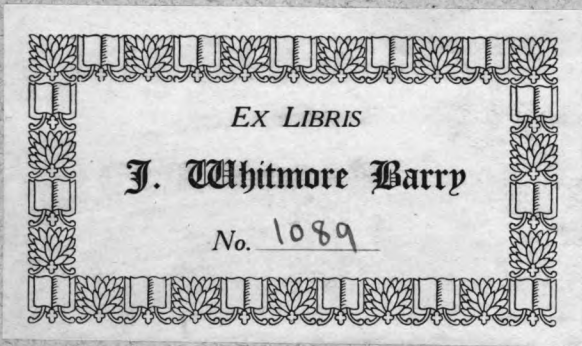


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Short Stories

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# SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

VOLUME VII.

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1891

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THIS MAGAZINE IS PLANNED TO COVER THE  
STORY-TELLING FIELD OF THE WORLD, AND  
ITS SELECTIONS WILL BE OF THE BEST PRO-  
CURABLE IN ALL THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES

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*"Were I called upon to designate that class of composition which should best fulfil the demands of high genius—should offer it the most advantageous field of exertion—I should unhesitatingly speak of the short prose tale. The novel is objectionable from its length. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality."*—EDGAR ALLAN POE.

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# SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

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Vol. VII. No. 1. *This magazine is planned to cover the story-telling field of the world. Its selections will be of the best procurable in all the languages.* JULY, 1891

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## HUSBAND AND WIFE \*

Still clad in her long pelisse of sealskin, with the black veil of her hat still lowered over her eyes, and her hands hidden in her muff, Donna Livia stood upright against the chimney-piece and warmed her benumbed feet at the fire. Suddenly, in the shadows of the dusking evening, she saw something looming white beside her.

"Who is it?" she said in vague alarm.

"It is I, Livia,"—answered her husband quietly.

"Ah, it is you, Riccardo? I did not hear you come in"—and her voice immediately softened, became affectionate.

"Why have the lights not been brought?"

"I have only now come in from the Villa Borghese," she murmured faintly. Then feeling about a little she found the electric bell on the wall and placed her finger on it. A servant entered with two lamps covered with pale blue silk shades which softened the light. The little drawing-room appeared, in its somewhat sad-tinted olive velvet and brocade of old gold, rather faded; quantities of tea-roses were prettily arranged about the room in porcelain vases and in crystal cups. Don Riccardo was in dress suit, a gardenia in his buttonhole.

"So soon ready?" exclaimed Donna Livia.

"I mistook the time, it is only six. I will wait."

And he threw himself into an easy chair, beside the fire, balancing one leg over the other.

"I may smoke here, Livia?"

"Certainly. The cigarettes—they are on that little table."

"I have some also."

"Mine will be better, Riccardo."

---

\* From the Italian of Mathilde Serao : Translated for Short Stories by Mrs. William Sharp.

"Who gave them to you?"

"Guido Caracciolo brought them from Constantinople."

She took him a light herself and held it till he lit his cigarette.

"So, this foundation dinner of yours at the Cercio is for seven o'clock?"

"Yes, dear Livia, at seven. A dinner entirely of men; it will be very tiresome."

"Oh! terribly tiresome."

Donna Livia slowly unbuttoned her gloves of black kid.

"If only you could have diverting neighbors at dinner, you would be less bored, Riccardo dear."

"My neighbors are to be Mario Torrespada and Fillippo Veirtimilla."

"That Borghese Garden is an ice-house," murmured she shivering with cold, holding her little ungloved hands to the flame.

"You do wrong to go there, then," answered the husband with his fine calm manner that nothing succeeded in disturbing.

"I know . . . habit. Oh, there were so many people there, being a festa-day, far more strange faces than usual. The queen wore a pale pink feather in a black velvet bonnet. Do you think I would look well in pale pink, Riccardo?"

"Every color looks well on you, dear."

"Prettily answered! Well, I met Maria, Clara, Margherite, Theresa, Vittoria; Giorgio was alone in the phaeton; Paul signed to me would we meet this evening, and I answered yes. Will you come?"

"Yes, after dinner."

"Bravo! I stayed too long there, in the Borghese Gardens, I did not notice that it was evening; besides I knew I should have to dine alone. Selfish man that you are! I went to see Sofia also before going to the Gardens; oh! if you knew how much I have done to-day since three. Poor Sofia, the baby has fever still, and it has become thin and yellow; to-morrow it is to be wrapped up in shawls, put in a close carriage and taken to Tivoli; who knows if the change of air will do it any good? . . ."

"Frederico goes with Sofia?"

"No, he goes every day to Tivoli. What a cold anti-pathetic man! He has not watched a single night beside his baby, and Sofia has not slept for twelve nights. . . ."

"They say that . . . that child is not his," observed Riccardo, shaking the ash of his cigarette into the fender.

"They say so, it is true. Sofia has compromised herself too much with Guido. I met him, Guido, in the Piazza di Spagna, while I was going to the dressmaker. And I also went to that dressmaker about the gray dress; what an amount of time I have wasted over it, and it will never fit me. A dress is like a picture; when spoilt it cannot be remedied; it must be thrown aside and another one must be made."

"It seems to me your dressmaker has given but little satisfaction lately. Why not change? Why not have everything sent from Paris? I would not grudge it."

"You are right, but how is it to be done? This one was so highly recommended to me; and besides they often send such a medley of colors from Paris, that it is impossible to use. Would you believe that they have sent a green dress to Giulia! She wept about it, to-day. I went also a minute to her, to see this dress, that she has awaited with such anxiety. A fiasco! Riccardo, my friend, a fiasco! A pale green dress!"

And her laugh rang through the room; then having taken off her hat and unfastened her pelisse she also stretched herself in the little easy-chair on the opposite side of the fire.

Now the nervous volubility with which she had spoken quieted down. She passed her fingers slowly over her fair hair as if to smooth it.

Don Riccardo lit another cigarette and looking steadily at the fire spoke thus:

"Livia, to-day you went out in the victoria. You went immediately to Sofia and you remained with her till twenty minutes past three; thence you went to Julia, where you remained ten minutes; at four you were at the large door of your dressmaker's house in the Piazza di Spagna; you entered there, and immediately went away again through the little door which opens into the Piazza Mignonetti. You took a shut hired carriage which had the number N 522. You went to Via Cesarin, No. 170, to the first floor, where Mario Torresparda has an apartment in which he receives the ladies of the fine world who are complaisant enough to go to see him there. His legal habitation where he receives his men friends and demi-mondaines is elsewhere. You remained there from ten minutes past four, till five minutes past five; the hired carriage again conducted you to Piazza Mignonetti; you had not small money with you, because you never think of everything, and you gave the driver ten francs; you immediately



issued from the large door on Piazza di Spagna and drove away in the victoria and you were in the Borghese Gardens for twenty minutes, and you then returned straight home."

She had slid on to the carpet and holding out her arms to him imploringly murmured:

"Forgive me, forgive me, it was the first time!"

"The first time, I know. Mario Torresparda has been paying court to you since July, when you were at Leghorn; it began one night during full moon; it was nothing at first, only fun; then from Switzerland when he was in Sabbina where you were, he wrote at first often, then every day to you. You always answered; there will have been from fifty-two to fifty-five letters and notes. Here you have seen each other twice on the Pincio in the morning, on Friday the 10th of November, and Sunday the 28th. Then you promised to go to him, but have twice broken your word—Monday and Thursday of last week. To-day, at last, you have been for the first time."

"O Riccardo, Riccardo!" sobbed Livia like a child, "why do you not kill me, instead of telling me these things?"

"No, my dear, I am not in the habit of killing people, and will certainly not begin now. The husbands who kill their wives are to be found in Ohnet's novels, and in the same author's dramas. I am not of that sort; I certainly have my own ideas of honor which I find it useless to submit to you, because you would not understand them. Blood, no; it is not worth while, dear. We suited each other well, before and after marriage, for a good while; then you found you did not care for me any longer, as is perfectly natural, and your thoughts naturally turned to some one else. Don't speak to me of struggles, of battlings, of deceptions, of thwarted passions; it serves no good end, I don't believe in them. Love comes to an end and it is logical that it should be so! Yours for me has lasted long enough, it seems to me. I don't complain, as you see; you have done nothing out of the common; thus in accordance with time-worn feminine habit, with that tradition from which you women never depart, with that refinement of taste for which you are noted, you have chosen my good friend Mario Torresparda. I have always wished him well, and I still wish well to Mario Torresparda. I shall certainly never fight with him, in order to gratify you and the public. You wish to tell me perhaps that he tempted you?"

No, dear, that is not true; perhaps you think that such is the case and think it in all good faith; but disabuse yourself of the idea, it is the women always who begin to seduce, and the man who allows himself to be taken. Where is Mario Torresparda to blame? Nowhere. He found a lady who played the coquette with him, he allowed himself to be snared, poor fellow, and fell in love. I pity him; to be the lover of a married woman is not a very pleasing matter; it is a position full of difficulties."

"Oh, what reason you have to despise me," she sobbed.

"No, dear. I have no sentiments whatsoever regarding you. I informed myself of this matter, in order that I might know the truth for the simple need of knowing the exact position of affairs. Now, for the future, do whatsoever pleases you, I shall not again take the trouble to inform myself. I warn you, nevertheless, that Mario Torresparda is seriously in love with you, and to suddenly break off with him would be inhuman. Addio, it is seven o'clock. I am going to dinner; a good appetite to you."

"Will you never forgive me?" she cried seizing his hand.

"Forgive you what? There is nothing to forgive. I find, though, as a general rule, we men are wrong to take you seriously and to marry you in consequence. If this is a discourtesy, excuse me. I must go. It is seven. I will come from Paolo's, afterward to fetch you. Good-evening."

"Dinner is served," said a servant entering the room.

And Donna Livia, seated on the carpet, watching the dying fire, thought how much more *chic* her husband, Don Riccardo, was than Mario Torresparda.

## ETCHINGS: THE WRESTLERS\*

The clamor of the audience ceases as the prospective adversaries appear. The elder of the two is introduced. He stands, spare and sinewy, not an ounce of superfluous flesh. The spectators view him in silence. The form of the younger man reveals a well-shaped body and athletic frame which instantly evokes vociferous applause. As he contrasts it with the silence which greeted him, a grim smile flits over the face of the elder athlete and his brows knit.

They face each other with every sense alert. After a few preliminary feints, the elder man, by what seems an incautious movement, offers his side. Quick as thought the other jumps upon him and forces him downward, but back uppermost. The extended arms defeat his purpose of turning him on his back, but with all his strength the younger man strives to pull one of those sinewy arms toward the trunk. He strains every nerve, and his passive opponent listens to the labored breathing with an inward smile. The efforts cease for a moment, that the panting man may regain his breath. Even as he draws his first full inspiration an arm closes round his neck and pins him tightly to the recumbent body. Another moment and he lies on his back—both shoulders down, in almost the same spot where lay his adversary an instant before.

In the second bout the younger man is more wary and views with distrust several good openings. By a quick turn he finally secures a strong back-hold, and strives by sheer weight to force the elder man to the floor. In his eagerness his head projects slightly over the latter's shoulder. Like light, an arm flashes round his neck and pulls the head downward with an irresistible force. Longer and longer grows the neck under the terrible strain until it seems that the widely-separated vertebræ must snap asunder. With protruding tongue and starting eyeballs the younger man makes one final unavailing effort to release himself then, unable longer to bear the torture, he looses his clasp about the elder athlete's waist. Still drawn by that relentless arm the body slowly follows the neck over that iron shoulder, and in full view of the spectators he is held, head downward, within his adversary's arms. The long-continued applause is acknowledged by the victor with a smile.

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\* Richard H. Keller : For Short Stories.



## THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT\*

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Such a still, beautiful morning! How slowly the sun raised himself from his couch of crimson! How lazily the one gauzy white cloud floated against the blue of the bending sky, borne aimlessly on by the slow breath of sleeping zephyr, that slept on, nor listed to the love-whispers among the green maples of my garden. How utterly happy I was! How fair were the white roses bending under their fragrant heaviness of dew! We had been married two months. Two moons, Douglass called them. We had been away in the mountains, and then my husband had brought me here on the green banks of the beautiful Hudson. He had given me this home.

Those straight, fine trees, these lovely flowers, even the very birds and the squirrels were mine, and this great dog with his cold nose thrust into my hand and his brown pathetic eyes following every glance of mine.

I loved Dante, the dog.

I worshipped Douglass, my husband.

I dare say we all of us worship some deity. With some it is a yellow god which men call gold and which women barter their souls for; other times it is the many-colored butterfly, Fame, which even hoary-headed men chase about like wanton boys. Sometimes it is some great being we have conjured from the many myths of the dead past and clothed with a perfection, allied to but often less than the perfection of the best man that crossed the orbit of our youth. When it is this being, classic as Faun, beautiful as Apollo, and omniscient as Proteus, we build a house for his worship and cause exquisite music to be sounded in his honor, and speak aloud words of praise and endearment to him.

And it was somewhat so with me.

My pure young body was the church, my love words were his music, and my caresses were as prayers.

And so those two moons had risen, crescented, and full, lagged in their coming and gone out in the duskiness of night, and we had always been together until this morning.

He had left me for a few hours. It was the first time I had been quite alone with my great joy to look it in the face.

Nor was I quite alone now, for there was Dante, the dog,

---

\* The Matron : N. Y. Town Topics.

and there were the birds—my birds—and the white roses and the squirrels in the high trees running about and speaking to each other almost in words.

It was my happiest hour.

All the fears, uncertainties, and perturbations which beset the bride had vanished one by one under the warm tender love of my dear husband as frost melts under the gentle warmth of a vernal sun; and now love at its fullest and surest and sweetest was ours.

Ah, those dear last hours in the garden with the grave dog Dante walking slowly at my side!

Then I grew restless, for you see I had gotten so used to my joy I was ready to share it again with Douglass.

I wandered into the house.

I prowled about the library. This had been my husband's house some years before he gave it to me.

One of the Fates must have tempted me to fit that key in that lock and open the desk and untie the portfolio and find that judgment of divorce granted to my husband, Douglass—divorce from some woman of whom I had never heard.

I was born in France, almost in the shadow of a Catholic church—at the Côte D'Or, in the dear Province of Doubs.

That is the reason I hate divorce, perhaps.

And to think he had been married before I ever saw him, and had put away a wife to take me!

Some other girl's brown head had rested on his dear breast. The soft arms of some other woman had been about his neck. Red lips had kissed him, as mine had kissed him. Another woman, in the early hours, had awakened, as I had done, frightened at his stirring, at his muttered words in sleep, and had gazed on his face in the dimly-lighted room till it seemed like the face of Styx or Cerberus, and had screamed out, as I did sometimes, and wakened him, shedding tears and hiding my face on his breast, till he soothed and caressed me back to calmness under the full light of the chandelier.

I lived over each hour of our wedded life, but imagined the unknown woman in my place through it all. What torture!

Then I fell on the floor in a swoon, for you see I had never been a very strong girl, and the terrible agony nearly killed me. I think it would have killed me but for the dog—Dante—who licked my face and fastened his strong white teeth in my pretty *robe de maison* and dragged me to the open door,

where the fresh, rose-laden air revived me a little, and there the old servant found me and put me to bed, and the doctor came and I——. Well, I remember no more for long weeks. I had brain fever, and they say the dog would stand beside me with real tears falling from his brown eyes when I was so near to death. That was a long time ago.

Yes, he says it was wrong to keep the marriage from me, but he knew I hated divorce.

And it seems she ran away from him because she loved another, and out of the greatness of his generous heart he had granted her the divorce she craved, and had forgiven her, and made it possible for her to marry the other man, and he had never looked with love on another woman since till he met me on that frosty Valentine's Day and began to woo me. And the other woman had been dead five years. You see, Douglass is much older than I am.

And the dog, Dante?

He seems gayer than he used, but he likes best of anything to sit beside the cradle, and when the baby moves in his sleep he swings him gently till he is quiet again.

## THE GREATEST OF ASTRONOMERS\*

“Where did you get that demonstration, Mr. Warwick?”

“I—it seemed to me to flow naturally from the properties of the curve and the relations of numbers,” I answer.

“Are you aware that your demonstration is that of John Bernonilli, only much simpler, much more beautiful?”

I am not sure even that I am aware who J. B. is, much less anything of his works, and I tell the professor so. By this time the class begins to applaud, the honor-men are taking down my work in their note-books, and I blush, for the first time perceiving that I have done something noticeable.

The professor takes his wand and goes over the problem to the class, explaining my demonstration, pointing out wherein the work is simpler and superior to that of the books. Then he turns to me, and says kindly but gravely withal:

“Mr. Warwick, you have a gift which seems to indicate a vocation. Always remember, my young friend, that special talents involve special responsibilities.”

That moment's thrill determined my career, and I doubt not, in the positive sense of the phrase, shaped my destinies. For I was intended to go into trade. I was rich in my own right, richer in expected inheritance from my father, and he never dreamed but that he was educating me to receive from him, to conduct, and to extend the old and respectable India trade which he had inherited from his father.

After I graduated there was something of a row between Warwick, Sr., and Warwick, Jr. He wanted me to go at once into the counting-house, to come regularly into the firm at the end of a year's probation, but I was determined to go to Europe and study in Paris, Berlin, and other observatories.

We compromised upon seven years and a half, but my worthy father did not live to see the end. He died in three years, leaving me all his fortune, with a pathetic entreaty that I would not let the firm name become extinct.

I had been studying the technique of practical astronomy and corresponding with the leading men in the science in regard to the best means for advancing my object, the best instruments, the best place for putting my plans in operation, and so on. I did not tell any one what I intended to attempt

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\* Edmund Spencer : Collected Sketches.

exactly, but it was known on all hands that I had paid continuous attention to the moon for some time, and that I would endeavor to advance the subject of selenography in some novel way which my large means enabled me easily to pursue. I had ordered the construction of instruments to suit my purposes, and now that these were nearly completed, I chartered a yacht to go in search of a good place wherein to erect my observatory. After visiting Teneriffe and several other places I finally fixed upon the plain of the Paul de Serra, the top of the ridge in the island of Madeira, 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, as the best place I could find. I was fixed in my choice by the fact that in the Villa Albreda, a fine Portuguese mansion a century and a half old, situated just at the margin of the plain and upon the very brink of the ridge, I found precisely the house and tower that my purposes seemed to demand. The deep and extensive wine vaults of this once wealthy house were cut out of the solid black basalt, the walls, as dry as the surface of the plain above at noonday.

I set a party of artisans, under direction of a competent engineer, to work to make the necessary alterations in these imposing cellars, and then returned to Europe for my apparatus and equipment. With these in charge and my assistants I went back to Madeira and busied myself with my final preparations. While my assistants attended to the mounting of my instruments, I devoted myself to the arrangements of the vaults in which I was to conduct my experiment.

I intended to make signal discoveries in the moon, to discover the facts of its physical constitution and solve some of the chief problems which vex science in regard to our satellite. To effect this a new method of observation was necessary, and that method I thought I had discovered. The problem of examining the face of the planets, and particularly the moon, is not to be solved by big telescopes. The question unsolved is that of deficiency of light. The light diminishes as the magnifying power of the telescope increases. If the field of vision through my glass covers 100 square miles and I increase the power so as to take in only fifty square miles, then the light is only half as bright. The further we go in this direction the more the light fails, the more we are disarmed. This has been the insuperable difficulty of practical selenoscopy. No means exists of artificially lighting the moon as we light our microscopic objects. As soon as our instrument enlarges

the apparent diameter of the moon so much that the light from any given space is no brighter than that from a corresponding angular area of the atmosphere around, the planet is no longer visible through the glass, and thus the very power of the telescope prevents us from seeing the object sought to be observed. This is the vexatious *cul-de-sac* in which practical astronomy has long found itself, and I felt sure I had discovered the means to cut a successful way out of it. In all astronomical observation the optical instrument is twofold—the tube and glasses and the observer's eye are co-ordinate factors of every observation. One of these factors is mechanical, operating by rule of thumb; the other is living, sensitive, intelligent, controllable by a thousand delicate nerve-forces. The telescope is the fixed power, the eye essentially a variable one. Now light, the vibrations of it, exist independently of the eye's power of sensitiveness to them. They flow on and impinge upon it with regular succession forever, whether it is conscious of them or not. Brightness and darkness are relative, not absolute. Attenuate the field as we may, from every part of it a flood of light is still streaming which would be visible if our imperfect nerves of sense could only take cognizance of and report the vibrations. There is plenty of light then; the mechanical arm of the telescope cannot be adapted to utilize it; but may not the sensitive arm be taught to do so? In a word, we cannot get more light by means of the lens in the tube, but cannot we make the lens in the eye more sensitive to the light that is streaming upon it—cannot we cure this astronomical blindness by improving the eye instead of trying to improve the telescope?

This was the problem and my solution of it: To promote my discoveries in the moon by heightening the sensitiveness of the eye. It was simple enough to conceive, and would be productive of grand results if it could be made successful. I determined to try the great experiment upon myself, and I was not long in deciding upon the best plan for conducting it effectively. I at once rejected drugs, as tending to render results uncertain, and settled upon darkness as the one positive means for producing the nervous condition sought. I proposed to contrive a maximum of darkness, to remain in it long enough to produce hyperæsthesia of the optic nerve, and while that condition was in its intensest phases, proceed to my telescope, already adjusted, and see what I should see.

This was my reason for selecting the Villa Albreda for my observatory, and for now devoting myself to the arrangement of its vast subterranean vaults. Here I proposed establishing myself, and in such a way as to have perfect darkness within. My food and drink are supplied through a series of rooms opening into the dark anteroom, precautions being taken to prevent the admission of any light whatever. In the same way ventilation is procured through tubes, the air being driven into them by blowers on the outside.

As for my own cell, that is hung completely around with black velvet and cloth; it is rigidly cut off from any possibility of light intruding by intricate double doors, and there is absolutely no furniture in it except a black velvet lounge. A clock in the anteroom strikes the hours and quarters, and my attendants, wishing to communicate with me, do so by telegraphic sounds produced also in the anterooms. These are ordinary precautions, but now come the extraordinary ones. I wish to produce absolute darkness; but there is still a faint luminosity in the materials of the room and in my own body. When, all preliminary arrangements completed, I retired into my cell, I determined to employ chemical means for removing these last vestiges of light. Vessels containing solutions of the sensitive salts of silver were placed all about the room; the tubes supplying air, food, etc., were of glass, having an outer casing, the intermediate space being filled with a sensitive solution to deluminize the outer air as it came in behind the velvet hangings.

I made my arrangements to remain in the cell for a week before proceeding to make my first observation, which was to be prepared for by signal. The deluminized corridor would conduct me to the eye-glass of the instrument which my attendants were to have ready for me, velvet bandages about my head protecting me until nothing except the field of vision on the moon's surface could pour down its rays of light upon the excited eye.

But I had not sufficiently taken into account the physiological effects of my great experiment. The clock in the anteroom had struck the quarters eight times only, and I had not even broken my fast in the strange prison when I perceived that my mechanical and chemical arrangements were entirely successful. The last, faintest particles of light were absorbed and extinguished. I was in absolute darkness. The con-



sciousness of it came upon me with a sudden throb. No living being had ever been in this situation before; none had ever felt the sensations that began to throng upon me. The first impression, when I could analyze it, was one of infinite strangeness and loneliness. I was lost, utterly, absolutely misplaced in boundless, unlighted space—a mere point anywhere in infinite blackness and vacancy. The clear, silver chime of the clock ringing out the ninth quarter here broke upon the horror of darkness like a voice from heaven, so full of sweetness and companionship that I could have wept for joy at the sound. I caught and hung upon its last echo, but when that no longer vibrated, the horror of the darkness fell back upon me like a pall. I flung myself upon my couch, and pressed my hands over my eyes to keep the blackness from entering my brain. I felt for the ebony knobs of my telegraphic apparatus, to communicate with my attendants and know from them how many revolutions in history the world had undergone since I had been in prison. But no—it was bare two hours yet, and I had given orders that in no event should I be communicated with inside of twelve hours. I lay down again, determined to endure. Besides, was it so very dark and blank, after all? Did not the hungry nerves of vision, frantic for the wonted stimulus so suddenly removed, already begin to supply it? In a distance beyond all distance, from a remoteness that made the farthest stars as it were close at hand, I see a point of light, travelling swiftly toward me, immeasurably swift, yet growing no larger. Another point joins it, then another, then a swarm of light points rushing and gyrating, numerous as ephemera in a summer noon, active as heat-lightning on a summer's eve. By the time the clock chimes the tenth quarter I am surrounded by a wilderness of light in motion, flashes, colored points, globes—I am the centre of a universe of splendors, whirling, darting, interlacing, bursting. The chime is no longer silver nor sweet now, for its first sound dispels this pyrotechnic display at its moment of highest splendor. The colors fade, the motions quiet, the points recede, the last spark flickers out in feeble resistance to the immensity of darkness that swallows it as a fire-fly might sink into the Mammoth Cave—and all is blackness again; and I press my eyeballs intensely, for I feel that now it is darker than ever—the nerves have parted with their vestiges of past impressions of light. But the brain—can I

keep it from letting itself be robbed of light remembered, of visions seen? No; for now even the brain begins to give up its sensations and fling them forth in a despairing effort to fill up this yawning imperative gulf of blackness. In the distance a light quivers like the fairy dawn; it broadens and deepens until morning breaks over a lovely landscape, such as human eye never beheld. Scene follows scene in rapid succession, projected from the kaleidoscope of the brain, which gives forth with lavish, incoherent, fatal rapidity, like a clock robbed of its balance-wheel, every form and shape remembered from nature and in dreams, in a mad, whirling panorama, that spins faster and faster by and grows more and more pallid and ghastly as the brain exhausts itself. The scene darkens, too; gloom, storm, shadow predominate; the night out-doors gives place to caverns vast and horrible, lit dimly by one expiring red torch—the chime plays the eleventh quarter, and I am in darkness again. But that darkness I was in before was not like this darkness. That darkness was transparent and endurable. This darkness is opaque and intolerable. It touches me. It incloses me. It imprisons me like a geode in black marble at the centre of the earth. This is not blindness, but darkness absolute. It compares with the night of the blind man as the horrors of the drunkard deprived of his grog compare with the feelings of him who never drank. It descends upon my eyes with resistless force, binds the orbits with steel, tramples the nerves of sensation into pulp and solidifies them into a porphyritic mass. I have no consciousness of space at all—the idea of it is pressed out of me by this unutterable weight of darkness. This is something I cannot escape from. This solid blackness will not even permit me to stretch out my hand and touch the knobs of my instruments to signal my attendants. I am past rescue, past all hope. The end is not far off, and I lie apathetically waiting for it, a stone packed in stone—a nothing glued to nothingness. The first feeling of prostrate indifference gives way, little by little, to regret, then to indignation, then to passion; a humorous sense of the uselessness of resentment gradually brings up the ludicrous side of my catastrophe, and I laugh aloud. As I do so the chime sounds again—the twelfth quarter—laughing at me, in the merriest style.

But the notes of the chimes are not sounds any longer. They are fairy-like silver bubbles of light floating off upon a

tide of splendor, and my laughter floats around with them in great globular clouds touched with all the hues of the prism. I spring up impulsively. I have made a great discovery—one that will stamp me as the foremost scientific man of the age—the discovery of the conditions under which sound-waves are convertible into vibrations of light. Cannot the process be reversed—cannot the feeble vibrations of light, under opposite conditions, be converted into sound-waves, and the crippled because amaurotic telescope become a telephone sublime, with harmonic intelligence from the spheres? “Yes!” I cried aloud, and the syllable forms rays and lines, gives colors and relations. “I will invent a means of polarizing sound,” I cry, with increased excitement and enthusiasm, as every word I uttered added a beam to the radiance collecting already in the cell. “I will adjust a spectroscope to it; the dream of Plato and the old idealists shall become a matter of every-day experience! I will sing the song of the spheres! I will become the poet of the philosophers, the philosopher among poets! Oh, heaven! nothing in the universe shall any more be unknown, or become mean and common, because known! Religion, resting on philosophy, shall have an entirely new birth, and the Beautiful forsake its solitary haunts to dwell once more familiarly among men!”

I sank down, overpowered with the rush of sublime thought and with the supernal glory of light with which my words seemed to fill the cell. I was rapidly becoming unconscious, when the chime sounded once more—the thirteenth quarter—and I sprang to my feet again, my head in an aureole of sound-light. I tore open the door leading to the corridor—I rushed to where the object-glass of my telescope was arranged, and saw—no! no! Not now can I reveal all that vision—for vision it was, pure and simple. Enough to say, I fainted at the sight and knew no more.

At the end of twenty hours, when my attendants came for me, after waiting in vain to hear from me, and signalling repeatedly without any response, they found me upon my couch in the cell, which I had never left, and in the most excited stages of a brain fever. I recovered my health and reason by slow degrees, but I was totally blind, and my sight I have never recovered. Three hours and a quarter of absolute darkness and its horrors had destroyed the most ambitious astronomer of the age.

## ETCHINGS: THE DEBUTANTE \*

In her room sits the young *débutante*, fresh from her bath, clad in the heavy folds of her bath-robe, above which her face shows as a pictured smile. She has not been unmindful of the fitness of things, and her room by the delicate touch of her own hands has been made to bloom with flowers; she would have them look in perfumed approval upon her as she dresses for the *début* party. Smilingly she glances to a chair whereon are laid the embroidered petticoats of China silk, then her eyes turn to where across the bed is placed that gown of white immaterial gauze. They are all so beautiful, these clothes, and they are all for her. Thereat she smiles. As she does so she spies the tiny white slippers of undressed kid with the silken stockings beside them. It seems to the young girl that she is living in fairyland, and her joy breaks into supremacy over the subjective condition in which for days she has kept herself. She forgets that the hour of young-lady-hood is approaching; she is a girl again; fervently she clasps her hands, the bath-robe falls aside, and clad in her mirth she merrily dances about the floor, while through the window the man in the moon smiles upon her. From beyond comes a voice warning her to begin the eventful toilet. As she draws on the silken hose the dream of a smile hovers about her mouth encarmined with the blood of bliss; never before has it appeared that stockings were so pretty, she thinks as she looks down upon them. Half-hesitantly she reaches for the slippers of white undressed kid, but she touches them not; they seem too dainty to be put on now, so she slips into a worn pair and begins to draw over her one garment after another. Over each as she unfolds it her smile deepens, and when she stands in a gown as white as her own soul, her eyes glitter with joy; never have her neck and arms seemed so real; arching her throat she presses her lips upon them, then leans forward to kiss her mirrored face. The slippers on, she stands in contemplation of her reflected image. The days of her girlhood have fore-divined. Her whole being is wrapped by the arms of consciousness. The long-awaited-for time has arrived. A great change has been wrought. That act of dressing has murdered the girl to create the woman.

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\* Heileman Wilson: For Short Stories.

## THE MOUSE'S RANSOM \*

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Salih was an Arab boy who frequented the harbor of Suez, or Suais, and earned a precarious living by renting that much-enduring beast, an Egyptian donkey, from his owner; having liberty, for the consideration of about two pence per diem, to exercise the devoted animal's legs and back to his (Salih's) heart's content, so long as those indispensable portions of the animal should not be seriously damaged. Though the first part of the contract was not always carried out with scrupulous exactitude, the latter certainly was; and on days when a Peninsular & Oriental Company's steamer, with a good cargo of passengers, was delayed an hour or two longer than usual, owing to obstructions in the canal, the donkey in question was persuaded, by screams, curses, and thwacks, to proceed from the quay to the hotel and back an almost incalculable number of times.

Now Salih lived in a little hut, in one of the back streets of Suez, in company with his mother and two or three small brothers and sisters. His father was dead, and the widow had little to live on but the earnings of her son. She herself was almost completely blind from that ophthalmia which is one of the plagues of Egypt, and could do little but plait rushmats and small baskets. She had never been able to afford to send Salih to school; so that young gentleman remained in ignorance, not, however, blissful. He possessed the natural quickness of the Arab, and secretly regretted his inability to read, write, and use those strange marks by which the clerks at the quay found out all about the numbers and quantities of articles. He had also a hankering to be "muaddab"—*i. e.*, knowing in poetry and rhetoric, disputations regarding which he often overheard in the Suk, or market-place of Suez, when loitering there in the cool of the evening after sunset, the time when Arabs sit out in the street and discourse of things in general. As time went on his yearning after knowledge increased, and he, one day when unusually flush of cash, bought an old Koran, at the mysterious characters of which he would gaze with admiration and astonishment for hours together, whenever the moon was bright enough. He was too poor to indulge in oil for reading purposes. If he could but afford

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\* London Society.

a few lessons in reading! Alas! there was no one among his own class who knew more than himself, and how could he find the time and the money for school? He would sometimes, when driving his donkey to and fro, loiter for a minute or two at the corner of the street where there was a school. Inside squatted the little scholars on the floor, each with his book, his reed pen, and his small bottle of thick ink. The master sat cross-legged at the top of the room, with (as it seemed to Salih) a mighty array of books around him. Texts from the Koran ornamented the walls, texts written in every variety of Arabic caligraphy, that most artistic effort of scribes. Salih's eyes lingered longingly on those wonderful and sacred curves, on which local religious art had expended all its powers. Could he but learn to write like that! And then to listen to the boys reading each his appointed task, in such an easy, fluent manner, as though the book were inside him, not outside; a familiar part of himself, not a something foreign and mysterious! And the noble sound, too, of the ancient and holy words, so different to his Arabic! Then he would stir up his donkey and go on his way sighing. Ah! knowledge was a fine thing! but how to get it? It lived in books locked up securely from all who had not the key, the art of reading with understanding.

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Now, one evening, when the moon was high and bright, Salih sat in his mother's hut with the Koran in his hand, looking wistfully at the long lines of well-ordered letters grouped into each page, just like the soldiers who sometimes exercised on the sands outside the town. His mother and the children were asleep, and he was in sole possession of the little outer room. He had been meditating sadly on the apparent impossibility of obtaining an education, and had fallen into a kind of doze, when his attention was aroused by the proceedings of two mice which were perambulating the floor, inspecting every square inch in search of some minute particle of edible matter, no very easy thing to discover in that poverty-stricken abode. There was a kind of impudence about these mice which he had never observed in others of their species, and which fascinated him in spite of the mournful thoughts which held possession of his mind. They marched round him (for he remained motionless) and sniffed at the hem of his dirty garment, as though desirous of making his

acquaintance. It happened that close by his side lay a small brass basin, commonly used for some domestic purpose. Watching his opportunity, he overturned this basin so quickly and cleverly that one of the mice was caught beneath it, imprisoned in the brazen trap. The other fled, but soon returned and commenced making vigorous assaults upon the strange dome which had descended so rapidly on his comrade. Finding this in vain, it retreated to its hole.

It came forth again after an absence of a few moments, holding something in its mouth. The something was heavy, for the mouse appeared to support it with difficulty; it was round, too, and glittered slightly when the moonbeams fell upon it. Up to the side of the basin, remote from Salih, advanced the mouse with its burden, which it deposited on the floor and then retreated a short distance. Halting a yard or two off, it sat up and looked intently at the boy.

Salih reached out his hand and picked up the object which the mouse had brought. It was—yes—there could be no doubt, it was—a piece of gold, an ancient coin, a dinar of the old Sultans of Egypt who had reigned before the Turks were heard of. The mouse intended it as a ransom for its imprisoned friend.

There is a belief very prevalent among Orientals, that any extraordinary boldness on the part of mice is a sure sign of their possessing a treasure of some sort. Capital is supposed to confer upon them the same independence of demeanor which it does upon human beings. The mice had displayed extraordinary impudence in their approach of him; therefore Salih was quite sure there must be more money in their hoard than the single dinar which had been produced. He therefore replaced the coin were the mouse had laid it, and shook his head, in order to convey to the expectant animal that more must be forthcoming before a release could be granted to the captive.

After waiting a little, the mouse retired with a disappointed air, but reappeared quickly with another dinar, similar to the first, in its mouth. This it deposited on the floor by the other and sat up in a suppliant attitude, as though asking for pity and consideration. The boy's cupidity and hope now began to rise together, and he had no thought of liberating his very profitable prisoner until perfectly sure that he had exacted the uttermost farthing which the pair could command. So



he continued to maintain a stern and unyielding countenance, on which the petitioner could perceive no sign of compassion.

A third journey to the hole now took place, and a third coin was produced. The same dumb show was presented, and the piece proceeded as before between the two actors. Sometimes the mouse would sit for a longer space than at others, in the hope, apparently, that the extortionate youth would either pity or become wearied with long waiting, but finding these expectations disappointed, it would again return to the treasure-house for another dinar. Salih, when telling the story afterward, asserted that its visage lengthened perceptibly with each journey it took. The floor was soon strewed with gold pieces, the original glittering hue of which had been dimmed by long neglect and the deposits of centuries of mould; here and there, though, brilliant flashes came from those parts of them which had been clawed by the mice when they turned over, and doubtless counted, their hoard.

When twenty-five separate journeys had been made to the treasury and twenty-five dinars exhibited to the delighted gaze of Salih, the mouse departed and reappeared with—no coin, but an old leather bag or purse. Bringing this to a part of the floor where the moonbeams shone brightest, it carefully turned the receptacle inside out. There was nothing within. The bag was evidently the original house of the dinars strewed around, and it was also clear that no more were forthcoming; the poor mouse was bankrupt; and with a touching air of resignation it seated itself by the empty purse and looked beseechingly at the master of the situation. That young gentleman saw that the bottom of the poor creature's pocket, so to speak, was reached. It had given its all for its companion's freedom. The sex of the animal was not distinguishable; it might be a bridegroom, imploring for the release of his captive bride—it might be a wife, begging for her husband's liberty. In any case, it had deserved well of Salih; and fully sensible of this fact, he raised the brazen basin and set free the palpitating little prisoner, which fled immediately, with the utmost precipitancy, rattling the coins in its flight to join its partner. Both lost no time in disappearing into the hole.

When all was quiet again, the boy sat as one entranced. Could the scene he had witnessed and taken part in be a reality? Was it not one of those deluding dreams which, he

had heard, often came to torment the longing and mock the desirous? But there lay the gold on the floor. Yes, but perhaps he was still dreaming. He pinched himself once or twice to make sure that this was not the case. No, he was wide awake, there could be no doubt about that; so he got up and clutched the dinars with a feverish hand. He had never seen so many gold pieces together before; and indeed had seldom seen any at all. Many times did he pick up each and turn it over, with its mysterious legend and royal cipher; and when he was at last convinced that he was bonafide master of twenty-five good, solid, heavy dinars, he could keep his own counsel no longer, and called to his mother.

The rest of that night and most of the succeeding day was spent in considering what should be done with this miraculously-obtained windfall. At last it was settled that half of it should be spent in improving the external appearance of the internal comforts of their abode; and the other half should be devoted to the commencement of Salih's long longed-for education. Two days afterward he took his place among the lowest class of that school into which his admiring eyes had so often glanced.

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Time has passed since then, and Salih is a man. He is well taught in all the wisdom which the modern Egyptians possess, and may, perhaps, be a pasha some day. And if you can find him in the bazaar of Suez, he will perhaps give you in his own words this story of the mouse's ransom.

## WETHERBEE'S WIFE\*

The first time I saw Wetherbee was the night Mrs. Deane's baby died. There was nothing at all to be done, and the man sat between me and the dim light like some haggard impersonation of sympathy—every outline of his figure pathetically drooped. When the little face on the pillow began to grow pinched and waxen, he got up with a stifled groan and went softly out of the room. I noticed that he steadied himself by the casement as he opened the door.

When I went into the kitchen a few moments later, he was sitting with his elbows on the table and his face on his hands. And such a face!

It has haunted me ever since—will always haunt me.

There are faces with an infinite capacity for suffering. Wetherbee's was one of these, I think. It was as if every capability of the man's nature had resolved itself into a receptacle for agony and was full to the brim. I hesitated when my eye fell upon him, but he motioned me to sit down. The Deanes had only two rooms, and the father and mother were better alone with the little fluttering life.

The hands of the clock were drawing near midnight. A dog in a neighboring kennel gave one of those plaintive howls so mournfully human. A faint breath of sweet violets came from the bunch in the open window. Wetherbee got up and looked out, as if searching the dark.

"What do you call them little flowers, ma'am—them that grow close to the ground, with the sweet, sickish smell?"

"Violets—sweet violets?"

"Yes, that's it. They use them a good deal for—for little children, don't they?"

The man turned and glanced toward the other room.

His face had lost some of its rigid lines.

"Yes, I believe they do, rosebuds and sweet violets; they are fair and delicate like little children."

The mother's voice came to us in soft cooing sobs. The sound seemed to strike my companion like some sharp physical pain. He sat down again, wiping the heavy drops from his forehead.

"Have you any children, ma'am?"

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\* Margaret Collier Graham: *The Argonaut*.

I did not understand it then, but I know now that my presence was a relief to him. It is only a sickly, short-lived grief that nurses itself. Strong simple natures, suffering keenly, follow their instinct, and their instinct is to forget.

"No, sir, I have no children."

The man looked at me with the nearest approach to divine pity I have ever seen in any human face.

"Did they die when they were little, ma'am?"

I shook my head. "I have had no children."

A shade of disappointment went over my companion's face. Then the anguish that had found an outlet in compassion returned to it. He shook his head sadly.

"Then you don't know, you don't know."

Something in the sound of his voice invited sympathy.

"You have buried a little child—more than one, perhaps?" I spoke as gently as I could.

"Yes, ma'am. I lost my baby. It wasn't exactly like other folks losing their children. I think it hurt me here." He drew his hand across his forehead slowly.

A low heart-broken cry came to us from the other room, and the mother's voice burst into a flood of passionate tenderness. The little spark of life had gone out. The cry seemed to stab my companion; he started up with a shuddering groan, and stood like a man face to face with some terrible memory. I had risen to leave the room, but his face held me.

"In God's name, what is it, sir? Can I help you?"

He sank into a chair beside the table, and buried his face in his arms hopelessly.

"No, ma'am, nobody can help me—nobody but God, and he turned his back on me a long time ago."

The strange fatalism of his words staggered me. To undertake the removal of a superstition so hideous seemed hopeless. The words came back to me again and again as I robbed the little form for its last narrow cradle. He came into the room at daybreak with a cluster of violets, dewy and fragrant. I laid them on the dead baby's breast and clasped the little hands over them, like two pearls. All the hard lines melted out of the man's face; it glowed with the exquisite radiance of fatherliness.

"The little thing's better off, don't you think so, ma'am? It might have grown up and broke loose from God some way."

"Yes; but God could keep it from sin as easily as he could take its life," I answered quietly.

He raised his dark luminous eyes quickly, with a questioning look.

"Don't you believe in God, ma'am?"

"Not in your God," I answered smiling.

The man stayed near me during the funeral, making himself useful at every opportunity. There was something peculiarly gentle in his helpfulness.

I spoke to Mrs. Deane of him afterward.

"Wetherbee? Oh, yes, we think a great deal of Wetherbee. He has a room on this floor. He used to come in often when—when baby was alive. I never saw any one fonder of children."

"Do you know anything of his wife?"

"Not very much. They don't live together. People say it's her fault. Wetherbee won't let anybody blame her. He says she's one of God's saints. You know some men get those notions about a woman, and nothing will cure them. There's Ivison next door; he says his wife is tender-hearted because she cries whenever things don't go to suit her. A good many men are queer that way. If they have a poor wife they blame everything on themselves, and if they have a good one they take all the credit. I always felt sorry for Wetherbee. He don't seem like a drinking man."

"Does he drink?"

"Well, we heard he did, but we haven't seen any signs of it since he's lived here. Baby always went to Wetherbee. She'd put her little cheek against his, and coo and coo in the cunningest way, when he sang or talked to her. Children generally take to a quiet, mild-spoken man, you know. I never could think there was anything very bad about Wetherbee."

In the fall the Deanes moved to a cottage in the suburbs, and I lost sight of my new acquaintance. But the memory of the man haunted me. I learned that he was a cabinet-maker by trade, and worked in a shop on Third Street. I used to take him a little mending now and then, exchanging a few friendly words about his work or the early rains. He always met me with his own peculiarly lonesome smile. Something was evidently wearing upon him. The transparent pallor of his face struck me one morning as he carried some

piece of work I had brought him to the window, and stood examining it carefully in the light.

"You are overworking yourself, Wetherbee," I said. "By-and-by you will not be able to work at all."

He looked up quickly with a puzzled expression. I do not think the idea of sickness as connected with himself had ever occurred to him before.

"Oh, no, ma'am. I've always been a strong, healthy man."

"Perhaps you have; but you are neither strong nor healthy now. If you get sick you must let me know."

He made no reply, but looked out of the window absently, as if my words had suggested a new train of thought to him. When I left the shop I turned to close the door. I saw him still standing with his eyes fixed meditatively, and the puzzled look deepening on his face.

The next time I chanced to be on Third Street there was a stranger at Wetherbee's bench. I went into the shop and spoke to the proprietor.

"Wetherbee? He didn't come down this morning; been ailing for some time, I think. Got an excellent workman in his place—anything we can do for you, madam?"

The poor fellow was sick, then—sick and alone in that cheerless lodging-house. Nothing could be more drearily desolate. I went straight to the office and talked it over with Esculapius, and by nightfall the invalid was lying on a couch before our sitting-room fire, his pale brown eyes wandering about the room with the dazed expression of a man who had never been taken care of in his life.

"I don't think it's anything, ma'am. I was just a trifle dizzy when I got up—as if everything gave out suddenly. I'm afraid I won't try to get well if I stay here."

Esculapius looked him over critically and reported to me in the evening:

"The fellow has let go his hold on life. Sing to him now and then. Keep the room sunny and flowers on the table. Let him talk when he will and say what he will. Presently he will tell you the medicine that will cure him, if a cure is possible."

I followed these directions carefully, but my patient refused to talk. His silence grew almost oppressive. He would lie for hours with his yellowish-brown eyes fixed on the ceiling, and an air of uncomplaining apathy indescribably

touching. His whole manner was retrospective. There was a pitiful lack, not of hope, but of futurity, in the man's face. I grew impatient under his stillness.

"Is there no one you would like to see, Wetherbee—no friend or acquaintance for whom I can send?"

I regretted the words instantly. A painful flush went over his face, leaving it whiter than before.

"No, ma'am—nobody, that is, who would come. I have no friends, ma'am."

He closed his eyes and lay quite still. A few weeks had wrought a wonderful change in his face. It was thinner—more spiritual—as if life were receding slowly and without pain. Suddenly he raised his eyelids and sought my gaze. A feverish determination seemed to take the place of his habitual apathy.

"I want to tell you something, ma'am—I ought to have told you long ago. Sometimes I thought I would, but you seemed to have goodness enough to save your own soul, and some to spare for other people; and I needed it, ma'am, and I took it. I don't ask you to forgive me, but it's come to me lying here that maybe you'll not turn your back on me like the rest. I don't blame them. God made them, and it isn't likely he'd make anybody better than himself. If he has people to-day sufferin' for sins they must have been sorry for before they'd been in hell an hour, it stands to reason that them that want to be like Him would turn their backs on such as me. And *she* is like him. I never saw her do a wrong thing in my life. You mustn't take anything I say as blamin' *her*, ma'am. It's all been my own wickedness, and it's but right I should pay for it. Only it seems wrong that she should pay for it, too—it don't seem as if God was just fair, always.

"I told you once I'd lost my baby, but I didn't tell you how it happened. I couldn't then. We never had any other children. Maybe that was the reason he always seemed brighter and prettier to us than most babies. He was just a year old when—when—it happened, ma'am; just big enough to stand by a chair, and shake his head, and talk the kind of babyish talk without words that nobody understands but fathers and mothers. He had the bravest big blue eyes, like his mother, and—you'll excuse me, ma'am, but I never talked of him to anybody before, and I see him all the time just as he looked *that* morning, settin' on the bed in his white flannel

gown, kickin' his little red socks off his legs, and lookin' out at me so 'cute an' mischievous from under his curls.

"You said you never had any children, ma'am. It's queer how foolish people will be about things every baby does. I reckon you've noticed it a good deal. If he'd lived to be a man and discovered another America, I couldn't have been any prouder of him than I was the morning his mother and me thought he spoke my name. I guess it's always the way. He wasn't very well one morning—just droopy and dull. I went and fetched the doctor, and he said it was nothing serious. He wrote a prescription, though, and said if he showed any signs of fever by midnight we might give him a powder. Little things come back very distinct sometimes. I recollect I was out of money; the boss had been behind with our pay for a couple of weeks, and Janet went to the drawer and got me a dollar of hers. She always did a little sewing for the neighbors. It wasn't in her to be idle.

"I don't know whether I can make you understand the rest or not, ma'am. I don't understand it myself. I never was what you'd call a drinkin' man. My father died of drink—a curse to himself and everybody else. I always thought it was that which made me hate liquor, and yet, all along, even when I was a boy, there was a longin' for it that stayed with me every minute.

"It got the better of me a few times, and when it did—you've read in the Bible of them possessed of devils?—well, it was like that, ma'am. When I went into the drug store that night they carried in a man that had fainted on the street and give him a glass of brandy. I smelled it and saw him drink it. All at once everything in me seemed to turn to thirst. If you had held the whole world in one hand and that little glass of reddish fiery stuff in the other, and offered me my choice, I'd have taken the drink. I wasn't a man any longer—just a terrible, senseless, wild creature, ma'am. I took the money—Janet's money—out of my pocket, flew to a saloon, and called for liquor. It's hard for you to believe it—it's hard for me, lookin' back through things that came afterward.

"I don't remember much more, only wandering around like a bad dream and staggerin' home toward morning. I think it was Janet's face that sobered me. She didn't get up when I came in—just sat still by the bed with her eyes wide open



and hard, and her face like it was cut out of stone. The baby was asleep. It came to me then, like something that had happened a long time ago, about the fever at midnight and the powder. I went up to the bed and laid my hand on his forehead. There wasn't any fever, ma'am. My baby—O my God, my God!—my baby was dead."

The speaker's voice sank to a hoarse, unnatural whisper. The look I had seen on his face in the little kitchen at Deane's came back, intensified by his thinness and pallor. It was some time before he spoke again.

"I can't go over all the rest, ma'am. If Janet had found fault with me, or said anything, it would have been easier, I think. But she went about like she was frozen, as still and white as death, with a look in her eyes like the blade of a knife. When they had dressed him all in white and put him in his coffin, with them pale little flowers in his hands—violets, I think you said they called 'em—she came and stood over him and spoke to me. She said some cruel things then—not crueller than I deserved, not crueller than was true—but they're things I can't say over again, ma'am; not that I've forgotten them, or ever will, but I think you'll understand.

"Them was the last words she ever said to me. She went away after the funeral and I've never seen her since. She'd took a vow on herself, she said. I'm not a religious man, as you know, ma'am, and I don't exactly understand these things. I've tried to send her money a good many times, but it always come back to me without a word. It isn't what she'd have me say, I know; but when I think of her workin' away there alone, with the same things to think of that I've got, and she as good as the angels in heaven, it makes all the talk about God's goodness seem a lie to me. If He can help her and won't, he ain't good; and if he wants to help her and can't, he ain't God. That's about the way I put it up, ma'am, and I hope you'll pardon me for sayin' so.

"I guess I've told you everything. I'll not blame you for washin' your hands of me. You've been very kind to me thus far, and I've hung on to your kindness a good deal. You've done it without knowin' what kind of a man I was; but somehow I can't think that'll trouble you much—they ain't the things that fret us lookin' back. I've thought a good many times if you could go to her—if you could have her here instead of me—things would be nearer right. But,

after all, I doubt if she'd let you do for her as you've done for me; it's not her way to be troublesome. That's all, ma'am."

The speaker stopped abruptly, closing his eyes. There was no eager looking for my verdict, any anxiety he may have felt on that point being allayed by my face or forgotten in more painful thoughts.

"Have you any idea where your wife is living now?" I asked.

"Yes, ma'am. She has a room on Fell Street. I think likely she'll go back to her folks when she has something ahead."

Of course, I determined upon a reconciliation. Esculapius was willing, but not hopeful.

"The woman has Scottish blood," he said, "and Scottish piety. Either might be overcome alone, but the combination is hopeless."

I found her without difficulty in a little back room on the second floor. The moment I saw her face I knew that my errand was useless. Not a strong face—I might have hoped to convince mistaken strength—but weak, bloodless, immovable. There was a well-thumbed Bible on the stand beside her and some unfinished needle-work on the floor. Everything was scrupulously neat. I glanced about for a flower, an ornament, something to arouse a shadow of hope. There was no generous disorder, nothing lovely in the room. Even in the woman's dress of plain print color had been sacrificed to cleanliness; and the woman herself, sitting in the midst of this chilling accuracy, her colorless hair combed smoothly about her colorless face, had an air of melancholy rectitude repellent and touching. The work I had brought required but few directions, and when they were given I rose to go.

"Do you live alone?" I asked, my real errand growing more difficult every moment.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you not find it very lonely?"

"Yes, ma'am. I have been lonesome ever since my baby died. It hath pleased the Lord to bruise me."

"But have you no one left to love or care for? Grief so easily turns to love, you know."

The woman was tying up the work I had brought her.

She drew the twine tight and fastened it firmly. There was not the slightest tremor in her voice when she spoke:

"Did *he* send you to me?"

"Your husband? No. He told me of you, and I came because I wished to—because I was sorry for him and you. Can I help you in any way?"

"No, ma'am. 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.'"

"But do you think the Lord wishes His children to hold themselves aloof from the world? 'He setteth the solitary in families,' you know."

The woman took her Bible from the stand, and read, in a slow, reverential monotone:

"'And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not, then all her vows shall stand and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.'"

The cold *finality* of her voice went over me like a breath from an underground dungeon.

"But her husband may disallow her. After all is it not for him to say whether her oath is binding or not?" Instinctively I grasped at any kind of slavery as less odious than that which she was under.

She had not raised her eyes and went on as if prepared for my appeal.

"'But if her husband disallowed her *on the day that he heard it*, then he shall make her vow which she vowed and that which she uttered with her lips wherewith she bound her soul of none effect, and the Lord shall forgive her.' It's no use, ma'am. I've gone over it a good many times here by myself, and there's no way out of it. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and he knoweth no variableness. I don't know what *he* told you, ma'am, but when I sat there by my baby's bed, and saw death creepin' over its little face, I vowed if he had murdered it I'd turn my back on him forever. And when I told him standing over the coffin he didn't open his lips. God put it into my heart to make the vow, and he'll help me to keep it, ma'am."

Esculapius was right—the case was hopeless.

I made one last appeal with my hand on the door:

"What if your husband were sick—suffering?"

The white-fringed eyelids quivered a little.

"It is in God's hands; let him do what seemeth to him good."

I drew a long breath in the generous sunlight below. The atmosphere I had left clung to me like a damp mist. The air from the street blew clean and warm. A stalwart countryman was passing with an apple-cheeked girl on his arm. I noted the sprig of green in his buttonhole, and the cheap white ribbons fluttering about his companion's bashful face. The wan, unhappy woman sitting up there in the sunless light of the window seemed the very ghost of renunciation—martyrdom robbed of all its fervor and glow.

"It is a case of spiritual petrification," I said to Esculapius. "She has experienced a change of heart—carries about a fossil in the place of the one God gave her. There is no hope, absolutely none."

I did not tell Wetherbee of my visit to his wife. If he suspected it my silence made him aware that it was fruitless. He was not able to leave his bed now, and the quiet, unsatisfied face on the pillow did not make my memories of the fair-haired fanatic more kindly. Esculapius shook his head privately over the condition of my patient.

"The life-preserving forces are lying idle for lack of steam," he said, "and the rust of idleness is eating them up. In common phrase, the man is dying of a broken heart."

There was no acute physical suffering to make the invalid forget his grief. I was sometimes tempted to wish it otherwise.

He opened his strange, luminous eyes on me suddenly one evening; and beckoned me to the bedside.

"Do you think there's a heaven, ma'am?" he whispered.

The question came to me strangely; as if some one standing in an open door should turn and ask me if there were anything without.

"I think there is an eternity where we see and are seen more clearly," I answered.

"Do you think there'll be a great gulf fixed between her and me?"

"No, Wetherbee. I believe God will bridge the gulf that has been between you on earth."

A tremulous, uncertain peace stole over his face. I went back to the window where Esculapius was standing looking

out into the rainy, cheerless dusk. He laid his hands on my shoulders, looked into my face tenderly, and repeated dreamily:

“Behold, we *know* not anything,  
We only *hope* that good may fall,  
Far off at last, at last to all,  
And every winter turned to spring.”

“Your patient will die to-night, little woman.”

I stared at him helplessly. I had not realized that it could really come to that—that the man would die there alone—worse than alone. Could nothing be done? Was there nothing stronger than superstition? I took a scrap of paper from the table and wrote hastily by the fading light: “Your husband is dying. Will you come?”

When my messenger was gone I came back to the sick-room to count the slow, monotonous hours. Outside the rain was beating pitilessly. I could see the bare, unlovely room, the pallid, grief-stricken woman fighting the battle with her imaginary God. There was no struggle here. The shadow of death was creeping over the tired face on the pillow gently.

“Them little flowers—do you think—if you’d ask her—maybe she’d put them in my hands, ma’am?—perhaps I’d know——”

There were footsteps behind me, then a low, smothered cry, and wet garments brushed my hand. She bent over him, holding his hands and cooing like a mother to her babe. A mild, ineffable peace came into his dying face.

“You are right, ma’am—the gulf’s bridged—up here—Janet——”

The stillness of death stole through the room.

I went up to Wetherbee’s wife presently, still kneeling with her head bowed on her husband’s lifeless hand, and laid my hand on her hair.

It was wet with rain.

I smoothed it gently, but she did not move.

The little hard-hearted woman was dead.

## ETCHINGS: SOAKED\*

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The last bell has rung for the departure of the pride of the road. The passengers have bid a last good-by and yet the train stands motionless. The engineer has oiled every bearing, tested every gauge. The train-master comes running with his last orders and a hurried imprecation to start, but still the engine stands, for Bill, the fireman, is not on board.

"If he's not here in ten seconds another man takes his place," yells the train-master, and two sturdy men leave the freight engine on the side tracks and stand waiting orders.

Half the time has elapsed when Bill runs out from the shadows, and clambering up over the tender opens the back tank lids, while the train glides out a minute and a half late.

On the front end of the baggage car crouch two muffled figures—two passengers who never pay.

Faster and faster, out of the city, and away speeds the train, the engineer's eyes fastened on the shining rails that reach out like gleaming snakes; Bill raking and shovelling until the glowing furnace fairly roars.

The lights of the farm-houses appear in the distance, then grow closer and closer, are passed and lost. Here and there along the track stands a lonely telegraph tower, and as the train rushes by the operator reports that the express is gaining time, with a clear way ahead.

Suddenly straight away in the centre of the track shines a narrow glistening band. Its watery surface glitters with the reflection from the two signal lamps that tell of safety.

Bill drops the scoop with the lever at his side and the express is taking water.

Up, up it rises until the tank is filled, and from the rear ports rushes a stream like a cataract, while back over the train floats a spray like that from a miller's wheel.

At last the trip is ended, the train has come in on time, and no sound is heard but the sobbing of the engine, when two dripping apparitions limp from behind the monster and a husky voice wheezes out to the engineer:

"Say, cap, do you always run through that lake?"

Bill laughs and says:

"Tramps, Jim! I seen 'em in the depot."

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\* John L. Given: For Short Stories.

## THE SLEEPLESS KID \*

"If thar is one thing," said the old cattleman with a strain of affection and respect in his tone, "which endears this yere Jack Booth to me, speshul, it is the ca'm uncompromisin' way he lines up on what he deems is his dooty.

"But where Jack shines exceedin' is when you opens a new game onto him. It is just beautiful, as a mere example to men, to see the confidence with which that Jack gets a stack of chips an' sets in agin it. One hot afternoon—Enright an' Doc Peets is away about some cattle or something, but the rest of us is holdin' down the camp—we're sorter hangin' an' revolv'in' 'round the post-office, a-waitin' for Old Monte an' the stage. Here she comes, final, a-rattlin' an' a-creakin', that old drunkard Monte a-crackin' of his whip, the six hosses on the canter, an' the whole business puttin' on more dog than a Mexican officer of revenoo. When the stage drors up, Old Monte throws off the mail bags, gets down an' opens the door, but nobody gets out.

"Well, I'm a coyote!" says Monte, a heap disgusted, 'wharever is the female?'

"Then we all peers into the stage an' thar's jest a baby, with maybe a ten-months' start down this vale of tears, inside, an' no mother nor nuthin' along. Jack Booth, jest as I says when I begins, reaches in an' gets him. The baby ain't sayin' nuthin' an' sorter takes it out in smilin' on Jack.

"He knows me, for a hundred dollars," says Jack, mighty ecstatic. 'I'm an Apache if he ain't allowin' he knows me. Wharever did you get him, Monte?'

"Give me a drink," says Monte, trackin' along into the Early Bird; 'this yere makes me sick.' After he gets about four fingers of carnation under his belt he turns in an' explains as how the mother starts along in the stage all right enuf from Tucson. The last time he sees her, he says, is at the last station back some twenty miles in the hills, at dinner, an' he s'poses all the time she's inside along of her progeny until jest now.

"I don't reckon," says Old Monte, lookin' gloomy like, 'as how that womern is aimin' to saw this yere infant onto the stage company none?'

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\* O. H. Lewis (Dan Quin): *Kansas City Star*.

“Don’t addle your whiskey frettin’ about the company,’ says Booth, a-settin’ of the kid on the bar while we all crowds in for a look at him; ‘the camp’ll play this hand for the infant an’ the company ain’t goin’ to be in it a little bit.’

“I wish Enright and Peets was yere,’ says Cherokee Hall, ‘to be heard hereon, ’cause I shore deems this a grave occasion. Yere we finds ourselves possessed of an unexpected infant of tender years, an’ the question nacheral enuf now is, whatever’ll we do with it?’

“Let’s maverick it,’ says Dan Boggs, who is a mighty good sort of a man, but onthankful.

“No,’ says Cherokee, ‘its mother’ll come hoppin’ along to-morry a-yellin’, you see! This yere is sabed all easy enuf. This old sot Monte has jest done drove off an’ left her planted some’rs up the trail an’ she’ll come along shore in time.’

“Meantime,’ says Booth, ‘the infant’s got to be took care of, to which dooty I volunteers. Thar’s a tenderfoot a-sleepin’ in the room back of the Red Light, an’ he’s that ’feminate an’ effect he’s got a sure-nuf bed an’ some goose-ha’r pillers; which the same I do yereby confiscate to public use to take care of this yearlin’. Is the sentiment pleasin’?’

“Jack’s scheme is right,’ says Boggs, ‘an’ for that matter he’s allers right. Let the shorthorn go sleep under a mesquite bush; it’ll do him good a whole lot; for sech is life in the far West.’

“I’m some dobersome of this play,’ says Cherokee. ‘Small infants is mighty mysterious people, an’ thar ain’t no livin’ man was ever onto their game an’ able to foresee their needs yet. Do you allow you can take care of this young one, Jack? Be you equal to it?’

“Take care of a small baby like this,’ says Jack, plenty scornful, ‘as ain’t weighin’ twenty pounds averdupois? Well, it’ll be some funny now if I can’t! I could take care of him if he’s four times as big. All I asks is for you all to stand by in crises, an’ back the play, an’ you can go make side bets we’ll come out winners on the deal.’

“I ain’t absolute shore,’ says the postmaster, ‘bein’ some out of practice with infants myse’f, but jedgin’ by his lookin’ smooth an’ silky I offers \$50 even he ain’t weaned none yet; an’ we leaves it to the mother when she comes.’

“I won’t bet none on his bein’ weaned complete,’ says



Booth, 'but I'll hang up \$50 even he drinks outen a bottle as successful as Old Monte.'

"'I'll jest go you once,' says the postmaster, 'if I lose. It's \$50 even he grows contemptuous at a bottle an' disdains it.'

"Well, we all talks it over an' decides Booth is to nurse the infant, an' at once proceeds to make a procession for the tenderfoot's bed, which he resigns without a struggle. Cherokee Hall an' Boggs then goes over to the corral an' lays for a goat, which was a mother, to milk it a whole lot. The goat was mighty reluctant an' refooses to enter into the spirit of the thing, but they makes their points right along, an' after a frightful time, which now an' then demands the assistance of a large part of the camp, comes back with more'n a pint.

"'That's all right,' says Booth. 'Now go out an' tell the barkeep to give you a pint bottle. We'll have this yere game a-winnin' in two minutes.'

"So Booth gets his bottle an' fills her up with goat's milk an' makes a stopper outen cotton cloth an' molasses for the young one to dror it through. About this time the infant sets up a yell an' ain't peaceful agin until Booth gives him his six-shooter to play with.

"'Which shows my confidence in him,' says Booth. 'There's only a few people left I care to pass my gun to.'

"Well, Booth gets along with him first-rate, a-feedin' of him the goat's milk, which he goes for with avidity, tharby nettin' Booth \$50 from the postmaster. He has Boggs build a fire so he can keep the milk warm, an' is that earnest he don't even go for no supper; jest has it brought to him.

"'Somebody'll have to ride herd on this yere foundling all night, I reckon,' says Boggs to Jack when he's bringin' him things.

"'I s'pose, most likely, we will have to make the play thataway,' says Booth.

"'All right,' says Boggs. 'You know me an' Cherokee. We're in this any time you says.'

"So a passel of us continues along with Booth and the infant until maybe it's about second drink time in the night. The infant don't raise the war yell once—jest takes it out in goat's milk an' in laughin' an' playin' with Booth's gun.

"'Excuse me, gents,' finally says Booth, mighty dignified, 'but I've been figgerin' this thing an' I rather thinks it's time to put this yere young one to sleep. So if you all will now

withdraw, I'll see how near I comes to beddin' of him down for the night. Stay within' whoopin' distance, though, so if he tries to stampede or takes to millin' I can have he'p.'

"So we all lines out an' leaves Jack an' the infant, an' turns in on faro an' poker an' similar devices which was bein' waged in the saloon.

"Maybe it's an hour when Jack comes in.

"'Boggs,' he says, 'jest step in an' play my hand a minute, while I goes over an' adjourns them frivolities in the dance hall. It looks like this yere camp was speshul tumultuous to-night.'

"Boggs does an' Jack proceeds to the Baile house next door an' states the case.

"'I don't want to onsettles busines,' he says, 'nor disturb the currents of trade, but this yere young one I'm responsible for, in back of the Red Light, gets that engaged in the sounds of these yere revels, it don't look like he's ever goin' to sleep none. So if you all will jest call on the last waltz an' wind her up for to-night, it'll be regarded. The kid's mother'll shore be here in the mornin', which will alter the play all around an' matters can then go back to old lines.'

"'Enuf said,' says Jim Hamilton, who runs the dance hall. 'You can gamble this dance house ain't layin' down none on a plain dooty, an' to-night's shindig closes right yere. All promenade to the bar. We'll take a drink on the house an' quit an' call it a day.'

"So then Jack comes back mighty grave with his cares, an' relieves Boggs, who's on watch, straddle of a chair, a-eyein' of the infant, who, a-settin' up agin a goose-ha'r pillar, along of his goat's milk and Booth's gun, is likewise a-eyein' of Boggs.

"'He's a-way up good infant, Jack,' says Boggs, givin' up his seat.

"'You can bet your life he's a good infant,' says Jack, 'but it seems mighty like he don't aim to turn in an' slumber none. Maybe goat's milk is too invigoratin' for him, an' keeps him awake.'

"About another hour goes on an' out comes Jack into the saloon agin.

"'I don't aim to disturb you all,' he says, 'but, boys, if you'll jest close the games yere an' shet up the store I'll take it as a personal favor. He can hear the click of the chips,

an' it's too many for him. Don' go 'way—jest close up an' set 'round quiet.'

"So we does as Jack says; closes the games an' shets up the camp, an' then sets 'round in our chairs an' keeps quiet a-waitin' for that infant to turn in. A half-hour later Jack comes out agin.

"'It ain't no use, gents,' he says, goin' back of the bar an' gettin' a big drink, 'that child is onto us an' won't have it. You can gamble he's fixed it up with himse'f he ain't goin' to sleep none to-night. I allow it's because he's among rank strangers, an' figgers it's a good safe play to stand watch for himse'f.'

"'I wonder couldn't we sing him to sleep,' says Cherokee Hall.

"'Nothin' agin makin' a try,' says Jack, some desperate, wipin' his lips after his drink.

"'S'pose we all goes an' gives him "The Dyin' Ranger" an' "Sandy Land" for an hour or so, an' see,' says Boggs.

"So in we trails. Cherokee lays down on one side of the infant an' Booth on the other, an' the rest of us takes chairs an' sets 'round. We starts in an' sings him all we knows an' we shorely keeps it up for hours; an' all the time that child a-settin' an' a-starin', sleepless as owls. The last I recollects is Boggs's voice in "The Dyin' Ranger:"

With his saddle for a pillow,  
An' his gun across his breast,  
Far away from his dear old Texas,  
We laid him down to rest.'

"The next thing there's a whoop an' a yell outside. We all wakes up—all except the infant, who's wide awake all along—an' yere it is four o'clock in the mornin' an' the mother has come. Comes over from the last station on a speshul buckboard, where that old inebriate Monte drove off an' left her. Well, son, we was willin' an' glad to see her. An' for that matter, splittin' even, so was the kid."

## ETCHINGS: THE RETURNED SLAVE \*

The plantation had long been deserted, the house gone to decay; but the soft, pitying moon rose, and transformed the ruin into a thing of beauty. It silvered the shadows and threw quivering patches of light through the rustling vine leaves which still clung faithfully to the sad-hued portals. A long row of whitewashed cabins, the "negro quarter," gleamed in the light. Once they were full of life but silent now; the doors half off their leathern hinges, and through the sagging roofs the moon poured liquid silver on the broken floors.

From the shadow of some trees came a woman's drooping figure, walking slowly as if deadly tired. She counted the cabins as she passed, and pausing before one crossed the broken threshold. She pushed back the straight hair that hung in wild disorder about her yellow face and gazed with black, burning eyes upon the surrounding desolation.

"Here I was happy," she murmured, "happy though a slave. The joy that thousands found in freedom was denied *me*."

The dead ashes were still banked in the yawning fire-place, and huddling down, she brooded over them, raking in them with her long fingers as if she sought there the buried past.

Again she saw fires leaping in every cabin, and beside them sitting wrinkled patriarchs, emancipated by age from labor, smoking their corn-cob pipes. The time for work was over, and the older ones sat before the open doors complacently watching the youngsters, some shouting, some fighting and squalling, but most of them in ecstatic enjoyment grovelling upon their stomachs in the sun-warmed dust. And, ah! she saw herself, a bright young quadroon girl, loitering beside the old well-sweep with the smart under-coachman, while the sweet, resistless music of the banjo floated over all.

The woman started from her reverie.

She crept out again into the still, white light and crossed wide moonlit fields, in one of which lay a weed-grown, unfenced spot, the old slave burying-ground, where the smart young coachman had been laid before he tasted freedom. The burdock grew rank over his grave, and there had never been a head-stone, but she found it, and lay down there; and in the silent night gave back her weary soul to God.

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\* A. L. Tinney: For Short Stories.

## JEAN'S LETTER \*

Six years old; breeches broken at the knees; hair blond, curly, so rich and thick it would have coiffed the heads of two pretty ladies; two great blue eyes that still tried to smile a little, though they had cried so much; a jacket well cut but falling to rags; a girl's shoe on one foot, a boy's boot on the other, both shoe and boot too wide and too long, turned at the toes and lacking in heels behind—this was Jean.

Little Jean, so cold and hungry this winter evening, who had eaten nothing since noon of the day before and who had finally decided to write to the Virgin. And how, say you, did Jean, who no more knew how to write than he knew how to read, arrange this letter?

Listen, for it is that which I am going to tell you.

Below there, in the quarter of the Gros-Caillou, at the corner of the avenue, not far from the Esplanade, there was a shop, in the days I tell of, of a public writer, for in those days also there were so many claims and petitions to be made to the government and so many people, like Jean, that did not know how to write.

And the writer that kept this shop was an old soldier far on in years, a brave man but a little testy, who was anything but rich and had the additional misfortune of not being sufficiently chopped to pieces to secure admission to the Hôtel des Invalides.

Jean, without prying at all, had many times seen him through the dingy glasses of his little cubby-hole, smoking his pipe and awaiting customers, and so to-day he entered fearlessly with a civil—

“Good-day, monsieur. I have come, if you please, for you to write me a letter.”

“Ten sous, little one,” Père Bonin responded, gazing over his spectacles at the midget before him.

Jean had no cap, and was therefore unable to lift it, but he said very politely:

“Then excuse me!” and he turned to reopen the door.

But, pleased with his manners, Père Bonin stopped him.

“Stay!” said he; “tell me first, little one, if you are the son of a soldier.”

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\* French of Paul Favel · E. C. Waggener: For Short Stories.

"Oh, no!" said Jean, "only mamma's son, and she's all alone."

"I see," said the writer, "and you have not the ten sous?"

"No, no sous at all," said Jean.

"Nor thy mother either, 'tis plain to be seen! And thy letter, little one—is it to make the soup come?"

"Yes," said Jean, "exactly."

"Advance, then. Ten lines on a half sheet; one is never too poor for that!"

And Père Bonin spread out his paper, dipped his pen in the ink, and wrote at the top of the page, in the beautiful hand of the quartermaster that once he had been:

PARIS, January 17th, 188—

Then a line lower:

To MONSIEUR——

"Well, go on," said he, "how do you call him, baby?"

"Who?" demanded Jean.

"Parbleu! the gentleman."

"What gentleman, monsieur?"

"The one to make the soup come."

Jean this time comprehended.

"But it isn't a gentleman," said he.

"Ah! bah! a lady, then?"

"Yes—no—that is——"

"Name of names! midget," Père Bonin cried, "don't you know whom you are going to write a letter to?"

"Oh, yes!" said the child.

"Out with it, then, quick! I can't wait all day!"

But little Jean stood all red and confused. The fact is, it is not as easy as it looks to address one's self to public writers for correspondences of this kind, but Jean was brave and presently answered softly:

"It is to the Holy Virgin that I wish to send a letter."

Father Bonin did not laugh, not at all; he simply wiped and laid aside his pen and took his pipe from his mouth.

"See you, midget," said he severely, "I don't want to believe that you mock an old man; besides, you are too small for me to trounce. Face about; march! Out you go!"

Little Jean obeyed and wonderingly turned heel, or foot rather, since heel he had none; and seeing him so submissive, Père Bonin a second time reconsidered and regarded him more closely.

"Name of names, of names!" grumbled he, "but there *is* misery in this Paris! What do you call yourself, baby?"

"Jean."

"Jean what?"

"Nothing—just Jean."

Père Bonin felt his eyes sting, but he only said:

"And what do you wish to say to the Holy Virgin?"

"To tell her that mamma's been asleep since four o'clock yesterday, and that I can't wake her up."

The heart of the old soldier suddenly stood still. He feared to comprehend. He demanded again:

"But that soup you spoke of a while ago?"

"Yes," said the child, "I know, I had to speak of it, you see, because mamma before going to sleep yesterday gave me the last piece of bread."

"And what did she eat, pray?"

"Nothing for more than two days—she always said she wasn't hungry."

"And you tried to wake her, say you—how?"

"As I always do—kissing her."

"Did she breathe?"

Jean smiled, and that smile made him beautiful.

"I don't know," said he. "Don't we always breathe?"

Père Bonin had to hastily turn his head, for two big tears were rolling down his cheeks, and his reply to the child was another question:

"And when you kissed her," said he, "you noticed nothing strange?"

"Yes, I did," said Jean, "how cold she was; but then it's always *so* cold in our house."

"She shivered, then, your mamma—shivered with the cold?"

"No, she was just cold, but so pretty, her hands crossed so; her head back and her eyes looking at the sky."

"And I wanted riches!" Père Bonin murmured, "I, who have enough to eat and drink, when here is one that died of hunger!" . . .

And drawing the child to him, he took him on his knee and softly began to talk to him.

"Thy letter, my baby," said he, "is written, sent, and received. Now take me to thy mother."

"Oh, yes, I will, but—but why do you cry?" demanded Jean, astonished.

"But I am not crying, Jean—no, men never cry! 'Tis you, my precious, who will soon do that!"

Then straining him in his arms and covering him with kisses: "I, too, know you, little Jean, once had a mother, whom I see even now in her bed, so pale and white and saying to me, the image of the Virgin resting at her head: 'Bonin, my son, be an honest man always, and always a Christian!' An honest man I have been, but a Christian—ah, dame!"

He sprang to his feet, the child still hugged to his breast, and speaking as if to one invisible:

"But now, old mother, now, I say, rest thou in peace, for thou art going to have thy way. Friends may laugh and jeer if they will, but where thou art I wish to go, and there will I be led by this precious angel here, who shall never leave me again. His letter, which was never even written, has made a double shot—it has given him a father and me a heart!"

That is all; this story without end is done. I know no more save that somewhere in Paris to-day there is a man still young, a writer also, but not as Père Bonin.

This man is a writer of eloquent things.

His friends still call him "Jean," as he called himself, and though I know not, either, the name of the postman that carries letters like these, they always reach their destination.



## CHOVALSKY THE JOINER\*

I owed his acquaintance to a chance, or to express myself better, I owed it to a spring-time in Yakutsk, that Siberian season, strange and marvellous, of which no European can form an idea. The sun of Yakutsk begins ordinarily to warm the atmosphere about the end of the first fortnight in April. In the month of May its globe of fire scarcely disappears for a few hours behind the horizon, and its heat becomes intense. Nevertheless, till the great Lena has thrown off her winter shackles, till the snows are completely melted, walled up as they are as far as the eye can reach, in the vast virgin forest, it cannot be said that the spring has arrived. A struggle as of the giants then begins, between the strong rays of the sun and those formidable blocks of ice, two fathoms thick, which the earth, frozen herself to the depth of hundreds of feet, is powerless to warm.

The sun triumphs at last. The sap crackles in the depths of the forest. The Grand Lena, queen of the waters, "the Grandmother," as the Siberians call her, is at length recalled to life. And toward the last days of May, in the city of Yakutsk, a most curious spectacle is witnessed. Through the streets all the inhabitants, men, women, and children—even to the superannuated—move about in expectancy, their necks extended, their ears bent, listening for the smallest sound that may come from the river. Each vibration of the air abruptly checks their course. They turn to the eastward and listen with a profound concentration of the senses. If the distant sounds expire or diminish, they continue tranquilly on their way, but if, on the contrary, the sounds increase, become accentuated, soon filling the air with a rumbling as of thunder, accompanied by sinister subterranean reports, like the roaring of a tempest, then these Yakuts, so tranquil a moment before, are suddenly aroused in the most extraordinary fashion, and a thousand joyous cries pierce the air:

"The ice cracks! It is crumbling! The break-up has come!"

There, on the verge, a multitude in delirium anxiously watches the most imposing phenomenon which nature offers in this region to the admiration of man. Over an area of four miles in extent, enormous ice-blocks, driven by the current,

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\* R. B. Davenport: "Siberian Sketches."

are piled up to the colossal height of some fabulous structure, or of some gigantic mountain which is now splitting asunder, cracking with horrible groans, and scattering, as it crumbles, a shower of myriad flakes, which glisten in the sunlight with marvellous variations of color.

Noisily the people disperse themselves in every direction and hasten to scatter the good news to those who have remained at home. And it is not only to their friends, but to everybody, near or far, that they shout these magic words, as moved by a feeling of fraternal duty:

“The Lena has started!”

Soon these words, repeated an infinity of times, modulated by hundreds of voices, reach the remotest *yourtes* [houses]; and all, as by a common impulse, hasten to the river side.

But, in order to comprehend perfectly the cause of the assembling of this breathless populace on the banks of the river, one must spend a winter in Siberia. And, at first, in the enthusiasm of the beholder, there is an entire absence of anything like an æsthetic prepossession. The view of this incomparable spectacle has no part in his emotion; no, these men, who, in their desperate struggles with the pitiless cold and with merciless hardship, have exhausted their ultimate forces, who languish and sigh for the benevolent glow of the sun—these men have but one object: to witness at last with their own eyes the great triumph of the sun and the complete annihilation of the despotic season. And an abounding joy, a joy which is childlike, bursts forth upon the yellowed features of the Yakuts, their simple faces relax, their large mouths seem larger than ever; their small eyes shine like living coals.

Intoxicated with gladness, the multitude almost reels.

“Praised be the Lord! Praised be the Lord!” it murmurs with one accord, and turning toward the gigantic ice mountains, melting away with almost prodigious rapidity, it salutes with joyful acclamations the fall of its implacable foe.

The enormous ice-blocks, driven by a torrent of tumultuous billows, burst and are engulfed, and quickly disappear.

Hardly has the Lena swept onward these fabulous ice-masses and swallowed them up than the ground itself quickly thaws, and though the soil is never mellowed to a greater depth than two feet beneath the surface, yet nature makes haste to profit by the three months of warmth that are vouch-

safed to her. In a very brief space all things have developed, all things are in bloom, and the great valley where the city of Yakutsk is spread out offers to the gaze a fairy-like aspect.

Fertile and greenly clothed, cultivated here and there, dotted with clumps of birches, with tufted copses, rich prairies and shining lakes, whose number is legion, this valley, seen from the summits surrounding it, is like a gigantic park, the silvery ribbon of the Lena alone winding through it.

And the natural beauty of this plain is still more enhanced by the solemn girdle of gloomy, virgin forests encircling it, which in the midst of this wild and inaccessible region make it a marvellous oasis in the heart of the desert.

The tribe of the Yakuts is unquestionably one of the best among the tribes of Siberia. It has especially learned to profit most largely by the bounties of the sun. Barely released from their cramped and unwholesome winter huts (for it is only the poorest of the Yakuts who dwell in the city in summer), the activity of the inhabitants so fills the air with the sense of movement, they display so intense an animation, they attack the soil with so great an energy, that the earth, awakened in such vigorous fashion, unheard of elsewhere, seems to throb and quicken with a twofold resonance.

Then is celebrated the festival of spring, a festival which commands from the Yakuts many grateful offerings, as well as ample libations of koumyss. After that the festive atmosphere seem not to change at all. Grass seems to spring from the earth as if by miracle, cows and mares are puffed out with milk, that ambrosia of Yakutsk, and the fermented koumyss never fails to moisten the wooden cups.

The sight of those lovely hills, the gayety of the populace whom I met at every step, that soft beatitude which seemed to be a part of the ambient air—all this began to awaken in me an enchantment to which I quickly abandoned myself with all the impulses of my being. Every day I left the town and went to feast my gaze upon the marvels of nature and to bathe eagerly in the warmth of the sun.

Ordinarily the object of my excursions was one or another of the yourtes widely scattered over the country, which give to the landscape the appearance of being more thickly peopled than it really is. The dweller in each cabin offers you, according to custom, koumyss or fresh milk. Certainly, neither

of those beverages is devoid of an odor particularly disagreeable, even repulsive, which prompts the stranger to remark as he carries it to his lips: "This smells of the Yakuts!" But in the end, for the lack of something better, he becomes accustomed to it; and for my part, I had grown so much so that I drank of both liquids in great quantities and without the least repugnance.

Among the various yourtes which I frequented was one which I especially liked, because of its isolated situation, in the midst of the wood, on the borders of a deep lake. This cabin belonged to an old man so far advanced in years that he was generally designated by the reverend title of the Patriarch (Ohonior). He lived with his wife and a young lad. His property consisted of a few mares, two cows, and a colt.

The people of Yakutsk are excessively garrulous and curious; the venerable Ohonior possessed both of these faults to a marked degree, and, as I could jabber Russian a little, it was at his house that I most freely visited.

He at first took pains, naturally enough, to inquire whence I came and who I was.

Toward a Russian an inhabitant of Yakutsk always maintains an humble and suspicious attitude. He cringes. A Muscovite, even though he be clothed in rags, is to him the representative of the master, the conqueror. With a Pole his relations are more familiar. I do not remember that a single Yakut ever remained indifferent to the announcement of my nationality.

"Bilak! \* Bilak! worthy brother," usually cry the least demonstrative of the Yakuts.

From the first I was on an intimate footing, then, with the Ohonior, and when, after a while, he learned that I was somewhat lettered, that I might have filled the post of village clerk, or even a more public function, if need be, and finally that I could compose and indite petitions, his esteem for me no longer knew any bounds, without, however, falling into too great a familiarity. Thanks to his congenial spirit, I always obtained from him most excellent koumyss and milk, and his good old spouse, in offering me the wooden bowl, always took good care to wipe it out with her wrinkled fingers, and even to apply her tongue to it conscientiously, wherever there might appear to be a doubtful stain.

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\* Polander.

One day, as I was returning from my daily walk, I found my patriarch in an abnormal state; he was not only talkative, but his gayety was such that I would hardly have recognized him. I soon learned that my venerable friend, by the aid of eau de vie, had sought to warm and reanimate his limbs which age was beginning to stiffen.

"The Bilaks are all good fellows!" he rattled off quickly, but indistinctly, while filling his pipe with tobacco from my pouch. "Every Bilak is a writer or a doctor, and if he be not a doctor he is a blacksmith. Oh—but such blacksmiths!—we have none such among us. Thou—thou art an honest man—one can see that—and an honest writer, and Sacha [thus the Yakuts designates himself] will ever remember that Bilak is his brother. But if I were to tell thee that I had not always thought thus, thou wouldst not credit me. Even as thou beholdest me, seventy times already have I seen with these eyes the grass spring up—the calves eat it. Well, it is hardly fifteen years since I was afraid of the Bilaks as I am of evil spirits. If I saw one in the road I quickly fled, like a rabbit, to the depths of the wood, and there I remained, crouched in the densest part of the bush—and I was not alone in thinking thus. All the Yakuts were alike, because—as thou mayest see, friend—they spoke much evil of the Bilaks; it was said they had horns, that they beat people, and many similar things."

And as I ridiculed the credulity of the patriarch, saying he could never have given any faith to such nonsense, he grew angry and very red.

"Nonsense, master! When I and everybody hereabouts have heard such things from father to son! Nonsense, eh! You take us for children? I do not know what is thought of you Polanders in other countries, but what I do know, and what we have heard from all time, is that the Bilaks are a very terrible, a very dangerous people."

The old man took a swallow of koumyss and drew a few whiffs of smoke.

"And there was reason for it," he continued. "My father was still alive; my son had hardly begun to look for a mate, when a Bilak exile arrived here. His eyes were dark and as clear as the flinty ice; his beard was long, with enormous mustaches. He dwelt not far from here, yonder on the lofty side of the mountain. At that time the mountain was covered

with a forest that but little resembled the present one; it was dense and heavily foliaged, and never had the axe penetrated it. In the thickest part of the bush stood an abandoned yourte; Bilak liked and rented it. But hardly was he established there than the forest for seven versts around became forbidden ground. The whole day long he was seen to wander with a rifle upon his shoulder. No sooner did he see a human form, were it even that of a Cossack, than he took aim, and if the man did not flee he fired—yes, he fired, and it was for good and all! How did he live? Only the spirits of the forest may know that, for never a human being got near him; he was avoided as you would avoid a leper. Those who had seen him prowling, with sinister intent, through the forest, said that at first he was clothed like a real gentleman; but afterward he went about clad in the skins of beasts, which doubtless he had sewed together himself, and they said, further, that he appeared more frightful and more savage than ever. His beard had grown so long that it reached to his belt; his face was yet more ghastly than before, and his eyes sparkled as with fire. So it went on for several years. But one winter, at the time when the cold is most terrible, when a murderous gale was blowing, he was no longer to be seen. Those who were most accustomed to espy him informed the authorities. A calamity, perhaps, had befallen him. A party was assembled and advanced with precaution—and there Bilak was found, lying on his bed, stiff—wrapped in his skins and already covered with snowflakes. In his hand, tightly closed, was a little cross. Bilak was dead—dead of hunger, perhaps, or else of the cold—unless it be that Satan himself took him off!

“And now dost thou comprehend why we fear the Bilaks so? Why we flee from them and from everybody, since so many are coming hither all the time? Ha! Thou art young yet, though a writer. And dost thou suppose that sensible people act thus without cause? Remember, thou wert mistaken, and that Sacha is not so foolish as thou thoughtest him.”

I left the patriarch, feeling strangely moved. I was haunted by the image of that unfortunate creature whose madness could not bear the sight of his fellow-man.

Those meadows, those copses which I was now treading, he too, perhaps, had visited, dragging his wretchedness with him through flowery pathways. Had his suffering been so

great, or was his soul so sensitive that it could not endure to be face to face with the iniquity, the baseness of humanity? Or, rather, was it because his country was so distant, because of the absence of beings especially beloved—was it this that had so wounded him?

Absorbed in these thoughts, I was returning toward the village when I heard a prolonged shout:

“Kaal are, kaal dohor!”

I did not at first comprehend from whence this exclamation came; but as the shouts grew clearer, I concluded that they proceeded from the opposite side of the copse.

“Kaal are, kaal dohor!” repeated the man in need.

By the peculiar accent of his voice, I was soon aware that he who was shouting was neither a Russian nor Yakuts, but was no doubt merely a Mazovian peasant, lately arrived; for none but a dweller in the region of Warsaw could have pronounced those three words, so sonorous in the Yakuts tongue, in that fashion:

“Kaal are, kaal dohor!” (“Come here, brother!”)

I drew near and I saw beyond the bushes, at the end of the bridge which spanned a green-bordered arm of the Lena, a man, dressed as an exile, who was berating with much gesticulation a native of the country. But the suspicious Yakut was fleeing through the tall herbage at his utmost speed.

“Kaal are! Blood of a dog!” yelled the peasant once more. And as the other did not even look around, the Mazovian proceeded to curse him, all to himself:

“Ah! mayest thou perish, dog-engine! Mayest thou rot, son of a she dog!”

Seeing me, he was suddenly silent. And as I saluted him with a “God be praised!” in Polish, he cried with a movement of astonishment: “Jésu!” and he added, “But how come you here, sir?”

He was a political exile who had arrived but a little before. He told me in his blunted patois that he had at first sojourned in the suburbs of Yakutsk, but having come into the city to obtain work in the gold mines, he had engaged himself as a cattle driver. Just then he was trying to assemble his herd, all alone, it being scattered over the prairie; and not succeeding, he had waited for some obliging person to help him. This service I promptly rendered him.

When the bullocks had crossed the stream and we saw

them proceeding on their way ahead of us in good order, we chatted a little together. I first asked him with whom he was staying in Yakutsk.

"Why, with Chovalsky, to be sure," he said.

I knew all of the exiles who resided at Yakutsk, but I had never heard of Chovalsky.

"What! the joiner?" he insisted.

I did not know any joiner.

"Has he any acquaintances in the town? Whom does he know?" I asked.

"Oh, he is a queer fellow! Everybody knows him, but he never visits anybody! And, then, how could he walk, since his feet have been frozen and he has lost all of his toes, so that his feet look like two blocks of wood rather than human members? Oh, he suffers greatly at times! And then he can scarce drag himself to his izba."

"How does he live?"

"By his joinery, somewhat. He has a good work-table and tools of all kinds; but—when he can't stand on his feet—his trade must necessarily fail him. At such times he is glad if some one will bring him an order for a broom, for he makes brooms, and handsome ones, too, both for the clothing and for the floor. Only here there are but few floors to sweep, and as for clothes, but very few persons think of brushing them. Just now the poor man is again ill."

"Knowest thou from whence he is? Whether here long?"

"Oh! a long time, a long time, even before any of us had come here. But it is very plain that you do not know him, sir, else you would not ask from whence he comes and who he is. You see, it is not from me alone that he hides this, but from every one, even from the priests of Irkoutz. When he is questioned he always answers the same thing:

"'God knows me and whence I came; but if I were to tell you, what good would it be to you?'

"No one has ever been able to get more out of him."

On leaving the Mazovian I inquired particularly as to the dwelling-place of Chovalsky. I know not why, but the image of this man, so eager to hide from every living creature the secret of his name and of his past, blended in my thought with that of the unfortunate Bilak who fled the sight of his fellow-man. There seemed to be between these two beings a mysterious affinity.



From this moment I often directed my footsteps toward the yourte of Chovalsky, but without ever entering it. An inexplicable apprehension checked me each time that I was about to cross the threshold.

On the outside of the dwelling, in the narrow sashes of the windows, were old and flimsy squares of wood, exposed to the parching heat of the sun, but which no one ever thought of renewing. Every day these squares grew darker and more shrunken, as also, perhaps, beneath the roof he who once placed them there grew darker and more shrunken. No sound of life or toil came from the house.

At length, my patience exhausted, I determined to enter. As I approached the threshold I heard from within, through the open window, a feeble song, murmured in a trembling, but very sweet voice. I seated myself upon the circular bench at the door of the yourte, and I could distinguish each word of a plaintive, somewhat ancient song, like the romances which were sung toward the middle of this century.

It began thus:

“When the fields are greenly dressed,  
When the spring thrills earth’s deep breast.”

The second strophe was yet more languorous:

“He who suffers in his soul,  
He whose heart is full of dole,  
Whom no nightingale can cheer,  
Hath no spring-time in his year;  
Life for him has no sweet calm,  
Softer seasons bring no balm;  
There’s no spring where grief doth reign,  
Winter dwells in hearts of pain!”

The voice paused an instant and then continued:

“He who weeps a mother dead,  
All whose hope with her hath fled,  
Marks his exiled comrade’s tears——”

Here the song was sharply interrupted and a querulous voice cried:

“Go, little dog, go revile the good God! Spare him not!”

I did not at first seize the full meaning of this absurd command, but very soon I heard a shrill barking in the court.

The door was open; I approached and looked in. Before the door of the izba a small black dog, of slender form, stood on his hind legs, jumped and turned about, and barked and howled, his small, sharp nose pointed to the cloudless blue

of the sky with a menacing air. This time, again, I was lacking in courage to enter, and I continued on my way.

I saw him at last. In stature a little above the average, his hair was gray, and he was greatly emaciated. His complexion, like that of most Siberian exiles, had a characteristic earthy hue. This particular trait was with him so far developed that it was painful to look at him, his face being yellowed, almost blackened, and had it not been that he talked and gesticulated, it might have been difficult, at a little distance, to take him for a human being. The gleaming glances, however, from his great eyes, darkly encircled, proved that the inner life was not yet extinct in this moving corpse, which had still the faculty of feeling and breathing. In the end I grew accustomed to this visage—when in repose—so emaciated by pain; yet when he arose I found myself compelled to turn away, so great was the suffering that I read in his features at every step which he took, with his pitifully mutilated members, which might with truth be compared to formless mallets of human flesh.

Chovalsky spoke Polish with a rare correctness and purity of accent. In his discourse he avoided all allusion to his past or his country. He seemed to be only interested in the present, and in his little dog, to whom he was always talking.

In the several weeks during which I visited him, only once, as I was talking of the district of Plock, did his eyes seem to brighten. He fixed on me a look in which there smouldered an inward fire, and he said in a voice wholly changed:

“You know Plock, sir?”

As I answered that I had sojourned there for a whole year, he murmured half to himself and half to me:

“Everything there must be changed after so many years. You were certainly not yet in the world when I was sent to Siberia. In what part of the district did you dwell?”

“Very near Racaiz.”

His lips half opened as if to speak, but whether he perceived that he was becoming too loquacious, or whether he divined that I was listening to him with a growing interest, I do not know. Anyhow, his mouth shut again abruptly, allowing a long and half-stifled exclamation to escape.

This was the only time that he gave way.

I was nevertheless burning to question him; but anticipating my questions, he adroitly turned them off by calling his

dog to his side, caressing him with his hand and saying to him in a low tone:

“Go, little dog, go revile the good God!”

Obediently the little animal bounded into the court, and for a long time he hurled toward heaven his hostile cries.

Every time that the exile gave his dog this singular command one might be sure that he would not again open his mouth in regard to himself during the entire day. He even affected thereafter to occupy himself wholly with his little companion; but he did so with a perfect heartiness, and spoke of him at such times with much detail.

The dog, as a matter of fact, was not extraordinary in any way. He differed, however, from all his confrères in Yakutsk in not having any name, and he answered only to that of “dog,” or more often “little dog,” although he was particularly petted and was fortunate in the possession of a master and a roof.

“Why have you never given him a name?” I asked Chovalsky.

“What would be the use?” said he. “If men had never invented these particular designations, and if they had merely called one another ‘men,’ perhaps they would better remember the duties incumbent upon human beings in this life.”

Consequently his dog had no name.

He was a little animal, slender and puny, and he resembled but little the strong, muscular build of the watch-dogs of Yakutsk, with their long, shaggy, thick coats. His hair was short and shiny and soft as silk. He led a very solitary life, but the cause of it was his diminutive size; the several experiments which he had made, to his cost, in mixing with the public life of the canine race had turned entirely to his disadvantage; he always returned from these unfortunate excursions so bitten and torn that after fruitless attempts he had entirely abstained from seeking the society of his kind, and no longer quitted the court-yard of his master. This solitude had finally imparted to him a far greater seriousness than might have been expected in a little animal of as lively a temperament, but his gravity had a special character. In his intelligent canine eyes one could read a sort of bitterness, mixed with contempt and hatred for every great and robust creature who would not respect the rights of the weak. Never did his tail wag for anybody except his master; never

did he beg caresses from another — perhaps he did not trust them—and if he responded to them, it was with low growls.

Two or three weeks glided by, but Chovalsky's health did not improve; on the contrary, it grew feebler day by day. We who watched the patient with close attention, were forced to admit that his illness would be the closing episode of his miserable existence here below.

Had Chovalsky a presentiment of it? God only knows! And yet he must have known it, for suddenly he ceased almost entirely to talk.

Several more days passed, during which he struggled obstinately against the weakness which was invading him; he endeavored to come and go in his yourte, strove to work at his partly-finished brushes. One day the work fell from his hands and he took to his bed.

Some time after that I was at home. I was about to take my morning tea when the locksmith, Vladislav Piotrovsky, came and knocked on my window. He was the closest friend of Chovalsky in Yakutsk. He came to ask me to go with him to the sick man, who was very low.

"Perhaps he will die in peace if he feels that he is not wholly abandoned," explained the worthy man, and he added:

"Would the master take a book with him?"

A book appropriate to the occasion? I hardly had one. Hastily I took up a New Testament and we started.

"Is he then so bad?" I asked.

"I fear so, for his face has turned black, and he says himself that he will surely die to-day."

The joiner's yourte was not far away; we quickly arrived there. As we entered, our hearts contracted and we were seized with that instinctive depression which one feels when penetrating into an interior that is utterly desolate.

On approaching the bed we soon perceived, by the unpleasant, feverish odor which proceeded from it, that he would never again leave it. Indeed, he resembled so little a human being, lying there so rigid and with closed eyes, that we doubted for an instant whether he was still alive.

At the foot of the bed lay his little dog, doubled up like a ball, watching him. Vladislav leaned over the moribund and passed his hand under the covering; the legs were like ice. He turned toward me with a shrug of the shoulders,

but hardly had he finished this gesture when the dying man raised himself:

"I still live! I still live!" he cried, in a voice so strong, so sonorous, that I never heard its like. And he added: "I am glad you have come, for I wished to speak to you before my death."

The feverish vivacity with which he spoke confirmed in both of us the thought that we had come in time. We exchanged a swift glance, but the patient detected the signal and understood it.

"I know," said he, "that I am going; it is useless to hide from me what I clearly see. If I have asked for you, it is because I felt that I was about to die; otherwise I would not speak. I feared that nobody would come, that nobody in the world would ever hear what I have to say, and that He whom you name the God of Mercy had even deprived me of speech. I thank you for your kindness, and if you should ever attain to the end of a life so miserable as mine, I hope you may not die in utter desolation."

Chovalsky was silent. In his seamed forehead the wrinkles contracted and then relaxed, as if his brain were making a supreme effort to unite the scattered thoughts which seemed about to escape him, and as if he were striving, by all the power of his will, to retain for a few instants longer the last lingering remnant of life.

It was an early hour of the morning. In the east the sun was rising above the laughing shores of the river, flinging upon the wall two glistenings sheaves of light. Without, the doors of light mounted from unbounded meadows, from archipelagoes whose isles were verdure. A sappy exuberance was felt on all sides, and the echoes of this living symphony, strengthened again by the all-potent warmth of the sun, seemed to blend in a hymn of gratitude, which reached the dying man and encompassed him.

And in this striking contrast between the miserable cot on which lay this living corpse and that exuberance of life, of joy and sunlight and melodious song, there was a bitter, sardonic, almost sacrilegious irony.

The joiner spoke: "It was long ago," said he, "forty years, perhaps. I was exiled to the steppes of Orenberg. At that time I was young, robust. I had confidence in God, in myself, in man. I imagined, wrongly perhaps, that I had no

right to abandon my faculties to the caprice of fate, and that I ought to find a larger field of action for them than that to which I was restricted. Home-sickness impelled me, too. For two years I struggled; at last, unable to resist longer, I escaped—but the Cossacks overtook me.

“I was this time banished much farther than before, to the district of Toms. I was not discouraged, and I again set energetically to work, nourishing myself with bread and water. When I had again gotten together the necessary sum, I again escaped.

“Alas! this second flight brought upon me an imprisonment of several years. Regarded henceforth as a hardened recalcitrant, I was sent to the farthest extremity of Siberia.

“That year the winter was frightfully severe. I was without money, without clothing. My feet froze. This was for me a dreadful misfortune, the more so as I had been banished beyond the Yenesei, a dismal country, scarcely inhabited, where life itself was a hardship. It was with difficulty that I gained my bread. Despite my infirmity I learned several trades, joinery among others, and I lived by that.

“Six years thus elapsed, during which, by dint of privations, I again gathered together some money. Then, despite my mutilated limbs, in spite of my cruel failures, I dragged myself once more on the road to liberty.

“I had no longer confidence in my strength. I was sick, broken down; but what would you? The Occident drew me toward it—only my aim was now changed; it was no longer in order to live, but to die, that I longed to return thither—to die! I dreamed of it as of a blessing! To die upon the grave of my beloved mother!

“In my wretched existence my mother was the only human being who had evinced any interest in me. I had never had either wife or child or mistress. It was from her only that I had received a little joy in this world.

“So when I felt myself at the end of my strength, feeble and desolate, it was for the grave of my mother that I languished.

“In my sleepless nights it seemed to me that I felt again as of yore—on my forehead at the moment of parting—the soft pressure of her hands; I felt on my cheeks her tender kisses; and her burning tears rained upon me again, as on the day when she said adieu to me, presaging, perhaps, this

eternal separation. I do not know whether it was for her or for my country that I longed the most.

“This time the journey was horribly painful. I advanced but little, because of my wounds, which had reopened. I travelled like a wild beast that is ceaselessly pursued, hiding myself for whole weeks in the deepest recesses of the great woods. Sometimes, in the immense virgin forests, I fell, nerveless, exhausted by hunger, and black troops of ravens and vultures, scenting a prospective corpse, swooped down in swift eddies over my head, like a sinister omen.\*

“Then, insensate that I was, I besought the God of Mercy, the God of Justice, the God of the Wretched: ‘Help me! Succor me! Have pity on me, Lord! Permit me, oh, tenderest of fathers, to see again my country. And then give me death! I will embrace it myself, if need be, but let me go that far! I ask thee nothing—nothing more!’

“During two years I travelled.

“At length I arrived in the district of Perm. Never before had I advanced so far toward my country. My heart was swelling with joy, and in my troubled brain, as in the head of a madman, a single thought revolved without ceasing. I shall see again my country! I shall see again my native land! I shall die on the grave of my beloved mother!

“When I had crossed the Ural Mountains I believed myself saved. Emotion so prostrated me that I lost consciousness. When I arose I wept for a long time, a long time, blessing God for his bounty, for his mercy! But He, the Merciful, prepared for me, for that very day, the mortal blow—the finishing stroke! It was to Yakutsk, this time, that I was banished.

“Why have I endured my tortures until now? Why have I striven to live, only to arrive at this miserable end?

“Because I wanted to know just how far would go the implacableness of God, and what purposes he had regarding me.

“And see—to a man who believed in him with the fervor of a child; to a man who never in the whole of his existence experienced an hour of joy and never even hoped for it; toward whom no one save his mother had ever shown any good-will; who, poor and lame, had toiled to the end of his

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\* Prisoners who escape from Siberia believe that if during their flight through the forest troops of birds alight on their head death is near, and that nothing can save them from it.

existence without stretching forth his hand; who had neither stolen nor killed; who had not coveted the goods of another; who, possessing two objects, gave them both up without reserve—see what He has done!

“Well, I tell you, this God—I hate him! This God—I do not believe in him! I question his holiness, I do not believe in his judgments, I do not believe in his justice!”

“Listen, my brothers! I call upon you as witnesses, at the hour of my death, that you may know and may attest it when some day you shall go back over yonder.”

Suddenly he sat up, stretched out his two fleshless hands toward the rays of the sun, and cried in a loud, sonorous voice:

“I—miserable dying wretch—I strike thee with anathema, O God! I fling it in thy face that thou art the God of cowards, the God of those who are glutted and gorged, the God of beasts, and thou hast unjustly persecuted me!”

In the great brightness of the sun, which was mounting higher and higher, lighting this couch of Lazarus, the aspect of this living skeleton, with its flaccid skin, was frightful.

When at length he fell back exhausted, inanimate, we believed him dead, and this without having been able to lighten his sufferings even ever so little.

“Let us pray for him,” said I to my companion.

We both knelt down; with trembling hand I took the book that I had brought. I opened it at a place which had been marked of old—the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John:

“I am the true vine and my father is the husbandman.”

I began to read in a loud voice.

The breast of the dying man rose and fell convulsively; his eyes were shut. And, as if to gladden the last moments of this poor wretch, the sun scattered over him a cloud of golden dust. It embraced him lovingly, it enveloped him in its rays as with a caress, like a mother who quiets her rebellious child with her kisses and puts it to sleep while soothing and rocking it.

I read on. When I came at last to those profound words of the Saviour, so filled with power and faith and consolation, to those words by which Jesus calls to himself the immense multitude of the poor, the despised, the weak, the oppressed, and says to them: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you,” I suddenly saw the eyes of the



dying man open, and two tears, two large, shining tears, the last perhaps that remained to this poor human body to shed, rolled slowly down his cheeks. And on his blackened face those trembling drops, of which the sun made brilliant prisms, seemed to manifest unto God the inward fire that had consumed the life of this unfortunate.

I continued:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.”

The dying man tried to lift his hands, but they fell powerless. Then, in a feeble voice, he murmured:

“In the name of thy sufferings, Lord, pardon me!”

I was suffocating with emotion. I closed the book.

We knelt in silence, while the little dog, astonished, sprang up betwixt us and fixed his intelligent gaze upon his master.

The eye of the moribund turned toward us again; his lips moved, and we heard him utter these words, very low and scarcely distinct:

“Little dog, do not revile the good God; do not revile him any more!”

At the voice of his master the devoted animal sprang, with a mournful howl, toward the hand that hung rigid over the verge of the couch; but that hand was already cold, the eyes were closed, a short, stifled rattle issued from the throat, the breast collapsed, the body straightened a little, and he who had endured so many miseries, ceased to suffer.

And it was only after we had subdued our feelings a little that we were conscious of the reiterated barking of the little dog, who bounded desperately up and down before the door.

In vain did we try to appease him. The poor little animal, who had never received an injunction from his master like the last one, had not understood—and he faithfully fulfilled what for so long a time had been his duty.

He barked and howled vehemently; then returned to the bed of his master and sprang at the rigid hand to claim from it the accustomed caress. But his master remained mute, the icy hand hung inert, and the dog, panting, aggressive, hoarse, returned with renewed ardor toward the threshold to hurl heavenward his maledictions. We left the house; and for a long time we still heard in the distance the howling of the poor dog—who did not understand.

## ETCHINGS: NOT IN ARMOR\*

I was a rugged boy in Wisconsin, by the blue lake. There was the small homestead hewn into the forest. There were deer and bear in the woods, ruffed grouse drummed in the copses, and along the rude brush fences squirrels, gray, black, and red, gambolled in the autumn. The call of wild turkeys was heard in the buckwheat field, and there were woodchuck holes in sandy places, and wintergreen patches where we, the first white children of the region, gathered the scarlet berries. Then came the rude district school, Webster's spelling-book, fierce frays with other youth. The new State grew apace. Then came family prosperity. Then came the village and the high school and the broadening of the country boy. There was a little world. Then came more—college and a change of drift of thought again. Then came the city, work and scheming, law and love. She was a woman of the world, as I a man of it, but pure and sweet, brown-haired and fair, ambitious but for me, and she helped me. She was not my other heart—we had but one between us; but she was—how can I best describe it?—like other lungs. She helped me breathe the air of that life which is worth the living. They honored me with high places and I labored hard. I did well.

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Once I was ill. It was pneumonia, and she nursed me. Queer, that pneumonia! Why is it that it seeks to throttle chiefly the strong? But I laughed at it. She bore children. They were ours—hers and mine, and we breathed as one. She died. We were no longer young, but I had won, and was winning, winning with her. She died, and it was all changed somehow. Our children were a fair family of young men and women, but I had lost my link with care for living. I did not fall upon my sword. We do not wear swords nowadays. I but plunged more deeply into all affairs and tried hard to forget. I failed. Still I was strong. Then pneumonia came again and killed me. I was strong, of sturdy Yankee stock, but I was strangled and died. Perhaps it was my age.

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It is better as it is. The Skeleton in Armor had a braver story, but lived in Viking times. The same blood was in our veins.

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\* Stanley Waterloo: For Short Stories.

DORETTA'S CONFESSION \*

"O Signor Anselmo," said Doretta, going to meet the newly-arrived and taking his hands in hers, "you arrive opportunely. I don't go to the confessional, but to an old friend of the family, one who knew me as a girl and might almost be my father. . . ."

"Thank you."

"For what?"

"For that *almost*."

"To you, in short," continued the young woman, "I am disposed to open my whole soul, Signor Anselmo my good friend. You shall be my confessor."

"Oh! The idea!"

"I wish it—I wish it absolutely. It is the first service that I ask of you. You must not say no to me."

"If you really think that it is necessary. . . ."

"Very necessary indeed. You shall judge. . . . I have been here two days, visiting my family, and my husband is trying for a separation from me."

"Dear Doretta," interrupted Signor Anselmo, "couldn't we take the thing more easily? And, for example, couldn't we sit down?"

"Let us sit down, by all means," said Doretta. But when she was seated the energy of her discourse did not slacken. Doretta, as will be seen, was somewhat of a chatterbox.

"You know what it is all about!"

"Truly I know very little."

"You know better than I do. It is a question of the young Lieutenant Baraldi, who, they say, is paying court to me, and whose attentions, to hear what people say, I am supposed to receive willingly. A falsity, if there ever was one. . . . I saw Baraldi for the first time three months ago, in Florence, at the house of the Countess Orelli . . . that is, she is not a countess at all, but wishes to be called so . . . now I never happen to find any longer a person who is not noble, and even my maid claims to be a cousin of the Peruzzi. But let us return to our subject, because I do not like long digressions. I was, then, at the Countess Orelli's, in the evening; there might have been a dozen persons at most. The Count-

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\* Italian of Enrico Castelonovo : E. Cavazza : For Short Stories.

ess Orelli had a headache, and the drawing-room was enlivened by only two carcel lamps, one with a shade of red paper and the other with a shade of green paper. The mistress of the house, who sat near the green light, looked like an unripe lemon; her sister, Signora Derilleri, who was beside the red light, looked like a beet. In the middle there was an aunt of theirs, with one profile green and one profile red, both beautiful to behold. Moreover, the Countess Orelli and Signora Derilleri are two mature women who, however, are not yet willing to beat a retreat. Of Signora Orelli, all Florence knows that she has an affection. . . .”

“But, Doretta!”

“Oh! a platonic affection. Fancy—with a councillor of the Court of Cassatim. As to Signora Derilleri, they attribute to her—it may be only gossip—old General Roscio, and they call her the *Hôpital des Invalides*, because they say that before him she flirted with a colonel on pension, Merilli, who lost a leg at San Martino. Of the aunt I believe they say nothing. That would be too much . . . with that face and that figure. A pedant who when she is not uttering her opinions goes to sleep in the midst of conversation, and if by chance she resolves to be silent when she is awake, makes you dizzy by rubbing her hands one upon the other as if she were washing them with soap and water.”

“This, however, Doretta, has little to do with the matter.”

“What! Little to do with it? Rather it has very much to do with it, excuse me. In short, the only young woman in that drawing-room was myself; of men there were the two on duty with the two sisters, that is to say the councillor of Cassatim and the general, then a gentleman, newly enriched, they say, by three bankruptcies; there was a deputy to Parliament—I don't know whether of the ‘right’ or ‘left,’ but certainly insipid; there was a young author—may heaven save and preserve us from such; there was Baraldi and there was my husband. Leave out of the question Baraldi and me—and see what a company! For, let me say it, my husband is a very good fellow; but, there, you will not maintain that he is not tiresome . . . indeed, he is a husband, and it seems that it is the nature of husbands to be tiresome. Don't shake your head so! You, Signor Anselmo, have no voice in the matter. You would have to be a woman and married for a week . . . you would see! Husbands, even when they are

pleasant away from home, are at home uncivil and grumblers. There is nothing that suits them, nothing that does not give them occasion to make discourses as long as the year of famine. They stick to our skirts when we would like them to go away; they go away when we would like them to remain; they do everything at the wrong time. If they accompany us to walk or to the theatre they have a face half a mile long, and do not begin to be serene again except when they see other men's wives. Therefore, on the whole, we women are least badly off when there is a *partie carrée* of two wives and two husbands. In this case there can be a 'change partners and chassez' which has some attractiveness. . . . But woe if the husband remains in a group where there is no other woman but his wife and there are, instead, several men. It is the husband who spoils the conversation. He seems to introduce on purpose the most difficult, the most uncomfortable subjects. And if there are really things that cannot be said aloud, behold him bend over the ear of the next man and whisper some triviality to him; and then is heard crackling round a foolish laugh that sounds like a cat with a bad cold sneezing."

"My dear Doretta, you are very witty, but will you permit me to say one word?"

"Say it."

"I wished to say that going on at this rate I never shall know what I was to know. . . . We are on the wrong track."

"Anything but that. What track should I keep to? But enough. I will make haste. I have described the surroundings in which I found myself the first time with Baraldi. It was indispensable. You can imagine how he was bored, too. The young author had penned him into a corner, and with the excuse that Baraldi is fond of poetry he declaimed in half voice some of his own verses. At length, when he was free from the bore, the young officer approached me and began to discourse. He depicted to me in the liveliest colors his painful situation of a few moments before. The rising poet had squeezed his knee very hard between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand, and because of the great warmth which he put into the recitation, as well as in order not to raise his voice too much, he approached his face in a manner to make his breath felt . . . and also something else. It was as if, said Baraldi, I had been in the neighborhood of a

cascade, in midst of a penetrating spray. . . . In short, we laughed a little at the literary man, a little at the others composing the society. . . . We made a group by ourselves, I warrant you, among those mummies! My husband fixed his eyes on me every moment—horrid thing! Did he expect me to sit and converse with him? The day after, Baraldi brought his visiting-card—Ludovico Baraldi, Lieutenant of Engineers. In one corner his fine coronet of a count. That, indeed, makes no longer any impression on me, because now every one has it. It ought to be stamped beforehand on the pasteboard. In a week the elegant officer came in person to my house. It was his duty. Moreover, he did not find me alone. There was Signora Rinucci, she who has a glass eye. I tell you this to prove that it was not a tête-à-tête—‘at four eyes’ as the phrase is. But Signora Rinucci has an evil tongue and soon began her performances. To hear her, I had given an appointment to the lieutenant at the Cascine. It is necessary to be as ugly as she is to invent such stories. Certainly, I did say to Baraldi that when I am in Florence I go to the Cascine every day at four o'clock . . . one has to talk about something. . . . But what fault is it of mine if four o'clock seemed to him, also, a good hour for a walk? I went in a carriage, he went on foot; naturally the carriages stop in the square, and the pedestrians come to the side of the carriages to bid good-afternoon to the ladies of their acquaintance. One day only, just to take the cramps out of my feet, I dismounted for a moment and took a turn . . .”

“With the lieutenant?”

“Yes, with the lieutenant; and, really, I was scandalized to see the Marchioness Dal Pazzo flirting as she walked up and down a path on the arm of an honorable, who would have done much better to be at Rome, where, on account of these distractions of the deputies, the Chamber never has a quorum. . . . However, I never meddle with other people's affairs. . . . I think I walked for ten minutes. . . . Prohibition to go to the Cascine at four o'clock, and then a trip to Bologna to pass some weeks with my own family. Now another casus belli: because Baraldi is come to Bologna too. What can I do about it? Am I his colonel? Have not people a right to journey by railroad as they please and prefer? . . . Also my mother-in-law, who writes me sermons, should mind her own affairs and think of what is said of her doings when

she was young . . . for although one would not believe it, to look at her, she has been young . . . ”

At this point the clock which was in the drawing-room began to strike the hour.

“Three o'clock?” asked Doretta.

“No, four.”

“Four! Dear me, dear me! I can't delay another minute longer. . . . I ordered the carriage for half-past three. . . .”

“But, Doretta, it is my turn to speak now.”

“Another day. To-day it is impossible. . . . I have made my confession.”

“However, I observe, my child, that you have confessed chiefly the faults of others. . . . As to your own . . .”

“Mine are so little that they merit full and entire absolution. And I do not doubt that I shall persuade my parents.”

“One moment.”

“There is not a moment to spare. Thanks, Signor Anselmo. Au revoir.”

And Doretta slipped away like a snake, leaving her confessor alone.

## AN ANCIENT CHRONICLE \*

It was a golden summer day when I leaned against the trunk of the gnarled old oak yonder and battled with my anger and pride—with my grief.

Up in the gabled house on the hillside they wept over the lifeless form of my love—*my* love, whom they refused to let me see in her last hours. I would have given my life for one last sweet smile, a kiss, a low murmur of farewell, even a pressure of her hand. I would have had her die, if hope were vain, in my arms—in *my* arms, instead of those of her arrogant brother, who denied the right of a lover to be with his beloved in her last moments.

Long I stood, looking at the green and red and gold of the forest and the shadowy blue of the distant hills, struggling like a demon with my passions until I mastered them. Then, drawing my cloak close about me, I strode across the fields and up the old, familiar path, never faltering for a moment, though I carried my darkened life in my hands. Up the wide steps, through the broad doorway, along the spacious hall I strode until I stood in the room where all that I had ever loved since my sainted mother died, all that had ever given me love for love, lay pale and cold.

As I hurried on, men and women stepped aside in fear; their faces whitened and they muttered:

“Look at him, so cold and stern. See the lightning in his black eyes!”

When I entered the chamber of the dead the crowd of mourners instinctively drew back, and a murmur ran about the still, fragrant room. I removed my plumed hat, and, standing by her bier, wept like a child. I, who had never been cowed by aught, brute or human, wept like a child! If she was beautiful in life she was thrice beautiful in death. Her face was in sweet repose, with the shadow of a smile hovering about her mouth; and but for the death-pallor and the whiteness of her lips, one would have thought that she slept, pillowed upon flowers, amid the gold of her hair.

“Here, master, I saved it for you. It was her wish,” whispered her old nurse, who had aided us in our love. I could have worshipped the dame and kissed the hem of her

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\* Franklyn W. Lee: Collected Sketches.



mourning robe, for she gave me one of my darling's bright tresses; but I thanked her with my eyes.

"Ah, infidel! is it thus you invade the sanctity of this place, made holy by the presence of my sister's corpse?"

Her brother, striding forward, laid his heavy hand upon my shoulder. The crowd drew still further away, breathlessly awaiting a terrible scene, for they well knew us both. I merely shook off his hand and said calmly:

"Better honest unbelief than canting hypocrisy. I am here because it is my right. There is no pollution in the homage of true love at the shrine of the dead. Yonder dead girl was my betrothed. You kept her from me in life, but in the presence of death you are powerless. It has made her a memory, and who can deny one a memory if he chooses not to forget? The tie you might have broken, as you have broken her heart, is now insoluble. I have come to weep over her as her lover, with a lover's anguish, and there are none here to stay me. *You* may weep, but your tears will be the tears of contrition, for you have slain her with the harshness of your arrogant spirit."

He shrank before my burning words like a scourged hound, and averted his glance. Then a fierce oath escaped him and he drew his sword. I looked him full in the eye and said, with bitter scorn:

"Who violates the sanctity of this place—the infidel or the churchman?" and, abashed, he turned away.

I mourned for my lost love. I knelt at her side, embraced her dead form, and kissed her pallid lips; and not one of those around put forth a hand to stay me, nor move, but stood instead with bowed heads, in deference to my grief.

I followed the cortège to the chapel door, but remained outside and walked up and down under the branches of the oaks, for I had no heart for priestly mummery.

I would have had the birds that fed from her hand, the rippling river that had loved to bear her upon its bosom, the wind that had kissed her cheek, and the leaves that had rustled a soft welcome at her approach, sing her requiem in Nature's great cathedral; but they must needs take her into the gloom and mysticism of discolored stone walls, where Death is made ghastlier and more terrible by frowning arches, cobwebbed windows, the flickering of a few ill-smelling tapers, and the meaningless chant of droning priest and listless acolyte.

"Come, Sir Infidel; we have an account to settle."

He came upon me suddenly as I stood there, moody and abstracted, in the shadow of the chapel wall.

I turned aside and said:

"You are her brother—our swords cannot cross."

"Coward!" he cried, striking me full in the face with his gauntlet.

All the slumbering fire in my hot nature was aflame in an instant. I could have killed him then and there in a half-dozen passes, for I prided myself upon my sword-play, but I held the reins of my temper with an iron hand.

"Bring a friend to the château to-night," I said.

"At what hour?" he asked, surprised by the selection of such a trysting-place, yet with satisfaction in his evil eyes.

"At twelve."

He darted a swift, curious glance at me, and, with a bow, walked away.

I knew not what prompted the words, but a hidden influence summoned and released them and they passed out undetained. I looked after him sadly, knowing full well that if I once crossed swords with him his gabled house would again be the scene of mourning.

That night I sat in this room, in the very chair in which I recline as I write these lines. I was no believer in the supernatural, but I could not fathom the strange influence that enveloped me.

The hours moved slowly along, and I sat here, idly toying with the lace on my sleeve, wishing in a languid way that my hot-headed enemy would come and the matter be soon ended; noting the peculiar mist in the room; thinking of my dead love; of my life; of death; wondering vaguely if there was any truth in the superstition of church love and the honesty of idle priests, until I heard heavy steps and her brother entered, accompanied by one of his familiars.

"There!" he exclaimed, throwing two rapiers across a chair. "Your choice, and in haste."

"Softly, softly," I said, pointing to the old clock. "You are impatient for death. It yet lacks a little of being twelve."

"Bah! what matters it if it lack an hour?"

"I do not choose to fight until the appointed time. Have a care, insolent, that I do not fight at all."

"What! after my blow?"

"Even so. You are unworthy of the honor of my sword. I do not wish to murder the brother of her whom I loved. I shall simply cudgel you and your companion from the château."

"Curses on you!" he foamed, snatching up a rapier and advancing upon me. I drew my own keen blade and parried his vicious thrust, contenting myself with the defensive.

The bells tolled the midnight hour and an answering chime came from the clock. He pressed me hard, until his lunges became so rapid and dangerous that I felt sore afraid that I should have to run him through. Stayed by an unseen hand, however, I met skill with skill in parries, until sparks flew from our gleaming blades. In retreating before his savage onslaughts I backed upon a chair, and stumbling awkwardly over the obstacle, lost my balance and fell, while he, with a cry of joy, sprang forward to end the duel and my life.

The mist that had hung in the room condensed, and the form of something intangible and mysterious came between us. As it gradually developed and assumed definite proportions he drew back, step by step, his friend fleeing in abject terror; and my enemy, livid to his coarse lips, his form trembling like an aspen, his eyes wild and staring and fascinated by the strange presence, backed out of the doorway, and with a sharp cry of fear fled from the building, leaving me alone with the phantom semblance of my dead love.

"*Marie!*" I cried, rising and steadying myself with the chair over which I had fallen, for the sight unnerved me.

She gave me the old, sweet smile; her pale lips moving, there came from them a low murmur, like the faint echo of a distant bell.

"I could not stand aloof and see my brother and my beloved shed each other's blood. For this, and to lift thee from thy spiritual darkness, I come, from whence I cannot tell. Antoine, believe me, if thou wouldst live after death: there *is* an after-life—a beautiful life; there *is* a soul—an immortal spirit, apart from ephemeral clay; and, above all, there is a God—a divine essence; but man's conception of them is meagre. Believe this, and we shall meet again. Until then, farewell."

"*Marie, my beautiful one!*" I exclaimed, springing forward to embrace her. But my eager arms clasped emptiness. I was alone and at the mercy of conscience and memory.

## ETCHINGS: INSPIRATION\*

The young and struggling, though richly-gifted author, his faithful pen clasped lightly in his listless hand, and with wistful, thinking eyes looking fixedly out of the window, sits at his table, a heavy manuscript lying before him.

No one, to see the pale, reposeful countenance of this young man, could have the faintest suspicion of his mental struggle.

He is at work upon the masterpiece of his life. His best labor and most deeply-laid plots have resulted in the manuscript before him. His brightest thoughts have been bestowed upon this effort, which he feels is the grandest of his whole life.

Feels! Nay, that word were too weak. Why, he *knows* it. He is a man of iron resolution; he has elected to make this the stepping-stone nearest the shore of fame, fortune, and future honors. The page uppermost before him is only half-covered; yet the ink in which it is written is days old.

He has reached a difficult point in his work—one which he has tried for many days to pass. It is a fitting end to the plot upon which nearly his whole work centralizes that is lacking, and for this he racks his fevered brain and seeks in vain. Should he fail to find it his whole struggle will count as naught. He closes his eyes and dreams, waking. A voice, singing an old love ballad, comes softly in from another part of the house. The author's face softens—the drawn lines over his forehead and about his mouth disappear. It is his wife, singing as she goes about the household duties she has chosen to do for herself, as they cannot find a suitable servant. The young man's thoughts fly back to the days of his wooing—to the starlit evening when she who now brightens his home plighted with him their troth—and suddenly, amid a flow of tender memories, comes dimly the inspiration he has sought. With a glad smile he studies it—it is just what he needs—it rushes upon him now. Can he hold it?

He starts, and grasps his pen to write.

A door near by is opened and a sweet voice asks:

“Joe, dear, won't you please come and baste the chicken while I wash and dress the baby?”

He stares at her blankly—and tears his curling locks in the anguish of his soul. The muse has fled with his inspiration.

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\* R. L. Ketchum: For Short Stories.

## THE MARTYR MOTHER\*

A mother watched beside the cradle of her child. One had only to see her face to know that she was a prey to the keenest sorrow. The child lay pale and gasping on its pillow; its eyes were closed and it breathed with difficulty, each of its expirations heavy as a sigh. . . .

The mother, every moment fearing to see it die, regarded the poor little being with a grief as dumb as her despair. Suddenly there was a knock at the door.

"Enter," said the mother.

And as the door opened and closed again and still she heard no noise, no footsteps, she turned her head to look behind her. There, approaching, was a poor old man wrapped only in a horse-blanket, a sorrowful covering for one that had no other, for the winter was rigorous, the glasses whitened and marbled by frost, and the wind cut the skin like a razor.

He was barefooted, too, which was doubtless the reason his steps made no sound on the floor, and how he trembled and shook with cold, that poor old man!

Because of this and also because the child, since his coming, seemed to sleep more profoundly, the mother rose to revive the fire, and the old man sat himself down in her place and began in his turn to rock and croon to the child, in some strange foreign tongue, a song mortally sad.

"Shall I keep him or shall I not?" said the mother presently, addressing her sombre guest. He shook his head with a gesture that meant neither yes nor no, a strange smile, meanwhile, flitting across his lips.

The mother dropped her eyes, great tears stole down her cheeks, and her head fell upon her breast. Three days and nights had gone since she had slept or eaten; her brow was as lead, and every instant, despite herself, she sank into a drowse.

All at once, with a start, she wakened, chilled to the heart. The old man was no longer there!

"Where can he have gone to?" she cried, and ran to the cradle. The cradle was empty. The old man had carried away the child. At that same moment the old clock that hung on the wall in the corner seemed to get out of order;

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\* Norwegian of Hans Andersen : E. C. Waggener : For Short Stories.

with a whirr and rattle the leaden weights descended to the floor and the old clock stopped.

The mother flung herself from the room, crying frantically: "My child! my child! Who, then, has seen my child?"

"Imprudent mother," cried in response a woman that stood in the street before the door, clothed in a long black garment and with her feet in the snow, "thou demandest thy child when thou didst let Death enter thy house to soothe it, instead of driving him away! Thou didst also sleep while he was there, when he only awaited that thou shouldst close thine eyes to take thy child from thee! He went like the wind, too, thy child in his arms, and that which Death carries away, poor mother, he never returns."

"But the road—the road that Death took; only tell me the road, and I will find him—I myself!" the mother urged.

"Yes, certainly nothing is easier," the woman answered, "but before thou goest thou must sing to me all the songs that thou didst sing to thy child crooning him to sleep. I am Night, and many times have I seen thy tears roll while thou wert singing."

"Yes, yes, everything," said the mother, "from first to last, but later on—some other day. Let me pass now that I may overtake and find my child!"

But Night was inflexible; the poor mother, wringing her hands in agony, was forced to yield and sing as she had sung to her boy.

There were many songs, but many more tears, and as her voice with the last one died in a dolorous sob, Night relented and said to her:

"Go straight to that cypress wood yonder; 'twas there Death entered with thy child, for I saw him."

The mother ran with a bound, but lo! in the midst of the wood the road forked, and she knew not whether to turn to right or left. But at the crossing of the two paths stood a thicket of bristling thorns that showed neither leaves nor flowers—instead, in this depth of winter, was covered with frost and hung with icicles from every branch.

"Hast *thou* seen Death pass here with my child?" demanded the mother of the thorny thicket.

"Yes," said a bush, "but I'll not tell thee the path he took till thou hast taken me in thine arms and warmed me at thy bosom, for, as thou seest, I am but a solid icicle."

The mother, never hesitating, fell to her knees and drew the bush to her breast. The thorns pierced her flesh and the blood ran in great drops, but in proportion as the breast was torn and the mother's blood ran, the bush, which was an aubepine, put forth beautiful green leaves and crimson flowers, so warm and life-giving was the mother's heart.

And then the aubepine, as Night had done, showed her the road to follow.

She took it running, and came thus to the bank of a great lake, where was to be seen neither bark nor vessel. This lake was frozen too hard for her to cross it swimming, but not hard enough for her to cross it afoot. Nevertheless, it was necessary, impossible as at first it seemed, that the lake be crossed. She fell to her knees praying and hoping that God would work a miracle in her favor.

"Hope not for the impossible!" cried the Spirit of the Lake to her, lifting his head, all foamy white, from the depths of the water. "See you, rather, if we cannot make terms together. There is nothing I love more than beautiful pearls. Thine eyes are the brightest eyes I have ever seen. Well, cry into my bosom all that thine eyes let fall—for then thy tears will be pearls as now thine eyes are diamonds—and I will myself transport thee to the other bank. To the bank, I say, where stands the great Conservatory where Death dwells and cultivates his trees and plants, every one of which stands for a human life."

"And this is all thou wishest," cried the poor disconsolate, "to carry me to my child?"

And she cried and she cried—so much that her eyes followed the tears that turned to pearls and fell into the lake to shine as diamonds. And then the Water Spirit, rising from the waves, took her gently in his arms and a moment later placed her safe on the shore where stood the Palace of Living Flowers.

An immense Palace, all of glass, many leagues long, warmed in winter by unseen stoves and in summer by the rays of the sun. The poor mother, however, saw nothing of all this, since she had no eyes to see with. She sought, therefore, by feeling till she had found the doorway, but alas! was stopped at the threshold by a curt—

"And what seekest thou here, madame? I am the Palace Keeper."

"A woman!" cried the mother to herself, "'tis she that will have pity on me!—Madame, madame," continued she, "it is Death that I seek, who has taken my child."

"But how didst thou reach here, and who hath aided thee?" the Keeper persisted stolidly.

"The good God," answered the mother softly. "'Twas He that led me as now thou wilt lead me—wilt thou not?—to the place where I may find my child."

"But I do not know him," the Keeper returned, "and thou canst no longer see. Besides, many trees and plants have died this night, which Death will soon come to uproot and transplant, for surely thou knowest that every human creature has here its tree or flower, according as each one is aged and organized. Their appearance is the same as the rest of vegetation, only they have hearts that beat always, for those that live no longer on earth still live in Heaven. Stay! a thought occurs to me. As the hearts of children beat the same as the hearts of grown people, perhaps thou wouldst be able to recognize thy child by the beating of his?"

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried the mother eagerly; "I am sure that I should know it!"

"And the age of thy child?"

"One year exactly, but he smiled at three months, and called 'Mamma' for the first time yesterday."

"Come, then, to the hall of the One Year Children, but—what wilt thou give me for this?"

"What have I left to give to any one?" the mother demanded; "nothing, as you see; but I will go to the end of the world barefoot, if so it must be!"

"Nay," said the Keeper dryly, "I've naught to do with the end of the world, but if thou wilt give me thy long black hair in exchange for my gray locks, I will do as thou desirest."

"Take it! take it!" cried the poor woman joyously, "only let us go!"

Together, the one leading the other, they entered the Palace of Death, where flowers, plants, trees, and shrubs were ranged and ticketed according to their growth; beautiful hyacinths blooming under glass bells, aquatic plants floating on the surface of placid basins, some erect, sturdy, and fresh, others sickly, wilted, and half-dead. And walking thus, they reached at last the hall of One Year Children.

"It is here," said the Keeper.



Then the mother began to listen to the beating hearts and then to feel them beat, she who had put her hand so often on the heart of the poor little being whom Death had taken from her that she would have recognized its beating in the midst of a million others.

"Behold him! behold him!" she cried out suddenly, stretching her hands toward a tiny cactus that leaned all frail and unhealthily to one side.

"Stop! do not touch it, the flower of thy child," the Keeper said; "stay here beside it, for Death is due here any minute; but when he comes do not permit him to tear up the cactus; threaten him, if he still persist, with tearing up two others. Why, dost thou say? Because Death is accountable to God for all his human plants, and only by God's permission may plant, tree, or flower, even by Death, be uprooted."

"Ah! mon Dieu!" sighed the mother at that instant; "why is it that I turn so cold?"

"Because," responded the Keeper, "Death is coming, but remember what I told thee; stay here, obey me, and be not afraid."

And quickly the Keeper fled away.

Gradually, as Death came nearer, the mother felt the cold redouble. She saw him not, of course, but soon divined that he was close beside her.

"And how didst thou find the road here?" Death demanded, as the Keeper had done, "and also how find thyself here before me?"

"I am a mother!" responded she simply; then, divining that Death had already stretched out his hand to the pale little cactus, she covered it with her own with so much strength, at the same time with so much precaution, that she never even stirred one of its fragile leaves. But Death stooped down and breathed upon the mother's hands, and under that breath, cold as from the mouth of a tomb, the muscles relaxed and the hands fell from the plant without strength or feeling.

"And thou wouldst struggle against Me, foolish one?" Death demanded.

"No," replied the mother, "'tis my child I would protect and by the will of God!"

"No," Death persisted, "that cannot be, for it is God's will that I am doing; for know you not that I am the Gar-

dener of God, and that it is I that take the human plants and trees that He places upon earth and replant for Him in the great Garden of Paradise?"

"But *my* child, give me back *my* child!" the mother cried, weeping and supplicating, "else tear up the tree of my life at the same time as his own!"

"No," said Death, "I cannot do that, either; thou hast thirty years more of life to live."

"Thirty years more!" cried the mother despairingly, "but I do not want them, Death. Give them to a happier mother than I, for I am childless and have given my blood to a bush, my eyes to a lake, and my long black hair to the Keeper of thine own Palace!"

Still Death repeated: "It is the order of God; I am able to change nothing."

"So be it, then, Death," the mother replied, "take *both*, as I ask thee, or—I'll tear up thy flowers."

And she seized, one in each hand, two yellow fuchsias.

"Stop! stop!" cried Death indignantly. "Thou sayest that thou art so unhappy, and yet thou art willing to render another mother more unhappy even than thou art. Those two fuchsias are two little twins!"

"Ah!" said the mother. And she let go the flowers.

There was silence between them a moment, during which Death must have felt a throb of pity, for all at once he put out his hand and placed in the mother's palm two great shining diamonds.

"Thine eyes," said he, "which I fished from the lake in crossing, more brilliant and beautiful than ever. Take them—I give them to thee, and look in that stream yonder. There thou wilt see all the human life of the flowers that thou didst wish to uproot, and all that thou wouldst have crushed to nothingness."

And the mother, resuming her eyes, did as Death told her. In truth, a wonderful spectacle to see all the future of happiness, virtue, and good works reserved for those two beings whom she had sought to make perish eternally. Their lives rolled away in an atmosphere of peace and joy, in the midst of a concert of benedictions.

"Look again," cried Death, as the mother, with a gesture of sorrowful contrition, covered her face with her hands. And now, in place of the beautiful fuchsias, the mother saw a

frail little cactus, which took the form of a child and grew before her eyes to youth and manhood, a youth and manhood full of burning passions, crimes, and violent deeds, with all about him tears and poignant sorrow—ending in suicide!

“Ah! my God!” she cried, “and this is——”

“Thy child!” Death answered.

The mother uttered a groan and sank to the floor, but presently reviving, raised her clasped hands to Heaven.

“Thou hast taken him, my God,” said she, “keep him! That which Thou hast done is always well done!”

Death turned quickly to seize the little cactus, but the mother caught his arm with one hand and with the other tore out and returned him her streaming eyes.

“Wait! wait!” she implored. “I cannot see him die!”

And that poor mother lived thirty years longer, blind, but resigned, and God, who had received her child and placed him in the ranks of His angels, placed her in the ranks of His cherished martyrs.

## ETCHINGS: FAITH\*

A negro meeting-house in Charleston, South Carolina.

A congregation of all colors, save white, stirred to the wildest enthusiasm by the fiery eloquence of a black but earnest and magnetic preacher of the Word.

On all sides shouts, groans, the measured clapping of hands, earnest amens, and soulful exclamations.

In one corner a woman in convulsions held by stalwart men, but causing no break in the maddening flow of oratory.

At last, aroused to a sense of the storm of human passions which he has invoked, the preacher exclaims with David:

"Oh that I had the wings of a dove,  
That I might fly away and be at rest!"

A negress, advanced in years, with a white handkerchief coiled turban-wise about her head, and weighing over two hundred pounds, called in local parlance a "Mammy," cries:

"Brother I have the wings of a dove and feel that I could fly away and be at rest."

"Sister," shouts the preacher, "if you have faith you *can* fly away and be at rest."

Aided by fellow-enthusiasts, the woman, who has faith, mounts from a bench to a window, twelve feet below the sill of which is a grass plot, waves her arms and leaps into space.

Both of her legs are broken, and amid her shrieks and groans the congregation is dismissed.

That same night a meeting of the deacons and elders is called by the undaunted pastor, and the question of faith and miracles fiercely and fearlessly discussed.

The conclusion arrived at and announced to an overflowing and expectant congregation on the following Sunday is that in modern times the truest faith consists in believing in miracles that have occurred and not in trying to work new ones.

The judgment of the church authorities is enthusiastically indorsed by the people with amens and exultant exclamations. An exceptionally large collection is taken up for the "sister" with the "mistaken understanding."

The revival, which had been brought to an abrupt pause, continues on its triumphant course with renewed vigor, and in the language of the victorious pastor, "Zion is saved."

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\* W. W. Lord, Jr.: For Short Stories.

## DIVORCED \*

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Amid the dust of the road still glittering in the rays of the setting sun, the evening mail-coach passed, the old vehicle jolting about and the bells jingling on the little thin horses. Then Claudine appeared at the door of the little white house. With her hand over her eyes and her elbow high in the air, she stood motionless in sharp relief against the dark background of the interior. The young woman's robust chest was inflated with impatient, joyous expectation; and the blood rising under her brown skin brightened her black eyes and imparted a still deeper redness to her laughing lips that contrasted with the shining whiteness of her teeth.

In the distance the sun, sinking ever lower, fastened its dying rays upon the fleecy tops of the wooded hillsides, imprinting upon the dark green of the old oaks points of light that quivered against the blue horizon; but nearer, a large ray, piercing the verdure, enveloped, as with a last and tardy caress, the rounded summit of a naked hillock, whose slopes, dying at the turn in the road, presented in the shadow a long, dull gray stretch of ploughed land.

Claudine knew that beneath these slopes, over which resounded in the stillness of the evening the sonorous voices of the laborers urging on their oxen, lay immense quarries corroding the earth and extending on and on infinitely, seeming, with their buttressed galleries, like the suddenly-cleared-up ruins of some buried city; and thither her thoughts went, in search of her husband. She saw him, young like herself and very handsome, perched on some high scaffolding, toiling at the top of the quarry, in the trembling light of lamps, that looked like stars, amid the continual and monotonous dripping of the waters; but now his labor ended; he descended and arranged his tools; then very quickly, thinking of her and impatient for her kisses, he came through the dark passages where the trucks had dug ruts in the mud.

Quarrymen, wearing gaudy sashes, with jackets thrown over their shoulders, were beginning to appear, in a series of groups, along the white road. Their voices rose, sometimes in song—voices vibrating like waves of sunlight and as rough as the surrounding country.

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\* French of Jean Reibrach: Transatlantic.

Incessantly the procession lengthened.

One by one Claudine recognized the sunburnt faces as they grew more and more distinct. But her man did not yet appear, and suddenly, as she was examining with her sharpest look the farthest groups on the hillside, whose contour seemed to sink, a cloud of dust shot up, high and enormous, casting a vast shadow. The quarrymen stopped short in the road; then they ran back, and at the same time, with a settling of all the neighboring territory, a tremendous explosion burst out like a peal of thunder, and rolled through the valley. The quarry had fallen in.

Claudine uttered a cry and fell upon the road with arms outstretched.

Under the ground, full of crevices and covered with fallen houses that spread their broken red-tiled roofs over the ruins like a mantle, quarrymen were buried, at inaccessible and hopeless depths; and near the foot of the hill, at a point where the engineers were trying to pierce a gallery, Claudine in a crouching posture, with a wild look on her face and refusing to budge, awaited her man. For days she remained there, unable to believe in the disaster and unwilling to be consoled, her eyes fixed obstinately upon the gallery which they were opening. But the work caused fresh settlements of the soil, and then water flowed into the gallery and they were obliged to stop their labors.

Then gloomily she climbed the hill. At the top the workmen were now boring a shaft. She crouched down near them, watching the piston go up and down with a continuous mechanical movement, the dull shocks of which, occurring at regular intervals, quieted her and filled her with soothing hopes. But the steel screws began to break off in the flinty strata, and then they penetrated into the sands, which began to roll down continually, filling up the shaft. Haggard and grim, the workmen persisted for a time; but soon they threw down their tools in despair and the band dispersed. Claudine was left alone upon the ravaged ground, amid the results of the abortive labors, broken, inert, feeling only one desire within her—the wish that she were dead.

“Claudine,” whispered a voice near her.

She recognized one of the quarrymen; she knew that his name was Pierre, and remembered having seen him at work with the others. He showed his callous hands, his soiled

clothing; and suddenly, before he had spoken, as she saw the look of gentle sadness which he gave her, she burst into a fit of tears.

He, finding nothing to say, knelt beside her, allowing her to weep, only pressing the young woman's hand the tighter at each sob, with an expression of anguish on his face.

Gradually she became calm. She heard him saying things the meaning of which escaped her, leaving her only the sensation of a vague and very gentle murmur that lulled her into childlike docility. And she suffered herself to be led away, almost unconscious, he, full of precautions and attentions, addressing her in caressing tones, as though she were an invalid, while, from time to time also, she stopped to heave long sighs that suddenly broke into tears, after which her head would drop upon the man's shoulder.

Days passed. The quarrymen were lost, undiscoverable, dead, it was declared, crushed by the rocks. This thought was a satisfaction to Claudine. In the long idle hours in which these things were talked over, she listened silently, in mournful attitudes, finding gradually a soothing charm in being pitied. Little by little she seemed to awake as from a long sleep, and to return from a great distance; and at the same time, insensibly, the exigencies of life presented themselves to her mind; she began to live again, with the progressive growth of a slow fear, that of poverty and solitude. Then she became interested in the news, in the subscriptions opened for the relief of the victims. And suddenly she had a feeling of rest, almost of joy, when Pierre, returning from the city, told her that the sums subscribed were sufficient to warrant an annuity for the widows, and that she had been allowed one of six hundred francs.

Then, idle and patiently awaiting events, she daily returned to the quarries. Often Pierre accompanied her, with his accustomed gentleness. There they spoke in low voices and walked with muffled tread, respectful of the grave. In these habitual visits as to a cemetery, where both went, over the hillside, through the melancholy of the thick woods, under the perpetual influence of the same thoughts, Claudine's tears gradually ceased to flow. Insensibly they arrived at conversations and slow and gentle reveries in which new possibilities began to shape themselves. Gradually a weight was lifted from the young woman's breast; the horizon, long

confined, enlarged about her, and in the trembling dawn of a new future there was a new and indefinable impression that grew rapidly in the penetrating charm of silence. Little by little, in the heat of summer, under the breath of the trees, her sorrow wore away, and lamentable death vanished in the distance, while slowly, like sap, a new love grew up that irradiated and enveloped them, but of which they dared not speak, out of respect for the grave which enabled them to meditate.

"Claudine," said the man at last.

"Pierre."

"Suppose we marry?"

"It has been only two months," said she, suddenly becoming sad.

"Oh! I do not hurry you. I meant . . . later . . . would you?"

"Yes," she sighed, "later."

Thenceforth it was an understood thing between them, upon which their thought centred more and more, according to the dead only a friendly memory, a feeling of tender gratitude. They began to make plans. They wandered about in their accustomed walks with the manners of open lovers; and soon, upon the hillside tomb, amid the entwinings of the flowers, laughter was heard, and then kisses.

One evening they went among the rocks loosened by the disaster. There, in the gentle warmth of the twilight, in their slow reverie of peasants, they looked through the trees below at the glittering of a stream, and, farther on, at the windings of the white road and the surrounding hills that inclosed them in a vast amphitheatre.

Suddenly a strange noise startled them. It was in the ground beneath them, like the stirring of a beast at the bottom of a hole. They bent over the edge of a crevice; and there the noise, more distinct, seemed to them like the desperate clambering of a man in a narrow ditch. At first they were transfixed by fear of the unknown; then at the same time the same thought struck them—the thought of the quarrymen buried alive.

From the bottom an appeal rose, far away, veiled, almost a breath.

"It is he!" hissed Claudine, her knees trembling.

Pierre was fairly livid as he straightened up. He! The



dead already so far away, already disappeared in the abyss of irremediable things! And thus was their love to be broken, the future ruined, the beautiful future, over which Claudine's six hundred francs threw the glitter of fortune?

By what right did he come back? His image now appeared, not in friendly perspective, surrounded with grateful memories, but as a menacing spectre suddenly arisen on the ruins of a shattered dream.

Meanwhile the appeal rose again; they could imagine the exhaustion of the wretched man after crawling under ground for nearly three months, living on roots and water, in the darkness, and doubtless aroused to a last effort by the perfume of the sun-bathed woods entering through the crevices in the ground. Pierre uttered a cry and threw himself violently backward, the victim of a bitter struggle.

But again the appeal rose, sinister, lamentable; and pity gained the victory.

Then he shouted feverishly and suddenly:

"Wait for me! I run, I will come back with a rope. The hole is just big enough."

And he ran madly down the hillside.

Left alone, Claudine looked fixedly at a rock overhanging the crevice. She shuddered; a breath would loosen it, and it would crush the man below. Suddenly she rose, staggering as if drunk, and bent over toward the rock.

It loosened and rolled into the gulf.

There was a dull shock, a cry, then all was still; livid, and leaning over the abyss, Claudine listened in the silence.

## THE STOLEN SHIP\*

In the year 1860 I was one of the crew of the British survey brig "Advance," which was surveying the islands to the south of the Sandwich group. Kingman Shoal, Palmyra Island, and other shoals and islands had not been closely surveyed, and we were spending the summer in this work. The brig was a craft of two hundred tons, and being a government vessel was under strict discipline.

About the middle of September we were at Fanning Island, when a heavy gale came up from the west, and we had to run for the open sea to the east. The gale struck us about three o'clock in the afternoon and hung to us until noon the next day. During this time we were running a little east of north and having all we could do, and when the gale broke we were at least two hundred miles to the north-east of our island. It was mid-afternoon before we got the brig about, and she had scarcely been headed back when a whaleboat came down upon us from the north-west, and when we got her crew aboard we heard a very interesting story.

There were eight of them; a first mate, two harpooners, and five hands. All belonged to the British whaling bark "Penrose," of Liverpool. Twenty days previously she had run into Honolulu and discharged half a cargo of oil and shipped three Portuguese sailors to replace hands who had been lost at sea. On leaving Honolulu she had cruised to the southward, taking a whale occasionally, and on the day the gale broke she lowered for whales about two hundred miles north of the group we had been surveying. Three boats were down at once as the bark ran into a school. As the breeze was light only a ship-keeper was left aboard, and he was a sailor who was just recovering from a hurt.

The three Portuguese were in the captain's boat, which made fast to a big bull whale within a quarter of a mile of the bark and was immediately struck and disabled, and the line had to be cut. Meanwhile the other two boats had gone to the eastward after the school, and they had no sooner made fast than their victim ran off at full speed. Owing to the direction of the wind the ship-keeper could not work down to the captain. His boat was a wreck, but was acting as a

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\* "Queer Tales of the Sea."

float to sustain the crew. In this emergency the three Portuguese offered to swim to the bark and return with a spare boat, and they were told to go. They reached the craft in safety, but had no sooner got aboard than the yards were trimmed, her head was brought to the south, and she sailed within three hundred feet of the captain as she made off. The dark-skinned rascals made no bones of the fact that they were running away with the ship. Indeed, they boasted of it, and derided the men hanging to the stoven boat.

It was a heartless, cold-blooded thing to do. The two other boats were five miles to the eastward, and it was an hour after the bark made off before the men cut loose from their dead whales to fathom the mystery. They found the wreck of the captain's boat, to discover that only one single man remained with it, the others having been pulled down by the sharks. By the time they had heard his story the bark was more than hull-down, and just then the gale broke. The boats were laid head-on to the sea and drifted slowly to the east, dividing their men, so as to give each an equal show to live out the gale. During the night the second mate's boat was lost sight of, and as it was never heard of again it must have been swamped. Had we been running a course the surviving boat could not have fetched us, but as we brought about she got the chance to do so.

As soon as the story had been told our captain decided to go in search of the stolen bark. It was a question, however, whether she had outlived the gale. She must have received the full force of it, and being so short-handed she was liable to disaster. The main question was whether she would scud or drift. We had adopted the former course, as the brig had a habit of flooding her decks when lying head-on. The mate of the stolen bark, whose name was Cummings, felt certain that the Portuguese would let her drift. In that case we would have to cover a hundred miles of ocean to the westward before beginning to look for them. What did they want of the craft? What could they do with her? There was only one reasonable answer. They would run her down among the southern islands, find some safe spot to lay her away, and then "have a good time." This meant eating, drinking, smoking, and having no work to do. They would not dare to try a long voyage nor to put into any prominent port.

It was Mate Cummings' belief that the Portuguese would

head for Christmas Island, a hundred miles to the south of where we had been surveying, and the brig's course was accordingly laid. On the afternoon of the third day after picking up the boat, we sighted the bark dead ahead. We were then not over twenty-five miles from the island. The stolen craft had evidently been taking things pretty easy. She was under short sail when we first espied her, although the weather was fine and the breeze fair. The thieves had no fear of pursuit, and perhaps all were captains except the ship-keeper and would not obey each other's orders. We had her almost hull-up when the fellows became suspicious, then they set everything below and aloft, and to our intense chagrin we discovered that the bark was a faster sailer than the brig. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when we sighted her, and as darkness fell she had gained a couple of miles on us. Having got the alarm it was hard to tell what they would now do, but after a long consultation our captain decided to round Christmas Island and lay a course for Jarvis Island. The bark was headed directly south when we last saw her.

Next day at noon we were to the west of Christmas and running down on our course, when we suddenly discovered the bark on our starboard quarter, standing out from the south-east end of the island, where she had been in hiding to let us pass. She had not seen us on account of a wooded peninsula making out for several miles, and we felt sure we had her in a box. The wind was from the west, and it was a bit of a job to get the brig about, smart as we were. The bark was about five miles off as we headed for her. She couldn't go to the west; nor were there men enough aboard to turn her on her heel and beat her back to the north-east.

Her only recourse was to stand to the south-west, heading directly for us, or to fall off and run dead to the west. We all looked to see her head into the wind and wait to be boarded, but the rascal had not thought of it. She suddenly shifted her course to the west, and hoping to cut her off we shifted ours north-west. Each was now the leg of a triangle. It was plain from the start that we should be within a cable's length of her at the meeting-point, even if we did not cut her off. She would have shore on one side and us on the other.

Each craft had all sail set. When within three miles of the bark we fired a gun for her to heave to, but not the slightest notice was taken of it. Our two pieces of ordnance

were then shifted over to the starboard side and loaded with solid shot. If the rascals refused to surrender they must take the consequences. Each craft held dead to its course, but again the bark proved her better sailing qualities. Instead of cutting her off as we hoped for, we were still a quarter of a mile away when she passed the point. The three Portuguese were shouting and cheering, while the white man was at the wheel. Orders were given to fire and two solid shots went whizzing at her, but to pass over her without damage. We then fell into her wake and could not bring a gun to bear, and we had the further mortification to see her walking away from us. The Portuguese ran up the American flag and dipped it three times, and our crew fairly danced in their indignation. The only thing we could do was to follow her, but we lost her early that evening and were all at sea again as to where we should set eyes on her again.

Three days later, having had only light breezes, we raised Enderbury Island, which is the easternmost island of the Phoenix group. The wind had been fair for the bark to lay this course, and this group also offered the pirates a good refuge and a beautiful climate. We approached it from the west, ran in to within two miles of the beach, and then worked slowly along the southern shore. The charts showed no haven of refuge on either the south or west shore, but located a bay on the north. We hoped to trap them, if they were there, by making a circuit of the island and coming upon them from a different direction unexpectedly.

Next day we had to work up the west shore against a head wind, and night came again before we had fairly turned the corner and headed to the east. We came to anchor again, but such was the impatience of Mate Cummings and his men that they set off in their whaleboat to explore the coast in advance. Ten miles to the east they found the bark anchored in the bay laid down on the chart. She was within two hundred feet of the beach, her sails furled and stowed, and was heard of before she was seen. The Portuguese were drunk, as they were singing and shouting so they could be heard half a mile away.

The mate should have returned and reported the case, but he did not. He believed his party strong enough to recapture his craft, and he therefore pulled down to make the attempt. He did not surprise the pirates, as he hoped to, and

when he attempted to board was driven back to his boat in great disorder, nearly every man being hurt by blows of capstan-bars. It was nearly daylight before the boat returned to the brig, and as it was a perfect calm we decided to wait until daylight before making any further move. As day dawned there was every prospect of a continuance of the calm, and two boats, each containing eight armed men, were dispatched to get possession of the bark. Our first mate had charge of one and Cummings of the other, and I was in the first boat. Our instructions were to board at any sacrifice, but to spare the pirates for the gallows if possible.

After a row of two hours we came to the entrance of the bay, and there was the bark before us. She had a snug anchorage, and everything aloft was as tidy as you please. She wasn't over half a mile away, as it was not a deep bay, and we were no sooner in sight than we heard a cheer from her decks, followed by the boom of a cannon and the sound of a round shot over our heads. In rummaging the vessel the men had discovered an old six-pound cannon which had lain in the hold for many years. This they had hoisted out, loaded with a shot intended for the feet of a dead man, and fired from a carriage so poorly constructed that the gun dismounted itself. The bark lay stern toward us, as the tide was running out, and we pulled to board her on either bow.

Captain and mate had both left revolvers aboard, and these were now used by two of the pirates. While we were sweeping up they killed two men and wounded a third, and a fourth man was wounded as we boarded. The Portuguese ran to the cabin for shelter, and we found the white sailor dead at the foot of the mainmast, they having clubbed him to death the night before. While we were planning to attack them in the cabin, they dropped from the windows to swim ashore. The alarm was raised in time for the boats to overhaul them, but one resisted so desperately that he had to be killed.

The other two were brought aboard and made secure, and about noon the brig came down. They were transferred to her, and that evening, while in the cabin to be questioned, one of them attacked the captain and was shot by the second mate, who had them in charge. The other committed suicide, and thus the villains were got rid of without trial or expense.

ETCHINGS: THE OPEN GATE\*

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“Go!”

Outside the door he paused with pity hovering over the determined face. Then it restrengthened, and striding out of the garden without shutting the gate, he rode away to drown his care in the eventful world.

He in the cities of men, working and pleasuring, and when the great war came, fighting, soon forgot the unmerited dismissal.

She in her lonely cottage near the mountain village had not even the heart to close the gate behind him, and had it chained back, lest chance should shut it against him.

Year after year she sat waiting for him.

He grew famous as a leader of men, first on the battle-field, then in the Senate.

When the newspapers of the day reached the remote village, she read with a thrill the praises heaped upon him.

The gate, so many years chained open, became the village sight. But he never passed through it.

\* \* \* \* \*

His heart was wounded again. His fair girl wife, twenty years his junior, had with her rosy beauty, bright eyes, and white teeth unwittingly bewitched a handsome, underworked diplomat, who laid desperate siege.

The old story! So careful of his party that he had no care for his trusted wife or himself, until one day chance showed him the golden head resting on the diplomat's shoulder.

The lover fled. She abased herself before him, for she loved him incomparably more than her would-be betrayer.

He spurned her and sought the Pennsylvanian village where his first love had failed him. He saw the gate chained open—Rumor told him—for a jilted lover's return.

It moved him beyond words.

He telegraphed for his wife to meet him here.

Would she still be in his home or have fled to infamy?

Agonizing hours intervened. But at last she came, with her girlish grace and her gracious beauty, a half-smile stealing from the tears and shame, and then and there he laid close to his heart the lesson of that open gate.

Did the first love see—and—understand?

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\* Douglas Sladen: For Short Stories.

## IN THE BUSH\*

Far away up a wild arm among the folding hills, with the green-gray mantle of the eucalyptus bush spreading for miles and weary miles between them and civilization, there lived a couple. Not man and wife, not even brothers, except in love; and in that these two were more to each other than many a pair representing a human relationship. It was only a man and his dog; and the man was only a shepherd on an outlying station belonging to a wealthy squatter.

It was in the old days, before sheep farms were the comparatively easily-managed affairs they are now, and when the unlucky shepherd seldom saw any human face but that of the manager; and his not more than once in a couple of months. It is true most shepherds had a house-mate, who took it in turn with him to stay in the hut, boil the "billy," and make the damper; but this man was an exception. He was still young, though it was difficult to say what age. He might have been anything from twenty-five to thirty-five; the gray eyes were bright and clear enough for the former age, while the expression of sorrowful patience was rather that of a man who had learned that the world-voices call to the human soul forever and forever, "Renounce, renounce!"

He certainly had not much to enliven him. The society of sheep assuredly plays a great part in the pastoral poetry of many celebrated verse-makers, but mayhap they never tried it. Anyway, they have a fashion of introducing ribbons and flutes and little Bo-peeps as compensating adjuncts to this style of life; whereas this man had none of these things, nothing at all, in fact, but a rough, yellowish cattle dog, which looked something like a colley that had gone wrong in early youth. He, the dog, rejoiced in the name of Snip. When I say "rejoiced" I speak advisedly. Snip looked upon life as one large joke. His mouth curled up in a kindly, if ironical, grin; his tail fairly wagged itself off when his master looked at him, and nothing but his deep sense of propriety prevented his joking with the sheep in a scoffing fashion when he ran the silly dingy creatures in for the night. As he sat by his master at this moment outside the hut door he occasionally interrupted his own hunt for the

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\* A. B.: Colonial Sketches.



lively flea to thrust his nose into the man's hand with a coaxing movement that meant as plainly as could be, "Come, drop that pipe, do; we have had enough of smoking and moonlight for one night. I want to lie across your feet and go to my dreams. This is the third night you have made me lose my beauty. What you see in that moon I can't make out. Bow!"

"Can't you, old fellow?" answered the man. "Perhaps not; you are a quite unsentimental dog—that is your one fault. If moonlight is the only earthly light that brings me back an evening on a long terrace walk over a shining sea, can you not give up a snore or two, you lazy beggar, to please me? No? Well, come then," and rising he stretched himself with a half-sigh. Why did the past come back to-night? He did not usually think of that old business, being too wise a man to worry over the irretrievable. But to-night—to-night there came to him a face he had loved a good deal better than Snip's; though it had held for him none of the tender devotion in the doggish brown eyes now turned up anxiously to his. A woman's face, connected somehow with the moonlight and the sea; a woman's voice in an agony of entreaty. "Save him, can you not? You, who can do everything; can you not save him, your own brother?" And he had done so. Not unthinkingly, not without a good many reflections if it were not possible to do so without giving up his own life. But it had not been possible. He wondered how would he have done it with no other incentive than bare duty, whether the sacrifice would have been so easy if another than the woman who loved his brother had asked it of him. His father, for instance? His father, who squandered as much misplaced affection on said brother as ever Isaac did on that scapegrace Jacob. Nonsense, of course he would. It would have killed his father if his eldest son had been disgraced. It was bad enough as it was. Why did he think of it to-night? Perhaps because of that strange unconscious faculty which recalls past events, because close in the future they are rising from their graves to give us one more scene of a play we had fancied well over.

Patting the dog's head, who gave a supercilious sniff, he turned to enter the hut when the sound of horses' feet broke the stillness of the night.

"The manager," he muttered, pausing on the threshold.

Soon that individual reined in his horse by the shepherd's side. Contrary to custom, he had a companion.

"Evening, Gervaise," he called to the shepherd, who lifted his hat slightly in answer to his superior's greeting. A typical Australian of the shepherd's class never touches his hat, or does so in a surly fashion that suggests compulsion. This man lifted it with the respect for himself, the respect for the person addressing him that one gentleman uses toward another. He did not speak, and the manager continued:

"This gentleman wishes to look over some of the run to-morrow. I suppose we may as well stretch ourselves here by the fire for a couple of hours. We must be moving by dawn, as we've to get back to Wallaby Creek to-morrow evening."

The shepherd helped to unsaddle the horses and then, throwing a couple of logs on the half-extinct fire, he soon kindled a blaze, boiled the billy, and gave his guests their evening meal. He had not paid them much attention as he did so, coming and going in the doubtful lights of the setting moon and the flickering fire; but as the others moved to stretch themselves on their blue blankets the manager kicked the smouldering sticks together and the flame shot high and clear into the night. In this sudden light the shepherd's eyes fell carelessly on the stranger, who was arranging himself in an awkward and new-commish fashion along the ground. The half-seen face and form were as familiar to him as the white English shores he would never see but in his dreams again. He could not help an involuntary start; but after that he sat quite still on his log, with Snip lying close against his legs.

He waited thus, silently, till the manager's heavy breathing assured him that that worthy was out of earshot in the land of dreams.

He seemed to have been making up his mind to something during this pause; and now he rose and going to the stranger's side gently touched his shoulder.

"Father!" he said, quietly.

The half-sleeping man opened his eyes.

"Father!" said the shepherd again, in a tone even more carefully void of emotion than before.

The stranger sat up and looked at him with a smothered ejaculation.

"What do you mean? Who the devil are you?"

The shepherd silently removed his hat and the pair looked into each other's eyes for a few seconds.

"I wonder you dare speak to me," said the elder man, at last, in a scarcely audible tone, which yet quivered with uncontrollable rage. "What do you mean by it? Why are you here?"

The shepherd shrugged his shoulders.

"I must exist somewhere till I die or commit suicide. The Australian bush is surely an odder place for you than it is for me! A sentimental desire to hear of you all again induced me to speak to you."

He paused, but his companion said nothing.

The shepherd's hand, resting on Snip's rough head, clinched itself till the nails met in the palm.

"Have you not forgiven me after these long seven years?" he said, hoarsely.

"No; and again no!" cried the other, in a burst of passion.

"So young a man, father!" interrupted the shepherd, with a gentle intonation, as if calling attention to an exculpatory circumstance about another person.

"Don't dare call me 'father!' I am no father of yours. None of our blood ever disgraced themselves; while you, you, a common thief who forged my name to pay your low debts! No; you are certainly no son of mine!"

The shepherd laughed shortly.

"I don't see that you are bettering the situation," he remarked, grimly. "However, though you have no forgiveness for me, perhaps you will not mind giving me a little home news. I shall never trouble you again; you shall never again hear from me or of me; never see my face on this side of the grave: but tell me about the old home this once! You cannot call me troublesome—sir! Can you not even grant me mercy enough for this favor?"

There was no reply for a little, then the answer came:

"No; I have no mercy on thieves. Go!"

And his father threw himself down again, turning his back to his son.

In a few hours, as day broke, the three men started up the run. If ever the bush looks beautiful it is in the soft solemnity of the dawn, when the mountain clefts and the hollows between the trees are filled with a strange blue dimness that is almost too glorified to be called a vapor; when the

dew is drenching the long coarse grass, and the exquisite clearness of the songs of the magpies, the leatherheads, the butcher-birds and many another "feathered fowl" is like an early choral service.

As day wears on, the mountains may look like huge mounds of sun-baked red earth, on which the covering gums seem to shrivel and droop before your very eyes; dawn's solemn sweetness may be replaced by an awful glare that holds the terror of death, but the joy of the daybreak keeps you alive through all the very long length of an Australian summer noon, and stays with you till the rapture of her star-bright nights comes to comfort your soul.

The three men rode silently on, except for an occasional remark from the manager. The country was good, but it was rough riding for all that, and though they kept the mid-day halt to boil the inevitable "billy" within the shortest possible limits, it was six o'clock before they again got within sight of the shepherd's hut.

Snip, who had been trotting behind in a cheerfully tired sort of way, bounded forward with renewed vigor, but all at once stopped short, barking furiously.

"What is it, Gervais?" called the manager to that individual, who rode forward to investigate.

"A snake, I think," was the answer as the shepherd dismounted. "Ah! a death adder, I fancy. Here, Snip, you fool, come back; you'll get bitten if you don't look out," and the shepherd, picking up a stout stick, aimed a blow at the creature, which was half-hidden in the grass. He hit it, but did not kill it, and the reptile darted upon his assailant, only to be met by another blow, which put an end to its career in this stage of existence.

"He didn't touch you, did he?" called the manager.

"No," answered the shepherd in a strange tone.

"Oh, that's all right. Well, we must be going on, or we shall get bushed. No, we won't go to the hut. Good-night," and putting spurs to their tired horses they cantered out of sight.

The man watched the disappearing figures for a moment, and then, kneeling down, he took up the dead adder, examined it a little, and, taking out his knife, carefully extracted the poison-bags. He looked round once more; it was a beautifully calm evening, with a tender rose-flush in the sky

—the bleating of a sheep came softly through the still air. He sighed a little, and then in a mechanical fashion made a tiny little scratch on his wrist and rubbed the deadly virus gently on the place. He did not move for some few minutes; in fact he appeared to have forgotten where he was till Snip jumping on him impatiently recalled him to himself. He started. "Oh, my poor old dog!" he ejaculated, caressing the animal as it tried to lead him home to supper. He hesitated a little, and then going into the hut poured some milk into a tin bowl and set it on the ground for Snip. That person wagged his tail in a half-thankful way, as much as to say, "You might have thought of that before!" and forthwith began to lap greedily. Had he not been so well employed he would have noticed his master's unusual occupation; as it was he saw nothing. When the gun was loaded the man came and passed his hand over the rough yellow coat with the movement of a mother touching her dead child's face.

"My poor old fellow; my dear old boy!" he murmured.

But something warned him not to wait. "Snip," he said suddenly, "look at me. Lie there; no, don't move, keep still—quiet, good dog!" The dog obediently did as he was told, and lay looking at his master, knocking his tail with little taps against the floor. The shepherd met the unutterable love of the brown eyes for an instant as he looked down the gleaming barrel, and then—then a quick report and it was all over.

The man dropped the gun, and creeping to Snip he lay down by him, throwing his arm across the poor furry body and burying his face out of sight against the faithful dead side.

The motionless quiet was only broken by the laughter of a jackass bird when the sun was down, and the darkness fell over the lonely hut, empty of all now save the silent presence of the dead.

## WILD WEST ROMANCE NUMBER 27\*

The zephyrs were blowing through the streets of Livingston, Montana, with their accustomed softness, as a gentleman stood at the main portal of the Volapuk mansion.

Who the mysterious personage was will appear later on, if the reader will only strive to control the feeling which always takes possession of the discriminating public when it discovers that it has been entrapped into reading facts.

There is no objection to the revealing of the man's name—Maurice Martingale, a member of the Chicago bar.

Having safely crossed the sand-bar that had formed in front of the door of the Volapuk domicile, Maurice Martingale, placing his hand upon the door-knob, found that the door yielded to his pressure, and he entered, remarking: "It is strange that these Northwesterners don't lock their doors. A foreign lord may enter and carry off their daughter."

He did not know that the Volapuks had left Boston—where the women outnumber the men—and gone West—where the men outnumber the women—simply and solely to dispose of their daughter, Mary Anna. He had been in correspondence with Mary Anna and her mother for some time past, and wishing to meet his fair client—and to have a chance to inspect the divorce records of Minneapolis while making the trip—had taken a run out to Montana. The Volapuks were customers whom he had attracted by a lurid advertisement in the newspapers.

"This is Lawyer Nightingale, I suppose?" said the stately Volapuk *mère*, sweeping into the reception-room—with a carpet-sweeper.

"Martingale, if you please," said the lawyer gravely. "Inform the lady of the house that I am here. Come, be spry."

"I am the mother of Mary Anna," said the lady proudly, removing a towel from her head. "Mary Anna is very ill. My son-in-law's last letter made her quite sick. I wish you would say something to comfort her."

"Perhaps this will cheer her more than anything I could say." And he drew from his pocket a decree of divorce signed by a Chicago judge, and with places left blank for filling in the names.

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\* Hugh A. Wetmore : Northwest Magazine.

Madame Volapuk's four eyes glistened with gratification as she extended her hand for the document.

"Hold," said Martingale. "The costs have not been paid."

"Costs!" said the madame, dryly. "We paid you \$1,000 in response to your first letter. We mortgaged this house to raise the money."

"That was my retainer. I have given you credit for it."

"Then we sent you five hundred for 'postage and other incidental expenses.' We spouted our jewelry and seal-skins for that amount."

"There is a small balance of fifteen hundred due," said the legal pundit, "to pay the witnesses and the statute fee——"

"Statute fee!" shrieked the woman. "I thought the statute fee was a legalized humbug peculiar to Minnesota!"

"I am letting you off very cheap," said the lawyer, buttoning up his coat. "I will keep the papers, and you can send for them when you get ready."

He was about to depart, when the madame grabbed him by the whiskers of his Benjamin (great-coat).

"Stay. Do not leave me thus. Here is a chattel mortgage on the kitchen furniture."

They then moved in the direction of Mary Anna's boudoir.

Mary Anna was sitting low in a casement, a sunset splendor glorying round her friz-papers, and when she heard the feet of mum-ah grind upon the stair, she started, flushed, and bounced into bed. When her parent entered, the young woman raised herself upon one elbow and glared wildly around.

"O mum-ah, has the divorce come yet?"

"Yes, darling. This is Mr. Martingale; he fetched it."

"I am better now!" Then suddenly: "O Mr. Martingale, how can I ever pay you?" sobbed Mary Anna. "I had hard work bringing mum-ah and pup-ah to my way of thinking; but I brought them, didn't I, old lady?"

"I guess you did," said the person addressed.

"Did you tell Mr. Him about it? It's such a hard name."

"I told Mr. Martingale nothing beyond the news of your illness. Remember what the doctor said—that you must not talk much until you were better——"

"Oh, but I am so much better now! You see, judge, I have had a time of it, between the doctors and the lawyers. But how did you get the divorce?"

"By hiring witnesses to swear to the truth of the allegations

that you had been cruelly deceived and inhumanly abused. How did he abuse you?" asked the attorney.

"It's a long story," said Mary Anna, with a sob. "But you shall hear it, if it kills me. You see, mum-ah couldn't find a suitable purchaser for me in Boston. There are lots of good fish in Boston, but there are likewise many fisherwomen. So pup-ah moved his family West, and I struck a bonanza sheep-raiser in the person of Orro Quintillion, and married him. Then commenced the work of civilizing him. He had never been near Boston, and he kept the whole family busy prompting him. At first he seemed to be really ambitious of acquiring our cultured ways of thinking and acting. I prevailed upon him to have his head clipped, to have his beard parted in the middle, and to wear spectacles. He also docked his bronco's tail. To silence me, he would eat vast quantities of oatmeal, and beans, and dried-apple pie. He affected a taste for Wagnerian music, and learned to admire Emerson. He would even shut his eye and swallow Henry James, Jr. But, after doing all that, he broke the marriage vow, and I had to get a divorce."

"He was a drunkard, I suppose?" queried the counsellor.

"No, I taught him to drink water."

"Chewed like a grasshopper?"

"No, I broke him of using the weed."

"Gambled?"

"Only at church fairs."

"Used profane language?"

"Never, in our hearing."

"Looked down on Sunday people?"

"No, he organized three missions."

"Lost his fortune?"

"No, he's rich as doughnuts."

"Ran after other women, then?"

"He was as true to me as the bark to a tree. You couldn't drive him out of the house at night."

"Did he have fleas,—some horrible disease?"

"I should say not. When he insured his life for my benefit, the examiner pronounced him an extraordinary good risk."

"How, then, did he make your life wretched?"

"By stubbornly, pertinaciously, and maliciously refusing to get the All-black Craze. I bought him a black nightshirt, and he wouldn't wear it."



## THE BOY BY THE BEACH\*

There are in this small history some gaps that can never be filled up; but as much as I know I will tell you.

The cottage where Kit lived until he was five years old stands at the head of a little beach of white shingle, just inside the harbor's mouth, so that all day long Kit could see the merchant-ships trailing in from sea, and passing up to the little town, or dropping down to the music of the capstan-song, and the calls and the creaking, as their crews hauled up the sails. Some came and went under bare poles in the wake of panting tugs; but those that carried canvas pleased Kit more. For a narrow coombe wound up behind the cottage, and down this coombe came not only the brook that splashed by the garden gate, but a small breeze, always blowing, so that you might count on seeing the white sails take it, and curve out as soon as ever they came opposite the cottage, and hold it until under the lee of the Battery Point.

Besides these delights, the cottage had a plantation of ash and hazel above it, that climbed straight to the smooth turf and the four guns of the battery; and a garden with a tamarisk hedge, and a bed of white violets, the earliest for miles around, and a fuchsia-tree three times as tall as Kit, and a pink climbing rose that looked in at Kit's window and blossomed till late in November. Here the child lived alone with his mother. For there was a vagueness of popular opinion respecting Kit's father; while about his mother, unhappily, there was no vagueness at all. She was a handsome, low-browed woman, with a loud laugh, a defiant manner, and a dress of violent hues. Decent wives clutched their skirts in passing her: but she was on excellent terms with every sea-captain and mate that put into the port.

All these captains and mates knew Kit and made a pet of him: and indeed there was a curious charm in the great serious eyes and reddish curls of this child whom other children shunned. No one can tell if he felt his isolation; but of course it drove him to return the men's friendship, and to wear a man's solemnity and habit of speech. The woman dressed him carefully, in glaring colors, out of her means: and as for his manners, they would no doubt have become

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\* Arthur Crouch Quiller: "Noughts and Crosses."

false and absurd, as time went and knowledge came; but at the age of four they were those of a prince.

"My father was a ship's captain, too," he would tell a new acquaintance, "but he was drowend at sea—oh, a long while ago; years and years before I was born."

The beginning of this speech he had learned from his mother; and the misty antiquity of the loss his own childish imagination suggested. The captains, hearing it, would wink at each other, swallow down their grins, and gravely inform him of the sights he would see and the lands he would visit when the time came for him, too, to be a ship's captain. Often and often I have seen him perched, with his small legs dangling, on one of the green posts on the quay, and drinking in their talk of green icebergs, and flaming parrots, and pig-tailed Chinamen; of coral reefs of all marvellous colors, and suns that burnt men black, and monkeys that hung by their tails to the branches and pelted the passers-by with cocoanuts; and the rest of it. And the child would go back to the cottage in a waking dream, treading bright clouds of fancy, with a little box or knick-knacks in his hand, the gift of some tender-hearted ruffian. It was pitiful.

Of course he picked up their talk, and very soon could swear with equal and appalling freedom in English, French, Swedish, German, and Italian. But the words were words to him and no more, as he had no morals. Nice distinctions between good and evil never entered the little room where he slept to the sound only of the waves that curved round Battery Point and tumbled on the beach below. And I know that, one summer evening, when the scandalized townsmen and their wedded wives assembled, and marched down to the cottage with intent to lead the woman in a "Ramriding," the sight of Kit playing in the garden, and his look of innocent delight as he ran in to call his mother out, took the courage out of them and sent them home, up the hill, like sheep.

Of course the truth must have come soon. But it never did: for when he was just five, the woman took a chill and died.

She had left a little money; and the vicar, rather than let Kit go to the workhouse, spent it to buy the child admission to an orphanage in the Midlands, a hundred miles away.

So Kit hung the rose-tree with little scraps of crape, and was put, dazed and white, into a train and whisked a hundred miles off. And everybody forgot him.

Kit spent two years at the orphanage in an antique, pre-posterous suit—snuff-colored coat with lappels, canary waistcoat, and corduroy small-clothes. And they gave him his meals regularly. There were ninety-nine other boys who all thrived on the food: but Kit pined. And the ninety-nine, being full of food, made a racket at times; but Kit found it quiet—deathly quiet; and his eyes wore a listening look.

For the truth was he missed the noise of the beach and was listening for it. And deep down in his small heart the sea was piping and calling to him. And the world had grown dumb; and he yearned always: until they had to get him a new canary waistcoat, the old one had grown too big.

One evening a lecture was given in the dining-room of the Orphanage. The subject was "The Holy Land," and the lecturer illustrated it with views from the magic-lantern.

Kit, who sat in one of the back rows, was moderately excited at first. But the views of barren hills, and sands, and ruins, and palm-trees, and cedars, wearied him after a while. He had closed his eyes, and the lecturer's voice became a sing-song in which his heart searched, as it always searched, for the music of the beach; when, by way of variety—for it had little to do with the subject—the lecturer slipped in a slide that was supposed to depict an incident on the homeward voyage—a squall in the Mediterranean.

It was a stirring picture, with an inky sky, and the squall bursting from it, and driving a small ship heeling over white-crested waves. Of course the boys drew their breath.

And then something like a strangling sob broke out on the stillness, frightening the lecturer; and a shrill cry—

"Don't go—oh, *damn it all!* don't go! Take me—take me home!"

And there at the back of the room a small boy stood up on his form, and stretched out both hands to the painted ship, and shrieked and panted.

There was a blank silence, and then the matron hurried up, took him firmly in her arms, and carried him out.

"Don't go—oh, for the Lord A'mighty's sake, don't go!"

And as he was borne down the passages his cry sounded among the audience like the wail of a little lost soul.

The matron carried Kit to the sick-room and put him to bed. After quieting the child a bit she left him, taking away

the candle. Now the sick-room was on the ground-floor, and Kit lay still a very short while. Then he got out of bed, groped for his clothes, managed to dress himself, and, opening the window, escaped on to the lawn. Then he turned his face south-west, toward home and the sea—and ran.

How could he tell where they lay? God knows. Ask the swallow how she can tell, when in autumn the warm south is a-fire in her brain. I believe that the sea's breath was in the face of this child of seven, and its scent in his nostrils, and its voice in his ears, calling, summoning all the way. I only know that he ran straight toward his home, a hundred miles off, and that they found his canary waistcoat and snuff-colored coat in a ditch, two miles from the orphanage, due south-west.

Of his adventures on the road the story is equally silent, as I warned you. But the small figure comes into view again, a week later, on the hillside of the coombe above his home. And when he saw the sea and the white beach glittering beneath him, he did not stop, even for a moment, but reeled down the hill. The child was just a living skeleton; he had neither hat, coat, nor waistcoat; one foot only was shod, the other had worn through the stocking, and ugly red blisters showed on the sole as he ran. His face was far whiter than his shirt, save some ugly red scratches; and his gaunt eyes were full of hunger and yearning, and his lips happily babbling the curses that the ships' captains had taught him.

He reeled down the hill to the cottage. The tenant was a new-comer to the town, and had lately been appointed musketry instructor to the battery above. He was in the garden pruning the rose-tree, but did not particularly notice the boy. And the boy passed without turning his head.

The tide on the beach was far out and just beginning to flow. There was the same dull splash on the pebbles, the same twinkle as the sun struck across the ripples. The sun was sinking; in ten minutes it would be behind the hill.

No one knows what the waves said to Kit. But he flung himself among them with a choking cry, and drank the brine and tossed it over his head and shoulders and chest, and lay down and let the small waves play over him, and cried and laughed aloud till the sun went down.

Then he clambered on to a rock, some way above them, and lay down to watch the water; and watching it, fell asleep; and sleeping, had his wish, and went out to the wide seas.

## THE DIAMOND LENS\*

*Famous Stories : The Old Time Favorites.*

From a very early period of my life the entire bent of my inclinations had been toward microscopic investigations. When I was not more than ten years old, a distant relative of our family, hoping to astonish my inexperience, constructed a simple microscope for me, by drilling in a disc of copper a small hole, in which a drop of pure water was sustained by capillary attraction.

This very primitive apparatus, magnifying some fifty diameters, presented, it is true, only indistinct and imperfect forms, but still sufficiently wonderful to work up my imagination to a preternatural state of excitement.

Seeing me so interested in this rude instrument, my cousin explained to me all that he knew about the principles of the microscope, related to me a few of the wonders which had been accomplished through its agency, and ended by promising to send me one regularly constructed, immediately on his return to the city.

I counted the days, the hours, the minutes, that intervened between that promise and his departure.

Meantime I was not idle. Every transparent substance that bore the remotest resemblance to a lens I eagerly seized upon, and employed in vain attempts to realize that instrument, the theory of whose construction I as yet only vaguely comprehended. All panes of glass containing those oblate spheroidal knots familiarly known as "bull's-eyes" were

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\* By Fitz James O'Brien. Born in Limerick, Ireland, 1828, died in a military hospital, of his wounds, April 6th, 1862. Fitz James O'Brien was one of the choice spirits of that New York bohemian literary set which became so celebrated just before the civil war. He was a graduate of Dublin University, a man of good family, who, having squandered his fortune in London, came to New York in 1832 with letters of introduction to the literary lights of those early days. "In this way," says William Winter in his memoirs of O'Brien, "his American career began, which was destined in the brief period of ten years to be signalized by the production of some of the most original and beautiful poems and stories in the literature of his time, to flow through many painful vicissitudes and much trouble, and to end abruptly in a soldier's grave. His prose work electrified magazine literature and set up a model of excellence which, in this department, has made it better than it ever had been in this country before those tales were printed." The *Diamond Lens* was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1858.

ruthlessly destroyed, in the hope of obtaining lenses of marvellous power. I even went so far as to extract the crystalline humor from the eyes of fishes and animals, and endeavored to press it into the microscopic service. I plead guilty to having stolen the glasses from my Aunt Agatha's spectacles, with a dim idea of grinding them into lenses of wondrous magnifying properties—in which attempt it is scarcely necessary to say that I totally failed.

At last the promised instrument came. It was of that order known as Field's simple microscope, and had cost perhaps about fifteen dollars. As far as educational purposes went, a better apparatus could not have been selected. Accompanying it was a small treatise on the microscope—its history, uses, and discoveries. I comprehended then for the first time the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." The dull veil of ordinary existence that hung across the world seemed suddenly to roll away, and to lay bare a land of enchantments. I felt toward my companions as the seer might feel toward the ordinary masses of men. I held conversations with nature in a tongue which they could not understand. I was in daily communication with living wonders, such as they never imagined in their wildest visions. I penetrated beyond the external portal of things, and roamed through the sanctuaries. Where they beheld only a drop of rain slowly rolling down the window-glass, I saw a universe of beings animated with all the passions common to physical life, and convulsing their minute sphere with struggles as fierce and protracted as those of men. In the common spots of mould, which my mother, good housekeeper that she was, fiercely scooped away from her jam pots, there abode for me, under the name of mildew, enchanted gardens, filled with dells and avenues of the densest foliage and most astonishing verdure, while from the fantastic boughs of these microscopic forests hung strange fruits glittering with green, and silver, and gold.

It was no scientific thirst that at this time filled my mind. It was the pure enjoyment of a poet to whom a world of wonders has been disclosed. I talked of my solitary pleasures to none. Alone with my microscope, I dimmed my sight, day after day and night after night, poring over the marvels which it unfolded to me. I was like one who, having discovered the ancient Eden still existing in all its primitive

glory, should resolve to enjoy it in solitude, and never betray to mortal the secret of its locality. The rod of my life was bent at this moment.

I destined myself to be a microscopist.

Of course, like every novice, I fancied myself a discoverer. I was ignorant at the time of the thousands of acute intellects engaged in the same pursuit as myself, and with the advantage of instruments a thousand times more powerful than mine. The names of Leeuwenhoek, Williamson, Spencer, Ehrenberg, Schultz, Dujardin, Schact, and Schleiden were then entirely unknown to me, or if known, I was ignorant of their patient and wonderful researches. In every fresh specimen of cryptogamia which I placed beneath my instrument I believed that I discovered wonders of which the world was as yet ignorant. I remember well the thrill of delight and admiration that shot through me the first time that I discovered the common wheel animalcule (*Rotifera vulgaris*) expending and contracting its flexible spokes, and seemingly rotating through the water. Alas! as I grew older, and obtained some works treating of my favorite study, I found that I was only on the threshold of a science to the investigation of which some of the greatest men of the age were devoting their lives and intellects.

As I grew up, my parents, who saw but little likelihood of anything practical resulting from the examination of bits of moss and drops of water through a brass tube and a piece of glass, were anxious that I should choose a profession. It was their desire that I should enter the counting-house of my uncle, Ethan Blake, a prosperous merchant, who carried on business in New York. This suggestion I decisively combated. I had no taste for trade; I should only make a failure; in short, I refused to become a merchant.

But it was necessary for me to select some pursuit. My parents were staid New England people, who insisted on the necessity of labor; and therefore, although, thanks to the bequest of my poor Aunt Agatha, I should, on coming of age, inherit a small fortune sufficient to place me above want, it was decided that, instead of waiting for this, I should act the nobler part, and employ the intervening years in rendering myself independent.

After much cogitation I complied with the wishes of my family, and selected a profession. I determined to study

medicine at the New York Academy. This disposition of my future suited me. A removal from my relatives would enable me to dispose of my time as I pleased without fear of detection. As long as I paid my Academy fees, I might shirk attending the lectures if I chose; and, as I never had the remotest intention of standing an examination, there was no danger of my being "plucked." Besides, a metropolis was the place for me. There I could obtain excellent instruments, the newest publications, intimacy with men of pursuits kindred with my own—in short, all things necessary to insure a profitable devotion of my life to my beloved science. I had an abundance of money, few desires that were not bounded by my illuminating mirror on one side and my object-glass on the other; what, therefore, was to prevent my becoming an illustrious investigator of the veiled worlds? It was with the most buoyant hope that I left my New England home and established myself in New York.

My first step, of course, was to find suitable apartments. These I obtained, after a couple of days' search, in Fourth Avenue; a very pretty second floor unfurnished, containing sitting-room, bedroom, and a smaller apartment which I intended to fit up as a laboratory. I furnished my lodgings simply, but rather elegantly, and then devoted all my energies to the adornment of the temple of my worship. I visited Pike, the celebrated optician, and passed in review his splendid collection of microscopes—Field's Compound, Hingham's, Spencer's, Nacet's Binocular (that founded on the principles of the stereoscope), and at length fixed upon that form known as Spencer's Trunnion Microscope, as combining the greatest number of improvements with an almost perfect freedom from tremor. Along with this I purchased every possible accessory—draw-tubes, micrometers, a *camera-lucida*, lever-stage, achromatic condensers, white cloud illuminators, prisms, parabolic condensers, polarizing apparatus, forceps, aquatic boxes, fishing-tubes, with a host of other articles, all of which would have been useful in the hands of an experienced microscopist, but, as I afterward discovered, were not of the slightest present value to me. It takes years of practice to know how to use a complicated microscope. The optician looked suspiciously at me as I made these wholesale purchases. He evidently was uncertain whether



to set me down as some scientific celebrity or a madman. I think he inclined to the latter belief. I suppose I was mad. Every great genius is mad upon the subject in which he is greatest. The unsuccessful madman is disgraced and called a lunatic.

Mad or not, I set myself to work with a zeal which few scientific students have ever equalled. I had everything to learn relative to the delicate study upon which I had embarked—a study involving the most earnest patience, the most rigid analytic powers, the steadiest hand, the most untiring eye, the most refined and subtle manipulation.

For a long time half my apparatus lay inertly on the shelves of my laboratory, which was now most amply furnished with every possible contrivance for facilitating my investigations. The fact was that I did not know how to use some of my scientific implements—never having been taught microscopics—and those whose use I understood theoretically were of little avail, until by practice I could attain the necessary delicacy of handling. Still, such was the fury of my ambition, such the untiring perseverance of my experiments, that, difficult of credit as it may be, in the course of one year I became theoretically and practically an accomplished microscopist.

During this period of my labors, in which I submitted specimens of every substance that came under my observation to the action of my lenses, I became a discoverer—in a small way, it is true, for I was very young, but still a discoverer. It was I who destroyed Ehrenberg's theory that the *Volvox globator* was an animal, and proved that his "monads" with stomachs and eyes were merely phases of the formation of a vegetable cell, and were, when they reached their mature state, incapable of the act of conjugation, or any true generative act, without which no organism rising to any stage of life higher than vegetable can be said to be complete. It was I who resolved the singular problem of rotation in the cells and hairs of plants into ciliary attraction, in spite of the assertions of Mr. Wenham and others, that my explanation was the result of an optical illusion.

But notwithstanding these discoveries, laboriously and painfully made as they were, I felt horribly dissatisfied. At every step I found myself stopped by the imperfections of my instruments. Like all active microscopists, I gave my

imagination full play. Indeed, it is a common complaint against many such, that they supply the defects of their instruments with the creations of their brains. I imagined depths beyond depths in nature which the limited power of my lenses prohibited me from exploring. I lay awake at night constructing imaginary microscopes of immeasurable power, with which I seemed to pierce through all the envelopes of matter down to its original atom. How I cursed those imperfect mediums which necessity through ignorance compelled me to use! How I longed to discover the secret of some perfect lens, whose magnifying power should be limited only by the resolvability of the object, and which at the same time should be free from spherical and chromatic aberrations, in short from all the obstacles over which the poor microscopist finds himself continually stumbling! I felt convinced that the simple microscope, composed of a single lens of such vast yet perfect power, was possible of construction. To attempt to bring the compound microscope up to such a pitch would have been commencing at the wrong end; this latter being simply a partially successful endeavor to remedy those very defects of the simple instrument, which, if conquered, would leave nothing to be desired.

It was in this mood of mind that I became a constructive microscopist. After another year passed in this new pursuit, experimenting on every imaginable substance—glass, gems, flints, crystals, artificial crystals formed of the alloy of various vitreous materials—in short, having constructed as many varieties of lenses as Argus had eyes, I found myself precisely where I started, with nothing gained save an extensive knowledge of glass-making. I was almost dead with despair. My parents were surprised at my apparent want of progress in my medical studies (I had not attended one lecture since my arrival in the city), and the expenses of my mad pursuit had been so great as to embarrass me very seriously.

I was in this frame of mind one day, experimenting in my laboratory on a small diamond—that stone, from its great refracting power, having always occupied my attention more than any other—when a young Frenchman, who lived on the floor above me, and who was in the habit of occasionally visiting me, entered the room.

I think that Jules Simon was a Jew. He had many traits of the Hebrew character: a love of jewelry, of dress, and of

good living. There was something mysterious about him. He always had something to sell, and yet went into excellent society. When I say sell, I should perhaps have said peddle; for his operations were generally confined to the disposal of single articles—a picture, for instance, or a rare carving in ivory, or a pair of duelling-pistols, or the dress of a Mexican *caballero*. When I was first furnishing my rooms, he paid me a visit, which ended in my purchasing an antique silver lamp, which he assured me was a Cellini—it was handsome enough even for that—and some other knick-knacks for my sitting-room. Why Simon should pursue this petty trade I never could imagine. He apparently had plenty of money, and had the *entrée* of the best houses in the city—taking care, however, I suppose, to drive no bargains within the enchanted circle of the Upper Ten. I came at length to the conclusion that this peddling was but a mask to cover some greater object, and even went so far as to believe my young acquaintance to be implicated in the slave-trade. That, however, was none of my affair.

On the present occasion, Simon entered my room in a state of considerable excitement.

“*Ah! mon ami!*” he cried, before I could even offer him the ordinary salutation, “it has occurred to me to be the witness of the most astonishing things in the world. I promenaded myself to the house of Madame ——. How does the little animal—*le renard*—name himself in the Latin?”

“Vulpes,” I answered.

“Ah! yes—Vulpes. I promenaded myself to the house of Madame Vulpes.”

“The spirit medium?”

“Yes, the great medium. Great heavens! what a woman! I write on a slip of paper many of questions concerning affairs the most secret—affairs that conceal themselves in the abysses of my heart the most profound; and behold! by example! what occurs? This devil of a woman makes me replies the most truthful to all of them. She talks to me of things that I do not love to talk of to myself. What am I to think? I am fixed to the earth!”

“Am I to understand you, M. Simon, that this Mrs. Vulpes replied to questions secretly written by you, which questions related to events known only to yourself?”

“Ah! more than that, more than that,” he answered, with

an air of some alarm. "She related to me things—— But," he added, after a pause, and suddenly changing his manner, "why occupy ourselves with these follies? It was all the biology, without doubt. It goes without saying that it has not my credence. But why are we here, *mon ami*? It has occurred to me to discover the most beautiful thing as you can imagine—a vase with green lizards on it, composed by the great Bernard Palissy. It is in my apartment; let us mount. I go to show it to you."

I followed Simon mechanically; but my thoughts were far from Palissy and his enamelled ware, although I, like him, was seeking in the dark a great discovery. This casual mention of the spiritualist, Madame Vulpes, set me on a new track. What if this spiritualism should be really a great fact? What if, through communication with more subtle organisms than my own, I could reach at a single bound the goal, which perhaps a life of agonizing mental toil would never enable me to attain?

While purchasing the Palissy vase from my friend Simon, I was mentally arranging a visit to Madame Vulpes.

Two evenings after this, thanks to an arrangement by letter and the promise of an ample fee, I found Madame Vulpes awaiting me at her residence alone. She was a coarse-featured woman, with keen and rather cruel dark eyes, and an exceedingly sensual expression about her mouth and under jaw. She received me in perfect silence, in an apartment on the ground-floor, very sparsely furnished. In the centre of the room, close to where Mrs. Vulpes sat, there was a common round mahogany table. If I had come for the purpose of sweeping her chimney, the woman could not have looked more indifferent to my appearance. There was no attempt to inspire the visitor with awe. Everything bore a simple and practical aspect. This intercourse with the spiritual world was evidently as familiar an occupation with Mrs. Vulpes as eating her dinner or riding in an omnibus.

"You come for a communication, Mr. Linley?" said the medium, in a dry, business-like tone of voice.

"By appointment—yes."

"What sort of communication do you want? a written one?"

"Yes—I wish for a written one."

"From any particular spirit?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever known this spirit on this earth?"

"Never. He died long before I was born. I wish merely to obtain from him some information which he ought to be able to give better than any other."

"Will you seat yourself at the table, Mr. Linley," said the medium, "and place your hands upon it?"

I obeyed—Mrs. Vulpes being seated opposite to me, with her hands also on the table. We remained thus for about a minute and a half, when a violent succession of raps came on the table, on the back of my chair, on the floor immediately under my feet, and even on the window-panes. Mrs. Vulpes smiled composedly.

"They are very strong to-night," she remarked. "You are fortunate." She then continued, "Will the spirits communicate with this gentleman?"

Vigorous affirmative.

"Will the particular spirit he desires to speak with communicate?"

A very confused rapping followed this question.

"I know what they mean," said Mrs. Vulpes, addressing herself to me; "they wish you to write down the name of the particular spirit that you desire to converse with. Is that so?" she added, speaking to her invisible guests.

That it was so was evident from the numerous affirmative responses. While this was going on, I tore a slip from my pocket-book, and scribbled a name, under the table.

"Will this spirit communicate in writing with this gentleman?" asked the medium once more.

After a moment's pause, her hand seemed to be seized with a violent tremor, shaking so forcibly that the table vibrated. She said that a spirit had seized her hand and would write. I handed her some sheets of paper that were on the table, and a pencil. The latter she held loosely in her hand, which presently began to move over the paper with a singular and seemingly involuntary motion. After a few moments had elapsed, she handed me the paper, on which I found written, in a large, uncultivated hand, the words, "He is not here, but has been sent for." A pause of a minute or so now ensued, during which Mrs. Vulpes remained perfectly silent, but the raps continued at regular intervals. When the short

period I mention had elapsed, the hand of the medium was again seized with its convulsive tremor, and she wrote, under this strange influence, a few words on the paper, which she handed to me. They were as follows:

"I am here. Question me.

"LEEUWENHOEK."

I was astounded. The name was identical with that I had written beneath the table, and carefully kept concealed. Neither was it at all probable that an uncultivated woman like Mrs. Vulpes should know even the name of the great father of microscopics. It may have been biology; but this theory was soon doomed to be destroyed. I wrote on my slip—still concealing it from Mrs. Vulpes—a series of questions, which, to avoid tediousness, I shall place with the responses, in the order in which they occurred:

I.—Can the microscope be brought to perfection?

SPIRIT.—Yes.

I.—Am I destined to accomplish this great task?

SPIRIT.—You are.

I.—I wish to know how to proceed to attain this end. For the love which you bear to science, help me!

SPIRIT.—A diamond of one hundred and forty carats, submitted to electro-magnetic current for a long period, will experience a rearrangement of its atoms *inter se*, and from that stone you will form the universal lens.

I.—Will great discoveries result from the use of such a lens?

SPIRIT.—So great that all that has gone before is as nothing.

I.—But the refractive power of the diamond is so immense, that the image will be formed within the lens. How is that difficulty to be surmounted?

SPIRIT.—Pierce the lens through its axis, and the difficulty is obviated. The image will be formed in the pierced space, which will itself serve as a tube to look through. Now I am called. Good-night.

I cannot at all describe the effect that these extraordinary communications had upon me. I felt completely bewildered. No biological theory could account for the *discovery* of the lens. The medium might, by means of biological *rapport* with my mind, have gone so far as to read my questions,

and reply to them coherently. But biology could not enable her to discover that magnetic currents would so alter the crystals of the diamond as to remedy its previous defects, and admit of its being polished into a perfect lens. Some such theory may have passed through my head, it is true; but if so, I had forgotten it. In my excited condition of mind there was no course left but to become a convert, and it was in a state of the most painful nervous exaltation that I left the medium's house that evening. She accompanied me to the door, hoping that I was satisfied. The raps followed us as we went through the hall, sounding on the balusters, the flooring, and even the lintels of the door. I hastily expressed my satisfaction, and escaped hurriedly into the cool night air. I walked home with but one thought possessing me—how to obtain a diamond of the immense size required. My entire means multiplied a hundred times over would have been inadequate to its purchase. Besides, such stones are rare, and become historical. I could find such only in the regalia of Eastern or European monarchs.

There was a light in Simon's room as I entered my house. A vague impulse urged me to visit him. As I opened the door of his sitting-room unannounced, he was bending, with his back toward me, over a carcel lamp, apparently engaged in minutely examining some object which he held in his hands. As I entered, he started suddenly, thrust his hand into his breast-pocket, and turned to me with a face crimson with confusion.

"What!" I cried, "poring over the miniature of some fair lady? Well, don't blush so much; I won't ask to see it."

Simon laughed awkwardly enough, but made none of the negative protestations usual on such occasions. He asked me to take a seat.

"Simon," said I, "I have just come from Madame Vulpes."

This time Simon turned as white as a sheet, and seemed stupefied, as if a sudden electric shock had smitten him. He babbled some incoherent words, and went hastily to a small closet where he usually kept his liquors. Although astonished at his emotion, I was too preoccupied with my own idea to pay much attention to anything else.

"You say truly when you call Madame Vulpes a devil of a woman," I continued. "Simon, she told me wonderful

things to-night, or rather was the means of telling me wonderful things. Ah! if I could only get a diamond that weighed one hundred and forty carats!"

Scarcely had the sigh with which I uttered this desire died upon my lips, when Simon, with the aspect of a wild beast, glared at me savagely, and, rushing to the mantel-piece, where some foreign weapons hung on the wall, caught up a Malay creese, and brandished it furiously before him.

"No!" he cried in French, into which he always broke when excited. "No! you shall not have it! You are perfidious! You have consulted with that demon, and desire my treasure! But I will die first! Me! I am brave! You cannot make me fear!"

All this, uttered in a loud voice trembling with excitement, astounded me. I saw at a glance that I had accidentally trodden upon the edges of Simon's secret, whatever it was. It was necessary to reassure him.

"My dear Simon," I said, "I am entirely at a loss to know what you mean. I went to Madame Vulpes to consult with her on a scientific problem, to the solution of which I discovered that a diamond of the size I just mentioned was necessary. You were never alluded to during the evening, nor, so far as I was concerned, even thought of. What can be the meaning of this outburst? If you happen to have a set of valuable diamonds in your possession, you need fear nothing from me. The diamond which I require you could not possess; or, if you did possess it, you would not be living here."

Something in my tone must have completely reassured him; for his expression immediately changed to a sort of constrained merriment, combined, however, with a certain suspicious attention to my movements. He laughed, and said that I must bear with him; that he was at certain moments subject to a species of vertigo, which betrayed itself in incoherent speeches, and that the attacks passed off as rapidly as they came. He put his weapon aside while making this explanation, and endeavored, with some success, to assume a more cheerful air.

All this did not impose on me in the least. I was too much accustomed to analytical labors to be baffled by so flimsy a veil. I determined to probe the mystery to the bottom.



"Simon," I said, gayly, "let us forget all this over a bottle of Burgundy. I have a case of Lausseure's *Clos Vougeot* down-stairs, fragrant with the odors and ruddy with the sunlight of the Côte d'Or. Let us have up a couple of bottles. What say you?"

"With all my heart," answered Simon, smilingly.

I produced the wine and we seated ourselves to drink. It was of a famous vintage, that of 1848, a year when war and wine throve together—and its pure but powerful juice seemed to impart renewed vitality to the system. By the time we had half finished the second bottle, Simon's head, which I knew was a weak one, had begun to yield, while I remained calm as ever, only that every draught seemed to send a flush of vigor through my limbs. Simon's utterance became more and more indistinct. He took to singing French *chansons* of a not very moral tendency. I rose suddenly from the table just at the conclusion of one of those incoherent verses, and, fixing my eyes on him with a quiet smile, said: "Simon, I have deceived you. I learned your secret this evening. You may as well be frank with me. Mrs. Vulpes, or rather one of her spirits, told me all."

He started with horror. His intoxication seemed for the moment to fade away, and he made a movement toward the weapon that he had a short time before laid down. I stopped him with my hand.

"Monster!" he cried, passionately, "I am ruined! What shall I do? You shall never have it! I swear by my mother!"

"I don't want it," I said; "rest secure, but be frank with me. Tell me all about it."

The drunkenness began to return. He protested with maudlin earnestness that I was entirely mistaken—that I was intoxicated; then asked me to swear eternal secrecy, and promised to disclose the mystery to me. I pledged myself, of course, to all. With an uneasy look in his eyes, and hands unsteady with drink and nervousness, he drew a small case from his breast and opened it. Heavens! How the mild lamp-light was shivered into a thousand prismatic arrows, as it fell upon a vast rose-diamond that glittered in the case! I was no judge of diamonds, but I saw at a glance that this was a gem of rare size and purity. I looked at Simon with wonder, and—must I confess it?—with envy.

How could he have obtained this treasure? In reply to my questions, I could just gather from his drunken statements (of which, I fancy, half the incoherence was affected) that he had been superintending a gang of slaves engaged in diamond-washing in Brazil; that he had seen one of them secrete a diamond, but, instead of informing his employers, had quietly watched the negro until he saw him bury his treasure; that he had dug it up and fled with it, but that as yet he was afraid to attempt to dispose of it publicly—so valuable a gem being almost certain to attract too much attention to its owner's antecedents—and he had not been able to discover any of those obscure channels by which such matters are conveyed away safely. He added, that, in accordance with oriental practice, he had named his diamond with the fanciful title of "The Eye of Morning."

While Simon was relating this to me, I regarded the great diamond attentively. Never had I beheld anything so beautiful. All the glories of light, ever imagined or described, seemed to pulsate in its crystalline chambers. Its weight, as I learned from Simon, was exactly one hundred and forty carats. Here was an amazing coincidence. The hand of destiny seemed in it. On the very evening when the spirit of Leeuwenhoek communicates to me the great secret of the microscope, the priceless means which he directs me to employ start up within my easy reach! I determined, with the most perfect deliberation, to possess myself of Simon's diamond.

I sat opposite to him while he nodded over his glass, and calmly revolved the whole affair. I did not for an instant contemplate so foolish an act as a common theft, which would of course be discovered, or at least necessitate flight and concealment, all of which must interfere with my scientific plans. There was but one step to be taken—to kill Simon. After all, what was the life of a little peddling Jew, in comparison with the interests of science? Human beings are taken every day from the condemned prisons to be experimented on by surgeons. This man, Simon, was by his own confession a criminal, a robber, and I believed on my soul a murderer. He deserved death quite as much as any felon condemned by the laws: why should I not, like government, contrive that his punishment should contribute to the progress of human knowledge?

The means for accomplishing everything I desired lay within my reach. There stood upon the mantel-piece a bottle half full of French laudanum. Simon was so occupied with his diamond, which I had just restored to him, that it was an affair of no difficulty to drug his glass. In a quarter of an hour he was in a profound sleep.

I now opened his waistcoat, took the diamond from the inner pocket in which he had placed it, and removed him to the bed, on which I laid him so that his feet hung down over the edge. I had possessed myself of the Malay creese, which I held in my right hand, while with the other I discovered as accurately as I could by pulsation the exact locality of the heart. It was essential that all the aspects of his death should lead to the surmise of self-murder. I calculated the exact angle at which it was probable that the weapon, if levelled by Simon's own hand, would enter his breast; then with one powerful blow I thrust it up to the hilt in the very spot which I desired to penetrate. A convulsive thrill ran through Simon's limbs. I heard a smothered sound issue from his throat, precisely like the bursting of a large air-bubble, sent up by a diver, when it reaches the surface of the water; he turned half round on his side, and, as if to assist my plans more effectually, his right hand, moved by some mere spasmodic impulse, clasped the handle of the creese, which it remained holding with extraordinary muscular tenacity. Beyond this there was no apparent struggle. The laudanum, I presume, paralyzed the usual nervous action. He must have died instantly.

There was yet something to be done. To make it certain that all suspicion of the act should be diverted from any inhabitant of the house to Simon himself, it was necessary that the door should be found in the morning locked on the inside. How to do this, and afterward escape myself? Not by the window; that was a physical impossibility. Besides, I was determined that the windows *also* should be found bolted. The solution was simple enough. I descended softly to my own room for a peculiar instrument which I had used for holding small slippery substances, such as minute spheres of glass, etc. This instrument was nothing more than a long slender hand-vise, with a very powerful grip, and a considerable leverage, which last was accidentally owing to the shape of the handle. Nothing was simpler

than, when the key was in the lock, to seize the end of its stem in this vise, through the keyhole, from the outside, and so lock the door. Previously, however, to doing this, I burned a number of papers on Simon's hearth. Suicides almost always burn papers before they destroy themselves. I also emptied some more laudanum into Simon's glass—having first removed from it all traces of wine—cleaned the other wine-glass, and brought the bottles away with me. If traces of two persons drinking had been found in the room, the question naturally would have arisen, Who was the second? Besides, the wine-bottles might have been identified as belonging to me. The laudanum I poured out to account for its presence in his stomach, in case of a *post-mortem* examination. The theory naturally would be, that he first intended to poison himself, but, after swallowing a little of the drug, was either disgusted with its taste, or changed his mind from other motives, and chose the dagger. These arrangements made, I walked out, leaving the gas burning, locked the door with my vise, and went to bed.

Simon's death was not discovered until nearly three in the afternoon. The servant, astonished at seeing the gas burning—the light streaming on the dark landing from under the door—peeped through the keyhole and saw Simon on the bed. She gave the alarm. The door was burst open, and the neighborhood was in a fever of excitement.

Every one in the house was arrested, myself included. There was an inquest; but no clue to his death beyond that of suicide could be obtained. Curiously enough, he had made several speeches to his friends the preceding week, that seemed to point to self-destruction. One gentleman swore that Simon had said in his presence that "he was tired of life." His landlord affirmed that Simon, when paying him his last month's rent, remarked that "he should not pay him rent much longer." All the other evidence corresponded—the door locked inside, the position of the corpse, the burnt papers. As I anticipated, no one knew of the possession of the diamond by Simon, so that no motive was suggested for his murder. The jury, after a prolonged examination, brought in the usual verdict, and the neighborhood once more settled down into its accustomed quiet.

The three months succeeding Simon's catastrophe I de-

voted night and day to my diamond lens. I had constructed a vast galvanic battery, composed of nearly two thousand pairs of plates—a higher power I dared not use, lest the diamond should be calcined. By means of this enormous engine I was enabled to send a powerful current of electricity continually through my great diamond, which it seemed to me gained in lustre every day. At the expiration of a month I commenced the grinding and polishing of the lens, a work of intense toil and exquisite delicacy. The great density of the stone, and the care required to be taken with the curvatures of the surfaces of the lens, rendered the labor the severest and most harassing that I had yet undergone.

At last the eventful moment came; the lens was completed. I stood trembling on the threshold of new worlds. I had the realization of Alexander's famous wish before me. The lens lay on the table, ready to be placed upon its platform. My hand fairly shook as I enveloped a drop of water with a thin coating of oil of turpentine, preparatory to its examination—a process necessary in order to prevent the rapid evaporation of the water. I now placed the drop on a thin slip of glass under the lens, and throwing upon it, by the combined aid of a prism and a mirror, a powerful stream of light, I approached my eye to the minute hole drilled through the axis of the lens. For an instant I saw nothing save what seemed to be an illuminated chaos, a vast luminous abyss. A pure white light, cloudless and serene, and seemingly limitless as space itself, was my first impression. Gently, and with the greatest care, I depressed the lens a few hairs' breadths. The wondrous illumination still continued, but as the lens approached the object a scene of indescribable beauty was unfolded to my view.

I seemed to gaze upon a vast space, the limits of which extended far beyond my vision. An atmosphere of magical luminousness permeated the entire field of view. I was amazed to see no trace of animalculous life. Not a living thing, apparently, inhabited that dazzling expanse. I comprehended instantly that, by the wondrous power of my lens, I had penetrated beyond the grosser particles of aqueous matter, beyond the realms of infusoria and protozoa, down to the original gaseous globule, into whose luminous interior I was gazing, as into an almost boundless dome filled with a supernatural radiance.

It was, however, no brilliant void into which I looked. On every side I beheld beautiful inorganic forms, of unknown texture, and colored with the most enchanting hues. These forms presented the appearance of what might be called, for want of a more specific definition, foliated clouds of the highest rarity; that is, they undulated and broke into vegetable formations, and were tinged with splendors compared with which the gilding of our autumn woodlands is as dross compared with gold. Far away into the illimitable distance stretched long avenues of these gaseous forests, dimly transparent, and painted with prismatic hues of unimaginable brilliancy. The pendent branches waved along the fluid glades until every vista seemed to break through half-lucent ranks of many-colored drooping silken pennons. What seemed to be either fruits or flowers, pied with a thousand hues, lustrous and ever varying, bubbled from the crowns of this fairy foliage. No hills, no lakes, no rivers, no forms animate or inanimate, were to be seen, save those vast auroral corses that floated serenely in the luminous stillness, with leaves and fruits and flowers gleaming with unknown fires, unrealizable by mere imagination.

How strange, I thought, that this sphere should be thus condemned to solitude! I had hoped, at least, to discover some new form of animal life—perhaps of a lower class than any with which we are at present acquainted, but still, some living organism. I found my newly discovered world, if I may so speak, a beautiful chromatic desert.

While I was speculating on the singular arrangements of the internal economy of Nature, with which she so frequently splinters into atoms our most compact theories, I thought I beheld a form moving slowly through the glades of one of the prismatic forests. I looked more attentively, and found that I was not mistaken. Words cannot depict the anxiety with which I awaited the nearer approach of this mysterious object. Was it merely some inanimate substance, held in suspense in the attenuated atmosphere of the globule? or was it an animal endowed with vitality and motion? It approached, flitting behind the gauzy, colored veils of cloud-foliage, for seconds dimly revealed, then vanishing. At last the violet pennons that trailed nearest to me vibrated; they were gently pushed aside, and the form floated out into the broad light.

It was a female human shape. When I say human, I mean it possessed the outlines of humanity—but there the analogy ends. Its adorable beauty lifted it illimitable heights beyond the loveliest daughter of Adam.

I cannot, I dare not, attempt to inventory the charms of this divine revelation of perfect beauty. Those eyes of mystic violet, dewy and serene, evade my words. Her long, lustrous hair following her glorious head in a golden wake, like the track sown in heaven by a falling star, seems to quench my most burning phrases with its splendors. If all the bees of Hybla nestled upon my lips, they would still sing but hoarsely the wondrous harmonies of outline that inclosed her form.

She swept out from between the rainbow-curtains of the cloud-trees into the broad sea of light that lay beyond. Her motions were those of some graceful naiad, cleaving, by a mere effort of her will, the clear, unruffled waters that fill the chambers of the sea. She floated forth with the serene grace of a frail bubble ascending through the still atmosphere of a June day. The perfect roundness of her limbs formed suave and enchanting curves. It was like listening to the most spiritual symphony of Beethoven the divine, to watch the harmonious flow of lines. This, indeed, was a pleasure cheaply purchased at any price. What cared I, if I had waded to the portal of this wonder through another's blood? I would have given my own to enjoy one such moment of intoxication and delight.

Breathless with gazing on this lovely wonder, and forgetful for an instant of everything save her presence, I withdrew my eye from the microscope eagerly—alas! As my gaze fell on the thin slide that lay beneath my instrument, the bright light from mirror and from prism sparkled on a colorless drop of water! There, in that tiny bead of dew, this beautiful being was forever imprisoned. The planet Neptune was not more distant from me than she. I hastened once more to apply my eye to the microscope.

Animula (let me now call her by that dear name which I subsequently bestowed on her) had changed her position. She had again approached the wondrous forest, and was gazing earnestly upward. Presently one of the trees—as I must call them—unfolded a long ciliary process, with which it seized one of the gleaming fruits that glittered on its sum-

mit, and sweeping slowly down, held it within reach of Animula. The sylph took it in her delicate hand and began to eat. My attention was so entirely absorbed by her, that I could not apply myself to the task of determining whether this singular plant was or was not instinct with volition.

I watched her, as she made her repast, with the most profound attention. The suppleness of her motions sent a thrill of delight through my frame; my heart beat madly as she turned her beautiful eyes in the direction of the spot in which I stood. What would I not have given to have had the power to precipitate myself into that luminous ocean, and float with her through those groves of purple and gold! While I was thus breathlessly following her every moment, she suddenly started, seemed to listen for a moment, and then leaving the brilliant ether in which she was floating, like a flash of light, pierced through the opaline forest, and disappeared.

Instantly a series of the most singular sensations attacked me. It seemed as if I had suddenly gone blind. The luminous sphere was still before me, but my daylight had vanished. What caused this sudden disappearance? Had she a lover or a husband? Yes, that was the solution! Some signal from a happy fellow-being had vibrated through the avenues of the forest, and she had obeyed the summons.

The agony of my sensations, as I arrived at this conclusion, startled me. I tried to reject the conviction that my reason forced upon me. I battled against the fatal conclusion—but in vain. It was so. I had no escape from it. I loved an animalcule!

It is true that, thanks to the marvellous power of my microscope, she appeared of human proportions. Instead of presenting the revolting aspect of the coarser creatures, that live and struggle and die, in the more easily resolvable portions of the water-drop, she was fair and delicate and of surpassing beauty. But of what account was all that? Every time that my eye was withdrawn from the instrument, it fell on a miserable drop of water, within which, I must be content to know, dwelt all that could make my life lovely.

Could she but see me once! Could I for one moment pierce the mystical walls that so inexorably rose to separate us, and whisper all that filled my soul, I might consent to be satisfied for the rest of my life with the knowledge of her re-



mote sympathy. It would be something to have established even the faintest personal link to bind us together—to know that at times, when roaming through those enchanted glades, she might think of the wonderful stranger, who had broken the monotony of her life with his presence, and left a gentle memory in her heart!

But it could not be. No invention of which human intellect was capable could break down the barriers that nature had erected. I might feast my soul upon her wondrous beauty, yet she must always remain ignorant of the adoring eyes that day and night gazed upon her, and, even when closed, beheld her in dreams. With a bitter cry of anguish I fled from the room, and, flinging myself on my bed, sobbed myself to sleep like a child.

I arose the next morning almost at daybreak, and rushed to my microscope. I trembled as I sought the luminous world in miniature that contained my all. Animula was there. I had left the gas-lamp, surrounded by its moderators, burning, when I went to bed the night before. I found the sylph bathing, as it were, with an expression of pleasure animating her features, in the brilliant light which surrounded her. She tossed her lustrous golden hair over her shoulders with innocent coquetry. She lay at full length in the transparent medium, in which she supported herself with ease, and gambolled with the enchanting grace that the nymph Salmacis might have exhibited when she sought to conquer the modest Hermaphroditus. I tried an experiment to satisfy myself if her powers of reflection were developed. I lessened the lamp-light considerably. By the dim light that remained, I could see an expression of pain flit across her face. She looked upward suddenly, and her brows contracted. I flooded the stage of the microscope again with a full stream of light, and her whole expression changed. She sprang forward like some substance deprived of all weight. Her eyes sparkled and her lips moved. Ah! if science had only the means of conducting and reduplicating sounds, as it does the rays of light, what carols of happiness would then have entranced my ears! what jubilant hymns to Adonais would have thrilled the illumined air!

I now comprehended how it was that the Count de Gabalis peopled his mystic world with sylphs—beautiful beings whose

breath of life was lambent fire, and who sported forever in regions of purest ether and purest light. The Rosicrucian had anticipated the wonder that I had practically realized.

How long this worship of my strange divinity went on thus I scarcely know. I lost all note of time. All day from early dawn, and far into the night, I was to be found peering through that wonderful lens. I saw no one, went nowhere, and scarce allowed myself sufficient time for my meals. My whole life was absorbed in contemplation as rapt as that of any of the Romish saints. Every hour that I gazed upon the divine form strengthened my passion—a passion that was always overshadowed by the maddening conviction, that, although I could gaze on her at will, she never, never could behold me!

At length, I grew so pale and emaciated, from want of rest, and continual brooding over my insane love and its cruel conditions, that I determined to make some effort to wean myself from it. "Come," I said, "this is at best but a fantasy. Your imagination has bestowed on Animula charms which in reality she does not possess. Seclusion from female society has produced this morbid condition of mind. Compare her with the beautiful women of your own world, and this false enchantment will vanish."

I looked over the newspapers by chance. There I beheld the advertisement of a celebrated *danseuse* who appeared nightly at Niblo's. The Signorina Caradolce had the reputation of being the most beautiful as well as the most graceful woman in the world. I instantly dressed and went to the theatre.

The curtain drew up. The usual semicircle of fairies in white muslin were standing on the right toe around the enamelled flower-bank, of green canvas, on which the belated prince was sleeping. Suddenly a flute is heard. The fairies start. The trees open, the fairies all stand on the left toe, and the queen enters. It was the Signorina. She bounded forward amid thunders of applause, and, lighting on one foot, remained poised in air. Heavens! was this the great enchantress that had drawn monarchs at her chariot-wheels? Those heavy muscular limbs, those thick ankles, those cavernous eyes, that stereotyped smile, those crudely painted cheeks! Where were the vermeil blooms, the liquid expressive eyes, the harmonious limbs of Animula?

The Signorina danced. What gross, discordant movements! The play of her limbs was all false and artificial. Her bounds were painful athletic efforts; her poses were angular and distressed the eye. I could bear it no longer; with an exclamation of disgust that drew every eye upon me, I rose from my seat in the very middle of the Signorina's *pas-de-fascination*, and abruptly quitted the house.

I hastened home to feast my eyes once more on the lovely form of my sylph. I felt that henceforth to combat this passion would be impossible. I applied my eye to the lens. Animula was there—but what could have happened? Some terrible change seemed to have taken place during my absence. Some secret grief seemed to cloud the lovely features of her I gazed upon. Her face had grown thin and haggard; her limbs trailed heavily; the wondrous lustre of her golden hair had faded. She was ill! ill, and I could not assist her! I believe at that moment I would have gladly forfeited all claims to my human birthright, if I could only have been dwarfed to the size of an animalcule, and permitted to console her from whom fate had forever divided me.

I racked my brain for the solution of this mystery. What was it that afflicted the sylph? She seemed to suffer intense pain. Her features contracted, and she even writhed, as if with some internal agony. The wondrous forests appeared also to have lost half their beauty. Their hues were dim and in some places faded away altogether. I watched Animula for hours with a breaking heart, and she seemed absolutely to wither away under my very eye. Suddenly I remembered that I had not looked at the water-drop for several days. In fact, I hated to see it; for it reminded me of the natural barrier between Animula and myself. I hurriedly looked down on the stage of the microscope. The slide was still there—but, great heavens! the water-drop had vanished! The awful truth burst upon me; it had evaporated, until it had become so minute as to be invisible to the naked eye; I had been gazing on its last atom, the one that contained Animula—and she was dying!

I rushed again to the front of the lens, and looked through. Alas! the last agony had seized her. The rainbow-hued forests had all melted away, and Animula lay struggling feebly in what seemed to be a spot of dim light. Ah! the sight was horrible: the limbs once so round and lovely

shrivelling up into nothings; the eyes—those eyes that shone like heaven—being quenched into black dust; the lustrous golden hair now lank and discolored. The last throe came. I beheld that final struggle of the blackening form—and I fainted.

When I awoke out of a trance of many hours, I found myself lying amid the wreck of my instrument, myself as shattered in mind and body as it. I crawled feebly to my bed, from which I did not rise for months.

They say now that I am mad; but they are mistaken. I am poor, for I have neither the heart nor the will to work; all my money is spent, and I live on charity. Young men's associations that love a joke invite me to lecture on optics before them, for which they pay me, and laugh at me while I lecture. "Linley, the mad microscopist," is the name I go by. I suppose that I talk incoherently while I lecture. Who could talk sense when his brain is haunted by such ghastly memories, while ever and anon among the shapes of death I behold the radiant form of my lost Animula!

# SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

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## THE STORY OF THE DIARY

One afternoon, in Madrid, the rain and sunshine followed each other so closely that no sooner did a shower cease than the sun shone forth more brightly than before. Though it was during the latter part of May, spring still shed tears as beautiful as everything appertaining to youth, not like the gloomy, ugly showers of the chilly month of November.

A pocket-book or diary was to be seen lying in the middle of St. Ann's Square, showing plainly that some passer-by must have dropped it. It would have been handsome, had its costly binding of Russian leather not been so defaced by the mud. It was fastened by means of a gilt clasp, and was somewhat larger than a card-case.

We do not know how long the pocketbook had been there, when a beautiful young lady appeared escorted by a man servant of decent appearance. Before proceeding any farther we will inform the reader that she is not our heroine, and all that she has to do in this story is to read the note-book, and make comments on its contents. Then we will leave her to fulfil her destiny, without informing you whether she married, became a nun, or died in single blessedness.

Donna Juana Lopez Garcia was a daughter of Don Antonio and Donna Josefa Garcia. Her mother had property which brought her a handsome income; and her father was Councillor of State, or Minister of the Interior, so long as his party was in power, and on the downfall of his political friends, put him on the retired list with a pension.

Juana was an only daughter, and was just twenty-two years old. She was a brunette, quite tall, neither thin nor stout, with black eyes and black hair, and a slight velvety down on her cheeks; a small, red mouth, that displayed her match-

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\* Spanish of Alascon : Mary Springer : For Short Stories.

less teeth when she smiled, rosy cheeks, small white hands with taper fingers and rosy nails, shapely shoulders, small feet with high insteps, and a mezzo-soprano voice, adapted to a caressing as well as more commanding tone. She dressed well, had rich clothes, but preferred plain colors.

She had a French maid to wait on her, and had three rooms for her exclusive use; a boudoir, a dressing-room, and a bed-room, which overlooked a large court. Juana was serious and cheerful, or, to be more explicit, she was neither coquettish nor dull. By serious, we mean noble-minded and discreet; and by cheerful, that she was happy and contented, and made everybody around her happy.

She had not yet had a lover though she had many suitors. She was well-educated, and very religious. She went to early Mass every day, not as a perfunctory duty, but in the proper way that such duties should be performed; as naturally as we love our fathers and mothers.

She liked to read sweet, pure, good books. Romantic novels which were sad and depressing made her laugh, because she could not understand the existence of grief without consolation.

The audacious or philosophical works bored her; for she thought that she could learn nothing from them so pleasant, so natural, as her adherence to the Catholic faith.

Immoral books disgusted her as much as ill-bred people did. Therefore, she never read any novel which was not similar to "I Promissi Sposi," or "Paul and Virginia." She spoke Italian and French, and played the piano. She was very charitable, and, in fact, was a paragon, the joy of her parents' heart.

Juana on entering the house changed her street dress for a wrapper, and retired to her boudoir to study the contents of the diary.

It consisted of about one hundred pages; half were blank, and the rest were in writing, either done with a pen or a pencil, but in the same hand-writing; sometimes carelessly and others very carefully written.

Every woman is somewhat of an Eve. Juana was a woman, so was naturally curious. She knew very well that her father was the proper person to read the diary, and then, only to see if it contained the owner's name. But she could not resist the temptation.

The first page contained the following list:

"Tailor"	"Draft"
"Photographs"	"Locket"
"Travelling-bag"	"Shoes"
"Cemetery"	"Cap"
"Passport"	"Ring"
"Cigars"	"Valise"
"Matches"	

Juana remained thoughtful, while her vivid imagination pictured from these unconnected words, the social standing, and the form of the one who had written them.

She re-read them, and felt that vague sadness a human being inspires when wrapped in mystery and far away, and when we are in ignorance of his commonplace surroundings.

The following is the way in which Juana's imagination glossed over those simple words.

"*Tailor*," she said to herself. "The owner of this book must be a man, who cares for dress; and a young one, too.

"*Photographs*."—I wonder whether they were his or belonged to somebody else?

"*Travelling-bag*."—So he was getting ready to go away. That about the tailor means that he was getting ready for an important journey, and that about the photographs that his journey would be a long one. I wonder where he was going, or whether he has gone away to America. But why should I think of any place so far off? He may have been sent to some place in the Provinces, or he may be in Madrid now.

"*Cemetery*."—That indicates a good heart. He must be either a devoted son, or a loving widower, or a disconsolate lover. For he did not want to go away without bidding farewell to some loved one's grave. That is evident, and makes the diary more interesting than I thought it would be.

"*Passport*."—A laudable precaution, which indicates that he was practical and discreet. I would have done the same.

"*Cigars*."—So he smokes. Well, men should be men!

"*Matches*."—He does not forget anything.

"*Draft*."—Well, I am glad that he had money. I wonder how much it was? Poor men! They are always full of cares; they have to provide not only for themselves, but for us also. Suppose it were for a smaller sum than he needed. I would have loaned him my savings. Who knows he may be in want of money now.

“‘*A locket.*’—This must represent a sweetheart, who gave him a lock of her hair on the day they parted. Undoubtedly she is young, and he was in love with her when he wrote that. Did he leave her? Has he seen her again? Does he still carry the locket—which must contain a lock of her hair?

“‘*Shoes.*’—He must have had them on when he lost the diary. Did he have a pretty foot? Was he handsome? Was he well-dressed? Would I like him if I could see him now? Have I ever met him by chance?

“‘*Cap.*’—For his journey without doubt. I wonder whether he travels alone. If I had met him in the train perhaps I would have gazed at him with careless indifference. That is almost certain. And why do I feel so interested in him now? Because I am reading the secrets of his heart, and have penetrated into his inmost soul.

“‘*Ring.*’—Ah! this is getting serious. I wonder to whom he gave it. Such a present if made by a single man to an unmarried woman must mean that they are engaged. So he must belong to somebody and I may have done wrong to read these pages. But his carelessness was unpardonable, to lose a diary which is not his exclusively. But then, who knows, he may have bought the ring for himself. Oh, no, it must have been for his sweetheart.

“‘*Valise.*’—I feel anxious that he should start at once. But he may have left Madrid! What do I care. Well, I am indeed preoccupied with his diary. But let me go on and see whether I can find a clew to the mystery.”

The second page contained the names of the people he wished to take leave of, and Juana felt a sinking of the heart on reading these names. One especially, which she thought stood for his sweetheart’s.

The latitude it afforded her for the vagaries of her fancy, was what made the diary so entrancing, but at the risk of feeling disenchanted she went on with her reading.

“‘*Frederick.*’—That name must represent his most intimate friend—or his brother, or possibly his future brother-in-law.

“‘*The Gomez.*’—They must have been some old spinsters, his mother’s friends. I don’t care for them. He probably called on them because common courtesy required it.

“‘*The Club.*’—So he was going there. He may have been a gambler. Men never learn anything good at the clubs. But yet, some of them do have fine libraries.



“*The Priest.*”—I like that. I think it praiseworthy that he should show so much deference to him, and call on him to say good-by. But, who knows, he may have gone after his baptismal papers. Perhaps he was going to get married secretly, before leaving his native place. I must not forget about the ring.

“*Ramona.*”—She does not signify much. She must have been a friend of his sweetheart's, or perhaps a married sister.

“*Lolilla.*”—I like that. She must be a nice little girl, one of those miniature friendships, one of those budding loves; a sort of adoration toward an angel, showing kind feelings and a pure heart in the young man. She must be ten years old and perhaps is his sweetheart's sister.

“*Apothecary.*”—This means one of those places in the provincial towns, which serve as a place for the men to meet and talk over politics or the topics of the day. Of course my hero did not go there to buy drugs.

“*Marchioness.*”—This indicates that the young man goes in good society. But she may be Lolilla's mother. Of course she had receptions and he was one of her favorite visitors. What a complex life he lived. I commence to perceive a certain restlessness in his spirit.

“*Don Manuel.*”—He must have been one of his father's friends. I believe that the unknown is an orphan. I am already getting well acquainted with him.

“*My cousins.*”—An equivocal relationship which changes according to whether they are congenial or not. An ugly cousin is like an insipid brother; while a handsome cousin is a dangerous being.

“*Pepa—Juan.*”—These two names seem insignificant. Let us pass on. Pepa may have been his nurse.

“*My darling.*”—That is clear, expressive and sweet. Who can she be?”

Juana paused. All was so clear to her, that it made her feel like one who tries to gaze at the sun. That is to say, the love-beams dazzled her eyes, for, like a well-bred girl, she could not stand the strong light of love all at once.

She then noticed her emotion, and felt annoyed with herself for her weakness, for her inquisitiveness, and that sort of way of spying over a neighbor's wall, that feeling of envy which commenced to rend her heart, so she turned the leaf.

There was another list of commissions for different friends.

Then on the following leaf, she read—

*"I left Jaen, September 8th."*

"Eight months ago," thought Juana. "So he is an Andalusian."

The next page had several names and addresses of prominent men in Madrid.

"So he was an office-seeker," said Juana to herself. "I pity him."

The following page contained several accounts of money lost in gambling.

"Alas, he gambled," cried Juana, sorrowfully. She added up the different sums, and resumed. "He must have lost a very large sum. Or, at least, he owed that amount, after he lost all he had. Unhappy youth."

Then she read the following memoranda:

*"I wrote to C. December 15th."*

*"I wrote again, January 6th."*

*"I broke off with her January 18th."*

*"Her letter, which I destroyed, was dated January 15th."*

Juana became absorbed in thought, with her eyes fastened on the diary. A thousand emotions agitated her soul, while she remained unconscious of them all. At last she exclaimed:

"Was it her fault, or his?"

After this came several blank pages, and then a memorandum written in ink on one page, like a sort of epitaph:

*"Carmen was married  
January 23d, 1860—  
R. I. P."*

Juana felt chilled to the very marrow. Then she found this list on the following page:

*"Naise, tailor, shoe-maker, glove-maker, Ferdinand, and broker."*

"This diary frightens me," thought Juana, while she closed the book, but kept one finger between the pages, so as not to lose her place.

She made up her mind not to read any more, but five seconds after read the following lines in another hand-writing:

*"Carnival—Royal Theatre, 4 o'clock A.M. The White Mask vows to show you her face before the expiration of a month."*

*"The White Mask."*

Under this signature, the young man from Jaen had written:

“*The White Mask had on a bracelet with these initials: A. C.*”

“And after all, that young man was not bad,” said Juana. “She was to blame. Madrid, also, was to blame for it all. Fate was wrong not to put a woman like me in his path. I am sure that Lolilla’s friend, that the priest’s friend, and the one who went to the cemetery to say farewell to some dear one’s grave, was good, true, and worthy.”

After a slight pause Juana read a few pages here and there, and found several notes saying:

“*The note falls due May 19th.*”

“*The Director’s address is Montun St. His seconds are the Colonel and Don Luis.*”

“*The Rev. Father died April 10th.*”

“*I received from my cousins the following sums of money:*”

“*I sold my estate April 30th for \$8,000.*”

Juana breathed again. Then she found another memorandum which increased her fears:

“*May 12th what a horrible night. I owe the Baron \$115.00.*”

“*On that day the Director and the Minister of the Cabinet no longer gave me any hope.*” “*What a day yesterday was!*”

Juana skipped a few pages without noticing their contents, as she was anxious to find the explanation of that tragedy.

Her eyes alighted on a page with the following figures:

“*Rail-road ticket to Jaen. Apparel, shoes, travelling expenses.*”

“He is going away. God speed him!” she exclaimed. “But what is left for him in Jaen now that his sweetheart is married? How poor he must be! How will he pay the note which falls due the 19th of May?”

The following pages were closely written:

“To-day, May 17th, I have promised the White Mask that I will not commit suicide. I felt sorry for her, not for myself. I do not care for her, and never shall. That which is not good, is not worthy of esteem. That woman is not good because she loves me more than duty, more than honor itself. She is false to another, and her love falls on my wounds like a corrosive poison. Everybody has deceived me; everybody has given me bad advice; everybody has ruined me. She has (my Carmen), and the influential men also, who promised to befriend me; my companions, all, all, have betrayed me cruelly. All, and I, myself. I have not

listened to my better nature; I have hurt myself; I have done myself more harm than all the rest together.

“ Dreams of love, and happiness. Peaceful conscience! The inevitable fruition of Justice! Noble ambition! Manly aspirations! Youthful enthusiasm! Where have you all flown? Where are you now? What remains to me, without you? I still have a heart more tender, more ardent, more desirous of love and joy than ever before. But what am I to the world? How do I appear in the eyes of others? Nothing but a rattlepate, a ruined gambler! And notwithstanding I hate gambling; I gambled at first to please my friends, and afterward to regain my losses, to get back what I could not afford to lose, what I needed to live on. But why do I write down my confession here? It comforts me to do so, to confide in these dumb pages, to see myself as I am, reflected in this faithful mirror. Besides, I foresee my approaching death, and I desire that the world should do me justice by reading what I have written here! I owe this slight reparation to my family, to my parents' memory, to my family's friends in Jaen, and to my friends in Madrid. Even though all have turned the cold shoulder to me since I lost my money and am so miserable.

“ *O my Lord, how lonely I feel!* ”

We are sure that if Juana had only known where to find the owner of the pocket-book, she would have implored her father to go to him at once, and free him from the clutches of Death. We also believe that her superior mind had understood his soul so fully that she considered him worthy of compassion and capable of reforming himself and leading a better life; and deserving of happiness and worthy of making others happy also.

But let us proceed. The book had very few unwritten pages left. In one of these she read a codicil, which completed the will we have just read.

“ *Love is but an empty dream. Any other woman would have deceived me the same as Carmen did.* ”

“ It is not true,” exclaimed Juana greatly agitated.

“ *I never would have been able to find a woman tender, true, generous and compassionate, who would have made me happy. No such woman exists.* ”

"Poor simpleton," cried Juana. "There are plenty such women to be found!"

"*Who would listen favorably to a ruined man—to a man who could only live by his daily toil, like a common laborer?*"

"What a stupid man! I would listen favorably to him so long as his repentance was sincere."

Juana had scarcely formed this sentence, when her eyes caught the following lines which made her turn pale with fear.

"*Poor Lolilla! How she will mourn for me! I warn a certain White Mask that her present position with E—absolves me from the vow I made her not to take my life. God have pity on my soul. So unjustly treated in this world. I, myself, destroy my own life. Julio de Cardela.*"

Thus ended the diary. Juana scanned the following pages, but found nothing! Then she cried out and discovered that she was weeping.

Trembling and convulsed she arose and ran toward her mother's boudoir, but on passing through the ante-chamber she met her father who had just returned from taking a walk.

"O papa," she cried, nearly beside herself.

"What's the matter, my child?" exclaimed the old man anxiously, on seeing Juana in such terrible agitation.

"Julio de Cardela! Don't you know——"

"What, did you know him?"

"What has happened?"

"He has just blown his brains out with a revolver in the middle of *la Puerta del Sol*, in the presence of more than a hundred people. There never has been any case of suicide so cruel, so scandalous, and so revolting! I saw the body laid out in the courtyard, where it remains until the authorities shall have examined it. A gentleman from Jaen recognized a fellow-countryman in the suicide and told his name. I assure you that it has made me sick. But you, my child, why do you weep? Did you happen to know that young man?"

Juana kept silent but handed the diary to her father. The poor girl could not speak, for her sobs choked her.

"A diary! Was it his? Answer me."

"Yes, it was his," said Juana in a broken voice.

"Who gave it to you?" inquired her father.

"I found it an hour ago in St. Ann's Square, and have just finished reading it."

## ETCHINGS: "VESUVIUS"\*

I have shaken hands with one who has shaken hands with the great navigator, Captain Cook. It happened in this wise.

I was sitting by the shore of Squid-water, in the Sandwich Islands. At my feet the languid waves seemed to sob in their sleep. Suddenly, from beneath a rock, rose an amphibious creature; the head and front of an idol; locks, as of tangled seagrass; a concave chest, and legs like withered saplings.

It was The Old Man Of The Sea.

His eyeballs were bleared; he was as blind and as dumb as an oyster. I knew him by reputation, the sole-surviving aborigine—the man who had shaken hands with Captain Cook—and, to my joy, he staggered out of the Great Deep and sat himself by me—a mere wasted rack of bones.

Yet he was human! His nostrils began to dilate; he lifted his nose like a pointer—he had scented my cigarette!

The corpse-like claw of an ape trembling received the burnt offering I surrendered to it; he placed the prize between his leathern lips and began to draw with the draft of a furnace; meanwhile he seized my hand with the clammy clutch of an octopus and held it gratefully for some moments.

Copious draughts of smoke he swallowed incessantly; but, oh, triumph of human ingenuity! his flue was a self-consumer.

The coal of the cigarette was rapidly approaching his mouth, yet there was not the slightest evidence of fumigation. In anxious awe I watched him. It seemed to me that he was gradually expanding; his wrinkles began to fill out; the veins knotted and writhed upon his forehead; I felt an artificial heat radiating from his body.

Then I heard a faint crackling, the live coal had touched the flesh; with appalling deliberation he smothered it in the hollow of his tongue and calmly blew the ashes into space.

The cloud that followed was what one might look for after the noiseless explosion of a powder-mill. Smoke covered his face as a veil; it uncoiled in gauzy ribbons from his nostrils; it issued from his ears; puffed from his armpits; oozed from every pore of his body. I dimly saw him for a moment enveloped in his opaque cloud; then a gust of wind swept down upon us and, in a moment, my friend Vesuvius—had vanished.

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\* Charles Warren Stoddard: For Short Stories.

## THE STONE-BREAKER \*

There was once in Japan—at a time so remote that savants hardly dare speak of it—a poor little stone-breaker who worked upon the highways.

He worked upon the highways, while it was daylight, all the time, during all seasons, under the rain, the snow or the sun. He was always half dead with fatigue, three quarters dead from hunger, and was not at all contented with his fate.

“Oh! how I would thank Heaven,” said he, “if I could one day be but rich enough to sleep the whole morning through, and eat and drink my fill. It is said there exist people, blessed by fortune, who thus live in ease and comfort. Stretched upon thick mats before my door, my back covered with soft vestments of silk, I would make a siesta to be broken every quarter of an hour by a servitor who should recall to me that I had nothing to do and that I could sleep without remorse.”

An angel passing heard these words and smiled—“Thy prayer be granted, poor man,” said he.

And suddenly, the stone-breaker, enveloped in sumptuous vestments of silk, found himself stretched upon some thick mats, before the door of a splendèd dwelling. He was no longer hungry or thirsty, no longer tired, and all this appeared to him as agreeable as it was surprising.

He tasted during a half-hour unknown happiness, when the Mikado chanced to pass. The Mikado! That was no small matter—no! The Mikado is the Emperor of Japan and the Emperor of Japan was, at that time, above all, the most powerful of the Emperors of the Orient.

Preceded by couriers, the Mikado was travelling for pleasure, surrounded by cavaliers all decorated and bedizened, like the Grand Turk of Turkey, followed by famous warriors, escorted by musicians, accompanied by women, the most beautiful in the world, who dozed in their silver howdahs perched upon white elephants.

The Mikado reposed upon eider down, in a palanquin of fine gold studded with precious stones. His Prime Minister had the unparalleled honor of holding above his head a great tinkling parasol, all fringed with little bells.

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\* French of Ériest L'Épine : Laura Lyon White: For Short Stories.

The enriched stone-breaker followed with an envious eye the Imperial cortège.

"I haven't gained much," he said to himself. "I am not much happier for the few paltry pleasures I am enabled to give myself. Oh, that I were the Mikado! I would travel in grand state, lolling in a golden palanquin blazing with precious stones, attended by my Prime Minister holding a great glittering parasol over me, while my second minister should cool my face with a fan made of peacock's feathers. Ah! that I could be the Mikado!"

"Your wish is granted," said the angel.

And immediately he saw himself stretched in the palanquin of fine gold, starred with precious stones, and surrounded by his ministers, his warriors, his women and his slaves, who said to him in Japanese:

"Mikado, thou art superior to the sun—thou art eternal—thou art invincible. All that the spirit of man can conceive thou canst execute. Justice itself is subordinate to thy will, and God, trembling, awaits thy counsels."

And the stone-breaker said to himself—"Ah! happy day! now here are people who know my value."

The sun, which had been very fierce for some days, had parched the country. The route was dusty and his glare fatigued the eyes of the new-made Mikado.

Addressing his minister who carried the tinkling parasol he said—

"Make known to the sun that he troubles me. His familiarities displease me. Say to him that the Grand Emperor of Japan commands him to retire. Go!"

The Prime Minister confided to a chamberlain the honor of carrying the tinkling parasol, and went away.

He returned, presently, with the greatest consternation written in his face.

"Great Emperor! Sovereign of the gods and of man! It is past comprehension. The sun pretends not to hear, and continues to shine on the road."

"Let him be punished."

"Certainly! His insolence merits it—but how shall I get at him to administer the punishment?"

"I am the equal of the gods—is it not so?"

"Assuredly, Great Mikado—the equal, to say the least.

"You told me, but a moment since, that nothing was im-



possible to me. You have lied to me—you have disobeyed me, or you have badly executed my orders. I give you five minutes in which to put out the sun, or ten in which to commit *hari-kari*. Go!”

The Prime Minister went away, but did not return.

The Imperial stone-breaker was purple with rage.

“Upon my word! This is a fine position—this of Emperor, when one is obliged to submit to the familiarities, the caprices, the brutalities of a moving planet. It is no use to deny it, the sun is more powerful than I. I would like to be the sun.”

“You are the sun,” said the angel.

And the little stone-breaker shone in the high heavens, all-radiant, all-flaming. He took pleasure in scorching the trees, in drying up the rivers and the springs, and in covering with sweat the august visages of emperors, no less than the dusty noses of the stone-breakers, his colleagues of the morning.

But a cloud came between the earth and him, and the cloud said—

“Halt there! my dear. No one can pass.”

“By the moon! This is a little too much. A cloud, a poor little cloud, without form, calls me ‘my dear’ and bars the way! Clouds are more powerful than I. I will be a cloud or I shall burst with jealousy.”

“Do not burst for so little,” said the angel, always in attendance, “be a cloud, since you wish it.” And the new cloud rested proudly, in his turn, between the earth and the resplendent sun.

Never in the memory of God had there fallen such showers. The transformed stone-breaker took pleasure in pouring rain and hail upon the earth in a fashion so terrible that trees fell down, finding only mud in which to fasten their roots. Under his aquatic rule, of several hours, streams became rivers; rivers became torrents; seas merged into each other and formidable waterspouts were everywhere.

A rock, meanwhile, held up his head in the storm. In face of all he remained impassive. Upon his flanks of granite the waves dashed, covering with froth the waterspouts breaking at his feet; and the thunder made him laugh each time that it tickled his sides.

“I am at my wits’ end!” said the cloud. “This rock ignores my power. He resists me, and I envy him.”

Said the angel—"Take his place, and let us see if you will at last be satisfied."

The transformed cloud at length felt at ease. Impervious, inaccessible, impassive, under the burning caresses of the sun and under the fury of the thunder—he believed himself master of the world.

But lo, at his feet a little soft hammering drew his attention. He leaned over and saw a poor creature, covered with rags—thin and pale as he himself had been in the time of his greatest misery—who, with a mallet in his hand chipped the granite into pieces to repair the neighboring roadway.

"What is this?" cried the superb rock, "a poor wretch, miserable among the most miserable, mutilates me and I cannot defend myself! I am profoundly humiliated. I am reduced to envying the state of this creature."

"Take his place," said the angel smiling.

And the insatiable personage became that which he was before—a poor little breaker of stones.

As in the past he worked upon the roads while there was light all the time, in all seasons, under the rain, the snow, or the sun.

He was always half dead from hunger, and three quarters dead from fatigue—all of which did not hinder him from being perfectly contented with his lot.

## ETCHINGS: AT THE ENGINE\*

The light from the electric lamps is reflected in patches, on the smooth steel beams of the engine. In and out, in and out like shuttles weaving work the rods, their perfect rhythm of motion and precision of movement giving no hint of the great speed at which the giant vessel is cleaving her way.

Days have passed without a signal from above, the engines throbbing steadily. Everything is repose; the incessant motion of the machinery is so common to the men that they do not notice it. The deck may be ever so noisy and these men, buried in the bowels of the ship, would never know it.

Suddenly the great signal gong sounds upon the stillness a single resonant clang—*stop*. The engineer and his assistant are at their posts in an instant; the engines stop. This, the first signal for hours, yes days, means to them nothing, but that it must be instantly obeyed. It may be a man overboard, it may be in another instant some vessel's prow will cut the ship in two, or the ship itself crash into an iceberg—they only know their orders, the bell has spoken—*stop*.

With hands upon the wheels they stand waiting, every nerve strained, in utter ignorance of what the signal means. Soldiers in action see the danger; the officers on deck know what is going on; but these men know nothing but duty.

A moment passes without a word in that narrow room. Strong hands are ready for the next order. It comes, "clang, clang," "reverse the engine." The lever is drawn forward, the valves open and obedient to the touch the great piston rods move again. The seconds seem ages; one, two minutes and then—an awful crash, a grinding, and the vessel staggers. "Clang" goes the great gong and still at their posts quick hands stop the engine. "Ting-a-ling-a-ling," "ting-a-ling-a-ling"—"quit the engine," comes the signal.

While confusion has reigned above, these silent men have stood to their posts until this order came. They rush to the deck. The vessel is filling, a great hole in her bow from the collision with the ice, and all hands turn to the life-boats.

In the depths of a steamer where that great heart of man's construction beats out the vessel's life, true heroism is to be found, firm, unquestioning obedience to orders.

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\* Henry Facet: For Short Stories.

## ASLEEP OR AWAKE \*

*The remarkable Reply of the Defendant in the Divorce Suit of  
Blandford vs. Blandford.*

I am the defendant in this case, if it is needful for me to make defense, and it is my wife, Cecilia Blandford, born Dunlap, who is the plaintiff asking for a divorce *a mensa et thoro*. So far as her general plea is concerned, I have no desire to traverse it, nor am I upon the defensive in any such sense; but as her said plea seems to reflect upon my mental equilibrium, I make this general answer, not in rebuttal, but in explanation—explanation, that is, so far as a statement of facts goes, for I have no theory to advance, and wish to disclaim all idea of such a thing. I am forty-nine years of age. My name is Mauricius Blandford, of the old English Blandford family, a cadet branch of which settled in Kent County on the eastern shore of Maryland in 1655. My paternal grandfather removed to Frederick County, Maryland, immediately after the war of the Revolution, in which he was a soldier, serving during several campaigns under Colonels Williams and Gist. He bought a farm in the valley of Pipe Creek in 1795, and on this farm I was born, the third of five children, on the twentieth of January, 1847. I was educated at the academy in Fredericktown, when I was sent to St. John's College at Annapolis, and spent two years under the scholarly tuition of Dr. Hector Humphreys. From St. John's College, without waiting to secure my diploma, I proceeded to Boston and studied medicine there. My father's means were limited and it was understood that, after I graduated in medicine, he was to furnish me with funds enough to enable me to take a clinical course of a year's duration at Paris; and then I was to shift for myself the best way I could.

One of my classmates was Henry Bishop, whose father was senior partner of the old established spice and tea importing house of Bishop, Froissac & Co., Boston, Paris, Canton, and Madras. When I sailed for Paris the elder Bishop gave me letters to Froissac, who lived in great elegance in a villa near Saint Dennis. Froissac received me cordially, and laughed at the idea of my trying the practice of medicine

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\* Edmund Spencer: Collected Sketches.

without a "connection." He offered me, instead, a clerkship in the firm's Canton house, where, if I chose, I could become a partner in ten years, and rich in fifteen years. I closed with the offer, and, at the end of my hospital year, sailed for Canton in a French Indiaman.

In Canton I passed seventeen uneventful years. I was a good book-keeper, a good clerk, a safe partner, and I accumulated money rapidly. I made the usual round of acquaintances at the foreign factories, was esteemed at the British and French, as well as the American Hong, and was a director for years of the Botanical Garden. I learned to grow as sick of the sound of "pidgin-English" as of the smells of the Canton streets. Canton is a dreary place of exile, and would be intolerable but for the easy Paradise of wealth that lies beyond it like a dream to which it is the only bridge and pathway. I got rich and I contracted a liver disease. My health must have been further impaired by the fact that, from some peculiarity of my organization, I had such a nice delicacy of taste that I became the best judge of teas in all the honges. This was worth much money to Bishop, Froissac & Co., since it enabled me to check and control the professional "tasters," and almost unconsciously I became, not indeed the house's regular "taster," but their judge of qualities of goods upon every important occasion. The nervous reaction from the excessive use of tea thus made necessary during a number of years was quite perceptible to me, but the practice increased our profits just as apparently, and I continued to be a taster long after the physicians recommended me to stop. In my fortieth year, just as I was preparing to leave Canton forever and return home, I was stricken down with a remittent fever that proved nearly fatal. When this had been finally broken it was succeeded by a low nervous condition, semi-febrile, which lasted several months before I was well enough to leave China, which I did by way of the overland route. A German doctor in Paris condemned me to the baths of Carlsbad, where I seemingly recovered. In Boston, during my business interval there, I met Miss Cecilia Dunlap, and married her after a somewhat brief courtship. I have never had any reason to regret this union with a woman of integrity, character and amiability, and I feel considerable chagrin at failing to give her the happiness and contentment with which she inspired me.

After our marriage I furnished a handsome house in a good neighborhood in Baltimore and brought my wife there to live. We were just beginning to be acquainted with each other and our neighbors, when I again fell into the low, nervous fever I have described, and from that into a state of stupor that lasted many weeks and during which I was seldom perfectly conscious. I had good medical advice, and my wife nursed me assiduously and tenderly. Gradually I returned to consciousness, and even to perfect health again, with a better liver and stomach and a clearer head than I had known before for a number of years. The doctors told me that I had come safely through a severe bilious and cerebral crisis, the effect of the long-continued wear and tear of business cares and a hostile climate upon a constitution naturally delicate; but they thought my system had now completely thrown off the poison it had long been absorbing, and I would enjoy better health than I had ever had in my life. I thought so myself. There was a sense of nervous rest, of physical elasticity and "bounce," of mental lucidness and grip, which was entirely new to my experience and wonderfully pleasant.

There was also what I might without any exaggeration describe as a new sensation, not quite as vivid, it may be, but as enjoyable and fascinating as it would be to a person long deaf to recover his hearing, or to one blind from infancy to regain his sight. Up to the period of this crisis I had never dreamed, or if I did dream at all, it was in such a dull, blurred, obscure way that I never recalled it and took no impression from it. But now I began to dream in the most vivid and remarkable way, and it seemed to me very soon that I went to bed less to go to sleep than to enter the portal of dreamland. Every night my visions had a certain force and outline of vividness, and such a long unbroken continuity, that I carried the series forward all the wide-awake day in my thoughts, lay down with it next night, and when I slept the dream went on from where I left off when last awakened. These dreams were singularly fascinating to me, the more so that I am naturally a man of rather cold imagination, slow perception, and few acute sensations. From my earliest recollection I seemed to be frost-bitten and October-tempered in respect of the appetites, passions, and sensual enjoyments which absorb so much of the life of most men. With what I have reason to believe an unusually delicate

taste, I had none of the gout of the epicure; one dish was always pretty much the same as another to me; and heat or cold, clouds or sunshine, it mattered less to me than to any other person I ever met. My passions, if I possessed any, had no glow or fire; and the thrill which choice music and fine poetry, and these alone, gave me, was apparently not sensuous but purely intellectual. Hence, the exaltation of the imagination and the peopling of the fancy that came in my dreams suffused my life with a new and cheerful warmth that was simply delightful. The dreams had so much more life and color, so much more heartiness and honest reality than my waking moments, that the transition from them to the workaday life was like passing from warm sunshine into dim, chilly twilight, and I could not help regretting having to make it.

I had many idle moments. My business—except the little care my estate required of me—was almost nothing; I was not in the habit of reading much, and did not care particularly for books. I only visited as a matter of form and duty, and, as I have said, the pleasures of the table neither occupied nor detained me. Hence, the major part of my time was not employed, or given simply to gentle and generally purposeless meditation. This large vacancy, or semi-vacancy, was now by degrees invaded and occupied by my dreams, or rather by waking thoughts upon the pleasurable features of my sleeping thoughts; and this went on, almost unconsciously to myself, until I found myself dreaming awake as much as when asleep. I do not mean metaphorically, but literally, dreaming awake. People talk of the unsubstantial pageantry of dreams, but I have not experienced anything of the sort. The reality of my dreams was what made them so pleasant to me, and this was so vivid at times that I felt a rational doubt creep over me as to whether I were not awake when I fancied myself dreaming, and only dreaming when I fancied myself awake. The dispute for the empire of my thoughts must have been rather closely and continuously waged between sleep and waking for some time, during which I was dimly conscious of a confusion and perplexity clouding my mind, but all this was probably apparent to myself alone, and did not affect my external conduct.

I cannot say how long the contest lasted, for I am not conscious of when I began to dream awake, and to wait for and watch and speculate on and enjoy the dream images which

presented themselves spontaneously in my mind. I can just dimly recollect the dawn of a sort of impatient eagerness in me for night to come, a sort of charmed anticipation creeping along my nerves of the delicious moment when, snugly tucked away in bed, I did not have to wait for the benumbed forces of sleep to marshal me off to the fairyland of dreams. No, indeed; the dreams came unbidden, and I would follow their images in a sort of genial rapture, lying awake half the night lapped in a delighted, restful luxury of sights, sounds and experiences, under which the brain and nerves and organs seemed to recover from the day's waste and repair themselves as effectually as they could have done in a state of actual sleep. Here was a dreaming going on without any of the usual preliminaries to dreaming, or rather, with a complete reversal of them. I rested, dreamed, was absorbed in my dreams and was happy; but there was no gradual failure and paling away of the perceptions, no unfettering of the leashed consciousness, no slipping out of one's self more and more, like the wreath of smoke that curls and curls and disappears, till, under the closed eyelid, the spirit stepped completely out and was lost in another land. Nothing of the sort. Instead of shutting myself in a dark passage on my way to the hall of visions, instead of going under the murmurous waters of oblivion, and putting on garments not my own, as he who descends under Niagara to visit the Cave of the Winds, I no sooner had lain down in bed than, wide awake, entirely myself, in full consciousness, I put bold hand upon the portal of dreams, the doors flew open to me as to a master, and I stepped confidently in among the various images there without in the least sacrificing my own shape or obscuring my own individuality.

I said that I do not know exactly when I reached this stage of wake-dreaming; as little can I tell exactly when it happened that the need for, and with it the power of, actual sleep passed away from me forever and was replaced by the sort of double life which I now lead. I can only feel sure that this has been my condition for several years, at least five of them, during which I have never slept at all, nor ever felt the least need of sleep nor inclination toward it. I never sleep, I repeat, but I have a double life, or rather I exist in a double state—a state of dreaming and a state of not dreaming, both states being equally real and equally actual to me



so far as my existence in them is concerned; as to their difference in external actuality, a problem arises in my mind which I am not entirely able to solve. For this world which I am now talking to, that other is certainly the dream; but, as certainly, when I am in that dream world it is the actual sphere of existence and this the dream. The longer I live, the more unsolvable the problem of choice between reality and unreality appears. Is there indeed any choice? Is one life more real than the other, or am I not rather participating in two separate, distinct, actual existences?

I have no means of determining the question, for one dream, when I attempt to reason with myself about it, is just as continuous and just as real as the other. What I have called the dream here, as necessary in addressing you, who are images in the reality to which that other state seems the dream, is a better and preferable state to this state, richer and more vivid in its images and surroundings, but nevertheless I would not sacrifice this state for the sake of that, any more than I would sacrifice that state for the sake of this. I have a sense of duty to be done in both spheres, and in my quiet way always wish to discharge my duty. Why should I not lead a double life, if I am capable to do so, just as well as a single life? Here, among you, I am the person whose simple history I have given you—Mauricius Blandford, of Madison Avenue, Baltimore. Every night, until my wife so unfortunately left me, I used to lie in bed, watch her before the glass tying her yellow hair and making her night toilet, and then—the other life, and this the dream!

Would you have a glimpse of that?

Mauricius Blandford is a dream, and sooth to say, a pale-tinted one, like the yellow hair of the lady he cherishes in his bosom. Ho! ho! ho! I am somebody else entirely. Come down this green lane with me, along under these leafed cedars and broad-limbed cornels, bursting with white blossoms over the zig-zag fences. Do you see those white palings, that neat latticed gate, that pathway under rose-bushes and embowering lilacs—that low house with vine-covered porch and hospitable door? That is my house. I am at your service: Conrad Schmidt, the butterman, whom people call Buttersmith. We—Conrad Buttersmith has a large family, mind you—we do not live at all as Mr. Mauricius Blandford lives, but I think more rationally. At any rate, life is not a squeezed

orange to us—not a pale, sapless inanity, by any means. I am a German immigrant, short, square, broad-shouldered, clumsily built, with a rosy, sunburnt face and blue eyes and glistening white teeth and ever so much light brown hair. My foot is big, my hand hard, and I work all day in the hardest way over my dung-heap, my truck patch, my butter-tub and cheese-vat. I am well-to-do, but I was poor enough when I came to this country. That was in 1850, when I ran away from Hessen. Yes, I remember it well. I was well brought up, though a simple peasant in mine own land—went to school, and the pastor taught us to sing sweet hymns, and I danced with the girls while I was yet a goose-boy, my brother Fritz and I. Then I was set to spade the beds in Herr Frolich's nursery garden; then, as my beard began to grow, was put into the army, mounted on an artillery horse, and sent into the Danish campaign. I could not ride, so clumsy I was, and the terrible corporal made my ribs sore with the strap. So one night in the stables he struck me too hard, and I laid him low with a single-tree alongside his head and ran for it. Well I remember the mother's pale face and tears, and the father's dumb distress when I came home to tell what I had done. But quickly they borrowed money for me, and the mother made me a bundle, and kissed me, and so I fled from the old home into France, and at Havre embarked in the steerage for America. Oh, the terrible voyage and the sickening loneliness of landing upon the piers of a strange city, without a friend, without a dollar, and I scarce a man and knowing no word of the language! But I had come to work, and that I soon found—ditching—in an unhealthy country, followed by ague and helpless sickness on the straw bed of a country almshouse. It was the day after I had left this wretched apology for charity, when, still weak as I was, resting and eating my last crust by a road side, that a gentleman riding by reined up to speak with me—God bless him! Said I looked sick, and did I want work, and could I do gardening? So I found a home with him, and my spade turned up his garden deeper than it had ever been dug before, I'll warrant. Then I saved my wages, sending some money now and then to the mother at home, and I bought me this little farm piece-meal, and built upon it, and married my wife, Trudschen, and we worked day in and day out, and the children grew up around us, and money came,

too, and everything seemed to prosper that I took hold of. Yes, I am that Conrad Buttersmith whose pretty house you see before you—just forty-nine years old, with eleven children, and good money in bank, and shares also in the building association, and my house, and my barn, and twenty-five acres good land, and two horses for my market-wagon, and ten cows to my dairy, and the best garden anywhere about, and a stall in the market, and a seat in the choir of the Lutheran Church, and mein Gott! the people whom I hire and the politicians who want me to vote for them, they call me *Mister* Buttersmith! But Trudschen and all old friends say Conrad, and the children call me daddy.

This is how I live: twice a week to market, with my wagon loaded; butter, eggs, vegetables, fruit, everything in season. Up and off on the turnpike road at three o'clock in the morning, at my stall at five, sold out and jogging home again by eleven, with plenty of money in my pocket—it is such an easy life. The rest of the week, my garden, my orchard, my meadow, my cowyard—oh, I find plenty of work there, I assure you. But rest, too, and enjoyment. Listen: On Sunday afternoons, I and mine dressed up, in comes Spielman with his wife and ladies, and Kummer and the daughter, and old Kraft with the game leg. If it is winter, we sit by the fire, a room full; if summer, in the garden on the benches under the grape arbor, and talk all at once, and sing those sweet dear Lutheran hymns we used to learn at home. Or else we go to Spielman's, or the others; but always talk and sing, and there is always a keg of fresh beer to tap, and merry clinking of mutchkins.

And two or three times in a month we give ourselves Saturday afternoon also, and have more beer, more fun, teaching the children to dance, and dancing ourselves to show them how, for old Kraft plays the fiddle like a band-master and Kummer's is a Zauberflöte truly, and we have such merry, laughing times.

It was this whole-souled, irrepressible, hearty laughter of Conrad Schmidt, the Buttersmith, which first led to the domestic troubles of Mauricius Blandford, and, as I have told you, made this explanatory statement necessary. By some unaccountable and most deplorable accident the hearty laughter of Conrad Buttersmith rippled over into the subdued, sedate life of Mauricius Blandford.

Cecilia turned the frills of her night cap toward me and nudged me with her elbow.

"Wake up! wake up!" she cried; "you are laughing horribly in your sleep!"

Horribly! when old Kraft was making me hold my sides at his droll story of the lost peddler who came to his house one midnight with a drunken negro for his guide!

"No, dear," I said, "I was not asleep, but only dreaming. I am sorry to have disturbed you."

"Not asleep! Nonsense!" she retorted; "I never heard you laugh that way in my life! Of course you were asleep!"

To this, of course, there was no reply to be made; for I did not want to confess even to the wife of my bosom that I never slept; but that confession I was forced to make before long, and meantime, was conscious that Cecilia watched me with curiosity, perhaps with apprehension.

One afternoon as I returned from market rather later than usual, Trudschen met me at the gate with a very grave face: "Come in," she said; "come in at once; the doctor is here; our little Walther is very sick."

Little Walther, with his beautiful rosy face and bright blue eyes—my best, my dearest child! I hurried in; the doctor was working with the distressed little boy; already he did not know me, the fever was so high, and the harsh, dreadful sibilation of his croupy cough was terrible to hear. I took the child in my arms—I held him—but our efforts were fruitless. He struggled—he gasped—he died in my arms, my little pet infant, my youngest darling, my Walther! How could I repress a groan, a cry of agony in sympathy with the little life pressed out?

"What is the matter with you? Are you in pain? Why do you groan? Good heavens! you are weeping!" cried Cecilia, turning toward me, after lighting a taper.

I sighed, but said nothing. That life was so much richer than this. I merely told her that I was in no pain, and refused her sympathies. For the moment Buttersmith overpowered Blandford, even in his own world; and in that supreme hour of grief it was essential to be loyal to poor Trudschen, lying prostrate by our child's yet unstretched corpse.

From that moment I knew that Cecilia watched me incessantly, and I speedily discovered that she had found out my

secret and was aware that I never slept. I thought it proper to make her a general statement of my condition without, of course, taking her into confidence as to the substance of my dreams. I even, without waiting for her to suggest it, proposed to consult a physician, and offered to put myself under the influence of anodynes, though feeling no need whatsoever for sleep. But I could see that the shock of what she had discovered was too much for her nerves. It preyed upon her soul and, as she says in her bill of complaint, threatened to drive her mad. I could see that she had an instinctive dread and horror of being alone with me—a feeling which she religiously strove to control, good woman as she is, but could not. At last she fled from my house early one morning, leaving a note saying that she could not stand it any longer; that the consciousness of my being always unnaturally awake was killing her. She could not sleep under it, had awful nightmares, was perpetually waking in a fright, etc., and ended by proposing a peaceful separation.

I did not wish to torture my wife; I never intended to cause her unhappiness; but I cannot approve of the way in which she left me. There need not have been any *esclandre*. We might have remained man and wife in appearance, without passing one night near each other, and I thought she ought to return to me for the sake of our good name and our standing in society. This she refused to do; she said the horror of renewing that association would kill her. I insisted, and her response has been this bill of complaint and petition for permanent separation, upon grounds to which my own self-respect compels me to take exception. I am entirely *compos mentis*, all her allegations to the contrary notwithstanding. For the rest, if the Court pleases to reject her petition and receive this my reply in lieu, as a true statement of facts, I am perfectly willing to consent to a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, and will furnish a full statement of the condition of my property and the income from it, in order that the Court may determine what will be an equitable alimony.

## PASSING THAT WAY\*

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In the whole length of the lane, there was no one but Tranquillina, all out of breath, and the locusts that sang to the dog-star of August.

That slight girl, with the neck too long and the hair light as tow, came down with her boots wrinkled and lost in a cloud of dust, with her laundress basket that drew her down at one side, although empty.

At a certain point she stopped. She had heard the clang, farther on, of the gilded gate of the Baroni villa, and a voice had saluted her.

She approached the low wall near the gate, where an enormous white dog lay with outstretched paws, among the green vines.

"How red you are!" said the voice.

She wiped her cheeks and neck with her kerchief, and looked at Michele high up in the lemon tree, cleaning it.

"I come from Torre del Gallo. I am all wet through, and it seems as if my head would split."

She had laid a hand upon the white head of Ginlay, and Michele had come to the gate.

"Eat one," he said, "it will quench your thirst." And he threw into her basket three lemons, which spread a perfume in the surrounding air.

She bit into the fresh peel, thirsty as she was, and he looked at her smiling, with his eyes narrowed by the sunlight, with his shirt open over his powerful chest, and the pruning-hook swinging from his belt.

They had become acquainted at the bird-fair, outside of Porta Romana, where the young men go to bargain for thrushes and bulfinches frightened and with bleeding heads, and the girls stroll up and down among the cages.

And from that September on, in the water of the basins where she washed linen, Tranquillina always saw his image swim; with the iron in her hand she was often absent-minded and scorched the clothes, in the poor little room in the via di Serragli, where she had been shut up since she was a little girl.

Passing that way, then, was not a mere chance; and the

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\* Italian of Orazio Grandi : E. Cavazza : For Short Stories.

rustling of branches was not really needed to make her turn to look. Ginlay, the dog, knew as much, for even when Michele was not there, he saw her, all the same, search with her eye amid the green, and he felt the little hand tremble that stroked him.

Yet Tranquillina did all in order to keep that poor love of hers concealed. She had felt it grow and grow, clinging fast to a thousand proofs; and she bore it with her, through her troubled life, now as an ineffable treasure, now as a fatality full of vague fears, of torturing presentiments. With her companions she was dull, as dull as the smoky, low room; along the road, where the trees and the flowers and the birds and the heavens smiled upon her, she, too, bounded as if with an intense thrill of life, and a voice of hope spoke within her heart, and she felt an impulse of kindness toward every one and everything; she would smooth the stray hair upon her forehead, and felt capable, strong, worthy of her love.

Men are all alike—she had heard repeated so many times and in so many tones, and by so many mouths, poor Tranquillina; but she had never received that saying. She had found her article of faith, all at once, ready imprinted in her soul, as if born with her. And if sometimes a different thought flashed upon her mind, the water in the basin, for its part, flashed before her a victorious image.

One day, she was in her bed, and unconscious. The oven was like a hell, the room too, and they had found her, half-alive, on the floor.

When she was out of danger she looked in the faces of her companions and saw them laughing slyly; she understood and wished herself dead. Delirium had betrayed her; her poor love was known.

Then the days seemed to her like centuries. That garden, those hours of conflict in which smiles and hope had conquered, those moments of happiness snatched one by one from the painful tedium of her existence, appeared to her like dreams. She felt the need of holding to realities. Reality was before her, sudden and inexorable.

Michele was a bridegroom!

When they told her, she did not understand; for she felt a great blow in her brain and a tearing pain in her heart. She was there at the basin, which had no more flashes for her; the water appeared clouded with red before her eyes.

She had not yet regained her full strength, but she fled through the door and ran along up the lane.

The stars were out; and the autumn breeze blew free and perfumed down the flowery hills, through the holm-oaks and the herbage of the grove. Tranquillina, breathless, blinded by the stars and by the strange shadows of the trees, the hedges, everything—ran, with what eyes, thought and vigor were left her, directed onward, always onward, amid the darkness broken by uneven shapes.

At the familiar gate she stopped. In the low rooms of the villa were lights, and music and merriment. The proprietor was fond of his young gardener, and was making a little festivity for the wedding.

Tranquillina had no more strength. Among the trees, down there, in full light, she saw Michele beside the figure of a young woman decked with flowers. He was embracing her; she, laughing with happiness.

Tranquillina felt her poor love doomed forever, amid the darkness and the fearful shadows. She tried to cry aloud, and her voice failed her. But she felt something lick her hand. Ginlay had recognized her, and she saw, amid the gloom, his eyes turned upon her.

Tranquillina embraced the white head of the friend that remained to her, and wept and wept; the dog felt the tears and the distressful sobs of the poor creature, and was motionless, as if he understood her.

Then he saw her disappear, down amid the shadows, like a mad woman.

When Michele heard that the corpse of Tranquillina had been taken out from the river Arno, a cloud passed across his brow, for he was just about to send her a packet of sugar plums. He thought of the many times that she had stopped to talk with him at the gate; then he shrugged his shoulders.

She had stopped, yes, often; but she did it naturally—by chance—passing that way!

And he sent the sugar plums to some one else.

But when his wife went to caress Ginlay, the animal suddenly turned his head and bit her.



## UNCLE TOM BARKER \*

Uncle Tom Barker was much of a man. He had been wild and reckless, and feared not God nor regarded man, but one day at a camp-meeting, while Bishop Gaston was shaking up the sinners and scorching them over the infernal pit, Tom got alarmed, and before the meeting was over he professed religion and became a zealous, outspoken convert, and declared his intention of going forth into the world and preaching the gospel. He was terribly in earnest, for he said he had lost a power of time and must make it up. Tom was a rough talker, but he was a good one, and knew right smart of "scripter," and a good many of the old-fashioned hymns by heart. The conference thought he was a pretty good fellow to send out into the border country among the settlers, and so Tom straddled his old flea-bitten gray, and in due time was circuit riding in North Mississippi.

In course of time Tom acquired notoriety, and from his strong language and stronger gestures, and his muscular eloquence, they called him old "Sledge Hammer," and after awhile, old "Sledge," for short. Away down in one corner of his territory there was a blacksmith shop and a wagon shop and a whiskey shop and a post-office at Bill Jones's crossroads; and Bill kept all of them, and was known far and wide as "Devil Bill Jones," so as to distinguish him from 'Squire Bill the magistrate. Devil Bill had sworn that no preacher should ever toot a horn or sing a hymn in the settlement, and if any of the cussed hypocrites ever dared to stop at the crossroads, he'd make him dance a hornpipe and sing a hymn, and whip him besides. And Bill Jones meant just what he said, for he had a mortal hate for the men of God. It was reasonably supposed that Bill could and would do what he said, for his trade at the anvil had made him strong, and everybody knew that he had as much brute courage as was necessary. And so Uncle Tom was advised to take roundance and never tackle the crossroads. He accepted this for a time, and left the people to the bad influence of Devil Bill; but it seemed to him he was not doing the Lord's will, and whenever he thought of the women and children living in darkness and growing up in infidelity, he would groan.

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\* "Bill Arp": Atlanta Constitution.

One night he prayed over it with great earnestness, and vowed to do the Lord's will if the Lord would give him light, and it seemed to him as he rose from his knees that there was no longer any doubt—he must go. Uncle Tom never dallied about anything when his mind was made up. He went right at it like killing snakes; and so next morning as a "nabor" passed on his way to Bill's shop, Uncle Tom said:

"My friend, will you please carry a message to Bill Jones for me? Do you tell him that if the Lord is willin', I will be at the crossroads to preach next Saturday at eleven o'clock, and I am shore the Lord is willin'. Tell him to please "norate" it in the settlement about, and ax the women and children to come. Tell Bill Jones I will stay at his house, God willin', and I'm shore he's willin', and I'll preach Sunday, too, if things git along harmonious."

When Bill Jones got the message he was amazed, astounded, and his indignation knew no bounds. He raved and cursed at the "onsult," as he called it—the "onsulting message of 'old Sledge'"—and he swore that he would hunt him up, and whip him, for he knowed that he wouldn't dare to come to the crossroads.

But the "nabors" whispered it around that "old Sledge" would come, for he was never known to make an appointment and break it; and there was an old horse-thief who used to run with Murrel's gang, who said he used to know Tom Barker when he was a sinner and had seen him fight, and he was much of a man.

So it spread like wild fire that "old Sledge" was coming, and Devil Bill was "gwine" to whip him and make him dance and sing a "hime," and treat to a gallon of peach brandy besides.

Devil Bill had his enemies, of course, for he was a hard man, and one way or another had gobbled up all of the surplus of the "naborhood" and had given nothing in exchange but whiskey, and these enemies had long hoped for somebody to come and turn him down. They, too, circulated the astounding news, and, without committing themselves to either party, said that h—ll would break loose on Saturday at the crossroads, and that "Old Sledge" or the devil would have to go under.

On Friday the settlers began to drop into the crossroads

under pretense of business, but really to get the bottom facts of the rumors that were afloat.

Devil Bill knew full well what they came for, and he talked and cursed more furiously than usual, and swore that anybody who would come expecting to see "Old Sledge" tomorrow was an infernal fool, for he wasn't a-coming. He laid bare his strong arms and shook his long hair and said he wished the lying, deceiving hypocrite would come, for it had been nigh on to fourteen years since he had made a preacher dance.

Saturday morning by nine o'clock the settlers began to gather. They came on foot and on horseback, and in carts—men, women and children, and before eleven o'clock there were more people at the crossroads than had ever been there before. Bill Jones was mad at their credulity, but he had an eye to business, and kept behind his counter and sold more whiskey in an hour than he had sold in a month. As the appointed hour drew near the settlers began to look down the long, straight road that "Old Sledge" would come, if he came at all, and every man whose head came in sight just over the rise of the distant hill was closely scrutinized.

More than once they said, "Yonder he comes—that's him, shore." But no, it wasn't him.

Some half a dozen had old bull's-eye silver watches, and they compared time, and just at 10:55 o'clock the old horse thief exclaimed:

"I see Tom Barker a risin' of the hill. I hain't seed him for eleven years, but, gintlemen, that ar' him, or I'm a liar." And it was him.

As he got nearer and nearer, a voice seemed to be coming with him, and some said, "He's talkin' to himself," another said, "He's a talkin' to God Almighty," and another said, "I'll be durned if he ain't a praying," but very soon it was decided that he was "singin' of a hime."

Bill Jones was soon advised of all this, and, coming up to the front, said: "Darned if he ain't singing before I axed him, but I'll make him sing another tune till he is tired. I'll pay him for his onsulting message. I'm not a-gwine to kill him, boys. I'll leave life in his rotton old carcass, but that's all. If any of you'n want to hear Old Sledge preach, you'll have to go ten miles from the roads to do it."

Slowly and solemnly the preacher came. As he drew near

he narrowed down his tune and looked kindly upon the crowd. He was a massive man in frame, and had a heavy suit of bark brown hair; but his face was clean shaved, and showed a nose and lips and chin of firmness and great determination.

"Look at him, boys, and mind your eye," said the horse thief.

"Where will I find my friend, Bill Jones?" inquired "Old Sledge."

All round they pointed him to the man.

Riding up close he said: "My friend and brother, the good Lord has sent me to you, and I ask your hospitality for myself and my beast," and he slowly dismounted and faced his foe as though expecting a kind reply.

The crisis had come and Bill Jones met it.

"You infernal old hypocrite; you cussed old shaved-faced scoundrel; didn't you know that I had sworn an oath that I would make you sing and dance, and whip you besides if you ever dared to pizen these cross-roads with your shoe-tracks? Now sing, d—n you, sing, and dance as you sing," and he emphasized his command with a ringing slap with his open hand upon the parson's face.

"Old Sledge" recoiled with pain and surprise.

Recovering in a moment, he said:

"Well, Brother Jones, I did not expect so warm a welcome, but if this be your crossroads manners I suppose I must sing," and as Devil Bill gave him another slap on his other jaw he began with:

"My soul, be on thy guard."

And with his long arm suddenly and swiftly gave Devil Bill an open hander that nearly knocked him off his feet, while the parson continued to sing in a splendid tenor voice:

"Ten thousand foes arise."

Never was a lion more aroused to frenzy than was Bill Jones. With his powerful arm he made at Old Sledge as if to annihilate him with one blow, and many horrid oaths, but the parson fended off the stroke as easily as a practised boxer, and with his left hand dealt Bill a settler on his peepers as he continued to sing:

"Oh, watch, and fight, and pray,  
The battle ne'er give o'er."

But Jones was plucky to desperation, and the settlers were watching with bated breath. The crisis was at hand, and

he squared himself, and his clenched fists flew thick and fast upon the parson's frame, and for a while disturbed his equilibrium and his song. But he rallied quickly and began the offensive, as he sang:

"Ne'er think the victory won,  
Nor lay thine armor down—"

He backed his adversary squarely to the wall of his shop, and seized him by the throat, and mauled him as he sang:

Fight on, my soul, till death—"

Well, the long and the short of it was, that "Old Sledge" whipped him and humbled him to the ground and then lifted him up and helped to restore him, and begged a thousand pardons.

When Devil Bill had retired to his house and was being cared for by his wife, "Old Sledge" mounted a box in front of the grocery and preached righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come, to that people.

He closed his solemn discourse with a brief history of his own sinful life before his conversion and his humble work for the Lord ever since, and he besought his hearers to stop and think—"Stop, poor sinner, stop and think," he cried in alarming tones.

There were a few men and many women in that crowd whose eyes, long unused to the melting mood, dropped tears of repentance at the preacher's kind and tender exhortation. Bill Jones's wife, poor woman, had crept humbly into the outskirts of the crowd, for she had long treasured the memories of her childhood, when she, too, had gone with her good mother to hear preaching. In secret she had pined and lamented her husband's hatred for religion and for preachers. After she had washed the blood from his swollen face and dressed his wounds she asked him if she might go down and hear the preacher. For a minute he was silent and seemed to be dumb with amazement. He had never been whipped before and had suddenly lost confidence in himself and his infidelity.

"Go 'long, Sally," he answered, "if he can talk like he can fight and sing, maybe the Lord did send him. It's all mighty strange to me," and he groaned in anguish. His animosity seemed to have changed into an anxious wondering curiosity, and after Sally had gone, he left his bed and drew near to the window where he could hear.

"Old Sledge" made an earnest, soul-reaching prayer, and his pleading with the Lord for Bill Jones's salvation and that of his wife and children reached the window where Bill was sitting, and he heard it. His wife returned in tears and took a seat beside him, and sobbed her heart's distress, but said nothing. Bill bore it for awhile in thoughtful silence, and then putting his bruised and trembling hand in hers, said: "Sally, if the Lord sent 'Old Sledge' here, and maybe he did—I reckon you had better look after his horse." And sure enough "Old Sledge" stayed there that night and held family prayer, and the next day he preached from the piazza to a great multitude, and sang his favorite hymn:

"Am I a soldier of the Cross?"

And when he got to the third verse his untutored but musical voice seemed to be lifted a little higher as he sang:

"Sure I must fight if I would reign,  
Increase my courage, Lord."

Devil Bill was converted and became a changed man. He joined the church, and closed his grocery and helped to build a meeting house, and it was always said and believed that "Old Sledge" mauled the grace into his unbelieving soul, and it never would have got in any other way.

## ETCHINGS: MY ENEMY \*

I was dying. A great awe stilled all emotions, save jealousy. At the side of the bed knelt my wife, and at the foot stood the man I hated. I fixed my eyes upon him as if I would read his very soul. He would marry my wife. How I hated him. As a physician had he given me the utmost benefit of his skill? I grew weaker. I was conscious that my enemy placed his hand over my heart and I tried to gather strength to throw him off—then came a blank.

When I awoke I was in a gray world. A low sky of gray clouds, a land of huge gray stones, and at my feet a sullen gray sea. At first I thought I must be dreaming and would awake to the familiar bedroom, with its dim night-lamp and odor of drugs. Then I remembered. I had died. This dreary place must be some new world. Was it inhabited? I arose to my feet. What I had taken for huge masses of gray rock I perceived to be numbers of strange beings with curious ape-like faces and their beady eyes filled me with terror.

"The name of this place?" I asked of the nearest creature.

The question caused a strange pantomime among them. The regard of their fishy eyes became more than I could bear. I fled in terror. Over the rocky ground I stumbled, till I saw a human being standing before me—it was my enemy.

"You dead, too!" I gasped.

"I left soon after we closed your eyes," he answered.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"This star is one of the constellation, Berenice's Hair," he replied. "I met the spirit of a man who had passed a century here and he told me. He left because I came. Only two are ever placed here at a time with these creatures. You died hating me, and I hated you in return. We are here to live a century together, to learn the lesson of brotherly love."

Again we gazed silently in each other's eyes.

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"Back from the jaws of death!" My wife exclaimed.

"Back from the jaws of evil passions," I tearfully replied, as I looked into her true and loving eyes.

My enemy had been accidentally killed, they told me, just two hours after they thought Death touched me.

## THE NIHILIST \*

In 187—, some time before the tragic death of the last czar, one of the men of most consideration in the empire was Prince Michael, whose illustrious family name it is unsuitable to designate here.

In a journey which he had made in France, a little while after the war, he had met at one of the receptions of the Princess Lise, the superb daughter of General de Contremont whom the Parisian world, arising from its ashes, already knew under the name of the "Belle Madelaine," and who was as poor as she was beautiful.

Michael was taken, despite his forty years and his solemn intentions of celibacy, against which for fifteen years all the young girls and all the widows of the Russian aristocracy had dashed themselves like bouquets of roses or lilies against the sombre sheathing of a gunboat.

"Mother," said Madelaine one evening, to the widow of the hero of Gravelotte, "would you be content if I were to become a princess?"

"Not altogether, for I have made you beautiful enough to be a queen."

Indeed, I do not remember to have met, in so perfect a combination, any type of human beauty. I see her again, the adorable one! on a certain evening, at the opera, some weeks after her marriage. There were, I will wager, in the orchestra chairs, fifty spectators who were or had been more or less in love with her, from simple admiration to desperate passion. You can judge how those men listened to the music. *Mireille* might have been played in the place of *Les Huguenots*, and not a single one of them would have dreamed of noticing it.

That was, and probably will be, the most memorable evening of Madelaine's youth. She felt herself avenged before the eyes of a sex that only inspired her, then, with rancor, for among these men who would have impoverished themselves to be loved by her for an hour, there was not one who had not found her too poor, before, to make her the companion of his life.

Alone in the great opera-box, with her husband, proud,

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\* French of Leon de Linseau : E. C. : For Short Stories.



hardly smiling in appearance, but inwardly vibrating from head to foot with the excitement of triumph, she reflected admiration as her diamonds sent back the light. She was a living superlative, for she could tell herself:

"I see here twenty-five women who are beautiful; but it is I who am the most beautiful."

That evening, an American woman many times millionaire, but not at all pretty, made in her opera-box this avowal:

"I do not wish to resemble the Princess Michael, for that would be asking too much. But only to have her teeth, I would give my house in the Champs Elysées and everything in it, even my jewel-box. With teeth like those, one has no need to be pretty. One smiles or yawns, according to circumstances—and the world is at her feet!"

"That is to say at the feet of the teeth," said a diplomat. "But I'm afraid that the princess is destined to yawn more than to smile. His Excellency of a husband has not an amusing or comfortable look. More than once in her life, the beautiful Madelaine will regret Paris."

No, in truth, the prince was not comfortable, even at the time of his marriage. But some years later, he was less so, the princess was there to testify.

He owed it to the coquetry of his wife that he had become jealous as a tiger, and to the favor of the czar that he had become Minister of Police. Confess that these two qualities united are not at all calculated to make a man amiable.

However, he had found means to utilize his public functions in the service of his private jealousy. It is thus that here in France the small dignitaries employ a cuirassier armed to the teeth—and even higher—to solicit a couple of circus tickets.

It was not cuirassiers that Prince Michael employed, although he had quantities of them at his disposition. He had found it more simple to choose, among the best subjects of his suite, the coachman who drove the carriage of his wife and the concierge who kept the door of his house. Then, as complementary, he had his *secret service*. I don't do you the injustice of supposing you ignorant of what that is, although of course it does not exist in France. Or else what would be the use of living in a republic?

At the beginning the unlucky minister had read by dozens, declarations of love addressed to his wife, in all keys and all

measures—and sometimes without measure. Then the movement had slackened, not that the princess became less charming, but people began to distrust. Those who had confided to the post and the telegraphs of his majesty their hopes or their complaints had almost always seen bad luck attach itself to their steps under the most unexpected and divers forms. The question was, as one of these victims said, whether the princess had the evil eye or whether the prince had too good eyes.

Of course, the replies went to the secret service, as well as the original letters, and his excellency was able to convince himself that he was the husband of a furious coquette, but nothing more than that; from which he experienced a relative satisfaction. It is a relief for one who hears the cry of Fire! in his house to be able to assure himself that everything is limited to an ill-swept chimney.' As for playing chimney-sweep himself, this poor prince had not the time, for the life of the czar gave him as much care with the nihilists, as the virtue of the princess with her adorers.

So judge of his frightful surprise, when he read one day the following letter, of which he recognized only too well the handwriting, although it was signed merely by a simple initial:

“It appears that the emperor will go to Warsaw sooner than was supposed. Keep yourself then in readiness to set out on brief notice, for who knows when we shall find again such an opportunity? I have not left you in ignorance of the difficulties of the undertaking. Arrange them so as to succeed the first time, without bungling. You will present yourself to me as a friend of the family travelling for pleasure in Russia. Go to see my mother before leaving. She will give you some errand, whatever, for me; and this will be your introduction in case of need.”

The unhappy prince was half beside himself when he finished this horrible reading. So, this conspiracy that he fought against night and day with iron, prison and exile; this monstrous, pitiless war, of a whole army of monsters against one man—he found it at his fireside! It was his own wife, his beautiful Madelaine, who was saying to the assassin: “The hour is at hand, be ready!”

What use to struggle any more? What fatality armed against this unfortunate sovereign the foreign woman herself?

This woman had everything; youth, beauty, luxury, admiration. She a nihilist! What then did she lack? What rancor impelled her to crime, her too, at the risk of the straw pallet of the dungeon that would bruise that charming body, the hempen rope that would break that ivory neck, the snow of Siberia that would freeze the little feet as white as itself?

"Ah!" thought the unfortunate man. "I have not known how to make her happy. I have shown myself too jealous. She hates me, and her hate has found this refinement, sublimated to a force of inconceivable horror!"

What must be done, meanwhile? He thought of killing his wife and then himself, leaving the public to imagine some story of love and detection, for this faithful subject liked this sort of dishonor better than the other. Then there came to him the desire to go to throw himself at the feet of the emperor and tell him all, after which he would disappear forever with the guilty woman.

The sentiment of duty withheld him. He had the clue of the plot; he must discover its whole network, and for that, it sufficed to let the letter go on its way. The assassin would deliver up himself. Already the minister had the name of this man; Nicholson, some Englishman or American, perhaps, a dynamite expert, or else merely a Russian student having assumed a false name.

The letter went, and that evening the prince and the princess were at the opera, in their box; he pale, trembling with fever, aged by fifteen years; she more fascinating and more surrounded than ever.

"You are ill, Michael!" said Madelaine, smiling at her husband in the carriage which was taking them home.

"By what do you notice that?" he said with an air strangely sombre.

"By what? You haven't been jealous this evening."

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At the end of a week, the Minister of Police said to his wife, without appearing to attach to it any importance:

"It is Thursday that the czar leaves Petersburg."

"Really!" she cried, scarcely disturbed by what she was about to learn. "The newspapers gave another date."

He answered, purposely deceiving the accomplice of Nicholson, for he had his plan:

"Yes, it is wished to ferret out those who might have evil designs."

Then he spoke of something else, admiring within himself the strength of mind of that unworthy creature.

That same day he understood that his ruse had succeeded when they communicated to him, from the telegraph office, this dispatch addressed by the princess, one guesses to whom.

"It is for Thursday. Be punctual."

Of course Thursday passed without the czar or his minister having quitted the capital.

Madelaine had become suddenly very uneasy at the announcement of this pretended change of plan.

The following day, in the afternoon, a person richly dressed, adorned with an enormous rosette, presented himself at the palace of Prince Michael.

"What does monsieur desire?" asked, bowing to the ground, the concierge lent by the fifth division of police.

"To pay my respects to the princess and give her a message from her mother. I am Doctor Nicholson.

"Very well," said the man, "monsieur is expected. Madame, the princess, is paying a visit to a friend and has given orders to take monsieur to her. In five minutes the carriage will be ready."

Nicholson had hardly had time to admire some tapestries in the waiting-room, for he was a connoisseur, when they made him enter a coupé, in which the concierge took a place beside him without asking leave to do so.

"Queer custom!" thought Nicholson. "He might very well have mounted on the box."

No need to say that a quarter hour later the self-styled doctor was in the best, that is to say the most solid prison of Petersburg, and that if he was expected there it was not by the princess.

In a sort of very disagreeable parlor, adorned with police agents, fully armed, a personage whom he did not know and who was the prince himself, interrogated him with an absence of regard to which poor Nicholson was unaccustomed.

"It is an infamy!" he cried, struggling. "I arrived from Paris this very morning. I have not spoken three words to any one whatever, and when I present myself at the house of the princess, they carry me away like a thief!"

"You know the princess?" the minister questioned coldly.

"I should say so! I almost saw her born. Here is a letter from her mother, the widow of a great general. Besides, I am an American citizen, and I protest . . ."

"Search this man carefully," interrupted the high functionary without seeming to hear.

They found nothing suspicious upon Nicholson, nothing but a dainty box, carefully wrapped. What if it were an infernal machine! It must be confessed, in this case, that the science of portability has made great progress since Fieschi.

An engineer of the school of torpedoes, attached to the ministry for similar occasions, undid the packet with the precautions counselled by science.

Most of the persons present were but little reassured, and expected some terrible explosion.

Nothing abnormal was produced. Only the engineer had a singular smile when he held out the open box to the prince who, hastened, moreover, to put it in his pocket after having glanced at it.

"Then," he asked Nicholson, "You are . . ."

"An American dentist, monsieur, and very much in haste. I wish to return to Paris as soon as possible. My work claims me."

Five minutes later Nicholson was again in the coupé, having, this time, as his companion the prince himself who overwhelmed him with apologies.

"But," said the husband of the beautiful Madelaine, "how is it that I have never perceived anything?"

"Your excellency," replied proudly the American, "if you had perceived anything, Nicholson's artificial teeth would no longer deserve their reputation."

"So the teeth of the princess . . ."

"False, prince. When she was very young Mlle. de Contremont had a fall from a horse which shattered her jaw. I executed at that time for her one of the best sets that ever went from my office. But everything wears out in time, and I was going to adjust a new set for her, during your absence."

The public has never known this adventure. It is merely noticed that the prince is less in love with her.

O human heart!

## ATHLETIC VENGEANCE \*

Smockton would hardly be called an English village. It was not much more than a hamlet, a poor and ugly one. A dozen or so of tumble-down cottages were irregularly planted on either side of a long, straggling high road which came, flat and dusty, from the country town five miles off and passed away blank and unlovely in the direction of London. At either end of the portion of the road that for a while had become a street stood a slightly more pretentious tenement, with a board over the door bearing the announcement that the owner was licensed to sell beer and spirits. The adult male members of the community, pretty equally divided as to numbers, congregated before the doors of these establishments every evening, in moody companionship.

The other buildings partaking of a public character were a smithy, a "general" shop and a wheelwright's back yard. Beyond the village, at a somewhat convenient distance to the rear, stretched a bald patchy open space, variously called "the green" or "the common." A few bare poles at one end, connected by a rope, supported, at odd times, freshly-washed linen, while two or three donkeys, temporarily exempted from hard labor, resented the suggestion that they were turned out to graze on this grassless green.

With these exceptions the ground was habitually deserted and lifeless. But twice a year a function, called "the fair" by the inhabitants of Smockton, swept away the clothes-lines, the poles and the donkeys, and filled the common with glitter and animation. Several gayly painted wagons, of the kind known as caravans, took possession of the common; a shooting gallery was established in a booth; rickety stalls for the sale of cheap drapery, boots and conglomerated sweets, were erected and a good-sized tent stretched its weather-beaten canvas over the most conspicuous plot of ground.

A large picture of crude design suspended over the entrance represented impossible gymnastic and acrobatic feats, wrestling, duels, and the attitudes of a fascinating female Samson, poisoning 100-pound weights with extended arms and jewelled fingers. A thin, rouged, white-wigged clown, whose lower limbs were cased in ordinary trousers, standing outside

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\* Ernest Mobray: London Budget.

on a barrel, announced in shrill tones, with intervals of drum-beating, that at the close of each of the three daily performances the celebrated athlete and fencing master, Mazagrano, owner of the show, who met in single combat all the crowned heads of Europe, would condescend to fight with sword, sabre, foils or sticks any gentleman in the audience willing to step into the ring and enter the lists with him.

It was the close of a sultry August day; the sun was sinking, and pierced with its level rays the haze, made of heat and dust, through which the wagons, the booths and the people loomed large and indistinct. The lifted canvas curtain of the athlete's tent showed a roughly constructed circle of boards and profiled on the black opening the swiftly moving figure of Lorenzo Mazagrano engaged in a single-stick combat with a tall, straight, neat-limbed soldier, who had thrown off his regimental jacket and accepted the proffered opportunity of measuring himself with the professional fencer for ninepenny stakes. The men were not badly matched.

The athlete was by far the most muscular and powerful of the two; but the private had superior skill and knowledge of his art. He wore an easy, good-humored smile, while his opponent fought with set teeth and a dark scowl, as if more bent on avenging some personal quarrel than displaying professional talent. The contest was the last on the programme. Most of the spectators, oppressed with the intense heat in the tent and allured by the prospect of refreshment outside, had deserted the ring and stood lazily near the entrance. Inside there remained only the two combatants, a boy (evidently a member of the company), the pale-faced clown, and a woman.

She was seated on a square deal chest in a corner of the tent, gathering tightly round her shoulders a threadbare waterproof cloak, which, however, did not conceal her person so closely as to prevent a pink sandal, the lower part of a flesh-colored stocking and the edge of a red skirt bound with tarnished gold from being visible. At her feet were three large black cubes with handles, on which were written respectively in large white figures, lbs. 100, lbs. 200, lbs. 500. She rested her elbows on her knees, dropped her chin in her hands, and kept her eyes fixed on the athlete and the soldier.

It would have been difficult to state accurately the age of the woman, or to decide whether she was pretty or not; animated, her expression might be pleasant enough; in its con-

centrated attention it was almost hard. Her complexion was brown to a dull red; her hair, plastered in festoons on her forehead, was braided at the back in broad oiled plaits confined by large brass hairpins. Her mouth was small, her lips thin; her eyes, which were large and round, had the half-vacant, half-melancholy look noticeable in the eyes of beasts of burden, which, while they stretch out their necks to the yoke with the placid indifference of long habit, carry in their patient, reproachful glance a silent protest against the hopelessness of their fate.

Any one who had watched the woman narrowly might have seen that at each feint or subtle stroke her pupils dilated and her breath came more quickly through her parted lips. Presently the invincible Mazagrano had to confess himself absolutely vanquished.

The fight was over. The soldier turned with a little gesture of triumph toward the woman and smilingly saluted her with a stick in military fashion.

She responded neither by look nor gesture.

The athlete, who had remained doggedly mute listening angrily to the applause of the men outside, who had thrust their heads into the tent, allowed them to disperse once more; then striding toward the private, who had resumed his jacket, he placed his coarse hand on his shoulder and said savagely:

"Not so soon, my fine fellow. Let us play quits. Work it out with your fists. We'll wrestle, if you please."

The soldier looked surprised. The woman had started to her feet. The cloak falling to the ground revealed the garishness of her circus dress and her bare outstretched arms.

"Don't fight him," she almost shrieked in a voice of terrified entreaty. "He is in one of his tantrums; he'll hurt you."

Mazagrano turned on her furiously. "So," he said with an ugly sneer, "you're afraid I'll spoil his beauty, missus." Then facing the private again he added brutally, "Are you a man or a coward?"

The soldier had become quite pale. He was brave, but not over strong, and he knew it. However, he began slowly to unbutton his coat again.

"Don't fight with him! Don't fight!" repeated the woman mechanically and almost inaudibly, as she sank down helpless on the wooden box.



Mazagrano crossed his arms over his chest and stood motionless, while his opponent attired himself in the wrestler's scanty apparel that had been flung at his feet. The athlete's eyes were bloodshot, his upper lip was lifted in a smile of bestial ferocity, and occasionally he shot a cruel glance at the woman, who gazed before her with widened, terror-stricken eyes. The two men faced each other and closed. Not for long. Almost at once the soldier was thrown, both his shoulders touching the ground.

Before he could even attempt to rise Mazagrano placed one knee on his chest, and, seizing his head with his two huge hands, was slowly twisting it round. A stifled groan of agony broke from the victim, echoed by a piercing scream of despair from the woman. Then the athlete arose, spurning with his foot the inanimate mass.

The soldier's spinal cord was broken.

The woman had fallen forward on her extended arms. As the crowd poured into the tent Mazagrano walked up to her side, and, with a fierce gesture, lifting her head, pointed to the corpse and laughed.

A few minutes later he was surrounded, pinioned, and handed over to the rural policeman. He allowed himself to be led away without protest, and was immediately hurried off by the jailer to the county town, followed by an exulting group of boys, and escorted by two men, who volunteered their services as amateur minions of the law.

There was no third performance in the booth that night. As the darkness fell the guttering candles of the stalls were lighted; the shooting gallery profited by the collapse of the rival entertainment, and was crowded; the sale of liquor was unusually brisk; the stock of the itinerant venders disappeared rapidly, and as it was the last day of the fair the frolic was loud and the horseplay boisterous.

In the shadow of the dark and empty tent, half shrouded by the idly flapping canvas of the entrance, crouched a solitary figure, unheeding the laughter and shouts, the songs and the noise around her. It was the woman who had juggled with the weights. She had not changed her dress—its pitiful finery hung about her limbs still—only she had thrown a cotton apron over her bowed head that completely hid her face. Her whole frame was shaken by long, convulsive sobs.

Were her tears for the living or the dead?

## ETCHINGS: THE SMILE OF KAMA-DEVA

He, immovable, and with suspended breath, gazed at the Indian Queen with ardent fervor. She was ill at ease, while thus being contemplated in silence, like a goddess, and would fain have replaced her veil of such exquisite filminess that it floated past her face in spite of the absence of breeze.

Weighing upon her, this magnetic look invincibly attracted her own and, unable to resist, she yielded brusquely, raising her head defiantly. "Let me see," she thought, "if these steady eyes will droop before mine."

But in meeting the eager rays of those blue eyes, she was fascinated, pierced by a sharp arrow whose dart, as though dipped in poison, infused fire into her veins.

That which she read in the look riveted upon her, so subjugated her, that the minutes passed unconsciously to her. In spite of its trembling ecstasy it was the look of no slave; it had a dominating imperial power which, while irritating, attracted and charmed the queen. She felt that this man, while adoring, would know how to protect her, that supported on his heart she would be stronger, more of a queen, but that nevertheless she would have a master; and she struggled against the enchantment which this idea instilled, essaying to combat it, protecting herself, as with a rampart, with all the impossibilities which separated her from a barbarian.

But their looks revelled in the impossible, overcame all obstacles, and united in a delicious embrace.

The young French noble did not attempt to obtain a word from her. What could she have said?

Words, the mask of thought, would have perhaps denied what those eyes so passionately avowed.

With a suppliant gesture she repulsed him, and unable to break the chain of his look, she veiled her eyes with her hand.

Then he fled, crushing against his lips a flower which he had seized; while the queen, tottering, drew slowly backward seeking a support, till she reached the statue of the God of Love, upon which she stayed herself with drooping head.

And Kama-Deva holding aloft his flowered bow smiled serenely under his golden mitre.

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\* From "La Conquête du Paradis" by Judith Gautier. Translated for Short Stories by Mrs. William Sharp.

## A TASMANIA LOVE TALE \*

The gig was waiting upon the narrow gravel drive in front of the fuchsia-wreathed porch of Cowa Cottage. Perched upon the seat, holding the whip in two small, plump, ungloved hands, sat Trucaninny, Mr. Paton's youngest daughter, whose straw-colored, sun-steeped hair, and clear, sky-reflecting eyes, seemed to protest against the name of a black gin that some "clay-brained cleric" had bestowed upon her irresponsible little person at the baptismal font some eight or nine years ago. The scene of this outrage was Old St. David's Cathedral, Hobart—or, as it was then called, Hobart *Town*—chief city of the Arcadian island of Tasmania; and just at this moment, eight o'clock on a November morning, the said cathedral tower, round and ungainly, coated with a surface of dingy white plaster, reflected back the purest, brightest light in the world. From Trucaninny's perch—she had taken the driver's seat—she could see, not only the cathedral, but a considerable portion of the town, which took the form of a capital S as it followed the windings of the coast. Beyond the wharves, against which a few whalers and fishing-boats were lying idle, the middle distance was represented by the broad waters of the Derwent, radiantly blue, and glittering with silver sparkles; while the far-off background showed a long stretch of yellow sand, and the hazy, undulating outline of low-lying purple hills. Behind her the aspect was different. Tiers of hills rose one above the other in grand confusion, until they culminated in the towering height of Mount Wellington, keeping guard in majestic silence over the lonely little city that encircled its base. This portion of the view, however, was hidden from Trucaninny's gaze by the weather-board cottage in front of which the gig was standing—though I doubt whether in any case she would have turned her head to look at it; the faculty of enjoying a beautiful landscape being an acquisition of later years than she had attained since the perpetration of the afore-mentioned outrage of her christening. Conversely, as Herbert Spencer says, the young man who was holding the horse's head until such time as the owner of the gig should emerge from the fuchsia-wreathed porch, fastened his eyes upon the beautiful scene before him

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\* "Tasma" in "Coo-ee," a story of "Convict Days."

with more than an artist's appreciation in their gaze. He was dressed in the rough clothes of a working gardener, and so much of his head as could be seen beneath the old felt wide-awake that covered it, bore ominous evidence of having been recently shaved. I use the word ominous advisedly, for a shaven head in connection with a working suit had nothing priestly in its suggestion, and could bear, indeed, only one interpretation in the wicked old times in Tasmania. The young man keeping watch over the gig had clearly come into that fair scene for his country's good; and the explanation of the absence of a prison suit was doubtless due to the fact he was out on a ticket-of-leave. What the landscape had to say to him under these circumstances was not precisely clear. Perhaps all his soul was going out toward the white-sailed wool-ship tacking down the Bay on the first stage of a journey of most uncertain length; or possibly the wondrous beauty of the scene, contrasted with the unspeakable horror of the one he had left, brought the vague impression that it was merely some exquisite vision. That a place so appalling as his old prison should exist in the heart of all this peace and loveliness, seemed too strange an anomaly. Either that was a nightmare and this was real, or this was a fantastic dream and that was the revolting truth; but then which was which, and how had he, Richard Cole, late No. 213, come to be mixed up with either?

As though to give a practical answer to his melancholy question, the sharp tingle of a whip's lash made itself felt at this instant across his cheek. In aiming the cumbersome driving-whip at the persistent flies exploring the mare's back, Trucanniny had brought it down in a direction she had not intended it to take. For a moment she stood aghast. Richard's face was white with passion. He turned fiercely round; his flaming eyes seemed literally to send out sparks of anger. "Oh, please, I didn't mean it," cried the child penitently. "I wanted to hit the flies. I did indeed. I hope I didn't hurt you?"

The *amende honorable* brought about an immediate reaction. The change in the young man's face was wonderful to behold. As he smiled back full reassurance at the offender, it might be seen that his eyes could express the extremes of contrary feeling at the very shortest notice. For all answer, he raised his old felt wide-awake in a half-mocking though

entirely courtly fashion, like some nineteenth century Don César de Bazan, and made a graceful bow.

"Are *you* talking to the man, Truca?" cried a querulous voice at this moment from the porch, with a stress on the *you* that made the little girl lower her head, shame-faced. "What do you mean by disobeying orders, miss?"

The lady who swept out upon the veranda at the close of this tirade was in entire accord with her voice. "British matron" would have been the complete description of Miss Paton, if fate had not willed that she should be only a British spinster. The inflexibility that comes of finality of opinion regarding what is proper and what is the reverse—a rule of conduct that is of universal application for the true British matron—expressed itself in every line of her face and in every fold of her gown. That she was relentlessly respectable and unyielding might be read at the first glance; that she had been handsome, in the same hard way, a great many years before Truca was maltreated at the baptismal font, might also have been guessed at from present indications. But that she should be the "own sister" of the good-looking, military-mustached, debonair man (I use the word *debonair* here in the French sense) who now followed her out of the porch, was less easy to divine. The character of the features as well as of the expression spoke of two widely different temperaments. Indeed, save for a curious dent between the eyebrows, and a something in the nostrils that seemed to say he was not to be trifled with, Mr. Paton might have sat for the portrait of one of those jolly good fellows who reiterate so tunefully that they "won't go home till morning," and who are as good as their word afterward.

Yet "jolly good fellow" as he showed himself in card-rooms and among so-called boon companions, he could reveal himself in a very different light to the convicts who fell under his rule. Forming part of a system for the crushing down of the unhappy prisoners, in accordance with the principle of "Woe be to him through whom the offence cometh," he could return with a light heart to his breakfast or his dinner, after seeing some score of his fellow-men abjectly writhing under the lash, or pinioned in a ghastly row upon the hideous gallows. "Use," says Shakespeare, "can almost change the stamp of Nature." In Mr. Paton's case it had warped as well as changed it. Like the people who live in

the atmosphere of courts, and come to regard all outsiders as another and inferior race, he had come to look upon humanity as divisible into two classes—namely, those who were convicts, and those who were not. For the latter, he had still some ready drops of the milk of human kindness at his disposal. For the former, he had no more feeling than we have for snakes or sharks, as the typical and popular embodiments of evil.

Miss Paton had speedily adopted her brother's views in this respect. Summoned from England to keep house for him at the death of Trucaninny's mother, she showed an aptitude for introducing prison discipline into her domestic rule. From constant association with the severe *régime* that she was accustomed to see exercised upon the convicts, she had ended by regarding disobedience to orders, whether in children or in servants, as the unpardonable sin. One of her laws, as of the Medes and Persians, was that the young people in the Paton household should never exchange a word with the convict servants in their father's employ. It was hard to observe the letter of the law in the case of the indoor servants, above all for Truca, who was by nature a garrulous little girl. Being a truthful little girl as well, she was often obliged to confess to having had a talk with the latest importation from the jail—an avowal which signified, as she well knew, the immediate forfeiture of all her week's pocket-money.

On the present occasion her apologies to the gardener were the latest infringement of the rule. She looked timidly toward her aunt as the latter advanced austerely in the direction of the gig, but, to her relief, Miss Paton hardly seemed to notice her.

"I suppose you will bring the creature back with you, Wilfrid?" she said, half-questioningly, half-authoritatively, as her brother mounted into the gig and took the reins from Truca's chubby hands. "Last time we had a drunkard *and* a thief. The time before, a thief, and—and a—really I don't know which was worse. It is frightful to be reduced to such a choice of evils, but I would almost suggest your looking among the—you know—the—*in-fan-ti-cide* cases this time."

She mouthed the word in separate syllables at her brother, fearful of pronouncing it openly before Truca and the convict gardener.

Mr. Paton nodded. It was not the first time he had been sent upon the delicate mission of choosing a maid for his sister from the female prison, politely called the Factory, at the foot of Mount Wellington. For some reason it would be difficult to explain, his selections were generally rather more successful than hers. Besides which, it was a satisfaction to have some one upon whom to throw the responsibility of the inevitable catastrophe that terminated the career of every successive ticket-of-leave in turn.

The morning, as we have seen, was beautiful. The gig bowled smoothly over the macadamized length of Macquarrie Street. Truca was allowed to drive; and so deftly did her little fingers guide the mare, that her father lighted his cigar, and allowed himself to ruminate upon a thousand things that it would have been better perhaps to leave alone. In certain moods he was apt to deplore the fate that had landed—or stranded—him in this God-forsaken corner of the world. Talk of prisoners, indeed! What was he himself but a prisoner, since the day when he had madly passed sentence of transportation on himself and his family, because the pay of a Government clerk in England did not increase in the same ratio as the income-tax. As a matter of fact, he did not wear a canary-colored livery, and his prison was as near an approach, people said, to an earthly Paradise as could well be conceived. With its encircling chains of mountains, folded one around the other, it was like a mighty rose, tossed from the Creator's hand into the desolate Southern Ocean. Here to his right towered purple Mount Wellington, with rugged cliffs gleaming forth from a purple background. To his left the wide Derwent shone and sparkled in blue robe and silver spangles, like the Bay of Naples, he had been told. Well, he had never seen the Bay of Naples, but there were times when he would have given all the beauty here, and as much more to spare, for a strip of London pavement in front of his old club. Mr. Paton's world, indeed, was out of joint. Perhaps twelve years of unthinking acquiescence in the flogging and hanging of convicts had distorted his mental focus. As for the joys of home-life, he told himself that those which had fallen to his share brought him but cold comfort. His sister was a Puritan, and she was making his children hypocrites, with the exception, perhaps, of Truca. Another disagreeable subject of reflection was the one that his groom

Richard was about to leave him. In a month's time, Richard, like his royal namesake, would be himself again. For the past five years he had been only No. 213, expiating in that capacity a righteous blow aimed at a cowardly ruffian who had sworn to marry his sister—by fair means or by foul. The blow had been only too well aimed. Richard was convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to seven years' transportation beyond the seas. His sister, who had sought to screen him, was tried and condemned for perjury. Of the latter, nothing was known. Of the former, Mr. Paton only knew that he would be extremely loth to part with so good a servant. Silent as the Slave of the Lamp, exact as any machine, performing the least of his duties with the same intelligent scrupulousness, his very presence in the household was a safeguard and a reassurance. It was like his luck, Mr. Paton reflected in his present pessimistic mood, to have chanced upon such a fellow, just as by his d——d good conduct he had managed to obtain a curtailment of his sentence. If Richard had been justly dealt with, he would have had two good years left to devote to the service of his employer. As to keeping him after he was a free man, that was not to be hoped for. Besides which, Mr. Paton was not sure that he should feel at all at his ease in dealing with a free man. The slave-making instinct, which is always inherent in the human race, whatever civilization may have done to repress it, had become his sole rule of conduct in his relations with those who served him.

There was one means perhaps of keeping the young man in bondage, but it was a means that even Mr. Paton himself hesitated to employ. By an almost superhuman adherence to impossible rules, Richard had escaped hitherto the humiliation of the lash; but if a flogging could be laid to his charge, his time of probation would be of necessity prolonged, and he might continue to groom the mare and tend the garden for an indefinite space of time, with the ever intelligent thoroughness that distinguished him. A slip of paper in a sealed envelope, which the victim would carry himself to the nearest justice of the peace, would effect the desired object. The etiquette of the proceeding did not require that any explanation should be given.

Richard would be fastened to the triangles, and any subsequent revolt on his part could only involve him more deeply



than before. Mr. Paton had no wish to hurt him; but he was after all an invaluable servant, and perhaps he would be intelligent enough to understand that the disagreeable formality to which he was subjected was in reality only a striking mark of his master's esteem for him.

Truca's father had arrived thus far in his meditations when the gig pulled up before the Factory gate. It was a large bare building, with white unshaded walls, but the landscape which framed it gave it a magnificent setting. The little girl was allowed to accompany her father indoors, while a man in a gray prison suit, under the immediate surveillance of an armed warder, stood at the mare's head.

Mr. Paton's mission was a delicate one. To gently scan his brother man, and still gentler sister woman, did not apply to his treatment of convicts. He brought his sternest official expression to bear upon the aspirants who defiled past him at the matron's bidding, in their disfiguring prison livery. One or two, who thought they detected a likely-looking man behind the Government official, threw him equivocal glances as they went by. Of these he took no notice. His choice seemed to lie in the end between a sullen-looking elderly woman, whom the superintendent qualified as a "sour jade," and a half-imbecile girl, when his attention was suddenly attracted to a new arrival, who stood out in such marked contrast with the rest, that she looked like a dove in the midst of a flock of vultures.

"Who is that?" he asked the matron in a peremptory aside.

"That, sir"—the woman's lips assumed a tight expression as she spoke—"she's No. 27—Amelia Clare—she came out with the last batch."

"Call her up, will you?" was the short rejoinder, and the matron reluctantly obeyed.

In his early days Truca's father had been a great lover of Italian opera. There was hardly an air of Bellini's or Donizetti's that he did not know by heart. As No. 27 came slowly toward him, something in her manner of walking, coupled with the half-abstracted, half-fixed expression in her beautiful gray eyes, reminded him of Amina in the *Sonnambula*. So strong, indeed, was the impression, that he would hardly have been surprised to see No. 27 take off her unbecoming prison cap and jacket, and disclose two round white arms to match her face, or to hear her sing "*Ah! non giunge*" in soft

dreamy tones. He could have hummed or whistled a tune-ful second himself at a moment's notice, for the matter of that. However, save in the market scene in *Martha*, there is no precedent for warbling a duet with the young person you are about to engage as a domestic servant. Mr. Paton remembered this in time, and confined himself to what the French call *le stricte nécessaire*. He inquired of Amelia whether she could do fine sewing, and whether she could clear-starch. His sister had impressed these questions upon him, and he was pleased with himself for remembering them.

Amelia, or Amina (she was really very like Amina), did not reply at once. She had to bring her mind back from the far-away sphere to which it had wandered, or, in other words, to pull herself together first. When the reply did come, it was uttered in just the low, melodious tones one might have expected. She expressed her willingness to attempt whatever was required of her, but seemed very diffident as regarded her power of execution. "I have forgotten so many things," she concluded, with a profound sigh.

"*Sir*, you impertinent minx," corrected the matron.

Amelia did not seem to hear, and her new employer hastened to interpose.

"We will give you a trial," he said, in a curiously modified tone, "and I hope you won't give me any occasion to regret it."

The necessary formalities were hurried through. Mr. Paton disregarded the deferential disclaimers of the matron, but experienced, nevertheless, something of a shock when he saw Amelia divested of her prison garb. She had a thorough-bred air that discomfited him. Worse still, she was undeniably pretty. The scissors that had clipped her fair locks had left a number of short rings that clung like tendrils round her shapely little head. She wore a black stuff jacket of extreme simplicity and faultless cut, and a little black bonnet, that might have been worn by a Nursing Sister or a "*grande dame*" with equal appropriateness. Thus attired, her appearance was so effective, that Mr. Paton asked himself whether he was not doing an unpardonably rash thing in driving No. 27 down Macquarrie Street in his gig, and introducing her into his household afterward.

It was not Truca, for she had "driven and lived" that morning, whose *mauvais quart-d'heure* was now to come. It

was her father's turn to fall under its influence, as he sat, stern and rigid, on the driver's seat, with his little girl nestling up to him as close as she was able, and that strange, fair, mysterious presence on the other side, toward which he had the annoyance of seeing all the heads of the passers-by turn as he drove on toward home.

Arrived at Cowa Cottage, the young gardener ran forward to open the gate; and here an unexpected incident occurred. As Richard's eyes rested upon the new arrival, he uttered an exclamation that caused her to look round. Their eyes met, a flash of instant recognition was visible in both. Then, like the night that follows a sudden discharge of electricity, the gloom that was habitual to both faces settled down upon them once more. Richard shut the gate with his accustomed machine-like precision. Amelia looked at the intangible something in the clouds that had power to fix her gaze upon itself. Yet the emotion she had betrayed was not lost upon her employer. Who could say? As No. 213 and No. 27, these two might have crossed each other's paths before. That the convicts had wonderful and incomprehensible means of communicating with each other, was well known to Mr. Paton. That young men and young women have an equal facility for understanding each other, was also a fact he did not ignore. But which of these two explanations might account for the signs of mutual recognition and sympathy he had just witnessed? Curiously enough he felt as he pondered over the mystery later in the day, that he should prefer the former solution. An offensive and defensive alliance was well known to exist among the convicts, and he told himself that he could meet and deal with the difficulties arising from such a cause as he had met and dealt with them before. That was a matter which came within his province, but the taking into account of any sentimental kind of rubbish did *not* come within his province. For some unaccountable reason, the thought of having Richard flogged presented itself anew at this junction to his mind. He put it away, as he had done before, angered with himself for having harbored it. But it returned at intervals during the succeeding week, and was never stronger than one afternoon, when his little girl ran out to him as he sat smoking in the verandah, with an illustrated volume of *Grimm's Tales* in her hands.

"Oh, papa, look! I've found some one just like Amelia

in my book of Grimm. It's the picture of Snow-White. Only look, papa! Isn't it the very living image of Amelia?"

"Nonsense!" said her father; but he looked at the page nevertheless. Truca was right. The snow-maiden in the woodcut had the very eyes and mouth of Amelia Clare—frozen through some mysterious influence into beautiful, unyielding rigidity. Mr. Paton wished sometimes he had never brought the girl into his house. Not that there was any kind of fault to be found with her. Even his sister, who might have passed for "She-who-must-be-obeyed," if Rider Haggard's books had existed at that time, could not complain of want of docile obedience to orders on the part of the new maid. Nevertheless, her presence was oppressive to the master of the house. Two lines of Byron's haunted him constantly in connection with her—

"So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,  
We start—for life is wanting there."

If Richard worked like an automaton, then she worked like a spirit; and when she moved noiselessly about the room where he happened to be sitting, he could not help following her uneasily with his eyes.

The days wore on, succeeding each other and resembling each other, as the French proverb has it, with desperate monotony. Christmas, replete with roses and strawberries, had come and gone. Mr. Paton was alternately swayed by two demons, one of which whispered in his ear, "Richard Cole is in love with No. 27. The time for him to regain his freedom is at hand. The first use he will make of it will be to leave you, and the next to marry Amelia Clare. You will thus be deprived of everything at one blow. You will lose the best man-servant you have ever known, and your sister, the best maid. And more than this you will lose an interest in life that gives it a stimulating flavor it has not had for many a long year. Whatever may be the impulse that prompts you to wonder what that ice-bound face and form hide, it is an impulse that makes your heart beat and your blood course warmly through your veins. When this fair, uncanny presence is removed from your home, your life will become stagnant as it was before." To this demon Mr. Paton would reply energetically, "I won't give the fellow the chance of marrying No. 27. As soon as he has his freedom, I will give him the sack, and forbid him the premises. As

for Amelia, she is my prisoner, and I would send her back to jail to-morrow if I thought there were any nonsense up between her and him."

At this point demon No. 2 would intervene: "There is a better way of arranging matters. You have it in your power to degrade the fellow in his own eyes and in those of the girl he is after. There is more covert insolence in that impenetrable exterior of his than you have yet found out. Only give him proper provocation, and you will have ample justification for bringing him down. A good flogging would put everything upon its proper footing—you would keep your servant, and you would put a stop to the nonsense that is very probably going on. But don't lose too much time; for if you wait until the last moment, you will betray your hand. The fellow is useful to him, they will say of Richard, but it is rather rough upon him to be made aware of it in such a way as that."

One evening in January, Mr. Paton was supposed to be at his club. In reality he was seated upon a bench in a bushy part of the garden, known as the shrubbery—in parley with the demons. The night had come down upon him almost without his being aware of it—a night heavy with heat and blackness, and noisy with the racking and whirring of the locusts entombed in the dry soil. All at once he heard a slight rustling in the branches behind him. There was a light pressure of hands on his shoulders, and a face that felt like velvet to the touch was laid against his cheeks. Two firm, warm feminine lips pressed themselves upon his, and a voice that he recognized as Amelia's said in caressing tones, "Dearest Dick, have I kept you waiting?"

Had it been proposed to our hero some time ago that he should change places with No. 213, he would have declared that he would rather die first. But at this instance the convict's identity seemed so preferable to his own, that he hardly ventured to breathe lest he should betray the fact that he was only his own forlorn self. His silence disconcerted the intruder.

"Why don't you answer, Dick?" she asked impatiently.

"Answer? What am I to say?" responded her master. "I am not in the secret."

Amelia did not give him time to say more. With a cry of terror she turned and fled, disappearing as swiftly and mys-

teriously as she had come. The words "Dearest Dick" continued to ring in Mr. Paton's ears long after she had gone; and the more persistently the refrain was repeated, the more he felt tempted to give Richard a taste of his quality. He had tried to provoke him to some act of overt insolence in vain. He had worried and harried and insulted him all he could. The convict's constancy had never once deserted him. That his employer should have no pretext whereby he might have him degraded and imprisoned, he had acted upon the scriptural precept of turning his left cheek when he was smitten on the right. There were times when his master felt something of a persecutor's impotent rage against him. But now at least he felt he had entire justification for making an example of him. He would teach the fellow to play Romeo and Juliet with a fellow-convict behind his back. So thoroughly did the demon indoctrinate Mr. Paton with these ideas, that he felt next morning as though he were doing the most righteous action in the world, when he called Richard to him after breakfast, and said in a tone which he tried to render as careless as of custom, "Here, you! just take this note over to Mr. Merton with my compliments, and *wait for the answer.*"

There was nothing in this command to cause the person who received it to grow suddenly livid. Richard had received such an order at least a score of times before, and had carried messages to and fro between his master and the justice of the peace with no more emotion than the occasion was worth. But on this particular morning, as he took the fatal note into his hands, he turned deadly pale. Instead of retreating with it in his customary automatic fashion, he fixed his eyes upon his employer's face, and something in their expression actually constrained Mr. Paton to lower his own.

"May I speak a word with you, sir?" he said, in low, uncertain tones.

It was the first time such a thing had happened, and it seemed to Richard's master that the best way of meeting it would be to "damn" the man and send him about his business.

But Richard did not go. He stood for an instant with his head thrown back, and the desperate look of an animal at bay in his eyes. At this critical moment a woman's form suddenly interposed itself between Mr. Paton and his victim.

Amelia was there, looking like Amina after she had awoken from her trance. She came close to her master—she had never addressed him before—and raised her liquid eyes to his.

“You will not be hard on—my brother, sir, for the mistake I made last night?”

“Who said I was going to be hard on him?” retorted Mr. Paton, too much taken aback to find any more dignified form of rejoinder. “And if he is your brother, why do you wait until it is dark to indulge in your family effusions?”

The question was accompanied by a through and through look, before which Amelia did not quail.

“Have I your permission to speak to him in the day-time, sir?” she said submissively.

“I will institute an inquiry,” interrupted her master. “Here, go about your business,” he added, turning to Richard; “fetch out the mare, and hand me back that note. I’ll ride over with it myself.”

Three weeks later Richard Cole was a free man, and within four months from the date upon which Mr. Paton had driven Amelia Clare down Macquarrie Street in his gig, she came to take respectful leave of him, dressed in the identical close-fitting jacket and demure little bonnet he remembered. Thenceforth she was nobody’s bondswoman. He had a small heap of coin in readiness to hand over to her, with the payment of which, and a few gratuitous words of counsel on his part, the leave-taking would have been definitely and decorously accomplished. To tell her that he was more loth than ever to part with her, did not enter into the official programme. She was her own mistress now, as much or more so than the Queen of England herself, and it was hardly to be wondered at if the first use she made of her freedom was to shake the dust of Cowa Cottage off her feet. Still, if she had only known—if she had only known. It seemed too hard to let her go with the certainty that she never did or could know. Was it not for her sake that he had been swayed by all the conflicting impulses that had made him a changed man of late? For her that he had so narrowly escaped being a criminal awhile ago, and for her that he was appearing in the novel rôle of a reformer of the convict system now? He never doubted that she would have understood him if she *had* known. But to explain was out of the ques-

tion. He must avow either all or nothing, and the all meant more than he dared to admit even to himself.

This was the reason why Amelia Clare departed sphinx-like as she had come. A fortnight after she had gone, as Mr. Paton was gloomily smoking by his library fire in the early dark of a wintry August evening, a letter bearing the N. S. Wales postmark was handed to him. The handwriting, very small and fine, had something familiar in its aspect. He broke open the seal—letters were still habitually sealed in those days—and read as follows:

“SIR:—I am prompted to make you a confession—why, I cannot say, for I shall probably never cross your path again. I was married last week to Richard Cole, who was not my brother, as I led you to suppose, but my affianced husband, in whose behalf I would willingly suffer again to be unjustly condemned and transported. I have the warrant of Scripture for having assumed, like Sarah, the *rôle* of sister in preference to that of wife; besides which, it is hard to divest myself of an instinctive belief that the deceit was useful to Richard on one occasion. I trust you will pardon me.—  
Yours respectfully, AMELIA COLE.”

The kindly phase Mr. Paton had passed through with regard to his convict victims came to an abrupt termination. The reaction was terrible. His name is inscribed among those “who foremost shall be damn’d to Fame” in Tasmania.



## BOUM-BOUM \*

The child was lying stretched out in his little, white bed, and his eyes, grown large through fever, looked straight before him, always with the strange fixity of the sick who already perceive what the living do not see.

The mother at the foot of the bed, torn by suffering and wringing her hands to keep herself from crying, anxiously followed the progress of the disease on the poor, emaciated face of the little being. The father, an honest workman, kept back the tears which burned his eyelids.

The day broke clear and mild, a beautiful morning in June, and lighted up the narrow room in the street of the Abessess where little François, the child of Jacques and Madeleine Legrand, lay dying. He was seven years old and was very fair, very rosy, and so lively. Not three weeks ago he was gay as a sparrow; but a fever had seized him and they had brought him home one evening from the public school with his head heavy and his hands very hot. From that time he had been here in this bed and sometimes in his delirium when he looked at his little well-blackened shoes, which his mother had carefully placed in a corner on a board, he said:

“You can throw them away now, little François’ shoes! Little François will not put them on any more! Little François will not go to school any more . . . never, never!”

Then the father cried out and said: “Wilt thou be still!” And the mother, very pale, buried her blond head in his pillow so that little François could not hear her weep.

This night the child had not been delirious; but for the two days past the doctor had been uneasy over an odd sort of prostration which resembled abandon, it was as if at seven years the sick one already felt the weariness of life. He was tired, silent, sad, and tossed his little head about on the bolster. He had no longer a smile on his poor, thin lips, and with haggard eyes he sought, seeing they knew not what, something there beyond, very far off . . .

In Heaven! Perhaps! thought Madeleine, trembling.

When they wished him to take some medicine, some syrup, or a little soup, he refused. He refused everything.

“Dost thou wish anything, François?”

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\* French of Jules Claretie: Mary Stuart Symonds: For Short Stories.

"No, I wish nothing!"

"We must draw him out of this," the doctor said. "This torpor frightens me! . . . you are the father and the mother, you know your child well. . . . Seek for something to re-animate this little body, recall to earth this spirit which runs after the clouds!" . . .

Then he went away.

"Seek!"

Yes, without doubt they knew him well, their François, these worthy people! They knew how it amused him, the little one, to plunder the hedges on Sunday and to come back to Paris on his father's shoulders laden with hawthorne. . . . Jacques Legrand had bought some images, some gilded soldiers, and some Chinese shadows for François; he cut them out, put them on the child's bed and made them dance before the bewildered eyes of the little one, and with a desire to weep himself he tried to make him laugh.

"Dost thou see, it is the broken bridge . . . Tire tire tire! . . . And that is a general! . . . Thou rememberest we saw one, a general, once, in the Bois de Boulogne? . . . If thou takest thy medicine well I will buy thee a real one with a cloth tunic and gold epaulettes. . . . Dost thou wish for him, the general, say?" . . .

"No," replied the child, with the dry voice which fever gives.

"Dost thou wish a pistol, some marbles—a cross-bow?"

"No," repeated the little voice, clearly and almost cruelly.

And to all that they said to him, to all the jumping-jacks, to all the balloons that they promised him, the little voice—while the parents looked at each other in despair—responded:

"No" . . . "No." . . . "No!"

"But what dost thou wish, my François?" asked the mother. "Let us see, there is certainly something thou wouldst like to have. . . . Tell it, tell it to me! to me! . . . thy mother!" And she laid her cheek on the pillow of the sick boy and whispered this softly in his ear as if it was a secret. Then the child with an odd accent, straightening himself up in his bed and stretching out his hand eagerly toward some invisible thing, replied suddenly in an ardent tone, at the same time supplicating and imperative:

"I want Boum-Boum!"

Boum-Boum!

Poor Madeleine threw a frightened look toward her husband. What did the little one say? Was it the delirium, the frightful delirium, which had come back again?

Boum-Boum!

She did not know what that meant and she was afraid of these singular words which the child repeated with a sickly persistence as if, not having dared until now to formulate his dream, he grasped the present time with invincible obstinacy:

"Yes, Boum-Boum! Boum-Boum! I want Boum-Boum!"

The mother had seized Jacques' hand and spoke very low, as if demented.

"What does that mean, Jacques? He is lost!"

But the father had on his rough, workingman's face a smile almost happy, but astonished too, the smile of a condemned man who foresees a possibility of liberty.

Boum-Boum! He remembered well the morning of Easter Monday when he had taken François to the circus. He had still in his ears the child's outbursts of joy, the happy laugh of the amused boy, when the clown, the beautiful clown all spangled with gold and with a great gilded butterfly sparkling, many-colored, on the back of his black costume, skipped across the track, gave the trip to a rider or held himself motionless and stiff on the sand, his head down and his feet in the air. Or again he tossed up to the chandelier some soft, felt hats which he caught adroitly on his head, where they formed, one by one, a pyramid; and at each jest, like a refrain brightening up his intelligent and droll face, he uttered the same cry, repeated the same word, accompanied now and then by a burst from the orchestra: Boum-Boum!

Boum-Boum! and each time that it rang out, Boum-Boum, the audience burst out into hurrahs and the little one joined in with his hearty, little laugh. Boum-Boum! It was this Boum-Boum, it was the clown of the circus, it was this favorite of a large part of the city that little François wished to see and to have and whom he could not have and could not see since he was lying here without strength in his white bed.

In the evening Jacques Legrand brought the child a jointed clown, all stitched with spangles, which he had bought in a passage-way and which was very expensive. It was the price of four of his working days! But he would have given twenty, thirty, he would have given the price of a year's labor to bring back a smile to the pale lips of the sick child.

The child looked at the plaything a moment as it glistened on the white cover of the bed, then said, sadly:

“It is not Boum-Boum! . . . I want to see Boum-Boum!”

Ah! if Jacques could have wrapped him up in his blankets, could have carried him to the circus, could have shown him the clown dancing under the lighted chandelier and have said to him, look! He did better, Jacques, he went to the circus, demanded the address of the clown, and timidly, his legs shaking with fear, he climbed, one by one, the steps which led to the apartment of the artist, at Montmartre. It was very bold this that Jacques was going to do! But after all the comedians go to sing and recite their monologues in drawing-rooms, at the houses of the great lords. Perhaps the clown—oh! if he only would—would consent to come and say good day to François. No matter, how would they receive him, Jacques Legrand, here at Boum-Boum’s house?

He was no longer Boum-Boum! He was Monsieur Moreno and, in the artistic dwelling, the books, the engravings, the elegance was like a choice decoration around the charming man who received Jacques in his office like that of a doctor.

Jacques looked but did not recognize the clown and turned and twisted his felt hat between his fingers. The other waited. Then the father excused himself. “It was astonishing what he came there to ask, it could not be . . . pardon, excuse. . . . But in short, it was concerning the little one. . . . A nice little one, monsieur. And so intelligent! Always the first at school, except in arithmetic which he did not understand. . . . A dreamer, this little one, do you see! Yes a dreamer. And the proof . . . wait . . . the proof . . .”

Jacques now hesitated, stammered; but he gathered up his courage and said brusquely:

“The proof is that he wishes to see you, that he thinks only of you and that you are there before him like a star which he would like to have and that he looks . . .”

When he had finished the father was deadly pale and he had great drops on his forehead. He dared not look at the clown who remained with his eyes fixed on the workman. And what was he going to say, this Boum-Boum? Was he going to dismiss him, take him for a fool and put him out the door?

“You live?” asked Boum-Boum.

“Oh! very near! Street of the Abessess!”

"Come!" said the other. "Your boy wants to see Boum-Boum? Ah well, he is going to see Boum-Boum."

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When the door opened and showed the clown, Jacques Legrand cried out joyfully to his son:

"François, be happy, child! See, here he is, Boum-Boum!"

A look of great joy came over the child's face. He raised himself on his mother's arm and turned his head toward the two men who approached, questioning, for a moment, who it was by the side of his father; this gentleman in an overcoat, whose good, pleasant face he did not know. When they said to him: "It is Boum-Boum!" he slowly fell back on the pillow and remained there, his eyes fixed, his beautiful large, blue eyes which looked beyond the walls of the little room and were always seeking the spangles and the butterfly of Boum-Boum, like a lover who pursues his dream . . .

"No," replied the child with a voice which was no longer dry, but full of despair, "no, it is not Boum-Boum."

The clown, standing near the little bed, threw upon the child an earnest look, very grave but of an inexpressible sweetness.

He shook his head, looked at the anxious father, the grief-stricken mother, and said, smiling, "He is right, this is not Boum-Boum!" and then he went out.

"I cannot see him, I will never see Boum-Boum any more!" repeated the child whose little voice spoke to the angels. "Boum-Boum is perhaps there, there, where little François will soon go."

And, suddenly—it was only a half hour since the clown had disappeared—the door opened quickly and in his black, spangled clothes, his yellow cap on his head, the gilded butterfly on his breast and on his back, with a smile as big as the mouth of a money-box and a powdered face, Boum-Boum, the true Boum-Boum, the Boum-Boum of the circus, the Boum-Boum of the popular neighborhood, the Boum-Boum of little François—Boum-Boum appeared.

Lying on his little white bed the child clapped his thin, little hands, laughing, crying, happy, saved, with a joy of life in his eyes, and cried "bravo" with his seven-year gayety which all at once kindled up like a match:

"Boum-Boum! It is he, it is he, this time! Here is Boum-Boum! Long live Boum-Boum! Good-day, Boum-Boum."

And when the doctor came back, he found, seated by little François' bed-side, a clown with a pale face who made the little one laugh again and again, and who said to the child while he was stirring a piece of sugar into a cup of medicine:

"Thou knowest, if thou dost not drink, little François, Boum-Boum will not come back any more."

So the child drank.

"Is it not good?"

"Very good! . . . thanks, Boum-Boum!"

"Doctor," said the clown to the doctor, "do not be jealous. . . . It seems to me that my grimaces will do him as much good as your prescriptions!"

The father and the mother wept, but this time from joy.

Until little François was on his feet again a carriage stopped every day before the dwelling of a workman in the street of the Abessess, at Montmartre, and a man got out with a gay powdered face, enveloped in an overcoat with the collar turned back and underneath it one could see a clown's costume.

"What do I owe you, monsieur," said Jacques, at last, to the master-clown when the child took his first walk, "for now I owe you something!"

The clown stretched out his two, soft, Herculean hands to the parents.

"A shake of the hand!" said he. . . .

Then placing two great kisses on the once-more rosy cheeks of the child:

"And" (laughing) "permission to put on my visiting-card:

BOUM-BOUM

*Acrobatic Doctor and Physician in ordinary to little François!*"

## ETCHINGS: WHITE WINE \*

A gentle breeze like the air swayed by a fan in the invisible hand of night sent the white boat forward and athwart the silvery wake of the moon.

The hour on the tiny inland lake which nevertheless seemed without shores—a part of the sky, its continuation as well as its reflection—had the quiet of eternity. It was broken only by the breath of the sail like the sigh of faithful sorrow and by the laughter of the tiny wake-waves that leaped up as if to dry themselves in the moon.

Echo had long ago fled with the songs of the boat party. Now they sat silent. It was the hour of hand pressures, of fathoming glances, and the youth saw the maiden whom chance had placed beside him in rosy colors which were not friendships. Love sat enthroned in propinquity.

Forward of the mast sat two, and when the sail shifted they bent toward each other, their hands met, their locks caressed. Although no ear in the boat could have heard what they said, yet they talked little; and less and less they spoke as the boat sailed on.

They were friends. To-day he had rowed her in a small boat to seek for water-lilies. But they had laughed and jested carelessly and freely.

Now they murmured in single words.

He covered her white fingers with his palm.

He looked at her and her eyes held him.

The sail hung a curtain over them.

Drunk with the moon's white wine they kissed.

Suddenly the sail careened. A cold beam like a lance cut them asunder. Two voices soared and sang "Santa Lucia."

He listened to the clear soprano voice and smiled.

She drew back her tears.

Now the boat touched shore. While he gave his hand to the tall brune girl who had sung, she disembarked, leaning on the arm of her affianced lover—the tenor.

A month later there were marriage bells in two cities.

The two who had kissed in the shadow of the sail were wed, but not to each other.

And both forgot—or did one remember?

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\* Willis Steele: For Short Stories,

## FATHER GILES OF BALLYMOY\*

It is nearly thirty years since I, Archibald Green, first entered the little town of Ballymoy, in the west of Ireland, and became acquainted with one of the honestest fellows and best Christians whom it has ever been my good fortune to know.

Ballymoy is a so-called town—or was in the days of which I am speaking—lying close to the shores of Lough Corrib, in the county Galway. It is on the road to no place, and, as the end of a road, has in itself nothing to attract a traveller. The scenery of Lough Corrib is grand—but the lake is very large and the fine scenery is on the side opposite to Ballymoy, and hardly to be reached, or even seen from that place. There is fishing, but it is lake fishing. The salmon fishing of Lough Corrib is far away from Ballymoy—where the little river runs away from the lake down to the town of Galway.

There was then in Ballymoy a single street, of which the characteristic at first sight most striking to a stranger was its general appearance of being thoroughly wet through. It was not simply that the rain-water was generally running down its unuttered streets in muddy, rivulets, but that each separate house looked as though the walls were reeking with wet; and the alternated roofs of thatch and slate—the slated houses being just double the height of those that were thatched—assisted the eye and mind of the spectator in forming his opinion. The lines were broken everywhere, and at every break it seemed as though there was a free entrance for the waters of heaven. The population of Ballymoy was its second wonder. There had been no famine then; no rot among the potatoes; and land round the town was let to cottiers for nine, ten, and even eleven pounds an acre. At all hours of the day, and at nearly all hours of the night, able-bodied men were to be seen standing in the streets, with knee-breeches unbuttoned, with stockings rolled down over their brogues, and with swallow-tailed frieze coats. Nor, though thus idle, did they seem to suffer any of the distress of poverty. There were plenty of beggars, no doubt, in Ballymoy, but it never struck me that there was much distress in those days. The earth gave forth its potatoes freely and neither man nor pig wanted more.

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\* Treasury of Irish Tales.



It was to be my destiny to stay a week at Ballymoy, on business, as to the nature of which I need not trouble the present reader. I was not, at that time, so well acquainted with the manners of the people of Connaught as I became afterward, and I had certain misgivings as I was driven into the village on a jaunting car from Tuam. I had just come down from Dublin, and had been informed that there were two "hotels" in Ballymoy, but that one of the "hotels" might, perhaps, be found deficient in some of those comforts which I, as an Englishman, might require. I was therefore to ask for the "hotel" kept by Pat Kirwan. The other hotel was kept by Larry Kirwan; so that it behooved me to be particular. I had made the journey down from Dublin in a night and a day, travelling, as we then did travel in Ireland, by canal-boats and by Bianconi's long cars; and I had dined at Tuam, and been driven over after dinner on an April evening; and when I reached Ballymoy I was tired to death and very cold.

"Pat Kirwan's hotel," I said to the driver, almost angrily. "Mind you don't go to the other."

"Shure, yer honor, and why not to Larry's? You'd be getting better entertainment at Larry's, because of Father Giles."

I understood nothing about Father Giles, and wished to understand nothing. But I did understand that I was to go to Pat Kirwan's "hotel," and thither I insisted on being taken.

It was quite dusk at this time, and the wind was blowing down the street of Ballymoy, carrying before it wild gusts of rain. In the west of Ireland March weather comes in April, and it comes with a violence of its own, though not with the cruelty of the English east wind. At this moment my neck was ricked by my futile endeavors to keep my head straight on the side car, and the water had got under me upon the seat, and the horse had come to a standstill half a dozen times in the last two minutes, and my apron had been trailed in the mud, and I was very unhappy. For the last ten minutes I had been thinking evil of everything Irish, and especially Connaught. I was driven up to a queerly shaped three-cornered house that stood at the bottom of the street, and which seemed to possess none of the outside appurtenances of an inn. "This can't be Pat Kirwan's hotel," said

I. "Faix and it is then, yer honor," said the driver. "And barring only that Father Giles——" But I had rung the bell, and as the door was now opened by a barefooted girl, I entered the little passage without hearing anything further about Father Giles.

Could I have a bedroom immediately—with a fire in it? Not answering me directly, the girl led me into a sitting-room, in which my nose was at once treated by that peculiar perfume which is given out by the relics of hot whiskey punch mixed with a great deal of sugar—and there she left me.

"Where is Pat Kirwan himself?" said I, coming to the door, and blustering somewhat. For, let it be remembered, I was very tired; and it may be a fair question whether in the far west of Ireland a little bluster may not sometimes be of service. "If you have not a room ready, I will go to Larry Kirwan's," said I, showing that I understood the bearings of the place.

"It's right away at the funder end then, yer honor," said the driver, putting in his word, "and we comed by it ever so long since. But shure yer honor wouldn't think of leaving this house for that?" This he said because Pat Kirwan's wife was close behind him.

Then Mrs. Kirwan assured me that I could and should be accommodated. The house, to be sure, was crowded, but she had already made arrangements, and had a bed ready. As for a fire in my bedroom, she could not recommend that "because the wind blew so mortal sthrong down the chimney since the pot had blown off—bad cess to it; and that loon, Mick Hackett, wouldn't lend a hand to put it up again, because there were jobs going on at the big house; bad luck to every joint of his body, thin," said Mrs. Kirwan, with great energy. Nevertheless she and Mick Hackett the mason were excellent friends.

I professed myself ready to go at once to the bed-room without the fire, and was led away upstairs. I asked where I was to eat my breakfast and dine on the next day, and was assured that I should have the room so strongly perfumed with whiskey all to myself. I had been rather cross before, but on hearing this I became decidedly sulky. It was not that I could not eat my breakfast in the chamber in question, but that I saw before me seven days of absolute misery, if I could have no other place of refuge for myself than a room

in which, as was too plain, all Ballymoy came to drink and smoke. But there was no alternative, at any rate for that night and the following morning, and I therefore gulped down my anger without further spoken complaint, and followed the barefooted maiden upstairs, seeing my portmanteau carried up before me.

Ireland is not very well known now to all Englishmen, but it is much better known than it was in those days. On this my first visit into Connaught, I own that I was somewhat scared lest I should be made a victim to the wild lawlessness and general savagery of the people; and I fancied, as in the wet, windy gloom of the night, I could see the crowd of natives standing round the doors of the inn, and just discern their naked legs and old battered hats, that Ballymoy was probably one of those places so far removed from civilization and law as to be an unsafe residence for an English Protestant. I had undertaken this service, with my eyes more or less open, and was determined to go through with it; but I confess that I was by this time alive to its dangers. It was an early resolution with me that I would not allow my portmanteau to be out of my sight. To that I would cling; with that ever close to me would I live; on that, if needful, would I die. I therefore required that it should be carried up the narrow stairs before me, and I saw it deposited safely in the bedroom.

The stairs were very narrow and very steep. Ascending them was like climbing into a loft. The whole house was built in a barbarous, uncivilized manner, and as fit to be a hotel as it was to be a church. It was triangular and all corners—the most uncomfortably arranged building I had ever seen. From the top of the stairs I was called upon to turn abruptly into the room destined for me; but there was a side step which I had not noticed under the glimmer of the small tallow candle, and I stumbled headlong into the chamber, uttering imprecations against Pat Kirwan, Ballymoy, and all Connaught. I hope the reader will remember that I had travelled for thirty consecutive hours, had passed sixteen in a small, comfortless canal-boat without the power of stretching my legs, and that the wind had been at work upon me sidewise for the last three hours. I was terribly tired, and I spoke very uncivilly to the young woman.

“Shure, yer honor, it’s as clane as clane, and as dhry as

dhry, and has been slept in every night since the big storm," said the girl, good-humoredly. Then she went on to tell me something more about Father Giles, of which, however, I could catch nothing, as she was bending over the bed, folding down the bed-clothes. "Feel of 'em," said she, "they's dhry as dhry." I did feel them, and the sheets were dry and clean, and the bed, though very small, looked as if it would be comfortable. So I somewhat softened my tone to her, and begged her to call me the next morning at eight. "Shure, yer honor, and Father Giles will call yer hissself," said the girl. I begged that Father Giles might be instructed to do no such thing. The girl, however, insisted that he would, and then left me. Could it be that in this savage place it was considered to be the duty of the parish priest to go round, with matins perhaps, or some other abominable papist ceremony, to the beds of all the strangers? My mother, who was a strict woman, had warned me vehemently against the machinations of the Irish priests, and I, in truth, had been disposed to ridicule her. Could it be that there were such machinations! Was it possible that my trousers might be refused me till I had taken mass? Or that force would be put on me in some other shape, perhaps equally disagreeable?

Regardless of that and other horrors, or rather, I should perhaps say, determined to face manfully whatever horrors the night or morning might bring upon me, I began to prepare for bed. There was something pleasant in the romance of sleeping at Pat Kirwan's house in Ballymoy, instead of in my own room in Keppel Street, Russell Square. So I chuckled inwardly at Pat Kirwan's idea of an hotel, and unpacked my things. There was a little table covered with a clean cloth, on which I espied a small comb. I moved the comb carefully without touching it, and brought the table up to my bedside. I put out my brushes and clean linen for the morning, said my prayers, defying Father Giles and his machinations, and jumped into bed. The bed certainly was good, and the sheets were very pleasant. In five minutes I was fast asleep. How long I had slept when I was awakened I never knew. But it was some hour in the dead of night, when I was disturbed by footsteps in my room, and on jumping up, I saw a tall, stout, elderly man standing with his back toward me, in the middle of the room, brushing his

clothes with the utmost care. His coat was still on his back, and his pantaloons on his legs; but he was most assiduous in his attention to every part of his body which he could reach. I sat upright, gazing at him, as I thought then, for ten minutes—we will say that I did so perhaps for forty seconds—and of one thing I became perfectly certain, namely, that the clothes-brush was my own! Whether, according to Irish hotel law, a gentleman would be justified in entering a stranger's room at midnight for the sake of brushing his clothes, I could not say; but I felt quite sure that in such a case he would be bound at least to use the hotel brush or his own. There was a trespass in regard to my property.

"Sir," said I, speaking very sharply, with the idea of startling him, "what are you doing here in this chamber?"

"'Deed, then, and I'm sorry I've waked ye, my boy," said the stout gentleman.

"Will you have the goodness, sir, to tell me what you are doing here?"

"Bedad, then, just at this moment it's brushing my clothes, I am. It was badly they wanted it."

"I dare say they did. And you were doing it with my clothes-brush."

"And that's throe, too. And if a man hasn't a clothes-brush of his own, what else can he do but use somebody else's?"

"I think it's a great liberty, sir," said I.

"And I think it's a little one. It's only in the size of it we differ. But I beg your pardon. There is your brush. I hope it will be none the worse." Then he put down the brush, seated himself on one of the two chairs which the room contained, and slowly proceeded to pull off his shoes, looking me in the face all the while.

"What are you going to do, sir?" said I, getting a little farther out from under the clothes, and leaning over the table.

"I am going to bed," said the gentleman.

"Going to bed! where?"

"Here," said the gentleman, and he still went on untying the knot of his shoestring.

It had always been a theory with me, in regard not only to my own country, but to all others, that civilization displays itself never more clearly than when it ordains that every man shall have a bed for himself. In older days, Englishmen of good position—men supposed to be gentlemen—

would sleep together and think nothing of it, as ladies, I am told, will still do. And in outlandish regions, up to this time, the same practice prevails. In parts of Spain you will be told that one bed offers sufficient accommodation for two men, and in Spanish America the traveller is considered to be fastidious who thinks that one on each side of him is oppressive. Among the poorer classes with ourselves this grand touchstone of civilization has not yet made itself felt. For aught I know there might be no such touchstone in Connaught at all. There clearly seemed to be none such at Ballymoy.

"You can't go to bed here," said I, sitting bolt upright on the couch.

"You'll find you are wrong there, my friend," said the elderly gentleman. "But make yourself aisy, I won't do you the least harm in life, and I sleep as quiet as a mouse."

It was quite clear to me that time had come for action. I certainly would not let this gentleman get into my bed. I had been the first comer, and was, for the night at least, the proprietor of this room. Whatever might be the custom of this country in these wild regions, there could be no special law in the land justifying the landlord in such treatment of me as this.

"You won't sleep here, sir," said I, jumping out of the bed, over the table, on to the floor, and confronting the stranger, just as he had succeeded in divesting himself of his second shoe. "You won't sleep here to-night, and so you may as well go away." With that I picked up his two shoes, took them to the door and chucked them out. I heard them go rattling down the stairs, and I was glad that they made so much noise. He would see that I was quite in earnest. "You must follow your shoes," said I, "and the sooner the better."

I had not even yet seen the man very plainly, and even now, at this time, I hardly did so, though I went close up to him and put my hand upon his shoulder. The light was very imperfect, coming from one small farthing candle, which was nearly burnt out in the socket. And I, myself, was confused, ill at ease, and for the moment unobservant. I knew that the man was older than myself, but I had not recognized him as being old enough to demand or enjoy personal protection by reason of his age. He was tall, and big, and burly—as

he appeared to me then. Hitherto, till his shoes had been chucked away, he had maintained imperturbable good humor. When he heard the shoes clattering down-stairs, it seemed that he did not like it, and he began to talk fast and in an angry voice. I would not argue with him, and I did not understand him, but still keeping my hand on the collar of his coat, I insisted that he should not sleep there. Go away out of that chamber he should.

"But it's my own," he said, shouting the words a dozen times. "It's my own room. It's my own room." So this was Pat Kirwan himself—drunk, probably, or mad.

"It may be your own," said I; "but you've let it to me for to-night, and you shan't sleep here." So saying I backed him toward the door, and in so doing I trod upon his unguarded toe.

"Bother you, thin, for a pig-headed Englishman," said he. "You've kilt me entirely, now. So take your hands off my neck, will ye, before you have me throttled outright."

I was sorry to have trod on his toe, but I stuck to him all the same. I had him near the door now, and I was determined to put him out into the passage. His face was very round and very red, and I thought that he must be drunk; and since I had found out that he was Pat Kirwan, the landlord, I was more angry with the man than ever. "You sha'n't sleep here, so you might as well go," I said, as I backed him away toward the door. This had not been closed since the shoes had been thrown out, and, with something of a struggle between the door-posts, I got him out. I remembered nothing whatever as to the suddenness of the stairs; I had been fast asleep since I came up them, and hardly even as yet knew exactly where I was. So, when I got him through the aperture of the door, I gave him a push, as was most natural, I think, for me to do. Down he went backward—down the stairs, all in a heap, and I could hear that in his fall he had tumbled against Mrs. Kirwan, who was coming up, doubtless to ascertain the cause of all the trouble above her head. A hope crossed my mind that the wife might be of assistance to her husband in this time of his trouble. The man had fallen very heavily, I knew, and had fallen backward. And I remembered then how steep the stairs were. Heaven and earth! Suppose that he were killed—or even seriously injured in his own house. What, in such

a case as that, would my life be worth in that wild country? Then I began to regret that I had been so hot. It might be that I had murdered a man on my first entrance into Connaught!

For a moment or two I could not make up my mind what I would first do. I was aware that both the landlady and the servant were occupied with the body of the ejected occupier of my chamber, and I was aware also that I had nothing on but my night-shirt. I returned, therefore, within the door, but could not bring myself to shut myself in and return to bed, without making some inquiry as to the man's fate. I put my head out, therefore, and did make inquiry. "I hope he is not much hurt by his fall," I said.

"Ochone, ochone! murdher, murdher! Spake, Father Giles, dear, for the love of God!" Such and many such exclamations I heard from the women at the bottom of the stairs.

"I hope he is not much hurt," I said again, putting my head out from the doorway; "but he shouldn't have forced himself into my room."

"His room, the omadhaun, the idiot!" said the landlady.

"Faix, ma'am, and Father Giles is a dead man," said the girl, who was kneeling over the prostrate body in the passage below. I heard her say Father Giles as plain as possible, and then I became aware that the man whom I had thrust out was not the landlord—but the priest of the parish! My heart became sick within me as I thought of the troubles around me. And I was sick also with fear lest the man who had fallen should be seriously hurt. But why—why—why had he forced his way into my room? How was it to be expected that I should have remembered that the stairs of the accursed house came flush up to the door of the chamber?

"He shall be hanged if there's law in Ireland," said a voice down below; and, as far as I could see, it might be that I should be hung. When I heard that last voice I began to think that I had in truth killed a man, and a cold sweat broke out all over me, and I stood for a while shivering where I was. Then I remembered that it behooved me as a man to go down among my enemies below, and to see what had really happened, to learn whom I had hurt—let the consequences to myself be what they might. So I quickly put on some of my clothes—a pair of trousers, a loose coat, and a pair of



slippers, and I descended the stairs. By this time they had taken the priest into the whiskey-perfumed chamber below, and although the hour was late there were already six or seven persons with him. Among them was the real Pat Kirwan himself, who had not been so particular about his costume as I had.

Father Giles—for indeed it was Father Giles, the priest of the parish—had been placed in an old armchair, and his head was resting against Mrs. Kirwan's body. I could tell from the moans which he emitted that there was still, at any rate, hope of life. Pat Kirwan, who did not quite understand what had happened, and who was still half asleep, and, as I afterward learned, half-tipsy, was standing over him wagging his head. The girl was also standing by, with an old woman and two men who had made their way in through the kitchen.

"Have you sent for a doctor?" said I.

"O you born blagghuard!" said the woman. "You thief of the world! That the like of you should ever have darkened my door!"

"You can't repent it more than I do, Mrs. Kirwan; but hadn't you better send for the doctor?"

"Faix, and for the police too, you may be sure of that, young man. To go and chuck him out of the room like that, his own room too, and he a priest and an ould man; he that had given up the half of it, though I axed him not to do so for a stranger as nobody knowed nothing about."

The truth was coming out by degrees. Not only was the man I had put out Father Giles, but he was also the proper occupier of the room. At any rate somebody ought to have told me all this before they put me to sleep in the same bed with the priest. I made my way round to the injured man, and put my hand upon his shoulder, thinking that perhaps I might be able to ascertain the extent of the injury. But the angry woman, together with the girl, drove me away, heaping on me terms of reproach and threatening me with the gallows at Galway.

I was very anxious that a doctor should be brought as soon as possible; and as it seemed that nothing was being done, I offered to go and search for one. But I was given to understand that I should not be allowed to leave the house until the police had come. I had therefore to remain there for half an hour or nearly so, till a sergeant, with two other

policemen, really did come. During this time I was in a most wretched frame of mind. I knew no one at Ballymoy or in the neighborhood. From the manner in which I was addressed and also threatened by Mrs. Kirwan, and by those who came in and out of the room, I was aware that I should encounter the most intense hostility. I had heard of Irish murders, and heard also of the love of the people for their priests, and I really began to doubt whether my life might not be in danger.

During this time, while I was thus waiting, Father Giles himself recovered his consciousness. He had been stunned by the fall, but his mind came back to him, though by no means all at once; and while I was left in the room with him, he hardly seemed to remember all the events of the past hour. I was able to discover, from what was said, that he had been for some days past, or, as it afterward turned out, for the last month, the tenant of the room, and that when I arrived he had been drinking tea with Mrs. Kirwan. The only other public bedroom in the hotel was occupied, and he had, with great kindness, given the landlady permission to put the Saxon stranger into his chamber. All this came out by degrees, and I could see how the idea of my base and cruel ingratitude rankled in the heart of Mrs. Kirwan. It was in vain that I expostulated and explained, and submitted myself humbly to everything that was said around me.

"But, ma'am," I said, "if I had only been told that it was the reverend gentleman's bed!"

"Bed, indeed! To hear the blagghuard talk, you'd think it was axing Father Giles to sleep along with the likes of him we were. And there's two beds in the room as dacent as any Christian iver stretched in."

It was a new light to me. And yet I had known over night, before I undressed, that there were two bedsteads in the room! I had seen them, and had quite forgotten the fact in my confusion when I was awakened. I had been very stupid, certainly. I felt that now. But I had truly believed that that big man was going to get into my little bed. It was terrible as I thought of it now. The good-natured priest, for the sake of accommodating a stranger, had consented to give up half of his room, and had been repaid for his kindness by being—perhaps murdered! And yet, though just then I hated myself cordially, I could not quite bring

myself to look at the matter as they looked at it. There were excuses to be made, if only I could get any one to listen to them.

"He was using my brush, my clothes-brush, indeed he was," I said. "Not but what he'd be welcome; but it made me think he was an intruder."

"And wasn't it too much honor for the likes of ye?" said one of the women with infinite scorn in the tone of her voice.

"I did use the gentleman's clothes-brush, certainly," said the priest. They were the first collected words he had spoken, and I felt very grateful to him for them. It seemed to me that a man who could condescend to remember that he had used a clothes-brush could not really be hurt to death, even though he had been pushed down such very steep stairs as those belonging to Pat Kirwan's hotel.

"And I'm sure you were very welcome, sir," said I. "It wasn't that I minded the clothes-brush. It wasn't indeed; only I thought—indeed, I did think that there was only one bed. And they put me into the room, and had not said anything about anybody else. And what was I to think when I woke up in the middle of the night?"

"Faix and you'll have enough to think of in Galway jail—for that's where you're going to," said one of the bystanders.

I can hardly explain the bitterness that was displayed against me. No violence was absolutely shown to me, but I could not move without eliciting a manifest determination that I was not to be allowed to stir out of the room. Red, angry eyes were glowering at me, and every word I spoke called down some expression of scorn and ill-will. I was beginning to feel glad that the police were coming, thinking that I needed protection. I was thoroughly ashamed of what I had done, and yet I could not discover that I had been very wrong at any particular moment. Let any man ask himself the question, what he would do, if he supposed that a stout old gentleman had entered his room at an inn and insisted on getting into his bed? It was not my fault that there was no proper landing-place at the top of the stairs.

Two sub-constables had been in the room for some time before the sergeant came, and with the sergeant arrived also the doctor, and another priest—Father Columb he was called—who, as I afterward learned, was curate, or coadjutor, to

Father Giles. By this time there was quite a crowd in the house, although it was past one o'clock, and it seemed that all Ballymoy knew that its priest had been foully misused. It was manifest to me that there was something in the Roman Catholic religion which made the priest very dear to the people; for I doubt whether in any village in England, had such an accident happened to the rector, all the people would have roused themselves at midnight to wreak their vengeance on the assailant. For vengeance they were now beginning to clamor, and even before the sergeant of police had come the two sub-constables were standing over me; and I felt that they were protecting me from the people in order that they might give me up—to the gallows!

I did not like the Ballymoy doctor at all—then, or even at a later period of my visit to that town. On his arrival he made his way up to the priest through the crowd, and would not satisfy their affection or my anxiety by declaring at once that there was no danger. Instead of doing so he insisted on the terrible nature of the outrage and the brutality shown by the assailant. And at every hard word he said, Mrs. Kirwan would urge him on. "That's throe for you, doctor!" "'Deed, and you may say that, doctor; two as good beds as ever Christian stretched in!" "'Deed, and it was just Father Giles's own room, as you may say, since the big storm fetched the roof off his riverence's house below there." Thus gradually I was learning the whole history. The roof had blown off Father Giles's own house, and therefore he had gone to lodge at the inn! He had been willing to share his lodging with a stranger; and this had been his reward!

"I hope, doctor, that the gentleman is not much hurt," said I, very meekly.

"Do you suppose a gentleman like that, sir, can be thrown down a long flight of stairs without being hurt? It is no thanks to you, sir, that his neck has not been sacrificed."

Then there arose a hum of indignation, and the two policemen standing over me bustled about a little, coming very close to me, as though they thought they would have something to do to protect me from being torn to pieces.

I bethought me that it was my special duty in such a crisis to show a spirit, if it were only for the honor of my Saxon blood, among the Celts. So I spoke up again, as loud as I could well speak.

"No one in this room is more distressed at what has occurred than I am. I am most anxious to know, for the gentleman's sake, whether he has been seriously hurt?"

"Very seriously hurt, indeed," said the doctor; "very seriously hurt. The vertebræ may have been injured for aught I know at present."

"Arrah, blazes, man," said a voice, which I learned afterward had belonged to an officer of the revenue corps of men which was then stationed at Ballymoy—a gentleman with whom I became afterward familiarly acquainted; Tom Macdermot was his name, Captain Tom Macdermot, and he came from the county of Leitrim—"Arrah, blazes, man! do ye think a gentleman's to fall sthrait headlong backwards down such a ladder as that, and not find it inconvanient? Only that he's the priest, and has had his own luck, sorrow a neck belonging to him there would be this minute."

"Be aisy, Tom," said Father Giles himself—and I was delighted to hear him speak. Then there was a pause for a moment. "Tell the gentleman I ain't so bad at all," said the priest; and from that moment I felt an affection for him which never afterward waned.

They got him upstairs back into the room from which he had been evicted, and I was carried off to the police station, where I positively spent the night. What a night it was! I had come direct from London, sleeping on my road but once, in Dublin, and now I found myself accommodated with a stretcher in the police barracks at Ballymoy! And the worst of it was that I had business to do at Ballymoy which required that I should hold up my head and make much of myself. The few words which had been spoken by the priest had comforted me, and had enabled me to think again of my own position. Why was I locked up? No magistrate had committed me. It was really a question whether I had done anything illegal. As that man whom Father Giles called Tom had very properly explained, if people will have ladders instead of staircases in their houses, how is anybody to put an intruder out of the room without risk of breaking the intruder's neck. And as to the fact—now an undoubted fact—that Father Giles was no intruder, the fault in that lay with the Kirwans, who had told me nothing of the truth. The boards of the stretcher in the police station were very hard, in spite of the blankets with which I had been furnished;

and, as I lay there, I began to remind myself that there certainly must be law in county Galway. So I called to the attendant policeman and asked him by whose authority I was locked up.

"Ah, thin, don't bother," said the policeman; "shure, and you've given throuble enough this night!" The dawn was at that moment breaking, so I turned myself on the stretcher, and resolved that I would put a bold face on it all when the day should come.

The first person I saw in the morning was Captain Tom, who came into the room where I was lying, followed by a little boy with my portmanteau. The sub-inspector of police who ruled over the men at Ballymoy lived, as I afterward learned, at Oranmore, so that I had not, at this conjuncture, the honor of seeing him. Captain Tom assured me that he was an excellent fellow, and rode to hounds like a bird. As in those days I rode to hounds myself—as nearly like a bird as I was able—I was glad to have such an account of my head jailer. The sub-constables seemed to do just what Captain Tom told them, and there was, no doubt, a very good understanding between the police force and the revenue officer.

"Well, now, I'll tell you what you must do, Mr. Green," said the captain.

"In the first place," said I, "I must protest that I'm now locked up here illegally."

"Oh, bother; now don't make yourself unaisy."

"That's all very well, Captain——. I beg your pardon, sir, but I didn't catch any name plainly except the Christian name."

"My name is Macdermot—Tom Macdermot. They call me captain—but that's neither here nor there."

"I suppose, Captain Macdermot, the police here cannot lock up anybody they please without a warrant."

"And where would you have been if they hadn't locked you up? I'm blessed if they wouldn't have had you into the Lough before this time."

There might be something in that, and I therefore resolved to forgive the personal indignity which I had suffered, if I could secure something like just treatment for the future. Captain Tom had already told me that Father Giles was doing pretty well.

"He's sthrong, as a horse, you see, or, sorrow a doubt, he'd be a dead man this minute. The back of his neck is as black as your hat with the bruises, and it's the same way with him all down his loins. A man like that, you know, not just as young as he was once, falls mortal heavy. But he's as jolly as a four-year-old," said Captain Tom, "and you're to go and ate your breakfast with him, in his bedroom, so that you may see with your own eyes that there are two beds there."

"I remembered it afterward quite well," said I.

"'Deed and Father Giles got such a kick of laughter this morning, when he came to understand that you thought he was going to get into bed alongside of you, that he strained himself all over again, and I thought he'd have frightened the house, yelling with the pain. But anyway you've to go over and see him. So now you'd better get yourself dressed."

This announcement was certainly very pleasant. Against Father Giles, of course, I had no feeling of bitterness. He had behaved well throughout, and was quite alive to the fact that the light of his countenance would afford me a better ægis against the ill-will of the people of Ballymoy than anything the law would do for me. So I dressed myself in the barrack-room, while Captain Tom waited without; and then I sallied out under his guidance to make a second visit to Pat Kirwan's hotel. I was amused to see that the police, though by no means subject to Captain Tom's orders, let me go without the least difficulty, and that the boy was allowed to carry my portmanteau back again. "Oh, it's all right," said Captain Tom, when I alluded to this. "You're not down in the sheet. You were only there for protection, you know." Nevertheless, I had been taken there by force, and had been locked up by force. If, however, they were disposed to forget all that, so was I. I did not return to the barracks again; and when, after that, the policemen whom I had known met me in the street, they always accosted me as though I were an old friend; hoping my honor had found a better bed than when they last saw me. They had not looked at me with any friendship in their eyes when they had stood over me in Pat Kirwan's parlor.

This was my first view of Ballymoy and of the "hotel" by daylight. I now saw that Mrs. Pat Kirwan kept a grocery establishment, and that the three-cornered house which had

so astonished me was very small. Had I seen it before I entered it I should hardly have dared to look there for a night's lodging. As it was, I stayed there for a fortnight, and was by no means uncomfortable. Knots of men and women were now standing in groups around the door, and indeed, the lower end of the street was almost crowded.

"They're all here," whispered Captain Tom, "because they've heard how Father Giles has been murdered during the night by a terrible Saxon; and there isn't a man or woman among them who doesn't know that you are the man who did it."

"But they know also, I suppose," said I, "that Father Giles is alive."

"Bedad, yes, they know that, or I wouldn't be in your skin, my boy. But come along. We mustn't keep the priest waiting for his breakfast." I could see that they all looked at me, and there were some of them, especially among the women, whose looks I did not even yet like. They spoke among each other in Gaelic, and I could perceive they were talking of me. "Can't you understand, then," said Captain Tom, speaking to them aloud, just as he entered the house, "that Father Giles, the Lord be praised, is as well as he ever was in his life? Shur it was only an accident."

"An accident done on purpose, Captain Tom," said one person.

"What is it to you how it was done, Mick Healy? If Father Giles is satisfied, isn't that enough for the likes of you? Get out of that and let the gentleman pass." Then Captain Tom pushed Mick away roughly, and the others let us enter the house. "Only they wouldn't do it unless somebody gave them the wink, they'd pull you in pieces this moment for a dandy of punch—they would indeed." Perhaps Captain Tom exaggerated the prevailing feeling, thinking thereby to raise the value of his own service in protecting me; but I was quite alive to the fact that I had done a most dangerous deed, and had a most narrow escape.

I found Father Giles sitting up in his bed, while Mrs. Kirwan was rubbing his shoulder diligently with an embrocation of arnica. The girl was standing by with a basin half full of the same, and I could see that the priest's neck and shoulders were as red as a raw beefsteak. He winced grievously under the rubbing, but he bore it like a man.



"And here comes the hero," said Father Giles. "Now stop a minute or two, Mrs. Kirwan, while we have a mouthful of breakfast, for I'll go bail that Mr. Green is hungry after his night's rest. I hope you got a better bed, Mr. Green, than the one I found you in when I was unfortunate enough to waken you last night. There it is, all ready for you still," said he, "and if you accept of it to-night, take my advice and don't let a trifle stand in the way of your dhraims."

"I hope, thin, the gintleman will contrive to suit hisself elsewhere," said Mrs. Kirwan.

"He'll be very welcome to take up his quarters here if he likes," said the priest. "And why not? But, bedad, sir, you'd better be a little more careful the next time you see a sthraner using your clothes-brush. They are not so strict here in their ideas of meum and tuum as they are perhaps in England; and if you'd broken my neck for so small an offence, I don't know but what they'd have stretched your own."

We then had breakfast together, Father Giles, Captain Tom, and I, and a very good breakfast we had. By degrees even Mrs. Kirwan was induced to look favorably at me, and before the day was over I found myself to be regarded as a friend in the establishment. And as a friend I certainly was regarded by Father Giles—then, and for many a long day afterward. And many times as he has, in years since that, but years nevertheless which are now long back, come over and visited me in my English home, he has told the story of the manner in which we first became acquainted.

"When you find a gentleman asleep," he would say, "always ask his leave before you take a liberty with his clothes-brush."

“ETCHINGS: TOO HARD”\*

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“Let me trot the young ’un, Mary,” said Benson, coming into the cabin and addressing his Ozark wife.

The woman looked up and saw that her husband was the worse for the moonshine whiskey that he liked so well, but, rather than have a quarrel, she pushed her not reluctant child toward the rough mountaineer.

“Come on, little ’un; come ter yer dad,” murmured Benson in drunken fashion.

“An’ you’ll trot me?” exclaimed the child, exultingly.

The father smiled in a half silly manner and nodded to the youngster. Then taking the yellow-haired four-year-old in his arms he trotted and jumped her a bit on his knee.

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“Thar,” he said, “thet’s ernough.”

The baby was set down, impatient to be played with again, and the father was not too drunk to resist her childish appeal.

So Benson took her up again and began tossing the child toward the rough ceiling of the cabin.

She laughed and crowed as the coarse man threw her up again and again.

The mountaineer grew unsteady and the baby slipped from his hands to the hard cabin floor.

She didn’t say anything, but lay there until the frightened mother rushed and picked her up.

“Ye’ve done it now, Benson,” said the wife, as she gathered the child in her arms, and Benson in his dense stupidity realized that something was the matter.

“Pore child,” he muttered in drunken tones, but the mother pushed him back and leaned over the baby.

The big blue eyes opened, and the child murmured:

“You *did* trot me, daddy, didn’t you?”

Then the eyes closed and never opened again.

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No man ever sobered quicker than Benson did then, and when he had cried his eyes half out on his rough sleeve, he leaned over his baby and kissed the pale lips.

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“I—I reckon,” he sobbed, “I trotted her too hard.”

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\* Homer Bassford; For Short Stories.

## A MYSTERY OF THE SEA \*

I was on my way out from London to Bombay, for the purpose of joining the fleet which was stationed in the East Indies, in the good ship "Amphitrite," when a somewhat mysterious event occurred to vary the monotony of an ordinary "old time" voyage round the Cape.

It was a lovely day, early in the month of February, and the ship was bowling along "close hauled," with a splendid breeze. We were nearing the line, and had lost the north-east monsoon, which, north of the Equator, blows with varying force all the year round, and were fortunate in having fallen in with a good, steady, southeasterly wind, that promised to last some time, and carry us perhaps into southern latitudes, for we had experienced a long run of bad weather in the "chops of the Channel." The winter had been unusually severe, and the gales during the months of November and December very frequent. After a great deal of knocking about, we felt the more pleased with the change. As I was saying, there was a fine spanking wind—what is called by sailors a "topgallant breeze," that is, when the ship can just carry well her topgallant sails. The beautiful morning had given place to as beautiful an afternoon; the sea was smooth, with a long swell; and the dancing waves, with their crests just ruffled by the wind, and tipped with foam, came tumbling one over the other in a joyous way, as if running a race to meet the ship; but, on encountering the opposition of the bows, these "white horses" speedily succumbed, and, after an angry buffet against the stern, disappeared in the black depths under her bilge.

The "Amphitrite" was a new ship, marked A 1 at Lloyd's, of 1,800 tons burden, and this was her first voyage; she was clipper-built, and the fastest vessel I ever sailed in. We never looked out for ships astern, but, whenever a sail was sighted, it was always ahead, and before night fell we were certain to leave her hopelessly behind. Many a storm and gale have I experienced on board her, and right nobly she always behaved in them, riding over the waves in spite of the immense weight aloft of the heaviest and squarest spars ever fitted to a ship of her size.

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\* Lieut. C. R. Lowe: "Tales of Old Ocean,"

On the 10th February, the year of which I am writing, the "Amphitrite" was sailing with her yards "braced sharp up" on the port tack, and every stitch of canvas was drawing, she having all "plain sail" set. The passengers (myself among the number) were all standing on the poop, talking and joking, and looking forward to doing justice to a good dinner, for which this pleasant sea-breeze gave us an appetite. On a long sea-voyage dinner is the great event of the day, to which every one looks forward as breaking the tedious monotony in an agreeable manner. The heat of the day had been great, although tempered by a double awning spread over the poop, under which we had placed our easy-chairs, and, with our books in our hands as a make-believe, we enjoyed the sweets of the *dolce far niente*. Conversation naturally turned on crossing the line and its attendant ceremonies, which were pretty generally spoken of as follies, especially by some young cadets going out to join the army, who were looking forward, half with feelings of curiosity and half of dread, to the advent of Neptune with his motley crew, and bucket of slush. Of all senseless customs and traditions, this line folly is about the most unreasonable. There can be no harm in the sailors dressing up and blundering through a performance, but the manner in which passengers often are ill-used is monstrous. This nuisance is now considerably abated, and it is hoped will soon entirely cease to disgrace the mercantile marine. Few respectable merchant captains allow their passengers to be thus insulted. The practical joking is frequently used as a means of extorting money from timid people, who would pay anything rather than be subjected to ill-treatment.

Three or four of the cadets had expressed their determination to join together for the purpose of resisting any attempt to make merry at their expense, when suddenly the lookout man on the fore-yard sang out, "Sail ho!"

"Where away?" was the query from the officer of the watch on the quarter deck.

"On the port bow," was the rejoinder.

The mate then asked what he made her out to be; and the reply was that she looked like a full-rigged ship, but, as she was coming down before the wind, he could not make out for certain what her rig was. The captain, being informed of this, soon came upon deck, with his long glass, and tried to

find her. We, all of us who possessed telescopes, went on the fore-castle, and swept the horizon forward, but could see nothing; but this was to be accounted for from the fact of her not having yet appeared above the horizon. However, in a few minutes we made the white sail out, like a speck in the far distance. The ladies now came up on deck, and the remainder of the passengers, for it is wonderful what an interest the sight of a ship creates among people wearied of seeing nothing but sea and sky—only “water, water everywhere.” It is always an event to be marked in the log-book, and duly chronicled in the diaries of the “cuddy” passengers; and we had seen nothing lately on the waters except the ordinary sea-birds that follow in the wake of a ship, picking up whatever will fill their maws, and which, sometimes flying, sometimes settling on the waves, are at first a source of amusement, and give rise to discussions as to where their home among this wild waste of waters may be.

The breeze was freshening, and soon we were gratified by a nearer inspection of the stranger. We found that she was a square-rigged ship, with all sail set, royals and studding sails below and aloft, and on both sides. “She walked the waters like a thing of life,” and came down before the wind like a race-horse, with the foam curling away from her bows. There are few more beautiful sights than a fine ship heeling over under full sail, with the copper on her weather-side showing, and every stitch of canvas bellying out to catch the favoring breeze. The ladies were admiring her beautiful proportions and the fine effect of the setting sun as it lit up her sails and glistened along her sides, painted black, but relieved with white ports. All hands now crowded up as the word was passed that the strange ship wished to speak, for she appeared as if steering to intercept us. Nearer she came and nearer, and, now that we could see her so well, the passengers retired to the poop, there to be out of the way, and the better to hear all that was said. The captain sent his boy down to his cabin for the speaking-trumpet, and we began speculating as to her nationality, for we could not see any flag flying. Some of the young cadets, having probably more money than they knew what to do with, began laying bets as to whether she was English or Swedish; for the quartermaster, an old salt, said she was a Swedish-built ship. To induce her to show her colors, we hoisted the ensign, and

then eagerly watched for a response. But no "bit of bunting" fluttered up to her mizen peak; and one of our number, conjectured she might be a "rover free."

The wind was now blowing freshly; but the ship still carried her royals and studding sails, and still came bearing down on us. We altered our course a point, just to see whether she really did wish to speak, and the stranger appeared to follow suit. This seemed to decide the captain as to the ship's intention of communicating with us, but yet she persisted in not showing her colors—a most unusual thing on the high seas, where common courtesy dictates an exchange of flags; and, what was still more strange, we could see no indication of life on her decks, for there were no heads peeping above the bulwark or the rail of her forecastle. The lookout man, who had a bird's-eye view of her, on being hailed, said he could see no one on board.

There is a "law of the road" at sea, as there is on shore among drivers of vehicles, and it is this: ships on the port tack, sailing near the wind, give way to vessels on the starboard; and ships running before the wind yield the pride of place to any they may encounter close-hauled on either tack. Now, we being "full and by," that is, close-hauled, it was the duty of the stranger, according to the rule of the road, and to avoid a collision, to put her helm a-port, and get out of our way. I mention this to exculpate us from all blame as to what followed. We, not expecting anything, but being still under the impression that she had something to communicate, kept on our course; but it soon became evident that her captain intended passing almost too near us for safety. If he had his ship well in hand, however, he might with ease prevent any disaster arising from our proximity. Some dark clouds were rising up, the wind now blew strong and in gusts, and we could not imagine how the other skipper could be so insane as to keep his top-gallant sails set.

Being soon within hailing distance, our captain raised the speaking-trumpet to his mouth, and shouted out, in a stentorian voice, "Ship ahoy! What ship's that?" No answer. "Ship ahoy!" again rang over the waters. Still no reply to the summons. "What does this mean?" said the captain to the first mate and a knot of passengers, myself among the number, standing by him on the break of the poop. We all looked at one another, and then at the ship anxiously. What,

indeed, could be intended by this silence? Was it a ruse to carry out some diabolical purpose? It was dusk, and stories that I had read, when at school, of the "Flying Dutchman," and other old sea legends, involuntarily recurred to me and raced unbidden through my brain. Not a soul could be seen on her decks, which were now distinctly visible. "Ship ahoy!" for the third time Captain H—— bellowed out, and then ran off the poop on to the quarter deck; for it was now awfully certain there must be a collision. "Put the helm hard up!" he shouted out to the quartermaster as he descended the ladder; but it was too late. I saw how it was to be, and caught hold of the cross-jack lifts to steady myself. Like lightning the huge mass of wood and tall spars and towering canvas struck us full on the port bow, a blow that caused every timber and plank in the vessel to creak and groan with the concussion. So terrific was the shock that our ship seemed absolutely to stand still as if aghast; the masts and yards shook and reeled like a forest of trees when blown by the passing gale; and the sails for an instant were thrown flat aback, in spite of the fresh breeze.

I saw that several of the crew and passengers were thrown down; and, as is usual on such occasions, the ladies fainted right and left. Some only wrung their hands, and screamed in an agony of terror; the gentlemen hurried them all down indiscriminately into the cuddy—not a very safe place, certainly, if we were going to founder, but there was confusion enough on deck without its being "worse confounded" by the persons of insensible ladies, young and old. When the ship struck us on the port bow her bowsprit came right over our decks. At the last moment, when it was too late to be of much service, our helm had been put "hard up," thereby paying the "Amphitrite's" head off. Instead, therefore, of the stranger steering alongside of us, she carried on her way, with her huge bow anchor, the flukes of which were hanging over the side, tearing all along our bulwarks, carrying away "dead eyes" and "lanyards," and laying the ship's side open. Up aloft matters were much worse; for the yards and studding-sail booms and all the gear were caught in inextricable confusion, and came rattling about our ears; most of the spars, fortunately for the safety of those below, falling overboard. The noise of the creaking timber and tumbling booms and yards was terrific. Nothing could be done; for

the two ships had each great way on them, and it was patent they would soon clear each other, even if all the masts were to go "by the board" in the struggle. Three of our men were seriously injured by the falling *débris* and had to be carried below, one poor fellow with both legs broken.

In the mean time how had our opponent fared through all this business? One of her studding-sail yards fell on the poop with its sail, and the spar, falling "end on," dashed a hole through the deck, nearly knocking my brains out at the same time. Her foretopmast went like a reed, carrying with it the main-topgallant-mast and the jibboom; but all this luckily fell clear of us into the water. The most singular thing of all, however, was the fact that not a soul could be seen anywhere on board her—neither on the look-out, nor on the decks, nor on the poop; and, what was incomprehensible, there was no one at the wheel. She seemed like a ship of the dead. Had we chosen, we could have jumped on board her with ease, as, in her mad career she tore along our whole length, from the "cathead" to the "boomkin," where was fitted the "pennant" of the main brace, and which, as a parting salute, she broke short off like a carrot. Everybody seemed for the moment paralyzed, and took shelter until the storm of falling wreck and blocks had subsided.

The stranger presently dropped astern, after having done us all this mischief; and we could then see that she was a large ship of 1,000 or 1,100 tons burden, of English build, and deeply laden. She looked a perfect wreck, with her rigging all hanging about, and her "top hamper" trailing in the water, mixed up with gear and sails. All this happened in much less time than I take to narrate it, and in a few seconds a fine ship was reduced to this pitiable condition. However, our thoughts were chiefly centred on our own safety; and the first thing to discover was whether we were in a sinking state or no. The captain immediately ordered the carpenter to sound the well. On doing so he reported that there were eight inches of water; and, as this was only an addition of two inches above the usual amount, we were much relieved. A party was told off to the pumps, and all watched with anxiety to see whether the water gained on us. The boatswain piped "Hands clear wreck!" and up aloft streamed the topmen to send down the stumps of the shattered masts, and clear the tangled ropes.



It was fast getting dark, and, now that our immediate safety was assured, we turned our thoughts to the stranger. When she first sheered off us all her sails were flat aback, and she was evidently without guidance, and just "forging" ahead slowly through the water; but she again soon fell off before the wind, and ploughed along her watery way as before.

We could see the ship a long way astern, and, as we passengers were talking and discussing the collision, suddenly one of our number exclaimed, "Hullo! I can't make her out now." We looked, and she was gone. The spot she occupied a moment before was vacant. We strained our eyes, but in vain; nothing could we see but the rising waves, and the clouds overhead now threatening an approaching gale. We went to the captain and informed him of the sudden disappearance of the strange ship; but he answered he had quite enough on his hands to occupy himself and all his crew, without lowering a boat and sending her, he did not know how far astern, on such a Quixotic errand. He said it was getting dark, and looked like bad weather ahead, and he must make all snug aloft before the gale came on. Besides, said he, to put an end to our remonstrances, it must have been all a mistake; it was so dusk that we had lost sight of her position; and she was probably all right, and we, no doubt, all wrong in our conjectures as to her having foundered. It was of no use arguing with him. We were firmly convinced that the unfortunate ship had gone down, as all of us were looking in her direction and saw her distinctly only a few seconds before her disappearance. The quartermaster on duty, whose attention was in no way taken up with the refitting of the wreck, afterward corroborated our statements and ideas as to the end of the unlucky vessel. He expressed no opinion then, for he did not feel himself called to express a different view of the question from the captain. Every one agreed that there was not a creature on the decks anywhere when the two ships were in collision, with one exception, and that was the above-mentioned petty officer, who declared that he saw, just before she dropped so far astern, a man running up on deck from below to the after-part. If this were so, it would account for her sails filling again.

The whole affair was shrouded in mystery, and we never discovered anything about her. To this day I know not what was her name, her country, or whither she was bound,

and probably never shall. When we arrived in the East Indies, two months after this affair, the captain made no inquiries respecting the fate of the ship, and I subsequently discovered forbade his officers speaking about her to any one ashore or afloat. He could not stop our tongues, however, and for a long time this strange occurrence was the fruitful source of conversation. After the first shock, the imaginative young ladies launched out into all manner of romantic notions with respect to her. There was much ground for speculation and discussion, although we could learn nothing fresh thereby. Had the ship, having sprung a leak, been deserted by the crew while becalmed on the Line, and then the unfortunate seamen, considering they had no time "to shorten sail," abandoned her with all sail set? and had a breeze subsequently sprung up, and driven her in wild, unguided career over the trackless sea, until she fell athwart our hawse, and so met her destruction? Was it so? Or had the crew risen in mutiny against the captain and officers, and, after binding or murdering them, abandoned themselves to drunken dissipation, and left the ship to take care of herself? If what the quartermaster stated he saw really took place, the last was the more probable supposition. But whether this was the case, or whether the fresh water had given out, and the ship's company taken to the boats as I have stated, we never discovered.

The whole affair was inexplicable, one of those unsolved mysteries of the deep that sometimes come across the path of those wayfarers who "go down to the sea in ships."

Although the captain acted wrongly as I think on this occasion my readers must not infer that he was unfeeling. Far from it, he was kind to his crew and always bore a character as a humane man; but it was clearly his duty to lower a boat, or rather to return on the track of the stranger, and if he could not make her out in the darkness to lie by the spot where she was last seen till morning would enable him to prosecute his search. He was right as to the weather, for it soon came on to blow a gale of wind and we were under double-reefed topsails before midnight. Although much strained the "*Amphitrite*" made little water; we repaired our damage aloft, and were soon all right again.

On arriving in port the ship had her topsides looked to, and all signs of the mysterious collision were effaced.

## ETCHINGS: EC-PAY-AH\*

It is early morn. So early that night is just giving way to the gray of day. The frost is heavy and black on the prairie which on either side stretches away into the leaden sky heavy with the first of a northern winter's snow. It is an Indian camp. Tepees are being taken down, and trevois prepared for the march to the distant mountains. To the mountains where sheltered nooks will be found for the winter. The tepees are all down save one. Before it stands a woman, old and blind, so blind that the sun just rising glistens in her eyes without her heeding it. At the blanket wrapped closely around her a child tugs and strains as she watches the warriors, the women, the children, the ponies, even the dogs file past on their journey to the mountains. She asks with childish voice the blind woman why they are not going with the rest, but receives no answer, while the blind eyes look and look as if straining to see. As group after group pass not a word is spoken, except when some child calls for the little one clinging to the blind woman's skirt to come with them. At last even the sound of the horses' hoofs has been lost in the distance. The woman feels a flake or two of snow on her face. She turns and with the child enters the tepee. How solitary it looks standing alone on the prairie! She sits down on a robe and draws the child to her, and strives with caresses to stop the little one's questions as to why they stay when all the rest have gone. Not a tear, not a word. It is ec-pay-ah. She is old and blind, why should they have taken her. It is ec-pay-ah. From childhood thus had she, herself, seen the old, the sick and the dying left by the tribe to die. They might have taken the child though. For herself she had known that the winter would bring her this fate. The child though—if it had only been a boy; but a girl—of squaws there were already too many.

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In the spring, after the snow has gone, a scouting party comes to where a single tepee lies cast down by the winter's storms. Around it are scattered the bones of a woman and child, polished white as ivory by the wolves. "A Sioux ec-pay-ah," quietly exclaims one of the party, and all is told.

## SHE—WITH THE BLACK POODLE \*

It was at Joinville-le-Pont on a Sunday afternoon. I went down by the eleven o'clock train, from the Gare de Vincennes. Twenty minutes of broiling hot ride to go six miles!

The dingy little station on the brow of the hill is no indication of the beauties of the village that rests so snugly on the Marne below. Quite a steep descent is necessary, before you reach the waterside. At the foot of the slope is the bridge, that gives distinction to the village, and to the right a broad avenue leads the eye along the side of the rapidly flowing stream.

“La Tête Noire,” an ancient inn that has seen at least two invading armies pass its narrow doorway, invites us. Just the place to breakfast! The large dining-room on the first floor overlooks the olive-green water. Breakfast, with a half-bottle of old Burgundy and a whole bottle of mineral water. So passes the time until after one o'clock. Then I begin to wonder why the oarsmen on the river have with them, in their dainty shells, all the pretty women at Joinville. See, there is a pair-oar passing, the two men on the sliding seats and the pretty creature at the tiller dressed alike in Chinese silk. A jolly party, well assembled. Close behind is a double-paddle canoe. Its stroke is set by a tall English-looking girl, through whose bodice of thread-lace I can detect the warm flesh on the arms and shoulders. Good girl. She manages her paddle well. Away they go, up stream, toward and under the gaping arches of the bridge. Yes, they must take the shute between “Lovers' Island”—a narrow strip of mid-river verdure, where nestled a dozen artists' cottages and from whence comes the soft sounds of music. That isle is a dainty little Delos, where Idleness and Folly dwell.

Ah! what is this coming down the road! How well she drives that dog-cart! Surely, the face is familiar! She is looking straight at me—our eyes meet. A momentary tremor in the lines. She knows me! She is determined to go on. I decide in my mind that she shall stop! Hypnotism? Nothing of the kind. I give her the hailing sign of fifteen years ago. Its effect is magical. She pulls up the chestnut cob, a turn

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\* Julius Chambers: Paris, “*Galignani*.”

of the wrist and the animal waits at the curb. Before I can find my hat and reach the street, she has handed the ribbons to her footman and sprung lightly to the gravel.

An over-clipped black poodle on the seat beside her follows.

Nanine! the very same, same Nanine!

How little she's changed! A trifle stouter perhaps, the result of regular habits and fresh air. "Lives not far from Joinville," she says. God bless her!

We look at each other in silence, and mentally recall the dear old days.

I am a youngster in the Quartier Latin; she a young grisette, just starting on a mistaken career. Ah! but I was as foolish as she. I thought I had inspiration in art; and not until five of my pictures, one after the other, had been rejected at the Salon, did I know better.

Then I went back to America, into trade with my father, and prospered. It was not life, but success! I'm independent to-day; yet I'd wish to be back in the old fifth floor, with the flowers and the birds about the windows and Nanine for company.

But that's not what I intended to say. I designed to suggest, mentally, that in ten minutes, without betraying any confidences, we had historically bridged the years since we had parted with tears in our eyes at the Gare du Nord. There was no deception on our part—no Fantine recalling lyric—"Yo soy de Badajos" of M. Hugo.

We knew we had to part, and we did so like two heroes.

Naturally, then, when the cobwebs had been cleared from the foreground she and I drifted back into the subject we had discussed so often together—Art.

I was conscious that I despised art, as every man hates what he has tried unsuccessfully as a means to earning his bread.

But it was different with Nanine. How could *she* forget that she had been the model for my Chloe? the one that was thrown out the back door of the Salon. Had not I tried for three months to paint her face into a copy of Murillo's "Immaculate Conception?" She never believed that I miserably failed. Ye gods! I can see her yet with the strip of blue cambric muslin about her. Good, patient girl; she was devoted to me and thought me the peer of any artist of my day. Alas! nature forgot me when artists were made.

How her tongue runs to painting. Now she is criticising

the pictures in the Salon that has just shut its doors. How merciless she is! She is cutting up one of the most renowned contemporary painters. He is *Hors Concour*; but that does not spare him. I do not hear all she says; but this—

“And, there’s G r me. I like his pictures. But how absurd to say that he is so true—so accurate. Why, you know his famous picture of the duel after the masquerade? Of course you do; so does everybody. Well, in that great picture G r me makes a supreme blunder.”

“Indeed!” recovering myself at this announcement.

“Recall the wounded man—the mortally hurt fellow on the snow?” She has grown impassioned. Her eyes have dilated, and their great brown pupils look straight into but far beyond mine. “And,” she continues, “you recall the bright red spot made on the snow by the dying man’s blood? Yes? Then I will make you understand the artist’s mistake. He didn’t know what he was about when he painted it. He never saw a man bleed to death in the snow, as—I have. Ah! I could have advised him better. His colors are all wrong. Green and chrome are what he wanted, with a touch of lake. Oh! If I had a palette I could tell.”

“Nanine, what are you chattering about?”

“I am talking of real art, of human life—the art of the actual. I have studied—I have learned much since we parted. You ask me how I know the heart’s blood does not turn the snow red? In the interest of art, the art we once worshipped together, I tell you I once knelt by a dying lover’s side on a chill February morning in the breezy wood of Vincennes, just behind where we now sit, and clung to his hand as long as it was warm. There was a horrible sword wound in his breast. The snow was not red with his blood, as the foolish poets say and the ignorant artists paint, but was stained a yellowish green. Ah! possibly there were salt tears of mine added to the blot upon the dawn-lit snow, but I felt badly, quite badly—as any girl will feel when a lover is killed for love of her. Yes, just one more glass. Here, *ma fille*, have my cart brought.”

And, followed by the fluffy poodle, madame—no, I mean Nanine—vanished out the door, forbidding me to follow.

I never saw her any more. But Mariano Benluria, pupil with me at the same school, has painted her, and the picture hangs in the main dining-room of Monsieur Boldt, of the Hotel Bellevue, Philadelphia, U. S. A.

## ETCHINGS: DEAD IN BED\*

He was found dead in his bed. Wealth, prominence, influential friends could not save the always unpleasant coroner's inquest. This was proper. Laws are made to be obeyed. Two learned surgeons who had probed the secrets of the dead man's body, deposed that heart disease, doubtless superinduced by over-exertion, was the cause of the sudden death. The jury said the same. The learned surgeons and the intelligent jury were wrong. This was the cause:

He, the man found dead, was home again for an autumn day in his quiet country birthplace. Everything seemed gladsome, and even the maples about the old place were in gorgeous holiday garb. His father, robust despite his years, welcomed him most heartily. Deeply touching was the joyful greeting of his gentle mother, long bedridden, but whose spirit had grown sweeter through all the suffering until her pure face upon the pillow seemed to have about it the halo of God's angels. He turned that she might not see the welling tears, when a sharp report rang out. Somehow the weapon in his pocket had been discharged. The bullet—great God, what fatal chance! had pierced the temple of the invalid and, as the son looked down, the breath of the sainted woman departed and her pillow was dripping red. The aged man rushed in. With a cry it seemed must echo to the portals of heaven, he sank lifeless, a crimson stream gushing from his lips. The blood formed a pool about the snow-white head, and the pool gave forth a little rivulet which crept slowly and tortuously across the floor as the one responsible for all this stood transfixed. And, as the son of the dead gazed, his brain reeled in such horror that hell could offer punishment no greater. Then the flaming, eye-searing stream changed to green and black and burnished gold, and a hideous serpent coiled about his feet, his legs, his waist—upward and upward to strangle life. And the awfulness and hideousness of it all caused the man's heart to stop its beating forever.

This was the *dream* of the man found dead in his bed.

Even the learned physicians did not know that he died of that horrible fright in his sleep, as had thousands before him and as will thousands in the years to come.

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\* Thomas J. Mosier: For Short Stories.

## FAMOUS STORIES: THE CLOAK\*

*From the Russian of Nikolai Gogol*

In the department of—but it is better not to mention the department. There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. Each individual attached to them nowadays thinks all society insulted in his person. Quite recently, a complaint was received from a justice of the peace, in which he plainly demonstrated that all the imperial institutions were going to the dogs, and that the Czar's sacred name was being taken in vain; and in proof he appended to the complaint a romance, in which the justice of the peace is made to appear about once in every ten lines, and sometimes in a drunken condition. Therefore, in order to avoid all unpleasantness, it will be better to designate the department in question, as a certain department.

So, in a certain department there was a certain official—not a very high one, it must be allowed—short of stature, somewhat pock-marked, red-haired, and short-sighted, with a bald forehead, wrinkled cheeks, and a complexion of the kind known as sanguine. The St. Petersburg climate was responsible for this. As for his official status, he was what is called a perpetual titular councillor, over which some writers make merry and crack their jokes, obeying the praiseworthy custom of attacking those who cannot bite back.

His family name was Bashmatchkin. This name is evidently derived from *bashmak* (shoe); but when, at what time, and in what manner, is not known. His father and grandfather, and all the Bashmatchkins, always wore boots, which only had new heels two or three times a year. His name was Akakiy Akakievitch. It may strike the reader as rather singular and far-fetched; but he may rest assured that it was by no means far-fetched, and that the circumstances were such that it would have been impossible to give him any other.

This was how it came about.

Akakiy Akakievitch was born, if my memory fails me not,

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\*This famous story is by the true founder of the Russian school of fiction, Nikolaï Vasilyévitch Gogol-Yanoviski, and is representative of the early work of the realistic school. Zola frankly confesses Gogol as his master, and Turgenieff has said: "We all came from Gogol's Cloak."



in the evening on the 23d of March. His mother, the wife of a Government official, and a very fine woman, made all due arrangements for having the child baptized. She was lying on the bed opposite the door; on her right stood the godfather, Ivan Ivanovitch Eroshkin, a most estimable man, who served as presiding officer of the senate; and the godmother, Anna Semenovna Byelobrushkova, the wife of an officer of the quarter, and a woman of rare virtues. They offered the mother her choice of three names, Mokiya, Sossiya, or that the child should be called after the martyr Khozdazat. "No," said the good woman, "all those names are poor." In order to please her, they opened the calendar at another place; three more names appeared, Triphiliy, Dula, and Varakhasiy. "This is a judgment," said the old woman. "What names! I truly never heard the like. Varadat or Varukh might have been borne, but not Triphiliy and Varakhasiy!" They turned to another page and found Pavsikakhiy and Vakhtisiy. "Now I see," said the old woman, "that it is plainly fate. And since such is the case, it will be better to name him after his father. His father's name was Akakiy, so let his son's be Akakiy too." In this manner he became Akakiy Akakievitch. They christened the child, whereat he wept, and made a grimace, as though he foresaw that he was to be a titular councillor.

In this manner did it all come about. We have mentioned it, in order that the reader might see for himself that it was a case of necessity, and that it was utterly impossible to give him any other name. When and how he entered the department, and who appointed him, no one could remember. However much the directors and chiefs of all kinds were changed, he was always to be seen in the same place, the same attitude, the same occupation; so that it was afterward affirmed that he had been born in undress uniform with a bald head. No respect was shown him in the department. The porter not only did not rise from his seat when he passed, but never even glanced at him, any more than if a fly had flown through the reception-room. His superiors treated him in coolly despotic fashion. Some sub-chief would thrust a paper under his nose without so much as saying, "Copy," or "Here's a nice interesting affair," or anything else agreeable, as is customary among well-bred officials. And he took it, looking only at the paper, and not observing who handed it

to him, or whether he had the right to do so; simply took it, and set about copying it.

The young officials laughed at and made fun of him, so far as their official wit permitted; told in his presence various stories concocted about him, and about his landlady, an old woman of seventy; declared that she beat him; asked when the wedding was to be; and strewed bits of paper over his head, calling them snow. But Akakiy Akakievitch answered not a word, any more than if there had been no one there besides himself. It even had no effect upon his work: amid all these annoyances he never made a single mistake in a letter. But if the joking became wholly unbearable, as when they jogged his hand, and prevented his attending to his work, he would exclaim, "Leave me alone! Why do you insult me?" And there was something strange in the words and the voice in which they were uttered. There was in it something which moved to pity; so much that one young man, a newcomer, who, taking pattern by the others, had permitted himself to make sport of Akakiy, suddenly stopped short, as though all about him had undergone a transformation, and presented itself in a different aspect. Some unseen force repelled him from the comrades whose acquaintance he had made, on the supposition that they were well-bred and polite men. Long afterward, in his gayest moments, there recurred to his mind the little official with the bald forehead, with his heart-rending words, "Leave me alone! Why do you insult me?" In these moving words, other words resounded—"I am thy brother." And the young man covered his face with his hand; and many a time afterward, in the course of his life, shuddered at seeing how much inhumanity there is in man, how much savage coarseness is concealed beneath delicate, refined worldliness, and even, O God! in that man whom the world acknowledges as honorable and noble.

It would be difficult to find another man who lived so entirely for his duties. It is not enough to say that Akakiy labored with zeal: no, he labored with love. In his copying, he found a varied and agreeable employment. Enjoyment was written on his face: some letters were even favorites with him, and when he encountered these, he smiled, winked, and worked with his lips, till it seemed as though each letter might be read in his face, as his pen traced it. If his pay

had been in proportion to his zeal, he would, perhaps, to his great surprise, have been made even a councillor of state. But he worked, as his companions, the wits, put it, like a horse in a mill.

Moreover, it is impossible to say that no attention was paid to him. One director, being a kindly man, and desirous of rewarding him for his long service, ordered him to be given something more important than mere copying. So he was ordered to make a report of an already concluded affair, to another department; the duty consisting simply in changing the heading, and altering a few words from the first to the third person. This caused him so much toil, that he broke into a perspiration; rubbed his forehead, and finally said, "No, give me rather something to copy." After that they let him copy on forever.

Outside this copying, it appeared that nothing existed for him. He gave no thought to his clothes; his undress uniform was not green, but a sort of rusty-meal color. The collar was low, so that his neck, in spite of the fact that it was not long, seemed inordinately so as it emerged from it, like the necks of those plaster cats which wag their heads, and are carried about upon the heads of scores of image sellers. And something was always sticking to his uniform, either a bit of hay or some trifle. Moreover, he had a peculiar knack, as he walked along the street, of arriving beneath a window just as all sorts of rubbish was being flung out of it; hence he always bore about on his hat scraps of melon rinds, and other such articles. Never once in his life did he give heed to what was going on every day in the street; while it is well known that his young brother officials train the range of their glances till they can see when any one's trouser-straps come undone upon the opposite sidewalk, which always brings a malicious smile to their faces. But Akakiy Akakievitch saw in all things the clean, even strokes of his written lines; and only when a horse thrust his nose, from some unknown quarter, over his shoulder, and sent a whole gust of wind down his neck from his nostrils, did he observe that he was not in the middle of a page, but in the middle of the street.

On reaching home, he sat down at once at the table, supped his cabbage-soup up quickly, and swallowed a bit of beef with onions, never noticing their taste, and gulping down

everything with flies and anything else which the Lord happened to send at the moment. His stomach filled, he rose from the table and copied papers which he had brought home. If there happened to be none, he took copies for himself, for his own gratification, especially if the document was noteworthy, not on account of its style, but of its being addressed to some distinguished person.

Even at the hour when the gray St. Petersburg sky had quite disappeared, and all the official world had eaten or dined, each as he could, in accordance with the salary he received and his own fancy; when all were resting from the departmental jar of pens, running to and fro from their own and other people's indispensable occupations, and from all the work that an uneasy man makes willingly for himself, rather than what is necessary; when officials hasten to dedicate to pleasure the time which is left to them, one bolder than the rest going to the theatre; another, into the street looking under all the bonnets; another wasting his evening in compliments to some pretty girl, the star of a small official circle; another—and this is the common case of all—visiting his comrades on the fourth or third floor, in two small rooms with an anteroom or kitchen, and some pretensions to fashion, such as a lamp or some other trifle which has cost many a sacrifice of dinner or pleasure trip; in a word, at the hour when all officials disperse among the contracted quarters of their friends, to play whist, as they sip their tea from glasses with a kopek's worth of sugar, smoke long pipes, relate at times some bits of gossip which a Russian man can never, under any circumstances, refrain from, and, when there is nothing else to talk of, repeat eternal anecdotes about the commandant to whom they had sent word that the tails of the horses on the Falconet Monument had been cut off, when all strive to divert themselves, Akakiy Akakievitch indulged in no kind of diversion. No one could ever say that he had seen him at any kind of evening party. Having written to his heart's content, he lay down to sleep, smiling at the thought of the coming day—of what God might send him to copy on the morrow.

Thus flowed on the peaceful life of the man, who, with a salary of four hundred rubles, understood how to be content with his lot; and thus it would have continued to flow on, perhaps, to extreme old age, were it not that there are vari-

ous ills strewn along the path of life for titular councillors as well as for private, actual, court, and every other species of councillor, even for those who never give any advice or take any themselves.

There exists in St. Petersburg a powerful foe of all who receive a salary of four hundred rubles a year, or thereabouts. This foe is no other than the Northern cold, although it is said to be very healthy. At nine o'clock in the morning, at the very hour when the streets are filled with men bound for the various official departments, it begins to bestow such powerful and piercing nips on all noses impartially, that the poor officials really do not know what to do with them. At an hour when the foreheads of even those who occupy exalted positions ache with the cold, and tears start to their eyes, the poor titular councillors are sometimes quite unprotected. Their only salvation lies in traversing as quickly as possible, in their thin little cloaks, five or six streets, and then warming their feet in the porter's room, and so thawing all their talents and qualifications for official service, which had become frozen on the way.

Akakiy Akakievitch had felt for some time that his back and shoulders suffered with peculiar poignancy, in spite of the fact that he tried to traverse the distance with all possible speed. He began finally to wonder whether the fault did not lie in his cloak. He examined it thoroughly at home, and discovered that in two places, namely, on the back and shoulders, it had become thin as gauze; the cloth was worn to such a degree that he could see through it, and the lining had fallen into pieces. You must know that Akakiy Akakievitch's cloak served as an object of ridicule to the officials; they even refused it the noble name of cloak, and called it a cape. In fact, it was of singular make; its collar diminishing year by year, but serving to patch its other parts. The patching did not exhibit great skill on the part of the tailor, and was, in fact, baggy and ugly. Seeing how the matter stood, Akakiy Akakievitch decided that it would be necessary to take the cloak to Petrovitch, the tailor, who lived somewhere on the fourth floor, up a dark staircase, and who, in spite of his having but one eye, and pock-marks all over his face, busied himself in repairing the trousers and coats of officials and others; that is to say, when he was sober, and not nursing some other scheme in his head.

It is not necessary to say much about this tailor: but, as it is the custom to have the character of each personage in a novel clearly defined, there is no help for it, so here is Petrovitch the tailor. At first he was called only Grigoriy, and was some gentleman's serf; he commenced calling himself Petrovitch from the time when he received his free papers, and further began to drink heavily on all holidays, at first on the great ones, and then on all church festivals without discrimination, wherever a cross stood in the calendar. On this point he was faithful to ancestral custom; and when quarrelling with his wife, he called her a low female and a German. As we have mentioned his wife, it will be necessary to say a word or two about her. Unfortunately, little is known of her beyond the fact that Petrovitch has a wife, who wears a cap and a dress, but cannot lay claim to beauty; at least, no one but the soldiers of the guard even looked under her cap when they met her.

Ascending the staircase which led to Petrovitch's room—which staircase was all soaked with dish-water, and reeked with the smell of spirits which affects the eyes, and is an inevitable adjunct to all dark stairways in St. Petersburg houses—ascending the stairs, Akakiy Akakievitch pondered how much Petrovitch would ask, and mentally resolved not to give more than two rubles. The door was open; for the mistress, in cooking some fish, had raised such a smoke in the kitchen that not even the beetles were visible. Akakiy Akakievitch passed through the kitchen unperceived, even by the housewife, and at length reached a room where he beheld Petrovitch seated on a large unpainted table, with his legs tucked under him like a Turkish pasha. His feet were bare, after the fashion of tailors as they sit at work; and the first thing which caught the eye was his thumb, with a deformed nail thick and strong as a turtle's shell. About Petrovitch's neck hung a skein of silk and thread, and upon his knees lay some old garment. He had been trying unsuccessfully for three minutes to thread his needle, and was enraged at the darkness and even at the thread, growling in a low voice, "It won't go through, the barbarian! You pricked me, you rascal!"

Akakiy Akakievitch was vexed at arriving at the precise moment when Petrovitch was angry; he liked to order something of Petrovitch when the latter was a little downhearted,

or, as his wife expressed it, "when he had settled himself with brandy, the one-eyed devil!" Under such circumstances, Petrovitch generally came down in his price very readily, and even bowed and returned thanks. Afterward, to be sure, his wife would come, complaining that her husband was drunk, and so had fixed the price too low; but, if only a ten-kopek piece were added, then the matter was settled. But now it appeared that Petrovitch was in a sober condition, and therefore rough, taciturn, and inclined to demand, Satan only knows what price. Akakiy Akakievitch felt this, and would gladly have beat a retreat; but he was in for it. Petrovitch screwed up his one eye very intently at him; and Akakiy Akakievitch involuntarily said: "How do you do, Petrovitch?"

"I wish you a good-morning, sir," said Petrovitch, squinting at Akakiy Akakievitch's hands, to see what sort of booty he had brought.

"Ah! I—to you, Petrovitch, this——" It must be known that Akakiy Akakievitch expressed himself chiefly by prepositions, adverbs, and scraps of phrases which had no meaning whatever. If the matter was a very difficult one, he had a habit of never completing his sentences; so that frequently, having begun a phrase with the words, "This, in fact, is quite——" he forgot to go on, thinking that he had already finished it.

"What is it?" asked Petrovitch, and with his one eye scanned Akakievitch's whole uniform from the collar down to the cuffs, the back, the tails and the button-holes, all of which were well known to him, since they were his own handiwork. Such is the habit of tailors; it is the first thing they do on meeting one.

"But I, here, this—Petrovitch—a cloak, cloth—here you see, everywhere, in different places, it is quite strong—it is a little dusty, and looks old, but it is new, only here in one place it is a little—on the back, and here on one of the shoulders, it is a little worn, yes, here on this shoulder it is a little—do you see? that is all. And a little work——"

Petrovitch took the cloak, spread it out, to begin with, on the table, looked hard at it, shook his head, reached out his hand to the window-sill for his snuff-box, adorned with the portrait of some general, though what general is unknown, for the place where the face should have been had been

rubbed through by the finger, and a square bit of paper had been pasted over it. Having taken a pinch of snuff, Petrovitch held up the cloak, and inspected it against the light, and again shook his head. Then he turned it, lining upward, and shook his head once more. After which he again lifted the general-adorned lid with its bit of pasted paper, and, having stuffed his nose with snuff, closed and put away the snuff-box, and said finally, "No, it is impossible to mend it; it's a wretched garment!"

Akakiy Akakievitch's heart sank at these words.

"Why is it impossible, Petrovitch?" he said, almost in the pleading voice of a child; "all that ails it is, that it is worn on the shoulders. You must have some pieces——"

"Yes, patches could be found, patches are easily found," said Petrovitch, "but there's nothing to sew them to. The thing is completely rotten; if you put a needle to it—see, it will give way."

"Let it give way, and you can put on another patch at once."

"But there is nothing to put the patches on to; there's no use in strengthening it; it is too far gone. It's lucky that it's cloth; for, if the wind were to blow, it would fly away."

"Well, strengthen it again. How this, in fact."

"No," said Petrovitch decisively, "there is nothing to be done with it. It's a thoroughly bad job. You'd better, when the cold winter weather comes on, make yourself some gaiters out of it, because stockings are not warm. The Germans invented them in order to make more money." Petrovitch loved, on all occasions, to have a fling at the Germans. "But it is plain you must have a new cloak."

At the word "new," all grew dark before Akakiy Akakievitch's eyes and everything in the room began to whirl round. The only thing he saw clearly was the general with the paper face on the lid of Petrovitch's snuff-box. "A new one?" said he, as if still in a dream: "why, I have no money for that."

"Yes, a new one," said Petrovitch, with barbarous composure.

"Well, if it came to a new one, how, it?"

"You mean how much would it cost?"

"Yes."

"Well, you would have to lay out a hundred and fifty or



more," said Petrovitch, and pursed up his lips significantly. He liked to produce powerful effects, liked to stun utterly and suddenly and then to glance sideways to see what face the stunned person would put on the matter.

"A hundred and fifty rubles for a cloak!" shrieked poor Akakiy Akakievitch, perhaps for the first time in his life, for his voice had always been distinguished for softness.

"Yes, sir," said Petrovitch, "for any kind of cloak. If you have a marten fur on the collar, or a silk-lined hood, it will mount up to two hundred."

"Petrovitch, please," said Akakiy Akakievitch in a beseeching tone, not hearing, and not trying to hear Petrovitch's words, and disregarding all his "effects," "some repairs, in order that it may wear yet a little longer."

"No, it would only be a waste of time and money," said Petrovitch; and Akakiy Akakievitch went away after these words, utterly discouraged. But Petrovitch stood for some time after his departure, with significantly compressed lips, and without betaking himself to his work, satisfied that he would not be dropped, and an artistic tailor employed.

Akakiy Akakievitch went out into the street as if in a dream. "Such an affair!" he said to himself: "I did not think it had come to—" and then after a pause, he added, "Well, so it is! see what it has come to at last! and I never imagined that it was so!" Then followed a long silence, after which he exclaimed, "Well, so it is! see what already—nothing unexpected that it would be nothing—what a strange circumstance!" So saying, instead of going home, he went in exactly the opposite direction without himself suspecting it. On the way, a chimney-sweep bumped up against him, and blackened his shoulder, and a whole hatful of rubbish landed on him from the top of a house which was building. He did not notice it; and only when he ran against a watchman, who, having planted his halberd beside him, was shaking some snuff from his box into his horny hand, did he recover himself a little, and that because the watchman said, "Why are you poking yourself into a man's very face? Haven't you the pavement?" This caused him to look about him, and turn toward home.

There only, he finally began to collect his thoughts, and to survey his position in its clear and actual light, and to argue with himself, sensibly and frankly, as with a reasonable

friend, with whom one can discuss private and personal matters. "No," said Akakiy Akakievitch, "it is impossible to reason with Petrovitch now; he is that—evidently, his wife has been beating him. I'd better go to him on Sunday morning; after Saturday night he will be a little cross-eyed and sleepy, for he will want to get drunk, and his wife won't give him any money; and at such a time, a ten-kopek piece in his hand will—he will become more fit to reason with, and then the cloak, and that——" Thus argued Akakiy Akakievitch with himself, regained his courage, and waited until the first Sunday, when seeing from afar that Petrovitch's wife had left the house, he went straight to him.

Petrovitch's eye was, indeed, very much askew after Saturday: his head drooped, and he was very sleepy; but for all that, as soon as he knew what it was a question of, it seemed as though Satan jogged his memory. "Impossible," said he; "please to order a new one." Thereupon Akakiy Akakievitch handed over the ten-kopek piece. "Thank you, sir; I will drink your good health," said Petrovitch; "but as for the cloak, don't trouble yourself about it; it is good for nothing. I will make you a capital new one, so let us settle about it now."

Akakiy Akakievitch was still for mending it; but Petrovitch would not hear of it, and said, "I shall certainly have to make you a new one, and you may depend upon it that I shall do my best. It may even be, as the fashion goes, that the collar can be fastened by silver hooks under a flap."

Then Akakiy Akakievitch saw that it was impossible to get along without a new cloak, and his spirit sank utterly. How, in fact, was it to be done? Where was the money to come from? He might, to be sure, depend, in part, upon his present at Christmas; but that money had long been allotted beforehand. He must have some new trousers, and pay a debt of long standing to the shoemaker for putting new tops to his old boots, and he must order three shirts from the seamstress, and a couple of pieces of linen. In short, all his money must be spent; and even if the director should be so kind as to order him to receive forty-five rubles instead of forty, or even fifty, it would be a mere nothing, a mere drop in the ocean toward the funds necessary for a cloak; although he knew that Petrovitch was often wrong-headed enough to blurt out some outrageous price, so that even his own wife

could not refrain from exclaiming, "Have you lost your senses, you fool?" At one time he would not work at any price, and now it was quite likely that he had named a higher sum than the cloak would cost.

But although he knew that Petrovitch would undertake to make a cloak for eighty rubles, still, where was he to get the eighty rubles from? He might possibly manage half; yes, half might be procured, but where was the other half to come from? But the reader must first be told where the first half came from. Akakiy Akakievitch had a habit of putting, for every ruble he spent, a groschen into a small box, fastened with lock and key, and with a slit in the top for the reception of money. At the end of every half-year he counted over the heap of coppers, and changed it for silver. This he had done for a long time, and in the course of years the sum had mounted up to over forty rubles. Thus he had one half on hand; but where was he to find the other half? where was he to get another forty rubles from? Akakiy Akakievitch thought and thought, and decided that it would be necessary to curtail his ordinary expenses, for the space of one year at least, to dispense with tea in the evening; to burn no candles, and, if there was anything which he must do, to go into his landlady's room and work by her light. When he went into the street he must walk as lightly as he could, and as cautiously, upon the stones, almost upon tiptoe, in order not to wear his heels down in too short a time; he must give the laundress as little to wash as possible; and, in order not to wear out his clothes, he must take them off as soon as he got home, and wear only his cotton dressing-gown, which had been long and carefully saved.

To tell the truth, it was a little hard for him at first to accustom himself to these deprivations; but he got used to them at length, after a fashion, and all went smoothly. He even got used to being hungry in the evening, but he made up for it by treating himself, so to say, in spirit, by bearing ever in mind the idea of his future cloak. From that time forth, his existence seemed to become, in some way, fuller, as if he were married, or as if some other man lived in him, as if, in fact, he were not alone, and some pleasant friend had consented to travel along life's path with him, the friend being no other than the cloak, with thick wadding and a strong lining incapable of wearing out. He became more

lively, and even his character grew firmer, like that of a man who has made up his mind, and set himself a goal. From his face and gait, doubt and indecision, all hesitating and wavering traits disappeared of themselves. Fire gleamed in his eyes, and occasionally the boldest and most daring ideas flitted through his mind; why not, for instance, have marten fur on the collar? The thought of this almost made him absent-minded. Once, in copying a letter, he nearly made a mistake, so that he exclaimed almost aloud, "Ugh!" and crossed himself. Once, in the course of every month, he had a conference with Petrovitch on the subject of the cloak, where it would be better to buy the cloth, and the color, and the price. He always returned home satisfied, though troubled, reflecting that the time would come at last when it could all be bought, and then the cloak made.

The affair progressed more briskly than he had expected. Far beyond all his hopes, the director awarded neither forty nor forty-five rubles for Akakiy Akakievitch's share, but sixty. Whether he suspected that Akakiy Akakievitch needed a cloak, or whether it was merely chance; at all events, twenty extra rubles were by this means provided. This circumstance hastened matters. Two or three months more of hunger and Akakiy Akakievitch had accumulated about eighty rubles. His heart, generally so quiet, began to throb. On the first possible day, he went shopping in company with Petrovitch. They bought some very good cloth, and at a reasonable rate too, for they had been considering the matter for six months, and rarely let a month pass without their visiting the shops to inquire prices. Petrovitch himself said that no better cloth could be had. For lining, they selected a cotton stuff, but so firm and thick, that Petrovitch declared it to be better than silk, and even prettier and more glossy. They did not buy the marten fur, because it was, in fact, dear, but in its stead, they picked out the very best of cat-skin which could be found in the shop, and which might, indeed, be taken for marten at a distance.

Petrovitch worked at the cloak two whole weeks, for there was a great deal of quilting; otherwise it would have been finished sooner. He charged twelve rubles for the job, it could not possibly have been done for less. It was all sewed with silk, in small, double seams; and Petrovitch went over each seam afterward with his own teeth.

It was—it is difficult to say precisely on what day, but probably the most glorious one in Akakiy Akakievitch's life, when Petrovitch at length brought home the cloak. He brought it in the morning, before the hour when it was necessary to start for the department. Never did a cloak arrive so exactly in the nick of time; for the severe cold had set in, and it seemed to threaten to increase. Petrovitch brought the cloak himself as befits a good tailor. On his countenance was a significant expression, such as Akakiy Akakievitch had never beheld there. He seemed fully sensible that he had done no small deed, and crossed a gulf separating tailors who only put in linings and execute repairs, from those who make new things. He took the cloak out of the pocket-handkerchief in which he had brought it. The handkerchief was fresh from the laundress, and he put it in his pocket for use. Taking out the cloak, he gazed proudly at it, held it up with both hands, and flung it skilfully over the shoulders of Akakiy Akakievitch. Then he pulled it and fitted it down behind with his hand, and he draped it around Akakiy Akakievitch without buttoning it. Akakiy Akakievitch, like an experienced man, wished to try the sleeves. Petrovitch helped him on with them, and it turned out that the sleeves were satisfactory also. In short, the cloak appeared to be perfect, and most seasonable. Petrovitch did not neglect to observe that it was only because he lived in a narrow street, and had no signboard, and had known Akakiy Akakievitch so long, that he had made it so cheaply; but that if he had been in business on the Nevsky Prospect, he would have charged seventy-five rubles for the making alone. Akakiy Akakievitch did not care to argue this point with Petrovitch. He paid him, thanked him, and set out a once in his new cloak for the department. Petrovitch followed him, and, pausing in the street, gazed long at the cloak in the distance, after which he went to one side expressly to run through a crooked alley, and emerge again into the street beyond to gaze once more upon the cloak from another point, namely, directly in front.

Meantime Akakiy Akakievitch went on in holiday mood. He was conscious, every second of the time, that he had a new cloak on his shoulders; and several times he laughed with internal satisfaction. In fact, there were two advantages, one was its warmth; the other its beauty. He saw

nothing of the road, but suddenly found himself at the department. He took off his cloak in the anteroom, looked it over carefully, and confided it to the especial care of the attendant. It is impossible to say precisely how it was that every one in the department knew at once that Akakiy Akakievitch had a new cloak, and that the "cape" no longer existed. All rushed at the same moment into the anteroom, to inspect it. They congratulated him, and said pleasant things to him, so that he began at first to smile, and then to grow ashamed. When all surrounded him, and said that the new cloak must be "christened," and that he must give a whole evening at least to this, Akakiy Akakievitch lost his head completely, and did not know where he stood, what to answer, or how to get out of it. He stood blushing all over for several minutes, and was on the point of assuring them with great simplicity that it was not a new cloak, that it was so and so, that it was in fact the old "cape."

At length one of the officials, a sub-chief probably, in order to show that he was not at all proud, and on good terms with his inferiors, said, "So be it, only I will give the party instead of Akakiy Akakievitch; I invite you all to tea with me to-night; it happens quite *à propos*, as it is my name-day." The officials naturally at once offered the sub-chief their congratulations, and accepted the invitation with pleasure. Akakiy Akakievitch would have declined; but all declared that it was discourteous, that it was simply a sin and a shame, and that he could not possibly refuse. Besides, the notion became pleasant to him when he recollected that he should thereby have a chance of wearing his new cloak in the evening also.

That whole day was truly a most triumphant festival day for Akakiy Akakievitch. He returned home in the most happy frame of mind, took off his cloak, and hung it carefully on the wall, admiring afresh the cloth and the lining. Then he brought out his old, worn-out cloak for comparison. He looked at it and laughed, so vast was the difference. And long after dinner he laughed again when the condition of the "cape" recurred to his mind. He dined cheerfully, and after dinner wrote nothing, but took his ease for a while on the bed, until it got dark. Then he dressed himself leisurely, put on his cloak, and stepped out into the street. Where the host lived, unfortunately, we cannot say; our

memory begins to fail us badly; and the houses and streets in St. Petersburg have become so mixed up in our head that it is very difficult to get anything out of it again in proper form. This much is certain, that the official lived in the best part of the city; and therefore it must have been anything but near to Akakiy Akakievitch's residence. Akakiy Akakievitch was first obliged to traverse a kind of wilderness of deserted, dimly-lighted streets; but in proportion as he approached the official's quarter of the city, the streets became more lively, more populous, and more brilliantly illuminated. Pedestrians began to appear; handsomely dressed ladies were more frequently encountered; the men had otter skin collars to their coats; peasant waggons, with their grate-like sledges stuck over with brass-headed nails, became rarer; while on the other hand, more and more drivers in red velvet caps, lacquered sledges and bear-skin coats began to appear, and carriages with rich hammer-cloths flew swiftly through the streets, their wheels crunching the snow. Akakiy Akakievitch gazed upon all this as upon a novel sight. He had not been in the streets during the evening for years. He halted out of curiosity before a shop-window, to look at a picture representing a handsome woman, who had thrown off her shoe, thereby baring her whole foot in a very pretty way; while behind her the head of a man with whiskers and a handsome mustache peeped through the doorway of another room. Akakiy Akakievitch shook his head, and laughed, and then went on his way. Why did he laugh? Either because he had met with a thing utterly unknown, but for which every one cherishes, nevertheless, some sort of feeling; or else he thought, like many officials, as follows: "Well, those French! What is to be said? If they do go in anything of that sort, why——" But possibly he did not think at all.

Akakiy Akakievitch at length reached the house in which the sub-chief lodged. The sub-chief lived in fine style; the staircase was lit by a lamp; his apartment being on the second floor. On entering the vestibule, Akakiy Akakievitch beheld a whole row of goloshes on the floor. Among them, in the centre of the room, stood a samovar or tea-urn, humming, and emitting clouds of steam. On the walls hung all sorts of coats and cloaks, among which there were even some with beaver collars or velvet facings. Beyond, the buzz of

conversation was audible, and became clear and loud when the servant came out with a trayful of empty glasses, cream-jugs, and sugar-bowls. It was evident that the officials had arrived long before, and had already finished their first glass of tea.

Akakiy Akakievitch, having hung up his own cloak, entered the inner room. Before him all at once appeared lights, officials, pipes, and card-tables; and he was bewildered by a sound of rapid conversation rising from all the tables, and the noise of moving chairs. He halted very awkwardly in the middle of the room, wondering what he ought to do. But they had seen him. They received him with a shout, and all thronged at once into the anteroom, and there took another look at his cloak. Akakiy Akakievitch, although somewhat confused, was frank-hearted, and could not refrain from rejoicing when he saw how they praised his cloak. Then, of course, they all dropped him and his cloak, and returned, as was proper, to the tables set out for whist.

All this, the noise, the talk, and the throng of people was rather overwhelming to Akakiy Akakievitch. He simply did not know where he stood, or where to put his hands, his feet, and his whole body. Finally he sat down by the players, looked at the cards, gazed at the face of one and another, and after a while began to gape, and to feel that it was wearisome, the more so as the hour was already long past when he usually went to bed. He wanted to take leave of the host; but they would not let him go, saying that he must not fail to drink a glass of champagne, in honor of his new garment. In the course of an hour, supper, consisting of vegetables, salad, cold veal, pastry, confectioner's pies, and champagne, was served. They made Akakiy Akakievitch drink two glasses of champagne, after which he felt things grow livelier.

Still, he could not forget that it was twelve o'clock, and that he should have been at home long ago. In order that the host might not think of some excuse for detaining him, he stole out of the room quickly, sought out, in the anteroom, his cloak, which, to his sorrow, he found lying on the floor, brushed it, picked off every speck upon it, put it on his shoulders, and descended the stairs to the street.

In the street all was still bright. Some petty shops, those permanent clubs of servants and all sorts of folks, were open.



Others were shut, but, nevertheless, showed a streak of light the whole length of the door-crack, indicating that they were not yet free of company, and that probably some domestics, male and female, were finishing their stories and conversations, while leaving their masters in complete ignorance as to their whereabouts. Akakiy Akakievitch went on in a happy frame of mind: he even started to run, without knowing why, after some lady, who flew past like a flash of lightning. But he stopped short, and went on very quietly as before, wondering why he had quickened his pace. Soon there spread before him those deserted streets, which are not cheerful in the daytime, to say nothing of the evening. Now they were even more dim and lonely: the lanterns began to grow rarer, oil, evidently, had been less liberally supplied. Then came wooden houses and fences: not a soul anywhere; only the snow sparkled in the streets, and mournfully veiled the low-roofed cabins with their closed shutters. He approached the spot where the street crossed a vast square with houses barely visible on its farther side, a square which seemed a fearful desert.

Afar, a tiny spark glimmered from some watchman's-box, which seemed to stand on the edge of the world. Akakiy Akakievitch's cheerfulness diminished at this point in a marked degree. He entered the square, not without an involuntary sensation of fear, as though his heart warned him of some evil. He glanced back and on both sides, it was like a sea about him. "No, it is better not to look," he thought, and went on, closing his eyes. When he opened them, to see whether he was near the end of the square, he suddenly beheld, standing just before his very nose, some bearded individuals of precisely what sort he could not make out. All grew dark before his eyes, and his heart throbbed.

"But, of course, the cloak is mine!" said one of them in a loud voice, seizing hold of his collar. Akakiy Akakievitch was about to shout "watch," when the second man thrust a fist about the size of a man's head, into his mouth, muttering, "Now scream!"

Akakiy Akakievitch felt them strip off his cloak, and give him a push with a knee; he fell headlong upon the snow, and felt no more. In a few minutes he recovered consciousness, and rose to his feet; but no one was there. He felt that it was cold in the square, and that his cloak was gone;

he began to shout, but his voice did not appear to reach to the outskirts of the square. In despair, but without ceasing to shout, he started at a run across the square, straight toward the watch-box, beside which stood the watchman, leaning on his halberd, and apparently curious to know what kind of a customer was running toward him, and shouting. Akakiy Akakievitch ran up to him, and began in a sobbing voice to shout that he was asleep, and attended to nothing, and did not see when a man was robbed. The watchman replied that he had seen two men stop him in the middle of the square, but supposed that they were friends of him; and that, instead of scolding vainly, he had better go to the police on the morrow, so that they might make a search for whoever had stolen the cloak.

Akakiy Akakievitch ran home in complete disorder; his hair, which grew very thinly upon his temples and the back of his head, wholly disordered; his body, arms, and legs covered with snow. The old woman, who was mistress of his lodgings, on hearing a terrible knocking, sprang hastily from her bed, and, with only one shoe on, ran to open the door, pressing the sleeve of her chemise to her bosom out of modesty; but when she had opened it, she fell back on beholding Akakiy Akakievitch in such a state. When he told her about the affair she clasped her hands, and said that he must go straight to the district chief of police, for his subordinate would turn up his nose, promise well, and drop the matter there. The very best thing to do, therefore, would be to go to the district chief, whom she knew, because Finnish Anna, her former cook, was now nurse at his house. She often saw him passing the house; and he was at church every Sunday, praying, but at the same time gazing cheerfully at everybody; so that he must be a good man, judging from all appearances. Having listened to this opinion, Akakiy Akakievitch betook himself sadly to his room; and how he spent the night there, any one who can put himself in another's place may readily imagine.

Early in the morning he presented himself at the district chief's; but was told that this official was asleep. He went again at ten and was again informed that he was asleep; at eleven, and they said: "The superintendent is not at home;" at dinner time, and the clerks in the anteroom would not admit him on any terms, and insisted upon knowing his busi-

ness. So that at last, for once in his life, Akakiy Akakievitch felt an inclination to show some spirit, and said curtly that he must see the chief in person; that they ought not to presume to refuse him entrance; that he came from the department of justice, and that when he complained of them, they would see.

The clerks dared make no reply to this, and one of them went to call the chief, who listened to the strange story of the theft of the coat. Instead of directing his attention to the principal points of the matter, he began to question Akakiy Akakievitch: Why was he going home so late? Was he in the habit of doing so, or had he been to some disorderly house? So that Akakiy Akakievitch got thoroughly confused, and left him without knowing whether the affair of his cloak was in proper train or not.

All that day, for the first time in his life, he never went near the department. The next day he made his appearance, very pale, and in his old cape, which had become even more shabby. The news of the robbery of the cloak touched many; although there were some officials present who never lost an opportunity, even such a one as the present, of ridiculing Akakiy Akakievitch. They decided to make a collection for him on the spot, but the officials had already spent a great deal in subscribing for the director's portrait, and for some book, at the suggestion of the head of that division, who was a friend of the author; and so the sum was trifling.

One of them, moved by pity, resolved to help Akakiy Akakievitch with some good advice at least, and told him that he ought not to go to the police, for although it might happen that a police-officer, wishing to win the approval of his superiors, might hunt up the cloak by some means, still, his cloak would remain in the possession of the police if he did not offer legal proof that it belonged to him. The best thing for him, therefore, would be to apply to a certain prominent personage; since this prominent personage, by entering into relations with the proper persons, could greatly expedite the matter.

As there was nothing else to be done, Akakiy Akakievitch decided to go to the prominent personage. What was the exact official position of the prominent personage, remains unknown to this day. The reader must know that the prominent personage had but recently become a prominent person-

age, having up to that time been only an insignificant person. Moreover, his present position was not considered prominent in comparison with others still more so. But there is always a circle of people to whom what is insignificant in the eyes of others, is important enough. Moreover, he strove to increase his importance by sundry devices; for instance, he managed to have the inferior officials meet him on the staircase when he entered upon his service; no one was to presume to come directly to him, but the strictest etiquette must be observed; the collegiate recorder must make a report to the government secretary, the government secretary to the titular councillor, or whatever other man was proper, and all business must come before him in this manner. In Holy Russia, all is thus contaminated with the love of imitation; every man imitates and copies his superior. They even say that a certain titular councillor, when promoted to the head of some small separate room, immediately partitioned off a private room for himself, called it the audience chamber, and posted at the door a lackey with red collar and braid, who grasped the handle of the door, and opened to all comers; though the audience chamber would hardly hold an ordinary writing-table.

The manners and customs of the prominent personage were grand and imposing, but rather exaggerated. The main foundation of his system was strictness. "Strictness, strictness, and always strictness!" he generally said; and at the last word he looked significantly into the face of the person to whom he spoke. But there was no necessity for this, for the half-score of subordinates, who formed the entire force of the office, were properly afraid; on catching sight of him afar off, they left their work, and waited, drawn up in line, until he had passed through the room. His ordinary converse with his inferiors smacked of sternness, and consisted chiefly of three phrases: "How dare you?" "Do you know whom you are speaking to?" "Do you realize who stands before you?"

Otherwise he was a very kind-hearted man, good to his comrades, and ready to oblige; but the rank of general threw him completely off his balance. On receiving any one of that rank, he became confused, lost his way, as it were, and never knew what to do. If he chanced to be among his equals, he was still a very nice kind of man, a very good fel-

low in many respects, and not stupid; but the very moment that he found himself in the society of people but one rank lower than himself, he became silent; and his situation aroused sympathy, the more so, as he felt himself that he might have been making an incomparably better use of his time. In his eyes, there was sometimes visible a desire to join some interesting conversation or group; but he was kept back by the thought, "Would it not be a very great condescension on his part? Would it not be familiar? and would he not thereby lose his importance?" And in consequence of such reflections, he always remained in the same dumb state, uttering from time to time a few monosyllabic sounds, and thereby earning the name of the most wearisome of men.

To this prominent personage, Akakiy Akakievitch presented himself, and this at the most unfavorable time, for himself, though opportune for the prominent personage. The prominent personage was in his cabinet, conversing very gayly with an old acquaintance and companion of his childhood, whom he had not seen for several years, and who had just arrived, when it was announced to him that a person named Bashmatchkin had come. He asked abruptly, "Who is he?" "Some official," he was informed. "Ah, he can wait! this is no time for him to call," said the important man.

It must be remarked here, that the important man lied outrageously: he had said all he had to say to his friend long before; and the conversation had been interspersed for some time with very long pauses, during which they merely slapped each other on the leg, and said, "You think so, Ivan Abramovitch!" "Just so, Stephan Varlamovitch!" Nevertheless, he ordered that the official should be kept waiting, in order to show his friend, a man who had not been in the service for a long time, but had lived at home in the country, how long officials had to wait in his anteroom.

At length, having talked himself completely out, and more than that, having had his fill of pauses, and smoked a cigar in a very comfortable arm-chair with reclining back, he suddenly seemed to recollect, and said to the secretary, who stood by the door with papers of reports, "So it seems that there is a tchinovnik waiting to see me. Tell him that he may come in." On perceiving Akakiy Akakievitch's modest mien, and his worn undress uniform, he turned abruptly to him, and said, "What do you want?" in a curt hard voice,

which he had practised in his room in private, and before the looking-glass, for a whole week before being raised to his present rank.

Akakiy Akakievitch, who was already imbued with a due amount of fear, became somewhat confused: and as well as his tongue would permit, explained, with a rather more frequent addition than usual of the word "that," that his cloak was quite new, and had been stolen in the most inhuman manner; that he had applied to him, in order that he might, in some way, by his intermediation—that he might enter into correspondence with the chief of police, and find the cloak.

For some inexplicable reason, this conduct seemed familiar to the prominent personage. "What, my dear sir!" he said abruptly, "are you not acquainted with etiquette? Where have you come from? Don't you know how such matters are managed? You should first have entered a complaint about this at the court below: it would have gone to the head of the department, then to the chief of the division, then it would have been handed over to the secretary, and the secretary would have given it to me."

"But, your excellency," said Akakiy Akakievitch, trying to collect his small handful of wits, and conscious at the same time that he was perspiring terribly, "I, your excellency, presumed to trouble you because secretaries—are an untrustworthy race."

"What, what, what!" said the important personage. "Where did you get such courage? Where did you get such ideas? What impudence toward their chiefs and superiors has spread among the young generation!" The prominent personage apparently had not observed that Akakiy Akakievitch was already in the neighborhood of fifty. If he could be called a young man, it must have been in comparison with some one who was seventy. "Do you know to whom you speak? Do you realize who stands before you? Do you realize it? do you realize it? I ask you!" Then he stamped his foot and raised his voice to such a pitch that it would have frightened even a different man from Akakiy Akakievitch.

Akakiy Akakievitch's senses failed him; he staggered, trembled in every limb, and, if the porters had not run in to support him, would have fallen to the floor. They carried him out insensible. But the prominent personage, gratified

that the effect should have surpassed his expectations, and quite intoxicated with the thought that his word could even deprive a man of his senses, glanced sideways at his friend in order to see how he looked upon this, and perceived, not without satisfaction, that his friend was in a most uneasy frame of mind, and even beginning, on his part, to feel a trifle frightened.

Akakiy Akakievitch could not remember how he descended the stairs, and got into the street. He felt neither his hands nor feet. Never in his life had he been so rated by any high official, let alone a strange one. He went staggering on through the snow-storm, which was blowing in the streets, with his mouth wide open, the wind, in St. Petersburg fashion, darted upon him from all quarters, and down every cross street. In a twinkling it had blown a quinsy into his throat, and he reached home unable to utter a word. His throat was swollen, and he lay down on his bed. So powerful is sometimes a good scolding!

The next day a violent fever showed itself. Thanks to the generous assistance of the St. Petersburg climate, the malady progressed more rapidly than could have been expected; and when the doctor arrived, he found, on feeling the sick man's pulse, that there was nothing to be done, except to prescribe a fomentation, so that the patient might not be left entirely without the beneficent aid of medicine; but at the same time he predicted his end in thirty-six hours. After this he turned to the landlady, and said, "And as for you, don't waste your time on him: order his pine coffin now, for an oak one will be too expensive for him." Did Akakiy Akakievitch hear these fatal words? and if he heard them, did they produce any overwhelming effect upon him? Did he lament the bitterness of his life? We know not, for he continued in a delirious condition. Visions incessantly appeared to him each stranger than the other. Now he saw Petrovitch and ordered him to make a cloak with some traps for robbers who seemed to him to be always under the bed; and cried every moment to the landlady to pull one of them from under his coverlet. Then he inquired why his old mantle hung before him when he had a new cloak. Next he fancied that he was standing before the prominent person listening to a thorough setting-down and saying, "Forgive me, your excellency!" but at last he began to curse, uttering

the most horrible words, so that his aged landlady crossed herself, never in her life having heard anything of the kind from him, the more so, as those words followed directly after the words "your excellency." Later on he talked utter nonsense, of which nothing could be made: all that was evident being that his incoherent words and thoughts hovered ever about one thing, his cloak.

At length poor Akakiy Akakievitch breathed his last. They sealed up neither his room nor his effects, because, in the first place, there were no heirs, and, in the second, there was very little to inherit beyond a bundle of goose-quills, a quire of white official paper, three pairs of socks, two or three buttons which had burst off his trousers, and the mantle already known to the reader. To whom all this fell, God knows. I confess that the person who told me this tale took no interest in the matter. They carried Akakiy Akakievitch out, and buried him.

And St. Petersburg was left without Akakiy Akakievitch, as though he had never lived there. A being disappeared, who was protected by none, dear to none, interesting to none, and who never even attracted to himself the attention of those students of human nature, who omit no opportunity of thrusting a pin through a common fly, and examining it under the microscope. A being who bore meekly the jibes of the department, and went to his grave without having done one unusual deed, but to whom, nevertheless, at the close of his life, appeared a bright visitant in the form of a cloak, which momentarily cheered his poor life, and upon whom, thereafter, an intolerable misfortune descended, just as it descends upon the heads of the mighty of this world!

Several days after his death, the porter was sent from the department to his lodgings with an order for him to present himself there immediately; the chief commanding it. But the porter had to return unsuccessful, with the answer that he could not come; and to the question, "Why?" replied, "Well, because he is dead! he was buried four days ago." In this manner did they hear of Akakiy Akakievitch's death at the department; and the next day a new official sat in his place, with a handwriting by no means so upright, but more inclined and slanting.

But who could have imagined that this was not really the end of Akakiy Akakievitch, that he was destined to raise a



commotion after death, as if in compensation for his utterly insignificant life? But so it happened, and our poor story unexpectedly gains a fantastic ending.

A rumor suddenly spread through St. Petersburg, that a dead man had taken to appearing on the Kalinkin Bridge and its vicinity, at night, in the form of a tchinovnik seeking a stolen cloak, and that, under the pretext of its being the stolen cloak, he dragged, without regard to rank or calling, every one's cloak from his shoulders, be it cat-skin, beaver, fox, bear, sable; in a word, every sort of fur and skin which men adopted for their covering. One of the department officials saw the dead man with his own eyes, and immediately recognized in him Akakiy Akakievitch. This, however, inspired him with such terror, that he ran off with all his might, and therefore did not scan the dead man closely, but only saw how the latter threatened him from afar with his finger. Constant complaints poured in from all quarters, of those who were exposed to the danger of a cold, on account of the frequent dragging off of their cloaks.

Arrangements were made by the police to catch the corpse, alive or dead, at any cost, and punish him as an example to others, in the most severe manner. In this they nearly succeeded; for a watchman, on guard in Kirushkin Alley, caught the corpse by the collar on the very scene of his evil deeds, when attempting to pull off the frieze cloak of a retired musician. Having seized him by the collar, he summoned, with a shout, two of his comrades, whom he enjoined to hold him fast, while he himself felt for a moment in his boot, in order to draw out his snuff-box, and refresh his frozen nose. But the snuff was of a sort which even a corpse could not endure. The watchman having closed his right nostril with his finger, had no sooner succeeded in holding half a handful up to the left, than the corpse sneezed so violently that he completely filled the eyes of all three. While they raised their hands to wipe them, the dead man vanished completely, so that they positively did not know whether they had acutally had him in their grip at all. Thereafter the watchmen conceived such a terror of dead men, that they were afraid even to seize the living, and only screamed from a distance, "Hey, there! go your way!" So the dead tchinovnik began to appear, even beyond the Kalinkin Bridge, causing no little terror to all timid people.

But we have totally neglected that certain prominent personage, who may really be considered as the cause of the fantastic turn taken by this true history. First of all, justice compels us to say, that after the departure of poor, annihilated Akakiy Akakievitch, he felt something like remorse. Suffering was unpleasant to him, for his heart was accessible to many good impulses, in spite of the fact that his rank often prevented his showing his true self. As soon as his friend had left his cabinet he began to think about poor Akakiy Akakievitch. And from that day forth, poor Akakiy Akakievitch, who could not bear up under an official reprimand, recurred to his mind almost every day. The thought troubled him to such an extent, that a week later he even resolved to send an official to him, to learn whether he really could assist him; and when it was reported to him that Akakiy Akakievitch had died suddenly of fever, he was startled, hearkened to the reproaches of his conscience, and was out of sorts for the whole day.

Wishing to divert his mind in some way, and drive away the disagreeable impression, he set out that evening for one of his friend's houses, where he found quite a large party assembled. What was better, nearly every one was of the same rank as himself, so that he need not feel in the least constrained. This had a marvellous effect upon his mental state. He grew expansive, made himself agreeable in conversation, in short, he passed a delightful evening. After supper he drank a couple of glasses of champagne—not a bad recipe for cheerfulness, as every one knows. The champagne inclined him to various adventures; and he determined not to return home, but to go and see a certain well-known lady, of German extraction, Karolina Ivanovna, a lady, it appears, with whom he was on a very friendly footing.

It must be mentioned that the prominent personage was no longer a young man, but a good husband, and respected father of a family. Two sons, one of whom was already in the service; and a good-looking, sixteen-year-old daughter, with a rather *retroussé* but pretty little nose, came every morning to kiss his hand, and say, "*Bon jour, papa.*" His wife, a still fresh and good-looking woman, first gave him her hand to kiss, and then, reversing the procedure, kissed his. But the prominent personage, though perfectly satisfied in his domestic relations, considered it stylish to have a friend

in another quarter of the city. This friend was scarcely prettier or younger than his wife; but there are such puzzles in the world, and it is not our place to judge them. So the important personage descended the stairs, stepped into his sledge, said to the coachman, "To Karolina Ivanovna's," and, wrapping himself luxuriously in his warm cloak, found himself in that delightful frame of mind than which a Russian can conceive nothing better, namely, when you think of nothing yourself, yet when the thoughts creep into your mind of their own accord, each more agreeable than the other, giving you no trouble either to drive them away, or seek them. Fully satisfied, he recalled all the gay features of the evening just passed, and all the *mots* which had made the little circle laugh. Many of them he repeated in a low voice, and found them quite as funny as before; so it is not surprising that he should laugh heartily at them. Occasionally, however, he was interrupted by gusts of wind, which, coming suddenly, God knows whence or why, cut his face, drove masses of snow into it, filled out his cloak-collar like a sail, or suddenly blew it over his head with supernatural force, and thus caused him constant trouble to disentangle himself.

Suddenly the important personage felt some one clutch him firmly by the collar. Turning round, he perceived a man of short stature, in an old, worn uniform, and recognized, not without terror, Akakiy Akakievitch. The official's face was white as snow, and looked just like a corpse's. But the horror of the important personage transcended all bounds when he saw the dead man's mouth open, and, with a terrible odor of the grave, gave vent to the following remarks: "Ah, here you are at last! I have you, that—by the collar! I need your cloak; you took no trouble about mine, but reprimanded me; so now give up your own."

The pallid prominent personage almost died of fright. Brave as he was in the office and in the presence of inferiors generally, and although, at the sight of his manly form and appearance, every one said, "Ugh! how much character he has!" at this crisis, he, like many possessed of an heroic exterior, experienced such terror, that, not without cause, he began to fear an attack of illness. He flung his cloak hastily from his shoulders and shouted to his coachman in an unnatural voice, "Home at full speed!" The coachman, hear-

ing the tone which is generally employed at critical moments, and even accompanied by something much more tangible, drew his head down between his shoulders in case of an emergency, flourished his whip, and flew on like an arrow. In a little more than six minutes the prominent personage was at the entrance of his own house. Pale, thoroughly scared, and cloakless, he went home instead of to Karolina Ivanovna's, reached his room somehow or other, and passed the night in the direst distress; so that the next morning over their tea his daughter said, "You are very pale to-day, papa." But papa remained silent, and said not a word to any one of what had happened to him, where he had been, or where he had intended to go.

This occurrence made a deep impression upon him. He even began to say: "How dare you? do you realize who stands before you?" less frequently to the under-officials, and, if he did utter the words, it was only after first having learned the bearings of the matter. But the most noteworthy point was, that from that day forward the apparition of the dead tchinovnik ceased to be seen. Evidently the prominent personage's cloak just fitted his shoulders; at all events, no more instances of his dragging cloaks from people's shoulders were heard of. But many active and apprehensive persons could by no means reassure themselves, and asserted that the dead tchinovnik still showed himself in distant parts of the city.

In fact, one watchman in Kolomna saw with his own eyes the apparition come from behind a house. But being rather weak of body, he dared not arrest him, but followed him in the dark, until, at length, the apparition looked round, paused, and inquired, "What do you want?" at the same time showing such a fist as is never seen on living men. The watchman said, "It's of no consequence," and turned back instantly. But the apparition was much too tall, wore huge mustaches, and, directing its steps apparently toward the Obukhoff Bridge, disappeared in the darkness of the night.

# SHORT STORIES

A MAGAZINE OF FACT AND FICTION

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## A NON-CONDUCTOR \*

They had told me that she was a soulless creature, frivolous and light; that the sole preoccupation, the one aim of her life, was pleasure. In fact I had made her acquaintance at a ball, surrounded by an infinite variety of adorers, smiling, disdainful, allowing herself to be worshipped, completely indifferent. Naturally, after a turn of the waltz, in which she floated, light and elegant, I remained an enthusiast in regard to her, and since the reputation of a sceptic, given me by my friends, was not well merited, I joined the crowd of vain worshippers that surrounded the goddess. Did she notice my devotion? I do not know! I know that sometimes the profound gaze of her large black eyes, resting upon me, seemed to become melancholy, thoughtful. But it was momentary, for then that expression disappeared under her customary smile. That especial evening, leaning her arm on the railing of her theatre-box, she had turned toward me one of her enigmatical glances, accompanied by a slight bending of the head.

I confess that I started, and that a thousand thoughts flocked into my mind. Was the ice melted, perhaps? Had that atrophied heart begun to beat? I did not delude myself, I might be her father; she was twenty-six years of age; I almost fifty, although I tried not to show them.

Yet I could not resist, and soon after my hand pushed open the door of box No. 4.

"Finally!" exclaimed the countess. "You really leave people to wish for your company."

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\* Italian of Sofia Bini: E. Cavazza: For Short Stories.

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"Signora," I replied, "you are pleased to flatter me."

"I never flatter my friends, and I regard you as one of them. It is so long that we have known each other. . . ."

So long! It was not even a month; not knowing what to reply, I silently assented with a smile. She did not appear satisfied with my manner, and bursting into one of her gay laughs, she said:

"But do not you remember? At Venice, on the Lido, I came with my cousin, Signora Lini, and you with Giorgio Rigoli; have you forgotten us? I am sorry, because I wished this evening, recalling those memories, that you should pay a little court to me! . . ."

Decidedly. She was a coquette, I an imbecile! But as a gallant squire of dames, was I to remain defeated?

"Countess!" I exclaimed, "if I were to take your words seriously, be warned that you would have assumed a terrible responsibility."

"I am not afraid; I believe that my signature is still negotiable."

"Take care, countess, you are always playing with dangers; are you sure of conquering them?"

"If there were no obstacles, victory would have no value."

"Well, you always succeed!"

"Certainly! When I set about an undertaking I never draw back."

"And now you have undertaken to make me lose my head."

"Who knows? Would you be sorry to devote it to me?"

"For you, countess, I would sacrifice myself."

"For pity's sake, do not let us go into the usual commonplace phrases of society; I like eccentricity, do you know! I wish to find in you an exception; then do not try to pay court to me, leave that privilege to the boys; but you! A serious man, sceptical, almost a philosopher! To care for an atom! That would be an antithesis!"

She was laughing at me. I rose to take leave.

"Wait a moment, I beg of you . . . I have something to ask you," and her voice trembled slightly.

"Countess, I am at your orders!"

"Are you a friend to me . . . a friend in the true sense of the word?"

"I hope so!" I replied.

"Well, tell me, away there in Africa, is Giorgio happy?"

"What! You still remember him; but, your marriage?"

"Was imposed upon me," she added excitedly. "But do not let us speak of that! It is of him that I wish for news, I have wanted so long to hear from him."

What was I to tell her? That he lived there alone, disconsolate, with her memory stamped upon his heart? Re-awaken the affection, sleeping, but not yet dead? Tell her that in every letter of his, overflowing with bitterness, Giorgio asked after her, but that, believing himself forgotten, he had sworn never to see her again? She must not know it.

"Happiness is a chimera, countess; but he lives tranquil, surrounded by affection and good will."

"But is his life in peril, does no one make war upon him?"

"He is very much liked, and is protected by the consul; he lives in that family as if he were a member of it."

"Ah! . . . are there many European families there?" And she fixed her great eyes, with jealous anxiety, upon my face.

"Many. I should not be surprised, indeed, to hear some day that Giorgio would settle permanently in Africa, making himself a home of his own there."

I was silent. Some people came into the box. I withdrew to the back of it. The countess had become very pale, tears were trembling in her eyes. With a resolute gesture, as if in answer to an inward question, she turned her dark head toward the parquette. When she turned it toward me again, her face was serene, the usual smile curved her lips.

"Then good-by, signor," she said to me ironically, "or rather, *au revoir*, for I hope, despite the total difference of our artistic opinions, that you will remain a friend to me."

And extending her hand: "I receive every Friday evening. I hope to see you there."

I bowed and went out slowly, while she, playfully and with extreme volubility, interrogated the new-comers about the things of the day.

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The next day a letter was sent to Giorgio. "Do not return, my friend," I told him. "You would have a disappointment. She lives tranquil and happy and has asked me nothing about you; forget her, she deserves nothing else!"

To those hearts be peace! As for the husband, he may rest secure. She, with the safeguard of the memory of her only love, will fearlessly meet the battles of life.

## ETCHINGS: "BOOT HILL"\*

Just where the stage-road climbs the hill—with the salty water of the Alkalette dribbling through the white-patched boulee below, and the second tier of pine-clad bluffs rising to the left, while across the valley the waters of the Blueboulder flash in the sunlight—lies a bit of level hill top, from which your eye falls on a fair view, whichever way you turn.

On this plateau lie five picket-begirt graves.

Nearest the road, an elongated ripple shows where they scooped out the gravelly soil to make room for "Long Mack," who died "in his boots,"—gun on hip, glass in hand. The other man "got the drop!"

Lower down lies a man of different mould. An English home cradled him; an English school gave him his humanities; and the boots that kept up the tradition of his burial place were made within sound of Bow Bells. Whether it was disgrace to be left behind, or money to be gained, that brought him in reach of that ugly eddy in the Blueboulder—God only knows. "English Archie's" secrets died with him.

Note the mound to your left, if you love the memory of a "square man." "Greater love hath no man, than to lay down his life for his friend;"—and when "Cœur d'Or Stroe" thrust his broad breast between a Piegan bullet and the "tenderfoot" lad who was fighting his boyish best to protect the horses in his charge, Death found a shining mark.

Many a vicious broncho had yielded to the strength and pluck of "Curly Jess," the rough range-rider. But to him who fools too long with Western horses, one event is apt to arrive, and a "white-eyed cayuse" turned a back somersault, and spitted him on the pommel of his own saddle.

Only one more. A short span of mother earth, but enough for the resting place of Baby Alice. 'Twas her first shoes she died in, and her mother has them put away, and cries over them yet. She strayed from the door one December day, a sudden blizzard fell on the land, and when they found her, her little body was stiff, the life chilled out of it.

'Tis a motley company she lies amidst, but if the last summons shall awaken them together, there's not a man in the crowd who will not reach out a helping hand to "Baby Alice."

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\* J. Whitcomb Marcy: For Short Stories.



## THE STORY OF AN ASS\*

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The frost silvered the trees of the Champs Elysées, powdered them with white like a marquise of the old régime.

In the avenue Montaigne it was close upon nine in the morning; the sun shone through the fog like a ball of fire, but threw out no warming beams, and the breeze was sharp and cruel on that poor struggling world.

One saw passing rapidly along the avenue women with veiled faces and men with bowed heads, like vessels whose prows dip under the blasts of the furious hurricane. One would have turned neither a dog nor a lover from the door; the kiss of an innocent, even, would have frozen en route.

I, too, passed in haste, like all the world, while close beside me a ragpicker, pale and care-worn; led by the bridle a forlorn little ass that had the air of being at least a hundred years old and dragged painfully a poor little cart, full of the trash and the cast-offs of the quarter—scraps, broken bottles, discarded papers, disdained bouquets, worn-out sauce-pans, skillets, crusts of bread, billet doux—in a word, the thousand nothings that make up the fortune of ragpickers.

The woman had made a good collection in her run of the night, but the ass was at the end of its endurance.

As I drew near the little wagonette a name caught my eye suddenly among the crumpled papers the name of *Mlle. Genevieve*, the name precisely of the demoiselle from whose house I had just come. Was it, perchance, *that* Mlle. Genevieve?

I did not need her portrait to be sure that it was she, I, who had seen her only the night before, dazzling with beauty, all daubed with red and white, with her hair in the latest fashion and her comedy ways, for really she seemed to adore me—I, who go too much, however, to genuine comedy to be caught by shams like these.

Nevertheless, though it was but a scrap, I dared not help myself to that tempting letter; it was the ragpicker's property.

"Madame," said I to her, "will you give me a bit of paper to light my cigar with?"

She regarded me with a surprised air, but as an honest woman, who did not desire to take advantage of the situation, responded simply:

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\* French of Arsene Houssaye : E. C. Waggener : For Short Stories.

"Help yourself, monsieur!" and proffered me a match.

I carelessly dropped a sou piece into her hand and turned away, the letter with me. Word for word behold it:

"Permit me to say, my friend, that for several weeks past I have found you very peculiar, posing, it seems to me, for one of the Eleven Thousand Virgins of ancient fame. . . . I warn you, therefore, that the end approaches; you will respond by offering me a cup of tea this *very evening*, or I seek the hospitality of your charming neighbor, for I shall dance attendance on *you* no longer."

And this epistle was signed with the name of our mutual friend de Marignac.

But why, I asked myself, why was this letter thrown thus in the trash of the rubbish cart? A letter that I myself had seen at Genevieve's house within twenty-four hours? Did it mean—but what mattered what it meant? I was going to turn about and return to her house to see for myself what it meant, when the ass diverted me, happily, from so stupid a step.

He had abruptly stopped short, as if resolved never to move again; his legs swayed under him, and he hung his head sorrowfully, as an ass meditating, who presaged his last hour.

The sight broke my heart; I stopped short with him.

A ragman would have beaten the ass to reanimate his failing strength, cursed and reviled him; the woman, on the contrary, regarded the poor beast with a compassionate air, the gaze of a mother, a wife, or sister. The ass also regarded her, his eye eloquent, saying plainly: "It is finished! The end is here. I have struggled for thee heroically. I have passed the days and nights without ever complaining, because I have comprehended that thy misery was greater than mine. Thou hast been good to me; thou hast refused me neither food nor caresses; thou hast even stolen for me the hay of thy neighbor; thou hast given me the half of thy bed of straw. But I die of agony. . . ."

The woman stroked the ass always, talking to him softly, tenderly reasoning with him.

"Come, come, my dear Pierrot, surely thou wouldst not leave me here!" said she; and she stepped to the side of the little vehicle and took out and threw aside the basket of broken glass and bottles.

"Now come," said she, as if he had understood her; "this time thou wilt be able to walk, Pierrot."

And she placed herself in readiness at the wheel; but the ass did not stir. No, he knew that he had not the strength to go on to Saint Ouen, his last country, his last station, as it were, in misery.

"But, how then shall we ever arrive, Pierrot?" his mistress pursued pleadingly; "the wagon I could draw myself, true; but thou, thou, Pierrot, thou wouldst never be willing that I should shame thee by fastening and dragging thee at the tail of the cart!"

The ass raised an ear, but that was all.

I was going to speak to the ragpicker and the ass, when she turned quickly and ran to a neighboring cabaret. The animal followed her with his eyes with vague, wistful uneasiness. It seemed as if he were afraid of dying there without his mistress.

Poor little beast! so small that at a distance you would have taken him for a Pyrenees dog, he had literally grown gray in harness; here and there only some tufts of whitish hair in the mane, on the tail and under the stomach. But they would never more need to shave him as they shave horses of high degree and position, so well had pain and age done the work for them.

He was like a mountain ravaged by gullies and ravines, and which the hot sun of summer has scorched over in patches.

Pierrot, for that matter, seemed with his resigned air to have given up all earthly vanities; to have long since ceased to pose—if ever he had posed in his gayest season—for a personage of importance. To give an idea of his spine is simply impossible. The bones were piercing the skin; a little more, and he had been transparent, but his face had gained only the more expression, something, I know not how else to describe it, of human intelligence, benevolent goodness.

Why had he been condemned to such martyrdom? Was it expiation for one of his kind, or punishment for a previous existence passed in orgies?

But now the ragpicker was returning, carrying in one hand a piece of bread, in the other a lump of sugar.

Pierrot raised his lip and attempted to show his teeth, worn and yellow as the keys of an old harpsichord; but though it was the breakfast hour, he let the bread drop again; he had no more strength in his jaws than he had in his legs.

The ragpicker tried him then with the lump of sugar; he took it as if it gave him pleasure, but let it fall beside the bread.

"Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu! what a misfortune!" cried the poor woman sorrowfully.

She thought no longer of getting her goods to her house; she thought of nothing but her old friend Pierrot.

"Pierrot! Pierrot!" she called again.

She divined that the ass was lost; two great tears glistened in her eyes. She opened her arms, took his head in her embrace and kissed him as if he had been a beloved child.

And I swear to you, my friend, that the ass himself let fall two tears!

This caressing, too, apparently performed a miracle, translating itself first by a cry from the heart—the ass began to bray as in his better days. I feared, myself, that it was as the cry of the swan, but no, Pierrot had revived, had returned to himself.

Deeply moved by the spectacle, I approached and held out my hand to the worthy woman.

"It is well, madame, this thing that you have done!" said I.

"Ah! monsieur," said she, sobbing bitterly, "if only you knew how I love this beast! Figure to yourself that it was I that saved him from the abattoir, seven years ago, that was, and when I had only a *hotte*, a miserable basket for the back and my pick hook with which to provide for seven children. The good God is just, monsieur! . . . The father, you see, has gone with another; a rascal stole from me my eldest girl; four other children—for I have had twelve, monsieur—died at the breast—for one has not good milk when one must work and toil all day and night long—and the youngest of the twelve, to save its life, I was forced to place in a foundling asylum. . . .

"This ass, monsieur, has been my only consolation, a better companion, too, than ever was my man to me. With him one has never to worry to keep him from the cabaret, or run to escape his beatings, no more than he has to run, my little Pierrot, who never was beaten—is it not so, my friend, my dear little ass?"

And truly the ass had the air of comprehending and joining in the conversation; he pricked up his ears, seemed to put on his thinking cap and to try to give an opinion.

An acquaintance passed at the moment and asked what I was doing there.

"Making a new friend, my dear," said I, patting and smoothing Pierrot's mottled sides with a feeling of tenderness that was steadily growing upon me.

"He is doubtless a steed of spirit, that," resumed the new-comer critically, "but certainly he is not handsome."

"You think so?" said I, "and I find him superb! In his place, let me tell you, my friend, you would look very much worse. He came out at twelve last night and has never been to bed at all. But stay! you arrive at an opportune moment—will you join me in a work of charity?"

"With all my heart!"

"Eh bien! help me, then, to buy this ass from this good woman here, and to put him on the invalid list for the rest of his days. She will care for him the same as ever."

The ragpicker regarded us with a doubting eye, believing that we mocked her. But when she saw five louis shining in her palm she began to smile radiantly.

"How much did Pierrot cost you?" said I.

"Ten francs, monsieur."

"Très-bien! go you to the abattoir and buy another one, and *we* will charge ourselves with the nourishing of this one."

And giving her my card and another caressing stroke to Pierrot's muzzle, we bade them both adieu.

The miracle had been worked, the ass pulled himself together with a mighty effort and started almost gayly, his mistress pushing valiantly from behind to assist her beloved Pierrot.

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But alas! that same evening she came to my house all drowned in tears.

I comprehended instantly.

"Ah! monsieur, monsieur!" said she, "he is gone—Pierrot is dead!"

"Poor Pierrot!"

"Yes, monsieur, he was dying, too, when you saw him this morning, which Pierrot knew well; behold why he tried to regain his strength to be able to reach our home.

"Brave Pierrot!"

"Well may you say so, monsieur, and we had reached Saint Ouen, and were in sight of our *baraque* when he fell to

his knees. I tried to lift him, but this time 'twas useless—all was finished. The children ran and gathered about him, everybody, monsieur. No use! Pierrot was going. Everybody spoke to him, caressed and petted him—ah! monsieur, the misery of the sight! He only looked at us with eyes so sad that it wrung the heart to see him. There was no one, in all the world no one, monsieur, who wouldn't have loved an ass like Pierrot!

“To think, too, how he wished to die at home, after he had done his work all day long! At his own door to die, monsieur, as Pierrot did!”

“As died the soldier,” said I, “when his last cartridge is gone.”

The ragpicker drew nearer, opened her hand and there in the palm shone the five louis of the morning.

“Your hundred francs, monsieur, behold them!”

“No, madame, no; the money is yours—from Pierrot!”

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And I still do not know whether to most admire Pierrot or Pierrot's good mistress; the ass that accomplished his duty, or the woman more delicate than charity itself, for if this ass was worthy of enrollment among the asses so celebrated of Plutarch, then this picker of rags was fit to be counted and canonized among the saints of the calendar.

## AN IMPORTED SENTIMENT\*

Shiro San had been thinking vaguely about it for some time; but when his friend Jokichi San (Jokichi San, whom everybody remembered quite well blacking foreigner's shoes in Yokohama a few years ago so that he might learn the foreigners' tongue) came back from America with a foreign wife and the prospects of a chief-secretaryship, Shiro San suddenly decided to marry a foreign wife too. Shiro San knew little about America, and still less about American ladies. It was only natural, therefore, that he should look upon the foreign wife as the cause rather than the effect of Jokichi's prospects, and emulate his friend's example accordingly. At heart he was profoundly indifferent to the blonde blue-eyed beauties of the West; but blonde blue-eyed beauties had somehow got mixed up with the Japanese idea of progress, individual and national, just as pot hats and white cotton gloves, horse-hair chairs, and green rep curtains had got mixed up with it; so he felt the time had come to bow a long farewell to O Fuji San and O Yaki San, O Hanna San and O Maya San, and all the other sweet almond-eyed Ok'Sans who had served him in the tea-houses with dancing and singing and samisen-playing, and to adapt himself to the manners of Tsukiji, the foreign quarter of Tokyo. I do not know whether the long farewell cost Shiro San very much, but the bow was very graceful; and little Miss Wisteria Blossom said something prettily despairing about going to sleep with the stars in the lake of the tea-house garden. You see, Japanese sentiment is such a decorative thing.

Though Shiro San smiled quite confidently when he spoke of his matrimonial projects to his foreign friends, after the candid manner of his countrymen, he was by no means at ease. A foreign wife could not sit on the floor, she could not eat with chopsticks, and she would alter the whole aspect of the back garden if she had the temerity to step into it. Then, worst of all, a foreign wife might demand some exhibition of affection. She might even ask him to kiss her; and he, a Japanese gentleman, thought all exhibitions of affections, and especially kissing, vulgar, notwithstanding the repartee of a pert little Yankee that she thought "it was

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\* St. Stephen's Review.

just ten times better having one wife and kissing her than six and not." But one morning Shiro San read something in his paper which reassured him, and filled his small brain with all sorts of hopes. A foreign lady tourist, intent upon studying the Japanese life, and resolved upon adopting the Japanese style during her stay in the country, had arrived at the Grand Hotel of Yokohama. Shiro San went the same evening to the house of a foreign friend in Tsukiji to find out some more about this lady tourist, and there, to his infinite satisfaction, he was presented to her.

"What a find!" she exclaimed softly, fixing a lady tourist's eye upon him, where he sat on the edge of a chair, laughing all over, and drawing himself together as if he thought he was occupying too much room and wanted to take in a tuck. "What a type!" she continued, examining Shiro more closely, his dainty feet and his delicate hands, his green tie and his waistcoat, for whose shortness an *obi* but half-atoned. Then she noted his quick eyes, peeping out from behind the thin drooping lids, his brusky hair, his sunken brown cheeks, his thick, rather sensuous lips, and last and not least his mustache and beard. But when she noted his mustache and beard she smiled. It was so brave an attempt—the bravest, perhaps, she had seen—and yet it fell so far short of the reality; it reminded her so forcibly of her forests at home after a spring fire when all the undergrowth had been burned and only a few charred trees are left standing. But Shiro San suspected nothing, and chattered with a nervous volubility that surprised even his foreign friend. Though I fear he was oblivious of the fact that the lady tourist's eyes were large and round and blue, that her mouth was not an ugly one, and her smile rather pleasing in its way, he throbbed with quite a novel sensation when she spoke of Confucius, chuckled delightedly when she talked glibly about Treaty Revision, claimed her silently when she wilyly feared "he was a dreadful diplomatist." And Shiro San's foreign friend, marking these things, said wickedly, right out before all the company:

"Shiro San is going to Europe in a fortnight, you know, and he means to bring back a foreign wife with him."

But Shiro San thought he had better marry the foreign wife first.

It was late when a Japanese gentleman, with a face as



solemn as only a Japanese gentleman can wear, wandered meditatively out of Tsukiji—out of the quarter of stern, tall, strong houses, into the delicious fantasy of wood and white paper they call Tokyo. Even the moonbeams seem to take particular care to fall gently over Tokyo, and the people there sleep as lightly as they laugh or live or die. But the Japanese gentleman had brought home something of Tsukiji that night—something new and incomprehensible—and it weighed heavily upon him. It was a sentiment. Not the sentiment he had entertained regarding O Fuji San, which seemed so very like the branch of a cherry blossom painted across a screen—no root and all flower; anything but the sentiment he had expected a foreign wife to inspire—a foreign wife who was to be in his life what a room furnished in foreign style would be in his house—a proof that he walked abreast of the times, that he recognized his duty to his countrywomen by bringing some one among them who wore a *tournure* and knew how to play the piano. The lady tourist fulfilled not only the last two conditions, but she could argue about Confucianism, she had read Mr. Norman on Treaty Revision, and she had told him what he longed but dared not tell himself, that he was a “dreadful diplomatist.”

Shiro San was in love à l'Européenne.

Though Shiro San was in love à l'Européenne, Shiro San was still a Japanese, and love was a *quid pro quo*. He had never seen a lady tourist before; but he knew, or he thought he knew, how to win a lady tourist's heart. So he took her to all the government schools, the state prison, the court house, and the museum; he lent her Perry, and he prepared for her six foolscap sheets of the facts and statistics with which every writer in Japan in turn enlightens his readers, and which no conscientious lady tourist should be without. Then he thought she must understand he wanted her to marry him. She did understand something to that effect when “he desired so much of Japanese women should experience influence of such learned lady,” and yet wondered why the “learned lady” could not go to Europe in a fortnight. But the whole affair up to this point was unsatisfactory and indefinite. The lady tourist had not come to Japan for facts. Facts were harrowing and inconvenient; they warped the imagination, and might always be brought up against one. She had come for impressions, and Shiro San would persist in making the most

disappointing ones. She had thought of Japanese love-making just as she had thought of Japanese houses; both would be filled with an infinity of dainty conceits. But she found the one furnished with a china vase, and the other with a bow. It is true that Shiro San ere long perceived the present situation demanded something further. But it only made matters more provoking; for though his phrases became a mixture of "Ivanhoe," Darwin, and the novel of the last century, his position always remained the same, a neutral one six feet off.

Seven days passed since Shiro San first met the lady tourist, and then there was an entirely new development in the acquaintanceship, in the shape of a parcel and a letter which Tomi, the maid, brought into the lady tourist's room early on New Year's Day. The parcel contained a fish, and the letter the wish of a "New Happy Year and Christmas Merry," besides the information that a fish had been sent as a present most characteristic of native style. The lady tourist penned her thanks for his "charming souvenir" in the most appreciative terms she could find, and at the same time hoped she should soon have an opportunity of expressing them in person. Shiro San sent back a reply two hours afterward, to the effect that, as he wrote, her note, which was the soul and heart to him, hung over the mantelpiece, and he could not help reading it as often as he could. In fact, when he got it he was overflowing with emotion, and started at once for Tsukiji; but the thought of conversing with a lady having such high accomplishments before half a dozen people, as was usually the case, deterred him. She might laugh, and he did believe he was too exclusive; but he thought it unpardonable on the part of any gentleman not to make an opportunity of talking alone to a lady who could exert so excellent an influence over Japanese women; for could there be any happiness and comforts in this world of mortals without high and noble sentiment among women? Then he proposed that the above-mentioned opportunity should be made on the morrow, when he would take her to the only government school she had not yet visited.

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She had hoped he would choose some moment as they sauntered in the starlight by the moats, as they stood watching sunsets over Fujijama, or wandered through the shadows

of the Parks; but he did not. He chose—O Spirit of Modern Japan!—the hour of tiffin in a European restaurant. Shiro San sat on one side of the table, and the lady tourist sat on the other. Up to this point Shiro San, being of the East and never having seen America, had no doubt that when, after due preliminaries, it should please him to make his final and definite proposition, it would be accepted without hesitation. But now suddenly, for some inexplicable reason, everything seemed changed; and in the silence of a deserted dining-room, with no other eye upon him than that of the lady tourist, the masterful Oriental in him began to quaver horribly. His face was pitifully anxious, his manner even more nervous than usual, and his little laugh a ghastly little echo of itself.

“I suppose you know why we have arrived in this place,” said Shiro San, abruptly rising to poke the fire.

“Yes,” said the lady tourist very innocently.

“Then don’t you come next week to Europe?”

“To Europe!” she echoed more innocently still.

“Yes, to Europe; don’t you come?”

“I . . . I can’t see how I am going to influence your countrywomen if I go to Europe next week.”

“You can influence them afterward.”

“Afterward? But I can’t imagine how I shall ever return to Japan.”

“Yes, you shall return,” poking the fire more frantically and bending low over the flames. “I know I express not well, but,” with a laugh, “in these . . . in these little *affaires de corps*, as the French say, I suppose it is all the same, and every lady understand, especially one having high accomplishment.”

The lady tourist had one eye on her plate and the other on Shiro San. Shiro San had his back to the table. There was a pause.

“I . . . I thought we had come here to talk about Japanese women,” murmured the lady tourist.

“We have come here to talk about something of much more serious,” replied Shiro San, turning round sharply and looking straight at her very gravely. “We have come here to talk about you and me, and how you marry me.”

She avoided his eyes. She stopped peeling her persimmon and gazed fixedly into the fire. She was wondering how she

should ever remember exactly his words and his expression, and she was hoping she had left her note-book in the jinrikishaw and not at the government school, as she feared. But nobody but another lady tourist could have guessed this.

"I know it is surprise so quick," went on Shiro San apologetically, remembering how the foreign courtships of the last century usually lasted three volumes, "but I had to hurry since I go next week."

"It is, indeed, a surprise," said the lady correspondent slowly, still gazing into the fire.

"That's what I say, it is surprise," answered Shiro San pettishly. "Don't you come?"

"You are so kind."

"Oh, it is my pleasure."

"Your pleasure to be kind, I know," said the lady tourist, smiling her sweetest smile upon him. "How shall I ever thank you for your goodness?"

"Ah, I can do much more to serve you," said Shiro San, regaining courage. "You have not seen yet our hospital, nor the lunatic asylum, nor the fire department and the new fire-alarms. But those can wait," he added, with a little knowing look.

"I am afraid they can't wait," replied the lady tourist solemnly. "I am afraid I shall have to stop behind to see them."

Then followed the old, old arguments of the "foreign style," the old, old arguments that have been since the world began. Shiro San had never used them before; but somehow they came to him now at twenty-eight in his foreign love making just as they came to the foreign novice of eighteen. The old, old arguments answered by the gentle conciliatory fibbings musingly poured into the trembling little flames of the grate—gravely addressed to an ambitious spider crawling up the opposite wall—softly whispered to a solitary bird on the branch of a leafless cherry-tree outside.

There was another long, long pause, and in the pause something touched her hand.

It had never been touched just like that before, and yet she did not care to turn her head to see.

A week later Shiro San went to Europe on some very important business of the Mikado's, and the lady tourist remained behind in Japan—for more impressions.

## ETCHINGS: SMOKE WREATHS\*

Do you believe in a previous existence? I do. For sometimes, my solitary tea ended, as I sit in my little balcony, watching the passers-by, the odor of a good cigar coming to me will rouse a train of memories, real memories, yet not of aught which I have known in *this* life at least.

I am rocking softly, pondering, perhaps, on my essay for the next meeting of the Woman's Fortnightly Club—when my pulses stand still for a moment, then the hot blood rushes furiously through my veins—the fragrant wreaths of cigar-smoke have floated to me from the street.

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And I am no longer old.

I am no longer plain and prosaic. I am young, beautiful, with the power to love and make others love strong within me! And the air is now so soft and sweet; the high walls of the garden, covered with glorious passion-vine and snake-like cactus, surround me. The splash of fountains sounds in my ear, and as I stoop to loose my silken train from the rose-bush's caress, the rich perfume of myriad blossoms rises to meet me. A fancy seizes me. I gather armfuls of the lovely things. With tuberose and jessamine sweet, I deck my hair, thrusting the blooms through my mantilla; on my bosom I fasten the blood-red *Sangre de Cristi*, token of the crucifixion; *Nido de Amor* roses I tuck in my girdle.

But now my heart beats wildly, for mingled with the flowers' perfume is that of tobacco. *He* is coming, he, the matador whom all the city worships, *he, my love!*

The garden-door opens quickly, showering the petals from the orange trees, and in he comes, the gold fringe on his scarlet jacket and yellow *faja* glistening in the sunshine.

The *cigarro* is tossed aside as I spring to meet him and am clasped to his breast. The fragrance of the crushed flowers intoxicates me—his dark eyes burn into mine with passionate fire—our lips meet, and soul leaps to soul in that embrace.

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I lean back in my chair, realizing that the last, faint scent of some one's cigar is dying away. And what have I, a staid New England spinster, to do with all this, I ask?

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\* Grace M. Hurd: For Short Stories.

## A FINANCIAL FAILURE\*

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The day's business of the old County Savings Bank was nearly done. Mr. Pendell, the treasurer, and his three assistants, were busy making up their accounts. Mr. Pendell was a methodical, old-fashioned business man who did most of his writing at a plain high desk, where he stood leaning on one elbow hour after hour, with no apparent fatigue. As for the three younger men, they were seated at more or less ornate roll-top desks; two of these clerks were Mr. Downs and Mr. Hathaway, reliable at accounts and both in the later twenties of their age. At the least elegant of the desks, with his face toward the street, sat Jonas Dyer, a young, good-looking country fellow, whose round face had never known an anxious furrow until he came to his junior clerkship a few weeks before.

He was a poor lad himself as to this world's wealth, and of late had been forwarded in life by an old uncle who was senior director of the bank. Jonas Dyer's mother was perfectly confident that he would be this uncle's heir, but old Mr. Dyer was of that spirit and temper of mind which sometimes results in large gifts to impersonal Tract Societies, and Jonas knew that a great deal might depend upon his own diligence and accuracy in accounts. He was slow at figures and slow with his pen, and he had by nature no gift for saving. It was fortunate that he had little to spend, otherwise there might have been clearer revelations of his generous traits. Everybody gave him congratulations enough on his good chance in the County Savings Bank, but nobody wasted sympathy on the caged heart of poor Jonas, who loved a free life and out-of-door air; he sometimes felt as if the new bank fittings and especially the handsome iron fretwork behind which he stood, all savored of the prison, and that during bank hours at least, he was a sorrowful captive. The other clerks were fond of their surroundings, and recognized, as time went on, a different spirit in their young associate. By some mysterious insight they were aware of the tone that Jonas's mother always took in laying his duty before him. She was a devoted mother, but she loved the exhorting sound of her own voice, and had talked so much to her growing

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\* Sarah Orne Jewett: Copyrighted by The Authors' Alliance.

boy that he had become stolidly reticent. Perhaps Downs and Hathaway had found their example in one of Mrs. Dyer's rare visits to the bank, when it may be suspected that she had come in merely to look upon her only son at his desk, trusted as he was with untold gold and on the highroad to fortune. There was nobody else there that day on the customers' side when Jonas timidly presented his mother to his three companions. Old Mr. Pendell behaved with courteous dignity, inviting Mrs. Dyer to come in and sit down, while Jonas unfastened the wicket gate for her, and blushing red gave her his own chair. How fast the good woman did talk without knowing it! Jonas went ostentatiously into the great safe to divert her mind and show her how completely he felt at home, trying by the way to escape a direct look at Downs and Hathaway. To tell the truth, he was just twenty years old and hardly felt as if he were sixteen.

"I tell Jonas," Mrs. Dyer was saying, "that there is a good deal to be proud of and grateful for in this situation. I know he's a good boy, if not so quick as some, and I advise him to be attentive and biddable to you, Mr. Pendell, and I want him to be constant at meetin' and to avoid worthless associates. I felt very anxious about him when he came away from home. He ain't no judgment what to eat——"

Jonas came bursting out of the safe with an expression of agony.

"I guess Mr. Pendell will let you come in and see where he keeps all his money," the poor boy told his mother, trying to behave as if there were a great joke going on. He did not look at the other fellows.

"I tell 'em up our way that there's nothing to prevent your filling your pockets unless 'tis your own honesty," the visitor said, and then happily became speechless as Jonas let her take one hurried look into the gold and silver drawers. He was fond of his mother, but she insisted upon treating him like a boy, and since he had lived in town among strangers he had begun to feel as if he were a man. The call was abruptly ended by the appearance of a friend who had brought Mrs. Dyer to town shopping. Downs and Hathaway shook hands politely with the good woman and seemed to take pleasure in accepting her kind invitation to come up with Jonas and stop awhile whenever they got leave. But alas! from this call much misery took rise; it was the delight

of the elder clerks to treat Jonas as if he were both touchingly young and delicate of constitution. They never went so far as to show the slightest disrespect in allusion to or quotation from the anxious mother; they simply adopted her solicitude about Jonas, who was seldom allowed in their presence to put on manly behavior. But if they did not chaff him about this they would be sure to find something else, and so, as they explained his bank work with unflinching patience, our hero bore their chaffing and mockery as best he might and with whatever bravery and unconcern he could muster.

Jonas stood beside his desk, facing the street in a moment of idleness; he was so tall that he could see over the mahogany railing that screened the bank interior from the glance of passers-by. It was cold weather outside and he had a sense of snug warmth and his own privileged position, yet the thought crossed his mind that it would be a good day to go through a piece of woods and mark trees for chopping. There would be no wind in the woods; somehow he could not get over the habit of planning farm work. At this moment he noticed an ancient covered chaise which belonged to the elderly farmer who was just arranging his financial business. Mr. Pendell himself liked to attend to some of the old bank customers, for there had been days when the County Savings Bank depended upon his services alone, and he was consequently trusted by all the thrifty farmers of the region.

Under the cover of the carriage Jonas did not at first observe a fresh young country face; he looked at the shaggy, strong old horse, used for ploughing and as a roadster by turns, and calculated the probable age and worth of the good beast before he saw the bright eyes beyond. Then a little thrill of curiosity and pleasure, such as he had never felt before, pervaded his frame. He felt a new sense of wakefulness and cheerful alacrity. The girl in the buggy looked at him as he looked at her, and if the truth were known the eyes of Jonas were the first to turn away. Hathaway softly reminded him that it was business hours, and Jonas bent sideways limberly into the chair before his own desk. Hathaway rose for an instant to see what was interesting outside, but the pretty girl was in eclipse of the chaise top. "Thinking of buying that colt?" inquired Hathaway, a good deal disappointed, and Jonas vaguely smiled.



The old farmer and Mr. Pendell were conversing sedately. "Ain't raised the rate o' interest, have they?" asked the depositor with a smile.

"Directors think of lowering it another year," reported the cashier. "We can't pay five per cent if we don't get but four. Savings-bank securities come higher every year. Why don't you buy some bonds, Mr. Hayland?"

"The Old County Savings Bank's always been good enough for me and my folks."

"You'd do better with your money by two per cent."

"Jim Hymore struck for eighteen and ain't got nothin' to show for't. I expect you've heard tell o' his venture?"

The cashier smiled and pushed the bank book in its much-thumbed envelope across the counter, and Mr. Hayland took some time to put it into a deep inner pocket and to button his coat over it. "Well, I've got my savin's where they'll be earnin' a little somethin'," he said, after his usual custom on such occasions. "There'd been more this time, but we've been fixin' up the meetin' house an' wife thought she ought to do same's others. Well, I do' know but I felt the pleasure o' bein' able to gratify her. Good-day."

"Good-day, sir," responded the cashier. "Give my respects to Mrs. Hayland."

Jonas longed to take another look before the buggy was driven away, perhaps forever, but he was afraid of Hathaway.

"Who was that old gentleman, Hathaway?" he made bold to inquire, but Hathaway only scuffed an angry foot for answer and began again at the foot of a long column of figures.

"That's Joel Hayland, he lives eight or nine miles down Oak Hill way; a good comfortable farmer, and as honest a man as I know." Mr. Pendell himself spoke warmly and Jonas felt as much pleased as if he were listening to the praise of one of his own family.

Just then old Mr. Hayland and his daughter were going out of town well wrapped against the chilly wind, which unluckily was well astern of the covered chaise.

"We shall have it nice an' comfortable goin' home, shan't we, Love?" asked the farmer. "Did you get all those things your mother wanted?"

"Yes, sir," said Love. "Seems to me there's something I haven't remembered, too. Who was it in the bank?" she added.

"Mr. Pendell the cashier—a nice, good man he is—wanted to be remembered to your mother."

"Oh, not Mr. Pendell; I know him," protested Love; "a younger man, I mean."

"I don't know's I really took notice. There's two or three of 'em, a young Downs has been there a number o' years. Mr. Pendell get's right up whatever he's doin' an' tends to me himself. They say he don't do it for everybody."

"'Twas a tall, young-lookin' fellow," Love Hayland continued persuasively, but the old farmer shook his head. He had taken note of no one but his old friend, the cashier; and so home they went along the winding road through the snowless winter country. It was after Thanksgiving and Mr. Hayland was two or three weeks later than usual with his semi-annual deposit. Although the northwest wind was behind them, the father and daughter were glad to find themselves in their own warm kitchen again. It was almost night when they got home. The day had been short and bleak, but Love came in with rosy cheeks and dancing eyes and a heartful of pleasure.

"I have had a real good ride," she said, "haven't you, father?"

"'Twas pleasanter than goin' alone," said the plain man with unwonted gallantry. "I don't know but I like the road full as well in good weather. Mr. Pendell was civil and accommodatin' to me same's he always is, and sent his respects to you, mother. I see Abel Foster on the street, too, and he was glad to see me, and they meant to ride up to see us if that long spell o' rain hadn't hindered 'em. There wan't many on the street, 'twas a bad day."

Love looked at her father with surprise.

"I suppose you got me that set o' knittin' needles?" asked Mrs. Hayland after looking over the packages that had been brought in.

"I declare, I forgot all about 'em, mother," said Love. "I left them till the last thing because we had to come by the store again and father was in a hurry to get his bank business done. I got into the chaise after I did the other errands and——"

"Dear heart, 'tain't such a great matter," said the kind little mother, with a sigh that Love could not hear. "Somebody'll soon be going again."

Presently Love disappeared and took off her best woollen dress and came back in a comfortable old one, but she had lingered to tie in a piece of red ribbon for a cravat and she had looked out of the bedroom window toward town to see if she could discover the reflection of the new electric lights. The sky was very cloudy and dark, but she was pretty sure that a dim glow lighted the heavens in that direction. When she came down into the kitchen, her father and mother and Jacob Bean, the hired man, were already at supper. Love looked uncommonly pretty and they all noticed her; the father and mother stole a pleased glance at one another.

"Seems to me you've taken a good while to change your dress," said Mrs. Hayland, gently reproachful.

"It didn't seem long to me," answered Love honestly. "I didn't know how late 'twas when we got home, it gets dark so early now. Why, I forgot ever so many things I've thought of buyin'. I shall have to go again quick as I can" (with a little blush).

"Come, draw up and have some o' this good warm supper, child," said the father. "I think the road's too plaguey rough to drive over again until snow comes. If you'd bought much more I shouldn't had a cent left to leave with Mr. Pendell."

"They weren't all my things," said Love. "Mother, I don't know but I ought to have me a new winter suit. Mine seemed to look a little past when I got among folks."

"I thought it looked pretty when you come down ready to go. 'Tis the bother o' gettin' it made," said the busy little woman. Love was still young for her age, and had never settled down into careful womanly ways though she was already nineteen.

Jonas and Mr. Pendell were alone together in the bank one February morning. One of the other young men was away at his brother-in-law's funeral and Hathaway had been sent to Boston on a financial errand. Jonas wished that he could have had the variety of a journey to Boston. Sometimes he felt as if the irksome confinement of his business were telling upon his health and spirits, but he looked perfectly well, and unsympathetic friends still congratulated him on his excellent opportunity. The odor of bank bills became more and more unpleasant to him, and once or twice good

Mr. Pendell had felt obliged to urge him to greater quickness—not accuracy, for our hero was much to be trusted in his figures. His patron, the rich uncle, looked at him approvingly from under his shaggy suspicious eyebrows, as he went and came about his business or the bank meetings. Jonas lived with this uncle, who was a bachelor, and there was always plenty to do night and morning in the matter of household work, the housekeeper being amiable but decrepit and the uncle held the opinion that a lad should be made to work as he had worked in his own youth. Jonas was naturally of a domestic turn, and only varied his life now and then by occupying a back seat at an evening meeting. In the bank he sometimes felt important and was upborne by the dignity of his position, but out of bank hours he was simply a clumsy, country fellow unused to town life. He often looked out of the bank window to see that old horse from Oak Hill but he was never fortunate, though the two bright eyes that looked from under the chaise top still shone like stars in his thoughts.

Mr. Pendell was very busy that morning, and when the door was opened he again nodded to Jonas, who had been busy paying and receiving all the morning. As the young man rose, he saw the same horse of his dreams fastened to a post in front of the window. There was an old high backed sleigh now, with two good buffalo robes and plenty of bright straw. Jonas recognized the quality of the straw and that a most uninteresting-looking man held the reins. But the bank door was open and when Jonas turned there stood his pretty girl. He blushed and she blushed, and they stood looking at each other, but Jonas's business habits stood him in good stead. He reached for the bank book, which was timidly proffered, but he dropped it twice and struck his head on the edge of the counter in trying to pick it up. Mr. Pendell looked up impatiently and that made things worse. The bank book was issued nineteen years before and the only amount credited was a sum placed to the owner's credit when she was a baby by the old aunt for whom she was named. Interest had been added from time to time so that the hundred dollars was now a comfortable little sum. Love pushed a small roll of bills under the grating. "I want to put this in, too," she said, and Jonas dipped his pen and made an entry of the date and counted the money afterward and set down the amount.

"There's some back interest due you, but Mr. Downs isn't here to-day," said Jonas.

"Father said I could leave the book and call for it some other time. I shall have more to put in next month. I'm keeping school."

They blushed again. Hathaway had returned by an earlier train than was expected, and just then entered the bank, but nobody noticed him, though Hathaway was quick to see the blushes.

"Won't it put you out if I leave it?"

"Not at all," said Jonas with truly a grand air. "It's our business; much snow down your way?"

"A good deal," answered the pretty girl still blushing, and then they almost looked each other in the face again, but were happily saved the embarrassment.

"Is that all?" asked the girl with touching deference, and Jonas said that it was all, but they both felt as if they wished there were something more, and Love tiptoed out to the empty world of the side walk.

"You'd better go out an' untie her horse," suggested Hathaway, affectionately, but by means of this jeer Jonas gained one look after the fair depositor, and reassured himself of her good looks, and that Jacob Bean, the elderly hired man, was not to be feared as a rival.

"That was old Mr. Hayland's girl that was here just before snow came," Jonas told his chief with great interest, for Mr. Pendell had spoken warmly of the farmer.

"Come, step round, Jonas, and get on with your work," urged the cashier. "Seems to me it's one of your numb days and we've got to drive work. It's a bad time to spare Downs." Even this rebuke did not destroy the junior clerk's sense of pleasure. He laid the clean bank book on Downs's desk with a lingering touch. He wished that the proper place for it was on his own desk. Bank books had seemed alike uninteresting until that moment.

As for Love Hayland she had forgotten two of her mother's commissions this time instead of one, and was jogging home speechless with delight.

There was stormy weather late that winter, and the roads were drifted, then there came a long season of rain and thaw, while Love's book lay unclaimed in the safe. At last she appeared one Saturday morning in March, when the sun was

shining like May, and the crows were thick and the road nearly bare of ice and snow all the way to town. It was the first day that seemed like spring and winter clothes were already too heavy. Spring was in the air and spring was in Love Hayland's look as she rode in the old chaise at her father's side and waited while he tied the horse to a stone post in front of the bank. Then they went in together, the girl had no idea of letting any one else do her business there.

Jonas had seen them drive up and was in a flutter of anticipation. He had the bravery to elbow Hathaway aside from the counter. Mr. Pendell and Joel Hayland were exchanging their usual friendly jokes and compliments. Joel had sold some of his young stock and had come to town with the money. Mr. Pendell retreated presently to his high desk to make up an account of some sort, but active business still went on between Love and Jonas. It took a good while to credit her with that twenty dollars for her month's school-keeping, and to display and explain the unexpected amount of interest due her in arrears. Then there was a moment of silence except for the scratching of Hathaway's pen.

"Was you ever to Oak Hill?" Love asked Jonas sweetly, in the hearing of all present.

Joel Hayland turned with sudden alarm, and took a good look at the junior clerk before he had time to speak. "I expect you're old Jonas Dyer's nephew by your looks. I heard you were in the bank some time ago, favor your uncle some, I see. Yes, call in if you've over our way. 'Tain't so pleasant now as it will be later on, but the road's settlin' fast. Good-day, Mr. Pendell, much obleeged to you, sir." The father and daughter departed and Jonas was conscious of that within him which would oblige him to knock down anybody who presumed to smile. As he turned round, however, nobody was smiling, there was an aspect of self-restraint and pious gravity about both Hathaway and Downs; Mr. Pendell was in the safe, and if he openly laughed it was inaudible to the young men outside. Jonas knew that misery was in store for him and fairly writhed at having been supposed to resemble his uncle. That close-fisted gentleman was perfectly unendurable of late, and our hero determined not to live like a toad under a harrow any longer.

There were no end to the jokes that the two clerks made that day, but none of them had any reference to Oak Hill, or

Jonas's journey in that direction. In one way the simplicity of Love's question had been a little painful, asked in public as it was, and yet he forgave the lack of maidenly reticence, for the sake of a delightful permission won from the father himself. Uncle Jonas was perfectly capable of leaving all his money to the cause of foreign missions and disappointing his poor and worthy relatives of various degrees, but Jonas was glad to have the endorsement of such relationship.

"Was you ever to Pelham Four Corners," Hathaway asked Jonas as he came in next morning, but Jonas answered yes so meekly as he hung up his coat, that the allusion was pressed no further.

"When I was up to my brother-in-law's funeral this winter I heard that there was a man by the name of Waters paying attention to the girl of Mr. Hayland's," said Downs, the head clerk. He was a soberer-minded man than Hathaway, and seemed to speak truthfully. Jonas's heart stood still.

"Was there? What kind of a man is he? She's a pretty girl," asked Hathaway.

"A kind of a seeking widower," answered Downs. "She's younger than he, about forty-five per cent, and didn't favor him at first, but he's well off and the old folks help it on. Their farms join, I believe, and 'twill be a good thing all round. I was kind of surprised when they asked a good-looking fellow like Jonas to call. You'd better not make any trouble, Jonas; but perhaps it's all settled and the old gentleman felt safe."

The next Sunday afternoon, Jonas, out of his limited means, hired the smartest single turnout at the best livery stable in Dartford and drove toward Oak Hill. It was like April overhead, but the mud was deep underfoot and he had to walk his impetuous steed the greater part of the way. The day seemed to him perfectly beautiful, and when he was directed to the Hayland farm nobody can describe how pleasant and comfortable it looked. It was joy enough to be out in the country after being cooped up so long in town. He had been promising to go to see his mother at the first good opportunity, but he did not feel the least shame at this selfish use of a holiday. The Hayland's best wagon was in the side yard, they had evidently been to church in the morning, and now for the first time Jonas's heart began to

beat in an awful and even retarding manner. He could not tie his horse's hitch rein as it should be tied, the knot worked wrong, and he grew redder and redder and did not dare to look up at the house windows. Then the door opened and hospitable Joel Hayland came out and welcomed him and they went into the house together. There was Love in her Sunday dress as pretty as a pink, and Mrs. Hayland was motherly and good-natured. She had heard about Jonas from somebody who lived neighbor to his mother, and knew what a good steady boy he had always been, and that he was doing well in the bank now; nephew and namesake, too, of rich old Jonas Dyer of Dartford. "We should be pleased to have you stop to supper, Mr. Dyer." She invited him kindly, but Jonas thought he ought to get back early. When he turned and looked at Love, however, he forgot time and space, and though they proceeded to speak at length of the state of the roads; he felt himself to be entertained indeed, and the long spring afternoon flew by on fleetest wings.

There was a very fresh little fire in the prim best room. Others might have found the wide low-storied kitchen a pleasanter and more airy place to sit, but Jonas and Love had already reached that stage of interest which demands seclusion and there they sat until the sun was low. It was not art that allured them in the shape of a portrait of Daniel Webster and the Landing of the Pilgrims on the parlor walls; it was not luxury, for the hair-cloth sofa had stiff springs and sloped forward at a strange angle. What they talked about was also of secondary consideration, it was enough for Love that she talked to Jonas and for Jonas that Love listened to his words. When they came out, trying hard to appear as if it were an every-day visit, Mrs. Hayland stood at the side of the window after parting with the blushing young visitor, and remarked significantly to her husband:

"Joel, just as sure's you're born them two's goin' to keep company."

"Let 'em have it their own way, they're both good child'n," answered Joel with a sage smile.

Before the spring work began at Oak Hill Jonas announced to Mr. Pendell that he meant to resign his situation, and gave no reason for so doing. Mr. Pendell, who knew the reason from Joel Hayland himself, laid the serious matter before the directors on Monday morning. Jonas had not



brooked his uncle's wrath at home by making a declaration of his ingratitude in proposing to leave so promising a financial career. The old man twisted himself about in his chair, and looked very black at the first moment of surprise. Then Mr. Pendell said that he had some sympathy with Jonas's decision. The boy was willing and honest and did the best he could, but he was not made for bank work. He was after Joel Hayland's girl over at Oak Hill, and the old folks needed a young smart man on the farm—it was a good thing all round.

“That's where the young dog's been going every Sunday then,” said old Mr. Dyer, the uncle, with unexpected approval and sympathy. “They're good folks and he might have done worse for himself. If Joel favors the match, I'll take hold and give Jonas a little start. I won't have anybody saying that the favor was all on *her* folks' side.”

There was an amiable grumble of applause from the other directors, and the busy cashier at once proposed a sale of bonds which were reported shaky but rising in market value, and so the great question of the junior clerk's future was quickly solved. The young couple were married in early planting time and however it may have appeared to other people, for them it was ever a miraculous and wonderful thing that they had fallen in love at first sight, and that their thoughts had been always of one another even while one was in the bank at Dartford and the other far away at Oak Hill.

That autumn Mr. Joel Hayland dreaded the long cold drive to town, and sent the young people to that bank with his stout pocket-book. Jonas had persuaded his father-in-law to make a safe investment in some County bonds and went inside the bank railings, to do a bit of writing. As he rose from his old desk he caught sight of Love well wrapped and looking for him expectantly out of the old chaise. Their eyes met as they had met once before, and Jonas knew that she was his wife now, and yet he was still shy, she did look so pretty and so strange, not like anybody else. Perhaps the year was all a dream!

Hathaway was standing close by; Hathaway began to look a little old and blurred in the face, like a worn silver piece, and not so quick and gay as he used. He longed to say, “Was you ever to Oak Hill?” but Jonas had flocks and herds now, and wide acres were under his rule; though he

was only twenty-one he was looked upon as a stable citizen and one of growing influence. Perhaps his size was in his favor, at any rate, the senior clerks had already more than once declared that his room was better than his company in the bank, he seemed some days to take up the whole floor.

"Call down and see us, boys," said Jonas pulling on a new pair of great fur gloves. "You, too, Mr. Pendell; 'twould please Father Hayland right through; he was anxious I should make his respects to you. He's got some first-rate cider tapped. Well, come when you can, any of you. Good-day!"

"Clever boy," said Mr. Pendell; "feels more comfortable where he is, doesn't he?" and at this the two clerks smiled assent.

"Jonas was never cut out for anything but a farmer. He feels crowded anywhere except in an open field," said Hathaway, bending over the neat pages of his great ledger.

Jonas and Love were driving out of town with the new horse, as fast as the law allowed.

"My!" exclaimed Jonas, "it came over me when I was in the bank how I saw you setting out there that first day. I don't suppose you cared any to speak of about me, but I knew I hadn't got to look further."

"I'm not going to tell you again about that day," said Love laughing at him. "You know now just as well as I do. There never was two before that had less doubts, I feel sure of that!"

"Ain't it first rate that folks can get married," said Jonas soberly. "I never thought anything about it till I come to want you. Now just think o' there being a law o' the state that folks that wants each other can have each other for good an' all! It seemed queer when I began to think about that."

"Don't you remember how I forgot mother's knittin' needles that very first day?" asked Love shyly. "I didn't even know what your name was and now here we are ridin' home together."

## THE PAWKY PEDDLER\*

It is curious to contemplate the various modes by which people attempt to obtain triumphs over each other in this bad world. Some conceive that the very best way is to punish their enemies; some, again, take the Christian doctrine of holding up "the other cheek;" and some are of opinion that there is no such thing at all as the luxury of a real, *bond fide*, lasting, and unqualified triumph to be had by one man over another. Let us see. We think that the case of simple Walter Wylie, who was for a long time so well known in the town of Inverkeithing for his peculiar manner of bringing out his sage philosophy of life after the pawky form of some packmen, who, when they are satisfied they have a *real* good article to show, affect a simplicity and scarcity of words of laudation, the very opposite of the verbose and stately declamation by which they endeavor to dispose of their general stock. The quality of Walter's moral and political commodities was clearly indicated by the *quantum* of simple naïveté infused into his speech and countenance while in the act of narration—his effort at the more pure degrees of simplicity being in exact proportion to the estimate (never a wrong one) which he himself made of the excellence of the communication his peculiar inspiration enabled him to produce. His shop in the high-street of Inverkeithing, in which he sold a variety of those commodities which are necessary for the sustenance of the human corporation, brought him more clearly into public notice. Directly opposite to honest Walter (as he was styled by the people) both in manners and locality was William Harrison, who carried on the same style of business in a shop on the other side of the street. The ordinary rivalry existed between them, and they took their different modes of recommending themselves to their customers—the one, Harrison, by a most verbose and figurative signboard and a most loquacious speech, and the other by his peculiar simplicity of enunciation and publication of the qualities of his wares. The former was both a philosophical and a practical rogue. The latter, again, was as honest as steel; and his honesty and simple humor combined made him beloved by all that knew him; while his rival, who bore to

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\* The Glasgow Citizen.

his simple friend a most inveterate spite, was mortally hated for his roguery throughout the whole burgh.

Now, it happened that Harrison, with a view to two objects—first, the gratification of his never-sleeping spirit of roguery; and, secondly, the ruin, or at least the inconvenience, of simple Walter—bought up from a neighboring rogue a debt alleged to be due by Walter, but which the latter had truly paid, though he had neglected to get it cancelled or discharged by a probative receipt. It amounted to about £100; and Harrison paid for it only about £5, with a condition of paying the cedent £5 more in the event of the entire sum being wrung out of the simple Walter by the wrenching-wheel of a horning. As soon as Walter heard that his rival and enemy Harrison had bought up the false debt, he knew, by an instinct which had nothing wonderful about it, that he was committed for a tough fight; but he retained his equanimity, and even his simple naïveté hung about his mouth and small twinkling eyes in the same manner as if no horning or any such thunderbolt of Jove had been in the act of being forged against him. One day his enemy came into his shop.

“Mr. Wylie,” said he, with a most pert loquacity, and holding up the horning in his hand, “I have a piece of paper here, on which there is the name of Walter Wylie as debtor to me in the sum of £100. I think you had better pay me at present, for I do not wish to let the debt lie and ruin you by allowing a larger sum of interest to run up against you.”

“I thank ye,” replied simple Walter, with an obsequious bow, and then proceeded with the business in which he was engaged. Harrison waited, expecting his debt; but Walter continued his operations. “I winna tak’ the present o’ your interest,” again said Walter; “ye needna wait. And as for your horning, it wadna row up three pundis o’ my sugar. You are as welcome to it as to the interest.”

This answer produced a laugh among the customers against Harrison, who, swearing he would have a caption and apprehend Walter the next day, walked out to instruct his agent to put his threat into execution. He had scarcely gone, when several of his (Harrison’s) creditors—for he himself was great as a debtor—arrested in Walter’s hand the false debt due to Harrison, so as to secure it to themselves. The simple Walter was astonished at all this parade about a debt that he had already paid; but he never lost his simple naïveté or

his temper, and was determined to go to jail as meekly as a lamb. Meanwhile, the inhabitants heard of the expected incarceration of their favorite, and insisted upon his defeating the schemes of his enemy by resisting according to law his unjust demands; but Walter, with a good-natured smile, said that he trusted all to the ways of Providence.

Next morning, Walter, altogether unconcerned about his apprehension, went forth to take his walk in the green fields, according to his custom, although it might be to take his breakfast in the old Tolbooth, which frowned upon him as he passed. He had wandered a little way in the country, when he thought he observed two men slipping along behind a thorn hedge, as if they wished to escape detection; and, impelled by curiosity, he slipped along the other side of the same hedge upon his hands and his feet, and, having seen the men deposit something in the side of a neighboring dyke, squatted down as if he had been shot dead, and lay there as still as death until the men went away. Up then rose Walter, and going cautiously, looking around him again and again as he crept along, he came to the hole in the dyke, and having examined it, found lying there a large bundle of bank-notes, amounting to no less than £500. Putting the money into his pocket, he, by one leap, got to the middle of the road, when, having folded his hands behind his back and struck up a very merry tune, he continued his walk, with a slow and comfortable composure which was pleasant to see. Several people passed him; and, as he was never heard to whistle before, they wondered mightily that simple Walter should whistle so merry a tune, and more so, on the morning of that day when he was to be put into prison. When he went a little farther, still whistling and sauntering, with a very easy and pleasant carelessness, whom does he meet? Why, no other than William Harrison, flying along the road like a madman, calling out if any one had seen two black-guard-looking men on the way; for that his shop had been robbed during the night, and all the money he had in the world taken out of it and carried away.

"I saw the blackguards," replied Walter. "They're awa' doun by Gibson's Loan yonder, as fast as if a messenger wi' a hornin' and caption was at their heels."

And he again whistled his tune—a circumstance that struck Harrison, who had never heard him whistle before, with 'as

much surprise as his announcement; but he had no time to wonder or reply, and away he shot like a pursuing messenger, while Walter walked into the town and opened his shop, wherein he deposited the £500, and proceeded to serve his customers with as much simplicity and good humor as ever.

The news of the loss sustained by Harrison went like wild-fire through the burgh, and every one wondered that a man who owed so much money should have had so large a sum as £500 in the house at one time, and it was suspected that he intended to fly the country with the money as soon as he could wring the false debt out of simple Watty. Every inquiry was made after the robbers, but they could not be traced; and now Harrison, made savage by his loss and the allusion made by Watty about the messenger, got his caption from Edinburgh by a special messenger, and sent to apprehend Walter for the false debt.

"I have a caption against you, Mr. Wylie," said the messenger as he entered. "Will you pay the debt or go with me?"

"If you'll wait," replied Watty, with the greatest simplicity, "till I weigh this pund o' sugar to Jenny Gilchrist, I'll tak' a step wi' ye as far as the jail."

And, proceeding to serve his customer, he indulged in some of his dry jokes in the very same way he used to do; and, when he had finished, called up his wife to serve the shop, and walked with great composure away with the messenger to that place of squalor and squalid misery. He was in due form entered in the jailer's books, and deposited in the old black building as a jail-bird, where, if he chose, he might whistle as gaily as he did in the morning when he went out to hear the larks singing in the clouds, to which celestial residence he had so unexpectedly accompanied them. The news soon spread far and wide that Walter Wylie was in prison, and many efforts were made to get him to pay the debt at once and gain his liberty; but Walter knew himself what he was about, and, having thus ascertained how far Harrison would go, he sent for a writer, and, having given him instructions and a part of the £500 to pay his expenses, got out in a few days on what the *honest* men of the law call a suspension and liberation.

Some time afterward, Harrison himself, having lost all his money, was put into jail at the instance of one of his credi-

tors, who was enraged at the scheme he had resorted to for defrauding them; and there he lay in the very same room in which Watty had been deposited. Harrison's creditor was a good and godly man, and, like Walter, was an elder of the church, and the people pitied him greatly for the loss he was likely to sustain through the rogue who had thus cheated so many poor people. His debt was £50, and, to the wonder and amazement of all the inhabitants, he got full payment from Walter Wylie, whereupon Harrison was immediately let out of prison.

No sooner was it known that Walter had paid one debt of Harrison than another creditor apprehended the rogue, and lodged him again in jail. He was allowed to lie there for a considerable time, when Watty again came forward and paid this debt also, whereupon he was again allowed to escape. A third creditor followed the example of the two others, and the rogue was again committed to durance; but this time Watty allowed him to remain for a longer time, and then paid the debt, that he might deal out his punishment in due proportion. A fourth time the rogue was apprehended, and a fifth and a sixth time, and upon each of these occasions he was allowed to remain for as long a time as Watty thought might produce as much pain as it was his intention to inflict. Altogether Harrison had thus lain about eight months in prison. His debts were now all paid, and the whole sum of £500 exhausted—having been honestly divided among those creditors whose debts were just, and who required them for the support of their wives and children. No part of the £500 was kept to answer the false debt claimed against Watty, because he had secured himself against that demand by getting assignments to the debts he paid, whereby he might *plead* compensation against his persecutor. Thus had he, in his own quiet way, saved himself, punished a rogue, and brought peace and comfort to the homes of a number of deserving men, whose debts otherwise would never have been paid.

The wonder produced by this extraordinary proceeding on the part of Watty was unparalleled; and what nobody could comprehend, they were surely entitled to wonder at. Some thought the simple creature mad, and his friends tried to interfere to prevent so reckless a squandering of his means.

“I am surprised, Mr. Wylie,” said his clergyman to him

one day in the presence of a number of people who were collected in the shop—"I am surprised at this proceeding of yours, which has spread far and wide throughout the country. If your motive be a secret, I will not ask it from thee; but, if it is a fair and legitimate question, I would make bold to put it to thee, as one of my flock and an elder of our church."

"There is nae secret about it, sir," replied Watty, with his accustomed simplicity. "We are told to do guid to them wha hate us, and *pay* for them wha despitefully persecute us." And he leered a grotesque look of simple cajolery in the face of the godly man.

"I fear thou misquotest the Holy Book, Mr. Wylie," replied the minister. "We are asked to pray for our enemies, not to pay for them."

"Ay! ay!" ejaculated Watty in surprise. "Is it possible that that single letter 'R' should hae cost a puir, simple body £500?"

The minister stared, and the people wondered; but, up to this day, none ever knew why simple Walter Wylie paid the debts of his enemy Harrison,



## ETCHINGS: GUILTY\*

She came into the court steadily. She was veiled, but when she showed her face it was beautiful. Hair bright with the sunshine of life; eyes dark as the shadows of death; the white flowers of innocence upon her breast—yet she was guilty.

She had killed her child. The slender, clinging fingers held strength to put out life as her sinuous, supple body held the strength to give it. When she spoke, her voice was like the far-away wave's—strong, pathetic, lashing.

“Look at me—I am what men call pleasure when they touch and hold me, and temptation when they but look upon me, and death when they have gained me. And many wished for me, for they would then have emptied life.

“But to one man who was strong, I turned and prayed of the unknown Power to give him to me, and my soul grew with that prayer until I felt there was no Power greater, and his soul and mine were one, and two souls can be a perfect strength.

“So we tasted of the wine of life and passed by its dregs and feasted upon the mystic which men call happiness.

“But what pleasure breeds it kills. When my child came its hair was like mine and its eyes like his, and when the lips pouted, he said they were mine, and when they were grave, I saw his own. Then he loved its hair and I its eyes.

“That was at first. Then we began to build castles and palaces for it. But the child played in the sand.

“And as the days went on, it grew, and my power and my strength grew less, as does everything before ambition. But the child grew strong and its eyes were more and more like his—and there came less sunlight upon the hair.

“One night, I came upon them together and I heard him say as he kissed the eyes of my child—

“‘I love thee for that thou art part of me—the better part, as is ambition of strength—in which pleasure has no part.’

“And he kissed the eyes again; the lips were grave, and there was no light upon the hair.

“So then I said, ‘Pleasure weds not strength for naught,’ and that night when my child kneeled to pray to the Unknowable I put my fingers about its throat and strangled it.”

“I am very weary, but—I shall have Eternity to rest in.”

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\* S. L. Bacon: For Short Stories.

## GREATEST STORY EVER WRITTEN \*

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“Or over the knightly years were gone  
With the old world to the grave,  
I was a king in Babylon  
And you were Christian slave.”

His name was Charlie Mears; he was the only son of his mother, who was a widow, and he lived in the north of London, coming into the city every day to work in a bank. He was twenty years old and suffered from aspirations. I met him in a public billiard saloon, where the marker called him by his given name, and he called the marker “Bull’s-eyes.” Charlie explained, a little nervously, that he had only gone to the place to look on, and since looking on at games of skill is not likely to be a cheap amusement, I suggested that Charlie should go back to his mother.

That was our first step toward better acquaintance. He would call on me sometimes in the evenings instead of running about London with fellow-clerks, and before long, speaking of himself as a young man must, he told me of his aspirations, which were literary. He desired to make an undying name, chiefly through verse, though he was not above sending stories of love and death to the cheap drop-a-nickel-in-the-slot-and-get-a prize journals. It was my fate to sit still while Charlie read to me poems of many hundred lines each, and bulky fragments of plays that were going to shake the world. My reward was his unreserved confidence, and the self-revelations and troubles of a young man are almost as holy as those of a maiden. Charlie had never fallen in love, but was anxious to do so on the first opportunity; he believed in all things good, and all things honorable, but at the same time was curiously careful to let me see that he knew his way about the world, as befitted a bank clerk on twenty-five shillings a week. He rhymed “dove” with “love” and “moon” with “June,” and devoutly believed that they had never been so rhymed before. The long, lame gaps in his plays he filled in with a few words of apology and description, and swept on, seeing all that he intended to do so clearly that he esteemed it already done, and turned to me for applause.

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I fancy that his mother did not approve of his aspirations, and I know that his writing-table at home was the edge of his wash-stand. This was told me almost at the beginning of our acquaintance; when he was ravaging my book-shelves, and a little before I was implored to speak the truth about his chances of "writing something really great, you know." Maybe I encouraged him too much; for one night he came, his eyes flaming with excitement, and said breathlessly:

"Do you mind—can you let me stay here and write all this evening? I won't interrupt you—I won't, really. There's no place for me to write in at my mother's."

"What's the trouble?" I said.

"I've a notion in my head that would make the most solemn story that ever was written. Do let me write it out here. It's such a notion."

There was no resisting the appeal. I set him a table and loaded it with all the devil's tools that drive a man to despair. He hardly thanked me, but plunged into the work at once. For half an hour the pen scratched away without stopping. Then Charlie sighed and tugged his hair. The scratching grew slower; there were more erasures, and at last he ceased altogether. The finest story in the world would not come out.

"It looks such awful rot now," he said, mournfully. "And yet it seemed so good when I was thinking about it. What's wrong?"

I could not dishearten him by saying the truth. So I answered, "Perhaps you don't feel in the mood."

"Yes, I do—except when I look at this stuff. Ugh!"

"Read me what you've done."

He read, and it was wondrous bad. He paused at all the specially turgid sentences, waiting for a little approval, for he was as proud of those sentences as I knew he would be.

"It needs revision," I said at last, cautiously.

"I hate cutting my things down. I don't think you could alter a word here without spoiling the sense. It reads better aloud than when I was writing it."

"Charlie, you're suffering from a disease afflicting a numerous class. Put the thing by and tackle it again in a week."

"I want to do it at once. What do you think of it?"

"How can I judge from a half-written tale? Tell me the whole of the story."

Charlie told, and in the telling there was everything that his ignorance had so carefully prevented from escaping into the written work. I looked at him aghast. Was it possible he did not know the beauty, the criminality, the tremendous power of the notion that had come in his way. Men had been shaken to their depths by an inspiration not a tithe as full. But Charlie babbled on serenely, interrupting the current of pure fancy with samples of horrible sentences he purposed to use. I heard him out to the end. It would be folly to allow his idea to remain in his own inapt hands when I could do so much with it. Not all that could be done, indeed; but oh, so much.

“What do you think?” he said.

“I think the ideas pretty good; but you won’t be able to handle it for ever so long. Now——”

“Would it be of any use to you? Would you care to take it? I should be proud,” said Charlie, promptly.

There is nothing sweeter in the world than the guileless, hot-headed, intemperate, open admiration of a junior. Even a woman in her blindest devotion does not fall into the gait of the man she adores, tilt her bonnet at the angle at which he wears his hat, or interlard her speech with his pet oaths. And Charlie did all these things. Still, it was necessary to salve my conscience.

“Let’s make a bargain. I’ll give you a fiver for the notion,” I said.

Charlie became a bank clerk at once.

“Oh, that’s impossible. Between two pals, you know, if I may call you so, and speaking as a man of the world, I couldn’t take the notion if it’s any good to you. I’ve heaps more.”

He had. Nobody knew this better than I, but they were mostly the notions of other men.

“Look at it as a matter of business—between men of the world—and £5 will buy you any number of books. Business is business, and you may be sure I shouldn’t spring that price unless——”

“Oh, if you put it that way!” said Charlie, visibly moved by the thought of the books. And the bargain was clinched, with an understanding that Charlie should, at unstated intervals, come to me with all the notions that he possessed, should have a table of his own to write at, and unquestioned

right to inflict upon me all his poems and fragments of poems. Then said I: "Now tell me how you came by this notion."

"It came." Charlie's eyes opened.

"Yes, but you told me a great deal about the hero that you must have read before."

"I haven't any time for reading except when you let me sit here; and on Sundays I'm on my tricycle, or down the river, all day. There's nothing wrong about the hero, is there?"

"Tell me again and I shall understand clearly. You say that your hero went pirating. How did he live?"

"He was on the lower deck of this ship-thing."

"What sort of ship? Tell me everything about it."

"It was the kind rowed with oars—and the sea spurts through the holes for oars, and the men sit up to their knees in water. Then there's a bench running down between the two lines of oars, and the overseer runs up and down the bench to make the men work."

"How do you know that?"

"It's in the tale. There's a rope running overhead, looped up to the upper deck, for the overseer to catch hold of when the ship rolls. When the overseer misses the rope once and falls among the rowers, remember, the hero laughs at him and gets licked for it with a whip. He's chained to his oar, of course."

"How is he chained?"

"There's an iron band round his waist, fixed to the bench he sits on, and there's a sort of handcuff on his left wrist, chaining him to the oar. He's on the lower deck, where the worst men are sent, and the only light comes from the hatchways and through the oar-holes. Can't you imagine the sunlight just squeezing through between the handle and the hole, and moving about as the ship moves?"

"I can, but I can't imagine your imagining it."

"How can it be any other way? Then the long oars on the upper deck are managed by four men to each bench, the lower ones by three, and the lower of all by two. Remember it's quite dark on the lowest deck and all the men there go mad. When a man dies at his oar on the deck he isn't thrown overboard, but cut up in his chains and stuffed through the oar-hole in little pieces."

"Why?"

"To save trouble and to frighten the others. It needs two overseers to drag a body up to the top deck, and if the men at the oars were left alone, of course they'd stop rowing and try to pull up the benches by all standing up together."

"You've a most provident imagination. Where have you been reading about galleys and galley-slaves?"

"Nowhere that I remember. I row a good deal when I get the chance. But, perhaps, if you say so, I may have read something."

He went away shortly afterward, while I wondered how a bank-clerk, aged twenty, could put into my hands with a profligate abundance of detail, all given with perfect assurance, the story of extravagant and bloodthirsty adventure, riot, piracy and death in unnamed seas. He had led his hero a desperate dance through revolt against the overseers, to command of a ship of his own, and ultimate establishment of a kingdom on an island "somewhere in the sea, you know," and, delighted with the paltry £5, had gone out to buy the notions of other men, that they might teach him how to write.

When next Charlie came to me he was drunk—royally drunk on many poets for the first time revealed to him. His pupils were dilated, his speech stumbled over itself, and he wrapped himself in quotations. Most of all was he drunk with Longfellow.

"Isn't it splendid? Isn't it superb?" he cried. "Listen to this:

" 'Wouldst thou go,' the helmsman answered,  
 ' Know the secret of the sea ;  
 Only those who brave its dangers  
 Comprehend its mystery.

Only those who brave its dangers  
 Comprehend its mystery,' "

he repeated twenty times, walking up and down the room and forgetting me. "But I can understand it, too. I don't know how to thank you for that fiver. And this, listen:

" 'I remember the black wharves and the ships,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free,  
 And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.'

"I haven't braved any dangers, but I feel as if I knew all about it."

"You certainly seemed to understand the sea. Have you ever seen it?"

"When I was a little chap I went to Brighton once. We used to live in Coventry, though, before we came to London; but I never saw it.

" 'When descends on the Atlantic  
The gigantic  
Storm wind of the equinox.' "

He shook me by the shoulder to make me understand the passion that was shaking him.

"When that storm comes," he continued, "all the oars in the ship that I was talking about get broken, and the rowers have their chests broken in by the oar heads. Have you done anything with that notion of mine yet?"

"No. I was waiting to hear some more about it from you. Tell me how in the world you're so certain about the fittings in the ship."

"I don't know. It's as real as anything to me until I try to write it down. I was thinking about it only last night in bed, after you had lent me 'Treasure Island,' and I made up a whole lot of new things."

"What kind of things?"

"About the food the men ate—rotten figs, and black beans, and wine in a bag passed from bench to bench."

"Was the ship built so long ago as that?"

"As what? I don't know whether it was long ago or not. It's only a notion, but sometimes it seems just as real as if it were true. Do I bother you with talking about it?"

"Not in the least. Did you make up anything else?"

"Yes; but it's nonsense."

"Never mind. Let's hear about it."

"Well, I was thinking, and after a while I got out of bed and wrote down on a piece of paper the sort of stuff the men scratched on their oars with their handcuffs. It seemed to make the thing more life-like. It is so real to me, y' know."

"Have you the paper about you?"

"Ye-es, but what's the use of showing it. It's only a lot of scratches. But you might have 'em reproduced in the book on the front page."

"Never mind that. Let's see what your men wrote."

He pulled out of his pocket a sheet of note paper with a single line of scratches upon it, and I put it carefully away.

"It's great nonsense," he repeated, "but all those men in the ship seem as real as real people to me. I can see all their faces, and some of them are just like the faces of men I know."

"I suppose you've fitted faces to your men," I said.

"No, I haven't. The men I know have the faces that fit my men. Do do something to the notion soon. I should like to see it written and printed."

"But all you've told me would make a long book."

"Make it, then. You've only to sit down and write it out."

"Give me a little time. Have you any more notions?"

"Not just now. I'm reading all the books I've bought."

When he left I looked at the sheet of note paper with the inscription upon it. Then I embraced my head with both hands, to make sure that it was not coming off or turning round. Then—but there seemed to be no interval between quitting my rooms and finding myself arguing with a policeman outside a room marked "Private" in a corridor of the British Museum. All I demanded, as politely as possible, was a Greek antiquity man. The policeman knew nothing except the regulations of the Museum, and it became necessary to forage through all the houses and offices inside the gates. An elderly gentleman, called away from his lunch, put an end to my investigations by holding the note paper between finger and thumb and sniffing at it scornfully.

"What does this mean? H'm! So far as I can ascertain, it is an attempt to write extremely corrupt Greek on the part"—here he glanced at me with intention—"of an extremely illiterate—ah—person." He read slowly: "Pollock, Eckerman, Tauchnitz, Henniker," four names familiar to me.

"Can you tell me what the corruption is supposed to mean—the gist of the thing?" I asked.

"I have been—many times—overcome with weariness in this employment." He returned me the paper, and I fled without a word of thanks, explanation, or apology.

I might have been excused for forgetting much. To me of all men had been given the chance to write the most marvellous tale in the world—nothing less than the story of a Greek galley slave, as told by himself. Small wonder that his dreaming seemed real to Charlie. The fates that shut the doors of each successive life behind us had in this case been neglectful, and Charlie was looking, though that he



did not know, where never man had been permitted to look since time began. Above all, he was absolutely ignorant of the knowledge sold to me for £5; and he would retain that ignorance, for bank clerks do not understand metempsychosis. He would supply me—here I capered among the dumb gods of Egypt and laughed in their battered faces—with material to make my tale sure—so sure that the world would hail it as an impudent and vamped fiction. And I, and I alone, would know that it was absolutely and literally true. I, and I alone, held this jewel to my hand for the cutting and polishing. Therefore I danced among the gods till a policeman saw me and took steps in my direction.

It remained now only to encourage Charlie to talk, and here there was no difficulty. But I had forgotten the gift of the books. He came to me time after time as useless as a surcharged phonograph—drunk on Byron, Shelley, or Keats. Knowing what the boy had been, and desperately anxious not to lose one word of his babble, I could not hide from him my respect and interest. He misconstrued both into respect for the soul of Charlie Mears and interest in his readings, and stretched my patience to breaking point by reciting poetry—not his own now, but that of others. I wished every English poet blotted out of the memory of mankind. I blasphemed the mightiest names of song because they had drawn Charlie from the path of direct narrative; but I choked down my impatience until the first flood of enthusiasm should have spent itself and the boy returned to his dreams.

“What’s the use of my telling you what I think when these chaps wrote things for the angels to read?” he growled one evening. “Why don’t you write something like theirs?”

“I don’t think you’re treating me quite fairly,” I said.

“I’ve given you the story,” he said shortly, replunging into “Lara.”

“But I want the details.”

“The things I make up about that — ship? They’re quite easy. You can just make ’em up yourself. Turn up the gas a little, I want to go on reading.”

I could have broken the glass globe over his head for his amazing stupidity. I could, indeed, make up things for myself, did I only know what Charlie did not know that he knew. But since the doors were shut behind me I could but wait his youthful pleasure and strive to keep him in kilter.

A minute's want of guard might spoil a priceless revelation, for now and again he would toss his books aside—he kept them in my rooms; his mother would have been shocked at the waste of good money had she seen them—and launched into his sea dreams. Again I cursed all the poets of England. The plastic mind of the bank clerk had been overlaid, colored, and distorted by that which he had read, and the result as delivered was a tangle like the muttered song through a city telephone in the busiest part of the day.

He talked of the galley—his own galley, had he but known it—with illustrations borrowed from the "Bride of Abydos." He painted the experiences of his hero with quotations from the "Corsair," and threw in deep and desperate moral reflections from "Cain" and "Manfred." Only when the talk turned on Longfellow were the jarring cross-currents dumb, and I knew that Charlie was speaking the truth, as he remembered it.

"What do you think of this?" I said one evening, and before he could expostulate, read him the whole of "The Saga of King Olaf."

He listened open-mouthed, flushed, his hands drumming on the back of the sofa where he lay, till I came to the song of Einar Tamberskeloer and the verse:

Einar then, the arrow taking  
From the loosened string,  
Answered: "That was Norway breaking  
'Neath thy hand, O king."

He gasped with pure delight of sound.

"That's better than Byron—a little," I ventured.

"Better? Why, it's true! How could he have known?"

I repeated:

"What was that?" said Olaf, standing  
On the quarter-deck;  
'Something heard I like the stranding  
Of a shattered wreck.'"

"How could he have known how the ships crash and the oars rip out and go all along the line? Why, only the other night—but go back and read the 'Skerry of Skuck's' again."

"No; I'm tired. Let's talk. What happened the other night?"

Charlie Mears roused himself and went on:

"I had an awful nightmare about that ship of ours. I dreamed I was drowned in a fight. You see, we ran along-

side another ship in harbor. The water was dead still, except where our oars threshed it up. You know where I always sit in the galley?"

"No. That's news to me!"

"On the fourth oar from the bow on the right side on the upper deck. There were four of us at the oar, all chained. I remember watching the water and trying to get my handcuffs off. Then we closed up on the other ship, and all their fighting men jumped over our bulwarks, and our bench broke and I was pinned down with the other three fellows atop of me and the big oar jammed across our backs. How I howled!"

"Well?"

Charlie's eyes were alive and light. He was looking at the wall behind me.

"I don't know how we fought. The men were trampling all over my back, and I stopped howling and lay low. Then our rowers on our left side—tied to their oars, you know—began to yell and back water—I could hear the water—I could hear the water sizzle—and we spun around like a cockchafer, and I knew, lying where I was, that there was a galley coming upon our left side, bow on, to ram us. I could just lift up my head and see her sail over the bulwarks. We wanted to meet her nose on, but it was too late. We only turned a little bit, because the galley on our right had hooked herself on to us and stopped our moving. Then, by gum! there was a crash! Our port oars began to break as the other galley—the moving one, y' know—stuck her nose into them. Then the lower deck oars shot up through the deck, butt first, and one of them drove clean up in the air and came down again close to my head."

"How was that managed?"

"The galley's bow was forcing them back through the oar holes, and there was the devil of a shindy down below. Then her nose caught us nearly in the middle and we tilted sideways, and the fellows in the right-hand galley unhitched their hooks and ropes and threw things onto our upper deck—arrows and hot pitch, or something—and we went up and up and up on the left side, and the right side dipped, and I heard the water just wait for a minute as it topped the starboard bulwarks, and then it curled over and crashed down on the whole lot of us, and I felt it hit my back, and it broke."

"And then?" I said breathlessly.

"The funny thing was, though, in all the mess I didn't feel a bit astonished. It seemed as if I'd been in a good many fights, because I told my next man so when the row began. But that cad of an overseer on my deck wouldn't unloose our chains and give us a chance. He always said we'd all be set free after a battle, but we never were."

"What a scoundrel!"

"I should say he was! He never gave us enough to eat, and sometimes we were so thirsty that we used to drink salt water. I can taste that salt water still."

"Now tell me something about the harbor where the fight was fought."

"I didn't dream about that. I know it was a harbor, though, because we were tied up to a ring on a white wall, and under water all the face of the stone was covered with wood to prevent our ram getting chipped when the tide made us rock."

"That's curious! Our hero commanded the galley, didn't he?"

"Didn't he just! He stood by the bows and shouted like a good 'un. He was the man who killed the overseer."

"But you were all drowned together, Charlie, weren't you?"

"I can't make that fit quite," he said, with a puzzled air. "The galley must have gone down with all hands, and yet I fancy that the hero went on living afterward. Perhaps he climbed into the attacking ship. I wouldn't see that, of course. I was dead, you know."

He shivered slightly and protested that he could remember no more. I did not press him further, but to satisfy myself that he lay in ignorance of the workings of his own mind, deliberately introduced him to Mortimer Collin's "Transmigration," and gave him a sketch of the plot before he opened the pages.

"What rot it all is!" he said frankly at the end of an hour. "I don't understand his nonsense about the red planet, Mars, and the King and the rest of it. Give me the Longfellow again."

I gave him the book and wrote out as much as I could remember of his description of the sea-fight, appealing to him from time to time for confirmation of fact or detail. He would answer without raising his eyes from the book, as as-

surely as though all his knowledge lay before him on the printed page. I spoke under the normal key of my voice, that the current might not be broken, and I do not believe that he was aware of what he was saying, for his thoughts were out on the sea with Longfellow.

"Charlie," I asked, "when the rowers on the galley rose in rebellion, how did they kill their overseers?"

"Tore up the benches and brained 'em. That happened when a heavy sea was running. An overseer on the lower deck slipped from the centre plank and fell among the rowers. They choked him to death against the side of the ship with their chained hands, and it was too dark for the other overseer to see what had happened. When he asked he was pulled down, too, and choked, and the lower deck fought their way up, deck by deck, with the pieces of the broken benches banging behind 'em. How they howled!"

"And what happened after that?"

"I don't know. The hero went away—red hair and red beard and all. That was after he had captured the galley, I think, and before the fight in the harbor."

"You never told me he was red-haired before," I said, after a discreet interval.

Charlie never raised his eyes. "He was as red as a red bear," said he, abstractedly. "He came from the North; they said so in the galley when he was first chained down. Afterward—years and years afterward—we knew where he had gone with the captured ship. The news came from another ship, or else"—His lips moved in silence. He was rapturously retasting some poem before him.

"Where had he been, then?" I was almost whispering, that the sentence might come gently to whichever section of Charlie's brain was working on my behalf.

"To the beaches—the long and wonderful beaches!" was the reply after a minute of silence.

"To Furdurstrandi?" I asked, tingling from head to foot.

"Yes, to Furdurstrandi." He pronounced the word in a new fashion.

"Do you know what you have said?" I shouted, incautiously.

He lifted his eyes, fully roused now.

"No!" he snapped. "I wish you'd let a chap go on reading. Hark to this:

" But Othere, the old sea captain,  
 He neither paused nor stirred  
     Till the king listened, and then  
     Once more took up his pen  
 And wrote down every word ;  
 And to the King of the Saxons,  
     In witness of the truth,  
     Raising his noble head,  
 He stretched his brown hand and said,  
 " Behold this walrus tooth ! "

" By Jove! what chaps these must have been to go sailing  
 all over the shop, never knowing where they'd fetch the  
 land! Hah! "

" Charlie," I pleaded, " if you'll only be sensible for a min-  
 ute or two I'll make our hero every inch as good as Othere."

" Umph! Longfellow wrote that poem. I don't care  
 about writing things any more. I want to read." He was  
 thoroughly out of tune now, and, raging over my own ill-  
 luck, I left him. Conceive yourself at the door of the world's  
 treasure-house, guarded by a child on whose favor depends  
 the gift of the key—an idle, irresponsible child playing  
 knuckle-bones—and you will imagine one-half my torment.  
 Up till that evening Charlie had spoken nothing that might  
 not lie within the experience of a Greek galley slave. But  
 now, or there was no virtue in books, he talked of some  
 desperate adventure of the Vikings, of Thorfin Karlsefne's  
 sailing to Wineland, which is America in the ninth or tenth  
 century. The battle in the harbor he had seen, and his own  
 death he had described.

But this was a much more startling plunge into the past.  
 Was it possible that he had "skipped" half a dozen lives  
 and was then dimly remembering some episode a thousand  
 years later? It was a maddening jumble, and the worst of  
 it was that Charlie Mears in his normal condition was the  
 last person in the world to clear it up. I could only wait  
 and watch, but I went to bed that night with my head full  
 of the wildest imagination. There was nothing that was not  
 possible if Charlie's detestable memory only held good.

I might rewrite "The Saga of Thorfin Karlsefne" as it  
 had never been written before—might tell the story of the  
 first discovery of America, myself the first discoverer. I  
 was entirely at Charlie's mercy, and so long as there was a  
 three-and-sixpenny Bohn volume within his reach Charlie

would not tell. I dared not curse him openly; I hardly dared to assist his memory, for I was dealing with the experiences of a thousand years ago told through the mouth of a boy of to-day. And a boy of to-day is affected by every change of tone and gust of opinion, so that he lies often when he desires to speak the truth.

I saw no more of him for nearly a week. When next I met him it was in Grace Church Street with a bill-book chained to his waist. Business took him over London Bridge and I accompanied him. He was very full of the importance of that book and magnified it. As we passed over the Thames we paused to look at a steamer unloading great slabs of white and brown marble. A barge drifted under the steamer's stern and a lonely cow in that barge bellowed. Charles's face changed from the face of the bank clerk to that of an unknown and—though he would not have believed it—a much shrewder man. He flung his arms across the parapet of the bridge and, laughing very loudly, said:

“When they heard our bulls bellow the Skroelings ran away!”

I waited only for an instant, but the barge and the cow disappeared under the bows of the steamer before I answered.

“Charlie, what do you suppose are Skroelings?”

“Never heard of 'em before. They sound like a new kind of sea-gull. What a chap you are for asking questions!” he replied. “I have to go to the cashier of the omnibus company yonder. Will you wait for me, and we can lunch somewhere together? I've a notion for a poem.”

“No, thanks, I'm off. You're sure you know nothing about Skroelings?”

“Not unless he's been entered for the Liverpool Handicap.” He nodded and disappeared in the crowd.

Now it is written in the Saga of Eric the Red or of Thorfin Karlsefne that nine hundred years ago, when Karlsefne's galleys came to Leif's booths, which Leif had erected in the unknown land called Markland, which may or may not have been Rhode Island, the Skroelings—and the Lord he knows who these may or may not have been—came to trade with the Vikings and ran away because they were frightened at the bellowing of the cattle that Thorfin had brought with him in the ship. But what in the world could a Greek slave

know of that affair? I wandered up and down the streets trying to unravel the mystery, and the more I considered it the more baffling it grew. One thing only seemed certain, and that certainly took away my breath for the moment. If I came to full knowledge of anything at all, it would not be one life of the soul in Charlie Mears's body, but half a dozen—half a dozen several and separate existences spent on blue water in the morning of the world.

Then I walked around the situation.

Obviously, if I used my knowledge I should stand alone and unapproachable until all men were as wise as myself. That would be something, but, manlike, I was ungrateful. It seemed bitterly unfair that Charlie's memory should fail him when I needed it most. Great powers above!—I looked up at them through the fog smoke—did the Lord of Life and Death know what this meant to me? Nothing less than eternal fame of the best kind that comes from One, and is shared by One alone. I would be content—like Clive I stood astounded at my own moderation—with the mere right to tell one story, to work out one little contribution to the light literature of the day. If Charlie were permitted full recollection for one hour—for sixty short minutes of existences that had extended to my own knowledge over a thousand years—I would forego all profit and honor from all that I should make of his speech. I would take no share in the commotion that would follow throughout the particular corner of the globe that calls itself the world. The thing should be put forth anonymously—nay, I would make other men believe that they had written it. They would hire bull-hided, self-advertising Englishmen to bellow it abroad. Preachers would found a fresh conduct of life upon it, swearing that it was new and that they had lifted the fear of death from all mankind. Every Orientalist in Europe would patronize it discursively with Sanskrit and Pali texts. Terrible women would invent unclean variants of the men's belief for the elevation of their sisters. Churches and religions would war over scuffles that would arise among half a dozen denominations, all professing "the doctrine of the True Metempsychosis, as applied to the world and the New Era," and saw, too, the respectable English newspapers shying like frightened kine over the beautiful simplicity of the tale. The mind leaped forward a hundred—two hundred—a thousand years. I saw



with sorrow that men would mutilate and garble the story; that rival creeds would turn it upside down till at last the Western world, which clings to the dread of death more closely than the hope of life, would set it aside as an interesting superstition and stamped after some faith so long forgotten that it seemed altogether new. Upon this I changed the terms of the bargain that I would make with the lords of life and death. Only let me know, let me write the story with sure knowledge that I wrote the truth, and I would burn the manuscript as a solemn sacrifice. Five minutes after the last line was written I would destroy it all. But I must be allowed to write it.

There was no answer. The flaming colors of an Aquarium "poster" caught my eye, and I wondered whether it would be wise or prudent to lure Charlie into the hands of the professional mesmerist there, and whether, if he were under his power, he would speak of his past lives. If he did, and if people believed him—but Charlie would be frightened and flustered or made conceited by the interviews. In either case he would begin to lie through fear or vanity. He was safest in my own hands.

"They are very funny fools, your English," said a voice at my elbow, and turning round I recognized a casual acquaintance, a young Bengali law student called Grish Chunder, whose father had sent him to England to become civilized. The old man was a retired native official, and on an income of £5 a month contrived to allow his son £200 a year, and the run of his teeth in a city where he could pretend to be the cadet of a royal house and tell stories of the brutal Indian bureaucrat who ground the faces of the poor.

Grish Chunder was a young, fat, full-bodied Bengali, dressed with scrupulous care in frock coat, tall hat, light trousers, and tan gloves. But I had known him in the days when the brutal Indian Government paid for his university education, and he contributed cheap sedition to Suchi Durpan and intrigued with the wives of his schoolmates.

"That is very funny and very foolish," he said, nodding at the poster. "I am going down to the Northbrook Club. Will you come, too?"

I walked with him for some time.

"You are not well," he said. "What is there in your mind? You do not talk."

"Grish Chunder, you've been too well educated to believe in a God, haven't you?"

"Oh—ah, yes, *here!* But when I go home I must conciliate popular superstition and make ceremonies of purification, and my women will anoint idols."

"And hang up *tulsi* and feast the *purchit*, and take you back into caste again and make a good *khuttri* of you again, you advanced social Freethinker. And you'll eat *desi* food again and like it all, from the smell in the court-yard to the mustard-oil over you."

"I shall very much like it," said Grish Chunder, unguardedly. "Once a Hindu always a Hindu. But I like to know what the English think they know."

"I'll tell you something that one Englishman knows. It's an old tale to you."

I began to tell the story of Charlie in English, but Grish Chunder put a question in the vernacular, and the history went forward naturally in the tongue best suited for its telling. After all, it could not have been told in English. Grish Chunder heard me, nodding from time to time, and then came up to my rooms, where I concluded the tale.

"*Beshak*," he said philosophically. "*Le kindarwaza band hai* (without doubt, but the door is shut). I have heard of this remembering of previous existences among my people. It is, of course, an old tale with us, but to happen to an Englishman—a cow-fed *Molech*—an outcast. By Jove! that is most peculiar."

"Outcast yourself, Grish Chunder! You eat cow beef every day. Let's think the thing out. The boy remembers his incarnations."

"Does he know that?" said Grish Chunder quietly, swinging his legs as he sat on my table. He was speaking in English.

"He does not know anything. Would I speak to you if he did? Go on."

"There is no going on at all. If you tell that to your friends, they will say you are mad and put it in the papers. Suppose, now, you prosecute for libel!"

"Let's leave that out of the question entirely. Is there any chance of his being made to speak?"

"There is a chance. Oh, ah, yes! But if he spoke it would mean that all this world would end now—instanter—

fall down on your head. These things are not allowed, you know. As I said, the door is shut."

"Not a ghost of a chance?"

"How can there be? You are a Christian and it is forbidden to eat, in your books, of the tree of life, or else you would never die. How shall you all fear death if you all know what your friend does not know that he knows? I am afraid to be kicked, but I am not afraid to die, because I know what I know. You are not afraid to be kicked, but you are afraid to die. If you were not, by God! you English would be all over the shop in an hour, upsetting the balances of power and making commotions. It would not be good. But no fear. He will remember a little and a little less, and he will call it dreams. Then he will forget altogether. When I passed my first Arts Examination in Calcutta that was all in the cram-book on Wordsworth. Trailing clouds of glory, you know!"

"This seems to be an exception to the rule."

"There are no exceptions to rules. Some are not so hard-looking as others, but they are all the same when you touch. If this friend of yours said so-and-so and so-and-so, indicating that he had lost all his lost lives or one piece of a lost life, he would not be in the bank another hour. He would be what you called sacked because he was mad, and they would send him to an asylum for lunatics. You can see that, my friend."

"Of course I can, but I wasn't thinking of him. His name need never appear in the story."

"Ah! I see. That story will never be written. You can try."

"I am going to."

"For your own credit and for the sake of money, of course?"

"No, for the sake of writing the story. On my honor, that will be all."

"Even then there is no chance. You cannot play with the gods. It is a very pretty story now. As they say, let it go on that—I mean at that. Be quick! He will not last long."

"How do you mean?"

"What I say. He has never, so far, thought about a woman."

"Hasn't he, though?" I remembered some of Charlie's confidences,

"I mean no woman has thought about him. When that comes, *bus—hogya*—all up! I know. There are millions of women here. House-maids, for instance."

I winced at the thought of my story being ruined by a house-maid. And yet nothing was more probable, among bank clerks. Grish Chunder grinned.

"Yes—also pretty girls—cousins of his house, and perhaps not in his house. One kiss that he gives back again and remembers will cure all this nonsense, or else"—

"Or else what? Remember, he does not know that he knows."

"I know that. Or else, if nothing happens, he will become immersed in the trade and financial speculations like the rest. It must be so. You can see that it must be so. But the woman will come first, I think."

There was a rap at the door and Charlie charged in impetuously. He had been released from office, and by the look in his eyes I could see that he had come over for a long talk; most probably with poems in his pocket. Charlie's poems were very wearying; but sometimes they led him to talk about the galley.

Grish Chunder looked at him keenly for a minute.

"I beg your pardon," Charlie said uneasily. "I didn't know you had any one with you."

"I am going," said Grish Chunder.

He drew me into the lobby as he departed.

"That is your man," he said quickly. "I tell you he will never speak all you wish. That is rot—bosh. But he would be most good to make to see things. Now, otherwise it may be too late. Suppose, now, we pretend that it was only play"—I had never seen Grish Chunder so excited—"and make him take the ink in his hand. Eh, what do you think? I tell you that he could see anything that a man could see. Let me get the ink and the camphor. He is a seer, and he will tell us very many things."

"He may be all you say, but I'm not going to trust him to your gods and devils."

"It will not hurt him. He will only feel a little stupid and dull when he wakes up. You have seen boys look into the ink-pool before."

"That is the reason why I am not going to see it any more. You'd better go, Grish Chunder."

He went, declaring far down the staircase that it was throwing away my only chance of looking into the future.

This left me unmoved, for I was concerned for the past, and no peering of hypnotized boys into mirrors and ink-pools would help me to that. But I saw Grish Chunder's point of view and sympathized with it.

"What a big black brute that was," said Charlie, when I returned to him. "Well, look here, I've just done a poem; I did it instead of playing dominoes after lunch. May I read it?"

"Let me read it to myself."

"Then you miss the proper expression. Besides, you always make my things sound as if the rhyme were all wrong."

"Read it aloud, then. You're remarkably like a good many other men."

Charlie mouthed me his poem, and it was not much worse than the average of his verses. He had been reading his books faithfully, but he was not pleased when I told him that I preferred my Longfellow straight and undiluted with Charlie.

Then we began to go through the manuscript line by line, Charlie parrying every objection and correction with:

"Yes, that may be better, but you don't catch what I'm driving at."

Charlie was, in one way at least, very like one kind of poet.

There was a pencil scrawl at the back of the paper and "What's that?" I said.

"Oh, that's not poetry at all. It's some rot I wrote last night before I went to bed and it was too much bother to hunt for rhymes; so I made it a sort of blank verse instead."

Here is Charlie's "blank verse:"

"We pulled for you when the wind was against us and the sails were low.

*"Will you never let us go?"*

"We ate bread and onions when you took towns, or ran aboard quickly when you were beaten back by the foe.

"The captain walked up and down the deck in fair weather singing songs, but we were below.

"We fainted with our chins on the oars and you did not see that we were idle, for we still swung to and fro.

*"Will you never let us go?"*

"The salt made the oar-handles like sharkskin; our knees were cut to the bone with salt cracks; our hair was stuck to our foreheads, and our lips were cut to our gums, and you whipped us because we could not row.

*"Will you never let us go?"*

"But in a little time we shall run out of the port-holes as the water runs

along the oar-blades, and though you tell the others to row after us, you will never catch us till you catch the oar-thresh and tie up the winds in the belly of the sail.

*"Will you never let us go?"*

"H'm! What's oar-thresh, Charlie?"

"The water washed up by the oars. That's the sort of song they might sing in the galley, y' know. Aren't you ever going to finish that story and give me some of the profits?"

"It depends on yourself. If you had only told me more about your hero in the first instance it might have been finished by now. You're so hazy in your notions."

"I only want to give you the general notion of it—the knocking about from place to place and the fighting and all that. Can't you fill in the rest yourself? Make the hero save a girl on a pirate galley and marry her or do something."

"You're a really helpful collaborator. I suppose the hero went through some adventures before he married?"

"Well, then, make him a very artful card—a low sort of man—a sort of political man who went about making treaties and breaking them—a black-haired chap, who hid behind the mast when the fighting began."

"But you said the other day that he was red-haired."

"I couldn't have! Make him black-haired, of course; you've no imagination."

Seeing that I had just discovered the entire principles upon which the half-memory falsely called imagination is based, I felt entitled to laugh, but forbore, for the sake of the tale.

"You're right. You're the man with imagination. A black-haired chap in a decked ship."

"No, an open ship—like a big boat."

This was maddening.

"Your ship has been built and designed, closed and decked in—you said so yourself," I protested.

"No, no, not that ship. That was open, or half decked because— By Jove, you're right! You made me think of the hero as a red-haired chap. Of course, if he were red, the ship would be an open one, with painted sails."

Surely, I thought, he would remember now that he had served in two galleys at least, in a three-decked Greek one under the black-haired "political man," and again in a Viking's open sea-serpent under the man "red as a red bear" who went to Markland. The devil prompted me to speak.

"Why, 'of course,' Charlie," said I.

"I don't know. Are you making fun of me?"

The current was broken for the time being. I took up a note-book and pretended to make many entries in it.

"It's a pleasure to work with an imaginative chap like yourself," I said after a pause. "The way you've brought out the character of the hero is simply wonderful."

"Do you think so?" he answered with a pleased flush. "I often tell myself that there's more in me than my mother than people think."

"There's an enormous amount in you."

"Then won't you let me send an essay on 'The Ways of Bank Clerks' to *Tid-Bits* and get the guinea prize."

"That wasn't exactly what I meant, old fellow. Perhaps it would be better to wait a little and go ahead with the galley story."

"Ah, but I shan't get the credit of that. *Tid-Bits* would publish my name and address if I win. What are you grinning at? They would."

"I know it. Suppose you go for a walk. I want to look though my notes about our story."

Now this reprehensible youth who left me, a little hurt and put back, might for aught he or I knew have been one of the crew of the "Argo"—had been certainly slave or comrade to Thorfin Karlsefne. Therefore, he was deeply interested in guinea competitions. Remembering what Grish Chunder had said, I laughed aloud. The Lords of Life and Death would never allow Charlie Mears to speak with full knowledge of his pasts, and I must even piece out what he has told me with my own poor inventions, while Charlie wrote of the ways of bank clerks.

I got together and placed on one file all my notes, and the net result was not cheering. I read them a second time. There was nothing that might not have been compiled at secondhand from other people's books—except, perhaps, the story of the fight in the harbor. The adventures of a Viking had been written many times before; the history of a Greek galley-slave was no new thing, and though I wrote both, who could challenge or confirm the accuracy of my details? I might as well tell a tale of 2,000 years hence. The Lords of Life and Death were as cunning as Grish Chunder had

hinted. They would allow nothing to escape that might trouble or make easy the minds of men. Though I was convinced of this, yet I could not leave the tale alone. Exaltation followed reaction, not once, but twenty times, in the next few weeks. My moods varied with the March sunlight and flying clouds. By night or in the beauty of a spring morning I perceived that I could write that tale and shift continents thereby. In the wet, windy afternoons I saw that the tale could indeed be written, but would be nothing more than a faked, false-varnished, sham-rusted piece of Wardour Street work. Then I blessed Charlie in many ways though it was no fault of his. He seemed to be busy with prize competitions, and I saw less and less of him as the weeks went by and the earth cracked and grew ripe to spring, and the buds swelled in their sheaths. He did not care to read or talk of what he had read, and there was a new ring of self-assertion in his voice. I hardly cared to talk about the galley when we met, but Charlie alluded to it on every occasion, always as a story from which money was to be made.

"I think I deserve twenty-five per cent, don't I, at least?" he said, with beautiful frankness. "I supplied all the ideas, didn't I?"

This greediness for silver was a new side in his nature. I assumed that it had been developed in the city, where Charlie was picking up the curious nasal drawl of the underbred city man.

"When the thing's done we'll talk about it. I can't make anything of it at present. Red-haired or black-haired here are equally difficult."

He was sitting at the fire staring at the red coals. "I can't understand what you find so difficult. It's all as clear as mud to me." A jet of gas puffed out between the bars, took light and whistled softly. "Suppose we take the red-haired hero's adventures first, from the time that he came South to my galley and captured it and sailed to the Beaches."

I know better now than to interrupt Charlie. I was out of reach of pen and paper and dared not move to get them lest I should break the current. The gas jet puffed and whinnied, Charlie's voice dropped almost to a whisper and he told a tale of the sailing of an open galley to Fundurstrandi; of sunsets on the open sea, seen under the curve of the one sail evening after evening, when the galley's beak



was notched into the centre of the sinking disk, and "we sailed by that, for we had no other guide," quoth Charlie. He spoke of a landing on an island and explorations in its woods, where the crew killed three men whom they found asleep under the pines. Their ghosts, Charlie said, followed the galley swimming and choking in the water, and the crew cast lots and threw one of their number overboard as a sacrifice to the strange gods whom they had offended. Then they ate seaweed when their provisions failed, and their legs swelled and their leader, the red-haired man, killed two rowers who mutinied, and after a year spent among the woods they set sail for their own country and a wind that never failed carried them back so safely that they all slept at night. This, and much more, Charlie told. Sometimes the voice fell so low that I could not catch the words, though every nerve was on the strain. He spoke of the leader, the red-haired man, as a pagan speaks of his god; for it was he who cheered them and slew them impartially, as he thought best for their needs; and it was he who steered them for three days among floating ice, each floe crowded with strange beasts that "tried to sail with us," said Charlie, "and we beat them back with the handles of our oars."

The gas jet went out, and the fire settled down with a tiny crash to the bottom of the grate. Charlie ceased speaking, and I said no word, hoping he might go on.

"By Jove!" said he, at last, shaking his head, "I've been staring at the fire till I'm dizzy. What was I going to say?"

"Something about the galley."

"I remember now. It's twenty-five per cent of the profits, isn't it?"

"It's anything you like when I've done the tale."

"I wanted to be sure of that. I must go now. I've—I've an appointment." And he left me.

Had my eyes not been held I might be sure that that broken muttering over the fire was the swan song of Charlie Mears. But I thought it the prelude to fuller revelation. At last and at last I should cheat the Lords of Life and Death!

When next Charlie came to me I received him with rapture. He was nervous and embarrassed, but his eyes were full of light and his lips a little parted.

"I've done a poem," he said, and then quickly: "It's the best I've ever done. Read it." He thrust it into my hand.

I groaned inward. It would be the work of half an hour to criticise—that is to say, praise the poem sufficiently to please Charlie. Then I had good reason to groan, for Charlie, discarding his favorite metres, had launched into shorter and chopping verse—and verse with a motive at the back of it. This is what I read:

“The day is most fair, the cheery wind  
 Halloos behind the hill,  
 Where he bends the wood as seemeth good,  
 And the sapling to his will!  
 Riot, O wind; there is that in my blood  
 That would not have thee still!

“She gave herself, O Earth, O Sky;  
 Gray sea, she is mine alone!  
 Let the sullen boulders hear me cry,  
 And rejoice tho’ they be but stone!

“Mine! I have won her; O good brown earth,  
 Make merry! ’Tis hard on Spring;  
 Make merry; my love is doubly worth  
 All worship your fields can bring;  
 Let the hind that tills you feel my mirth  
 At the early harrowing.”

“Yes, it’s the early harrowing, past a doubt,” I said, with a dread at my heart. Charlie smiled, but did not answer.

“Red cloud of the sunset, tell it abroad;  
 I am victor. Greet me, O Sun,  
 Dominant master and absolute lord  
 Over the soul of one!

“Well!” said Charlie, looking over my shoulder.

I thought it far from well, and very evil, indeed, when he silently laid a photograph on the paper—the photograph of a girl with a curly head and a foolish, slack mouth.

“Isn’t it—isn’t it wonderful?” he whispered, pink to the tips of his ears, wrapped in the new mystery of first love. “I didn’t know; I didn’t think. It came like a thunder clap.”

“Yes. It comes like a thunder-clap. Are you very happy, Charlie?”

“My God—she—she—loves me!” He sat down, repeating the last words to himself. I looked at the hairless face, the narrow shoulders already bowed by desk-work, and wondered when, where, and how he had loved in his past lives.

"What will your mother say?" I asked cheerfully.

"I don't care what she says."

At twenty the things for which one does not care should properly be many, but one must not include mothers in the list. I told him this gently, and he described Her, even as Adam must have described to the newly-named beasts the glory and tenderness and beauty of Eve. Incidentally I learned that She was a tobacconist's assistant, with a weakness for pretty dress, and she had told him four or five times already that she had never been kissed by a man before.

Charlie spoke on, and on, and on, while I, separated from him by thousands of years, was considering the beginning of things. Now I understood why the Lords of Life and Death shut the doors so carefully behind us. It is that we may not remember our first woosings. Were it not so our world would be without inhabitants in a hundred years.

"Now, about that galley story," I said, still more cheerfully, in a pause in the rush of the speech.

Charlie looked up as if he had been hit. "The galley—what galley? Good heavens! don't joke, man! This is serious! You don't know how serious it is!"

Grish Chunder was right. He had tasted the love of woman that kills remembrance, and the finest story in the world would never be written.

So I have decided to let it go at that.

## THE GREAT CINCH \*

The scene, a box canyon in southern Arizona, was lonely enough. The rocky walls shut out the morning sun rays, and the only trees in sight were sombre evergreens and thickets of chaparral. The aspect of the rugged landscape was suggestive of their primitive inhabitants, the Apache Indian and the grizzly bear.

Yet in this secluded spot there were signs of human life and activity in the shape of a rude miner's "shack," open in front, with three sides formed of upright poles chinked with mud, and a roof of overlapping splints. It stood near a large freshly dug hole in the canyon side.

Picketed by a rope tied to his fore leg an aged burro was feeding on the dry herbage of the canyon's bottom. In the excavation in the mountain side a raw-looking youth was working very moderately, using alternately a pick and a shovel. A shock of tow hair ran wild beneath his hat brim, and a stray tuft like a tassel appeared through a hole in the crown. This young fellow was Joe Dobbs, late of Missouri, and the object of his labors was to develop Peg Leg Crawford's newly located mine, Great Cinch, in Bueno Canyon in the Chiricahua range.

This mine was at present in the stage of a hole in the ground with prospects ahead; but the indications of mineral were good and had grown better as the digging went on. A good face had been cleared against the rock, and when the proprietor—now on a trip to town for supplies—should return, blasting was to begin. Joe was not to share in the profits of the mine's development. He was merely a shiftless boy picked up "dead broke" at Camp Bowie and taken along by Crawford for the sake of his work and company at the price of his "grub" and a shadowy promise of wages if the mine turned out well. The decrepit burro had been turned out to die by his Mexican owner, and Joe had driven him to camp, "as a starter for a herd," he said.

The shadow of the beetling cliff on the southeast, which during the first half of the day lay across the canyon's bottom, slowly shifted eastward until a blaze of bright sunshine in the mouth of the tunnel informed Joe Dobbs that "noon

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\* Clarence Pullen: New York Sun.

o'clock," as he termed it, was approaching. The boy was not fond of labor, and it did not require many minutes' endurance of the hot sun's rays to convince him that it was time to stop work and get something to eat. There is little doubt that he arrived at this decision fully an hour in advance of the time it would have been reached had Mr. Crawford been with him instead of presumably somewhere on the San Simon plain coming back with his burros and supplies. Having repaired to the shade of the "shack," he cut some slices from the small piece of bacon for his use and raked together the embers of the camp fire.

There was no wood cut and before setting out to get some Joe sat down to rest. His eye fell on the large valise that Peg Leg Crawford always kept carefully locked and out of the way of harm. In the hurry of departure the miner had left the key in the lock, and it occurred to the boy that it would be a good time to see what was inside.

Joe turned the key and opened the sacred valise. It contained two pairs of cotton socks, some specimens of ore, and a bulky package wrapped in a scrap of army blanket.

Joe untied the cord that fastened the parcel and unrolled the covering from a wooden box that once had held Malaga raisins. Prying off the top of the box with his knife, he saw that it contained about two dozen of what looked like long, thick candles. Had the youth been more thoughtful, and known more of letters, he would have spelled out the words, "dinumite dangeruss," written in blue chalk on the cover, but as it was, that inscription passed unheeded with all the warning of risk that it conveyed. He had heard vaguely of dynamite, but knew nothing of how it appeared or should be handled. The cylindrical objects before him he half thought might be some form of candy.

"I don't see why ole Peg Leg should be so mighty per-ticklar 'bout this outfit o' stuff," he said to himself, as, picking up a flake of the substance that had scaled from one of the pieces; he put it in his mouth and tried it with his tongue. It had a sweetish taste, and he set his teeth into it.

If Joe had applied his grinders with the force and enthusiasm that he would have shown in cracking a hickory nut, there might have been a premature explosion and my story never have been told; but he quickly discovered a caustic property in the substance, and, not liking the flavor, spit it

out. He put the box on a flat rock that served as a table, convinced that he wanted nothing of its contents.

Chancing to glance up the mountain side, he saw the boughs shaking in a scrub oak. At the back of the camp leaned one of those old style army rifles, chiefly formidable to the one who fires them, known as the "Long Tom." With more animation than he had shown at any former time in the day, Joe seized the fire-arm and exclaimed:

"I sees yer, and yer my meat; here goes fur br'iled squir'l fur dinner," and started up the mountain to secure the game.

The path which he must take to reach the place where he had seen the squirrel was steep and roundabout. When, after hard scrambling over rocks, he came near the place where he had seen the squirrel, that evasive rodent was not to be found. But, climbing higher and looking beyond the summit of the ridge into a little mountain park, Joe spied a jack rabbit feeding in an open space. As he crept toward the creature, following its upstartings, short runs and upsitings, in the effort to get a chance for a sure shot, he saw to the windward among the pine trees across the valley, a red deer, which caused him to abandon the rabbit at once.

"Hit's a great mornin' fur critters astir," said Joe to himself in high glee. "Who'd a thunk that triffin' squir'l ud a led up ter a deer. 'N thar may be sumthin' a heap bigger 'n one deer a waitin' fur me."

There was something, "a heap bigger a waitin'." Crack, crack, crack, came the sharp report of several rifles off on his right: there was a singing of bullets about him, so close that one passed through his hat: and there arose a hideous yelling outcry, which made his flesh creep and for a moment weakened him so much that he nearly tumbled from fright.

The symptoms of returning courage and presence of mind manifested themselves first in Joe's legs, and with no loss of time he ran away as fast as he could, making down the valley toward the foothills. A shot or two more whistled by his ears as some Indians, a half-dozen or so in number, leaped up and started after him as fleet as deer.

If Joe had kept on straight down the valley the Indians would soon have overtaken and killed him. Fortunately, he had a good start of them, and was luckier still in his knowledge of a narrow path—stumbled upon during a previous hunting expedition—which followed the bottom of a fissure

leading up the face of a cliff on the side of the ridge that separated this mountain park from the canyon. The opening to this fissure was hidden by wild vines; a turn in the winding valley served to hide his movement from his pursuers—and as they dashed round the rocky promontory and kept on down the valley, Joe was crawling sidewise up the narrow cleft, which took him, after much difficult squeezing and climbing, to a rocky nook near the summit of the ridge, so concealed by evergreens as to be wholly out of view of any one a few feet away. When at last the Indians retraced their steps he was safely hidden, although they came so near him that he could hear their calls as they ran about the ridge, passing and repassing his retreat in their search for him.

Joe was in no hurry to quit his place of refuge, but after a time, when all was quiet, he crept out from his shelter to look about and see if the coast was clear. No Indians were in sight, and he crawled to the summit of the ridge and over the other side until he reached a point which commanded a view of the canyon and the Great Cinch mine. There, in full possession of his camp, were seven painted Apaches, the same ones undoubtedly that had "jumped" him so recently.

Joe, who had hoped that his unpleasant visitors had gone away for good, was far from pleased to see the enemy established in his camp. Peering between the side of a boulder and a Spanish bayonet plant, which effectually screened him, the Missouri boy watched the performance of the red men, who were making themselves wholly at home. They had killed his burro, and the choice parts of its carcass, stuck on sticks, were roasting about a fire made of poles torn from the sides of the shack. They had upset and overhauled the valise and pretty much everything else in camp in search of ammunition, "whisk," tobacco, and less valued articles of plunder. The dynamite they perhaps deemed "bad medicine," for it lay in the box on the flat rock where Joe had left it when the squirrel had lured him from the camp.

What specially grieved Joe's heart was their killing of his burro, the only possession he had in the world except the tattered clothes he wore. Now, that after all the fuss he found himself still alive, the boy's courage came back sufficiently for him to get very angry over his loss. As a relief to his feelings he cocked his rifle and sighted it at different members of the group, thinking, as he dallied with the trigger,

what a pleasure it would give him to send a bullet among them as a sauce to their meal. For a youth of Joe's capacity for doing the wrong thing, this fooling with the trigger was most unwise, as was shown presently when he pulled just a trifle too hard; the hammer fell, and the heavy army piece, pointing into the midst of the Indian group, went off with a louder bang and a more emphatic rebound—so it seemed to Joe—than ever before.

The vicious kicking of the gun against his shoulder, the noise and smoke of its explosion, and the feeling of astonishment at its unexpected performance, occupied Joe's thoughts for an instant. Before he had time to be frightened at what he had done, he was jarred and shaken as if the mountains were rocking, and was stunned by a deafening roar that rent the air. Loose rocks went rolling down the slopes, trees were rushing to the earth, and Joe saw, as in a fantastic dream, the top of a giant pine that had overhung the mine high aloft and still going upward as if it never would stop. Everything in the cañon seemed to be in the air, flying away from the spot where the camp had been. After the dust had somewhat settled, Joe, looking down upon the site of the shack, could see there only a great hole in the ground, while a heap of earth had taken the place of the Great Cinch tunnel. The shot fire by mistake had missed every Indian and plumped straight into the box of dynamite.

At the time when Joe's shot was fired, Peg Leg Crawford, riding a burro and driving his pack animals before him on his way back to the camp, had reached the mouth of the canyon. Another turn in the path would bring him in sight of his mine. He was speculating as to how things had gone on in his absence.

"I wonder what that fool boy Joe's been a doin' while I've been gone," he soliloquized. "He's done no work ter speak of, that's dead sure, an' it's a great streak o' mercy if he hain't been up ter mischief. If he should get ter foolin' with that dynamite——"

At this point in his reflections Crawford found his burro's footing unsteady, owing to an unexplainable tremor of the earth. There was a commotion in the air as if several cyclones were fighting for the right of way through the canyon, and a great roar came to his ears as if the thunders of a whole rainy season were combined in one peal. The next



thing he realized was that he and his burros were on the ground together in a heap, where, by unanimous consent, they waited until the elements subsided.

When things had quieted down, the old prospector, who was not very nimble on his pins, pulled himself out of the tangle of burros, got his animals on their feet and stumped up the canyon to find out what had happened. He expected to find some part of the body of Joe at a distance more or less remote from the place where the camp had stood.

When he reached the scene of the explosion he looked for some sign of his assistant.

"Joe's gone with the rest, I reckon," he said with a touch of regret. "I'll have a whiff o' my pipe 'n then take a look roun' for the body 'n' give it a Christian burial 'f thar's enough left ter put in a hole. Hullo! What's that? Hain't the stuff got through fallin' yet?"

There was a rattling down the mountain side, and looking up to learn the cause, he saw Joseph Dobbs sliding on his back down a sloping face of rock. In making his way to the canyon's bottom to investigate matters the boy had missed his footing, in his excitement, and was coming down by the run much faster than he liked. He landed at the foot of the cliff, torn as to clothing and scratched as to skin, but was regardless of all injuries in his wonder and pride at his unexpected achievement. He was delighted to see Crawford, for he was bursting to brag of his exploit.

"Didn't I fix up that trap fur 'em slick?" he said, with the air of one who had carried out a carefully planned purpose.

By good luck the picks and shovels lay where they had escaped injury. So the work of developing the Great Cinch mine went forward with no more extra trouble than the rebuilding of the shack and the removing of the earth blown into the tunnel. To be sure, they had no dynamite for blasting, but Crawford felt that his explosives had been put to a good use.

So high was Joe raised in the old prospector's estimation that before they set to work next day he formally adopted him as his "pard," and thereafter that youth dawdled over the pick and shovel with a sense of importance befitting the half-proprietor of the true lead, dips, spurs, angles, and prospective profits of the Great Cinch mine.

## ETCHINGS: THE STEAMER-CHAIR \*

Through the concave green of the sea the City of Paris ploughed her undulant way. On the deck promenade there were little clusters of steamer-chairs. In one grouping there was a vacant seat which had not been occupied during the two days out, and concerning it there was vague speculation.

To its left, in a position of semi-recline, sat a young woman who wore light mourning. She also wore the prettiness of one who had been beautiful and who would be beautiful again when her cloud of sorrow had passed. Her eyes were litanies save when they rested on the vacant chair.

At its right sat a man who might have attained any age albeit he looked youthful. Yet he seemed otherwise; his constant silence suggested that he had lost the illusions of youth. For hours he would sit, looking afar over the billowy sea as if to follow the trend of a vanishing hope or to search the rise of a new one. When spoken to, he would languidly lift his eyes, and having replied in the accent of a Virginian, he would again plunge into an arctic silence.

One day she handed him her field-glasses to sight a distant ship, and when he returned them she was first conscious that his eyes rested upon her. They seemed to shed interest. They became friends, and one evening when they were entirely alone she told him the story of the chair.

It had belonged to her now dead husband, and he had been the European buyer for a New York firm. Six times a year going and coming, they had made the journey during the twelve months of their married life, then death had come. Why did she travel with the chair? She was a Swedenborgian, and she had taken it with her so that when he came in the spirit, it should wait for him and be next to her.

He listened. In the after days he grew more quiet and she more interested. At last one night she spoke of the inconvenience of talking to him as if across another person, and he suggested that he sit beyond at her left.

"No," she answered. "You can sit here."

And as he saw her hand placed on the long vacant chair he believed that for him the fulness of time had come, and the heavens seemed enamelled with stars.

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\* Heileman Wilson: For Short Stories.

## AN ELABORATE MURDERER\*

The twinmen, who, at the outset of this possible case, were in the station at the outer end of an Adirondack railway, had been physical counterparts at birth; but between the age of forty winks and forty years they had grown into a difference of appearance. This account will tell how they became too alike again in a manner very singular indeed. Jasper Haden was lean. Joseph Haden was fat. In that disparity of size lay the contrast which had nearly obliterated all similarity. Both had grown to precisely the same height, and it is not likely that their skeletons, if the two hundred pounds of flesh had been removed from the one and the one hundred from the other, would have shown any marked contrast, save in one particular—Jasper had lost his left foot. It had been cut off at the ankle. Nevertheless, he had won in a fleet mercantile race for wealth, while his brother had lagged in poverty as a physician and surgeon.

“Two tickets for Tupper Lake and return,” said Jasper to the young man inside the window.

The face of Jasper was emaciated, and its complexion was wan. Many invalids go into the Adirondacks and die there. Jasper looked like that kind of a traveller; but in fact he was not very badly off for health, and he had an impulsive way of using his fair degree of strength.

“Did you say, ‘and return?’” the ticket seller asked, with a look and a tone commiserative of the man, who apparently was buying a seat that he could never sit in.

Jasper was sensitive about his false show of illness, and very retaliatory, too. He reached through the window, gripped the young man and hauled him half way out.

“Don’t hurt him,” Joseph interposed. “He is aware now that you’re not in a precarious state of health.”

“Yes,” the assailed fellow said, going back into his seat like a rubber doll that had been stretched and then let go off. “Yes—yes—I know—you’re not in a precarious state of health.”

A man with sidelong eyes and edgewise attitudes watched the episode with very conspicuous slyness. That man was a private detective. Sometimes he feared that people would

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not know it. He liked to be a spy. When he was not spying for pay he spied for pleasure. So the Hadens had not disappeared into the wilderness a week before he knew who they were; how rich was the one who looked poor in health, and how poor in money the one who looked rich in health; and the reason why the irascible one limped was that the left foot was an artificial member.

The twins encamped on the shore of Bascom Pond, and fished and hunted with the help of Reuben Brown, an Adirondack guide. Reuben showed them how to hook the trout and bullet the deer, and he was their proxy in much of the sports which proved at all dangerous to the dumb creatures.

But he has never revealed the fact of their failure as sportsmen, not only because it was a professional secret, but also for a reason which will presently appear. The hunting and the fishing, such as they were, went on for a few days ordinarily. The campers told one another that they liked the discomforts of camping, and they convinced themselves that the dampness of the rainy days, the chilliness of the windy nights, and the lack of sanitary things all the time were conducive to robust vigor. Jasper Haden never realized the truth or falsity of these theories. He died in Bascom Pond.

Although Jasper was a quick-tempered man, as we have already seen, the reader will be surprised to learn that it was not he who killed the suave and unctuous Joseph, but it was Joseph who killed Jasper. The murder was far from an impulsive act. It was a coolly calculated achievement, looking to a transfer of fortune from the man of sordid mercantile pursuits to the man of jovial professional leisure. Joseph would be the only natural heir of Jasper in case of the wifeless, childless man's death, and there was no will in existence. So, when the brothers capsized their canoe while fishing, and it was not likely that the lean one would sink and the fat one float, Joseph did not depend upon such natural results. He clung to the overturned boat, and pushed his brother off, until a most deliberate and diabolical fratricide had been committed. Then he removed the artificial foot from his dead victim and pocketed it carefully, stripped off all the clothes, and placed them where he could recover them later, and hid the body under water by means of a rope and a stone. "Reuben," said Joseph Haden to the guide, upon returning to the tent (and here see how the murderer kept

his conscience clear of any lie) "my brother Jasper has been drowned, and I have escaped with my life."

Reuben went to search for the body of the dead Haden, leaving the live Haden shivering with a chill, for his clothes were wet, and, besides, a man naturally feels a creepy sensation after he has murdered a brother for the first time. The guide rowed hither and thither, peering down into the pond, and reaching with a paddle, but never finding Jasper in the dark little water-pit into which he was sunken. He returned to the tent after an hour or two and saw a thing that astonished him.

Joseph Haden sat enveloped from neck to heels in a big bag of rubber. Steam was escaping a little at the throat and the exposed face looked parboiled. The inclosed man was taking a Turkish bath, by shutting himself in with a lighted lamp, after the manner common out of the woods, but Reuben didn't know it.

"I am taking precautions against a cold," Joseph said. "I'm a physician, you know, and I am fully aware of the danger of pneumonia following the chill I have had."

Reuben had heard of folks' boiling with rage, and he was now impressed vaguely with the thought that this bagged man was boiling with grief for his drowned brother. If so, he was bound to be well done, for he sat there hour after hour until nightfall, with the perspiration dripping from his head down the outside of the bag, inside of which the accumulation of water threatened to rise high enough to extinguish the lamp. The fire did burn itself out at length, and then the simmering man tumbled weakly from the seat.

"Take off the rubber," he whispered. "That's it. Now lay me out straight, and rub me with that woollen jacket. Hard—harder—that's right."

The friction dried the man, and tired the guide.

"Now," Joseph said, "I'll turn in for the night."

Wrapped thickly in blankets, he slept on the bed of boughs until morning, but at dawn he started off on a brisk walk of five or six miles before breakfast, of which he ate sparingly of lean meat only. During the ensuing five days the guide was astonished by the amount of boiling, walking, and rubbing which this singular man endured.

"Hadn't we oughter go out 'n give notice of your brother's death?" Reuben once suggested.

"Go and make one more hunt for his body," was the reply, "and if you don't find it we will quit the camp morning."

Reuben did find it, and good reason why. Joseph had loosened it from the rope and stone an hour before and then fled from it as it floated, for he habitually avoided unpleasant sights if possible. He looked long enough, however, to see that it had bloated to much more than its former bulk.

"Good Lord!" the guide cried, breathlessly, as he ran back into the camp. "I've found him. His clothes was gone. How could that a'been? And he was as stocky as you was two weeks ago."

He looked at the surviving brother and saw in an instant the change that had been wrought in him. The fat man had reduced himself to a thin one, by violent sweating and exercise, right before the staring eyes of the guide, but it was not until now that the doltish witness realized the extent of the alteration.

"My gracious!" he exclaimed, drawing back for a critical survey, "you're the image of him like he was when we come here—and"—

"And his body is as big now as mine was then?" the other suggested, urbanely.

"That's jest about so, Dr. Haden."

"And it looks to you as though I had been drowned, and he stood here before you alive?"

"To judge by the 'pearances, yes. Only"—

"Well, only what?"

"Only there was his foot. I mean only there wa'n't his foot."

"Ah, yes. He had only one foot. So the false one had become detached?"

"Gone along with the clothes, I guess."

"No doubt."

"But what I can't guess, doctor, is how them clothes got off'n him."

Joseph wouldn't do any needless lying. He was inclined, rather, to economize in the guilt necessary for his enterprise. He was no reckless criminal. Still, the time had clearly come to murder Reuben. Nor was it to be done thoughtlessly. The manner and means had been planned already.

"You think I resemble my brother, as he was when we came into the woods together, Reuben?" he remarked.

"Like ez two peas," was the reply.

"All caused by the treatment, Reuben. I was too fleshy to suit my notion, and so I reduced myself—you see."

Reuben passed a hand dazedly across his own brows. He was not used to hard thinking, and these strange occurrences made his head ache.

"Great thing, the Turkish bath," Joseph continued. "In five minutes it would make you unconscious of the headache you've got now. Come, sit down here and try it. Oh, you needn't undress. I'll apply it to your head only."

The guide did not consent to the proposed treatment. But he permitted it, and so he is dead. His demise was very singular. If he has come to his senses yet he must review the event with keen interest, arising not so much from a personal concern as from that pride of distinction which should exist in a man who has been drowned on dry land.

"Will it hurt me?" Reuben asked as the rubber bag was being puckered tightly around his neck.

"After a minute or two you won't feel it," was the sincere reply, "and your headache will be gone entirely."

By this time the upper end of the sack was fitted to the neck so tightly as to choke.

"We will vary the use of this thing to suit your case," the operator went on. "Oh, don't gasp. Your breath will not bother you after just a little."

Nor did it. Joseph slit the bag at the bottom, turned it up over Reuben's head, and gripped it tightly.

"You'll smother me," the victim panted, with a convulsive shake of his bagged head.

"I'll give you some air," and the assassin kept his word by relaxing his hold sufficiently to make an aperture. "Now, sit down quietly on the ground, Reuben. It's got to be done, you know, and the quicker it's over the sooner you'll be comfortable."

It was at this point in the experiment that Reuben became greatly amazed. In recalling it to memory (if his present condition of mind permits him to be retrospective) he will recollect that the novelty of the homicide was wondrous. He sat down on the ground obediently. Over his head, but leaving a small open space, the reversed bag was bunched in one hand by Joseph, who with the other took up a pailful of water and poured it into the opening. So Reuben's head

was as completely submerged as though he had been at the bottom of the pond.

For a minute or two there was a great deal of commotion. If Reuben had not tried, in the absence of air, to breathe the water his violent strength might have availed him; but he had enjoyed no experience with such unexpected circumstances, and his futile writhings and contortions seemed to be actuated by a confused belief that he might swim out of the difficulty. Joseph twisted the bag with all his might, thus forcing the water down around Reuben's head.

"Stop kicking," he cried. "Do you hear me?"

Reuben heard him, but couldn't say so; and, whether in obedience or not, his resistance ceased, and he soon lay drowned to death on the sun-dried ground.

But it is not blithesome or jocose to be alone in the woods with two men whom you have murdered, and Joseph Haden, moreover, was filled with personal regret for the sacrifice of feeling which his enterprise had demanded. Besides, he knew that a most inconvenient and painful ordeal still awaited him. He had put himself into a restored resemblance of his deceased brother; he had caused the body to assume the proportions of his own as last seen by relatives and friends; he had silenced the only witness of any of the process; he was ready to go out into civilization with the now indisputable lie that the two men had been drowned accidentally in the lake—except that one important act remained to be done. If Joseph Haden was to be accepted without suspicion as Jasper Haden, then the dead twin must have two feet and the survivor only one.

Joseph was not a man to enter upon an important undertaking without calculating it to a climax, nor to stop in his endeavor before he had done his utmost to reach the ultimate success. He was a surgeon, and well aware of the bother and unpleasantness of amputating his own foot. But he felt that the two other persons concerned had suffered considerable annoyance and he would not permit himself to hesitate in doing his duty by the affair. So he excised his left foot at the ankle, and it was an excellent piece of surgery, well worthy of a full report to his medical society, if he had not felt an obligation of professional secrecy.

Joseph allowed himself a week for the wound to get along in the process of healing. With a skilful and uncommonly



solicitous surgeon in attendance the case had no mishaps or complications. When all was ready he went to the nearest settlement, introduced himself as Jasper Haden, reported the death of Joseph and the guide, and arranged for their burial. There was no arousal of suspicion in the minds of the rustics who had to do with the inquest, funeral, and interment. Several relatives and acquaintances of the Hadens came, but there was no cause for incredulity. There was a well-rounded and two-footed dead Haden—for the surgeon had attached his severed member to his brother's ankle in a manner which, being uninvestigated, was not discovered. There was a slim and single-footed live Haden, for he wore the artificial foot. Who could suspect?

It was almost a month later when the false Jasper Haden arrived at the station at the outer end of the Adirondack Railway.

"Ah! I see that I guessed wrong that you wouldn't need a return ticket," said the young man behind the window. "How uncertain life is! Your brother looked so robust and healthy"—

"And I am alive, although no better for my sad trip, thanks to grief and—and"—as he limped on the still sensitive stump of his left leg.

Then he looked across the room and saw the same detective who had lounged there at the time of the journey's start. The guilty man blanched and trembled.

"You here?" he faltered.

"Oh, yes; I'm here, sir," and the spy glanced furtively at the lame foot.

Instantly the criminal felt that he had been watched throughout his awful deeds by this sleuth-hound of the law.

But that was an utter mistake. The detective had no suspicion whatever. So far as anybody save Joseph Haden knows, Joseph was drowned in the Adirondacks, and Jasper Haden is sumptuously living, and fattening with judicious slowness, on the luxuries which an ample fortune commands. Sometimes he goes to the cemetery and reads his own name on the fine monument which he has erected over his brother's grave. But he is serene and complacent, even then and there, although he cannot help dreading to meet Jasper and Reuben by-and-by.

## ETCHINGS: POLITE "OLD SCIP" \*

"A few years ago," said the colonel, smacking his lips and setting down his julep glass, "the county-town, about seventeen miles from my plantation, was visited one summer by a circus that had an out-door attraction never before seen in that part of the State, a fellow who made a balloon ascension from every place they showed. The balloon was a real one, filled with hydrogen gas, and he used to go up doing flip-flaps on a trapeze dangling below it until he got so high that he looked no bigger than a crow. When the wind had drifted him away a few miles, he would let out his gas, descend, and get a team to haul him and his gas-bag back to the circus. He made a great sensation through the country, as the news of his astoundingly novel and perilous performance spread, but it was right early in the summer when he struck our section, so our people—particularly the niggers—were not prepared for him, and you may judge the prodigious effect he produced among simple-minded folks who had never before seen and many of them not even heard of a balloon.

"The day he went up from our county-town he must have struck a right smart current of wind aloft, for it carried him all the way to my plantation where he came down gracefully in the middle of a field I had about thirty niggers, men and women, weeding tobacco plants in. Consternation seized them when they saw the huge yellow globe poised in the air above their heads and when he began to descend they took to the woods, screeching like a camp-meeting broke loose. All got away safely but one white-woolled patriarch, seventy years of age—"old Scip"—whose rheumatism prevented his running. Knowing that escape was hopeless, he stood his ground, though trembling in an agony of apprehension, until the big gas bag swooped down and collapsed, and his tottering mind became conscious of the presence of an awful and resplendent being—the circus man—in tights and spangles of many colors, more gorgeous than a bed of portulacca flowers, who had hopped off the perch and was advancing toward him.

"Sarvent! Massa Jesus!" exclaimed the trembling old darkey, doffing his tattered straw hat and making a deep obeisance, "Sarvent, sah! How's yo' pa?"

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\* James H. Connelly: For Short Stories.

## IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS\*

Another "no."

The slender, pale young man, buttoned up to the chin in his summer overcoat, in order to conceal the lack of starched linen and the presence of a worn flannel shirt well patched, did not even give a sign of resentment or surprise. He went down the stairs of the office of the celebrated lawyer, where they had almost laughed in his face when he offered himself for a clerk's place; and he began to walk hurriedly past the buildings, with indifference in his face and despair in his heart.

Indeed, it was his destiny to find all the ways crowded, the openings closed, the probabilities vanished.

For three months the same thing had been repeated every day with slight variations; but he ascended every staircase knocked at the door of every office, of all the newspapers, importuned celebrities, men of manufactured reputations, moral zeros, suspicious characters. It had been a descending chromatic scale, beginning with the vibrating high notes of hope, then rapidly fallen down among the low notes of discouragement; a whole keyboard of suppressed moans and sobs, whose echo left within his breast a sense of acute suffering, almost insupportable, which would perhaps have caused an outburst if the very depression that possessed him had not muted the strings.

Now he no longer believed or hoped; he exhausted every attempt, conscientiously, one by one, scrupulously and in order to avoid remorse; but he was better posted than all the deputies, journalists, wire-pullers, politicians, and black-guards that he fell in with.

At this office there were to be given six clerkships at a hundred lire the month, and the competitors already numbered ninety-five; the editorial staff of that newspaper was complete; leading articles, locals, law reports, musical and literary notices; not even a little place to clear out the wastebaskets, for the janitor did that himself. Agent? But the bonds, to guarantee at least the value of the cash-box if the whim should take him to run away with the assets? Designer? But it was not enough to improvise with a few strokes a clever caricature or to sketch pretty little figures; what is wanted

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\* Italian of Fulvia: E. Cavazza: For Short Stories.

is linear design, and practice on maps, plans, and elevations. Give lessons? And the diploma, which nowadays even the sons of doorkeepers have?

In short, it was "no" all along the line; and he, the poor fellow out of a place, like so many others, had met denials, dry as a pistol-shot, or sugared with a pinch of pity, or appearing amid deft circumlocutions, or like an arrow sped by a brutal hand; they followed each other, ironical, compassionate, rough, mellifluous, shot at short range, murmured slightly, with an angry abruptness, burlesque irony, insult—but all desperately alike in their essence. And he must live.

The last banknote of fifty lire would enable them to live, the mother and the son, for some weeks; but the rent was not paid, the provision of wood and coal was exhausted, and the old woman trembled with cold before the dying fire on the hearth-stone, or in the bed upon which were heaped, rag upon rag, all the clothes in the house, that made a pile affording no warmth.

The day before a renowned notary, to whom he had recourse for employment—a brick-colored little old man, curt of speech and violent of gesture, who seemed to box the ears of the whole world—under form of benevolent familiarity, had given him a solemn scolding: "My dear fellow, at your age one must have energy. Nerve! You are a lot of weaklings, you young men of to-day. Go ahead, what the deuce! Nerves, and good ones at that!"

And as the young man murmured something timid and embarrassed, as to the impossibility of making a show of courage when poverty, cold, and hunger weighed heavily on the other side of the balance, the notary had another access of magnanimous irritability, and blowing in his face the smoke of an excellent cigar, said:

"Because you have notions in your heads, my dear young gentlemen. Throw yourselves into a business! Oh, that would be a dishonor. You must needs soil white with black, write sonnets to your lady-love, sentimental sketches or even an epic poem in octave stanza. And with these affectations you go to end in the charity hospital," he charitably added, while by way of a paternal adieu, stretching himself at full length in the stuffed armchair: "My dear fellow, accept this advice from one who knows. Make an effort! A bold push, a dash of energy; set the whole machinery in motion!"

And the poor young man went away, but for all that he tried he did not succeed in making the machinery move; everything seemed broken, like an implement cast aside.

If he had been alone, the question would have been readily resolved; he could have found a mouthful of bread, adapting himself to anything, and then—who knows, if the worst came to the worst, in a black hour, the final blunder that makes the curtain fall suddenly!

But there was his mother, and he alone knew what a mother she was, with what love, faithful, heroic, impassioned, she had loved him. She had worn out her health, youth, eyes, and spirit in order that that flesh of her flesh, that blood of her blood might become a great and celebrated man, whose brow should be kissed by the grandeurs and sweetnesses of life.

From the time when, a little child, blond and beautiful, he grew up at the side of parents already old, the unexpected fruit of an indifferent union; from the time when he was the first in his school, and the masters said, patting him on the head "There is something here!" from the time when the dying father had recommended him to the mother with the solemn accents of one already beyond the material world he had felt himself the centre, the pivot, the aim of an unlimited adoration made up of pride and of hope, of enthusiasm and of fanaticism.

Only God and himself knew how the work of these weak hands of a fragile and nervous woman had accomplished the daily miracle of the support of the two, of maintaining him at his studies until his technical education was completed. Only God and himself could have counted the vigils, the sufferings, the struggles of that obscure heroism, of that ingenuous, obstinate, and divine faith in his star.

And when the cord, over-strained, broke, and the mother, ill, worn out, finally conquered, had been obliged to say "Now 'tis your turn!" he found himself a man, and ready to pay the debts of the past.

This was their case.

Another week, sterile of results, full of bitterness and humiliations. The landlord had written laconically: "Either the six months' rent, or out of the house, and I take your furniture."

The editor of a literary journal had accepted a story,

"Sphinx," at the reading of which the mother had thrilled and wept, declaring it a masterpiece.

He had run to the newspaper office with his heart beating like a hammer.

"Not bad for a first attempt. Study, analyze; above all, greater depth is wanted," the editor had said, with some kindness.

Then, perceiving that the young man showed no sign of departing, and stood there with hat in hand—the poor rag of a hat that told a tale of all weathers—he himself arose, and wrapping himself in a fur-lined coat, said more coldly:

"You will excuse me, but I have to go out."

Then the youth, taking all his courage in both hands, with drooping eyes and quivering voice had dared to ask . . . you know . . . by way of encouragement . . . some modest remuneration. . . .

But the editor, from the height of his majesty, said this time with absolute dryness.

"I don't know what to say to you; the manuscript is at your disposal; but we only pay the well-known, illustrious writers, who have made a name for themselves."

"As if you were not already greater than they!" the mother had murmured, kissing him passionately, when he was at home again. "They speak from envy, from unkindness. But you must never lower yourself. The day will come, oh! it will come . . . when the publishers will vie with each other to print your works, and every celebrity will feel honored to take off his hat to you . . . my son!"

And she clung about his neck, looking in his dark thoughtful eyes, caressing the fine golden hair that her sweet delusion already saw surrounded with an aureole of glory.

But bread was about to fail them, and that great city where they reckoned so few acquaintances and not a single friend, that opulent city that seemed paved with gold, increased in his heart the feeling of misery, the consciousness of a desperate defeat, against which they could not struggle or fight.

"If you would make some translations from the French?" said a fellow inmate of the house, a printer in a well-known publishing house. "They pay little . . . but I could easily say a word in your favor."

He would have answered yes, with gratitude, with enthusiasm, but maternal idolatry hindered him again.

“Translate the works of others? . . . Tire yourself with writing so that people shall praise the author of the book, without even knowing the name of the one who has toiled to make it known in Italy? . . . No, a hundred times no. Let us wait. God must help us.”

He let himself be submerged again, as always, by that flood of impassioned eloquence, that confused his ideas like a narcotic; and all his artistic ideals arose again in tumult to sing a brief hymn of trustful joy, while the reality swept away everything, hopes, dreams, ambitions; and the squalor of the present spread itself before him like a gloomy immensity without bounds.

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He threw aside his overcoat, no longer thin and threadbare, but a fine new garment, well cut, that fitted his slender figure like a glove. His face was still pale, with a wrinkle upon the brow and a bitter curve at the corners of the mouth, that was not there three months earlier, with a changed expression like that of a convalescent who has seen near at hand the mysteries of the beyond and wears its sign upon his face.

A little lamp with its cheerful flame illuminated the writing-table crowded with papers and journals, a packet of manuscript, scattered sheets upon which innumerable figures appeared, sketched with a few touches, caught with an acute sense of truthfulness, a penetrating instinct of comicality.

He seated himself, with an enigmatic smile that rendered his mouth more severe, and opened the newspapers one by one, while his hand, as if slightly convulsed, contracted itself involuntarily amid the soft waves of his blond hair.

For some time the readers of the great political journal of the city—before perusing the leading article, or seeking with eyes eager for sensation the sanguinary chronicle of human wickedness, glancing at the stock quotations or the latest despatches—hastened to seek on the fourth page or the last column of the third, the amazing advertisement of Balsamo’s Syrup, that surpassed in audacity of invention all the most extraordinary resources of Bertelli’s Tar or Géraudel’s Lozenges. He knew it; neither was he ignorant that the political paper was not the only one, and that all the other periodicals, literary, theatrical, even the *Minuzzolo* for juvenile readers and the *Moda Illustrata* for dressmakers, vied in obtaining the forms, always new and original, of that adver-

tisement, with its inexhaustible humor, which drew smiles and applause from serious men and cultivated women, and obtained ever new and ever increasing success in every grade of the social scale, from princes to porters.

He unfolded and read untiringly, while before him rose, great and monstrous, the form of that enormous quackery, that eminent jest made up of wit, of talent . . . of the life-blood of his heart. He lived over again that day in which having met face to face, on a street-corner, an old school-mate—the most antipathetic of all—he had perceived that the little childish aridities had changed into the profound cynicism of one who believes in nothing, but knows how to profit by everything. Balsamo (a predestined name) was the son of a modest village apothecary; but, his father dead and the little property in his own hands, he had come to the city, had set himself up in great style, without paying any one except with tricks, and was beginning—as he said—to take his flight.

In the poor famished youth who asked aid of him, he quickly saw a potent auxiliary in his work of shrewd deception of the public, which he kindly compared to the fishes, red, gold, and dark-hued of an aquarium. "Throw in, instead of a crumb of bread, a bit of paper, and all will hasten to it, open-mouthed, great and small. Repeat the thing twenty times and they will not understand it yet, the greedy things, trying which can get there first. Also we, with my Syrup, will catch the fishes."

From that day the poor youth had sold not only his pen, but all his ideals; the delicacy, the reserves of his artist soul curled together like the leaves of a sensitive plant; and the disgust of the business made him suffer acutely a burning pain, such as leaves a scar. Something was dead within him, something was torn, without noise, but after a fierce agony of struggles and rending. Money had come, more than was necessary, almost in excess for his modest aspirations; but also had come shame, and this he had no means to combat, for it was a new foe. He had not yet dared tell his mother.

"It is a surprise," he would say vaguely, clasping her to him, in order that she might not see the wave of crimson that flushed up to his brow. And she was silent, triumphant, as sure of him as of the mysterious reward which God and life would sooner or later accord to her darling.



So he suffered alone, and all his sweetness was turned to sarcasm, all his kindness to acerbity; and it seemed to him that he was going down, down, in proportion as Balsamo declared himself content and the crowd applauded, and success came to him by the tortuous but sure ways of human gullibility.

That evening he examined his own work, not with the subtle and happy exaltation of one who has created with the soul even more than with the brain, but like a pitiless judge, and above all, cynical, who smiles in order not to weep. That week the advertisement had pushed itself farther than it had ever dared before. Upon the third page was announced, in great letters, a new romance, *Evelina*, by an anonymous author, whose name would perhaps be told at the end, as in France at the fall of the curtain upon a last act. And the story was begun, in a nervous and effective style, all brilliant imagery, with restrained and charming audacity. The tender hearts of fair readers were taken at once, in the first column, by the sad and poetic description of an invalid girl asking in vain of life the only thing which it has not given to her, the idolatry of a mother, the despair of a lover, the soft and luxuriant climate of the Riviera of Lizuria, from which appeared to rise wafts of air loaded with perfumes. Then, as the graceful plot was developed, were presented attractive figures, sketched by an unerring pen; an unexpected incident; the appearance of a former rival, to whom the heroine had sacrificed herself; the struggle of good against evil, of gratitude against instinct . . . a refined work, acutely observed, which evidenced by turns the soul of a thinker, the chisel of an artist, the scalpel of a modern anatomist . . . But, on the last page, in the final paragraph, *Evelina* was cured by merit and virtue of Balsamo's Syrup!

This culmination had aroused a cry of surprise, a clamor of laughter, a hundred protests, and a thousand criticisms.

He read it over, voluntarily inflicting that torture on himself, feeling again the anguish of the bitter hour in which he had brutally clipped the wings of the work of his thoughts. It seemed to him to have before him a masterly painting, and to see it slashed its whole length by a knife; to hear the development of a divine harmony, ended by the moan of a discord; to have in his hand—as in the legend—gold and pearls, and see them change into pebbles; to steer with spread

sails upon an azure sea, with a fair wind, and suddenly abandon the helm, letting himself drift at the will of chance . . . This was tragedy, but followed by a burlesque:

Every form of witticism, of pun, boldly utilized for the same purpose; and the pencil came in aid of the pen to render the image clearer and the effect more immediate.

Here, a pulpit, with the slightly comic profile of a reverend preaching with might and main; below, the congregation of the faithful with their noses in the air; illustrating the final phrase of the homily:

“. . . It is by virtue of Balsamo's Syrup, my children, that you hear again, by my mouth, the divine word.”

There, the height of impudence, touched with clever ease: a letter to the public:

“Gentlemen! The inventor of Balsamo's Syrup is obliged to ask you to suspend for some time your orders; the crowd of requests renders it impossible to fill orders promptly.”

Dialogue of new ministers seeking for means to lighten the government debt: “I have found it!” “What?” “To prohibit by law the use of Balsamo's Syrup, which fattens employees and makes them need large salaries.”

Counsels to “loving mothers,” to “celebrated singers,” to “heads of families.” Premiums awarded to the inventor by a Life Insurance Society, ready to fail, for his method of delaying payments. American stock-market reports in which the marvellous Syrup is quoted at high rates. Strike of physicians who have no longer any patients; lawsuit brought by Koch against the only serious rival of his lymph . . . jest and ridicule impudently thrown in the face of science, that insult all the miseries of life and do not draw back in presence of the august mystery of death.

“Oh! the ignoble trade! The infamous, the cowardly thing that they pay me for!”

He threw in heaps in the air, on the floor, the soiled papers upon which, daily, he lowered art, that one divine passion of his, to which he would have wished to raise altars, and which fatality compelled him to vilify.

A contraction of bitter feeling caught his throat like a vise while a blush, so painful to be seen upon the face of a man, kindled the cheek-bones of his thin face. With a trembling hand he unclosed the door of the adjoining room.

The old mother was asleep, in an easy attitude, in a large

chair drawn up to the fireplace. A little flame arose, sparkling, up the heated chimney, and the red reflections illuminated, fitfully, her weary figure, so slender, diminished, almost rendered incorporeal by suffering. But she was smiling vaguely in her sleep, and the pose of her waxen hands, of her little feet stretched toward the fire, spoke of physical comfort that must have relaxed every fibre. A thick mantle of white wool wrapped her all over, like a great cover of cottonwool, and her head rested deep in a down cushion. Within reach of her hand, on a little table, were a goblet filled with Marsala, a paper of biscuits, and early hot-house fruit . . . the little pleasures of the palate, more necessary to the old than daily bread.

He went forward, holding his breath, embracing her wholly, soul and body, in a passionately loving glance. And he thought of that which was not seen: the assured subsistence, the tranquillity of mind, the reanimating warmth, the treasure of illusions; the return at last, the return for that heroic maternal sacrifice prolonged throughout a lifetime.

And then before her who smiled, he knelt, weeping manly tears. . . . Ah! no. It was not a cowardly thing.

## ETCHINGS : A TRAGEDY\*

"One more!" little Virginia pleaded. "I just *must* hear one more!" So I had to succumb.

"I'll tell you the tragedy of the two kittens," I began.

"What is a tragedy?" she asked.

"Wait till I'm done, my dear, and then you'll know.

"There once was a mother-cat, who lived in our barn, and she had two pretty kittens. One was gray with white stripes, and the other was white with gray stripes.

"These two kittens played hide and seek together all day long, and at night they slept on the soft hay. Whenever I went to peep at them, the mother-cat told me in cat language that I was intruding and that *she* owned that barn. One day, when I went to peep, what do you think I saw? I saw a little striped kitten lying on the barn floor as still as could be. It was dead. My dog had killed it!"

"Was it bloody?" said Virginia, winking very fast.

"The next day I went again to peep, and what do you think I saw? I saw the mother-cat sitting all alone. She did not scold me. She mewed. I said, 'Mother-cat, where is your little kitten?' but she only mewed."

"Oh *dear!*" said Virginia. "Go on!"

"There is nothing more to tell you," said I. "I never saw the little kittens again."

"Is that the *end?*" asked Virginia.

"Yes," I said.

Then Virginia's eyes flooded, and her chin quivered. "Oh, what a dreadful—dreadful story. I don't like it! Make another end to it quick! Plee-ease make another end to it!"

"But I can't!"

Then the tears rolled down and she pressed her soft wet cheeks against my face. "Well, listen then!" said I. "I never saw the little kittens again, but—but—by-and-by the mother-cat had two more kittens; and one was gray with white stripes and one was white with gray stripes, just exactly like her other little kittens—and——"

"And so she was happy again," finished Virginia, beginning to smile once more. "Oh, I'm so—so—glad for the mother-cat! . . . That was a lovely tragedy!"

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\* Amy Elizabeth Leigh : For Short Stories.

## OCEAN REMINISCENCES\*

Let me recall a trifling incident of my shipboard life—an experience small and brief, indeed, but vividly fresh and of clearest and keenest outline in memory. We were on the Mozambique parallels, well to the eastward; the weather hot, the sky copperish, and the sea of a sallowish blue, with a thick, slow flow of swell as though the water was heavy and sluggish with oil; a weak breeze of wind blew off the port quarter, with a sort of sting of heat in it, like the bite of the sun himself; and the ship under all studding-sails on that side went rolling forward in a kind of loathing way, as though alive to the trucks with instinct; and I very well remember the slopping noise of the water as it fell from her bow like flinging bucketfuls of liquid grease overboard.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the thickness over the starboard bow died out along the horizon there and showed the sea-line clear to the edge of the ocean, with a twisting and glancing of yellow fires in it from the sun, as though lines of molten brass were slowly sinking in it. It was then that a sail was made out some three points on the bow or thereabouts, apparently a large ship, showing to her courses with her mizzen-topmast gone, and the spanker gaff naked, with some colors flying at it. As we slowly rose she showed like a frigate upon the water, with her band of broken ports and her big wing of standing jib; and I heard the captain tell the mate, after taking a long view of her through a telescope, that he believed she was such and such a ship, naming a well-known Indiaman of those days. She was in distress, it was now gathered; for it seems that she carried a brace of signal halliards at her gaff-end, on one of which was hoisted the English ensign, jack down, while on the other fluttered a row of bunting out of Marryatt's Code, signifying that there was serious sickness on board.

I can see that ship now as I saw her then; her canvas had the whiteness of froth touched by moonshine; she rose and fell very majestically, her ports bristling and fading as she leaned to the heave of the waters. By the aid of the glass, which I furtively employed on the mate turning his back, I could distinctly make out the white quarter-boat swinging at

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\* W. Clark Russell: *The Independent*.

her davits, the gleams off the glass of her large windows, the hurried shadowing of her sails as they swung in and out, and the flags hovering in reds and whites and blues from the peak end. The helm of our ship was shifted for her, and we got her right under our flying jibboom end. There was not enough yaw in the foot of the foresail to disclose her from the poop; and it being now four o'clock and my turn to quit the deck, I strolled forward on to the forecastle to watch the very noble picture on the sea-line that was rendered significant beyond expression by her appealing colors and by the mutilation of her abaft. A group of our Jacks stood against one of the catheads, gazing too. I had not been looking above three minutes when one of them exclaimed in a hoarse voice:

"What, the blazes! Is that there muck a-drawing up around her, or is she a-dissolving?"

"The 'Flying Dutchman,' or my eyes ain't mates!" said a second man in subdued voice of mingled awe and astonishment.

"Watch her a-dying out! Smite me, if mortal eyes ever see the like of that afore."

My gaze was upon the ship as the men spoke; and, sure enough, I observed her to be slowly melting out, not as though a fog were driving down upon her, but as a rainbow dies, the tints shining and fading and perishing. In a few moments all was blank sea where she had been.

There was an expression of dismay on every wart-ridden, whiskered face I glanced at. The captain, the mate, and a number of passengers were moving and moping like goblins over the brass rail at the break of the poop in search of the amazing phantasm. It was, of course, a mirage; but it took all hands, from the skipper down to the cook's mate, some time to realize it, so marvellous had been the illusion, so substantial to the vision that rolling and stately fabric, so exquisitely had the painted mirroring of her fitted the line of the sea. With some fancy that the real object could not be far off, the captain continued to head in the direction in which the mirage had shone until the darkness came, when the ship was brought to her course afresh. A few days before we sailed from Calcutta we got news of this phantom vessel. She had been some leagues below the horizon on which her likeness was painted, signalling for assistance to another ship

seven or eight miles distant from her. Had the quality of the atmosphere remained as it was, by which I mean had the mirage lingered awhile longer, no doubt we should have brought the simulacrum of the other vessel into view. Thus it will be seen that ships as well as men have their ghosts.

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This recalls to me another incident, belonging, however, to no experiences of my own. It was the chief mate of this same ship from whose deck we sighted the mirage, who told me the story. He was third-mate of a very handsome clipper bark, bound to a New Zealand port. The captain of her was a tall, austere man, with a grizzly beard, and an eye of the dead blackness of unpolished jet. Instead of speaking of him as the "old man," his sailors called him "the monk." He was exceedingly reserved, said little or nothing at table or on deck outside such instructions as he had to give; yet, spite of his monastic or collegiate looks which might have qualified him to adorn a pulpit rather than a merchantman's quarter-deck, he was an excellent sailor, possessed of a thorough knowledge of every walk of his vocation, and a man of considerable refinement of speech.

Nothing particular occurred until the little bark was drawing on to the Equator, when it was observed that the captain grew restless. He seemed unable to sleep; throughout the night-watches he was incessantly arriving on deck, and for a whole half-hour at a time he would stand right in front of the binnacle, obscuring it to the sight of the man at the wheel, and keeping his eyes fixed upon the card with the lifeless air of a person acting in his sleep. At noon one day the latitude was found to be about six miles north. There was a pleasant breeze blowing off the port beam, and the clipper keel was made by the log to be sliding through it at some seven miles in the hour. The captain, putting down his sextant, walked aft to the binnacle and stood before it, holding his watch in his hand. There was a light as of fever in the gaze he rooted upon the dial plate. Suddenly he called to the second mate, who had charge: "Hands to the port braces. Get the yards trimmed for a westerly course. Down below." The little ship came round with the men rounding in upon the braces too astonished to sing out. The captain walked the deck chafing his hands and chuckling. "Now, sir, we have it," he cried to the second mate. "Have

what, sir?" asked the astounded officer. "The Equator, sir," roared the captain. "The Equator?" cried the mate, looking round him. "Yes, sir, true as a hair by the magnetic bearings—a fore and aft line, sir. Keep to that course, d'ye hear. Not an inch off to port or starboard, or quicker than you can say Jack Robinson I'll blow your brains out!"

The second mate, glancing through the skylight, observed the chief officer in the cabin, and with a slight motion of his head summoned him on deck. The man arrived, with a face of wonder, gazing aloft and around, and not a little amazed to find the ship bound to the Eastern American seaboard instead of New Zealand. "This is to be an achievement, sir," shouted the captain to him, "that'll rank me foremost among the most famous men this century has produced." The mate viewed him with a stupid look of interrogation. "Sir," cried the captain, approaching him with an expression of ecstasy on his singular countenance, "the keel of this bark will be the first that ever ploughed the line of the Equator without a hair-breadth of deviation for one thousand miles at least; and mark you this," he cried, drawing himself erect, and extending his clenched fist at the mate, "if I catch the vessel's head off her course by the smallest fraction of a point, I will blow out the brains of the man who has charge of the deck at the time." He slapped his breast that the two men might guess what he concealed there, and, picking up his sextant, stalked below. The unfortunate creature went entirely out of his mind that night, and they had to pinion him to prevent him from destroying himself, or dealing death to the ship by firing her. He died within the week, raving mad, not a little to the relief of the mates, who could do nothing for him beyond seeing him watched.



## ETCHINGS : DESIRE

A butterfly with rose and opal wings flitted from flower to flower, rising, dipping, hovering over the plain, similar itself to a winged blossom. . . . A child, trying its first steps upon the daisied turf, saw and was seized with a desire for the dazzling insect. . . . But the butterfly kept on its way, resting now upon a lily stem, now upon a grass spear, under the eye of the child always, but always just out of reach.

From the valley, fresh and flowered, the butterfly passed to an arid plain. . . . The child ran after, dead to fatigue, seeing but the gorgeous insect—gone like a flash as the man put out his hand. For the child pursuing had grown to manhood, but with all the craving of youth, all the unquenchable desire of possession, despite every failure, urging him on after his beautiful mirage. A living mirage that steeped its bill in the flowers' calyces, beat its wings amorously and fled, light as a perfume, on the breath of the breeze. . . .

Hours and years passed in this insensate chase, and the insect and the man had reached the top of a mountain, no other than the culminating point of Life. Here the man hesitated, the descent was so precipitous. . . . But the mountain passed, green dells and verdant parks appeared; there, too, at the mountain's foot, a great inclosure, walled all about, but with a yawning portal, beyond which put forth only stones and brambles. To this inclosure, following the incline, the butterfly took its way, and to this inclosure, following the butterfly, the old man, for age had caught him as he left the crest, raced with a step faster and faster.

One by one the flowers vanished; the butterfly rested now on dead roots and branches, and scarcely had they crossed the sill of the inclosure when the man stumbled and fell and the butterfly grew dull and faded.

In vain, too, the old man sought to rise again and chase his chimera; he could only extend to it beseeching arms. . . . Then, as if touched with pity, the butterfly, little by little, narrowed the circle of its flight, to softly rest on the brow of the dying. The old man raised his hand—'twas his at last, the rose and opal vision, and—it was not a butterfly, but a simple sun-ray he had spent life pursuing.

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\* French of Marquot : E. C. W.: For Short Stories.

## THE EGG-STEALER \*

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It wanted less than an hour to high tide when Miss Marty Lear heard her brother's boat grate on the narrow beach below the garden, and set the knives and glasses straight while she listened for the rattle of the garden-gate.

A stunted line of hazel ran along the foot of the garden and prevented all view of the landing-place from the kitchen window. But above the hazels one could look across and catch a glimpse, at high tide, of the intervening river, or, toward low water, of the mud-banks shining in the sun.

It was Miss Lear's custom to look much on this landscape from this window; had, in fact, been her custom for close upon forty years. And this evening, when the latch clicked at length, and her brother in his market suit came slouching up the path that broke the parallels of garden-stuff, her gaze rested all the while upon the line of gray water.

Nor, when he entered the kitchen and hitched his hat upon the peg against the wall—where its brim accurately fitted a sort of dull halo in the whitewash—did he appear to want any welcome from her. He was a long-jawed man of sixty-five, she a long-jawed woman of sixty-one; and they understood each other, having kept this small and desolate farm together for twenty years—since their father's death.

There was a cold pasty ready on the table, and the jug of cider that Job Lear regularly emptied at supper. These suggested no questions, and the pair sat down to eat in silence.

It was only while holding his plate for a second helping of the pasty that Job spoke with a full mouth.

"Who d'ye reckon I ran against to-day, down in Troy?"

Miss Marty cut the slice without troubling to say that she had not an idea.

"Why, that fellow Amos Trudgeon," he went on.

"Yes?"

"'Pears to me you disremembers en—son of old Jane Trudgeon that used to live 'cross the water; him that stole our eggs, long back, when father was livin'."

"I remember."

"I thought you must. Why, you gave evidence, to be sure. Be dashed! now I come to mind, if you wasn't the

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\* Arthur Quiller Couch : London Speaker.

first to wake us up an' say you heard a man cryin' out, down 'pon the mud."

"Iss, I was."

"An' saved his life, though you did get 'en two months in jail by it. Up to arm-pits, he was, an' not two minutes to live, when we hauled 'en out 'an' found he'd been stealin' our eggs. He inquired after you, to-day."

"Did he?"

"Iss, 'How's Miss Marty,' says he. 'Agein' rapidly,' says I. The nerve that some folks have! 'Comes up to me cool as my lord and holds out his hand. I'd a mind to say 'Eggs' to en, it so annoyed me; but I hadn' the heart. 'Tis an old tale after all, that feat o' his."

"Two an' forty year, come seventeenth o' July next. Did he say any more?"

"Iss—wanted to know if you was married."

"Oh, my dear God!"

Job laid down knife and fork with the edges resting on his plate, and with a lump of pasty in one cheek, looked at his sister. Before he could speak, she broke out again—

"He was my lover."

"Mar—ty——"

"I swear to you, Job—here across this table—he was my lover; an' I ruined en. He was the only man, 'cept you an' father, that ever kissed me; an' I betrayed en. As the Lord liveth, I stood in the box an' swore away his name to save mine. An' what's more, he made me."

"Mar——"

"Don't hinder me, Job—it's truth I'm tellin' ee. His people were a low lot, an' father 'd have hided me if he'd know. But we used to meet in the orchard, 'most every night. Amos' 'd row across in his boat, an' back agen. For the Lord's sake, brother, don't look so. I'm past sixty, an' no harm done; an' now evil an' good's the same to me."

"Go on."

"Well, the last night he came over, 'twas low tide. I was waitin' for en in the orchard; an' he would have me tell father and you, and I wouldn'. I reckon we quarrelled over it so long, his boat got left high in the mud. Anyways, he left me in wrath an' I stood there by the gate in the dark, longin' for en to come back. But the time went on an' I didn' hear his oars pullin' away—though listenin' with all my ears.

"An' then I heard a terrible sound, a low sort of breathin' but fierce, an' something worse, a suck-suckin' of the mud below; an' ran down. There he was, above his knees in it, half-way between firm ground and his boat. For all his fightin' he heard me, and whispers out o' the dark—

"'Little girl, it's got me. Hush! don't shout."

"'Can't you get out?' I whispered back.

"'No, I'm afraid.'

"'I'll run an' call father an' Job.'

"'Hush! Be you mazed? Do you want to let 'em know?'

"'But it'll kill you, dear, won't it?'"

"'Likely it will,' said he. Then after a while of battlin' with it, he whispers agen, 'Little girl, I don't want to die. Death is a cold end. But I reckon we can manage to save me an' your name as well. Run up to the hen-house an' bring me as many eggs as you can find—and don't ax questions. Be quick: I can keep up for a while.'

"I didn't know what he meant, but ran up for my life. I could tell pretty well how to find a dozen or more in the dark, by gropin' about; an' in three minutes had gathered 'em in the lap o' my dress, and run down agen. I could just spy him—a dark blot out on the mud.

"'How many?' he asked, his voice hoarse as a rook's.

"'About a dozen.'

"'Toss 'em here. Don't come too near; an' shy careful, so's I can catch. Quick!'

"I stepped down pretty near to the brim o' the mud an' tossed 'em out to him. Three fell short in my hurry, but the rest he got hold of, somehow.

"'That's right. They'll think egg-stealin' nateral to a low family like our'n. Now back to your room—undress—an' cry out, sayin' there's a man shoutin' for help down 'pon the mud. When you wave your candle twice i' the window I'll shout like a Trojan.'

"An' I did it, Job: for the cruelty in a fearful woman passes knowledge. An' you rescued en, an' he went to jail. For he said 'twas the only way. An' his mother took it as quite reas'nable that her husband's son should take to the bad—'twas the way of all the Trudgeons.

"You needn't look at me like that. I'm past sixty, an' I've done my share of repentin'. He didn't say if he was married, did he?"

## ETCHINGS: ANGORA TOM \*

"What a dear, sweet little kitty!" gushed Miss Oglethorpe, who had "just run in" to make Aunt Serena a neighborly call; "an Angora, too! Where did you get it?" And the ancient maiden picked up the fluffy little animal aforesaid and laid her virgin cheek against its furry side.

"Why, Cousin Willie brought it from Boston last week," answered Aunt Serena. "Would you like to have it?"

Indeed Miss Oglethorpe would be delighted—she was fond of cats, and her spinster home had never seen the day when its fireside lacked a feline couchant to give the place a home-like air until her dear old Solomon died, leaving his affectionate mistress alone and well-nigh inconsolable.

So it came to pass that the kitten which Will had brought from Boston for the Ellsworths was installed in the place left vacant by the lamented Solomon, and was christened by a name usually bestowed upon cats of more plebeian origin—Tom.

Tom grew very much attached to his mistress, and his feeling was reciprocated. He lived on the fat of the land—and slept on the cushion which the departing soul of chrome-yellow Solomon had sanctified, and life for Tom was one continual round of pleasure, unclouded by the presence of small boys. And Tom was fat and sleek, and as he lay before the great open fireplace he was a pleasant sight to look upon.

As Miss Oglethorpe said: "Gentleman cats are so different from the other kind; they become so attached to one, and are never a nuisance, like other cats. Yes, indeed."

We had friends visiting us from out West, and one afternoon we went over to take five o'clock tea with Miss Oglethorpe; and the conversation turned to the subject of cats and pets in general. Of course we must all see Tom; so we formed a procession to the sitting-room.

"Really he's different from any other cat I ever saw," said Miss Oglethorpe, proudly, as we neared the door to the sitting-room. "See, now."

We saw Tom *was* different from other cats. For there, sprawling around the cushion in different positions, were seven blind, brand-new kittens. The party broke up in hysterical confusion—and Miss Oglethorpe's home is now—catless.

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\* R. L. Ketchum : For Short Stories.

## FAMOUS STORIES: GREEN TEA \*

*The Old Time Favorites.*

Though carefully educated in medicine and surgery, I have never practised either. The study of each continues, nevertheless, to interest me profoundly. Neither idleness nor caprice caused my secession from the honorable calling which I had just entered. The cause was a very trifling scratch inflicted by a dissecting knife. This trifle cost me the loss of two fingers, amputated promptly, and the more painful loss of my health, for I have never been quite well since, and have seldom been twelve months together in the same place.

In my wanderings I became acquainted with Dr. Martin Hesselius, a wanderer like myself, like me a physician, and like me an enthusiast in his profession. Unlike me in this, that his wanderings were voluntary, and he a man, if not of fortune, as we estimate fortune in England, at least in what our forefathers used to term "easy circumstances."

He was an old man when I first saw him; nearly five-and-thirty years my senior.

In Dr. Martin Hesselius I found my master. His knowledge was immense, his grasp of a case was an intuition.

He was the very man to inspire a young enthusiast, like me, with awe and delight.

My admiration has stood the test of time and survived the separation of death. I am sure it was well-founded.

For nearly twenty years I acted as his medical secretary. His immense collection of papers he has left in my care, to be arranged, indexed, and bound. His treatment of some of these cases is curious. He writes in two distinct characters. He describes what he saw and heard as an intelligent layman might, and when in this style of narrative he had seen the patient either through his own hall-door, to the light of day, or through the gates of darkness to the caverns of the dead, he returns upon the narrative, and in the terms of his art, and with all the force and originality of genius, proceeds to the work of analysis, diagnosis, and illustration.

Here and there a case strikes me as of a kind to amuse or

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\* By J. Sheridan Le Fanu. This choice specimen of the scientifically weird is considered by English writers to be the most morbidly fascinating bit of story-telling in the language. And it is not altogether fiction.

horrify a lay reader with an interest quite different from the peculiar one which it may possess for an expert. With slight modifications, chiefly of language, and of course a change of names, I copy the following. The narrator is Dr. Martin Hesselius. I find it among the voluminous notes of cases which he made during a tour in England about sixty-four years ago.

It is related in a series of letters to his friend, Professor Van Loo, of Leyden. The professor was not a physician, but a chemist, and a man who read history and metaphysics and medicine, and had, in his day, written a play.

The narrative is therefore, if somewhat less valuable as a medical record, necessarily written in a manner more likely to interest an unlearned reader.

These letters, from a memorandum attached, appear to have been returned on the death of the professor, in 1819, to Dr. Hesselius. They are written, some in English, some in French, but the greater part in German. I am a faithful, though I am conscious, by no means a graceful translator, and although here and there I omit some passages, and shorten others, and disguise names, I have interpolated nothing.

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The Rev. Mr. Jennings is tall and thin. He is middle-aged, and dresses with a natty, old-fashioned, high-church precision. He is naturally a little stately, but not at all stiff. His features, without being handsome, are well formed, and their expression extremely kind, but also shy.

I met him one evening at Lady Mary Heyduke's. The modesty and benevolence of his countenance are extremely prepossessing.

We were but a small party, and he joined agreeably enough in the conversation. He seems to enjoy listening very much more than contributing to the talk; but what he says is always to the purpose and well said. He is a great favorite of Lady Mary's, who, it seems, consults him upon many things, and thinks him the most happy and blessed person on earth. Little knows she about him.

The Rev. Mr. Jennings is a bachelor, and has, they say, sixty thousand pounds in the funds. He is a charitable man. He is most anxious to be actively employed in his sacred profession, and yet though always tolerably well elsewhere, when he goes down to his vicarage in Warwickshire, to engage in

the actual duties of his sacred calling, his health soon fails him, and in a very strange way. So says Lady Mary.

There is no doubt that Mr. Jennings' health does break down in, generally, a sudden and mysterious way, sometimes in the very act of officiating in his old and pretty church at Kenlis. It may be his heart, it may be his brain. But so it has happened three or four times, or oftener, that after proceeding a certain way in the service, he has on a sudden stopped short, and after a silence, apparently quite unable to resume, he has fallen into solitary, inaudible prayer, his hands and his eyes uplifted, and then pale as death, and in the agitation of a strange shame and horror, descended trembling, and got into the vestry-room, leaving his congregation, without explanation, to themselves. This occurred when his curate was absent. When he goes down to Kenlis now, he always takes care to provide a clergyman to share his duty, and to supply his place on the instant should he become thus suddenly incapacitated.

When Mr. Jennings breaks down quite, and beats a retreat from the vicarage, and returns to London, where, in a dark street off Piccadilly, he inhabits a very narrow house, Lady Mary says that he is always perfectly well.

I have my own opinion about that. There are degrees of course. We shall see.

Mr. Jennings is a perfectly gentleman-like man. People, however, remark something odd. There is an impression a little ambiguous. One thing which certainly contributes to it, people I think don't remember; or, perhaps, distinctly remark. But I did, almost immediately. Mr. Jennings has a way of looking sidelong upon the carpet, as if his eye followed the movements of something there. This, of course, is not always. It occurs only now and then. But often enough to give a certain oddity, as I have said, to his manner, and in this glance, travelling along the floor, there is something both shy and anxious.

A medical philosopher, as you are good enough to call me, elaborating theories by the aid of cases sought out by himself, and by him watched and scrutinized with more time at command, and consequently infinitely more minuteness than the ordinary practitioner can afford, falls insensibly into habits of observation, which accompany him everywhere, and are exercised, as some people would say, impertinently,



upon every subject that presents itself, with the least likelihood of rewarding inquiry.

There was a promise of this kind in the slight, timid, kindly, but reserved gentleman, whom I met for the first time at this agreeable little evening gathering. I observed, of course, more than I here set down; but I reserve all that borders on the technical for a strictly scientific paper.

I may remark, that when I here speak of medical science, I do so, as I hope some day to see it more generally understood, in a much more comprehensive sense than its generally material treatment would warrant. I believe the entire natural world is but the ultimate expression of that spiritual world from which, and in which alone, it has its life. I believe that the essential man is a spirit, that the spirit is an organized substance, but as different in point of material from what we ordinarily understand by matter, as light or electricity is; that the material body is, in the most literal sense, a vesture, and death consequently no interruption of the living man's existence, but simply his extrication from the natural body—a process which commences at the moment of what we term death, and the completion of which, at furthest a few days later, is the resurrection "in power."

The person who weighs the consequences of these positions will probably see their practical bearing upon medical science. This is, however, by no means the proper place for displaying the proofs and discussing the consequences of this too generally unrecognized state of facts.

In pursuance of my habit, I was covertly observing Mr. Jennings, with all my caution—I think he perceived it—and I saw plainly that he was as cautiously observing me. Lady Mary happening to address me by my name, as Dr. Hesselius, I saw that he glanced at me more sharply, and then became thoughtful for a few minutes.

After this, as I conversed with a gentleman at the other end of the room, I saw him look at me more steadily, and with an interest which I thought I understood. I then saw him take an opportunity of chatting with Lady Mary, and was, as one always is, perfectly aware of being the subject of a distant inquiry and answer.

This tall clergyman approached me by-and-by; and in a little time we had got into conversation. When two people, who like reading, and know books and places, having trav-

elled, wish to discourse, it is very strange if they can't find topics. It was not accident that brought him near me, and led him into conversation. He knew German, and had read my *Essays on Metaphysical Medicine* which suggest more than they actually say.

This courteous man, gentle, shy, plainly a man of thought and reading, who, moving and talking among us, was not altogether of us, and whom I already suspected of leading a life whose transactions and alarms were carefully concealed, with an impenetrable reserve from, not only the world, but his best beloved friends—was cautiously weighing in his own mind the idea of taking a certain step with regard to me.

I penetrated his thoughts without his being aware of it, and was careful to say nothing which could betray to his sensitive vigilance my suspicions respecting his position, or my surmises about his plans respecting myself.

We chatted upon indifferent subjects for a time, but at last he said:

“I was very much interested by some papers of yours, Dr. Hesselius, upon what you term *Metaphysical Medicine*—I read them in German, ten or twelve years ago—have they been translated?”

“No, I'm sure they have not—I should have heard. They would have asked my leave, I think.”

“I asked the publishers here, a few months ago, to get the book for me in the original German; but they tell me it is out of print.”

“So it is, and has been for some years; but it flatters me as an author to find that you have not forgotten my little book, although,” I added, laughing, “ten or twelve years is a considerable time to have managed without it; but I suppose you have been turning the subject over again in your mind, or something has happened lately to revive your interest in it.”

At this remark, accompanied by a glance of inquiry, a sudden embarrassment disturbed Mr. Jennings, analogous to that which makes a young lady blush and look foolish. He dropped his eyes, and folded his hands together uneasily, and looked oddly, and you would have said guiltily, for a moment.

I helped him out of his awkwardness in the best way, by appearing not to observe it, and going straight on, I said:

“Those revivals of interest in a subject happen to me often; one book suggests another, and often sends me back a wild-goose chase over an interval of twenty years. But if you still care to possess a copy, I shall be only too happy to provide you; I have still got two or three by me—and if you allow me to present one I shall be very much honored.”

“You are very good indeed,” he said, quite at his ease again, in a moment: “I almost despaired—I don’t know how to thank you.”

“Pray don’t say a word; the thing is really so little worth that I am only ashamed of having offered it, and if you thank me any more I shall throw it into the fire in a fit of modesty.”

Mr. Jennings laughed. He inquired where I was staying in London, and after a little more conversation on a variety of subjects, he took his departure.

“I like your vicar so much, Lady Mary,” said I, as soon as he was gone. “He has read, travelled, and thought, and having also suffered, he ought to be an accomplished companion.”

“So he is, and, better still, he is a really good man,” said she. “His advice is invaluable about my schools, and all my little undertakings at Dawlbridge, and he’s so painstaking, he takes so much trouble—you have no idea—wherever he thinks he can be of use: he’s so good-natured and so sensible.”

“It is pleasant to hear so good an account of his neighborly virtues. I can only testify to his being an agreeable and gentle companion, and in addition to what you have told me, I think I can tell you two or three things about him,” said I.

“Really!”

“Yes, to begin with, he’s unmarried.”

“Yes, that’s right—go on.”

“He has been writing, that is he *was*, but for two or three years perhaps, he has not gone on with his work, and the book was upon some rather abstract subject—perhaps theology.”

“Well, he was writing a book, as you say; I’m not quite sure what it was about, but only that it was nothing that I cared for; very likely you are right, and he certainly did stop—yes.”

“And although he only drank a little coffee here to-night, he likes tea, at least, did like it, extravagantly.”

"Yes, that's *quite* true."

"He drank green tea, a good deal, didn't he?"

"Well, that's very odd! Green tea was a subject on which we used almost to quarrel."

"But he has quite given that up," said I.

"So he has."

"And, now, one more fact. His mother or his father, did you know them?"

"Yes, both; his father is only ten years dead, and their place is near Dawlbridge. We knew them very well," she answered.

"Well, either his mother or his father—I should rather think his father, saw a ghost," said I.

"Well, you really are a conjurer, Dr. Hesselius."

"Conjurer or no, haven't I said right?" I answered merrily.

"You certainly have, and it *was* his father: he was a silent, whimsical man, and he used to bore my father about his dreams, and at last he told him a story about a ghost he had seen and talked with, and a very odd story it was. I remember it particularly, because I was so afraid of him. This story was long before he died—when I was quite a child—and his ways were so silent and moping, and he used to drop in sometimes, in the dusk, when I was alone in the drawing-room, and I used to fancy there were ghosts about him."

I smiled and nodded.

"And now, having established my character as a conjurer, I think I must say good-night," said I.

"But how *did* you find it out?"

"By the planets, of course, as the gypsies do," I answered, and so, gayly, we said good-night.

Next morning I sent the little book he had been inquiring after and a note to Mr. Jennings, and on returning late that evening I found that he had called at my lodgings, and left his card. He asked whether I was at home, and asked at what hour he would be most likely to find me.

Does he intend opening his case, and consulting me "professionally," as they say? I hope so. I have already conceived a theory about him. It is supported by Lady Mary's answers to my parting questions. I should like much to ascertain from his own lips. But what can I do consistently with good breeding to invite a confession? Nothing. I rather think he meditates one. At all events, my dear Van

L., I shan't make myself difficult of access; I mean to return his visit to-morrow. It will be only civil in return for his politeness, to ask to see him. Perhaps something may come of it. Whether much, little, or nothing, my dear Van L., you shall hear.

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Well, I have called at Blank Street. On inquiring at the door, the servant told me that Mr. Jennings was engaged very particularly with a gentleman, a clergyman from Kenlis, his parish in the country. Intending to reserve my privilege, and to call again, I merely intimated that I should try another time, and had turned to go, when the servant begged my pardon, and asked me, looking at me a little more attentively than well-bred persons of his order usually do, whether I was Dr. Hesselius; and, on learning that I was, he said, "Perhaps then, sir, you would allow me to mention it to Mr. Jennings, for I am sure he wishes to see you."

The servant returned in a moment, with a message from Mr. Jennings, asking me to go into his study, which was in effect his back drawing-room, promising to be with me in a very few minutes.

This was really a study—almost a library. The room was lofty, with two tall slender windows, and rich dark curtains. It was much larger than I had expected, and stored with books on every side, from the floor to the ceiling. The upper carpet—for to my tread it felt that there were two or three—was a Turkey carpet. My steps fell noiselessly. The book-cases standing out, placed the windows, particularly narrow ones, in deep recesses. The effect of the room was, although extremely comfortable, and even luxurious, decidedly gloomy, and aided by the silence, almost oppressive. Perhaps, however, I ought to have allowed something for association. My mind had connected peculiar ideas with Mr. Jennings. I stepped into this perfectly silent room, of a very silent house, with a peculiar foreboding; and its darkness, and solemn clothing of books, for except where two narrow looking-glasses were set in the wall, they were everywhere, helped this sombre feeling.

While awaiting Mr. Jennings's arrival, I amused myself by looking into some of the books with which his shelves were laden. Not among these, but immediately under them, with their backs upward, on the floor, I lighted upon a com-

plete set of Swedenborg's "Arcana Cœlestia," in the original Latin, a very fine folio set, bound in the natty livery which theology affects, pure vellum, namely, gold letters, and carmine edges. There were paper markers in several of these volumes, I raised and placed them, one after the other, upon the table, and opening where these papers were placed, I read in the solemn Latin phraseology, a series of sentences indicated by a pencilled line at the margin. Of these I copy here a few, translating them into English.

"When man's interior sight is opened, which is that of his spirit, then there appear the things of another life, which cannot possibly be made visible to the bodily sight." . . .

"By the internal sight it has been granted me to see the things that are in the other life, more clearly than I see those that are in the world. From these considerations, it is evident that external vision exists from interior vision, and this from a vision still more interior, and so on." . . .

"There are with every man at least two evil spirits." . . .

"With wicked genii there is also a fluent speech, but harsh and grating. There is also among them a speech which is not fluent, wherein the dissent of the thoughts is perceived as something secretly creeping along within it."

"The evil spirits associated with man are, indeed, from the hells, but when with man they are not then in hell, but are taken out thence. The place where they then are, is in the midst between heaven and hell, and is called the world of spirits—when the evil spirits who are with man, are in that world, they are not in any infernal torment, but in every thought and affection of the man, and, so, in all that the man himself enjoys. But when they are remitted into their hell, they return to their former state." . . .

"If evil spirits could perceive that they were associated with man, and yet that they were spirits separate from him, and if they could flow in into the things of his body, they would attempt by a thousand means to destroy him; for they hate man with a deadly hatred." . . .

"Knowing, therefore, that I was a man in the body, they were continually striving to destroy me, not as to the body only, but especially as to the soul; for to destroy any man or spirit is the very delight of the life of all who are in hell; but I have been continually protected by the Lord. Hence

it appears how dangerous it is for man to be in a living consort with spirits, unless he be in the good of faith." . . .

"Nothing is more carefully guarded from the knowledge of associate spirits than their being thus conjoint with a man, for if they knew it they would speak to him, with the intention to destroy him." . . .

"The delight of hell is to do evil to man, and to hasten his eternal ruin."

A long note, written with a very sharp and fine pencil, in Mr. Jennings' neat hand, at the foot of the page, caught my eye. Expecting his criticism upon the text, I read a word or two, and stopped, for it was something quite different, and began with these words, *Deus misereatur mei*—"May God compassionate me." Thus warned of its private nature, I averted my eyes, and shut the book, replacing all the volumes as I had found them, except one which interested me, and in which, as men studious and solitary in their habits will do, I grew so absorbed as to take no cognizance of the outer world, nor to remember where I was.

I was reading some pages which refer to "representatives" and "correspondents," in the technical language of Swedenborg, and had arrived at a passage, the substance of which is, that evil spirits, when seen by other eyes than those of their infernal associates, present themselves, by "correspondence," in the shape of the beast (*fera*) which represents their particular lust and life, in aspect direful and atrocious. This is a long passage, and particularizes a number of those bestial forms.

I was running the head of my pencil-case along the line as I read it, and something caused me to raise my eyes.

Directly before me was one of the mirrors I have mentioned, in which I saw reflected the tall shape of my friend, Mr. Jennings, leaning over my shoulder, and reading the page at which I was busy, and with a face so dark and wild that I should hardly have known him.

I turned and rose. He stood erect also, and with an effort laughed a little, saying:

"I came in and asked you how you did, but without succeeding in awaking you from your book; so I could not restrain my curiosity, and very impertinently, I'm afraid, peeped over your shoulder. This is not your first time of looking

into those pages. You have looked into Swedenborg, no doubt, long ago?"

"Oh dear, yes! I owe Swedenborg a great deal; you will discover traces of him in the little book on Metaphysical Medicine, which you were so good as to remember."

Although my friend affected a gayety of manner, there was a slight flush in his face, and I could perceive that he was inwardly much perturbed.

"I'm scarcely yet qualified, I know so little of Swedenborg. I've only had them a fortnight," he answered, "and I think they are rather likely to make a solitary man nervous—that is, judging from the very little I have read—I don't say that they have made me so," he laughed; "and I'm so very much obliged for the book. I hope you got my note?"

I made all proper acknowledgments and modest disclaimers.

"I never read a book that I go with, so entirely, as that of yours," he continued. "I saw at once there is more in it than is quite unfolded. Do you know Dr. Harley?" he asked, rather abruptly.

In passing, the editor remarks that the physician here named was one of the most eminent who had ever practised in England.

I did, having had letters to him, and had experienced from him great courtesy and considerable assistance during my visit to England.

"I think that man one of the very greatest fools I ever met in my life," said Mr. Jennings.

This was the first time I had ever heard him say a sharp thing of anybody, and such a term applied to so high a name a little startled me.

"Really! and in what way?" I asked.

"In his profession," he answered.

I smiled.

"I mean this," he said: "he seems to me one-half blind—I mean one-half of all he looks at is dark—preternaturally bright and vivid all the rest; and the worst of it is, it seems *wilful*. I can't get him—I mean he won't—I've had some experience of him as a physician, but I look on him as, in that sense, no better than a paralytic mind, an intellect half dead. I'll tell you—I know I shall some time—all about it," he said, with a little agitation. "You stay some months



longer in England. If I should be out of town during your stay for a little time, would you allow me to trouble you with a letter?"

"I should be only too happy," I assured him.

"Very good of you. I am so utterly dissatisfied with Harley."

"A leaning to the materialistic school," I said.

"A *mere* materialist," he corrected me; "you can't think how that sort of thing worries one who knows better. You won't tell any one—any of my friends you know—that I am hippish; now, for instance, no one knows—not even Lady Mary—that I have seen Dr. Harley, or any other doctor. So pray don't mention it; and, if I should have any threatening of an attack, you'll kindly let me write, or, should I be in town, have a little talk with you."

I was full of conjecture, and unconsciously I found I had fixed my eyes gravely on him, for he lowered his for a moment, and he said:

"I see you think I might as well tell you now, or else you are forming a conjecture; but you may as well give it up. If you were guessing all the rest of your life, you will never hit on it."

He shook his head smiling, and over that wintry sunshine a black cloud suddenly came down, and he drew his breath in, through his teeth, as men do in pain.

"Sorry, of course, to learn that you apprehend occasion to consult any of us; but, command me when and how you like, and I need not assure you that your confidence is sacred.

He then talked of quite other things, and in a comparatively cheerful way, and after a little time I took my leave.

We parted cheerfully, but he was not cheerful, nor was I. There are certain expressions of that powerful organ of spirit—the human face—which, although I have seen them often, and possess a doctor's nerve, yet disturb me profoundly. One look of Mr. Jennings haunted me. It had seized my imagination with so dismal a power that I changed my plans for the evening and went to the opera, feeling that I wanted a change of ideas.

I heard nothing of or from him for two or three days, when a note in his hand reached me. It was cheerful, and full of hope. He said that he had been for some little time so much

better—quite well, in fact—that he was going to make a little experiment, and run down for a month or so to his parish, to try whether a little work might not quite set him up. There was in it a fervent religious expression of gratitude for his restoration, as he now almost hoped he might call it.

A day or two later I saw Lady Mary, who repeated what his note had announced, and told me that he was actually in Warwickshire, having resumed his clerical duties at Kenlis; and she added, “I begin to think that he is really perfectly well, and that there never was anything the matter, more than nerves and fancy; we are all nervous, but I fancy there is nothing like a little hard work for that kind of weakness, and he has made up his mind to try it. I should not be surprised if he did not come back for a year.”

Notwithstanding all this confidence, only two days later I had this note, dated from his house off Piccadilly:

“DEAR SIR:—I have returned disappointed. If I should feel at all able to see you, I shall write to ask you kindly to call. At present, I am now too low, and, in fact, simply unable to say all I wish to say. Pray don't mention my name to my friends. I can see no one. By-and-by, please God, you shall hear from me. I mean to take a run into Shropshire, where some of my people are. God bless you! May we, on my return, meet more happily than I can now write.”

About a week after this I saw Lady Mary at her own house, the last person, she said, left in town, and just on the wing for Brighton, for the London season was quite over. She told me that she had heard from Mr. Jennings' niece, Martha, in Shropshire. There was nothing to be gathered from her letter, more than that he was low and nervous. In those words, of which healthy people think so lightly, what a world of suffering is sometimes hidden!

Nearly five weeks had passed without any further news of Mr. Jennings. At the end of that time I received a note from him. He wrote:

“I have been in the country, and have had change of air, change of scene, change of faces, change of everything and in everything—but *myself*. I have made up my mind, so far as the most irresolute creature on earth can do it, to tell my

case fully to you. If your engagements will permit, pray come to me to-day, to-morrow, or the next day; but, pray defer as little as possible. You know not how much I need help. I have a quiet house at Richmond, where I now am. Perhaps you can manage to come to dinner, or to luncheon, or even to tea. You shall have no trouble in finding me out. The servant at Blank Street, who takes this note, will have a carriage at your door at any hour you please; and I am always to be found. You will say that I ought not to be alone. I have tried everything. Come and see."

I called up the servant, and decided on going out the same evening, which accordingly I did.

He would have been much better in a lodging-house, or hotel, I thought, as I drove up through a short double row of sombre elms to a very old-fashioned brick house, darkened by the foliage of these trees, which overtopped, and nearly surrounded it. It was a perverse choice, for nothing could be imagined more triste and silent. The house, I found, belonged to him. He had stayed for a day or two in town, and, finding it for some cause insupportable, had come out here, probably because being furnished and his own, he was relieved of the thought and delay of selection, by coming here.

The sun had already set, and the red reflected light of the western sky illuminated the scene with the peculiar effect with which we are all familiar. The hall seemed very dark, but, getting to the back drawing-room, whose windows command the west, I was again in the same dusky light.

I sat down, looking out upon the richly-wooded landscape that glowed in the grand and melancholy light which was every moment fading. The corners of the room were already dark; all was growing dim, and the gloom was insensibly toning my mind, already prepared for what was sinister. I was waiting alone for his arrival, which soon took place. The door communicating with the front room opened, and the tall figure of Mr. Jennings, faintly seen in the ruddy twilight, came, with quiet stealthy steps, into the room.

We shook hands, and, taking a chair to the window, where there was still light enough to enable us to see each other's faces, he sat down beside me, and, placing his hand upon my arm, with scarcely a word of preface began his narrative.

The faint glow of the west, the pomp of the then lonely woods of Richmond, were before us, behind and about us the darkening room, and on the stony face of the sufferer—for the character of his face, though still gentle and sweet, was changed—rested that dim, odd glow which seems to descend and produce, where it touches, lights, sudden though faint, which are lost, almost without gradation, in darkness. The silence, too, was utter; not a distant wheel, or bark, or whistle from without; and within, the depressing stillness of an invalid bachelor's house.

I guessed well the nature, though not even vaguely the particulars of the revelations I was about to receive, from that fixed face of suffering that so oddly flushed stood out, like a portrait of Schalken's, before its background of darkness.

"It began," he said, "on the 15th of October, three years and eleven weeks ago, and two days—I keep very accurate count, for every day is torment. If I leave anywhere a chasm in my narrative tell me.

"About four years ago I began a work, which had cost me very much thought and reading. It was upon the religious metaphysics of the ancients."

"I know," said I, "the actual religion of educated and thinking paganism, quite apart from symbolic worship? A wide and very interesting field."

"Yes; but not good for the mind—the Christian mind, I mean. Paganism is all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy, their religion involves their art, and both their manners, and the subject is a degrading fascination and the Nemesis sure. God forgive me!

"I wrote a great deal; I wrote late at night. I was always thinking on the subject, walking about, wherever I was, everywhere. It thoroughly infected me. You are to remember that all the material ideas connected with it were more or less of the beautiful, the subject itself delightfully interesting, and I, then, without a care."

He sighed heavily.

"I believe that every one who sets about writing in earnest does his work, as a friend of mine phrased it, *on* something—tea, or coffee, or tobacco. I suppose there is a material waste that must be hourly supplied in such occupations, or that we should grow too abstracted, and the mind, as it were,

pass out of the body, unless it were reminded often of the connection by actual sensation. At all events, I felt the want, and I supplied it. Tea was my companion—at first the ordinary black tea, made in the usual way, not too strong: but I drank a good deal, and increased its strength as I went on. I never experienced an uncomfortable symptom from it. I began to take a little green tea. I found the effect pleasanter, it cleared and intensified the power of thought so. I had come to take it frequently, but not stronger than one might take it for pleasure. I wrote a great deal out here, it was so quiet, and in this room. I used to sit up very late, and it became a habit with me to sip my tea—green tea—every now and then as my work proceeded. I had a little kettle on my table, that swung over a lamp, and made tea two or three times between eleven o'clock and two or three in the morning, my hours of going to bed. I used to go into town every day. I was not a monk, and, although I spent an hour or two in a library, hunting up authorities and looking out lights upon my theme, I was in no morbid state as far as I can judge. I met my friends pretty much as usual and enjoyed their society, and, on the whole, existence had never been, I think, so pleasant before.

“I had met with a man who had some odd old books, German editions in mediæval Latin, and I was only too happy to be permitted access to them. This obliging person's books were in the city, a very out-of-the-way part of it. I had rather out-stayed my intended hour, and, on coming out, seeing no cab near, I was tempted to get into the omnibus which used to drive past this house. It was darker than this by the time the 'bus had reached an old house, you may have remarked, with four poplars at each side of the door, and there the last passenger but myself got out. We drove along rather faster. It was twilight now. I leaned back in my corner next the door ruminating pleasantly.

“The interior of the omnibus was nearly dark. I had observed in the corner opposite to me at the other side, and at the end next the horses, two small circular reflections, as it seemed to me of a reddish light. They were about two inches apart, and about the size of those small brass buttons that yachting men used to put upon their jackets. I began to speculate, as listless men will, upon this trifle, as it seemed. From what centre did that faint but deep red light come,

and from what—glass beads, buttons, toy decorations—was it reflected? We were lumbering along gently, having nearly a mile still to go. I had not solved the puzzle, and it became in another minute more odd, for these two luminous points, with a sudden jerk, descended nearer the floor, keeping still their relative distance and horizontal position, and then, as suddenly, they rose to the level of the seat on which I was sitting and I saw them no more.

“My curiosity was now really excited, and, before I had time to think, I saw again these two dull lamps, again together near the floor; again they disappeared, and again in their old corner I saw them.

“So, keeping my eyes upon them, I edged quietly up my own side, toward the end at which I still saw these tiny discs of red.

“There was very little light in the 'bus. It was nearly dark. I leaned forward to aid my endeavor to discover what these little circles really were. They shifted their position a little as I did so. I began now to perceive an outline of something black, and I soon saw, with tolerable distinctness, the outline of a small black monkey, pushing its face forward in mimicry to meet mine; those were its eyes, and I now dimly saw its teeth grinning at me.

“I drew back, not knowing whether it might not meditate a spring. I fancied that one of the passengers had forgot this ugly pet, and wishing to ascertain something of its temper, though not caring to trust my fingers to it, I poked my umbrella softly toward it. It remained immovable—up to it—*through* it. For through it, and back and forward it passed, without the slightest resistance.

“I can't, in the least, convey to you the kind of horror that I felt. When I had ascertained that the thing was an illusion, as I then supposed, there came a misgiving about myself and a terror that fascinated me in impotence to remove my gaze from the eyes of the brute for some moments. As I looked, it made a little skip aback, quite into the corner, and I, in a panic, found myself at the door, having put my head out, drawing deep breaths of the outer air, and staring at the lights and trees we were passing, too glad to reassure myself of reality.

“I stopped the 'bus and got out. I perceived the man look oddly at me as I paid him. I dare say there was something

unusual in my looks and manner, for I had never felt so strangely before.

“When the omnibus drove on, and I was alone upon the road, I looked carefully round to ascertain whether the monkey had followed me. To my indescribable relief I saw it nowhere. I can’t describe easily what a shock I had received, and my sense of genuine gratitude on finding myself, as I supposed, quite rid of it.

“I had got out a little before we reached this house, two or three hundred steps. A brick wall runs along the foot-path, and inside the wall is a hedge of yew, or some dark evergreen of that kind, and within that again the row of fine trees which you may have remarked as you came.

“This brick wall is about as high as my shoulder, and happening to raise my eyes I saw the monkey, with that stooping gait, on all fours, walking or creeping, close beside me on top of the wall. I stopped, looking at it with a feeling of loathing and horror. As I stopped so did it. It sat up on the wall with its long hands on its knees looking at me. There was not light enough to see it much more than in outline, nor was it dark enough to bring the peculiar light of its eyes into strong relief. I still saw, however, that red foggy light plainly enough. It did not show its teeth, nor exhibit any sign of irritation, but seemed jaded and sulky, and was observing me steadily.

“I drew back into the middle of the road—an unconscious recoil. There I stood, still looking at it. It did not move.

“With an instinctive determination to try something—anything, I turned about and walked briskly toward town with askance look, all the time watching the movements of the beast. It crept swiftly long the wall, at exactly my pace.

“Where the wall ends, near the turn of the road, it came down, and with a wiry spring or two brought itself close to my feet, and continued to keep up with me, as I quickened my pace. It was at my left side, so close to my leg that I felt every moment as if I should tread upon it.

“The road was quite deserted and silent, and it was darker every moment. I stopped, dismayed and bewildered, turning as I did so, the other way—I mean, toward this house, away from which I had been walking. When I stood still, the monkey drew back to a distance of, I suppose, about five or six yards, and remained stationary, watching me.

“I had been more agitated than I have said. I had read, of course, as every one has, something about ‘spectral illusions,’ as you physicians term the phenomena of such cases. I considered my situation, and looked my misfortune in the face.

“These affections, I had read, are sometimes transitory and sometimes obstinate. I had read of cases in which the appearance, at first harmless, had, step by step, degenerated into something direful and insupportable, and ended by wearing its victim out. Still as I stood there, but for my bestial companion, quite alone, I tried to comfort myself by repeating again and again the assurance, ‘the thing is purely disease, a well-known physical affection, as distinctly as small-pox or neuralgia. Doctors are all agreed on that, philosophy demonstrates it. I must not be a fool. I’ve been sitting up too late, and I daresay my digestion is quite wrong, and, with God’s help, I shall be all right, and this is but a symptom of nervous dyspepsia.’ Did I believe all this? Not one word of it, no more than any other miserable being ever did who is once seized and riveted in this satanic captivity. Against my convictions, I might say my knowledge, I was simply bullying myself into a false courage.

“I now walked homeward. I had only a few hundred yards to go. I had forced myself into a sort of resignation, but I had not got over the sickening shock and the flurry of the first certainty of my misfortune.

“I made up my mind to pass the night at home. The brute moved close beside me, and I fancied there was the sort of anxious drawing toward the house, which one sees in tired horses or dogs, sometimes as they come toward home.

“I was afraid to go into town, I was afraid of any one’s seeing and recognizing me. I was conscious of an irrepressible agitation in my manner. Also, I was afraid of any violent change in my habits, such as going to a place of amusement, or walking from home in order to fatigue myself. At the hall door it waited till I mounted the steps, and when the door was opened entered with me.

“I drank no tea that night. I got cigars and some brandy and water. My idea was that I should act upon my material system, and by living for a while in sensation apart from thought, send myself forcibly, as it were, into a new groove. I came up here to this drawing-room. I sat just here. The



monkey then got upon a small table that then stood *there*. It looked dazed and languid. An irrepressible uneasiness as to its movements kept my eyes always upon it. Its eyes were half closed, but I could see them glow. It was looking steadily at me. In all situations, at all hours, it is awake and looking at me. That never changes.

“I shall not continue in detail my narrative of this particular night. I shall describe, rather, the phenomena of the first year, which never varied, essentially. I shall describe the monkey as it appeared in daylight. In the dark, as you shall presently hear, there are peculiarities. It is a small monkey, perfectly black. It had only one peculiarity—a character of malignity—unfathomable malignity. During the first year it looked sullen and sick. But this character of intense malice and vigilance was always underlying that surly languor. During all that time it acted as if on a plan of giving me as little trouble as was consistent with watching me. Its eyes were never off me. I have never lost sight of it except in my sleep, light or dark, day or night, since it came here, excepting when it withdraws for some weeks at a time, unaccountably.

“In total dark it is visible as in daylight. I do not mean merely its eyes. It is *all* visible distinctly in a halo that resembles a glow of red embers, and which accompanies it in all its movements.

“When it leaves me for a time, it is always at night, in the dark, and in the same way. It grows at first uneasy, and then furious, and then advances toward me, grinning and shaking, its paws clenched, and, at the same time, there comes the appearance of fire in the grate. I never have any fire. I can't sleep in the room where there is any, and it draws nearer and nearer to the chimney, quivering, it seems, with rage, and when its fury rises to the highest pitch, it springs into the grate, and up the chimney, and I see it no more.

“When first this happened, I thought I was released. I was now a new man. A day passed—a night—and no return, and a blessed week—a week—another week. I was always on my knees, Dr. Hesselius, always, thanking God and praying. A whole month passed of liberty, but on a sudden, it was with me again.

“It was with me, and the malice which before was torpid

under a sullen exterior, was now active. It was perfectly unchanged in every other respect. This new energy was apparent in its activity and its looks, and soon in other ways.

"For a time, you will understand, the change was shown only in an increased vivacity, and an air of menace, as if it was always brooding over some atrocious plan. Its eyes, as before, were never off me."

"Is it here now?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "it has been absent exactly a fortnight and a day—fifteen days. It has sometimes been away so long as nearly two months, once for three. Its absence always exceeds a fortnight, although it may be but by a single day. Fifteen days having past since I saw it last, it may return now at any moment."

"Is its return," I asked, "accompanied by any peculiar manifestation?"

"Nothing—no," he said. "It is simply with me again. On lifting my eyes from a book, or turning my head, I see it, as usual, looking at me, and then it remains, as before, for its appointed time. I have never told so much and so minutely before to any one."

I perceived that he was agitated, and looking like death, and he repeatedly applied his handkerchief to his forehead; I suggested that he might be tired, and told him that I would call, with pleasure, in the morning, but he said:

"No, if you don't mind hearing it all now. I have got so far, and I should prefer making one effort of it. When I spoke to Dr. Harley, I had nothing like so much to tell. You are a philosophic physician. You give spirit its proper rank. If this thing is real——"

He paused, looking at me with agitated inquiry.

"We can discuss it by-and-by, and very fully. I will give you all I think," I answered, after an interval.

"Well—very well. If it is anything real, I say, it is prevailing, little by little, and drawing me more interiorly into hell. Optic nerves, he talked of. Ah! well—there are other nerves of communication. May God Almighty help me! You shall hear.

"Its power of action, I tell you, had increased. Its malice became, in a way, aggressive. About two years ago, some questions that were pending between me and the bishop having been settled, I went down to my parish in Warwickshire,

anxious to find occupation in my profession. I was not prepared for what happened, although I have since thought I might have apprehended something like it. The reason of my saying so is this——”

He was beginning to speak with a great deal more effort and reluctance, and sighed often, and seemed at times nearly overcome. But at this time his manner was not agitated. It was more like that of a sinking patient, who has given himself up.

“Yes, but I will first tell you about Kenlis, my parish.

“It was with me when I left this place for Dawlbridge. It was my silent travelling companion, and it remained with me at the vicarage. When I entered on the discharge of my duties, another change took place. The thing exhibited an atrocious determination to thwart me. It was with me in the church—in the reading-desk—in the pulpit—within the communion rails. At last, it reached this extremity, that while I was reading to the congregation it would spring upon the open book and squat there, so that I was unable to see the page. This happened more than once.

“I left Dawlbridge for a time. I placed myself in Dr. Harley’s hands. I did everything he told me. He gave my case a great deal of thought. It interested him, I think. He seemed successful. For nearly three months I was perfectly free from a return. I began to think I was safe. With his full assent I returned to Dawlbridge.

“I travelled in a chaise. I was in good spirits. I was more—I was happy and grateful. I was returning, as I thought, delivered from a dreadful hallucination, to the scene of duties which I longed to enter upon. It was a beautiful sunny evening, everything looked serene and cheerful, and I was delighted. I remember looking out of the window to see the spire of my church at Kenlis among the trees, at the point where one has the earliest view of it. It is exactly where the little stream that bounds the parish passes under the road by a culvert, and where it emerges at the road-side, a stone with an old inscription is placed. As we passed this point, I drew my head in and sat down, and in the corner of the chaise was the monkey.

“For a moment I felt faint, and then quite wild with despair and horror. I called to the driver, and got out, and sat down at the road-side, and prayed to God silently for

mercy. A despairing resignation supervened. My companion was with me as I re-entered the vicarage. The same persecution followed. After a short struggle I submitted, and soon I left the place.

"I told you," he said, "that the beast has before this become in certain ways aggressive. I will explain a little. It seemed to be actuated by intense and increasing fury, whenever I said my prayers, on even meditated prayer. It amounted at last to a dreadful interruption. You will ask, how could a silent immaterial phantom effect that? It was thus, whenever I meditated praying; it was always before me, and nearer and nearer.

"It used to spring on a table, on the back of a chair, on the chimney-piece, and slowly to swing itself from side to side, looking at me all the time. There is in its motion an indefinable power to dissipate thought, and to contract one's attention to that monotony, till the ideas shrink, as it were, to a point, and at last to nothing—and unless I had started up, and shook off the catalepsy I have felt as if my mind were on the point of losing itself. There are other ways," he sighed heavily; "thus, for instance, while I pray with my eyes closed, it comes closer and closer, and I see it. I know it is not to be accounted for physically, but I do actually see it, though my lids are closed, and so it rocks my mind, as it were, and overpowers me, and I am obliged to rise from my knees. If you had ever yourself known this, you would be acquainted with desperation.

"I see, Dr. Hesselius, that you don't lose one word of my statement. I need not ask you to listen specially to what I am now going to tell you. They talk of the optic nerves, and of spectral illusions, as if the organ of sight was the only point assailable by the influences that have fastened upon me—I know better. For two years in my direful case that limitation prevailed. But as food is taken in softly at the lips, and then brought under the teeth, as the tip of the little finger caught in a mill crank will draw in the hand, and the arm, and the whole body, so the miserable mortal who has been once caught firmly by the end of the finest fibre of his nerve, is drawn in and in, by the enormous machinery of hell, until he is as I am. Yes, doctor, as I am, for while I talk to you, and implore relief, I feel that my prayer is for the impossible, and my pleading with the inexorable."

I endeavored to calm his visibly increasing agitation, and told him that he must not despair.

While we talked the night had overtaken us. The filmy moonlight was wide over the scene which the window commanded, and I said:

"Perhaps you would prefer having candles. This light, you know, is odd. I should wish you, as much as possible, under your usual conditions while I make my diagnosis, shall I call it—otherwise I don't care."

"All lights are the same to me," he said; "except when I read or write, I care not if night were perpetual. I am going to tell you what happened about a year ago. The thing began to speak to me."

"Speak! How do you mean—speak as a man does, do you mean?"

"Yes; speak in words and consecutive sentences, with perfect coherence and articulation; but there is a peculiarity. It is not like the tone of a human voice. It is not by my ears it reaches me—it comes like a singing through my head.

"This faculty, the power of speaking to me, will be my undoing. It won't let me pray, it interrupts me with dreadful blasphemies. I dare not go on, I could not. Oh! doctor, can the skill, and thought, and prayers of man avail me nothing!"

"You must promise me, my dear sir, not to trouble yourself with unnecessarily exciting thoughts; confine yourself strictly to the narrative of *facts*; and recollect, above all, that even if the thing that infests you be, you seem to suppose, a reality with an actual independent life and will, yet it can have no power to hurt you, unless it be given from above: its access to your senses depends mainly upon your physical condition—this is, under God, your comfort and reliance: we are all alike environed. It is only that in your case, the '*paries*,' the veil of the flesh, the screen, is a little out of repair, and sights and sounds are transmitted. We must enter on a new course, sir—be encouraged. I'll give to-night to the careful consideration of the whole case."

"You are very good, sir; you think it worth trying, you don't give me quite up; but, sir, you don't know, it is gaining such an influence over me: it orders me about, it is such a tyrant, and I'm growing so helpless. May God deliver me!"

"It orders you about—of course you mean by speech?"

"Yes, yes; it is always urging me to crimes, to injure others, or myself. You see, doctor, the situation is urgent, it is indeed. When I was in Shropshire, a few weeks ago" (Mr. Jennings was speaking rapidly and trembling now, holding my arm with one hand, and looking in my face), "I went out one day with a party of friends for a walk; my persecutor, I tell you, was with me at the time. I lagged behind the rest; the country near the Dee, you know, is beautiful. Our path happened to lie near a coal mine, and at the verge of the wood is a perpendicular shaft, they say, a hundred and fifty feet deep. My niece had remained behind with me—she knows, of course, nothing of the nature of my sufferings. She knew, however, that I had been ill, and was low, and she remained to prevent my being quite alone. As we loitered slowly on together, the brute that accompanied me was urging me to throw myself down the shaft. I tell you now—oh, sir, think of it!—the one consideration that saved me from that hideous death was the fear lest the shock of witnessing the occurrence should be too much for the poor girl. I asked her to go on and take her walk with her friends, saying that I could go no further. She made excuses, and the more I urged her the firmer she became. She looked doubtful and frightened. I suppose there was something in my looks or manner that alarmed her; but she would not go, and that literally saved me. You had no idea, sir, that a living man could be made so abject a slave of Satan," he said, with a ghastly groan and a shudder.

There was a pause here, and I said, "You *were* preserved nevertheless. It was the act of God. You are in His hands and in the power of no other being: be therefore confident for the future."

I made him have candles lighted, and saw the room looking cheery and inhabited before I left him. I told him that he must regard his illness strictly as one dependent on physical, though *subtle* physical causes. I told him that he had evidence of God's care and love in the deliverance which he had just described, and that I had perceived with pain that he seemed to regard its peculiar features as indicating that he had been delivered over to spiritual reprobation. Than such a conclusion nothing could be, I insisted, less warranted; and not only so, but more contrary to facts, as disclosed in

his mysterious deliverance from that murderous influence during his Shrophire excursion. First, his niece had been retained by his side without his intending to keep her near him; and, secondly, there had been infused into his mind an irresistible repugnance to execute the dreadful suggestion in her presence.

As I reasoned this point with him, Mr. Jennings wept. He seemed comforted. One promise I exacted, which was that should the monkey at any time return, I should be sent for immediately; and, repeating my assurance that I would give neither time nor thought to any other subject until I had thoroughly investigated his case, and that to-morrow he should hear the result, I took my leave.

Before getting into the carriage I told the servant that his master was far from well, and that he should make a point of frequently looking into his room.

My own arrangements I made with a view to being quite secure from interruption.

I merely called at my lodgings, and with a travelling-desk and carpet-bag, set off in a hackney carriage for an inn about two miles out of town, called "The Horns," a very quiet and comfortable house, with good thick walls. And there I resolved, without the possibility of intrusion or distraction, to devote some hours of the night, in my comfortable sitting-room, to Mr. Jennings's case, and, so much of the mornings it might require.

(There occurs here a careful note of Dr. Hesselius' opinion upon the case, and of the habits, dietary, and medicines which he prescribed. It is curious—some persons would say mystical. But, on the whole, I doubt whether it would sufficiently interest a reader of the kind I am likely to meet with, to warrant this being here reprinted. The whole letter was plainly written at the inn where he had hid himself for the occasion. The next letter is dated from his town lodgings.)

I left town for the inn where I slept last night at half-past nine, and did not arrive at my room in town until one o'clock this afternoon. I found a letter in Mr. Jennings' hand upon my table. It had not come by post, and, on inquiry, I learned that Mr. Jennings' servant had brought it, and on learning that I was not to return until to-day, and that no one could tell him my address, he seemed very uncomfortable, and said that his orders from his master were that he was

not to return without an answer. I opened the letter and read:

“DEAR DR. HESSELIUS:—It is here. You had not been an hour gone when it returned. It is speaking. It knows all that has happened. It knows everything—it knows you, and is frantic and atrocious. It reviles. I send you this. It knows every word I have written—I write. This I promised, and I therefore write, but I fear very confused, very incoherently. I am so interrupted, disturbed.

“Ever yours, sincerely yours,

“ROBERT LYNDER JENNINGS.”

“When did this come?” I asked.

“About eleven last night: the man has been here three times to-day. The last time is about an hour since.”

Thus answered, and with the notes I had made upon his case in my pocket, I was in a few minutes driving toward Richmond, to see Mr. Jennings.

I by no means, as you perceive, despaired of Mr. Jennings' case. He had himself remembered and applied, though quite in a mistaken way, the principle which I lay down in my *Metaphysical Medicine*, and which governs all such cases I was about to apply it in earnest. I was profoundly interested, and very anxious to see and examine him while the “enemy” was actually present.

I drove up to the sombre house, and ran up the steps, and knocked. The door, in a little time, was opened by a tall woman in black silk. She looked ill, and as if she had been crying. She curtsied, and heard my question, but she did not answer. She turned her face away, extending her hand toward two men who were coming down-stairs; and thus having, as it were, tacitly made me over to them, she passed through a side-door hastily and shut it.

The man who was nearest the hall, I at once accosted, but being now close to him, I was shocked to see that both his hands were covered with blood.

I drew back a little, and the man, passing down-stairs merely said in a low tone, “Here's the servant, sir.”

The servant had stopped on the stairs, confounded and dumb at seeing me. He was rubbing his hands in a handkerchief, and it was steeped in blood.



“Jones, what is it? what has happened?” I asked, while a sickening suspicion overpowered me.

The man asked me to come up to the lobby. I was beside him in a moment, and, frowning and pallid, with contracted eyes, he told me the horror which I already half guessed.

His master had made away with himself.

I went up-stairs with him to the room—what I saw there I won't tell you. He had cut his throat with his razor. It was a frightful gash. The two men had laid him on the bed, and composed his limbs. It had happened, as the immense pool of blood on the floor declared, at some distance between the bed and the window. There was carpet round his bed, and a carpet under his dressing-table, but none on the rest of the floor, for the man said he did not like a carpet on his bedroom. In this sombre and now terrible room, one of the great elms that darkened the house was slowly moving the shadow of one of its great boughs upon this dreadful floor.

I beckoned to the servant, and we went down-stairs together. I turned off the hall into an old-fashioned panelled room, and there standing, I heard all the servant had to tell. It was not a great deal.

“I concluded, sir, from your words and looks, sir, as you left last night that you thought my master seriously ill. I thought it might be that you were afraid of a fit, or something. So I attended very close to your directions. He sat up late, till past three o'clock. He was not writing or reading. He was talking a great deal to himself, but that was nothing unusual. At about that hour I assisted him to undress, and left him in his slippers and dressing-gown. I went back softly in about half-an-hour. He was in his bed, quite undressed, and a pair of candles lighted on the table beside his bed. He was leaning on his elbow, and looking out at the other side of the bed when I came in. I asked him if he wanted anything, and he said no.

“I don't know whether it was what you said to me, sir, or something a little unusual about him, but I was uneasy, uncommon uneasy about him last night.

“In another half-hour, or it might be a little more, I went up again. I did not hear him talking as before. I opened the door a little. The candles were both out, which was not usual. I had a bedroom candle, and I let the light in, a little bit, looking softly round. I saw him sitting in that

chair beside the dressing-table with his clothes on again. He turned round and looked at me. I thought it strange he should get up and dress, and put out the candles to sit in the dark, that way. But I only asked him again if I could do anything for him. He said, No, rather sharp, I thought. I asked if I might light the candles, and he said, 'Do as you like Jones.' So I lighted them, and I lingered about the room, and he said, 'Tell me truth, Jones; why did you come again—you did not hear any one cursing?' 'No, sir,' I said, wondering what he could mean.

"'No,' said he, after me, 'of course, no;' and I said to him, 'Wouldn't it be well, sir, you went to bed? It's just five o'clock;' and he said nothing but, 'Very likely; good-night, Jones.' So I went, sir, but in less than an hour I came again. The door was fast, and he heard me, and called, as I thought, from the bed to know what I wanted, and he desired me not to disturb him again. I lay down and slept for a little. It must have been between six and seven when I went up again. The door was still fast, and he made no answer, so I did not like to disturb him, and thinking he was asleep, I left him till nine. It was his custom to ring when he wished me to come, and I had no particular hour for calling him. I tapped very gently, and getting no answer, I stayed away a good while, supposing he was getting some rest then. It was not till eleven o'clock I grew really uncomfortable about him—for at the latest he was never, that I could remember, later than half-past ten. I got no answer. I knocked and called, and still no answer. So not being able to force the door, I called Thomas from the stables, and together we forced it, and found him in the shocking way you saw."

Jones had no more to tell. Poor Mr. Jennings was very gentle, and very kind. All his people were fond of him. I could see that the servant was very much moved.

So, dejected and agitated, I passed from that terrible house, and its dark canopy of elms, and I hope I shall never see it more. While I write to you I feel like a man who has but half waked from a frightful and monotonous dream. My memory rejects the picture with incredulity and horror. Yet I know it is true. It is the story of the process of a poison, a poison which excites the reciprocal action of spirit and nerve, and paralyzes the tissue that separates those cognate

functions of the senses, the external and the interior. Thus we find strange bed-fellows, and the mortal and immortal prematurely make acquaintance.

\* \* \* \* \*

My dear Van L——, you have suffered from an affection similar to that which I have just described. You twice complained of a return of it.

Who, under God, cured you? Your humble servant, Martin Hesselius. Let me rather adopt the more emphasized piety of a certain good old French surgeon of three hundred years ago: "I treated, and God cured you."

Come, my friend, you are not to be hippish. Let me tell you a fact.

I have met with, and treated, as my book shows, fifty-seven cases of this kind of vision, which I term indifferently "sublimated," "precocious," and "interior."

There is another class of affections which are truly termed—though commonly confounded with those which I describe—spectral illusions. These latter I look upon as being no less simply curable than a cold in the head or a trifling dyspepsia.

It is those which rank in the first category that test our promptitude of thought. Fifty-seven such cases have I encountered, neither more nor less. And in how many of these have I failed? In no one single instance.

There is no one affliction of mortality more easily and certainly reducible, with a little patience, and a rational confidence in the physician. With these simple conditions, I look upon the cure as absolutely certain.

You are to remember that I had not even commenced to treat Mr. Jennings' case. I have not any doubt that I should have cured him perfectly in eighteen months, or possibly it might have extended to two years. Some cases are very rapidly curable, others extremely tedious. Every intelligent physician who will give thought and diligence to the task will effect a cure.

You know my tract on "The Cardinal Functions of the Brain." I there, by the evidence of innumerable facts, prove, as I think, the high probability of a circulation, arterial and venous in its mechanism, through the nerves. Of this system, thus considered, the brain is the heart. The fluid, which is propagated hence through one class of nerves, returns in

an altered state through another, and the nature of that fluid is spiritual, though not immaterial, any more than, as I before remarked, light or electricity are so.

By various abuses, among which the habitual use of such agents as green tea is one, this fluid may be affected as to its quality, but it is more frequently disturbed as to equilibrium. This fluid being that which we have in common with spirits, a congestion found upon the masses of brain or nerve, connected with the interior sense, forms a surface unduly exposed, on which disembodied spirits may operate: communication is thus more or less effectually established. Between this brain circulation and the heart circulation there is an intimate sympathy. The seat, or rather the instrument of exterior vision, is the eye. The seat of interior vision is the nervous tissue and brain, immediately about and above the eyebrow. You remember how effectually I dissipated your pictures by the simple application of iced eau-de-cologne. Few cases, however, can be treated exactly alike with anything like rapid success. Cold acts powerfully as a repellent of the nervous fluid. Long enough continued it will even produce that permanent insensibility which we call numbness, and a little longer, muscular as well as sensational paralysis.

I have not, I repeat, the slightest doubt that I should have first dimmed and ultimately sealed that inner eye which Mr. Jennings had inadvertently opened. The same senses are opened in delirium tremens, and entirely shut up again when the over-action of the cerebral heart, and the prodigious nervous congestions that attend it, are terminated by a decided change in the state of the body. It is by acting steadily upon the body, by a simple process, that this result is produced—and inevitably produced—I have never yet failed.

Poor Mr. Jennings made away with himself. But that catastrophe was the result of a totally different malady, which, as it were, projected itself upon that disease which was established. His case was in the distinctive manner a complication, and the complaint under which he really succumbed, was hereditary suicidal mania. Poor Mr. Jennings I cannot call a patient of mine, for I had not even begun to treat his case, and he had not yet given me, I am convinced, his full and unreserved confidence. If the patient does not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain.













