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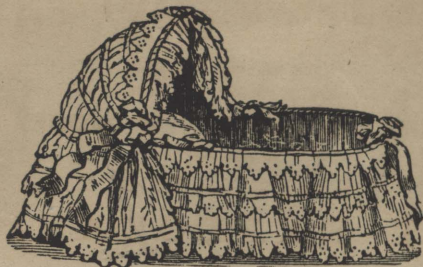
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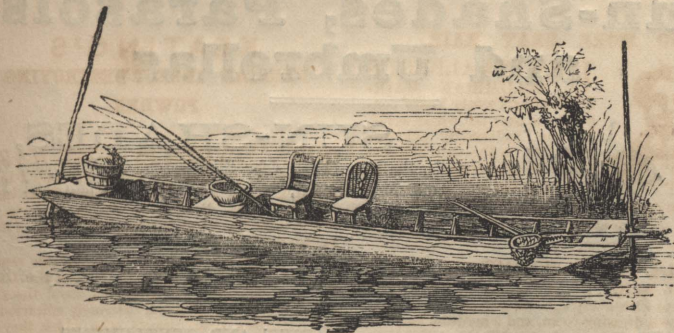
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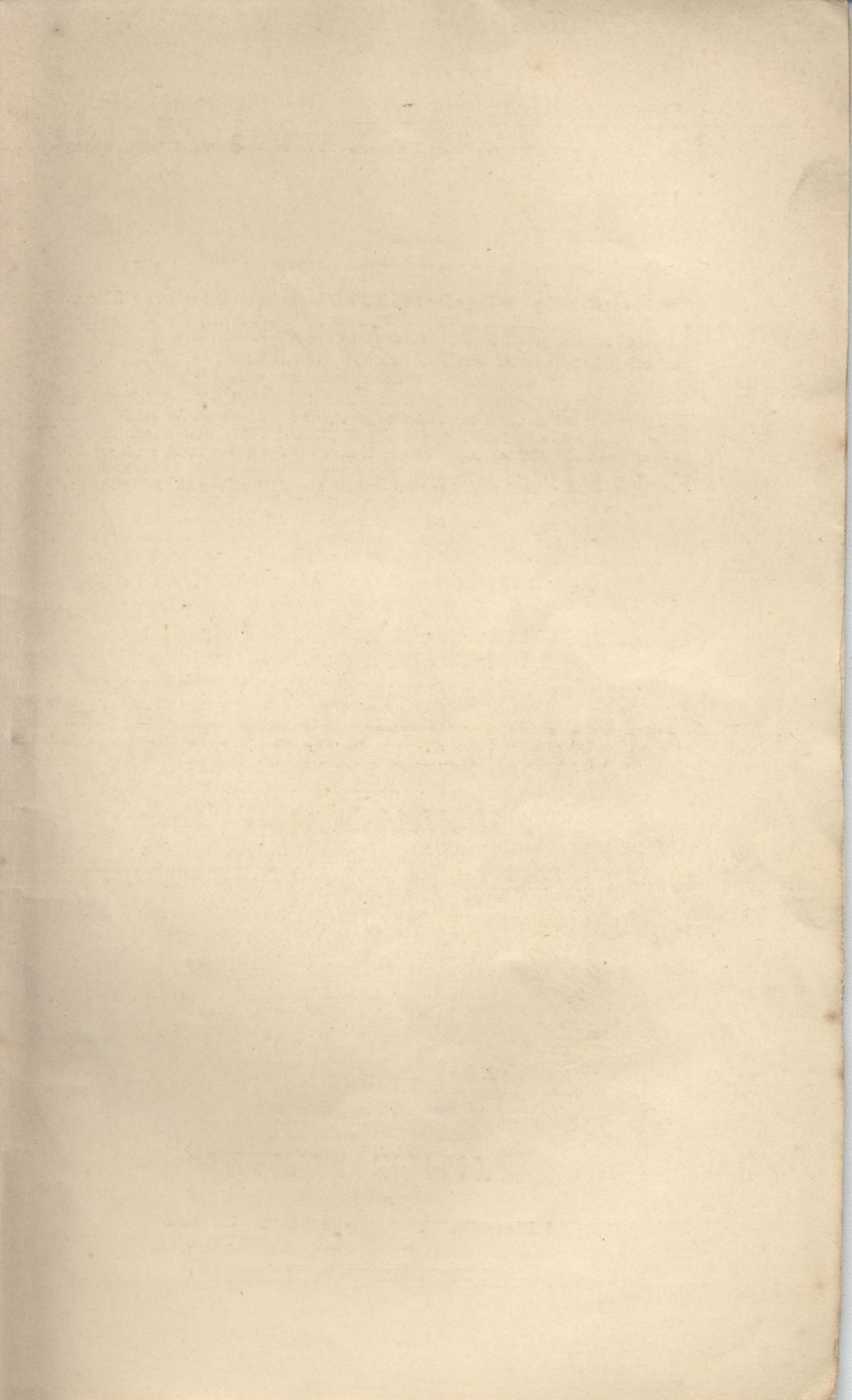
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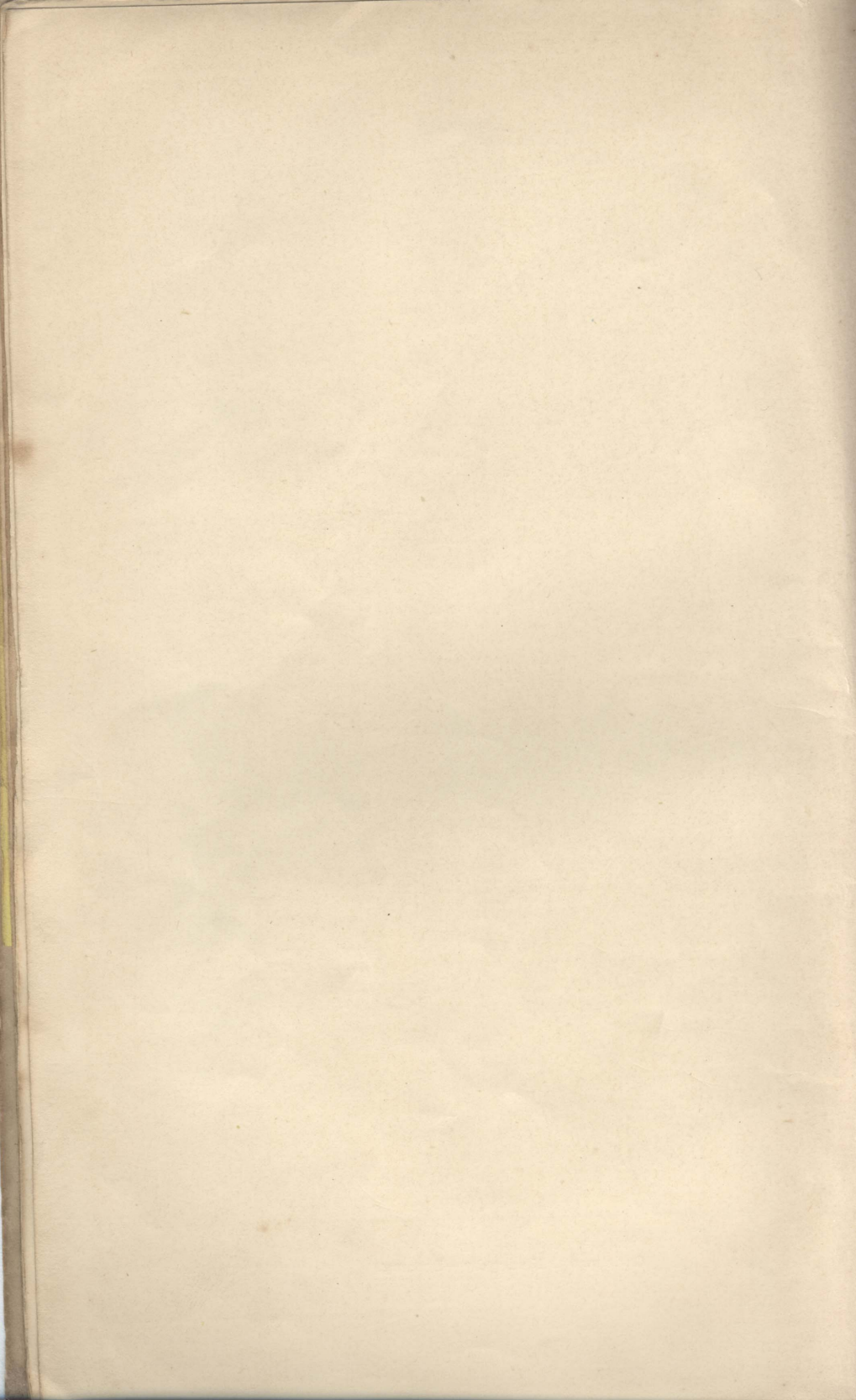




Christmas at Noningsby.—Morning.



Christmas at Noningsby.—Evening.



CHAPTER XXI.

CHRISTMAS IN HARLEY STREET.

It seems singular to me myself, considering the idea which I have in my own mind of the character of Lady Staveley, that I should be driven to declare that about this time she committed an unpardonable offence, not only against good nature, but also against the domestic proprieties. But I am driven so to say, although she herself was of all women the most good-natured and most domestic; for she asked Mr. Furnival to pass his Christmas-day at Noningsby, and I find it impossible to forgive her that offence against the poor wife whom in that case he must leave alone by her desolate hearth. She knew that he was a married man as well as I do. Sophia, who had a proper regard for the domestic peace of her parents, and who could have been happy at Noningsby without a father's care, not unfrequently spoke of her, so that her existence in Harley Street might not be forgotten by the Staveleys—explaining, however, as she did so, that her dear mother never left her own fireside in winter, so that no suspicion might be entertained that an invitation was desired for her also; nevertheless, in spite of all this, on two separate occasions did Lady Staveley say to Mr. Furnival that he might as well prolong his visit over Christmas.

And yet Lady Staveley was not attached to Mr. Furnival with any peculiar warmth of friendship; but she was one of those women whose foolish hearts will not allow themselves to be controlled in the exercise of their hospitality. Her nature demanded of her that she should ask a guest to stay. She would not have allowed a dog to depart from her house at this season of the year, without suggesting to him that he had better take his Christmas bone in her yard. It was for Mr. Furnival to adjust all matters between himself and his wife. He was not bound to accept the invitation because she gave it; but she, finding him there, already present in the house, did feel herself bound to give it;—for which offence, as I have said before, I cannot bring myself to forgive her.

At his sin in staying away from home, or rather—as far as the story has yet carried us—in thinking that he would do so, I am by no means so much surprised. An angry ill-pleased wife is no pleasant companion for a gentleman on a long evening. For those who

have managed that things shall run smoothly over the domestic rug there is no happier time of life than these long candlelight hours of home and silence. No spoken content or uttered satisfaction is necessary. The fact that is felt is enough for peace. But when the fact is not felt; when the fact is by no means there; when the thoughts are running in a direction altogether different; when bitter grievances from one to the other fill the heart, rather than memories of mutual kindness; then, I say, those long candlelight hours of home and silence are not easy of endurance. Mr. Furnival was a man who chose to be the master of his own destiny, so at least to himself he boasted; and therefore when he found himself encountered by black looks and occasionally by sullen words, he declared to himself that he was ill-used and that he would not bear it. Since the domestic rose would no longer yield him honey, he would seek his sweets from the stray honeysuckle on which there grew no thorns.

Mr. Furnival was no coward. He was not one of those men who wrong their wives by their absence, and then prolong their absence because they are afraid to meet their wives. His resolve was to be free himself, and to be free without complaint from her. He would have it so, that he might remain out of his own house for a month at the time and then return to it for a week—at any rate without outward bickerings. I have known other men who have dreamed of such a state of things, but at this moment I can remember none who have brought their dream to bear.

Mr. Furnival had written to his wife,—not from Noningsby, but from some provincial town, probably situated among the Essex marshes,—saying various things, and among others that he should not, as he thought, be at home at Christmas-day. Mrs. Furnival had remarked about a fortnight since that Christmas-day was nothing to her now; and the base man, for it was base, had hung upon this poor, sore-hearted word an excuse for remaining away from home. ‘There are lawyers of repute staying at Noningsby,’ he had said, ‘with whom it is very expedient that I should remain at this present crisis.’—When yet has there been no crisis present to a man who has wanted an excuse?—‘And therefore I may probably stay,’—and so on. Who does not know the false mixture of excuse and defiance which such a letter is sure to maintain; the crafty words which may be taken as adequate reason if the receiver be timid enough so to receive them, or as a noisy gauntlet thrown to the ground if there be spirit there for the picking of it up? Such letter from his little borough in the Essex marshes did Mr. Furnival write to the partner of his cares, and there was still sufficient spirit left for the picking up of the gauntlet. ‘I shall be home to-morrow,’ the letter had gone on to say, ‘but I will not keep you waiting for my dinner, as my hours are always so uncertain. I shall be at my

chambers till late, and will be with you before tea. I will then return to Alston on the following morning.' There was at any rate good courage in this on the part of Mr. Furnival;—great courage; but with it coldness of heart, dishonesty of purpose, and black ingratitude. Had she not given everything to him?

Mrs. Furnival when she got the letter was not alone. 'There,' said she, throwing it over to a lady who sat on the other side of the fireplace handling a loose sprawling mass of not very clean crochet-work. 'I knew he would stay away on Christmas-day. I told you so.'

'I didn't think it possible,' said Miss Biggs, rolling up the big ball of soiled cotton, that she might read Mr. Furnival's letter at her leisure. 'I didn't really think it possible—on Christmas-day! Surely, Mrs. Furnival, he can't mean Christmas-day? Dear, dear, dear! and then to throw it in your face in that way that you said you didn't care about it.'

'Of course I said so,' answered Mrs. Furnival. 'I was not going to ask him to come home as a favour.'

'Not to make a favour of it, of course not.' This was Miss Biggs from ——. I am afraid if I tell the truth I must say that she came from Red Lion Square! And yet nothing could be more respectable than Miss Biggs. Her father had been a partner with an uncle of Mrs. Furnival's; and when Kitty Blacker had given herself and her young prettinesses to the hardworking lawyer, Martha Biggs had stood at the altar with her, then just seventeen years of age, and had promised to her all manner of success for her coming life. Martha Biggs had never, not even then, been pretty; but she had been very faithful. She had not been a favourite with Mr. Furnival, having neither wit nor grace to recommend her, and therefore in the old happy days of Keppel Street she had been kept in the background; but now, in this present time of her adversity, Mrs. Furnival found the benefit of having a trusty friend.

'If he likes better to be with these people down at Alston, I am sure it is the same to me,' said the injured wife.

'But there's nobody special at Alston, is there?' asked Miss Biggs, whose soul sighed for a tale more piquant than one of mere general neglect. She knew that her friend had dreadful suspicions, but Mrs. Furnival had never as yet committed herself by uttering the name of any woman as her rival. Miss Biggs thought that a time had now come in which the strength of their mutual confidence demanded that such name should be uttered. It could not be expected that she should sympathize with generalities for ever. She longed to hate, to reprobate, and to shudder at the actual name of the wretch who had robbed her friend of a husband's heart. And therefore she asked the question, 'There's nobody special at Alston, is there?'

Now Mrs. Furnival knew to a furlong the distance from Noningsby to Orley Farm, and knew also that the station at Hamworth was only twenty-five minutes from that at Alston. She gave no immediate answer, but threw up her head and shook her nostrils, as though she were preparing for war; and then Miss Martha Biggs knew that there was somebody special at Alston. Between such old friends why should not the name be mentioned?

On the following day the two ladies dined at six, and then waited tea patiently till ten. Had the thirst of a desert been raging within that drawing-room, and had tea been within immediate call, those ladies would have died ere they would have asked for it before his return. He had said he would be home to tea, and they would have waited for him, had it been till four o'clock in the morning! Let the female married victim ever make the most of such positive wrongs as Providence may vouchsafe to her. Had Mrs. Furnival ordered tea on this evening before her husband's return, she would have been a woman blind to the advantages of her own position. At ten the wheels of Mr. Furnival's cab were heard, and the faces of both the ladies prepared themselves for the encounter.

'Well, Kitty, how are you?' said Mr. Furnival, entering the room with his arms prepared for a premeditated embrace. 'What, Miss Biggs with you? I did not know. How do you do, Miss Biggs?' and Mr. Furnival extended his hand to the lady. They both looked at him, and they could tell from the brightness of his eye and from the colour of his nose that he had been dining at his club, and that the bin with the precious cork had been visited on his behalf.

'Yes, my dear; it's rather lonely being here in this big room all by oneself so long; so I asked Martha Biggs to come over to me. I suppose there's no harm in that.'

'Oh, if I'm in the way,' began Miss Biggs, 'or if Mr. Furnival is going to stay at home for long——'

'You are not in the way, and I am not going to stay at home for long,' said Mr. Furnival, speaking with a voice that was perhaps a little thick,—only a very little thick. No wife on good terms with her husband would have deigned to notice, even in her own mind, an amount of thickness of voice which was so very inconsiderable. But Mrs. Furnival at the present moment did notice it.

'Oh, I did not know,' said Miss Biggs.

'You know now,' said Mr. Furnival, whose ear at once appreciated the hostility of tone which had been assumed.

'You need not be rude to my friend after she has been waiting tea for you till near eleven o'clock,' said Mrs. Furnival. 'It is nothing to me, but you should remember that she is not used to it.'

'I wasn't rude to your friend, and who asked you to wait tea till near eleven o'clock? It is only just ten now, if that signifies.'

'You expressly desired me to wait tea, Mr. Furnival. I have got your letter, and will show it you if you wish it.'

'Nonsense; I just said I should be home——'

'Of course you just said you would be home, and so we waited; and it's not nonsense; and I declare——! Never mind, Martha, don't mind me, there's a good creature. I shall get over it soon;' and then fat, solid, good-humoured Mrs. Furnival burst out into an hysterical fit of sobbing. There was a welcome for a man on his return to his home after a day's labour!

Miss Biggs immediately got up and came round behind the drawing-room table to her friend's head. 'Be calm, Mrs. Furnival,' she said; 'do be calm, and then you will be better soon. Here is the hartshorn.'

'It doesn't matter, Martha; never mind: leave me alone,' sobbed the poor woman.

'May I be excused for asking what is really the matter?' said Mr. Furnival, 'for I'll be whipped if I know.' Miss Biggs looked at him as if she thought that he ought to be whipped.

'I wonder you ever come near the place at all, I do,' said Mrs. Furnival.

'What place?' asked Mr. Furnival.

'This house in which I am obliged to live by myself, without a soul to speak to, unless when Martha Biggs comes here.'

'Which would be much more frequent, only that I know I am not welcome to everybody.'

'I know that you hate it. How can I help knowing it?—and you hate me too; I know you do;—and I believe you would be glad if you need never come back here at all; I do. Don't, Martha; leave me alone. I don't want all that fuss. There; I can hear it now, whatever it is. Do you choose to have your tea, Mr. Furnival? or do you wish to keep the servants waiting out of their beds all night?'

'D———the servants,' said Mr. Furnival.

'Oh laws!' exclaimed Miss Biggs, jumping up out of her chair with her hands and fingers outstretched, as though never, never in her life before, had her ears been wounded by such wicked words as those.

'Mr. Furnival, I am ashamed of you,' said his wife with gathered calmness of stern reproach.

Mr. Furnival was very wrong to swear; doubly wrong to swear before his wife; trebly wrong to swear before a lady visitor; but it must be confessed that there was provocation. That he was at this present period of his life behaving badly to his wife must be allowed, but on this special evening he had intended to behave well. The woman had sought a ground of quarrel against him, and had driven him on till he had forgotten himself in his present after-

dinner humour. When a man is maintaining a whole household on his own shoulders, and working hard to maintain it well, it is not right that he should be brought to book because he keeps the servants up half an hour later than usual to wash the tea-things. It is very proper that the idle members of the establishment should conform to hours, but these hours must give way to his requirements. In those old days of which we have spoken so often he might have had his tea at twelve, one, two, or three without a murmur. Though their staff of servants then was scanty enough, there was never a difficulty then in supplying any such want for him. If no other pair of hands could boil the kettle, there was one pair of hands there which no amount of such work on his behalf could tire. But now, because he had come in for his tea at ten o'clock, he was asked if he intended to keep the servants out of their beds all night!

'Oh laws!' said Miss Biggs, jumping up from her chair as though she had been electrified.

Mr. Furnival did not think it consistent with his dignity to keep up any dispute in the presence of Miss Biggs, and therefore sat himself down in his accustomed chair without further speech. 'Would you wish to have tea now, Mr. Furnival?' asked his wife again, putting considerable stress upon the word now.

'I don't care about it,' said he.

'And I am sure I don't at this late hour,' said Miss Biggs. 'But so tired as you are, dear—'

'Never mind me, Martha; as for myself, I shall take nothing now.' And then they all sat without a word for the space of some five minutes. 'If you like to go, Martha,' said Mrs. Furnival, 'don't mind waiting for me.'

'Oh, very well,' and then Miss Biggs took her bed-candle and left the room. Was it not hard upon her that she should be forced to absent herself at this moment, when the excitement of the battle was about to begin in earnest? Her footsteps lingered as she slowly retreated from the drawing-room door, and for one instant she absolutely paused, standing still with eager ears. It was but for an instant, and then she went on up stairs, out of hearing, and sitting herself down by her bedside allowed the battle to rage in her imagination.

Mr. Furnival would have sat there silent till his wife had gone also, and so the matter would have terminated for that evening,—had she so willed it. But she had been thinking of her miseries; and, having come to some sort of resolution to speak of them openly, what time could she find more appropriate for doing so than the present? 'Tom,' she said,—and as she spoke there was still a twinkle of the old love in her eye, 'we are not going on together as well as we should do,—not lately. Would it not be well to make a change before it is too late?'

‘What change?’ he asked; not exactly in an ill humour, but with a husky, thick voice. He would have preferred now that she should have followed her friend to bed.

‘I do not want to dictate to you, Tom, but—! Oh Tom, if you knew how wretched I am!’

‘What makes you wretched?’

‘Because you leave me all alone; because you care more for other people than you do for me; because you never like to be at home, never if you can possibly help it. You know you don’t. You are always away now upon some excuse or other; you know you are. I don’t have you home to dinner not one day in the week through the year. That can’t be right, and you know it is not. Oh Tom! you are breaking my heart, and deceiving me,—you are. Why did I go down and find that woman in your chamber with you, when you were ashamed to own to me that she was coming to see you? If it had been in the proper way of law business, you wouldn’t have been ashamed. Oh Tom!’

The poor woman had begun her plaint in a manner that was not altogether devoid of a discreet eloquence. If only she could have maintained that tone, if she could have confined her words to the tale of her own grievances, and have been contented to declare that she was unhappy, only because he was not with her, it might have been well. She might have touched his heart, or at any rate his conscience, and there might have been some enduring result for good. But her feelings had been too many for her, and as her wrongs came to her mind, and the words heaped themselves upon her tongue, she could not keep herself from the one subject which she should have left untouched. Mr. Furnival was not the man to bear any interference such as this, or to permit the privacy of Lincoln’s Inn to be invaded even by his wife. His brow grew very black, and his eyes became almost bloodshot. The port wine which might have worked him to softness, now worked him to anger, and he thus burst forth with words of marital vigour:

‘Let me tell you once for ever, Kitty, that I will admit of no interference with what I do, or the people whom I may choose to see in my chambers in Lincoln’s Inn. If you are such an infatuated simpleton as to believe—’

‘Yes; of course I am a simpleton; of course I am a fool; women always are.’

‘Listen to me, will you?’

‘Listen, yes; it’s my business to listen. Would you like that I should give this house up for her, and go into lodgings somewhere? I shall have very little objection as matters are going now. Oh dear, oh dear, that things should ever have come to this!’

‘Come to what?’

‘Tom, I could put up with a great deal,—more I think than most

women; I could slave for you like a drudge, and think nothing about it. And now that you have got among grand people, I could see you go out by yourself without thinking much about that either. I am very lonely sometimes,—very; but I could bear that. Nobody has longed to see you rise in the world half so anxious as I have done. But, Tom, when I know what your goings on are with a nasty, sly, false woman like that, I won't bear it; and there's an end.' In saying which final words Mrs. Furnival rose from her seat, and thrice struck her hand by no means lightly on the loo table in the middle of the room.

'I did not think it possible that you should be so silly. I did not indeed.'

'Oh, yes, silly! very well. Women always are silly when they mind that kind of thing. Have you got anything else to say, sir?'

'Yes, I have; I have this to say, that I will not endure this sort of usage.'

'Nor I won't,' said Mrs. Furnival; 'so you may as well understand it at once. As long as there was nothing absolutely wrong, I would put up with it for the sake of appearances, and because of Sophia. For myself I don't mind what loneliness I may have to bear. If you had been called on to go out to the East Indies or even to China, I could have put up with it. But this sort of thing I won't put up with;—nor I won't be blind to what I can't help seeing. So now, Mr. Furnival, you may know that I have made up my mind.' And then, without waiting further parley, having wisked herself in her energy near to the door, she stalked out, and went up with hurried steps to her own room.

Occurrences of a nature such as this are in all respects unpleasant in a household. Let the master be ever so much master, what is he to do? Say that his wife is wrong from the beginning to the end of the quarrel,—that in no way improves the matter. His anxiety is that the world abroad shall not know he has ought amiss at home; but she, with her hot sense of injury, and her loud revolt against supposed wrongs, cares not who hears it. 'Hold your tongue, madam,' the husband says. But the wife, bound though she be by an oath of obedience, will not obey him, but only screams the louder.

All which, as Mr. Furnival sat there thinking of it, disturbed his mind much. That Martha Biggs would spread the tale through all Bloomsbury and St. Pancras of course he was aware. 'If she drives me to it, it must be so,' he said to himself at last. And then he also betook himself to his rest. And so it was that preparations for Christmas were made in Harley Street.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHRISTMAS AT NONINGSBY.

THE house at Noningsby on Christmas-day was quite full, and yet it was by no means a small house. Mrs. Arbuthnot, the judge's married daughter, was there, with her three children; and Mr. Funival was there, having got over those domestic difficulties in which we lately saw him as best he might; and Lucius Mason was there, having been especially asked by Lady Staveley when she heard that his mother was to be at The Cleeve. There could be no more comfortable country-house than Noningsby; and it was, in its own way, pretty, though essentially different in all respects from The Cleeve. It was a new house from the cellar to the ceiling, and as a house was no doubt the better for being so. All the rooms were of the proper proportion, and all the newest appliances for comfort had been attached to it. But nevertheless it lacked that something, in appearance rather than in fact, which age alone can give to the residence of a gentleman in the country. The gardens also were new, and the grounds around them trim, and square, and orderly. Noningsby was a delightful house; no one with money and taste at command could have created for himself one more delightful; but then there are delights which cannot be created even by money and taste.

It was a pleasant sight to see, the long, broad, well-filled breakfast table, with all that company round it. There were some eighteen or twenty gathered now at the table, among whom the judge sat pre-eminent, looming large in an arm-chair and having a double space allotted to him;—some eighteen or twenty, children included. At the bottom of the table sat Lady Staveley, who still chose to preside among her own tea cups as a lady should do; and close to her, assisting in the toils of that presidency, sat her daughter Madeline. Nearest to them were gathered the children, and the rest had formed themselves into little parties, each of which already well knew its own place at the board. In how very short a time will come upon one that pleasant custom of sitting in an accustomed place! But here, at these Noningsby breakfasts, among other customs already established, there was one by which Augustus Staveley was always privileged

to sit by the side of Sophia Furnival. No doubt his original object was still unchanged. A match between that lady and his friend Graham was still desirable, and by perseverance he might pique Felix Graham to arouse himself. But hitherto Felix Graham had not aroused himself in that direction, and one or two people among the party were inclined to mistake young Staveley's intentions.

'Gus,' his sister had said to him the night before, 'I declare I think you are going to make love to Sophia Furnival.'

'Do you?' he had replied. 'As a rule I do not think there is any one in the world for whose discernment I have so much respect as I have for yours. But in this respect even you are wrong.'

'Ah, of course you say so.'

'If you won't believe me, ask her. What more can I say?'

'I certainly shan't ask her, for I don't know her well enough.'

'She's a very clever girl; let me tell you that, whoever falls in love with her.'

'I'm sure she is, and she is handsome too, very; but for all that she is not good enough for our Gus.'

'Of course she is not, and therefore I am not thinking of her. And now go to bed and dream that you have got the Queen of the Fortunate Islands for your sister-in-law.'

But although Staveley was himself perfectly indifferent to all the charms of Miss Furnival, nevertheless he could hardly restrain his dislike to Lucius Mason, who, as he thought, was disposed to admire the lady in question. In talking of Lucius to his own family and to his special friend Graham, he had called him conceited, pedantic, uncouth, unenglish, and detestable. His own family, that is, his mother and sister, rarely contradicted him in anything; but Graham was by no means so cautious, and usually contradicted him in everything. Indeed, there was no sign of sterling worth so plainly marked in Staveley's character as the full conviction which he entertained of the superiority of his friend Felix.

'You are quite wrong about him,' Felix had said. 'He has not been at an English school, or English university, and therefore is not like other young men that you know; but he is, I think, well educated and clever. As for conceit, what man will do any good who is not conceited? Nobody holds a good opinion of a man who has a low opinion of himself.'

'All the same, my dear fellow, I do not like Lucius Mason.'

'And some one else, if you remember, did not like Dr. Fell.'

'And now, good people, what are you all going to do about church?' said Staveley, while they were still engaged with their rolls and eggs.

'I shall walk,' said the judge.

'And I shall go in the carriage,' said the judge's wife.

‘That disposes of two; and now it will take half an hour to settle for the rest. Miss Furnival, you no doubt will accompany my mother. As I shall be among the walkers you will see how much I sacrifice by the suggestion.’

It was a mile to the church, and Miss Furnival knew the advantage of appearing in her seat unfatigued and without subjection to wind, mud, or rain. ‘I must confess,’ she said, ‘that under all the circumstances, I shall prefer your mother’s company to yours;’ whereupon Staveley, in the completion of his arrangements, assigned the other places in the carriage to the married ladies of the company.

‘But I have taken your sister Madeline’s seat in the carriage,’ protested Sophia with great dismay.

‘My sister Madeline generally walks.’

‘Then of course I shall walk with her;’ but when the time came Miss Furnival did go in the carriage whereas Miss Staveley went on foot.

It so fell out, as they started, that Graham found himself walking at Miss Staveley’s side, to the great disgust, no doubt, of half a dozen other aspirants for that honour. ‘I cannot help thinking,’ he said, as they stepped briskly over the crisp white frost, ‘that this Christmas-day of ours is a great mistake.’

‘Oh, Mr. Graham!’ she exclaimed.

‘You need not regard me with horror,—at least not with any special horror on this occasion.’

‘But what you say is very horrid.’

‘That, I flatter myself, seems so only because I have not yet said it. That part of our Christmas-day which is made to be in any degree sacred is by no means a mistake.’

‘I am glad you think that.’

‘Or rather, it is not a mistake in as far as it is in any degree made sacred. But the peculiar conviviality of the day is so ponderous! Its roast-beefiness oppresses one so thoroughly from the first moment of one’s waking, to the last ineffectual effort at a bit of fried pudding for supper!’

‘But you need not eat fried pudding for supper. Indeed, here, I am afraid, you will not have any supper offered you at all.’

‘No; not to me individually, under that name. I might also manage to guard my ownself under any such offers. But there is always the flavour of the sweetmeat, in the air,—of all the sweetmeats, edible and non edible.’

‘You begrudge the children their snap-dragon. That’s what it all means, Mr. Graham.’

‘No; I deny it; unpremeditated snap-dragon is dear to my soul; and I could expend myself in blindman’s buff.’

‘You shall then, after dinner; for of course you know that we all dine early.’

‘But blindman’s buff at three, with snap-dragon at a quarter to four—charades at five, with wine and sweet cake at half-past six, is ponderous. And that’s our mistake. The big turkey would be very good;—capital fun to see a turkey twice as big as it ought to be! But the big turkey, and the mountain of beef, and the pudding weighing a hundredweight, oppress one’s spirits by their combined gravity. And then they impart a memory of indigestion, a halo as it were of apoplexy, even to the church services.’

‘I do not agree with you the least in the world.’

‘I ask you to answer me fairly. Is not additional eating an ordinary Englishman’s ordinary idea of Christmas-day?’

‘I am only an ordinary Englishwoman and therefore cannot say. It is not my idea.’

‘I believe that the ceremony, as kept by us, is perpetuated by the butchers and beersellers, with a helping hand from the grocers. It is essentially a material festival; and I would not object to it even on that account if it were not so grievously overdone. How the sun is moistening the frost on the ground. As we come back the road will be quite wet.’

‘We shall be going home then and it will not signify. Remember, Mr. Graham, I shall expect you to come forward in great strength for blindman’s buff.’ As he gave her the required promise, he thought that even the sports of Christmas-day would be bearable, if she also were to make one of the sportsmen; and then they entered the church.

I do not know anything more pleasant to the eye than a pretty country church, decorated for Christmas-day. The effect in a city is altogether different. I will not say that churches there should not be decorated, but comparatively it is a matter of indifference. No one knows who does it. The peculiar munificence of the squire who has sacrificed his holly bushes is not appreciated. The work of the fingers that have been employed is not recognized. The efforts made for hanging the pendent wreaths to each capital have been of no special interest to any large number of the worshippers. It has been done by contract, probably, and even if well done has none of the grace of association. But here at Noningsby church, the winter flowers had been cut by Madeline and the gardener, and the red berries had been grouped by her own hands. She and the vicar’s wife had stood together with perilous audacity on the top of the clerk’s desk while they fixed the branches beneath the cushion of the old-fashioned turret, from which the sermons were preached. And all this had of course been talked about at the house; and some of the party had gone over to see, including Sophia Furnival, who had declared that nothing could be so delightful, though she had omitted to endanger her fingers by any participation in the work. And the children had regarded the operation as a triumph of all

that was wonderful in decoration; and thus many of them had been made happy.

On their return from church, Miss Furnival insisted on walking, in order, as she said, that Miss Staveley might not have all the fatigue; but Miss Staveley would walk also, and the carriage, after a certain amount of expostulation and delay, went off with its load incomplete.

'And now for the plum-pudding part of the arrangement,' said Felix Graham.

'Yes, Mr. Graham,' said Madeline, 'now for the plum-pudding—and the blindman's buff.'

'Did you ever see anything more perfect than the church, Mr. Mason?' said Sophia.

'Anything more perfect? no; in that sort of way, perhaps, never. I have seen the choir of Cologne.'

'Come, come; that's not fair,' said Graham. 'Don't import Cologne in order to crush us here down in our little English villages. You never saw the choir of Cologne bright with holly berries.'

'No; but I have with cardinal's stockings, and bishop's robes.'

'I think I should prefer the holly,' said Miss Furnival. 'And why should not our churches always look like that, only changing the flowers and the foliage with the season? It would make the service so attractive.'

'It would hardly do at Lent,' said Madeline, in a serious tone.

'No, perhaps not at Lent exactly.'

Peregrine and Augustus Staveley were walking on in front, not perhaps as well satisfied with the day as the rest of the party. Augustus, on leaving the church, had made a little effort to assume his place as usual by Miss Furnival's side, but by some accident of war, Mason was there before him. He had not cared to make one of a party of three, and therefore had gone on in advance with young Orme. Nor was Peregrine himself much more happy. He did not know why, but he felt within his breast a growing aversion to Felix Graham. Graham was a puppy, he thought, and a fellow that talked too much; and then he was such a confoundedly ugly dog, and—and—and—Peregrine Orme did not like him. He was not a man to analyze his own feelings in such matters. He did not ask himself why he should have been rejoiced to hear that instant business had taken Felix Graham off to Hong Kong; but he knew that he would have rejoiced. He knew also that Madeline Staveley was—. No; he did not know what she was; but when he was alone, he carried on with her all manner of imaginary conversations, though when he was in her company he had hardly a word to say to her. Under these circumstances he fraternized with her brother; but even in that he could not receive much satisfaction, seeing that he could not abuse Graham to Graham's special friend, nor could

he breathe a sigh as to Madeline's perfections into the ear of Madeline's brother.

The children,—and there were three or four assembled there besides those belonging to Mrs. Arbuthnot, were by no means inclined to agree with Mr. Graham's strictures as to the amusements of Christmas-day. To them it appeared that they could not hurry fast enough into the vorvex of its dissipations. The dinner was a serious consideration, especially with reference to certain illuminated mince-pies which were the crowning glory of that banquet; but time for these was almost begrudged in order that the fast handkerchief might be tied over the eyes of the first blindman.

'And now we'll go into the schoolroom,' said Marian Arbuthnot, jumping up and leading the way. 'Come along, Mr. Felix;' and Felix Graham followed her.

Madeline had declared that Felix Graham should be blinded first, and such was his doom. 'Now mind you catch me, Mr. Felix; pray do,' said Marian, when she had got him seated in a corner of the room. She was a beautiful fair little thing, with long, soft curls, and lips red as a rose, and large, bright blue eyes, all soft and happy and laughing, loving the friends of her childhood with passionate love, and fully expecting an equal devotion from them. It is of such children that our wives and sweethearts should be made.

'But how am I to find you when my eyes are blinded?'

'Oh, you can feel, you know. You can put your hand on the top of my head. I mustn't speak, you know; but I'm sure I shall laugh; and then you must guess that it's Marian.' That was her idea of playing blindman's buff according to the strict rigour of the game.

'And you'll give me a big kiss?' said Felix.

'Yes, when we've done playing,' she promised with great seriousness.

And then a huge white silk handkerchief, as big as a small sail, was brought down from grandpapa's dressing-room, so that nobody should see the least bit 'in the world,' as Marian had observed with great energy; and the work of blinding was commenced. 'I ain't big enough to reach round,' said Marian, who had made an effort, but in vain. 'You do it, aunt Mad.,' and she tendered the handkerchief to Miss Staveley, who, however, did not appear very eager to undertake the task.

'I'll be the executioner,' said grandmamma, 'the more especially as I shall not take any other share in the ceremony. This shall be the chair of doom. Come here, Mr. Graham, and submit yourself to me.' And so the first victim was blinded. 'Mind you remember,' said Marian, whispering into his ear as he was led away. 'Green spirits and white; blue spirits and gray—,' and then he

was twirled round in the room and left to commence his search as best he might.

Marian Arbuthnot was not the only soft little laughing darling that wished to be caught, and blinded, so that there was great pulling at the blindman's tails, and much grasping at his outstretched arms before the desired object was attained. And he wandered round the room skilfully, as though a thought were in his mind false to his treaty with Marian,—as though he imagined for a moment that some other prize might be caught. But if so, the other prize evaded him carefully, and in due progress of play, Marian's soft curls were within his grasp. 'I'm sure I didn't speak, or say a word,' said she, as she ran up to her grandmother to have the handkerchief put over her eyes. 'Did I, grandmamma?'

'There are more ways of speaking than one,' said Lady Staveley. 'You and Mr. Graham understand each other, I think.'

'Oh, I was caught quite fairly,' said Marian—'and now lead me round and round.' To her at any rate the festivities of Christmas-day were not too ponderous for real enjoyment.

And then, at last, somebody caught the judge. I rather think it was Madeline; but his time in truth was come, and he had no chance of escape. The whole room was set upon his capture, and though he barricaded himself with chairs and children, he was duly apprehended and named. 'That's papa; I know by his watch-chain, for I made it.'

'Nonsense, my dears,' said the judge. 'I will do no such thing. I should never catch anybody, and should remain blind for ever.'

'But grandpapa must,' said Marian. 'It's the game that he should be blinded when he's caught.'

'Suppose the game was that we should be whipped when we are caught, and I was to catch you,' said Augustus.

'But I would not play that game,' said Marian.

'Oh, papa, you must,' said Madeline. 'Do—and you shall catch Mr. Furnival.'

'That would be a temptation,' said the judge. 'I've never been able to do that yet, though I've been trying it for some years.'

'Justice is blind,' said Graham. 'Why should a judge be ashamed to follow the example of his own goddess?' And so at last the owner of the ermine submitted, and the stern magistrate of the bench was led round with the due incantation of the spirits, and dismissed into chaos to seek for a new victim.

One of the rules of blindman's buff at Noningsby was this, that it should not be played by candlelight,—a rule that is in every way judicious, as thereby an end is secured for that which might otherwise be unending. And therefore when it became so dark in the schoolroom that there was not much difference between the

blind man and the others, the handkerchief was smuggled away, and the game was at an end.

‘And now for snap-dragon,’ said Marian.

‘Exactly as you predicted, Mr. Graham,’ said Madeline: ‘blind-man’s buff at a quarter past three, and snap-dragon at five.’

‘I revoke every word that I uttered, for I was never more amused in my life.’

‘And you will be prepared to endure the wine and sweet cake when they come.’

‘Prepared to endure anything, and go through everything. We shall be allowed candles now, I suppose.’

‘Oh, no, by no means. Snap-dragon by candlelight! who ever heard of such a thing? It would wash all the dragon out of it, and leave nothing but the snap. It is a necessity of the game that it should be played in the dark,—or rather by its own lurid light.’

‘Oh, there is a lurid light; is there?’

‘You shall see;’ and then she turned away to make her preparations.

To the game of snap-dragon, as played at Noningsby, a ghost was always necessary, and aunt Madeline had played the ghost ever since she had been an aunt, and there had been any necessity for such a part. But in previous years the spectators had been fewer in number and more closely connected with the family. ‘I think we must drop the ghost on this occasion,’ she said, coming up to her brother.

‘You’ll disgust them all dreadfully if you do,’ said he. ‘The young Sebrights have come specially to see the ghost.’

‘Well, you can do ghost for them.’

‘I! no; I can’t act a ghost. Miss Furnival, you’d make a lovely ghost.’

‘I shall be most happy to be useful,’ said Sophia.

‘Oh, aunt Mad., you must be ghost,’ said Marian, following her.

‘You foolish little thing, you; we are going to have a beautiful ghost—a divine ghost,’ said uncle Gus.

‘But we want Madeline to be the ghost,’ said a big Miss Sebright, ten or eleven years old.

‘She’s always ghost,’ said Marian.

‘To be sure; it will be much better,’ said Miss Furnival. ‘I only offered my poor services hoping to be useful. No Banquo that ever lived could leave a worse ghost behind him that I should prove.’

It ended in there being two ghosts. It had become quite impossible to rob Miss Furnival of her promised part, and Madeline could not refuse to solve the difficulty in this way without making more of the matter than it deserved. The idea of two ghosts was delightful to the children, more especially as it entailed two large

dishes full of raisins, and two blue fires blazing up from burnt brandy. So the girls went out, not without proffered assistance from the gentlemen, and after a painfully long interval of some fifteen or twenty minutes,—for Miss Furnival's back hair would not come down and adjust itself into ghostlike lengths with as much readiness as that of her friend—they returned bearing the dishes before them on large trays. In each of them the spirit was lighted as they entered the schoolroom door, and thus, as they walked in, they were illuminated by the dark-blue flames which they carried.

'Oh, is it not grand?' said Marian, appealing to Felix Graham.

'Uncommonly grand,' he replied.

'And which ghost do you think is the grandest? I'll tell you which ghost I like the best,—in a secret, you know; I like aunt Mad. the best, and I think she's the grandest too.'

'And I'll tell you in a secret that I think the same. To my mind she is the grandest ghost I ever saw in my life.'

'Is she indeed?' asked Marian, solemnly, thinking probably that her new friend's experience in ghosts must be extensive. However that might be, he thought that as far as his experience in women went, he had never seen anything more lovely than Madeleine Staveley dressed in a long white sheet, with a long bit of white cambric pinned round her face.

And it may be presumed that the dress altogether is not unbecoming when accompanied by blue flames, for Augustus Staveley and Lucius Mason thought the same thing of Miss Furnival, whereas Peregrine Orme did not know whether he was standing on his head or his feet as he looked at Miss Staveley. Miss Furnival may possibly have had some inkling of this when she offered to undertake the task, but I protest that such was not the case with Madeline. There was no second thought in her mind when she first declined the ghosting, and afterwards undertook the part. No wish to look beautiful in the eyes of Felix Graham had come to her—at any rate as yet; and as to Peregrine Orme, she had hardly thought of his existence. 'By heavens!' said Peregrine to himself, 'she is the most beautiful creature that I ever saw;' and then he began to speculate within his own mind how the idea might be received at The Cleve.

But there was no such realized idea with Felix Graham. He saw that Madeline Staveley was very beautiful, and he felt in an unconscious manner that her character was very sweet. He may have thought that he might have loved such a girl, had such love been a thing permitted to him. But this was far from being the case. Felix Graham's lot in this life, as regarded that share which his heart might have in it, was already marked out for him;—marked out for himself and by himself. The future wife of his bosom had already been selected, and was now in course of prepara-

tion for the duties of her future life. He was one of those few wise men who have determined not to take a partner in life at hazard, but to mould a young mind and character to those pursuits and modes of thought which may best fit a woman for the duties she will have to perform. What little it may be necessary to know of the earlier years of Mary Snow shall be told hereafter. Here it will be only necessary to say that she was an orphan, that as yet she was little more than a child, and that she owed her maintenance and the advantage of her education to the charity and love of her destined husband. Therefore, as I have said, it was manifest that Felix Graham could not think of falling in love with Miss Staveley, even had not his very low position, in reference to worldly affairs, made any such passion on his part quite hopeless. But with Peregrine Orme the matter was different. There could be no possible reason why Peregrine Orme should not win and wear the beautiful girl whom he so much admired.

But the ghosts are kept standing over their flames, the spirit is becoming exhausted, and the raisins will be burnt. At snap-dragon, too, the ghosts here had something to do. The law of the game is this—a law on which Marian would have insisted had not the flames been so very hot—that the raisins shall become the prey of those audacious marauders only who dare to face the presence of the ghost, and to plunge their hands into the burning dish. As a rule the boys do this, clawing out the raisins, while the girls pick them up and eat them. But here at Noningsby the boys were too little to act thus as pioneers in the face of the enemy, and the raisins might have remained till the flames were burnt out, had not the beneficent ghost scattered abroad the richness of her own treasures.

‘Now, Marian,’ said Felix Graham, bringing her up in his arms. ‘But it will burn, Mr. Felix. Look there; see; there are a great many at that end. You do it.’

‘I must have another kiss then.’

‘Very well, yes; if you get five.’ And then Felix dashed his hand in among the flames and brought forth a fistful of fruit, which imparted to his fingers and wristband a smell of brandy for the rest of the evening.

‘If you take so many at a time I shall rap your knuckles with the spoon,’ said the ghost, as she stirred up the flames to keep them alive.

‘But the ghost shouldn’t speak,’ said Marian, who was evidently unacquainted with the best ghosts of tragedy.

‘But the ghost must speak when such large hands invade the caldron;’ and then another raid was effected, and the threatened blow was given. Had any one told her in the morning that she would that day have rapped Mr. Graham’s knuckles with a kitchen

spoon, she would not have believed that person; but it is thus that hearts are lost and won.

And Peregrine Orme looked on from a distance, thinking of it all. That he should have been stricken dumb by the beauty of any girl was surprising even to himself; for though young and almost boyish in his manners, he had never yet feared to speak out in any presence. The tutor at his college had thought him insolent beyond parallel; and his grandfather, though he loved him for his open face and plain outspoken words, found them sometimes almost too much for him. But now he stood there looking and longing, and could not summons courage to go up and address a few words to this young girl even in the midst of their sports. Twice or thrice during the last few days he had essayed to speak to her, but his words had been dull and vapid, and to himself they had appeared childish. He was quite conscious of his own weakness. More than once during that period of the snap-dragon, did he say to himself that he would descend into the lists and break a lance in that tourney; but still he did not descend, and his lance remained inglorious in its rest.

At the other end of the long table the ghost also had two attendant knights, and neither of them refrained from the battle. Augustus Staveley, if he thought it worth his while to keep the lists at all, would not be allowed to ride through them unopposed from any backwardness on the part of his rival. Lucius Mason was not likely to become a timid, silent, longing lover. To him it was not possible that he should fear the girl whom he loved. He could not worship that which he wished to obtain for himself. It may be doubted whether he had much faculty of worshipping anything in the truest meaning of that word. One worships that which one feels, through the inner and unexpressed conviction of the mind, to be greater, better, higher than oneself; but it was not probable that Lucius Mason should so think of any woman that he might meet.

Nor, to give him his due, was it probable that he should be in any way afraid of any man that he might encounter. He would fear neither the talent, nor the rank, nor the money influence, nor the dexterity of any such rival. In any attempt that he might make on a woman's heart he would regard his own chance as good against that of any other possible he. Augustus Staveley was master here at Noningsby, and was a clever, dashing, handsome, fashionable young fellow; but Lucius Mason never dreamed of retreating before such forces as those. He had words with which to speak as fair as those of any man, and flattered himself that he as well knew how to use them.

It was pretty to see with what admirable tact and judicious management of her smiles Sophia received the homage of the two

young men, answering the compliments of both with ease, and so conducting herself that neither could fairly accuse her of undue favour to the other. But unfairly, in his own mind, Augustus did so accuse her. And why should he have been so venomous, seeing that he entertained no regard for the lady himself? His object was still plain enough,—that, namely, of making a match between his needy friend and the heiress.

His needy friend in the mean time played on through the long evening in thoughtless happiness; and Peregrine Orme, looking at the game from a distance, saw that rap given to the favoured knuckles with a bitterness of heart and an inner groaning of the spirit that will not be incomprehensible to many.

‘I do so love that Mr. Felix!’ said Marian, as her aunt Madeline kissed her in her little bed on wishing her good night. ‘Don’t you, aunt Mad.—?’

And so it was that Christmas-day was passed at Noningsby.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTMAS AT GROBY PARK.

CHRISTMAS-DAY was always a time of very great trial to Mrs. Mason of Groby Park. It behoved her, as the wife of an old English country gentleman, to spread her board plenteously at that season, and in some sort to make an open house of it. But she could not bring herself to spread any board with plenty, and the idea of an open house would almost break her heart. Unlimited eating! There was something in the very sounds of such words which was appalling to the inner woman.

And on this Christmas-day she was doomed to go through an ordeal of very peculiar severity. It so happened that the cure of souls in the parish of Groby had been intrusted for the last two or three years to a young, energetic, but not very opulent curate. Why the rector of Groby should be altogether absent, leaving the work in the hands of a curate, whom he paid by the lease of a cottage and garden and fifty-five pounds a year,—thereby behaving as he imagined with extensive liberality,—it is unnecessary here to inquire. Such was the case, and the Rev. Adolphus Green, with Mrs. A. Green and the four children, managed to live with some difficulty on the produce of the garden and the allotted stipend; but could not probably have lived at all in that position had not Mrs. Adolphus Green been blessed with some small fortune.

It had so happened that Mrs. Adolphus Green had been instrumental in imparting some knowledge of singing to two of the Miss

Masons, and had continued her instructions over the last three years. This had not been done in any preconcerted way, but the lessons had grown by chance. Mrs. Mason the while had looked on with a satisfied eye at an arrangement that was so much to her taste.

'There are no regular lessons you know,' she had said to her husband, when he suggested that some reward for so much work would be expedient. 'Mrs. Green finds it convenient to have the use of my drawing-room, and would never see an instrument from year's end to year's end if she were not allowed to come up here. Depend upon it she gets a great deal more than she gives.'

But after two years' of tuition Mr. Mason had spoken a second time. 'My dear,' he said, 'I cannot allow the girls to accept so great a favour from Mrs. Green without making her some compensation.'

'I don't see that it is at all necessary,' Mrs. Mason had answered; 'but if you think so, we could send her down a hamper of apples,—that is, a basketful.' Now it happened that apples were very plentiful that year, and that the curate and his wife were blessed with as many as they could judiciously consume.

'Apples! nonsense!' said Mr. Mason.

'If you mean money, my dear, I couldn't do it. I wouldn't so offend a lady for all the world.'

'You could buy them something handsome, in the way of furniture. That little room of theirs that they call the drawing-room has nothing in it at all. Get Jones from Leeds to send them some things that will do for them.' And hence, after many inner misgivings, had arisen that purchase of a drawing-room set from Mr. Kantwise,—that set of metallic 'Louey Catorse furniture,' containing three tables, eight chairs, &c. &c., as to which it may be remembered that Mrs. Mason made such an undoubted bargain, getting them for less than cost price. That they had been 'strained,' as Mr. Kantwise himself admitted in discoursing on the subject to Mr. Dockwrath, was not matter of much moment. They would do extremely well for a curate's wife.

And now on this Christmas-day the present was to be made over to the happy lady. Mr. and Mrs. Green were to dine at Groby Park,—leaving their more fortunate children to the fuller festivities of the cottage; and the intention was that before dinner the whole drawing-room set should be made over. It was with grievous pangs of heart that Mrs. Mason looked forward to such an operation. Her own house was plenteously furnished from the kitchens to the attics, but still she would have loved to keep that metallic set of painted trumpery. She knew that the table would not screw on; she knew that the pivot of the music stool was bent; she knew that there was no place in the house in which they could stand; she must have known that in no possible way could they be of use

to her or hers,—and yet she could not part with them without an agony. Her husband was infatuated in this matter of compensation for the use of Mrs. Green's idle hours; no compensation could be necessary;—and then she paid another visit to the metallic furniture. She knew in her heart of hearts that they could never be of use to anybody, and yet she made up her mind to keep back two out of the eight chairs. Six chairs would be quite enough for Mrs. Green's small room.

As there was to be feasting at five, real roast beef, plum-pudding and mince-pies;—‘Mince-pies and plum-pudding together are vulgar, my dear,’ Mrs. Mason had said to her husband; but in spite of the vulgarity he had insisted;—the breakfast was of course scanty. Mr. Mason liked a slice of cold meat in the morning, or the leg of a fowl, or a couple of fresh eggs as well as any man; but the matter was not worth a continual fight. ‘As we are to dine an hour earlier to-day I did not think you would eat meat,’ his wife said to him. ‘Then there would be less expense in putting it on the table,’ he had answered; and after that there was nothing more said about it. He always put off till some future day that great contest which he intended to wage and to win, and by which he hoped to bring it about that plenty should henceforward be the law of the land at Groby Park. And then they all went to church. Mrs. Mason would not on any account have missed church on Christmas-day or a Sunday. It was a cheap duty, and therefore rigidly performed. As she walked from her carriage up to the church-door she encountered Mrs. Green, and smiled sweetly as she wished that lady all the compliments of the season.

‘We shall see you immediately after church,’ said Mrs. Mason.

‘Oh yes, certainly,’ said Mrs. Green.

‘And Mr. Green with you?’

‘He intends to do himself the pleasure,’ said the curate's wife.

‘Mind he comes, because we have a little ceremony to go through before we sit down to dinner;’ and Mrs. Mason smiled again ever so graciously. Did she think, or did she not think, that she was going to do a kindness to her neighbour? Most women would have sunk into their shoes as the hour grew nigh at which they were to show themselves guilty of so much meanness.

She stayed for the sacrament, and it may here be remarked that on that afternoon she rated both the footman and housemaid because they omitted to do so. She thought, we must presume, that she was doing her duty, and must imagine her to have been ignorant that she was cheating her husband and cheating her friend. She took the sacrament with admirable propriety of demeanour, and then on her return home, withdrew another chair from the set. There would still be six, including the rocking chair, and six would be quite enough for that little hole of a room.

There was a large chamber up stairs at Groby Park which had been used for the children's lessons, but which now was generally deserted. There was in it an old worn-out pianoforte,—and though Mrs. Mason had talked somewhat grandly of the use of her drawing-room, it was here that the singing had been taught. Into this room the metallic furniture had been brought, and up to that Christmas morning it had remained here packed in its original boxes. Hither immediately after breakfast Mrs. Mason had taken herself, and had spent an hour in her efforts to set the things forth to view. Two of the chairs she then put aside into a cupboard, and a third she added to her private store on her return to her work after church.

But, alas, alas! let her do what she would, she could not get the top on to the table. 'It's all smashed, ma'am,' said the girl whom she at last summoned to her aid. 'Nonsense, you simpleton; how can it be smashed when it's new,' said the mistress. And then she tried again, and again, declaring as she did so, that she would have the law of the rogue who had sold her a damaged article. Nevertheless she had known that it was damaged, and had bought it cheap on that account, insisting in very urgent language that the table was in fact worth nothing because of its injuries.

At about four Mr. and Mrs. Green walked up to the house and were shown into the drawing-room. Here was Mrs. Mason supported by Penelope and Creusa. As Diana was not musical, and therefore under no compliment to Mrs. Green, she kept out of the way. Mr. Mason also was absent. He knew that something very mean was about to be done, and would not show his face till it was over. He ought to have taken the matter in hand himself, and would have done so had not his mind been full of other things. He himself was a man terribly wronged and wickedly injured, and could not therefore in these present months interfere much in the active doing of kindnesses. His hours were spent in thinking how he might best obtain justice,—how he might secure his pound of flesh. He only wanted his own, but that he would have;—his own, with due punishment on those who had for so many years robbed him of it. He therefore did not attend at the presentation of the furniture.

'And now we'll go up stairs, if you please,' said Mrs. Mason, with that gracious smile for which she was so famous. 'Mr. Green, you must come too. Dear Mrs. Green has been so very kind to my two girls; and now I have got a few articles,—they are of the very newest fashion, and I do hope that Mrs. Green will like them.' And so they all went up into the schoolroom.

'There's a new fashion come up lately,' said Mrs. Mason as she walked along the corridor, 'quite new:—of metallic furniture. I don't know whether you have seen any.' Mrs. Green said she had not seen any as yet.

'The Patent Steel Furniture Company makes it, and it has got very greatly into vogue for small rooms. I thought that perhaps you would allow me to present you with a set for your drawing-room.'

'I'm sure it is very kind of you to think of it,' said Mrs. Green.

'Uncommonly so,' said Mr. Green. But both Mr. Green and Mrs. Green knew the lady, and their hopes did not run high.

And then the door was opened and there stood the furniture to view. There stood the furniture, except the three subtracted chairs, and the loo table. The claw and leg of the table indeed were standing there, but the top was folded up and lying on the floor beside it. 'I hope you'll like the pattern,' began Mrs. Mason. 'I'm told that it is the prettiest that has yet been brought out. There has been some little accident about the screw of the table, but the smith in the village will put that to rights in five minutes. He lives so close to you that I didn't think it worth while to have him up here.'

'It's very nice,' said Mrs. Green, looking round her almost in dismay.

'Very nice indeed,' said Mr. Green, wondering in his mind for what purpose such utter trash could have been manufactured, and endeavouring to make up his mind as to what they might possibly do with it. Mr. Green knew what chairs and tables should be, and was well aware that the things before him were absolutely useless for any of the ordinary purposes of furniture.

'And they are the most convenient things in the world,' said Mrs. Mason, 'for when you are going to change house you pack them all up again in these boxes. Wooden furniture takes up so much room, and is so lumber some.'

'Yes, it is,' said Mrs. Green.

'I'll have them all put up again and sent down in the cart to-morrow.'

'Thank you; that will be very kind,' said Mr. Green, and then the ceremony of the presentation was over. On the following day the boxes were sent down, and Mrs. Mason might have abstracted even another chair without detection, for the cases lay unheeded from month to month in the curate's still unfurnished room. 'The fact is they cannot afford a carpet,' Mrs. Mason afterwards said to one of her daughters, 'and with such things as those they are quite right to keep them up till they can be used with advantage. I always gave Mrs. Green credit for a good deal of prudence.'

And then, when the show was over, they descended again into the drawing-room,—Mr. Green and Mrs. Mason went first, and Creusa followed. Penelope was thus so far behind as to be able to speak to her friend without being heard by the others.

'You know mamma,' she said, with a shrug of her shoulders and a look of scorn in her eye.

‘The things are very nice.’

‘No, they are not, and you know they are not. They are worthless; perfectly worthless.’

‘But we don’t want anything.’

‘No; and if there had been no pretence of a gift it would all have been very well. What will Mr. Green think?’

‘I rather think he likes iron chairs;’ and then they were in the drawing-room.

Mr. Mason did not appear till dinner-time, and came in only just in time to give his arm to Mrs. Green. He had had letters to write,—a letter to Messrs. Round and Crook, very determined in its tone; and a letter also to Mr. Dockwraith, for the little attorney had so crept on in the affair that he was now corresponding with the principal. ‘I’ll teach those fellows in Bedford Row to know who I am,’ he had said to himself more than once, sitting on his high stool at Hamworth.

And then came the Groby Park Christmas dinner. To speak the truth Mr. Mason had himself gone to the neighbouring butcher, and ordered the surloin of beef, knowing that it would be useless to trust to orders conveyed through his wife. He had seen the piece of meat put on one side for him, and had afterwards traced it on to the kitchen dresser. But nevertheless when it appeared at table it had been sadly mutilated. A stake had been cut off the full breadth of it—a monstrous cantle from out its fair proportions. The lady had seen the jovial, thick, ample size of the goodly joint, and her heart had been unable to spare it. She had made an effort and turned away, saying to herself that the responsibility was all with him. But it was of no use. There was that within her which could not do it. ‘Your master will never be able to carve such a mountain of meat as that,’ she had said, turning back to the cook. ‘Deed, an’ it’s he that will, ma’am,’ said the Irish mistress of the spit; for Irish cooks are cheaper than those bred and born in England. But nevertheless the thing was done, and it was by her own fair hands that the envious knife was used. ‘I couldn’t do it, ma’am,’ the cook had said; ‘I couldn’t raily.’

Mr. Mason’s face became very black when he saw the raid that had been effected, and when he looked up across the table his wife’s eye was on him. She knew what she had to expect, and she knew also that it would not come now. Her eye stealthily looked at his, quivering with fear; for Mr. Mason could be savage enough in his anger. And what had she gained? One may as well ask what does the miser gain who hides away his gold in an old pot, or what does that other madman gain who is locked up for long long years because he fancies himself the grandmother of the Queen of England?

But there was still enough beef on the table for all of them

to eat, and as Mrs. Mason was not intrusted with the carving of it, their plates were filled. As far as a sufficiency of beef can make a good dinner Mr. and Mrs. Green did have a good dinner on that Christmas-day. Beyond that their comfort was limited, for no one was in a humour for happy conversation.

And over and beyond the beef there was a plum-pudding and three mince-pies. Four mince-pies had originally graced the dish, but before dinner one had been conveyed away to some upstairs receptacle for such spoils. The pudding also was small, nor was it black and rich, and laden with good things as a Christmas pudding should be laden. Let us hope that what the guests so lost was made up to them on the following day, by an absence of those ill effects which sometimes attend upon the consumption of rich viands. 'And now, my dear, we'll have a bit of bread and cheese and a glass of beer,' Mr. Green said when he arrived at his own cottage. And so it was that Christmas-day was passed at Groby Park.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHRISTMAS IN GREAT ST. HELENS.

WE will now look in for a moment at the Christmas doings of our fat friend, Mr. Moulder. Mr. Moulder was a married man living in lodgings over a wine-merchant's vaults in Great St. Helens. He was blessed—or troubled, with no children, and prided himself greatly on the material comfort with which his humble home was surrounded. 'His wife,' he often boasted, 'never wanted for plenty of the best of eating; and for linen and silks and such-like, she could show her drawers and her wardrobes with many a great lady from Russell Square, and not be ashamed, neither! And then, as for drink,—'tipple,' as Mr. Moulder sportively was accustomed to name it among his friends, he opined that he was not altogether behind the mark in that respect. 'He had got some brandy—he didn't care what anybody might say about Cognac and eau de vie; but the brandy which he had got from Betts' private establishment seventeen years ago, for richness of flavour and fullness of strength, would beat any French article that anybody in the city could show. That at least was his idea. If anybody didn't like it, they needn't take it. There was whisky that would make your hair stand on end.' So said Mr. Moulder, and I can believe him; for it has made my hair stand on end merely to see other people drinking it.

And if comforts of apparel, comforts of eating and drinking, and comforts of the feather-bed and easy-chair kind can make a woman

happy, Mrs. Moulder was no doubt a happy woman. She had quite fallen in to the mode of life laid out for her. She had a little bit of hot kidney for breakfast at about ten; she dined at three, having seen herself to the accurate cooking of her roast fowl, or her bit of sweetbread, and always had her pint of Scotch ale. She turned over all her clothes almost every day. In the evening she read Reynolds's Miscellany, had her tea and buttered muffins, took a thimbleful of brandy and water at nine, and then went to bed. The work of her life consisted in sewing buttons on to Moulder's shirts, and seeing that his things were properly got up when he was at home. No doubt she would have done better as to the duties of the world, had the world's duties come to her. As it was, very few such had come in her direction. Her husband was away from home three-fourths of the year, and she had no children that required attention. As for society, some four or five times a year she would drink tea with Mrs. Hubbles at Clapham. Mrs. Hubbles was the wife of the senior partner in the firm, and on such occasions Mrs. Moulder dressed herself in her best, and having travelled to Clapham in an omnibus, spent the evening in dull propriety on one corner of Mrs. Hubbles's sofa. When I have added to this that Moulder every year took her to Broadstairs for a fortnight, I think that I have described with sufficient accuracy the course of Mrs. Moulder's life.

On the occasion of this present Christmas-day Mr. Moulder entertained a small party. And he delighted in such occasional entertainments, taking extraordinary pains that the eatables should be of the very best; and he would maintain an hospitable good humour to the last,—unless anything went wrong in the cookery, in which case he could make himself extremely unpleasant to Mrs. M. Indeed, proper cooking for Mr. M. and the proper starching of the bands of his shirts were almost the only trials that Mrs. Moulder was doomed to suffer. 'What the d— are you for?' he would say, almost throwing the displeasing viands at her head across the table, or tearing the rough linen from off his throat. 'It ain't much I ask of you in return for your keep;' and then he would scowl at her with bloodshot eyes till she shook in her shoes. But this did not happen often, as experiences had made her careful.

But on this present Christmas festival all went swimmingly to the end. 'Now, bear a hand, old girl,' was the harshest word he said to her; and he enjoyed himself like Duncan, shut up in measureless content. He had three guests with him on this auspicious day. There was his old friend Snengkeld, who had dined with him on every Christmas since his marriage; there was his wife's brother, of whom we will say a word or two just now;—and there was our old friend, Mr. Kantwise. Mr. Kantwise was not exactly the man whom Moulder would have chosen as his

guest, for they were opposed to each other in all their modes of thought and action; but he had come across the travelling agent of the Patent Metallic Steel Furniture Company on the previous day, and finding that he was to be alone in London on this general holiday, he had asked him out of sheer good nature. Moulder could be very good natured, and full of pity when the sorrow to be pitied arose from some such source as the want of a Christmas dinner. So Mr. Kantwise had been asked, and precisely at four o'clock he made his appearance at Great St. Helens.

But now, as to this brother-in-law. He was no other than that John Kenneby whom Miriam Usbech did not marry,—whom Miriam Usbech might, perhaps, have done well to marry. John Kenneby, after one or two attempts in other spheres of life, had at last got into the house of Hubbles and Grease, and had risen to be their book-keeper. He had once been tried by them as a traveller, but in that line he had failed. He did not possess that rough, ready, self-confident tone of mind which is almost necessary for a man who is destined to move about quickly from one circle of persons to another. After a six months' trial he had given that up, but during the time, Mr. Moulder, the senior traveller of the house, had married his sister. John Kenneby was a good, honest, painstaking fellow, and was believed by his friends to have put a few pounds together in spite of the timidity of his character.

When Snengkeld and Kenneby were shown up into the room, they found nobody there but Kantwise. That Mrs. Moulder should be down stairs looking after the roast turkey was no more than natural; but why should not Moulder himself be there to receive his guests? He soon appeared, however, coming up without his coat.

'Well, Snengkeld, how are you, old fellow; many happy returns, and all that; the same to you, John. I'll tell you what, my lads; it's a prime 'un. I never saw such a bird in all my days.'

'What, the turkey?' said Snengkeld.

'You didn't think it'd be a ostrich, did you?'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed Snengkeld. 'No, I didn't expect nothing but a turkey here on Christmas-day.'

'And nothing but a turkey you'll have, my boys. Can you eat turkey, Kantwise?'

Mr. Kantwise declared that his only passion in the way of eating was for a turkey.

'As for John, I'm sure of him. I've seen him at the work before.' Whereupon John grinned but said nothing.

'I never see such a bird in my life, certainly.'

'From Norfolk, I suppose,' said Snengkeld, with a great appearance of interest.

'Oh, you may swear to that. It weighed twenty-four pounds, for I put it into the scales myself, and old Gibbetts let me have it for

a guinea. The price marked on it was five-and-twenty, for I saw it. He's had it hanging for a fortnight, and I've been to see it wiped down with vinegar regular every morning. And now, my boys, it's done to a turn. I've been in the kitchen most of the time myself, and either I or Mrs. M. has never left it for a single moment.'

'How did you manage about divine service?' said Kantwise; and then, when he had spoken, closed his eyes and sucked his lips.

Mr. Moulder looked at him for a minute, and then said, 'Gammon.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed Snengkeld. And then Mrs. Moulder appeared, bringing the turkey with her; for she would trust it to no hands less careful than her own.

'By George, it is a bird,' said Snengkeld, standing over it and eyeing it minutely.

'Uncommon nice it looks,' said Kantwise.

'All the same, I wouldn't eat none, if I were you,' said Moulder, 'seeing what sinners have been a basting it.' And then they all sat down to dinner, Moulder having first resumed his coat.

For the next three or four minutes Moulder did not speak a word. The turkey was on his mind, with the stuffing, the gravy, the liver, the breast, the wings, and the legs. He stood up to carve it, and while he was at the work he looked at it as though his two eyes were hardly sufficient. He did not help first one person and then another, so ending by himself; but he cut up artistically as much as might probably be consumed, and located the fragments in small heaps or shares in the hot gravy; and then, having made a partition of the spoils, he served it out with unerring impartiality. To have robbed any one of his or her fair slice of the breast would, in his mind, have been gross dishonesty. In his heart he did not love Kantwise, but he dealt by him with the utmost justice in the great affair of the turkey's breast. When he had done all this, and his own plate was laden, he gave a long sigh. 'I shall never cut up such another bird as that, the longest day that I have to live,' he said; and then he took out his large red silk handkerchief and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

'Deary me, M.; don't think of that now,' said the wife.

'What's the use?' said Snengkeld. 'Care killed a cat.'

'And perhaps you may,' said John Kenneby, trying to comfort him; 'who knows?'

'It's all in the hands of Providence,' said Kantwise, 'and we should look to him.'

'And how does it taste?' asked Moulder, shaking the gloomy thoughts from his mind.

'Uncommon,' said Snengkeld, with his mouth quite full. 'I never eat such a turkey in all my life.'

‘Like melted diamonds,’ said Mrs. Moulder, who was not without a touch of poetry.

‘Ah, there’s nothing like hanging of ’em long enough, and watching of ’em well. It’s that vinegar as done it;’ and then they went seriously to work, and there was nothing more said of any importance until the eating was nearly over.

And now Mrs. M. had taken away the cloth, and they were sitting cozily over their port wine. The very apple of the eye of the evening had not arrived even yet. That would not come till the pipes were brought out, and the brandy was put on the table, and the whisky was there that made the people’s hair stand on end. It was then that the floodgates of convivial eloquence would be unloosed. In the mean time it was necessary to sacrifice something to gentility, and therefore they sat over their port wine.

‘Did you bring that letter with you, John?’ said his sister. John replied that he had done so, and that he had also received another letter that morning from another party on the same subject.

‘Do show it to Moulder, and ask him,’ said Mrs. M.

‘I’ve got ’em both on purpose,’ said John; and then he brought forth two letters, and handed one of them to his brother-in-law. It contained a request, very civilly worded, from Messrs. Round and Crook, begging him to call at their office in Bedford Row on the earliest possible day, in order that they might have some conversation with him regarding the will of the late Sir Joseph Mason, who died in 18—.

‘Why, this is law business,’ said Moulder, who liked no business of that description. ‘Don’t you go near them, John, if you ain’t obliged.’

And then Kenneby gave his explanation on the matter, telling how in former years,—many years ago, he had been a witness in a lawsuit. And then as he told it he sighed, remembering Miriam Usbeck, for whose sake he had remained unmarried even to this day. And he went on to narrate how he had been bullied in the court, though he had valiantly striven to tell the truth with exactness; and as he spoke, an opinion of his became manifest that old Usbeck had not signed the document in his presence. ‘The girl signed it certainly,’ said he, ‘for I handed her the pen. I recollect it, as though it were yesterday.’

‘They are the very people we were talking of at Leeds,’ said Moulder, turning to Kantwise. ‘Mason and Martock; don’t you remember how you went out to Groby Park to sell some of them iron gimcracks? That was old Mason’s son. They are the same people.’

‘Ah, I shouldn’t wonder,’ said Kantwise, who was listening all the while. He never allowed intelligence of this kind to pass by him idly.

'And who's the other letter from?' asked Moulder. 'But, dash my wigs, it's past six o'clock. Come, old girl, why don't you give us the tobacco and stuff?'

'It ain't far to fetch,' said Mrs. Moulder. And then she put the tobacco and 'stuff' upon the table.

'The other letter is from an enemy of mine,' said John Kenneby, speaking very solemnly; 'an enemy of mine, named Dockwrath, who lives at Hamworth. He's an attorney too.'

'Dockwrath!' said Moulder.

Mr. Kantwise said nothing, but he looked round over his shoulder at Kenneby, and then shut his eyes.

'That was the name of the man whom we left in the commercial room at the Bull,' said Snengkeld.

'He went out to Mason's at Groby Park that same day,' said Moulder.

'Then it's the same man,' said Kenneby; and there was as much solemnity in the tone of his voice as though the unravelment of all the mysteries of the iron mask was now about to take place. Mr. Kantwise still said nothing, but he also perceived that it was the same man.

'Let me tell you, John Kenneby,' said Moulder, with the air of one who understood well the subject that he was discussing, 'if they two be the same man, then the man who wrote that letter to you is as big a blackguard as there is from this to hisself.' And Mr. Moulder in the excitement of the moment puffed hard at his pipe, took a long pull at his drink, and dragged open his waistcoat. 'I don't know whether Kantwise has anything to say upon that subject,' added Moulder.

'Not a word at present,' said Kantwise. Mr. Kantwise was a very careful man, and usually calculated with accuracy the value which he might extract from any circumstance with reference to his own main chance. Mr. Dockwrath had not as yet paid him for the set of metallic furniture, and therefore he also might well have joined in that sweeping accusation; but it might be that by a judicious use of what he now heard he might obtain the payment of that little bill,—and perhaps other collateral advantages.

And then the letter from Dockwrath to Kenneby was brought forth and read. 'My dear John,' it began,—for the two had known each other when they were lads together,—and it went on to request Kenneby's attendance at Hamworth for the 'short space of a few hours,—'I want to have a little conversation with you about a matter of considerable interest to both of us; and as I cannot expect you to undertake expense I enclose a money order for thirty shillings.'

'He's in earnest at any rate,' said Mr. Moulder.

'No mistake about that,' said Snengkeld.

But Mr. Kantwise spoke never a word.

It was at last decided that John Kenneby should go both to Hamworth and to Bedford Row, but that he should go to Hamworth first. Moulder would have counselled him to have gone to neither, but Snengkeld remarked that there were too many at work to let the matter sleep, and John himself observed that 'anyways he hadn't done anything to be ashamed of.'

'Then go,' said Moulder at last, 'only don't say more than you are obliged to.'

'I does not like these business talkings on Christmas night,' said Mrs. Moulder, when the matter was arranged.

'What can one do?' asked Moulder.

'It's a tempting of Providence in my mind,' said Kantwise, as he replenished his glass, and turned his eyes up to the ceiling.

'Now that's gammon,' said Moulder. And then there arose among them a long and animated discussion on matters theological.

'I'll tell you what my idea of death is,' said Moulder, after a while. 'I aint a bit afeard of it. My father was an honest man as did his duty by his employers, and he died with a bottom of brandy before him and a pipe in his mouth. I sha'n't live long myself—'

'Gracious, Moulder, don't!' said Mrs. M.

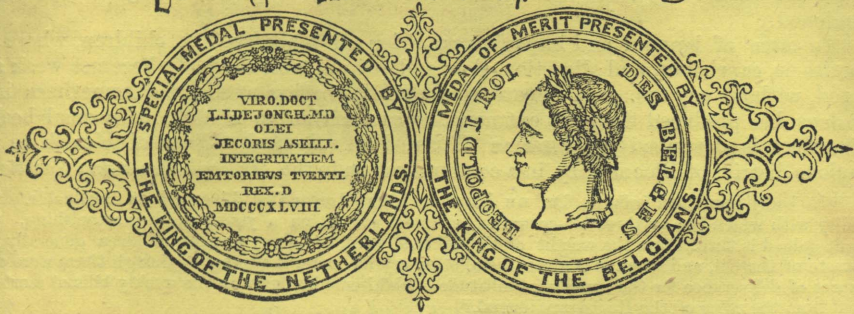
'No, more I sha'n't, 'cause I'm fat as he was; and I hope I may die as he did. I've been honest to Hubbles and Grease. They've made thousands of pounds along of me, and have never lost none. Who can say more than that? When I took to the old girl there, I insured my life, so that she shouldn't want her wittles and drink—'

'Oh, M., don't!'

'And I aint afeard to die. Snengkeld, my old pal, hand us the brandy.'

Such is the modern philosophy of the Moulders, pigs out of the sty of Epicurus. And so it was they passed Christmas-day in Great St. Helens.

DR. DE JONGH
 (KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF
 LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM.)



LIGHT-BROWN

COD LIVER OIL.

THE invariable purity, palatableness, speedy efficacy, and consequent economy of this unrivalled preparation, have obtained for it the general approval and unqualified confidence of the Medical Profession, and, notwithstanding the active and in too many instances unscrupulous opposition of interested dealers, an unprecedented amount of public patronage.

The immeasurable therapeutic superiority of Dr. DE JONGH'S Cod Liver Oil over every other variety is incontestably established by the recorded opinions of the most distinguished Physicians and Surgeons in all parts of the world. In numberless instances, where other kinds of Cod Liver Oil had been long and copiously administered with little or no benefit, Dr. DE JONGH'S Oil has produced almost immediate relief, arrested disease, and restored health.

GENERAL DEBILITY AND EMACIATION.

In cases of prostration and emaciation produced by long sickness, by exposure to the deleterious influences of tropical and unhealthy climates, to vicissitudes of temperature, or where extreme heat, excessive labour, fatigue, bad nourishment, and other hardships have caused depressing lassitude and reduced the vital forces, and where life appeared to be even at its lowest ebb, the restorative powers of Dr. DE JONGH'S Oil have been remarkably manifested. By its administration, the natural appetite is revived, and the functions of digestion and assimilation improved, reanimated, and regulated; and, when its use has been steadily persevered in, its peculiar tonic and nutritive properties have entirely restored health and strength to the most feeble and deteriorated constitutions.

The actual benefit derived is thus described by BENJAMIN CLARKE, Esq., M.R.C.S., F.L.S., author of "Notes and Suggestions on Cod Liver Oil and its Uses:"—

"Having myself taken both the Pale and Light-Brown Cod Liver Oils for debility, I am able, from my own experience, to remark upon their effects and comparative usefulness as remedial agents. After the Pale Oil, and all other remedies that I could think of had failed, I tried, merely as a last resort, Dr. DE JONGH'S Light-Brown Oil. I received immediate relief; and its use was the means of my restoration to health. In their sensible properties and chemical constituents the Pale Oil and Dr. DE JONGH'S Light Brown Oil are distinct medicines; and, from my observation of their mode of action and effects, I must believe that I have seen many patients die both in hospital and private practice, some of them of juvenile years, and others in the prime of life, who in all probability would have been cured if the medical properties of Dr. DE JONGH'S Light-Brown Oil had been known as they are now, and its use prescribed."

[TURN OVER.]

EFFICACY OF DR. DE JONGH'S OIL IN THE TREATMENT OF THE DISORDERS OF INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD.

In those severe disorders, *Infantile Wasting and Rickets*, from which children suffer so extensively, and which destroy so many infants, the good effects of this Oil are strikingly exhibited, its operation being oftentimes so very remarkable as to cure the disease when every other remedy had failed, and all hope of saving life had been abandoned.

In cases of languid and imperfect nutrition often observed in children, where the appetite is capricious, and digestion slow and painful, and the body becomes weak and wasted, without any apparent disease, this Oil, after a few weeks, and sometimes in a few days, has produced the most extraordinary transition to a state of normal health. This effect is described by THOMAS HUNT, Esq., Medical Officer of Health to the populous district of Bloomsbury, in a communication to the *Medical Times and Gazette*:—

"In badly-nourished infants, Dr. DE JONGH's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil is invaluable. The rapidity with which two or three tea-spoonfuls per diem will fatten a young child is astonishing. The weight gained is three times the weight of the Oil swallowed, or more; and, as children generally like the taste of the Oil, and when it is given them, often cry for more, it appears as though there were some prospect of deliverance for the appalling multitude of children who figure in the weekly bills of mortality issued from the office of the Registrar-General."

From innumerable medical and scientific opinions of the highest character in commendation of Dr. DE JONGH's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil, the following are selected:—

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Professor at the University of London, Physician to the London Hospital, &c., &c.

"It was fitting that the author of the best analysis and investigations into the properties of this Oil should himself be the purveyor of this important medicine. I know that no one can be better, and few so well, acquainted with the physical and chemical properties of this medicine as yourself, whom I regard as the highest authority on the subject. The Oil which you gave me was of the very finest quality, whether considered with reference to its colour, flavour, or chemical properties; and I am satisfied that for medicinal purposes no finer Oil can be procured."

Finbury Square, April 16th, 1851.

EDWIN LANKESTER, Esq., M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., F.L.S.,

Late Lecturer on the Practice of Physic at St. George's Medical School, Superintendent of the Food Collection at the South Kensington Museum, &c., &c.

"I consider that the purity and genuineness of this Oil are secured in its preparation by the personal attention of so good a Chemist and intelligent a Physician as Dr. DE JONGH, who has also written the best medical treatise on the Oil with which I am acquainted. Hence, I deem the Cod Liver Oil sold under his guarantee to be preferable to any other kind as regards genuineness and medicinal efficacy.

8, Savile Row, W., 1st August, 1859.

A. B. GRANVILLE, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.P., F.R.S.,

Author of "THE SPAS OF GERMANY," "THE SPAS OF ENGLAND," "ON SUDDEN DEATH," &c., &c.

"Dr. Granville considers this Oil to be preferable in many respects to Oils sold without the guarantee of such an authority as DE JONGH. Dr. Granville has found that this particular kind produces the desired effect in a shorter time than others, and that it does not cause the nausea and indigestion too often consequent on the administration of the Pale Oils. The Oil being, moreover, much more palatable Dr. Granville's patients have themselves expressed a preference for Dr. DE JONGH's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil."

1, Curzon Street, Mayfair, 7th January, 1856.

RICHARD MOORE LAWRENCE, Esq., M.D., L.R.C.P.,

Physician to H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Great Northern Hospital, Author of "ON GOUT AND RHEUMATISM," &c., &c.

"I have frequently tested your Cod Liver Oil, and so impressed am I with its superiority, that I invariably prescribe it in preference to any other, feeling assured that I am recommending a genuine article, and not a manufactured compound, in which the efficacy of this invaluable medicine is destroyed."

21, Connaught Square, Hyde Park, January 26th, 1856.

Sold ONLY in IMPERIAL Half-Pints, 2s. 6d.; Pints, 4s. 9d.; Quarts, 9s.; Capsuled and Labelled with Dr. DE JONGH's Stamp and Signature,

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CAUTION.—SERENOUSLY RESIST PROPOSED SUBSTITUTIONS.

[TURN OVER.]

BY HER MAJESTY'S LETTERS PATENT



RIMMEL'S PERFUME VAPORIZER

FOR DIFFUSING THE

*Fragrance of Flowers in Apartments, Ball Rooms, etc.
Purifying the Air in Houses and Sick Rooms, and producing a Pleasant Atmosphere.*

**PRICES
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No. 1, 6½ in. by 3½ in.	
Bronze - - - - -	£0 6 0
Silver Plated - - -	0 12 0
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<i>Fancy patterns from Two to Twenty Guineas.</i>	



**PRICES
OF THE
PERFUMES.**

*Prepared specially for using
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ORDINARY PERFUMES.

5 oz. Flat Bottles -	2s. 6d.
10 „ Ditto - - -	4s. 6d.
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DISTILLED FROM FLOWERS.

5 oz. Stopped Bottles 3s. 6d.
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Prepared Spirits for burning in Lamps
Half-pint Bottles - 1s. 0d.

This Apparatus is strongly recommended by Dr. Letheby, and other Eminent Authorities, for its many useful and Sanitary Properties.—(See other side.)

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Are to be obtained at his Principal Branches or Dépôts as under:—

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AND FROM THE PRINCIPAL PERFUMERY DEALERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

RIMMEL'S PERFUME VAPORIZER has been introduced at Her Majesty's Theatre, St. James's Hall, Lyceum Theatre, Hanover Square Rooms, Mr. & Mrs. Howard Paul's Entertainment, Mr. Woodin's Cabinet of Curiosities, &c., and has given the greatest satisfaction to the public.

RIMMEL'S PATENT PERFUME VAPORIZER.

The means employed hitherto for perfuming the atmosphere have been to burn aromatic resins or woods under the shape of pastilles, papers, ribbons, &c., which all emit the same heavy smell, unpleasant to most persons, and even injurious to some. A lamp, with a platinum wire and ball, was introduced a few years since, for a like purpose, but it gave out very little perfume, and that little was mixed with noxious acrid vapors disengaged during the operation. RIMMEL'S PERFUME VAPORIZER is intended to replace those defective processes by the simple emanations of flowers produced through the agency of steam, or what may be termed an open-air distillation. The various points of superiority offered by this Apparatus, may be thus briefly summed up.

I.—It diffuses the perfume of any flower in all its freshness and purity, emitting the balmy fragrance of a bloom *parterre*, on a fine spring morning.

II.—The vapors produced are so delicate and refreshing that they cannot affect even the most nervous persons, and their elasticity is such that they spread over a vast area in a very short time. Fifteen minutes are sufficient to perfume the largest theatre, and a small room naturally requires much less.

III.—This process entirely neutralizes the vitiated air generated in theatres, ball-rooms, and other assemblies; used on the dinner or supper table, at dessert time it replaces the unpleasant culinary odours by a grateful and reviving fragrance. It also completely removes the smell of tobacco.

IV.—It effectually purifies the air in dwelling-houses, and counteracts unpleasant and noxious effluvia arising from drains, gas, or any other cause.

V.—It is invaluable for the sick chamber, substituting balmy and soothing vapors to the close and tainted atmosphere and leaving the patient the gratification of choosing his own favorite flower or scent.

VI.—It is strongly recommended to travellers, especially to those visiting continental cities, where such a pleasant and powerful disinfectant will often prove a great desideratum. It will also be found very reviving at sea to fumigate close cabins.

VII.—This Apparatus forms an elegant drawing-room ornament, is easily managed, requires no trouble nor labour, cannot get out of repair, and is sold at a very moderate price which places it within the reach of all classes.

In order to give the public a full guarantee of the useful and beneficial properties of his PERFUME VAPORIZER, RIMMEL has submitted it to the most eminent authorities on all sanitary matters, whose favorable opinion confirms every point of the foregoing observations, and leads E. R. to hope that his invention will be extensively patronized as soon as it becomes known.

N.B.—The Vaporizer can only be used with the Perfumes prepared specially by E. RIMMEL, as other Perfumes would not produce the desired effect, and there would be danger of ignition.

TESTIMONIALS.

COLLEGE LABORATORY, LONDON HOSPITAL,
March 9th, 1861.

The Apparatus which Mr. RIMMEL has invented for diffusing the scent of flowers and other perfumes into the atmosphere is a great improvement on the usual contrivances for volatilizing aromatic substances by the aid of a direct heat, or by slow combustion; for in all such cases many imperfectly oxidised compounds are produced, which not only destroy the delicacy of the perfume, but which by reason of their acidity give an irritating property to the air. It is not so with the Apparatus of Mr. RIMMEL, which acts at too low a temperature for combustion, and which by evolving aqueous vapour diffuses the most delicate scents without injury to their odour. This, indeed, is the speciality of the invention, and I have no doubt that it will be found useful, not merely as a refinement and luxury in ordinary rooms but as a corrective of the atmosphere of sick chambers; for there are good grounds for the opinion that many persons are endowed with the power of ozonizing the air and so of giving it a disinfecting property. The Apparatus might also be employed as a means of volatilizing medicinal substances, and thus acting as a curative agent. Lastly, its use in Theatres, Club-houses, Dining Saloons, and such other places of public resort, will doubtless be fully appreciated.

H. LETHEBY, M.B., Ph.D. & C.,

Professor of Chemistry in the College of the London Hospital and Medical Officer of Health for the City of London.

Dr. HASSALL, Dr. GOLDSBORO', and Mr. CANTON, Surgeon to the Charing Cross Hospital, have all expressed their high opinion of the merits of the Vaporizer; the latter has introduced it into the wards of the Hospital and been much satisfied with the results.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"A simple apparatus capable of being made very useful as a sanitary agent, as well as for the diffusion of more pleasant odours through apartments, hospitals, halls, theatres, &c."—*Builder*.

"We are fully convinced that this simple but ingenious contrivance will be most extensively adopted and patronized so soon as it becomes more generally known, for it combines useful with agreeable properties and hence may truly be termed *utile dulci*."—*Technologist*.

"We understand Mr. Rimmel is preparing a series of Perfume Vaporizers for private use, which, on account of their many useful purposes for which they are adapted, will assuredly meet with great success."—*Morning Post*.

"This is a charming improvement on the old fashioned pastille."—*China Telegraph*.

"Mr. Rimmel's art has been taxed to diffuse by means of his new patent the most delightful scents into the hall during the progress of the entertainment."—*Lady's Newspaper*.

"Mr. Rimmel, the eminent Perfumer, diffuses the perfume of sweet briar through the hall by a singularly effectual process of his own invention."—*Morning Star*.

"The grand *bal masqué* given at Her Majesty's Theatre last Monday, afforded another opportunity of testing the merits of 'Rimmel's Perfume Vaporizer,' which seemed to neutralize completely the vitiated air inherent to such assemblies, and replace it with a refreshing atmosphere of 'sweet smells.'"—*United Service Gazette*.

"The very breath of a thousand flowers is wafted into the hall by Rimmel's new patent process."—*Court Circular*.

"It is a very graceful invention."—*New York Weekly Programme*.

"Mr. Rimmel, the perfumer, has recently invented a small apparatus termed the 'Perfume Vaporizer,' for diffusing a grateful vapour in crowded assemblies or private dwellings, which effectually destroys unpleasant effluvia. It is adapted to be well adapted for those who travel by sea, to fumigate close cabins and to dispel other *desagremens* on shipboard. The invention is deserving of some commendation, and is presented in an elegant and economical form."—*Australian and New Zealand Gazette*.

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