrate of silver."

"Fiend!" muttered Vandeleur.

He jumped up and began to pace the room. I had never seen his face so black with ungovernable rage.

"You know what this means?" he said at last to me. "Nitrate of silver eats into the flesh and is permanent. Once exposed to the light the case is hopeless, and the helpless child becomes her own executioner."

The nurse looked up restlessly.

"The operation was performed in a room with a red light," she said, "and up to the present the words have not been seen. Unless the young lady exposes her neck to the blue rays of ordinary light they never will be. In order to give her a chance to keep her deadly secret Madame has had a large carbuncle of the deepest red cut and prepared. It is in the shape of a cross, and is suspended to a fine gold, almost invisible, thread. This the signora is to wear when in full evening dress. It will keep in its place, for the back of the cross will be dusted with gum."

"But it cannot be Madame's aim to hide the fateful words," said Vandeleur. "You are concealing something, nurse."

Her face grew an ugly red. After a pause the following words came out with great reluctance:—

"The young lady wears the carbuncle as a reward."

"Ah," said Vandeleur, "now we are beginning to see daylight. As a reward for what?"

"Madame wants something which the signora can give her. It is a case of exchange; the carbuncle which hides the fatal secret is given in exchange for that which the signora can transfer to Madame."

"I understand at last," said Vandeleur. "Really, Druce, I feel myself privileged to say that of all the malevolent——" he broke off abruptly. "Never mind," he said, "we are keeping nurse. Nurse, you have answered all my questions with praiseworthy exactitude, but before you return to your well-earned slumbers I have one more piece of information to seek from you. Was it entirely by Miss Ripley's desire, or was it in any respect owing to Madame Sara's instigations, that the young lady is permitted to wear the pearl necklace on the night of the dance? You have, of course, nurse, heard of the pearl necklace?"

Rebecca Curt's face showed that she undoubtedly had.

"I see you are acquainted with that most interesting story. Now, answer my question. The request to wear the necklace to-morrow night was suggested by Madame, was it not?"

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"Ah, yes—yes!" cried the woman, carried out of herself by sudden excitement. "It was to that point all else tended—all, all!"

"Thank you, that will do. You understand that from this day you are absolutely in my service. As long as you serve me faithfully you are safe."

"I will do my best, sir," she replied, in a modest tone, her eyes seeking the ground.

The moment we were alone Vandeleur turned to me.

"Things are simplifying themselves," he said.

"I fail to understand," was my answer. "I should say that complications, and alarming ones, abound."

"Nevertheless, I see my way clear. Druce, it is not good for you to be so long out of bed, but in order that you may repose soundly when you return to your room I will tell you frankly what my mode of operations will be to-morrow. The simplest plan would be to tell Rowland everything, but for various reasons that does not suit me. I take an interest in the little girl, and if she chooses to conceal her secret (at present, remember, she does not know it, but the poor child will certainly be told everything to-morrow) I don't intend to interfere. In the second place, I am anxious to lay a trap for Madame. Now, two things are evident. Madame Sara's object in coming here is to steal the pearls. Her plan is to terrify the little signora into giving them to her in order that the fiendish words written on the child's neck may not be seen. As the signora must wear a dress with a low neck to-morrow night, she can only hide the words by means of the red carbuncle. Madame will only give her the carbuncle if she, in exchange, gives Madame the pearls. You see?"

"I do," I answered, slowly.

He drew himself up to his slender height, and his eyes became full of suppressed laughter.

"The child's neck has been injured with nitrate of silver. Nevertheless, until it is exposed to the blue rays of light the ominous, fiendish words will not appear on her white throat. Once they do appear they will be indelible. Now, listen! Madame, with all her cunning, forgot something. To the action of nitrate of silver there is an antidote. This is nothing more or less than our old friend cyanide of potassium. To-morrow nurse, under my instructions, will take the little patient into a room carefully prepared with the hateful red light, and will bathe the neck just where the baleful words are written with a solution of cyanide of potassium. The nitrate of silver will then become neutralized and the letters will never come out."

"But the child will not know that. The terror of Madame's cruel story will be upon her, and she will exchange the pearls for the cross."

"I think not, for I shall be there to prevent it. Now, Druce, I have told you all that is necessary. Go to bed and sleep comfortably."

The next morning dawned dull and sullen, but the fierce storm of the night before was over. The ravages which had taken place, however, in the stately old park were very manifest, for trees had been torn up by their roots and some of the stateliest and largest of the oaks had been deprived of their best branches.

Little Miss Ripley did not appear at all that day. I was not surprised at her absence. The time had come when doubtless Madame found it necessary to divulge her awful scheme to the unhappy child. In the midst of that gay houseful of people no one specially missed her; even Rowland was engaged with many necessary matters, and had little time to devote to his future wife. The ballroom, decorated with real flowers, was a beautiful sight.

Vandeleur, our host, and I paced up and down the long room. Rowland was in great excitement, making many suggestions, altering this decoration and the other. The flowers were too profuse in one place, too scanty in another. The lights, too, were not bright enough.

"By all means have the ball-room well lighted," said Vandeleur. "In a room like this, so large, and with so many doors leading into passages and sitting-out rooms, it is well to have the light as brilliant as possible. You will forgive my suggestion, Mr. Rowland, when I say I speak entirely from the point of view of a man who has some acquaintance with the treacherous dealings of crime."

Rowland started.

"Are you afraid that an attempt will be made here to-night to steal the necklace?" he asked, suddenly.

"We won't talk of it," replied Vandeleur. "Act on my suggestion and you have nothing to fear."

Rowland shrugged his shoulders, and crossing the room gave some directions to

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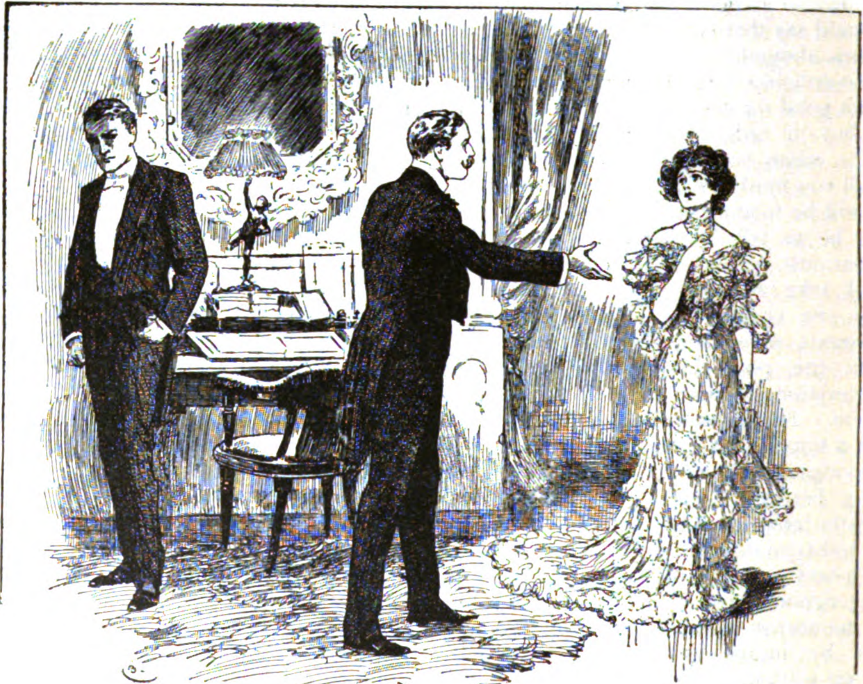
several men who were putting in the final touches.

Nearly a hundred guests were expected to arrive from the surrounding country, and the house was as full as it could possibly hold. Rowland was to open the ball with little Antonia.

There was no late dinner that day, and as evening approached Vandeleur sought me.

"I say, Druce, dress as early as you can, and come down and meet me in our host's study."

I looked at him in astonishment, but did not question him. I saw that he was intensely excited. His face was cold and stern; it invariably wore that expression when he was most moved.



"WHAT IS IT, LITTLE ONE?"

I hurried into my evening clothes and came down again. Vandeleur was standing in the study talking to Rowland. The guests were beginning to arrive. The musicians were tuning-up in the adjacent ball-room, and signs of hurry and festival pervaded the entire place. Rowland was in high spirits and looked very handsome. He and Vandeleur talked together, and I stood a little apart. Vandeleur was just about to make a light reply to one of our host's questions when we heard the swish of drapery in the passage outside, and little Antonia, dressed for her first ball, entered. She was in soft white lace, and her neck and arms were bare. The effect of her entrance was somewhat startling, and would have arrested attention even were we not all specially interested in her. Her face, neck, and arms were nearly as white as her dress, her dark eyes were much dilated, and her soft black hair surrounded her small face like a shadow. In the midst of the whiteness a large red cross sparkled on her throat like living fire. Rowland uttered an exclamation and then stood still; as for Vandeleur and myself, we held our breath in suspense. What might not the next few minutes reveal?

It was the look on Antonia's face that aroused our fears. What ailed her? She came forward like one blind, or as one who walks in her sleep. One hand was held out slightly in advance, as though she meant to guide herself by the sense of touch. She certainly saw neither Vandeleur nor me, but when she got close to Rowland the blind expression left her eyes. She gave a sudden and exceedingly bitter cry, and ran forward, flinging herself into his arms.

"Kiss me once before we part for ever. Kiss me just once before we part," she said.

"My dear little one," I heard him answer,

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"what is the meaning of this? You are not well. There, Antonia, cease trembling. Before we part, my dear? But there is no thought of parting. Let me look at you, darling. Ah!"

He held her at arm's length and gazed at her critically.

"No girl could look sweeter, Antonia," he said, "and you have come now for the finishing touch—the beautiful pearls. But what is this, my dear? Why should you spoil your white neck with anything so incongruous? Let me remove it."

She put up her hand to her neck, thus covering the crimson cross. Then her wild eyes met Vandeleur's. She seemed to recognise his presence for the first time.

"You can safely remove it," he said to her, speaking in a semi-whisper.

Rowland gave him an astonished glance. His look seemed to say, "Leave us," but Vandeleur did not move.

"We must see this thing out," he said to me.

Meanwhile Rowland's arm encircled Antonia's neck, and his hand sought for the clasp of the narrow gold thread that held the cross in place.

"One moment," said Antonia.

She stepped back a pace; the trembling in her voice left it, it gathered strength, her fear gave way to dignity. This was the hour of her deepest humiliation, and yet she looked noble.

"My dearest," she said, "my kindest and best of friends. I had yielded to temptation, terror made me weak, the dread of losing you unnerved me, but I won't come to you charged with a sin on my conscience; I won't conceal anything from you. I know you won't wish me *now* to become your wife; nevertheless, you shall know the truth."

"What do you mean, Antonia? What do your strange words signify? Are you mad?" said George Rowland.

"No, I wish I were; but I am no mate for you; I cannot bring dishonour to your honour. Madame said it could be hidden, that this"—she touched the cross—"would hide it. For this I was to pay—yes, to pay a shameful price. I consented, for the terror was so cruel. But I—I came here and looked into your face and I could not do it. Madame shall have her blood-red cross back and you shall know all. You shall see."

With a fierce gesture she tore the cross from her neck and flung it on the floor.

"The pearls for this," she cried; "the pearls were the price; but I would rather you knew. Take me up to the brightest light and you will see for yourself."

Rowland's face wore an expression impossible to fathom. The red cross lay on the floor; Antonia's eyes were fixed on his. She was no child to be humoured; she was a woman and despair was driving her wild. When she said, "Take me up to the brightest light," he took her hand without a word and led her to where the full rays of a powerful electric light turned the place into day.

"Look!" cried Antonia, "look! Madame wrote it here—here."

She pointed to her throat.

"The words are hidden, but this light will soon cause them to appear. You will see for yourself, you will know the truth. At last you will understand who I really am."

There was silence for a few minutes. Antonia kept pointing to her neck. Rowland's eyes were fixed upon it. After a breathless period of agony Vandeleur stepped forward.

"Miss Antonia," he cried, "you have suffered enough. I am in a position to relieve your terrors. You little guessed, Rowland, that for the last few days I have taken an extreme liberty with regard to you. I have been in your house simply and solely in the exercise of my professional qualities. In the exercise of my manifest duties I came across a ghastly secret. Miss Antonia was to be subjected to a cruel ordeal. Madame Sara, for reasons of her own, had invented one of the most fiendish plots it has ever been my unhappy lot to come across. But I have been in time. Miss Antonia, you need fear nothing. Your neck contains no ghastly secret. Listen! I have saved you. The nurse whom Madame believed to be devoted to her service considered it best for prudential reasons to transfer herself to me. Under my directions she bathed your neck to-day with a preparation of cyanide of potassium. You do not know what that is, but it is a chemical preparation which neutralizes the effect of what that horrible woman has done. You have nothing to fear—your secret lies buried beneath your white skin."

"But what is the mystery?" said Rowland. "Your actions, Antonia, and your words, Vandeleur, are enough to drive a man mad. What is it all about? I will know."

"Miss Ripley can tell you or not, as she pleases," replied Vandeleur. "The unhappy child was to be blackmailed, Madame Sara's object being to secure the pearl necklace worth a King's ransom. The cross was to be

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given in exchange for the necklace. That was her aim, but she is defeated. Ask me no questions, sir. If this young lady chooses to tell you, well and good, but if not the secret is her own."

Vandeleur bowed and backed towards me.

"The secret is mine," cried Antonia, "but it also shall be yours, George. I will not be your wife with this ghastly thing between us. You may never speak to me again, but you shall know all the truth."

"Upon my word, a brave girl, and I respect her," whispered Vandeleur. "Come, Druce, our work so far as Miss Antonia is concerned is finished."

We left the room.

"Now to see Madame Sara," continued my friend. "We will go to her rooms. Walls have ears in her case; she doubtless knows the whole *dénouement* already; but we will find her at once, she can scarcely have escaped yet."

He flew upstairs. I followed him. We went from one corridor to another. At last we found Madame's apartments. Her bedroom door stood wide open. Rebecca Curt was standing in the middle of the room. Madame herself was nowhere to be seen, but there was every sign of hurried departure.

"Where is Madame Sara?" inquired Vandeleur, in a peremptory voice.

Rebecca Curt shrugged her shoulders.

"Has she gone down? Is she in the ball-room? Speak!" said Vandeleur.

The nurse gave another shrug.

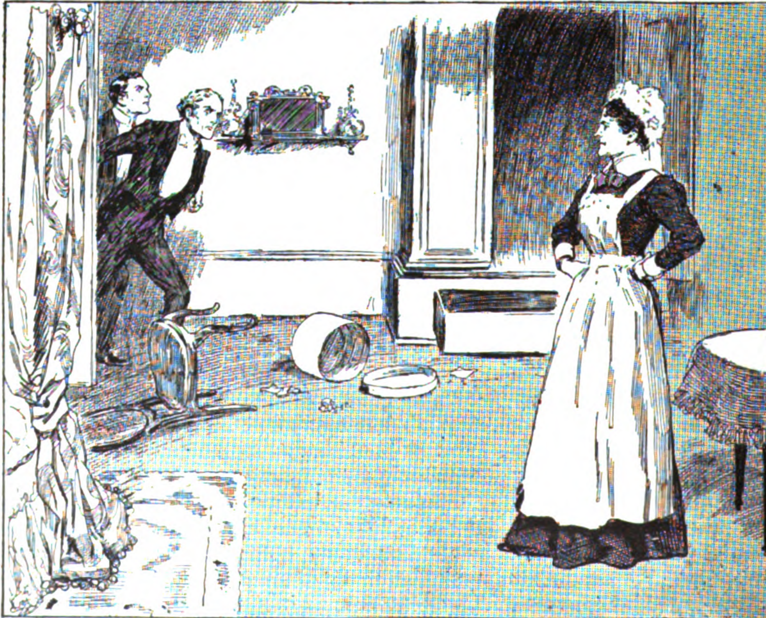
"I only know that Achmed the Arabian rushed in here a few minutes ago," was her answer. "He was excited. He said something to Madame. I think he had been listening—eavesdropping, you call it. Madame was convulsed with rage. She thrust a few things together and she's gone. Perhaps you can catch her."

Vandeleur's face turned white.

"I'll have a try," he said. "Don't keep me, Druce."

He rushed away. I don't know what immediate steps he took, but he did not return to Rowland's Folly. Neither was Madame Sara captured.

But notwithstanding her escape and her meditated crime, notwithstanding little Antonia's hour of terror, the ball went on merrily, and the bride-elect opened it with her future husband. On her fair neck gleamed the pearls, lovely in their soft lustre. What she told Rowland was never known; how he took the news is a secret between Antonia and himself. But one thing is certain: no one was more gallant in his conduct, more ardent in his glances of love, than was the master of Rowland's Folly that night. They were married on the day fixed, and Madame Sara was defeated.



"REBECCA CURT WAS STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM."

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The American Cartoonist and His Work.

III.

By Arthur Lord.

A DOZEN years ago the newspaper cartoon was an innovation, especially in the West, where the better newspapers were very dubious as to whether their readers cared for cartoons. Mr. Charles L. Bartholomew, at that time a young reporter, succeeded in convincing the Minneapolis *Journal* that its readers did care for cartoons on current events, and they became a regular feature of the paper. The *Journal* was one of the first newspapers in the United States to run daily cartoons. In Minneapolis and St. Paul, where no cartoonists were at work when "Bart" began, each of the six daily papers now has a capable cartoonist, and no other locality is so well represented in the reviews of the country as are the twin cities by the work of these picture-makers.

MR. CHARLES L. BARTHOLOMEW ("BART").
From a Photo. by E. R. Shepard, Minneapolis.

"Bart's" early ambition was to be a civil engineer; his later endeavours, to be a very civil caricaturist, whose victims can laugh with the rest of the audience at their own caricatures. As with Bowman, his theory is that the day for the bitter cartoon has passed, or, at least, that people cannot live every day with a scold, and that the daily newspaper cartoon must be good-humoured.

RUSSIA'S MOVABLE FRONTIER IN ACTION.
DRAWN BY "BART" FOR THE MINNEAPOLIS "JOURNAL."

After studying the higher mathematics and the sciences for four years, Mr. Bartholomew graduated from the Iowa State College, at Ames, Iowa, at the age of nineteen and went at once to Minneapolis to secure some kind of newspaper work, four years' struggle with mathematics having persuaded him to try something easier. His vacations had been spent in part in the office of a small country paper, and the newspaper field seemed allur-

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A NEUTRAL CANAL B'GOSH!
DRAWN BY "BART" FOR THE MINNEAPOLIS "JOURNAL."

must evolve a concrete result just as in calculus. It became a regular habit to submit his ideas and work them over with Mr. J. S. McLain, the able editor of the *Journal.* Seldom less than an hour, sometimes two hours each day were devoted to this matter of deciding on a subject and how to treat it. Often the time for the execution of the picture was cut down to the minimum, but the result was that the *Journal* cartoons always meant something, even if the picture was crude.

The newspaper cartoonist has a unique field, and the men who undertook the proposition ten years ago had to work out for themselves a new method. The news of one day's *Journal* came to furnish the text for the next day's cartoon. Often the news of the next day could be anticipated, and the cartoon and news story appear side by side.

ing to a young man of twenty. After a few weeks of waiting he secured a position with the St. Paul *Globe* on the strength of an illustrated article which he had contributed. The *Globe* availed itself of his picture-making ability, and here "Bart" made his first newspaper pictures by the crude chalk-plate process, at which the artist is also etcher. He also succeeded in disposing of a few of his cartoons to the *Journal,* and obtained a position with that paper, not as artist or cartoonist, but as a reporter. For a year or two the cartoons were voluntary, but finally gained a regular place on the first page of the journal as a pictorial chronicle of current events.

In this work his college drudgery at mathematics and his college diversion of sketching caricatures of the professors and his classmates joined hands to help him in his new task where he was his own master. He soon found that the cartoon subject was the main thing. The news was his problem from an abstract proposition he

THE BEAR: "There ain't goin' to be no Kor-e-a."
DRAWN BY "BART" FOR THE MINNEAPOLIS "JOURNAL."

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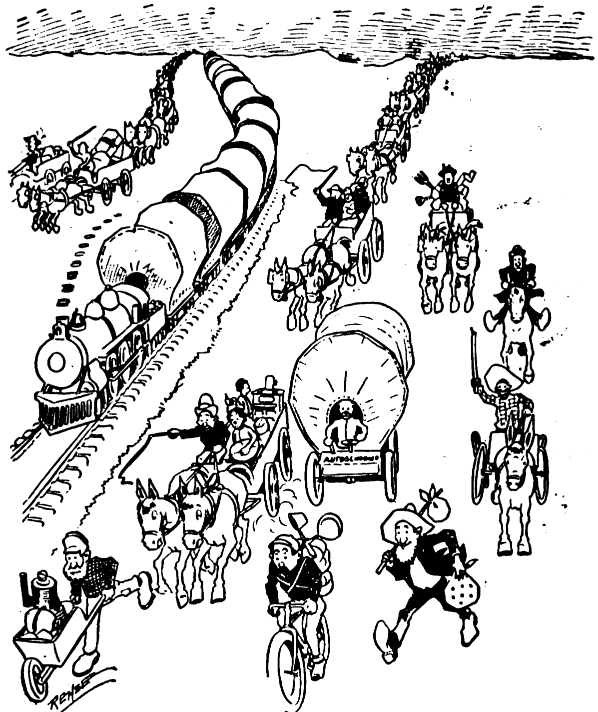
Often the morning news furnishes a text that must be handled in the publication which goes to press at three o'clock in the afternoon. In this case the cartoonist abandons the cartoon outlined the evening before and begins work on the new subject. It may take an hour, possibly two, to think out an interesting or humorous turn to give the situation; then the drawing must be carefully pencilled out to convey just the proper shade of ink lines, strong and clear for reproduction. All this in a period of four or five hours, for the drawing must be in the hands of the engravers at noon, to be photo-engraved and ready for the press at three o'clock.

ALL THE WORLD'S A WHEEL—AND J. PIERPONT MORGAN IS THE WHEELMAN.
DRAWN BY "BART" FOR THE MINNEAPOLIS "JOURNAL."

Mr. Bartholomew's early home was at Chariton, Iowa. He is a son of Colonel O. A. Bartholomew, an attorney of that place. At twenty-one he married a college classmate. In addition to the cartoon work, "Bart" has

MR. G. W. REHSE.
From a Photo. by John Kuhn, St. Paul.

meaning, and make the idea very plain even to a person who has not yet seen the news. The drawing must then be completed in



THE DISCOVERY OF FARM LANDS IN THE NORTH-WEST.
DRAWN BY G. W. REHSE FOR THE ST. PAUL "PIONEER PRESS."

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devoted much time to pictures for children. In this work his own children and his home-life furnish models and inspiration. In fact, much of his study and special preparation for his work has been done at home. Besides this, "Bart's" cartoons are also published annually by the *Journal* and eight volumes have appeared.

Mr. Bartholomew is a Western cartoonist, and believes in the West to the extent that he has steadfastly refused Eastern offers. His cartoons, however, are now published daily in Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, in the papers of the Scripp's Editorial Alliance, as well as in his own paper in Minneapolis, giving him an audience each evening all over the great central portion of the United States.

The twin cities of the West are indeed fortunate in possessing such men as Bowman, Bartholomew, and Rehse. The latter gentleman, whose name is now known throughout America as one of the most fertile and ingenious of Western cartoonists, has by his work given to the St. Paul *Pioneer Press* a reputation equal to that gained by the *Journal* or the *Tribune* in Minneapolis. Mr. G. W. Rehse is of Minnesota born, was educated in the Minneapolis public schools, and has spent in the city most of his thirty-four years of life. The *Penny Press* of Minneapolis first claimed Rehse's services as a cartoonist, and after a connection with the St. Paul *Globe* and the St. Louis *Republic* he settled down on the *Pioneer Press* for the most successful period of his career.

Rehse has had no art training, and his knowledge of cartoon work came without instruction. In a spirit of kindly criticism it

PRINCE HENRY IS WITH HIS BROTHER AGAIN.
DRAWN BY G. W. REHSE FOR THE ST. PAUL "PIONEER PRESS."

THE PUBLICATION OF WORTHLESS BOOKS.—THE READING PUBLIC: "What a shame it is to waste that valuable timber."
DRAWN BY G. W. REHSE FOR THE ST. PAUL "PIONEER PRESS."

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MR. C. G. BUSH.
From a Photo.

THE INTERESTED SPECTATOR: "SIC'EM!"
DRAWN BY C. G. BUSH FOR THE NEW YORK "WORLD."

ought to be said that Rehse's technique shows his art limitations, and we can only conjecture what a power he might have been had some skilful teacher taken him early in hand. So much may reasonably be said on this point. As for Rehse's subjects and his treatment of them, from the point of view of humour, one can say much in praise. He is a thorough Westerner, breezy and direct. He never carries the bludgeon. "I furnish my own subjects, evolving them along my own lines of thought," he says, "and make it my rule never to offend by vicious strokes those sharing contrary political belief. A cartoon can be made to tell its story in a good-humoured way, hitting the other fellow near the belt without knocking his wind." We have already noted this genial quality in Bowman and "Bart." Can it be that the West has something to teach the East in cartoon production, and is it not this geniality of spirit that should be imitated? Curiously enough Rehse is a Democrat, yet works for a Republican paper, and is thus constantly cartooning contrary to his own political creed and convictions. In the first article of this series we touched upon such a case as this. Rehse's success shows him to be an exception to the rule there mentioned.

THE SKIPPER: "Hi, there, you men! Get hold of that wheel."
DRAWN BY C. G. BUSH FOR THE NEW YORK "WORLD."

What the New York *World* would be without Bush's cartoons is a problem indeed. This paper, it is true, made its huge circulation long before Bush went to work for it, but the latter-day power of this great metropolitan journal is due in no small measure to the forcible personality and trenchant pencil of its leading artist. The mere fact that such a man is on such a paper proves that he must possess exceptional ability in influencing

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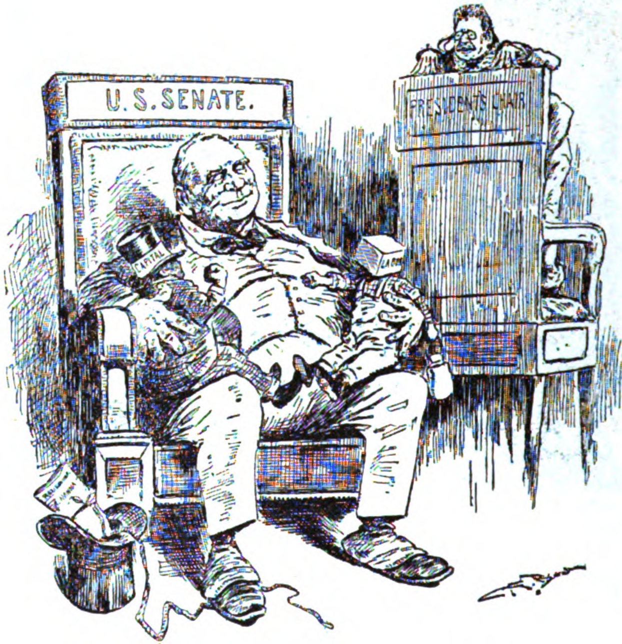
the class of readers appealed to by the *World*. Were it otherwise, Bush would not to-day sit in his little room in the Pulitzer building drawing the 15,000 dollars a year which, says the profession, he gets for salary.

In Bush's work we get little humour and much ridicule. The artist has evidently no time to waste creating laughs for his *clientèle*. He sees a wrong

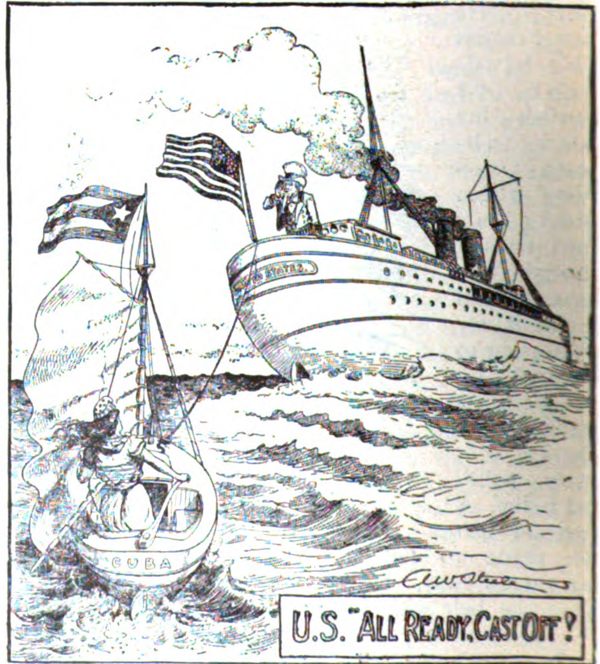


"STAY? CERTAINLY, IF THE PUBLIC INSIST."
DRAWN BY C. G. BUSH FOR THE NEW YORK "WORLD."

MR. A. W. STEELE.
From a Photo.

and goes for it. He ridicules the pretensions of the politician with merciless skill, and now and then offers a bit of advice upon some pressing problem of the hour. Let us add promptly that this power is rarely wielded in a wrong direction. The opportunities that come to such a man for doing harm are many, but Bush has rarely abused his opportunities. It has been said by one writer in praise of him that Bush "has made more public characters squirm under his provoking touch than any other living cartoonist." Such a statement, if true, is one evidence of Bush's value to his paper, but we are not sure, as we have before remarked, that the cartoonist's proper function is to make public characters squirm.

The Denver *Post's* cartoonist, Mr. A. W. Steele, is another of those who never received regular art training. He was born in Illinois in 1862, and at the age



DRAWN BY A. W. STEELE FOR THE DENVER "POST."

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of four with his family crossed the great plains of the West on a stage-coach. The family settled in Denver, and young Steele, after education in the public schools, entered upon the profession of a surveyor at the age of seventeen. Later he followed various lines of work, farming, book-keeping, clerking, etc., until 1890, when he got a position as cartoonist on the *Rocky Mountain News* of Denver. With this journal he remained seven years, and then became a member of the *Post's* art staff. Steele is an ardent student of politics, and believes that varied experiences and different occupations make the best founda-

THE MEAT TRUST.—"This worked fine last year!"
DRAWN BY A. W. STEELE FOR THE DENVER "POST."

MR. C. MERRIMAN PETER ("PETE").
From a Photo.

A GOOD IDEA —"I don't think I'll turn over a new leaf this century. I think the old one is good enough."
DRAWN BY "PETE" FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO "WASP."

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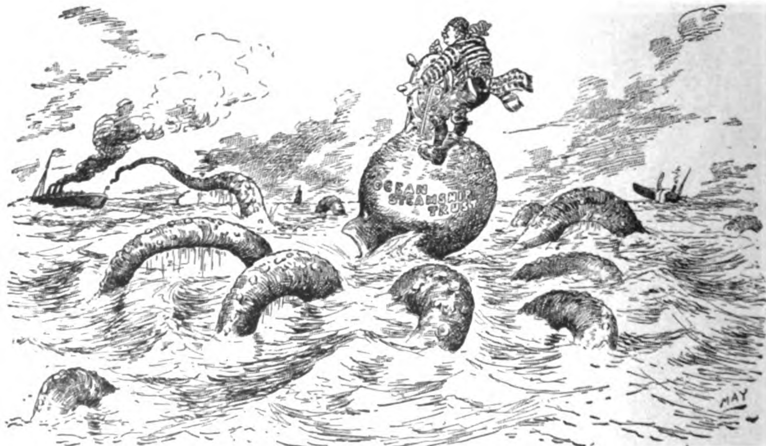
tion for a cartoonist's career. With the few advantages Steele has had his success has been remarkable. Original in conception and vigorous in style, he is full of ideas and an expert in character presentation. The two cartoons which are here reproduced give an admirable idea of his style.

MR. THOMAS MAY.
From a Photo. by O. Muhme, Detroit.

The career of "Pete," another name for Mr. C. Merriman Peter, is typical of the West, and shows how opportunities are given and taken in Western journalism. Peter, with a limited training at a Sacramento art school, was first employed on the San Francisco *Wasp* in August, 1899, as a joke-maker. The editor at that time was looking for a cartoonist. As Peter himself writes: "Neither he nor I thought I was able to fill the bill, and the place was vacant until December, when I plucked up courage enough to try a cartoon on the Dreyfus case, then attracting the attention of the world. The cartoon was accepted, and in the following number I had three full-page cartoons."

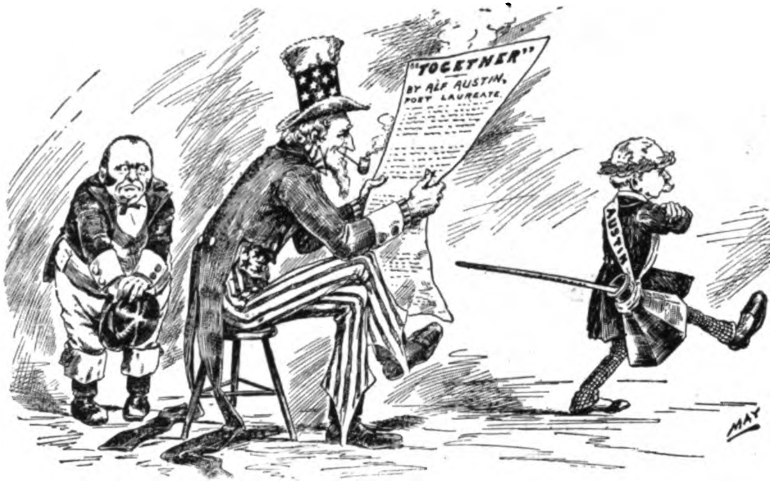
Since that time, "Pete's" name has figured in many of the American papers devoting space to cartoon work. His comic figures are anatomically correct. "I firmly believe," he says, "that bad drawing is not funny, and I am preparing to enter an art school in order to perfect myself in my career."

In May and Nash Detroit possesses two of the most progressive cartoonists in the West, and, as it happens, both work for the Detroit *Journal*. Mr. Tom May is as extensively copied as any cartoonist in America, and has, on half-a-dozen occasions, refused fine offers from the East. But sentiment holds him to the paper which owes to him much of its success. His series of cartoons on the international yacht race of 1901 was certainly the best of its kind, and the different episodes in the races were pictured with a humour always exceedingly amusing, if at times a little rough on John Bull, the graceful loser. May's fund of subjects seems inexhaustible.



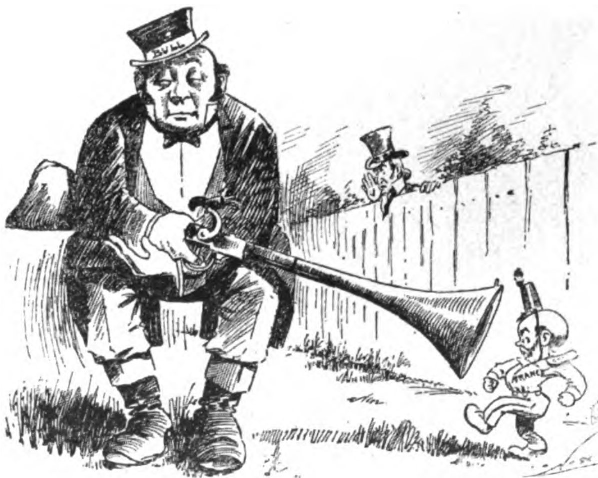
HE'S AFTER THEM.
DRAWN BY T. MAY FOR THE DETROIT "JOURNAL."

Nash's work is quite different from that of May, both in *motif* and execution, but the *Journal* gains instead of loses by having two individual styles in its illustration. Mr. Fred C. Nash is perhaps the youngest cartoonist in the United States to be regularly employed



JOHN BULL: "Don't blame me, Sam, I can't help it."
DRAWN BY T. MAY FOR THE DETROIT "JOURNAL."

on a paper of any prominence. He studied for a time in the Detroit Art Academy, then went to work on the *Evening News* of Detroit. He later drew illustrations for the *Free Press*, but for the past five years has furnished the Detroit *Journal* with caricatures and cartoons. In the line of the former his great skill lies. Perhaps no portrait artist on any American paper has attracted more attention to himself by ingenious work than Nash. He has also done considerable work in oils and pastel as well as water-colour. At a recent exhibition of the work of newspaper artists in Detroit more sales were made by him than by any one other artist exhibiting. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War and early in the British-Boer contest Nash drew a score or more of pertinent cartoons that were widely copied in the magazines of America, chiefly in the *Review of Reviews*, the *Cosmopolitan*, and the *Literary Digest*.



"Be careful, sonny; he's an absent-minded beggar."
DRAWN BY F. C. NASH FOR THE DETROIT "JOURNAL."

MR. FRED. C. NASH.
From a Photo.

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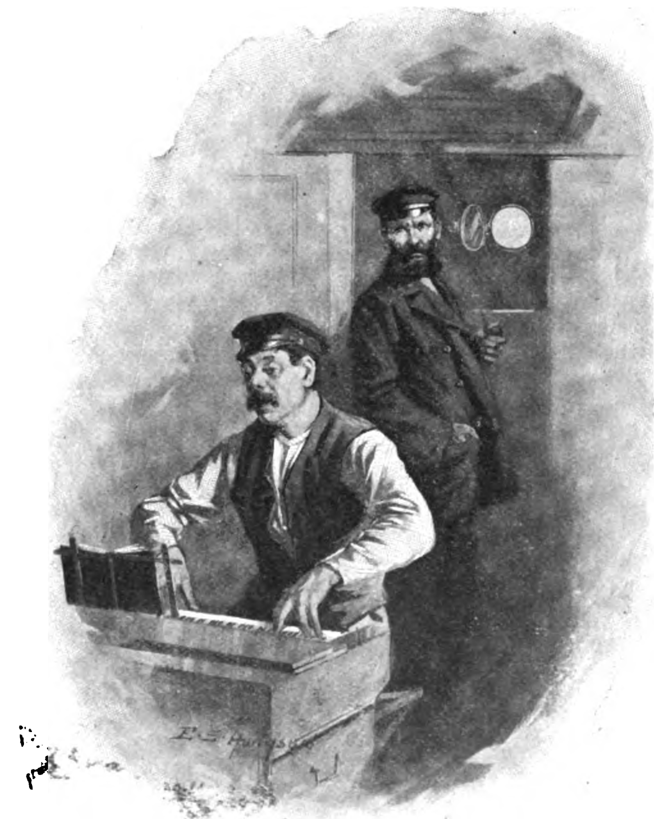
Saunderson and the Dynamite.

By Louis Becke.

SAUNDERSON was one of those men who firmly believed that he knew everything, and exasperated people by telling them how to do things; and Denison, the supercargo of the *Palestine*, hated him most fervently for the continual trouble he was giving to everyone, and also because he had brought a harmonium on board, and played dismal tunes on it every night and all day on Sundays. But as Saunderson was one of the partners in the firm who owned the *Palestine*, Denison and Packenham, the skipper, had to suffer him in silence and trust that something might happen to him before long. What irritated Denison more than anything else was that Saunderson frequently expressed the opinion that supercargoes were superfluous luxuries to owners, and that such work "as they tried to do could well be done by the captains, provided the latter were intelligent men."



"HE PLAYED DISMAL TUNES ON IT EVERY NIGHT AND ALL DAY ON SUNDAYS."

"Never mind, Tom," said Packenham, hopefully, one day, "he's a big eater, and is bound to get the fever if we give him a fair show in the Solomons. Then we can dump him ashore at some missionary's—he and his infernal groan-box—and go back to Sydney without the beast."

When the *Palestine* arrived at Leone Bay, in Tutuila, Saunderson dressed himself beautifully and went ashore to the mission-house, and in the evening Mrs. O—— (the missionary's wife) wrote Denison a note, and asked if he could spare a cheese from the ship's stores, and added a P.S.: "What a *terrible* bore he is!" This made the captain and himself feel better.

The next morning Saunderson came on board. Denison was in the cabin, showing a trader named Rigby some samples of dynamite; the trader wanted a case or two of the dangerous compound to blow a boat passage through the reef opposite his house, and Denison was telling him how to use it. Of course, Saunderson must interfere, and said *he* would show Rigby what to do. He had never fired a charge of dynamite in his life, nor even seen one fired, or a cartridge prepared, but had listened carefully to Denison. Then he sarcastically told Denison that the cheese he had sent Mrs. O—— might have passed for dynamite, it was so dry and tasteless.

"Well, dynamite is made from cheese, you know," said the supercargo, deferentially; "just cheese, slightly impregnated with picric acid, gastrito-nepenthe, and cubes of oxalicogene."

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Saunderson said he knew that, and after telling Rigby that he would walk over to his station before dinner and show him where to begin operations on the reef, went on shore again.

About twelve o'clock Denison and Rigby went on shore to test the dynamite, fuse, and caps—first in the water and then on the reef. Just abreast of the mission-house they saw a big school of grey mullet swimming close in to the beach, and Denison quickly picked up a stone, tied it round a cartridge, cut the fuse very short, lit it, and threw it in. There was a short *fizz*, then a dull, heavy thud, and up came hundreds of the beautiful fish, stunned or dead. Saunderson came out of the mission-house and watched the natives collecting them. Denison had half-a-dozen cartridges in his hand; each one was tightly enveloped in many thicknesses of paper, seized round with twine, and had about 6in. of fuse with the ends carefully frayed out so as to light easily.

"Give me some of those," said Saunderson.

The supercargo reluctantly handed him two, and Saunderson remarked that they were very clumsily covered, but he would fix some more himself "properly" another time. Denison sulkily observed that he had no time to waste in making dynamite cartridges look pretty. Then as Saunderson walked off he called out and told him that if he was going to shoot he would want to put a good heavy stone on the cartridges. Saunderson said when he wanted advice from anyone he would ask for it. Then he sent word by a native to Mrs. O—— that he would send her some fish in a few minutes.

Now, within a few hundred yards of the mission-house there was a jetty, and at the end of the jetty was His Majesty's gunboat *Badger*, a small, schooner-rigged, wooden vessel, commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Muddle, one of the most irascible men that ever breathed and who had sat on more Consuls than anyone else in the Service.

Saunderson went on the jetty, followed by a crowd of natives, and looked over into the water. There were swarms of fish, just waiting to be dynamited. He told a native to bring him a stone, and one was brought—a nice, round, heavy stone, as smooth as a billiard ball—just the very wrong kind of stone. He tied it on the cartridge at last, after it had fallen off four or five times; then, as he did not smoke and carried no matches, he lit it from a native woman's cigarette and let it drop into the water. The stone promptly fell off, but the cartridge floated gaily and drifted along, fizzing in a contented sort of way. Saunderson put his hands on his hips and watched it nonchalantly, oblivious of the fact that all the natives had bolted back to the shore, to be out of danger and watch things.

There was a bit of a current, and the cartridge was carried along till it brought up gently

"MUDDLE NEARLY WENT INTO A FIT."

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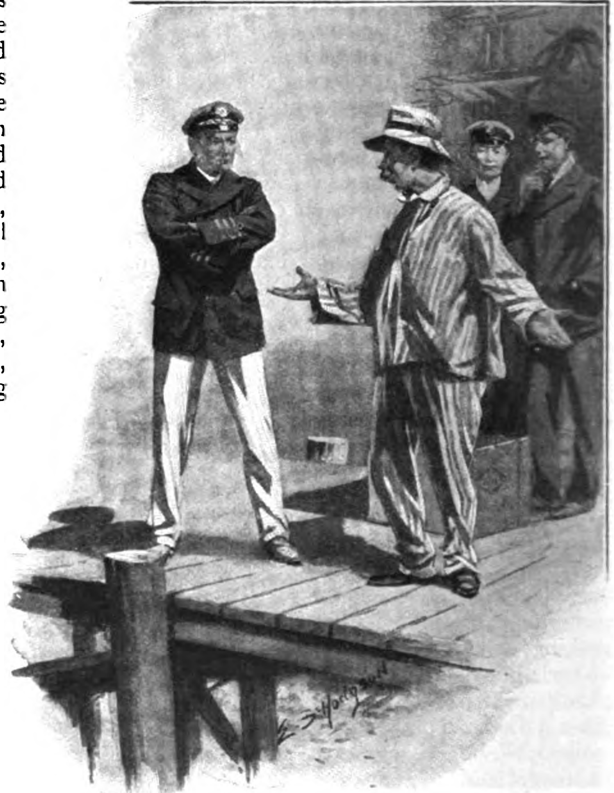
against the *Badger*, just in a nice, cosy place between the rudder-boarding and the stern-post. Then it went off with a bang that shook the universe and ripped off forty-two sheets of copper from the *Badger*, and Saunderson fell off the jetty into the water, and the blue-jackets, who were below, came tumbling up on deck, and the gunner, seeing Lieutenant-Commander Muddle rush up from his cabin in his shirt-sleeves with a razor in his hand, thought that he had gone queer again in his head, and had tried to blow up the ship, and was going to cut his throat, and so he rushed at him, and knocked him down and took his razor away, and begged him to be quiet; and Muddle, thinking it was a mutiny, nearly went into a fit, and struggled so desperately, and made such awful, choking noises, that two more men sat on him; and the navigating midshipman, thinking it was fire, told the bugler to sound to quarters, and then, seeing the captain being held down by three men, rushed to his assistance, but tripped over something or somebody and fell down and nearly broke his nose; and all the time Saunderson, who was clinging to one of the jetty piles, was yelling for help, being horribly afraid of sharks.

At last he was fished out by Rigby and some natives and carried up to the mission-house, and then when he was able to talk coherently he sent for Denison, who told him that Commander Muddle was coming for him presently with a lot of armed men, and a boatswain with a green bag in which was a "cat," and that he (Saunderson) would first be flogged and then hanged at the *Badger's* yard arm, and otherwise treated severely for an attempt to blow up one of His Majesty's ships; and then Saunderson shivered all over, and staggered out of the mission-house in a suit of Mr. O——'s pyjamas, and met Commander Muddle on the jetty, and tried to explain how it occurred, and Muddle called him a drivelling idiot, and knocked him clean off the jetty into the water again, and used awful language, and told Denison that his chronometers were ruined, and the ship's timbers started, and that he had had a narrow escape from cutting his own throat when the dynamite went off, as he had just begun to shave.



"SAUNDERSON TRIED TO EXPLAIN HOW IT OCCURRED."

Saunderson was very ill after that, and was in such mortal terror that Muddle and everyone else on board the gunboat meant to kill, wound, or seriously damage him that he kept inside the mission-house and said he felt he was dying. So Denison and Packenham, who were now quite cheerful again, sent his traps and his harmonium ashore and sailed without him, a great peace in their bosoms.

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The Athlete in Bronze and Stone.

BY C. B. FRY.

OF an athlete in action the statue, perhaps, most admired in both ancient and modern times is the Discobolus, or discus - thrower, of Myron. The original was in bronze, but we know only copies in marble. Myron's most successful human figures represented purely physical qualities; he did not express the feelings of the mind. He delighted to seize for representation "the moment when the whole breath was held back for a final effort of strength — that moment, in fact, when the human figure is most truly statuesque; when the body is lifeless, so to speak, like the statue itself, and the spectator suspends breathing in sympathy." Of another famous athletic statue of his, for instance, that representing the Spartan Ladas, who, in winning a long-distance race at Olympia, fell dead at the goal, we read that the figure seemed about to leap from its base to seize the victor's wreath, the last breath leaving his lips. An ancient art - critic described Myron as the first maker of statues "to multiply truth," and as being, compared with Polycletus, another famous sculptor of athletes, able to work more points into his figures and "more careful in symmetry." By multiplying truth was meant, it has been suggested, an exaggeration of Nature, in order to give effect to the momentary attitude of the figure; and by symmetry, "the manner in which every member and part of the body was made to work together for the expression of the moment of action." In the Discobolus Myron seems indeed to have been most successfully careful of symmetry in this sense, but not to have exaggerated truth so much as to have seized and portrayed all its points.

THE DISCOBOLUS OF MYRON.
From a Photo. by Mansell & Co.

It is a marvellous and a beautiful statue. The thrower is caught at the moment when the right arm, discus in hand and flat against the forearm, is at the extremity of its backward swing, and when also the right leg has been advanced, the foot turned outwards and firmly gripping the ground in anticipation of the forward swing; the left arm has swung loosely across to the right, the left leg is loose for the imminent forward lunge, dragging the toes; the whole body stoops for the effort, half-turned for the circular sweep.

The details of how the discus was thrown in the old Olympic games are not known. But in the Olympic games held at Athens in 1896 the method used is thus described by Mr. G. S. Robertson, the Oxford hammer-thrower, who competed unsuccessfully in "the disc," but won first prize with his Greek Pindaric ode: "The discus is a sort of girdle-cake of wood, about 8½in. in diameter, with a brass core, and weighs about 4½lb. The thrower stands in a square of two mètres (about 6½ft.) and holds the discus in both hands above the left shoulder. The fingers of the right hand grip it tightly by the upper edge; those of the

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left merely support it. The left leg is advanced. Then the body is swung half round to the right, so that the face is turned towards the discus, the latter having been brought round by the right hand to a position above and behind the thrower's head. At the same time the right leg is put forward. It is this attitude which is depicted in the celebrated statue. The left leg is then brought swiftly to the front again, and the discus is hurled with all the swing of the body." He also remarks that the Discobolus really represents a snap-shot of the middle of the action, a notable achievement.

It is most interesting to discover by trial that, in following the method described, one falls at the end of the backward swing into the precise attitude of the statue. One can then appreciate the fidelity of Myron's details: the outward turn of the right foot and the vigorous grip of the ground with the toes, the tension of the muscles of the right thigh and calf, and especially the drag of the left foot with the toes turned over, for in the circular sweep of the backward swing the toes are inevitably turned over. Note, too, that only at the extremity of the backward swing is the head as much bent forward as in the statue: a moment before and the head is more upright, a moment after and the face is lifted for the eye to follow the flight of the missile.

From an athletic point of view it is most interesting to perceive how perfectly the sculptor has caught the effort of throwing—an effort not of strained, contorted strength, but of smooth, quick, agile swing, an effort less of strength than of knack. In throwing the discus the power comes from the swing of the arm following the swift turn of the body on the hips, and the abetting lift from the thighs. In Myron's statue it is the muscles behind the shoulder which swing the right arm, the muscles of the small of the back and of the waist which turn the body, and the muscles of the thigh which give the upward lift, that stand out contracted.

One of the most perfect points about the statue is the slackness of the disengaged limbs. How loosely the left arm hangs! How loosely the left leg drags! And one is reminded how in driving at golf or at cricket the perfection of style is attained by him who keeps all his muscles that are not directly engaged loose and free: while he who contracts his whole muscular system indiscriminately is stiff and ungainly, and makes a far greater effort than is needed for the full effect of his stroke. In the statue, too, even the throwing arm itself is loose, as it should be: a mere rope of flesh and sinew connecting the missile with the propelling force resident in the trunk and thighs. That ropey pull of the right arm is perfection; so, too, is the mere suspicion of tightness—that and no more—in the face, the lips parted, the teeth not clenched.

It is a figure of lissom, sinewy strength—no corded, exaggerated muscles: beautifully developed all over; but the deltoid muscles on the points of the shoulders, the muscles above the shoulder-blade, and of the waist are fine to see. You will notice the same in a great fast bowler. The chest is broad and deep, the ribs roundly sprung. The thighs and lower legs are powerful and the knees and ankles, through strong, are shapely. Such a man should have been a shrewd combatant in the "pentathlon" at Olympia, the group of five events which comprised throwing the discus and the javelin, wrestling, leaping, and running, and gave scope at once for adroit activity and strength.

In contrast with Myron's Discobolus, the perfect type of the athlete in action, Walter Pater selects as the *beau ideal* of athletic repose the Diadumenus of Polycletus, the athlete at rest, binding round his brows the fillet or diadem of victory. Of this statue there are several extant copies, two of them in the British Museum, not generally regarded as adequately representative of the original bronze; the one from which the illustration is taken is styled a Græco-Roman copy.

Polycletus was a native of the Peloponnesus, and in a way its artistic champion in rivalry with the great Phidias of Athens. Like Phidias, Polycletus executed statues of deities, notably one of Hera, which, in comparison with the former's famous Zeus at Olympia, was said to have been superior in finish, though inferior in grandeur and imposing aspect. Another celebrated statue of Polycletus was his Wounded Amazon, "in exquisite pain alike of body and soul"; in contrast therefore with Myron he did express the feelings of the mind. But he delighted most in rendering the form of the ideal athlete, of which type, besides the Diadumenus, one called the Doryphorus, or spear-bearer, is celebrated. In comparing Myron and Polycletus, Pater says that "Myron by patience of genius had mastered the secret of the expression of movement, had plucked out the heart of its mystery. Polycletus, on the other hand, is, above all, the master of rest,

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of the expression of rest after toil. . . . He studied human form under such conditions as would bring out its natural features, its static laws in their entirety, their harmony; and in an academic work, so to speak, no longer to be clearly identified in what may be derivations from it, he claimed to have fixed the canon, the common measure of perfect man."

The Athlete with the Diadem strikes the eye of the observer less perhaps as an athlete than as a beautiful youth necessarily represented in terms of athletic beauty. One is inclined rather to admire in him the beauty of a human form truly divine, with perhaps a sidelong remembrance of the Apollo Belvidere, than to inquire what feats of physical prowess he might be fitted for or have done. It is as though Polycletus idealized humanity in the shape of a youthful athlete where Myron caught the athlete as such and made him a perfect man.

THE DIADUMENUS OF POLYCLETUS.
From a Photo. by Mansell & Co.

The figure is standing charmingly at ease, with a slight inclination of the body at the waist, as though accepting all the repose there may be in such an attitude. Indeed, this restfulness is one of the most affecting qualities of the statue; the maker seems to have put all the relaxation of a figure reclining into this figure standing. The languor of the turn of the right arm and hand raised to bind the fillet is most expressive; it is as though the binding of the fillet were too much trouble. The action, or, rather, the suggestion of action, is one of tired pleasure: rather as though the youth was lifting a cup to his lips, knowing he will enjoy the liquid, yet not eager to drink, and thinking of something else. And about the inclination of the head and the rather thoughtful face there is an expression of detachment, as though he were not explicitly, but at the back of his mind, wondering whether the crown of victory were worth the dust of conflict.

It is a beautiful figure, but of graceful, dignified strength rather than of swift activity. One cannot quite imagine the Discobolus of Myron looking like this even in repose or tired after the games; he would even then suggest more strongly the capacity for alert action. The Diadumenus, so shapely with his long limbs and long, slow, smooth curves, calls no attention to his muscular development: his muscles are relaxed and merged in his shapeliness: one alone catches the eye, the oblique fold of muscle leading to the groin, always noticeable when well developed. There is just the suggestion about him of the athlete beautifully developed but not fully trained. His chest and shoulders are grand, but he scarcely tapers towards the waist and flanks with that slight tapering you notice in the trained man, the hard, sinewy Discobolus. His thighs and legs are the least bit lazy and lacking in vigour. Are the thighs full enough for the trunk above, full enough sideways? Nor has he that smallness, almost delicacy of knee and ankle, the not disproportionate slimness of knee and ankle that marks speed and activity. He would walk beautifully, but would he run swiftly or leap far? In hurling the discus or the javelin and in wrestling he might be a match for the Discobolus, but not, surely, in running or leaping. He has the broad hips of the swift runner, but not the nicety of joint—at least, not in the copy we have here.

A statue of some affinity from the athletic point of view with the Diadumenus of Polycletus is the Adorante, or Praying Youth, of Berlin, which has become famous, apart from its own intrinsic beauty, by reason of the high esteem in which it was held by the great art-critic, the discoverer, or at any

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rate the revealer, of Greek art, Winckelmann. The Adorante is not directly connected with any idea of athleticism, except in so far as the beauty of virile youth must be in some degree athletic.

Winckelmann admired this statue for its beauty, for its realization of what he considered to be the true end of art. According to him, the artist, the sculptor, could only attain this end by subordinating all individual and characteristic features to his general scheme. "The true artist, selecting from Nature the phenomena fitted for his purpose, and combining them through his imagination, creates an ideal type marked in action by 'noble simplicity and calm greatness,' an ideal type in which normal proportions are maintained, particular parts, such as muscles and veins, not being permitted to break the harmony of the general outlines."

THE ADORANTE, OR PRAYING YOUTH.
From a Photo. by Levy & Sons.

Selective observation and constructive imagination could, of course, evolve according to these principles a type of the athlete in action. But the very presence of action, at any rate of athletic action as portrayed, for instance, in the Discobolus of Myron, necessitates a certain emphasis on the muscles and limbs directly engaged. Hence it would seem that the beauty to be abstracted from athletic figures would most naturally, according to Winckelmann's theory, find its expression in the smoothness and harmony of such figures as the Diadumenus and the Adorante.

Yet in the Adorante there is no missing the athleticism under its cloak of beauty. The figure is of a youth, almost a boy, younger at any rate than the Athlete with the Diadem: he stands with his weight firm on his left foot, with his right knee slightly bent, and his right heel raised a few inches from the ground. His face is inclined upwards and both hands are raised above his head, the palms spread open in supplication. Is he praying to Olympic Zeus for favour in the foot-race? The gracefulness of the figure hides for a moment and then reveals the shapely power of the shoulders and hips: the round, smooth moulding of the trunk and limbs lightens a certain solidity of strength; not an ounce of retarding weight, yet no trace of frailty.

To gnarled muscularity there could be no greater contrast: the muscles are on him, but their surfaces flow into one another so that the total effect is smooth and harmonious. The legs carry the body finely; long, free-moving legs they might be. But, as in the Athlete with the Diadem, the knees and ankles seem just to miss the fineness of moulding that indicates extreme nimbleness and speed. With such perfect proportions the youth must have been a runner of grace and power; but he might just have missed superlative excellence of speed. And had he been a hurdler he might have been just a trifle heavy of foot in alighting after clearing the obstacles in his stride. But in the feats of mingled activity and strength, wrestling and boxing and the like, he would, after training, have been a prince among his peers of age and ambition.

The Discobolus at Rest of the Vatican is not so well known as Myron's masterpiece of athletic action, but it is, as representing the figure of an athlete, equally fine, if not finer. It is supposed to be a copy of an original by Alcamenes, a pupil of Phidias, who was particularly famous for the gracefulness and perfect proportion of his female forms; indeed, he was the maker of a celebrated statue of Aphrodite, of which the Venus of Milo, in the Louvre, is by some regarded as a copy. But there is nothing feminine about the Discobolus at Rest—a man if ever there was one.

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Strictly speaking, the athlete is only at rest in the sense that he is not engaged in throwing the missile; he appears to be moving into position for the throw, planting his right foot carefully as though on a mark, and looking down slightly as though to make sure. The attitude of the figure reproduces almost exactly that of a runner carefully adjusting his toe on the mark before the start of a race. He has his right hand raised, and a careful fore-finger, somewhat in front of him exactly as one sees in a runner who is taking pains in setting his foot to the mark.

It has been suggested that the watchfulness and attention expressed by the raised hand are directed to the throw of another; but the athlete seems rather to be looking down at his own foot and entirely engaged with himself. A notable detail of the figure is the hang of the left arm, the hand of which carries the discus; you can feel the weight of the discus in the hang of that arm; there is just a trace of contraction of the biceps as though the muscle anticipated the lifting of the weight presently.

THE DISCOBOLUS AT REST.
From a Photo. by D. Anderson.

The muscular development is that of a fully-trained athlete in his athletic prime. Compared with Myron's Discobolus he is more muscular, but less lithe and sinewy. Indeed, the marking of the muscles would be almost exaggerated were it not for the perfection of the muscular proportion of the figure; and it may be said of the whole body as of the left arm that there is a suggestion of action, of muscular effort, almost eagerly anticipated; and with this anticipation a kind of contraction *par avance* of the muscles is conformable. The limbs are long and active; but there is about the figure a certain squareness, though this without angularity.

The almost assertive power of the upper part of the body makes the thighs—though, no doubt, they are in proportion—look a trifle as if they were not quite up to the weight. The knees and ankles are strong rather than nice—a point mentioned previously. There is no suspicion of languor of movement, as with the Athlete with the Diadem, but the quickness is of alert, ready strength rather than of smooth, graceful agility.

The man is, for certain, not essentially a runner or leaper; he is a strong—very strong—man, with all the sheer strength that is possible without verging into the Hercules type of strength, terrible, but slow: he stands midway between the almost feminine grace of the Adorante and the muscle-plated, overgrown strength of the Farnese Hercules. As such he is a golden mean and very beautiful. With the Adorante and the Athlete with the Strigil he shares the perfect athlete's head—the round head, rather small, covered with crisp, close curls and set on a splendid neck, the head that is truly a crown for the body that bears it.

Of all the ancient statues, the best from a purely athletic as against a purely artistic standpoint is that known as the Apoxyomenus, or Athlete with a Strigil (*i.e.*, a flesh-scraper). Here we have the perfect prizeman for the "pentathlon," who might win all the five events, for he would be as first-rate a runner—at any rate of short distances—as he would be first-rate at wrestling and the discus.

The original statue of Lysippus was in bronze; there is a marble copy in the Vatican. Pliny narrates that the statue was brought from Greece by Agrippa to adorn the baths he built for the people, and that the Emperor Tiberius so admired it that he carried it off to his palace, but was forced to restore it by the outcries of the populace the next time he appeared in public.

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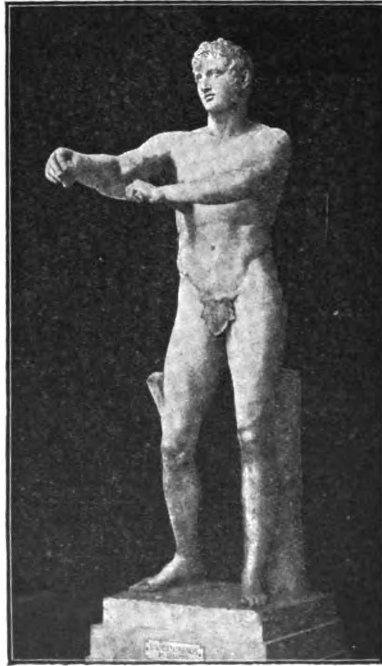
The reason this athlete strikes a modern eye as so perfect a type is that we find in him what we do not see even in the Discobolus of Myron, the thoroughbred knees and ankles of the born runner. With all his splendid strength, the Apoxyomenus is perfectly made for speed over short distances; he would be too heavy for long distances; but nowhere among the most famous masterpieces do we see the long-distance runner specialized as we know him.

It is interesting to learn that Lysippus was one of the first sculptors who attempted to modify the canon of athletic proportions worked out by Polycletus. In seeking this modification he is said to have introduced a smaller head and a slimness of the arms and legs which gave a greater lightness to the figure. But the slimness of limb, or, rather, the appearance of lightness of limb, was gained chiefly by making the joints, especially the knees and ankles, more delicate. And it is precisely this modification that renders the Apoxyomenus so pleasing to us as an athletic type. He is obviously a runner, whatever else he may be, and most of us know the runner when we see him, few the wrestler or the discus-thrower; and it is the runner's points we miss in the Discobolus at Rest, for instance, and in the Athlete with the Diadem.



THE ATHLETE WITH A STRIGIL.
From a Photo. by Sommer.

It is said of Lysippus that, though he studied the works of Polycletus, he found himself compelled to abandon "the dignity and repose by which the older masters suggested the possession of physical power in favour of new attitudes in which the exercise of physical power should be made apparent by its effects on the body and on the face." For this reason he was fond of studies of Hercules, who could always be represented under the effects of his huge labours Yet his type of athlete, curiously enough, was farther than those of Polycletus and Myron from the "mere strong man."

The Apoxyomenus represents an athlete scraping the oil from his extended right arm. The trainer of ancient Greece was a believer in anointing the athlete with oil as a means to suppleness; in fact, he was called the "aleiptes," or anointer. The statue expresses most beautifully the happy vigour, the delicious semi-languor of an athlete in perfect condition, not tired but fresh after exacting exercise. The small round head, with its close curls and beautiful round face, is slightly withdrawn from the outstretched arm in a most attractive poise. And the whole figure is redolent of the "contagious pleasantness" so characteristic of the Greek athletic youth in bronze and stone.

The athletic points of the figure are the thick, round chest, not too broad, the hips broad and powerful but not heavy, the tapering of the trunk to the waist, the fine outward sweep of the thighs and lower legs, and the straight line inside the leg from thigh to ankle. No doubt the tapering of the trunk was another attempt at lightness, but it is very true to athletic perfection as we see it. Minor but telling points are the small, quick wrists and the manly, capable hands; the thin, shapely, yet capable feet, with the arched instep, betokening springiness and lightness of tread. It is a pity Lysippus has not given us, or we have not inherited from him, such another athlete represented in motion, starting for a race or in the act of running, to be a companion statue for Myron's Discobolus.

The artist who made the swift strength of the Athlete with the Strigil is supposed also to have evolved that type of colossal, heavy strength of which the most notable example is the Farnese Hercules of Glycon in the Museum at Naples. This Herculean type is not athletic according to the Greek ideal of beauty and strength combined. A man built on such lines would hardly have been suited even to the competition at the Olympic

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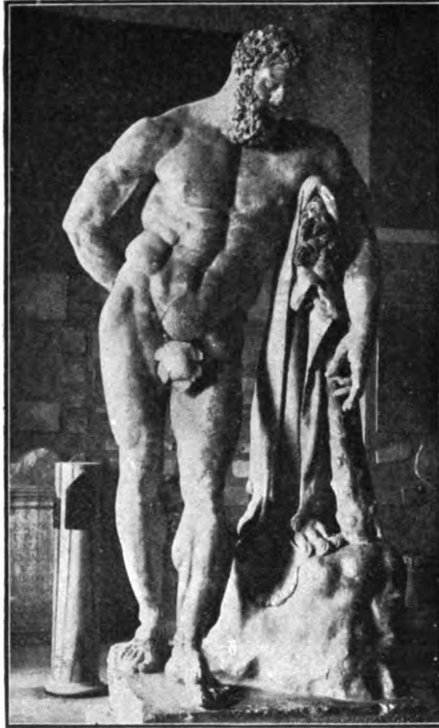
games called the "pancratium," a combination of boxing and wrestling. Victory in this contest was reserved for men of the greatest strength, but the skill and adroitness required in boxing and wrestling would put out of court mere unwieldy muscle.

The boxing, at any rate, was scientific and skilful; the boxers were not allowed to bind their hands with leathern straps, much less to wear the cruel cestus, a binding of iron-studded straps, of Roman times. Armed with a Roman cestus, the Farnese Hercules, reduced to mortal dimensions, would have been a terrible adversary if allowed to plant one blow home; but in skilful boxing such muscular development as his would be far too slow.

As an athlete he might have been a champion lifter of heavy weights, but not much else. In a boat, with all his strength he would scarcely have pulled his own weight. He is, of course, a representation of the colossal strength, slow and persistent, that accomplished the colossal labours of the legends. He is a deity-hero, not beautiful but imposing. In his right hand he holds the golden apples of the Hesperides, indicating the accomplishment of the eleventh of the labours imposed on him by King Eurystheus, and leans weary upon his club. The whole figure seems to represent, in some degree, the exhaustion of great muscular strength.



THE FARNESE HERCULES.
From a Photo. by Sommer.

But the effort of the artist to express muscular strength is overstrained; those huge, bulging muscles seem almost as though they had been riveted on to the frame in gnarled lumps. The suggestion of heavy contraction of the muscles in an attitude of weariness and repose is incongruous, though this would not seem a defect were Hercules lifting his club for a gigantic blow, or even intending to do so.

Huge as are the thighs and calves of the figure, they are scarcely powerful enough for the huge trunk they support. The hips seem not broad enough in comparison with the chest. And the trunk strikes one as not only too heavy, but too long for the legs. It is a grand and imposing statue, but as a type of the sheer "strong man" it cannot be compared with the bronze athlete found in the Tiber, and now in one of the museums in Rome.

More in keeping with the ideal of strength required in the "pancratium" are the two figures of the famous Wrestlers in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. But struggling on the ground, as shown in this group, was not allowed in the Olympic games. Wrestling both among the Greeks and the Romans was held in much higher estimation than it is by us; indeed, with them it seems to have been the favourite athletic exercise.

The methods of the Greek and Roman wrestlers appear not to have differed much, but the Romans characteristically, as also in boxing, allowed all sorts of cruel practices which were not tolerated in Greece—at least, in the great games. If a combatant in the "pancratium" killed his adversary he was not only disqualified, but severely punished. The Roman wrestler in the public games was honoured all the more if he succeeded in maiming or killing his adversary. One esteemed trick was to seize your opponent's fingers and bend them back till broken; another, to choke him by encircling his neck with your arm from behind, or else by pressing up his chin with your elbow; in fact, the greatest brutality was the highest art. But wrestling was also practised in Rome, as in Greece, as a pastime.

The popularity of the exercise may be judged from the name "palæstra," or wrestling-ground, given to the open-air gymnasium,

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From a] THE WRESTLERS IN THE UFFIZI GALLERY. [Photo.

The body of the wrestler was anointed with oil, and then sprinkled with sand or dust to give a grip.

The Wrestlers of the Uffizi Gallery are not regarded as quite satisfactory because the heads do not belong to the original and the greater part of the legs and arms is modern : the right arm of the man who seems to be victorious is supposed to be erroneously restored. But both figures are fine specimens of the heavy-weight athlete who is not ponderous. The build and the limbs are massive, but well within the limits of activity. The victor displays a splendid breadth of back, with its large folds of muscle on each side of the spine, making a rivulet in between : muscles not knotty or angular, but sweeping and round. He is admirably shaped, too, in the small of the back and the flanks, and has a magnificent thigh. The interlocking of the thighs and ankles catches the eye at once.

The man underneath is turning a wary head, and, while straining tensely up from the ground against the downward pressure of his opponent, present or expected, is alert in every muscle to reverse the position. The wary strain of both men is finely suggested : one is forcing, the other resisting, yet with that reserve of force or resistance which the wrestler must warily maintain lest his own effort carry too far and be turned against him by his adversary.

Two statues which have no direct connection with purely athletic ideals, and less with one another, but which are not without athletic interest, are the immortal Apollo Belvidere and the Dying Gaul.

The Apollo is famous for the disdainful beauty of his head and face, the divine dignity of his attitude, and the exquisite perfection of his proportions. It has been said that in him the perfect beauty of man and of woman are blended and spiritualized to make the god. But from the antique statues he has been selected by one of the best-known judges of rowing, in special contrast to the "strong man" of exaggerated muscle, as a perfect type of what the heavy-weight oarsman should be. He is the sun-god terrifying with his ægis the enemies of his client city; but his great shapely shoulders, back, and hips, and the sweep and freedom of his limbs, are of the athlete.

THE APOLLO BELVIDERE.
From a Photo. by D. Anderson.

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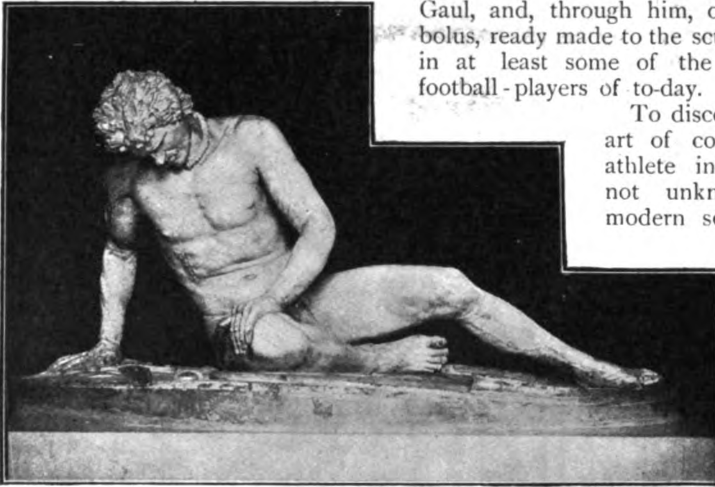
The Dying Gaul as a work of art is celebrated as an expression of the pathos of manly death, and the meaning of the marble has been immortalized by Byron. But whether a warrior or a gladiator, he is distinctly an athlete, and most interesting, because he represents the athlete of Northern Europe as distinguished from, or identified with, the athlete of Greece and Olympia. If not a Gallic warrior but a gladiator, he might be a Dacian or a German, and he might in truth be an Englishman. Yet, set the round Greek head upon his shoulders and he differs scarcely at all from the Greek prizeman, the Discobolus of Myron. He is less rounded-off, a trifle angular, perhaps, in comparison with the Greek type, but he has the same freedom and length of limb, the same union of strength and activity.



From a Photo. by] THE DYING GAUL. [*Sommer.*

Suppose him an Anglo-Saxon, and might he not be an elder brother of the youthful English athlete of whom Walter Pater has written that "in England also, in Oxford, we have still, for any master of such art (the art of the Greek sculptor of athletes) that may be given to us, subjects truly 'made to his hand'"? You may see, too, if your eye can penetrate and abolish the unsightly shirt and knickers, the hideous shin-guard and boot, all that is athletic of the Gaul, and, through him, of the Discobolus, ready made to the sculptor's hand, in at least some of the professional football-players of to-day.

To discover that the art of congealing the athlete into bronze is not unknown among modern sculptors, one need only visit the Tate Gallery in London and look at the two beautiful statues by Lord Leighton, "The Athlete Struggling with a Python" and "The Sluggard."

It is difficult for the lay or, shall we say, the athletic eye to detect wherein the former statue is inferior to anything among the antiques. It represents an athlete struggling in the folds of a huge snake, yet not so huge as to destroy our hope that the man may win. With his right hand driven at arm's length he grips the serpent's neck and holds off the gaping fangs. The tail of the beast is hooked round his right ankle, and its length passing between his legs coils over his left thigh and then round the small of his back, and then clings up his right side to the angle of the arm-pit and along the extended right arm. With his left arm behind his back he is trying to release his body from the coil.

ATHLETE STRUGGLING WITH A PYTHON.—BY LEIGHTON.
From a Photo. by Ellis & Hayward.

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The figure of the athlete is magnificent, the perfection of agile strength, deep-chested, lissom, and muscular, with most adequate thighs and legs. Every muscle and every proper vein and sinew stands out to the eye, not exaggerated, but perfectly expressive of the tension of the struggle. The composition of the statue strikes one as most artistic in this, that the strain against the circling coils is in all directions: the powerful legs are set firmly wide apart, the arms press opposite ways, and the whole body strains, it seems, all ways at once.

Such a centrifugal struggle, so to speak, justifies the contraction and stress of every fibre of the body. And the anatomy of the figure is said to be remarkable in truth. In physical beauty the athlete might be compared to the Adorante, trained and more muscular and with more capable legs.

THE SLUGGARD.—BY LEIGHTON.
From a Photo. by Ellis & Hayward.

"The Sluggard" is beautiful as such, expressive of a youth sleepily stretching himself with head inclined over one arm doubled up towards it with open hand, while the other arm is doubled higher over the other shoulder with clenched fist. The mingled tension and relaxation of the "stretch" is admirable. But in the sluggard wakened against his will there is the athlete, and the athlete of a type interesting particularly because not found in the more famous antiques; the deep chest, spare frame, and light limbs, though the legs are, perhaps, not too light, are those of the long-distance runner.

MERCURY IN REPOSE.
From a Photo. by Sommer.

Here we have the youth who might have won the long race at Olympia, about three miles. Over such a distance the Athlete with the Strigil, one conjectures, would not have lived with him, for the former is built for pace, the latter for stamina, as these terms are applied in running. The Sluggard would move with the long stride, easy and unhurried, and the lift from the back of the thighs; the other with the gripping front foot, the pull from the front leg, as well as with the quick push from the rear foot, of the sprinter.

Among the antiques, perhaps the statues most in harmony with the type to which one refers the athleticism of long-distance running are the much-admired bronzes of Naples, the Mercury in Repose and the two so-called Discoboli.

Mercury is, of course, a god, and the messenger of the gods, with his winged sandals bound to his ankles. But he has the wayfaring foot and the sturdy lightness of build of the distance-runner. Perhaps he is just too sturdy for the long-distance type, and might be a better competitor in the "diaulus" at Olympia, about a quarter-mile; still, he would not be a sprinting quarter-miler, but the runner of any distance from that to a full mile. He has the hips and back almost of the sprinter, but the legs are the striding legs of the miler.

The bronze Discoboli, so-called, of Naples

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ONE OF THE BRONZE DISCOBOLI OF NAPLES.
From a Photo. by Sommer.

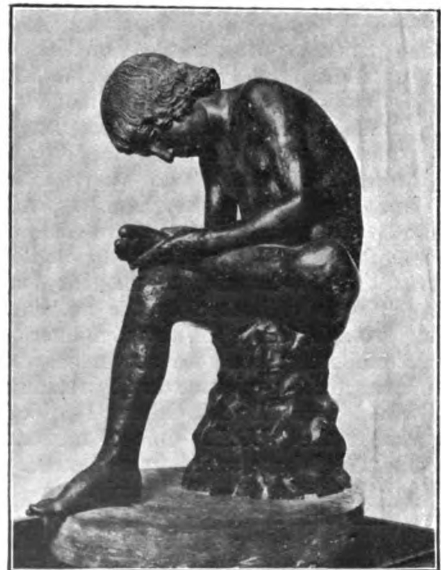
have been variously interpreted. They may be discus-throwers watching intently the flight of the missile now well on its way, having followed on to the left foot advanced again after the stride of the right foot, with which, it seems, the discus was thrown. Or they may be wrestlers about to engage, which would account equally well for the intent, watchful look on the faces, the attitude of the bodies, and the position of arms and hands, and better for the fact that there are two of them, both in the same attitude. They are not on the mark ready to start for a race, because the arms are incorrectly held for this; in starting the natural position is for the arm on the side of the advanced foot to be advanced with it, while the other is withdrawn behind the body. But they remind one closely of high-jumpers with eyes fixed on the bar and stooping to gather momentum for the run up to it: the hands and arms are right for this. The figures are probably, however, of wrestlers about to engage.

But with their long, clean limbs and light, strong build they make excellent types of the long-distance runner. They have the proper leg and back. No doubt the lightness of the figures and their slimness of limb are meant to express youth. But imagine them a little older, with the same bodies, and they are three-milers to the life, or rather better than life.

Younger than these is the Spinario, the boy drawing a thorn from his foot, a figure famous not only for its artistic beauty, but for its preservation in the real antique bronze. He, too, has been variously explained. In the Capitoline Museum he is called the Shepherd Martius, and one story made for him is that he was a shepherd boy who, having been sent to reconnoitre an enemy, returned from his errand without stopping to extract a thorn which had wounded his foot. Others have seen in him a boy-athlete who has finished the course before extracting the thorn; or one who stopped in the middle of the race for this purpose.

It has been remarked that there is nothing athletic about him and that the subject is pastoral and arcadian. But at his boyish years he might be an athlete without showing it; he would be just a boy, not a miniature to scale of the muscled Apoxyomenus. Pater sets him beside "the larger, the full-grown, physical perfection of the Discobolus, one of whose alert younger brethren he may be."

He may well have been a competitor in the races for boys at the games, and might have won, for his shapely, half-grown limbs and smooth, spare frame are those of the true boy-athlete. At any rate, he is extracting the thorn very carefully, with lips pursed for the delicate work like one threading a needle with a tiny eye.



THE SPINARIO.
From a Photo. by D. Anderson.

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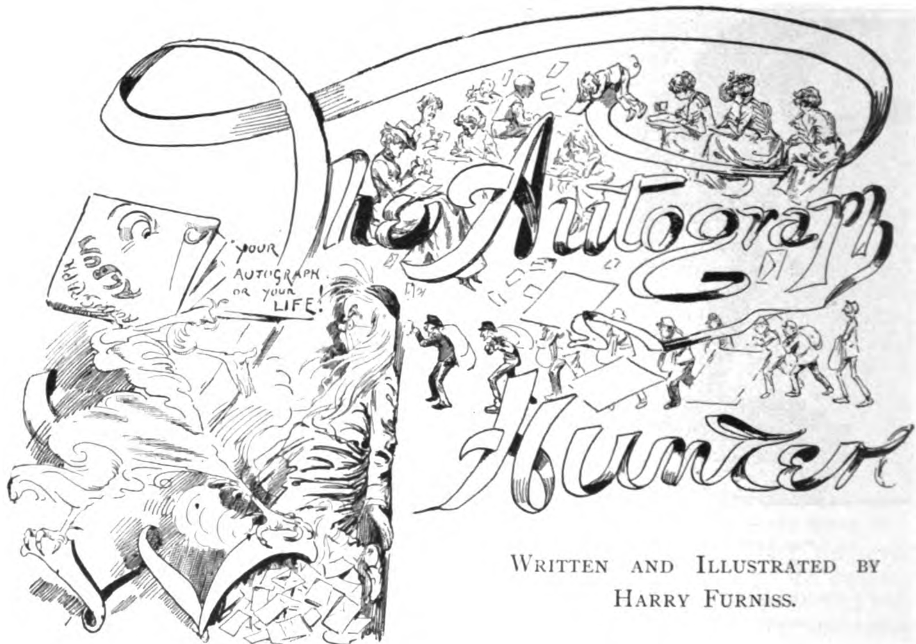

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRY FURNISS.

IS there any inoculation possible to avert autograph fever? It is a disease always prevalent in the United States, but of late years has become quite an epidemic in England. Tattooing the patient's own autograph on the arm suggests itself to a Pasteur of graphology. The worst of this disease is that it is not painful to those attacked by it, but punishes those they correspond with. In the case of those who worry artists for sketches as well as autographs, a picture might be pin-pricked on the arm as well, to cure them of pin-pricking their fellow-creatures. It is flattering to me that I am being constantly hunted by the autograph fiend. And in return for the compliment I do not hesitate to send an autograph when the hunter accompanies the dart by a stamped and directed envelope. Others I quickly dispatch to the W.P.B. One of the latter just to hand I have saved from destruction to keep as a curiosity—after fumigation—for its contents are startling :—

"Sick Room, Monkton School.

"DEAR SIR,—A squad of us are down with German measles, and we are trying to run a 'Monkton Measles Chronicle' to cheer us up a bit. Can you very kindly send us something for this week's number? We are trying to make it funny, and a little sketch from you would be awfully jolly.

"Yours truly,

"THE OCCUPANTS OF THE SICK ROOM.

"Please send answer to the Editor, 'Monkton Measles Chronicle,' etc."

The funniest description of an autograph was given at my own house. My daughter was entertaining some little girls at tea when I overheard the following conversation between two of her small guests :—

Winnie (aged eleven): "Do you collect autographs?"

Girlie (aged nine): "No, I would not collect them on any account; they are nasty, horrid things."

Winnie: "I don't think you know what an autograph is."

Girlie: "Oh, yes, I do. It's a nasty, green, slimy thing that grows in water."

Well, it is quite as difficult to get "a green, slimy" actinia off a rock under water as it is to get an autograph off some celebrities. Those whom the autograph hunter chases are generally very busy people indeed.

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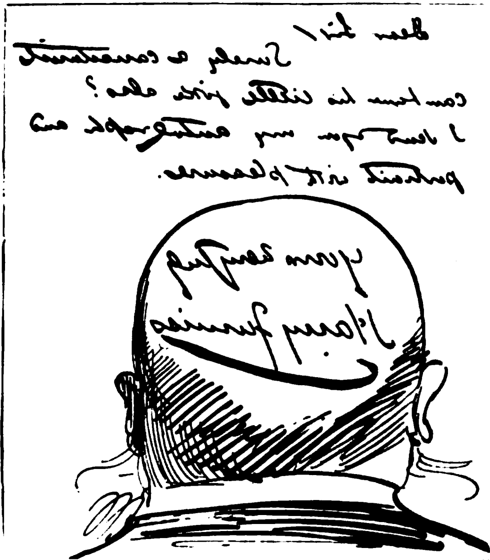

MY LITTLE JOKE.

Still, not too busy to sign their names, provided a stamped and addressed envelope is sent with the request. Some of those hunted are humorists, others are practical, others eccentric. Mr. Dan Leno is a humorist unequalled on the boards, and, judging from a note I received from a schoolboy a short time ago, he carries his jokes on just as successfully in private life: "Dear Sir,—Will you kindly favour me with your autograph, and, if not asking too much, will you add a funny little sketch? You must not be as funny as Mr. Dan Leno, for in reply to my request he sent his autograph, as he always does, by telegraph!" But I had my little joke with the little stranger who asked me for a little sketch. My reply was something like the above, which a looking-glass will render legible.

The practical side of giving autographs cannot be better illustrated than by the system practised, and, I believe, originated, by Miss Ellen Terry. The hunter must send a shilling (or is it half a crown?) for Miss Terry's charity fund, and the delightful actress's autograph is received in return. A cheap bargain for the hunter, and an excellent idea of this clever and charitable lady. The eccentric list is a long one. To illustrate the pretty side of eccentricity, and at the same time the difficulty there is in obtaining some autographs, I cannot do better than refer my reader to the following incident which was recently reported as follows: "Autograph hunters are very keen about getting the Sultan's signature. It is said that both the German Emperor and the Duke of Edinburgh tried in vain. But a few days ago the Sultan entertained the American Minister, his wife, and daughters at dinner, and, at the request of Mrs. Leishman, wrote his signature on her fan. It was only scribbled in pencil, and the next day he sent for the fan, on the pretence of rewriting it in ink. But on its return it was found that the pencil marks had been carefully erased, and a tiny 'A. H.' (Abdul Hamid) set in diamonds had taken its place." It is interesting to note that where a German Emperor and an English Duke had failed, those from the country of autograph hunters succeeded.

In America one is besieged by autograph collectors perfectly startling in their persistency. On arrival at the hall or theatre to give an entertainment, one finds a row of autograph books and their owners waiting for your autograph. Some books are too precious to be left, so the owner calls personally at your hotel; many appeals are sent through the post. Others have their appeal printed in neat type. Here is a specimen. Complimentary to a degree; but what the sender means by "something better than an autograph" is somewhat vague. A photograph, however, will suffice if—as I take it the writer infers—one has not a full-length portrait in oils ready to be dispatched immediately to Texas. This reminds me that a cousin of mine in South Africa when on a visit to England asked me for my

5: 30 1892

Mr Harry Furniss
23 St Edmunds Terrace
Regents Park
London Eng

Dear Sir

I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO PLACE A LETTER OR OTHER PAPER WRITTEN BY YOU IN MY COLLECTION OF AUTOGRAPHS. SOMETHING BETTER THAN THE SIGNATURE ALONE WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. A PHOTOGRAPH OR PORTRAIT ALSO, IF YOU CAN SPARE ONE, WOULD ADD VERY MUCH TO THE INTEREST OF THE COLLECTION.

SINCERELY YOURS,

AN AMERICAN AUTOGRAPH-HUNTER'S FORM OF APPLICATION.

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photograph and autograph for his little girl. "I have brought you cousin Harry's portrait and autograph," he told her on his return to Africa.

"Oh, we have had them, father, for ever so long."

"Indeed! Where?"

"Just come up to the nursery. He is framed there, and his portrait is signed by himself."

In all earnestness my cousin was shown by his children an advertisement (which was, unknown to me, taken for that purpose by the proprietors of a soap, from a drawing of mine in *Punch*): "I used your soap two years ago; since then I have used no other."

COUSIN HARRY

A FAMILY PORTRAIT OF MYSELF.

The most extraordinary autograph I was ever presented with (I never asked for one in my life) was years ago while making a sketch of the most beautiful actress of that time—Mrs. Rousby. She was afraid I would miss one of the points upon which she greatly prided herself—her small and exquisitely-formed ears; and in order that I might do full justice to them she took a plaster cast of one of them out of a case in her dressing-room, and previous to presenting it to me wrote her autograph upon it. This was in 1876, when Tom Taylor's accomplished *protégée*, although still very beautiful, was quickly losing the ear of the public.

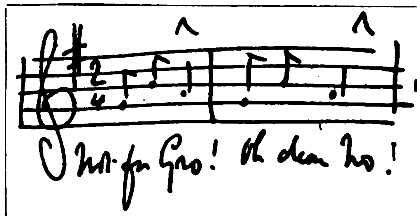
Judging from the number of autograph-hunters' books I have looked through, actresses are very easily scalped of theirs. Even I who never ask have frequently been honoured by them. Miss Mary Anderson sent me a photograph of Mr. Watts's beautiful portrait of her, with her autograph on the back.

Mrs. Brown Potter writes much in the same bold style, and gracefully knelt at the table in her dressing-room at Her Majesty's Theatre during the run of "The Three Musketeers" as she flattered me—and spelt my name wrongly! By the way, nearly all actresses write a bold hand. Talk

"MRS. BROWN POTTER FLATTERED ME—AND SPELT MY NAME WRONGLY."

"SET TO MUSIC"—SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

of "filling the stage," I cannot recall any of our charming actresses—particularly those hailing from America—that would not fill a paper equal in size to the largest stage with their autograph alone!



"SET TO MUSIC"—MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH.

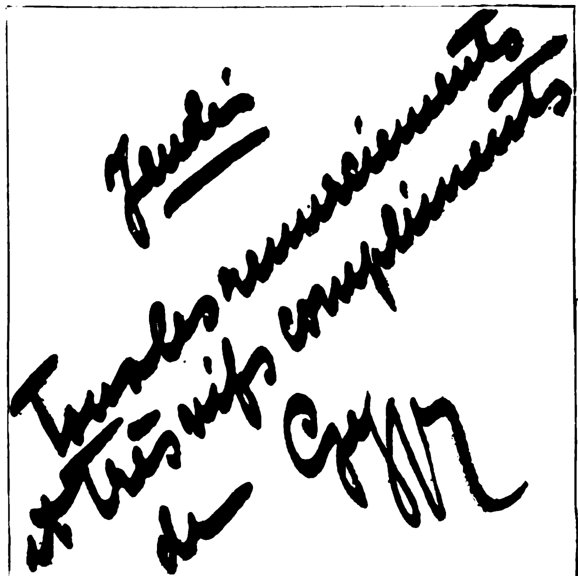
Not so with the critics. The critical mind is content in writing the most modest and neatest of hands. Writers of all kinds, as a rule, write the smallest, even the cynic. Taking one at haphazard, I find an autograph of George Bernard Shaw, which fully illustrates this fact. It is, however, not so eccentric as the writer of it. Eccentric autographs often emanate from the artistic mind. The artist embellishes his with a sketch to the musician, who returns his set to music, from the seriously clever Sir Alexander Mackenzie to the ever humorous George Grossmith.

Authoresses run actresses very hard in their eccentricity in writing. The Comtesse de Martel, better known by her *nom de plume* "Gyp," writes very much the same hand as the fair actress whose letter I have just referred to. Here is a facsimile of a note written by that charming authoress to her London publisher.

I came across the following in an "appreciation" of "Gyp": "She is always very witty, outspoken, human, occasionally impertinent, and frequently flippant." And I venture to say that you need not be a graphologist to read the truth of this by one glance at her autograph. I must not, however, introduce autographs in general; I am merely in this short chapter dealing with a few of personal interest to myself.

The common practice of signing menus at public dinners is a modern nuisance also copied from America. To have to sign dozens of cards after one has sat through a long dinner and dreary speeches is anything but a pleasant occupation to wind up with.

I shall never forget one request for my autograph. I was playing lawn tennis on the lawn of a country house — a real match for a prize. It was the semi-final, and the score was "love all"; I was the favourite. Excitement ran high. I was opposed by the youngest daughter, aged twelve, and had only her uncle, an M.P., with a poor idea of the game, to meet in the final. I had just defeated one of the young ladies who gave me thirty, and the German governess who



"GYP'S" AUTOGRAPH.

A LITTLE INCIDENT AT LORD'S.

played me even, when at that critical moment the head gardener, Mr. MacPherson, walked straight on to the tennis lawn with his autograph book wrapped up in tissue paper, and, provided with a gardener's pencil — something like a builder's—about an inch wide, and having a stubby point one-eighth of an inch long, there and then demanded my autograph, "with just a wee bit of the face of the Grand Old Man."

I lost the match.

Sketching at Lord's one Eton and Harrow match day some years ago, a sheet of my sketch-book fell out. A very young lady I had just sketched picked it up. "Will you kindly sign this and give it to me?" Could I refuse after her politeness in bringing it to me? But these are trifles among the trials of those autographically hunted.

I have discovered a not very uncommon manœuvre of the autograph collector, who, finding that writing for autographs does not always meet with a response, writes to ask some business question: the price of a picture; your fee to give an entertainment; and may, in fact, should his family be collectors too, carry on a correspondence till the autographs are obtained. Then one hears no more. This cool impertinence I have known carried still further. Some artists cannot resist adorning their letters with sketches. To obtain that sketch requires more careful fishing on the part of the stranger. The sport to him is, therefore, all the greater. On more than one occasion I have received letters from well-to-do strangers asking me to accept a commission for a drawing.

"A slight sketch of the subject will oblige." I take the bait; the *slight* subject sketch is sent, and there the correspondence ceases. But my sketch is not returned. I have a letter to this effect which may explain the reason why. It is adorned with a coat of arms and three separate addresses after the following fashion:—

"Hav'em Hall, Do'emshire.
"The Rookery, Chislehurst.
"6, Bounder Court, Mayfair.

"SIR,—Lady Sharper and I have changed our minds. We fear your price for the drawing is more than we care to give; and as we only wanted a specimen of your work for our collection, you will be glad to learn

ROBBERY IN A FRAME.

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that we have decided to frame your autograph letter, including the sketch."

The frame-maker at least earns something for his family.

One should be careful in sending an autograph. For instance, a pretty little note from "Miss May Melrose" or from "Miss Lottie Lightfoot," written on primrose-tinted paper, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope—care of The Creamery, West End Villas, Highgate—is not always from an enthusiastic young lady in her teens who is, in spite of her parents' protests, collecting the autographs of celebrities. It is just possible that that flattering little note is penned in the coffee-shop or public-house next door to the "Creamery" by a thorough-paced blackguard, who either sells the autograph or, worse still, uses your signature to rob you or yours. It is therefore most unwise to sign your autograph carelessly in the centre of paper.

THE YOUNG LADY IN HER TEENS.

What is to prevent "Miss May" or "Miss Lottie"—in other words, the practised thief; as practised, no doubt, in imitating handwriting as an Ireland or a Pigott—placing over your signature "I O U," or even something more elaborate, to be presented to your executors after your death, if not actually manipulated at once? It is, therefore, well to bear this in mind, and when writing your signature do not leave a space above it, but place it well on the top of the page. A safe form is as follows: "Mr. S—— has much pleasure in complying with the request for his autograph." (Here sign the name.)

There can be no hanky-panky tricks played with that.

"MISS MAY MELROSE."

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BILL'S LAPSE

BY W. W. JACOBS

STRENGTH and good-nature—said the night-watchman, musingly, as he felt his biceps—strength and good-nature always go together. Sometimes you find a strong man who is not good-natured, but then, as everybody he comes in contack with is, it comes to the same thing.

The strongest and kindest-'earted man I ever come across was a man o' the name of Bill Burton, a shipmate of Ginger Dick's. For that matter 'e was a shipmate o' Peter Russet's and old Sam Small's too. Not over and above tall; just about my height, his arms was like another man's legs for size, and 'is chest and his back and shoulders might ha' been made for a giant. And with all that he'd got a soft blue eye like a gal's (blue's my favourite colour for gals' eyes), and a nice, soft, curly brown beard. He was an A.B., too, and that showed 'ow good-natured he was, to pick up with firemen.

He got so fond of 'em that when they was all paid off from the *Ocean King* he asked to be allowed to join them in taking a room ashore. It pleased everybody, four coming cheaper than three, and Bill being that good-tempered that 'e'd put up with anything, and when any of the three quarrelled he used to act the part of peacemaker.

The only thing about 'im that they didn't like was that 'e was a teetotaler. He'd go into public-'ouses with 'em, but he wouldn't drink; leastways, that is to say, he wouldn't drink beer, and Ginger used to say that it made 'im feel uncomfortable to see Bill put away a bottle o' lemonade every time they 'ad a drink. One night arter 'e had 'ad seventeen bottles he could 'ardly get home, and Peter Russet, who knew a lot about pills and such-like, pointed out to 'im 'ow bad it was for his constitushon. He proved that the lemonade would eat away the coats o' Bill's stomach, and that if 'e kept on 'e might drop down dead at any moment.

That frightened Bill a bit, and the next night, instead of 'aving lemonade, 'e had five bottles o' stone ginger-beer, six of different kinds of teetotal beer, three of soda-water, and two cups of coffee. I'm not counting the drink he 'ad at the chemist's shop arterwards, because he took that as medicine, but he was so queer in 'is inside next morning that 'e began to be afraid he'd 'ave to give up drink altogether.

He went without the next night, but 'e was such a generous man that 'e would pay

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every fourth time, and there was no pleasure to the other chaps to see 'im pay and 'ave nothing out of it. It spoilt their evening, and owing to 'aving only about 'arf wot they was accustomed to they all got up very disagreeable next morning.

"Why not take just a *little* beer, Bill?" asks Ginger.

Bill 'ung his 'ead and looked a bit silly. "I'd rather not, mate," he ses, at last. "I've been teetotal for eleven months now."

"Think of your 'ealth, Bill," ses Peter Russet; "your 'ealth is more important than the pledge. Wot made you take it?"

Bill coughed. "I 'ad reasons," he ses, slowly. "A mate o' mine wished me to."

"He ought to ha' known better," ses Sam.

"He 'ad 'is reasons," ses Bill.

"Well, all I can say is, Bill," ses Ginger, "all I can say is, it's very disobligin' of you."

"Disobligin'?" ses Bill, with a start; "don't say that, mate."

"I must say it," ses Ginger, speaking very firm.

"You needn't take a lot, Bill," ses Sam; "nobody wants you to do that. Just drink in moderation, same as wot we do."

"It gets into my 'ead," ses Bill, at last.

"Well, and wot of it?" ses Ginger; "it gets into everybody's 'ead occasionally. Why, one night old Sam 'ere went up behind a policeman and tickled 'im under the arms; didn't you, Sam?"

"I did nothing o' the kind," ses Sam, firing up.

"Well, you was fined ten bob for it next morning, that's all I know," ses Ginger.

"I was fined ten bob for punching 'im," ses old Sam, very wild. "I never tickled a policeman in my life. I never thought o' such a thing. I'd no more tickle a policeman than I'd fly. Anybody that ses I did is a liar. Why should I? Where does the sense come in? Wot should I want to do it for?"

"All right, Sam," ses Ginger, sticking 'is fingers in 'is ears, "you didn't, then."

"No, I didn't," ses Sam, "and don't you forget it. This ain't the fust time you've told that lie about me. I can take a joke with any man; but anybody that goes and ses I tickled——"

"All *right*," ses Ginger and Peter Russet together. "You'll 'ave tickled policeman on the brain if you ain't careful, Sam," ses Peter.

Old Sam sat down growling, and Ginger Dick turned to Bill agin. "It gets into everybody's 'ead at times," he ses, "and where's the 'arm? It's wot it was meant for."

Bill shook his 'ead, but when Ginger called 'im disobligin' agin he gave way and he broke the pledge that very evening with a pint o' six 'arf.

Ginger was surprised to see the way 'e took his liquor. Arter three or four pints he'd expected to see 'im turn a bit silly, or sing, or do something o' the kind, but Bill kept on as if 'e was drinking water.

"Think of the 'armless pleasure you've been losing all these months, Bill," ses Ginger, smiling at him.

Bill said it wouldn't bear thinking of, and, the next place they came to he said some rather 'ard things of the man who'd persuaded 'im to take the pledge. He 'ad two or three more there, and then they began to see that it was beginning to have an effect on 'im. The first one that noticed it was Ginger Dick. Bill 'ad just lit 'is pipe, and as he threw the match down he ses: "I don't like these 'ere safety matches," he ses.

"Don't you, Bill?" ses Ginger. "I do, rather."

"Oh, you do, do you?" ses Bill, turning on 'im like lightning; "well, take that for contradictin'," he ses, an' he gave Ginger a smack that nearly knocked his 'ead off.

It was so sudden that old Sam and Peter put their beer down and stared at each other as if they couldn't believe their eyes. Then they stooped down and helped pore Ginger on to 'is legs agin and began to brush 'im down.

"Never mind about 'im, mates," ses Bill, looking at Ginger very wicked. "P'r'aps he won't be so ready to give me 'is lip next time. Let's come to another pub and enjoy ourselves."

Sam and Peter followed 'im out like lambs, 'ardly daring to look over their shoulder at Ginger, who was staggering arter them some distance behind a 'olding a handkerchief to 'is face.

"It's your turn to pay, Sam," ses Bill, when they'd got inside the next place. "Wot's it to be? Give it a name."

"Three 'arf pints o' four ale, miss," ses Sam, not because 'e was mean, but because it wasn't 'is turn.

"Three wot?" ses Bill, turning on 'im.

"Three pots o' six ale, miss," ses Sam, in a hurry.

"That wasn't wot you said afore," ses Bill. "Take that," he ses, giving pore old Sam a wipe in the mouth and knocking 'im over a stool; "take that for your sauce."

Peter Russet stood staring at Sam and wondering wot Bill ud be like when he'd

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'ad a little more. Sam picked hisself up arter a time and went outside to talk to Ginger about it, and then Bill put 'is arm round Peter's neck and began to cry a bit and say 'e was the only pal he'd got left in the world. It was very awkward for Peter, and more awkward still when the barman came up and told 'im to take Bill outside.

"Go on," he ses, "out with 'im."

"He's all right," ses Peter, trembling; "'e's the truest-'arted gentleman in London. Ain't you, Bill?"

Bill said he was, and 'e asked the barman to go and hide 'is face because it reminded 'im of a little dog 'e had 'ad once wot 'ad died.

"You get outside afore you're hurt," ses the barman.

Bill punched at 'im over the bar, and not being able to reach 'im threw Peter's pot o' beer at 'im. There was a fearful to-do then, and the landlord jumped over the bar and stood in the doorway, whistling for the police. Bill struck out right and left, and the men in the bar went down like skittles, Peter among them. Then they got outside, and Bill, arter giving the landlord a thump in the back wot nearly made him swallow the whistle, jumped into a cab and pulled Peter Russet in arter 'im.

"BILL JUMPED INTO A CAB AND PULLED PETER RUSSET IN ARTER 'IM."

"I'll talk to you by-and-by," he ses, as the cab drove off at a gallop; "there ain't room in this cab. You wait, my lad, that's all. You just wait till we get out, and I'll knock you silly."

"Wot for, Bill?" ses Peter, staring.

"Don't you talk to me," roars Bill. "If I choose to knock you about that's my business, ain't it? Besides, you know very well."

He wouldn't let Peter say another word, but coming to a quiet place near the docks he stopped the cab and pulling 'im out gave 'im such a dressing down that Peter thought 'is last hour 'ad arrived. He let 'im go at last, and after first making him pay the cabman took 'im along till they came to a public-'ouse and made 'im pay for drinks.

They stayed there till nearly eleven o'clock, and then Bill set off home 'olding the unfortunit Peter by the scruff o' the neck, and wondering out loud whether 'e ought to pay 'im a bit more or not. Afore 'e could make up 'is mind, however, he turned sleepy, and, throwing 'imself down on the bed which was meant for the two of 'em, fell into a peaceful sleep.

Sam and Ginger Dick came in a little while arterwards, both badly marked where Bill 'ad hit them, and sat talking to Peter in whispers as to wot was to be done. Ginger, who 'ad plenty of pluck, was for them all to set on to 'im, but Sam wouldn't 'ear of it, and as for Peter he was so sore he could 'ardly move.

They all turned in to the other bed at last, 'arf afraid to move for fear of disturbing Bill, and when they woke up in the morning and see 'im sitting up in 'is bed they lay as still as mice.

"Why, Ginger, old chap," ses Bill, with a 'earty smile, "wot are you all three in one bed for?"

"We was a bit cold," ses Ginger.

"Cold?" ses Bill. "Wot, this weather? We 'ad a bit of a spree last night, old man, didn't we? My throat's as dry as a cinder."

"It ain't my idea of a spree," ses Ginger, sitting up and looking at 'im.

"Good 'eavens, Ginger!" ses Bill, starting back, "wotever 'ave you been a-doing to your

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face? Have you been tumbling off of a 'bus?"

Ginger couldn't answer; and Sam Small and Peter sat up in bed alongside of 'im, and Bill, getting as far back on 'is bed as he could, sat staring at their pore faces as if 'e was having a 'orrible dream.

"And there's Sam," he ses. "Where ever did you get that mouth, Sam?"

"Same place as Ginger got 'is eye and pore Peter got 'is face," ses Sam, grinding his teeth.

"You don't mean to tell me," ses Bill, in a sad voice — "you don't mean to tell me that I did it?"

"You know well enough," ses Ginger.

Bill looked at 'em, and 'is face got as long as a yard measure.

"I'd 'oped I'd growed out of it, mates," he ses, at last, "but drink always takes me like that. I can't keep a pal."

"You sur-prise me," ses Ginger, sarcastic-like.

"Don't talk like that, Ginger," ses Bill, 'arf crying. "It ain't my fault; it's my weakness. Wot did I do it for?"

"I don't know," ses Ginger, "but you won't get the chance of doing it agin, I'll tell you that much."

"I daresay I shall be better to-night, Ginger," ses Bill, very humble; "it don't always take me that way."

"Well, we don't want you with us any more," ses old Sam, 'olding his 'ead very high.

"You'll 'ave to go and get your beer by yourself, Bill," ses Peter Russet, feeling 'is bruises with the tips of 'is fingers.

"But then I should be worse," ses Bill. "I want cheerful company when I'm like that. I should very likely come 'ome and 'arf kill you all in your beds. You don't 'arf know wot I'm like. Last night was nothing, else I should 'ave remembered it."

"Cheerful company?" ses old Sam. "'Ow do you think company's going to be cheerful when you're carrying on like that, Bill? Why don't you go away and leave us alone?"

"Because I've got a 'art," ses Bill. "*I* can't chuck up pals in that free-and-easy way. Once I take a liking to anybody I'd do anything for 'em, and I've never met three chaps I like better than wot I do you. Three nicer, straightforrard, free-'anded mates I've never met afore."

"Why not take the pledge agin, Bill?" ses Peter Russet.

"No, mate," ses Bill, with a kind smile; "it's just a weakness, and I must try and grow out of it. I'll tie a bit o' string round my little finger to-night as a reminder."

He got out of bed and began to wash 'is face, and Ginger Dick, who was doing a bit o' thinking, gave a whisper to Sam and Peter Russet.

"All right, Bill, old man," he ses, getting out of bed and beginning to put his clothes on; "but first of all we'll try and find out 'ow the landlord is."

"Landlord?" ses Bill, puffing and blowing in the basin. "Wot landlord?"

"Why, the one you bashed," ses Ginger, with a wink at the other two. "He 'adn't got 'is senses back when me and Sam came away."

Bill gave a groan and sat on the bed while 'e dried himself, and Ginger told 'im 'ow he 'ad bent a quart pot on the landlord's 'ead, and 'ow the landlord 'ad been carried up-stairs and the doctor sent for. He began to tremble all over, and when Ginger said he'd go out and see 'ow the land lay 'e could 'ardly thank 'im enough.

Ginger was gone about two hours, and when 'e came back he looked so solemn that

"THEN 'E GOT UP AND PATTED BILL ON THE BACK, VERY GENTLE."

old Sam asked 'im whether he 'ad seen a ghost. Ginger didn't answer 'im; he set down on the side o' the bed and sat thinking.

"I s'pose—I s'pose it's nice and fresh in the streets this morning?" ses Bill at last, in a trembling voice.

Ginger started and looked at 'im. "I didn't notice, mate," he ses. Then 'e got up and patted Bill on the back, very gentle, and sat down again.

"Anything wrong, Ginger?" asks Peter Russet, staring at 'im.

"It's that landlord," ses Ginger; "there's straw down in the road outside, and they say that he's dying. Pore old Bill don't know 'is own strength. The best thing you can do, old pal, is to go as far away as you can, at once."

"I shouldn't wait a minnit if it was me," ses old Sam.

Bill groaned and hid 'is face in his 'ands, and then Peter Russet went and spoilt things by saying that the safest place for a murderer to 'ide in was London. Bill gave a dreadful groan when 'e said murderer, but 'e up and agreed with Peter, and all Sam and Ginger Dick could do wouldn't make 'im alter his mind. He said that he would shave off 'is beard and moustache, and when night came 'e would creep out and take a lodging somewhere right the other end of London.

He stayed in the bedroom all day, with the blinds down, and wouldn't eat anything, and when Ginger looked in about eight o'clock to find out whether he 'ad gone, he found 'im sitting on the bed clean shaved, and 'is face cut about all over where the razor 'ad slipped.

"It'll soon be dark," ses Ginger, "and your own brother wouldn't know you now, Bill. Where d'you think of going?"

Bill shook his 'ead. "Nobody must know that, mate," he ses. "I must go into hiding for as long as I can—as long as my money lasts; I've only got six pounds left."

"That'll last a long time if you're careful," ses Ginger.

"I want a lot more," ses Bill. "I want you to take this silver ring as a keepsake, Ginger. If I 'ad another six pounds or so I should feel much safer. 'Ow much 'ave you got, Ginger?"

"Not much," ses Ginger, shaking his 'ead.

"Lend it to me, mate," ses Bill, stretching out his 'and. "You can easy get another ship. Ah, I wish I was you; I'd be as 'appy as 'appy if I hadn't got a penny."

"I'm very sorry, Bill," ses Ginger, trying to smile, "but I've already promised to lend it to a man wot we met this evening. A promise is a promise, else I'd lend it to you with pleasure."

"Would you let me be 'ung for the sake of a few pounds, Ginger?" ses Bill, looking at 'im reproachfully. "I'm a desprit man, Ginger, and I must 'ave that money."

Afore pore Ginger could move he suddenly clapped 'is hand over 'is mouth and flung 'im on the bed. Ginger was like a child in 'is hands, although he struggled like a madman, and in five minutes 'e was laying there with a towel tied round his mouth and 'is arms and legs tied up with the cord off of Sam's chest.

"I'm very sorry, Ginger," ses Bill, as 'e took a little over eight pounds out of Ginger's pocket. "I'll pay you back one o' these days, if I can. If you'd got a rope round your neck same as I 'ave you'd do the same as I've done."

He lifted up the bedclothes and put Ginger inside and tucked 'im up. Ginger's face was red with passion and 'is eyes starting out of his 'ead.

"Eight and six is fifteen," ses Bill, and just then he 'eard somebody coming up the stairs. Ginger 'eard it, too, and as Peter Russet came into the room 'e tried all 'e could to attract 'is attention by rolling 'is 'ead from side to side.

"Why, 'as Ginger gone to bed?" ses Peter. "Wot's up, Ginger?"

"He's all right," ses Bill; "just a bit of a 'eadache."

Peter stood staring at the bed, and then 'e pulled the clothes off and saw pore Ginger all tied up, and making awful eyes at 'im to undo him.

"I 'ad to do it, Peter," ses Bill. "I wanted some more money to escape with, and 'e wouldn't lend it to me. I 'aven't got as much as I want now. You just came in in the nick of time. Another minute and you'd ha' missed me. 'Ow much 'ave you got?"

"Ah, I wish I could lend you some, Bill," ses Peter Russet, turning pale, "but I've 'ad my pocket picked; that's wot I come back for, to get some from Ginger."

Bill didn't say a word.

"You see 'ow it is, Bill," ses Peter, edging back towards the door; "three men laid 'old of me and took every farthing I'd got."

"Well, I can't rob you, then," ses Bill, catching 'old of 'im. "Whoever's money this is," he ses, pulling a handful out o' Peter's pocket, "it can't be yours. Now, if you make another sound I'll knock your 'ead off afore I tie you up."

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"Don't tie me up, Bill," ses Peter, struggling.

"I can't trust you," ses Bill, dragging 'im over to the washstand and taking up the other towel; "turn round."

Peter was a much easier job than Ginger Dick, and arter Bill 'ad done 'im 'e put 'im in alongside o' Ginger and covered 'em up, arter first tying both the gags round with some string to prevent 'em slipping.

"Mind, I've only borrowed it," he ses, standing by the side o' the bed; "but I must say, mates, I'm disappointed in both of you. If either of you 'ad 'ad the misfortune wot I've 'ad, I'd have sold the clothes off my back to 'elp you. And I wouldn't 'ave waited to be asked neither."

He stood there for a minute very sorrowful, and then 'e patted both their 'eads and went downstairs. Ginger and Peter lay listening for a bit, and then they turned their pore bound-up faces to each other and tried to talk with their eyes.

Then Ginger began to wriggle and try and twist the cords off, but 'e might as well 'ave tried to wriggle out of 'is skin. The worst of it was they couldn't make known their intentions to each other, and when Peter Russet leaned over 'im and tried to work 'is gag off by rubbing it up agin 'is nose, Ginger pretty near went crazy with temper. He banged Peter with his 'ead, and Peter banged back, and they kept it up till they'd both got splitting 'eadaches, and at last they gave up in despair and lay in the darkness waiting for Sam.

And all this time Sam was sitting in the Red Lion, waiting for them. He sat there quite patient till twelve o'clock and then walked slowly 'ome, wondering wot 'ad happened and whether Bill 'ad gone.

Ginger was the fust to 'ear 'is foot on the stairs, and as he came into the room, in the darkness, him an' Peter Russet started shaking their bed in a way that scared old Sam nearly to death. He thought it was Bill carrying on agin, and 'e was out o' that door and 'arf-way downstairs afore he stopped to take breath. He stood there trembling for about ten minutes, and then, as nothing 'appened, he walked slowly upstairs agin on tiptoe, and as soon as they heard the door creak Peter and Ginger made that bed do everything but speak.

"Is that you, Bill?" ses old Sam, in a shaky voice, and standing ready to dash downstairs agin.

There was no answer except for the bed, and Sam didn't know whether Bill was dying or whether 'e 'ad got delirium trimmings. All 'e did know was that 'e wasn't going to sleep in that room. He shut the door gently and went downstairs agin, feeling in 'is pocket for a match, and, not finding one, 'e picked out the softest stair he could find and, leaning his 'ead agin the banisters, went to sleep.

It was about six o'clock when 'e woke up, and broad daylight. He was stiff and sore all over, and feeling braver in the light 'e stepped softly upstairs and opened the door. Peter and Ginger was waiting for 'im, and as he peeped in 'e saw two things sitting up in

"'E PICKED OUT THE SOFTEST STAIR HE COULD FIND."

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bed with their 'air standing up all over like mops and their faces tied up with bandages. He was that startled 'e nearly screamed, and then 'e stepped into the room and stared at 'em as if he couldn't believe 'is eyes.

"Is that you, Ginger?" he ses. "Wot d'ye mean by making sights of yourselves like that? 'Ave you took leave of your senses?"

Ginger and Peter shook their 'eads and rolled their eyes, and then Sam see wot was the matter with 'em. Fust thing 'e did was to pull out 'is knife and cut Ginger's gag off, and the fust thing Ginger did was to call 'im every name 'e could lay his tongue to.

"You wait a moment," he screams, 'arf crying with rage. "You wait till I get my 'ands loose and I'll pull you to pieces. The idea o' leaving us like this all night, you old crocodile. I 'eard you come in. I'll pay you."

Sam didn't answer 'im. He cut off Peter Russet's gag, and Peter Russet called 'im 'arf a score o' names without taking breath.

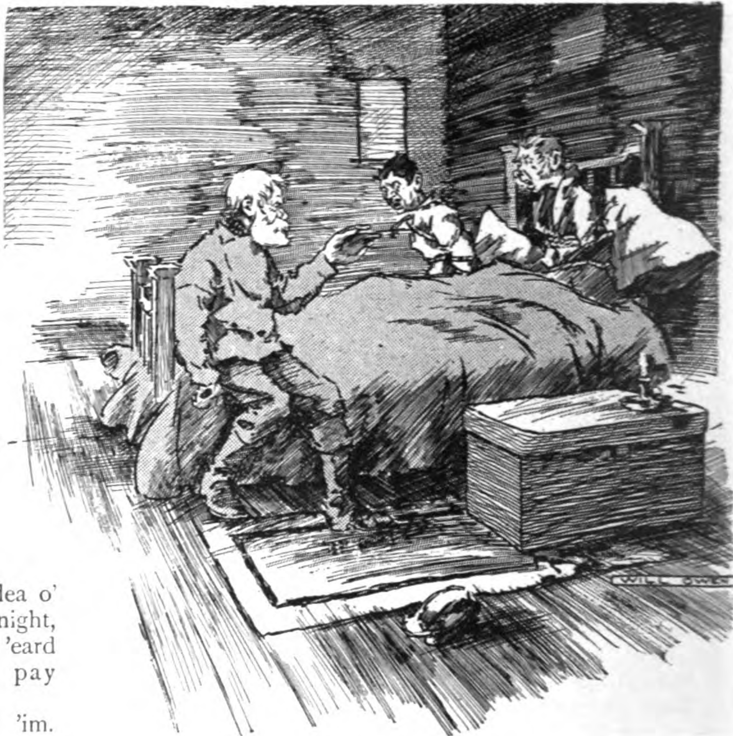
"And when Ginger's finished I'll 'ave a go at you," he ses. "Cut off these lines."

"At once, d'ye 'ear?" ses Ginger. "Oh, you wait till I get my 'ands on you."

Sam didn't answer 'em; he shut up 'is knife with a click and then 'e sat at the foot o' the bed on Ginger's feet and looked at 'em. It wasn't the fust time they'd been rude to 'im, but as a rule he'd 'ad to put up with it. He sat and listened while Ginger swore 'imself faint.

"That'll do," he ses, at last; "another word and I shall put the bedclothes over your 'ead. Afore I do anything more I want to know wot it's all about."

Peter told 'im, arter fust calling 'im some more names, because Ginger was past it, and when 'e'd finished old Sam said 'ow surprised he was at them for letting Bill do it, and told 'em how they ought to 'ave prevented it. He sat there talking as though 'e enjoyed the sound of 'is own voice, and he told Peter and Ginger all their faults and said wot



"OLD SAM SAID 'OW SURPRISED HE WAS AT THEM FOR LETTING BILL DO IT."

sorrow it caused their friends. Twice he 'ad to throw the bedclothes over their 'eads because o' the noise they was making.

"*Are—you—going—to undo—us?*" ses Ginger, at last.

"No, Ginger," ses old Sam; "in justice to myself I couldn't do it. Arter wot you've said—and arter wot I've said—my life wouldn't be safe. Besides which, you'd want to go shares in my money."

He took up 'is chest and marched downstairs with it, and about 'arf an hour arterwards the landlady's 'usband came up and set 'em free. As soon as they'd got the use of their legs back they started out to look for Sam, but they didn't find 'im for nearly a year, and as for Bill, they never set eyes on 'im agin.

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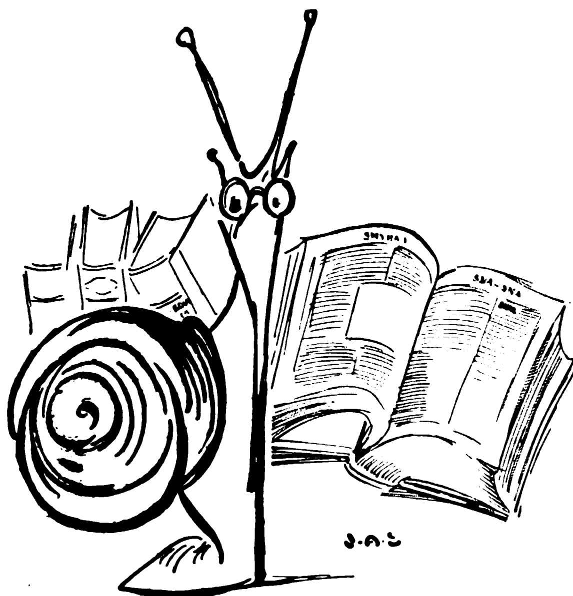
The Arcadian Calendar.

BY E. D. CUMING AND J. A. SHEPHERD.

TWO complaints have reached me concerning these papers: one (whose justice I should regretfully admit did it extend to every species of which mention has been made), that the snails have not received their meed of attention; the other, that "the writer displays an almost morbid antipathy to scientific terminology." Again I plead guilty: I feel shy in the company of these great words; do not understand them; experience none of that exaltation of spirit their society inspires in some people. But if scientific terminology be desired let us face it boldly. Limelight, please, for Miss Polly Syllabics: "The Pneumonochlamyda, represented in England by the common genus Cyclostoma, have a twisted visceral nerve-loop, an operculum on the foot, a complex rhipidoglossate or tænioglossate radula, and are of distinct sexes: they are, in fact, Ozygobranchiate Streptoneura." I know this is so, because I copied it out of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, myself; the writer is describing certain snails. The snails ought to have gone to bed for the winter by this time, closing their doors with a home-made stopper of lime-like material, which hardens quickly to keep the cold out; any snail who happens to hear such remarks as the foregoing about his relations will, no doubt, promptly retire. You remember the indignation of the Dublin apple-woman who was called a parallelogram? Let us turn to more popular themes.



"THE INDIGNANT SNAIL."

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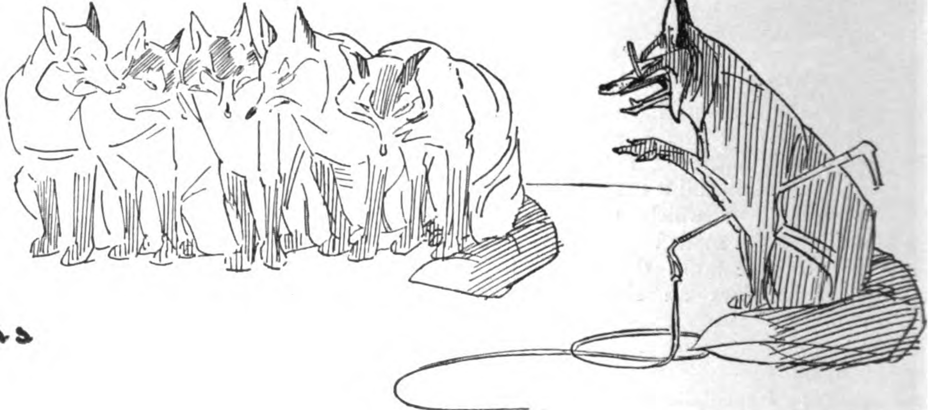
The First of November sees every vixen's son promoted. Yesterday he was a cub; to-day he is a fox and every foxhound's lawful prey. If fortunate in his parents he has received plenty of good advice, and the crowning lecture, we may suppose, was delivered last night:—

The duty of the fox is this—
To run with all celerity;
Don't dally when you hear a hound,
He speaks to let you know you're found,
And ere you can get safe to ground
Are ten—or twenty—miles to go
To that snug head of earths you know;
Start, then, with prompt temerity.

His history who tarries long
Is writ with painful brevity:
Safest the fox that runneth straight;
He who'd be master of his fate
Beginneth soon and stoppeth late.
His refuge gained, he hears men say,
"Leave him to run another day,"
With pardonable levity.



"THE DUTY OF A FOX."

If legs should fail and breath be spent,
Then use your rare sagacity.
Turn, twist, and creep, climb, crouch, and leap,
Poke up a friend, run through the sheep,
Who'd keep his brush his head must keep,
The dullest fox that ever ran
Can baffle hounds—unhelped of man—
By cunning and audacity.

And when at last you go to join
The brushless great majority,
There shall arise to sing your fame,
As one who really knew the game
And well and truly played the same,
Some one among the sons of men
Whose life-won lore and ready pen
Have crowned him an authority.

It is at this season that the thievish magpie exhibits another ugly side of his character. When the fox is trying to escape from hounds the magpie enjoys nothing so much as to follow him from tree to tree overhead, shrieking the magpie equivalent for "Tally-ho!" Why he should do this, unless with the idea of currying favour with his worst enemy—man—it is hard to say, for he has much less reason to hate the fox than have many other birds. The rooks, on the other hand, are often helpful and obliging. In autumn and winter they assemble in great flocks in the pastures, and the scent of a fox is almost as hard to follow over ground on which rooks are feeding as it is through a flock of sheep.

It is against the principles of the hare to run straight; she makes a "bee-line" for a few fields—a mile or so—then, bethinking her that she does not know the country ahead, makes a tremendous leap to right or left, and starts off again at right angles to her original path, eventually coming back to the field she lives in. It is a paradox to say a hare is not hare-brained, but nobody who has hunted with harriers will deny her intelligence; she has as many dodges as a fox: a favourite trick is to run back in her own track, spring to one side, and crouch down, laughing at the hounds as they sweep past. When they are gone she hops away in the opposite direction. Generally speaking, a hare only runs straight for a long way when in strange country. The fallow deer, who is occasionally hunted by harriers, has a trick something like the hare's: hearing hounds in his rear and feeling disinclined for exercise, he will canter past a clump of bush, and with a big, sidelong jump alight in the middle of it; there he crouches down, spreading himself out so flat on the ground that anyone who did not know the device would be almost sure to overlook him.

After a month's holiday, to permit the red

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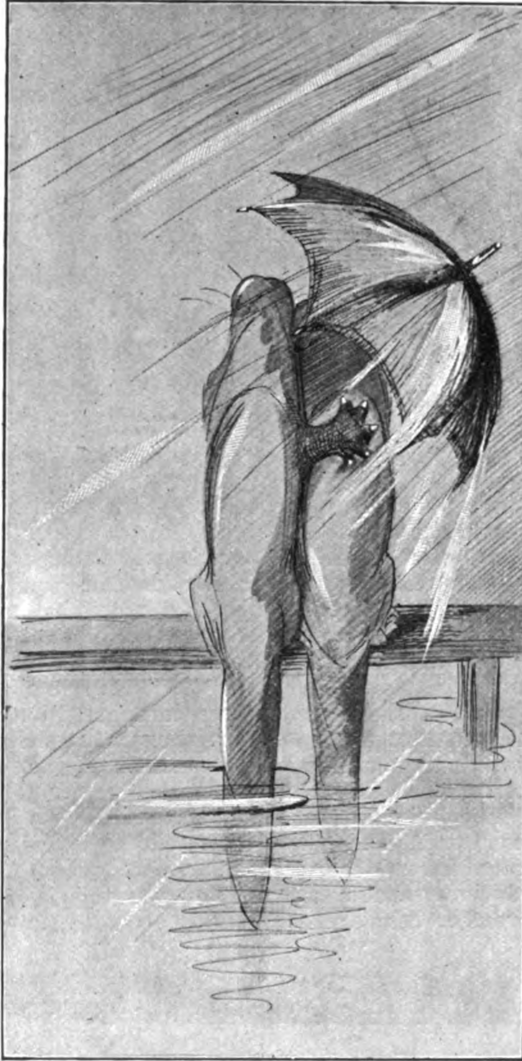
deer to attend to their private affairs, hind-stalking begins during the first ten days of November. Some people pretend to hold hind-shooting lightly as a poor form of sport, but those having knowledge approach the hind with even more scrupulous respect than they stalk the stag: he is wary enough, but his wives suspect an enemy even sooner than he does, and don't wait to ascertain particulars.

The ptarmigan has donned his white dress by the middle of the month. He has been changing his clothes continually ever since June; in fact, this child of vanity only wears the same suit for more than three months together in winter; by March he begins to change his white for his wedding dress, which is perfect by April; in June the ornithological eye detects the beginning of new alterations, which go on till August, when he begins to wear the blue-grey suit which gradually gives way to white.

The mole takes up quarters in his winter fortress, or monastery—a wonderful system of circular galleries in some hillock with passages to one central chamber, whither he retires from time to time to sleep on a bed of dry grass and leaves. This establishment is distinct from the summer residence and the nursery, and seems to be shared by a community; at all events, no private right of way is acknowledged, for as many as twenty-four moles have been trapped at the same point in one tunnel. When frost comes and drives the worms deep into the earth the mole simply turns up his sleeves and digs straight down after them. There is reason to suppose that the otters generally talk of love and marriage about this season; young ones have been found as early as October and as late as February; but the otter does not encourage any display of interest in his private affairs — it would be strange if he did when you remember that he has been hunted assiduously all the summer, and only owes his survival to his superior swimming and diving powers. His wife brings up her children, three, four, or five, in a hole in the river-bank: the passage slopes gently upwards from the front door, which is at the water's edge, so the nursery is not in danger of flood: the otters are always coming in wet, so the house cannot be a very comfortable habitation. Mrs. Otter is a careful mother; when her children are able to go out she always goes first to make sure there are no enemies lurking near; a strict disciplinarian, she has been seen to take a refractory child by the neck and duck it, kindly but thoroughly, to bring it to its senses.



"THE OTTERS TALK OF LOVE."

The hedgehog puts on his nightcap when beetles disappear, snails close their doors, and frost drives the earth-worms to the deeper depths where he cannot get them; hence his bed-time depends much on the character of the season. He makes his winter

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dormitory in a dry bank, under brushwood, or—very commonly—inside the hollow trunk of some decayed tree. He arranges his enveloping blanket of withered moss and leaves so cleverly that it is impossible to discover where he got into it, and there he sleeps, rolled tightly up in a ball.

"THE HEDGEHOG PUTS ON HIS NIGHTCAP."

The weather has still great influence on the arrangements of migratory birds. The fieldfares usually flock southward late in September or in October; but on the 24th of November, 1897, the keepers of the Flamborough Lighthouse reported a great rush of fieldfares, which lasted all night, and it was remarked that this rush followed a heavy snowfall in Scotland. Happy fieldfares! No packing up, no trouble about houses, not even half an hour's trial of temper with "Bradshaw"; the same simple, sensible idea, "Let's go where it's warmer," enters their ten thousand minds at the same instant, and with beautiful unanimity they start with windy roar of wings. A cold snap farther north always brings birds of one species or another southward, and thus migration movements go on intermittently all through the winter. Swallows and martins leave a few of their number behind every autumn, particularly if the weather be mild; then they sometimes linger in the South of England even to December. The snow-buntings are among the later birds to seek refuge with us; a few spend the whole year in this country, but choose the coldest situation possible for residence—to wit, the mountains in the Highlands. Mr. Abel Chapman remarks that the flocks of snow-buntings which appear so punctually on the 1st of November on the border moorlands are almost all young birds; the grown-up ones come later, but are never very numerous. Perhaps the seniors are hardier, and allow the youngsters to winter with us as a concession to youth and delicacy. Comes also the short-eared or woodcock owl, who differs from most of his relatives in that he very often hunts by day; he prefers the open moorland to more civilized localities, but regulates his preferences by the facilities for marketing; and where field-mice and field-voles are plentiful there will you find the short-eared owl. They stay and bring up their children in this country when sufficient inducement offers. Thus, when the vole plague was ruining farmers in the Scottish border counties in 1892–93, these owls

FATHER OWL: "VOLES AGAIN! REALLY, MY DEAR, THE HOUSEKEEPING!"

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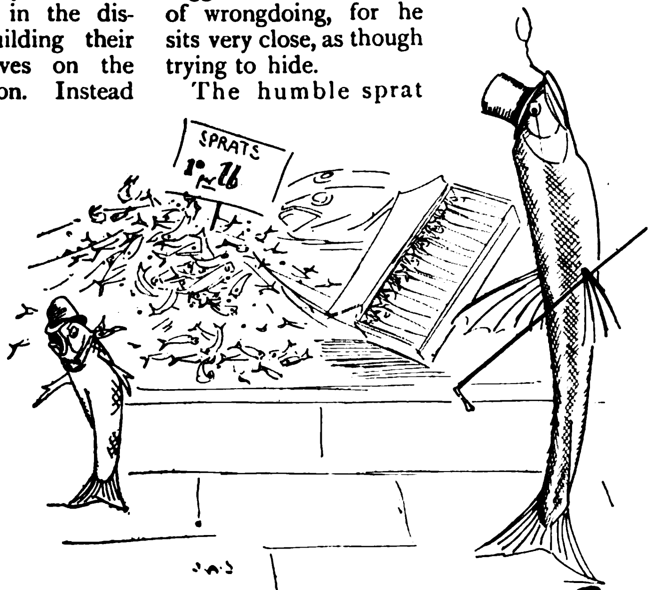
"A FATAL COLD."

declared for man in the war he was waging, and rose to the occasion splendidly. Departing from their usual routine, they mobilized their forces and settled down in the disturbed area in hundreds, building their nests and quartering themselves on the district as an army of occupation. Instead of rearing their usual half-dozen children, they nobly put personal considerations out of sight and went to the trouble of rearing ten or a dozen; and they and their children ate voles day and night, till you would have thought the very sight of a vole must make them ill. They rendered yeoman's service in stamping out these guerilla bands of mice, and they had their reward—the people didn't shoot them.

Some of the birds who nest in colonies consider this a favourable season to call and see how things are going on at their old nurseries. The rooks assemble at the rookery and spend an hour or two, talking a good deal but doing nothing so far as human eyes can see. Of course, it may be that they are a building committee settling sites in advance for next spring; but if this be their mission, one can only conclude that their decisions are subject to much revision when business begins in March. Occasionally, if the season be mild, a pair of rooks are seized with a craving to plunge into family affairs at once. They may succeed in bringing off their ill-timed family, but a few days of frost will probably give the eggs a fatal cold. The black-headed gulls go in a body to the gullery and swoop around and scream at one another, but do not linger very long; their visit seems to be a duty visit and might as well be omitted altogether. The cheery dipper leaves the sheltered streams and low grounds and betakes himself to the hills. The dipper's demeanour suggests consciousness of wrongdoing, for he sits very close, as though trying to hide.

The humble sprat



"SOLD LIKE SHRIMPS TO A CARTER BEFORE THE EYES OF UPSTART SMELT."

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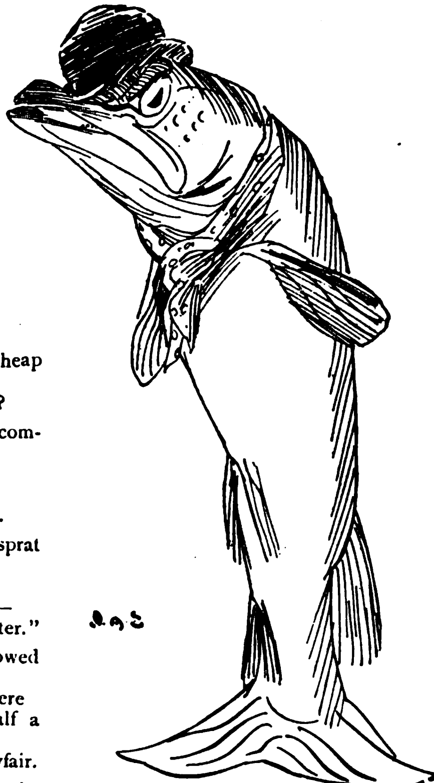
appears in heaps on the fishmonger's slab. In his youth he masqueraded as whitebait, and the reception accorded him at a riper age must be a terrible blow to his self-esteem :—

"Why are we treated in this way?
It is not what we're used to.
Grown-up whitebait are 'Cheap to-day'!
Is this what we're reduced to?

"Of being cheap, though we complain,
What we feel far more deeply
Is, you a dainty fish disdain
Because they sell him cheaply.

"Ah! The pangs that the sprat has felt
Sold like shrimps to a carter
Before the eyes of upstart smelt—
Bought for Knights of the Garter."

Good little fish, with hearts bowed down,
That is the world its way; were
Twopence a pound made half a crown,
Then you should feed all Mayfair.



"THE PIKE HAS A PRICE UPON HIS HEAD."

The pike is at his best in winter; that is to say, he is readier in cold weather to take a bait, for his merits on the table, in the present scribe's opinion, depend entirely upon the stuffing wherewith he shall be stuffed. The pike has fallen from a high estate. In Edward I.'s time he was set above the salmon and everybody was eager to get him. In H.M. Edward VII.'s time angling associations set a price upon his head as for vermin. There be those who say that the pike, like the eel, can work his way overland; but the water must fall low indeed before he prefers to get out and walk. The eel does do this: like the famous American river-steamer he can go where it is damp: but stories like that of the gardener who declared he had caught eels in the kitchen garden stealing his young peas must be accepted with reserve. Many fish, both sea and river, seek an equable climate in the deep waters as winter draws near; the carp goes a long step farther, for he hibernates; if it be cold at this time of the year, he calls his friends and neighbours round him, and they huddle together in the mud. The carp is, moreover, eccentric in his unfishlike independence of water; he can live for hours out of his element. Three ten-pound carp were once sent from Windsor to Southport, packed in wet moss; they were thirteen hours on the journey, but two arrived fresh and cheerful, while the third, though a little faint, speedily recovered when put into water. The barbel, a "sweete fysshe but a quasy meate," as Dame Juliana Berners calls him, does not hibernate like the carp, but when the weeds die off in the cold the barbel congregate in large numbers under some tree-root, log, or sunken boat in deep water, and there remain in a

"TWO OF THE CARP ARRIVED FRESH AND CHEERFUL."

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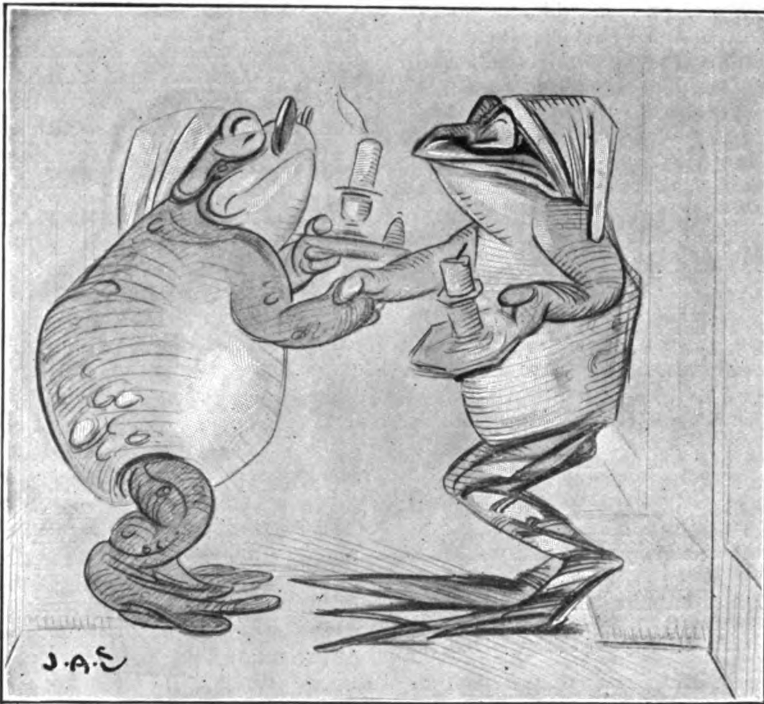
lethargic state till spring. Whether fish sleep or not is a debated point.

It was supposed formerly that the badger stayed in bed all winter; he does so in colder climates than ours, Sweden for example, but in England he regulates his arrangements by the temperature; hating cold, he won't go out for a walk in the snow if he can help it, but stays abed sucking his fingers—a childish habit which he perhaps gets from his distant cousin, the bear. If disturbed in his repose he soon demonstrates that he was not very sound asleep, for he is quite ready to fight; and here it may be remarked our seventeenth-century friend, Mr. Topsell, was wrong when he said of the badger: "Her manner is to fight on her back, using thereby both her teeth and her nails, and by blowing up her skin above measure after an unknown manner she defendeth herself." Any self-respecting badger would be horrified at the idea of fighting like that.



"THE FROG AND TOAD RETIRE TO THEIR RESPECTIVE BEDROOMS."

Reptiles retire now, if they have not gone before; the vipers are said to assemble and twine lovingly together for their winter sleep. If they do it is the only time these unattractive creatures display any taste for society. The frog and toad retire to their respective bedrooms: the latter is easily satisfied in the matter of accommodation; a hole in a rubbish heap suits him nicely; but he will gratefully accept permission to put up for a few months in the coal-hole and take his chance of being brought to untimely light by the cook turning over the slack, into which he luxuriously sinks as it were a feather-bed. The young dormice, having made the most of their first summer, yawn and get to work to prepare their winter nests: sometimes the dormouse sleeps on his back with his nose in the air, but his usual attitude is curled up with his hands pressed against his cheeks, his tail turned forward towards his head, and his back uppermost. A tame dormouse who weighed thirty-seven grains when she went to sleep on the 2nd of October (apparently she approved early hours) had lost eleven grains, or nearly a third of her weight, when she was weighed on the 27th of March. She finally awoke on the 9th of April, having slept six months and eleven days, with one brief interval: she got up on the 31st of December—presumably to see the Old Year out.

The squirrel dons his warm winter coat with bushy tail and those long ear "pencils" which do so much to improve his appearance. He is too active and restless a being to

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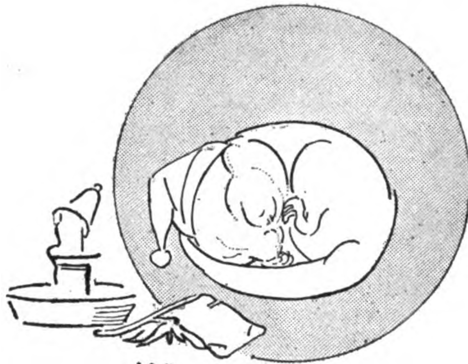

"THE DORMOUSE SLEEPS."

squander the winter months in idle sloth, and though, hating rain and damp, he sometimes stays in bed for days together in wet weather, you may see him any fine day in winter, racing and jumping about the trees in the best of spirits :—

"What! Go to bed," the squirrel said, "because it's wintry weather!
Stay up with me and you shall see what games we'll play together.

"You fear the cold? That plea is old; my friend, you're talking folly.
If you come out and jump about, you'll soon be warm and jolly.

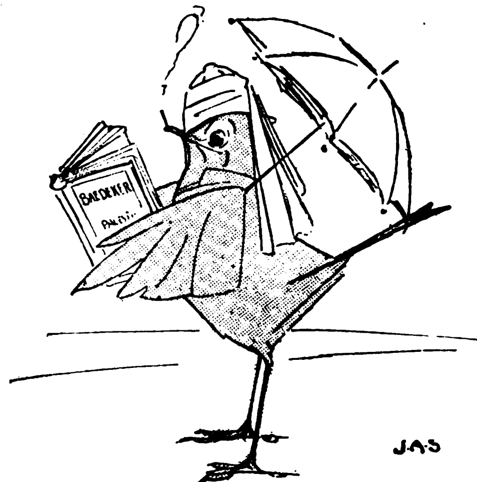
"Look! here's a ball for what they call 'Ping Pong' or 'Table Tennis';
What's in a name? It is a game that much admired of men is.

"Here come the rats who bring their bats, also the moles and rabbits;
Dear hedgehog stay with us and play, renouncing lazy habits!"

"Nay! I'll to bed," the hedgehog said. "For you the cold all right is;
Not so for me, because, you see, I'm subject to bronchitis.

"I *might* bear cold, but must be told where food is and the way there;
I must have meat or, I repeat, I'll go to bed and stay there."

By the end of November the birds who left us in autumn have taken up their residence where they mean to spend the winter. The spotted fly-catcher has been found late this month at Newcastle, in Natal; so has the willow warbler; while quail have been reported as "swarming" near Maritzburg, in which locality they breed. The red-backed shrikes winter in Mashonaland and in other parts of Central South Africa, and, sometimes at least, bring up families there before they come back to confer the benefits of their society on Europe in the spring; the greater number of shrikes appear to prefer the Nile Valley and East Coast route when southward bound. The common white-throat is easily pleased as to winter quarters; any part of Africa from Algiers to the south-central regions of the continent suit him. The swallows are abundant in many parts of South Africa by this time: whether they turn their attention to domestic affairs is not certain, but some individuals may do so. The robin is common now in Palestine; the winter climate there agrees with him; and as the people there do not eat him he is quite as forward and self-confident in the Holy Land as he is in England.


"THE ROBIN IN PALESTINE."

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The Guardian of the Pulwani.

BY FRANK SAVILE.

GOOD-BYE, old chap, good-bye!"

The train had already begun to move before Mannering jumped aboard. He leaned on the rail, waving his hand and shouting cheerily.

"Before next hot weather, then, I shall expect you," he cried. "I'll take no denial. I dare say we shall raise no end of entertainment out of the cattle-lifters."

"I don't doubt that," I answered, at the top of my voice, for the mail was already thundering over the points outside the station. As I watched the red tail-lights fade into the night I smiled to myself. Entertainment was little likely to be lacking where Arthur Mannering was concerned. More extraordinary incidents happened to him in a month than to most slow-going individuals in the course of their natural lives. It was the nature of the man to be the storm-centre of his surroundings. His whole life had been a tacit revolt against the commonplace.

His start at the age of fourteen was in the Navy. He was in Egypt, saw fighting, and won the Distinguished Service Order. After that a year on survey duty wearied him of the piping times of peace. He left the sea to study engineering on the land, but by the time he was seventeen he began to yearn again for the companionable life of the servants of the Crown, and deserted the machine shops and chemical laboratories to cram for Woolwich, into which he passed with honours. When he left he took a place that entitled him to a commission in the Sappers. He was sent out to India.

He brought all his hard-won knowledge of mechanics to bear upon his profession, and nearly broke his heart in battering against the many departmental doors which the War Office has barricaded with fold on fold of red tape. It is possible that he would have thrown up the Service within a year of his appointment had not six months' active campaigning given him a vent for his activities. During the Manzai Expedition, at least, he was perfectly happy. He passed through many perils, won no further distinctions, but endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact. He was left as part of the small army of occupation that held the conquered district.

Here the extraordinary ascendency he had gained over his fellow-countrymen was transferred to the frontier caterans. Alone, and practically unarmed, he would stroll out into the hill fastnesses, and return, jauntily assuring his superiors that much education and entertainment were to be had for the asking within rifle-shot of the barrack-yard to which they clung. He reappeared, now and again, with some swarthy tribesman, to whom he would offer weird hospitalities, and with whom he would converse in strange jargons. And now he had just received the Deputy Commissionership of the Pulwani, that restless district along the borderlands of Tibet and the Pamirs. Before we parted at the station he had given me a warm invitation to spend part, at least, of my next leave with him.

And so it came to pass that about the middle of the March following our farewells I found myself on the back of a Cashmeri pony, attended by half-a-dozen Luzai cut-throats, stumbling up the long ravine that cuts the Pulwani like the slash of a sabre.

It was near the falling of the dusk as we rounded a corner of the cliff and discovered ourselves to any watchers on the walls of Fort Nagar—the grey stone ramparts of which crown a precipitous peak in the centre of the ravine. I noted the preposterous size of the flagstaff that towered above the compound, and was about to make a remark to one of my followers in my halting Luzai when I received an unexpected interruption.

There was the report of an explosion from the cliffside upon my right, and a column of smoke swirled up from the crag top. My attendants dropped to their knees, bowed towards it, and, as they sprang again to their feet, regarded me with increased respect. Before I could speak a second report followed—this time from the left. Again my attendants prostrated themselves, and with even deeper obeisances.

"Do they shoot blank cartridge in sign of welcome?" I asked. The headman smiled.

"That was no gunshot, sahib. The djinns of the Commissioner Sahib welcome you and assure you of their protection. They are everywhere abroad upon the hills."

I stared at him blankly.

"What foolish talk is this?" I asked. "Djinns? Who can control the spirits of the earth and air?"

"They are the servants of Mannering Sahib," said the man, confidently.

I looked at him with no little surprise. I knew, of course, that it would be impossible

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to convince a Mohammedan, much less a Luzai, that such things as djinns and afreets—the spirits that are supposed to control all natural phenomena—do not exist. But even from the point of view of a Mussulman I could not understand how an Englishman—a dog of an unbeliever—could be credited with such powers. But the question that hovered on my lips was anticipated by a third report. Azim Khan turned and waved his hands excitedly.

"Look, sahib!" he cried. "Look well!"

I wheeled round to see again a slender column of smoke that wavered off into the still evening air. The sunset was behind it. It was distinctly outlined by the gold and crimson glories of the sky.

I rubbed my eyes. It seemed quite certain that it was an exact profile that had hovered over the stones before it dissolved into nothingness, and just as certain that the profile had been a human one. This I told myself could only be a coincidence, but at the same time I was mightily puzzled to explain the presence of the smoke at all. The plateau from which it arose was bare and coverless. There was no shelter from which a shot could be fired.

I stared at Azim. With a good deal of confident satisfaction he stared back.

"'LOOK, SAHIB!' HE CRIED. 'LOOK WELL!'"

"The sahib has seen?" he murmured.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I saw—smoke," I admitted.

"Even so, sahib. They have no bodily presence—these servants of Mannering Sahib. Yet it cannot be denied—our eyes tell us—that they exist."

I smiled doubtfully, and then, for the fourth time, the strange report echoed among the boulders. This time I felt that any theory of coincidence was futile. Most starkly distinct I saw the misty presentment of a human form arise among the hillside rubble, float for appreciable seconds, and dissolve. Azim Khan coughed, triumphantly.

I dropped my switch upon my pony's withers and rode forward. No doubt there was an explanation; but it was no use attempting to extract it from my present following while they clung so resolutely to ideas with which common sense forbade sympathy.

Mannering appeared upon the walls of his fortress, waving cheerily as our little procession drew up. For ten minutes we stood exchanging answer and question like schoolboys meeting after the holidays. But from the very first I was surprised to find how exceed-

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ingly up-to-date his knowledge of passing events was. It was a six-days' ride from Assourah, the nearest telegraph-post, to Fort Nagar, yet I found him already primed with all the items of general intelligence which I had expected him to regard as news. In fact, he himself informed me of events which had occurred in the outside world since my start from Peshawur.

It was not till after dinner, when we had taken our cigars to the veranda, that I made any allusion to the events of the afternoon. My thoughts were turned to it by a somewhat surprising circumstance. There was a great silence over the valley below, broken only by the distant purr of the torrent, yet so faint was a click that echoed out of Mannering's office behind us that it almost escaped my attention. But my friend rose at once and left me. He returned in a minute or two, lighting a fresh cigar.

"Cambridge has won the boat-race," he remarked, with the same nonchalance that he might have used to a fellow-clubman in Pall Mall.

I bounced in my chair.

"What?" I cried. "Why, to-day—yes, to-day—is the date of the race!" He nodded.

"This afternoon," he agreed. "By five lengths."

"But—but where is your telegraph wire?" I exclaimed.

He smiled complacently as he pointed to the great flagstaff that soared above the roof.

"Have you never heard the name of Marconi?" he inquired.

A light broke over me.

"Why, of course," I answered. "I might have thought of that. You certainly are marvellously up-to-date. So you have one of his installations?"

"You are partly right and partly wrong. I have what I suppose I must call a Mannering installation. The Italian inventor and I happened to strike upon the same idea more or less simultaneously."

"Look here," said I, "as we are on the subject of mysteries, do you mind explaining those fog-signal explosions that welcomed me? They seemed to impress my body-guard mightily. Did *you* fire them?"

He nodded, still smiling.

"How?"

"By means of another of my inventions, which I was sorry to see has again been forestalled by a fellow-investigator only a few months ago."

"What is it?"

"'Armorl.'* Have you heard of it?"

I shook my head.

"Then you will in the immediate future. It is merely a method of utilizing earth currents, as Marconi uses those he sets astir in the air. So far, though, it has a more restrained radius."

"But you must at least plant your explosives?"

"Of course. And to do that—as well as for other reasons—I saw to it that my reputation for mystery should be established as soon as I arrived here. A few easy conjuring tricks, a demonstration or two with the electric battery, and I was immediately placed upon the pedestal of superstition that I desired. Now I can go where I will unattended. In fact, I doubt if one of my men—who worship me—could be got for any reward that you could mention to attend me abroad after dark. There is nothing like a notoriety for supernatural powers if you want a peaceful district about you. The threats of my wrath are sufficient to quell blood-feuds that date from past centuries."

"But why should scattered explosions here and there appear so marvellous to them?" I demurred, for by now I had returned to the conclusion that the shadowy forms I had seen wavering against the sunset could only be creations of my own imagination. Many matters take on a different complexion after a good dinner.

He grinned.

"Did you not see as well as hear?" he asked.

I hesitated.

"I saw some smoke," I said.

He rose and made off in the direction of his office.

"Come with me," he said, briefly.

I followed him into his office. Ranged along the wall I found two rows of metal rods, thrust through the boarding into the earth. Communicating with them were the wires of what looked like an electric battery. Mannering turned one of the rods in its socket and bade me look westwards through the window. I heard a click from behind me.

Instantly out of the night came the same dull report that had welcomed me that afternoon. A crimson light shone in the distant darkness, glimmered vividly against the background of the hill, and vanished. I looked at Mannering with curious eyes. For, outlined against the sudden glare, transparent but distinct, I again saw a dim presentment of a bodily form.

* The Armstrong-Orling process.

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"An amusing trick, isn't it?" said my friend.

I looked from Mannering to the row of metal rods, and back again from the rods to his impassive face. I was absolutely beaten for an explanation, and I said so.

"It is really rather simple," he replied. "You haven't had my special training, or you would understand. Come out on the veranda again."

When we had seated ourselves in our chairs he began to pull steadily at his cheroot. As soon as he had got a bright, glowing ash upon it he turned to me with a smile.

"Watch!" said he.

He sucked hard, thrust the tip of his tongue from his mouth, and lightly licked his lips. Then he sent a great solid oval of smoke swinging across the stillness of the shadow.

"That is the principle," he said. "Now look again!"

This time he twisted his lips and tongue strangely. Another lump of smoke shot out—like a rough figure of eight. He looked across at me and laughed cheerily.

"A regular schoolboy trick," he admitted. "I learned it at the engineering college. But lots of things like that turn out useful if you only wait your opportunity."

"I see that you can blow elaborate smoke-rings," I answered. "I may add that I have seen an American professor of the art do the thing considerably better," I went on, for his mysteries were growing a little raw upon my nerves. "But that is no explanation of how you bring it about here, there, and everywhere within a couple of miles or more."

"If you had been in the Navy," he replied, "you would know that middies often get magnificent smoke-ring effects by greasing the muzzle of a gun before a salute. That notion stayed by me, too."

"Then you have planted guns upon the hillside?"

"Not exactly guns. I don't mind showing you the device, if you particularly want to understand it."

He went back into the house and returned carrying half-a-dozen little wrought-iron pots. Their rims were compressed into various shapes.

"I put a pinch of blasting powder and a handful of powdered charcoal into each of these. Look at this—this little round one is the head. This oblong, set below it, is the body. These four slender tubes produce the arms and legs at exact intervals. So arises my smoke jack-in-the-box, illuminated at night by the packet of Greek fire which is exploded at the same time."

"Great heavens! what an idea!" I cried, admiringly. "Though I can't think of anyone but yourself with an imagination sufficiently diseased to have evolved it. So these crackers are planted all over the countryside to frighten the insubordinate tribesmen into obedience?"

"Precisely. I let them off intermittently, quite certain that they will have their due effect. Someone somewhere is sure to be plotting some sort of devilry, at no matter what hour of the day or night. Then my djinns upon the hillside arise to warn me; at least, that is what these Luzai have settled in their great minds."

I lay back and laughed heartily. It was so entirely like Mannering to deal in such out-of-the-way artifices, and the cool way in which he mingled fireworks with political administration touched my sense of the humorous vastly. Azim Khan, bringing coffee, eyed me with grave disapproval. I followed his train of thought. Was it decent, he was considering, that anyone should laugh in the face of his omnipotent master?

"You see," went on Mannering, "it doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone else as yet that a current can be made to flick a needle against a scrap of fulminate and cause an explosion quite as easily as it can indicate the signs of a message. I just ramble about at nights, plant an 'armorl' bar here and there, syntonize it to one of those rods you have seen in my office, connect it with one of these crackers, and any one of my twenty djinns can 'make a report' whenever I touch my battery."

"Twenty?" I repeated. "I counted two dozen rods?"

"Four of them have other uses," he said.

"What, then?"

He hesitated. Then he rose, walked forward a pace, and leaned his elbows on the parapet. I followed. He was staring down into the valley below us, which was faintly lit by the crescent moon.

"Do you observe my defences?" he asked. "They are good, but not quite impregnable as they stand."

I stared slowly round me. The cliff behind the residency was absolutely sheer into the ravine. No attack was to be feared there. On the right, too, the crags were plainly unsurmountable. On the left they were more rugged. It was conceivable, though improbable, that a trained cragsman

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might have won a way up from ledge to ledge, but the only obvious way of assault was in front. The road rose by fairly easy slants from the river, to end upon a rocky platform a few feet below the outer fringe of fortifications. It was not a naturally sloped ascent. In places it had been hewn and blasted through the solid rock. "It's a hard nut to crack," said I. "I would rather defend it than attack it any day."

"Yes," he said, slowly. "But you overlook two things. The first is the size of the fortifications. This pinnacle, though a splendid site, is too small. My forty Dogras are inconveniently crowded as it is, and the servants have to camp outside the walls. A force that could afford to waste a few lives might rush us by sheer weight of numbers."

"FERISHT ALLA KHAS."

"Perhaps," I agreed. "What is your other weakness?"

"Water," he said, simply. "We are supplied from the river two hundred feet below."

I looked down at the stream. The eddies were white in the moonlight and seemed near enough, but I realized what an immeasurable distance away they might appear if bullets were sweeping the hillside between them and the crag top. I nodded.

"I think I understand," I said. "Those four extra rods are syntonized to something rather more powerful than mere crackers. You have mined the slope?"

"With something like 200lb. of guncotton," he said, tersely.

"I guessed as much," said I. "Let us hope you will never have to use it. After all, the tribesmen are never likely to assault the stronghold of such a magician as yourself. The djinns and afreets of the mountain would sweep them away to destruction," I added, with a smile.

For a moment or two he was silent, staring meditatively across the void of the ravine at the ranges opposite. Then he sighed.

"As long as I pose as a magician, as you say, all is well. But——"

"But——?"

"There are always 'buts.' The 'but' in this case calls himself Ferisht Alla Khas, wears a filthy sheepskin coat over a vile yellow tunic, and is squatting in a hovel beside a notorious hill-shrine not fifteen miles away."

I laughed.

"The local mullah?" I cried. "I suppose he was the one and only necromancer before you arrived, and your tricks outshine his immeasurably. It is a case of two of a trade?"

For the second time his answer hesitated. Then he drew himself up, and turned towards me with a decisive gesture.

"Look here, Strange," he said, "I have—quite involuntarily—asked you to join me at a very critical moment. It is possible—in fact, it is likely—that you may see active service before you leave me."

I took off my terai and waved it.

"Three cheers for that!" I cried. "Don't waste apologies. But in the name of goodness—why?"

"Because," he said, slowly, "in a little cellared hiding-place in this tin-pot fort of mine is a collection of documents which one big Empire would squander a thousand men to steal, and which another big Empire would do as much to keep. Also because Ferisht Alla Khas is no more a mullah or a Mohammedan than I am. Again, because the Pulwani is the natural route for any invaders of India coming from the Pamirs."

I looked at him with a dim suspicion forming in my mind.

"Is this mullah——" I began, but he interrupted me.

"He settled hereabouts five years ago, in my predecessor's time. He began to perform

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the usual little cheap-jack miracles which impress these simple hillmen; he gained influence. He was joined from time to time by disciples who professed to be drawn by wondrous reports of his miraculous powers. He has a little colony now of a dozen of them. It is to be noted that they all came from the North."

"Then he is——"

"A Russian spy, of course," said Mannering.

I whistled. Things grew very clear, though there was one more question to be put.

"But about these documents?" I asked.

He answered my query with another.

"You heard of the Vassiloff Zoological Expedition?"

"Yes. It left Assourah only a fortnight before I did."

"Just so," said Mannering, drily. "And now Vassiloff is dead, and the whole of his collection—which had nothing to do with zoology, but contained many excellent survey and sketch maps—is hidden within thirty feet of where you stand."

"*You* didn't kill the beggar?" I asked, blankly.

"No. The whole thing was luck—the sort of luck that always attends this blundering old Empire of ours. Of course I was watching him, or certain Luzai friends of mine were. He camped beside our friend Mr. Ferisht Alla Khas for the best part of a week, and from my later investigations I think the two must have pooled their collections for Vassiloff to take home with him. Three days ago one of my men came flying hot-foot to tell me that the expedition, after leaving Ferisht's village, had been overwhelmed by an avalanche not five miles from here."

I looked at him keenly. "By accident?" I asked.

He gave the ghost of a grin.

"I didn't inquire. My fellows knew that I didn't look on Vassiloff with favour, and it is a fact that in their intertribal feuds the simple trick of dislodging an avalanche on an opposition village has been most successfully practised. But, on my word of honour, *I* had nothing to do with it. Of course, from motives of mere humanity, I and my Dogras were at the scene of the disaster within less than an hour, digging for all we were worth."

"In mere humanity," I agreed, "you could do no less."

"Ferisht and his men turned up later in a great state of excitement, to find us still digging, and continued the good work at our side. We left them still at it, having disinterred everything except, oddly enough, two mules, that had been laden with oilskin covered baskets. There was no trace of these."

"And Ferisht has suspicions that they have found their way to Fort Nagar?"

"Yes," said Mannering, "and he means getting them."

"But why on earth haven't you sent them down to Peshawur?"

"For the very simple reason that any force that I could collect would be wiped out on the way. Ferisht controls eight hundred men. I could spare ten Dogras and enlist, perhaps, fifty Luzai irregulars. They would be murdered to a man."

"Then ask for an expedition to fetch them," I exclaimed.

"I have been dinning that request into the ears of Gresham, who has the Marconi instalment at Assourah, for the last eight-and-forty hours."

"Well?"

"It is not at all well. To begin with, I doubt if the Department entirely believe me. For political reasons they are very averse to sending any considerable body of troops this way to upset the tribes. In the third place, till the Agra manœuvres are over, which won't be for three weeks, there are no troops available for——" He broke off suddenly, rose to his feet, and stared over the parapet.

"By Jove!" he murmured.

A white-clad figure was stumbling hastily up by the path through the moonlight. So noiselessly did his bare feet fall upon the pebbles that it was the sound of his laboured breathing that first made his presence known. We heard the Dogra sentry challenge. A moment later Azim Khan introduced the panting messenger on to the veranda. He made a deep obeisance.

"What is this haste?" demanded Mannering, in the Pulwani dialect.

The man rolled his eyes and waved his arms with extravagant gestures. I could not understand his jerky sentences, but Mannering followed them with close attention. I could see his eyes harden and his fingers close tensely upon the arms of his chair. As the man finished he rose and clapped his hands. Azim Khan answered the summons, to be told to see to the messenger's comfort and to summon the sergeant of the Dogras, Ullah Das.

"They are out upon us already!" said Mannering, as his under officer came hurrying in.

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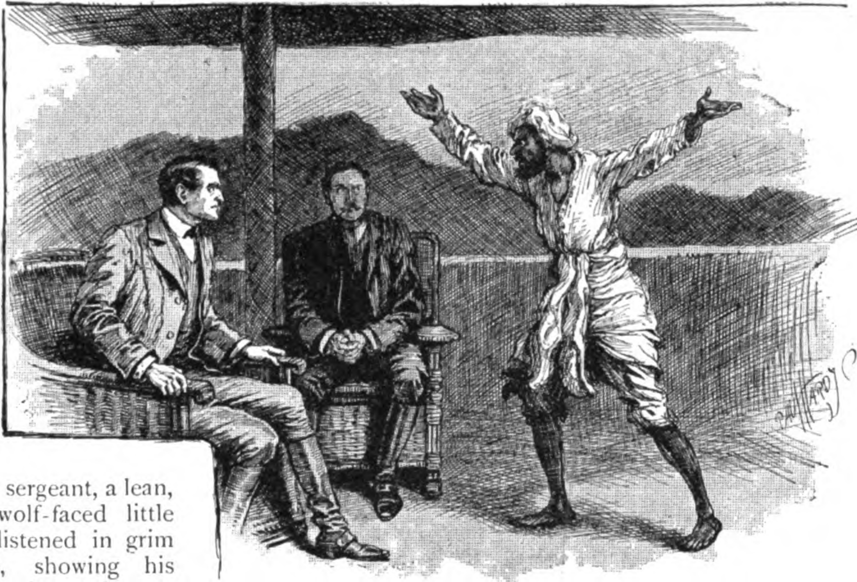

"'WHAT IS THIS HASTE?' DEMANDED MANNERING."

The sergeant, a lean, wiry, wolf-faced little man, listened in grim silence, showing his teeth in fierce pleasure now and again. He saluted and left swiftly when Mannering dismissed him. I could hear his hoarse words of command a few instants later in the outer courtyard.

"Our friend who arrived in such disordered haste," said Mannering, "is a most gentlemanly cattle-lifter, whose broken arm I happened to set successfully a month or two back. He was out to-night—cattle-lifting again, I dare swear. At any rate, he was moving with such exemplary caution that he ran almost into the arms of a couple of hundred men with Ferisht Alla at their head, stealing down the gorges in this direction."

"Then he is going to attempt a surprise?"

"Evidently. But what is especially annoying is the fact that he has apparently won over some of my own Luzai to join him by proclaiming that he is waging a jehad—a holy war—against my infidel arts. He has called upon them as true believers to aid him against the giaour."

"What are you going to do?"

"The first and most obvious thing is to get in water. I have sent every coolie in the place down to the river with casks and cans——"

A shot rang out from the valley, followed quickly by half-a-dozen more. We could see the red flashes flare across the night. There was an answering volley from immediately below us, the faint sound of a yell or two, and then a great clattering of tin.

"Good Lord!" said Mannering, anxiously. "I don't like the empty sound of those cans."

Two score camp-followers, escorted by a reluctant Dogra guard, came flying up the path to report that they had found the river-bank already held in strength. They thumped their empty tins resoundingly to give emphasis to the explanation that they had got no water—not a drop.

Even as they spoke a bullet thudded into our midst against a coolie's chest. The man flung up his arms, spun round, and fell dead across my feet. A dozen more reports produced as many white splinter marks on the veranda roofing. The servants scurried to shelter like so many rabbits, while we and our fighting men settled down behind the parapet for the defence in earnest.

Before an hour was over we recognised that the attack was wanting in enthusiasm. If the false mullah wanted to annihilate us in one first desperate onset he was wofully disappointed in his men. Their fighting fervour was at a low ebb. They crouched and skipped among the boulders at the hill-foot; they yelled insults; they fluttered ragged skirts derisively in the moonlight, but not one of them attempted to leave the cover of the stones for the last hundred bare yards of hillside that lay between them and the platform outside the parapet gate.

They pelted their bullets at us from their long jezails. Here and there the sharper crack of some stolen or smuggled rifle was heard. Uproar was with us ceaselessly, and as the moon sank nearer the hills our anxiety grew. But even with the lessening light the

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peril was no more acute, and as the hours passed, and gradually the faint illumination of the stars gave place to the pale birth of dawn, we realized that an assault in the darkness was beyond the courage of Ferisht Alla's men. The terrors of Mannering Sahib, the magician, were not to be dared in the djinn-haunted night.

We on our side wasted little ammunition, and after the first anxiety grew dull our leader left us to sit anxiously in his office, vainly endeavouring to get into communication with Assourah, where no doubt Gresham, his correspondent, was healthily asleep.

It was as the first vivid rays of the sun shot out upon the summit of Mount Thanipura opposite that the long wait came to an end. Ullah Das, crouching at my elbow, was peering like myself across the bastion with his rifle cocked. Suddenly he rose to his feet, scarcely took time to aim, and fired. A yellow-clad figure leaped into the air and sprawled back upon the boulders. Ullah Das grunted contentedly.

"A fool and the son of a fool, sahib!" he ejaculated. "His brainless poll was exposed!"

A yell of rage went up from the besiegers. A dozen wrathful faces glared from above as many rocks and brown fists were furiously shaken. Two of the more reckless paid for their temerity as a volley from the lower parapet rang out; yet, to my ears, there seemed something of exultation rather than of defeat in the defiant roar that followed.

My instinct had been right. Suddenly Ullah Das leaped to his feet again, brought up his rifle, and began to empty his magazine towards the left side of the rock platform at the road head. He shouted to his men below. Then I saw where our peril lay.

In twos and threes, looking like a long line of ants as they followed one another, a horde of hillmen was pouring over the topmost ledge of the precipitous ascent, scrambling to their feet, and racing for shelter beneath the outer wall of the fort. A good percentage fell beneath the Dogra fire, but this slackened swiftly and with good cause. Thrusting the muzzles of their jezails through the loopholes of the outer parapet the besiegers covered all who stood upon their feet within. We could no longer direct a fusillade upon the bare slope below without exposing ourselves as easy marks to their fire. With a howl of delight the main body of the enemy rose from their hiding-places and came sweeping up to join their comrades in the hard-won position above. I gave a shout. Mannering came out of his office in two strides, took in the situation in one comprehensive glance, and then stuffed a corner of his handkerchief into a rifle-muzzle and waved it above his head!

I clutched at him in my amazement.

"Good heavens! you don't mean a surrender?" I yelled.

He shook his head impatiently.

"My God!—no!" he answered. "It is for their own sakes that I am going to parley with them—there are scores of my own villagers among them, carried away by that Russian devil's tongue. I must save them if I can!"

He raised his voice into a shout.

"Ferisht Alla Khas! A word with you!"

There had been a hoarse roar of triumph as the soiled white flag was waved. Then a hush fell as a tall figure stepped out into the open and motioned his followers to silence.

"Here am I, sahib!" cried the man, in an accent that even my untutored ears could tell was faltering Luzai.

"Draw off your men, renegade!" commanded Mannering. "Draw off these fools that you have lashed to madness before my vengeance falls!"

The man laughed, sneeringly.

"Does the panther flee the trapped or wounded deer?" he asked. "Why has not the vengeance of the sahib fallen in these last midnight hours?"

Mannering made a gesture towards the hills.

"In my mercy I have stayed my hand," he said. "Will you have a sign from me? Watch!"

I was suddenly aware that he had left my side. I heard the familiar click from the office behind me. Two reports followed each other from the opposite crest. The atmosphere of the dawning was so stagnant still that the two smoke figures that rose into view hovered appreciable minutes before they dissolved, and hesitating murmurs broke out in the ranks below us.

Half-a-dozen hillmen threw down their weapons and covered their eyes. Comrade yelled to comrade that it was ill work to fight against Mannering Sahib and the trained servants of devildom, and not a few began to sidle furtively down the hillside. But Ferisht Alla was equal to the occasion. He leaped to the head of his men.

"Forward upon this hireling of the Pit! Forward!" he cried. "By God's Holy Prophet I swear that His protections shall be about you if you destroy the dealers in

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"FERISHT ALLA KHAS! A WORD WITH YOU!"

accursed arts! Follow me and kill!—kill!"

Mannering raised himself to his full height and vainly endeavoured to gain a second hearing. Ferisht Alla denied it him, ignoring the white flag that still fluttered above our heads. He threw up his jezail and fired. Mannering clutched his arm, staggering. I sprang to catch him.

"It is nothing—nothing!" he shouted, and waved me impatiently aside. Gathering himself together, he lurched back into the building. At the same moment the whole mob of maddened caterans made a rush for the walls.

I caught up my rifle to sell my life as dearly as might be, and began to empty the magazine into the brown turmoil of the charge.

And then, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole foreground was blotted out. With a thunderous roar the earth shook, the rocks dissolved, the red soil, the boulders, the tangled tumult of ravening men disappeared into nothing more substantial than a swirling cloud of dust—a cloud through which sickening fragments rained that even the stolid Dogras shuddered to look upon! Two hundred men had been blown out of the very semblance of humanity more swiftly than the autumn gust flicks the leaves from its path!

An hour later Mannering, his arm bandaged, his face pale to the lips, was wandering with me through the massed horrors before the walls. He halted before a body less dismembered than most. I looked down upon the sheepskin-clad figure with dawning recognition. It was the coat worn by the leader of the attack.

"His blood be on his own head!" said Mannering, solemnly. "I gave him his chance!"

The body lay face downwards. A morbid impulse made me turn the shattered features to the sun. Disfigured though they were, they were recognisable. It was Ferisht Alla himself. His yellow tunic was open at the breast and a silver chain shone round his throat. It held a tiny pendant—an image roughly wrought in bronze. Mannering pointed at it as I held it up into the light.

"There is proof enough, if you want it, of what the man was," said he. "Do true mullahs, faithful sons of Islam, wear idols? It is an eikon, and worn by a devout servant of the Orthodox Russian Church!"

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By G. H. Page.

HE Cosy Corner Tea - Rooms were to be opened in Bond Street on the 24th June, two days before the coronation of the King. Eva and Muriel Stanley, who had put all their little capital and their great hopes into the venture, were filled with tremors as the day drew near. Suppose the rooms were not a success after all?

And yet the girls had done everything they knew to command success. They had taken, at an immense rent, three large and pretty rooms at the corner of Maddox Street, and Eva, who was artistic, had superintended the decoration and furnishing. She had hung the walls with a green trellis-work paper put on in panels on a white background, and having found in the pattern-book of Messrs. Spoylet and Sneerum an ivy-leaf frieze, she had had the original idea of cutting the garland out and applying it as a border round the panelling. The result was entirely happy. Then she had laid down a dark green velvet carpet with just a little sprig of lighter green thrown on it here and there, and the curtains were of pale green cashmere edged with broad bands of chintz over which roses of every shade of deep crimson and blushing pink bloomed almost as naturally as in an English garden. They only wanted fragrance to complete the illusion, and, after all, the fragrance was supplied by the bouquets of real roses which on the morning of the 24th stood on every one of the thirty little tables, ten in each room.

The roses had all been sent up from Crossways, the girls' home in Sussex, where Mumsie and the kiddies had rifled the garden of every single blossom in order to help in the success of the C.C.T.

For these tea-rooms were naturally a very great venture, and a great deal depended for the Stanley girls on their success. Each had put her whole fortune of a thousand pounds into the scheme, and while gentle Mrs. Stanley approved of it, as she would have approved of anything which her energetic

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Eva and Muriel devised, while the kiddies were perfectly sure it was the most splendid idea in the world, all the family aunts had thrown up hands and eyes in horror, all the family uncles had loudly disapproved, all the cousins had deplored, criticised, and ridiculed, and most other people had cheerfully predicted failure.

"Such a stoopid thing to do," Aunt Jane Fisher had told them. "You are sure to lose your money, and there you'll be penniless on my hands, I suppose. But I warn you beforehand, I shall do nothing for you whatever. I've too many claims on my purse as it is."

Mrs. Fisher lived in Chester Square, had three thousand a year, and, as she said, many claims, which took the shape of two fat carriage horses, a fat coachman, a fat poodle, and a still fatter pug.

"Never heard of such a preposterous idea in my life!" fumed Uncle Bentley. "Louisa must be out of her mind to let the girls do such a thing. They might as well chuck their money into the Thames; while if they would invest it in Consols they would get close on forty pounds a year apiece, and what more can a single woman need?"

An old bachelor like Colonel Bentley, of course, needed a great deal more, since he lived at Walsingham House, paid the subscription of three clubs, and smoked more than twenty shillings' worth of cigars in the course of a week.

"So low! Why, it's keeping a shop!" cried one of the Eltham girls; their father was a dean, but their mother was Mrs. Stanley's sister.

"Well, when Tom hears of this he will have nothing to do with Eva, I am sure," declared the other.

Tom Eltham was still with the Yeomanry in South Africa, but before he went out he had spent a great deal more time than his sisters approved of down in Sussex with the Stanleys.

Willie Rhodes, the Harrow boy, however, was understood to have said he was jolly glad those plucky little Stanley girls were opening a grub-shop, and of course he would patronize them, and take the other chaps there, and no doubt, as he was their cousin, they would give him a long tick.

His was the only approval they received, and it did really require a great deal of courage to persevere under the dribbling of so much cold water, and to believe in their ultimate success.

But they were really plucky little girls, as Rhodes major said, and very devoted to each other, so that when Eva's high spirits momentarily failed her, Muriel would turn all her gaiety to the task of reviving them again, and *vice versâ.*

"Do you think that we have enough of everything?" said Muriel, the night before opening day. "It would be simply awful if we ran short."

Eva counted over the fowls, the tongues, the hams ready cooked, the loaves of bread, the pounds of butter, the dozens of lettuces, the cucumbers, the cream cheeses, the jars of jam, the cakes, and the biscuits with which they had stored their larder against the great event.

"Let me see," she said, "how many may we expect for luncheon? Town is very full; there are thousands and thousands of foreigners, and Americans, and Colonials over, who all must be fed. Still, we'll be modest, and not count on too many. Suppose we say twenty for luncheon?"

"Yes, twenty for luncheon at five shillings each. That makes five pounds, doesn't it?" murmured Muriel, working out the intricate sum with pencil and paper. "Now for tea we might reckon on a good many more. Lots of people who don't have luncheon can't do without tea. Let's say sixty teas at half a crown, which makes—makes—oh, what on earth *does* it make, Evy?"

It was delightful to find that it actually made twelve pounds ten, and then, reckoning on twenty people again for dinner, the girls found the takings of the day total twenty-seven pounds.

June the 25th would certainly bring more customers still. They thought they might reckon the takings of that day at about thirty pounds. And if Coronation Day itself did not augment the numbers, it was at least reasonable to suppose these would not decline. So they put down the rest of the week at the low figure of twenty pounds a day. Say, just for the sake of round numbers, one hundred and forty pounds for the five days from Tuesday till Saturday inclusive. And after that an average of fifty pounds a week for the rest of the year. Very good interest surely on two thousand pounds! Eva and Muriel were so enchanted with their arithmetic that they waltzed round the empty rooms and kissed each other ecstatically.

When the great morning arrived, the morning of the 24th, they dressed themselves in the dainty pale grey frocks which had been made for them from Eva's designs, put on

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the snowy lace and muslin bibs and aprons and sleeves, which lent them so business-like an air, and superintended the final touches.

A whole array of cooks and waitresses in rather more serviceable aprons than the girls' took final orders, cut sandwiches under their directions, set each little tea-table with an embroidered cloth, a Japanese tea-tray, blue and white china, and a glass bowl of roses, sweet and dewy as when they were plucked.

"THERE ISN'T GOING TO BE NO CORONATION AFTER ALL."

The tea ladies walked through the room hand in hand, their pretty, fair heads held high with delight at the beauty and appropriateness of their arrangements.

"Ten o'clock!" said Eva. "Well, I'm glad we are ready so early, but, of course, we can't expect anyone to come for hours and hours yet."

"Sightseeing is awfully tiring work," Muriel suggested. "I dare say some of the people who are going round the decorations will just drop in for a sandwich or something."

"What a heavenly morning! Aren't we lucky the weather has turned so fine? I do really feel we are going to make a big success!"

And while the words were on Eva's lip, cook came bustling into the room with a scared face.

"Lor', miss! what do you suppose the man as brought the salmon have just told us? Why, there isn't going to be no coronation after all. It's put off deficiently."

The girls laughed.

"Nonsense! What tales you get hold of, cook, you and the fish-man. Why should it be put off?"

"They do say the King, God bless him, is ill."

"Oh, people are always croaking evil! Don't pay any attention, cook, but just get on with your work."

At that moment a boy passed down the street selling second editions of the morning papers, and shouting, "Serious illness of the King! Coronation postponed!"

Eva and Muriel looked at each other in dismay.

"The poor King!" was Muriel's first exclamation. "Oh, how I hope it isn't really much!"

"The poor people!" sighed Eva. "Think how horribly disappointed they'll be!"

Then the same idea occurred to both girls.

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"And poor little us! Whatever shall we do?"

It was a tragic moment, a shattering blow. But Eva perceived Muriel's pretty mouth to be trembling towards tears, and this was a sign she must not give way herself.

"If the King only recovers, the rest won't matter much," said she. "Cook, run out, like a dear, and get us a paper. And after all, Birdie," this was her pet name for Muriel, "after all we need not despair. People will have to eat just the same. Town is just as full as it was five minutes ago. Everybody is not going to run away instantly, you may be sure. On the contrary, they will want to remain on the spot to get news of the King. You may be sure that everyone who is here already will stay for the week. And perhaps even on Coronation Day (poor Coronation Day!) we shall do better business than we expected. For instead of people being on the stands all the time, and having their luncheon there, they will be wandering about and very likely coming in here to us. So cheer up, darling, and help me move this table nearer the window. There! It looks prettier like that, doesn't it?"

It was dreadfully sad about the King, but, of course, as Eva said, people would want their luncheons just the same. So everything was prepared for the expected guests, and the sisters flitted about with an anxious eye upon the clock.

Ten-thirty struck; eleven; eleven-thirty; twelve.

The tea ladies' hearts began to beat, for now at any moment the first customer might arrive.

Half-past twelve; one o'clock; half-past one.

Not a single person had come into the Cosy Corner Tea-Rooms. The girls looked at each other in silent agitation. What could it mean? For Bond Street was full of people passing to and fro, and for over an hour a steady stream had been pouring in and out of the tea-rooms opposite.

2 P.M.—The door opened with a cling, and both girls moved forward to welcome the incoming guest. But it was only a telegraph boy, who handed Eva the orange envelope containing a message from home.

"So sad about the dear King," it ran, "but how are things going with you?—Mumsie."

"Any answer, miss?" queried the boy, and Eva, compressing her lips, took a pencil and wrote: "Awfully sad, but everything going splendidly here."

Muriel, looking over her shoulder, nodded approval. They *couldn't* let the poor little mother know how miserably disappointed, how humiliated they felt. Time enough when they had to write to her, and, besides, by tea-time the position would be quite changed. Oh, by tea-time they would have their hands full; of that there could be no doubt!

And piles of delicious sandwiches stood ready, platefuls of tempting cakes, dozens of pots of tea waiting only to be "wetted," as cook expressed it; and meanwhile the hands crept round the little Louis Seize clock on the mantelpiece from two to three, from three to four, from four to five, and the street was always filled with people, but, as Muriel said, it seemed as though some malignant fairy had touched the Cosy Corner Tea-Rooms and made them invisible, for not a soul so much as paused at the door.

It was inexplicable, it was heart-breaking, and two pale, tired, pretty girls crept about the rooms they had prepared with such gay anticipations, and made a poor pretence of keeping up each other's spirits, and feared to look into each other's eyes lest they should burst into tears.

When, breaking the silence, six strokes chimed out from the ormolu time-piece, Muriel gave way. She sat down by one of the unneeded tables, sank her little head on the snowy cloth, and wept into her hands.

Eva bent over her, caressing her hair.

"Dearest Birdie, don't cry!" she pleaded. "The day isn't ended yet. Some people might come still. And whatever would they think if they were to find the tea ladies in tears?"

"They'd think the tea must have been horribly nasty to have had such an effect!" said Muriel, suddenly smiling up, although her long eyelashes were all beaded with diamonds. "And, oh! Heavens! Here, actually, is a real customer at last!"

Breathlessly the girls sprang to attention as a young man entered the shop.

He was a very tall young man, with splendidly broad shoulders, and strong, nervous hands, and a very sun-burned face. He didn't look quite English, and yet assuredly he was not foreign, but he might have been Canadian or Colonial. He bowed deferentially, and holding his hat in his hands said, with a little smile which showed milk-white teeth:—

"I wonder whether it would be possible for me to have any tea?"

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"You can have all there is," murmured Muriel, ruefully.

"Which means, I fear, that there is very little? And I could drink up a pailful. Nor would it be the first time either. I have often drunk a pailful when sheep-shearing out at Worrabinda."

"There are three dozen pots of tea waiting to be made," said Muriel again, "and if you like you can have them all."

"Dear me, my luck has turned at last," said the young man, gaily, putting down his hat and stick and choosing his chair. "I have been into a dozen different tea-shops and simply couldn't get served, the crowd was so great, and I was almost afraid to come in here as it was past six, and I supposed the tea-hour would be over."

"Here it has never begun," announced Muriel, her mouth trembling again, and a dewdrop fell from her dark lashes on to her roseleaf cheek. "We have not had a single human being all day."

And then because she was so unhappy, and because the young man was so sympathetic, and because Eva had gone to get the tea, she found herself telling the whole story of their great venture, their high hopes, and their frightful disillusionment.

"Well, that's too bad!" declared the young man. "But just like Fortune. She plays us these tricks continually. Look at King Edward, for instance, and look at me. Here I am, home in England for the first time in my life, after a year's hard work with the Australians in South Africa. I find myself alone in London, among six million or so of people, without a soul to exchange a word with. I can tell you I have found it jolly dull all day, and what with this news about the King, and what with the prospect of having to go without my tea, I've wished myself back in Worrabinda more than once. But the thing is to buck up, and take the jade's blows smiling. She gives them to try our mettle, I think, for when she finds it fairly tough she always relents in our favour. Now, if I had crumpled up as I had half a mind to do, and gone back to my hotel, I should not now be enjoying such a delicious cup of tea in such charming company. For I'm sure you'll do me the kindness of taking tea with me? I'm feeling so awfully lonely away from all my people, and it would be such a tremendous pleasure to me to be allowed to chat a little with you ladies."

Eva and Muriel, who themselves were weak from worry and want of food, couldn't resist his friendly petition. And he was so boyish, so open-hearted, and so outspoken that they were soon getting on with him as though they had known him all their lives.

But Eva's more practical mind was busy with housekeeping; she was thinking of all the stacks of food ranged round the larder, and she gave a little sigh.

"I wonder whether anyone will come in to dinner?" she said.

But a great idea had occurred to the guest.

"I was just going to ask whether I might not dine here myself," he replied. "And I shall probably bring a friend with me, or several friends. Perhaps as many as fifty. Could you accommodate fifty?"

The tea ladies gasped a little, for had he not said that he knew no one in London? But it was not for them to accuse a customer, and their only customer, too, of inconsistency of statement. Besides, he had already seized his hat and stick, and, with a friendly bow, was gone.

"Good gracious!" cried Muriel, rippling over now with laughter. "What an extraordinary young man! Why, he hasn't even paid for his tea!"

"Do you think he is a little queer?" Eva wondered. "You see, he's so sunburnt that very likely he's had sunstroke too."

But neither Eva nor Muriel accused him for one instant of anything worse than forgetfulness or eccentricity. There are certain faces one can never doubt.

The tea ladies, however, would certainly have thought their only customer actually mad had they witnessed his next proceedings.

A fat poodle had escaped from his mistress's victoria as it stood drawn up by the kerbstone, and turned a deaf ear to her agonized pleadings and the blandishments of the footman seeking to cajole it back. It ran perversely between the feet of the pedestrians, calling forth opprobrious names upon its beribboned head.

The young man laid a firm hand on the scruff of its neck, and carried it yelping to its owner's knee.

The old lady received it with tears of gratitude, displacing a still fatter pug in favour of the prodigal.

"If I could but do something for you!" she said, wistfully, to the poodle's preserver.

"You can come and dine with me," he retorted, promptly. "I don't know whether you have ever had a son, madam, but you are very like my own mother, and she, at this

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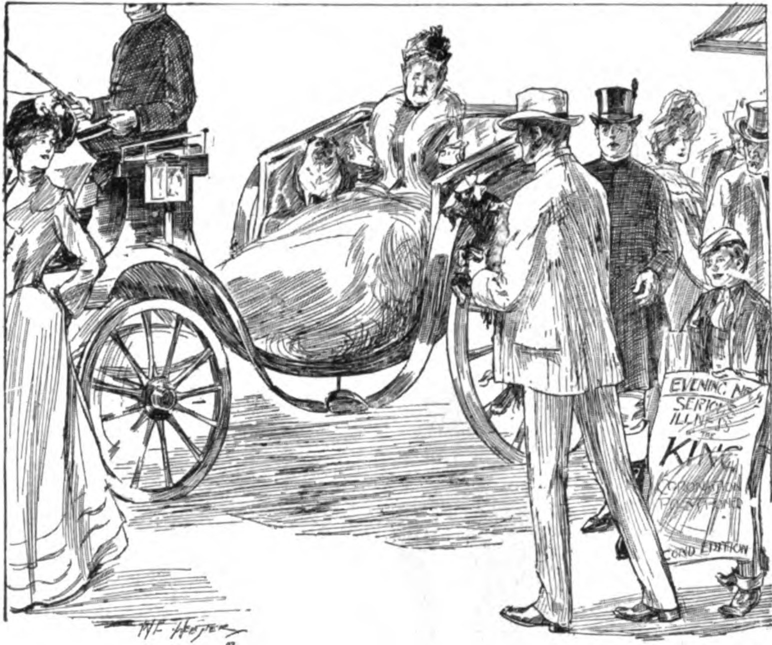
moment, is fifteen thousand miles away, and I'm feeling lonesome."

He took out his card, wrote "The Cosy Corner Tea-Rooms, 8 p.m.," above his address, and put it into the old lady's hand. Before she had adjusted her glasses and read "Mr. James Bullen, Worrabinda, Australia," that eccentric individual was out of sight.



"THE OLD LADY RECEIVED IT WITH TEARS OF GRATITUDE."

As he turned into Piccadilly someone clapped him on the shoulder.

"Halloa, Jimmy, my blooming millionaire!" cried a "gentleman in khaki." "Come to see the show, eh? But the show seems very much off."

"Good man, Eltham!" cried the Australian. "You're the very chap I want. Remember the last time we met in Pretoria, eh? Come and dine with me to-night at the Cosy Corner Tea-Rooms. Delightful place—awfully pretty girls——"

"Glad to hear the place is all right, but you needn't tell me the girls are pretty. They are the Stanleys, my cousins, and I was going there this very moment to see Eva—I mean to say to see them both. I'll dine with you with pleasure, but don't let me detain you now. I'll just run round and have a word with Eva—and, of course, with Muriel, at once."

By the time James Bullen had once traversed the space between the Circus and Green Park he had invited quite a number of people, choosing each of them for his or her respectable appearance as well as for a certain gleam of humanity in the eye. Amidst his invited guests was a bevy of charming girls under the escort of some attentive young men, a public school boy piloting two younger brothers, and an irascible old gentleman whom he had secured on the very steps of Walsingham House.

"My dear sir," he had said in reply to the old gentleman's peppery refusals, "this is a unique occasion. Our King lies ill, we are all in consequence very much depressed, and it is our duty to keep up each other's spirits. I am an Australian alone in London, and I am not going to believe my father's people mean to give me the cold shoulder. If you were ever to come out to Worrabinda, you bet we'd put you up and do you well, and meantime you won't allow me to dine alone?"

But there seemed little chance of a solitary dinner for him. Between five minutes to eight and five minutes past the door of the Cosy Corner Tea-Rooms was perpetually on the click, and very nearly fifty people sat down to the inviting little tables.

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A carriage with two fat horses, two fat servants, a fat poodle, and a fatter pug stood outside the door, and an old lady had bustled in and kissed the tea ladies very affably.

"Your young friend, Mr. Bullen, is extremely eccentric," she began, when Tom Eltham put in a word. "Very rich, do you say? An Australian millionaire? To be sure, that makes a difference. The vagaries of millionaires must be pardoned like those of genius, I suppose. And I'm glad to see that you girls are doing such good business. I always told your poor mother that the best thing was for you to show a little energy and work for yourselves."

Aunt Jane's memory was, like her stature, short.

"What, no champagne?" stuttered Uncle Bentley, who had arrived at the tea-rooms actually holding his young host by the arm. "No champagne, Eva? Must have champagne on an occasion like this. Here, let Jane's servants take this card round to my man at Walsingham House. Let 'em bring back a couple of cases. Do 'em good to work 'em a bit."

The Eltham girls couldn't get over their astonishment and delight at meeting their brother Tom on his return from South Africa for the first time here; and the Harrow boy couldn't sufficiently express his admiration for his plucky little cousins' smart rooms, spiffin' tuck, and general jollity.

Tom Eltham had already managed to tell Eva what was his first and foremost object in coming home, and the young Australian lost no opportunity to make Muriel understand clearly that having once seen her he intended to see her very often again. She blushed and smiled with happiness, for somehow he seemed to her the most charming young man she had ever met.

If the luncheon and tea had been a failure at the C.C.T., at least the dinner was an enormous success. The family party was excessively gay, and the outside people were never for a moment allowed to feel themselves outsiders, owing to the tea ladies' attention and tact. And it was with feelings of the utmost cordiality and good-fellowship that all rose, on the invitation of Colonel Bentley, to drink the solemn and heartfelt toast, "God Save the King."

"UNCLE BENTLEY ARRIVED AT THE TEA-ROOMS ACTUALLY HOLDING HIS YOUNG HOST BY THE ARM."

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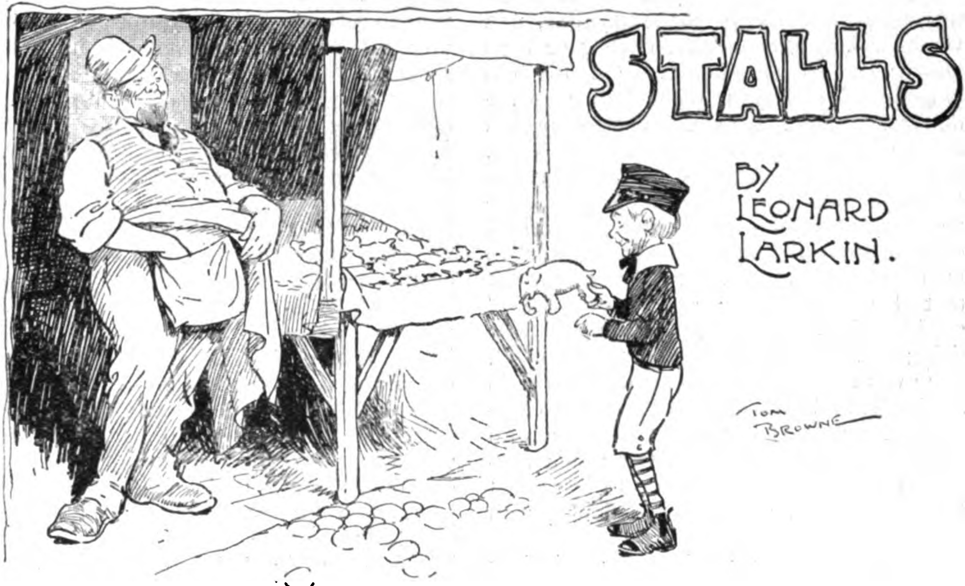

E have some wonderful words in the English language, and the word "stall" is one of them. When we are told, as I have been told, that a Chinese sign may mean a dozen different words, according to the context, and a Chinese word, or sound, may be written by a dozen (or twenty, or forty) different signs, according to all sorts of things, then we laugh at the outlandishness of it all, and wonder how in the world the unhappy heathens understand each other. We laugh because we forget, for the moment, the ancient anecdote of the Frenchman who complained of a cow in his box—which any intelligent medical practitioner should have instantly understood as a cough in the chest—and the other anecdote, just as old, of the other Frenchman (or the same—it doesn't matter) who was amazed to discover that a Christmas-box wasn't a box at all, but a half-crown, and who, being told that somebody had given another a box on the ear, examined the ear very carefully, but couldn't find the box. That same Frenchman—or say a Chinaman, if you like, for the sake of variety—could never guess what this article was about from the title. The respected reader, true-born Englishman as he may be, has perhaps expected information on the stalls in a theatre; but he should remember that THE STRAND MAGAZINE is not a theatrical publication. Perhaps he thought to learn something about the stalls in a stable, or even the headstall that a horse wears, because he forgot that this is not a sporting periodical. He may even have anticipated something about the prebendal stalls in a cathedral, though he really ought to know that this is not an ecclesiastical journal. And if he expects to read about the person called a "stall" who screens a pickpocket in business hours—well, really now, has he any right to consider this a thieves' journal?

No doubt a good deal might be written about all these sorts of stalls, if some other fellow did it. Personally, I don't understand much about them. And speaking of not understanding stalls, what is a stalled ox, exactly? That is a thing I understand less than all the stalls together. But this by the way. The sort of stalls I know something about stand on trestles or wheels, and the

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sort of things that stand on the stalls are numberless. There are some things, however, that used to stand on stalls in the days of my youth that I can no longer find there. Gingerbread, for instance. I don't think you can buy gingerbread anywhere now, and the last time I saw it in a shop, some years ago, it was in the most uninteresting rectangular shape possible, and wholly lacking the gilt that once gave it so aristocratic an appearance. On the old gingerbread stall you could buy a pig, a donkey, a tiger, a man, an elephant—all made of gingerbread and all beautifully gilt, and the elephant with two lucifer matches for tusks; and it was wonderful to observe the varied flavours that the gingerbread derived from the different shapes—not to mention the matches. I positively assert that I could imagine a distinct taste of crackling in the pig if I shut my eyes very tight; and as to the tiger and the elephant, there was never such a flavour of hunting in the jungle and grilling the quarry at a camp fire as I could get out of them—again with my eyes shut very tight. After which confession it will not surprise you to learn that I always ate the man and the donkey with my eyes wide open.

Mem. of sudden recollection: all their eyes were made of caraway comfits—a stony little pebble of a sweetmeat with a seed in it. It was not until I learned to spell that I got rid of the notion that they somehow derived their name from carrying away my comfort by breaking my teeth.

But I sadly miss the gingerbread stall, and the prosperous-looking man with the money-bag under his white apron who kept it. Surely *all* the gingerbread stall-keepers can't have made their fortunes? Here's an offer to stimulate enterprise. I'll buy five shillingsworth of the first gilt gingerbread I see on a stall, and eat the lot—barring the caraway comfits and the lucifer matches, which I will return to the stall-keeper as a bonus.

I think I must have bought, and used, everything ever sold on a stall, except old boots and some of the swarm of infallible medicines. Everything except these—and, I think I should add, a petticoat, a thing sold in large numbers in many markets. You know the corn-cure stall, of course? There was one not so long ago—perhaps it is there now—near the cattle market beyond King's Cross. "William the Corn-curer," the proprietor styled himself, and the name was displayed in large letters over his triumphing head and the very bad hat that covered it. The stuff was a green and greasy substance, which no doubt did very little harm, except when you smelt it; it cost a penny, and you might have done worse things with your penny—swallowed it, for instance. But William was very confident. "Now then, now then, now then!" he would cry. "'Ere is a novelty which has been tried for forty year an' done better every month. The King of Proosia an' the Emperor of Roosia might envy any o' you ladies an' gents the opportunity I now offer you free gracious. Ho yus! Ho yus! Ho yus! Hi, hi! Any lady in this 'ere company as suffers from corns, warts, bunions, or enlargements *of* the big toe—any lady as will perjooce her corn, wart, bunion, or enlargement *of* the big toe on this 'ere little table a-standing before me, the same I will treat free gracious with my world-famed philosophical preparation of botanical an' geological medica-medica *be*-fore the very respectable company now assembled. What? None of ye got a corn, wart, bunion, or enlargement *of* the big toe? Then you must be old customers o' mine, every one of yer, come to buy my world-famous preparation for somebody else. A penny only! One single penny! Sold for the benefit of sufferin' 'umanity for a single copper penny! This 'ere philosophical preparation for one penny—the same which Sir Frederick Treves would charge King Edward the Seventh fifty guineas a time for if he knew the secret o' manufactor—which 'e don't. Sold again to a lady with no bunions of her own, for a penny, a solitary dee! If one application of my celebrated preparation don't cure—if the distressin' symptoms ain't vanished in the mornin'—if a single dab o' the botanical an' geological preparation don't make you dance for joy—why, then, you can try another dab! A penny! A penny only! Mind you, I'm not one o' them parties as comes 'ere to deceive the sufferin' public, promisin' all sorts o' things as will lead to disappointment. Not me. I don't claim that this 'ere philosophical preparation 'll cure consumption, rickets, an' smoky chimneys, nor convert into a perambulator a foldin' bedstead, like as you might easy be persuaded by some vulgar impostors. No! *All* I says is, that it is the most uniquest invention *of* the Christian airy, an' will take the warts off a brass pump-handle, such is its marvellious philosophical power. A penny again! One copper penny! No objections to silver, an' gold not refused!"

I think I have punctuated that speech

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purely from habit. William himself never condescended to such triviality, but reeled off the whole thing like one sentence, without stopping to take breath. And I think he was the only patterer I ever encountered who pronounced the word "penny" as you and I do. Some call it a "pinny," others a "panny"; but the general fashion favours "wan punnee!"

That is what the trotter-seller usually calls it. "Two legs o' mutton for wan punnee!"

"TROTTERS."

is a cry I remember well. It can still be heard in the remote fastnesses of Camden Town and the Borough, though the edge was worn off the ancient joke many years ago. In pursuit of my duty as an inquirer into things in general I have tried a sheep's trotter, and I can most warmly recommend it to any person passionately fond of gristle. Personally, a passion for gristle is not one of my vices. My trotter, by the way, cost me a whole penny. The merchant explained that those at two a penny were all sold, and, moreover, that they were so very small that so haughty a nobleman as myself would disdain to appear in public with one. I suspected that astute tradesman of selling me a ha'porth of trotter and a ha'porth of gammon; but after trying the trotter I decided that on the whole I should have preferred a complete penn'orth of gammon, plain.

Trotters were a favourite article of food among the porters at Billingsgate not so long ago. There were two foreign Jews who kept stalls in opposition, and one of these tradesmen contrived to play his real or assumed ignorance of the English language to a tune of profit. "Dese on vat de ship do run, tree for two ha'pence each, two for tree ha'pence each!" was his announcement; and it was left to the puzzled native to discover what the exact price was, between the extremes of three a penny and two for threepence. As a result he pouched all sorts of prices without varying his song; and at the worst, if a cantankerous customer insisted, he could sell at the lowest interpretation, still with a profit, doubtless. The opposition Jew was cautious and subtle. He apprehended possible trouble in the flagrant ambiguity of his competitor—and I have no doubt that trouble sometimes came. So he contented himself with answering the repeated confusions of the other with a steady and persistent "Same dis side de vay—same dis side de vay!" I think it was the most cautious offer to negotiate "without prejudice" I have ever run against.

Pigs' trotters, I have discovered, are more expensive than sheep's—twice the price. But then you may go into a good restaurant and have the very thing offered you under the name of *pied du porc à* something or other at about eighteenpence.

When I said I had tried everything sold on a stall except old boots and medicines, I meant to exclude also that mysterious red fluid called sarsaparilla wine. At fairs and market-places one sees a construction which it would be sacrilege to call a stall, a vast vermilion thing on wheels, speckled with brass taps and gilt decoration—something between a fire-engine and a Chinese joss-house. The taps exude the "wine," and a careful inspection of the faces of the customers as they retired from the fray decided me long ago to postpone my own experiment. And then—then—I was one morning looking out from

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my bedroom window in an inn which overlooked the site of a very busy fair. It was early, and the show-people were building their booths. The sarsaparilla-wine merchant was preparing, too. He had taken his joss-house to a convenient corner by a ditch, and he was filling up his machinery by the aid of a scarlet bucket with a gilt rim. When I was dressed and had finished my breakfast I strolled out and took a glance at that ditch; and somehow that experiment got postponed again—indefinitely.

The "sarsaparilla wine," I believe, is held to combine the uses of a beverage with the delights of a medicine. Personally, I have a dislike for such compromises. Give me rather the blatant lecturer on therapeutics, mounted on a cart, with a chart of the digestive system and a row of bottles of the Universal Elixir. You know the scientist I mean, and you know with what indignation he would repudiate the inclusion of his establishment in an article on stalls. You must also know his chart, mounted on rollers like a map, with the circulation of the blood very red, the alimentary system very blue, and the nervous system very black. The scientist himself is very much in earnest, and he bangs his chart with an impassioned stick. "I am not 'ere to-night, ladies an' gentlemen," he says, "to delood you, nor to deceive you, nor to bamboozle you, nor to 'umbug you, nor to make up for scientific an' medicinal ignorance by silly jokes an' unphysiological nonsense. No! A heducated man of science, drove out o' the corrupt ring of registered practitioners by professional jealousy, an' professional spite, an' professional greed, I come free an' open to show you all, to demonsterate to you, 'ow you are robbed, 'ow you are delooded, 'ow you are bamboozled an' 'umbugged by the so-called qualified doctors that fattens upon the infirmities of 'uman nature. Ladies an' gentlemen, if you go to a doctor in a fashionable square, with a brass plate on the door, for to be attended to, what does that doctor do? He charges you, that's certain, an'

"THE UNIVERSAL ELIXIR."

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that's all that is certain, an' all he thinks about. What else does he do? You dunno. He dunno. Nobody dunno. I'm sure *I* dunno, an' I dunno nobody else but what dunno. He gives you a bottle o' stuff, p'r'aps, or a box o' pills. Do 'e tell you what's in that bottle o' stuff, or what them pills is made of? Not 'im. 'E won't tell you, an' I don't believe 'e knows 'isself. Do 'e tell you what the haction 'll be on the 'uman body? Not 'im. 'E dunno that, an' I'm sure 'e wouldn't like me to tell you. But 'ere I 'ave a bottle o' stuff, an' 'ere I 'ave a pill; an' I won't take—no, not five hundred pound if you offered it for either of 'em till I've explained clear what the haction is of them two unrivalled remedies. I 'ave 'ere a correck view of the 'ole digestive system, an' a view of the blood system, an' a view of the nervous system; the three medicinal systems which, if I didn't exactly discover 'em myself—an' I won't deny but what I came very close to it—nevertheless are very near as important as some o' the things I *did* discover. Well, ladies an' gentlemen, we'll take the digestive system. Supposin' an affection of the digestive system, such as gashtric fever, typhoid, indigestion, alimental stultification, or even the common an' very prevalent *casus belli*, commonly called stomach-ache. Having took the mixture, or the pill, as the case may be, in the ordinary way in the *trappum osculatum*, or mouth, it passes, as you will perceive, into the digestive system; an' 'avin' arrived there, an' remainin' there, an' bein' there, why there it is! There it is, in the precise spot wanted, and it exercises a beneficent, emollient, dulciferous, soporiferous, remedial cure in a way which it would take a week to explain in a scientific manner, which you wouldn't understand. So much for the digestive system, which you will now comprehend so thoroughly that I need not explain it further. Ah, but, says you, very properly, s'pose the trouble is in the nervous system or the circulation o' the blood, what then? It is then, ladies an' gentlemen, that my world-renowned elixir and igstrornary pill prove their incon—testable superiority over the morbiferous, pestiferous nostrums and paternostrums of the so-called profession. Absorbed first, in the usual manner, by the *trappum laterum*, they pass into the digestive system, which is coloured blue, till they arrive at the *ne plus ultra*, or er wall of the stomach, or *panarum* then, with a saltatory gambado, which i peculiar property of their most expensive ingredient, they pass, *per saltum*, or, as you might say, *cum grano salis*, into the nervous system, which is coloured black, *or* into the circulation o' the blood, which is coloured red, consekins o' the red corpuscles predominating in the proportion of fifty to one, which is long odds, as I think you will agree, and proves a cure to be as good as certain with the very first dose. For you will observe that, it being fifty to one in favour of a cure with the first dose, it is fifty times fifty to one in favour of a certain cure with the second, as I once proved to Professor 'uxley by the celebrated mathematical rule of *tertium quid*, or decimal rule o' three, to *his* intense amazement. Now, then, just to show you, just to demonsterate to you that I am not in the least like the common so-called profession, I will proceed to sell this invaluable mixture at the popular price of sixpence a bottle, bottle included. Pills, twopence. There is nothing to equal the mixture, as I have incon—testably proved to you, except the pills, and nothink in the 'ole world like the pills except the mixture. And remember, ladies and gents, that if it is fifty to one bar none on a cure with the first dose of either, and two thousand five hundred to one on a cure with the second, there is nothing in this wonderful world about us that can withstand a dose of the pills and mixture combined. Thank you, mum, thank you. You too, mum? Here it is. Remember, I am not limitin' you to one bottle—I am equally ready to sell two, an' I do not object to sell a dozen to the same person. Now, then, for sixpence only!"

I think I have written about whelk-stalls in another number of THE STRAND MAGAZINE, in which I paid a tribute to the high moral qualities of the whelk and to its indomitable fortitude under misfortune. I also told the anecdote of the whelk accidentally run over by a waggon, and what the whelk-seller had to pay for the broken wheel. So that there is not much left to say here, except to rejoice that the whelk, with characteristic gristly obstinacy, still holds its place in the London streets; and most earnestly to recommend those in search of a new sensation to try whelks swallowed whole. They will get what they want.

Bookstalls are going, going, but they are not yet gone. I mean, of course, the genuine stalls on barrows, not the hybrid imitations stuck in front of booksellers' shops. You can find the real article in Farringdon Road, in Aldgate High Street, in High Street, Camden Town, in the Borough, and in other

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shady nooks. I fear the barrow-stalls are not so profitable as once they were. I am sorry, partly on general grounds, but chiefly because the literary coster was so pleasant a contradiction. I like to have a classic recommended to me in the husky tones and the dialect usually associated with bloaters. "'Leventh edition, sir, well knowed by

"'LEVENTH EDITION, SIR."

canoozers to be the rarest of all on 'em. Fine calf bindin', with on'y one side of it gawn an' a little bit o' the other. All the pages in it, more or less, an' on'y wants sortin' out. They'd 'ave a quid for it in Charing Crawse Road, but say a tanner—well, fourpence, if that'll tempt yer!" There is a copy of Blair's Sermons, which I have been watching with fascinated interest for years, on a stall in Aldgate. I think I shall go down again to-morrow to see how it is getting on. I have promised myself to buy it some day—I can have it for twopence, I know. But I am always risking losing the relic for the sheer enjoyment of observing the stall-keeper's desperate efforts to get rid of it. It was a shilling once, when I first met it, and its owner contented himself with casually pushing it forward over the others when a clergyman stopped at the stall. Then it was ninepence, and he took to recommending it by word of mouth. I believe he drove one clergyman away for ever by suggesting, with incautious bluntness, that as all the sermons were precious long he might crib enough to last him his "'ole nachral puff" by cutting each into three or four, "an' nobody 'ud spot the fake." After that it got down to sixpence, and the indomitable tradesman took to recommending it generally as a great bibliographical rarity which would bring a vast price some day, in a sale. In its later and twopenny days he desperately represents it as a work of reckless comicality, the title being part of the joke, a very suitable wedding present, and just the thing for a young man starting business as a doctor.

Have you ever observed the wonderful pictorial embellishments of the Italian ice-cream stall? Truly the Italians are an artistic nation. There is an ice-cream stall in Camden Town that I visit regularly, for the sake of the shipwreck painted on the side. The terrible blue and white waves, of all sorts and kinds of jaggedness and curliness, stuck full of broken masts and spars like pins on a cushion, are enough to daunt the hardiest beholder, and must drive away many customers of tender nerves. The wreck, a pathetically shapeless brown blob, is garnished with a yellow mast, very splintery at the top, to which clings a terrified and corpulent mariner, as big as the wreck and twice as pathetic. But the triumph of the work is the lightning. It is vermilion, and it spreads all over the composition in the most terrible and amazing streaks and twiddles, radiating from a large, solid mass just over the wreck. The execution of that lightning

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"ICE-CREAMS."

is a marvel. It can only have been done by corking up the paint in a glass bottle, and then shying the bottle, with great force, accurately into the middle of the picture. How any small boy can face that lightning, even in pursuit of ice-cream, astonishes me. But in pursuit of ice-cream the street boy is capable of anything. I have seen him sucking at it in January, with the London improved snow making the streets black and slimy.

I have never been able to understand how the ice-cream stall-keeper makes his trade pay. The water, and the sour milk, and the mildewed flour are cheap enough, of course, and if that were all he used the profit would be handsome. But how can he find all the microbes for the money?

A kind of stall has appeared of late years in which the proprietor makes sweetstuff in full view of the purchasing public. It is a most astonishing conjuring trick, performed thus. Toffee is boiling in a large pot, and from time to time this toffee is poured out into a flat, shallow dish to cool. The performer, with the muscles of his more or less brawny arms bared to above the elbows, grabs handfuls of this sticky, half-cooled toffee and hangs them on a nail. Once the stuff is on the nail the athlete in charge drags it out in a long rope till he has to loop it up and hang it over the nail again. So he goes on, dragging it out and looping it up, looping and dragging; and, marvellous to tell, as he loops and drags the black stuff changes colour, grows gradually brown, then yellow, and at last white. So that by checking his gymnastics at various stages the exhibitor provides the material of multi-coloured sweets all out of one material. It is a great marvel, and I linger, fascinated, to watch the trick. But I don't feel attracted to buy. Some old-fashioned prejudice of mine makes me prefer my toffee in its primitive state, before it is man-handled and wrestled with. But I admire and wonder, nevertheless, for the phenomenon is against all precedent. Anybody familiarly acquainted with the average hand of the average stall-keeper would be prepared to see anything white he handled grow black, but this reverse process—but there, never mind!

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By E. Nesbit.

VIII.—RED INDIANS.

PROBABLY the next day would have been a greater success if Cyril had not been reading "The Last of the Mohicans." The story was running in his head at breakfast, and as he took his third cup of tea he said, dreamily: "I wish there were Red Indians in England—not big ones, you know, but little ones, just about the right size for us to fight."

Everyone disagreed with him at the time, and no one attached any importance to the incident. But when they went down to the sand-pit to ask for a hundred pounds in two-shilling pieces with Queen Victoria's head on to prevent mistakes—which they had decided on after long discussion as a really reasonable wish that must turn out well—they found out that they had done it again. For the psammead, which was very cross and sleepy, said:—

"Oh, don't bother me. You've had your wish."

"I didn't know it," said Cyril.

"Don't you remember yesterday?" said the sand fairy, still more disagreeably. "You asked me to let you have your wishes wherever you happened to be, and you wished this morning, and you've got it."

"Oh, have we?" said Robert. "What is it?"

"So you've forgotten," said the psammead, beginning to burrow. "Never mind, you'll know soon enough. And I wish you joy of it. A nice thing you've let yourselves in for."

"We always do, somehow," said Jane, sadly.

And now the odd thing was that no one could remember anyone's having wished for anything that morning. The wish about the Red Indians had not stuck in anyone's head. It was a most anxious morning. Everyone was trying to remember what had been wished for, and no one could, and everyone kept expecting something awful to happen every minute. It was most agitating; they knew from what the psammead had said that they must have wished for something more than usually undesirable; and they spent several hours in most agonizing uncertainty. It was not till nearly dinner-time that Jane tumbled over "The Last of the Mohicans," which had, of course, been left face downwards on the floor, and when Anthea had picked her and the book up she suddenly said, "I know!" and sat down flat on the carpet.

"Oh, Pussy, how awful! It was Indians he wished for—Cyril—at breakfast; don't you remember? He said, 'I wish there were Red Indians in England'—and now there are, and they're going about scalping people all over the country, as likely as not."

"Perhaps they're only in Northumberland and Durham," said Jane, soothingly. It was almost impossible to believe that it could really hurt people much to be scalped so far away as that.

"Don't you believe it," said Anthea; "the sammyadd said we'd let ourselves in for a nice thing. That means they'll come *here*. And suppose they scalped the Lamb?"

"Perhaps the scalping would come right again at sunset," said Jane, but she did not speak so hopefully as usual.

"Not it," said Anthea; "the things that

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grow out of the wishes don't go. Look at the fifteen shillings. Pussy, I'm going to break something, and you must let me have every penny of money you've got. The Indians will come *here*, don't you see. That spiteful sammyadd as good as said so. You see what my plan is? Come on!"

Jane did not see at all. But she followed her sister meekly into their mother's bedroom.

Anthea lifted down the heavy water-jug; it had a pattern of storks and long grasses on it, which Anthea never forgot. She carried it into the dressing-room and carefully emptied the water out of it into the bath; then she took the jug back into the bedroom and dropped it on the floor. You know how a jug always breaks if you happen to drop it by accident? If you happen to drop it on purpose it is quite different. Anthea dropped that jug three times and it was as unbroken as ever, so at last she had to take her father's boot-tree and break the jug with that in cold blood. It was heartless work.

Next she broke open the missionary-box with the poker. Jane told her that it was wrong, of course; but Anthea shut her lips very tight and then said:—

"Don't be silly; it's a matter of life and death."

There was not very much in the missionary-box—only seven and fourpence—but the girls between them had nearly four shillings. This made over eleven shillings, as you will easily see.

Anthea tied up the money in a corner of her pocket-handkerchief. "Come on, Jane," she said, and ran down to the farm. She knew that the farmer was going into Rochester that afternoon. In fact, it had been arranged that he was to take the four children with him. They had planned this in the happy hour when they believed that they were going to get that hundred pounds in two-shilling pieces out of the psammead. They had arranged to pay the farmer two shillings each for the ride. Now Anthea hastily explained to him that they could not go, but would he take Martha and the baby instead? He agreed, but he was not pleased to get only half a crown instead of eight shillings.

Then the girls ran home again. Anthea was agitated, but not flurried. When she came to think it over afterwards she could not help seeing that she had acted with the most far-seeing promptitude, just like a born general. She fetched a little box from her corner drawer, and went to find Martha, who was laying the cloth and not in the best of tempers.

"Look here," said Anthea. "I've broken the toilet-jug in mother's room."

"Just like you — always up to some mischief," said Martha, dumping down a salt-cellar with a bang.

"Don't be cross, Martha, dear," said

"NEXT SHE BROKE OPEN THE MISSIONARY-BOX WITH THE POKER."

Anthea. "I've got enough money to pay for a new one, if only you'll be a dear and go and buy it for us. Your cousins keep a china-shop, don't they? And I would like you to get it to-day, in case mother comes home to-morrow. You know she said she might, perhaps."

"But you're all going into town yourselves," said Martha.

"We can't afford to if we get the new jug," said Anthea, "but we'll pay for you to go if you'll take the Lamb; and I say, Martha,

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look here, I'll give you my Liberty box if you'll go. Look ! it's most awfully pretty, all inlaid with real silver and ivory and ebony, like King Solomon's temple."

"I see," said Martha; "no, *I* don't want your box, miss. What *you* want is to get the precious Lamb off your hands for the afternoon. Don't you go for to think I don't see through you."

This was so true that Anthea longed to deny it at once. Martha had no business to know so much. But she held her tongue.

Martha set down the bread with a bang that made it jump off its trencher.

"I *do* want the jug got," said Anthea, softly. "You *will* go, won't you?"

"Well, just for this once, I don't mind; but, mind you don't get into none of your outrageous mischief while I'm gone—that's all!"

"He's going earlier than he thought," said Anthea, eagerly. "You'd better hurry and get dressed. Do put on that lovely purple frock, Martha, and the hat with the pink cornflowers. Jane'll finish laying the cloth, and I'll wash the Lamb and get him ready."

"ANTHEA PEEPED OUT OF THE WINDOW FROM TIME TO TIME."

As she washed the unwilling Lamb and hurried him into his best clothes, Anthea peeped out of the window from time to time; so far all was well—she could see no Red Indians. When, with a rush and a skurry, and some deepening of the damask of Martha's complexion, she and the Lamb had been got off, Anthea drew a deep breath.

"*He's* safe!" she said, and to Jane's horror flung herself down on the floor and burst into floods of tears. Jane did not understand at all how a person could be so brave and like a general, and then suddenly give way and go flat like an air-balloon when you prick it. It is better not to go flat, of course, but you will observe that Anthea did not give way till her aim was accomplished. She had got the dear Lamb out of danger; she felt certain that the Red Indians would be round the White House or nowhere—the farmer's cart would not come back till after sunset, so she could afford to cry a little. It was partly with joy that she cried, because she had done what she meant to do. She cried for about three minutes while Jane hugged her miserably and said, at five-second intervals, "Don't cry, Panther, dear!"

Then she jumped up, rubbed her eyes hard with the corners of her pinafore, so that they kept red for the rest of the day, and started to tell the boys. But just at that moment Eliza rang the dinner-bell, and nothing could be said till they had all been helped to minced beef. Then Eliza left the room and Anthea told her tale. But it is a mistake to tell a thrilling tale when people are eating minced beef and boiled potatoes. There seemed somehow to be something about the food that made the idea of Red Indians appear flat and unbelievable. The boys actually laughed and called Anthea a little silly.

"Why," said Cyril, "I'm almost sure it was before I said that that Jane said she wished it would be a fine day."

"It wasn't," said Jane, briefly.

"Why, if it was Indians," Cyril went on—"salt, please, and mustard; I must have something to make this mush go down—if it was Indians they'd have been infesting the place long before this. You know they would. I believe it's the fine day."

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"Then why did the sammyadd say we'd let ourselves in for a nice thing?" asked Anthea. She was feeling very cross. She knew she had acted with nobility and discretion, and after that it was very hard to be called a little silly, especially when she had the weight of a burglared missionary-box and about seven and fourpence, mostly in coppers, lying like lead upon her conscience.

There was a silence, during which Eliza took away the mincy plates and brought in the treacle-pudding. As soon as she had retired Cyril began again.

"Of course, I don't mean to say," he admitted, "that it wasn't a good thing to get Martha and the Lamb out of the light for the afternoon, but as for Red Indians—why, you know jolly well the wishes always come that very minute. If there was going to be Red Indians they'd be here now."

"I expect they are," said Anthea; "they're lurking amid the undergrowth, for anything you know. I do think you're most beastly unkind."

"Indians almost always *do* lurk, really, though, don't they?" put in Jane, anxious for peace.

"No, they don't," said Cyril, tartly. "And I'm not unkind, I'm only truthful. And I say it was utter rot breaking the water-jug, and as for the missionary-box I believe it's a treason-crime, and I shouldn't wonder if you could be hanged for it, if any of us was to split."

"Shut up, can't you?" said Robert, but Cyril couldn't. You see, he felt in his heart that if there *should* be Indians they would be entirely his own fault, so he did not wish to believe in them. And trying not to believe things when in your heart you are almost sure they are true is as bad for the temper as anything I know.

"It's simply idiotic," he said, "talking about Indians, when you can see for yourselves that it's Jane who's got her wish. Look what a fine day it is——*Oh!*"

He had turned towards the window to point out the fineness of the day—the others turned too—and a frozen silence caught at Cyril, and none of the others felt at all like breaking it. For there, peering round the corner of the window, among the red leaves of the Virginian creeper, was a face—a brown face with a long nose and a tight mouth and very bright eyes. And the face was painted in coloured patches. It had long black hair, and in the hair were feathers!

"NO ONE COULD MOVE."

Every child's mouth in the room opened, and stayed open. The treacle-pudding was growing white and cold on their plates. No one could move.

Suddenly the feathered head was cautiously withdrawn and the spell was broken. I am sorry to say that Anthea's first words were very like a girl.

"There now!" she said. "I told you so!"

Treacle-pudding had now definitely ceased to charm. Hastily wrapping their portions in a *Spectator* of the week before the week before last, they hid them behind the crinkled paper stove-ornament, and fled upstairs to reconnoitre and to hold a hurried council.

"Pax," said Cyril, handsomely, when they reached their mother's bedroom. "Panther, I'm sorry if I was a brute."

"All right," said Anthea, "but you see now!"

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No further trace of Indians, however, could be discerned from the windows.

"Well," said Robert, "what are we to do?"

"The only thing I can think of," said Anthea, who was now generally admitted to be the heroine of the day, "is, if we dressed up as like Indians as we can, and looked out of the windows or even went out, they might think we were the powerful leaders of a large neighbouring tribe and—and not do anything to us, you know, for fear of awful vengeance."

"But Eliza and the cook?" said Jane.

"You forget; they can't notice anything," said Robert. "They wouldn't notice anything out of the way even if they were scalped or roasted at a slow fire."

"But would they come right at sunset?"

"Of course. You can't be really scalped or burned to death without noticing it, and you'd be sure to notice it next day, even if it escaped your attention at the time," said Cyril. "I think Anthea's right, but we shall want a most awful lot of feathers."

"I'll go down to the hen-house," said Robert. "There's one of the turkeys in there; it's not very well. I could cut its feathers without it minding much. It's very bad; doesn't seem to care what happens to it. Get me the cutting-out scissors."

Earnest reconnoitring convinced them all that no Indians were in the poultry-yard. Robert went.

In five minutes he came back—pale, but with many feathers.

"Look here," he said, "this is jolly serious. I cut off the feathers, and when I turned to come out there was an Indian squinting at me from under the old hen-coop. I just brandished the feathers and yelled and got away before he could get the coop off the top of himself. Panther, get the coloured blankets off our beds, and look slippy, can't you?"

"I JUST BRANDISHED THE FEATHERS AND YELLED."

It is wonderful how like an Indian you can make yourselves with blankets and feathers and coloured scarves. Of course, none of the children happened to have long black hair, but there was a lot of black calico that had been got to cover school-books with. They cut strips of this into a sort of fine fringe and fastened it round their heads with the amber-coloured ribbons off the girls' Sunday dresses. Then they stuck turkey feathers in the ribbons. The calico looked very like long black hair, especially when the strips began to curl up a bit.

"But our faces," said Anthea; "they're not at all the right colour. We're all rather pale, and I'm sure I don't know why. Cyril is the colour of putty."

"I'm not," said Cyril.

"The real Indians outside seem to be brownish," said Robert, hastily. "I think we ought to be really red; it's sort of superior to *have* a red skin, if you *are* one."

The red ochre cook uses for the kitchen bricks seemed to be about the reddest thing in the house. The children mixed some in a saucer with milk, as they had seen cook do for the kitchen floor. Then they carefully painted each other's faces and hands with it, till they were quite as red as any Red Indian need be, if not redder.

They knew at once that they must look very terrible when they met Eliza in the passage and she screamed aloud. This unsolicited testimonial pleased them very much. Hastily telling her not be a goose, and that it was only a game, the four blanketed, feathered, really-and-truly Redskins went boldly out to meet the foe. I say boldly. That is because I wish to be polite. At any rate, they went.

Along the hedge dividing the wilderness

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from the garden was a row of dark heads, all highly feathered.

"It's our only chance," whispered Anthea. "Much better than to wait for their blood-freezing attack. We must pretend like mad—like that game of cards where you pretend you've got aces when you haven't. Fluffing, they call it, I think. Now then. Whoop!"

With four wild war-whoops—or as near them as English children could be expected to go without any previous practice—they rushed through the gate and struck four warlike attitudes in face of the line of Red Indians. These were all about the same height, and that height was Cyril's.

"I hope to goodness they can talk English," said Cyril, through his attitude.

Anthea knew they could, though she never knew how she came to know it. She had a white towel tied to a walking-stick. This was a flag of truce, and she waved it, in the hope that the Indians would know what it was. Apparently they did, for one who was browner than the others stepped forward.

"Ye seek a pow-wow?" he said, in excellent English. "I am Snakeskin, of the mighty tribe of Rock-dwellers."

"And I," said Anthea, with a sudden inspiration, "am the Black Panther—chief of the—the—the—Mazzawattee tribe. My brothers—I don't mean—yes I do—the tribe—I mean the Mazzawattees—are in ambush below the brow of yonder hill."

"And what mighty warriors be these?" asked Snakeskin, turning to the others.

Cyril said he was the great chief Squirrel of the Moning Congo tribe, and seeing that Jane was sucking her thumb, and could evidently think of no name for herself, he added, "This great warrior is Wild Cat—Pussy Ferox we call it in this land—leader of the vast Phit-eezi tribe."

"And thou, valorous Redskin?" Snakeskin inquired, suddenly, of Robert, who, taken unawares, could only reply that he was the great chief Bobs—leader of the Cape Mounted Police.

"And now," said Black Panther, "our tribes—if we just whistle them up—will far outnumber your puny forces. So resistance is useless. Return, therefore, to your own land, O brother, and smoke pipes of peace in your wampums with your squaws and your medicine men, and dress yourselves in gayest wigwams, and eat happily of the juicy, fresh-caught moccasins."

"'YE SEEK A POW-WOW?' HE SAID."

"You've got it all wrong," murmured Cyril, angrily. But Snakeskin only looked inquiringly at her.

"Thy customs are other than ours, O

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Black Panther," he said. "Bring up thy tribe that we may hold pow-wow in state before them, as becomes great chiefs."

"We'll bring them up right enough," said Anthea, "with their bows and arrows and tomahawks and scalping-knives, and everything you can think of, if you don't look sharp and go."

She spoke bravely enough, but the hearts of all the children were beating furiously, and their breath came in shorter and shorter gasps. For the little real Red Indians were closing up round them—coming nearer and nearer with angry murmurs—so that they were the centre of a crowd of dark, cruel faces.

"It's no go," whispered Robert. "I knew it wouldn't be. We must make a bolt for the psammead. It might help us. If it doesn't—well, I suppose we shall come alive again at sunset. I wonder if scalping hurts as much as they say?"

"I'll wave the flag again," said Anthea. "If they stand back we'll run for it."

She waved the towel, and the chief commanded his followers to stand back. Then, charging wildly at the place where the line of Indians was thinnest, the four children started to run. Their first rush knocked down some half-dozen Indians, over whose blanketed bodies the children leaped and made straight for the sand-pit. This was no time for the safe, easy way by which carts go down; right over the edge of the sand-pit they went, among the yellow and pale purple flowers and dried grasses, past the little sand-martin's little front doors, skipping, clinging, bounding, stumbling, sprawling, and finally rolling.

Snakeskin and his followers came up with them just at the very spot where they had seen the psammead that morning.

Breathless and defeated, the wretched children now awaited their fate. Sharp knives and axes gleamed round them, but worse than these was the cruel light in the eyes of Snakeskin and his followers.

"Ye have lied to us, O Black Panther of the Mazzawattees—and thou, too, Squirrel of the Moning Congos. These also—Pussy Ferox of the Phit-eezi and Bobs of the Cape Mounted Police—these also have lied to us, if not with their tongues, yet by their silence. Ye have lied under the cover of the truce-flag of the pale face. Ye have no followers. Your tribes are far away—following the hunting trail. What shall be their doom?" he concluded, turning with a bitter smile to the other Red Indians.

"Build we the fire!" shouted his followers, and at once a dozen ready volunteers started to look for fuel. The four children, each held between two strong little Indians, cast despairing glances round them. Oh, if they could only see the psammead!

"Do you mean to scalp us first and then roast us?" asked Anthea, desperately.

"Of course!" Snakeskin opened his eyes at her; "it's always done."

The Indians had formed a ring round the children and now sat on the ground gazing at their captives. There was a threatening silence.

Then slowly by twos and threes the Indians who had gone to look for firewood came back, and they came back empty-handed. They had not been able to find a single stick of wood for a fire! No one ever can, as a matter of fact, in that part of Kent.

The children drew a deep breath of relief, but it ended in a moan of terror, for bright knives were being brandished all about them. Next moment each child was seized by an Indian—each closed its eyes and tried not to scream. They waited for the sharp agony of the knife. It did not come. Next moment they were released and fell in a trembling heap. Their heads did not hurt at all. They only felt strangely cool. Wild war-whoops rang in their ears. When they ventured to open their eyes they saw four of their foes dancing round them with wild leaps and screams, and each of the four brandished in his hand a scalp of long, flowing black hair. They put their hands to their heads—their own scalps were safe. The poor, untutored savages had, indeed, scalped the children. But they had only, so to speak, scalped them of the black calico ringlets!

The children fell into each other's arms, sobbing and laughing.

"Their scalps are ours," chanted the chief. "Ill-rooted were their ill-fated hairs! They came off in the hands of the victors; without struggle, without resistance, they yielded their scalps to the conquering Snakeskin! Oh, how little a thing is a scalp so lightly won!"

"They'll take our real ones in a minute, you see if they don't," said Robert, trying to rub some of the red ochre off his face and hands on to his hair.

"Cheated of our just and fiery revenge are we," the chant went on, "but there are other torments than the scalping-knife and the flames. Yet is the slow fire the correct thing. Oh, strange, unnatural country wherein

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"THEY SAW FOUR OF THEIR FOES DANCING ROUND THEM WITH WILD LEAPS AND SCREAMS."

a man may find no wood to burn his enemy! Ah, for the boundless forests of my native land, where the great trees for thousands of miles grow but to furnish firewood wherewithal to burn our foes. Ah, would we were but in our native forest once more."

Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, the golden gravel shone all round the four children instead of the dusky figures. For every single Indian had vanished on the instant at their leader's word. The psammead must have been there all the time. And it had given the Indian chief his wish!

Martha brought home a jug with a pattern of storks and long grasses on it; also she brought back all Anthea's money.

"My cousin, she give me the jug for luck. She said it was an odd one what the basin of had got smashed."

"Oh, Martha, you are a dear!" sighed Anthea, throwing her arms round her.

"Yes," giggled Martha, "you'd better make the most of me while you've got me. I shall give your ma notice directly the minute she comes back."

"Oh, Martha, we haven't been so *very* horrid to you, have we?" asked Anthea, aghast.

"Oh, it ain't that, miss," Martha giggled more than ever. "I'm a-goin' to be married. It's Beale, the gamekeeper. He's been a-proposin' to me off and on ever since you come home from the clergyman's, where you got locked up on the church tower. And to-day I said the word an' made him a happy man."

Anthea put the seven and fourpence back in the missionary-box and pasted paper over the place where the poker had broken it. She was very glad to be able to do this, and she does not know to this day whether breaking open a missionary-box is or is not a hanging matter.

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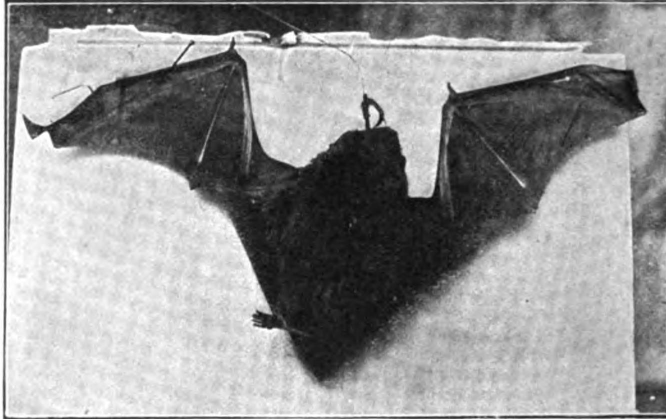
*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

NOT A FISH STORY.

"A friend of mine who had been trout-fishing was returning home at dusk, with his rod over his shoulder, when he felt a pull at his line. Looking round he saw that a bat had taken the trout fly; this he successfully 'landed.' The hook can be seen in the bat's mouth. I never heard of this happening before."—Mr. James G. Dick, Easton Lodge, Cliftonville, Belfast.



AN AUTOMOBILE ANIMAL AMBULANCE.

"This is probably the only animal ambulance in the world which is an automobile. It is the design of Dr. W. F. Staniforth, a veterinary surgeon, of Cleveland, Ohio, who has a regular hospital for dogs and cats. When a case of illness is reported the doctor goes for it in his auto. The lower part is used for dogs and the upper part for felines, as they need to be separated usually. The doctor is a great friend of these animals, and if their owners have no money to pay for treatment he makes no charge. In the picture he is seen going after a case accompanied by his own pet bulldogs, which frequently make calls with him."—Mr. D Allan Willey, Baltimore.

THE MARKER WAS ASTONISHED.

"The accompanying photo. shows a remarkable affair which occurred at the Hendon Road Unionist Club recently. Playing with a friend in the billiard-room I ordered two bottles of stout. These were opened in the bar and sent up, in glasses, in the lift. The marker brought up the lift sharply, there was a crash, and then the marker cried: 'Look here, gentlemen!' The edge of the tray had evidently projected beyond the lift and caught the framework, with the result that one glass had jumped into the other, as in the photo. This remarkable result was witnessed by several gentlemen who were in the room at the time. The photo. was taken in the yard of the club next day by Mr. C. H. Hodgson, Hendon Road, Sunderland."—Mr. J. J. Witten, 38, Hendon Road, Sunderland.

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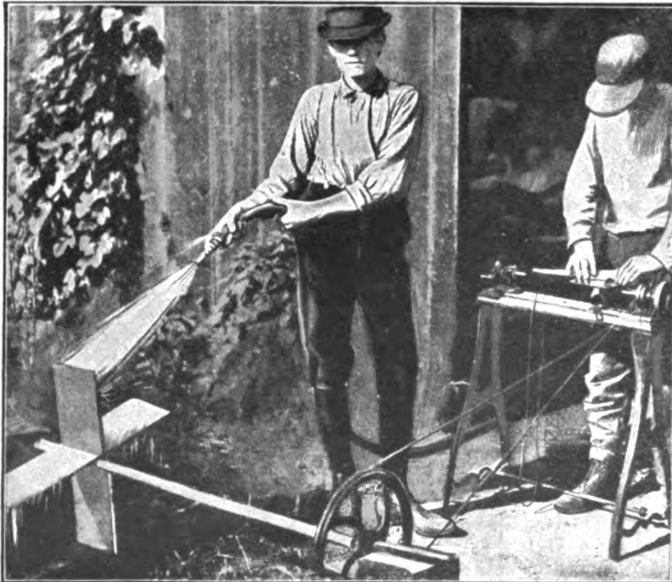
NOT A FLATTERING LIKENESS.

"This curiosity is not, as the photograph implies, a freak. When in France, at a small village named Villequier, on the Seine, a pig's head was hanging outside a butcher's shop, and one of my friends standing behind it, it looked as if he had a pig's head, hence this curious result."—Mr. Chas. R. B. Godmans, Muntham, Horsham.

INGENIOUS BOYS.

"Several Los Angeles boys have improvised a sawmill from odds and ends in which surprising ingenuity is displayed, as the accompanying photograph shows. This picture was taken while they were earnestly at work with their odd machine, which actually saws very well. The boys took an amateur turning-lathe and mounted on it a small circular saw of their own make. A line-shaft was made of an old broom-handle, at one end of which is a paddle-wheel constructed from a few pine shingles, and at the other the belt-wheel, taken from an invalid sewing-machine. When the clever inventors want their machine to run the water is turned on the paddle-wheel by means of an ordinary hose attached to a hydrant in the back-yard, and then the sawdust begins to fly in real sawmill style, while the teeth cut rapidly through the wood. The sponsors for this unique outfit are Delbert Axelson, engineer and nozzleman; Edgar Brown, sawyer and general manager; and Edmund Lucey, solicitor to work up enthusiasm among the other small boys."—Mr. John L. Von Blon, Los Angeles, California.



From a Photo. by C. F. Treble, Brixton.

A NOVELTY IN WAISTCOATS.

"What Lord Kitchener has described as a 'very unique' waistcoat, and Lord Roberts considers 'most interesting,' is the result of a collection which has been made by Mr. George Parke, jun., of 'Grosvenor,' Sydney Road, Stockwell, of the different regimental badges of nearly every regiment in the British Army. The collection took a long time to get together, and cost a good deal of money before completion. Mr. Parke arranged the badges upon a red waistcoat, and he terms it his Coronation waistcoat."—Mr. J. While, 124, Loughborough Road, Brixton, S.W.

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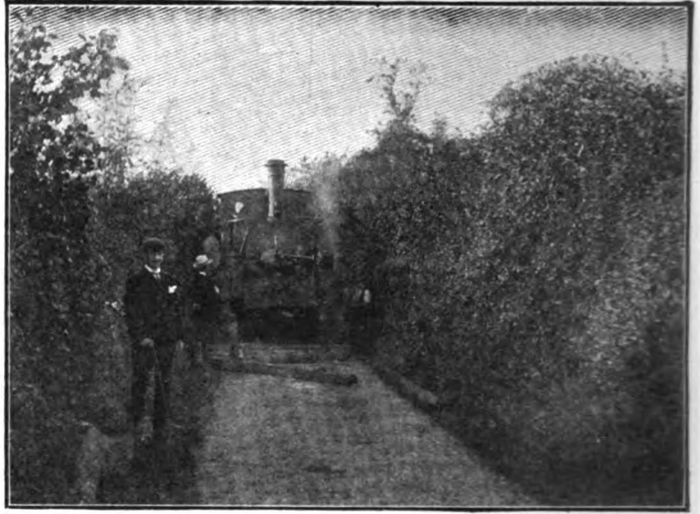
A LOCOMOTIVE'S HOLIDAY.

"It is, I should think, of rare occurrence to meet a railway engine in a Devonshire lane, where one is generally said to wander 'with love-stories olden for theme.' The enclosed is a photograph of a railway engine in such a lane near Axminster, Devon. The engine was being taken from the London and South-Western Railway to Great Trill, to help in the construction of the Axminster and Lyme Regis Light Railway. At some parts the lane was so narrow that the banks had to be cut back to effect a passage."—Mr. W. H. Bellamy, Axminster, Devon.



AN ADVENTUROUS BOTTLE.

"I send you the photo. of a bottle supposed to be of Bass's ale, which was found in sixty fathoms of water in the sea off Barbados. It was fished out by Mr. Taylor, and is in a perfect state. It is encrusted with moss, coral, and weed, and a large and beautiful sponge has grown on the top of it."—Miss Maud Gibson, 7, Amblecote Road, Grove Park, Kent.

THE TOP OF THE LADDER.

"'The Top of the Ladder' picture which I send you was obtained under the following extraordinary circumstances. At a hook and ladder competition held on Labour Day, the first Monday in September, in Thorold, Ont., not a great while ago, the ladder-climber of one of the fire companies met with an accident while in the act of ascending, his companions below having failed to keep a firm hold of the upright ladder. The result was that down came ladder, fireman, and all. Immediately arose varying shouts from the spectators, some crying, 'He didn't touch the top,' while others were equally emphatic in calling out, 'Yes, he did.' Even the judges were quite unable to decide the matter, and so after a brief delay another company was allowed to take its turn. The writer, who had been looking at the 'finder' of his camera and had 'pressed the button' just as the climber was apparently ascending, thought to himself, 'This picture is a failure.' After the tournament he retired to the seclusion of the dark room. Imagine his surprise and pleasure when in the course of developing he found a man with one hand touching the top rung of a vertical ladder, his feet wide apart, and his whole body showing extreme haste and exertion. As this picture was the only one of its particular kind that the writer had attempted to take during the tournament there was not the slightest room for doubt that those who had shouted 'He didn't touch the top' were mistaken. A printed proof was shown to the members of the local fire company, and it is almost needless to add that it excited much interest."—The Rev. P. L. Spencer, Jarvis, Ont.

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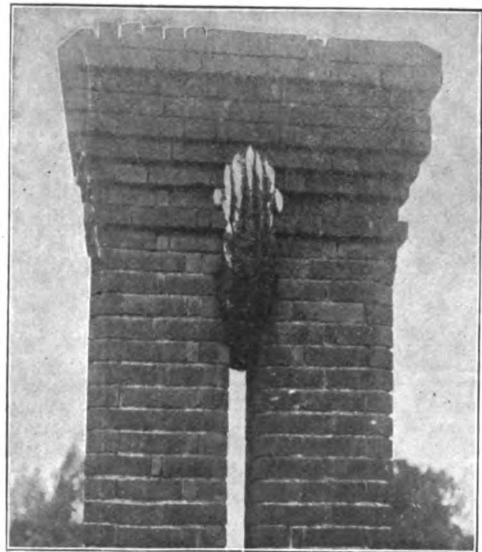
WHAT A WIDE-ANGLE LENS CAN DO.

"The three photos. shown here illustrate what can happen to a person if photographed with a wide-angle lens. Photo. No. 1 shows the model as he really is, photo. No. 2 is of the same person taken with a wide-angle lens, and in photo. No. 3 the hand is extended towards the camera with strange results."

AN AMUSING JUMBLE.

"I send herewith a jumble of American magazine advertisements. You will observe the opportunity for a

trip over an entirely new route of travel, personally conducted by Hiprah Hunt, also advice about the time of getting married and timely caution concerning the safety or danger of your bank account, etc."—Mr. William Reader, Columbia Falls, Montana.



A BEE-HIVE IN A CHIMNEY-STACK.

"One of the chimneys at Timsbury Manor has been stormed by bees, and when the photo. was taken they had been there only six weeks. The slot in the middle is 18in. long by 4in. wide, and the comb extends right through and bulges out on the other side, much the same as that photographed. The operation of taking the photograph was rather ticklish, as I had to rig up the camera on the roof by lashing two legs of the tripod to the coping of the roof, about 8ft. from the bees. The comb can be seen almost covered with bees. Timsbury Manor is the property of T. Vickers, Esq., of Vickers, Sons, and Maxim, and I have his permission to send this photograph to you."—C. Cowell, Timsbury Manor, near Romsey, Hants.

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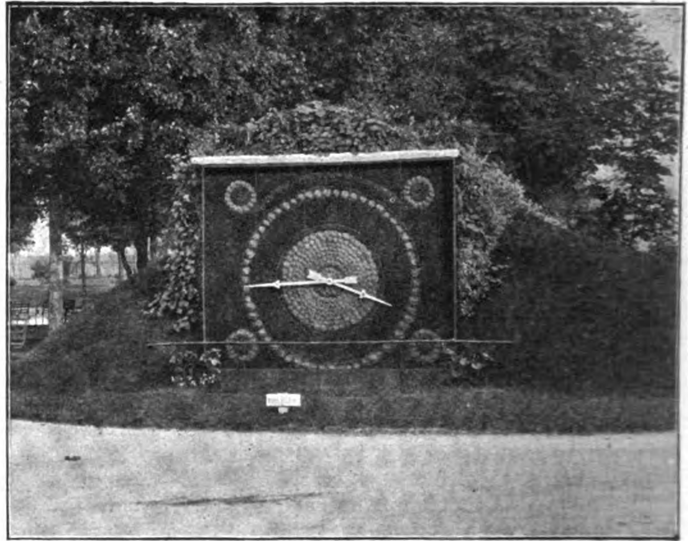
A FLOWER CLOCK.

"I send you a photograph of what is known as the 'Flower Clock,' located in a public park at Detroit, Mich. The dial or face is composed of flowers and foliage, and is about 6ft. in width. Upon an axle in the centre revolve the wooden hands, which represent the minutes and hours as in an ordinary timepiece. They are moved around the dial by a small stream of water, which turns the axle. They record the divisions of time throughout the twenty-four hours, the motions of each hand being regulated accordingly. The flower clock requires no winding so long as the water-power is turned on, and it runs throughout the summer season."—Mr. Day Allan Willey, Baltimore.



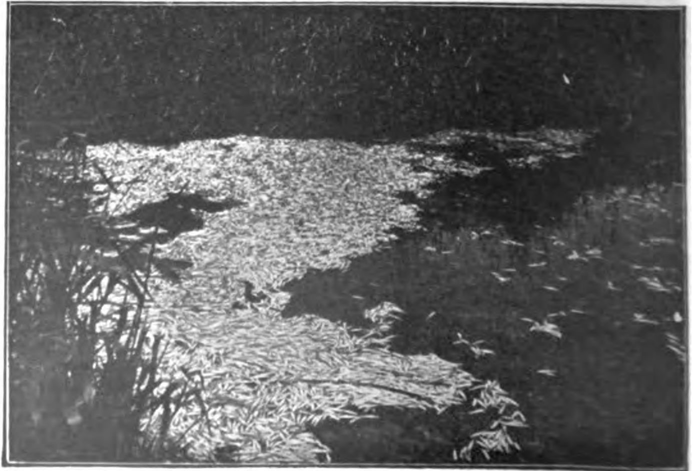
PERSIAN TEAR-BOTTLES.

"The quaint glasses or bottles depicted in the accompanying

photograph are two rare Persian tear-glasses of a beautiful blue colour, standing 13in. high, and having a like circumference at the thickest part. Although it is pretty generally known that widows in Persia collect their tears in glasses to sprinkle on their husbands' graves, yet such glasses are by no means common, and very few Europeans, however long they have resided in the country, or however extensively they have travelled therein, have seen them, or, having seen them, have guessed to what purpose they are put. This is chiefly due to the fact that only natives are allowed to be present on the great occasion when widows—or, for the matter of that, men also—shed tears profusely, viz., the 'Tazieh,' or religious play to commemorate the deaths of Hassan and Hussain, the sons of Ali, considered by Persians and all Shiah Mohammedans to be the rightful successors of Mahomet the Prophet. The drama setting forth the courage and resignation of the martyrs, the sufferings of their little children, and the heroism of their followers moves the audience to sob as if their hearts would break. The women cover their heads with straw to represent the sand of the desert; the men make bare and smite their breasts; some strike themselves over the bare shoulders with heavy chains; others cut their heads with swords and knives; the track of the cortège on the tenth day, when frenzy runs highest, is marked with blood."—Mr. J. A. Lee, 211, Ivydale Road, Nunhead, S.E.

MURDERED TROUT.

"Here is a photo. taken on the Six Mile Water, near Antrim, of trout poisoned by chemicals run into the water. The trout measure from the size of a minnow up to about 3lb. weight. The Six Mile Water was once the best trout river in Ireland, but the chemical refuse which has once or twice been allowed to run into it has caused the wholesale murder of which my photograph is the witness. It is a sight to make anglers, let alone fishermen, weep, and it is to be hoped that a stop will soon be put to this objectionable practice."—Mr. Wm. M. Gallaher, Malone Park House, Belfast.



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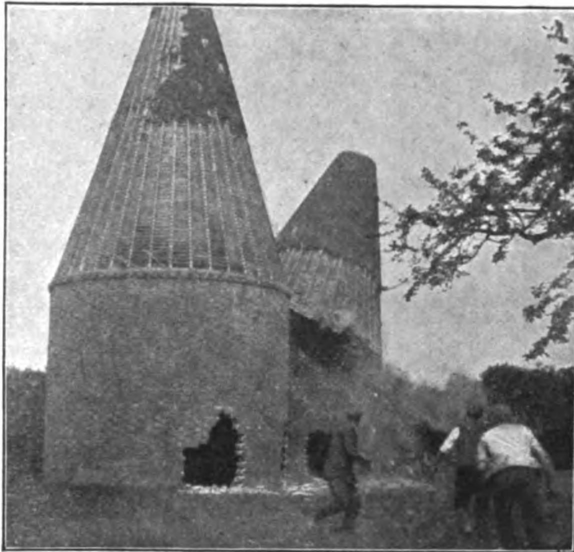
SIXPENCE FOR A LIFE!

"Perhaps the enclosed coin may interest your readers of the Curiosity page, and the publication of a photograph of it may be the means of restoring same to its owner. It was picked up by myself on Peckham Rye. The reason for the inscription on the back is not at once apparent, as such a

medal would not have been given by any society, and the late owner would have had no object in having the sixpence engraved in such a manner. The only construction that can be put on it is that the magnificent sum of sixpence was given as a reward for life-saving, the brave owner being so pleased by this munificence that he had the coin engraved as an example of human generosity and gratitude."—Mr. B. C. Carpenter, 59, Fenwick Road, East Dulwich, S.E.



THE DOOM OF THE "OAST."

"Owing to several causes, principally the use by large hop growers of modern machinery for drying hops by steam-power, farmers in Kent are pulling down their old-fashioned 'oasts,' and the above photograph shows two of these kilns being demolished by a traction-engine after the cooling-room had been removed by hand and with bricks cut out, making holes through which chains were passed and then attached to the engine. One of the buildings was actually taken in the act of falling."—Mr. George Mercy, East Peckham, Tonbridge.

AN INGENIOUS TIMEPIECE.

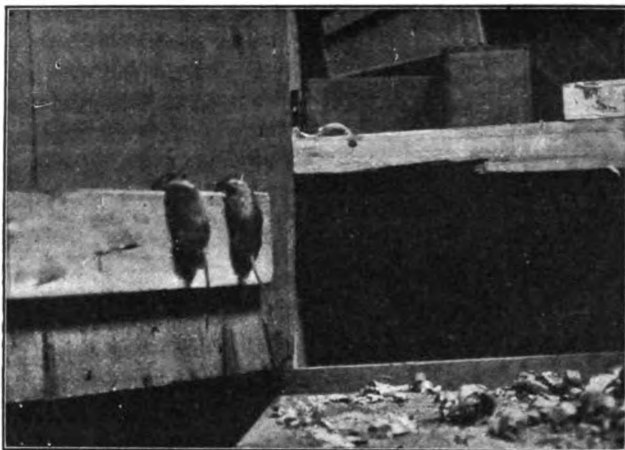
"The curious clock of which I send you a photo. was designed by Mr. F. Whatling of this town. Mr. Whatling is a china riveter and umbrella maker, and the clock was made by him with various pieces of china which he had repaired. It consists of an ordinary circular clock fixed to the back of a tray, to the front

of which the pieces of china are fastened. The face is decorated in brilliant colours, and well drawn for a mechanic or artisan. It keeps good time."—Mr. T. K. Biddle, 73, High Street, Dartford.

DOG "SPECS."

"This is a photo. of one of our customers, for whom we made a pair of auto-specs. to order. This intelligent collie sits on the front seat of his owner's automobile, in the same position you see him now, while the machine goes at top speed. This caused his eyes to get full of dust, to prevent which the specs. were made. His dogship seemed to appreciate them, and makes no effort to get them off."—Mr. E. B. Meyrowitz, Optician, 3, Rue Scribe, Paris.

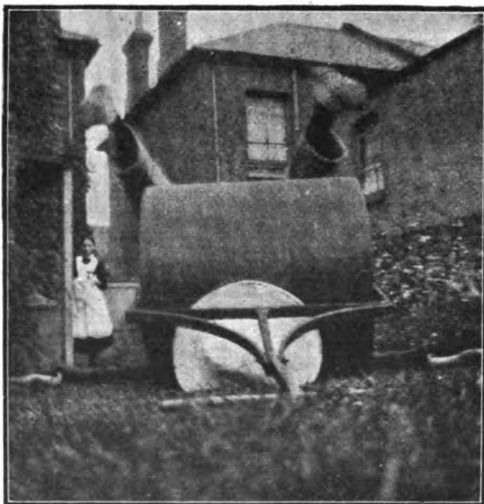
A CURIOUS MOUSE-TRAP.



"The two mice, a photograph of which I send you, met their death at the same moment and in exactly the same position. The photo. shows a rough cupboard in a workshop. One evening, as the door of the cupboard was being closed, the mice, in trying to escape, must have jumped at exactly the same instant, but a little too late, as the result shows; they both got jammed between the shelf and the door, and when the latter was opened in the morning the culprits were found as shown in the illustration."—Mr. J. W. Puntis, 10, The Avenue, King Street, Southsea.

WHY THE FIRE REFUSED TO BURN.

"The other day when the billiard-room fire was lighted it refused to burn, and smoked to such an extent that the chimney was swept as soon as possible. The photograph given below shows the resulting *débris* which came down the chimney when the sweep applied his brush, and which had all been deposited there by jackdaws since the chimney was last swept."—Mr. W. L. Chance, Great Alne Hall, Alcester.



SQUASHED!

"I send a photograph which has the appearance of a boy being squashed under a garden roller. It is simply a hat put in front of the roller and a boy with his legs up in the air and hands out at the side at the back." —Mr. P. Russell, 51, Avenue Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

A TOMATO-CAN RACE.

"This picture was taken by myself in the town of Merritton last month, and shows three children running races on old tomato-cans which they keep in place on their feet by strings held in the hand. It struck me that this was so peculiar a method for children's play that I 'snapped' them on the spot." — Mr. A. T. Phillips, 12, Cooper Street, Ottawa.

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"RIGHT IN FRONT OF US WAS DRAWN UP A TRIPLE LINE OF RUSSIAN GRENADIERS."

(See page 609.)

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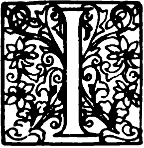
// THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Vol xxiv. JANUARY, 1903. No. 144.

The Adventures of Etienne Gerard.

By A. Conan Doyle.

III.—HOW THE BRIGADIER RODE TO MINSK.



I WOULD have a stronger wine to-night, my friends, a wine of Burgundy rather than of Bordeaux. It is that my heart, my old soldier heart, is heavy within me. It is a strange thing, this age which creeps upon one. One does not know, one does not understand; the spirit is ever the same, and one does not remember how the poor body crumbles. But there comes a moment when it is brought home, when quick as the sparkle of a whirling sabre it is clear to us, and we see the men we were and the men we are. Yes, yes, it was so to-day, and I would have a wine of Burgundy to-night. White Burgundy—Montrachet——Sir, I am your debtor!

It was this morning in the Champ de Mars. Your pardon, friends, while an old man tells his trouble. You saw the review. Was it not splendid? I was in the enclosure for veteran officers who have been decorated. This ribbon on my breast was my passport. The cross itself I keep at home in a leathern pouch. They did us honour, for we were placed at the saluting point, with the Emperor and the carriages of the Court upon our right.

It is years since I have been to a review, for I cannot approve of many things which I have seen. I do not approve of the red breeches of the infantry. It was in white breeches that the infantry used to fight. Red is for the cavalry. A little more, and they would ask our busbies and our spurs! Had I been seen at a review they might well have said that I, Etienne Gerard, had condoned it. So I have stayed at home. But this war of the Crimea is different. The men go to battle. It is not for me to be absent when brave men gather.

My faith, they march well, those little infantrymen! They are not large, but they are very solid and they carry themselves well. I took off my hat to them as they passed. Then there came the guns. They were good guns, well horsed and well manned. I took off my hat to them. Then came the Engineers, and to them also I took off my hat. There are no braver men than the Engineers. Then came the cavalry, Lancers, Cuirassiers, Chasseurs, and Spahis. To all of them in turn I was able to take off my hat, save only to the Spahis. The Emperor had no Spahis. But when all of the others had passed, what think you came at the close? A brigade of Hussars, and at the charge! Oh, my friends, the pride and the glory and the beauty, the flash and the sparkle, the roar of the hoofs and the jingle of chains, the tossing manes, the noble heads, the rolling cloud, and the dancing waves of steel! My heart drummed to them as they passed. And the last of all, was it not my own old regiment? My eyes fell upon the grey and silver dolmans, with the leopard-skin shabraques, and at that instant the years fell away from me and I saw my own beautiful men and horses, even as they had swept behind their young colonel, in the pride of our youth and our strength, just forty years ago. Up flew my cane. "Chargez! En avant! Vive l'Empéreur!" It was the past calling to the present. But, oh, what a thin, piping voice! Was this the voice that had once thundered from wing to wing of a strong brigade? And the arm that could scarce wave a cane, were these the muscles of fire and steel which had no match in all Napoleon's mighty host? They smiled at me. They cheered me. The Emperor laughed and bowed. But to me the present was a dim dream, and what was real were my eight hundred dead Hussars and the Etienne of long ago. Enough—a brave

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man can face age and fate as he faced Cossacks and Uhlans. But there are times when Montrachet is better than the wine of Bordeaux.

It is to Russia that they go, and so I will tell you a story of Russia. Ah, what an evil dream of the night it seems! Blood and ice. Ice and blood. Fierce faces with snow upon the whiskers. Blue hands held out for succour. And across the great white plain the one long black line of moving figures, trudging, trudging, a hundred miles, another hundred, and still always the same white plain. Sometimes there were fir-woods to limit it, sometimes it stretched away to the cold blue sky, but the black line stumbled on and on. Those weary, ragged, starving men, the spirit frozen out of them, looked neither to right nor left, but with sunken faces and rounded backs trailed onwards and ever onwards, making for France as wounded beasts make for their lair. There was no speaking, and you could scarce hear the shuffle of feet in the snow. Once only I heard them laugh. It was outside Wilna, when an aide-de-camp rode up to the head of that dreadful column and asked if that were the Grand Army. All who were within hearing looked round, and when they saw those broken men, those ruined regiments, those fur-capped skeletons who were once the Guard, they laughed, and the laugh crackled down the column like a *feu de joie.* I have heard many a groan and cry and scream in my life, but nothing so terrible as the laugh of the Grand Army.

"THEY WERE THE COSSACKS, WHO HUNG ROUND US LIKE WOLVES ROUND THE FLOCK."

But why was it that these helpless men were not destroyed by the Russians? Why was it that they were not speared by the Cossacks or herded into droves, and driven as prisoners into the heart of Russia? On every side as you watched the black snake winding over the snow you saw also dark, moving shadows which came and went like cloud drifts on either flank and behind. They were the Cossacks, who hung round us like wolves round the flock. But the reason why they did not ride in upon us was that all the ice of Russia could not cool the hot hearts of some of our soldiers. To the end there were always those who were ready to throw themselves between these savages and their prey. One man above all rose greater as the danger thickened, and won a higher name amid disaster than he had done when he led our van to victory. To him I drink this glass—to Ney, the red-maned Lion, glaring back over his shoulder at the enemy who feared to tread too closely on his heels. I can see him now, his broad white face convulsed with fury, his light blue eyes sparkling like flints, his great voice roaring and crashing amid the roll of the musketry. His glazed and featherless cocked hat was the ensign upon which France rallied during those dreadful days.

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It is well known that neither I nor the regiment of Hussars of Conflans were at Moscow. We were left behind on the lines of communication at Borodino. How the Emperor could have advanced without us is incomprehensible to me, and, indeed, it was only then that I understood that his judgment was weakening and that he was no longer the man that he had been. However, a soldier has to obey orders, and so I remained at this village, which was poisoned by the bodies of thirty thousand men who had lost their lives in the great battle. I spent the late autumn in getting my horses into condition and re-clothing my men, so that when the army fell back on Borodino my Hussars were the best of the cavalry, and were placed under Ney in the rear-guard. What could he have done without us during those dreadful days? "Ah, Gerard," said he one evening—but it is not for me to repeat the words. Suffice it that he spoke what the whole army felt. The rear-guard covered the army and the Hussars of Conflans covered the rear-guard. There was the whole truth in a sentence. Always the Cossacks were on us. Always we held them off. Never a day passed that we had not to wipe our sabres. That was soldiering indeed.

But there came a time between Wilna and Smolensk when the situation became impossible. Cossacks and even cold we could fight, but we could not fight hunger as well. Food must be got at all costs. That night Ney sent for me to the waggon in which he slept. His great head was sunk on his hands. Mind and body he was wearied to death.

"Colonel Gerard," said he, "things are going very badly with us. The men are starving. We must have food at all costs."

"The horses," I suggested.

"Save your handful of cavalry there are none left."

"The band," said I.

He laughed, even in his despair.

"Why the band?" he asked.

"Fighting men are of value."

"Good," said he. "You would play the game down to the last card and so would I. Good, Gerard, good!" He clasped my hand in his. "But there is one chance for us yet, Gerard." He unhooked a lantern from the roof of the waggon and he laid it on a map which was stretched before him. "To the south of us," said he, "there lies the town of Minsk. I have word from a Russian deserter that much corn has been stored in the town-hall. I wish you to take as many men as you think best, set forth for Minsk, seize the corn, load any carts which you may collect in the town, and bring them to me between here and Smolensk. If you fail it is but a detachment cut off. If you succeed it is new life to the army."

He had not expressed himself well, for it was evident that if we failed it was not merely the loss of a detachment. It is quality as well as quantity which counts. And yet how honourable a mission and how glorious a risk! If mortal men could bring it, then the corn should come from Minsk. I said so, and spoke a few burning words about a brave man's duty until the Marshal was so moved that he rose and, taking me affectionately by the shoulders, pushed me out of the waggon.

It was clear to me that in order to succeed in my enterprise I should take a small force and depend rather upon surprise than upon numbers. A large body could not conceal itself, would have great difficulty in getting food, and would cause all the Russians around us to concentrate for its certain destruction. On the other hand, if a small body of cavalry could get past the Cossacks unseen it was probable that they would find no troops to oppose them, for we knew that the main Russian army was several days' march behind us. This corn was meant, no doubt, for their consumption. A squadron of Hussars and thirty Polish Lancers were all whom I chose for the venture. That very night we rode out of the camp, and struck south in the direction of Minsk.

Fortunately there was but a half moon, and we were able to pass without being attacked by the enemy. Twice we saw great fires burning amid the snow, and around them a thick bristle of long poles. These were the lances of Cossacks, which they had stood upright while they slept. It would have been a great joy to us to have charged in amongst them, for we had much to revenge, and the eyes of my comrades looked longingly from me to those red flickering patches in the darkness. My faith, I was sorely tempted to do it, for it would have been a good lesson to teach them that they must keep a few miles between themselves and a French army. It is the essence of good generalship, however, to keep one thing before one at a time, and so we rode silently on through the snow, leaving these Cossack bivouacs to right and left. Behind us the black sky was all mottled with a line of flame which showed where our own poor wretches were trying to keep themselves alive for another day of misery and starvation.

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All night we rode slowly onwards, keeping our horses' tails to the Pole Star. There were many tracks in the snow, and we kept to the line of these, that no one might remark that a body of cavalry had passed that way. These are the little precautions which mark the experienced officer. Besides, by keeping to the tracks we were most likely to find the villages, and only in the villages could we hope to get food. The dawn of day found us in a thick fir-wood, the trees so loaded with snow that the light could haroly reach us. When we had found our way out of it it was full daylight, the rim of the rising sun peeping over the edge of the great snow-plain and turning it crimson from end to end. I halted my Hussars and Lancers under the shadow of the wood, and I studied the country. Close to us there was a small farmhouse. Beyond, at the distance of several miles, was a village. Far away on the sky-line rose a considerable town all bristling with church towers. This must be Minsk. In no direction could I see any signs of troops. It was evident that we had passed through the Cossacks and that there was nothing between us and our goal. A joyous shout burst from my men when I told them our position, and we advanced rapidly towards the village.

I have said, however, that there was a small farmhouse immediately in front of us. As we rode up to it I observed that a fine grey horse with a military saddle was tethered by the door. Instantly I galloped forwards, but before I could reach it a man dashed out of the door, flung himself on to the horse, and rode furiously away, the crisp, dry snow flying up in a cloud behind him. The sunlight gleamed upon his gold epaulettes, and I knew that he was a Russian officer. He would raise the whole countryside if we did not catch him. I put spurs to Violette and flew after him. My troopers followed; but there was no horse among them to compare with Violette, and I knew well that if I could not catch the Russian I need expect no help from them.

But it is a swift horse indeed and a skilful rider who can hope to escape from Violette with Etienne Gerard in the saddle. He rode well, this young Russian, and his mount was a good one, but gradually we wore him down. His face glanced continually over his shoulder—a dark, handsome face, with eyes like an eagle—and I saw as I closed with him that he was measuring the distance between us. Suddenly he half turned; there were a flash and a crack as his pistol bullet hummed past my ear. Before he could draw his sword I was upon him; but he still spurred his horse, and the two galloped together over the plain, I with my leg against the Russian's and my left hand upon his right shoulder. I saw his hand fly up to his mouth. Instantly I dragged him across my pommel and seized him by the throat, so that he could not swallow. His horse shot from under him, but I held him fast and Violette came to a stand. Sergeant Oudin of the Hussars was the first to join us. He was an old soldier, and he saw at a glance what I was after.

"Hold tight, Colonel," said he, "I'll do the rest."

He slipped out his knife, thrust the blade between the clenched teeth of the Russian, and turned it so as to force his mouth open. There, on his tongue, was the little wad of wet paper which he had been so anxious to swallow. Oudin picked it out and I let go of the man's throat. From the way in which, half strangled as he was, he glanced at the paper I was sure that it was a message of extreme importance. His hands twitched as if he longed to snatch it from me. He shrugged his shoulders, however, and smiled good-humouredly when I apologized for my roughness.

"And now to business," said I, when he had done coughing and hawking. "What is your name?"

"Alexis Barakoff."

"Your rank and regiment?"

"Captain of the Dragoons of Grodno."

"What is this note which you were carrying?"

"It is a line which I had written to my sweetheart."

"Whose name," said I, examining the address, "is the Hetman Platoff. Come, come, sir, this is an important military document, which you are carrying from one general to another. Tell me this instant what it is."

"Read it and then you will know." He spoke perfect French, as do most of the educated Russians. But he knew well that there is not one French officer in a thousand who knows a word of Russian. The inside of the note contained one single line, which ran like this:—

"Pustj Franzuzy pridutt v Minsk. Min gotovy."

I stared at it, and I had to shake my head. Then I showed it to my Hussars, but they could make nothing of it. The Poles were all rough fellows who could not read or write, save only the sergeant, who came from

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Memel, in East Prussia, and knew no Russian. It was maddening, for I felt that I had possession of some important secret upon which the safety of the army might depend, and yet I could make no sense of it. Again I entreated our prisoner to translate it, and offered him his freedom if he would do so. He only smiled at my request. I could not but admire him, for it was the very smile which I should have myself smiled had I been in his position.

"At least," said I, "tell us the name of this village."

"It is Dobrova."

"And that is Minsk over yonder, I suppose?"

"Yes, that is Minsk."

"Then we shall go to the village and we shall very soon find someone who will translate this despatch."

"WE SHALL VERY SOON FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL TRANSLATE THIS DESPATCH."

So we rode onward together, a trooper with his carbine unslung on either side of our prisoner. The village was but a little place, and I set a guard at the ends of the single street, so that no one could escape from it. It was necessary to call a halt and to find some food for the men and horses, since they had travelled all night and had a long journey still before them.

There was one large stone house in the centre of the village, and to this I rode. It was the house of the priest—a snuffy and ill-favoured old man who had not a civil answer to any of our questions. An uglier fellow I never met, but, my faith, it was very different with his only daughter, who kept house for him. She was a brunette, a rare thing in Russia, with creamy skin, raven hair, and a pair of the most glorious dark eyes that ever kindled at the sight of a Hussar. From the first glance I saw that she was mine. It was no time for love-making when a soldier's duty had to be done, but still, as I took the simple meal which they laid before me, I chatted lightly with the lady, and we were the best of friends before an hour had passed. Sophie was her first name, her second I never knew. I taught her to call me Etienne, and I tried to cheer her up, for her sweet face was sad and there were tears in her beautiful dark eyes. I pressed her to tell me what it was which was grieving her.

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"How can I be otherwise," said she, speaking French with a most adorable lisp, "when one of my poor countrymen is a prisoner in your hands? I saw him between two of your Hussars as you rode into the village."

"It is the fortune of war," said I. "His turn to-day; mine, perhaps, to-morrow."

"But consider, Monsieur——" said she

"Etienne," said I.

"Oh, Monsieur——"

"Etienne," said I.

"Well, then," she cried, beautifully flushed and desperate, "consider, Etienne, that this young officer will be taken back to your army and will be starved or frozen, for if, as I hear, your own soldiers have a hard march, what will be the lot of a prisoner?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"You have a kind face, Etienne," said she; "you would not condemn this poor man to certain death. I entreat you to let him go."

Her delicate hand rested upon my sleeve, her dark eyes looked imploringly into mine.

A sudden thought passed through my mind. I would grant her request, but I would demand a favour in return. At my order the prisoner was brought up into the room.

"Captain Barakoff," said I, "this young lady has begged me to release you, and I am inclined to do so. I would ask you to give your parole that you will remain in this dwelling for twenty-four hours, and take no steps to inform anyone of our movements."

"I will do so," said he.

"Then I trust in your honour. One man more or less can make no difference in a struggle between great armies, and to take you back as a prisoner would be to condemn you to death. Depart, sir, and show your gratitude not to me, but to the first French officer who falls into your hands."

When he was gone I drew my paper from my pocket.

"Now, Sophie," said I, "I have done what you asked me, and all that I ask in return is that you will give me a lesson in Russian."

"With all my heart," said she.

"'LET US BEGIN ON THIS,' SAID I."

"Let us begin on this," said I, spreading out the paper before her. "Let us take it word for word and see what it means."

She looked at the writing with some surprise. "It means," said she, "if the French come to Minsk all is lost." Suddenly a look of consternation passed over her beautiful face. "Great heavens!" she cried, "what is it that I have done? I have betrayed my country!

Oh, Etienne, your eyes are the last for whom this message is meant. How could you be so cunning as to make a poor, simple-minded, and unsuspecting girl betray the cause of her country?"

I consoled my poor Sophie as best I might, and I assured her that it was no reproach to her that she should be outwitted by so old a campaigner and so shrewd a man as myself. But it was no time now for talk. This message made it clear that the corn was indeed at Minsk, and that there were no troops there to defend it. I gave a hurried order from the window, the trumpeter blew the assembly, and in ten minutes we had left the village behind us and were riding hard for the city, the gilded domes and minarets of which glimmered above the snow of the horizon. Higher they rose and higher, until at last, as the sun sank towards the west, we were in the broad main street, and galloped up it amid the shouts of the moujiks and the cries of frightened women until we found ourselves in front of the great town hall. My cavalry I drew up in the square, and I, with my two sergeants, Oudin and Papilette, rushed into the building.

Heavens! shall I ever forget the sight which greeted us? Right in front of us was drawn up a triple line of Russian Grenadiers. Their muskets rose as we entered, and a crashing volley burst into our very faces. Oudin and Papilette dropped upon the floor, riddled with bullets. For myself, my busby was shot away and I had two holes through my dolman. The Grenadiers ran at me with their bayonets. "Treason!" I cried. "We are betrayed! Stand to your horses!" I rushed out of the hall, but the whole square was swarming with troops. From every side street Dragoons and Cossacks were riding down upon us, and such a rolling fire had burst from the surrounding houses that half my men and horses were on the ground. "Follow me!" I yelled, and sprang upon Violette, but a giant of a Russian Dragoon officer threw his arms round me and we rolled on the ground together. He shortened his sword to kill me, but, changing his mind, he seized me by the throat and banged my head against the stones until I was unconscious. So it was that I became the prisoner of the Russians.

When I came to myself my only regret was that my captor had not beaten out my brains. There in the grand square of Minsk lay half my troopers dead or wounded, with exultant crowds of Russians gathered round them. The rest in a melancholy group were herded into the porch of the town-hall, a sotnia of Cossacks keeping guard over them. Alas! what could I say, what could I do? It was evident that I had led my men into a carefully-baited trap. They had heard of our mission and they had prepared for us. And yet there was that despatch which had caused me to neglect all precautions and to ride straight into the town. How was I to account for that? The tears ran down my cheeks as I surveyed the ruin of my squadron, and as I thought of the plight of my comrades of the Grand Army who awaited the food which I was to have brought them. Ney had trusted me and I had failed him. How often he would strain his eyes over the snowfields for that convoy of grain which should never gladden his sight! My own fate was hard enough. An exile in Siberia was the best which the future could bring me. But you will believe me, my friends, that it was not for his own sake, but for that of his starving comrades, that Etienne Gerard's cheeks were lined by his tears, frozen even as they were shed.

"What's this?" said a gruff voice at my elbow; and I turned to face the huge, black-bearded Dragoon who had dragged me from my saddle. "Look at the Frenchman crying! I thought that the Corsican was followed by brave men and not by children."

"If you and I were face to face and alone, I should let you see which is the better man," said I.

For answer the brute struck me across the face with his open hand. I seized him by the throat, but a dozen of his soldiers tore me away from him, and he struck me again while they held my hands.

"You base hound," I cried, "is this the way to treat an officer and a gentleman?"

"We never asked you to come to Russia," said he. "If you do you must take such treatment as you can get. I would shoot you off hand if I had my way."

"You will answer for this some day," I cried, as I wiped the blood from my moustache.

"If the Hetman Platoff is of my way of thinking you will not be alive this time to-morrow," he answered, with a ferocious scowl. He added some words in Russian to his troops, and instantly they all sprang to their saddles. Poor Violette, looking as miserable as her master, was led round and I was told to mount her. My left arm was tied with a thong which was fastened to the stirrup-iron of a sergeant of Dragoons. So in most sorry plight I and the remnant of my men set forth from Minsk.

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Never have I met such a brute as this man Sergine, who commanded the escort. The Russian army contains the best and the worst in the world, but a worse than Major Sergine of the Dragoons of Kieff I have never seen in any force outside of the guerillas of the Peninsula. He was a man of great stature, with a fierce, hard face and a bristling black beard, which fell over his cuirass. I have been told since that he was noted for his strength and his bravery, and I could answer for it that he had the grip of a bear, for I had felt it when he tore me from my saddle. He was a wit, too, in his way, and made continual remarks in Russian at our expense which set all his Dragoons and Cossacks laughing. Twice he beat my comrades with his riding-whip, and once he approached me with the lash swung over his shoulder, but there was something in my eyes which prevented it from falling. So in misery and humiliation, cold and starving, we rode in a disconsolate column across the vast snow-plain. The sun had sunk, but still in the long northern twilight we pursued our weary journey. Numbed and frozen, with my head aching from the blows it had received, I was borne onwards by Violette, hardly conscious of where I was or whither I was going. The little mare walked with a sunken head, only raising it to snort her contempt for the mangy Cossack ponies who were round her.

But suddenly the escort stopped, and I found that we had halted in the single street of a small Russian village. There was a church on one side, and on the other was a large stone house, the outline of which seemed to me to be familiar. I looked around me in the twilight, and then I saw that we had been led back to Dobrova, and that this house at the door of which we were waiting was the same house of the priest at which we had stopped in the morning. Here it was that my charming Sophie in her innocence had translated the unlucky message which had in some strange way led us to our ruin. To think that only a few hours before we had left this very spot with such high hopes and all fair prospects for our mission, and now the remnants of us waited as beaten and humiliated men for whatever lot a brutal enemy might ordain! But such is the fate of the soldier, my friends—kisses to-day, blows to-morrow, Tokay in a palace, ditch-water in a hovel, furs or rags, a full purse or an empty pocket, ever swaying from the best to the worst, with only his courage and his honour unchanging.

The Russian horsemen dismounted, and my poor fellows were ordered to do the same. It was already late, and it was clearly their intention to spend the night in this village. There were great cheering and joy amongst the peasants when they understood that we had all been taken, and they flocked out of their houses with flaming torches, the women carrying out tea and brandy for the Cossacks. Amongst others the old priest came forth—the same whom we had seen in the morning. He was all smiles now, and he bore with him some hot punch on a salver, the reek of which I can remember still. Behind her father was Sophie. With horror I saw her clasp Major Sergine's hand as she congratulated him upon the victory he had won and the prisoners he had made. The old priest, her father, looked at me with an insolent face and made insulting remarks at my expense, pointing at me with his lean and grimy hand. His fair daughter Sophie looked at me also, but she said nothing, and I could read her tender pity in her dark eyes. At last she turned to Major Sergine and said something to him in Russian, on which he frowned and shook his head impatiently. She appeared to plead with him, standing there in the flood of light which shone from the open door of her father's house. My eyes were fixed upon the two faces, that of the beautiful girl and of the dark, fierce man, for my instinct told me that it was my own fate which was under debate. For a long time the soldier shook his head, and then, at last softening before her pleadings, he appeared to give way. He turned to where I stood with my guardian sergeant beside me.

"These good people offer you the shelter of their roof for the night," said he to me, looking me up and down with vindictive eyes. "I find it hard to refuse them, but I tell you straight that for my part I had rather see you on the snow. It would cool your hot blood, you rascal of a Frenchman!"

I looked at him with the contempt that I felt.

"You were born a savage and you will die one," said I.

My words stung him, for he broke into an oath, raising his whip as if he would strike me.

"Silence, you crop-eared dog!" he cried. "Had I my way some of the insolence would be frozen out of you before morning." Mastering his passion, he turned upon Sophie with what he meant to be a gallant manner. "If you have a cellar with a good lock," said he, "the fellow may lie in it for the night,

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"MY EYES WERE FIXED UPON THE TWO FACES."

since you have done him the honour to take an interest in his comfort. I must have his parole that he will not attempt to play us any tricks, as I am answerable for him until I hand him over to the Hetman Platoff to-morrow."

His supercilious manner was more than I could endure. He had evidently spoken French to the lady in order that I might understand the humiliating way in which he referred to me.

"I will take no favour from you," said I. "You may do what you like, but I will never give you my parole."

The Russian shrugged his great shoulders, and turned away as if the matter were ended.

"Very well, my fine fellow, so much the worse for your fingers and toes. We shall see how you are in the morning after a night in the snow."

"One moment, Major Sergine," cried Sophie. "You must not be so hard upon this prisoner. There are some special reasons why he has a claim upon our kindness and mercy."

The Russian looked with suspicion upon his face from her to me.

"What are the special reasons? You certainly seem to take a remarkable interest in this Frenchman," said he.

"The chief reason is that he has this very morning of his own accord released Captain Alexis Barakoff, of the Dragoons of Grodno."

"It is true," said Barakoff, who had come out of the house. "He captured me this morning, and he released me upon parole rather than take me back to the French army, where I should have been starved."

"Since Colonel Gerard has acted so generously you will surely, now that fortune has changed, allow us to offer him the poor shelter of our cellar upon this bitter night," said Sophie. "It is a small return for his generosity."

But the Dragoon was still in the sulks.

"Let him give me his parole first that he will not attempt to escape," said he. "Do you hear, sir? Do you give me your parole?"

"I give you nothing," said I.

"Colonel Gerard," cried Sophie, turning to me with a coaxing smile, "you will give *me* your parole, will you not?"

"To you, mademoiselle, I can refuse nothing. I will give you my parole, with pleasure."

"There, Major Sergine," cried Sophie, in

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triumph, "that is surely sufficient. You have heard him say that he gives me his parole. I will be answerable for his safety."

In an ungracious fashion my Russian bear grunted his consent, and so I was led into the house, followed by the scowling father and by the big, black-bearded Dragoon. In the basement there was a large and roomy chamber, where the winter logs were stored. Thither it was that I was led, and I was given to understand that this was to be my lodging for the night. One side of this bleak apartment was heaped up to the ceiling with fagots of firewood. The rest of the room was stone-flagged and bare-walled, with a single, deep-set window upon one side, which was safely guarded with iron bars. For light I had a large stable lantern, which swung from a beam of the low ceiling. Major Sergine smiled as he took this down, and swung it round so as to throw its light into every corner of that dreary chamber.

"How do you like our Russian hotels, monsieur?" he asked, with his hateful sneer. "They are not very grand, but they are the best that we can give you. Perhaps the next time that you Frenchmen take a fancy to travel you will choose some other country where they will make you more comfortable." He stood laughing at me, his white teeth gleaming through his beard. Then he left me, and I heard the great key creak in the lock.

For an hour of utter misery, chilled in body and soul, I sat upon a pile of fagots, my face sunk upon my hands and my mind full of the saddest thoughts. It was cold enough within those four walls, but I thought of the sufferings of my poor troopers outside, and I sorrowed with their sorrow. Then I paced up and down, and I clapped my hands together and kicked my feet against the walls to keep them from being frozen. The lamp gave out some warmth, but still it was bitterly cold, and I had had no food since morning. It seemed to me that everyone had forgotten me, but at last I heard the key turn in the lock, and who should enter but my prisoner of the morning, Captain Alexis Barakoff. A bottle of wine projected from under his arm, and he carried a great plate of hot stew in front of him.

"Hush!" said he; "not a word! Keep up your heart! I cannot stop to explain, for Sergine is still with us. Keep awake and ready!" With these hurried words he laid down the welcome food and ran out of the room.

"Keep awake and ready!" The words rang in my ears. I ate my food and I drank my wine, but it was neither food nor wine which had warmed the heart within me. What could those words of Barakoff mean? Why was I to remain awake? For what was I to be ready? Was it possible that there was a chance yet of escape? I have never respected the man who neglects his prayers at all other times and yet prays when he is in peril. It is like a bad soldier who pays no respect to the colonel save when he would demand a favour of him. And yet when I thought of the salt-mines of Siberia on the one side and of my mother in France upon the other, I could not help a prayer rising, not from my lips, but from my heart, that the words of Barakoff might mean all that I hoped. But hour after hour struck upon the village clock, and still I heard nothing save the call of the Russian sentries in the street outside.

Then at last my heart leaped within me, for I heard a light step in the passage. An instant later the key turned, the door opened, and Sophie was in the room.

"Monsieur——" she cried.

"Etienne," said I.

"Nothing will change you," said she. "But is it possible that you do not hate me? Have you forgiven me the trick which I played you?"

"What trick?" I asked.

"Good heavens! is it possible that even now you have not understood it? You have asked me to translate the despatch. I have told you that it meant, 'If the French come to Minsk all is lost.'"

"What did it mean, then?"

"It means, 'Let the French come to Minsk. We are awaiting them.'"

I sprang back from her.

"You betrayed me!" I cried. "You lured me into this trap. It is to you that I owe the death and capture of my men. Fool that I was to trust a woman!"

"Do not be unjust, Colonel Gerard. I am a Russian woman, and my first duty is to my country. Would you not wish a French girl to have acted as I have done? Had I translated the message correctly you would not have gone to Minsk and your squadron would have escaped. Tell me that you forgive me!"

She looked bewitching as she stood pleading her cause in front of me. And yet, as I thought of my dead men, I could not take the hand which she held out to me.

"Very good," said she, as she dropped it by her side. "You feel for your own people and I feel for mine, and so we are equal.

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But you have said one wise and kindly thing within these walls, Colonel Gerard. You have said, 'One man more or less can make no difference in a struggle between two great armies.' Your lesson of nobility is not wasted. Behind those fagots is an unguarded door. Here is the key to it. Go forth, Colonel Gerard, and I trust that we may never look upon each other's faces again."

"You will find Captain Barakoff at the end of the village street," said she. "We of the North never forget either an injury or a kindness. He has your mare and your sword waiting for you. Do not delay an instant, for in two hours it will be dawn."

So I passed out into the starlit Russian night, and had that last glimpse of Sophie as she peered after me through the open door. She looked wistfully at me as if she expected something more than the cold thanks which I gave her, but even the humblest man has his pride, and I will not deny that mine was hurt by the deception which she had played

"BEHIND THOSE FAGOTS IS AN UNGUARDED DOOR."

I stood for an instant with the key in my hand and my head in a whirl. Then I handed it back to her.

"I cannot do it," I said.

"Why not?"

"I have given my parole."

"To whom?" she asked.

"Why, to you!"

"And I release you from it."

My heart bounded with joy. Of course, it was true what she said. I had refused to give my parole to Sergine. I owed him no duty. If she relieved me from my promise my honour was clear. I took the key from her hand.

upon me. I could not have brought myself to kiss her hand, far less her lips. The door led into a narrow alley, and at the end of it stood a muffled figure who held Violette by the bridle.

"You told me to be kind to the next French officer whom I found in distress," said he. "Good luck! Bon voyage!" he whispered, as I bounded into the saddle. "Remember, 'Poltava' is the watchword."

It was well that he had given it to me, for twice I had to pass Cossack pickets before I was clear of the lines. I had just ridden past the last vedettes and hoped that I was a free man again when there was a soft thudding in the snow behind me, and a heavy man upon a great black horse came swiftly after me. My first impulse was to put spurs to Violette. My second, as I saw

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a long black beard against a steel cuirass, was to halt and await him.

"I thought that it was you, you dog of a Frenchman," he cried, shaking his drawn sword at me. "So you have broken your parole, you rascal!"

"I gave no parole."

"You lie, you hound!"

I looked around and no one was coming. The vedettes were motionless and distant. We were all alone, with the moon above and the snow beneath. Fortune has ever been my friend.

"I gave you no parole."

"THE WORDS WERE HIS DEATH-WARRANT."

"You gave it to the lady."

"Then I will answer for it to the lady."

"That would suit you better, no doubt. But, unfortunately, you will have to answer for it to me."

"I am ready."

"Your sword, too! There is treason in this! Ah, I see it all! The woman has helped you. She shall see Siberia for this night's work."

The words were his death-warrant. For Sophie's sake I could not let him go back alive. Our blades crossed, and an instant later mine was through his black beard and deep in his throat. I was on the ground almost as soon as he, but the one thrust was enough. He died, snapping his teeth at my ankles like a savage wolf.

Two days later I had rejoined the army at Smolensk, and was a part once more of that dreary procession which tramped onwards through the snow, leaving a long weal of blood to show the path which it had taken.

Enough, my friends; I would not re-awaken the memory of those days of misery and death. They still come to haunt me in my dreams. When we halted at last in Warsaw we had left behind us our guns, our transport, three-fourths of our comrades. But we did not leave behind us the honour of Etienne Gerard. They have said that I broke my parole. Let them beware how they say it to my face, for the story is as I tell it, and old as I am my forefinger is not too weak to press a trigger when my honour is in question.

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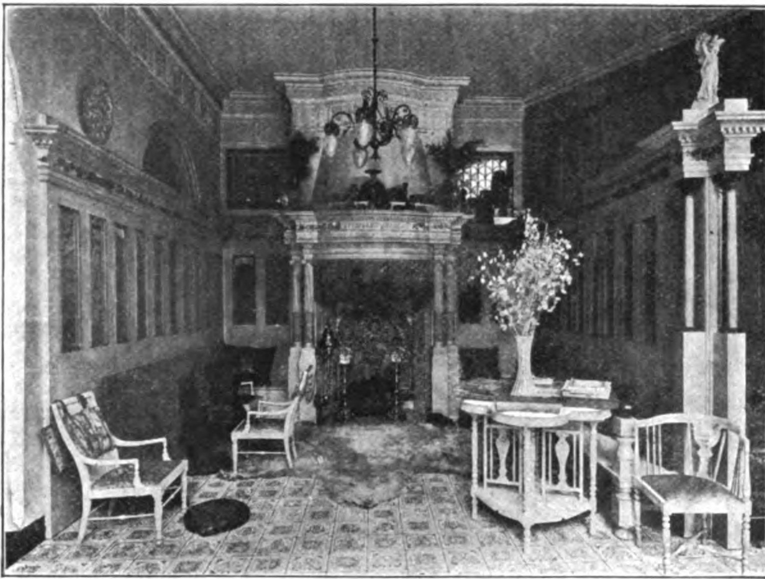
The Panels in Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's Hall.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

From Photos. by George Newnes, Limited.

NIQUE in London, unique indeed in the world, is the hall which—by the kindness of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and his artist friends, to whom I desire to express my warmest acknowledgments for their kindness in permitting the pictures to be reproduced—forms the subject of this article.

There are many halls whose walls are graced by valuable paintings, some of which may be, and undoubtedly are, the gifts of artist friends. No other hall, however, is entirely adorned by the gift of brother artists whose work has been specially designed and executed for a certain definite place and no other; for each picture was painted to fill its own particular niche in the wall of the house beautiful at St. John's Wood where Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema lives.



THE HALL OF SIR LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA'S HOUSE.

Well may he inscribe, as he has done, over the mantelpiece of that hall the words :—

> I count myself in nothing else so happy
> As in a soul remembering my good friends.
> —*Richard the Second,*

for the feeling which those friends have for him it has been my privilege to discover in the communion which the preparation of this article has given me with the painters. It must be added that in most cases no titles are attached to the panels, and those given here are merely intended to indicate the subjects.

Some idea of the enthusiasm with which the work was undertaken, as well as the conditions under which it was done, may be gathered from the incident connected with the painting of the panel of Mr. G. H. Boughton, R.A.

Sir Lawrence and Lady Alma-Tadema gave a party one evening at which Mr. Boughton was present. Incidentally the spaces for the panels were shown, many of them already filled with pictures. Over Mr. Boughton there crept a feeling of intense sadness at the thought of being "left out," as he described it to me, and he turned to Sir Lawrence and inquired what he had done that he had not been asked to fill one of the empty spaces. "My dear George," said Sir Lawrence, "no one has been asked. These are all 'volunteers' that you see here."

"Am I in time?" asked Mr. Boughton.

"That little space is waiting for you," said Sir Lawrence, indicating it.

The next moment Sir Lawrence had to furnish a foot-rule, with which Mr. Boughton measured the length and breadth of the panel he had to fill.

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"THE SLEEP-WALKER."
By G. Pope.

"A JAVANESE GIRL."
By John J. Sargent, R.A.

"READY FOR A RIDE."
By G. H. Boughton, R.A.

be likened to the sonnet form in poetry, and every-one knows how difficult that is. Mr. Boughton solved his problem with a tall young horsewoman, in the riding-dress of a hundred years ago, standing on an old-time mounting-stone, but the difficulty has been characteristically and, if I may permit myself to voice the opinion of Sir Lawrence himself, brilliantly overcome in every case.

The panels are uniformly 31½in. high, but they vary in breadth from about 2½in. in the case of that painted by Miss Alma-Tadema to about 8in. in that painted by Mr. Marcus Stone, R.A.

Mr. John J. Sargent's panel, which is inscribed "To my friend Alma-Tadema," is a reminiscence of the Javanese dancers who created so great a sensation at the Paris Exhibition in 1889. These girls used to paint their faces, their arms, and the exposed portions of their bodies a bright yellow colour, and this Mr. Sargent has faithfully done, with a most remarkable result. Later on, the girls, presuming on their vogue, declined to paint in their characteristic fashion, with the result that in a very little while they lost the attraction they possessed.

"The Sleep-Walker" is the subject of Mr. Gustave Pope's picture, and it will be noticed that he differs in his treatment of it from

It will be noticed in the illustrations that that is the shortest panel of all, and does not completely fill the space. The reason is that in the empty place a barometer is fixed when the pictures are in position, for they had all to be removed to be specially photographed for this article.

The finding of a subject for a tall, narrow space is declared by all the artists to have been by no means an easy matter. Indeed, the panel form in painting might not inaptly

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Shakespeare, who made Lady Macbeth walk with her eyes open, though "their sense was shut." Mr. Pope's peaceful figure, however, does not in any way suggest the guilty wife of him who was Thane of Glamis and of Cawdor; and further evidence that he had no idea of illustrating that scene is furnished by the fact that she is carrying in her hand a candlestick of modern date instead of a mediæval lamp.

Mr. Val Prinsep's panel represents an Indian girl going down the sacred steps to the Ganges to fill her pitchers with water. The study was made when he went to India to paint his great picture of the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India.

"A LANDSCAPE." By David Murray, A.R.A. "AN INDIAN GIRL." By Val Prinsep, R.A. "A SEASCAPE." By H. Moore, A.R.A.

No one looking at Mr. Henry Moore's contribution could fail to recognise that it was a moonlight scene, as it would be impossible to fail to get the feeling of evening in the landscape of Mr. David Murray.

The difficulty of finding a subject was humorously suggested by the late Lord Leighton, who offered to paint a panel. Sir Lawrence sent him the dimensions. A few days after they met at dinner at the house of a mutual friend. They were sitting directly opposite one another, and, picking up a long, narrow-bladed dessert knife, Lord Leighton turned to his comrade in art and said: "My dear Tadema, what sort of a subject do you expect me to paint on this?"

It was not long, however, before he found the answer himself. Everyone will recognise the resemblance to Lord Leighton's famous picture, "The Bath of Psyche." From this panel, indeed, he painted that picture. Recognising, however, that the idea of the subject belonged to his friend, Lord Leighton first went to him and asked whether he had any objection to his working it out again in

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"A SCENE IN IRELAND." By Sir E. Waterlow, A.R.A.

"THE BATH OF PSYCHE." By Lord Leighton, P.R.A.

"PEACE." By Andrew C. Gow, R.A.

another way. Naturally Sir Lawrence gracefully acquiesced in the idea, and, cutting away the reflection in the water and elaborating the columns, the late President of the Academy produced a picture which in its many reproduced forms has had an extraordinary vogue. For permission to reproduce it, as well as Mr. Marcus Stone's panel, I am indebted to the Berlin Photographic Company, Ltd., and to Messrs. Henry Graves and Co., Ltd., for the use of "Andromeda."

Sir E. Waterlow's landscape represents a scene in Ireland, and his admirers will have no difficulty in recognising his characteristic touch.

Mr. Andrew Gow's typical panel of a Royalist gentleman with a little boy before him on the horse, which is quietly drinking at the stream, takes the mind back to the days when "Civil blood made civil hands unclean." It represents the happy termination of the war between King Charles and the soldiers of the Commonwealth, for Mr. Gow intended to call it "Peace."

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"TEMPLE AT PHILÆ." By Hon. J. Collier. — "CHERRY GARDEN STAIRS." By Charles Wyllie. — "A BIT OF OLD HAMPSTEAD." By Charles Green, R.I.

The spirit of the East breathes in the Hon. John Collier's picture, which represents a view of the interior of the great temple at Philæ.

It has been said, and said without fear of contradiction, that no one knows more about the life of the bargee than Mr. Charles Wyllie, if, indeed, anyone knows as much. He has very skilfully contrived to get a great reach of the Thames he loves so well into the narrow compass of his composition, for the distance between the barge in the foreground and the steamer in the background is fully two miles. The scene is really at Rotherhithe, and the building on the right is a public-house containing the captain's room described by the late Sir Walter Besant in his novel of that name. The stairs by it leading from the river to the land are "Cherry Garden Stairs," but the cherry gardens to which they led have long since departed, though in the old days men and women used to foregather in them. The scene depicted, however, may be witnessed

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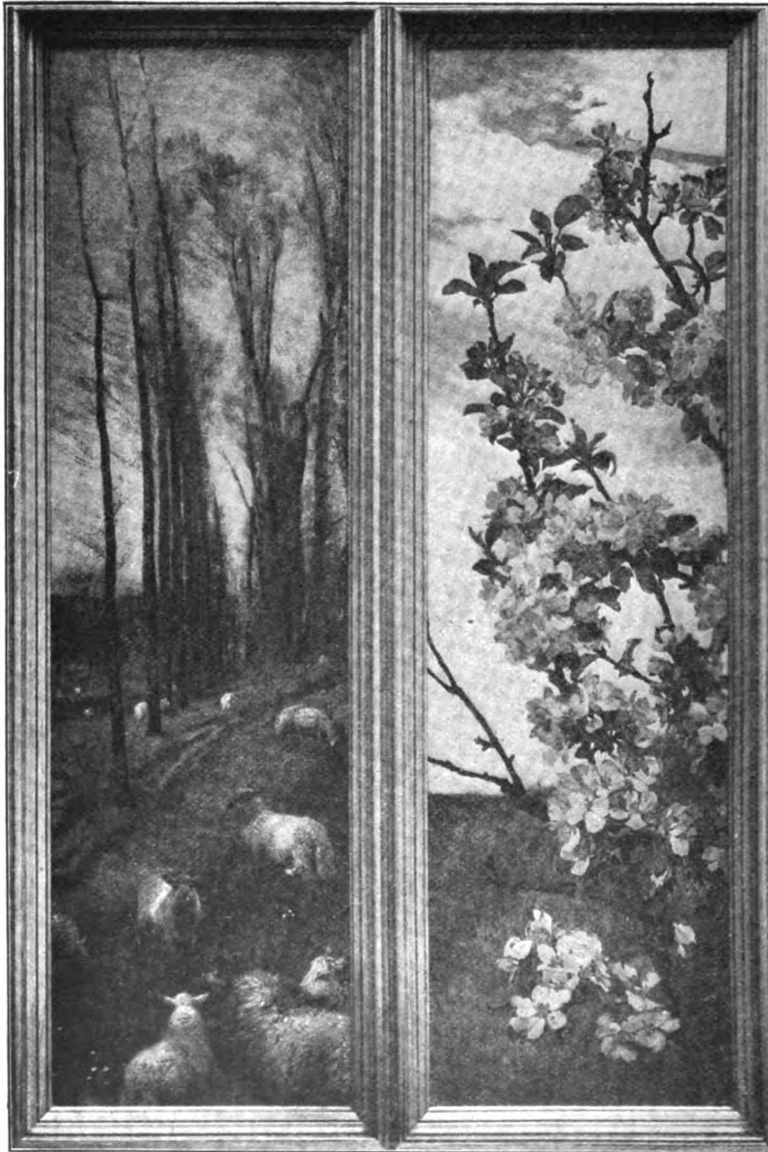

"A LANDSCAPE."
By H. W. B. Davis, R.A.

"APPLE BLOSSOM."
By Alfred Parsons, A.R.A.

incident will come in view — the mother with the baby in her arms and her daughter at her feet on the barge in front; the little lad leaning against the wall; and the bathers revelling in the cool water in the middle distance, while on the balcony of the house may be seen another woman holding up her baby to view the lively scene; and it hardly requires any imagination to fancy that in the happy throng below is the woman's husband, whom she is so intently watching.

A bit of old Hampstead which unfortunately no longer exists was the subject which inspired the late Charles Green — always "Charlie" to his intimates — with the subject of his picture. It was a standing joke of his that whenever he passed by that particular shop the barber was always standing in the doorway, and his wife was always watering the flowers out of the first-floor window. The subject lent itself so essentially to the peculiar treatment of the panels that he could not refrain from using it.

The panel of Mr. H. Davis, R.A., needs no word of explanation, nor did the work develop any incident which the artist recalls beyond the fact that it was painted from the grounds round the house in which he was living at the time in France.

any warm Saturday afternoon in the summer, for the boys in the neighbourhood delight in bathing in the cool water, even though its appearance would not commend it to more fastidious mortals. They are not supposed to bathe without proper clothing, but many of them, it must be confessed, ignore this rule, and on the appearance of a policeman they scurry away carrying their street clothes in their arms. To appreciate the picture at its full it ought to be studied with a magnifying glass, when incident after

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The two panels of Mr. Alfred Parsons, the greatest flower painter in England, were painted some eighteen years ago at Stratford-on-Avon, and one is inscribed "To my friend Mrs. Alma-Tadema," while the other is "To my friend Alma-Tadema." Those were, of course, the days before Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema was knighted, an event which led a lady to say to him with delightful *naïveté* one day, "I suppose, Sir Lawrence, now that you've been made a knight you'll leave off painting and live like a gentleman." Happily for art, however, he remains what he was before he "had it on the shoulder."

"CRUEL WINTER." By E. F. Brewtnall, R.W.S.

"THE PANEL-ROOM, TOWNSHEND HOUSE." By Miss Hipkins.

The possessors of an etching by Mr. Edward F. Brewtnall, R.W.S., called "Cruel Winter," will recognise in his picture a similar subject to the one he treated in that work. That etching was after a water-colour drawing hung at an exhibition of the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, and was the reason of his being elected a full member. The subject was suggested to him by a very severe winter, when many birds perished in the cold. Sensitive to all suffering as the artist always is, Mr. Brewtnall saw in the contrast between the young girl, warmly clad and ermine tippeted, and the stark, frozen figure of the dead sparrow that clash which is the essence of all drama. The expression of the girl as she contemplates that little tragedy is, it is safe to say, Mr. Brewtnall's own, for the fate of the birds is one in which he is deeply interested.

An interesting souvenir of Townshend House amongst the panels is the one painted by Miss Hipkins. It represents a view from the Gold Room into the Panel Room. The principal features are the sixteenth-century Antwerp window, now adorning the bedroom in that style, which forms the annexe to Lady Alma-Tadema's present studio, and the collection of blue and white, the remnant of that which decorated the house before the explosion of a gunpowder barge on the Regent's Canal, in front of Townshend House, on the 2nd of October, 1874.

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"FLAGS." By Miss Alma-Tadema. "IN THE GARDEN." By Marcus Stone, R.A. "A LANDSCAPE." By Mrs. R. Williams.

Miss Alma-Tadema's panel was a birthday gift to her father, and is a reminiscence of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. It consists of flags of various nations floating in the breeze and breathing the spirit of Robert Browning's line :—

The church spires flamed, such flags they had.

There is in it a conceit as beautiful as it is refined, which, unfortunately, the exigencies of reproduction render indistinct, but which may, nevertheless, be seen by careful observation. The lowermost flag is that of Holland, which no one needs reminding is the country of Sir Lawrence's birth. Adorning the flag is a laurel wreath surrounding the initials L. A. T., and the whole world has united with the country of his birth in offering him that recognised mark of greatest distinction.

Mr. Marcus Stone's panel has the distinction of being the largest in the collection. It has another distinction, for the artist has never in his life taken so long over a picture of that size as he did over this. To describe it as a labour of love is but to say what should be said of every other panel, but of all the commissions he has received Mr. Stone regards Sir Lawrence's request that he should paint a contribution for the hall as the most flattering he has ever had. Mr. Stone's idea was to make it as characteristic of himself as possible, and he put into it the things he loved best himself. For this reason the cat appears prominently in the foreground, for he is a great lover of cats, and, as I once heard him say, "The things I like most are a fine day, a lovely garden, good company, and a cat." These are certainly all present in his picture, which many artists have described as "a Marcus Stone at his best." The background was painted from a water-colour study made in a garden in

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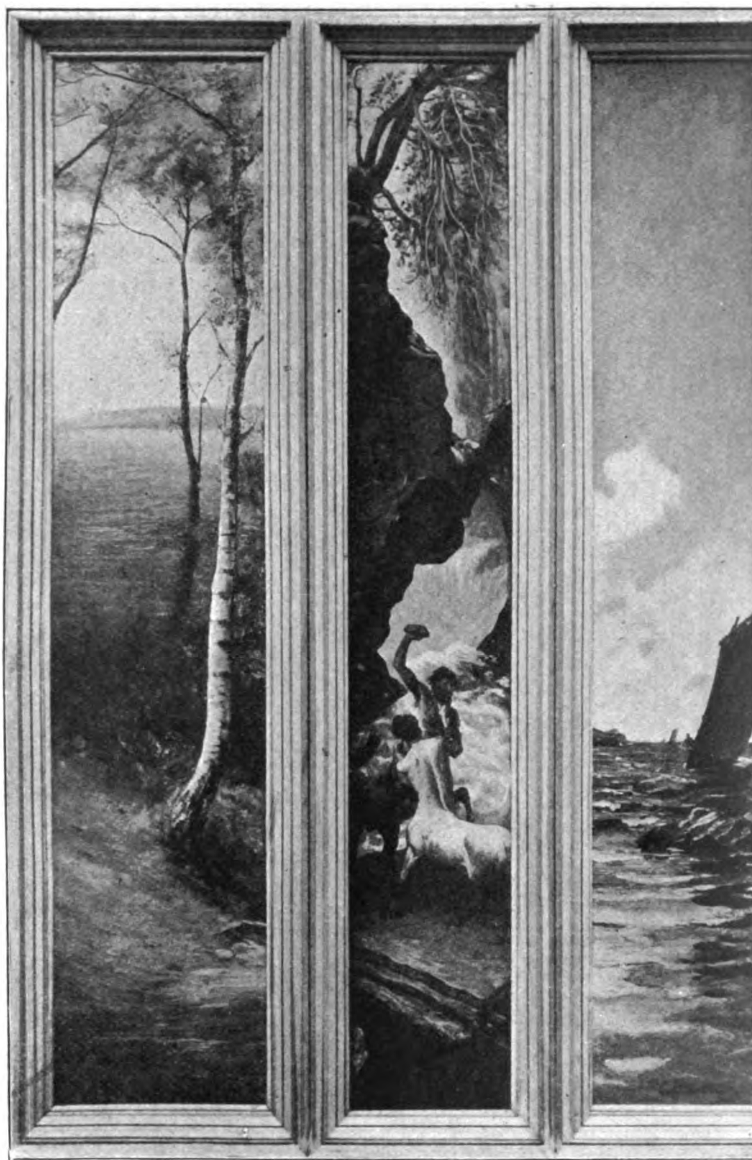
Surrey, but modified and altered for the purpose of this panel. That water-colour enjoyed the distinction of being the only picture from Mr. Stone's brush in the Academy of 1901. The materials of this picture were afterwards adapted to another picture of a different size and structure which the artist painted some time ago, and which is known to collectors of reproductions of his work.

Mrs. R. Williams is alone among the artist band with three subjects, one a landscape, while two are souvenirs of Sir Lawrence's old house in Regent's Park.



"SILVER BIRCHES." By J. MacWhirter, R.A. "CENTAURS." By J. Archer, R.S.A. "A SEASCAPE." By Colin Hunter, A.R.

Mr. MacWhirter's admirers will delight in one of the silver birches of which—even before the year London went wild over his famous "Three Graces"—he had made so great a study. Those who care for Mr. Colin Hunter's work will as easily recognise his no less characteristic sea-piece, in which the sea is painted with his own masterful knowledge of its ever-varying moods.

Perhaps two circumstances conspired to make Mr. J. Archer paint "A Fight Between Two Centaurs" for his friend. In the first place, some years ago he did paint a picture in which there were Centaurs, and Sir rence admired it very much indeed. In next, it was intended as a delicate co ment to the artist who in his own art shown so much power in realizing the classic life and mythology and so n knowledge in reproducing it. It wil noticed that the background consists waterfall. The reason Mr. Archer introd it was that in a certain article he came a a reference to the Centaurs, who student of mythology will remember

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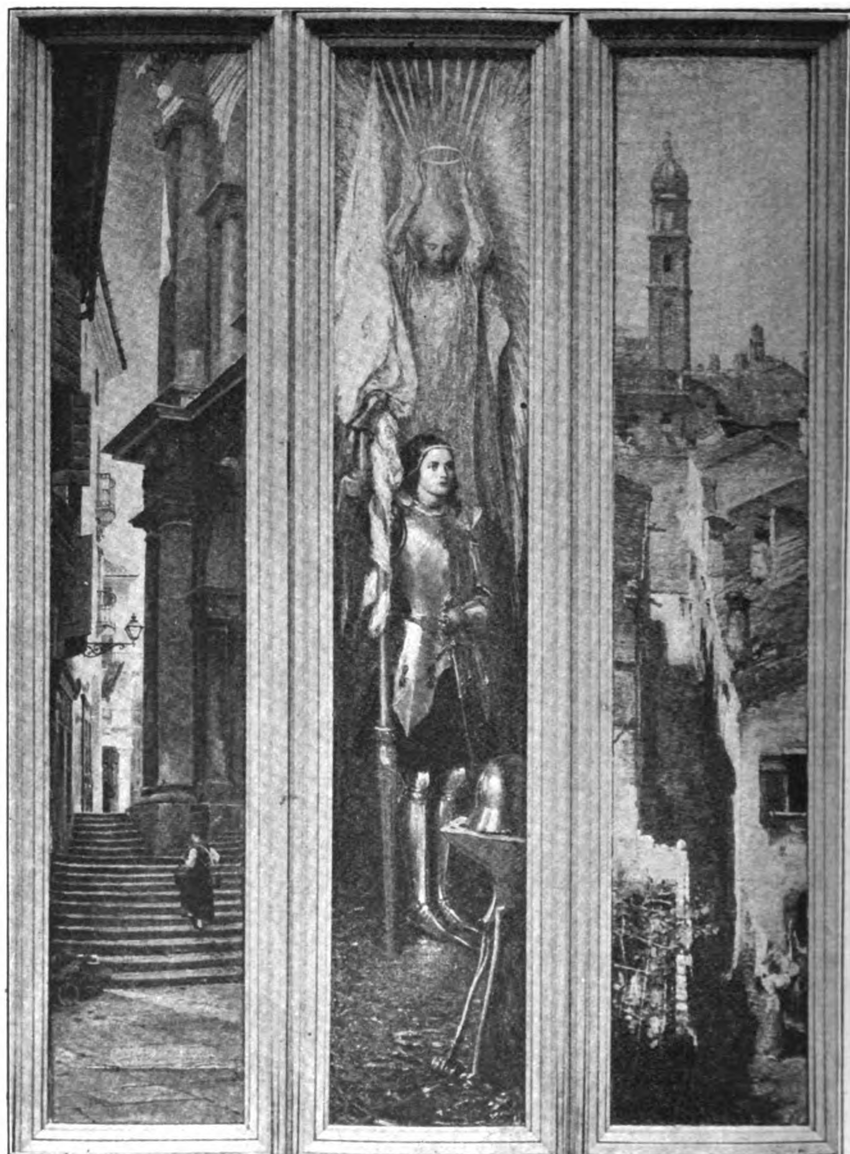

"VIEW IN VICENZA." By John O'Connor. "JOAN OF ARC." By Blake Wirgman. "VIEW IN VENICE." By Van Haanen.

represented as the sons of Zeus and Nephele (the cloud), as the symbols of the torrent which hurls in its course stones and branches of trees, the weapons the Centaurs were always said to use.

The contribution of the late Mr. John O'Connor, who was at one time a scene painter, is a view in Vicenza, Northern Italy.

Mr. Wirgman's picture of Joan of Arc in armour with an angel bearing a crown of immortality to place upon her brow is particularly beautiful in colouring, and is especially remarkable for its realism, for his Maid of Orleans is a typical French peasant woman.

Mr. Van Haanen's picture is a view from the window of his studio in Venice, and represents the Rio Terra, Ognisanti. The chief towers shown are those belonging to the churches Ognisanti, San Sebastiano, and San Raffaelo.

Andromeda recently chained to her rock with only the fear of the monster in her

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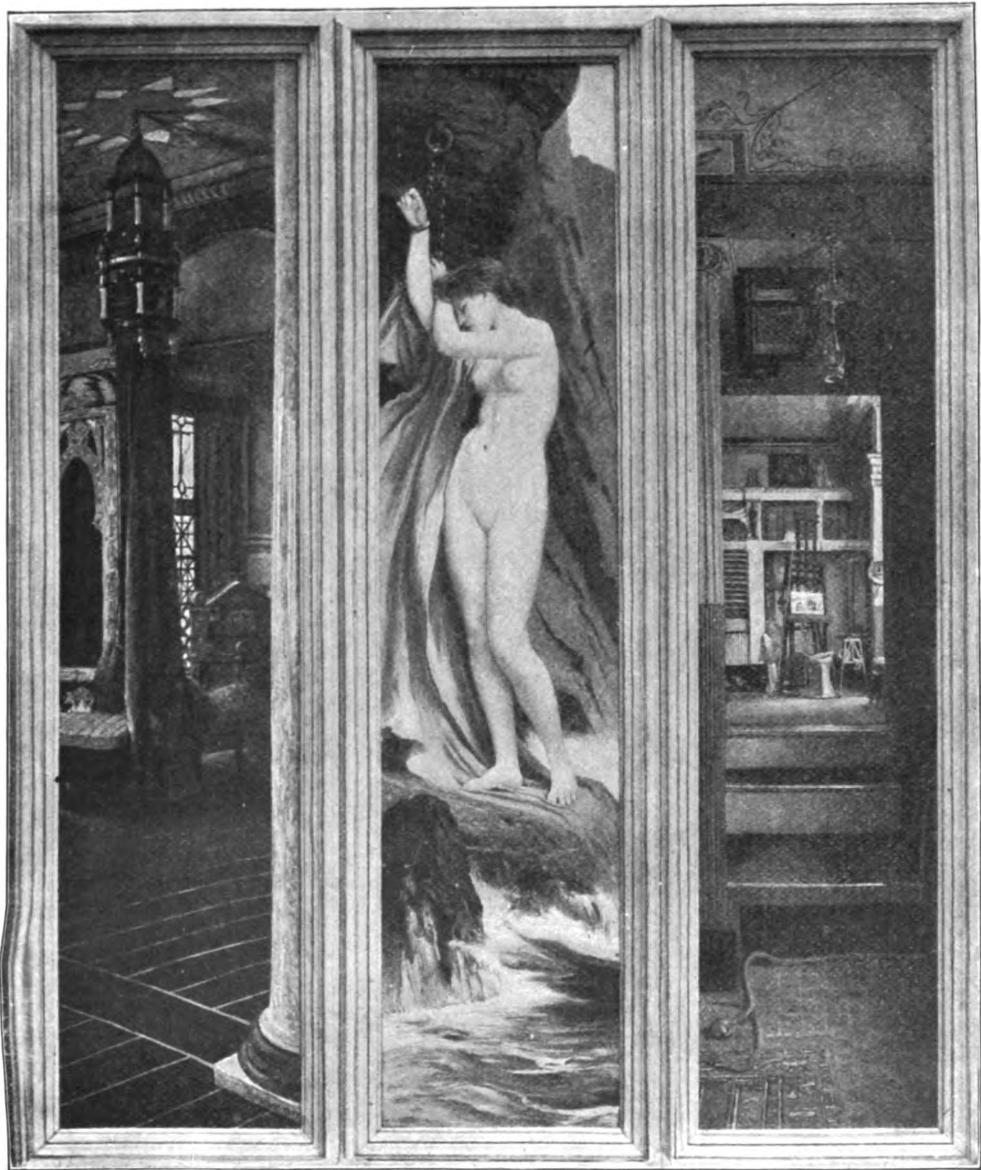

"THE DRAWING-ROOM, TOWNSHEND HOUSE." By Mrs. R. Williams. "ANDROMEDA." By F. Dicksee, R.A. "THE STUDIO, TOWNSHEND HOUSE." By Mrs. R. Williams.

soul, intensified, perhaps, by the other fear that his coming might be delayed and she should suffer the agony of life before death came to her relief, and while yet no Perseus lighted up her wretchedness with the shadow of his approaching, is the subject chosen by Mr. Frank R. Dicksee, R.A.

Mrs. Williams supplies two other panels besides that already shown, one representing the drawing-room and the other the studio of Townshend House. It cannot fail to be noticed in the picture of the drawing-room how great is the contrast between the dark boards and the white lines between them. This was an effect which may be said to have been invented by Sir Lawrence himself. He had the floors stained jet-black, and the divisions between the boards grooved out and filled with holly. The result was very striking, and, it need hardly be said, has been copied by many people.

The first question which everyone will ask in looking at the picture of the studio is, "What is the picture on the easel?"

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"FLOWERS."
By Alfred Parsons, A.R.A.

"ITALIAN LANDSCAPE."
By M. R. Corbet, A.R.A.

The landscape of the late Mr. M. R. Corbet is from a study made in Italy, the mountain in the background being a part of the Carrara range, one of his favourite haunts during his life. Unfortunately, black and white can give no idea of the exquisite colouring; the blue of the kingfisher being like a wonderful turquoise set in gold, which is the dominant colour of the grass and plants of the foreground.

A certain cheery humour which always distinguished the work of the late Mr. Stacy Marks is apparent in the two panels, the right-hand one of which is inscribed "L. A. T., from his friend H. S. M.," with the date 1887 beneath. The sailor, with his "smiling morning face," is talking up to the maid of the Anchor Inn, bidding her good-morning, and it was Mr. Marks's idea that he should always wish Sir Lawrence good-morning on his behalf as he went through the hall to his studio.

Happily, I am in a position to answer the question. It is called "An Old Story," and it is painted in water-colour. Messrs. Agnew bought it, but what has become of it perhaps only they can tell. The picture is further interesting as giving an insight into Sir Lawrence's method. He invariably sits to his easel on a basket-work stool, while on the little table next the seat he has his paints and an ash-tray, which he frequently brings into requisition, for he smokes when he paints.

The fact that Sir Lawrence is greatly interested in the art of Japan, and is, indeed, a member of the Japanese Society, decided Mr. Alfred East, A.R.A., to select a Japanese subject for his picture. It has the distinctive feature that belongs to Japanese art in that it introduces the marvellous white cone of Fuji-yama. The panel was painted at the very

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spot from which Hokusai, the leader of what may be called the naturalist or realistic school of Japanese artists, painted one of thirty-six views of his beloved mountain. Mr. East placed his easel on a bank of grey sand thrown up by the sea, and relieved from dulness by a pine growth. Looking towards the mountain his eye dwelt with pleasure on the beautiful "Valley of Sweet Waters," as the natives thus charmingly name the village of Suzukawa, built on the edge of a lake in which Fuji is always seen reflected in the pictures painted from that spot. While making his sketch, attended by his servant, Mr. East saw the earth begin to move, as it were, in undulating folds. He stopped to look at the remarkable phenomenon, for he had not seen an earthquake in Japan before, when his servant turned to him and said: "Honoured master, it will be fine to-morrow, for whenever there is an earthquake in the morning it is fine the next day."

"AT THE ANCHOR INN."
By H. Stacy Marks, R.A.

In this panel one seems to look out of the present into the past, as in that of Mr. Briton Riviere, R.A., which is placed next to it, one seems to come out of the past into the present, as the lions come towards one out of the dark. It presents that subtle spirit of truth which one feels in the presence of a picture as opposed to a piece of painting; for, even in the reproduction, one appreciates the brooding mystery of the Eastern night and the strange solemnity that belongs to the contemplation of a race of animals older than ourselves.

The little landscape of Madame Mesdag van Houten was one of the first presented to Sir Lawrence. It was, indeed, painted for his old house, Townshend House, Regent's Park, which he left in 1885, and it had for its companions the pictures of Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Van Haanen, and Mr. Pope. It is a scene in Drenthe, one of the northern provinces of Holland, where Madame Mesdag and her husband had recently been spending some time studying from Nature. This panel, however, was painted from memory.

Mr. Herbert Schmalz's picture will be recognised by all who remember his justly celebrated work, "Christiani ad Leones," or "The Martyrs," as one of the principal figures in that composition, which, beautiful in its execution, realized to the full the grim tragedy of those who were "butchered to make a Roman holiday." In arrangement, however, Sir Lawrence's panel presents many differences from the large picture, which has been exhibited in Europe, America, Australia, and Africa to the delight of countless thousands of spectators. Sir Lawrence himself greatly admired that picture, and it was his idea that this figure should form the subject of his panel. Strange to say, a girl of

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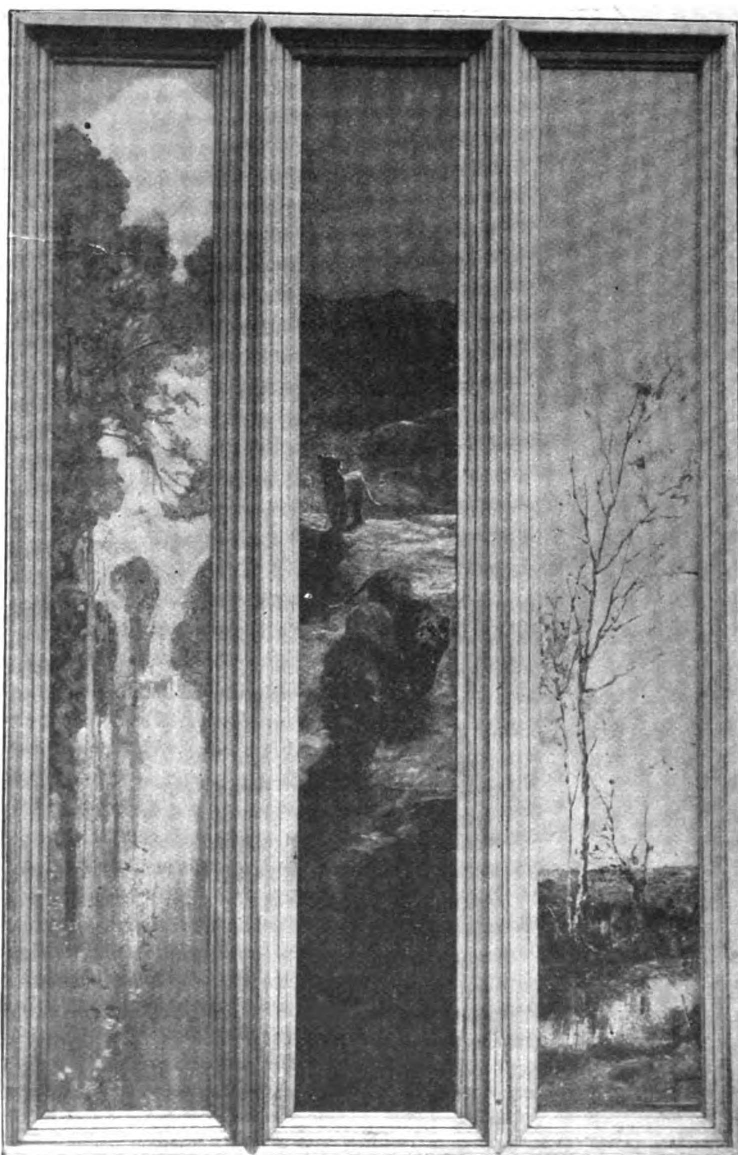


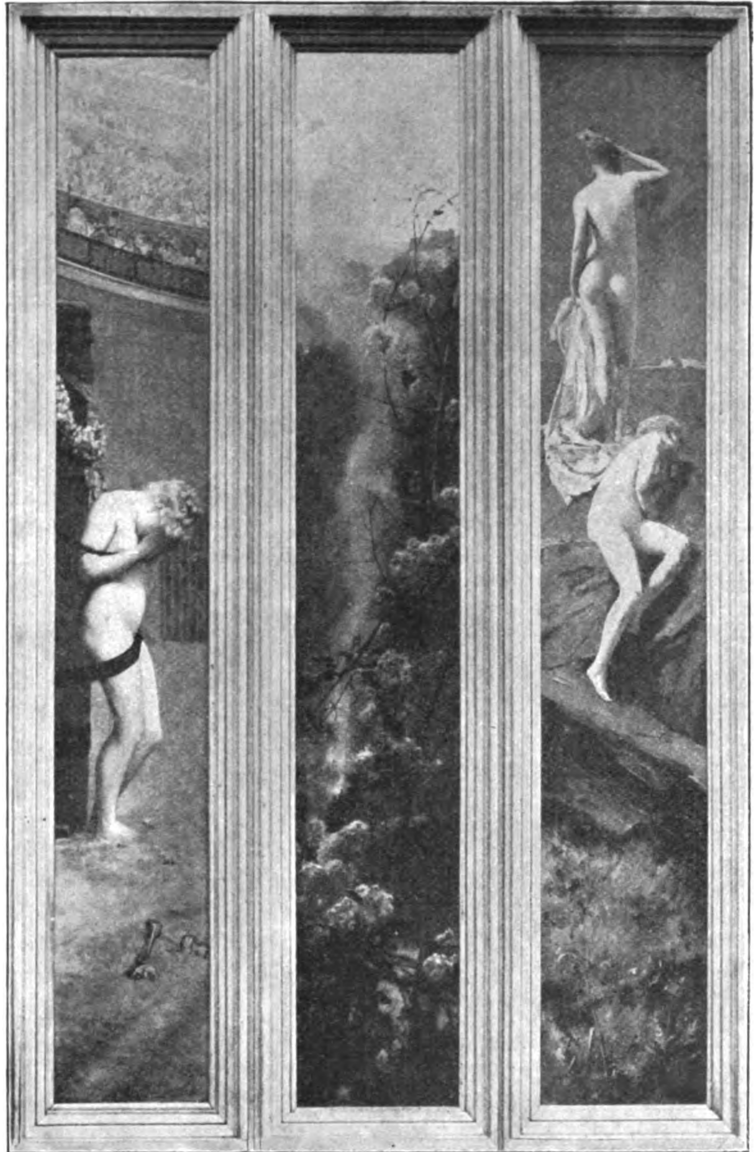
"VALLEY OF SWEET WATERS." By Alfred East, A.R.A. "LIONS." By Briton Riviere, R.A. "A SCENE IN DRENTHE." By Mme. Mesdag van Houten.

fifteen, a model, inspired the whole subject, though without a single word being spoken by her. She was resting after a pose, or just about to reassume the pose in which she had been sitting, when unconsciously she stood in a position the dramatic force of which deeply impressed Mr. Schmalz. "Keep that position," he said, and picking up a block he made a rapid sketch of her. That simple fact was the nucleus from which "The Martyrs" was gradually developed. No one can fail to notice how the bonds which bind the girl to the post seem to cut into the soft flesh of her arms. This was realized absolutely by the model, for Mr. Schmalz had a post erected in his studio and bound the girl to it exactly as represented. Within the limited area of the panel it will be noticed how the whole spirit of the large picture has been retained, even the mark in the foreground of the chariot-wheel, which has thrown to one side the thigh and shin-bones of some long dead-and-gone martyr who had perished for the sake of her faith.

"Befano Fuoci" was the name Mr. Herbert A. Olivier gave to his panel, and, as he humorously said to me, "So much depends on a name, whether it be a dog or a picture." Perhaps "Traveller's Joy" would best convey in English the spirit of the picture, which represents a spot in the hills of Asolo, so well loved by Robert Browning. All along the road the tendrils are bright with the wild clematis, or traveller's joy, the seeds of which always seem to gather into themselves all the light of Heaven that they can. On the eve of the Epiphany, on the tops of the hills fires are lighted, some say to remind the people of the Star in the East, which was the traveller's joy in those rare days of old, and others that the fires are merely to frighten away evil spirits. It was to embody the actual fact as well as the allegorical one that the clear mind of

the artist gathers all the light it can from everything around in order that it may see that the artist was inspired to produce a very beautiful work.

The fantasy contributed by Mr. J. R. Weguelin suggests an incident which could scarcely occur in our present-day environment, unless we could get very far away indeed from so-called civilization. As he himself says, "It may represent an incident occurring in any serene and lonely spot where the sea is blue and smooth, say the Greek islands, in an age when manners were simple." As a matter of fact, a fault in the construction of his studio at Winchelsea caused the sun to penetrate into his studio at the extreme height of the summer, and so gave him the opportunity, of which he availed himself, of painting a figure in actual sunlight.



"A CHRISTIAN MARTYR." By Herbert Schmalz. "BEFANO FUOCI." By H. A. Olivier. "BATHERS." By J. R. Weguelin.

It is not only the panels which are the gift of friends, but the decorative flower design over them, and the design of the tiles of which the floor is composed. The former is the work of Mrs. R. Williams, whilst the latter were designed by Mr. Henschel, the famous musician. It is a curious fact that only three letters are required for the initials of the four members of Sir Lawrence's family, L. A. T. serving for all ; those three being the initials of Sir Lawrence and Lady Alma-Tadema and Miss Lawrence Alma-Tadema, while Miss Alma Tadema's initials are A. A. T.

The hall communicates by means of a flight of brass steps, which are indicated in the last illustration, with Sir Lawrence's studio, to which access is gained by means of a great door. This is adorned by a massive shield in beaten brass, the gift of Mr. George Simonds, the famous sculptor. For a long time the question what he should do remained in abeyance. At last one day he received a circle of white paper with a line from Sir Lawrence, saying, "This is what I want for the door of my studio," adding that Mr. Simonds could do what he

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liked, "but it must be repoussé and in brass," and with the words the exact dimensions required, but nothing more. For a long time Mr. Simonds pondered over the subject, and at last decided to go back to the old quatrocento form. He then began to divide up his circle into sections, each of which should contain a figure separated by a shield. Finally the design shaped itself in his mind, and he determined to make it express the day by its four distinctive features—dawn, daylight, evening, night. Dawn is suggested by the female figure, her head surmounted by the morning star, and the lark, with outstretched wings, rising at her feet. On the corresponding portion on the other side, day is shown by the figure of a man crowned with the sun and with a trumpet in his hand calling to action.

Evening is suggested by the man resting after the toil of the day and refreshing himself with food and drink, in the lower right-hand panel, while night is presented by a sleeping woman. At the top of the shield is the head with the butterfly wings of invention, a delicate compliment to the mental activity of Sir Lawrence's household, in which the inventive faculty may literally be said to be always being exercised, for it is the home of artists, Sir Lawrence, Lady Alma-Tadema, and Miss Alma-Tadema all being painters, while Miss Lawrence Alma-Tadema is an artist in words, and her gift has been made manifest in play and poem, in novel, in short story, and in criticism. The outer design of the shield is an ordinary Greek honeysuckle ornament, selected because one of the bosses had to be movable to loosen the spring that opens the door. Each panel and shield was beaten separately and had to be brazed over a charcoal fire. It says much for the exquisite spirit in which this gift, like all the others, was wrought that Mr. Simonds would not allow anyone to join the component parts but himself. As the shield is 3ft. 8in. in diameter, it was very difficult to prevent it twisting. In order to obviate this accident a great iron tray was made, set on legs, and filled with charcoal. When it was hot, big gas blowpipes were brought to bear on it, and in that way the solder was made to run. Altogether the work was in hand for about a year, though it need hardly be said it was not being worked at continuously. Still, in order that he might get the best result possible, Mr. Simonds actually made a complete model of the shield in brass, beating it out as carefully as the one which he sent to Sir Lawrence, and that model he still possesses.

THE BRASS SHIELD ON THE STUDIO DOOR.
By George Simonds.

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By A. B. Cooper.

I'VE double reason--good and bad--for remembering the Christmas of 189—, because, while it was the most humiliating day of my life, it ended my career as a swell cracksman, and was the commencement of my better days.

I'd long had my eye on Wharton Manor as a crib worth the cracking, and, as I never was the mere midnight marauder who is popularly supposed to lurk under the bed until the family is asleep, I thought the dinner-hour on Christmas Eve a favourable opportunity for taking my pick of the jewel-cases of Lord Wharton's guests, and for annexing the unconsidered trifles that doubtless strewed their dressing-tables. I did not forget that some of the most valuable articles would at that moment be enhancing the charms of their fair owners, but, as I always worked single-handed and could not hope to carry away a van-load, I reckoned upon picking up sufficient to pay me handsomely for my trouble.

Audacity is half the battle in artistic burglary. I always trusted to my wits, and—I will say this for myself—I never carried a weapon of any kind. I took the fortunes of war and considered that, if I were dolt enough to walk into a trap or let another man's wits outwit mine, or another man's legs outrun mine, I ought to yield him the palm like a gentleman. And it was the fact that things panned out so differently from anything I could have foreseen--but that's the end of the story, and we are still at the beginning.

Christmas, 189—, was the snowiest in my memory. It was a real Christmas-card Christmas, and as I stood in the deep shadow of a yew within forty yards of the manor the scene pleased my artistic eye not a little.

The great hall door was wide open in spite of the severity of the weather, for it was a still night, and a flood of rosy light from the crimson-covered lamps and fairy lights streamed out upon the drive. Low lights, too, burned in most of the upper windows, but as the whole house-party was at dinner they revealed no sign of life within. The drive swept round to my right as I faced the house. Having studied the geography of the neighbourhood, I knew where it was, certainly, or I should have had difficulty in locating it. A line of yew trees, similar to the one behind which I stood, was planted at intervals along the near edge of the drive, and the opposite side was bounded by a broad stone balustrade, something like the parapet of Waterloo Bridge, though not nearly so high.

This stone fence was a beautiful ornament to the manor and was admired by everybody, but, strangely enough, it was for use even more than ornament. The manor stood high, and the ground to the right fell away very suddenly into a deep

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dingle. This dingle was full of bracken and brambles which filled the spaces between the young trees, but the rock cropped out here and there and made it a dangerous place on a dark night. That was the reason of the stone balustrade. Farther down the drive the ravine shallowed off, and winding paths went in and out, which made it a very jolly place in the summer.

When first I took my position of observation behind the yew I got a fright. Casting my eyes towards the balustrade, I saw what I thought was a man looking directly at me. It was the hat that made the figure appear so real, yet I could have laughed aloud at my fears the next minute. It was a man indeed, but it was a man of snow, built on the coping of the balustrade in imitation of a statue. The house was full of young fellows and girls, with a fair sprinkling of small boys—Lord Wharton had no fewer than six of his own; and they had spent the morning—all the lot of them—setting up this effigy, just for the fun of the thing.

This figure could not be seen from the front door because the sweep of the drive brought the yews into the line of sight. From where I stood, however, I could have knocked his old silk hat off with a snowball, and, such are the mad impulses of our poor human nature, I could have found it in my heart almost to have had a shy.

Of course I did no such thing, for I could see by the dishes the flunkeys were carrying in that dinner was getting on, and that I was much later at my post than I had intended to be. I must bestir myself if I meant business.

Business! Yes—it was my business then, I'm sorry to say, and no easy business either. Yet I knew exactly what I was going to attempt and how I meant to attempt it. There was nothing original in the plan. Ivy and an open window summed it up. The back of the house would doubtless have been safer, but then my booty was in front, and at such an hour it would have been ten times more risky to traverse the house from back to front than to go boldly in at an upper front window.

Behold me then, ten minutes later, stealthily peering into a dimly-lighted room most luxuriously furnished. I had experienced more difficulty than usual—for I was as nimble as a cat—in negotiating the ivy, because I wore a long, lightish coloured overcoat, made necessary by my tendency to rheumatism. Only a couple of candles in candlesticks of beaten silver served to light the room, but I could see the gleam of jewels and rich ornaments on the dressing-table, half hidden by a heavy curtain which hung from a sort of carved oaken bracket branching from the wall.

I stepped inside upon the thick pile of the carpet and stole noiselessly towards the glittering table. The next moment you might have knocked me down with a feather. Behind the curtain, quickly pocketing the smallest and most valuable objects he could see, was a man in evening dress—a big man, half

"THEY HAD SPENT THE MORNING SETTING UP THIS EFFIGY."

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as big again as myself, but with "gentleman's valet" written all over him. We were not four feet apart, and the gasp of astonishment I gave was enough to make him nearly jump out of his skin.

His dismay was only momentary. He knew the next instant what I was there for, and was evidently as quick-witted as I, for, before I could say "peas," he had darted between the wall and the curtain, banged the window into its place, and yelled "Thieves! thieves! thieves"—a truer plural than anyone imagined—at the very top of his voice.

For the wink of an eyelid I meant to tackle him, but what was the use? Moments were mighty precious just then, and even while he was shouting—the sly wretch—I turned and bolted for the door, intending to make a dash through the camp of the enemy, and trust to my heels to get clear away.

As bad luck would have it, as I turned the bend of the stairs that brought me in full view of the brilliantly-lighted hall I ran full tilt against a big flunkey with a tray of wine-glasses. Talk about a shindy! A gas explosion would scarcely have made more noise. Broken glass, clattering tray, and the bumpety-bump of two heavy bodies falling down stairs, was something to remember. I fell uppermost, and giving myself a bounce up, with a prod below the belt which knocked the remaining wind out of the footman, I made for the door again as if a legion had been behind me.

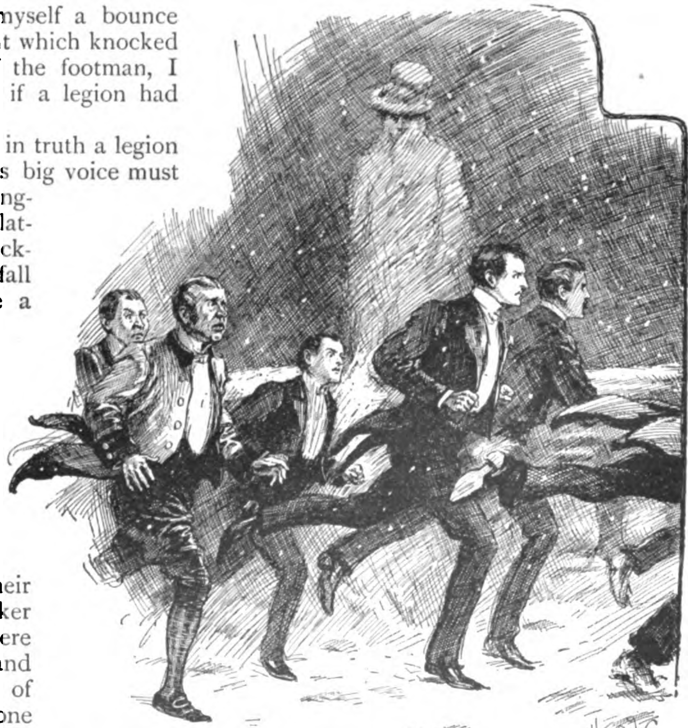
Nor was it mere fancy, for in truth a legion was behind me. The valet's big voice must have penetrated to the dining-room, and the tremendous clatter of the footman and my luckless self caused by the downfall brought the party out like a swarm of bees.

"Thieves!" came like a thunderclap from the top of the stairs. The valet was playing the game to perfection. I had thirty yards start, but I knew that among the guests would be many a young athlete from the 'Varsities—men who could do their hundred in even time—socker and rugger men who were accustomed to rough and tumble—so my chances of getting clear away were none too rosy. Besides, the whole party were lighter shod and clad than I, and I knew that these young fellows, though in no rig for snow, would not care a straw about ruining their dress shoes.

I got round the sweep of the drive and was in the straight. It was three hundred yards to the great gate, and cover, except the yews, was scarce. A gleam of lanterns ahead decided me. My way was blocked. Meanwhile my wits had been working at express speed. It was snowing again in heavy flakes. I purposely fell headlong into the snow piled on the edge of the drive, rolled over and over, and clutched an armful of it to my body and shoulders. I then scrambled up, leapt upon the stone balustrade, snatched the old silk hat—all snow-covered—from the head of the snow man, gave that unfortunate effigy a shove which toppled it neck and crop into the depths of the dingle, and myself dropped upon my knees on the top of the snowy foundation it had left behind it.

It was the work of five seconds at the most, and there was I, with the snow-crowned hat over my eyes, my overcoat thickly caked with snow and my legs wholly invisible, posing in the room and stead of the man of snow.

The hue and cry went past me like a whirl-



"THE HUE AND CRY WENT PAST ME LIKE A WHIRLWIND."

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wind, half-a-dozen flunkeys in their knee-breeches and yellow stockings bringing up the rear. They ran full speed, thirty yards past my post of observation, into a band of waits, with lanterns and instruments, from the village. These yokels were ready to turn and fly themselves when they saw the strange exodus from the Manor, thinking, no doubt, that all the ghosts of which the old house was well known to be the trysting-place had suddenly appeared—not in singles but in battalions—and scared the guests away from their dinner and out of their five senses.

But the sudden halt didn't help me in the least. The dilemma was distinctly mutual, and I did not bless the waits one little bit. Had the thief gone down the drive they would surely have seen him. It was a perfect mystery how he could possibly have dodged them. He had been seen in full flight round the bend. He must either have gone over into the dingle—a most unlikely course if he knew what he was doing—or he was hiding behind the yews.

Then commenced a game of hide and seek. I nearly burst with laughter as I saw this mixed company dodge in and out among the sombre trees and catch at each other convulsively, each thinking the other a burglar. But there was no opportune opening for me. All I could do was to kneel stock still. One of the waits pointed me out. His attitude showed terror though I could not see his face. The laugh that greeted his "find" sent him behind a yew tree on a fresh trail and very greatly reassured me. I evidently looked my part.

Just then there was another arrival—the local policeman and a big man in plain clothes whom I guessed was a 'tec. Lord Wharton and some of the guests were in a group near me when they came along, and I heard the whole colloquy. Their arrival at that moment was quite unconnected with my affair, but it seemed to fit into the circumstances as detailed by his lordship in a few sentences.

I heard the 'tec say: "He's a very old hand, known commonly as 'Toff' Smith, but his real name is Charles Markland. He's wanted for a dozen big jobs, and I've had almost certain advice that he's somewhere in this neighbourhood."

"It'll be he," said his lordship, "but he has been baulked this time. Lieutenant Fontenoy's valet was too quick for him. He has got away in the most amazing fashion, but it's a comfort to know that he has gone empty-handed."

I'd heard of "Toff" Smith. He was one of the big-wigs of the profession—a perfect Napoleon of burglary—but it goes without saying I was not he. So I was now not only personating a snow man but involuntarily standing in the shoes of "Toff" Smith as well.

"He's got clear away!" one cried. "Why trouble further? James tells me he did not have time to pick up a pin. Let us have a lark while we're out." I guessed it was Lieutenant Fontenoy who spoke, and all the youngsters, who had enjoyed the whole thing immensely, set up a shout, for he had evidently suggested something.

"Cock-shies! Pay yer penny and take yer chance! Now, then, fair and square! No, don't cross the drive. Who'll knock his hat off first? Take yer chice—coker-nut or cigar! I'm frozen to death! It'll warm us up!"

These were the cries I heard, but I didn't at the first blush tumble to their meaning. The ladies, clad in thick wraps, were at the windows all this time, where they could look along the drive and get news of the search. Now I heard them laugh merrily as a small boy ran across and made some communication to them.

I quickly learned what it was. They were to witness a bombardment. The whole band, guests and waits—the police had hurried off—were gathered together about twenty yards from where I knelt, and at the word of command they let fly.

I have enjoyed snowballing in my time, but that was when I had a chance of potting my opponent in the nape of the neck when he was stooping for ammunition. But to be the sole target for thirty well-directed missiles per second is another story. Move I dared not. I must grin and bear it, or, failing that, bear it without grinning. I had jammed the beastly old hat too tightly over my cranium for it to be easily dislodged, and the fun in consequence waxed fast and furious.

By degrees discipline broke down, and the set distance was no longer regarded. Snowballs innumerable came at me from a range of a few yards with terrific force. Recognition was quickly put out of the question, for had I been a veritable snow man I could not have looked more like one. Every snowball that hit—and few, indeed, missed—left its contribution to my make-up, and I was shortly in peril of suffocation from the accumulation of snow about my mouth and nostrils, and almost equally in danger of temporary blindness, but that the hat-rim protected me enough, at least, to keep half an eye intact.

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Had not the top of the wall been broad and I on my knees, I must inevitably have gone over willy-nilly; but hitherto I had kept my place, and I meant to continue to do so, for the fall backwards had greater terrors for me even than remaining where I was.

But now the clapping of fair hands, the exhilarating exercise, the excitement of the last twenty minutes, and the spirit of mad revel which enters into the hearts of all men occasionally, wrought my doom.

The waits, as aforementioned, had been pressed into the fray. It was Christmas time, and class distinctions went by the board. Even the man who played the big bass viol had propped his instrument against a tree and joined in the sport. But now—like me—they were to be sorry they had come.

Half-a-dozen young sparks, to vary the amusement, seized the big bass fiddle, and the youngsters fought for clarinet, hautboy, ophicleide, euphonium, and trombone! Then, to the sound of a wild, unearthly pibroch, they levelled the bass fiddle like a battering-ram and charged for the supposed snow man with shouts of laughter, thinking to demolish it finally and end the sport.

I saw it coming, and I knew that the bottom end of a bass fiddle has an ugly spike, which might put an end to my career more surely than the dingle: I never waited for the shock. I went down without a touch, and, rolling over and over down the steep bank, I only remember thinking I should never stop, and—then—nothing!

How I got to Everledge—a small town five miles away—I never rightly knew. I came to myself in the dingle, while it was still dark, with pains in every limb. The nurse at the Cottage Hospital—bless her—tells me that I was picked up in an apparently dying state, and everybody sympathized with my being lost in the snow. I never told her the truth—how could I when she was so kind and good!—but if she had guessed why I was so interested in the district weekly paper she might have suspected something.

"THEY LEVELLED THE BASS FIDDLE LIKE A BATTERING-RAM."

Here is the conclusion of the paragraph which took my eye: "This is one of the most cunning robberies on record. The detectives think the whole affair was a put-up job on the part of 'Toff' Smith—Lieutenant Fontenoy's valet—who left a most impudent note behind him, for while the party were all disporting themselves with the snow man, or applauding from the windows, he got clear away with three thousand pounds' worth of jewellery."

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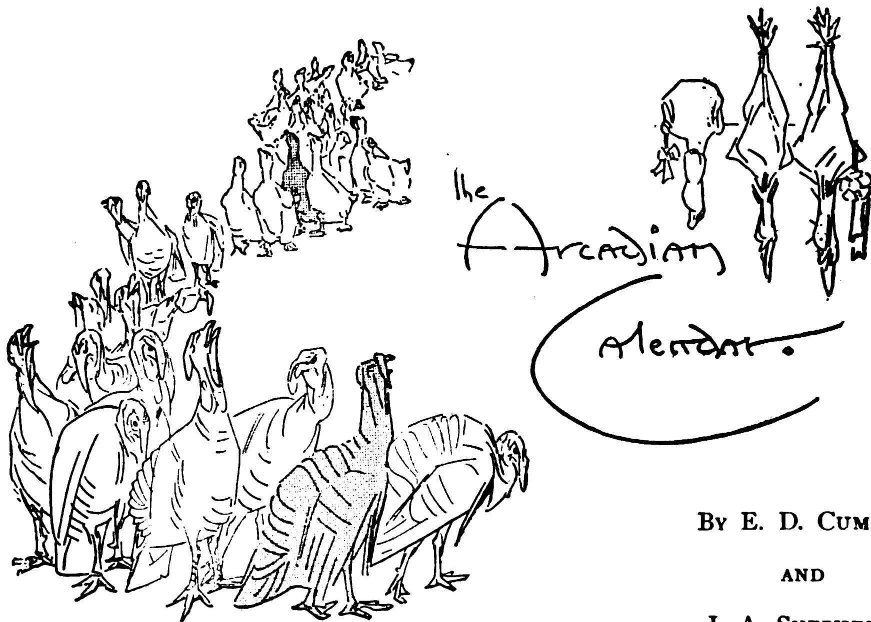

By E. D. Cuming

and

J. A. Shepherd

December

AT the beginning of this month the blue or mountain hare has finished changing into his white winter coat. Living as he does on high grounds, where the snow falls early and lies long, he finds safety from his enemies, the fox and eagle, in clothes which match his surroundings. He is so much in the habit of making this change that he does it without consulting the weather forecast; and a white hare in a snowless landscape feels his conspicuousness acutely, hiding himself whenever he can in thick clumps of heather. This white coat is really an overcoat, a new growth of fur, to match which the summer coat gradually changes its colour. In March, when he has done with his warm clothes, he sheds them and dons a new summer suit.

"WINTER CLOTHING."

Blackgame would seem to suffer from cold feet, for in snowy weather they renounce their habit of roosting on the ground and perch on the trees. Birds resort to various devices to keep themselves warm in winter; for the most audacious we naturally look to the robin. When *he* suffers from cold feet he will follow a shooting-party, and use the freshly-killed game as a warming-pan. He has no fear of guns, and will snuggle down on the quivering carcass of a rabbit till the keeper puts it in the game-bag. It is quite in keeping with his character that he should scold the

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gamekeeper for taking it away from him. When the snow lies long the brown hare leaves the open fields and takes refuge in the woods and copses, where there is a certain amount of shelter, and where food is available in the forbidden shape of the bark of young trees. The hare will not face a sudden, heavy snowfall if it surprise her in her form out in the open; she prefers to be snowed-in where she sits, comfortably—or uncomfortably—conscious that she can go without food for a week or so at a pinch. Her breath keeps one tiny hole open for air, and probably she spends the time in sleep.

"NOTHING FIT FOR AN AUK TO EAT."

The storms of winter carry seafaring birds inland, where they do not want to go and have nothing to do. In the winter of 1894–95 numbers of little auks were picked up exhausted in the midland and southern counties. The little auk always pays our northern coasts a visit in the cold weather, but does not care to come farther south, much less make trips inland, where he cannot find anything fit for an auk to eat. It is only when the wind brings upon him pressure he cannot resist that he leaves the coast. So large and powerful a bird as the gannet makes a good fight for it before he submits to the wind: more than once a gannet has been found inland so sound asleep that he was easily caught by hand; he was simply worn out from battling with the elements. The bittern, who was formerly a resident in the eastern counties, but turned his back on a nation which displays such a passion for draining marshes, is a regular winter visitor, and is most common after a stormy succession of east winds, which bring him over from Holland. He is become a naturalized Dutchman; bittern prejudices are more regarded in Holland.

"THE BITTERN TURNS HIS BACK ON THE NATION."

The fogs we look for at this season bring many birds to grief; like men, birds lose their way, or grow so utterly bewildered that they drop to earth and remain where they alight. One morning a few years ago, after a day or two of fog not thicker than that which is commonly bestowed on London in winter, a woodcock was picked up alive in Jermyn Street. The game-dealer to whom the finder brought it said the bird seemed "confused"; no doubt its feelings were comparable to those a town-reared child would experience if suddenly dropped into the haunts of a woodcock. Some twenty years ago or more an astonished gunner shot a woodcock on Tooting Common; it was a foggy December morning, and the bird, having evidently lost its

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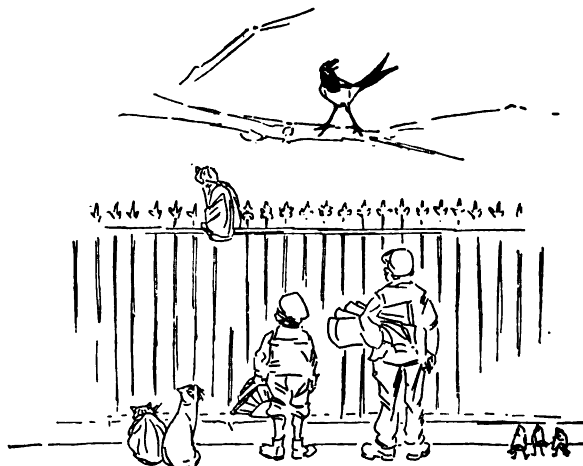
bearings, had decided to wait for it to clear. A little grebe who had lost its head in the fog allowed itself to be caught in the street at Market Drayton a year ago; and Mr. Harting has record of a curious catch of kestrels during a fog. A number of them, on migration presumably, came aboard a steamer in the Baltic; they were either exhausted or utterly stupefied, for they allowed the sailors to catch them. Nine of these kestrels were brought alive to the curator of the Newcastle Museum. It is a singular thing, but in misty weather such wary birds as wild duck either are less vigilant or miscalculate distance, for you can often approach within easy shot of them before they take wing.

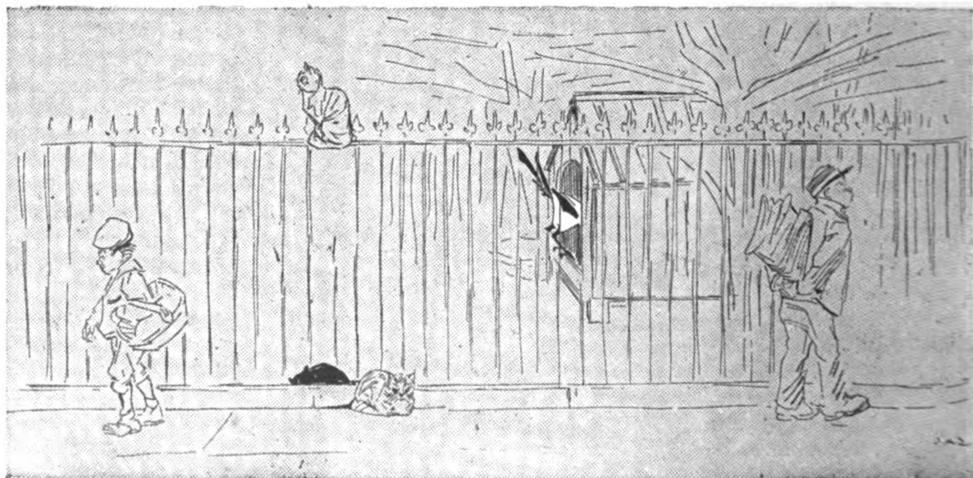


"DELIVERING HIS DAILY LECTURE."

A tame magpie I had used to remain at home in the big dog-kennel he occupied when it was foggy. One morning a thick black fog came on while he was delivering from the branch of a tree one of his daily lectures to an appreciative audience of message-boys, cats, and sparrows; he immediately ceased, hurried silently down to his kennel, and went to bed, angry, puzzled, and alarmed.

The field-mouse has taken up his winter quarters; sometimes he patronizes a mole's run, having made sure there are in it no moles who would give him a cordial welcome—for dinner; even then it is not always a safe abode, because the weasel is in the habit of seeking refuge there too. The field-mouse is most commonly brought to light by the farmer who is threshing out a stack of corn in winter. A corn stack combines shelter and food together, and both field and harvest mice colonize the interior, making tunnels in all directions. If there be a kestrel in the neighbourhood the hum of the threshing machine will bring him post-haste; he knows it means mice.

Floods drive wild creatures to unwonted expedients; both hares and rabbits can swim well if forced to take to water, but naturally they do not leave dry land if they can avoid it, and when the floods are out rabbits often take refuge on stone walls if there happen to be any convenient: there they sit with exemplary patience waiting for the waters to subside. The late Mr. Moray Brown once saw a rabbit who had taken refuge on the



"HE WENT TO BED ANGRY, PUZZLED, AND ALARMED."

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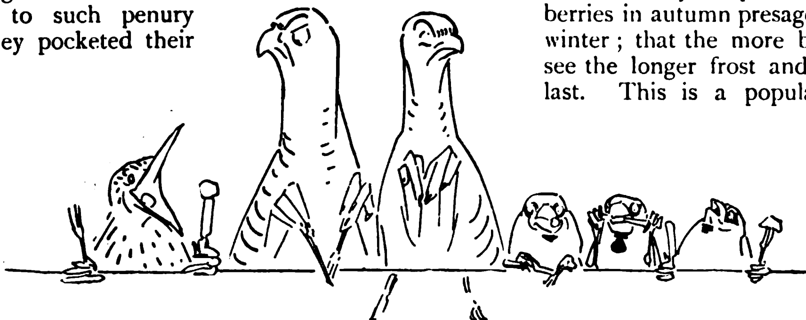
back of a cow, the rabbit appeared quite content, and the cow, up to her knees in water, had no objection to being used as an ark of refuge. The question that naturally presents itself is, how did the rabbit get there? Probably the water was rising fast and he took advantage of the cow's lowered head to reach her back that way.

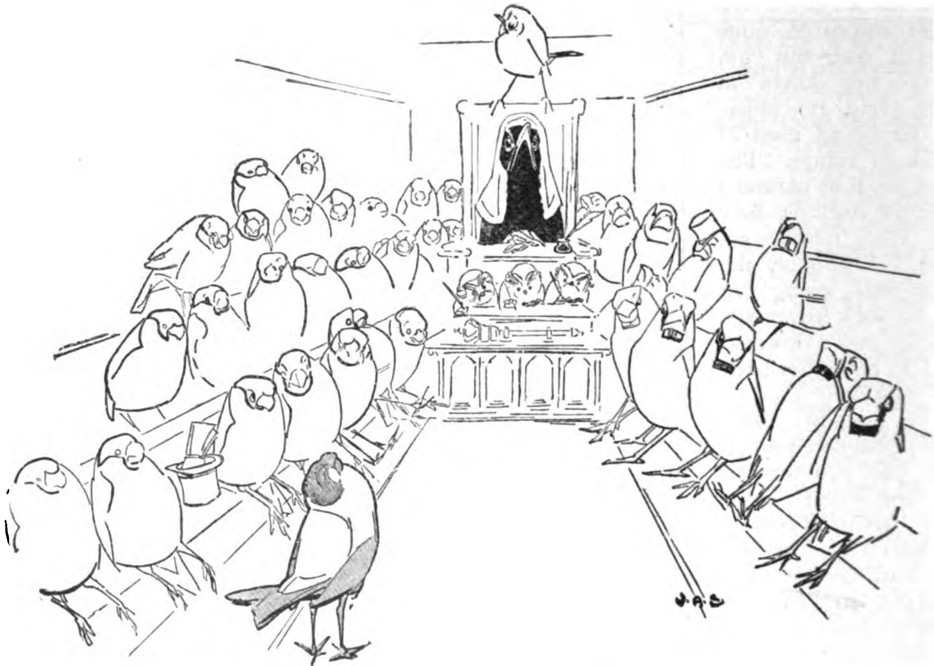
"HOW DID THE RABBIT GET THERE?"

The grouse, who have not suffered much from the gun for the last few weeks, begin their lawful holidays on the 11th December, and can choose their abiding-places now without fear of man. Grouse take special pride in their tails apparently, for they hate wetting them. When snow lies, you see them stalking about with their tails held so high you wonder what is the matter with the bird. They afford easier opportunities of study when the snow is deep, for then they leave the moors and come down to the low grounds for food and shelter; in very severe weather they have been known to resort to the shore and eat seaweed. Under stress of hunger they will perch on the thorn bushes and eat haws; and a Yorkshire clergyman records a case in which two or three grouse were reduced to such penury that they pocketed their pride and joined the sparrows and starlings on the lawn where crumbs were thrown out. Mr. Chapman says that sometimes, when the snow is deep, the grouse burrow under it for shelter, working out a regular system of tunnels among the stems of old heather, where the snow lies lightly and is easily pushed aside. Here they sleep, no doubt packed together for mutual comfort and consolation. Mention of grouse in the snow recalls the ingenious trap employed by poachers to catch grouse and ptarmigan which Mr. J. E. Millais has described. The snow being fairly deep and hard the poacher arms himself with a bottle (champagne bottle for choice, its shape being the most suitable), and with this implement, neck downwards, he presses holes in the snow; at the bottom of each he puts a few grains of corn, and the trap is made. The birds, trying to reach the food, cannot draw back out of the holes, which are just big enough to admit their bodies with the wings pressed to their sides; and there they remain, tail in air, till the poacher returns.

There is a very generally-cherished belief that a heavy crop of haws and berries in autumn presages a severe winter; that the more berries you see the longer frost and snow will last. This is a popular error—



"THE GROUSE POCKETING THEIR PRIDE."



"THE BULLFINCH BEGS TO MOVE A RESOLUTION."

deservedly popular, but none the less an error; yet when you see the bullfinches, in companies of a dozen or so, you cannot but feel that they have the same idea, and are assembled in committee to inquire into the food stocks available for winter:—

"I beg for leave," the bullfinch said, "to move a resolution
Concerning that most vital thing—our winter food supplies—
To wit: 'This House regards with dread the future destitution
That looms from every bush and tree and shrub before its eyes.
And so we pray Your Majesty appoint a small commission,
With power to investigate, examine, and report
On measures best to remedy the very grave condition
Of things that's bound to follow when the berry crops fall short.'"
The hawfinch said he'd listened with the warmest admiration
To the brief but lucid motion of his honourable friend,
But he hoped he should convince him from official information
That the scarcity was local, and it did not far extend.
The Board of Food Inspectors, who had travelled, on migration,
And inspected every hedge and wood from Aberdeen to Kent,
Reported that the hips and haws surpassed imagination;
Perhaps this would relieve his friend's alarm to some extent.

The hawfinch is an intelligent bird; like the bullfinch, he repays education, and displays a certain talent for languages. The Rev. H. A. Macpherson reared one which picked up the words and sounds he used, and, though the bird practised his own notes, he gave them up eventually in favour of eccentric noises selected with but slight judgment from those he heard daily.

In the poultry-yard contentment born of high living reigns supreme. The turkeys have forgotten the fate that last Christmas brought upon their relatives, and the shrieks of Michaelmas martyrs have mercifully passed out of the anserine mind. Cold it may be, but the lofty superiority of the turkey's demeanour indicates consciousness that in double rations he is only receiving his deserts. Life is full of compensations; in this case compensation precedes injury. The east winds drive the best clad among men into the house, but the jovial duck is indifferent to cold, and his only complaint is that the ice on the pond has not been broken so that he may enjoy his tub. The air with which the ducks swagger in Hyde Park when man deserts it suggests that they merely lent us the place in the summer out of goodwill.

The cock pheasant who has escaped the gun until now has been only spared for the Christmas shooting party; between lawful

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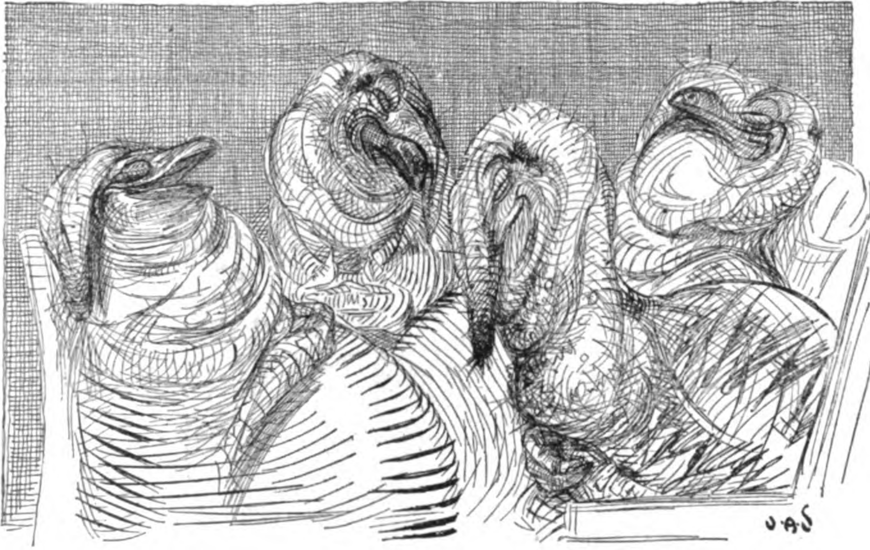

"CONTENTMENT."

shooting by day and unlawful snaring by night his lot is not a happy one. More discretion on his part would save him in some degree from the dangers of night, but the pheasant will not learn by experience. Every night he advertises the address of his roost by crowing at the top of his voice; and the listening poacher, hearing him, walks straight to the tree whereon he is perched and brings him down—sometimes with a small charge of powder and shot, sometimes with a strong horsehair noose on a long twig, or with stupefying sulphur fumes. The cock pheasant's love of fighting gave a clever poacher an idea for an effective trap. He fixed up a looking-glass, and in front of it a couple of well-sharpened steel knitting needles, which impaled the unsuspecting pheasant charging bravely upon his own reflection. The partridges, roosting on the ground, have most to fear from the net the poachers drag across the fields at night,

A SKETCH IN HYDE PARK—"THE DUCK IN POSSESSION."

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a trick the gamekeeper defeats by sticking thorny bushes at intervals over the pastures. Partridges, by the way, display much judgment in their bed arrangements; the members of the family pack themselves together with their tails in the centre and their heads turned outwards; thus no enemy can approach undiscovered, and, what is probably of equal importance, the birds who face the wind shelter those who do not. Birds who sleep in exposed situations always face the wind: did they not the heaviest feather clothes would be of little protection. Writing of enemies, the method the coots employ in winter to frighten away a hawk is worth mentioning. Coots, like so many other birds, assemble in flocks for the cold weather, and if a hawk stoops at them they splash water at him with their feet. Either the hawk hates being wetted or is terrified by the sight of so many large feet, for the manœuvre is commonly successful. Cold sharpens appetite, and birds of prey are as alert in winter as they are in summer when they have a hungry family to provide for. The golden eagle, who, thanks to the protection afforded him by Scottish landowners, is commoner now than he was fifteen or twenty years ago, takes heavy toll of the mountain hares. The hare, without means of defence, finds refuge, if he can, under some overhanging rock or stone where the bird cannot reach him, and squats there while the eagle, perched hard by but out of his sight, watches his retreat as a cat watches a mouse-hole. The hare will not move while the eagle remains; it seems likely that he waits till his keen sense of hearing tells him that the great bird has gone; not that very sharp ears are necessary to hear the whistling wing-beat of the eagle launching himself into the air.

"WAITING FOR THE MOUNTAIN HARE."

The John Dory is now much in evidence at the fishmonger's; only the fisherman sees that fish at his best, for his brilliant livery, like a well-burnished new penny, fades soon after he dies—his popular name is corrupted from the French *jaune dorée*, "gilded yellow." The John Dory wears his eyes on the top of his head, and his long face suggests melancholy alarm; the fact is he had a very narrow escape:—

That you were born a Dory, John,
Was Nature's act of grace.
Be grateful in your glory, John,
You might have been a plaice.

Your figure, far from pursy, John,
Shows Nature had designed
A flat fish, and in mercy, John,
She boldly changed her mind.

Your look, like death-doomed wretch's, John,
Methinks I read aright:
You saw her early sketches, John,
And can't forget your fright.

Very, very little more compression from Nature's shaping hand, and John had assuredly been a flat fish; even now he finds it tiring to swim upright, and is in the habit of leaning up against something to rest: clear indication that more ballast would be acceptable.

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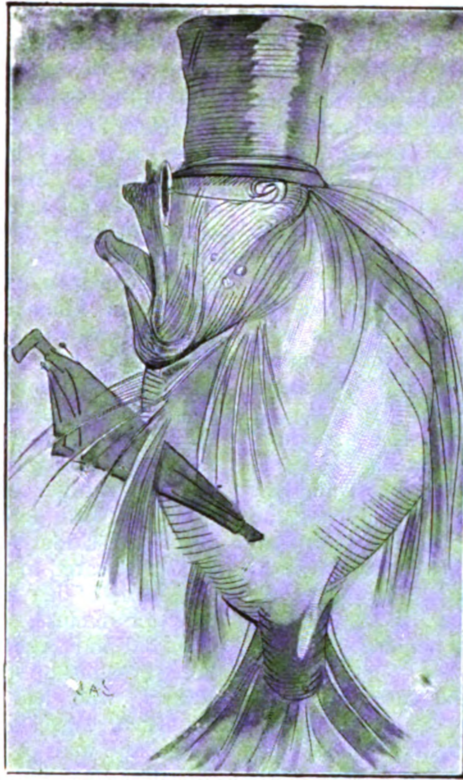
The roedeer shed their horns about Christmas time; having strong bias in favour of a woodland residence, and dining frugally off twigs, bark, ivy, and other evergreens, the roe is even less visible to man in winter than at other seasons of the year. If the snow lie deep on the hills, the red deer, emboldened by hunger, come down to forage on the low grounds. If not provided with hay under these circumstances they will raid the crofters' gardens and revel in turnips and potatoes. Mr. Allan Gordon Cameron, one of our best authorities on the red deer, says that if they once acquire a taste for these dainties they will "go through fire and water" to get them.



"JOHN."

Snow occasionally gets the hare into a curious difficulty; it gathers on the long hair of her under parts and forms into hard balls, of which the animal cannot rid herself; hares thus encumbered with snowballs have been picked up by hand. I remember finding a Skye terrier on a doorstep in Perth in exactly the same case one day when the snow lay deep. Each tag of long hair from his chest to his tail had its pendent snowball, and the unfortunate little dog had lain down in the doorway unable to struggle any farther. The only bird who enjoys a snowstorm is the thoughtless, improvident sparrow; he seems to think the whirling flakes were sent for his special delectation, and amuses himself by catching them as they float. Let it be said on the sparrow's behalf that with all his faults he is a cleanly little vagabond; he takes his cold tub in winter as cheerfully as his dust bath in the height of summer.

"SPARROWS AT PLAY."

N.B.—CLOSE SEASON FOR TROUT IN SCOTLAND.—In the October "Calendar" it was stated that the trout in Scottish rivers enjoy "no season of rest." This statement was correct at the time the "Calendar" was written: but has, happily, been rendered incorrect by the passing of the "Fresh Water Fish (Scotland) Act of 1902," which came into operation on 15th October last and secures for Scottish trout a close season from 15th October till 28th February, practically the spawning season. The author of the "Calendar" apologizes to readers of THE STRAND MAGAZINE for his omission to make the needful correction.

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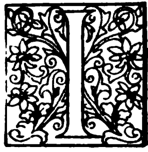
The Sorceress of the Strand.

By L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace.

III.—THE FACE OF THE ABBOT.



IF Madame Sara had one prerogative more than another it was that of taking people unawares. When least expected she would spring a mine at your feet, engulf you in a most horrible danger, stab you in the dark, or injure you through your best friend; in short, this dangerous woman was likely to become the terror of London if steps were not soon taken to place her in such confinement that her genius could no longer assert itself.

Months went by after my last adventure. Once again my fears slumbered. Madame Sara's was not the first name that I thought of when I awoke in the morning, nor the last to visit my dreams at night. Absorbed in my profession, I had little time to waste upon her. After all, I made up my mind, she might have left London; she might have carried her machinations, her cruelties, and her genius elsewhere.

That such was not the case this story quickly shows.

The matter which brought Madame Sara once again to the fore began in the following way.

On the 17th of July, 1900, I received a letter; it ran as follows:—

"23, West Terrace,
"Charlton Road, Putney.

"Dear Mr. Druce,—I am in considerable difficulty and am writing to beg for your advice. My father died a fortnight ago at his castle in Portugal, leaving me his heiress. His brother-in-law, who lived there with him, arrived in London yesterday and came to see me, bringing me full details of my father's death. These are in the last degree mysterious and terrifying. There are also a lot of business affairs to arrange. I know little about business and should greatly value your advice on the whole situation. Can you come here and see me to-morrow at three o'clock? Senhor de Castro, my uncle, my mother's brother, will be here, and I should like you to meet him. If you can come I shall be very grateful.—Yours sincerely,

"Helen Sherwood."

I replied to this letter by telegram:

"Will be with you at three to-morrow."

Helen Sherwood was an old friend of mine; that is, I had known her since she was a child. She was now about twenty-three years of age, and was engaged to a certain Godfrey Despard, one of the best fellows I ever met. Despard was employed in a merchant's office in Shanghai, and the chance of immediate marriage was small. Nevertheless, the young people were determined to be true to each other and to wait that turn in the tide which comes to most people who watch for it.

Helen's life had been a sad one. Her mother, a Portuguese lady of good family, had died at her birth; her father, Henry Sherwood, had gone to Lisbon in 1860 as one of the Under-Secretaries to the Embassy and never cared to return to England. After the death of his wife he had lived as an eccentric recluse. When Helen was three years old he had sent her home, and she had been brought up by a maiden aunt of her father's, who had never understood the impulsive, eager girl, and had treated her with a rare want of sympathy. This woman had died when her young charge was sixteen

"SHE TREATED HER WITH A RARE WANT OF SYMPATHY."

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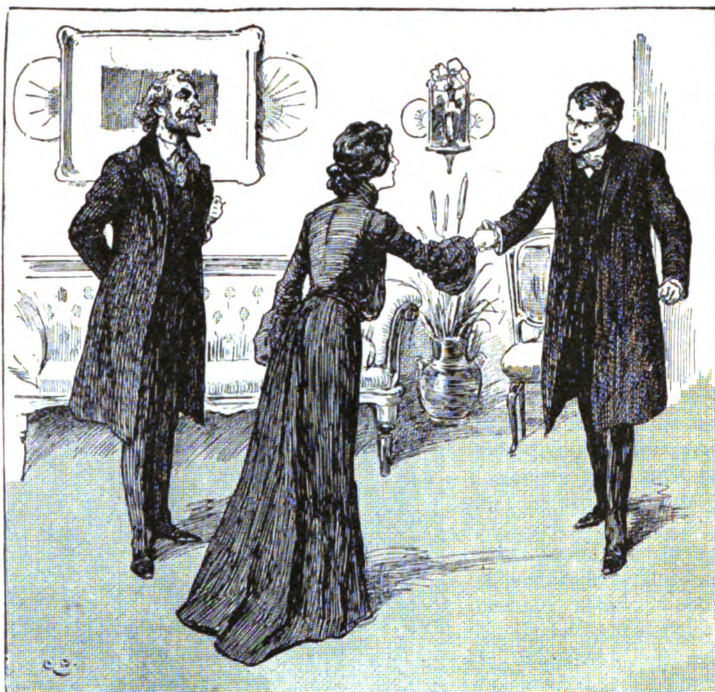
years of age. She had left no money behind her, and, as her father declined to devote one penny to his daughter's maintenance, Helen had to face the world before her education was finished. But her character was full of spirit and determination. She stayed on at school as pupil teacher, and afterwards supported herself by her attainments. She was a good linguist, a clever musician, and had one of the most charming voices I ever heard in an amateur. When this story opens she was earning a comfortable independence, and was even saving a little money for that distant date when she would marry the man she loved.

Meanwhile Sherwood's career was an extraordinary one. He had an extreme stroke of fortune in drawing the first prize of the Grand Christmas State Lottery in Lisbon, amounting to one hundred and fifty million reis, representing in English money thirty thousand pounds. With this sum he bought an old castle in the Estrella Mountains, and, accompanied by his wife's brother, a certain Petro de Castro, went there to live. He was hated by his fellow-men and, with the exception of De Castro, he had no friends. The old castle was said to be of extraordinary beauty, and was known as Castello Mondego. It was situated some twenty miles beyond the old Portuguese town of Coimbra. The historical accounts of the place were full of interest, and its situation was marvellously romantic, being built on the heights above the Mondego River. The castle dated from the twelfth century, and had seen brave and violent deeds. It was supposed to be haunted by an old monk who was said to have been murdered there, but within living memory no one had seen him. At least, so Helen had informed me:

Punctually at three o'clock on the following day I found myself at West Terrace, and was shown into my young friend's pretty little sitting-room.

"How kind of you to come, Mr. Druce!" she said. "May I introduce you to my uncle, Senhor de Castro?"

The Senhor, a fine-looking man, who spoke English remarkably well, bowed, gave a



"'HOW KIND OF YOU TO COME, MR. DRUCE,' SHE SAID."

gracious smile, and immediately entered into conversation. His face had strong features; his beard was iron-grey, so also were his hair and moustache. He was slightly bald about the temples. I imagined him to be a man about forty-five years of age.

"Now," said Helen, after we had talked to each other for a few minutes, "perhaps, Uncle Petro, you will explain to Mr. Druce what has happened."

As she spoke I noticed that her face was very pale and that her lips slightly trembled.

"It is a painful story," said the Portuguese, "most horrible and inexplicable."

I prepared myself to listen, and he continued:—

"For the last few months my dear friend had been troubled in his mind. The reason appeared to me extraordinary. I knew that Sherwood was eccentric, but he was also matter-of-fact, and I should have thought him the last man who would be likely to be a prey to nervous terrors. Nevertheless, such was the case. The old castle has

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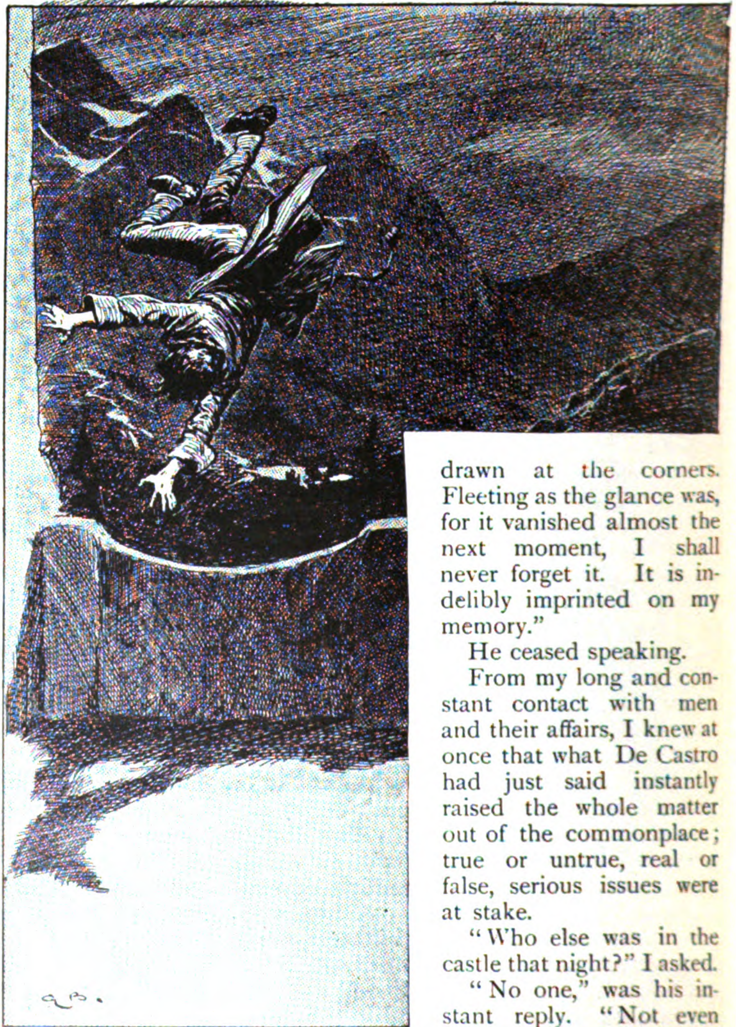
the reputation of being haunted, and the apparition that is supposed to trouble Mondego is that of a ghastly white face that is now and then seen at night peering out through some of the windows or one of the embrasures of the battlements surrounding the courtyard. It is said to be the shade of an abbot who was foully murdered there by a Castilian nobleman who owned the castle a hundred years ago.

"It was late in April of this year when my brother-in-law first declared that he saw the apparition. I shall never forget his terror. He came to me in my room, woke me, and pointed out the embrasure where he had seen it. He described it as a black figure leaning out of a window, with an appallingly horrible white face, with wide-open eyes apparently staring at nothing. I argued with him and tried to appeal to his common sense, and did everything in my power to bring him to reason, but without avail. The terror grew worse and worse. He could think and talk of nothing else, and, to make matters worse, he collected all the old literature he could find bearing on the legend. This he would read, and repeat the ghastly information to me at meal times. I began to fear that his mind would become affected, and three weeks ago I persuaded him to come away with me for a change to Lisbon. He agreed, but the very night before we were to leave I was awakened in the small hours by hearing an awful cry, followed by another, and then the sound of my own name. I ran out into the courtyard and looked up at the battlements. There I saw, to my horror, my brother-in-law rushing along the edge, screaming as though in extreme terror, and evidently imagining that he was pursued by something. The next moment he dashed headlong down a hundred feet on to the flagstones by my side, dying instantaneously. Now comes the most horrible part. As I glanced up I saw, and I swear it with as much certainty as I am now speaking to you, a black figure leaning out over the battlement exactly at the spot from which he had fallen—a figure with a ghastly white face, which stared straight down at me. The moon was full, and gave the face a clearness that was unmistakable. It was large, round, and smooth, white with a whiteness I had never seen on human face, with eyes widely open, and a fixed stare; the face was rigid and tense; the mouth shut and drawn at the corners. Fleeting as the glance was, for it vanished almost the next moment, I shall never forget it. It is indelibly imprinted on my memory."



"HE DASHED HEADLONG DOWN."

He ceased speaking.

From my long and constant contact with men and their affairs, I knew at once that what De Castro had just said instantly raised the whole matter out of the commonplace; true or untrue, real or false, serious issues were at stake.

"Who else was in the castle that night?" I asked.

"No one," was his instant reply. "Not even old Gonsalves, our one

man-servant. He had gone to visit his people in the mountains about ten miles off. We were absolutely alone."

"You know Mr. Sherwood's affairs pretty well?" I went on. "On the supposition of trickery, could there be any motive that you know of for anyone to play such a ghastly trick?"

"Absolutely none."

"You never saw the apparition before this occasion?"

"Never."

"And what were your next steps?"

"There was nothing to be done except to carry poor Sherwood indoors. He was buried on the following day. I made every effort to have a systematic inquiry set on foot, but the castle is in a remote spot and the authorities are slow to move. The Portuguese doctor gave his sanction to the burial after a formal inquiry. Deceased was testified as having committed suicide while temporarily insane, but to investigate the apparition they absolutely declined."

"And now," I said, "will you tell me what you can with regard to the disposition of the property?"

"The will is a very remarkable one," replied De Castro. "Senhor Sousa, my brother-in-law's lawyer, holds it. Sherwood died a much richer man than I had any idea of. This was owing to some very successful speculations. The real and personal estate amounts to seventy thousand pounds, but the terms of the will are eccentric. Henry Sherwood's passionate affection for the old castle was quite morbid, and the gist of the conditions of the will is this: Helen is to live on the property, and if she does, and as long as she does, she is to receive the full interest on forty thousand pounds, which is now invested in good English securities. Failing this condition, the property is to be sold, and the said forty thousand pounds is to go to a Portuguese charity in Lisbon. I also have a personal interest in the will. This I knew from Sherwood himself. He told me that his firm intention was to retain the castle in the family for his daughter, and for her son if she married. He earnestly begged of me to promote his wishes in the event of his dying. I was not to leave a stone unturned to persuade Helen to live at the castle, and in order to ensure my carrying out his wishes he bequeathed to me the sum of ten thousand pounds provided Helen lives at Castello Mondego. If she does not do so I lose the money. Hence my presence here and my own personal anxiety to clear up the mystery of my friend's death, and to see my niece installed as owner of the most lovely and romantic property in the Peninsula. It has, of course, been my duty to give a true account of the mystery surrounding my unhappy brother-in-law's death, and I sincerely trust that a solution to this terrible mystery will be found, and that Helen will enter into her beautiful possessions with all confidence."

"The terms of the will are truly eccentric," I said. Then turning to Helen I added:—

"Surely you can have no fear in living at Castello Mondego when it would be the means of bringing about the desire of your heart?"

"Does that mean that you are engaged to be married, Helen?" asked De Castro.

"It does," she replied. Then she turned to me. "I am only human, and a woman. I could not live at Castello Mondego with this mystery unexplained; but I am willing to take every step—yes, *every* step, to find out the truth."

"Let me think over the case," I said, after a pause. "Perhaps I may be able to devise some plan for clearing up this unaccountable matter. There is no man in the whole of London better fitted to grapple with the mystery than I, for it is, so to speak, my profession."

"You will please see in me your hearty collaborator, Mr. Druce," said Senhor de Castro.

"When do you propose to return to Portugal?" I asked.

"As soon as I possibly can."

"Where are you staying now?"

"At the Cecil."

He stood up as he spoke.

"I am sorry to have to run away," he said. "I promised to meet a friend, a lady, in half an hour from now. She is a very busy woman, and I must not keep her waiting."

His words were commonplace enough, but I noticed a queer change in his face. His eyes grew full of eagerness, and yet—was it possible?—a curious fear seemed also to fill them. He shook hands with Helen, bowed to me, and hurriedly left the room.

"I wonder whom he is going to meet," she said, glancing out of the window and watching his figure as he walked down the street. "He told me when he first came that he had an interview pending of a very important character. But, there, I must not keep you, Mr. Druce; you are also a very busy man. Before you go, however, do tell me what you think of the whole thing. I certainly cannot

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live at the castle while that ghastly face is unexplained; but at the same time I do not wish to give up the property."

"You shall live there, enjoy the property, and be happy," I answered. "I will think over everything; I am certain we shall see a way out of the mystery."

I wrung her hand and hurried away.

During the remainder of the evening this extraordinary case occupied my thoughts to the exclusion of almost everything else. I made up my mind to take it up, to set every inquiry on foot, and, above all things, to ascertain if there was a physical reason for the apparition's appearance; in short, if Mr. Sherwood's awful death was for the benefit of any living person. But I must confess that, think as I would, I could not see the slightest daylight until I remembered the curious expression of De Castro's face when he spoke of his appointment with a lady. The man had undoubtedly his weak point; he had his own private personal fear. What was its nature?

I made a note of the circumstance and determined to speak to Vandeleur about it when I had a chance.

The next morning one of the directors of our agency called. He and I had a long talk over business matters, and when he was leaving he asked me when I wished to take my holiday.

"If you like to go away for a fortnight or three weeks, now is your time," was his final remark.

I answered without a moment's hesitation that I should wish to go to Portugal, and would take advantage of the leave of absence which he offered me.

Now, it had never occurred to me to think of visiting Portugal until that moment; but so strongly did the idea now take possession of me that I went at once to the Cecil and had an interview with De Castro. I told him that I could not fulfil my promise to Miss Sherwood without being on the spot, and I should therefore accompany him when he returned to Lisbon. His face expressed genuine delight, and before we parted we arranged to meet at Charing Cross on the morning after the morrow. I then hastened to Putney to inform Helen Sherwood of my intention.

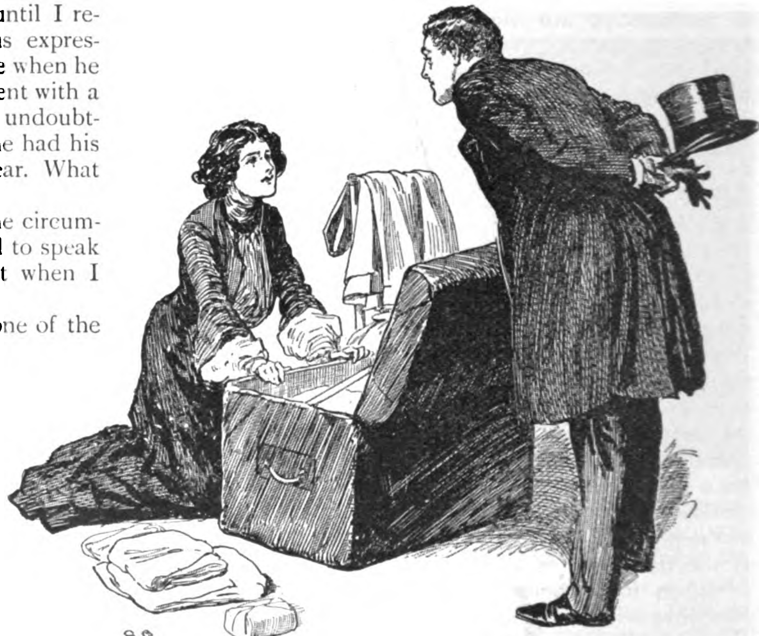
To my surprise I saw her busy placing different articles of her wardrobe in a large trunk which occupied the place of honour in the centre of the little sitting-room.

"What are you doing?" I cried.

She coloured.

"You must not scold me," she said. "There is only one thing to do, and I made up my mind this morning to do it. The day after to-morrow I am going to Lisbon. I mean to investigate the mystery for myself."

"You are a good, brave girl," I cried. "But listen, Helen; it is not necessary."



"'YOU MUST NOT SCOLD ME,' SHE SAID."

I then told her that I had unexpectedly obtained a few weeks' holiday, and that I intended to devote the time to her service.

"Better and better," she cried. "I go with you. Nothing could have been planned more advantageously for me."

"What put the idea into your head?" I asked.

"It isn't my own," she said. "I spent a dreadful night, and this morning, soon after ten o'clock, I had an unexpected visitor. She is not a stranger to me, although I have never mentioned her name. She is known as Madame Sara, and is——"

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"My dear Helen!" I cried. "You don't mean to tell me you know that woman? She is one of the most unscrupulous in the whole of London. You must have nothing to do with her—nothing whatever."

Helen opened her eyes to their widest extent.

"You misjudge Madame Sara," she said. "I have known her for the last few years, and she has been a most kind friend to me. She has got me more than one good post as teacher, and I have always felt a warm admiration for her. She is, beyond doubt, the most unselfish woman I ever met."

I shook my head.

"You will not get me to alter my opinion of her," continued Helen. "Think of her kindness in calling to see me to-day. She drove here this morning just because she happened to see my uncle, Petro de Castro, yesterday. She has known him, too, for some time. She had a talk with him about me, and he told her all about the strange will. She was immensely interested, and said that it was imperative for me to investigate the matter myself. She spoke in the most sensible way, and said finally that she would not leave me until I had promised to go to Portugal to visit the castle, and in my own person to unearth the mystery. I promised her and felt she was right. I am keeping my word."

When Helen had done speaking I remained silent. I could scarcely describe the strange sensation which visited me. Was it possible that the fear which I had seen so strongly depicted on De Castro's face was caused by Madame Sara? Was the mystery in the old Portuguese castle also connected with this terrible woman? If so, what dreadful revelations might not be before us! Helen was not the first innocent girl who believed in Madame, and not the first whose life was threatened.

"Why don't you speak, Mr. Druce?" she asked me at last. "What are you thinking of?"

"I would rather not say what I am thinking of," I answered; "but I am very glad of one thing, and that is that I am going with you."

"You are my kindest, best friend," she said; "and now I will tell you one thing more. Madame said that the fact of your being one of the party put all danger out of the case so far as I was concerned, for she knew you to be the cleverest man she ever met."

"Ah!" I replied, slowly, "there is a cleverer man than I, and his name is Eric Vandeleur. Did she happen to speak of him?"

"No. Who is he? I have never heard of him."

"I will tell you some day," I replied, "but not now."

I rose, bade her a hasty good-bye, and went straight to Vandeleur's rooms.

Whatever happened, I had made up my mind to consult him in the matter. He was out when I called, but I left a note, and he came round to my place in the course of the evening.

In less than a quarter of an hour I put him in possession of all the facts. He received my story in silence.

"Well!" I cried at last. "What do you think?"

"There is but one conclusion, Druce," was his reply. "There is a motive in this mystery—method in this madness. Madame is mixed up in it. That being the case, anything supernatural is out of the question. I am sorry Miss Sherwood is going to Lisbon, but the fact that you are going too may be her protection. Beyond doubt her life is in danger. Well, you must do your best, and forewarned is forearmed. I should like to go with you, but I cannot. Perhaps I may do more good here watching the arch-fiend who is pulling the strings."

De Castro took the information quietly that his niece was about to accompany us.

"Women are strange creatures," he said. "Who would suppose that a delicate girl would subject herself to the nervous terrors she must undergo in the castle? Well, let her come—it may be best, and my friend, the lady about whom I spoke to you, recommended it."

"You mean Madame Sara?" I said.

"Ah!" he answered, with a start. "Do you know her?"

"Slightly," I replied, in a guarded tone. Then I turned the conversation.

Our journey took place without adventure, and when we got to Lisbon we put up at Durrand's Hotel.

On the afternoon of that same day we went to interview Manuel Sousa, the lawyer who had charge of Mr. Sherwood's affairs. His office was in the Rue do Rio Janeiro. He was a short, bright-eyed little man, having every appearance of honesty and ability. He received us affably and looked with much interest at Helen Sherwood, whose calm, brave face and English appearance impressed him favourably.

"So you have come all this long way,

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"'YOU MEAN MADAME SARA?' I SAID."

Senhora," he said, "to investigate the mystery of your poor father's death? Be assured I will do everything in my power to help you. And now you would all like to see the documents and papers. Here they are at your service."

He opened a tin box and lifted out a pile of papers. Helen went up to one of the windows.

"I don't understand Portuguese," she said. "You will examine them for me, won't you, Uncle Petro, and you also, Mr. Druce?"

I had a sufficient knowledge of Portuguese to be able to read the will, and I quickly discovered that De Castro's account of it was quite correct.

"Is it your intention to go to Castello Mondego?" asked the lawyer, when our interview was coming to an end.

"I can answer for myself that I intend to go," I replied.

"It will give me great pleasure to take Mr. Druce to that romantic spot," said De Castro.

"And I go with you," cried Helen.

"My dear, dear young lady," said the lawyer, a flicker of concern crossing his bright eyes, "is that necessary? You will find the castle very lonely and not prepared for the reception of a lady."

"Even so, I have come all this long way to visit it," replied Helen. "I go with my friend, Mr. Druce, and with my uncle, and so far as I am concerned the sooner we get there the better."

The lawyer held up his hands.

"I wouldn't sleep in that place," he exclaimed, "for twenty contos of reis."

"Then you really believe in the apparition?" I said. "You think it is supernatural?"

He involuntarily crossed himself.

"The tale is an old one," he said. "It has been known for a hundred years that the castle is haunted by a monk who was treacherously murdered there. That is the reason, Miss Sherwood, why your father got it so cheap."

"Supernatural or not, I must get to the bottom of the thing," she said, in a low voice.

De Castro jumped up, an impatient expression crossing his face.

"If you don't want me for the present, Druce," he said, "I have some business of my own that I wish to attend to."

He left the office, and Helen and I were about to follow him when Senhor Sousa suddenly addressed me.

"By the way, Mr. Druce, I am given to understand that you are from the Solvency Inquiry Agency of London. I know that great business well; I presume, therefore, that matters of much interest depend upon this inquiry?"

"The interests are great," I replied, "but are in no way connected with my business. My motive in coming here is due to friendship. This young lady is engaged to be married to a special friend of mine, and I have known her personally from her childhood. If we can clear up the present mystery, Helen Sherwood's marriage can take place at once. If, on the other hand, that terror which hangs over Castello Mondego is so overpowering that Miss Sherwood cannot make up her mind to live there, a long separation awaits the young pair. I have answered

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your question, Senhor Sousa; will you, on your part, answer mine?"

"Certainly," he replied. His face looked keenly interested, and from time to time he glanced from Helen to me.

"Are you aware of the existence of any motive which would induce someone to personate the apparition and so bring about Mr. Sherwood's death?"

"I know of no such motive, my dear sir. Senhor de Castro will come into ten thousand pounds provided, and only provided, Miss Sherwood takes possession of the property. He is the one and only person who benefits under the will, except Miss Sherwood herself."

"We must, of course, exclude Senhor de Castro," I answered. "His conduct has been most honourable in the matter throughout; he might have been tempted to suppress the story of the ghost, which would have been to his obvious advantage. Is there no one else whom you can possibly suspect?"

"No one—absolutely no one."

"Very well; my course is clear. I have come here to get an explanation of the mystery. When it is explained Miss Sherwood will take possession of the castle."

"And should you fail, sir? Ghosts have a way of suppressing themselves when most earnestly desired to put in an appearance."

"I don't anticipate failure, Senhor Sousa, and I mean to go to the castle immediately."

"We are a superstitious race," he replied, "and I would not go there for any money you liked to offer me."

"I am an Englishman, and this lady is English on her father's side. We do not easily abandon a problem when we set to work to solve it."

"What do you think of it all?" asked Helen of me, when we found ourselves soon afterwards in the quaint, old-world streets.

"Think!" I answered. "Our course is clear. We have got to discover the motive. There must be a motive. There was someone who had a grudge against the old man, and who wished to terrify him out of the world. As to believing that the apparition is supernatural, I decline even to allow myself to consider it."

"Heaven grant that you may be right," she answered; "but I must say a strange and most unaccountable terror oppresses me whenever I conjure up that ghastly face."

"And yet you have the courage to go to the castle!"

"It is a case of duty, not of courage, Mr. Druce."

For the rest of that day I thought over the whole problem, looking at it from every point of view, trying to gaze at it with fresh eyes, endeavouring to discover the indiscoverable—the motive. There must be a motive. We should find it at the castle. We would go there on the morrow. But, no; undue haste was unnecessary. It might be well for me, helped as I should be by my own agency, a branch of which was to be found in Lisbon, to discover amongst the late Mr. Sherwood's acquaintances, friends, or relatives the motive that I wanted. My agents set to work for me, but though they did their utmost no discovery of the least value was found, and at the end of a week I told De Castro and Helen that I was ready to start.

"We will go early to-morrow morning," I said. "You must make all your preparations, Helen. It will take us the day to reach Castello Mondego. I hope that our work may be completed there, and that we may be back again in Lisbon within the week."

Helen's face lit up with a smile of genuine delight.

"The inaction of the last week has been terribly trying," she said. "But now that we are really going to get near the thing I feel quite cheerful."

"Your courage fills me with admiration," I could not help saying, and then I went out to make certain purchases. Amongst these were three revolvers—one for Helen, one for De Castro, and one for myself.

Afterwards I had an interview with Sousa, and took him as far as I could into my confidence.

"The danger of the supernatural is not worth considering," I said, "but the danger of treachery, of unknown motives, is considerable. I do not deny this fact for a moment. In case you get no tidings of us, come yourself or send some one to the castle within a week."

"This letter came for you by the last post," said Sousa, and he handed me one from Vandeleur.

I opened it and read as follows:—

"I met Madame Sara a week ago at the house of a friend. I spoke to her about Castello Mondego. She admitted that she was interested in it, that she knew Miss Sherwood, and hoped when she had taken possession to visit her in that romantic spot. I inquired further if she was aware of the contents of the strange will. She said she had heard of it. Her manner was perfectly frank, but I saw that she was uneasy. She

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took the first opportunity of leaving the house, and on making inquiries I hear that she left London by the first train this morning, *en route* for the Continent. These facts may mean a great deal, and I should advise you to be more than ever on your guard."

I put the letter into my pocket, got Sousa to promise all that was necessary, and went away.

At an early hour the following morning we left Rocio Station for Coimbra, and it was nearly seven in the evening when we finally came to the end of our railway journey and entered a light wagonette drawn by two powerful bay stallions for our twenty-mile drive to the castle.

The scenery as we approached the spurs of the Estrella was magnificent beyond description, and as I gazed up at the great peaks, now bathed in the purples and golds of the sunset, the magic and mystery of our strange mission became tenfold intensified. Presently the steep ascent began along a winding road between high walls that shut out our view, and by the time we reached the castle it was too dark to form any idea of its special features.

"A PHLEGMATIC-LOOKING MAN OPENED THE DOOR FOR US."

De Castro had already sent word of our probable arrival, and when we rang the bell at the old castle a phlegmatic-looking man opened the door for us.

"Ah, Gonsalves," cried De Castro, "here we are! I trust you have provided comfortable beds and a good meal, for we are all as hungry as hawks."

The old man shrugged his shoulders, raised his beetle-brows a trifle, and fixed his eyes on Helen with some astonishment. He muttered, in a Portuguese dialect which I did not in the least comprehend, something to De Castro, who professed himself satisfied. Then he said something further, and I noticed the face of my Portuguese friend turn pale.

"Gonsalves saw the spectre three nights ago," he remarked, turning to me. "It was leaning as usual out of one of the windows of the north-west turret. But, come; we must not terrify ourselves the moment we enter your future home, Niece Helen. You are doubtless hungry. Shall we go to the banqueting-hall?"

The supper prepared for us was not appetizing, consisting of some miserable goat-chops, and in the great hall, dimly lighted by a few candles in silver sconces, we could scarcely see each other's faces. As supper was coming to an end I made a suggestion.

"We have come here," I said, "on a serious matter. We propose to start an investigation of a very grave character. It is well known that ghosts prefer to reveal themselves to one man or woman alone, and not to a company. I propose, therefore, that we three should occupy rooms as far as possible each from the other in the castle, and that the windows of our three bedrooms should command the centre square."

De Castro shrugged his shoulders and a look of dismay spread for a moment over his face; but Helen fixed her great eyes on mine, her lips moved slightly as though she would speak, then she pulled herself together.

"You are right, Mr. Druce," she said. "Having come on this inquiry, we must fear nothing."

"Well, come at once, and we will choose

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our bedrooms. You as the lady shall have the first choice."

De Castro called Gonsalves, who appeared holding a lantern in his hand. A few words were said to the man in his own dialect, and he led the way, going up many stone stairs, down many others, and at last he flung open a huge oak door and we found ourselves in a vast chamber with five windows, all mullioned and sunk in deep recesses. On the floor was a heavy carpet. A four-post bedstead with velvet hangings was in a recess. The rest of the furniture was antique and massive, nearly black with age, but relieved by brass mountings, which, strange to say, were bright as though they had recently been rubbed.

"This was poor Sherwood's own bedroom," said De Castro. "Do you mind sleeping here?"

He turned to Helen.

"No, I should like it," she replied, emphatically.

"I am glad that this is your choice," he said, "for I don't believe, although I am a man and you are a woman, that I could myself endure this room. It was here I watched by his dead body. Ah, poor fellow, I loved him well."

"We won't talk of memories to-night," said Helen. "I am very tired, and I believe I shall sleep. Strange as it may sound, I am not afraid. Mr. Druce, where will you locate yourself? I should like, at least, to know what room you will be in."

I smiled at her. Her bravery astonished me. I selected a room at right angles to Helen's. Standing in one of her windows she could, if necessary, get a glimpse of me if I were to stand in one of mine.

De Castro chose a room equally far away from Helen's on the other side. We then both bade the girl good-night.

"I hate to leave her so far from help," I said, glancing at De Castro.

"Nothing will happen," he replied. "I can guarantee that. I am dead tired; the moment I lay my head on my pillow, ghost or no ghost, I shall sleep till morning."

He hurried off to his own room.

The chamber that I had selected was vast, lofty, and might have accommodated twenty people. I must have been more tired even than I knew, for I fell asleep when my head touched the pillow.

When I awoke it was dawn, and, eager to see my surroundings by the light of day, I sprang up, dressed, and went down to the courtyard. Three sides of this court were formed by the castle buildings, but along the fourth ran a low balustrade of stone. I sauntered towards it. I shall never forget the loveliness of the scene that met my eyes. I stood upon what was practically a terrace—a mere shelf on the scarping of rock on the side of a dizzy cliff that went down below me a sheer two thousand feet. The Mondego River ran with a swift rushing noise at the foot of the gorge, although at the height at which I stood it looked more like a thread of silver than anything else. Towering straight in front of me, solemnly up into the heavens, stood the great peak of the Serra da Estrella, from which in the rosy sunrise the morning clouds were rolling into gigantic white wreaths. Behind me was the great irregular pile of the castle, with its battlements, turrets, and cupolas, hoar and grey with the weight of centuries, but now transfigured and bathed in the golden light. I had just turned to glance at them when I saw De Castro approaching me.

"Surely," I said, "there never was such a beautiful place in the world before! We can never let it go out of the family. Helen shall live here."

De Castro came close to me; he took my arm, and pointed to a spot on the stone flags.

"On this very spot her father fell from the battlements above," he said, slowly.

I shuddered, and all pleasant thoughts were instantly dispelled by the memory of that hideous tragedy and the work we had still to do. It seemed impossible in this radiant, living sunlight to realize the horror that these walls had contained, and might still contain. At some of these very windows the ghastly face had appeared.

Helen, De Castro, and I spent the whole day exploring the castle. We went from dungeons to turrets, and made elaborate plans for alternate nightly vigils. One of the first things that I insisted on was that Gonsalves should not sleep in the castle at night. This was easily arranged, the old man having friends in the neighbouring village. Thus the only people in the castle after nightfall would be De Castro, Helen, and myself.

After we had locked old Gonsalves out and had raised the portcullis, we again went the complete round of the entire place. Thus we ensured that no one else could be hiding in the precincts. Finally we placed across every entrance thin silken threads, which would be broken if anyone attempted to pass them.

Helen was extremely anxious that the night should be divided into three portions, and that she should share the vigils; but this both De Castro and I prohibited.

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"At least for to-night," I said. "Sleep soundly; trust the matter to us. Believe me, this will be best. All arrangements are made. Your uncle will patrol until one o'clock in the morning, then I will go on duty."

This plan was evidently most repugnant to her, and when De Castro left the room she came up and began to plead with me.

"I have a strange and overpowering sensation of terror," she said. "Fight as I will, I cannot get rid of it. I would much rather be up than in that terrible room. I slept last night because I was too weary to do anything else, but I am wakeful to-night, and I shall not close my eyes. Let me share your watch at least. Let us pace the courtyard side by side."

"No," I answered, "that would not do. If two of us are together the ghost, or whatever human being poses as the ghost, will not dare to put in an appearance. We must abide by our terrible mission, Helen; each must watch alone. You will go to bed now, like a good girl, and to-morrow night, if we have not then discovered anything, you will be allowed to take your share in the night watch."

"Very well," she answered.

She sighed impatiently, and after a moment she said:—

"I have a premonition that something will happen to-night. As a rule my premonitions come right."

I made no answer, but I could not help giving her a startled glance. It is one thing to be devoid of ghostly terrors when living in practical London, surrounded by the world and the ways of men, but it is another thing to be proof against the strange terror which visits all human beings more or less when they are alone, when it is night, when the heart beats low. Then we are apt to have distorted visions, our mental equilibrium is upset, and we fear we know not what.

Helen and I knew that there was something to fear, and as our eyes met we dared not speak of what was uppermost in our thoughts. I could not find De Castro, and presumed that he had taken up his watch without further ado. I therefore retired to my own room and prepared to sleep. But the wakefulness which had seized Helen was also mine, for when the Portuguese entered my bedroom at one o'clock I was wide awake.

"You have seen nothing?" I said to him.

"Nothing," he answered, cheerfully. "The moon is bright, the night is glorious. It is my opinion that the apparition will not appear."

"I will take the precaution to put this in my pocket," I said, and I took up my revolver, which was loaded.

As I stepped out into the courtyard I found that the brilliant moonlight had lit up the north-west wall and the turrets; but the sharp black shadow of the south wall lay diagonally across the yard. Absolute stillness reigned, broken only by the croaking of thousands of frogs from the valley below. I sat down on a stone bench by the balustrade and tried to analyze my feelings. For a time the cheerfulness which I had seen so marked on De Castro's face seemed to have communicated itself to me; my late fears vanished, I was not even nervous, I found it difficult to concentrate my thoughts on the object which had brought me so far from England. My mind wandered back to London and to my work there. But by degrees, as the chill stole over me and the stillness of night began to embrace me, I found myself glancing ever and again at those countless windows and deep embrasures, while a queer, overpowering tension began to be felt, and against my own will a terror, strange and humiliating, overpowered me. I knew that it was stronger than I, and, fight against it as I would, I could not overcome it. The instinctive dread of the unknown that is at the bottom of the bravest man's courage was over me. Each moment it increased, and I felt that if the hideous face were to appear at one of the windows I would not be answerable for my self-control. Suddenly, as I sat motionless, my eyes riveted on the windows of the old castle, I felt, or fancied I felt, that I was not alone. It seemed to me that a shadow moved down in the courtyard and close to me. I looked again; it was coming towards me. It was with difficulty I could suppress the scream which almost rose to my lips. The next instant I was glad that I had not lost my self-control, when the slim, cold hand of Helen Sherwood touched mine.

"Come," she said, softly.

She took my hand and, without a word, led me across the courtyard.

"Look up," she said.

I did look up, and then my heart seemed to stop and every muscle in my body grew rigid as though from extreme cold. At one of the first-floor windows in the north-west tower, there in the moonlight leant the apparition itself: a black, solemn figure—its arms crossed on the sill—a large, round face of waxy whiteness, features immobile and fixed in a hideous, unwinking stare right across the courtyard.

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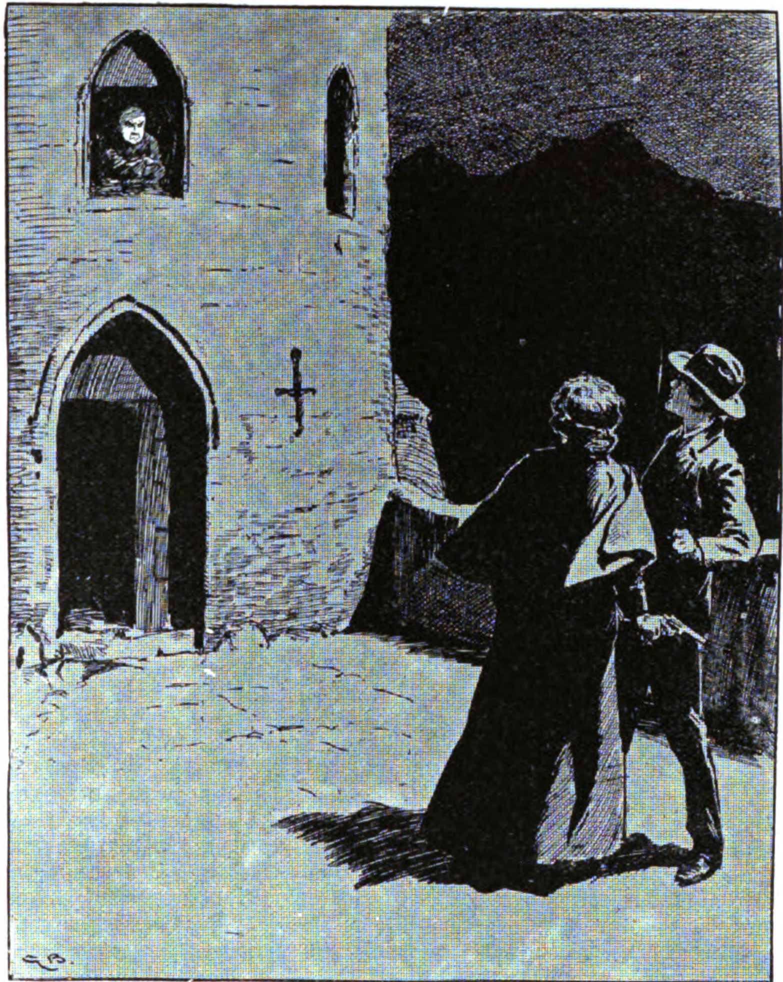

"THERE IN THE MOONLIGHT LEANT THE APPARITION ITSELF."

My heart gave a stab of terror, then I remained absolutely rigid—I forgot the girl by my side in the wild beating of my pulse. It seemed to me that it must beat itself to death.

"Call my uncle," whispered Helen, and when I heard her voice I knew that the girl was more self-possessed than I was.

"Call him," she said again, "loudly—at once."

I shouted his name:—

"De Castro, De Castro; it is here!"

The figure vanished at my voice.

"Go," said Helen again. "Go; I will wait for you here. Follow it at once."

I rushed up the stairs towards the room where De Castro slept. I burst open his door. The room was empty. The next instant I heard his voice.

"I am here—here," he said. "Come at once—quick!"

In a moment I was at his side.

"This is the very room where it stood," I said.

I ran to the window and looked down. De Castro followed me. Helen had not moved. She was still gazing up—the moonlight fell full on her white face.

"You saw it too?" gasped De Castro.

"Yes," I said, "and so did Helen. It stood by this window."

"I was awake," he said, "and heard your shout. I rushed to my window; I saw the spectre distinctly, and followed it to this room. You swear you saw it? It was the face of the abbot."

My brain was working quickly, my courage was returning. The unfathomable terror of the night scene was leaving me. I took De Castro suddenly by both his arms and turned him round so that the moonlight should fall upon him.

"You and I are alone in this tower. Helen Sherwood is in the courtyard. There is not another living being in the whole castle. Now listen. There are only two possible explanations of what has just occurred. Either you are the spectre, or it is supernatural."

"I?" he cried. "Are you mad?"

"I well might be," I answered, bitterly. "But of this I am certain: you must prove to me whether you are the apparition or not. I make this suggestion now in order to clear you from all possible blame; I make it that we may have

"EITHER YOU ARE THE SPECTRE, OR IT IS SUPERNATURAL."

absolute evidence that could not be upset before the most searching tribunal. Will you now strip before me?—yes, before you leave the room, and prove that you have no mask hidden anywhere on you. If you do this I shall be satisfied. Pardon my insistence, but in a case like the present there must be no loophole."

"Of course, I understand you," he said. "I will remove my clothes."

In five minutes he had undressed and dressed again. There was no treachery on his part. There was no mask nor any possible means of his simulating that face on his person.

"There is no suspicion about you," I said, almost with bitterness. "By heavens, I wish there were. The awfulness of this thing will drive me mad. Look at that girl standing by herself in the courtyard. I must return to her. Think of the courage of a woman who would stand there alone."

He made no answer. I saw that he was shivering.

"Why do you tremble?" I said, suddenly.

"Because of the nameless fear," he replied. "Remember I saw her father—I saw him with the terror on him—he ran along the battlements; he threw himself over—he died. He was dashed to pieces on the very spot where she is standing. Get her to come in, Druce."

"I will go and speak to her," I said.

I went back to the courtyard. I rejoined Helen, and in a few words told her what had occurred.

"You must come in now," I said. "You will catch your death of cold standing here."

She smiled, a slow, enigmatic sort of smile.

"I have not given up the solution yet," she said, "nor do I mean to."

As she spoke she took her revolver from her belt, and I saw that she was strangely excited. Her manner showed intense excitement, but no fear.

"I suspect foul play," she said. "As I stood here and watched you and Uncle Petro talking to each other by that window I felt convinced—I am more than ever convinced——"

She broke off suddenly.

"Look! — oh, Heaven, look! What is that?"

She had scarcely uttered the words before the same face appeared at another window to the right. Helen gave a sharp cry, and the next instant she covered the awful face with her revolver and fired. A shrill scream rang out on the night air.

"It is human after all," said Helen; "I thought it was. Come."

She rushed up the winding stairs; I followed. The door of the room where we had seen the spectre was open. We both dashed in. Beneath the window lay a dark, huddled heap with the moonlight shining on it, and staring up with the same wide-open eyes was the face of the abbot. Just for a moment neither Helen nor I dared to approach it, but after a time we cautiously drew near the dark mass. The figure never moved. I ran forward and stretched out my hand. Closer and closer I bent until my hand touched the face. It was human flesh and was still warm.

"Helen," I said, turning to the girl, "go at once and find your uncle."

But I had scarcely uttered the words before Helen burst into a low, choking laugh—the most fearful laugh I had ever heard.

"Look, look!" she said.

For before our eyes the face tilted, foreshortened, and vanished. We were both

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"BENEATH THE WINDOW LAY A DARK, HUDDLED HEAP."

gazing into the countenance of the man whom we knew as Petro de Castro. His face was bathed in blood and convulsed with pain. I lit the lantern, and as I once more approached I saw, lying on the ground by his side, something hairy which for an instant I did not recognise. The next moment I saw what it was—it explained everything. It was a wig. I bent still nearer, and the whole horrible deception became plain as daylight. For, painted upon the back of the man's perfectly bald head, painted with the most consummate skill, giving the startling illusion of depth and relief, and all the hideous expression that had terrified one man at least out of the world, was the face of the abbot. The wig had completely covered it, and so skilfully was it made that the keenest observer would never have suspected it was one, it being itself slightly bald in order to add to the deception.

There in that dim, bare room, in broken sentences, in a voice that failed as his life passed, De Castro faltered out the story of his sin.

"Yes," he said, "I have tried to deceive you, and Gonsalves aided me. I was mad to risk one more appearance. Bend nearer, both of you; I am dying. Listen.

"Upon this estate, not a league across the valley, I found six months ago alluvial gold in great quantities in the bed of the gully. In the 'Bibliotheca Publica' in Lisbon I had years before got accounts of mines worked by the Phœnicians, and was firmly persuaded that some of the gold still remained. I found it, and to get the full benefit of it I devised the ghastly scheme which you have just discovered. I knew that the castle was supposed to be haunted by the face of an old monk. Sherwood with all his peculiarities was superstitious. Very gradually I worked upon his fears, and then, when I thought the time ripe for my experiment, personated the apparition. It was I who flung him from the battlements with my own hand. I knew that the terms of the will would divert all suspicion from me, and had not your shot, Helen, been so true you would never have come here to live. Well, you have avenged your father and saved yourself at the same time. You will find in the safe in a corner of the banqueting-hall plans and maps of the exact spot where the gold is to be found. I could have worked there for years unsuspected. It is true that I should have lost ten thousand pounds, but I should have gained five times the amount. Between four and five months ago I went to see a special friend of mine in London. She is a woman who stands alone as one of the greatest criminals of her day. She promised at once to aid me, and she suggested, devised, and executed the whole scheme. She made the wig herself, with its strangely-bald appearance so deceptive to the ordinary eye, and she painted the awful face on my bald skull. When you searched me just now you suspected a mask, but I was safe from your detection. To remove or replace the wig was the work of an instant. The woman who had done all this was to share my spoils."

"Her name?" I cried.

"Sara, the Great, the Invincible," he murmured.

As he spoke the words he died.

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Darkest Siberia and Its Political Exiles.

AN APPEAL TO CIVILIZATION.

By Harry de Windt.

Author of "Siberia As It Is," "The New Siberia," "Finland As It Is," etc.

Special Notice.—The information contained in the following article was chiefly obtained from Russian Government officials stationed at Sredni-Kolymsk, the facts furnished being afterwards verified, or otherwise, by the political exiles at the same place, by my request.

MY experience of Russian prisons dates from the year 1890. Mr. Kennan's report on the condition of the penal establishments of Siberia was then arousing indignation throughout civilized Europe, and his heartrending accounts of the sufferings endured by political and criminal offenders obviously called for some sort of an explanation from the Czar's Government. A mere denial of the charges would have been practically useless. A disinterested person was needed to report upon the prisons and "étapes," which had been described as hells upon earth, and to either confirm or gainsay the statements made by the American traveller. The evidence of a Russian subject would, for obvious reasons, have met with incredulity; and it came to pass, therefore, that, through the agency of Madame de Novikoff, herself a prison directress, I was selected for a task which, although intensely interesting, subjected me to a good deal of unfavourable criticism on my return to England. Some yellow journals even went so far as to suggest that I had received payment from the Russian Government for "whitewashing" its penal system. But I fancy the following article should conclusively disprove the existence of any monetary transactions, past or present, between the Czar's officials and myself, to say nothing of the fact that my favourable report on the prisons of Western Siberia has been endorsed by such reliable and well-known English travellers as Dr. Lansdell and Mr. J. Y. Simpson. In fairness, however, to Mr. Kennan, I should state that my inspection of the Tomsk Forwarding Prison and similar establishments was made fully five years after his visit.

MR. HARRY DE WINDT.
From a Photo. by Pach, New York.

In 1894 I again proceeded to Siberia (under similar conditions) to report upon the penal settlements on the Island of Sakhalin, the political prison of Akatui, and the mines, where only convict labour is employed, of Eastern Siberia. On this occasion I travelled from Japan to the Island of Sakhalin on board a Russian convict ship, a voyage which convinced me that the Russian criminal convict is as humanely treated and well cared for at sea as he is on land, which says a great deal. I have always maintained that were I sentenced to a term of penal servitude I would infinitely sooner serve it in Siberia than in England. It is not my intention, however, in the present article to deal with criminal convict life; but to describe, as accurately as I can, the life led by a handful of political exiles in the most remote Arctic settlement of Siberia. I may add that the members of my expedition were the first strangers from the outer world to visit the place in question for over thirty years.

There are now only two prisons throughout the Russian Empire where political offenders are actually incarcerated.* One is the Fortress of Schlüsselburg, on Lake Ladoga, within a short journey of St. Petersburg; the other the Siberian prison of Akatui, in the Trans-Baikal Province, about three hundred miles east of Irkutsk. Schlüsselburg I have never

* Political prisoners are no longer confined in the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Short terms of imprisonment (previous to banishment to Siberia) are served in the citadels of Warsaw and other cities, but Schlüsselburg and Akatui are the only establishments now used as "political prisons."

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visited, but I was invited to inspect the prison of Akatui throughout, and also permitted to converse freely with the politicals within its walls. The majority were men of education, but dangerous conspirators, condemned, most of them, to long terms of penal servitude. The strictest prison discipline, hard labour in the silver mines, and association at night in public cells with the vilest criminals, was the lot of those whom I saw at Akatui. And yet I doubt if any of these men would willingly have exchanged places with their exiled comrades "domiciled," in comparative liberty, in Sredni-Kolymsk.

I have found that, as a rule, very erroneous impressions exist in England as to the conditions under which political offenders are sent to Siberia, a country which has often been greatly maligned by English novelists. For the Czar's great prison-land is not always a question of dungeons and life-long imprisonment. The latter certainly awaits the active revolutionist, but, on the other hand, an erring journalist may, for an "imprudent" paragraph, be sent to vegetate for only a couple of months within sight of the Urals. "The punishment fits the crime," and in the towns of Western Siberia I have frequently met men, originally banished for a short term, who, rather than return to Russia, have elected to remain in a land where living is cheaper and money more easily gained than at home.

MR. DE WINDT AS HE APPEARED WHEN RESCUED FROM THE SHORES OF BERING STRAITS—THE PARTY WERE ALMOST IN THE LAST EXTREMITY OF STARVATION.
From a Photo.

Let me now briefly describe the method of procedure in the case of a Russian subject who, for political reasons, has incurred the suspicion of the authorities. The exile of State offenders to Siberia is invariably carried out by what is called the "administrative process," or, in other words, by a secret tribunal composed of civil and military members. There are no Press reports of the trial, which is held strictly *in camera*, and, as a general rule, a political "suspect" vanishes as completely from the face of the earth as a pebble cast into the sea. Usually the blow falls unexpectedly. A man may be seated quietly at home with his family, in his office, or at some place of public entertainment when the fatal touch on the shoulder summons him away—perhaps for ever. The sentence once passed there is no appeal to a higher Court, nor can a prisoner hold any communication whatever with the outer world. A prisoner's relatives, therefore, frequently ascribe his absence to voluntary motives, and years sometimes elapse before the truth is known. Indeed, it may never reach his family, and the harassing thought that he is perhaps regarded by the latter as a heartless deserter has driven many a victim of the "administrative process" to suicide.

A term of imprisonment varying from six months to two years in a European fortress invariably precedes a term of exile, and this rule applies to both sexes. There are hundreds of towns and villages throughout Siberia where men and women are "domiciled" for various periods of their existence,

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but, as this article is descriptive only of the remoter settlements within the Arctic Circle, we will follow the footsteps of a political exile destined for, say, Sredni-Kolymsk. From the forwarding prison at Moscow to the city of Irkutsk in Eastern Siberia politicals not sent by rail travel with a criminal gang, wear prison dress, and live practically the same as ordinary convicts. At night-time, however, in the "étapes,"* a separate cell is set apart for their use. On arrival at Irkutsk prison dress is discarded, and an exile may wear his own clothes, although he remains under lock and key and in close charge of the Cossack responsible for his safe arrival at their destination. In summer-time the two-thousand-mile journey to the first stage northward, Yakutsk, is made by river steamer, but during the winter months this dreary trip must be accomplished in uncovered sleighs, and is one of great severity and privation, especially for women. At Yakutsk a reindeer-sled conveys the ill-assorted pair ever northward for another six hundred miles to the settlement of Verkhoyansk, the coldest place in the world. Nearing the latter a steep and dangerous pass over the Verkhoyansk Mountains must be negotiated. In Switzerland the ascent would necessitate ropes and ice-axes; but delicate women, on their way to exile, are here compelled to clamber unassisted over giddy places that would try the nerves of an experienced mountaineer. From Verkhoyansk, a miserable village of log-huts, yet another weary stretch of twelve hundred miles brings the reindeer-sled to its destination, Sredni-Kolymsk, after a journey, entailing almost superhuman endurance, of eight thousand miles from Moscow. We accomplished this voyage, under favourable conditions, in a little over three months, but exiles travel so slowly that a year frequently elapses before they reach this "end of the end of the world." I should add that women never travel alone with a Cossack, but are always accompanied on the journey by another exile of their own sex.

My visit to Sredni-Kolymsk was a pure accident, and the result of a recent overland journey from Paris to New York. Had I chosen a different route (*viâ* Anadyrsk) to Bering Straits this story of human suffering would probably never have reached the ears of civilization. But Providence has willed it otherwise. A glance at the map will show the reader the position of the place, and about six hundred miles to the south-west of it he will observe (in most large English maps) a town inscribed as Zashiversk. The following incident, which I quote from Mr. Kennan, will give some idea of the almost incredible desolation of these parts of Siberia:—

"A few years ago the Governor-General

MAP SHOWING THE ROUTE OF THE OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM PARIS TO NEW YORK—SREDNI-KOLYMSK WILL BE SEEN NEAR THE EXTREME NORTH.

* Roadside prisons used in Siberia as rest-houses.

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of Siberia at Irkutsk ordered the removal of an exile named Schiller from that city to the town of Zashiversk, a town which was 'supposed to be' situated on the Indigirka River near the Arctic Circle. In the reign of the Empress Catherine Zashiversk was a prosperous fur-trading centre, but the place fell into decay and gradually ceased to exist. Nevertheless, its location is still marked on all Government maps, although the town was probably virtually extinct long before the beginning of the present century. Schiller, after having been carried three or four thousand miles up and down the rivers Lena and Indigirka in a vain search for a non-existent Arctic town, was finally brought back to Yakutsk, and a report was made to the Governor-General at Irkutsk that Zashiversk had, apparently, ceased to exist! The Governor-General thereupon ordered that the prisoner be taken to Sredni-Kolymsk, another town of forty-five houses situated on the River Kolyma, north of the Arctic Circle. When, after more than a year of travel, the unhappy Schiller reached this last outpost of the Czar in North-Eastern Asia and was set at liberty, he made his way to the log-church, entered the belfry, and proceeded to jangle the bells in a wild and erratic chime. When the settlers ran to the belfry in alarm and inquired the reason of the peal, Schiller replied with dignity that he wished the whole population to know that, by the grace of God, Hermann Schiller, after long and perilous wanderings, had reached in safety the town of Sredni-Kolymsk!" Months of fatigue, privation, and intolerable loneliness had deprived the poor fellow of his reason, a not unusual occurrence in this isolated portion of the great Russian Empire.

COSSACKS EMPLOYED IN TRANSPORTING EXILES TO SREDNI-KOLYMSK.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt

At Verkhoyansk, which is composed of a double row of dilapidated log-huts containing some three hundred souls, I imagined that we had reached the acme of desolation. The village stands in the centre of a bleak and barren plateau, bisected by the River Yana and surrounded by a belt of dark forest, which only accentuates the dull dreariness of the wintry landscape. We had travelled night and day for nearly a fortnight with reindeer from Yakutsk, across precipitous mountains, pathless forests, and deserts of snow, halting every hundred miles or so at some filthy rest-house, and suffering severely from hunger and the intense cold. I had, therefore, looked forward to Verkhoyansk as a haven of warmth and rest, but my one object, having reached the place, was to leave it with the utmost dispatch, even for the unknown perils and privations that might be in store for us in the great beyond. For it seemed to me that a more cheerless, God-forsaken spot could not exist on the face of this planet. But I had yet to see Sredni-Kolymsk.

We remained for three days here while fresh reindeer were procured for the long journey northward. A log-hut was placed at our disposal by M. Katcheroffski, the chief of police, a kind and courteous host, who rendered valuable assistance to those survivors of the ill-fated *Jeanette* expedition who were enabled to reach here, half dead from cold and exposure, after the disaster on the Lena delta. Even the political exiles at Verkhoyansk, of whom there were under a score, had a good word for Katcheroffski, who is a gentleman and not a gaoler, like

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too many of his class. And yet Verkhoyansk must be a terrible abiding-place for civilized beings. Although Yakutsk bears the reputation, the former is undoubtedly the coldest place in Siberia, if not in the world. M. Abramovski, a Polish exile, who for some years past had kept a meteorological record, told me that careful observations showed a mean temperature for the whole year of four degrees below zero. In hard winters the thermometer fell repeatedly to seventy degrees below zero, and on one occasion touched minus eighty-one degrees Fahrenheit. During our stay in early March it only registered minus sixty-five degrees in Verkhoyansk itself, but at the first settlement we reached, two hundred miles distant, on our way north it fell to seventy-eight degrees below zero.

long struggle for existence. Abramovski had vainly tried to grow vegetables, but, although these thrive around Yakutsk, they obstinately refuse to appear in this icebound soil. Only Katcheroffski had succeeded in raising a few miserable cabbages, which were served at his table with as much ostentation as early strawberries or asparagus at home. Beef and deer-meat were unattainable luxuries, and horseflesh therefore proves the staple diet of the exiles in winter, when they cannot procure fish from the River Yana. But horseflesh is looked upon as a luxury by the Yakutes, and to my surprise many people here averred that they preferred it to reindeer, which is often ill-fed and therefore tough and stringy. Altogether Verkhoyansk may in many ways be likened

From a Photo. by] GENERAL VIEW OF THE CONVICT SETTLEMENT OF SREDNI-KOLYMSK. [*Harry de Windt.*

to a paradise when compared to Sredni-Kolymsk, for literature, that golden lining to the cloud of every exile, is never lacking throughout the long winter darkness. I found the most recent works of Tolstoi, Zola, and Sienkiewicz in the small but well-stocked library, to say nothing of the translations of many English authors, ranging from Charles Dickens to Anthony Hope.

Abramovski had passed several years here, and his wife, a bright, pretty little woman, had voluntarily shared his exile, which was drawing to an end. According to Madame Abramovski, winter-time here is preferable to the summer months, which are cursed by intolerable heat and clouds of mosquitoes. There is also, during the winter, a monthly post from Yakutsk, while in the open season Verkhoyansk, like other Arctic settlements, is cut off from the outer world by unfordable rivers and leagues of swamp and impassable forest. Verkhoyansk is not unhealthy, and epidemics and pulmonary diseases are almost unknown, although during the spring and autumn rheumatism is prevalent.

But all the exiles here bitterly complained of the inadequate allowance for their maintenance made by the Government. Provisions of all kinds were so dear that life became one

We left Verkhoyansk for the Arctic Ocean on the 2nd of March. I will not linger over that weary journey of twelve hundred miles, an account of which appears in the current number of *The Wide World Magazine.** For—

League on league on league of desolation,
Mile on mile on mile without a change,

* The Magazine named is publishing in a series of articles by Mr. Harry de Windt an account of the whole of his daring journey "Overland from Paris to New York," illustrated by the striking photographs taken *en route*.

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accurately and sufficiently describes the bleak and barren stretch of country which lies between Central Siberia and the shores of the Polar Sea. Nearing Sredni-Kolymsk the expedition would occasionally be brought to a standstill by the howling blizzards that sweep down from the Arctic, and would be compelled to halt, sometimes for a couple of days, seventy or eighty miles from the nearest shelter, until the gale moderated. Tainted fish or deer-meat was the only food obtainable in the filthy rest-houses, never less than two hundred miles apart. But if we suffered, as we undoubtedly did, during those twenty-six days of hunger and cold, what must this journey mean to poorly clad, ill-nourished women, who generally take three or four times as long to accomplish the distance?

MADAME AKIMOVA, WHO TRIED TO MURDER THE PRESENT CZAR, AND HER BABY.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

At last, one morning early in April we reached Sredni-Kolymsk. It was a glorious day; one of those peculiar to the Arctic, when the pure, frosty air exhilarates like champagne, and snowy plain and rime-covered forest sparkle like diamonds in the dazzling sunshine under a sky of cloudless blue. But the sight of that dismal drab settlement and its sad associations seemed to suddenly depress the mind and spirits, and to darken the smiling face of Nature like a coffin which has been borne by mistake into a brilliant ball-room. Imagine a double row of log-huts, plastered with mud and lit by windows of ice, some of which, detached by the bright spring sunshine, have fallen to the ground. This avenue of hovels forms the main street, at one extremity of which stands a dilapidated wooden church and crowded graveyard, at the other the residence of the chief of police, the only decent and weather-proof building in the place. Picture a score of other dwellings, even more squalid than the rest, scattered around the village within an area of half a mile, and you have before you the last "civilized" outpost in North-Eastern Siberia: Sredni-Kolymsk. At first sight the place looked like a settlement deserted by trappers or some village cleared of every living soul by some deadly sickness —anything but the abode of human beings. For a while the sound of our bells attracted no attention, but presently skin-clad forms emerged here and there from the miserable huts, and haggard faces nodded a cheerless welcome as we drove through the village towards the police office. Here a hut was assigned to us, and we took up our residence for ten days in quarters colder and filthier than any we had occupied since leaving Yakutsk. And yet our lodgings were preferable to many of those occupied by the exiles.

Of the latter, who at the time of my visit numbered twelve men and two women, only two had been banished here for actual crime. One of these was Madame Akimova, who was found with explosives concealed about her person at the Coronation of Nicholas II., and the other Zimmermann, convicted of complicity in the destruction of the Government workshops at Lodz, by dynamite, a few years ago. I was informed by the officials that, with these two exceptions, the Sredni-Kolymsk exiles were guiltless of active participation in the revolutionary movement; and, indeed, most of them appeared to me to be quiet, intelligent men of moderate political views, who would probably have contributed to the welfare and prosperity of any country but their own. Only one or two openly professed what may be called anarchistic views, and these were young students, recent arrivals, who looked more like robbing an orchard than

ZIMMERMANN, WHO CONSPIRED TO BLOW UP THE GOVERNMENT WORKSHOPS WITH DYNAMITE.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

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threatening a throne. So far as I could see, however, most of these so-called political offenders had been consigned to this living tomb merely for openly expressing opinions in favour of a Constitution and freedom of speech.

The most pitiable peculiarity about Sredni-Kolymsk is perhaps the morbid influence of the place and its surroundings on the mental powers. The first thing noticeable amongst those who had passed some years here was the utter vacancy of mind, even of men who, in Europe, had shone in the various professions. Amongst them was a well-known Polish author,* who, upon his arrival here only three years ago, set to work on an historical novel to lighten the leaden hours of exile. But in six months the work was thrown aside in disgust, and less than a year afterwards the writer's mind had become so unhinged by the maddening monotony of life that he would, in civilization, have been placed under restraint. I met also a once famous professor of anatomy (who had resided here for seven years), who seemed completely indifferent to the latest discoveries of medical and surgical science at home, and yet displayed an eager interest as to what was going on in the Paris music-halls. Indeed, I can safely state that, with three exceptions, there was not a perfectly sane man or woman amongst all the exiles I saw here. "A couple of years usually makes them shaky," said an official, "and the strongest-minded generally become childish when they have been here for five or six." "But why is it?" I asked. My friend walked to the window and pointed to the mournful, desolate street, the dismal drab hovels, and frozen, pine-fringed river darkening in the dusk. "That," he said, "and the awful silence—day after day, year after year, not a sound. I have stood in that street at midday and heard a watch tick in my pocket. Think of it, Mr. de Windt. I myself arrived here only a few months ago, but even I shall soon have to get away for a change, or——" and he tapped his forehead significantly.

A WELL-KNOWN POLISH WRITER, WHO WENT MAD IN EXILE.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

The insanity so prevalent among the exiles of Sredni-Kolymsk is no doubt largely due to physical privation. When a man is banished for political reasons to Siberia his property is confiscated, to the uttermost farthing, by the Russian Government, which provides a fixed monthly allowance for his maintenance in exile. The sum differs in the various districts. At Verkhoyansk it is sixteen roubles a month; at Sredni-Kolymsk, nineteen roubles a month (about one pound sixteen shillings), although whether the extra six shillings is generously added to meet the increased cost of provisions twelve hundred miles farther north did not transpire. In any case, the allowance is absurdly inadequate, in a place where the necessaries of life are always at famine prices, by reason of the enormous distance of Sredni-Kolymsk from the nearest civilized centre, and the primitive mode of travel by which it is reached. During our stay here flour was selling at a rouble a pound and an abominable kind of brick tea at two roubles a pound, while candles, sugar, and salt cost exactly five times as much as at Yakutsk, where European prices are already trebled. The price of deer-meat is of course prohibitive, and the exiles were accordingly living, throughout the winter, upon fish caught the preceding summer, unsalted, and therefore putrid and quite unfit for human consumption. And this at midday was their sole nourishment, breakfast and supper consisting of one glass of weak tea and a diminutive piece of gritty black bread. Sugar was such a luxury that a lump was held in the teeth while the liquid was swallowed, one piece thus serving for several days in succession. Were house rent and clothing provided, even the miserable pittance paid by the Government might suffice to

* I was requested to suppress the name.

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keep body and soul together, but this is not the case. Some of the exiles were therefore occupying filthy and dilapidated sheds, that had been vacated even by Yakutes, while many were so poorly clad that in winter-time they were unable to leave the cheerless shelter of their draughty and malodorous huts.

The house occupied by M. Strajevsky, a Polish gentleman whose personality I shall always recall with sincere regard and sympathy, will serve as a type of the better class of dwelling occupied by the "political." It consisted of a low, mud-plastered log-hut, about twelve feet in height, the flat roof of which, however, overtopped the adjoining dwellings by several inches. Fourteen feet by ten was the measurement of the one room it contained, the walls of which were of rough-hewn logs and the floor of beaten earth, glistening with damp and greasy with the filth of years. A yellow light filtered dimly, even on the brightest day, through the slab of ice which formed the solitary window, but revealed only too clearly the miserable squalor of the room. Some planks on trestles covered with deer-skins formed my friend's sleeping-place, and more planks, strewn with books and writing materials, his table. An old kerosene tin was the only chair available, and, as I seated myself, my friend went to the mud fire-place and kindled a few sticks, which burned brightly for a few moments and then flickered out. Strajevsky then left the hut, climbed on to the roof, and blocked up the chimney with a bundle of rags. This, he explained, is the Yakute mode of warming an apartment, and is practised for economy, for Sredni-Kolymsk is near the tree-line, and firewood, like everything else, is an expensive article. But this method of obtaining warmth is scarcely a success, for we sat, during my visit, in an atmosphere of minus forty-seven degrees Fahrenheit by my thermometer. And in this miserable den Strajevsky, once a rising barrister at Warsaw, had passed eight of the best years of his life, and is still dragging out a dull, hopeless existence.

From a Photo by] THE OLD HOSPITAL OF SREDNI-KOLYMSK. [*Harry de Windt*

In summer-time the life here is perhaps less intolerable than during the winter, for the Kolyma River teems with fish, and edible roots and berries are obtainable in the woods around the settlement. Geese, duck, and other wildfowl are plentiful in the spring, and, as the use of firearms is not prohibited, game is at this season a welcome addition to a generally naked larder. Manual labour, too, is often procurable, for in addition to its exiles Sredni-Kolymsk has from three to four hundred inhabitants, consisting of officials, discharged criminal convicts (who have received a grant of land from the Government), and Yakute natives. In summer, therefore, an exile may earn a few roubles by fishing, trapping, wood-cutting, etc., but the dark winter months must be passed in a condition of inactive despair. During the latter season there are two mails from Russia, brought by the Cossacks in charge of the yearly consignment of exiles, but in the spring, summer, and early autumn Sredni-Kolymsk is as completely cut off from the outer world as a desert island in mid-ocean, by swamps and thousands of shallow lakes, which extend landwards on every side for hundreds of miles. A reindeer-sled skims rapidly over their frozen surface, but in the open season a traveller sinks knee-deep at every step, and progress becomes an impossibility.

Summer here is no glad season of sunshine and flowers, but only a few brief

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weeks of damp and cloudy weather. Even on fine days the sun looms through a curtain of mist; rainy weather prevails, and the leaky huts are sometimes flooded for days together by an incessant downpour. Swarms of mosquitoes and sand-flies add to the general discomfort, for there is no protection against these pests by night or day. There is much sickness at this season, especially a kind of low fever arising from damp dwellings and the miasma from the surrounding marshes. Epidemics are frequent, and during our visit small-pox was raging, chiefly, however, amongst the native population. Leprosy amongst the Yakutes is as prevalent here as in Central Asia, while the Russians suffer chiefly from bronchitis and diphtheria, which never fail to make their appearance with the return of spring. And yet in this hot-bed of pestilence there is no Government infirmary, or any provision whatsoever made for the sick. Miskiévitch, a young medical student, and himself an exile, was attending the community as efficiently as circumstances would permit, but an almost total lack of medical and surgical appliances rendered his task a hopeless one. I inquired for the old hospital, which I was told still existed, and was shown a barn-like construction, partly open to the winds, and occupied by a family of filthy but thriving Yakutes. The new infirmary, for which a large sum of money was voted in St. Petersburg ten years ago, adjoined the older building; but the former was still in its initial stage of foundations and four corner posts, where it will probably remain, the silent witness of a late Ispravnik's reign and rascality.

MISKIÉVITCH, THE DOCTOR OF THE SETTLEMENT, AND HIMSELF AN EXILE.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

But there exists a mental disease far more dreaded than any bodily affliction, or than even death itself, by this little colony of martyrs. This is a form of hysteria, chiefly prevalent amongst women, and common to all persons, officials, exiles, and natives alike, who remain for any length of time in this Arctic Inferno. The attack is usually unexpected. A person hitherto perfectly calm and collected will suddenly commence to shout, sing, and dance without warning and at the most inopportune moment, and from that time the mind of the patient becomes permanently deranged. A curious phase of this mysterious disease is the irresistible impulse to imitate the voice and actions of others. Thus I witnessed a painful scene one evening in the hut of an exile who had assembled his comrades to meet me, and in the street one day a Russian woman born and bred here seized my arm and repeated, with weird accuracy, a sentence in French which I was addressing to my companion, the Vicomte de Clinchamp. This strange disease is quite unknown in other Siberian settlements, and is probably due to the intolerable climate and surroundings and, last but not least, to the eternal stillness and monotony of this hell upon earth. The malady would seem to be essentially local, for the daughter of a Sredni-Kolymsk official who was attacked by it immediately recovered on her removal to Yakutsk. On the other hand, sufferers compelled to remain here generally become after a few years hopelessly

THE GRAVE OF AN EXILE WHO WAS DRIVEN TO SUICIDE.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

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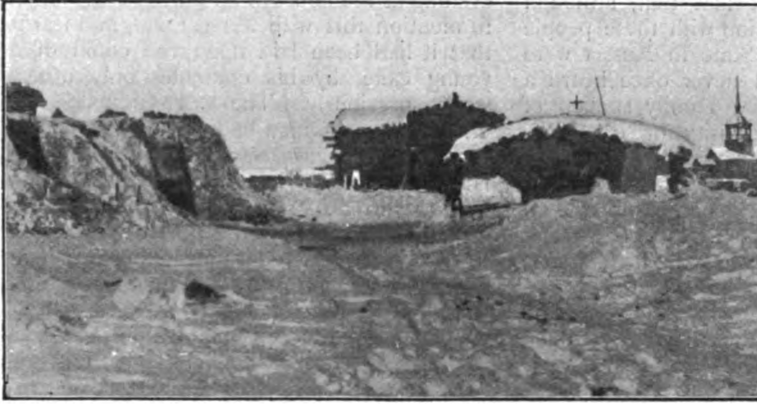

From a Photo. by] MADAME AKIMOVA'S HUT. [*Harry de Windt.*

insane. In the opinion of Dr. Miskiévitch the affliction is chiefly due to total inertia of the reasoning faculties, which in time becomes a positive torture to the civilized mind.

There are many ways by which this evil could be remedied. For instance, were mental work of any kind—even unremunerative—provided by the Government the innovation would be gladly welcomed by every exile with whom I conversed. But the authorities seem to consider apathy of the mind as essential a punishment as privation of the body. Some years ago the exiles were permitted to instruct young children of the free community, and their life was thus rendered infinitely less unbearable than before. But shortly afterwards, for no apparent reason, an order was issued from St. Petersburg prohibiting this so-called "privilege."

Oddly enough, I found an almost total lack of resentment amongst the disconsolate victims consigned here by an outrageous travesty of justice. Madame Akimova (whose portrait has already been given) for instance, a plain but homely-looking person, devoted to her child, seemed engrossed with the cares of her squalid little *ménage*, to the exclusion of all mundane matters. I sometimes wondered, as I sat in her hut and watched the little woman, clad in rusty black and honestly striving to make his home less wretched for a devoted husband, whether this could really be Theisa Akimova, the famous Nihilist, whose name at one time electrified Europe. We often spoke of Paris, which she had visited, but Akimova evinced little or no interest in the political questions of the day, and I never heard her murmur a word of complaint as to her fate. Nevertheless, she is here for life. Zimmermann was another example of patient resignation, although I fancy that in his case years of exile had somewhat dulled the edge of a once powerful intellect. Strajevsky, Miskiévitch, and the others were enduring a life of intolerable suffering for so-called offences which, in any country but Russia, would not even have subjected them to a fine, and yet when they alluded to their loss of liberty the tone was never vindictive towards those who had sent them into exile.

THE LIBRARY, FOUNDED BY THE EXILES THEMSELVES—STRAJEVSKY AND YANOVITCH PLAYING CHESS.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

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And it is a significant fact that, although throughout my association with these people the higher officials of State in Russia were sometimes execrated, I never once heard a member of the Imperial Family spoken of with the slightest animosity or even disrespect. The reason for this is, perhaps, to be found in the following incident. Upon one occasion I expressed my surprise to an exile that His Majesty the Czar, a ruler renowned for his humanity and tolerance, should sanction the existence of such a place of exile as Sredni-Kolymsk. "The Emperor!" was the answer, with a bitter laugh; "you may be quite sure that the Emperor doesn't know what goes on, or we should not be here for a day longer."

Although the expedition remained here for only ten days it seemed, on the day of our departure, as though as many months had elapsed since our arrival. Each day seemed an eternity, for my visits to the huts of the exiles generally took place, for obvious reasons, after dark. During the hours of daylight there was absolutely nothing to do but to stare moodily out of window at the wintry scene, as wan and cheerless as a lunar landscape. Outdoor exercise is undesirable in a place where you cannot walk three hundred yards in any direction without floundering into a snowdrift. So during the interminable afternoons I usually found my way to the tiny log-hut known as the Library. It contained some seven or eight hundred works, on dull and dreary subjects, which, however, had been read and re-read until most of the volumes were torn and coverless. Amongst the numerous photographs of political exiles, past and present, that were nailed to the log-walls, one object daily excited my curiosity. This was a funeral wreath composed of faded wild flowers secured by a black silk ribbon and bearing the golden inscription, "Auf Wiedersehen" in German characters. While supping one evening at the house of an official I happened to mention this withered garland, and learnt that it had been laid upon the coffin of a young exile by his comrades only a few weeks previously. The sad circumstances under which the man had met his death, and the startling *dénouement* that followed the latter, form one of the darkest tragedies that have occurred of recent years in the annals of Siberian exile. I give the story word for word as it was related to me by the chief of police, the successor of the infamous Ivanoff who figures in the tale.

MADAME KALESHNIKOFF AND HER CHILDREN.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

In the winter of 1900 there came to Sredni-Kolymsk one Serge Kaleshnikoff, who, previous to his preliminary detention at the prison of Kharkoff, had held a commission in the Russian Volunteer Fleet. For alleged complicity with a revolutionary society known as the "Will of the People,"* Kaleshnikoff was sentenced to imprisonment for twelve months in a European fortress and subsequent banishment for eight years to Siberia.

Kaleshnikoff was a young man of about thirty years of age, whose cheerful, sympathetic nature and attractive manners soon rendered him a universal favourite. Even the officials regarded him more as a friend than a prisoner—with one exception. This was Ivanoff, the late chief of police, whose marked aversion to the young sailor was noticeable from the first day the latter set foot in the settlement. But as Ivanoff was an ignorant and surly boor, disliked even by his colleagues, Kaleshnikoff put up with his petty persecutions with equanimity.

One day last summer, while fishing from a canoe in the Kolyma, Kaleshnikoff espied the barge of Ivanoff returning from Nijni-Kolymsk, a small settlement about three hundred miles down the river. The exile, who was expecting a letter from a fellow-"political" domiciled at the latter place, paddled out into mid-stream and boarded

* Russian: "Narodna-Volya."

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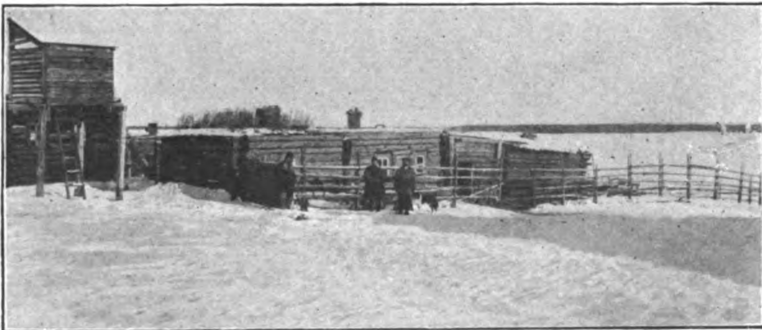
the barge, leaving his canoe to trail astern. Ivanoff, who met him at the gangway, had been drinking heavily, as was his wont. His only answer to Kaleshnikoff's polite inquiry was an oath and a shameful epithet, to which the other naturally replied with some warmth. An angry discussion followed, with the result that the chief of police, now livid with rage, summoned the guard. By his orders Kaleshnikoff was then bound hand and foot, flogged with rope-ends into a state of insensibility, and flung, bruised and bleeding, into his boat. The latter was then cast adrift, and the barge proceeded on her way up river.

M. ERGIN, WHO SHOT THE CHIEF OF POLICE.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

The incident occurred some miles from Sredni-Kolymsk. The next evening, as Madame Boreisha and M. Ergin (an intimate friend of Kaleshnikoff) were strolling by the riverside, they met the latter, who, weakened by exhaustion and loss of blood, had taken more than twenty-four hours to return to the settlement. Ergin, shocked by his friend's wild and blood-stained appearance, pressed him for an explanation, but Kaleshnikoff, with a vacant stare, waved him away and, with a despairing gesture, disappeared through the doorway of his hut, only a few yards distant. A few minutes later a pistol-shot was heard, and Ergin, instinctively fearing what had happened, rushed to his friend's assistance, only to find that the latter had taken his life. Beside the dead man was a sheet of paper bearing the words, hastily scrawled in pencil: "Farewell! I go to a happier land."

An inquiry followed, and Ivanoff was placed under temporary arrest. Unfortunately for the chief of police, this order did not entail confinement to the house or he might have escaped the tragic fate which, oddly enough, overtook him on the afternoon of the very day that his victim was laid to rest in a lonely grave on the banks of the Kolyma. As luck would have it the hated official was lounging outside his doorway, smoking a cigarette, as Ergin—a gun on his shoulder—strolled homewards from the marshes. The latter asserts that the act was unpremeditated, for at the time his thoughts were far away. But Ergin adds: "The sudden appearance of that evil face and the recollection of its owner's foul and inhuman cruelty suddenly inspired me with uncontrollable fury, and I raised my fowling-piece and shot the man dead, just as he had divined my purpose and had turned to rush indoors." Ergin has ere this been tried for murder at Yakutsk, but I was assured that he would be acquitted. For Ivanoff's conduct would in any case have met with severe punishment at the hands of the authorities in St. Petersburg. Physical brutality is, as regards Russian political exiles, a thing of the past, and an official who now lays a finger on any person under his charge lays himself open to instant dismissal, or even to a term of imprisonment.



From a Photo. by] THE HOUSE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE WHO WAS SHOT BY ERGIN. [*Harry de Windt.*

Such is a plain and unvarnished account of the penal settlement of Sredni-Kolymsk, written less with the object of entertaining the

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reading public than that of drawing attention to an accursed spot which should surely, and without delay, be erased from the face of civilization. The Kaleshnikoff tragedy is only one of many that have occurred of recent years, and, although space will not admit of my giving the details of others, I can vouch for the fact that since 1898 no fewer than three cases of suicide and four of insanity have occurred here amongst a score or so of exiles. And yet every winter more miserable hovels are prepared for the reception of exiled comrades, every year Sredni-Kolymsk enfolds fresh victims in her deadly embrace. "You will tell them in England of our life," said one, his eyes dim with tears, as I entered the sled which was to bear me, through months of Arctic desolation to the Bering Straits. And the promise made that day in that lifeless, forsaken corner of the earth, "where God is high and the Czar is far away," I have now faithfully kept. For the first time for thirty years I am enabled to give an "unofficial" account of these unfortunates, and to deliver to the world their piteous appeal for deliverance. May it be that these pages have not been written in vain, that the clemency of a wise and merciful ruler may yet be extended towards the unhappy outcasts in that Siberian hell of famine, cold, and darkness, scarcely less terrible in its ghastly loneliness than those frozen realms of eternal silence which enshrine the mystery of the world.

YARTSEGG, EXILED FOR SMUGGLING RIFLES—IN HIS HAND IS HIS DINNER OF FROZEN FISH.
From a Photo. by Harry de Windt.

From a Photo. by] A GROUP OF EXILES. [*Harry de Windt.*

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Breaking a Spell.

BY W. W. JACOBS.

"WITCHCRAFT?" said the old man, thoughtfully, as he scratched his scanty whiskers. No, I ain't heard o' none in these parts for a long time. There used to be a little of it about when I was a boy, and there was some talk of it arter I'd growed up, but Claybury folk never took much count of it. The last bit of it I remember was about forty years ago, and that wasn't so much witchcraft as foolishness.

There was a man in this place then—Joe Barlcomb by name—who was a firm believer in it, and 'e used to do all sorts of things to save hisself from it. He was a new-comer in Claybury, and there was such a lot of it about in the parts he came from that the people thought o' nothing else hardly.

He was a man as got 'imself very much liked at fust, especially by the old ladies, owing to his being so perlite to them, that they used to 'old 'im up for an example to the other men, and say wot nice, pretty ways he 'ad. Joe Barlcomb was everything at fust, but when they got to 'ear that his perliteness was because 'e thought arf of 'em was witches, and didn't know which arf, they altered their minds.

"HE GOT 'IMSELF VERY MUCH LIKED, ESPECIALLY BY THE OLD LADIES."

In a month or two he was the laughing-stock of the place; but wot was worse to 'im than that was that he'd made enemies of all the old ladies. Some of 'em was free-spoken women, and 'e couldn't sleep for thinking of the 'arm they might do 'im.

He was terrible uneasy about it at fust, but, as nothing 'appened and he seemed to go on very prosperous-like, 'e began to forget 'is fears, when all of a sudden 'e went 'ome one day and found 'is wife in bed with a broken leg.

She was standing on a broken chair to reach something down from the dresser when it 'appened, and it was pointed out to Joe Barlcomb that it was a thing anybody might ha' done without being bewitched; but he said 'e knew better, and that they'd kept that broken chair for standing on for years and years to save the others, and nothing 'ad ever 'appened afore.

In less than a week arter that three of his young 'uns was down with the measles, and, 'is wife being laid up, he sent for 'er mother to come and nurse 'em. It's as true as I sit 'ere, but that pore old lady 'adn't been in the house two hours afore she went to bed with the yellow jaundice.

Joe Barlcomb went out of 'is mind a'most. He'd never liked 'is wife's mother, and he wouldn't 'ave had 'er in the house on'y 'e wanted her to nurse 'is wife and children, and when she came and laid up and wanted waiting on 'e couldn't dislike her enough.

He was quite certain all along that somebody was putting a spell on 'im, and when 'e went out a morning or two arterwards and found 'is best pig lying dead in a corner of the sty he gave up and, going into the 'ouse, told 'em all that they'd 'ave to die 'cause he couldn't do anything more for 'em. His wife's mother and 'is wife and the children all started crying together, and Joe Barlcomb, when 'e thought of 'is pig, he sat down and cried too.

He sat up late that night thinking it over, and, arter looking at it all ways, he made up 'is mind to go and see Mrs. Prince, an old lady that lived all alone by 'erself in a cottage near Smith's farm. He'd set 'er down for

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wot he called a white witch, which is the best kind and on'y do useful things, such as charming warts away or telling gals about their future 'usbands; and the next arternoon, arter telling 'is wife's mother that fresh air and travelling was the best cure for the yellow jaundice, he set off to see 'er.

Mrs. Prince was sitting at 'er front door nursing 'er three cats when 'e got there. She was an ugly, little old woman with piercing black eyes and a hook nose, and she 'ad a quiet, artful sort of a way with 'er that made 'er very much disliked. One thing was she was always making fun of people, and for another she seemed to be able to tell their thoughts, and that don't get anybody liked much, especially when they don't keep it to theirselves. She'd been a lady's maid all 'er young days, and it was very 'ard to be taken for a witch just because she was old.

"Fine day, ma'am," ses Joe Barlcomb.

"MRS. PRINCE WAS SITTING AT 'ER FRONT DOOR NURSING 'ER THREE CATS."

"Very fine," ses Mrs. Prince.

"Being as I was passing, I just thought I'd look in," ses Joe Barlcomb, eyeing the cats.

"Take a chair," ses Mrs. Prince, getting up and dusting one down with 'er apron.

Joe sat down. "I'm in a bit o' trouble, ma'am," he ses, "and I thought p'r'aps as you could help me out of it. My pore pig's been bewitched, and it's dead."

"Bewitched?" ses Mrs. Prince, who'd 'eard of 'is ideas. "Rubbish. Don't talk to me."

"It ain't rubbish, ma'am," ses Joe Barlcomb; "three o' my children is down with the measles, my wife's broke 'er leg, 'er mother is laid up in my little place with the yellow jaundice, and the pig's dead."

"Wot, another one?" ses Mrs. Prince.

"No; the same one," ses Joe.

"Well, 'ow am I to help you?" ses Mrs. Prince. "Do you want me to come and nurse 'em?"

"No, no," ses Joe, starting and turning pale; "unless you'd like to come and nurse my wife's mother," he ses, arter thinking a bit. "I was hoping that you'd know who'd been overlooking me and that you'd make 'em take the spell off."

Mrs. Prince got up from 'er chair and looked round for the broom she'd been sweeping with, but, not finding it, she set down agin and stared in a curious sort o' way at Joe Barlcomb.

"Oh, I see," she ses, nodding. "Fancy you guessing I was a witch."

"You can't deceive me," ses Joe; "I've 'ad too much experience; I knew it the fust time I saw you by the mole on your nose."

Mrs. Prince got up and went into her back-place, trying her 'ardest to remember wot she'd done with that broom. She couldn't find it anywhere, and at last she came back and sat staring at Joe for so long that 'e was arf frightened out of his life. And by-and-by she gave a 'orrible smile and sat rubbing the side of 'er nose with 'er finger.

"If I help you," she ses at last, "will you promise to keep it a dead secret and do exactly as I tell you? If you don't, dead pigs'll be nothing to the misfortunes that you will 'ave."

"I will," ses Joe Barlcomb, very pale.

"The spell," ses Mrs. Prince, holding up her 'ands and shutting 'er eyes, "was put upon you by a man. It is one out of six men as is jealous of you because you're so clever, but which one it is I can't tell without your assistance. Have you got any money?"

"A little," ses Joe, anxious-like—"a very little. Wot with the yellow jaundice and other things, I——"

"Fust thing to do," ses Mrs. Prince, still with her eyes shut, "you go up to the

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Cauliflower to-night; the six men'll all be there, and you must buy six ha'pennies off of them; one each."

"Buy six ha'pennies?" ses Joe, staring at her.

"Don't repeat wot I say," ses Mrs. Prince; "it's unlucky. You buy six ha'pennies for a shilling each, without saying wot it's for. You'll be able to buy 'em all right if you're civil."

"It seems to me it don't need much civility for that," ses Joe, pulling a long face.

"When you've got the ha'pennies," ses Mrs. Prince, "bring 'em to me and I'll tell you wot to do with 'em. Don't lose no time, because I can see that something worse is going to 'appen if it ain't prevented."

"Is it anything to do with my wife's mother getting worse?" ses Joe Barlcomb, who was a careful man and didn't want to waste six shillings.

"No, something to you," ses Mrs. Prince.

Joe Barlcomb went cold all over, and then he put down a couple of eggs he'd brought round for 'er and went off 'ome agin, and Mrs. Prince stood in the doorway with a cat on each shoulder and watched 'im till 'e was out of sight.

That night Joe Barlcomb came up to this 'ere Cauliflower public-house, same as he'd been told, and by-and-by, arter he 'ad 'ad a pint, he looked round, and taking a shilling out of 'is pocket put it on the table, and he ses, "Who'll give me a ha'penny for that?" he ses.

None of 'em seemed to be in a hurry. Bill Jones took it up and bit it, and rang it on the table and squinted at it, and then he bit it agin, and turned round and asked Joe Barlcomb wot was wrong with it.

"Wrong?" ses Joe; "nothing."

Bill Jones put it down agin. "You're wide awake, Joe," he ses, "but so am I."

"Won't nobody give me a ha'penny for it?" ses Joe, looking round.

Then Peter Lamb came up, and he looked at it and rang it, and at last he gave Joe a ha'penny for it and took it round, and everybody 'ad a look at it.

"It stands to reason it's a bad 'un," ses Bill Jones, "but it's so well done I wish as I'd bought it."

"H-s-h!" ses Peter Lamb, "don't let the landlord 'ear you."

The landlord 'ad just that moment come in, and Peter walked up and ordered a pint, and took his tenpence change as bold as brass. Arter that Joe Barlcomb bought five more ha'pennies afore you could wink a'most, and every man wot sold one went up to the bar and 'ad a pint and got tenpence change, and drank Joe Barlcomb's health.

"There seems to be a lot o' money knocking about to-night," ses the landlord, as Sam Martin, the last of 'em, was drinking 'is pint.

Sam Martin choked and put 'is pot down on the counter with a bang, and him and the other five was out o' that door and sailing up the road with their tenpences afore the landlord could get his breath. He stood in the bar scatching his 'ead and staring, but he couldn't understand it a bit till a man wot was too late to sell his ha'penny up and told 'im all about it. The fuss 'e made was terrible. The shillings was in a little heap on a shelf at the back o' the bar, and he did all sorts o' things to 'em to prove that they was bad, and threatened Joe Barlcomb with the police. At last, however, 'e saw wot a fool he was making of himself, and arter nearly breaking his teeth 'e dropped them into a drawer and stirred 'em up with the others.

"HE TOOK IT ROUND AND EVERYBODY 'AD A LOOK AT IT."

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Joe Barlcomb went round the next night to see Mrs. Prince, and she asked 'im a lot o' questions about the men as 'ad sold 'im the ha'pennies.

"The fust part 'as been done very well," she ses, nodding her 'ead at 'im; "if you do the second part as well, you'll soon know who your enemy is."

"Nothing'll bring the pig back," ses Joe.

"There's worse misfortunes than that, as I've told you," ses Mrs. Prince, sharply. "Now, listen to wot I'm going to say to you. When the clock strikes twelve to-night——"

"Our clock don't strike," ses Joe.

"Then you must borrow one that does," ses Mrs. Prince, "and when it strikes twelve you must go round to each o' them six men and sell them a ha'penny for a shilling."

Joe Barlcomb looked at 'er. "'Ow?" he ses, short-like.

"Same way as you sold 'em a shilling for a ha'penny," ses Mrs. Prince; "it don't matter whether they buy the ha'pennies or not. All you've got to do is to go and ask 'em, and the man as makes the most fuss is the man that 'as put the trouble on you."

"It seems a roundabout way o' going to work," ses Joe.

"*Wot!*" screams Mrs. Prince, jumping up and waving her arms about. "*Wot!* Go your own way; I'll have nothing more to do with you. And don't blame me for anything that happens. It's a very bad thing to come to a witch for advice and then not to do as she tells you. You ought to know that."

"I'll do it, ma'am," ses Joe Barlcomb, trembling.

"You'd better," ses Mrs. Prince; "and mind—not a word to anybody."

Joe promised her agin, and 'e went off and borrered a clock from Albert Price, and at twelve o'clock that night he jumped up out of bed and began to dress 'imself and pretend not to 'ear his wife when she asked 'im where he was going.

It was a dark, nasty sort o' night, blowing and raining, and, o' course, everybody 'ad gone to bed long since. The fust cottage Joe came to was Bill Jones's, and, knowing Bill's temper, he stood for some time afore he could make up 'is mind to knock; but at last he up with 'is stick and banged away at the door.

A minute arterwards he 'eard the bedroom winder pushed open, and then Bill Jones popped his 'ead out and called to know wot was the matter and who it was.

"It's me—Joe Barlcomb," ses Joe, "and I want to speak to you very partikler."

"Well, speak away," ses Bill. "You go into the back room," he ses, turning to his wife.

"Whaffor?" ses Mrs. Jones.

"'Cos I don't know wot Joe is going to say," ses Bill. "You go in now, afore I make you."

His wife went off grumbling, and then Bill told Joe Barlcomb to hurry up wot he'd got to say as 'e 'adn't got much on and the weather wasn't as warm as it might be.

"I sold you a shilling for a ha'penny last night, Bill," ses Joe.

"Do you want to sell any more?" ses Bill Jones, putting his 'and down to where 'is trouser pocket ought to be.

"Not exactly that," ses Joe Barlcomb. "This time I want you to sell me a shilling for a ha'penny."

Bill leaned out of the winder and stared down at Joe Barlcomb, and then he ses, in a choking voice, "Is that wot you've come disturbing my sleep for at this time o' night?" he ses.

"I must 'ave it, Bill," ses Joe.

"Well, if you'll wait a moment," ses Bill, trying to speak perlitely, "I'll come down and give it to you."

Joe didn't like 'is tone of voice, but he waited, and all of a sudden Bill Jones came out o' that door like a gun going off and threw 'imself on Joe Barlcomb. Both of 'em was strong men, and by the time they'd finished they was so tired they could 'ardly stand. Then Bill Jones went back to bed, and Joe Barlcomb, arter sitting down on the doorstep to rest 'imself, went off and knocked up Peter Lamb.

Peter Lamb was a little man and no good as a fighter, but the things he said to Joe Barlcomb as he leaned out o' the winder and shook 'is fist at him was 'arder to bear than blows. He screamed away at the top of 'is voice for ten minutes, and then 'e pulled the winder to with a bang and went back to bed.

Joe Barlcomb was very tired, but he walked on to Jasper Potts's 'ouse, trying 'ard as he walked to decide which o' the fust two 'ad made the most fuss. Arter he 'ad left Jasper Potts 'e got more puzzled than ever, Jasper being just as bad as the other two, and Joe leaving 'im at last in the middle of loading 'is gun.

By the time he'd made 'is last call—at Sam Martin's—it was past three o'clock, and he could no more tell Mrs. Prince which 'ad made the most fuss than 'e could fly. There didn't seem to be a pin to choose between

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'em, and, arf worried out of 'is life, he went straight on to Mrs. Prince and knocked 'er up to tell 'er. She thought the 'ouse was afire at fust, and came screaming out o' the front door in 'er bedgown, and when she found out who it was she was worse to deal with than the men 'ad been.

She 'ad quieted down by the time Joe went round to see 'er the next evening, and asked 'im to describe exactly wot the six men 'ad done and said. She sat listening quite quiet at fust, but arter a time she scared Joe by making a odd, croupy sort o' noise in 'er throat, and at last she got up and walked into the back-place. She was there a long time making funny noises, and at last Joe walked towards the door on tiptoe and peeped through the crack and saw 'er in a sort o' fit, sitting in a chair with 'er arms folded acrost her bodice and rocking 'erself up and down and moaning. Joe stood as if 'e'd been frozen a'most, and then 'e crept back to 'is seat and waited, and when she came into the room agin she said as the trouble 'ad all been caused by Bill Jones. She sat still for nearly arf an hour, thinking 'ard, and then she turned to Joe and ses:—

"SHE SAT LISTENING QUITE QUIET AT FUST."

"Can you read?" she ses.

"No," ses Joe, wondering wot was coming next.

"That's all right, then," she ses, "because if you could I couldn't do wot I'm going to do."

"That shows the 'arm of eddication," ses Joe. "I never did believe in it."

Mrs. Prince nodded, and then she went and got a bottle with something in it which looked to Joe like gin, and arter getting out 'er pen and ink and printing some words on a piece o' paper she stuck it on the bottle, and sat looking at Joe and thinking.

"Take this up to the Cauliflower," she ses, "make friends with Bill Jones, and give him as much beer as he'll drink, and give 'im a little o' this gin in each mug. If he drinks it the spell will be broken, and you'll be luckier than you 'ave ever been in your life afore. When 'e's drunk some, and not before, leave the bottle standing on the table."

Joe Barlcomb thanked 'er, and with the bottle in 'is pocket went off to the Cauliflower, whistling. Bill Jones was there, and Peter Lamb, and two or three more of 'em, and at fust they said some pretty 'ard things to him about being woke up in the night.

"Don't bear malice, Bill," ses Joe Barlcomb; "'ave a pint with me."

He ordered two pints, and then sat down alongside o' Bill, and in five minutes they was like brothers.

"'Ave a drop o' gin in it, Bill," he ses, taking the bottle out of 'is pocket.

Bill thanked 'im and had a drop, and then, thoughtful-like, he wanted Joe to 'ave some in his too, but Joe said no, he'd got a touch o' toothache, and it was bad for it.

"I don't mind 'aving a drop in my beer, Joe," ses Peter Lamb.

"Not to-night, mate," ses Joe; "it's all for Bill. I bought it on purpose for 'im."

Bill shook 'ands with him, and when Joe called for another pint and put some more gin in it he said that 'e was the noblest-'arted man that ever lived.

"You wasn't saying so arf an hour ago," ses Peter Lamb.

"'Cos I didn't know 'im so well then," ses Bill Jones.

"You soon change your mind, don't you?" ses Peter

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Bill didn't answer 'im. He was leaning back on the bench and staring at the bottle as if 'e couldn't believe his eyesight. His face was all white and shining, and 'is hair as wet as if it 'ad just been dipped in a bucket o' water.

"See a ghost, Bill?" ses Peter, looking at 'im.

Bill made a 'orrible noise in his throat, and kept on staring at the bottle till they thought 'e'd gone crazy. Then Jasper Potts bent his 'ead down and began to read out loud wot was on the bottle. "P-O-I—POISON FOR BILL JONES," he ses, in a voice as if 'e couldn't believe it.

You might 'ave heard a pin drop. Everybody turned and looked at Bill Jones, as he sat there trembling all over. Then those that could read took up the bottle and read it out loud all over agin.

"Pore Bill," ses Peter Lamb. "I 'ad a feeling come over me that something was wrong."

"You're a murderer," ses Sam Martin, catching 'old of Joe Barlcomb. "You'll be 'ung for this. Look at pore Bill, cut off in 'is prime."

"Run for the doctor," ses someone.

Two of 'em ran off as 'ard as they could go, and then the landlord came round the bar and asked Bill to go and die outside, because 'e didn't want to be brought into it. Jasper Potts told 'im to clear off, and then he bent down and asked Bill where the pain was.

"I don't think he'll 'ave much pain," ses Peter Lamb, who always pretended to know a lot more than other people. "It'll soon be over, Bill."

"We've all got to go some day," ses Sam Martin.

"Better to die young than live to be a trouble to yourself," ses Bob Harris.

To 'ear them talk everybody seemed to think that Bill Jones was in luck; everybody but Bill Jones 'imself, that is.

"I ain't fit to die," he ses, shivering. "You don't know 'ow bad I've been."

"Wot 'ave you done, Bill?" ses Peter Lamb, in a soft voice. "If it'll ease your feelings afore you go to make a clean breast of it, we're all friends here."

Bill groaned.

"And it's too late for you to be punished for anything," ses Peter, arter a moment.

Bill Jones groaned agin, and then, shaking 'is 'ead, began to w'isper 'is wrong-doings. When the doctor came in arf an hour arterwards all the men was as quiet as mice, and pore Bill was still w'ispering as 'ard as he could w'isper.

The doctor pushed 'em out of the way in a moment, and then 'e bent over Bill and felt 'is pulse and looked at 'is tongue. Then he listened to his 'art, and in a puzzled way smelt at the bottle, which Jasper Potts was a-minding of, and wetted 'is finger and tasted it.

"Somebody's been making a fool of you and me too," he ses, in a angry voice. "It's only gin, and very good gin at that. Get up and go home."

It all came out next morning, and Joe Barlcomb was the laughing-stock of the place. Most people said that Mrs. Prince 'ad done quite right, and they 'oped that it ud be a lesson to him, but nobody ever talked much of witchcraft in Claybury agin. One thing was that Bill Jones wouldn't 'ave the word used in 'is hearing.

"THE DOCTOR FELT 'IS PULSE AND LOOKED AT 'IS TONGUE.

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Ruskin and His Books.

AN INTERVIEW WITH HIS PUBLISHER.

BY E. T. COOK.

HALF a century ago it was a grand thing to be a student at the Working Men's College. The college had just been founded by Frederick Denison Maurice (father of the present Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, K.C.B.), a man whose theology may have been misty, but whose efforts in the service of man were wise and good, and who was beloved by all who came near him. The helpers whom he gathered round him at the college formed the most brilliant group of teachers ever brought together for such a purpose. Foremost among them was Ruskin, who for several years was in charge of the art classes at the college. Ruskin was at that time in close intimacy with the poet-painter, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and he also became a master at the college. Ruskin taught landscape; Rossetti, the figure. For a time Burne-Jones also was pressed into the service. Opinions differed as to the technical quality of the teaching given by these distinguished men.

William Bell Scott, also painter and poet, once went to the college to see Ruskin's class at work. "Everyone," he says, "was trying to put on small pieces of paper imitations by pen and ink (? pencil) of pieces of rough stick crusted with dry lichens! I came away feeling that such pretence of education was in a high degree criminal—it was intellectual murder!" But Scott at the time was a master in the South Kensington Schools, and was, perhaps, not impartial. Rossetti's own account of his class is lively. "None of your freehand drawing-books used," he wrote to a friend; "the British mind is brought to bear upon the British *mug* at once, and with results that would astonish you."

MR. GEORGE ALLEN.
From a Photo. by Emil Vieler, Bexhill.

Whatever else it may have been, to attend classes conducted by Ruskin and Rossetti cannot have been dull. Among the young men who had the good fortune to be students at the Working Men's College, and the good sense to make the most of the opportunity, was Mr. George Allen, now so well known as publisher of Ruskin's works. He was one of the most regular of the students, and attracted the special attention both of Rossetti and of Ruskin. Mr. Allen entered the college in 1855, and first became associated with Mr. Ruskin in 1857. Of Rossetti, then in his prime, Mr. Allen speaks enthusiastically. He was, he says, the most lovable of men. Rossetti was one of the founders of the firm of art-decorators which, under the title of Morris and Company, was to effect a revolution in domestic art in England. Rossetti suggested that Mr. Allen should join the firm as a partner. But by this time he was already attaching himself to Ruskin, and did not care to break the connection. Ruskin had noticed his industry, discerned his sterling character, and encouraged his artistic talent.

One of the first pieces of work in which Mr. Allen was associated with Ruskin was the sorting and arranging of the Turner sketches at the National Gallery. Judicious lovers of pictures in London know well the rooms where a selection of these drawings is exhibited. (Ruskin always called the rooms "a cellar"; as a matter of fact they are on the ground floor of the building, and were once the Library and Council Room of the Royal Academy of Arts.) There are few more interesting artistic haunts in London. Here, in the desks, you may see several of Turner's loveliest colour effects, while on the walls the leaves from his sketch-books show how the painter

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lived for sixty years with pencil in hand. But the drawings exhibited to the public are only a small portion — about one-twentieth of those which passed into the possession of the nation under Turner's will. There were nineteen thousand pieces in all, left by the artist in blind disorder: creased, dirty, and sometimes torn. Ruskin undertook to sort, clean, arrange, and catalogue them. The work occupied him throughout the autumn and winter of 1857, "every day, all day long, and often far into the night." Stacy Marks, the R.A., who made Ruskin's acquaintance at this time, has given a description of him "surrounded by piles of sketch-books and loose drawings by the master, which he was arranging, mounting, and framing." He had two assistants in the task, and Mr. George Allen was one of them.

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT, ROSSETTI, AND RUSKIN.
From a Photo. by W. & D. Downey.

Another picked student at the Working Men's College was Mr. William Ward (afterwards an under-master there), and Ruskin encouraged them to devote themselves to the interpretation of Turner—Mr. Allen as an engraver, Mr. Ward as a copyist. Mr. Allen's skill of hand as an engraver is known to all readers of Ruskin's later books. I asked him which of his plates pleased "the master" most. "Mr. Ruskin always said," he told me, "that the feather printed in 'The Laws of Fésole' was the best thing I ever did." The drawing and the engraving are now at Sheffield. Much of Mr. Allen's work as an engraver has, however, never been published; it was done in connection with schemes which Ruskin did not complete. Chief among these was the Oxford Art School Series, for which many plates (size half imperial to serve as drawing copies) were engraved. These have never been published, but they include a varied assortment of subjects—the Etruscan cup (500 B.C.) which had its place by the Luca della Robbia altarpiece in Mr. Ruskin's study, the hippocampus, the lily of the valley leaf, the Plantagenet shields, and many other examples, from drawings made by Mr. Ruskin. Another unfulfilled scheme was the illustration of Turner's drawings in the size of the originals. Mr. Allen showed me some plates which he engraved from pencil drawings in pursuance of this scheme. Ruskin himself would pin down the drawing and trace it with his own hand on to tracing paper, for reversal on the engraved plate. This scheme, however, was never carried out, but Ruskin entered upon it with characteristic enthusiasm. Mr. Allen naturally possesses many pieces of Ruskin's handiwork. One of these, an early drawing of Fribourg, is facsimiled in our pages; in drawing, as well as in writings, Ruskin's skill was precocious. He was fifteen when this drawing was made.

From a] JOHN RUSKIN, ABOUT 1859. *[Photo.*

One day in 1862 Ruskin wrote to Mr. Allen, telling him to leave England forthwith

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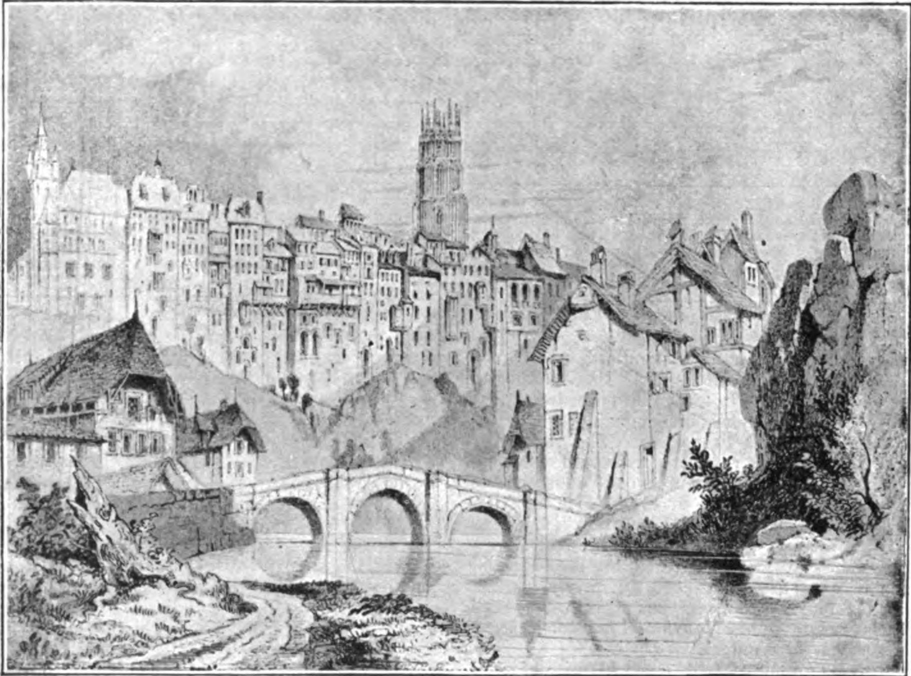
and come with his wife to Geneva. The master was sick, he said, of "the London mob." Life could only be properly lived in the free air of the Alps. Mr. Allen was to join him there, where they would live quietly and happily ever afterwards. The disciple obeyed the master's call, packed up his belongings, and joined Ruskin at Geneva. Ruskin at this time was deep in political economy; his special work was to be the writing of the "Six Essays on the Elements of Political Economy," which he entitled "Munera Pulveris." Mr. Allen's special work was to be engraving Turner drawings as described above. He took out his printing-press with him, and the work went for a time well ahead. They settled first in a châlet at Mornex, which, says Ruskin's biographer, will one day perhaps become a place of pilgrimage:—



A VIEW OF FRIBOURG—A DRAWING BY RUSKIN AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN.

The tourist of the future, after seeing Voltaire's Fernex in the morning, will pick his way among the fields beyond Carouge, and through the gorge of Monnetier, or drive on his pilgrimage by Annemasse round the Petit Salève, to another shrine at Mornex. There, two thousand feet above sea-level, basking in the morning sun, and looking always over the broad valley of the Arve at Mont Blanc and its panorama, are country retreats of the Genevese, beneath the old mother-c stle "of Savoy"; and there, with its shady little garden and rustic summer-house, is the châlet, or *cottage ornée*, where Mr. Ruskin went into hermitage and wrote his "Political Economy." You can enter now: it is a place of public entertainment; and in the cool, broad-windowed dining-room you can drink a glass to the memory.

Ruskin himself revisited the spot twenty years afterwards, and wrote a long and interesting account in a private letter to Mr. Allen:—

Hôtel des Bergues,
Friday Evening, Sept. 8th, 1882.

DEAR ALLEN,—I've had a glass too much Burgundy, or shouldn't have begun wrong side of paper; but the day's been hot and thundery, and I drove to the foot of the Grande Gorge before taking the Pas, and let the sun come round on it. I walked up nearly as well as ever, and got lovely views to the right towards Annecy as soon as I passed Monnetier. When I came in sight of Mornex I saw they had new-roofed my old house, and (having Mr. Collingwood and Baxter with me) was rather taken aback at finding it a flourishing hotel! I took them in and walked along the terrace to the old Pavillon without saying anything. The view was lovelier to me than ever, but there were people on the terrace having fore-noon beer! I went into the house and sat down in the salle-à-manger *under* my old room. The waitress, after taking order for bread and cheese, stared at being asked for news of the Chevaliers; but the landlord, though young, knew of them, and after being asked a few probing questions, asked in *his* turn, "Seriez-vous M. Ruskin?"

To my surprise and considerable complacency I found that English people often came up to see

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[The published passage reads thus: "Or that ghost of a cloud, which steals by yonder clump of pines; nay, which does *not* steal by them, but haunts them, wreathing yet round them, and yet,—and yet,—slowly; now falling in a fair waved line like a woman's veil; now fading, now gone; we look away for an instant, and look back, and it is again there. What has it to do with that clump of pines, that it broods by them, and weaves itself among their branches, to and fro? Has it hidden a cloudy treasure among the moss at their roots, which it watches thus? Or has some strong enchanter charmed it into fond returning, or bound it fast within those bars of bough?"]

A WELL-KNOWN PASSAGE FROM THE ORIGINAL MS. OF "MODERN PAINTERS."

where I lived, and that the landlord even knew that I always slept in the Pavillon! I asked leave to see the old room. It was turned into a bedroom, but otherwise it and its galleries unchanged.

Then I got news of Franceline. She was living with her husband in her father's house. I went up by myself, and she came running out—had seen me go down, and known me at once. She isn't improved by the twenty years' "progress," but was very glad to see me—showed me her four daughters—gave me some excellent tea and currant preserve and a bunch of white roses; listened attentively while I described Sunnyside and its business to her—and heard with reverence of my Oxford Professorship.

She sent you all manner of regards.

After saying good-bye, with some promise of coming again, I walked down to Etrembières, and drove home here from the pont; and had a lovely walk and study of the Rhone, and made a sketch of it and the old town at sunset.

As I was up the Dole yesterday—good 1,500ft. climb above the road at its highest point—I'm rather pleased to find myself as fresh as if I had done nothing, or rather fresher! having, as I said, had a glass too much Burgundy after dinner. . . . .
—Ever yours affectionately, J. RUSKIN.

The Chevaliers were the good people in the village who used to send in Mr. Ruskin's meals.

Here, then, in 1862, Ruskin and Mr. Allen settled down, Couttet, the Alpine guide, being also of the party. For a time, too, Ruskin had with him his valet and factotum, Crawley. He was well attended, it will be seen, but not well enough for his anxious mother, who was never reconciled, Mr. Allen says, to her son being absent from her watchful care. Ruskin was a good walker, but no athlete. He and Mr. Allen were out one day upon the mountain-side. They passed a group of men engaged in rough work with pickaxes. "How I wish," said Ruskin, "I could do what those men are doing! I was never allowed to do any work which would have strengthened my back. I wasn't allowed to ride, for fear of being thrown off; nor to boat, for fear of being drowned; nor to box, because it was vulgar; I was allowed to fence, because it was genteel." But Mr. Allen cannot remember ever seeing Ruskin with the foils. Sometimes when he was living with his parents at Denmark Hill he would enjoy a surreptitious row on the river. "I used to be told," says Mr. Allen, "not to let his parents know where he was gone." Ruskin at this time was in the forties.

What a companion must Ruskin have been on mountain walks around Bonneville and Chamonix! Mr. Allen looks back, as one can well understand, to those days among the Alps as the most stimulating and interesting of his life. "Ruskin's great work," he says, "was to teach people to see. He had an eye for everything—clouds and stones, hills and flowers, all interested him in the same intense way. And what he saw and felt he communicated in inimitable and inevitable eloquence to

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others. I seem to hear him now breaking forth into a rhapsody of delight as we came unexpectedly, on a walk up the Brezon, upon a sloping bank of the star-gentian. He was full, too, of sympathy with the life of the people. I can see him now kneeling down, as he knelt on Easter Sunday, 1863, and praying with a peasant woman at a wayside chapel. 'When I first reach the Alps,' he said to me once, 'I always pray.' Mr. Ruskin's printed passages of adoration in presence of the sublimity of Nature were the expression of his inmost feelings and in accord with his own practice." Here is a characteristic letter :—

Assisi, June 8th.

My Dear Allen,—I find your letter here to-day enclosing Tyndall, etc. I have no intention of getting into controversy with him; the glacier lectures will state all the facts gravely and sternly, taking no notice of his equivocations or impertinences, and will set the men on glacier work themselves next year. . . . .

I can't write more to-night. We can talk over all this better at Courmayeur.—Ever affectionately yours,

J. R.

June 9th, Morning.

I have opened my letter to copy for you a bit of glacier lectures I've just chanced upon, which may amuse you.

Here, then, is your first group of questions : What sort of forces are—(were)—these which take—(for familiar instance in our own chalk formation)—the whole of the North Foreland, with Dover Castle on it—turn it slap upside down and put it on the top of the Parade at Margate—then sweep up Whitstable oyster beds and lay them in a heap on the top of the bottom of Dover cliffs turned upside down—and finally strew blocks of Aberdeen granite over the whole, of the average size of an omnibus? That is the sort of thing which produces the north side of the Lake of Thun, and provides after-dinner "objects of interest" for the company at the Hôtel de Bellevue.

At one time Ruskin was bent upon building himself a house in Savoy. It was to be a "hill-top" house. He had been for a solitary ramble up the Brezon, above Bonneville, and was entranced with the flowers and the view. There on the mountain summit was the place chosen for his châlet. He entered into his scheme with characteristic enthusiasm. "The hardest day's work I ever did in my life," says Mr. Allen, "was marking out the boundaries of Mr. Ruskin's intended purchase." He was resolved to buy the greater part of the mountain. There was no water; he would construct a dam to collect the snow. Dante Rossetti was to come out and design the decoration of the châlet; Burne-Jones was to paint the walls. Alas! this "house beautiful" among the mountains remained a châlet in the air. Ruskin has himself told the sequel :—

I entered into treaty with the Commune of Bonneville for the purchase of the whole top of the Brezon ; but this negotiation came to nothing, because the Commune, unable to see why anybody should want to buy a waste of barren rock, with pasturage only for a few goats in the summer, concluded that I had found a gold-mine or a coal-bed in it, and raised their price on me till I left the Brezon on their hands ; Osborne Gordon (Ruskin's old tutor at Christ Church) having also walked up with me to my proposed hermitage, and, with his usual sagacity, calculated the daily expense of getting anything to eat up those four thousand feet from the plain.

The good people of Bonneville were not a little disappointed. They had thought to see Ruskin permanently established among them as an earthly providence; they even on one occasion "discharged salvoes of artillery," says Mr. Allen, "in our honour. They overreached themselves; but it was a lovely spot; the Alpine rose that Mr. Ruskin loved so much was magnificent, and the flora generally very rich." Much of the geological and botanical work that Ruskin did in Savoy was afterwards used in his uncompleted works, "Deucalion" and "Proserpina," and many of Mr. Allen's engravings were also thus employed.

["Her successor, like her in perfection of beauty, though less in endurance of dominion, is still left for our beholding in the final period of her decline ; a Ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak—so quiet—so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow."]

A PASSAGE FROM THE OPENING PAGE OF "STONES OF VENICE."

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Ruskin's "hermitage" in the Alps—alleviated, it should be said, during its continuance by two or three flying visits to England—came to an end in March, 1864, owing to his father's illness and death. Mr. Allen remained in Savoy from December, 1862, till July, 1864. On returning to England he continued in various ways to assist his "master." Ruskin was very hospitable, and was always ready to show his collections at Denmark Hill—his Turners and his minerals—to friends, acquaintances, or even strangers who were really interested. But he did not care to be lion-hunted. "I am afraid," says Mr. Allen, "that visitors bent on that pursuit were often disappointed, for if Mr. Ruskin suspected anything of the kind he would employ me to take his place and show the collections." Among Ruskin's most cherished visitors at this period was Carlyle. Ruskin would send his carriage to drive Carlyle out from Chelsea, or the old man would ride over and spend the day. "No one," wrote Mrs. Carlyle, "managed Carlyle so well as Ruskin. It was quite beautiful to see him. Carlyle would say outrageous things, running counter to everything Ruskin cared for. Ruskin would treat Carlyle like a naughty child, lay his arms around him, and say, 'Now this is too bad.'" Mr. Allen remembers a characteristic little trait of Ruskin's thoughtfulness. Carlyle loved tobacco; Ruskin hated it, and his mother could not tolerate it. When a visit from Carlyle was expected, Mr. Allen would be sent up to London to buy a box of the best cigars for the "Sage of Chelsea" to carry away with him from Denmark Hill.

I asked Mr. Allen about Ruskin's Turners. "Is it true, as related by Mr. Frederic Harrison in his monograph, that Ruskin's mother was so strict a Sabbatarian as to insist on having all the Turners covered up on Sunday?" Mr. Allen said that this was a mistake. Mr. Harrison perhaps visited Denmark Hill on Sunday, and, noticing that the drawings were covered, concluded that this was a piece of Sunday observance. But the Turners were always thus covered up. Ruskin was convinced that water-colours deteriorated seriously under direct sunlight. Mr. Allen remembers some experiments made by Cozens, the engraver, which Ruskin saw, and which seemed conclusive. "There was one of his Turners," continued Mr. Allen, "which Mr. Ruskin was not proud of. He used to say to me, 'Don't show it, or, if you do, tell them it's a bad one.' This was the Rochester. 'My father gave it to me once,' said Mr. Ruskin, 'just to bring me home a fortnight earlier from abroad, and it's the worst Turner I have.' But Mr. Harrison is quite correct," said Mr. Allen, "in writing of the beautiful deference and tender affection which Mr. Ruskin ever showed to his parents. His mother's watchfulness was unfailing, but perhaps sometimes excessive. In these years Mr. Ruskin did much lecturing and other work which took him away in the evenings. His devoted nurse Anne always required to know where he was going; sat up for him till he returned, and tucked him up in bed." Two little writings by Ruskin, not generally known, may be given here. They are inscribed on the tomb of his father and mother in Shirley Churchyard, near Elmer's End, Kent:—

Here rests from day's well-sustained burden, John James Ruskin, born in Edinburgh, May 18th, 1785. He died in his home in London, March 3rd, 1864. He was an entirely honest merchant, and his memory is, to all who keep it, dear and helpful. His son, whom he loved to the uttermost and taught to speak truth, says this of him.

Here, beside my father's body, I have laid my mother's. Nor was dearer earth ever returned to earth, nor purer life recorded in Heaven. She died December 5th, 1871, aged ninety years.

A photograph of the tombstone is reproduced here, but, unfortunately, it was found impossible to show the inscription at the top, owing to the metal lettering having become almost identical in colour with the stone.

Photo. by] THE TOMB OF RUSKIN'S FATHER AND MOTHER. [G. Newnes, Ltd.

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It was in the year of old Mrs. Ruskin's death that Mr. Allen was surprised one day in his cottage home at Keston by receiving a bulky parcel of pamphlets from Mr. Ruskin. He had been told nothing about the matter beforehand, and now was informed that he was to publish and sell the pamphlets. They turned out to be copies of the first monthly part of that wonderful miscellany which Mr. Ruskin entitled "Fors Clavigera." Thus was it that chance with the nail and hammer drove in upon Mr. George Allen, engraver, that he was henceforth to turn publisher. Ruskin had resolved to be rid of those wiles of publishers and tricks of the trade of which other authors, wrongly or rightly, are used to grumble. Sir Walter Besant's crusade, authors' societies, the net system: all these things were in 1871 still in the future. Ruskin struck out a line for himself, and resolved to try the experiment of establishing a publisher and bookseller of his own and on his own terms. The passage in which he first explained his scheme is worth citing as a curiosity in the annals of the book-world:—

> It costs me ten pounds to print a thousand copies, and five pounds more to give you a picture, and a penny off my sevenpence to send you the book; a thousand sixpences are twenty-five pounds; when you have bought a thousand "Fors" of me I shall therefore have five pounds for my trouble, and my single shopman, Mr. Allen, five pounds for his; we won't work for less, either of us. And I mean to sell all my large books, henceforward, in the same way; well printed, well bound, and at a fixed price; and the trade may charge a proper and acknowledged profit for their trouble in retailing the book. Then the public will know what they are about, and so will tradesmen. I, the first producer, answer, to the best of my power, for the quality of the book—paper, binding, eloquence, and all; the retail dealer charges what he ought to charge, openly; and if the public do not choose to give it, they can't get the book. That is what I call legitimate business.

It was on these principles that Mr. Allen was set up in the publishing trade. As might be expected, progress was slow. Ruskin's publications had now to steal their way, as it were, into the world. Booksellers showed them no favour, and they were seldom noticed in the Press. At first Ruskin only published his new books in this way. His books already in print were still issued on the usual terms by his old publishers, Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co. But gradually he transferred the whole of his books to Mr. Allen—not without some regret at the severing of old associations, for Ruskin, like so many other distinguished authors of the time, had been on very pleasant terms with the late Mr. George Smith. "I should like much again," he wrote, "to be on terms with my old publisher, and hear him telling me nice stories over our walnuts, this Christmas, after dividing his year's spoil with me in Christmas charity." From a business point of view Ruskin had no cause to regret the change.

From a] "SUNNYSIDE," WHERE FOR MANY YEARS ALL RUSKIN'S BOOKS WERE PUBLISHED. [*Photo.*

It was, as we shall see, a brilliant success. His experiment was much ridiculed at the time. His idea of publishing "in the wilds of Kent" was decided as visionary; he was "mad" once more. But he lived to see his books obtain a new lease of popularity and to receive from their sale rewards which, in the case of that style of literature, were probably unprecedented.

"Mr. Ruskin has transferred his publishing," said a trade circular at the time, "to the middle of a country field." The remark was quite true. The imprint for many years was "Sunnyside, Orpington, Kent," and there

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the whole business was conducted. Visitors who sought out Sunnyside on business were often, Mr. Allen says, a good deal surprised. "They would not believe it was the right house; apologized for their mistake; explained that they wanted 'the shop,' and asked me kindly to direct them to Allen's." The mistake was natural enough, for Sunnyside is a pleasant private house, standing in its own gardens, and the warehouses which contained the stock of Ruskins might easily have passed for the more usual appurtenances of a rural residence. Ruskin himself used often to visit his publisher at home. "We used to try and get him to come and help," says Miss Allen (for the publishing was in those days a purely family and village industry), "but he said he hated parcels and didn't believe anybody really wanted to read all those books; he preferred us to go with him to the flowers and

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire.

Brantwood, Coniston, Lancashire.
MY DEAR ALLEN,—I do extremely wonder what you think my brains are made of? Catgut? or Caoutchouc? or macaroni?—or glass bottles that can be blown to balloons?

A CHARACTERISTIC LETTER FROM RUSKIN TO HIS PUBLISHER.

MY DEAR ALLEN, You really are a considerable goose. Of course you mustn't take booksellers' orders for less than a dozen—and they must pay their own carriage. This will still leave you a shilling (and over) profit on every parcel you make up allowing twopence for paper and string, and it's not everybody who can get a shilling for making up a parcel.—Ever affectionately yours, J. R.

ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC LETTER.

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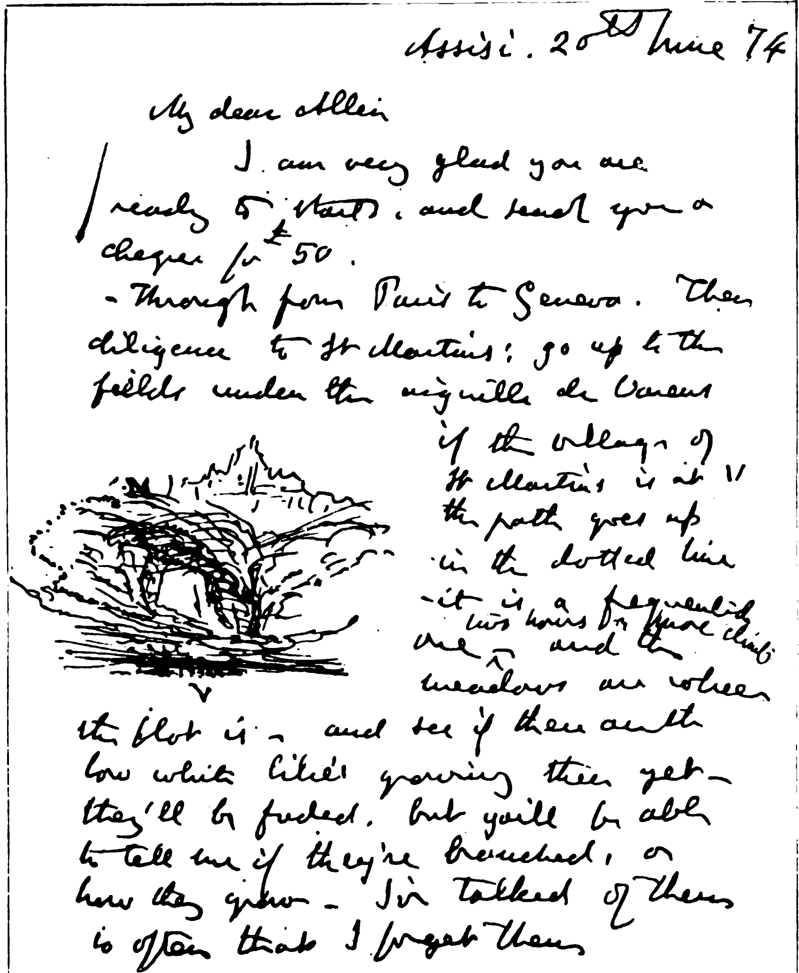
tne woods." However, people did want the books—so much so that Mr. Allen was forced to open a London warehouse also: first at Bell Yard, Chancery Lane, and afterwards in the Charing Cross Road, where the business is now conducted.

The demand for Ruskin's books of all sorts has been very great during the last quarter of a century. When the business of publishing them was transferred to Mr. George Allen, early in the seventies, a list was drawn up of the stock on hand and of the time which, according to the then rate of sale, would be necessary to exhaust the stock. Of "The Stones of Venice," for instance, there were one hundred copies; it would take a year, it was thought, to exhaust them. For a hundred and two copies of "Unto this Last" two years were allowed. As a matter of fact "The Stones" were soon exhausted, and when Mr. Allen published his first new edition of that work over nine hundred copies were sold in the first half-year of issue. Of "Unto this Last" he has sold some seventy thousand copies. It may be interesting to give a list of Ruskin's cheaper books, in the order of their popularity:—


Assisi. 20th June 74

My dear Allen

I am very glad you are ready to start, and send you a cheque for £50.

– Through from Paris to Geneva. Then diligence to St Martins; go up to the fields under the aiguille de Varens if the village of St Martins is at V the path goes up in the dotted line – it is a frequented one, two hours or more climb, and the meadows are where the blot is – and see if there are the low white lilies growing there yet – they'll be faded. but you'll be able to tell me if they're branched, or how they grow – I've talked of them so often that I forget them

Assisi, 20th June, '74.

MY DEAR ALLEN,—I am very glad you are ready to start, and send you a cheque for £50. Through from Paris to Geneva. Then diligence to St. Martins; go up to the fields under the Aiguille de Varens if the village of St. Martins is at V, the path goes up in the dotted line—it is a frequented one, two hours or more climb—and the meadows are where the blot is—and see if there are the low white lilies growing there yet: they'll be faded, but you'll be able to tell me if they're branched, or how they grow. I've talked of them so often that I forget them.

A LETTER SHOWING RUSKIN'S HABIT OF PUTTING ROUGH SKETCHES INTO HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

1. "Sesame and Lilies." 2. "Unto this Last." 3. "Frondes Agrestes." 4. "The Crown of Wild Olive." 5. "The King of the Golden River." 6. "The Ethics of the Dust." 7. "The Queen of the Air." 8. "Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne." 9. "The Two Paths." 10. "The Eagle's Nest."

"Sesame" is, I understand, by far the most popular, though of late "Unto this Last" has been "going very strong," as they say. Of Ruskin's greater works—the three by which his name and fame will most securely live—"The Seven Lamps of Architecture" is the most popular; it is also, we must remember, the cheapest. "Modern Painters" and "The Stones of Venice" can never, in any decent form, be very cheap, for the illustrations are an integral portion of them. Each book, since it was issued in a

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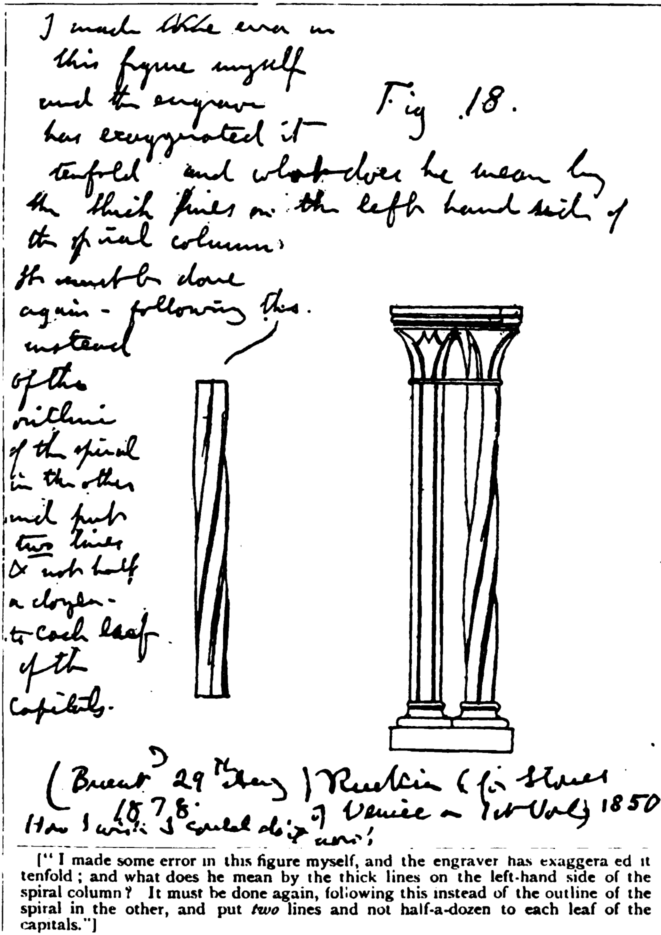

["I made some error in this figure myself, and the engraver has exaggera ed it tenfold; and what does he mean by the thick lines on the left-hand side of the spiral column? It must be done again, following this instead of the outline of the spiral in the other, and put *two* lines and not half-a-dozen to each leaf of the capitals."]

SKETCH AND NOTES FOR "STONES OF VENICE.

cheaper form than heretofore, has sold very largely. "Frondes Agrestes," it may be well to explain to those who do not happen to have read the book, is a selection of passages from "Modern Painters," which, in this form, has been one of the three most widely dispersed of all Ruskin's books.

Ruskin's titles are, it must be confessed, more picturesque than informing. It is impossible not to sympathize with the Scottish farmer who demanded the return of his money when he discovered that "Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds" was a treatise upon pastoral theology. Mr. Frederic Harrison says he has never been able to unriddle why "Sesame" and why "Lilies." Well, it is not very obvious, certainly, but the meaning is there, though it has to be fetched from afar; when found, it is characteristically pretty and fanciful. "Sesame" alludes to "that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame, that opens doors—doors not of robbers' caves, but of Kings' treasuries." The Kings' treasuries of which Ruskin writes are libraries of books. Our hearts and imaginations are "the Open Sesame" of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it. The lecture on "Lilies," or Queens' gardens, was an impassioned exhortation to the women of England. Not as the lilies of the field, that "toil not, neither do they spin," these human lilies have their work to do, their battle to fight, that they may be counted worthy "to grow among the sesame of knightly spears," as Giotto's lilies grew among the roses. Perhaps the safest thing to conclude about any title of Ruskin's was that the contents would not correspond to the obvious meaning of it. I remember hearing a lecture in which Ruskin laughed at himself in this connection. The subject originally announced was "Crystallography," but it had subsequently been changed to "Cistercian Architecture." A certain newspaper, which I forbear to specify, remarked that "no doubt either title would do equally well."

Ruskin put his audience into good humour at the outset by referring to the remark and admitting that there was a good deal of truth in it. "For," said he, "in the proposed lecture on crystallography there would certainly have been allusions to Cistercian architecture, while it had required all his powers of self-denial to keep crystallography out of the lecture he was actually delivering. But he had not been equally successful in including Cistercian architecture." Perhaps the most truthful, if the least dignified, title for many of Ruskin's books would be "Inquire Within Upon Everything."

To enumerate even the titles of Ruskin's books would take pages; to specify the editions, a volume or two. At present his

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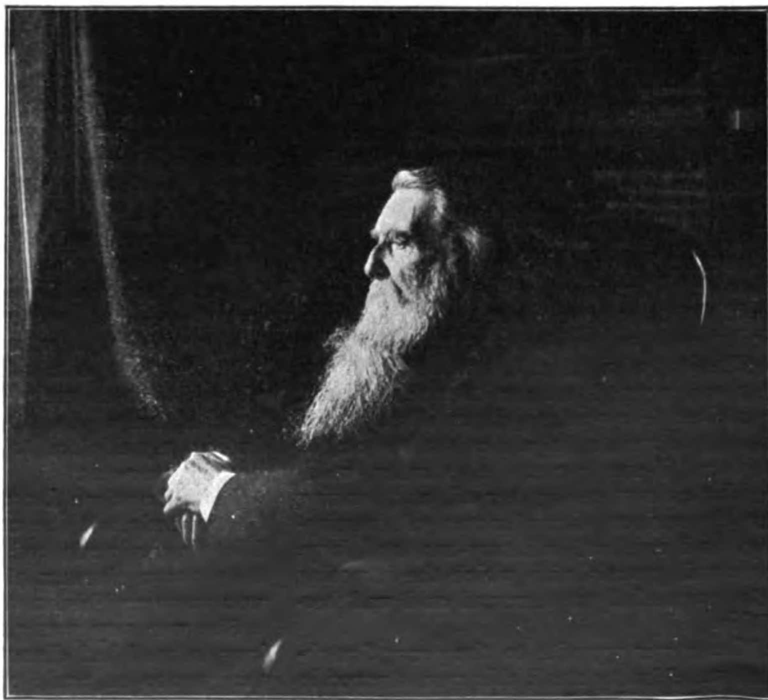
writings, as published by Mr. Allen, consist of some seventy volumes, costing about twenty-seven pounds, and even then a purchaser who desires the complete works of Ruskin must study the "Bibliography" and spend some years in "collecting." He will find that he still lacks some thirty volumes or pamphlets; some almost, if not quite, unobtainable; many obtainable only at great cost. The object of the Library Edition which Mr. Allen now has in hand is to put within reach of every collector the complete works of Ruskin. "My hope and aim," adds Mr. Allen, "is to make this edition a worthy monument of the master."

Ruskin's industry was prodigious. No literary man of the time reached anything like the same output, and all the while he was no less indefatigable as an artist than as an author. One secret of the amount of work he did was early rising. To be up with the sun was his rule of life, and much of his best literary work was done in the early morning hours, before the rest of the household was astir. I asked Mr. Allen if the master was not inclined to be a little chippy at breakfast. "By no means," was the answer. "He was always bright and cheerful then, and ready to receive his guests in good spirits." A remarkable tribute, it must be allowed, to his sweetness of disposition. Mr. Allen could say much of the infinite trouble which Ruskin took over the illustrations for his books. The collection of Ruskin manuscripts which Mr. Allen possesses shows the same thing — in their successive revisions, erasures, re-castings; but of these things we are to hear, I understand, in the Library Edition. The illustration given on the opposite page is a facsimile of a piece of one of the manuscripts of "Stones of Venice" (vol. i., fig. 18). It is a note by Ruskin for the engraver. In turning over his old MSS., Ruskin added a note to this: "How I wish I could do it now!"

That was in 1878. Mr. Allen saw Ruskin occasionally during the days, twenty years later, of his weakness, weariness, and sometimes listlessness. Mr. Allen had been talking to him once of old times—of those old times of life among the Alps, described in this article. Ruskin seemed to follow with interest, and every now and then would contribute some reminiscence of his own. Then his publisher and old friend went on to talk of his books. Ruskin held out his hand. "Poor hand!" he exclaimed, "it will never hold pen again. Well, it has got me into much trouble; perhaps it is better so." Into much trouble, it may be; but also into much honour and an abiding place in English letters.



From a Photo. by] THE LATEST PORTRAIT OF MR. RUSKIN. [*Fred Holyer.*

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THE NINE-FIFTEEN

By Florence Warden.

Author of "The House on the Marsh," "A Thief in the Night," etc.

IT was Christmas-time, and the nine-fifteen train from St. Pancras to Edinburgh was fairly well filled when I took my seat in a third-class compartment, and thought myself lucky in getting a corner.

The weather was bitterly cold, and the prospect of an all-night journey not a particularly pleasant one. Snow had been falling all day in London, and, although a good deal of it had melted as it fell, there was reason to fear that the state of affairs would be worse farther north, and that the journey might be longer and more tedious than usual.

These fears were reflected on the faces of my fellow-passengers in the compartment, of whom there were five.

In one of the far corners sat a shrewd-looking, sandy-haired young man, whose accent and appearance proclaimed him to be a Scotchman, of an unsympathetic type. I took a strong dislike to him from the moment of my first observing the manner in which he settled himself in his corner, and the satisfied smirk on his face when another passenger got in and looked disappointed on seeing that all the corners were occupied already.

Not that I myself felt very warmly towards this new-comer, who was a showily-dressed, florid woman of about forty, with hair which looked as if art had assisted Nature in the production of a beautiful copper-coloured tint, and a grand manner of looking round upon her fellow-passengers as if they were so many worms, upon whom she had a right to tread if she chose. A slender, mild-looking girl was seeing her off, and handing her the various encumbrances of dressing-bag, and rug, and millinery-box, and large and small parcels, with which the imposing lady proceeded to surround and wall herself in.

The corner opposite to the young Scotchman was filled by a tall, thin man, dressed in black clothes, and wearing a soft, wide-brimmed black hat and gold spectacles, which helped to give him an aspect, not only of respectability, but of benignity and saintliness. He was munching biscuits in a furtive and severely respectable manner, having evidently come away on his journey without having had time to dine.

The man next to me was a stout, well-dressed man, who looked like a prosperous stockbroker, and, if one ever dared wonder why strangers did things not expected of them, one would have wondered why he, with his sleek and prosperous appearance, his smart luggage and his general air of being used to the best share of the best things, should be travelling in a modest third-class carriage, instead of in a more luxurious "first." I was very glad to have him nearest to me, for, with all his lordly grumblings at the porter and sneers at British railway travelling, I felt that the man was by nature good-humoured, and preferred his neighbourhood to that of the canny Scot or the prim-looking elderly gentleman who sat opposite to him.

Now, I have left to the last the description of the person who sat in the opposite seat to mine, although from the first moment I caught sight of her I felt in her an interest overwhelmingly greater than that inspired by any of the rest. Of course, I hold the only sane opinion about love at first sight, and I know, therefore, that it is for the most part a fallacy, an illusion of the eye, and not in the least a guarantee that the individual who inspires it is calculated to realize the dreams of which her too willing victim has made her the unconscious heroine.

Nevertheless, I suppose that most men have been, at one time or another, the victims of some such seizure as that which attacked me within the first few minutes of finding myself face to face with the girl in the corner-seat.

For a long time I could not even see her face properly, but the more I saw, the more I involuntarily admired, the more I felt that there was a glamour of witchery about this woman which I had never seen in any other.

She was very young, of that I felt sure long before I had discerned more of her face than was to be made out through the folds of one of those curious silky gauze veils which leave the features they cover sometimes a vague, unrecognisable mass, while at any moment a movement may reveal each feature in delicate distinctness.

She was dressed in dark clothes of con-

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ventional shape and cut, not at all calculated to enhance the power of her charms; yet charming she was in spite of all disadvantages of thick black cloth jacket, plain dark stuff skirt, and insignificant small black hat.

There was something more than usually graceful, too, about her movements, as I saw when she rose to get one of her parcels down from the rack above; while her voice, as she apologized for touching the shoulder of the imposing lady beside her, was refined, sweet, and winning. About her whole person and manner there were a modesty and a timidity very uncommon in women as pretty as she was; so that, as I was only five-and-twenty, and as I had been out in West Africa for some months, fighting in one of our unconsidered and trifling minor wars, there are perhaps excuses to be made for the strong impression the beautiful stranger made upon me.

We were all in our seats some minutes before the starting of the train, and it was while we were quietly shuffling down into our places, undoing rugs and making ourselves as comfortable as we could in view of the long, cold journey in front of us, that the Scotchman, who had been looking out of the window, pointed out to the prim man opposite a person who was walking slowly up and down the platform, looking into the different compartments as he went.

"That man's a detective," said the Scotchman, in a voice just loud enough to reach the ears of all the rest of us.

The prosperous-looking City man beside me drew himself up and craned his neck hastily to see. The prim man in the corner left off munching his biscuit.

"How do you know?" he asked, in exactly the dry tones his appearance had prepared one for.

The Scotchman smiled and slightly shook his head.

"There's something about the man that's enough to 'give him away,'" he answered. "Just observe the way he's pulled down his travelling cap over his eyes, and the sharp way in which he peers out under it. But if that's not enough, then look at his feet. Those policeman's boots are an autobiography."

"H'm," assented the prim man, and he sat farther back and finished his biscuit thoughtfully.

In the meantime everybody else in the carriage had shown more or less interest in the little incident. My pretty companion had appeared quite startled by it, as one might have expected such a sensitive and shy little creature to be at this mere reminder of the fact of the existence of criminals and crime. The showily-dressed lady by her side seemed to be quite disturbed by the circumstance, and watched the man on the platform with a certain nervousness which seemed altogether unaccountable. As for me, I looked from one to the other of my companions, hoping for an adventure, and wondering whether any

"WE WERE ALL IN OUR SEATS SOME MINUTES BEFORE THE STARTING OF THE TRAIN."

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one of these apparently law-abiding citizens would prove to be the person of whom the detective appeared to be in search.

As for this man himself, I thought the Scotchman's conjecture a shrewd one. For although I was too lame from a recent wound in the right foot to care to get up and cross the carriage to look for the tell-tale boots, I could see enough of the man in question, and of the piercing glance of his eyes from under his peaked cap, to feel pretty sure that he was not only a detective by profession, but that he was on special duty.

It was curious to see how this impression gained ground among us all, and with how much interest, if not indeed anxiety, we all watched, more or less furtively, for the man's passing and repassing. My pretty girl drew farther into her corner, but I could see the gleam of her blue eyes behind her veil as she turned her face towards the farther window. The City man and the smartly-dressed lady affected to take no interest in the man's movements, but it was clear that this was only a pretence, and they both looked out for his coming as keenly as the rest of us. Both the prim man and the young Scotchman made no secret of their interest.

But when the man in the peaked cap began to pass the window of our compartment more and more frequently, and when it became increasingly evident that he never did so without passing the whole of us in swift but careful review, then it was strange to note what a restlessness grew upon most of us, and how some turned away as if by accident, while others offered a sort of defiant front to the man's gaze.

I believe I was the only person of the six who maintained any sort of composure under this new and closer scrutiny, and I confess I was much amused by the sort of veiled consternation I could read in two out of the five other faces. My City friend became apoplectic; the middle-aged lady with the copper-coloured hair began to suffer from a sort of nervous rage which set me wondering what the state of her conscience might be; while the pretty, fair-haired girl opposite shrank into herself, and looked as if she would like to hide under the seat.

Yet she at least could have nothing on her mind to make her fear the scrutiny of an inquiry agent, whether from Scotland Yard or elsewhere!

A sense of relief and satisfaction became clearly evident to me throughout the compartment when at last the train began to move, and the spirits of my next neighbour, the City man, improved at once.

Whether a common sense of trouble escaped made a bond of sympathy between us I do not know, but we soon became more communicative and friendly than a party of British strangers usually becomes at such short notice. So that before we reached Bedford—the first stopping-place out of London—I had heard enough talk from all my fellow-travellers, with one exception, to give me a little insight into their character and habits.

But the one exception was an important one: it was the pretty girl. The more friendly the rest became, the more she seemed to shrink into herself and to avoid intercourse with the rest of us. While this behaviour made her more interesting, it irritated, piqued me. I should so much have liked to hear that gentle voice again—a voice which had struck me as the sweetest I had ever heard. But then I was in love, in a sort of way, and my opinion must be taken with reserve.

Conversation was in full swing when the train stopped for the first time; but a sudden deadly pause ensued when the face of the detective was once more seen at the window. There was no mistaking the fact that this incident had an intense interest and significance for some of us.

He passed, and for a moment the talk flowed on, intermittently. Then the door of the compartment was thrown open from the outside, and the man in the peaked cap, standing on the platform with his bag in his hand and his rug over his arm, asked if there was room for one.

Nobody answered. Why, indeed, should anybody answer any more than ask such a question? For it was patent that there was room for more than one, and we all knew instinctively that the man had a motive for wishing to hear somebody's voice.

Whose?

There was a moment's dead silence, and then, without waiting further, the man got in, put his bag, with an apology, in the rack facing my side, and sat down between the young Scotchman and the prosperous City man.

The smartly-dressed lady had become as quiet as a mouse; the pretty girl turned her face away; the prim man looked straight in front of him; the City man whistled softly to himself; the Scotchman watched the new-comer narrowly.

The last-named, however, had scarcely seated himself when he got up again, gave one glance at his bag, put his rug to keep

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his seat, and got out of the carriage, making for the refreshment-room.

I had a presentiment that someone would seize the opportunity of his momentary absence to escape from the compartment, and with this conviction strongly in my mind I sat back in my corner, half closed my eyes, and waited. It was with a spasm of horror that I found my hypothesis correct. Someone did take the opportunity to escape: it was the pretty girl. Scarcely had the detective disappeared than she sprang up, got down her light luggage from the rack, and hurried out of the carriage. I confess to a feeling of the utmost consternation. For there was, I felt sure, something more than a mere woman's reluctance to be present at any sort of "scene" in her mind; her manner was not only hurried, but furtive. And even as she stepped out on the platform I saw the gleam of her blue eyes under her veil watching the door of the refreshment-room while she turned to look for another carriage.

I had not yet got over my surprise and consternation when this first disappearance was followed by another, and then another. My eyes grew round with astonishment as my fellow-passengers, gathering up their light luggage, popped out of the compartment, one after the other, like rabbits disturbed by the sound of a gun. Out into the darkness they all went, disappearing this way and that; so that by the time our friend the detective re-entered the compartment I was its only other occupant.

I thought I heard him chuckle to himself as he got in at the last moment before the train restarted, and settled himself in the corner which had been vacated by the prim man in the wide-brimmed hat and the gold spectacles. Then he pushed up his peaked cap a little, and I saw a shrewd pair of eyes under thick black eyebrows, a commonplace nose, and a heavy black moustache. He caught my eye and nodded.

"Afraid I've frightened the rest of our friends away," he said, somewhat sardonically. "Looks as if there were some uneasy consciences about, don't it, sir?"

But I was too discreet to admit that I guessed what his profession was; so I said, politely:—

"Indeed! I don't see what there is in your appearance alarming enough for that."

But he smiled and shook his head gently.

"Oh, you won't hurt my feelings by owning you've guessed my business," he said; and thrusting out one of the tell-tale boots, which had, indeed, helped to betray him, he added: "These boots give us all away. I'm sure I don't know why the authorities haven't tumbled to that and set us up before this in patent leather."

I laughed in my turn.

"Well, I think myself you can be detected as quickly by the eyes as by the boots," I said; "and you couldn't get rid of those, could you?"

The detective looked rather amused.

"By Jove, I hadn't thought of that," said he. "But I suppose we do get into a sharp way of looking about us, which, as you say, is another trade-mark. At any rate, it has served me well on this occasion, for it has cleared the decks a bit."

And he glanced round the compartment, which was now empty but for himself and me.

"Cleared the decks?" echoed I, wondering.

"Yes. There's nothing to be gained by denying that I'm on business, and that, as my work lies very near to my hand, I prefer to do it without too much of a crowd at my elbow."

"You're after someone who is in the train?" hazarded I, with interest.

The detective nodded.

"That's it, sir. A well-known jewel thief, who's got away with something like ten thousand pounds' worth, unless they've made a mistake."

"What!" cried I, uneasy, remembering who it was that had left the carriage first. "And you think it was one of the passengers in here——"

But he relieved my mind by a shake of the head.

"Oh, no. He's in the next compartment to this, I believe. But I haven't been able to make quite sure yet, because I don't want to frighten him."

I was puzzled.

"Then why——" I began, and then I stopped.

He took up my words where I had left off. "Why did all the people in here get out in such a hurry? Why, for the same reason that nineteen out of every twenty people will keep out of the way of one of us if they can. Ten to one, sir, they've all got their little secrets and their little worries, and feel easier out of my company than in it. And I may tell you, between ourselves, that for that reason one can pretty well reckon on making one's company select by a few artful looks round. The sheep and the goats separate

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as if by instinct at a whisper of Scotland Yard."

"But," said I, smiling, "at that rate I'm the only sheep."

He laughed.

"Well, I shouldn't say that, except in the best sense," said he.

And then he asked if he might smoke, and we both fell into silence, while I wondered whether I too should have changed my compartment if the wound in my foot had not made it still inconvenient to me to move about very fast. For I remembered that, though I certainly had no very heavy burdens on my conscience, I had myself not been without a transitory qualm of uneasiness when the detective's piercing eyes had been fixed upon me in my turn.

What troubled me chiefly was the fact that my pretty girl had apparently had the worst conscience of us all, since it was she who had been the first to disappear. It was extraordinary how greatly this thought troubled me, and I was quite glad to be diverted from my musings on this head by my companion, who, apparently soothed and rendered genial by the influence of his pipe, began to entertain me with some of his adventures as a thief-taker, until I became too much interested to think of anything else.

He was so much more entertaining than my late companions had been that the time passed quickly, and I was quite surprised when the train began to slow down, and I discovered that we had reached Carlisle. The snow was by this time coming down so fast that our rate of progress was perceptibly slower, and the detective, who told me his name was Birch, began to express doubts whether we should be able to get on to Edinburgh without accident.

"I've been snowed up on this line before now," he said, with a shake of the head. "Up in this part of the country one gets it worse than in the south."

In spite of the falling snow, however, I saw that he was making ready to get out, for he took down his Gladstone bag from the rack and prepared to let down the window. As he did so he kept his face close to the glass, peering out with his sharp eyes into the darkness.

"Do you get out here?" I asked, in surprise, for I had understood that he was making the entire journey.

"Only for a moment," he answered, quickly, in a low voice. And I wondered whether he suspected my honesty, since he appeared unwilling to trust me alone with his property.

A few moments later we drew into the station, and I heard the door of the next compartment open. My companion had drawn back a little, but he was watching as keenly as ever. A couple of seconds after I had heard the next door open, and had seen a man hurrying down towards the refreshment-room, the detective let down the window very quietly and, with remarkable quickness, got out of our compartment and into the next, carrying his bag with him.

I decided that something interesting was going to happen, since he and the suspected

"HE HAD DISAPPEARED AND REAPPEARED SO RAPIDLY, SO QUIETLY, THAT I WAS LOST IN ADMIRATION AND WONDER."

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thief would be travelling together. So I slid along my seat to the window which looked upon the platform. To my surprise, however, Birch was back again in a few moments, his bag still in his hand, and a look of considerable satisfaction on his somewhat stolid face. He had disappeared and reappeared so rapidly, so quietly, that I was lost in admiration and wonder. But before we exchanged any remark I saw the suspected man hurrying up along the platform, and pressed my face against the glass to get a good view of him. He was a well-dressed, clean-shaven man, spare and active-looking, of middle age, and he looked like a gentleman's servant. The expression of his face, though, betrayed that he was not what he seemed. It appeared to me that there was an expression of furtive anxiety in his eyes as he turned them towards the window of our compartment; and I wondered whether he had any notion that he was being followed and watched.

A few moments later we were again on our way. But now, as my companion had predicted, we found our progress so much impeded by the snow that I also began to have grave fears that we should not reach Edinburgh in the early hours of the morning, as we ought to have done. My companion had by this time put his bag upon the seat, and, standing with his back to me, was feeling in his pockets for the key.

"It's not of much use trying to get anything to eat on these journeys," said he, "even if one were travelling for one's own pleasure and had time to look about one. I always come provided. I suppose you're supplied also, or may I offer you some sandwiches?"

I thanked him, but said I had brought my own. All this time he was fumbling for his keys, and at last he turned to me with a rather long face.

"By Jove!" said he, in a tone of annoyance, "I've left them behind! I shall have to force the lock."

"Oh, it's not worth while just for a sandwich. Have some of mine," I said, and I began to hunt in my own bag for the refreshments with which I had been carefully provided.

But he would not listen to this; and wrenching open his bag with a pocket-knife he fumbled about in it, and transferred two or three small parcels into the capacious pockets of his overcoat. Then he strapped up the bag again, pushed it under the seat, and, again plunging his hands into his overcoat pockets, produced from one a box of sandwiches and from another a flask, and we proceeded to sup together; not with the same cheerfulness that we had shown a few minutes before, but with apprehension growing strong upon us that we should not see Edinburgh within the next four-and-twenty hours.

Indeed, we were going more and more slowly, and the snow was falling in such blinding showers that it was impossible to discern any object on either side of us as we went along. Before very long the expected happened—the train came slowly to a stop.

Birch rose from his seat in evident anxiety. He had made no remark to me concerning his brief visit to the adjoining compartment, and I had, therefore, been too discreet to allude to it myself. But when the stopping of the train brought our fears to a head he became suddenly communicative.

"I must wire up to London," he said in a low voice, rather to himself than to me, "or we may lose him after all."

From which I gathered that in his lightning visit he had satisfied himself as to the identity of his "man."

"Where are we?" asked I.

"I can't say I know myself," he answered, "but I don't think it's long since we passed a station of some kind. I saw lights close to the line some minutes ago." He was standing up with a reflective frown upon his face. We could hear voices, and the noise of opening doors and windows. Nervous passengers were calling the guard. Birch opened the door.

"I must get back there somehow," he said, desperately. And turning to me as he stepped out, he added:—

"You won't mind looking after my bag till I come back, will you?"

"Certainly not," said I, while it occurred to me to be amused that he should trust me with his luggage now that the lock was broken, while he had been so particular when it was intact.

The snow was so thick that he was lost to sight almost as soon as his feet reached the earth, where he sank, and I could not even hear the sound of his footsteps on the snowy ground.

Indeed, the rest of the passengers were by this time making such a clamour that no one sound could be discerned above the din. The guard was philosophic, desperate; there was a drift in front of us, he said, and the engine could not get through. There was a driving wind, blowing the snow in clouds to the east of us, and he reckoned we might

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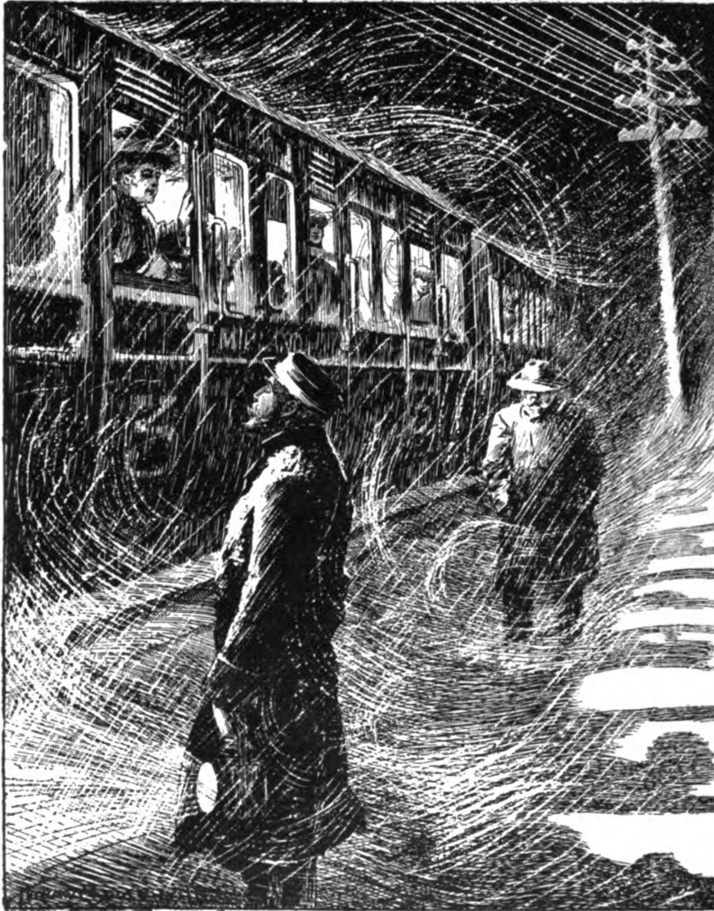
think ourselves lucky if we were not snowed up altogether, since, though we had been able to get thus far, it was by no means certain that we should be able to get back again; for drifts that we had been able to plough through half an hour before might be impassable by this time.

The consternation was general and acute.



"THE CONSTERNATION WAS GENERAL AND ACUTE."

The train was not very full, the badness of the weather having interfered with the traffic, which is usually heavy so near to Christmas. Still, there were enough of us to make a great noise, and I distinctly heard the voice of the florid lady who had been one of my travelling-companions in the earlier part of the journey, alternately uttering threats against the railway company and pleading to the guard to make one more effort to get forward. But this was impossible; and we should have been in sorry plight but for the approach of a stalwart northerner, who had seen from afar that something was wrong, and who had come up to inform us that he had an inn not many hundred yards away, and that if some of us would accompany him thither he and his wife would do the best they could for us.

The passengers, as one man, accepted the invitation. Taking our light luggage with us and leaving the rest to its fate, we were streaming after our host through mountains of soft snow when I bethought me that I was in some sort responsible for the detective's bag, and decided to take it with me.

As I was lame, however, I had to get help in carrying both his and my own luggage, and I made my way so slowly that by the time I reached the little inn I found its accommodation stretched to the utmost by this sudden influx of visitors.

My fellow-travellers of the early part of the journey, who had, I imagine, spread themselves about in different parts of the train, had now instinctively foregathered again, and were sitting in a group by the fire in the stone-flagged kitchen, all but the pretty girl with the fair hair, who was by herself in a distant corner.

Every chair being by this time occupied, and even the deal table and the coal-box having been converted into seats, I put the detective's bag on the top of my own and, regardless of the consequences to their contents, made myself a seat of them.

I observed that a certain constraint appeared to fall upon these good people at my approach, and presently the young Scotchman glanced at my heap of luggage and said:—

"I'm thinking ye are not like the Yankee who can travel round the world with a toothbrush and a paper collar, sir."

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I laughed a little.

"Oh, this isn't all mine," I said. "I'm taking care of part of it for a chance travelling-companion."

At once I caught, not only upon his face, but on the faces of his companions, a look which told me they considered this remark a perversion of the truth. And it flashed through my mind that they took me for a detective also, and thought that my remaining in the carriage when they all left it was a proof of this. Coupled with my care of his luggage, no doubt it seemed a conclusive proof.

I was much tickled with this idea, and resolved, for the fun of the thing, to live up to my new character.

"Oh, yes, quite a chance companion," I repeated, truly enough, but with just sufficient emphasis to confirm them in their own opinion.

"And where may he be gone?" asked the City man, with assumed carelessness.

"Oh, just to send off a wire from the nearest station to give news of our mishap."

A manifest ripple of uneasiness passed over the whole party. This was curious, but the fact that the pretty girl in the distant corner shared the general feeling worried me again not a little. There was silence among us for a few moments. The rest of the passengers in the room chatted and grumbled, but my group fidgeted in their seats and watched me furtively. When at last the silence was broken, and they began to talk again, even noisily, as if to appear at their ease, the sanctimonious man in the gold spectacles, who was sitting beside me on the coal-box, spoke confidentially in my ear:—

"And who may you be after, sir? We know very well that you are from Scotland Yard also. And I suppose you're both on business."

I was considerably surprised by this address, and I felt a malicious pleasure in maintaining his anxiety, as there was something piquant in the discovery of a guilty conscience under such a smug and sanctimonious manner.

"By-the-bye," I said, turning to look well in his face, but keeping my tone at the same level as his, "what made you leave the carriage so quickly just because another passenger got into it?"

The man stammered a little before answering.

"I—I—I would not willingly be present to see a fellow-creature's pain and distress," he then said, solemnly.

"No, Mr. Smith; I dare say not," I answered.

It was amusing to see the shock the sound of his own name gave him.

"How—how did you know——"

Then he faltered and stopped. Indeed, my knowledge had been arrived at very simply, for he had been passing the time by reading a second-hand book, on several pages of which the name "Robert Smith" was impressed with a common rubber stamp. I said nothing, however, but looked very wise. Growing more and more uneasy, he at length jumped up, dragged me back into a corner near the dresser, and whispered hurriedly in my ear:—

"If you've come to arrest me for deserting my wife and family, I can explain everything; I——"

But I cut him short, appalled by the discoveries I had innocently made.

"Oh, that's all right. I know nothing about that," I said, hastily, as I tried to get away.

The man actually staggered back a step against the dresser, his forehead white and glistening under the wide-brimmed black hat which he was still wearing. I heard him utter a broken murmur of thankfulness as he let me go, and it was evident, as he presently followed me back to his place in the group, that a great burden had been taken off his mind.

As his brow cleared, however, it was plain to me that those of his companions clouded still more. And after a little interchange of speech with me, in which his manner was half bumptious and half deferential, the man on the other side of me, the City man, as I had decided that he must be, whispered to me in his turn.

"Do you happen to know anything about this Turf fraud they're trying to keep so dark?" he said, in a would-be airy manner.

"Oh, yes, I know a great deal about it," I cried, promptly.

He rubbed his chin and looked at me askance.

"If you think I had anything to do with it," he said, sullenly, in a low voice, "you're mistaken. But I tell you what: I can give you the straight tip as to the men who were in it," he added, in a lower voice than ever.

I took out my pocket-book with assumed alacrity.

"Your name first, please," I said, trying to look very knowing as I bit my pencil.

"Oh, you know my name well enough," said he, shortly. "Granby Hillier, of Fen-

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church Street, that's my name, and I've never been known by any other."

As I was not anxious for his further communications, having carried the joke far enough with him, I shut up my pocket-book suddenly, as if this last piece of information made me doubtful of his good faith. The action frightened him very much.

"Do you mean to say," he hissed into my ear, "that you or your pal have got a warrant for my arrest?"

"I haven't, certainly," said I; "and if he has I haven't heard of it."

The man looked hard at me and heaved a sigh of relief. Satisfied in his turn, he left the seat beside me and went out into the bar. The next moment the important-looking lady with the numerous hat-boxes took the seat he had left. It was evident that her nervousness had got the better of her discretion, for she began without any opening at all.

"If you think I'm leaving London to avoid paying my debts," she said, in an agitated whisper, "you are wrong, quite wrong. And as for my calling myself Madame Maude, why, that's nothing. All ladies of social position, when they take up millinery or anything of that sort, do it under another name."

"I am perfectly aware of that, madam," said I, politely; and I added, truly enough, "and if you were to use a dozen names I assure you I should consider it no concern of mine."

She looked at me hard, as if not quite certain whether this was satisfactory or not. But I think she at last came slowly to the conclusion that I meant her no harm, for she gave me a gracious bend of the head, and said, with a smile which was meant to be sweet, but which was still rather quivery:—

"Oh, I could see at a glance that you were a gentleman; otherwise I should not have said so much to you."

"'IF YOU THINK I'M LEAVING LONDON TO AVOID PAYING MY DEBTS,' SHE SAID, 'YOU ARE WRONG.'"

The first part of this sentence I thought hardly tallied with the last; but I returned her smile, and was glad when she turned to busy herself with her numerous parcels.

After this experience I could scarcely be surprised when the young Scotchman engaged me in confidential discourse, and I felt much interested in wondering what his particular peccadillo would turn out to be. But he was cute and canny, after the manner of his race, and though he held me in conversation for a long time and touched upon all sorts of subjects, I not only failed to discover whether he too had a wholesome fear of the law's grip, but I fancied that he guessed the truth concerning me. At any rate, I noticed him examining very carefully, though as if casually, the luggage on which I was seated, and there was a smug air of satisfaction on his face when he had done with me.

Of all my five fellow-passengers there remained now only my pretty girl uninter-

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viewed, and I own I was very anxious to be addressed by her, and to make her mind easy, should that be necessary, as I could not but feel that it was. For indeed I could see her eyes watching me from behind her gauze veil as I moved about.

She did not, however, address me of her own accord, as the others had done; and at last I, overcome by my own anxiety to speak comfort to her, seized the occasion of the entrance of a woman with some tea for the ladies of the party to take the initiative in addressing her.

So I took a cup of tea from the tray, and made my way into the corner where she sat alone. She seemed to shrink into herself as I approached, but I cannot help thinking she felt some sort of reassurance as soon as I spoke to her, offering her the welcome refreshment as gently as I could.

She took the cup, and, forced to raise her veil a little, showed me a face even more attractive than I had supposed. I found myself stoutly denying, in my own mind, the possibility that this fair and sweet young creature could have anything very heavy on her conscience, and yet there was a sort of entreaty in her eyes which made me wonder.

I followed up my first attention by others, bringing her cakes and sandwiches, and trying to arrange the curtain of the little window behind her in such a manner as to keep out the draught. And all the while I talked to her, not trying to make her talk in return, but striving to put her at her ease.

I think she began to look at me with less suspicion, and at last she expressed a courteous regret that I should move about so much on her account.

"Oh! Because of my foot?" said I. "That's nothing. I had a shot through it fighting out in Africa, but the lameness has nearly gone now, and it looks worse than it is."

I could see that she was looking at me earnestly through her veil.

"You have been in Africa, fighting? And you've just come back?" she said, in an anxious voice scarcely above a whisper. "Then—then you're not——"

Her voice sank and died away.

"I'm not anybody to be afraid of," I answered, in a low voice, "but I've been amusing myself by pretending that I am to those people over there."

The tears rushed suddenly to her eyes, and her voice trembled as she said: "Oh, but you shouldn't do that! You don't know how much misery you may be causing! Surely, surely——"

I was so much moved by her emotion that I could not at first answer her.

At last I said:—

"Surely we need not waste much compassion upon wrong-doers, for they certainly must be wrong-doers if their consciences are so very tender!"

"You are too hard," said she, quickly. "Everybody is a wrong-doer, more or less, at some time or other, and very often it is more by misfortune or by weakness than by wickedness. It seems to me that cruelty is as bad as crime."

I looked at her earnestly. Her face, her voice, her manner, all seemed to me to inspire a perfect belief that she herself was the most innocent of human creatures.

"At any rate," I said, "no one would be hard or cruel to anybody for whom you were to plead!"

A change came over her face. It broke up into an infinite tenderness.

"If I could only believe that!" faltered she.

And in an instant I understood that it was not upon her own account, but upon that of another, that she was in such distress. Realizing, with a quick look of terror, that she had in a measure betrayed herself, the pretty girl bit her lip, rose hurriedly, and looked at the hanging Dutch clock on the wall.

"How long do you think it will be," she went on, nervously, "before we can get on to Edinburgh?"

"A week, perhaps," said I, rashly.

I was sorry the next moment, for the tears rushed to her pretty blue eyes.

"Then it will be too late," said she, below her breath, in a tone of anguish. And then some instinct, some impulse, made her turn to me again, and looking up into my face with the most piteous look of entreaty she whispered: "Oh, sir, if you can do anything to help me to get on with my journey I do beg you to do it! I'm sure you would if you knew how much depends on it—the safety, the salvation, of one very near and dear to me, my only brother."

"I would do anything I could," said I, earnestly; "but——"

"If there is any way of going on, no matter how difficult or even dangerous," she went on, still in a whisper, and with her veil now quite raised, so that I could see every movement of her beautiful eyes, every quiver of her lips, "let me know of it—let me try it. Listen! I'm sure you would not betray a confidence. I don't know why, but I do

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feel sure of that. It is a matter almost of life and death to me. I have to find a sum of money within two days to save a great disgrace, a great sorrow. I can, I think, get it in Edinburgh from some relations; but if I can't get to them within that time it will be too late, and I shall break my heart."

I was distressed beyond measure by her words, even while I was conscious that the eyes of the young Scotchman were fixed upon us with a sort of shrewd malevolence which was disconcerting. I assured her that I would make inquiries as to the possibility of proceeding, and did my best to keep up her hopes, even though I could not but feel something like despair of her attaining her object.

We were still talking earnestly in a low voice when I was startled to see a face pressed against the glass of the latticed window from the outside. Looking out I recognised the face of the man who had occupied the next compartment to mine in the train—the thief who had carried off the jewels.

The cause of the terrible expression on his face only became clear to me in the light of after events. He had discovered the loss of the stolen property, and his haggard eyes and look of fierce despair were shocking to see.

He looked at everybody in the room, staring in with bloodshot eyes, but disappeared when an exclamation from my lips drew the attention of the occupants to him.

The men went to the window and tried to look out, but the snow was still falling too thickly for them to be able to do so.

The appearance of this haggard and ghastly face, however, pressed close to the window-panes, had filled everybody with some uncanny sense of approaching misfortune. The women uttered faint screams, and there grew among us all a vague sense that some tragedy was happening, or about to happen.

The men began to file out into the bar, leaving the rest of the company in a state of suspense and uneasiness, which was increased when a loud murmur of voices, swelling with excitement, came into the room.

"What is it? What is happening?" asked the stout lady, nervously.

I was going out in my turn, in spite of my lameness, to see what was wrong, when the door of the room burst open, and Mr. Granby Hillier came in, much excited and apparently somewhat relieved.

"What is it?" asked the Scotchman, who was the only man besides myself who had remained in the room. "What's a' the excitement?"

"There's been a robbery," cried he, "a great jewel robbery, and the thief was in the very same train with us."

The ladies exclaimed and asked a dozen

"HE OPENED ONE AND SHOWED THAT IT CONTAINED A HANDSOME DIAMOND BRACELET."

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questions, but the young Scotchman and I held our tongues.

"Luckily," went on Granby Hillier, "there were two detectives after him—in the train, too."

"Detectives! Ah!"

The ladies looked interested and relieved at the same time. Poor Madame Maude, especially, gave a soft sigh of contentment. There was a worse malefactor than herself abroad!

"So they've caught him?" said she.

"Not yet. But he's been seen close by this house, and we may hope at any moment——"

He was interrupted by a shout from outside. We were by this time all upon our feet. But those of us who would have rushed out to learn the news were prevented by a sudden inrush of people from the bar. They entered in a body, bringing with them a strong perfume of whisky toddy.

"Here's one of the 'tecs' coming in here," explained Granby Hillier, in a loud whisper.

But it was not my friend of the train who came in, with a group of interested observers at his heels. It was a tall, thin man, with grizzled hair and whiskers, in a long, light overcoat and heavy muffler. He was a disappointing person after my friend, commonplace-looking, and without any particular keenness of eye. Moreover, he did not wear policeman's boots, and I felt inclined to doubt his pretensions.

However, he came into the room, looked round casually, and asked if he could see the light luggage which had been brought from the train. With the greatest alacrity most of those present offered their bags and their parcels for his inspection; but I stood by the pretty girl's side without offering mine. The Scotchman, however, officiously dragged my luggage into view.

"Maybe ye'll care to see these things; they're the property of the young gentleman over yonder," said he, with a glance of malice, which I attributed to a sort of jealousy he felt at my companion's honouring me with her conversation.

The detective, who was closely followed by the landlord, looked at the luggage and then at me. I came forward and explained, in a low voice, that one of the bags was mine.

"The other," said I, "was left in my charge by your colleague."

He looked into the bag which did not belong to me, and then he gazed steadily at me. And as he did so the Scotchman sniggered.

Then, for the first time, a glimmering of the truth broke in upon me. Cold from head to foot, I struggled for my breath, and said, hoarsely:—

"Surely, surely you don't take *me* for a thief?"

The man in the long overcoat still looked at me in the same stolidly irritating way.

"Oh, no, sir, that's not what I take you for," said he. "But—would you mind coming with me a minute?"

I felt cold from head to foot, and the self-satisfied expression of smug content with the turn things were taking which I saw in the face of the Scotchman made me angry as well as anxious. All the group round us began instinctively to draw away from me, as I was suddenly conscious. Only the pretty young girl made a movement in my favour. Taking a step towards me, she smiled up in my face, and said:—

"And I'll take care of your things till you come back."

The words were not much, but the comfort they gave me was so great that I could scarcely stammer out a conventional word of thanks.

Then, feeling that I was an object of suspicion to everyone but her, I went out with the man in the long overcoat.

He led me past the bar, up the narrow staircase, and unlocked a door on the upper floor.

"Go in, please," said he. And he followed me in, still carrying the bag of which I had taken charge.

The room was of fair size, and was evidently used for lodge-meetings and farmers' dinners. On the long table stood two lamps, and at the end sat three men. One of them was the man who had run away with the jewels, and whose face I had seen at the window downstairs; the second was unknown to me; and the third was Birch.

I had had an uncanny fear that Birch, of the shrewd eyes and the policeman's boots, would turn out to be somebody else when I next met him. But he pushed back his chair, looked up at me as I entered, and burst out laughing. I gave a sigh of relief.

"You've taken care of my bag, I hope?" said he.

"Oh, yes," said I. "At least, I've given it—I've had it taken——"

And, without finishing my speech, I glanced at the man who had brought me in—the man in the long coat. He, however, was taking no

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notice of me. He placed the bag in front of the suspicious traveller from the next compartment to ours.

"Is this your bag?" said he.

"Yes," said the man, at once. "This is it. And look; here are some of the cases left at the bottom."

He pulled out, as he spoke, some shabby leather jewel-cases, and then he opened one and showed that it contained a handsome diamond bracelet.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Birch, from his seat at the table.

But the speaker took no notice of him.

"No doubt," he went on, "he emptied all he could into his pockets and left what he couldn't carry away."

I looked at Birch again, but he made no remark. I was getting puzzled once more. The man who was talking did not now look like a thief. He looked like a respectable gentleman's servant, and now that his expression was no longer furtive and anxious his appearance and manner were not unprepossessing. He went on:—

"I wasn't gone from the carriage more than a minute, and when I came back my bag was gone and another put in its place. I didn't find it out till the accident, when I dragged it out from under the seat, and saw that it had been exchanged for another like it. The fellow must have watched me when I've been in charge of her ladyship's jewels before."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Birch again.

And then I saw that he was handcuffed.

"Good heavens!" cried I. "Then—then you're not a detective at all?"

"No," said Birch, insolently; "but I pass very well for one—with the mugs!"

The remark was exceedingly pointed, and I grew red. More than that, I felt sick and cold with the shock of this discovery, and with the fear that I was suspected of being the man's accomplice. I staggered a little, and when the man in the long coat gave me his arm I made sure he meant to arrest me.

"I—I know nothing about it—really!" stammered I.

"Bless you, sir! Of course you don't. You're as innocent as a babe," said he.

This was meant to be reassuring, but I confess I should have preferred a different form of words. I felt more and more keenly the sense they all had of my gullibility as the man in the long coat good-naturedly made clear to me what had happened.

My supposed detective, Birch, was an expert thief, who had found out that the jewels of a certain very great lady were to be sent to her by train by a confidential and trusted servant who had frequently been employed on similar errands. As he was a member of a gang who devoted their time to these matters, Birch knew that it was the

"THEY HAD NO PRETTY MARY MALLOW TO CONSOLE THEM."

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custom for this servant to carry the jewels in a common Gladstone bag, to avoid exciting suspicions as to the value of the parcel. He had therefore provided himself with a similar bag, and had deftly exchanged the one for the other on the first opportunity.

Then, transferring as much of the jewellery as he could conveniently carry from the bag to his own pockets, he had left the bag itself in my care, and he would probably have succeeded in making his escape but for the mishap, which had caused the servant to find out his loss almost immediately.

This latter had given the alarm to a couple of real detectives who had been sent by the same train as the servant, by way of extra precaution. One of them, seated in the next compartment to the servant, had seen the entrance and departure from the carriage of Birch, and when the accident happened and the alarm was given he had little difficulty in identifying the escaping thief, whom he and his colleague promptly brought to bay and overhauled.

To turn out his pockets, recover the stolen property, and then to handcuff and to take him to the inn were their next cares. And when I was brought in with the missing bag the smallest details of the robbery were made clear.

It was with a burning face and an uneasy sense of my own stupidity that I went downstairs again, leaving the thief, the servant, and the two detectives together.

The sore point with me was that the miserable Scotchman looked upon me as the greatest duffer that ever drew breath, and piqued himself upon his discernment in finding it out.

To my secret satisfaction, however, things turned out differently from what I had expected. No sooner had I re-entered the room where I had left my travelling-companions than the Scotchman sprang up, scared and pale, ejaculating in unmistakable dismay :—

"Then ye're no the thief?"

Quick to take advantage of this, I drew myself up and said, quietly :—

"The thief! No, not exactly. But I'm very happy to have been of use in running the scoundrel to earth."

The sensation caused by these words was indescribable. All the travellers talked at once, asking questions, and trying to prove that they had never themselves had the least doubt of the truth.

"They had, though," whispered my pretty girl to me, presently, when the commotion had calmed down a little and the group had become broken into twos and threes. "They all followed the lead of that Scotchman, who thought you had been arrested too."

We laughed together over this little joke, for my pretty companion's spirits were rising since the information had been brought in that the snow had ceased to fall and that in a short time it was hoped the line might be clear enough for us to continue our journey.

By the time we did so I had learnt that my heroine's name was Mary Mallow, and that we had some friends in common, by means of whom I had already made up my mind to improve my acquaintance with this, the sweetest girl I had ever met. I sympathized with her anxiety for the young brother who had, in a weak moment, done the rash act from the consequences of which she hoped to rescue him by an appeal to their relations. And I had already made up my mind on one of the most important subjects in the world to a previously heart-whole young man.

A certain reserve on the part of the rest of our travelling-companions, engendered by the remembrance of their rash confessions to me, helped to throw us two together.

And in the pleasure I felt in her society I was able to overcome the annoyance caused by Birch, who, as he walked over the snow towards the train between the two real detectives, said to me as he passed :—

"Good-bye, old pal! I wish I could come across a few more of your sort, that I do!"

I felt myself grow red under the taunt; but after all, if I had made some mistakes on that journey, my fellow-passengers had made more.

And they had no pretty Mary Mallow to console them!

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Some Wonders from the West.

From a] THE GATE OF MENAGERIE FARM. [*Photo.*

XLVI.—A WOODEN MENAGERIE.

HE animals in this menagerie bite not. The lion does not roar, the elephant never eats nuts and cakes, and the sea-serpent is as peaceable as such a serpent ought to be. No one ever visits this extraordinary "Zoo" to see the animals fed, for they have no appetite, and can go from one year's end to the other without a morsel of food, and the inquisitive visitor can poke any one of the exhibits with a stick, yet never evoke an ebullition of zoological wrath. Indeed, one can wander with assured safety through any part of the "Zoo," and little children can see everything thoroughly well without the help of their uncles or their mothers.

It would, of course, be otherwise were these animals not made of wood, the wood being the roots of trees which Mr. Hugh E. Jones, a kindly-hearted gentleman of seventy-six years, has for a long time collected on his farm near Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Jones's own title for his homestead and its collection is Menagerie Farm, and under that name it has attained a reputation which has travelled far beyond the borders of the "Buck-eye State." Possibly it is the best name, too, for there are other things on his farm besides animals, particularly men, and if these men happen to be fearfully and wonderfully made it is only in strict accordance with that well-known dictum which to name the author of would be to asperse the intelligence of our readers.

Forty years ago Mr. Jones went to America and settled in Ohio, after an adventurous life passed near the Holy Land. He was born on board his father's ship within three miles of Alexandria, Egypt, and the effect of environment on youthful fancy is shown to-day on his Ohio farm. Whether or not the entrance gate was built before or after the other attractions of Menagerie Farm we cannot at the moment say, but the gate shown in the above photograph is a fairly exact reproduction in wood of the original brass gate which leads from Jericho to Jerusalem. It is hung in the centre, and opens inward or outward, forward or back. The effect of environment upon maturity—or it may be to an intelligent reading of the daily press—is shown by the elaboration of the original design. On top of the gate an old and not always to be honoured friend, Oom Paul, stands in the centre, and acts as a weather-vane for the benefit of passers-by. On the right post screams the American eagle, and on the left post a democratic "rooster" raises its head in conscious hope of a glorious future, yet sadly aware that for nearly a decade he has not had a genuine opportunity to crow. The introduction of these two birds gives evidence of the proprietor's patriotism and political proclivities, and the

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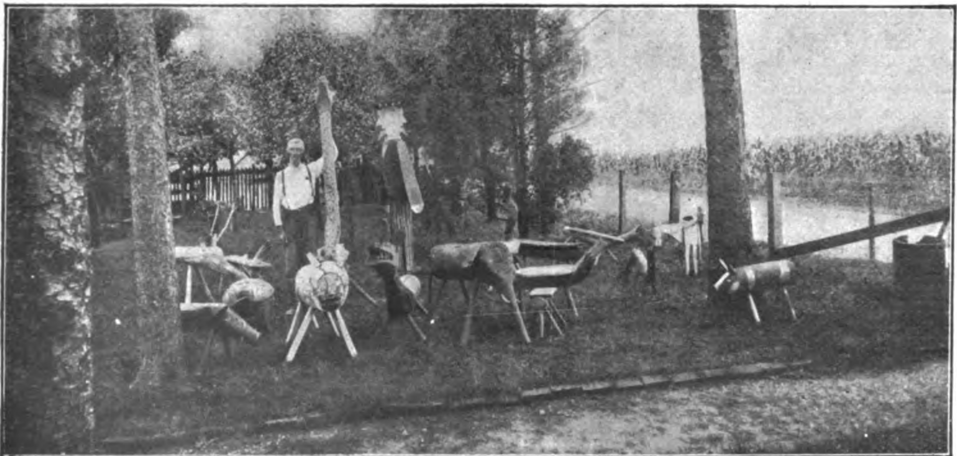
gate as a whole is a most commendable example of native ingenuity.

For the convenience of travellers the respective distances to Columbus and Lockbourne are given upon this gate, and on the right-hand gate-post Mr. Jones's letter-box is attached, giving all necessary postal information, as follows: "United States rural delivery. Box II., L. Station C. Route 3, South-East." Those who would make a trip to this remarkable farm now possess accurate information as to its whereabouts, and we can only add that the farm is worth going miles to see.

From a] MR. HUGH E. JONES IN HIS WORKSHOP. [Photo.

If we enter the gate we are in the midst of a collection of figures extraordinary and, indeed, unique. The animals are scattered about the lawn with a profusion almost characteristic of bounteous Nature. The elephant looks down with some disdain upon the deep-sea turtle, and the sea-serpent raises its fearsome head from the billows of the turf towards the monarch of the jungle. This lion, by the way, was Mr. Jones's first contribution to his menagerie, and the improvement in the handiwork of the proprietor from early times to the present is shown if you look at the mule on the following page. Up to the time of writing this mule was the latest contribution to the menagerie, and



From a] A GENERAL VIEW OF MENAGERIE FARM. [Photo.

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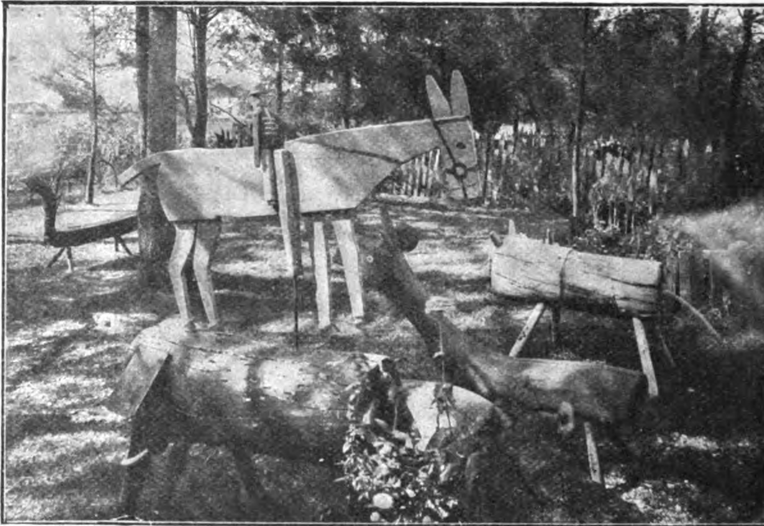

From a] A NEARER VIEW OF THE MULE AND OTHER ANIMALS. *[Photo.*

was, of course, suggested by the late war in South Africa, as it is, on the face of it, a distinctly American mule, with a British soldier on top. The shipment of American mules to South Africa is, of course, a fact; but it yet remains to be proved that Tommy utilized the Yankee hybrid for general cavalry purposes. That, however, is by the way. We ought to add that this wooden mule, like mules in general, arrived very slowly at maturity, for it was entirely hand-made, and to turn the product of an ordinary pine tree into an approximate representation of a forty-dollar quadruped is not a labour to be completed in a night.

In all this curious collection there are but two animals made of oak, these being the giraffe and Persian wild boar, which are shown together in the last of our illustrations. The others have mostly been made out of the roots of apple trees, and all the roots have been found on Mr. Jones's own land. Students of Nature have often observed the peculiar shape into which apple trees, root and branch, twist themselves, and it was such observation that gave to this ingenious man the idea of Menagerie Farm. The embellishment of the wood with teeth, eyes, and other characteristics of the animal kingdom was a natural advance upon the original idea, and, to paraphrase a well-known Johnsonism, the wonder is, not that they really look like animals in a "Zoo," but that the "Zoo" should have been thought of at all.

The people who visit Menagerie Farm come from all parts, and an afternoon's outing in this curious demesne is made pleasant for everyone by the courteous simplicity of the owner in his treatment of his guests. He will tell you, in more detail than we can use, of the history of the farm, its slow but regular development, the people, noted and unnoted, who have come to visit him, and if you care to hear you will be told the interesting reminiscences of an active and adventurous youth. If you wish he will take you to the room in which he works, where, with chisel, plane, and saw, he laboriously executes his ever-growing collection. You may in this simple workshop, if you care to stay long enough, witness the development of the gnarled wood into something interesting and full of surprise. Nature, full of tricks, has supplied the material, and the man does the rest. We are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Gustave A. Harring, of Zanesville, Ohio, for the photos. and information in this article.

From a] THE GIRAFFE AND THE PERSIAN WILD BOAR. *[Photo.*

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XLVII.—GOATS AS LAND-CLEARERS.

THE present is the age of machinery and mechanical labour in lieu of manual, for the very cogent reason that it is both cheaper and quicker. But even a machine costs money, and after it has accomplished its allotted task is only worth its weight in old iron. An enterprising American farmer has gone one better, since the means by which he performed a special task in hand were actually worth more to him than the price he expended in securing them.

From a] WHAT THE LAND LOOKED LIKE BEFORE THE GOATS WERE TURNED IN. [*Photo.*

Mr. D. D. Moss is a wealthy farmer, owning large expanses of fields and uncleared pasture in Boone County, Missouri. As is always the case out West, when a farmer desires to open up any of his ground for agricultural purposes it is primarily necessary for him to clear away all the bushes, weeds, and other obnoxious shrubbery on the land. Mr. Moss's speciality is the manufacture of vaccine, and for this purpose he has a large stock of the finest-bred young cattle.

A few months ago he desired to open up and develop a large expanse of his virgin land. It had run very much to seed, being covered with dense undergrowth and weeds of all descriptions. It looked a Herculean task to clear it by the conventional means, either manual or mechanical, and would have necessitated a heavy expenditure of money. While cogitating over the matter it suddenly occurred to him that, as goats will devour nearly everything green, the land might be efficaciously and cheaply cleared by this agency.

Mr. Moss consulted Dr. H. J. Waters, the head of the Missouri State Agricultural Experiment Station—to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce the accompanying photographs—at Columbia, and the result of these negotiations was that a decision was made to test the experiment, and to follow its progress with a view to its adaptation to other districts. Several farmers in the State were apprised of the fact, and requested to repair to Mr. Moss's farm to follow the trial.

After the consultation with Dr. Waters, Mr. Moss hied to the cattle market at Kansas City and bought two hundred mongrel goats, at an average price of nine shillings each —a total outlay of ninety pounds—and had them transported to his farm. Here a

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certain area of land was wired off. The vaccine young cattle were first turned in to eat up the sweetest grass, followed by other general cattle, which ate everything that was worth eating. The goats were then turned in and allowed to roam over the area of their own free will.

Naturally, the animals first cleared off what was to them the most luscious and appetizing verdure, but as this was in a very short time all devoured they soon turned their attention to the coarser pasture. The farmers who had gathered at the vaccine farm followed the experiment closely every day, while Dr. Waters and his own staff from the State Agricultural Station made daily careful observations and memoranda as to the varieties of shrubbery preferred by the goats, and the effect of the constant nibbling by the animals upon the plants. As a matter of fact, there were very few descriptions of foliage the goats refused to eat, and these comprised thistles and one or two other plants.

From a] THE GOATS AT WORK. *[Photo.*

The observations made showed that the animals first cropped off the elm, dewberry, blackberry, and crab-apple classes of bushes as being the most tasty, and the hickory and ash were left to the last. The last-mentioned small trees the goats barked with their horns. The animals did not display very appreciable preference for any particular weed beyond the dock leaf, and they scoured the pasture for this dainty.

The rapidity and thoroughness with which the animals cleared the ground were most remarkable. When the goats had passed over an expanse there was scarcely a green leaf left behind them. The weeds were cropped close to the ground; all the leaves were devoured off the bushes; the trees had been barked as high as the animals could reach, and even the young shoots and tender branches had been consumed. Our photographs, showing the land before and after the goats had been at work upon it, will afford a very comprehensive idea of the utility of goats for this special work. The animals cleared the land at the rate of forty acres in twenty days, an average of two acres per day, which was considerably quicker than would have been accomplished by machinery or manual effort.

Also while this garbage was being devoured Mr. Moss was improving the marketable value of his stock. When he purchased the goats they were in a comparatively wasted condition, but they soon gained flesh and improved their appearance after being turned out upon the weeding work, thus showing that these animals can thrive very well upon the verdure that other classes of cattle refuse to eat. They also entailed no further expense beyond their initial cost, since the pasture they devoured was sufficient food for them.

Moreover, Mr. Moss, the enterprising promoter of this unique scheme, further profited in his venture by a substantial increase in his flock. During the season the herd was augmented by sixty kids, which were worth four shillings a head in the open market at the age of one week, and increased in value as they grew older.

Under the circumstances of this unqualified success achieved by Mr. Moss's experiment it is no small wonder that several other

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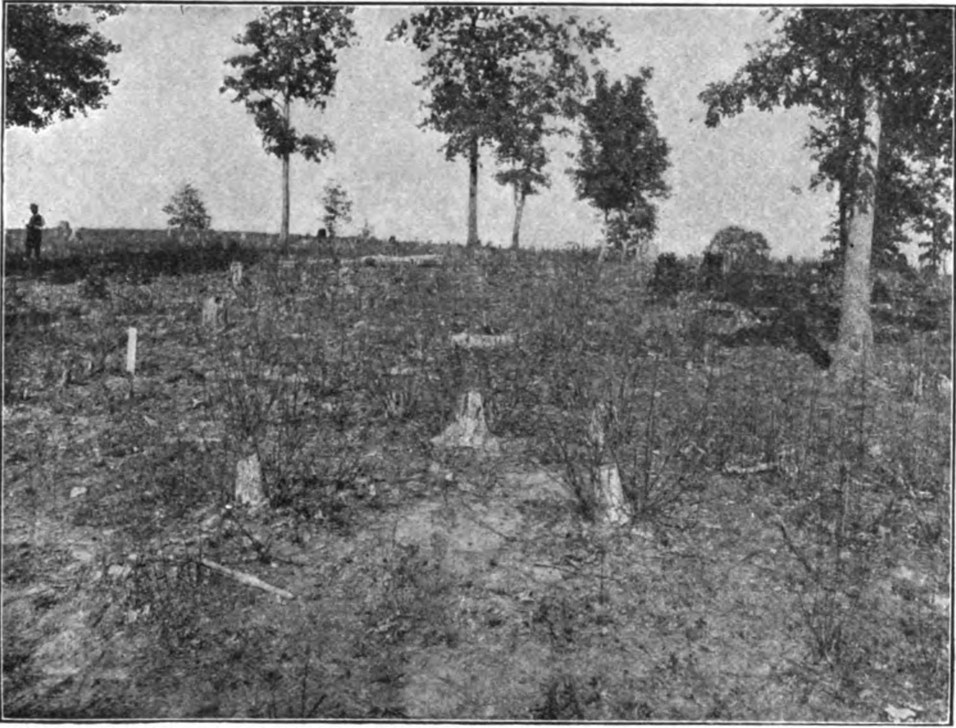

From a] THE SAME PIECE OF LAND WHEN THE GOATS HAD FINISHED WITH IT. [*Photo.*

farmers are adopting the same cheap process of developing their land. Labour is difficult to obtain in some districts in Missouri. By means of the goats large tracts of land will be opened up for the culture of cereals or other produce. The goat-labour is unlike any other : it enhances rather than depreciates in value, providing there is a sufficiency of verdure for them to thrive upon ; maintenance costs nothing ; the work is done for nothing ; and when the task is accomplished the animals, owing to their improved condition and appearance, can be sold for more than they cost. In the case of Mr. Moss's herd of two hundred goats, their present value is estimated at two hundred pounds—an excellent return upon ninety pounds' expenditure for less than one year, which proves that goats for farm-labouring are a gilt-edged investment.

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THE PSAMMEAD
or the Gifts.

BY E. NESBIT.

IX.—THE LAST WISH.

OF course, you who see above that this is the ninth (and last) chapter know very well that the day of which this chapter tells must be the last on which Cyril, Anthea, Robert, and Jane will have a chance of getting anything out of the psammead, or sand-fairy.

But the children themselves did not know this. They were full of rosy visions, and whereas on other days they had often found it extremely difficult to think of anything really nice to wish for, their brains were now full of the most beautiful and sensible ideas. "This," as Jane remarked afterwards, "is always the way." Everyone was up extra early that morning, and these plans were hopefully discussed in the garden before breakfast. The old idea of a hundred pounds in modern florins was still first favourite, but there were others that ran it close —the chief of these being the "pony each" idea. This had a great advantage. You could wish for a pony each during the morning, ride it all day, have it vanish at sunset, and wish it back again next day; which would be an economy of litter and stabling. But at breakfast two things happened. First, there was a letter from mother. Granny was better, and mother and father hoped to be home that very afternoon. A cheer arose. And, of course, this news at once scattered all the before-breakfast wish-ideas, for everyone saw quite plainly that the wish of the day must be something to please mother and not to please themselves.

"I wonder what she *would* like?" pondered Cyril.

"She'd like us all to be good," said Jane, primly.

"Yes, but that's so dull for us," Cyril rejoined; "and, besides, I should hope we could be that without sand-fairies to help us. No, it must be something splendid, that we couldn't possibly get without wishing for."

"Look out," said Anthea, in a warning voice; "don't forget yesterday. Remember, we get our wishes now just wherever we happen to be when we say 'I wish.' Don't let's let ourselves in for anything silly to-day of all days."

"All right," said Cyril; "you needn't jaw."

Just then Martha came in with a jugful of hot water for the teapot, and a face full of importance for the children.

"A blessing we're all alive to eat our breakfasses," she said, darkly.

"Why, whatever's happened?" everybody asked.

"Oh, nothing," said Martha, "only it seems nobody's safe from being murdered in their beds nowadays."

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"Why," said Jane, as an agreeable thrill of horror ran down her back and legs and out at her toes, "*has* anyone been murdered in their beds?"

"Well, not exactly," said Martha, "but they might just as well; there's been burglars over at Peasemarsh Place—Beale's just told me, and they've took every single one of Lady Chittenden's diamonds and jewels and things, and she's a-goin' out of one fainting fit into another with hardly time to say 'Oh, my diamonds!' in between. And Lord Chittenden's away in London."

"Lady Chittenden?" said Anthea. "We've seen her. She wears a red and white dress, and she has no children of her own and can't abide other folks's."

"That's her," said Martha. "Well, she's put all her trust in riches—and you see how she's served. They say the diamonds and things was worth thousands of thousands of pounds. There was a necklace and a river—whatever that is—and no end of bracelets, and a tarrer and ever so many rings. But there, I mustn't stand talking, and all the place to clean down afore your ma come home."

EVERY ONE OF THE CHILDREN SEARCHED MOTHER'S ROOM."

"I don't see why she should ever have had such lots of diamonds," said Anthea, when Martha had flounced off. "She was rather a nasty lady, I thought. And mother hasn't any diamonds and hardly any jewels — the topaz necklace, and the sapphire ring daddy gave her when they were engaged, and the garnet star, and the little pearl brooch with great-grandpapa's hair in it—that's about all."

"When I'm grown up I'll buy mother no end of diamonds," said Robert, "if she wants them. I shall make so much money exploring Africa I sha'n't know what to do with it."

"Wouldn't it be jolly," said Jane, dreamily, "if mother could find all those lovely things —necklaces and rivers of diamonds and tarrers?"

"Ti-aras," said Cyril.

"Ti-aras, then—and rings and everything in her room when she came home. I wish she would——"

The others gazed at her in horror.

"Well, she *will*," said Robert. "You've wished, my good Jane, and our only chance now is to find the psammead, and, if it's in a good temper it *may* take back the wish and give us another. If not — well, goodness knows what we're in for — the police, of course, and —— Don't cry, silly — we'll stand by you. Father says we need never be afraid if we don't do anything wrong and always speak the truth."

But Cyril and Anthea exchanged gloomy glances. They remembered how convincing the truth about the psammead had been once before when told to the police.

It was a day of misfortunes. Of course, the psammead could not be found; nor the jewels, though every one of the children searched mother's room again and again.

"Of course," Robert said, "*we* couldn't find them. It'll be mother who'll do that. Perhaps she'll think they've been in the house for years and years, and never know they are the stolen ones at all."

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"Oh, yes." Cyril was very scornful. "Then mother will be a receiver of stolen goods, and you know jolly well what *that's* worse than."

Another and exhaustive search of the sandpit failed to reveal the psammead, so the children went back to the house slowly and sadly.

"I don't care," said Anthea, stoutly. "We'll tell mother the truth, and she'll give back the jewels and make everything all right."

"Do you think so?" said Cyril, slowly. "Do you think she'll believe us? Could anyone believe about a sammyadd unless they'd seen it? She'll think we're pretending. Or else she'll think we're raving mad, and then we shall be sent to Bedlam. How would you like it?"—he turned suddenly on the miserable Jane—"how would you like it to be shut up in an iron cage with bars and padded walls, and nothing to do but stick straws in your hair all day and listen to the howlings and ravings of the other maniacs? Make up your minds to it, all of you. It's no use telling mother."

"But it's true," said Jane.

"Of course it is, but it's not true enough for grown-up people to believe it," said Anthea. "Cyril's right. Let's put flowers in all the vases and try not to think about the diamonds. After all, everything has come right in the end all the other times."

So they filled every pot in the house with flowers—asters and zinnias, and loose-leaved late red roses from the wall of the stable-yard—till the house was a perfect bower.

And almost as soon as dinner was cleared away mother arrived, and was clasped in eight loving arms. It was very difficult indeed not to tell her all about the psammead at once, because they had got into the habit of telling her everything. But they did succeed in not telling her.

Mother, on her side, had plenty to tell them — about granny, and granny's pigeons, and Auntie Emma's lame tame donkey. She was very delighted with the flowery-boweryness of the house, and everything seemed so natural and pleasant now that she was home again that the children almost thought they must have dreamed the psammead.

But when mother moved towards the stairs to go up to her bedroom and take off her bonnet the eight arms clung round her just as if she only had two children—one the Lamb and the other an octopus.

"Don't go up, mummy darling," said Anthea; "let me take your things up for you."

"Or I will," said Cyril.

"We want you to come and look at the rose tree," said Robert.

"Oh, don't go up," said Jane, helplessly.

"THE EIGHT ARMS CLUNG ROUND HER."

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"Nonsense, dears," said mother, briskly. "I'm not such an old woman yet that I can't take my bonnet off in the proper place. Besides, I must wash these black hands of mine."

So up she went, and the children, following her, exchanged glances of gloomy foreboding.

Mother took off her bonnet—it was a very pretty hat really, with white roses in it — and when she had taken it off she went to the dressing-table to do her pretty hair.

On the table between the ring-stand and the pin-cushion lay a green leather case. Mother opened it.

"Oh, how lovely!" she cried. It was a ring — a blue sapphire with shining, many-lighted diamonds set round it. "Wherever did this come from?" mother asked, trying it on her wedding-finger, where it fitted beautifully. "However did it come here?"

"I don't know," said each of the children, truthfully.

"Father must have told Martha to put it here," mother said. "I'll run down and ask her."

"Let me look at it," said Anthea, who knew Martha would not be able to see the ring. But when Martha was asked, of course she denied putting the ring there, and so did Eliza and cook.

Mother came back to her bedroom very much interested and pleased about the ring. But when she opened the dressing-table drawer and found a long case containing an almost priceless diamond necklace she was more interested still, though not so pleased. In the wardrobe, when she went to put away her bonnet, she found a tiara and several brooches, and the rest of the jewellery turned up in various parts of the room during the next half-hour. The children looked more and more uncomfortable, and now Jane began to sniff.

Mother looked at her gravely.

"Jane," she said, "I am sure you know something about this. Now, think before you speak, and tell me the truth."

"We found a fairy," said Jane, obediently.

"No nonsense, please," said her mother, sharply.

"Don't be silly, Jane," Cyril interrupted.

H. R. MILLAR. 1902

"'WE FOUND A FAIRY,' SAID JANE, OBEDIENTLY."

Then he went on, desperately: "Look here, mother, we've never seen the things before, but Lady Chittenden at Peasemarsh Place lost all her jewellery by wicked burglars last night. Could this possibly be it?"

All drew a deep breath. They were saved.

"But how could they have put it here? And why should they?" asked mother, not unreasonably. "Surely it would have been easier and safer to make off with it?"

"Suppose," said Cyril, "they thought it better to wait for—for sunset—nightfall, I mean, before they went off with it. No one but us knew that you were coming back to-day."

"I must send for the police at once," said

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mother, distractedly. "Oh, how I wish daddy were here!"

"Wouldn't it be better to wait till he *does* come?" asked Robert, knowing that his father would not be home before sunset.

"No, no; I can't wait a minute with all this on my mind," cried mother. "All this" was the heap of jewel-cases on the bed. They put them all in the wardrobe and mother locked it. Then mother called Martha.

"Martha," she said, "has any stranger been into my room since I've been away? Now, answer me truthfully."

"No, mum," answered Martha; "leastways, what I mean to say——"

She stopped.

"Come," said her mistress, kindly, "I see someone has. You must tell me at once. Don't be frightened; I'm sure *you* haven't had anything to do with it."

Martha burst into heavy sobs.

"I was a-goin' to give you warning this very day, mum, to leave at the end of my month, so I was—on account of me being going to make a respectable young man happy, a gamekeeper he is by trade, mum, and I wouldn't deceive you, of the name of Beale. And it's as true as I stand here. It was your coming home in such a hurry, and no warning given; out of the kindness of his heart, it was, as he says, 'Martha, my beauty,' he says, which I ain't and never was, but you know how them men will go on, 'I can't see you a-toiling and a-moiling, and not lend you a 'elping 'and—which mine is a strong arm, and it's yours, Martha, my dear,' says he; and so he helped me a-cleanin' of the windows—but outside, mum, the whole time, and me in; if I never say another breathing word, it's the gospel truth."

"Were you with him the whole time?" asked her mistress.

"MARTHA BURST INTO HEAVY SOBS."

"Him outside and me in, I was," said Martha, "except for fetching up a fresh pail and the leather that that slut of a Eliza'd hidden away behind the mangle."

"That will do," said the children's mother. "I am not pleased with you, Martha; but you have spoken the truth, and that counts for something."

When Martha had gone the children clung round their mother.

"Oh, mummy darling," cried Anthea, "it isn't Beale's fault, it isn't really. He's a great dear, he is, truly and honourably, and as honest as the day. Don't let the police take him, mummy, oh, don't, don't, don't!"

It was truly awful. Here was an innocent man accused of robbery through that silly wish of Jane's, and it was absolutely useless to tell the truth. All longed to, but they thought of the straws in the hair and the shrieks of the other frantic maniacs, and they could not do it.

"Is there a cart hereabouts?" asked mother, feverishly. "A trap of any sort; I must drive in to Rochester and tell the police at once."

All the children sobbed: "There's a cart at the farm, but oh, don't go!—don't go!—oh, don't go!—wait till daddy comes home."

Mother took not the faintest notice. When

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she had set her mind on a thing she always went straight through with it. She was rather like Anthea in this respect.

"Look here, Cyril," she said, sticking on her hat with long, sharp, silver-headed pins, "I leave you in charge. Stay in the dressing-room. You can pretend to be swimming boats in the bath, or something. Say I gave you leave. But stay there, with the landing-door open; I've locked the other. And don't let anyone go into my room. Remember, no one knows the jewels are there except me—and all of you, and the wicked thieves who put them there. Robert, you stay in the garden and watch the windows. If anyone tries to get in you must run and tell the two farm men that I'll send up to wait in the kitchen. I'll tell them there are dangerous characters about—that's true enough. Now, remember, I trust you both. But I don't think they'll try it till after dark, so you're quite safe. Good-bye, darlings."

And she locked her bedroom door and went off with the key in her pocket.

The children could not help admiring the dashing and decided way in which she had acted. They thought how useful she would have been in organizing escape from some of the tight places in which they had found themselves of late, in consequence of their ill-timed wishes.

"She's a born general," said Cyril, "but *I* don't know what's going to happen to us. Even if the girls were to hunt for that beastly sammyadd and find it, and get it to take the jewels away again, mother would only think we hadn't looked out properly, and let the burglars sneak in and nick them, or else the police will think *we've* got them, or else that she's been fooling them. Oh, it's a pretty decent average ghastly mess this time, and no mistake."

He savagely made a paper boat and began to float it in the bath, as he had been told, but he did not seem to find it amusing.

Robert went into the garden and sat down on the worn, yellow grass, with his miserable head between his helpless hands.

Anthea and Jane whispered together in the passage downstairs, where the cocoanut matting was with the hole in it that you always catch your foot in if you're not careful. Martha's voice could be heard in the kitchen, grumbling loud and long.

"It's simply quite too dreadfully awful," said Anthea. "How do we know all the diamonds are there too? If they aren't the police will think mother and father have got them, and that they've only given up some of them for a kind of desperate blind. And they'll be put in prison and we shall be branded outcasts, the children of felons. And it won't be at all nice for father and mother either," she added, by a candid afterthought.

"But what can we *do?*" asked Jane.

"Nothing; at least, we might look for the sammyadd again. It's a very, *very* hot day. He may have come out to warm that whisker of his."

"He won't give us any more beastly wishes to-day," said Jane, flatly. "He gets crosser and crosser every time we see him. I believe he hates having to give wishes." Anthea had been shaking her head gloomily; now she stopped shaking it so suddenly that it really looked as though she were pricking up her ears.

"What is it?" asked Jane. "Oh, have you thought of something?"

"Our one chance," cried Anthea, dramatically; "the last, lone, forlorn hope! Come on!"

At a brisk trot she led the way to the sandpit. Oh, joy! there was the psammead, basking in a golden sandy hollow and preening its whiskers happily in the glowing afternoon sun. The moment it saw them it whisked round and began to burrow—it evidently preferred its own company to theirs. But Anthea was too quick for it. She caught it by its furry shoulders gently but firmly, and held it.

"Here—none of that," said the psammead; "leave go of me, will you?"

But Anthea held him fast.

"Dear, kind, darling sammyadd," she said, breathlessly.

"Oh, yes, it's all very well," it said; "you want another wish, I expect, but I can't keep on slaving from morning till night giving people their wishes. I must have some time to myself."

"Do you hate giving wishes?" asked Anthea, gently, and her voice trembled with excitement.

"Of course I do," it said. "Leave go of me or I'll bite; I really will—I mean it. Oh, well, if you choose to risk it——"

Anthea risked it and held on.

"Look here," she said, "don't bite me; listen to reason. If you'll only do what we want to-day we'll never ask you for another wish as long as we live."

The psammead was much moved.

"I'd do anything," it said, in a tearful voice. "I'd almost burst myself to give you one wish after another as long as I held out

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"SHE CAUGHT IT BY ITS FURRY SHOULDERS."

could forget all about the diamonds."

"Done!" said the psammead, but its voice was weaker.

"Would you like to rest a little?" asked Anthea, considerately.

"Yes, please," said the psammead; "and before we go any farther, will you wish something for me?"

"Can't you do wishes for yourself?"

"Of course not," it said; "we were always expected to give each other our wishes — not that we had any to speak of in the good old megatherium days. Just wish, will you, that you may never be able, any of you, to tell anyone a word about *me*."

"Why?" asked Jane.

"Why, don't you see, if you told grown-ups I should have no peace of my life. They'd get hold of me, and they wouldn't wish silly things like you do, but real earnest things, and the scientific people would hit on some way of making things last after sunset, as likely as not, and they'd ask for a graduated income-tax, and old-age pensions, and manhood suffrage, and free secondary education, and dull things like that, and get them and keep them, and the whole world would be turned topsy-turvy. Do wish it. Quick."

Anthea repeated the psammead's wish, and it blew itself out to a larger size than they had yet seen it attain.

"And now," it said as it collapsed, "can I do anything more for you?"

"Just one thing, and I think that clears everything up, doesn't it, Jane? I wish Martha to forget about the diamond ring, and mother to forget about the keeper cleaning the windows."

"It's like Anstey's 'Brass Bottle,'" said Jane.

"Yes; I'm glad we had that or I should never have thought of it."

"Now," said the psammead, faintly, "I'm almost worn out. Is there anything else?"

"No; only thank you kindly for all you've done for us, and I hope you'll have a good, long sleep, and I hope we shall see you again some day."

if you'd only never, never ask me to do it after to-day. If you knew how I hate to blow myself out with other people's wishes, and how frightened I am always that I shall strain a muscle or something! And then to wake up every morning and know you've *got* to do it. You don't know what it is—you don't know what it is—you don't." Its voice cracked with emotion, and the last "don't" was a squeak.

Anthea set it down gently on the sand.

"It's all over now," she said, soothingly. "We promise faithfully never to ask for another wish after to-day."

"Well, go ahead," said the psammead; "let's get it over."

"How many can you do?"

"I don't know; as long as I can hold out."

"Well, first, I wish Lady Chittenden may find she's never lost her jewels."

The psammead blew itself out, collapsed, and said, "Done!"

"I wish," said Anthea, more slowly, "mother mayn't get to the police."

"Done!" said the creature, after the proper interval.

"I wish," said Jane, suddenly, "mother

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"Is that a wish?" it said, in a weak voice.

"Yes, please," said the two girls together.

Then, for the last time, they saw the psammead blow itself out and collapse suddenly. It nodded to them, blinked its long snail's eyes, burrowed and disappeared, scratching fiercely to the last, and the sand closed over it.

"So you see it's all right," Jane whispered. "She doesn't remember."

"No more does Martha," said Anthea, who had been to ask after the state of the kettle.

As the servants sat at their tea, Beale, the gamekeeper, dropped in. He brought the welcome news that Lady Chittenden's jewels had not been lost at all. Lord

"IT BURROWED AND DISAPPEARED, SCRATCHING FIERCELY TO THE LAST."

"I hope we've done right," said Jane.

"I'm sure we have," said Anthea; "come on home and tell the boys."

Anthea found Cyril glooming over his paper boats and told him. Jane told Robert. The two tales were only just ended when mother walked in, hot and dusty. She explained that as she was being driven into Rochester to buy the girls' autumn school dresses the axle had broken, and but for the narrowness of the lane and the high, soft hedges she would have been thrown out. As it was she was not hurt, but she had had to walk home. "And oh, my dearest, dear chicks," she said, "I am simply dying for a cup of tea. Do run and see if the kettle boils!"

Chittenden had taken them to be reset and cleaned, and the maid who knew about it had gone for a holiday. So that was all right.

"I wonder if we ever shall see the sammyadd again?" said Jane, wistfully, as they walked in the garden while mother was putting the Lamb to bed.

"I'm sure we shall," said Cyril, "if you really wished it."

"We've promised never to ask it for another wish," said Anthea.

"I never want to," said Robert, earnestly.

They did see the psammead again, of course, but not in this story. And it was not in a sandpit either, but in a very, very, very different place. It was in a——but I must say no more.

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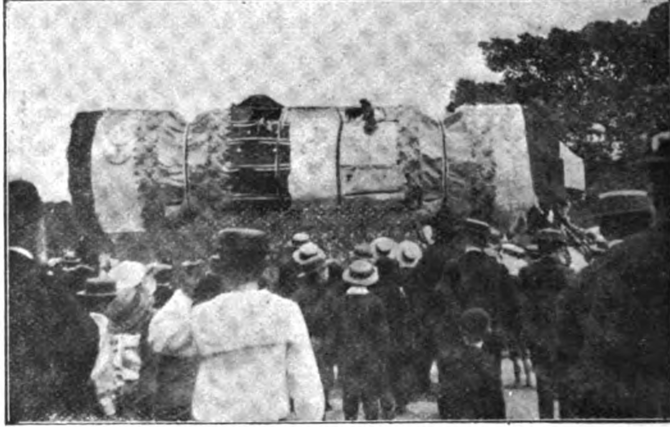
*Curiosities.**

[*We shall be glad to receive Contributions to this section, and to pay for such as are accepted.*]

A MONSTER CHRISTMAS CRACKER.



"The immense cracker shown in my photograph was carried by the confectioners in the 'eight hours' procession in Sydney, Australia. The length was twenty-five feet and the diameter six feet three inches. It was made by Mr. Alexander Wyatt, president of the Confectioners' Union. The boy in the opening is engaged in distributing the contents of the cracker—a ton of sweets (over twenty thousand bags)—to the crowd along the route."—Master Lionel Walcot, 52, Ebley Street, Waverley, near Sydney.

AN INTERNATIONAL SNOW MAN.

"There is perhaps no place in the whole wide world where the long hours of the dreary winter drag more slowly than in the mid-land of the New North of America, the vast waste of ice and snow-covered wilderness broken only at very irregular intervals by straggling settlements that in the rush of the short-lived summer are boastful cities in embryo, but which, with the falling of the mercury to 50deg. and 60deg. below zero, are but halting-places for the men of iron mould who trek it over the river-ice to or from Dawson City. The coming of these, the daily arrival and departure of the stage up or down the solid-frozen Yukon, and the consideration of the comparative merits of dog teams make up the entire chapter of winter life from Whitehorse, the railway terminus, through to the Klondike goldfields, five hundred miles or more of bleak, inhospitable desolation. Nowhere in the broad and busy world are the contributory elements of suicidal melancholia more in evidence, and when an enterprising resident of The Summit proposed some few months ago that the entire population of the boundary post 'turn out and build a snow man,' his ennui-breaking suggestion was hailed with glad approval, albeit the overworked thermometer showed minus 52deg., and the comforts of life upon the mountain tops that mark the provisional international boundary are notably inconspicuous in fact. The people of the American western and northern wonderland do nothing incompletely; hence their snow man takes precedence over all other snow men that yet have been. He calmly guards the peak on which there are flying side by side the significant banners of Great Britain and the United States, looking serenely down upon a sea of snowy ridges and a rugged wilderness of valley through which the world's northernmost railway crawls from cliff to precipice in manner most uncanny. The snow man is himself a trifle reminiscent of bygone days of giants upon the earth, for from base to crown he stands thirty-two feet six inches high, a glittering and conspicuous, if scarcely an artistic, figure. As the blocks of snow were piled in place, water (readily obtained by melting the convenient snow) was used with prodigal liberality until the snow man became in truth a man of ice, and lasting as other ice formations in these latitudes. The fancy of the architect has made him Janus-headed, and when imagination is coerced to aid the eye the features of the serene and silent sentinel of the snowy summit are recognised as those of His Majesty King Edward overlooking the British domain and of Uncle Sam on the American side."—Mr. C. H. Gibbons, Editor *Vancouver World*, Vancouver, B.C.

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A LUCKY SNAP-SHOT.

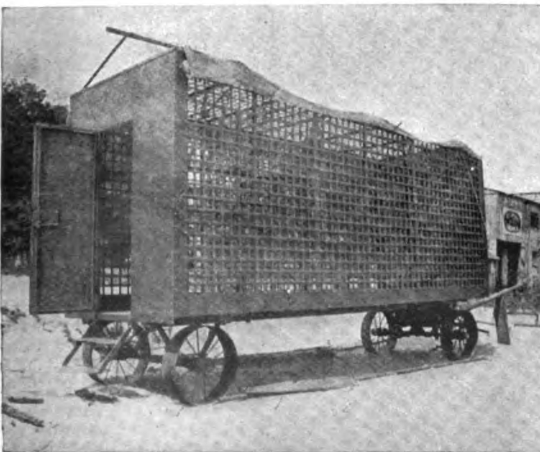
"This curious snap-shot was taken on Southsea Common with an ordinary quarter-plate hand camera. I happened to be passing and noticed the man going up rather high. Thinking it would make a good picture, I took a snap and managed to get the man just as he was going over the top."—Mr. V. Le C. Binet, 2, Bond Street, Jersey.

THE MISSING LINK.

"I took this photograph with a No. 1 Eastman's Pocket Kodak in our grounds at Fairview. It is a photograph of myself, and for some reason or other the picture came out in this way."—Mr. C. G. Clute, New Westminster, British Columbia.

A CAGE FOR HUMAN BEINGS.

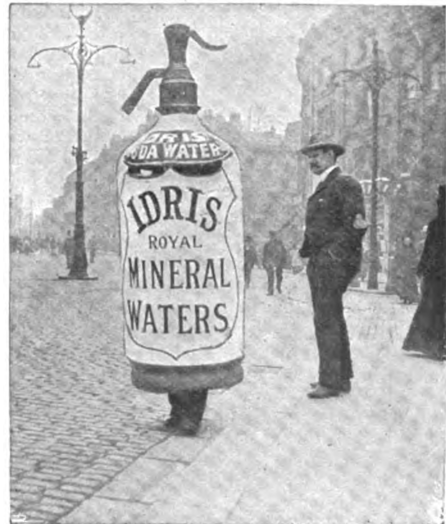
"This cage is not intended for wild animals, as might be supposed from its appearance, but is used to confine human beings. The convicts are made to work upon the public highways, and in order to work the roads at any great distance from the county gaol it is necessary for the



prisoners to camp out, so this steel car was constructed for the purpose of confining the convicts while working in the outlying districts. The cage is twenty feet long by eight feet six inches wide, and is eight feet high from floor to roof. It is divided into two compartments; the larger one, for the prisoners, contains twelve bunks, and the smaller one has two bunks for the guards. The whole thing requires six horses to pull it over the country roads."—Mr. V. W. Gould, Deland, Florida.

A NOVEL ADVERTISING DEVICE.

"Almost everyone has heard of 'Idris' mineral waters, but, for the benefit of those who have not, the proprietors have hit upon a novel plan for attracting the notice of prospective purchasers. The device does not require much explanation, for a glance at the photo. will reveal the ingenuity of the idea. The huge siphon dawdling along the footpath at the rate of two



and a half miles an hour is a sight not easily forgotten."—Mr. C. Chaddock, 80, Percy Street, Bootle, Liverpool.

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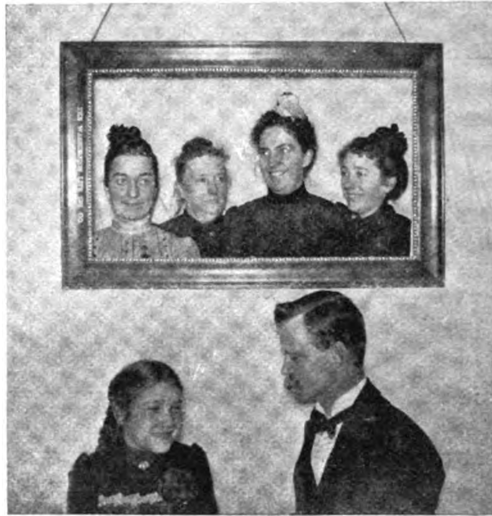
AN INGENIOUS LIVING-PICTURE PHOTOGRAPH.

"The picture represents a unique idea of illustrating 'living pictures,' the group at the top having the appearance of a photograph suspended from the wall. The effect was secured by hanging an open picture-frame, by means of the usual picture cord, in a double doorway, allowing a pair of white sheets to hang so that the edges would be just over the edges of the frame, a third sheet being suspended just at the back of the group having their likenesses taken, in order to hide all furn ture or other objects which might show through the opening. Thus life-size pictures may be shown with others in the foreground with all the appearance of an ordinary picture." — Mr. W. C. Bouk, 3,026, South Nineteenth Street, Omaha.



WILL SOMEONE EXPLAIN?

"I think your readers might be interested in an experience of mine. The other day I was testing a rook rifle. I placed an empty tin on a stick and fired at eighty yards. I heard the bullet strike and saw the tin revolving slowly, but out of the perpendicular. On examination I found no fewer than four distinct holes through the can—two entering and two issuing (as shown by the jagged tear of holes). I was so puzzled that I tried again with another canister, and with the same result! I am forwarding a print of a photo. of the can, and I shall be grateful for any suggested theory as to how one bullet can make more than two holes (one in and one out) in a canister at eighty yards."—Mr. Herbert Greg, Breingorton, Colintraive, Argyllshire.

A WONDERFUL MIRAGE.

"The extraordinary picture of a mirage which I send you represents an event which actually took place at St. Malo on August the 15th, when even wheeled vehicles could be seen up above moving upside down. The excitement in St. Malo was so great that religious processions and services were immediately organized. It is not often that so interesting a photograph is secured."—Mr. Thomas Norman, 3, Sussex Terrace, Wood Green, N.

THE POWER OF COMPRESSED AIR.

"I send you a curious photo. showing the force of compressed air. It is of a cheviot shirt worn by a student while making a series of tests in which compressed air was used. Air under a pressure of five pounds was coming out of a two-inch orifice. As the student leaned over, the shirt came in front of the orifice, causing the result shown. The horizontal threads were torn out, leaving the vertical threads."—Mr. Donald G. Robbins, 33, Mulberry Street, Springfield, Mass.

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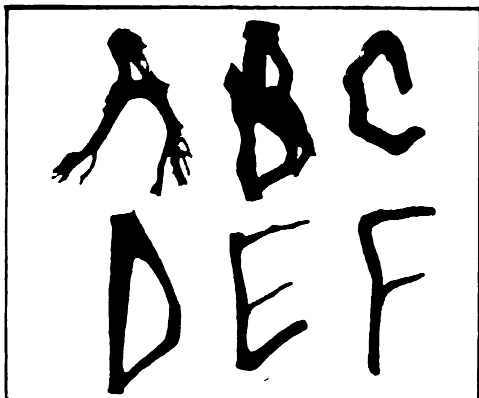
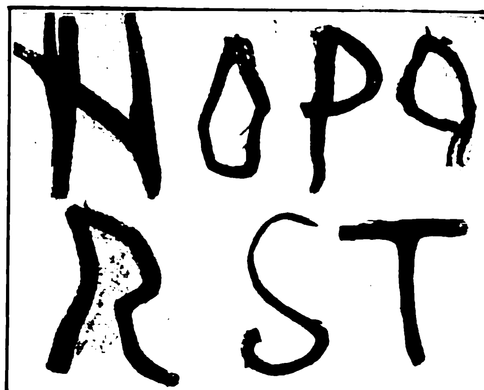
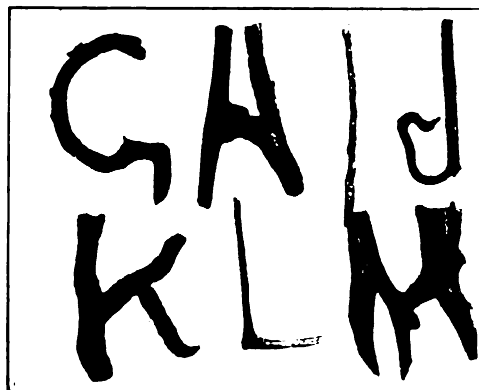
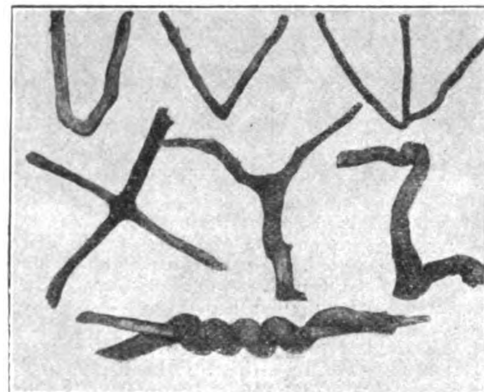






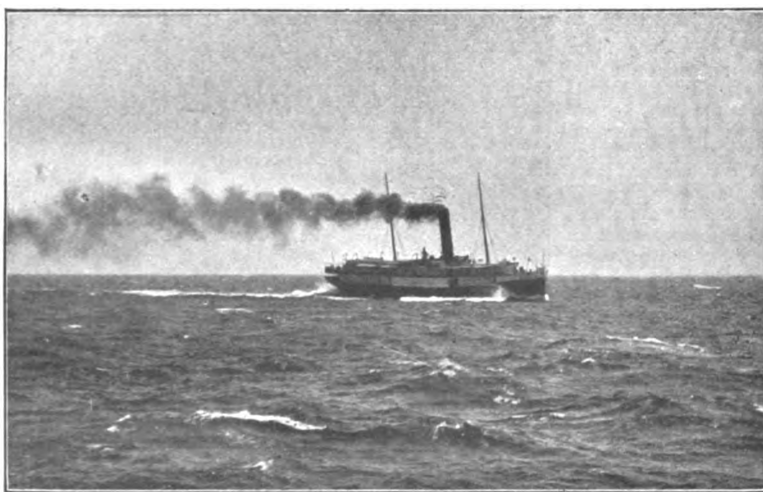


A WOODEN ALPHABET.

"The letters in this curious alphabet are all of wood, chiefly twisted roots of the blue gum, and have not been altered in any way from their original growth; three girls collected them in their daily walks or rides for a period of six months, and the specimens were found in various places; frequently one was carried home on horseback for many miles. All are about two feet high. The 'B' was the last found, and when the young ladies had almost despaired of ever getting one it was found in a heap of driftwood caught against a tree in the river."—Miss Cave, Vergemont, Clontreagh, Co. Dublin.

WHICH WAY IS SHE GOING?

In a recent issue we published a photograph of a man on horseback in such a position that the reader was left to judge whether the animal was moving away when the picture was taken or coming toward the camera. Here is another photograph of the same kind. "The picture of the steamboat was taken from the deck of another vessel, but the two are not headed in the same direction. The one in the picture is either approaching the vessel from which the photograph was taken or leaving it. Which is she doing? A passenger who had just come on deck at the time the picture was taken made a bet that the ship was approaching—but lost it, for, as a matter of fact, she was rapidly going away from it."—Mr. D. Allen Willey, Baltimore.



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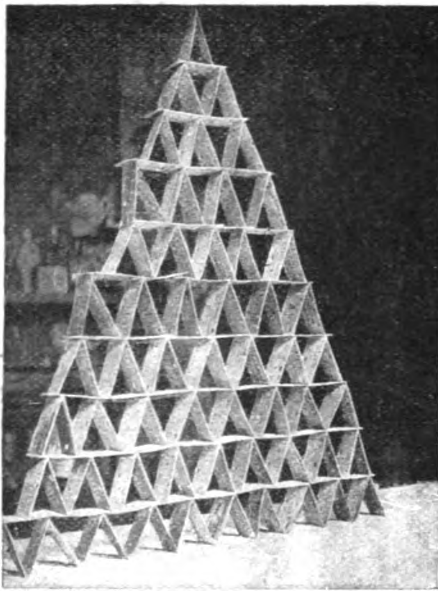

A TOWER OF TRAM-TICKETS.

"My brother and I made this tram-ticket tower on a very wet morning while staying at the seaside. It took us nearly three hours to complete. It fell twice when half completed, and again for the third time when finished and the camera was nearly ready. We began it again for the fourth time and succeeded. I send you a photograph of it, and it may interest your readers to know that we used a hundred and fifty-five tram-tickets in all." — Master G. Holzapfel, care of Mrs. Hawe, Boys' High School, Croydon.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A SMALL ROOM.

"This is a photo. of my room, to which a great number of Cape Town people have made a pilgrimage. The room was small, so to gain space I have suspended everything from the ceiling by cords with counterpoises. In this way I have the floor space clear; the corners of the room are fitted up as 'cosy corners,' and the following can be pulled down from the ceiling as required: dressing-table, shaving-table, washstand, stove, ash-trays, pipe, cards, and chairs. Cords from the bed open and shut the windows and door, operate a musical-box, and bring a trolley from the window containing coffee, etc.

And, by the way, my bed is behind the curtain on the left of the picture, with a bath-room underneath."—Mr. Richard B. Sainsbury, 133, Longmarket Street, Cape Town.

A WAGGISH WORKMAN.

"I am sending you a photograph taken at the W. L. Douglas Shoe Factory at Brockton, Mass., U.S.A., by one of our men. At the first glance this looks like an enormous pair of trousers, but in reality it is a section of the blow-pipe which is used to carry dirt and dust away from the factory."—Mr. F. E. Erskine, Brockton, Mass.

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