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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CHARLES DICKENS.

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CHAPTER I. LOST ON THE FELL.

"I suppose," said Philip Gilbank, addressing a labourer sauntering out of a wayside field gate, "that I can easily get to Meretown if I go over this hill!"

The labourer, as he crossed the road, barely took the trouble to look at his questioner, but jerking his head in an upward direction replied:

"Ay, straight oop."

Philip smiled at the laconic answer of "straight oop." The direction was at all events easy, but when he began to ascend, his mind full of his own affairs, he found the climb stiffer than he had anticipated.

It had been a fine morning, but now the day was passing away and the sun was setting behind a high range of mountains. The clouds were forming themselves into long lines of crimson and grey, whilst a low bank of dove-like grey filled the space between two near peaks, looking like a couch of down prepared to receive the weary Phobus. As the May day faded into evening Philip Gilbank found his steep climb becoming tiresome. The loose stones he displaced on the steep incline rolled down far below him, and the mountain bed of a stream which he was following was decidedly an unpleasant path.

"The man said 'straight oop,'" he thought, "but surely, when I consulted my guidebook it seemed to indicate that I ought to take an easterly direction; I should say that the natives of this valley have made a vow to use no superfluous words. I must get to Meretown this evening."

Then Philip left his torrent bed and made for the eastern ridge above him. Soon after he was delighted to find a path a foot wide. This he thought must be the right track, so he followed it till he noticed that it narrowed perceptibly, and suddenly vanished, not into thin air, but into short turf and oozy bog, and he saw it no more.

"'Straight oop,'" he repeated, and suddenly finding that he was still some distance from the highest ridge, he climbed straight ahead only to find that the top was a huge rock, and that above it rose other hills intercepted by miniature valleys.

"This is the fell," said Philip, and he stood still to watch the sun dip behind the beautiful line of hills and mountains far away in the west. "And now which way is 'straight oop,' for it seems a series of zigzags!"

To climb each hillock was merely adding a descent to his labour, so Philip tried to round them, getting himself occasionally in a cul-de-sac. Sometimes a bleating sheep with her attendant lamb started up and ran away affrighted; then a hawk sailed slowly by, as if half asleep on the wing, for Nature appeared to retire early to rest in these lonely uplands.

Philip was now decidedly puzzled as to which course he should now pursue. His knapsack was heavy and his day's walk had been long; worse than this, the light was fading quickly. The grey clouds increased tenfold and spread themselves rapidly over the sky, apparently regretting that the dale folk had enjoyed a long, fine day. In half an hour everything about the sky denoted rain, and a chill wind began to moan along the hillocks.
Now and then Philip struck into a small sheep path, each time feeling sure that at last he had found the right track leading to Meretown, for that one existed he was certain; but after five minutes of self-congratulation on his part the path seemed to make a farewell bend into nothingness, leaving the lonely traveller to seek for another. Philip Gillbanks had never been in this country before, and though he was at first amused at the idea of having lost himself, he came at last to the conclusion that this was really the case. It was now too dark to find any path at all, whether true or false, and in a few moments the clouds seemed to come down bodily, enveloping the whole range of desolate hills and dales in one great mantle of mist. To make matters better, Philip Gillbanks discovered that he was at the edge of a swampy bog, so common in these regions, and so annoying to pedestrians who are racing with daylight. Here and there were tiny stagnant ponds of inky-looking water, near to which black clumps of peat were heaped about in wild confusion.

Philip Gillbanks was travelling a few days in this mountainous district in order to get rest and refreshment. At this moment he repented having ventured as far as this desolate region in order to obtain what he was certain could have been as well enjoyed on level ground.

An hour later, having splashed through a new bog in a very undignified manner and found himself at last on firmer ground, he sank down to rest upon a collection of rocky boulders. He was completely spent, and the torrents of rain which wetted him to the skin seemed as nothing to this great enveloping white mist now preventing him from seeing many feet ahead.

"Well," he thought, "I must own that I'm lost, so I may as well remain where I am as go on wandering round these never-ending fells. It seems preposterous, but these rocky hills are very awkward bits of climbing, and in this fog, if I tried to descend, I should most likely find myself with a broken leg at the bottom of a gully. Why on earth didn't I keep to the high-road? Sooner or later I must have come upon some farmhouse where I could have been taken in."

He put on his mackintosh, then crouching under a great grey rock, he tried to shelter himself as much as was possible under the circumstances. A hot supper and a soft bed seemed tantalising visions, for he was certainly both hungry and weary. Still, Philip Gillbanks could always make the best of every misfortune. He had a great deal of staying power and more patience than often falls to the lot of a modern young man.

"I wanted time for reflection, and certainly I have got it now," he thought, still able to smile at his unpleasant position.

Philip was at this moment in a very unsettled state of mind. His father wanted him to follow in his footsteps and to enter the business which, under the elder Gillbanks, had acquired fame and money. Philip had just finished a creditable college career, and something in his nature revolted against money-getting, and for the last few days he had been trying to solve the problem of his future career. Should he devote his life to patent boiler-screws, or to something more after his own heart?

The rain fell in a steady, persistent manner, and Philip Gillbanks's feelings became decidedly the reverse of cheerful. He tried to enliven them by thinking of his college friend, Forster Bethune; if he had been with him this small adventure would have been merely a laughing matter, but the loneliness of these miles of fell added to his general depression. It was like an emblem of his present life, in which nothing was clear, except perhaps the advisability of giving himself up to patent boiler-screws, and foregoing all ideas of a more romantic life. Business men should avoid romance as much as possible, it does not agree with profit and loss. Philip had no right to inherit a strong dose of it. It was this knowledge that shook his faith in heredity, for by nature he had almost as much romance in him as had Forster Bethune, his college friend. This man was Philip's Ideal of perfection; he was so strongly original in his views, that he could see no distinction of rank or wealth. Possessing both himself, he was the only true Radical Philip had as yet encountered. He had a creed that "all men are equal," and acted up to it. It was at times a very inconvenient creed, and Philip saw that his own father, who had raised himself entirely by his genius and his industry, laughed at the idea of comparing himself or of being compared with his own workmen. Forster, on the contrary, who was related to some of the bluest blood in the land, could not see why this should entitle him to any more regard from his fellow-men than if he had been born in a workhouse.
At the beginning of their friendship Philip had one day remarked that there could be but very little in common between the Bethones and the Gillbanks, and at this moment Philip smiled again at the recollection of the wrath he had called down upon himself.

"Look here, Gillbanks, if you ever say such a thing as that to me again our friendship ends. I don't care a straw who your people are or what they are. I liked you and I think you liked me from the first. We met here as Freshmen; you have to put up with my odd ways, and I shall have to put up with your want of sense in liking me. I don't make friends easily, but I like you. If you swear to respect my prejudices I will do the same by yours, but don't let me hear of rank and all that sort of rubbish. There is much to do in the world, and we have to prepare for it as best we can. I didn't want to come to college, because men think too much of a college education, but my father insisted on it, so here I am."

Gillbanks's friendship for Forster was a subject of remark among the other Freshmen, but that did not stop it. Their college life was now over. Forster had passed a brilliant examination in everything; he had eclipsed Philip, but when they parted Forster's last words were:

"I'm coming to Moorchester in a fortnight. I must go home first to receive the parental blessing. My advice to you, Philip, is, take a few days' walking tour and sweep away all recollection of these narrow-minded dons, and when I come we'll settle plans for the future."

"Oh, mine will be patent boiler-screws," Philip said, sighing and laughing at the same time.

"I don't know; we must consult. Suppose your father accepted me in your stead? There's a great deal to be made out of screws. You can get hold of your men by working with them."

Philip laughed aloud.

"You should hear my father on that subject! He ought to know, and he has no belief in getting hold of men."

Forster's fine pale face looked extremely grave.

"It's no laughing matter. You see, Philip, one's elders don't know; they think they do, and they try to stifle our ideas, but we must be cautious. My father is all wrong. He thinks a man who isn't a gentleman by birth can't be expected to act the same as one who is. This is merely the remains of servility and prejudice. We must think for ourselves. Go and commune with Nature, Philip, then all will come clear."

Philip had taken his friend's advice, and here he was alone, but unpleasantly alone, with Nature. To spend the night on the desolate fell, enveloped in mist in lieu of a blanket, is not conducive to pleasing meditation.

"I wish I had waited for Forster, though the chances are he would not have rested here, but he would have wandered about till he fell over one of these treacherous rocks."

Thoughts of Forster beguilled the time, but did not cure Philip's hunger, nor did they dry his now saturated garments. At last he jumped up, and determined to do something more exciting than to sit still under a rock. If he had to walk up and down all night in this narrow upland valley, it would certainly be better than to sow the seeds of future rheumatism.

To beguile the time he tried to think of Forster's views on various subjects, for Forster's views were never dull, and usually they were so surprising as to give ample food for reflection; but in spite of himself, Philip's mind strayed back to the inevitable chop he had eaten in the morning at the "Greendale Valley Inn." He would find no fault with it now, could he order its twin brother. He felt numbed and stiff; the mist filled his eyes, and the rain dripping from his hat made rivulets down his back.

Suddenly a lamb started from its mother's side. Its bleating broke the desolate stillness, but better still, it was followed by a long, low whistle and the bark of a shepherd's dog. Philip's spirits rose at once and he shouted lustily. There must be a shepherd close at hand with the dog, for these hardy men often wandered all night on the fells, especially if they had lost a sheep, or if it were lambing time.

There was no answer to his call, and Philip again shouted through the mist.

"Hi! Here! Is any one here? Hi!"

These folk of laconic speech are as likely as not to go their own way, he thought; but he was mistaken, for in another moment the blurred outline of a shepherd stood suddenly before him. The figure seemed to come from nowhere, thus adding to the mystery of the place. Philip at once made known his wants.

"My good fellow, I've lost my way. I was walking across these fells to Mere-
town, and a labourer down below told me to go straight up, and here I am."

"Meretown," was the answer, as if spoken enquiringly.

"Yes, Meretown, just the other side of this never-ending fell. I was afraid to proceed in this mist and darkness."

"You shudhev minded the path," was the short comfort afforded to the lost traveller.

"That was my stupidity, I suppose, but indeed I never saw it.

"Leak back noo and I'll show you," said the shepherd.

"I want to get on, my good man," said Philip, brushing the drops from before his eyes and speaking a little impatiently.

"D'ye nut mind, then, about Meretown? It's a goodish step from here. Ye be in the wrong path noo."

"I do mind about getting shelter and supper, but where I get that I don't much care—the sooner the better. Perhaps there is a farmhouse in these parts?"

"Farm! Bless your sow!, there's nowt but the Palace between here and Meretown." The Palace was, of course, the name of a public, and Philip accepted this offer of bed and board with alacrity.

"I shall be extremely glad if you will show me the way to it, my good fellow."

"I can show you the way, sartin sure, boot—"

"I can pay my night's lodging," said Philip, mistaking the shepherd's meaning.

"I dare say you can, boot—"

"But what?" said Philip impatiently.

"Boot the King's got a crank against strangers."

"The King?" Was this shepherd an idiot?

"Ay!"

"But I can't stay here even if the Palace won't give me a night's shelter."

"I kent saw; the King might, and he might not."

"Legally he can't refuse to take in a bocde-side traveller," said Philip, forgetting he was dealing with a peasant.

"What kind o' traveller did you saw?"

"An honest man. My good fellow, if we go on talking here much longer I shall be frozen to death."

"That's not uncommon in the winter, sartin sure, boot—the King's got a will of his own; howsoever, noo I'll tak' you to him."

Philip was not in a mood to argue; he was very weary, very wet, and very hungry, and though he could have knocked the fellow down for talking such rubbish he considered that it was not to his advantage to do so. For a while he now followed his companion in silence, and indeed to follow at all required all his small remaining stock of energy. After crossing a stretch of rocky ground, the guide ascended another hill, at the summit of which he stood still.

"If it war clear, you cud see right doon into the valley fra here," he said; "the Palace is doon yonder. This is the most shut in kind of glen in the country. Yur not laysum, be you?"

"I'll follow you," said Philip, hardly understanding the vocabulary.

"It's a bit steep but shorter. This 'ere mountain is Fettishon and kind o' shuts in the Rothery glen. Toorist gents never coom our way; they never find the Rothery."

"Then the Palace is out of the beaten track?" said Philip, still a little uncertain as to what kind of shelter he was being taken to.

"The King don't like strangers, no more does the Dook."

"The Duke must be another inn," thought Philip. But what on earth did they exist for if not for strangers?

His guide, however, now turned suddenly down a sharp ridge covered with slate and loose stones, which the least touch of the shepherd's wooden shoes sent flying down below into the misty depth.

Presently the guide paused again and remarked:

"You can scramble a bit?"

"Oh, yes; but it's so wet and dark I can't see my footing."

"It's a foin country, this 'ere, for hills. Ah'll show you two foin rocks for climbing. This one'll shorten the way, and the King's made a bit of a path at the bottom through the deep part of the dale. Boot alone I wudna advise it. There's danger of falling into the Rothery, and if you did no one would be a bit wiser."

"I'd rather not," said Philip, smiling to himself.

"Sartin sure. Now, just swing yourself doon."

Philip was not a great mountaineer, and he now found himself expected to climb down the face of an almost perpendicular and rocky hill. Here and there were tiny ledges where the foot could rest a moment, and where one could take breath for the next scramble. Philip was too proud to
NOTABLE NEW YEAR'S DAYS.

[January 7, 1891]

own that he was not much pleased with his path, but he allowed the shepherd to take his knapsack, and then he followed him as best he could, regardless of the mud which he meditated must be sadly spoiling the only suit he possessed. Neither was he much reconciled to his situation by hearing the roar of one of the many mountain streams, which after rain become raging torrents, and which, as was here the case, have in past times cut themselves a deep bed through masses of solid rock.

However, "all's well that ends well," and at last Philip jumped down upon what he felt to be, for he could not see, a path placed on level ground.

"Here is the King's path," said the shepherd. "He's often said to me, 'Jim Oldcorn, nature has made my natural boundaries, and I'd rayder have the age than a lot of them strangers about the place.'"

"This good man is not particularly fond of his fellow-creatures, then!" remarked Philip.

"Sartin sure," was the answer.

"I think I'd better walk on to Mere-town in that case."

"If the stimmock's empty, victuals is agreeable, sir, and I tak' it that's your condition. It so happens the Dook's at home, and he's particularly civil; but the King — here the shepherd laughed — 'he's not one of your narvish sort as thinks of consequences. If he war to find a stranger here, he'd as loik as not send him into the Rothery and not help him out of it again, that's sartin sure.'"

"And yet travellers must come here pretty often, unless this is the best road of approach, in which case —" "It's no' so bad, sir, for one as niver's been out of the country; but Lord! there's another on to the high-road, only the King has put bars in, as like snarley dogs as possible, to warn 'em off."

Philip was more and more puzzled, and was going to make another remark when his companion silenced him.

"It's best not to speak loud, for the King, as loik as not, might be firing at us. There's no telling when he's oot or in. Best keep quiet."

NOTABLE NEW YEAR'S DAYS.

ALTHOUGH New Year's Day may be all, and not even of the dignity of a quarter day, yet perhaps all the more for that it continues to grow in popularity as a festival even to the depredation of Christmas. The latter is a casket of old memories often too sad to be encouraging, while there is something of hope anyhow in the prospect of a new year. And with all the changes of styles and calendars, and the intrusion of other beginnings of years, legal, ecclesiastical, or financial, it has always been the first of January that has come victorious out of the competition as the real undoubted New Year's Day.

Thus it was in the Roman calendar, and visits were paid and presents exchanged among the fine people in old Rome, just as to-day in Paris, where the shops are all gay with New Year's gifts, and a universal fair seems to be held in the streets and boulevards. With us devotion seems to take the place of pleasure. We stick to our ledgers, we deal out gold and notes over bank counters, but we have rousing watch-night services on New Year's Eve.

If anybody would open St. Paul's Cathedral on that occasion, it would be crammed; as it is, people crowd about the churchyard and wish each other a good time as the bell tolls out the midnight hour.

It is from Scotland doubtless that we have been inoculated with this gregarious way of letting in the New Year. For wherever Scotia's sons are to be found, they are pretty sure to be busy in letting in the New Year, which has always been a favoured festival in Scotland, since dour John Knox put Christmas out of fashion, although we may suspect that French influence has had something to do with the matter. And to Scottish engineers and sea captains is probably due the general recognition of the New Year by the great British mercantile steam navy. "The numerous steamers anchored in our port," wrote a French journalist from Rouen, "have saluted the commencement of the year 1880 in the English manner. At midnight a piercing carillon of all the ships' bells made itself heard and lasted during a quarter of an hour. It is the second time that this usage has been practised at Rouen." Since then the usage has made the tour of the world. It is a tintinnabulation that runs all round the globe, and is heard in nearly every harbour in the world.

In former days it was the capital of
Scotland that led the way in the joyous celebration of the New Year. As midnight struck on New Year’s Eve the streets of Auld Reekie would be more thronged than at midafternoon, while the lowering fronts of the old gabled, overhanging houses, the wynds and dark courts, and flights of steps that seemed to lead into the abyss, would be flecked with moving lights; and the windows would shine out with a joyous glow, and all the passers-by would exchange hearty greetings. But on one notable New Year’s Eve, of 1812, a band of young apprentices conspired to sour the streets and knock down and rob all whom they found on their way. “This,” writes Walter Scott, “they executed with such spirit on the last night of the year, that two men have died and several others are dangerously ill from the wanton treatment they received. The watchword of these young heroes when they met with resistance was ‘Mar him,’ a word of dire import.” Three of the lads, all under eighteen years of age, suffered the penalty of death for their share in this outrage, although their youth and penitence excited the deepest compassion. And altogether this inexcusable affair brought the celebration, at all events in Edinburgh, into some discredit.

But the children still remember New Year’s Eve as Hogmanay:

The cottage bairns sing blythe and gay
At the la’ door for Hogmanay.

And at Abbotsford in Sir Walter’s time they each got a penny and an oaten cake. On the other side of the water, on the Norman seaboard, the children, too, sing at people’s doors and shout “Aguinesita,” a phrase which has puzzled all the antiquaries, but which has probably a closer relationship to Hogmanay.

As for New Year’s gifts in general, they seem to be in origin as old as the calendar itself. The lawyers under the Roman codes fostered and preserved these pleasant perquisites amid the shock of falling empires. And under the old French régime every one who had a procès—and that meant every person of condition—made it a point to pay a New Year’s visit to the judges in the cause, and delicately leave behind a suitable number of gold pieces. The same custom was fostered by English lawyers, but purists might reject the presents, as Sir Thomas More, who, when a lady visitor sent him a pair of gloves with forty gold pieces inside, was content to take the gloves but refused the lining. But presents from subordinate officials to their chiefs were accepted, and even expected by the most scrupulous. The monarch, too, looked for New Year’s gifts as marks of loyalty from the high nobility, and these gifts were of considerable amount in Elizabeth’s reign, but dwindled to very little under the Stuarts.

In the French Court of old it was different. There the great function was the “Rols,” our Twelfth Day, when, in imitation of the Magi, whom the feast is supposed to commemorate, the French nobles brought rich gifts to their King. The “Rols” is still in high favour among Norman peasants as a day of continual feasting; but the old observances, with the election of king or queen, according to the chance allotment of the bean in the cake, seem everywhere to have gone out of use.

The Revolution it was that brought New Year’s Day to the front, that French Revolution that threatened to abolish it altogether. The Republican Calendar does not acknowledge such a day. You may search the months Ventose and Pluviose in vain for any recognition of the Jour de l’An. But the first of January, 1806, witnessed the triumph of New Year’s Day with the restoration of the Gregorian Calendar, and a general reversion to things as they were before the revolutionary deluge. And with the Empire the day assumed a place of its own among the brilliant festivals of a Court where everything was gaudy, bright, and new.

Still there were notable New Year’s Days before that epoch. Suppose we stand ghostlike behind the chair of state at Scone, where, on the first of January, 1626, sits Charles the First, enthroned on his Coronation Day, bringing to mind the ghostly pageant witnessed by Macbeth:

Some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry.

Then, witnessing the great nobles and fair dames of Scotland at his feet, we may look forward to another New Year’s Day spent sadly and alone at Windsor in 1649. The King, a captive and deserted by all, now gazes from the windows of his palace prison, and far away on the horizon he may see the pinacles of the sombre pile at Westminster, where his Parliament that very day had voted his virtual sentence of death.

Just a hundred and one years ago, on New Year’s Day in 1793, another King and prisoner, Louis the Sixteenth, was await-
ing his doom at the hands of a hostile Convention. His prison was in the cold vaulted chamber of the old donjon of the Templars, and here he spent the last days of his long anguish, separated from wife, children, friends, in the view of hostile and mocking spectators. “On the first of January on his awakening,” writes Lamartine, “Clergy, his faithful valet, approached his master’s bed and offered him, in a low voice, his good wishes for a happy end to his misfortunes. The King received those wishes with emotion, and lifted his eyes to heaven in recalling the days when such homage, whispered to-day in low murmur by the sole companion of his dungeon, resounded as the voice of a whole people through the magnificent galleries of Versailles.”

Again, with the brilliant receptions of the great Emperor, surrounded by his victorious marshals, and receiving the congratulations of subject princes, we may contrast the New Year’s Day at Elbe, in 1815—the tiny court, the band of broken exiles! Yet there was a great though secret gathering of the braves of the old army that day about their idolised chief, and the cloud soon burst upon Europe in the lurid tempest of the Hundred Days. In England on the same day people were enjoying the first days of peace. Some were reading the “Glacour,” others Scott’s new poem, while a few of the élite were expanding over Wordsworth’s “Excursion,” and a new novel by the author of Waverley was coming out forthwith. And no one dreamt of the glory and slaughter of Waterloo.

After the shock of arms the arts come in again. But New Year’s Days of a notable kind are few and far between. On New Year’s Day, 1821, Macready is playing in “Virginius.” On New Year’s Day, 1834, Flaxman, the sculptor, gives a dinner-party, when Sir John and Lady Franklin are guests, poor Sir John so soon to spend a last New Year’s Day among the terrible icy solitudes of the Arctic regions. A New Year’s party, in 1851, was planned at the Athenaeum Club, to consist entirely of the bright spirits of the age. Goldsmith had imagined such a symposium a generation before:

We’ll have Johnson and Burke, all the wits will be there;
with a reminiscence, perhaps, of a still earlier repast promised to Bolteau:

Molière avec Tartufe, y doit jouer son rôle.

But this particular banquet turned out a dull affair, and, indeed, none of the guests were of very distinguished mark.

Greville records the banquet, where Maule—afterwards Justice Maule—was very rude to him. On an earlier New Year’s Day, Greville himself had begun his Diary, for which posterity may be mildly grateful, although doubtless it was a grievous burden to the poor man himself. The Diary gives us another New Year’s Day, that of 1838, which “opens in gloom and uncertainty. The Chartists are in great force, collecting arms and constantly practising at firing at a mark.” How timid were our grandfathers and grandmothers! If they trembled all over at the Chartists with their harmless five points, what sort of a face would they have made to the Socialists, the Anarchists, to say nothing of the Dynamiters, of to-day?

A few years afterwards it was the Corn Law agitation which was making people tremble; and New Year’s Day, 1846, found Sir Robert Peel busy in rearranging the Ministry which was to carry their repeal. In 1851 the New Year opened with great anticipations of the world’s fair and of the wonderful glass palace that was rising under Sir Joseph Paxton’s auspices among the trees in Hyde Park. It was a gloomy New Year’s Day, that which the British Army spent in 1855 on the frozen plateau before Sebastopol. A third of the troops were in hospital. The warm clothing destined for the army had been lost in the wreck of the “Prince,” or was lying hopelessly embedded in a chaos of useless stores. The soldiers were in rags, and with biscuits and salt junk for their daily rations, they were hardly able to hold the trenches which were continually searched by the heavy fire of a powerful artillery.

On the following New Year’s Day the interest was transferred to the French capital; for under the Second Empire this was the special day for manifestations of future policy. All Europe waited with some apprehension to hear what might be said by the Emperor at his New Year receptions. In 1856 the Emperor reviewed his guard and his daily rations, they were hardly able to hold the trenches which were continually searched by the heavy fire of a powerful artillery.
scarcely interrupted by the terrible Indian Mutiny. And 1857 was the most delightful year of which there is any record in England, the weather perfect, and an outdoor life almost becoming a habit. New Year's Day, 1858, opened like one of a genial spring. Needless to say that soon came a killing frost, and nipped any hopes of a cycle of genial years.

In 1859 we have Napoleon again culminating on New Year's Day in a peremptory speech to the Austrian Ambassador. And the campaign which followed, with the victories of Solferino and Magenta, brought the Emperor to the zenith of his power and fame.

The usual New Year's articles in our daily papers of the first of January, 1866, announced "a world at peace," and congratulated the country on its commercial and social prosperity. The year proved a disastrous one. In May came the suspension of Overend and Gurney, with Black Friday in the City, and a general breakdown of credit, which brought poverty and distress to many helpless families.

And on the second of July Sadowa was fought, and Prussia, victorious over Austria, became the leading power in Europe.

Perhaps the blackest, bitterest day of the century was the New Year's Day of 1871. Before Christmas the frost set in with a severity unknown for many years. The military administration of France had been completely crushed, its chief armies dispersed or captured; but she was still struggling, with hasty levies and an improvised Government, against overwhelming odds. Paris, invested since the twelfth of September, was reduced to the last extremity. On the Jour de l'An the bombardment was at its height, shells were raining down upon the beautiful city; the Seine, encumbered with ice, brought down the bodies of men killed in desperate sorties or drowned in the retreat. It was a day of darkness and despair. The most hopeful hardly dared to make a forecast of the future. Yet France has risen from the disaster, stronger and with a more wholesome strength.

Again, among the phantasmagoria of the past, we may picture the brilliant scene at Calcutta on New Year's Day, 1876, when the Prince of Wales was holding a grand chapter of the Star of India, surrounded by tributary potentates in their magnificence of jewellry and costume.

But another portentous New Year's Day was that of 1878, when the Russian hosts had passed the Balkans and were pouring into the plains with nothing to arrest their victorious march on long-coveted Constantinople. A great war seemed imminent, but we were happily quit for the scare, and July brought us "Peace with honour" from Berlin.

Approaching nearer and nearer to the present time, we are brought more and more under the influence of the depressing "fin-de-siècle" feeling, and to rest our hopes rather on the absence of misfortune than on any brilliant forecasts of the future. But this wry old century may still have its surprises for us, and its future chronicler may yet have to add to the record of notable New Year's Days.

THE IRON HORSE IN THE HOLY LAND.

The services of the ubiquitous Cook have for years rendered travel in the Holy Land, and in Egypt, so much less formidable than it used to be, that the public mind has been prepared to regard with calmness development which at one time would have been discussed excitedly as wonders of the age. The railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, for instance, is now quietly accepted as an accomplished fact, just like the railway to Constantinople, or the still more remarkable tracks across the Rocky Mountains. But while everybody knows that now the iron road links the seaboard with the City which is regarded as Sacred by the three great religions of the world, not so many people are aware of a hardly less interesting projection of nineteenth century enterprise into Syria.

Yet commercially, and perhaps even socially, the Damascus railway is potentially far more important than the Jerusalem railway.

The city of Damascus is, somehow, much less familiar to the Western world than the City of the Holy Sepulchre, and probably most people think of the capital of Syria only as a place of departed glory and decay. Apart from the Bible narrative, and the tradition of famous sword-blades, Damascus has probably no definite place in the average mind at all. Yet not only has it played an important part in the great drama of the world, not only has it a history fading away into the far back atmosphere of myth, but it is to-day one of the greatest cities in the East. It was a city in the days of Abraham, and it has
remained a city ever since, although it has been twelve times destroyed, and has been successively occupied by Syrians, Parthians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Turks.

A city of four thousand years old which still retains importance as a centre of commerce and of social life can be no mean place.

But old as it is, the modern Damascus has little of the outward splendour of the East, though it is an active entrepot of trade. Its streets are mean, but its wealth is great. Not less than a quarter of a million of people permanently inhabit its houses, while its bazaars are constantly thronged by traders from all parts of the East. The capital of Syria is, in short, a sort of commercial "hub" of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, where, as Lady Burton has written, one may daily observe: "the Circassian and Anatolian; the wild Bedouin Sheik; the fat, oily, cunning, money-making Jew; the warlike looking Druse; the rough Kurd; the sleek, fawning, frightened Christian; the grave, sinister Moslem; the self-possessed Persian; the waddling Turk; the quiet, deep-looking Moslem; the dark and trusty Algerine, "Every costume of Asia," she says, "every sect of religion, all talking different tongues, all bringing their wares to sell, or coming to buy; every tongue, every race jostling one another and struggling through the strings of mules, camels, donkeys, and thoroughbred mares."

But Damascus is a hundred miles from the sea-coast, and dependent on camels for carriage, and, therefore, according to Western ideas, at least a hundred miles from anywhere. Surrounded by beautiful gardens and orchards, decorated with stately mosques and picturesque minaretes, this wonderful old city seems to Europeans to be buried in the desert. It is an anachronism — this place of busy trade, so far removed from the course of the great commercial currents of the world; this town of shabbily-looking houses, whose rich intereads are said to exceed in magnificence and beauty anything to be found in either Cairo or Constantinople.

No longer is it famed for the sword-blades which attained such a fabulous value—Sheffield and Birmingham having taken its place. No longer is it famed for the snowy damaak — which Dunfermline and Belfast can now turn out so much more cheaply. But in silk and cotton and woollen fabrics its manufactures are still extensive and renowned; and for delicate decorative work in the precious metals it remains without a rival. And so, seated on the banks of the river Abana, at the foot of the mountains of Lebanon, the city of Damascus, as both a survival of the dim and distant past, and an expression of the living present, is one of the most interesting places in the world.

To connect Damascus with the Western world there are now two projects. One is the scheme of a French company, who have obtained a concession from the Sultan of Turkey for the construction of a railway from the port of Beyrout to Damascus; and another is the scheme of an English company, who have obtained a concession for the construction of a line from the Bay of Acre to Damascus. The British enterprise has naturally the most interest for us, and as it is now in progress, we propose to give a brief description of it.

The idea of a railway in Syria, it may be remarked, is no new one. It was first mooted some fifty years ago, and was discussed from time to time; but to the present Sultan—who is much more enlightened and progressive than is generally supposed—belongs the honour of giving it authority. It required, however, much hard fighting against traditional habits and Turkish procrastination for Mr. J. R. Pilling to obtain the formal concession—nothing can be done in the Turkish dominions without a " firman"—which was at length granted to him a few years ago. Surveys had then to be made, and these took up some four years; and then the capital had to be got together, which required more time. Sir Douglas Fox was selected as the engineer of the line, which is to be built on the solid English system, and of the English standard gauge.

The two things upon which the engineers had first to decide, were the starting-point at the coast, and the line of route to be followed.

After much careful consideration, Sir Douglas Fox decided in favour of the Bay of Acre, which is three miles deep and eight miles across, having at one end the ancient town of Acre — or Akka—famous in the Crusades, in the wars of Bonaparte, and in the revolt of Ibrahim Pasha; and at the other end, the modern town of Haifa, which has been made familiar to English readers by the long residence in its neighbourhood of the late Laurence Oliphant.

Neither of these places is at present of great commercial importance, but the Bay
of Acre is said to be the only bay on the Syrian coast able to accommodate safely our large modern ships. In ancient days Tyre and Sidon were the great ports of this coast, and from Tyre went the fleets of the enterprising Phoenicians, long before the Christian Era. But nothing more marks the difference between the ships of the ancient and of the modern maritime nations than the utter unsuitability of the ancient ports for our modern ships.

Now Acre, although a place of small population and of limited trade, is a Turkish military centre, and is destined to become a great depot of the Ottoman Empire; while Haifa is destined to become a great entrepot of commerce.

The railway line begins in a fork, one prong being Acre, and the other Haifa. The junction of the prongs is formed at the head of the Bay some distance to the east of Haifa, and thereafter the line traverses the Plain of Esdraelon, along the foot of Mount Carmel. The first station is at Belles-es-Sheikh. In crossing the Plain the railway leaves Nazareth some distance to the left, but runs close by Nain, for which the station will be Shunem. From Shunem the route is through Jerseel, and the land of Issachar, to the valley of the Jordan.

Following the course of the Jordan for some distance, the railway then crosses the river on a bridge, and skirting the lower end of the Sea of Gaililee reaches the Hauran Plain—the ancient land of Og, King of Bashan. The next important places are the towns of Gamala, Klahin, and Nawa, at which point the Plain of Damascus is reached. Running across this Plain, the railway passes along the eastern base of Mount Hermon, and so enters the city of Damascus from the south. Thus it traverses the region where the tradition says that Job pastured his flocks and herds—a region which, until comparatively recent times, was well populated, as the ruins of numerous villages testify, until the people were driven out by the Arabs, who here fasten their cattle and horses, after their long journey from Mesopotamia on the way to the markets of Egypt.

The wonderful fertility of the soil of this region is proverbial, and enables one to understand how Syria was once known as the granary of the world. The author of "The Land and the Book" says of the valley of the Jordan that "few spots on earth, and none in this country, possess greater agricultural and manufacturing advantages than this valley, and yet it is utterly desolate"—until the railway awakens it to a new life.

Some years ago, when the concession had just been granted to a Turkish syndicate—afterwards cancelled and a new one given to Mr. Pilling—Laurence Oliphant wrote: "It needs only a more satisfactory administration on the part of the Government, and the connection of this district with the sea by rail, to make Belsen an important commercial and manufacturing centre. All kinds of machinery might be driven at small expense by its abounding brooks, and then the lovely Valley of Jezreel above it, Irrigated by the Jalad, and the Gher Belsen below, watered in every part by many fertilizing streams, are capable of sustaining a little nation in and of themselves."

But a little bit of engineering is required to carry the railway down this valley, for the river is here eight hundred feet below the level of the sea.

At Djier-el-Medjamieh is an ancient Roman bridge of three arches, over which the camels still carry the produce of the Hauran to the coast, and near this ancient viaduct the new railway bridge will probably be built, thus bringing the old and the new civilisation side by side in a striking manner.

The grain trade must be even now very large, for Laurence Oliphant said that he used to see thousands of grain-laden camels collected at the gates of both Acre and Haifa, waiting to be relieved of their burdens, from the rich interior plains. And this was not part of the actual Damascus trade, which for the most part finds its way along the carriage-road which the French made some years ago across the Lebanon to Beyrount. When the Syria-Ottoman Railway, however, is completed, all the westward trade of Damascus, as well as the traffic of the intervening regions, will, it is expected, pass along the line.

One of the privileges of the concession, we understand, is to place and run steamers on the Sea of Galilee. Concerning this it is interesting to recall what Oliphant wrote in 1883: "The great Plain of Genesarath, across which I rode, is now a waste of the most luxuriant wild vegetation, watered by three fine streams, besides being well supplied with springs. It was celebrated of old for the amount and variety of its produce; and I have no
doubt is again destined to be so. The plains in which Bethlehem and Capernaum stood formerly are all covered with heavy vegetation, which conceals the extensive ruins of the cities which once adorned them; and there is a fine back country within easy reach of the lake, which will send its produce to it as soon as means of transportation are provided. At present there are only half-a-dozen sailing-boats on the Lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee—rather a contrast from the time when Josephus collected no fewer than two hundred and thirty war-ships with which to attack Tiberias in the war against the Romans; and the fish with which it abounded in the days of the miraculous draught are more miraculously numerous than ever; for fishing as an industry has almost ceased to exist, and the finny tribe are left undisturbed. There are some celebrated sulphur baths also on the shores of the lake, and within two miles of the town of Tiberias, which are visited annually by thousands of patients."

It is said that even now the Plains of Bashan produce upwards of two hundred thousand tons of grain annually, all of which is conveyed either to Damascus or to the coast on camels. Travellers say that on these plains furrows a mile long are frequently seen. The great cost of carriage necessarily restricts the tillage, but, with the railway, an enormous development in agriculture appears almost certain. Besides grain, the country is capable of producing wool, cotton, olives and other fruit, and is peculiarly adapted for the cultivation of the silk-worm. The passenger traffic may not be extensive at first, as the population of the whole region does not probably exceed one million, but it is bound to grow as trade develops. And, moreover, the line will doubtless be largely used by tourists and pilgrims.

Meanwhile, the promoters count upon a revenue of about forty-five thousand pounds a year from passengers, and about one hundred and eighty thousand pounds a year from goods; the latter estimate being based on a traffic of about one hundred and eighty thousand tons. The estimated cost of construction and preliminary expenses is about two millions sterling. This seems a small sum for a railway of about one hundred and fifty miles; but then three-fourths of it will be over almost level plains, involving neither expensive cuttings nor costly embankments.

Haifa, as we have said, will be the coast terminus for the goods traffic, and it is intended to form a line of swift steamers between that port and London. By-and-by, it is thought that the bulk of the foreign trade of Syria—which amounts to about five and a half millions sterling per annum, including about one million's worth of Manchester goods—will concentrate at Haifa, because there the outward steamers will always be able to get homeward cargoes of grain and other produce brought down by the railway.

Consul Trotter, of Beyrut, in a recent official report, says that: "It may be safely concluded that of all the railway schemes hitherto propounded in Syria, this is the most reasonable and hopeful, from an engineering and financial point of view. Whether it will be productive of immediate dividends is another question; but at any rate, it may be said that if this railway will not pay there is very little chance of any railway paying in Syria."

Several miles of it have already been laid, and perhaps in the not very dim and distant future, the Syria-Ottoman railway may be continued to the Persian Gulf, and so on towards the Indian frontier, in realisation of a long-cherished dream.

Haifa, the commercial terminus, is quite a modern place compared with the Governmental terminus, Akka, or Acre, or St. Jean d'Acre—a town which has had a more eventful history than any other on the coast of Syria. It was called by Boupare the Key of Palestine, and it has been the scene of almost countless contests. Laurence Oliphant was able to make up a list of no fewer than fifteen sieges which the town has undergone, without including numerous more or less doubtful episodes in the time of the ancient Egyptians. The first authentic siege was in the year 721 B.C., when Shalmaneser tried to wrest the fortress from the Syrians, and the last was in the year 1840 A.D., when Sir Charles Napier bombarded it with English guns, aided by those of the allied Austrian and Turkish fleets.

It contains now but a small population, variously estimated at from nine to fifteen thousand, for the most part cooped up in the fortifications, but it is picturesque enough. Oliphant said that there is no more characteristic bazaar in the East than that of Acre, with its motley crowd of wild Bedouins; devout Parsees; Turkish soldiers; white-turbaned Druses; wild, gipsy-looking Metawalls; Syrian Christians; and Moslem peasants— with the accom-
paniment of veiled women, long strings of camels, an occasional foreigner, and a few sailors from the ships in harbour.

It possesses a unique mosque—that of Jezzar Pacha, with vaulted galleries, supported by ancient columns brought from the ruins of Tyre and Cesarea—four Christian churches, and an immense citadel. In ancient times it was the most populous and flourishing place on the Syrian seaboard after the decline of Tyre and Sidon, and must have housed an immense population, but it is only once mentioned in the Old Testament, as a town from which the tribe of Asher did not succeed in driving the Cannamites; and once in the New Testament, under the name of Ptolemais, as a place visited by Saint Paul on his way from Greece to Jerusalem.

Besides the Syria-Ottoman line, another railway is in course of construction in Palestine. This is the line from Beyrout to Damascus, already mentioned, for which a concession has been obtained by a French company. This, however, will be a much more expensive railway to construct than that we have been describing, as it has to cross two mountain-ranges. It is, however, a shorter route, and as Beyrout is a great emporium of trade and centre of finance, the French line—the building of which has been assigned to a Paris Société de Construction—will doubtless be a formidable competitor of the English line. The latter, however, will have the advantage of the prospective traffic of the fertile country it traverses between Damascus and the sea.

A word in conclusion as to the Jaffa and Jerusalem railway, now in actual operation. This scheme also dates back for fifty years, or nearly so, although it did not take shape until about 1860, when three lines of route were advocated. One was the old Roman road from Jerusalem to Cesarea, passing Mispeh and over the battlefield of Joshua and the five Kings. A modification of this route found the largest number of supporters, the plan being to start from Jaffa in an easterly direction, cross the mountains by the Pass of Bath-Horon, and approach Jerusalem from the north. This route was carefully explored and surveyed by French engineers in 1874 and in the following year.

Meanwhile, however, a German-American named Zimpel, who lived in Jerusalem, and who had for himself surveyed the various routes, had decided that one more to the south was preferable. He was an experienced railroad engineer, as well as a scientist, and he settled at Jerusalem to practise medicine while maturing his scheme.

He died, however, before it reached fruition. The line of route actually adopted follows that laid down so long ago by Zimpel. It was recognised in the end by practical experts to be the best, because two-thirds of its course were over plains.

The concession was granted by the Sultan of Turkey to a French company, and the railway has been built by French engineers with French capital. Most of the rails and the coal were imported from Belgium, the other appliances from France, and labour from the Soudan and Algeria. Great difficulties attended the landing of the plant at Jaffa, and much trouble attended the labour question, especially when the hills of Judea were reached. But in two years and a half the railway was completed at a cost of about half a million sterling, and in September of last year it was formally opened to traffic.

Between Jaffa and Jerusalem there are five stations: Ludd, the Lod of the Hebrews and the Lydda of the Romans; Ramleh, in the midst of olive groves; Es Si-jid, a place of water supply; Deir-Aban, in the country of Samson; Bittir, the first station among the mountains, situated amid wild and romantic scenery, and where are the vegetable gardens which supply Jerusalem; and an intermediate station.

Jerusalem stands two thousand four hundred and eighty feet above the level of the terminus at Jaffa, and it takes the train three and a half hours to make the journey of fifty-three miles. The return ticket, first-class, costs about sixteen francs, and for this small sum one is transported across a country every rood of which is rich in Bible associations.

The shriek of the locomotive will soon be as familiar on the plains of Syria and in the valley of the Jordan, as it is already amid the hills of Judea and in the vicinity of Holy Jerusalem.

PAWNED.

(FACT.)

At times wer' bitter hard, honey. I'se fourscore years and ten.
But I'se never seed like hungering deed as what wer' round us then:
For t' yards wer' closed, and t' jet wer' nort, and t' seas wer' wild and rough.
An' ivery step one went one heard trouble an' want enuff.
Charles Dickens.

HIS SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

Up in this very yard, where I have bided all my life,
Was this two men could not face it out— sick bairns and 
hungry wife;
One hanged himself, and one just slipped off t' pier-
side at 't flood;
Some says they walks. I've watched for 'em; see
'em I never could.

Well, well, it's years ago, an' things brightened up
 bit by bit.
It's none for 'lack o' bread or fire I wants to threep
on it;
But it left a secret in my heart, that weary time we
passed.
I'd go a deal the easier if I got it told at last.

Nay, I never heeded parsons much. I can't tell
 Perhaps fresher and more original— but
around to ipeak, the celebrated painter he
had in his sordid, every-day cares, and even in his
most sanguine moments he scarcely dreamt
of celebrity. He had begun life with
plenty of ambition and almost inexhaustible
 energy; but circumstances had thwarted
the one and turned the other to an un-
congenial use, so that instead of the great
 things he would and could have done, he
used to esteem himself lucky if he got a
small picture indifferently hung in one of
the London exhibitions. His work was
scarcely noticed, still less criticised, and he
might have remained obscure till the end
of things, if his name and address in the
Academy catalogue had not happened to
stand immediately above a certain name
and address which a certain great lady
was looking for on a certain private show
day, which was destined to be the turning-
point in the history of more than one
person.

The name which the lady was looking
for is, to us, totally unimportant. The
one which caught her eye and attention
was, "Wyndham, Lewis, ten, Bristol
Terrace, Carchester. Number one thousand
two hundred and ninety-six."

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, more to her-
sel than to her companion, "a Carchester
genius! That is interesting. I must look
up his picture. Now, my dear Sir Anthony,"
she went on, "you mustn't let me bore
you. I know you have had enough of it."

"I wonder why you say that?" rejoined
the person addressed, half reproachfully.
"You know I should never have enough
of it—with you. Besides, I have a heap
of things to say to you, and in this crowd,
while you have been so busy with the
pictures, I haven't been able to speak a
word."

It was getting late and the crowd was
thinning, but she did not seem inclined to
encourage him to say any of the "heap of
things" he had on his mind.

"It will be in room five— no, six,"
she said, consulting her catalogue again.
"So if you really don't mind coming with
me, let us go." And he followed her
submissively.

"Did you ever see any one so desperately
in love as poor Mainwaring!" said somebody, looking after them as they passed.

"I wonder if she cares for him!"

"Cares for him?" rejoined the man addressed. "Not she! She never has cared, and never will care, for any one."

"Well, I wonder if she'll accept him!"

"She may," was the answer, "for the same reason as she married the late Mr. Kerr."

"But she married Kerr, or was married to him—which is, I suppose, the correct version of the story—for his money. She's a rich woman now, and Mainwaring is as poor as a church mouse."

"Yes, but remember his family, the oldest in Southdownshire."

"My good fellow, she doesn't go in for family. She cultivates the painter, sculptor, penny-a-liner sort of fellow. She won't marry into a stiff, stuck-up family like Mainwaring's."

"Well, I don't care if she doesn't. I tell you what," he added with a sudden air of conviction, "she's the handsomest woman in London, and she's thirty if she's a day; Lady St. Aubyn says so."

Meanwhile the couple under discussion were standing before number one thousand two hundred and ninety-six, which was a small picture hung in a corner. The subject of it was a fisher boy, sitting listlessly on a cottage window seat dangling his long legs and gazing out through the mullioned panes on to an estuary, where the tide was low and the boats lay stranded among the brilliant red and green seaweed.

She looked at it critically and long. Then she put a mark against it in her catalogue.

"Wyndham, of Carchester," she said meditatively, "do you happen to have heard of him?"

"I don't know," was the reply, "but I believe a fellow of that name teaches my sister Ursula. She dabbles in paint when we are down at Carchester."

"Ah, well," she said, "he must be clever. The next time I am at Bramthurst I shall cultivate his acquaintance."

"Shall you?" he said, a shade of surprise in his tone.

"Why not?" she asked, smiling.

"Oh, well," he replied hesitatingly, "I don't think it would do exactly. That is, if he really is the painting master. You see, in town one expects to meet a medley of people, but at Bramthurst it's different. People are so much more exclusive in the country."

"I suppose they are," she rejoined, still smiling, and then she put another mark against one thousand two hundred and ninety-six. "It is later than I thought," she went on, "and I am dining at the St. Anwyn's! I think I must go."

He followed her down the steps to her carriage.

"Will you take me as far as the Park?"

he said, when she held out her hand to bid him good-bye, "I have not said my say yet."

She made room for him beside her, but there was no cordiality in her manner.

"You can guess what it is," he began, leaning forward so that she could hear his lowered voice in the roar of Piccadilly.

"I want to finish what I began to say to you last night."

"My dear Sir Anthony," she replied, "I had so much rather you did not finish. If I could have given you the answer you want, I would have heard you to the end last night."

"I guessed as much," he said, bearing his discomfort as if he had expected it; "but still I have something to ask. I know you always say you will not marry again. But you are young. You may change your mind. Is there any hope for me if you do?"

"I don't know about my youth," she replied. "I am eight-and-twenty. Still, of course, a woman may always change her mind. In spite of which I cannot tell you either to hope or to wait."

"I shall do the one if not the other," he said, "and you won't mind being friends, just the same as ever!"

"Of course," she replied, "why should we not be friends? If I don't want to marry I don't wish to be friendless. There, good-bye. Please don't kiss my hand in the street. It isn't proper."

A few days later the small household of number ten, Bristol Terrace, Carchester, was thrown into a flutter of excitement by an announcement from Burlington House that Mr. Lewis Wyndham's picture, "Low Water," had been sold to Lady Patricia Kerr, of Bramthurst.

"Lady Patricia Kerr," said Wyndham, laying down the letter, "who is she?"

"She is the widow of old Mr. Kerr who used to keep the bank in Jewry Street," replied his mother. "People talked about her a great deal in Carchester at the time she married. It was when you were living in Paris. Her father was a Scotch peer. She was seventeen and her husband..."
About a week later a smart brougham drove through Carchester to Bristol Terrace, and an unimpeachable footman descended from it to execute a knock on the door of number ten, such as seldom surprised that unpretending locality. Then Mrs. Wyndham’s rough-handed maid-of-all-work carried to her mistress a visiting card on which the good lady read with astonishment the name of Lady Patricia Kerr. The next moment the visitor had entered a dingy little sitting-room, where the flames of the last meal were waiting for those of the next to overpower them.

“Is Mr. Wyndham at home?” she asked, smiling graciously, while inwardly she wondered what connexion existed between the painter and the solid, eminently commonplace old lady who was the sole occupant of the room. Perhaps she was his wife; perhaps he, too, was elderly, bulky, and uninteresting-looking—well, anyhow he was clever, and here she was. “I hope he is at home,” she continued, during the momentary pause which Mrs. Wyndham needed to recover herself before she said:

“My son is out, but I expect him in directly, if your ladyship does not mind waiting.”

“Thank you,” replied Lady Patricia, with an involuntary sense of relief at the explanation of the old lady’s position. “I will certainly wait if you will allow me. You remember my name, perhaps. I am the owner of one of Mr. Wyndham’s pictures. I am most anxious to secure another. I wonder if he will be kind enough to show me anything he may have in his studio?”

“I am afraid, your ladyship,” was the reply, “that he hasn’t much finished work. He has so little time for painting pictures—at least, like the one you bought.”

“Hasn’t he? Then I am wrong in imagining him to be an artist by profession?”

“He was educated as an artist,” replied the old lady proudly. “He studied in what he says was the very best school in Paris; but now he gives most of his time to teaching.”

“Indeed!” said Lady Patricia. “But isn’t that rather a pity? His picture seemed to show such talent. Does he prefer teaching?”

“Oh, no, that he doesn’t!” cried the artist’s mother. “He’d far rather paint

nearly seventy. But I’ve heard nothing about her now for a long time.”

“I have!” said Wyndham’s sister. “I have heard that Sir Anthony Mainwaring wants to marry her.”

“Perhaps,” went on the elder lady, “it was Sir Anthony who spoke to her of you.”

“Not he!” said Wyndham.

“It’s a splendid thing, anyhow,” resumed his mother, “and when it gets known it might bring you a better class of pupils.”

“Dash the pupils!” cried Wyndham impatiently. “I wish there were no such things as pupils.”

“My dear Lewis,” exclaimed his mother, “don’t talk like that. It’s tempting Providence. How should we keep this roof over our heads if it weren’t for your pupils!”

“Yes,” he said, “they are certainly necessary, but none the less an evil.”

Then he handed over Lady Patricia’s cheque to his mother, and, having carefully brushed his shabby coat, went to pay his bi-weekly visit to Miss Cramham’s select boarding-school, where—while he made never-ending corrections of hopeless proportion and perspective—he solaced himself by building the most romantic castles in the air on the narrow basa of this, his first stroke of luck.

But the days wore on into months; Lady Patricia’s cheque was absorbed into the everlastings arrears of household bills, and Wyndham’s castles in the air were in serious need of repair.

“I was an idiot,” he said to himself; “as if selling a picture could make any difference to the utter hopelessness of it all!”

Meanwhile an unusually brilliant London season had run its course. A Royal wedding and an Imperial visit had filled society’s list of engagements to overflowing; and, when it was all over, Lady Patricia Kerr went abroad to recruit, and then to Scotland to spend Christmas among her own people. It was there she got a letter from her house-steward at Bryantthurst, reminding her that he was still waiting for directions as to the hanging of certain pictures she had had sent down from London months before.

“Pictures!” she ejaculated. “Of course, what an oversight! And then there is that man at Carchester whose painting I liked so much. I ought to have gone to Bryantthurst long ago.”
pictures. But, you see, painting pictures is a precarious way of getting a living, and pupils are pretty safe when you've got a good connection to start with. You see, it isn't as if Lewis had only himself to think of; but there's me and his sister. If it wasn't for us he'd live abroad. He doesn't care a bit for exhibiting in London," she continued, warming up with her subject. "That is, he'd far rather send his pictures to Paris if he could afford it. But when my poor husband died some years ago there were complications. His business—he was a solicitor—didn't wind up as well as we expected it to; so Lewis had to come home and take his place as the bread-winner for the family. He gets on very well, I'm thankful to say. He's getting quite a county connection now, since he's taught Miss Mainwaring, and his time's almost filled up."

"He must be a very good son," said Lady Patricia, thinking, as she spoke, of the wistful look in the face of the boy who sat gazing out at the stranded boats.

"Yes, he's a good son," assented the old lady; "but he gets very discontented now and again. He's never really settled down to it. But he's the best of sons for that. Ah, there he comes. Lewis," she went on, bustling out into the narrow front passage, "here is Lady Patricia Kerr; she wants to see you."

Lady Patricia's interest in the painter of "Low Water" had, during her conversation with his communicative mother, considerably deepened. She was a peculiar species of the genus of which Mrs. Leo Hunter is the personating type. She did not trouble herself much about the lions before whom every one agrees to bow down in admiration. She preferred to unearth her big game herself, and to force from a select aesthetic circle the admission that her critical acumen was superior to that of the ordinary dilettante. She had not unnaturally presupposed Mr. Wyndham to be a young man with his foot on the lowest rung of the ladder, who would finally be a great credit to his earliest patron, always supposing that he allowed himself to be patronised. But the real state of the case was much more enticing. She had come on her lion hampered and enslaved by the meshes of a net which she could easily sunder, and she felt a little thrill of elation at the thought of the glory his emancipation would reflect on her. She looked at him eagerly as he entered. She saw a vigorous-looking man of middle height, past his first youth, his dark, irregular face barely redeemed from ugliness by remarkably fine grey eyes. His general appearance was as unpretending as his abode. He looked plain, brisk, businesslike. There was no hint of artistic license in his dress or manner, no protest against the Philistinism of his commonplace surroundings, no assertion of conscious superiority to his daily life. He bowed to his visitor and waited for her to speak.

"I wonder," she began, with a little tremor of excitement which surprised herself, "I wonder if I may claim a few minutes of your valuable time, Mr. Wyndham? The fact is, I am so charmed with your picture that I want to see if I can find a companion to it in your studio."

His face brightened perceptibly; but by way of answer he shook his head.

"I am sorry to say I have nothing in my studio," he said, "but studies and sketches."

"So Mrs. Wyndham feared," replied Lady Patricia. "Still, unless you make it a rule not to show your work to strangers, it would give me great pleasure to look at what you have."

"I have no rules about strangers," he said grimly, "for the simple reason that strangers do not come. All that you care to see I will show you."

Then he rose and led the way to a capacious garret, lighted from the roof. Every available bit of the walls was hung with canvases of every shape and size; other canvases were piled in stacks, bulging portfolios lay here and there, and under the skylight stood an easel on which was an unfinished sketch of a girl's head. But the room was nearly destitute of those countless accessories, those gleams of coloured draperies, those graceful lines of form which the artist's eye delights in. It was less an artist's studio than a poor painter's workshop.

"Is this what you call 'nothing' in your studio?" cried Lady Patricia. "I should call it an immense accumulation of work."

"It is an accumulation I might just as well never have allowed to gather," he replied. "The folly is that I am always slaving to increase it."

"Why do you say folly?" she asked with some surprise. "You must work, you have your name to make."

"So I used to think," he replied. "I have given up that idea now."
She looked at him for a moment in silence. There was a certain bitterness in his tone—a constraint in his manner—that stirred her almost to a sense of shame that she had been so long in coming to his help.

"Mrs. Wyndham has told me your history," she said. "I know you have made a very noble sacrifice."

"I don't know about the nobility," he rejoined; "I simply shouldered a responsibility I could not refuse."

"It comes to just the same thing," she said, and as she spoke she began moving slowly round the room, examining here and there with a careful eye.

In front of the easel she stopped. He stopped hastily forward.

"Please do not look at that," he said nervously. "It is an unfinished study from memory," and he lifted it from its place.

"The expression seems half familiar to me," she said interrogatively, but he made no answer, and she continued her investigation with a comment now and again. Presently she seated herself on the wooden stool before the easel and looked at the artist.

"Mr. Wyndham," she began slowly, "I have a proposal to make to you. It occurred to me while Mrs. Wyndham was talking downstairs, and I have thought it over up here. I should like you to paint my portrait—a full-length, life-size portrait—for the next Paris Salon. Could I persuade you to undertake such a commission?"

He had moved a step nearer while she spoke. The soft light from above fell on her dazzling auburn hair, and gave tender shadow to her creamy skin; her eyes flashed on him, half in command, half in entreaty. She looked to him like the embodiment of a better fate. His chilled ambition caught fire again.

"Persuade is hardly the word," he said. "You do not know what such an offer means to me—to me of all men. Why, a portrait of you as it might be painted would make any man’s name and fame, once and for all."

"That is a very fine compliment," she replied, laughing. "I hope there is some truth in it, for your own sake. Then it is settled; and now let us talk of the sittings and of the business side in general."

The road from Carisbrooke to Bryanthorpe lies uphill over broad-bosomed downs, in the curves of which, as Lady Patricia drove homeward, the shadows were gathering, while the meagre Scotch fir and solid yew-trees stood out black against the pale February evening sky. She leaned back in her carriage with a look of satisfaction on her face. "Yes," she said, "it was a splendid compliment from such a man, and I think if it can come true, I would like it to come true for Lewis Wyndham." And then for the rest of her drive her ladyship amused herself by imagining scenes and situations which should grow out of the success in store for the man whom she was going to lift out of obscurity.

"And so you have come to Bryanthorpe at last; I thought you had deserted the place; and now I suppose we shall only have you in the neighbourhood for the shortest possible time."

It was Sir Anthony Mainwaring who said this, and Lady Patricia, to whom he spoke, laughed at him.

"You are wrong," she said. "I am going to stay at least two months."

"Two months! That is really kind of you. If you only knew what it means to me. Now, please don't turn the subject, I am not going to say anything—of that kind. I have come to ask you a favour. I want you to help me out of a hobble."

"How can I help you? Of course, it depends on what kind of hobble it is."

"It is about Ursula," he replied. "Now, dear Lady Patricia, you will acknowledge that I hold a very difficult position with regard to my sister. It is so difficult to act as guardian to one’s sister—horribly difficult."

"Is it? Now, I should have thought Ursula was an extremely easy girl to manage."

"Of course you would, because she has such a quiet way with her. But you try going against the grain with her."

"Then why do you go against the grain with her? She can't need it."

"Indeed she can, and does; that's just what I have to tell you about. Of course," he continued, lowering his voice, "you know Lord Bertie Ewtree, Lord Southdown's second son?"

"Certainly."

"And isn't he a good sort of fellow, a capital match for any girl—family, looks, cash, everything?"

"Certainly," said Lady Patricia again.

"Well, he wants to marry Ursula, and she won't accept him."

His hearer smiled.
"Perhaps she doesn’t care for him."
"But why shouldn’t she care for him? Any girl might care for Bertie. I tell you she’s a dreadful responsibility, and I want you to talk to her."
"About your responsibility, or about Lord Bertie?" she asked.
"Oh, about everything. I don’t believe she realises what she’s doing in refusing him."
"Perhaps," suggested Lady Patricia, "perhaps there is some one else."
"There can be nobody else—who else could there be? No one can fancy Ursula with two strings to her bow. Now you will talk to her, won’t you? If you are staying a long while you will have lots of chances."
"I’ll do what I can. But you must know I am going to be very busy. I have a great undertaking on hand. You ought to be interested. Do you remember my talking to you one day at the Academy about a certain Mr. Wyndham, an artist at Carchester? No, you don’t! And you said you fancied Ursula was a pupil of his. You remember now? Well, I have unearthed Mr. Wyndham, and have commissioned him to paint my portrait. Now, why do you look so cross?"
"I’m not looking cross, I was only wondering why you let a third-rate fellow make a picture of you."
"You mustn’t call him third-rate till my picture has been in the Salon, my friend—after that you may chime in with the opinion of the multitude."

Sir Anthony rose to go. He did not care how Lewis Wyndham ranked as an artist; he only wished Lady Patricia cared less for art.

"But you will make an opportunity of talking to Ursula," he said, as he took leave, "or, anyhow, you will take the first that offers itself, just to oblige me?"

And Lady Patricia promised.

The opportunity, however, either never came, or Lady Patricia let it slip. On the whole, she saw little of her neighbours, the Mainwarings, in the weeks that followed, for the painting of her portrait absorbed a large share of her time and attention, and left her altogether indisposed for minding other people’s business, even by special request.

"I wish so much," Mr. Wyndham had said the first time she posed for him in his garret studio, "that it were possible for me to make a couple of studies of you before beginning the actual portrait, but I fear you would find it too irksome to have to sit so much."

"Irkstone!" she replied, smiling on him graciously, "why should I find it irksome? Quite the contrary. I have placed myself in your hands. You will, of course, do whatever you consider necessary to your complete success."

"You are very, very good," he said, letting his eyes rest for a moment gratefully on her.

And then, Lady Patricia Kerr, who always declared that for her the day of youthful emotion had passed by on the other side, felt the colour mount to her face with a thrill from her heart such as her courtship, her marriage, and her widowhood had never brought her.

The blush passed, but the memory of that thrill seemed to change everything for her. It was scarcely to be wondered at that the suitability of a match with Lord Bertie Ewtree became a matter of insignificance. And how could she trouble herself to ascertain the state of a rather commonplace girl’s affections when she was so fully occupied with the overwhelming discovery she had made concerning herself? It was a very absurd discovery—it was even humiliating—but at the same time, it was delightful to know that Love, who had always been a myth to her, should have become suddenly a serious reality. She could not even manage to feel ashamed that her heart beat faster for an obscure drawing-master—the son of a provincial solicitor.

"He is a heaven-born genius," she said proudly to herself; "that is what the world will have to acknowledge in him."

She saw the new light at her heart shining from the canvas as her portrait developed and throve. She wondered if he saw it too. Sometimes she thought he did, when he drew back from his work and looked at it long and tenderly.

Of what his feeling for her must be, she had scarcely a moment’s doubt. To be loved was far more natural to her than to love. His reticence on the subject was also natural, considering their present relations.

So, at last, the picture was finished, packed, and despatched, and Wyndham, who intended to follow it to Paris and be present at the opening of the Salon and the voting of the jury, came to pay a farewell visit to Lady Patricia.

"We shall probably meet in Paris," she
said. "I shall come over when we have both become persons of distinction."

He had risen to go, but stood hesitating as if he had still something of importance to say.

"If it should be," he began slowly, "that I do get the distinction I hope for, I am going to venture to ask you a very great favour. I shall place my life's happiness in your hands—if I succeed, I mean."

"Would it not be better to ask me now?" she said, looking up at him. "Surely you know that my estimation of you does not depend on your immediate success!"

"Yours may not," he replied. "Unfortunately, the world contains few such as you."

With that he left her.

It was from the French art journals that Lady Patricia learnt the fate of her portrait. They were all loud in praise, both of painter and subject, and her ladyship fixed the date of her visit to Paris. Wyndham was expecting her there; she told herself, otherwise he would surely have written to her.

Before she started, however, she received an urgent invitation from Ursula Mainwaring, which, in a fit of remorse at her neglect, she accepted.

"Patricia, darling," began that young lady in a coaxing tone, as soon as they were alone together, "I want to have a most important talk with you, and I am so afraid of beginning. First of all I should like to ask you if Anthony has ever said anything to you in confidence about my marrying?"

"You surely would not expect me to tell you if he had," was Lady Patricia's reply.

"Ah, well, I can guess he has hinted as much. He has asked you to help him to talk me into accepting Lord Bertie Ewtree, Patricia, you have been a perfect angel."

"I don't think your brother would say so." "Perhaps not, but, you know, you never would have talked me over, and as you didn't try I am able to speak to you about another matter much more important."

"Go on, dear," said Lady Patricia, as the girl hesitated.

Then Miss Mainwaring made a desperate effort.

"Patricia," she began, "I—that is, we want your help with Anthony. He always thinks you are in the right. He will approve of any one whom you approve of."

"Ah," said Lady Patricia, smiling, "then there is some one else after all."

"Of course there is some one else," replied Ursula, blushing, "some one Anthony will think dreadfully unsuitable. But you are a friend of his. He told me so," continued Miss Mainwaring, growing ambiguous in the use of her pronouns; "he told me to ask you to plead our cause with Anthony. Look here," and she drew from her pocket a closely written letter, "this is what he writes. I got it last night;" and she read: "'Of course some difficulties still remain, but my idea is to place our cause in the hands of Lady Patricia Kerr. She is a woman in a thousand. To me she has been a special Providence. I feel almost sure she will consent to intercede with your brother.' Now, concluded the girl, 'can you guess who it is?"

"It is Lewis Wyndham," said Lady Patricia very calmly.

"Yes, it is Lewis Wyndham. We have had an understanding for more than a year; but you see he has been so poor and handicapped. He will get on now. He has two commissions already—I was to tell you so—and oh, my darling Patricia, you will help us, won't you? Don't look so awfully serious."

"It is a serious matter," replied Lewis Wyndham's Special Providence.

"Not so very, very serious, dear. I know Anthony will do anything you ask him to do."

A little later, when Miss Mainwaring's engagement to a certain rising portrait painter was announced and caused some surprise, her brother took great pains to explain to every one that his consent had been wrung from him by the persistent persuasions of Lady Patricia Kerr.

"I shouldn't have been half so much astonished if she had told me she meant to marry him herself," he added on several occasions. "He's just the sort of fellow she would go and lose her heart to—only, much as I admire her, I don't believe she has a heart to lose."

THROUGH THE RANKS.

BY MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. B. S. DE COURCY JAFFAN.)

Author of "Aunt Hepsy's Foundling," "My Land of Beulah," "Bonnie Kate," "The Pekton Romances," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIX. SIMMONS IS EXHILARATED.

It has already been said that the Hundred and Ninety-Third was in a state of much turmoil and unrest. As time went on, this condition of things was in-
tensified rather than allayed, for the most astounding items of news, followed one on the other with lightning rapidity.

Sadness, deep and pathetic, gladness and great joy, the rending of hearts already filled with sorrow to overflowing, the joy of hearts reunited after long severance—all these kept crowding on, jostling one another, as it were, to see who should get to the front and claim the most notice.

"If you have tears, prepare to shed them now," seemed one to cry; yet another: "Laugh with me, friends, that I have found Heaven's world so fair! Ring out, oh! joy-bells, that my happiness may find a voice;" and men's hearts were torn now this way, and now that. Here was Colour-Sergeant number one company, as fine a non-commissioned officer as ever "stood a regiment," pale and hollow-eyed truly, and very like what you might expect his own ghost to be, but still on his legs again. If they were rather shaky legs, what matter? There he was, any way.

Hadn't they seen him with their very own eyes, driving in a carriage with a grand lady—a lady who might have been a queen by the look of her, and she smiling this way and that, and seeming so proud of the pale man by her side?

McMurdock swore mighty oaths as to the privileges enjoyed by those who had seen this sight; and as to Coghlan, when the Colour-Sergeant stopped the carriage, and spoke to him kindly and gently, being even still a little short as to breath, that worthy man's heart began to feel ever so many times too big for its topic, his feelings ultimately finding relief in a mad rush to the canteen, and a treat to all the men who chanced to be there at the time.

Then Orderly Simmons got leave off duty, and came out of the hospital splendid and shining, his hair smooth and black as the raven's wing, his facings dazzling, and gave himself all sorts of airs. He swaggered into the canteen and began to gas about how well "we" had managed the case; indeed, Simmons seemed to have been in partnership with the doctor all through, in truth to have been the more important man of the two.

"The Colour-Sergeant," said Simmons, "quite in a providential kind of way, turned to speak to a little dog, and so the bullet 'it's chase slantendicularly, an' knitched the hedge of the lungs, in place of the centre, which would have been mortal, an' no 'opes to be 'ad. It was a matter of big wessels and little wessels, an' it hall hung on a thread, as the sayin' is. 'There's a chance for 'im,' says the doctor, 'but it's a regular hint of a chance,' says he, and I was of the same opinion, mates.

'Lord knows,' says the doctor, 'which 'all win—life or death,' says he, an' it felt kinder solemn, I can tell you, to hear such words; 'but we'll do our best,' says he, 'and with such a horderly as Simmons to hundred take the case as far as nursing goes, we're givin' the poor man every benediction,' says he.

Some of the men winked at each other over the edges of their pewters; but others were deeply impressed, shaking their heads gravely.

"But the hawfulest time of all was when they took his disposition," continued Simmons, revealing in the horrors he was relating, his cap marvellously on one aide, and flipping his trouser-leg with his natty little cane. "I heard them read it out to him, an' it said as how he stated them there fao's believing himself to be a dyin' man, an'all that. I says to myself on the strict Q.T., 'Not if I knows it,' for I meant to pull 'im through if keer an' watchin' would do it. We didn't know then that if we kep' him alive he'd be a lord one of these days; and we wouldn't 'av' cared If we 'ad, for a man's a man, an's life's a life, an' an orphan's an orphan, where all are equal together, an' none afore or after t'other."

This sentiment met with universal applause. Then a blight seemed to fall upon everybody. The thought that had held his pewter upside down, and let the little bubbles of froth trickle down on to the floor. One or two coughed in a reflective and contemplative manner. At last a hatchet-faced, sombre-looking fellow, who had appeared to take an almost painfully keen interest in the discussion, or rather creation, for Simmons hadn't given any one much chance to get a word in, put into words the thought that had arisen like a spectre in their midst.

"It's a bad job about poor Harry."

A murmur that was like a groan followed. Harry the graceless, Harry the spendthrift, Harry who had been lashed like a dog, Harry who had sold his kit, what a favourite he was! The world is very unjust in these things; for some are terribly good and no one cares a rap about them, and some are always slipping and
tripping, and every one loves them, and tries to cover up their backfillings; ministers to them alive, passionately mourns them dead!

So young—and to have to say good-bye to life—having numbered only three-and-twenty years, and yet the knell must toll, the life be choked out of the young and lusty frame! Is there upon this earth a more terrible tragedy than that of capital punishment? The living, hearing, seeing, thinking human being, sound in life and limb, waking to the dawn of the day that means to him death by the hand of his fellow-man! It is a thought from which even the least sympathetic may well recoil. When such a fate comes to one you have seen and known day by day—whose face is as familiar to you as your own—what trembling horror must take possession of your soul as you think of the fate that awaits him? Can it be wondered at that the ranks of the regiment to which Harry Deacon belonged thrilled through and through when the verdict upon him was known to be that of death?

He was so young, so easily led, so weak in face of the power of his own fiery passions—such an irresponsible, reckless, dare-devil fellow!

Maybe if he had another chance, he would have made a better thing of life.

But there was to be no more chance in this life for Harry Deacon; he was to be hanged by the neck till he was dead—and might the Lord have mercy on his soul! He had had his chance, and lost it. The talk ran on in low-voiced short sentences; it was hard—hard—hard, they said; yet they were soldiers every one, and knew that the air had been murky with murder; that first at one station, then at another, officers or non-commissioned officers had been shot down; wantonly, too, and not because of any actual personal grudge or wrong. It was time that the authorities, military and civil, took some strong step.

Not long after this, a rumour, like a little breeze from the sea, began to creep and rustle in and about the Hundred and Ninety-Third. It had been known that the Colour-Sergeant's father had turned out to be an old boyish friend of the Colonel's; a fact that had been voted sufficiently interesting. Had not the two been seen walking about together, the one lean and lank, with sager face and soldierly mien—their own fiery, generous-hearted Chief—and the other somewhat portly, dressed in priestly garb, and instinct with a gentle courtesy of manner that well became his sacred calling? Had they not been seen laughing, as they talked, those two—doubtless of the olden days, and the various escapades of each, or both?

"You bet they were a blithesome pair," said a sprightly young Sergeant at the Sergeant's mess, and the stately Sergeant-Major, stiff as buckram, puffed out like a pouter pigeon, relaxed his dignity somewhat, and gave a solemn guffaw, like the firing off of a minute-gun, then looked supernaturally grave. The Colonel Commanding as a schoolboy, and a mischievous one too, was an idea savouring of disrespect, it might almost be looked upon as mutinous. But the enormity of this, and every other idea, paled its insensitve fires before a new and wonderful rumour; a rumour that grew, and from a little breeze became a mighty gale. There could, indeed, be no doubt of the fact, marvellous and incredible as it might appear. Miss Alison Drew was one day to become the wife of this Colour-Sergeant number one company, who was in reality—or would be one day, it was all the same thing—a living lord. It may seem a strange thing, but it was, nevertheless, a fact, that these simple and hearty men saw nothing incongruous in this betrothal. Their social ideas were not very vividly developed, and to them it appeared a most proper and fitting thing. The Colour-Sergeant was the most excellent and popular non-com. that had ever been in their midst; Miss Drew was the best and sweetest lady. The thing commended itself to them as altogether desirable. In their eyes no higher honour existed than for a man to have his commission given to him. No doubt the Colour-Sergeant would thus have greatness thrust upon him. Then he would marry Miss Drew. When their wives were ill she would visit them; when their little children were laid low she would go and sit beside them, hold their little hot hands in hers, and, maybe, sing to them, as she did to Corporal Haywood's little girl, when the poor child lay stretched out straight after pulling the boiling teakettle over on to her little self. Of course the lady would play the organ at the Chapel as usual—no one played it like she did. Should they ever forget the Sunday when the doctor's lady was busy with it, and it set up a squeal like a cat with its tail caught in a trap, and took no less than three privates, two non-coms., and the
doctor himself to silence it? It would never do for the regiment to be left in the lurch that way.

But others took a different view of matters, and surmises and "you don't say so," and "well, I never" were rife. Some of these comments came to Alison's ears, and made her blush; but do you think she cared any way?

A great sorrow, or a great joy, lifts us out of the reach of tongues. The pain, or the happiness, as the case may be, is so absorbing and intense, that every other thing around us is dwarfed, and grows indistinct and far away. What does it matter what people say? Nay, what does anything matter?

Then Mrs. Musters was a tower of strength. If she had had nothing to say to the matter, she would have been on fire with curiosity, and her tongue would have wagged as the clapper of a bell that is always ringing. As it was, she looked upon herself as one of the chief actors in the strange and romantic drama; and she took every one concerned in it under her capacious wing. No one dared say a word in her presence that might not have been said in Alison's.

"Of course it is all right now," said one daring female, "and nothing can be nicer, such a good family as the Claverdons, and such delightful people, and all that; but there must have been a time—don't you think so? Quite so—"

But Mrs. Musters's eye grew round and totally expressionless, her mouth opened, and remained so; she looked like a dead wall, so perfectly dense was she in the matter of understanding the innuendoes of the other; and that was all that any one ever got out of her. The Hospital Sergeant was almost as reticent, and the scene in the ward, when Hubert Claverdon thought he lay a-dying, and listened to an angel's voice, became as though it never had been.

Save in the memory of two hearts, wherein its record was written in colours that could never fade or die.

What shall we say of the happiness that had now come to Alison? The clouds and mists of uncertainty had passed away, and the blessed sun itself was shining on her pathway. To one of her intense and concentrated nature, the joy that now had come was as keen as the pain that had preceded it. Yet she was very quiet about it all; and when Sunday came round she was in her place at the organ, as though nothing strange or wonderful had come about since the week before.

But the singing did not go so well as before. Both the tenors were lacking, for Captain Dennison had gone on leave, prior to starting for India to join the corps into which he had effected an exchange. Not even to Elise had her cousin spoken of her parting interview with Hugh Dennison; not even to Hubert Claverdon did she ever speak of it in the days to come. It was a sacred thing, this pure and perfect love that knew no earthly close, a memory that all her life long Alison treasured.

About this time it began to dawn on little Missy that there were more things in heaven and earth than she had dreamt of in her philosophy. She had a grave, sweet, contemplative look about her that was absolutely irresistible, and went about de-murely, walking as though she trod on eggs. And in her child-heart were thoughts many and strange, for in the little circle that was her world, changes seemed passing, and hitherto unknown influences and individualities were making themselves felt. Between herself and Mrs. Claverdon a touching friendship grew; a fondness that was pretty to see, since each was so perfect in her way—the beautiful, stately woman, and the dainty, fairy-like child.

There had been no difficulty about the granting of furlough to Hubert Claverdon, and his father and mother had gladly taken him to a comfortable hotel in the city, where they could be more together. But this was only for a time; since, as soon as his health and strength would permit, they were all to start for Forrest-leigh.

Meanwhile, the lovers contrived to see a good deal of each other, and each day as it passed seemed to draw them more closely together. Of the change of fortune that had taken place in the career of Colour-Sergeant number one company, Alison spoke but little. Once, holding her close in his arms, and looking deep down into her happy eyes, Hubert said:

"Are you not glad, my darling, that things are—as they are?"

She returned his steadfast gaze, and her eyes were grave and tender.

"Yes," she said, "I suppose I am. It pleases everybody, and it makes Daddy and the mother happy, but I loved you, Hubert, just as you were."

Whether little Missy ever caught a glimpse of one of these tender encounters, which, truth to tell, were of frequent
enough occurrence, certain it is, as has been said before, she grew very grave and thoughtful.

At last, Missey spoke out what was in her mind. She leaned her head against Alison's shoulder, and the long-lashed eyes looked up into Alison's face. But Missey did not ask a question, she stated a fact.

"You've taken my officer Sergeant for a sweetheart, Alison—good Eliza says so, an' Mr. Drummer says so—an' it's spoken of in the regiment—an' I say so my own self . . . an' Mr. Drummer's got his 'dueness, an' he's goin' to marry good Eliza an' take her quite away, an' I do be very sadly—I truly do—and—Alison—Alison dear, will the officer Sergeant take you away too?"

Here was a pretty state of things! Little Missey, a white distressful heap, shaken with sobs, had flung herself into her dear Alison's arms; and the rest of the family, including Lieutenant Verrinder, were gathered round her in a moment, and each clutching at what they could get of her. It was perhaps quite as well that the "officer Sergeant" did not chance to be present, or he might have felt himself a miserable and guilty malefactor. It was also a good thing that little Missey did not chance to call to mind the scathing rebuke with which her own idea of taking the officer Sergeant for a sweetheart, had been met in times past.

It must not be supposed that the effulgence of her own joy and perfect content blinded Alison's eyes, so that she forgot to watch over the sorrows of others, or that the sad and silent little home that turned its side-face to the winding lane, knew her no more. Yet how helpless she felt, trying to comfort and sustain poor desolate Norah in her awful grief! Words seemed utterly powerless; indeed, the touch of a tender hand was, at times, almost more than could be borne. The tears might run down the furrowed cheeks of Father John; Norah's neighbours might kneel and beat the air with trembling hands; but Norah's eyes were dry, her hands seemed no longer able even to be raised in prayer. Ever since that awful moment when Father John, shaking like a leaf, and clutching at the crucifix that hung upon his breast, had told her that her lover must die a shameful death, no tears had softened the strained misery of Norah's eyes. Those lovely eyes were dull and glazed, a great terror lurking in their depths. It was as though she ever watched the horrible pageant of Deacon's death. Every now and then a tremor would pass over her from head to foot, and Phelim—never far from the mistress he loved in this her day of sorrow—would give a piteous, lengthened whistle, and lay his ugly, faithful head in her lap.

"Arrah, whist now!" would some tearful neighbour say. "Shpake a word or two, me dartint, or Iver yer poor heart burst wi' the pent-up sorre!"

And Norah would get up, Phelim following close, and wander into the wood, a weird, sad figure, passing slowly under the shadow of the trees, from which, every now and then, a leaf came fluttering slowly down, the first-fruits of autumn's harvest of death.

In vain the pigeons fluttered and cowered, alighting softly in the girl's pathway, with bowings and sweeping of tail-feathers on the mossy ground; she had no eyes to see them.

Only one vision was hers. The white young face of her lover, with the brown eyes set fiercely, and the line of the lips showing blue, the last look on the world and the light of the sun, and then—the white cap drawn swiftly across it, the grating of the bolt as it is withdrawn, the sickening thud as the body falls and swings, the breaking of the rope as the weight stretches its coiled strands.

Over and over and over again comes the fearful vision. She sees it limned upon the curtain of the night as she lies sleepless through the silent hours; it is there on the sunlight of the day-dawn; there as she kneels still and tearless in the chapel, and the people fall away from her in awe and fear.

Norah is not the only one who suffers. In the midst of all his happiness, even with Alison by his side, and her gentle, helpful hand in his, Hubert Claverdon cannot put aside the thought that the light of that young life will soon be put out for ever. Not one impulse of anger lurks in his heart against his would-be murderer. He would fain move heaven and earth to get the verdict reversed. He has talked the matter over from every possible standpoint, weighed every possible chance of a commutation of the punishment. He dared not—no one dared—speak of it to the Colonel. There is a deep shadow on the stern face—the life of a soldier is precious in the man's eyes—and yet, in his inmost heart, he is conscious of no
dissent from the decision arrived at by the court. He knows that in some sort Private Harry Deacon will die a martyr, since Hubert Claverdon lives; but in the army things have reached a terrible crisis; the lives of those who are set to rule must be protected; and, in this case, premeditation was plainly proved by the evidence of Private Perkins McMurdo. The thing is unutterably sad, but it is inevitable, and every one knows that the Colonel feels this, and every one pays the tribute of silence alike to his resolve and his regret. So far the day of the execution has not been made public. There is a general sensation of waiting for the announcement, like the catching of a man’s breath; and it becomes known that the prisoner has been removed to Kilmainham Jail, and that there the last dread scene will take place.

And the time draws near for the Honourable and Reverend Claverdon, his wife, and son, to start for Devon. Alison is with her lover, and has been telling him of her visit to Norah that day. She has told of the hollow eyes, the pallid lips, the changed face of the poor girl, of Phelim’s patient, persistent devotion; and Claverdon, just touching the tendrils of her hair now and then, or laying a fond hand upon her shoulder, watches her changeful, speaking face, and thinks there is no other face like it in all the world! It is his star, his sun, the music, and light, and sweetness of his life! What can he do—even if Heaven grant him a long life to do it in—to show how dear he counts the treasure of her love, how all unworthy of her tender, womanly devotion he feels?

"As if it wasn’t joy enough," he says presently, "to think of seeing my own home again; of wandering in those Devonshire lanes that are like no other lanes; of listening to the sound of the old church bells that comes trembling over the pine-woods, but that it must all be made more perfectly beautiful for me, by taking you there with me and showing them all to you, my queen. Ah, Alison, do you remember:

Bid me good-bye, good-bye——

But she will not let him finish the line. She lays her hand against his mouth, and he sees the tears glisten in her eyes.

"Hush!" she says, with a little sob; "don’t speak of that," and then—memory catching her, and holding her—she cries:

"Oh, Hubert! do you remember the shrieking of the fiddle on the hill?"

Does he remember? Can he ever forget if he live a thousand years?

"Do you know," he says, holding her hands as if he would never let them go, "even now sometimes I dream that it is like that again—I fancy I see you turning from me, as you did that night, your white face showing pale among the shadows, the sound of your footsteps growing fainter and fainter, and I making a mad struggle to follow you. I wake to remember all the blessed truth——"

"There is no good-bye any more now for me," says Alison softly, "as long as we both shall live."

And they are silent awhile. But there is a thing Alison has to say.

"Hubert—I want you to promise me something!"

"Is it a hard thing?"

"It is a right thing—promise!"

"Without knowing what it is?"

"Yes; without knowing what it is!"

"I—promise!" he says, smiling.

But Alison does not smile.

NOTE.

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A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
BY ESMÉ STUART.
Author of "Joan Veilacet," "A Woman of Forty," "Kratell of Greston," etc., etc.

CHAPTER II. A KING AND HIS COURT.

Philip Ollibanks had so lately been in the full swing of a busy and monotonous University life, that now having chanced upon this adventure he had some difficulty in believing that he was really in his senses. The day's long tramp had wearied him, and the cold and chill he had experienced on the fell—though his late scramble had considerably restored his circulation—caused him to say to himself, half in fun, and half in earnest, that he must be dreaming. The shepherd's talk about a Palace, a King, and a Duke, was, of course, easily explainable, only he was unable to explain it; and at this moment the river far below the thin path, though invisible through the darkness, added to the mystery, for it splashed and roared between its rocky banks. Moreover, he glen was well wooded, and the trees ending over the foaming stream hid from his curious eyes its struggle with its rocky foe. Philip followed in silence not because he believed in the King's murderous rifle, but because conversation was useless unless carried on at very close quarters, and he felt too weary to shout so as to make himself heard above the noise. Following closely the shepherd's eels—and this in itself was not easy, considering that the countryman was not at all spent, and that the townsman was nearly exhausted—Philip at last saw that his ride paused before a small wicket gate.

Opening it he took a path directly to his left, leaving the river to roar on its way alone, and soon after the two emerged on what Philip fancied must be a lawn, beyond which a large pile of building suddenly hid the grey sky. A few lights twinkled in various windows, but they appeared only to add to the mysterious silence of the place. This silence was, however, soon broken when the shepherd, turning again to the left, entered a back courtyard. A furious barking of dogs and rattling of chains made Philip truly thankful that he was not alone, and still more puzzled as to the reason why this inn should look like a private mansion, and why the landlord kept so many dogs to guard it.

Suddenly he realised that this could be no common public-house, for the shepherd, leaving him in near companionship with the furious dogs, dived into a well-lighted kitchen, where he was soon surrounded by several servants, who, though not possessing the spick-and-span air of modern domestics, were certainly not the menials of a poor innkeeper. After some gesticulating and much talk, his friend returned to his side.

"The King's at home, and Betty is gone to talk to the Princess, for the Queen's a-bed. She never was up oop; ta t' bargain between the ledgy and the King. Sometimes they differ and frach't, but no fowling on course."

What all this might mean Philip did not know in the least, and by this time he did not much care. The warm glow from the kitchen fire, and the smell of savoury messes, was more than his starving temper could stand.

"I don't know who all these people are, but surely this good woman will let me
dry myself a little, and give me some supper, and then I’ll walk to Meretown, if hospitality is not to be had at—this farm.”

“It’s noash time o’ neit ta loose yaw temper,” said Jim Oldcorn, grinning broadly. “Yaw wad be a gay bit better I bed and with victuals inside o’ you, but if the King war to set his face agin it, well, ye see, your condition wad be for getting worse and worse. Patience a bit, sir, for Betty’s a neat lass and handy with haw tongue, and no doubt the Princess will tak’ pity on you.”

“Take pity! I can pay my night’s lodging,” said Philip shortly; but happily for his temper Betty reappeared. If she was unusually handy with her tongue she failed on this occasion, for she merely beckoned to the stranger to follow her. Philip turned to the shepherd and slipped a crown into his palm as he wished him “good night.” Jim Oldcorn, however, answered, with a grin on his face:

“No need, no need, sir, and I fancy you’ll be here for a bit longer; we’ll meet again.”

Philip sincerely hoped that he might not again require the swain’s services, but repeating his thanks, he followed Betty through dark passages, till at last they emerged into a large, oak-panelled hall, very dimly lighted by one oil lamp. Here Betty paused and looked at Philip’s dripping condition.

“The Princess had better come and see you here, sir,” she whispered.

Again Philip inwardly cursed the strange etiquette of these wild folk and wondered whether he could not allow a poor besotted traveller to come in and dry himself without so much ceremony and so many nicknames. Was he in an enchanted valley? Had he suddenly jumped back into a past age, or perhaps into a past age, or was he at some place more strange than respectable, which would turn out to be a den of iniquity, where robbery, and perhaps murder, were not unknown? The shepherd’s talk gave likelihood to the idea. No, the supposition was ridiculous, and Philip was about to make another impatient remark, when a roar of laughter rang through the hall, followed by a hurried sound of footsteps. Betty was visibly affected.

“It’s the King,” she murmured, “he’s coming out, and I thought he was drinking for the rest of the night. Liv-a-mercy!”

“Hang it all,” said Philip, “who is the villain they call the King?”

Suddenly a door opened, and the loud voice audibly preceded the person of the King. The next moment Philip was so much lost in astonishment that for an instant he was speechless. He saw before him a man dressed in the shabbiest fashion, much patched and discoloured. Closer scrutiny revealed, however, a certain indistinguishable something about the wild-looking personage which betokened gentle birth; besides, even the laugh was not that of a farmer, though the appearance was so poverty-stricken. The man himself was short and thick-set, with the look be- tokening enormous strength, possessed in a remarkable degree by some short men. His eyes, deep set under scrubby, greyish eyebrows, had in them a keen, cunning expression; his nose was straight, and went far to redeem the rest of his face, whilst his mouth was barely hidden by a short, iron-grey beard and moustache.

The roar of laughter he had heard was disagreeable in the extreme, or so thought Philip Gillbanks, who was, however, doomed this evening to have his mind disturbed by the sight of strange contrasts, for just behind the King came a gentleman who, not unworthily, might have stood for the portrait of a French Marquis. His dress, face, manners, attitude, and bearing were in the highest degree courtly. He was so handsome that it was difficult to believe he could be found in the company of the short, ruffianly-looking man who walked in front of him. His dress was of the style long forsaken by ordinary mortals, and included knee-breeches, velvet coat, buckled shoes, and hair which, though not powdered, had the appearance of so being; for nature herself had slightly tinged it with soft grey. His beautiful hands were at this moment toying with a gold snuff-box, as he gazed politely but with a slightly astonished air at Philip’s dripping condition, and then at Philip himself.

There had been a smile round this gentleman’s exquisitely-shaped and clean-shaven lips as he stepped into the hall, but Philip noticed that the amusement was at once concealed, and he received a bow so courtly but so distant as to make him suddenly realise, though unwillingly, the foolish appellative he had heard. This must surely be the “King,” and the other was his buffoon.

All these thoughts flashed themselves through the unfortunate traveller’s weary brain as he returned the bow, and said:

“I must ask you to forgive my intrusion,
if this is, as I now see it must be, a private house, but I lost myself on the fall, and a good-natured shepherd directed me here, giving me to understand—"

The short man again roared with laughing, but the courtly gentleman took up the word, and to Philip's intense astonishment he said:

"You will, perhaps, kindly forgive the King's merriment. It is occasioned by no other than Jim Oldcorn himself, who gave us a short description of the discovery of the unfortunate situation in which he found you. I am sure the King will be delighted to give you to-night what shelter and hospitality you may require."

"What the devil do you mean by losing yourself?" was the King's rejoinder.

"However, as it's so late and Meretown is not close by, you must stay here. Betty, take this traveller to the guest room, the small room, mind, and he'll find food in the dining-room; he'll want no looking after. I'm off, Greybarrow; Oldcorn says those confounded Richarsons have been up to their tricks again with my lambs, and I'm going to see for myself."

"Ah!" said the Duke of Greybarrow; "just so."

"If they think they are going to graze over my land, and then play their tricks with respect to my property, I'll show them the contrary."

"Just so!" repeated the Duke, and after bowing again, Philip found himself following the silent Betty down a corridor, then up some dark, creaking stairs, along another passage, and finally, nearly breaking his neck over two unexpected steps, he was ushered into a small room, smelling of damp or dry-rot.

Beggars must not be choosers, but when Betty, having intimated that he placed his wet things outside she'd see what she could find for him from the Prince's wardrobe, he was fairly mystified.

At last, left alone, Philip burst into a hearty laugh, promising himself the mental pleasure of giving a thrilling account of this strange adventure to his sister and to Forster Bethune.

"King, Queen, Duke, Princess, and now Prince! Good heavens! Is this a madhouse, or am I mad, or is the world gone forward or backward? When I was last in my senses it was Her Gracious Majesty, Lady Queen Victoria, who was on the throne of England, and there was certainly a Duke of Edinburgh, but none of Greybarrow. Well, I'm under cover, anyhow; but the Duke! Certainly his brother, or uncle, or whatever relationship he accepts, should change places with him. The throne would really have been well filled by such a specimen of a true courtier. Let us hope the Prince takes after his uncle and not after his father. Besides, His Majesty seems to use unparliamentary language, and to have no objection to tramping out in this abominable rain. They are all mad, and I had better humour them and depart as early as I possibly can to-morrow morning. To-night it is impossible."

After these reflections Philip undressed, and was not sorry, though again surprised, when the now familiar voice of the shepherd announced to him just outside his door that a suit of the Prince was thought by Betty to be just about the right size for him.

Philip opened the door, again laughing inwardly at the idea that the shepherd was also the valet in this extraordinary household.

"Yâ two didn't differ seah much," said Jim Oldcorn, holding up a suit of rough garments.

Philip, being in no position to be proud, was nevertheless glad to see that the Prince's garments were certainly many degrees superior to those of the King. Indeed, they were much like the ordinary suit of a country gentleman who has no vanity and cares more for durability than for cut.

Philip was a tall, well-grown young man, possessed of pleasant blue eyes and an open countenance which at once inspired strangers with confidence. Shabby clothes could not turn him into a cad. To his unspoken relief he found that he really was not very unlike himself in these borrowed plumes, and he was glad of the discovery. A man in dry clothes looks out upon the world in a better frame of mind than when he is in a dripping condition. Indeed, this episode had so awakened his curiosity as almost to overpower his hunger, but not quite. So in a very short time he opened his door, seized the brass candlestick, wherein guttered a dip candle, peered about him down the passage, wondering if Jim Oldcorn were again going to act as valet, or whether the house possessed any more men-servants more in agreement with the courtly names of its masters, and started on a voyage of discovery.

No one was about and nothing was to
be seen. The wind whistled sadly in the eaves, and the rain beat against the window-panes. Philip even fancied he could still hear the Rothery foaming, dashing and howling along its bed of rocks. How was he to find his way about this somewhat dilapidated Palace? Trying to remember his bearings he started forth, now only anxious to reach the spot where food was to be found.

After losing his way several times he found himself once more in the great hall, and then, recognising the door from which the King had issued, he boldly entered it. A lamp was burning on the table, and a clean plate was set. A large joint of beef, a jug of ale, a huge loaf, some butter, and a dish of custard were placed on the table. There was no footman, and nobody to help him, but hunger is not amenable, and Philip, feeling weak, but duly grateful, was soon eating what was before him as if he had not eaten for a week. Every now and again he burst into a low laugh at the bare recollection of the King's strange attire, and at Oldcorn's intimate knowledge of the duties of a "valet-de-chambre." After a while he had eyes for something besides beef and bread, and, having helped himself to a large plateful of custard and jam, he was able to notice that the old silver sparingly scattered on the table would have filled a collector with jealous despair.

Certainly no mushroom family—and Philip did not exclude the firm of Gillbanks and Son—would have had the chance to buy such things. Further, to his intense surprise, Philip noticed that on each article a small crown was engraved, and beneath it was the motto: "Absolutus sum Ignavis."

"I am acquitted of cowardice," murmured Philip. "Well, anyhow, there is some modesty in that remark, though I suppose it means 'I am braver than others,' when the words are used under a crown! By the way, I wonder what is the name of this extraordinary family? The King of Rothery is certainly euphonious—but the man!"

Whereupon Philip laughed again, and this time with such thorough enjoyment of the situation that he had to put down the knife wherewith he was helping himself to cheese. At this moment, to his shame and confusion, the door opened and a young man entered. Philip had not a moment's doubt in his mind that it was the Prince. "By the cut of his clothes shall thou know the size of his brain," says an old proverb, and Philip settled that, weighing by this measure, the Prince's brains were of no vast circumference. But he had hoped to find personal beauty, and in this he was disappointed. Though tall and broad, the Prince had no pretension to good looks; indeed, from the slow way he entered the room, the girlish blush that spread over his face, and the stutter that hindered the understanding of his speech, Philip decided that the heir to the throne was, alas, more fool than knave. But there was a certain look of appeal for sympathy, and a certain nervousness of expression in the young man's face, which went straight to Philip's heart, and which he could not account for.

"Excuse me," said the Prince; "I hope you have had all you require? We don't make much show at the Palace, but my uncle sent me to see if you are a smoker. If you cared to smoke he would like you to try this brand. I believe they are good, though I don't speak from experience, and my father only smokes a pipe."

Philip had risen quietly at the Prince's entrance, and accepting the cigar with a bow, wondered how such a smoker as the Duke of Greybarrow and the Prince of Rothery could live side by side.

"It is very kind of—of——" he hesitated.

"The Duke of Greybarrow," said the youth simply. "I was forgetting you had not been introduced to my uncle. My father was so much amused by Oldcorn's description of your plight on the fell that he forgot to be civil."

The forgetfulness was fictitious, thought Philip, slightly nettled, but it is impossible to speak your thoughts to your host, so he was silent.

"It was scarcely kind of the swain," he said, smiling, "to reveal the secret sorrows of a wandering bookman."

"Ah!" said the Prince, "you are from college, perhaps?"

He spoke as if this institution were situated in some fairy region, not easily discoverable.

"I am bidding good-bye to the Alma Mater, and before deciding as to my future career, I thought I would tramp a little among your lovely mountains; but even here my bad luck pursued me."

The Prince seemed to be searching in some far recess of his brain for an appropriate answer to this speech, but finding none, he hunted up some matches for his
guest and retired. In another moment, however, he returned.

"When you have finished your cigar, perhaps you will come and join us in the drawing-room. My father is out, but——"

"Thank you," said Philip, "but I had no intention of intruding myself into your——"

He could not say palace, so he paused, and the Prince, moving uneasily first on one foot, then on the other, seemed strangely disconcerted, till suddenly a bright idea struck him.

"I will come back and fetch you. My mother keeps early hours, but the Princess will be glad to see a stranger; very few ever come here."

The Prince managed to get out of the room in a hurried, shambling fashion, and Philip was again left to himself. He lighted his cigar, and walking to the window, he musingly watched the pouring rain beating against the uncurtained window, and listened to the melancholy howl of the wind.

Again he burst out laughing.

"What would Forster say to this? He would certainly be enchanted at such a novel adventure. Somehow or other he really must come here. A woman called a Princess would almost make him use bad language; for he declares that all women are born to be queens, and it is man's fault that sometimes they are something different!"

A RIDE TO LITTLE TIBET.

DR LANSDELL has added yet another book to those he has already published about Asia. The earlier publications dealt respectively with Siberia, Russian Central Asia, and Central Asia, while this present book,* as its title denotes, deals with Chinese Central Asia, concerning which, particularly as to the relations between the Chinese and Russians, there is much of interest to be learnt. The object of the journey was to spy out the land for missionary purposes: to see what openings existed or were possible. Being advised that if he wished to travel by the Trans-Caspian Railway it would be advisable to first proceed to St. Petersburg to obtain the requisite permissions, Dr. Lansdell left London on the nineteenth of February, 1888, for the Russian capital, calling on his way at Berlin on the Chinese Ambassador, from whom he received a letter, with the ambassadorial seal, to the Governor-General of Illy, which was one of the districts which he proposed to visit. The first thing required at St. Petersburg was permission to travel as far by the Trans-Caspian Railway as possible towards Kuldja, which is a town on the borders of Russian and Chinese Central Asia. This, with the help of Sir Robert Morier, Lansdell was enabled to procure, together with official letters to the Russian Consuls at Kuldja and Kashgar, in Chinese Turkestan, and one from Sir Robert himself to the Governor-General at Taishkend in the Russian district. He also obtained permission to return to Russia should he, after entering Chinese territory, deem that a better plan than proceeding south into India. Before he received this permission, he had to draw up for official information an itinerary of his proposed journey, which, as it gives the route to which he principally adhered, it would be as well to give in full. It ran as follows:

"I expect to leave St. Petersburg to-morrow, or soon after, for Moscow; to stay not more than a week (for banking arrangements, etc.), then proceed direct to Batoum; from Batoum to Tiflis (stay two or three days); then to Baku and Askhabad (stay one or two days, perhaps); Marr (two or three days); Charsul (one or two days, to get, if possible, fishes, pheasants, etc., for specimens); Bokhara (about a week, to see places once again that I visited in 1882); Samarkand (three or four days); Taishkend (about a week, to purchase various necessaries); Vierny (two or three days to receive my luggage, sent forward from Batoum); Kuldja. I hope to arrive at Kuldja by May the first, and at Urumut by June the first, and then to meet my English interpreter, into China. If news reaches me that he arrives earlier, I shall hasten forwards; if I learn that he will come later, then I need not go through Turkestan quite so fast. I should like to arrive at Yarkand by September the first, and cross the Himalayas, and it is only in case of accident, sickness, or something important and unforeseen, that I should wish to return to Russia from Kasbgar to Fergiana."

Such was his plan, and over this long journey it will be impossible to follow him minutely, so we will simply select for notice any item of special interest or of difficulty.

had come direct from London with the heavy luggage, and soon after arrived at Usun Ada, the western terminus of the Trans-Caspian Railway, where he commenced the journey through Russian Asia.

At the place named Geok Tepe the train stopped long enough to allow Lansdell to scale the walls of the fortress where the Turkomans showed such desperate resistance to Skobeleff. "The wall in some places is completely broken down, but enough remains to show what crude ideas of fortification the Turkomans possessed. Imagine a bank of earth thirty feet thick, finished on the top with breast-high inner and outer walls, and running for nearly three miles round a quadrilateral area like that of Hyde Park or Blackheath, but without their verdure, and you will have some idea of the proportions of the 'fortress' at Geok Tepe." At Askhabad Lansdell met with more assistance from the Russians, one of whom telegraphed to friends in Merv and other places to help him as far as possible. Another stopping-place was at Dushak, which is interesting to Englishmen as being the nearest point to our Indian railways, and is only four hundred miles from the Caspian, while the distance between Dushak to the Afghan frontier is only as far as from London to Doncaster. When starting from Merv, where a stoppage of a few days was made, more Russian kindness helped Lansdell on his way. He had had all the way a separate compartment in the one second-class carriage on the train—there was no first class—and now from Merv the second class only ran on certain days, and Lansdell had fixed on a non-second class day. However, the authorities placed at his disposal a whole third-class carriage, "wherein, if there was lack of cushions, there certainly was not of room, my only companions being my servant Joseph, and a messenger whom Colonel Alikhanoff was sending on business to Bokhara, and who, he thought, might be useful on the way." When Lansdell arrived at Charjui on the Oxus, six hundred and seventy miles from the Caspian, he had come by payment for, before a small looking-glass, he was continually combing his long and plentiful hair and beard. There were others on a Loft who had been there three months; but some only fifteen days, and in all cases their stay was intended to be temporary. Certainly the lot of the insane in Bokhara is not a happy one in Bokhara, and the same state of things is mentioned as existing in many other places visited by Lansdell.

Jews in Bokhara still labour under considerable disadvantages. They may not wear
silk garments with belt and turban, but cotton garments and black calico caps, and many for belts have only pieces of string. They may not ride a horse in the city, and if away from the town when mounted on an ass they meet a Mahommedan, they have to dismount; while a Mahommedan may smite a Jew, but the Jew must not retaliate.

Soon after leaving Bokhara the end of the railway was reached, and the journey to Samarkand had to be completed by driving, and from Samarkand Lansdell had a drive of one hundred and ninety miles before he before he could reach Tashkend. On the way he passed the ruins of an old caravanserai, supposed to date from the sixteenth century. At Tashkend a house was put at his disposal by the hospitable Russians, and here Lansdell had to withdraw from the bank the roubles forwarded there—banks not existing further east—and take for them rupee notes, which he was advised were more negotiable.

From Tashkend the route lay to Lake Tasik-Kul, which was a big detour from the originally proposed route, which would have led straight to Viervy; but as the baggage, which was following, could not reach Viervy for several days, and as Viervy, on account of a recent earthquake, was not a convenient spot to rest at, it was determined to make the extra journey. Nothing of interest occurred while on the road to Tasik-Kul or on the return to Viervy, save that Lansdell came upon a settlement of the Kirghese, a nomad race of uncertain origin. They believe in an invisible world; also that the tops of mountains are inhabited. "Sickness is the work of the devil, and the intervention of invisible beings in the affairs of men is accepted without question." They also venerate objects of extraordinary character. "Thus near Tokmak is an enormous stone of unknown origin with a human figure rudely cut out on one side, whereon every Kirghese in passing thinks it obligatory to place, as an offering, a piece of tallow." They respect cemeteries and tombs, and go frequently to the cemeteries to say their prayers.

At Viervy a long wait had to be made for the baggage, and even then a start was made without it, though news was to hand that it was coming up; indeed, it caught up the travellers at Yarkend and was despatched on to Kuldja. At Yarkend horses were purchased and also a cart, and a couple of Cossacks were lent as escort to Kuldja. Under their escort the frontier of Russia and China was passed, and Lansdell arrived at Kuldja on the twenty-first of June. It may come as a surprise to some to learn that Russia and China actually touch here, as perhaps an impression might exist that Mongolia, Turkistan, and Manchuria are independent states. In reality they are all Russian or Chinese. Lansdell thought that, despite the passports, he might have trouble in getting across the frontier. He had, indeed, been advised that it would be impossible, and that the only way of entry was by way of Pekin. But this is what happened.

"What the Cossacks said or did I know not; but the great doors with 'warders,' or painted dragons, flew open, my tarantass roUed majestically through, without my being stopped or, so far as I remember, asked for my passport, and in five minutes we were calmly driving through the fields of the Flowery Land, and among the Celestials, quizzing their plottails, and feeling on excellent terms with ourselves and the world in general."

At Kuldja the new horses and cart—"arba"—were found, as well as the luggage, and the journey was resumed to Suiting, the capital of the province. Here Lansdell made his first experience of a Chinese inn. He describes it as consisting of a large courtyard with rooms on two sides, with the third side and the centre occupied by horses, carts, and drivers. Foul straw and manure it was not considered necessary to remove, and through this he had to wade to his room, which was without flooring or any description of furniture; added to which the natives seemed to have no idea of privacy, and seemed to think it quite the thing to stroll in if they felt so inclined, while the windows were apparently, according to them, to be used to aid them in looking in, and not the occupants in looking out.

In China, as in Russia, the authorities did all in their power to help him on his way, and having received further papers and documents, Lansdell returned to Kuldja.

Here preparations were made for the further start. The packages numbered fifty and weighed nearly two tons, including food, physic, clothing, furniture, books, maps, and stationery, instruments and arms, and presents. Osman Bai was engaged as caravan leader, and agreed to go as
far south as Aksu, a matter of twelve
days' journey, and if necessary to Kashgar,
and a start was made on Thursday, July
the twenty-sixth, into Chinese Turkestan.
Besides Lansdell, Joseph and Osman,
there was an escort of forty-one, while
Osman had three assistants to help him
with the horses. A mountain range had
to be crossed, and here, five thousand feet
above the level of the sea, a few
days' rest was taken at the gorge of
Chapchel, where for their immediate neigh-
bours the party had a small encampment of
Kalmucks. Proceeding, a stiff climb led
the party to the summit of the pass,
from which the descent into the valley was
easier and, more gradual than the ascent
from the north. From the Tekes valley,
to which this descent led them, they had
again to mount, this time the Muzart defile
of the Tian Shan Mountains, which is a range
one thousand five hundred miles long, and
abounds in glaciers. In the course of this
climb they came to a "black, tumbledown,
smoky timber shed" — the last Chinese
picket on the northern slope of the range,
and here two of his escort left Lansdell to
return home. After their departure the
caravan proceeded to attack the Muz-davan,
or Ice Pass. "The route leading up to the
crest of the Muzart skirts the east of the
Jalyn-Khatayr glacier, and, blocked more
or less with large stones, winds along the
flanks of the lateral rocks. . . . The crest
of the pass is saddle-shaped, and about a
third of a mile in length, presenting the
appearance of a little plateau sloping
slightly towards the south, and affording
a superb view right and left of the magni-
cificent peak of the Tian Shan. . . . From
the crest the road proceeds south-
wards, the cliffs sometimes on the right
and sometimes on the left, whilst between
them lay a hollow with a flat bed, along
which, in summer, streams trickle
towards the south." Proceeding, they
came across a huge glacier. "Scattered
over this sea of ice are innumerable speci-
mens of coloured marbles. . . . Deep
down in the layers of ice flow streams
which are heard but not seen. Here and
there the ice is cracked and broken up
into crevasses or ice-wells, into some of
which I would fall have peeped, but to
approach them was perilous, since a false
slip might entail a fall into an abyss." Journeying along through this grand
scene, at one o'clock was reached a spot,
Mazar-bash, five miles from the crest
of the pass, where the most trying part
of the journey was to be encountered.
Mazar-bash is on the eastern side of the sea
of ice, where the ice was broken off almost
vertically, leaving a cliff forty to fifty feet
high, down which the party had to de-
send. "Needless to say, I dismounted,
and presently came to the top of the cliff,
down the face of which we were invited to
scramble. It looked as if blocks of ice and
débris had been hurled from above, and
perhaps the face of the cliff to some extent
broken away, and steps cut here and there;
but how to get down whilst maintaining the
perpendicular looked well-nigh impossible." However, by sliding, stepping, slipping,
and jumping, the descent of the men was safely
accomplished, and then came the turn of
the horses, which is described as follows:
"I do not remember seeing any ropes
attached, but my horse was taken by one
man at his head, while another held him
back by the tail, and thus steadied, he was
made to scramble and slide on legs or
haunches as he chose, till something like
terra firma was reached at the bottom of
the glacier." Lansdell was told afterwards
that about thirty are sometimes killed
making this descent in a month, while he
has the proud position of being the first
European to completely cross the Pass of
the Muz-davan.
It would be impossible to minutely
follow the caravan through Chinese Turke-
stan, and we must only briefly mention a
few events which occurred before the party
met with the last difficulty — the crossing
of the Himalayas.
At Aksu a stay of some considerable
time was made. Here Lansdell saw
a body being borne to burial. "Unlike the
staid procession of the West, this is done
at Aksu with a rush. At death the
chin of the corpse is tied with a cloth,
and the thumbs of the hands are tied together
as well as the big toes. Then the body,
after being washed and laid out, is burned
within twenty-four hours, mullahs at
the cemetery reading the Koran." He
also visited the prison, which he describes
as one of the most horrible he had ever
seen. The prison at Kashgar was also
visited, but Lansdell thinks it must have
been got ready for him. It was suspiciously
clean, and the special red tunics which three
men wore who were serving a term for
manslaughter, and who had been in prison
for some time, were too spotlessly clean
and new.
But leaving the rest of Lansdell's journey
in Chinese Turkestan — his visit to Yarkend,
and his expedition to the province of Khotan—we must hurry on to conduct him over the Himalayas safely into Tibet. It was on the morning of Monday, October the twenty-ninth, that the caravan left the village of Killian to clamber over half-a-dozen of the high passes of the world; and after two or three days' travel arrived at the snow line. The thermometer sank at night to many degrees below freezing-point, and "to avoid chapped hands and face, I resolved in these latitudes to wash only once a day, and that in the afternoon." The party was now at an altitude above that of any road in Europe, and was about to cross the Killian Pass, which cannot be attempted by horses; their loads were accordingly transferred to "yaks," which are a species of oxen. Lansdell found them sure-footed, carrying him safely over rough ground more smoothly and with fewer jerks than a horse, especially downhill. The road led upwards through snow more than a foot deep, and at three o'clock an altitude of seventeen thousand feet was reached, and the party suffered from mountain sickness. Lansdell found out what it was in a very practical manner, for having been told that there were some partridges a hundred yards off, he took his gun, alighted from his yak, and started running. "Before I had proceeded many yards, however, my heart began to beat as if it would burst, and I had to sit down twice, take breath, and learn that such agility at altitudes equal to the top of Mont Blanc was quite out of place." The cold, too, became more severe with the setting of the sun. If a cup of hot coffee was not gulped down at a draught, what remained became frozen in a few minutes, and the ink with which Lansdell was trying to write his diary froze between the bottle and the paper. After the descent from this pass the route lay for some way along plains to the fort of Shahidula, which was the last Turkif building seen by the party, the next houses they entered being in Tibet.

From Shahidula the route lay towards the Karakoram Pass, for which a start was made on November the sixth. When the start was made the weather was delightful, and the sun warm, but in a few minutes in the shade, "necessary for taking a view of the pass, my fingers became so cold that I feared frost-bite. Added to this, we were rising again, and I was so exhausted with the trifling effort of undoking and putting away the camera, that I had to sit down and rest. The least exertion became a painful effort, and after the day's journey I could do little more than sit in my tent, rest my head on my hands, and neither write, read, nor even think." The next day they ascended to the height of seventeen thousand six hundred and eighteen feet, while later on an altitude of eighteen thousand five hundred and fifty feet was attained. Although they continued on their way safely they were frequently reminded of the perils of the journey by the number of skeletons, chiefly of horses, lying about. A man they met told them he had just lost six horses in the Saser Pass, and further on they found a pilgrim from Mecca with his horse dead and himself starved.

This Saser Pass was the next to be attacked, and Lansdell says that though he considered he had accomplished something in crossing the Musar, "the Saser was far more difficult; the ice was of colossal proportions, and around us still towered snowy peaks to a height of more than twenty thousand feet above the sea." From this pass their way led to the summit of Karawal Dawan, fourteen thousand one hundred feet high, and from here they could distinguish in the valley below cultivated fields and two villages—the first houses they had seen for many days. The valley was soon reached, but the houses turned out to be mere hovels, not to be preferred to the tent. On setting out the next day they were in Tibet; the first sign to Lansdell of his caravan being in Her Majesty's dominions being the appearance of a good pack road, from which the large stones were cleared to either side. After ascending another pass seventeen thousand seven hundred feet in height, Lansdell reached Leh, where he received a warm welcome from the Moravian mission. "I was put up in a simply furnished but perfectly clean room, and never in my life did I get with such delight between a pair of clean sheets; for I had not been in a proper bed for five months, and again and again, for whole weeks at a stretch, had slept without undressing. Here, too, after listening to Joseph's psalms only for four months, I heard once more English properly spoken, and enjoyed the delights of Christian society and fellowship. I had now kindred spirits with whom to talk over missionary matters, which we proceeded to do, and to consider my plans for Lassa."
Here we will leave Dr. Lanadell, as an account of his voyage homewards would not be of any general interest; but before we finish our account of this book, it will be interesting to note the distance travelled, the modes of travelling, and the time occupied from London to Sonamarg in Kashmir. The time occupied was two hundred and ninety-three days, of which one hundred and forty-six were stationary days, and one hundred and forty-seven travelling days. The distance covered was eight thousand nine hundred and thirteen miles, which were covered in the following manner: four thousand four hundred and thirty-seven by rail, eight hundred and thirty-seven by water, one thousand and forty-seven travelling days by driving, one thousand and twenty-nine by riding, and one thousand and ninety-two by driving and riding. Another calculation shows twenty-five days by rail at one hundred and seventy-four miles a day; six days by water at one hundred and fifty-two miles a day; and one hundred and sixteen miles by horses at thirty-one miles a day.

ON CANNOCK CHASE.

Cannock Chase is one of those famous hunting-grounds in which England abounded centuries ago. But it no longer sees trained hawk or deer. Its glory cannot be said to have wholly departed from it, for it has still square miles of heather and breezy hills unscarred by modern tenements; yet it is sadly diminished. From the centre of it one marks the trails of black smoke trending from the tall chimneys of the town and neighbourhood of Cannock, and observes with grief the miserable cottages of Hednesford perched on one of its most conspicuous eminences.

Year by year it becomes more circumscribed in area. A century hence, unless an Act of Parliament intervenes on its behalf, there will be nothing of it left for the people at large. The pebbly tracks which now cross it in many directions will by then be macadamized into hard, even thoroughfares. Perhaps an electric tramway will rush across the existing wastes, linking one colliery centre to another. And where one now has a sufficiently pellucid atmosphere and fine, bracing, unpolluted breezes—unless the quarter of the wind is from the south—the heavens may be canopied with smoke as in the Black Country of Staffordshire, a dozen miles or so to the south.

In its present state, however, the Chase is still delightful. It is best approached from Penkridge, that pretty little old village some six miles from Stafford. The ascent from the valley of the Penk to the ridge of the Chase is then gradual and endurable. The red houses are soon left in the hollow; the copseless and woods of Teddlesley—once part of the Chase—swell on the one hand with, in October, gorgeous blazes of crimson nestled in the dark green bays where the hawthorns of the lodge are in the full garishness of autumnal decay; and the long, bosky ridge at the sky-line makes one doubt if there can be aught remaining of the open space of heather, bracken, and bilberry plants for which the Chase was, and, in fact, still is, renowned.

But the road climbs shrewdly past the copseless, in which the pheasants are shortening their unique note of alarm, and soon carries one to the girdle of fir plantations which is one of the prime charms of the district. The colours here in October are splendid. There can be no more alluring contrast of glorious orange and gold, and amber and clouded purple. The bracken and heather about the stems of the fir make a divine tapestry. Overhead the fleecy clouds are speeding across a background of heaven’s own blue. The sunlight plays at hide-and-seek among the trunks of the trees, and the merry wind, full cool for the time of the year, sings through the fir-tops and bustles the moribund bracken somewhat rudely. In a hollow to the left a still pool reflects firs, clouds, and sunshine impartially. The high-road has all in a moment become a series of parallel ruts in the gravel, with grass and heather tufts between the ruts.

The fir belt traversed, the undulating Chase is attained; treeless and bleak, but on such a day beautiful withal. Even the rusted heather is not without grace. Instead of its dazzling crimson of a month back, there is a faint tender purple—an atmosphere difficult for the artist. They have set fire to the heath in many places. The result is strong: instantly recalling the slopes of Etna. The soil is turned a jetty black by the charred twigs and ash dust; and through this, new bracken in its spring-time verdure has shot upwards thickly. Here again the colour contrasts must be seen to be enjoyed aright. The
bilberry plants have gone red as blood.
The older bracken strives towards every
hue under the sun. It is impossible not
to exult over this scene of dappled
enchantment. For a few minutes, too, the
sense of solitude is supreme. We have not
attained the watershed of the Chase: the
northern and eastern horizons are severed
by the parti-coloured undulations, and
behind, the fir belt still intervenes between
us and the spacious landscape of the
west, dominated by the old Wrekin.
Were it not for the significant smoke-
drifting from the south, the imagination
might take this for a wholesome piece of
the Scottish Highlands.

Two objects now declare themselves.
The one is a red lodge set by the track a
mile or so ahead; the other is a solitary
birch-tree more to the left. The frantic
barking of a dog in the lodge soon tells of
the quick scent or hearing powers of the
brute. When we near the building he is
fain to snap his chain with rage. The
apple-cheeked man who appears has much
to stifle the beast’s voice sufficiently
for conversation. He represents the lord
of Beaudesert Park, the demesne on the
hill to the right, with its gaunt, wind-
shattered trees in the dimples of the land.
There are birds among the heather and
manorial rights or pretensions to be main-
tained. Of late an attempt has been made
to hinder pedestrians from roaming at
large over the heather; they must keep to
the dim tracks or suffer prosecution. The
towns adjacent to the Chase are already
protesting, and the issue of this final
struggle over the almost dead carcase of
this magnificent old hunting-ground will
be interesting whichever way it goes. The
squat houses of Hednesford show in the
distance as a warning. All too soon, it
may be, their fellows will be studded here
also, where nowadays the partridges find
tolerable entertainment.

At a meeting-place of six weak tracks
we deviate by the next to the left after
passing the stump of a sign-post. The
Chase soon discloses more of its glories.
The dimples between the hills get deeper.
Sparse companies of birch-trees and oaks
appear on their slopes. They have been
terribly ill-used by the storms; this, how-
ever, does but add to their picturesque-
ness. The wooded slopes of the land
on the north bank of the Trent are also
visible, veiled by the rain falling heavily
upon them. And looking north-west, a
square dark mass of masonry is seen
quaintly peering above a long shoulder of
the Chase in that direction. This is the
top of the Keep of Stafford Castle, full
seven miles away. The sight of this relic
of a thousand years harmonises well with
the view of the Chase itself, on which our
early Kings sought—and doubtless found—
good sport with their hawks and hounds.

Hence our track strikes sharply down-
hill to the west between two rounded sides of moor-
land. There is a great two-horsed wain
near, and men and women are seen cutting
and gathering the crisp bracken. “It be
rare good stuff for lighting fires,” says one
of the men. As fuel, indeed, it is always
in request, whether coal be dear or at its
normal price. A little lower down we
clash with two women treading on the
skirts of one of the little wooded tumps—as
they would call them farther south—
which on the Trent side of the Chase are
a distinct feature of the district. “We’re
only a-sticking,” they say. The nose of
one of them is for all the world like a
sugar-loaf or a candle-extinguisher.

Down through the gravelly cranny, with
the heather and bracken still thick about
us, and the valley of Trent coming nearer
at every step. Up go a covey of partridges
and off with a whirr to the other side of
the wire netting which here marks the
beginning of more enclosures and planta-
tions. One may carp at these nibblings at
the Chase; but there is no denying the
pretty effect of the knolls of beech-trees
and firs which crest the little hills on this
main declivity riverwards. The effect is
enhanced, too, by the shoving of the
bracken beneath them into squares and
oblongs.

The valley air is much less of a tonic
than that of the Chase; but the valley
itself is worth seeing. Nowhere is the
Trent more sweet and pure to the eye.
It comes hither from the woods of Shug-
borough—where circumnavigator Anson
was born in 1697—refined and good to
see. A single swan breasts the stream
close under the bridge, and its plumage is
as white as the river itself seems irre-
proachable. The sun shines strongly on
the green weed under the water.

The two old dames with their sticks
joined us in the little inn up the lane.
They were clearly brave-hearted old
creatures. One of them, who appeared
under sixty, confessed to eighty-three. She
accepted a sixpence, with some doubt at
first, but later with affecting gratitude and
the words:
"It isn't often I meet with a friend now."

The parish was her best friend, at half-a-crown a week. But parochial charity is too impersonal a matter, it seems, to touch the hearts of its recipients.

Another excellent day may be spent by approaching the Chase from Lichfield, crossing it by Beaudesert, the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey, and leaving it at Cannock. This shows us the best charms of the district and also the greatest degradation.

Lichfield needs no orator to proclaim its graces. Who that has viewed its Cathedral from the farther side of the lakelet to the south, on a fine autumnal day, when the gorgeous crocketed spires, the foliage of the trees, and the shapes of the clouds are all mirrored impartially in the pool, will ever forget the old, yet ever rejuvenated building? It is as well, too, to bear in mind that this is Samuel Johnson's native city. There is an ugly monument of him in the market-place. It shows him seated in an arm-chair beneath which books—lexicons from their size—are most unconventionally and inconveniently stacked. He looks very miserable, as well he may, thus exposed with his beloved books to all kinds of weather. But though as a work of art the thing is poor, the statue will always be suggestive. There is better work in the Cathedral. Unless you have seen the two sleeping children at Lichfield you cannot have an adequate idea of Chantrey's powers.

Anciently, Lichfield was just within the bounds of the Chase. It is very different nowadays. One must walk three or four miles to get to its hem, and even then there are on this side no fine open expanses of heather as east of Penkridge. The lords of the manor shrewdly got their hands upon the land long ago. They have turned it into noble demesnes, or just lost it. The knife-grinder's machine at the door, sets the Cannock man upon the knife-grinder himself.

"Look here now," he says warmly, "tell me how to earn a day's money. I don't care what it be at, but I'm thirsting for it. Tell me.

"You're right, lad, you're right." Either this praise, or the sudden sight of the knife-grinder's machine at the door, sets the Cannock man upon the knife-grinder himself.

"Tell me how to earn a day's money. I don't care what it be at, but I'm thirsty for it, fair thirsting for it. Tell me." The knife-grinder, unsawed by the almost ferocious earnestness of the poor collier, just draws back of his hand across his mouth and remarks with a smile:

"Well, I'll tell you. Use your own judgement, that's the way to do it.

"The storm that ensued upon this rejoinder was terrific. We left it at its
THE PLEASURES OF GOLF.

[January 13, 1894.]

height. Village inns are not the enlightening places they once were, but even nowadays they ought not to be beneath the attention of men who wish to learn how the people in the provinces talk, and what they think about.

From Longdon we climbed by devious byways to the lodge gates of Beaudesert. The park was fascinating in its warm October colours in the bracing October air. The Hall is a mellow old building of purple-red brick, embosomed—in October—in russet and gold foliage. It stands well over the Trent valley, fronting the east with truly British indifference to the winds and weather. From the oak fencing of its park we see the spires of Lichfield once more, well-nigh seven miles distant. Nearer at hand are the houses of Rugeley, at the foot of the Chase, with the Trent watering its meadows. Rugeley's fame still centres mainly upon Mr. Palmer, the poacher. There are plenty of people in the little town who remember him, and express their wonder that so pleasant-mannered a person should have come to such an end.

You will nowhere see pheasants tamer than those on the Beaudesert estate. Four cock-birds allowed us to walk unreservedly within ten paces of them in the high-road. Even then they did not protest against the intrusion with a noisy whirr of wings. Not a bit of it. They skipped lightly into the coppice on one side, and there they stayed pecking at insects in the grass. It seemed the easiest thing in the world to thrust a hand after them and grasp them by their tails. More engaging were the antics of a couple of squirrels, who tumbled each other about in the roadside bracken with the like disregard for bipeds. But when they departed they did it with a theatrical flourish. One—two—three—and they were high up the lichenened trunk of an old oak. You will find most kinds of northern trees in this park of Beaudesert, and bracken galore. Nothing more need be said to convince its beauty in mid-October. The dead beech and oak-leaves are crisp under foot, and their pungent perfume is quite noteworthy. So, too, is the keen air of the Chase as we ascend and ascend until we are in the breezy outskirts of the park, where the trees are blown to bits, where they gradually become rarer, until they cease to be, and only the heather moorland with its fine lofty line against the sky is left to dignify the Chase. And yonder, conspicuous in the midst of this upland reach, is the small red lodge already mentioned in the walk from Penkridge.

Hence to Hednesford is a good three-mile trudge. The heather gets more and more meagre on the Chase banks by the roadside. The dirty red houses of the colliers are more and more strikingly ugly. And the black smoke from the tall chimneys hovers between the blue and white heavens and the autumnal, dun-coloured earth. But for the strike it would be very grimy in Hednesford. As it is, the unfortunate colliers may be seen in knots, with their hands in their pockets, either discussing without enthusiasm or watching their more youthful brethren play pitch-and-toss.

There is nothing beautiful in Hednesford, and the Great Coal Strike has added misery to the prevalent uncomeliness.

THE PLEASURES OF GOLF.

I am a foreigner—"tout ce qu'il y a de plus——"; but hold, my pen, thou art on dangerous ground! The British like not the stories with which they enliven their leisure hours to be interspersed with phrases which need a dictionary for interpretation. I am a foreigner. Enough! I am staying in a charming country house in Scotland with a dear old rickety-kneed General of my acquaintance, and I am learning to golf.

The country house is near a seaside town. It is March; it is windy; also sandy. Every day of my life I come home with more "grit" in me than when I went out. The day after I arrived General McShallop said to me: "You can't go back to your own country without knowing everything there is to know about golf. Not to golf is not to live. We will go for a turn on the links to-morrow."

Some people say that to-morrow never comes. They lie. It does, as I know to my cost.

There are some very charming girls staying in this same country house. One likes naturally to distinguish oneself in the presence of fair Amazons. I was, therefore, rather averse from the idea of learning a somewhat difficult and dangerous game before them. I had ascertained that they all started with the men in the morning, and came home with them to lunch; that they scorned the humble limits of the ladies' links, and preferred to go the whole...
breezy round. Finding that I was in for it beyond a doubt, I not unnaturally asked my host for some account of the game, which I had never seen played in my life.

Now, golf is more than a game or a science. It is a fever and a passion. It was with some curiosity, therefore, that I listened to General McShallop’s exposition of the same.

“You place your ball on a small mound of sand called a ‘tee,’ ” he explained in as simple language as he could, in kindly deference to my imperfect knowledge of English, “and you hit it with your club.”

Then he paused for such a long time that I began to think that this was the Whole Duty of the golfer, and spoke accordingly.

“Is that all? What do you do then?”

“You walk after it and hit it again,” said the General solemnly. There was another pause.

“That sounds easy,” said I, with a sigh of relief, and speaking like a fool in his folly.

“It sounds easier, perhaps, than it is,” said my host, with a ghastly smile. “Have you ever heard of ‘bunkers’?”

I never had, although there vaguely flitted familiar wise across my mind the battle of Bunker Hill.

“When you strike off,” said the General, leaving the subject of bunkers as one too painful to be proceeded with, “you see a road at some distance before you. The first difficulty for a beginner is to get over the road. Then you come to a steep incline, half rock, half grass. For this you will need a different club.”

“How many clubs must I have?” I asked meekly.

“The General made a rapid calculation.

“You can have thirteen,” he answered. “The Driver, the Bulger Driver, the Long Spoon, the Mid Spoon, the Short Spoon, the Putter, the Brassie, the Cleek, the Niblick, the Driving-Iron, the Patting-Cleek, the Lofting-Iron, and the Mashie; but then again, you can manage with very few if you like. To begin with, I should only recommend four—the Driver, the Cleek, the Putter, and the Lofting-Iron.”

My brain reeled. I hastily abandoned the discussion of clubs and returned to the game.

“After you have driven off, and got over the road and the hill,” I asked, “what then?”

“Then you see a red flag in a hole,” said the General, as if this were a full, sufficient, and lucid explanation enough.

“I see. And then?”

“You ‘put’ the ball in,” said the General, in astonishment at foreign ignorance. “And then you pick it up,” he added, in fatigued anticipation of another question, “and make another ‘tee,’ and drive off again—over a bunker this time—and then there is a sort of hollow marsh which you must avoid, and then another bunker, and after that a burn—in which you are certain to lose your ball—and then a high stone wall, where the green-keepers have their tools, and which very often catches one’s ball when one is not careful; and then—”

I stopped him. His rapid description appalled me. The golfing course appeared to be a kind of “Pilgrim’s Progress” to me, with bunkers for Apollyons, and stone walls and burns for the Hill of Difficulty.

The golfing course appeared to me, with bunkers for Apollyons, and stone walls and burns for the Hill of Difficulty. I became “tumbled up and down in my mind,” as John Bunyan hath it. Where did the Land of Beulah come in?

“And what is the end of the game?” I asked.

“When you have been the round, of course. Those who get into the holes in the fewest number of strokes win the game,” said the General in a tired voice.

I have always been rather celebrated for getting into holes of a mental description, in very few strokes indeed, so I did not despair yet about golf. It did, indeed, at first sight, and to the ignorant, appear a somewhat peculiar pastime, but as all Europe was going mad over it, and marking out ridiculous little golfing-grounds when and where it could, and as I was on the real spot where the real game was played, I determined not to lose the opportunity.

The morrow came, my host in fine form and in business-like short skirts and Tam-o’-Shanter caps. It is a pity that this style of dress does not suit all girls—but there, the sex is always charming, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances.

One of the young ladles took pity upon my evident trepidation at breakfast time, and offered to break me in all by herself in an artless and charming manner, which would be impossible except in Britain.

“For, General McShallop,” she added archly, “you know your foursome is made up, and as there are five of us girls, Monsieur de S—and I will be left out in the cold, unless we play with each other.”
THE PLEASURES OF GOLF.

This arrangement met with universal satisfaction. I could see that the foursome had been trembling in its shoes at the idea of having an ignorant stranger tacked on to it. For golf is also business.

As for me, of course, I am always pleased at the prospect of a tête-à-tête with one of Albion's fair daughters, especially when she happens to be the prettiest girl of the party. We started at last, the others well on in front, and Mademoiselle and I well behind. We walked over the course, sand-grown grass towards the little golf club-house, and the salt air blew sweet and strong in our faces.

Arrived there, I provided myself with the balls, the four requisite clubs, together with a seedy-looking caddy to carry the same, and we 'started fair.'

At this moment my pen arrests itself. That day, long ago now, comes back to my mind in all its vivid freshness. The blue, blue sea, the salt, breezy wind, the green links picturesquely dotted about with the scarlet jackets worn by some of the golfers, the pretty face of the girl by my side, the sordidly dressed caddy in the rear, and before us two nice little, clean white balls on two small mounds of sand, waiting to be launched into space.

My companion struck off first. She was playing with a club only, and it flashed brilliantly in the sunshine as she swung it high in the air. The ball vanished, became a mere speck, and then fell lightly and gracefully there all right.

"Where is the hole?" I demanded haughtily of the caddy, when I was well fixed in a firm and rigid position, with my driver clasped with the tightness of despair.

"It's awa' ower the hill," he answered briefly; "ye canna see it frae here."

I prepared to strike.

"Lift your club slowly and bring it down quickly," said my fair companion, contemplating my statue-like attitude with a smile.

At this moment the caddy knelt down and officiously turned my toes in, readjusted the ball, looked critically at my thumb, which he tugged round the handle of the club, and rising, kindly allowed me to play.

I struck with the strength of a navvy. I expected to see the ball lost in space, but on looking down, I beheld it still reposeing in its snowy whiteness at my feet.

I was readjusted by the caddy, and required to assume an attitude in which I could hardly keep my feet. Again I struck—this time scattering the "tee" to the winds and ploughing a long furrow on the links. I had dugged a pit and fallen into the midst of it myself. The caddy frowned as he replaced the turf, and we journeyed on. I had not far to go—barely half-a-dozen yards in fact—and began to find being placed in position each time fatiguing. I waved the man aside, therefore, and struck my own way. This time I fall into the deepest rut in the road. My companion was very kind and encouraging, but it took me eight strokes to get to where her ball lay. Then she played again and lifted it easily and gracefully on to the hill, whilst I followed after as best I could. I found the hole with the red flag, and went in thirty-four. I believe it has been done in three.

From thence I pursued my unhappy flight from hill to vale, from burn to bunker. I lost two balls in the burn, and as for the bunker—I went down into the pit alive.

I sent the caddy on ahead after my companion, preferring to potter about alone. Whenever they were not looking, I picked up my ball and carried it along, finding that by so doing I could golf much faster, and, indeed, almost keep up with Mademoiselle.

"You have improved," she said to me on one occasion, when I arrived on the putting-green in eight strokes, having carried my ball all the way from the last bunker.

And I admitted that I had.

After the burn came the wall—a great stone affair which you fired at from an eminence in the hope of destroying it. Many savage blows has that wall endured in its day! Indeed, Puritan as one might suppose the Scotch links to be, I have heard language used thereon which would not disgrace Whitechapel on a Sunday night. But golf, like love, excuses all.

Beyond the wall lay a smooth putting-green, then another wall, then—but why enumerate all the deadly obstacles placed in the way of harmless, peaceable individuals who wanted to golf and enjoy themselves in a sensible manner? Had
the valleys been exalted and the hills made low, had the crooked been made straight and the rough places plain, we might have managed the game fairly well. As it was—

"How do you like it?" asked Mademoiselle, as we came back on the homeward course.

"Immensely," I replied, as a ball whistled past my ear, narrowly escaping brushing me. "There are elements of difficulty and danger about it that render it the most fascinating of games."

There was a large 18 on the iron flag which marked the hole before me. I went in eighteen strokes, and felt proportionately triumphant, until it was pointed out to me that the eighteen referred merely to the number of the hole, and not to the strokes supposed to be played.

"We will come again to-morrow," said my fair companion cheerfully, picking up her ball. "You will soon get into the swing of it."

I walked home rather sadly, and my dreams that night were of yawning chasms, of desolate sea-ashores, of rapid rolling rivers bearing fated golf balls on their bosoms, of insurmountable stone walls that rose, like Fate, ever higher between the golfer and the Promised Land.

The General and his foursome came home in high spirits. They talked during luncheon of cleeks and nibblucks, of "going in in four," and of the hard tricks that destiny had played them. Immediately after lunch they started off again, faint yet eager. For golf is also life. For a week before I returned to my native country, my original companion and I were golfing together alone. Suddenly she gave a little shriek.

"Oh, dear, I have lost my head!" she exclaimed.

I had assured her that this was a thing I often did, before I understood that she was referring to her dub, which lay head-low before me. She was looking very pretty indeed just then, with a bright colour in her cheeks, and all her fair hair blown about her face. I took hold of the stick, and we held it between us. It was rather romantic. I became sentimental.

"I have lost something worse than that," I murmured.

"Not your ball again, I hope?" she interrupted rather sharply.

"No—my heart—"
She loosed the stick and looked me straight in the eyes. Really, there is a frank and unabashed candour about these British maidens that——

She did not pretend to misunderstand me.

"I am going to have my head put on in the right place again," she remarked as she walked away from me. "I should advise you to do the same thing with your heart. Cracked things always last the longest."

Four weeks of uninterrupted and delightful intercourse had brought me to this! For calm audacity and unfurled presence of mind, this enchanting specimen of womankind had surpassed herself.

Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of——golf!

**DOCK LIFE.**

**Down** in the busy east of London, where the steady rumble of heavy vans laden with merchandise, the whirr and clang of cranes and the rattle of winches, resound always in the ears of the passer-by, stand two large gates, which are the entrance to the Mecca of the East End labourer. For here are the docks, whose business, directly or indirectly, gives employment to a great proportion of the lower stratum of dwellers in the east.

Every morning—at seven in winter, and six in summer—an eager throng pours through these gates, and surges up to the iron chains which span the wide roadway some hundred yards within. The space between these chains and the gateway is soon packed with several hundred "dockers" clamouring vociferously to the "taking-on" foremen, standing in their little pulpits high above the crowd, for the tickets whose possession gives them a day's work. Hundreds go away unsatisfied, for there are at least three applicants to every vacancy, and seek consolation in the neighbouring pubs, or hang around the dock gates on the off-chance of a second "call" at nine or ten o'clock. The comments of these disappointed individuals as they loaf away dejectedly are often characteristic.

"E ain't no bloomin' good to a working man, 'e ain't," says one burly docker, with a straw in his mouth, pointing the finger of scorn at a foreman who has made up his tale of labour without including the speaker, "taking on all boys agin this mornin'.'"

**Blowed if yer ain't right, too, Jim,"** assents another disappointed applicant, a rat-eyed, waspish little man, with a terrible reputation for sarcasm as it is understood in Wapping. "Lor' bless yer, I could make a better man nor 'im outer two sticks an' a lump o' coal." He expectorates vigorously as he finishes this tirade, and then wends his way with the rest of the discontented mob to the gates.

Those who have been more fortunate in securing the coveted ticket are now distributed throughout the docks. According to the necessities of the authorities, they are told off to the wool warehouses, the wine vaults, the dry goods stores, the open quays to which goods are transferred from vessels lying alongside, or down to the inmost recesses of these vessels, to assist in breaking-out their cargoes. Of all these various employments, the last is the most dreaded, and only seasoned dockers can stand it for any length of time, the strain upon the constitution being most severe. Working thirty feet down in a ship's hold, in semi-darkness, surrounded by a stifling atmosphere, and with the body never for a moment during the whole day in an erect position, is no jokes, as the present writer can assure any one who wishes to try the experiment. Fortunately the same men are seldom required to work more than two days a week at this particular task.

The other kinds of toil, especially those conducted in the warehouses, are by no means so exacting, and many a pipe is smoked, and many a gallon of beer drunk behind those huge bales of wool which periodically fill every floor of huge buildings extending over several acres. Both these descriptions of amusement are of course strictly forbidden by the Dock Company's regulations, and many are the devices resorted to by ingenious dockers to indulge in these tabooed delights. Both ale and rum are brought in wholesale in harmless-looking tea-cans, which are seldom examined by the dock police at the gates, and these go backwards and forwards for replenishment all through the day. A new hand is generally selected for the somewhat perilous task of running the gauntlet with these forbidden luxuries. No labourer is allowed to leave the docks——except for dinner——during work-time without a written permission from his foreman. The faces of the old stagers, those who come every morning, week after week and year after year,
of course well known to the dock police, and they dare not run the risk—even to obtain beer. But the new hand, whose face is not yet familiar to the dock officials, and who has not yet acquired the indefinable stamp of the regular docker, is the very man for the purpose. So by judicious coaxing, intermixed with a little judicious bullying, the new-comer is persuaded to fill his pockets with these innocent-looking cans, and to stroll aimlessly out of the docks to the nearest tavern. Once safely outside return is easy and without risk, if the "runner," as he is called, is not known to the police. So many people enter the docks daily on various errands that scarcely any notice is taken of them. While the "runner" is absent, his comrades cheerfully do his work, and conceal his departure from the foreman. If he be a very green hand, he will be kept busy at the same errand all day long, as dockers are thrifty souls, and every "runner" has his day. After a week or two the risk of detection increases, and a fresh Mercury has to be found. The regular fee for each successful trip is "half-a-pint," or a penny in cash, and a new hand finds it easy to earn a couple of shillings a day at this work, while he is also being paid sixpence an hour by the Dock Company. Until one has actually tried the experiment, no one would believe the number of bottles and flat tin cans which can be stowed away in a rough pea-jacket, especially if a ragged overcoat be put on over it. An expert "runner" will safely convey a gallon of beer and several small bottles of rum every journey.

The regulations against smoking are still more strict than those against drinking, and are more difficult to evade. Still, a good deal of surreptitious homage is paid to the goddess Nicotine in the various out-houses and so on, one of the gang being told off to keep watch for any prowling constable. Most dockers also indulge in chewing, which is permitted, and so manage to satisfy their craving for tobacco in a legitimate manner. It is, by-the-bye, an offence under the Company's bye-laws for any labourer to have in his possession either pipe or matches, so the old stager conceals his cutty in some warehouse, and carries his matches in his boot.

What has been said above is ample proof that the docker is a man of resource, and fully understands in his own humble way the art of living. He carries the same principle into his work; he regards it as a necessary evil, and does not do one iota more than he can help. Foremen vary very much in disposition, but most of them recognise the advantage to themselves of having plenty of men for the work in hand, as things go more smoothly, even if the Dock Company's pocket suffers. One day a foreman in a particular department found that after dinner he had absolutely no work for his gang to do. While his men were enjoying their enforced idleness, suddenly the awful tidings came that the dock superintendent, with several directors, were making a tour of the docks, and were even then in the next warehouse. The foreman was in despair. What was to be done? An old and astute docker approached him, and a whispered colloquy ensued. The result was soon apparent. The men had that morning been engaged in repairing gunny bags to hold rice. These, all finished, were piled up neatly at one end of the floor. In five minutes they were all ripped open again, and when the big-wigs entered the warehouse, four-and-twenty men were industriously engaged in sewing them up again.

A good deal of smuggling and petty thieving goes on daily at the docks, not that the average docker is worse than other labourers, but because smuggling especially possesses an inherent charm for him out of all proportion to the value of the article surreptitiously conveyed out of the docks. Many good stories are told of the ingenious manner in which both constables and Custom House officers have been outwitted.

One foggy day, a docker working aboard a vessel in the Central Bashi had the ill-luck, apparently by accident, to fall overboard. He could swim, but it was some little time before he could be got out, and he then seemed almost done up. All cold and exhausted as he was, his sympathetic chums placed him on a plank and soon ran him out of the docks to a neighbouring public-house. There he was stripped and having plenty of men for the work in hand, as things go more smoothly, even if the Dock Company's pocket suffers. One day a foreman in a particular department found that after dinner he had absolutely no work for his gang to do. While his men were enjoying their enforced idleness, suddenly the awful tidings came that the dock superintendent, with several directors, were making a tour of the docks, and were even then in the next warehouse. The foreman was in despair. What was to be done? An old and astute docker approached him, and a whispered colloquy ensued. The result was soon apparent. The men had that morning been engaged in repairing gunny bags to hold rice. These, all finished, were piled up neatly at one end of the floor. In five minutes they were all ripped open again, and when the big-wigs entered the warehouse, four-and-twenty men were industriously engaged in sewing them up again.

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Dock labourers are a democratic lot. They have but little respect for their foremen or even for a dock director, and none at all for each other. Some time
ago a docker was charged at Thames Police Court with attempting to commit suicide. He had been seen in broad daylight to jump off the quay into the South Dock. An eye-witness, a fellow-labourer, was called to give evidence.

"Did the prisoner deliberately jump into the water?" asked the magistrate.

"Well, as to that, howsoever, I can't say, but I'll go ball for it 'e never meant to commit suicide. 'E can swim as well as I can. 'Sides, 'e's too precious fond of 'is bloomin' life to risk it while he can borrow a bob of any one. A lazy, good-for-nothing 'ound, that's what 'e is!"

The prisoner was eventually dismissed with a caution.

In conclusion, let not the reader fancy from the above brief notes that the docker's life is one of unalloyed bliss. He has his bad days when, wet and cold and hungry, he loafs aimlessly about the dock gates, waiting for work which never comes. He is poorly paid at the best of times; he has little leisure when at work, he is indifferently lodged, and the finer joys of life are not for him. Small wonder if at times he seek refuge from the monotony of his existence in the coarse pleasures of the beer-shop and gin-palace. Small wonder if his intellect, denied all legitimate vent, is turned to deeds of low cunning and doubtful morality.

**THE ABDUCTION OF A KING.**

The abduction of Stanislaus Augustus, King of Poland, in the very midst of Warsaw, his own capital, was probably as audacious an exploit as any body of conspirators ever conceived or accomplished. Perhaps I should say "nearly" accomplished, since at the last moment the King effected his escape, but in its earlier stages the attempt was completely successful. The instigators of the offense were the confederated Polish nobles, who had never recognized Stanislaus as lawfully elected; and, not without reason, looked upon him as the mere tool of Russian tyranny.

The man who planned the details of the abduction was the celebrated Polish patriot, Pulaski. He it was who engaged a body of forty adventurers to carry it out, under the leadership of three daring men, Lukowski, Strasinski, and Koinski, whom he had won over, and who had sworn to follow up to him the King, dead or alive.

Making their way by stealthy journeys from Czteschokow, in Great Poland, they entered Warsaw, on the second of November, without having been discovered. They were disguised as peasants in charge of carts loaded with hay, under which were concealed their saddles, weapons, and ordinary dress.

They did not penetrate into the heart of the city; some remained at the gates. The others, on the following evening, collected, with due precautions, in the Street of the Capucins; for they calculated, "from information received," that the King would pass that way on returning to his Palace at the accustomed hour.

And so it happened.

Between nine and ten o'clock, leaving the residence of his uncle, Prince Czartoriski, to whom he had been paying a visit, the King drove into the trap prepared for him. His escort did not exceed some fifteen or sixteen grooms and troopers, and an aide-de-camp rode with him in his carriage.

Suddenly a number of well-armed men sprang out of the darkness, and surrounded both the carriage and its escort, ordering the coachman to pull up. Before he could obey a shower of bullets clattered about the vehicle, and struck down an equerry who had posted himself on the doorstep to defend his master. The escort had fled at the first shot; even the aide-de-camp was gone; the King was all alone. It was a pitch-dark night, and he attempted to profit by the darkness; but before he had taken half-a-dozen steps, a rough hand clutched hold of his hair.

"We have you now," cried the man who had stopped him; "your hour is come!" and a pistol was discharged so close to his face that he afterwards said he could feel the heat of the flame. At the same time a sabre-stroke was aimed at his head, and cut through his hat and hair to his skull. Meanwhile the conspirators had remounted their horses; two of them seized his collar and dragged him on between them, while they rode at full gallop, five hundred paces through the streets of Warsaw.

The alarm had by this time been given in both the Palace and the city. The guards hastened to the scene of the outrage, but discovered only the King's hat, soaked in blood. It was at once concluded that he had been killed, and his dead body carried off by the murderers; the city was filled with all kinds of dreadful rumours.

The King was soon breathless and ex-
haunted with the cruel treatment to which he had been subjected. He was unable to stand, and his captors were obliged to mount him on horseback. They then proceeded at a still more rapid pace. On reaching the city gate they found it closed, so that the only means of escape was by leaping the ditch. They did not hesitate. The King was of course compelled to follow their example. He pushed his horse forward, but he fell in the middle. A second attempt, a second failure; and the poor animal broke his leg. Stanislaus was dragged out covered with mud and greatly disordered; another horse was provided, and the desperate ride resumed. But not before they had relieved him of all his valuables, leaving only his handkerchief and tablet. Even Lukowski shared in the plunder, snatchin the ribbon of the King's black eagle, with the diamond cross attached to it. Most of the conspirators now dispersed; no doubt in order to warn their chiefs of the captive's approach. Only seven remained, under the command of Kosinski. The night had grown so heavy that they had lost their bearings, and knew not where they were. Moreover, their horses were spent with fatigue, and would not budge a step further. The party were compelled to alight, and forced the King to do the same—though he had but one boot, the other having stuck in the mud of the city ditch. For some time they continued to wander about the fields, unable to discover any regular road, or to get out of the neighbourhood of Warsaw. At length they re-mounted King Stanislaus, two of them holding him up in the saddle with their hands, while a third led the horse by the bridle. Thus they stumbled on, until the King, perceiving that they had struck into a path which led to a village called Burskow, warned them that some Russian soldiers were stationed there, who would probably attempt his rescue. Strange advice, you will say, for the King to have given to his abductors; but it was really dictated by consummate prudence. He was reasonably afraid that on seeing the Russian guard the conspirators might have killed him and taken to flight; whereas by informing them of the danger to which they were exposing themselves, he to some extent gained their confidence. And, as a matter of fact, thenceforward they treated him with greater leniency. Finding himself unable to endure any longer the painful posture they had forced upon him, he begged them to provide him with a boot and another horse. To this they assented; and then resumed their journey over the pathless tracts, frequently retracing their course without knowing it, until they finally found themselves in the wood of Bialany, not more than a league from Warsaw.

Meanwhile the capital was a scene of consternation and perplexity. The guards were afraid that if they pressed the pursuit of the captors, the latter, in their rage, might put the King to death under cover of the darkness. On the other hand, by delaying, they gave them time to convey their victim to some secure retreat, whence it might not be possible to rescue him. At last, several nobles mounted their horses and followed up the traces of the conspirators until they reached the point where the King had crossed the ditch. There they picked up his pelisse, which the King had lost in the scuffle, and as it was blood-spotted and shot-torn, it confirmed them in their belief that the King was no more.

Stanislaus and his captors were still wandering in the wood of Bialany, when they were suddenly alarmed by the sounds of a Russian patrol. After holding a short conference together four of them disappeared, leaving Kosinski and two others with the King. A quarter of an hour later they came upon a second Russian guard, and the two men fled, so that the King was alone with Kosinski. Both had abandoned their horses and were on foot. Exhausted by all he had undergone, Stanislaus begged his guardian to halt and allow him a few minutes' repose. The Pole refused, and threatened him with his drawn sword, but at the same time told him they would find a vehicle waiting for them on the threshold of the wood. They continued their tramp until they found themselves at the gate of the Convent of Bialany. Kosinski was here so agitated by his thoughts that the King perceived his disorder, and having remarked that they had strayed from the road in quite a different direction, added: "I see that you do not know where to go. Let me seek shelter in the convent, and do you provide for your own safety." "No," replied Kosinski, "I have sworn."

They continued their journeyings until they arrived at Mariemont, a small palace belonging to the House of Saxony, which
is not more than half a league from Warsaw. Kosinski showed some satisfaction on finding out where he was; and the King having again asked for a few minutes' rest, he consented. While they reclined together on the ground, the King employed the brief interval in endeavouring to propitiate his conductor, and persuade him to assist, or at least permit, his escape. He represented to him the criminality of his conduct in undertaking to kill his Sovereign, and the invalidity of an oath taken for such a purpose. Kosinski listened attentively, and at last showed some signs of remorse. "But if," he said, "consenting to save your life, I reconduct you to Warsaw, what will be the consequence? I shall be arrested and put to death."

This reflection plunged him anew into uncertainty and embarrassment. "I give you my word," said the King, "that no ill shall befall you; but if you doubt the fulfilment of my promise, escape while there is yet time. I can find my way towards some place of safety, and I will certainly point out to any who might wish to pursue you a route directly opposite to that taken by you." Kosinski could no longer resist. Throwing himself at the King's feet he implored his forgiveness, and swore to protect him against every enemy, adding that he would trust wholly to his generosity. The King repeated his promise that no harm should come to him. Thinking it prudent not the less to gain some asylum without delay, and remembering that there was a miller's herd by, he immediately turned his steps in that direction. Kosinski knocked at the door. There was no reply. Then he broke a window-pane, and demanded that shelter should be given to a gentleman who had been ill-used by thieves; but the miller, thinking they were robbers, refused to open, and for more than half an hour persisted in the refusal. Eventually the King approached, and speaking through the broken casement, endeavoured to induce the miller to receive them. "If we were thieves," said he, "we could as easily have broken the whole window as a single pane." This pithy argument convinced the miller; he opened the door and received the King.

The latter immediately wrote in French the following note to General Couter, Colonel of his foot guards:

"By a kind of miracle I have escaped from my assassins, and am now at the little mill of Mariemont. Come as soon as may be to convey me from here. I am wounded, but not badly."

The King experienced some difficulty in finding a messenger to take the billet to Warsaw; but at length succeeded. Without a minute's delay Couter repaired to the mill, followed by a detachment of guards. On arriving there he found the King asleep on the ground, covered by the miller's cloak. The reader can imagine all that ensued—the surprise of the miller and his family when they discovered whom they had treated with such scant courtesy; the delight of the King at the happy ending of his night of peril; the rejoicings in Warsaw when the citizens welcomed back their sovereign. All's well that ends well, and so ended this strange story of the Abduction of a King.

THROUGH THE RANKS.

By MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAPPAN.)

Author of "Aunt Hippy's Foundling," "My Land of Beulah," "Bonnie Kate," "The Peyton Romance," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XX. WAITING FOR THE KNELL.

"And now—you will not hold me back!"

Hubert Claverdon knew to what he had pledged himself when he promised blindfold. He looked fixedly at Alison as she stood before him, and the thought came over him—could he ever hold her back, when the impulse of an intense nature led her into this or that action? Another thought followed. Would he ever, however long Heaven granted them to walk through life together, wish to hold her back? Surely her impulse would always be high and holy—her deeds great and good.

He knew now to what he had pledged himself. A farewell interview with the condemned man before removal to Kilmainham, had shown Claverdon that his stock of strength was still small, his powers of endurance poor. Dr. Masters had said that it would be months before "Richard was himself again," and that care and rest, and a change to his native air, were things imperative.

After the manner of all men, Hubert had rebelled against these drastic opinions; but Alison would have her way. She held up a warning, imperious finger.

"If I be dear to some one else," she quoted; and after that there was nothing
more to be said. So it was settled they
were all to go down to Forrestleigh, and
Alison with them. There was, of course,
no difficulty about a long furlough for
Hubert; a privilege that Alison was
proud to hear him speak of by its actual
name, and not as going on leave.

The Colonel had thrown cold water
upon the idea of the Rector buying his son
out.

"If you do that," he said, "we cannot
give him his commission, and that is
what we wish to do. Our Quartermaster
is about to retire upon his laurels, and
then I shall recommend your son for the
vacancy. After that—the world is wide, and
he can do what he will. You can purchase
him an exchange into some other corps if
he wishes to stick to the service."

Well, in any case Hubert's promise
must be kept. He must go to sunny Devon
with his father and mother; but Alison
must be left behind.

"It will be terrible for you—an awful
ordeal, my darling—to be with that poor
girl at such a time."

"It would be more terrible to me to
be kept back. I cannot tell you how
miserable I should be."

He saw that her words were indeed
true: he realised that for the love of
such a woman there was a price to pay.

"And you will go to Kilmainham—
just you and she together?"

"Just she and I. We shall be together
all the time—every hour, every moment,
until all is over. Then I shall bring
her back here to Father John. I will
not let the old man go with us, because I
think that it would kill him."

"And Norah is to see her lover?"

"Yes; once, and the two men, Coghlan
and McMurdock; the Colonel has inter-
ceded for them."

Hubert Claverdon hid his face upon his
arms.

"Oh, good Heaven!" he said, with a
long-drawn breath like a sob, "it seems
too high a price to pay for my poor faulty
life. I would give all I have—except you
—to save him."

Alison was afraid. When Mr. Milman
told him, ever so gently, and with all
delicate tact, that the sentence upon Deacon
was death, Hubert had had a trying
relapse. She dared not speak, but just
laid her hand upon the dear, dark head;
and in her touch was comfort and healing.

We are nearing the end of our story,
and to some the end may seem too
sad; yet not altogether sad, I think, since
we leave Alison fulfilling the highest and
holiest task life can give to any one—
the comforting and sustaining of the
afflicted.

It is a shabby, sordid little room in
which the two women wait for the tolling
of the knell that shall tell of Harry
Deacon's death. There is a poor little deal
table in the middle of the room—a pitiful
affair enough; and yet just now no altar
gorgeously draped, and ablaze with lights,
could be a more sacred thing. By this
table the two women kneel, hand clasped
in hand, with no barrier either of caste or
creed between them. Everything is very
silent. A bird sings sweetly in a cage some-
where across the paved yard into which
the room looks. Just as for the poor colleen!
The once lustrous eyes are dull and fixed—
filled with an unspeakable fear. The
prayer dies upon the lips, that are livid
and drawn tightly over the white teeth.
She clings to Alison as the drowning man
to the rope.

Oh, the horror of it—the horror of it! Her
darling boy—her Harry—now this
moment alive, and strong in the strength of
his young manhood; perhaps the next—
swinging, a dead and lifeless thing, in a
horrible pit.

The bird in the room across the yard
sings jubilant, for a ray of sunlight has
touched the gilded bars of his cage.
Louder and louder, more joyous and more
shrill, rises his cry, until, in one final out-
burst, it seems to rise into the very
heart of ecstasy.

"It is the song of a pardoned soul,"
says Alison, speaking she knows not by
what divine grace, and in that moment
the knell sounds, with a horrible lingering
between each note that shudders as it
falls. A gleam like the flicker of madness
lights up Norah's eyes, and she lifts her
arms high towards heaven.

"They have killed him—killed him—
killed him!" she shrieks, and her
voice rises shrilly and more shrill.

Then, as the dull thud of the deep-
voiced bell still beats the air, Alison
catches her in her arms, and the two
women, with smothered sobs, clasp each
other close.

Do you say we end our story with a
death-knell? Nay, for the echo of joy-
bells is in the air; and in this strange and
complex life of ours, do not the death-
knells and the joy-bells mingle—do not joy and sorrow, life and death, jostle one another?

L'ENVOI.

Years have passed, and brought many changes to the Hundred and Ninety-Third.

We will begin with Ensign Green. That gentleman’s career in the service was cut short by a relative dying and leaving him a large estate and fortune. The duties of a landlord called him, and there was no other way than to obey. The night he dined with the mess as a guest—pathetic in a musty suit of dress clothes—the farewell speech he made—bursting into bitter tears in the middle of it—these are written in the records of the regiment. Subsequently he presented a massive gold snuff-box to the mess, and it went by the name of “Green’s snuff-box,” a fact which is alluded to in another story, that tells of the doings of the Hundred and Ninety-Third.

Mention is also there made of his recitation of My name is Nerval having created a similar sensation. BUazard was left a reputation behind it. We do not mention is also there made of his story, that tells of the doings of the Hun-

There was a rather lanky girl, with two long plaits of golden hair hanging down her back, busy with her lesson-books, but not the Little Missy we have known. There was no Little Missy any more. Eliza, too, fretted for her nursling until she got a Little Missy of her own; and even then the conceit was somewhat taken out of her, for Missy, after regarding the baby gravely reflective, said, with solemn earnestness:

“Do you really think it is so much nicer than little Abednego? It’s pears to me a little tiresome that its little face should be so red, and the top of its head like a Surgeon Major now, and his Amelia delights in being the wife of a field-officer. She also greatly prides herself upon the possession of a certain bracelet, which on festive occasions adorns her well-made, plump little arm. It has two hearts in diamonds on the clasp, and—rather reversing the order of things, perhaps, yet full of a charming significance—was given to her by Mr. and Mrs. HubertOlavdson on their wedding-day. Perhaps presents of this kind were the fashion in the Hundred and Ninety-Third, for on the day that Eliza married Drummer Coughlan, a neat square box arrived at Major Hannaker’s, and from a round aperture in the front thereof looked forth a little frilled face, and Missy, screaming with delight, pulled forth poor Abednego and “spread” him on the spot, while every one gazed in admiration at a small silver collar round his neck, whereon was engraved the magic name: “Little Missy.” But Missy could not forget good Eliza, and many a night the child cried herself to sleep, in spite of the fact that the square box stood on a chair by her bedside. Eliza, too, fretted for her nurpling until she got a Little Missy of her own; and even then the conceit was somewhat taken out of her, for Missy, after regarding the infant intently, with her head on one side, out of her, for Missy, after regarding the infant intently, with her head on one side, said, with solemn earnestness:

There’s one thing I can do,

Get shot instead of you.

Says II

“An’ he done it, too,” said an old soldier grimly. That was Blizzard’s last song and last word. So he wasn’t such a very feeble creature, after all. When they heard his story the mess of the Hundred and Ninety-Third drank to his memory, all standing, and in silence—a fitting tribute.

And the doctor? Much the same; his hair growing more sparsely on the temples, thinner on the crown; but quite as full of energy as ever, and as busy organising Soldiers’ Evenings. Dr. Musters is, however, a Surgeon-Major now, and his Amelia delights in being the wife of a field-officer.
loves and pains. About three years after
the sad death of Private Deacon, Major
Henneker sold out and turned his sword
into a plough-share, gliding with all the
ease of a perfect man of the world into
the position of a country gentleman.
Yerrinder had exchanged with one the
Honourable Robert Dacre, gone to India
and taken Elsie with him. Truly, as we
go on in life, “the old order changeth,
yielding place to new.”

For our closing scene we find ourselves
once more in Ireland; once more in the
soft, sweet early summer, when the meadows
are starred with blossoms, and the music
of the woods is at its sweetest. We are
at Kinsale, and the glint of the bright bay
is seen through the trees, the trees that
are the homes of countless cushats. How
fair the clear expanse of water, kissing the
pale faces of the forget-me-nots that grow
right down to its edge! In other parts of
the shore the rocks run sheer down into
the bay, and in their steep sides are caverns
where the sea-flowers, of many a tint and
hue, open their delicate corollas in the
water, gently moving their slender
petals, as though they were asleep and
dreaming. The road winds round the
bay, and here is the turn where the
mother of discipline and self-forgetfulness, and
her face chiselled and spiritualised by a
life of discipline and self-forgetfulness, and
yet with the old sadness in the dark
grey eyes; the sadness that nature had
somehow planted there to tell of a sorrow-
ful life to come. The boy studied the
beautiful face in the quaint and unfamiliar
setting of the conventual veil, the face
that looked at him so tenderly and with
such wistful fondness.

“Kiss the lady, darling,” said Alison,
and the chubby baby mouth made itself
into a rosebud, and touched the pale
mouth of the nun. “Tell her your name,
sweet,” went on the mother. It was a
great effort to speak plain enough, but the
three-year-old tongue did its best.

“Har-ry Cla-ver-don—daddy’s de-ar
little boy—an’ mummie’s too,” he added,
slapping his precious little hand into
Alison’s; then, with the quick sympathy
that looked at him so tenderly and with
softly, “Harry, Harry,” so that at last he
got half afraid, and Alison had to soothe
and quiet him.

But do not think that Norah’s life is all
sadness. There is nothing morbid about
her. She is young, and of a healthy
frame; she may live to be as old as the
Mother Superior, whose gentle face is all
over tiny lines and wrinkles, and her
hands like withered brown leaves.

“Sister Norah loves to be among the
little ones in our schools—she is the best
teacher we have,” says this Lady Abbes,
as Hubert Olaverdon and his wife are
taking their leave, “and she wins all their
hearts entirely.”

She has evidently won little Harry’s heart,
for he strains back from his mother’s hand
to look at the sweet-faced nun, and finally
wafts a kiss to her from the tips of his
chubby fingers.

Life for Norah may be long; but she
has work enough to do, and she is
happy.
CHAPTER III.

AN ARISTOCRATIC PROGRAMME.

Half an hour after this, Philip Gillbanks followed the strange Prince through the cold, gloomy hall, then down a long stone passage. He was making a mental picture of the Prince, meaning to paint it for the amusement of his sister Clotide and of his friend Forster. Clotide was a born Republican. She despised all the aristocracy in a body, and was so advanced in her views, that she desired to pull down every existing institution of Church and State. She and Forster, coming from opposite poles of society, had apparently met at the same point; but where mere opinions are the point of interest, appearances are very deceptive.

Philip had by this time decided that he was in a house where all its members were severally and collectively afflicted with dyspepsies, but that, as he was a stranger taken in on sufferance and kindly allowed food and shelter, he must of course respect their idiosyncrasies. Feeling weary, his greatest wish at this moment was to be allowed to retire to bed; but he was so thankful for the hospitality he had received at the hands of Royalty that he could not behave as if he were at a common inn.

The Prince paused at the end of the passage as if he wished to make a remark; however, either from shyness or from inability to frame his thoughts he said nothing, but slowly opened the door.

Philip's frame of mind was by this time decidedly cheerful. He was expecting to see a Princess who should, in manners and appearance match the Prince. The first thing he noticed, when he stepped over this new threshold, was that he was in a large, old-fashioned room, oak-panelled, and with deep recesses to the great bay windows. There was here a look of far greater comfort and refinement than he had seen elsewhere in the house, and the stately simplicity of the furniture at once impressed him as being of very ancient date. A lamp was standing on the table, placed on a slightly raised platform running all along the western end of the room. The effect was very quaint and picturesque, and afterwards Philip found out that the reason of the raised floor was that a small western dumber bed at some time been added to the drawing-room, and that the higher floor level had been left untouched.

Suddenly it seemed to the young man that he was being ushered into the presence of Royalty, or at least of some being quite above him in social rank. Having in a few seconds become accustomed to the dim light, he was struck speechless by the vision of the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. She was dressed in black, but an old-fashioned white embroidered fichu was thrown over her shoulders and crossed at her waist. Her hair was coiled round the top of her head, leaving the slender throat well defined.

The so-called Duke was sitting beside her, and his picturesque attire greatly added to the mystification. Philip was so utterly unprepared for this strange revelation of beauty, that he was seized with a feeling that the whole episode was a dream, and that, having fallen asleep on the fell, he had been led, like some...
bewitched knight of folk-lore, to this strange court in order to be lured to his destruction.

The Princess was at this moment bending over an embroidery frame, and Philip noticed her small white hands, one above and one below, swiftly taking and retaking the needle.

As the door shut, the Princess paused and looked down the long room, trying to pierce the gloom which enveloped the opposite side. Then Philip saw her distinctly, and noted also—indeed, it was impossible not to note—the look of haughty pride which marred the expression of the otherwise perfect features. The handsome man sitting beside her might have been her father, so striking was the likeness between them, but her innate look of distinction was even more noticeable than his.

Philip’s feeling of scornful merriment immediately disappeared as he followed the awkward Prince up to the date.

“Penelope, here is the stranger,” he said grandly.

The Princess rose slowly; she did not even hold out the tips of her fingers, but made a very distant bow, which her exalted position appeared to render even more distant. She motioned him to a chair below the date, whilst the Duke, who had at once risen and stepped down to meet Philip, sat down on another close beside him.

“I must apologise,” began Philip, feeling so utterly abashed and surprised that he was conscious of appearing as awkward as the Prince himself.

The Princess waved her hand a little impatiently as she answered:

“Jim Oldcorn could not have done otherwise than to bring you here. You are a stranger, or you would not have missed your path.”

“It was extremely foolish of me,” said Philip, suppressing the desire to say, “Your Royal Highness.”

“Not at all,” said the Duke, with the most courtly bow, whilst the tone, polite as it was, seemed to poor Philip to affirm rather than to deny his remark. The Princess said nothing, but continued her work in silence.

“Oblige me, David, by closing the door,” continued the Duke. “If the ghost finds it open she may wish to enter.”

The smile on his lips as he said this was full of subtle irony, and, accompanied as it was by his courtly gestures, it struck Philip as strangely fascinating. At the same moment, looking furtively up at the Princess, he noticed the smile repeated on her face.

“The Duke concludes that you belong to the new régime,” she said, turning very slightly towards Philip, “and that you have no fears of ghosts.”

Again Philip was almost struck dumb by the strange difference he had found in this strange household where the son could hardly express his thoughts at all, where the father could not speak without strong language, and where the uncle and niece expressed themselves in perfect English.

For a moment he again imagined the whole was a delusion, and that he was witnessing a ghostly repetition of a long-past scene.

He grasped the arm of his chair; it certainly felt like good, solid English oak, and was no mere shadow.

“Of course you have a family ghost. I have often wished to see one. Is yours ever visible?”

“It is seen here at times,” continued the Princess quietly, in her clear, silvery voice, “but only very occasionally. Still, my ancestress is often heard. If she takes a liking to any one she will follow them down the passage, but to see her is a sign of misfortune.”

The Prince, who was standing awkwardly on one leg, burst out laughing.

“I’ve never seen her.”

“I am not surprised,” was his sister’s answer, and Philip detected the tone of scorn in the young lady’s voice; “but she was seen when you were born.”

The Duke smiled and took a pinch of snuff, an act which Philip thought added to the old-world feeling, but he also noticed how well the action showed off the shape of the well-formed hand.

“Your sister repeats hearsay, as you are her elder.”

“Then I think the hearsay is from your mouth,” she said, “and I know that is good authority.”

“You must excuse any little warmth of feeling we may show about our family ghost,” continued the Duke, looking at Philip. “I believe there are but few left in the country. Have you studied the subject of apparitions?”

“No, I don’t interest myself much about ghosts, but my friend—Forster Bethune—”

“I beg your pardon, I did not catch your friend’s name.”
"Bethune, Forster Bethune; he is the greatest friend I have, and he is deeply interested in spirits and apparitions. He collects them."

"Indeed!" Again came the delicate tone of irony, which made Philip winces.

"Not the spirits themselves, of course, but stories of them. He means to write a book with quite a new explanation of apparitions. I forget what it is, but Bethune has new explanations for everything."

"He must be refreshing in this age of old ideas," said the Princess.

"The world is never good enough for you, Penzie," said her brother suddenly; indeed, whenever he made a remark, by some trick of wild nature his words appeared to be shot forth as peas from a pea-shooter.

"Apparently it is good enough for your needs, so it must have reached a high state of perfection," was the answer.

"Hang it," muttered the Prince, "I'm off. Father wants to load that timber this evening, and I had better help him."

"Tonight!" said the Duke, glancing at the curtainless window, which offered a desolate prospect of foggy rain.

"The men take twice as long as is necessary."

"I suppose some light is necessary even to load timber," said the Princess.

The Prince laughed. Whenever he did not see the drift of his sister's remarks—and this was frequently the case, because, to use his expression, she was "so clever and so clever"—he hid his ignorance with laughter.

He now walked hurriedly towards the door, and slammed it after him. He was seen no more that evening. Philip was too wise to question Royalty, but he could not reconcile the fact of the King and his heir calmly walking out into the dripping rain on business, and the Princess and the Duke—belonging apparently to another race of thinking beings—sitting in a quest room, speaking in the polished tones of highly-bred English people.

"If I be I," he thought, "this is all past my unravelling. I wish Forster were here; even Clytie might help me out," but, having no friendly help at hand to unravel the mystery, Philip's eyes could only fix themselves on the beautiful woman before him, wondering what it all meant, and more and more fascinated by the turn of her head and every movement of her beautifully-formed hands. He had been weary before entering the room, now he was glad to sit here, even on sufferance, so that he might watch her. He addressed most of his remarks to the Duke, but he secretly cared only as to what might be their effect on this Princess. This name now appeared to him quite natural; half an hour ago it had sounded ridiculious. He was willing to conclude that the idea of Royalty had originated with her, and that the other titles had followed as a joke, though, indeed, as far as the Duke was concerned, he might be said not unworthily to invade the aristocratic circle. He was, perhaps, a little too clever and too sarcastic for the ordinary run of Dukes, that is, of the Dukes of whom Forster spoke, for Philip himself was not acquainted with the race, and the one heir to a dukedom whom he had known at Oxford had not given him any high ideas of that select circle. But this Duke of Greybarrow would have "adorned" any society, if, indeed, it had not shunned him for his subtle sarcasms, of which Philip was conscious without having any specific thing to complain of as to the remarks which fell from his lips.

When the Prince had shut the door there was a noticeable pause. The Princess frowned slightly, and her hands moved more swiftly above and below the frame; then gradually the disturbing thoughts, whatever they might be, appeared to be laid to rest. Suddenly she secured her needle, and looked at her uncle. Philip noticed at once that the beautiful face which was certainlly not habitual to it.

"You will replant the hillside," said he?

"That is extremely doubtful."

"He must be refreshing in this age of that select circle. But this Duke of Greybarrow would have "adorned" any society, if, indeed, it had not shunned him for his subtle sarcasms, of which Philip was conscious without having any specific thing to complain of as to the remarks which fell from his lips."

"I believe so, Penzie."

"Will he replant the hillside?"

"That is extremely doubtful."

The Princess tapped her foot impatiently.

"It is Jim Oldcorn's fault; he loves to haggle over a bargain."

"He merely follows suit," said the Duke, taking another pinch of snuff, "and you must give him his due, Penzie, for the fellow never revokes."

Then the Princess evidently bethought herself that the conversation was not one a stranger should listen to. She turned towards Philip, apparently looking at him attentively for the first time since his entrance, and Philip felt that he coloured
slightly. What an idiot he was; but, on the other hand, why was she so beautiful? It was ridiculous and out of place to find such a being in such strange surroundings. Clytie, who considered herself clever, and indeed was so, could not stand comparison with this north-country maiden.

Again he said to himself: "Am I dreaming?" But the Princess was speaking to him.

"I think you said your name was——"

Philip had not spoken on this insignificant subject, but he hastened to supply the omission, remembering at the same time that he did not know how to address the Princess, except by that strange and—well, yes, ridiculous title. Of course she could not be a real Princess, for Blood Royal cannot hide itself in any outlandish corner of the British Isles.

"I was only wondering the other day, Mr. Gillbanks, whether the modern spirit of unbelief in spirits or the modern power of believing in anything and everything were the strongest. Living here almost outside the world, one has to think out a few problems."

"My friend Bethune is full of ideas and speculations. I often contradict him for the sake of having him fulminate against the opposition."

"Your friend is interested, I suppose, in many things?" she asked, with the half-hidden longing of some one who wishes to go forth and do battle, but has to be content merely with tales of war.

"Oh, he is quite different to other men. Though aristocratic by birth, he thinks——" Philip stopped short, for he was going to say, "that all titles should be abolished."

"Thinks what?" said the Princess.

"That the world needs much reformation," stammered Philip, whilst the Duke remarked:

"Is your friend a Bethune of Bethune Castle?"

"Yes; his father is still alive, but I should not be surprised if my friend settles to cut off the entail and sell the place, for I fancy he will never marry."

"If the male entail were abolished," said the Princess quietly, "properties could go on in the female line."

"And sometimes it would be greatly to the advantage of old families," said the Duke thoughtfully.

"I should think so indeed," said the Princess, lightly tapping her foot. "What we need in England are great families who will understand what is due to themselves and to their country, who could all stand together to uphold their rights, and to crush the arrogance of the middle class."

"The arrogance of——" murmured Philip.

"Yes, of the middle class. It is they who have brought England to her low condition. They who imagine that money can do everything without birth. If old families could rally round each other, then there would yet be hope for us. I believe that even now if one man or one woman from our best nobility would make a stand against all vulgar ideas, I believe that even now England would rise again."

The girl's eyes were kindled. Self-generated and mysterious energy which no man can explain, and which each one calls by a different name, had called forth her enthusiasm.

The Duke's lips, on the contrary, kept their peculiar, quiet smile, but Philip saw plainly that he glanced admiringly at his niece.

"You said just now, Prinzle, that you believed that one woman could do it. I venture to say that I know that woman. Tell us how she would set about it."

The Princess rose slowly, apparently lost and what they could regain by keeping true to themselves.

"Yes," said the Duke, "it would be a fine mission." Philip, keen watch as he was, could not tell whether the man were really appreciative of his niece's words or merely covering them with his veneer of scorn. "But, my dear Penaii, the question is, would she succeed?"

"Yes," continued the Princess, "if she could come amongst them rich enough to
despite them, and rich enough to accept no favours from any of them, then they would listen to her, and they would see the sense of all she told them. She would show them how sordid are all their motives when they patronise the rich merely because they are rich; how small their aims; how worthless their ambitions.

"In fact, she would change them altogether," put in the Duke. Then, as if politeness obliged him to address Philip, he continued: "What is your opinion, Mr. Gilbanks?"

The Princess seemed suddenly to recollect the presence of the stranger. She sat down again at her frame and slowly took up her needle, as if Philip's opinion were of no consequence to her. He at once felt the change, and he knew that his ideas were nothing to her.

"I should like you to hear my friend Bethune talk on these matters. He has great ideas of reforming the world, but he would set about it in rather a different manner. I dare say, though, if you were to discuss the subject with him, it would end in your paths leading much to the same end."

A slight but exquisite curl of the girl's upper lip made Philip recognise that he was speaking to a woman who would certainly not change her path.

"Your friend may be clever, but, as for myself, I can see but one way. Leadership must come from the superior class. It is with the educated classes and with the true aristocracy alone that reform is of any value. You know the common people copy us; they are proud to imitate our ways and our dolour. It is utterly foolish to talk of wisdom resting with the people. If it does, why do we strive to educate them? No, wisdom must flow from the higher channel."

"The woman I am thinking of," said the Duke, "has seen very little of the world; she has read much and thought much; but do you not think, Penelope, that if she were launched upon that whirlpool which we call society, she would be simply wrecked in the maelstrom?"

"Some women might be. Oh, yes, some might be, but the nobly born have more staying power—much more—than the people. Put a girl whose family is 'nouveau riche' in that position, and of course she will be swept away by the excitement; but the other—"

The Duke gave a slight shrug of the shoulders and smiled again.

"The other you think, Princess, would weather the storm?"

"Yes, yes!" She spoke in a low, clear voice, and Philip was astonished at the strong feeling these two words revealed.

"You are over confident," said her uncle.

"I thought you, too, believed as I do, that it is breeding which conquers in the long run—in the long run, uncle. I thought you at least were true to our old motto: 'Absolutus sum ignavise.'"

"Certainly, with the old rapier, the sword, or the bow; but modern warfare has discarded all antiquated arms, Penzile.

Besides—" The Duke paused then, and said, in quite another tone: "You must be anxious to retire to rest, Mr. Gilbanks. If you will excuse me a minute I will see if all is ready for you."

Philip began to protest, but the Duke, smiling, deprecated his objections and went out of the room. For a few moments there was silence in the chamber, except from the soft click of the needle passing through the stiff material. Philip was longing for Forster's presence, and a whole train of ideas filled his mind. The one which chiefly predominated was:

"Who is she? What does it all mean? If these are deluded people, the world would be the better if it were full of them."

"You are on the threshold of the life we have been discussing, I suppose," said the Princess slowly.

She did not speak as if Philip's career were of any interest to her, but as if she, a weak woman, would willingly change places with him, a well-equipped man.

"Yes, I am on the threshold, but—" he wanted to explain that he belonged to the class which she wanted to wipe off the face of the earth, but he could not frame the words, and the Princess evinced no curiosity for information.

"I see you do not agree with me," she said.

"Well, perhaps not altogether, but—"

"I do not blame you; I do not expect every one to agree with my uncle and myself. Only a few can do so, but our family, having lived here so long—"

"I see you are of course an old family," said Philip, smiling, "but I have not yet heard your family name."

He positively stammered over this remark, so much was he disconcerted before this beautiful girl, resembling no other woman he had ever met. Her glance of almost cold disdain and pride finished his discomfiture.
"We do not advertise ourselves as modern people like to do; for many miles round these glens and mountains there would be no need to do so. All the dalesmen know the King of Rotherby."

"Yes," faltered Philip, "I heard that title, but——"

"But what else is there to know?"

"Is it—a—a name given in—1?"

"Yes, of course, it was given hundreds of years ago. My ancestor was made King of Rotherby. I wonder you have never heard that the brave David Winskell, hearing how the fierce border-men were coming to overrun our dales and our mountain fastnesses, rushed forth from this spot and rallied the frightened people. 'I ask only a handful of you to follow me,' he called out, 'then I, David Winskell, will lead you.' And they looked at his face full of belief in his cause and in his country, and they rallied round him, those at least who had stouter hearts than the rest, and David Winskell went out from this very glen, and all night he climbed the fells, and in the early morning when the mist lifted they found themselves face to face with the herd of wild border-men. Then David said: 'They are more in number, but our cause is the best; we fight for our rights and for our lands.' Then he stationed his men behind one of the hillocks, where you lost yourself, and he kept the narrow pass till the border-men were disheartened; then he rushed forth upon them and drove them back over the steep rocks, and their corpses strewed the deep valley beneath, and the eagles came to feed upon them. When evening came again they brought David back in triumph to this glen, and they crowned him King of Rotherby. They said his family should always from that time have their rightful title, and that his home should be his people's Palace. Who could deny them, for David's land was allodial, and was held of no superior."

"And ever since then!" said Philip, now seeing that he was indeed in the presence of as true Royal blood as those who claim the title from the world. "Ever since then—from time immemorial the dalesmen like to say—the Winskells have been Kings of Rotherby, from father to son, and if some have fallen, there have always been others of the family ready to bear the burden of true greatness."

"I see that it is so," said Philip earnestly, no longer willing to laugh in ridicule, but entirely conquered by the power of this one of David Winskell's descendants.

Penelope Winskell put away her work and again stood up.

"There are only about two reigning families who could show a pedigree like ours," she said in a tone that was the essence of pride; "but then the others have gold to prop up their poor birthright. We have become poor!"

"And the Gillbanks, who have risen from the lowest rank, are rich," thought Philip, with a feeling of shame, for his wealth seemed to insult the poverty of the Princess. But at this moment the Duke re-entered, and Philip had no longer any wish to smile at his title. Had not the Princess said that some of her family had always been able to bear their honours well? And the Duke most certainly was one of them.

"Your room is prepared for you," said the Duke.

Philip rose and wondered how he ought to bid his hostess good night; but there was no time for thought, the Duke was waiting.

"Good night, Penelope," said her uncle, taking his niece's hand, and bending over it he kissed it in courtly fashion. Philip knew the Queen's hand was kissed by her subjects, so surely he could not err by following the Duke's example. The Princess seemed to take his homage and the low bow that he bestowed upon her quite as her right, and it was only when the Duke had left him at the door of his room that he recalled with new surprise the contrast between the King and the Princess. This time, however, he only smiled, he did not laugh.

As the Duke, having left the guest, was walking down the passage, he met the Princess going to her own room. Even to him she looked like some beautiful old-world apparition, for she was still dreaming of the possible future. The Duke was a great admirer of beauty, and besides this he loved Penelope as if she were his child, for he had done everything for his niece. To him she owed her education, her powers of concentrated thought, and some of her scornful speeches. He was proud of her, though he did not often express his true feelings. As for the Duke, he was a mystery to all about him, and sometimes to himself; but his had been a strange life.

"Well, Penzie, what made you so discursive to-night?" he said, still with his
touch of sarcasm, to which the Princess was too much accustomed to notice.

"It was, I suppose, seeing a glimpse of the outer world that made me speak. We see it so seldom," she said almost sadly.

"And you wish to see it?" There was a slight tone of anxiety discernible in his voice.

"Yes, I wish to see it."

"You shall, Princess. By the way, this young man is an ingenuous cub—he must, I think, be the son of the firm of Gillbanks and Son, known all over the world."

"Firm?"

The Princess was not interested.

"Patent boiler-screw makers! Eternally rich people."

"Oh! a 'nouveau riche'!"

All the scorn the Princess could put into her voice was concentrated in the two words, as she went on to her own room.

A CHAPTER IN NAVAL HISTORY.

NAVAL HISTORY is not contained only in the biographies of those whom we have elevated to the Temple of Heroes. We are, as a nation, predisposed to hero-worship, but the opportunities for the sudden making of splendid names are few and far between, while history goes on continually. As Shakespeare says:

There is a history in all men's lives, Figuring the nature of the times deceased.

We are apt to ignore this, when turning all our gaze and admiration upon the departed great ones, who are smiling serene even in the Shades, because, as Dante says: "On earth their names in Fame's eternal volume shine for aye."

Thus it is that the mute inglorious Miltons and the village Hampdens of the poet's dream are regarded as nebulous impossibilities. How could a Milton be either "mute" or "inglorious"? How could a Hampden remain shut up in a village all his life? It has been said by some one that the voice of Fame is alone the voice of Truth, and this is practically the verdict of the world; but it may be unjust, for all that. Certainly it is, at any rate, that even as many men grow so blind in gazing at the sun that they cannot see the beauty of the stars, so we are all too ready to concentrate our gaze on the petty heroes of history, and to miss the smaller lights who helped to make them heroes.

Yet without these smaller lights our world would be dark indeed.

To read the annals of our national glory only by the suspended greater lights is as wrong as Professor Seeley has shown it would be to read the History of England as a mere succession of dynasties. Let us not forget that in the manufacturing of Heroes the world has made many mistakes. Some of these mistakes may have been of omission, as well as of commission.

As a maritime nation we naturally take most pride and delight in our Naval Heroes. And what a cluster of them do we not owe to Bonaparte! The close of the eighteenth, and the opening years of the nineteenth, century were indeed the palmy days for "the sudden making of splendid names." The long years of the old war gave us a large selection of gallant men, whose deeds are deathless, and whose memories will be ever green. But they gave us also a larger number whose memories are withered, yet whose works follow them.

Let us take a brief glance at the career of one of these men, who helped to make our glory and to build up our history, but whom a partial hero-worship has permitted us to forget.

Few people now, perhaps, are familiar with the name of Admiral John Markham. Yet he was twice one of the Lords of the Admiralty in the early years of the present century, and for over twenty years he represented the naval borough of Portsmouth in Parliament.

John Markham came of a good stock. His family had been resident in Nottinghamshire for several centuries, and produced a Bishop, two Judges, many Knights of the Shire, several eminent soldiers, and one traitor. This traitor was the "bar sinister" on the family shield, and with him began the decay of the family prosperity. The ruin was completed by one Sir Robert Markham, in the days of James the First, described as "a fatal unthrift," and "destroyer of this eminent family." The grandson of this "fatal unthrift" descended so low as to become a common London "prentice-boy. But he seems to have had some of the original "grit" of the old family in him, for he volunteered for military service in Ireland, under the Duke of York, about 1680.

He married and settled in Ireland, and had a son William, whom he was able to educate at Trinity College, Dublin, and for whom he purchased a commission in the
army. William seems to have been rather harum-scarum in his youth, but by-and-by he married and settled at Kinsale on his half-pay of one hundred pounds a year. There, though proud of his ancient family, he augmented his income by keeping a school. After his wife's death he moved to London, in order to give his three sons the education and up-bringing of gentlemen. To gain the wherewithal he did copying and engrossing work for two solicitors, and he also painted fans, which, in disguise, he sold in the streets. Once more we see the strong heroic trait of the race. One of his younger sons he put into the army, one into the navy. On the eldest, William, he lavished most of his attention and rested all his hopes.

They were well bestowed, for William was the restorer of the family fortunes and fame. Entered as a scholar at Westminster in his fourteenth year, William early attracted attention, and in five years was the captain of the school, and elected a student of Christ Church, Oxford. Among his schoolfellows and companions were Thomas Sheridan, father of the famous Richard Brinsley; Graville Leweson Gower, future Marquis of Stafford; Edmond Burton, the scholar; and Howe and Keppel, the future Admirals. After a few years' residence at Oxford, William was appointed Head Master of Westminster School, in succession to his own old master.

It is gratifying to know that the gallant, self-denying old half-pay Captain lived to see his favourite son in that position of honour, and even to see him still higher. At this time the scholar's most intimate friends were William Murray, future Earl of Mansfield, and Edmund Burke. Among his pupils were Jeremy Bentham; Cyril Jackson, afterwards Dean of Christ Church; and Archibald MacDonald, afterwards Lord Chief Baron. William, now Doctor, Markham married the daughter of a wealthy merchant, and was appointed successively Dean of Rochester, Dean of Christ Church, Chaplain to George the Second, Bishop of Carlisle, Tutor to the young Princes, and Arch Bishop of York.

He had thirteen children—all boys and seven girls—all of whom did well in the world, but with only one of whom we are concerned at present.

John was the second son and was born in 1761, at the Head Master's house in Little Dean's Yard, Westminster. When only eight years old he was sent to Westminster School, of which Dr. Samuel Smith was then head, and Dr. Vincent was one of the teachers. It was from the latter—the author of "The History of the Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean"—that Jack derived his ideas of naval glory. Among his schoolfellows were many lads who afterwards became famous—Home Popham, the Admiral and Marine Surveyor; Everard Home, the great physician; Charles Abbot, Speaker of the House of Commons, and afterwards created Lord Colchester; Henry Agar, Lord Clifden; George, afterwards Lord, Barrington; James Affleck, who died a Baronet and a General; Robert Hobart, fourth Earl of Buckinghamshire, and Governor of Madras; Spencer Madan; George Rice, afterwards Lord Dysnavor, and his own brother-in-law; and a number of others more or less known to fame. With such companions, and in listening to the learned and brilliant company which used to gather in his father's house, the days of John Markham's boyhood were happily enough passed.

On the eleventh of March, 1775, little Jack Markham, now of the mature age of thirteen years and nine months, was entered as an officer in His Majesty's Navy. He joined the "Romney," then fitting out at Deptford, under the command of Captain the Honourable George Elphinstone, afterwards Admiral Lord Keith. Jack was always fortunate in his companions; his favourite messmate in the "Romney" was "the gallant good Btou," immortalised in Campbell's ballad. Their friendship endured until Btou's glorious death at Copenhagen.

Jack's first voyage was to Newfoundland, where the "Romney" remained cruising for two months, and then returned to Spithead with a convoy. While she was in port he was allowed a short holiday, part of which he spent with the young Princes at Buckingham Palace, then called the "Queen's House." The Prince of Wales, writing to Dr. Markham, said of this visit: "Dear Admiral went last Thursday. We may say to him what Virgil makes Apollo say to Ascanius:

"Macte novâ virtute puer:  
Sic itur ad astra."

(Advance, illustrious youth! increase in fame,  
And wide from east to west extend thy name.)

Captain Elphinstone was transferred to the "Peroes" in 1776, and Jack went with him. The "Peroes" was sent out to New York with a convoy of eighteen merchantmen, the seas then swarming with American privateers. The great War of
Independence was now going on. Convo
ying a fleet of merchantmen across the
Atlantic was then an exciting and an
anxious task, and the "Perseus" had her
share of the fun. First a rebel slop-of-war was captured, and then a schooner
was taken. To his pride and delight Jack
was sent, with a crew of four men, to take
charge of this last prize, and he brought
her safely into New York harbour. There
he fell in with his uncle, Enoch Markham,
Colonel of the Forty-Sixth Regiment, who
saw some hard service during the re-
bellion.
It provokes a natural smile nowadays to
read of a child of fourteen commanding a
prize of war, but our smile disappears very
soon. After a year's cruising and chasing of
privateers on the American coast, the
"Perseus" joined a small squadron which
was engaged in hunting pirates, and which
in February, 1777, proceeded to the West
Indies. There, off the Island of St.
Eustatia, the "Perseus" overhauled and
captured a privateer sloop carrying ten
guns, eight swivels, and a crew of twenty-
eight men. Jack was again put in charge,
and shortly after passing company with the
frigate, was chased by an enemy's
_cruiser. His crew had on all sail and
triumphantly brought his charge into the
English harbour at Antigua. There he
heard that his father had been created
Archbishop of York, and he was naturally
elated with joyful pride.
Captain Elphinstone now changed into
the "Pearl," one of the finest frigates in
the navy, and was employed in surveys at
the mouth of the Delaware - Jack
still with him. In a few months they
both returned to the "Perseus," which
vessel went to cruise off the coast of the
Carolinas. There, during very dirty
weather, a large merchant vessel was
sighted, chased, and captured. All the
crew, saving four American-Frenchmen,
who were left to help in working her,
were taken off, and Jack was clapped on
board with four men and a boy from the
"Perseus." A gale was gathering, and
there was just time to tell him to make
the best of his way to an English port.
He was now barely sixteen. The gale
came on with violence, the prize sprang a
leak, and became waterlogged. His
English crew, thinking all was up, became
insubordinate, seized upon a cask of
spirits, and drank themselves into a state
of insensibility.
Jack was at the helm, and the boy was
asleep. This was too good an opportunity
for the Frenchmen to lose, and they
determined to regain the ship. One took
a musket, another a cutlass, the others
got handspikes, and together they rushed
on Jack. They had mistaken their man
—or boy. Jack, if young, was active. He
jumped quickly aside, seized an iron pump-
handle, felled the man with the musket,
disabled the man with the cutlass, and
drove the other two under hatches, which
he smartly battened down. The boy,
awakened by the noise, came to his help,
and the two wounded men on deck were
secured. Thus he remained in command
of a sinking vessel, four prisoners, a
drunken crew, and one boy. When the
men came to their senses a thorough
examination was made of the vessel, which
they found to be full of stores and to-
acco, and that she could not sink. They
all had a hard time of it, before a passing
vessel rescued them, and so many months
elapsed before Jack landed in England,
that his friends had put on mourning,
believing him to be dead. It was a
happy reunion, and the plucky young
middy had again a well-deserved holi-
day. We cease to smile now at the boy-
commander.
Jack's next cruise was in the "Roebuck,"
under the command of Sir Andrew Hamond
—a gallant captain, knighted for his
services during this war. Jack was now
promoted to be Acting Lieutenant.
After a nine weeks' passage to New
York, the "Roebuck" joined the fleet of
Admiral Arbuthnot on an expedition to
South Carolina. The object was to attack
the strongly-fortified city of Charleston,
and a number of troops were landed at
the mouth of the Eilato River, with a
naval brigade under Jack's old captain,
Elphinstone. The "Roebuck"—on board
which Admiral Arbuthnot now hoisted
his flag—accompanied by the "Renown"
and the "Romulus," lightened of guns,
water, and provisions, crossed the bar to
attack nine war-vessels which the enemy
had inside. These were withdrawn up
the river to Charleston, and there sunk
to block the passage. But the "Roebuck"
pushed on, passed Fort Maunlarie under a
heavy fire, and landed men to attack the
fort, which then surrendered. Charleston
surrendered a few days later, and very
soon afterwards the whole of South
Carolina was taken by Lord Cornwallis's
army.
Markham did such good service in this
affair that he was promoted to be First Lieutenant of the "Roebuck," and he shared in the thanks voted by both Houses of Parliament to the officers and men engaged. Returning to New York, the "Roebuck" cruised for a time off Rhode Island, and early in 1781 returned to England.

But Markham was then in charge of the rebel prize-frigate, and after disposing of her he joined the "Royal Oak," and went on a cruise to Nova Scotia. There he was selected for duty on board of the "London," the flagship of Admiral Graves. Meanwhile the French had joined the rebels in an attempt to root out Lord Cornwallis from South Carolina, and news arrived that the French Admiral, De Grasse, with twenty-four sail of the line, was making for Chesapeake Bay. Thither the combined fleets of Hood and Graves—in all nineteen sail—followed, and sighted the enemy on the fifth of September, 1781.

The French fleet weighed, battle was at once opened, and a good deal of damage was done on both sides without any decisive result. The "London" was in the thick of it, and was so much cut up that she had to return a few days afterwards to New York to refit. Markham also distinguished himself in this action.

Meanwhile things were in a very disturbed state at home. While Jack was at New York, the Gordon riots were taking place in England, his father's house was attacked, and the lives of all the family were in great jeopardy. He received a long letter from the Archbishop telling him of all the stirring events, and of their escape from the imminent peril they had been in.

In January, 1782, Jack was appointed to the "Hinchinbrooke" as Lieutenant-commanding, and was sent to cruise off Jamaica to protect trade. In March he was given charge of the fire-ship, "Volcano," and he missed being with Sir George Rodney in the memorable action which established our supremacy in the West Indies, and led to peace being declared between France and England.

In May he received the command of H.M. sloop "Zebra," with orders to cruise off Cape Tiburon. There he had an unfortunate encounter with a vessel which would not show her colours until he fired. She then turned out to be a truce- vessel, with prisoners for exchange. The French Lieutenant in charge professed that the fault was his, and assured Markham that no blame attached to the latter. Yet on arrival at Port Royal, the Frenchman laid a charge against Markham of wilfully firing on a flag-of-truce and defenseless men. A court-martial followed, and on the false swearing of the French witnesses, Jack was found guilty and dismissed the service.

This was a great blow, but Jack was not the man to submit tamely to injustice, and he was backed by Sir George Rodney, who highly disapproved of the sentence. He returned to England, laid his case before the King, who referred it to Lord Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty, and the end was that an Order in Council reinstated Jack in the service. He was at once promoted to be Post-Captain, received half-pay for the time he had been out of the service, and then, after a short command, was granted six months' leave on half-pay.

The unjust sentence thus became a windfall to him, and it further made him many warm friends who resented the treatment he had received.

When in 1783 Jack, now Captain, Markham commissioned the "Sphynx," he was just twenty-two years old. The American War was over and peace ensued for ten years. For the first three years he was cruising in the Mediterranean, and for a time was second officer at Gibraltar, a position of some responsibility. In October, 1786, the "Sphynx" returned to Gibraltar, a position of some responsibility. In October, 1786, the "Sphynx" returned to England to be paid off, and Jack, now in his twenty-fifth year, had a term of six years ashore. This long holiday he spent happily among his many friends, and in making lengthened tours on the Continent—one of them being with Lord Wycombe, through Norway, Sweden, and Russia. He also made himself useful at home in connection with the Naval Club, and organised the formation of a fund for the relief of the widows and orphans of members. He also made a trip to Canada and to the States to look after some land in which his father was interested.

On the first of February, 1793, began the great war with France. As we would expect, Captain Markham was one of the first to apply for employment, and in a short time he was commissioned to a fine frigate called the "Blonde," then fitting out at Deptford. The "Blonde" was at first employed as a convoy to merchant traders for Holland, and then she was ordered to join Sir John Jervis—our famous Lord St. Vincent—in his expedition to the French West Indies.
Captain Markham took part in the capture of Martinique, and was sent home with the news, which caused great rejoicing, and evoked the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. Thereafter the "Blonde" joined the Channel Fleet under Lord Howe, and took part in the memorable chase of the great French fleet, which received a tolerable pounding from Lord Howe off Ushant.

Having obtained command of a seventy-four-gun line-of-battle-ship, the "Hannibal," with her he was sent off again to the West Indies, and was ordered to Minorca, and the "Centaur." On the passage two French frigates were taken, one by the "Hannibal" alone, with a good slice of prize-money to the share of our hero.

This West Indies expedition was one of the great follies of the Great War. The English Government sent a handful of eight hundred and seventy men to conquer San Domingo, defended by six thousand picked French troops and fifteen thousand acclimatised militia. For many dreary months the hopeless struggle went on. The fever was even a greater foe than the French, and the mortality was fearful. In this wretched affair Jack's brother David, a Captain in the Twentieth Regiment, was killed when gallantly leading an attack on one of the forts. This was a terrible grief to Jack, and the whole employment at this time was a heart-break to him. The war-vessels had to remain in port to aid the inadequate land forces, for the drafts sent from England from time to time did not replace the removals by yellow fever. Scurvy broke out in the ships, and the crew of the "Hannibal," in spite of the ceaseless attention and anxious care of her commander, suffered severely. Finally, Jack himself broke down and was sent home invalided. This was his darkest term of service, and his saddest homing.

He now had a spell of a year ashore, and during that time was married to Maria Rice, sister of his old schoolfellow, George Talbot Rice, now Lord Dynevor. Maria Rice was a bright, graceful, accomplished young lady, full of health and spirits, a great reader, but also a great walker; full of breezy sunshine, and the very model of a sailor's wife. Some pleasant months were occupied in visiting various friends, and then Captain Jack was commissioned to H.M.S. "Centaur." His principal duty, while this vessel was fitting out, was sitting on courts-martial in connection with the Mutiny at the Nore. This over, he was sent with his fine new seventy-four-gun ship to cruise off the south coast of Ireland, to look out for the then expected French invaders. Needless to say, he did not find any, but he found some of his grandfather's old friends, and he had plenty of practice in seamanship during a stormy winter. In April, 1798, he was ordered to join Lord St. Vincent's fleet off Cadiz. Here he had some disagreement with the gallant Admiral—who could be very dictatorial and unpleasant when he chose—concerning the sanitary arrangements of the "Centaur"; but Jack, while he bowed to authority, upheld his own opinion, and in doing so gained the respect of St. Vincent. The two afterwards became firm friends and allies.

Meanwhile, however, an expedition was ordered to Minorca, and the "Centaur" formed part of it. The whole of the next year was employed in chasing, and in active encounters with, the French in the Mediterranean; and later with the Channel Fleet, of which Lord St. Vincent, though very ill, took command at the urgent request of Government, for the more effectual blockade of Brest.

We must shorten our story, however. The Channel service was anxious and rough work, and it was aggravated by an outbreak of scurvy in the fleet. Finally, in February, 1801, Lord St. Vincent resigned his command in order to take the office of First Lord of the Admiralty in Mr. Addington's Ministry, and he invited Captains Trowbridge and Markham, as the two of whom, by close observation, he had formed the highest opinion for judgement and ability, to join the Board as Naval Lords.

Thus, early in 1801, Captain Markham retired from the sea after twenty-six years in the navy and twenty years of varied active service. He was now forty years of age, and in due time he was gazetted Rear-Admiral, Vice-Admiral, and Admiral. The remainder of Admiral Markham's life was spent in legislative and administration work, and he was especially associated with Lord St. Vincent in reforming the service and overhauling the dockyards. It was Markham who reorganised the Hydrographic Department, who introduced teak timber into the British Navy, and did much other useful work.
down to his death in 1827. But we do not dwell on his career as a public servant, as our object was merely to present a picture of a gallant British sailor in one of the most stirring periods of our naval history.

THE WOUND.

Purlo the gay stuffs above it,
The scar that the wound has left;
Ride it with glowing flowers,
With fingers quick and deft;
Speak as if never a weapon,
Heird in a reckless hand,
Had struck a blow so cruel;
The world will understand.
The world will look and lightly
Say it is all forgot;
The snor, the lie, the treason
Are all as they were not.
Change is the law of Nature,
And love, and faith, and trust
Are things too fair and dainty
To tread life’s common dust.
Only when all is over,
The curtain draws o'er the play;
When the voice has hushed its pleading,
The smile has died away;
When the corpse is decked for burial,
And things show as they are,
Deep, red and angry, as at first,
I think they’ll find the scar.

WINTER LIFE IN COPENHAGEN.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

DENMARK is not a country to visit in winter unless you are fond of a good deal of snow, a low thermometer, and wintry landscapes.

I thought I was fond of these three things; but, all the same, I did not like to form my first impression of Copenhagen at two o’clock in the morning, after a painful passage of the Great Belt—we were four hours late in crossing—and in a snowstorm, which, judging from the state of the streets, had already raged some time.

We were a party of about a hundred travellers from the South. The ice in the Belts had got so severe as to threaten Denmark with a general stoppage of communication in its most important part. Instead of a ferry once every three or four hours across the Great Belt, it was all they could do to send the strong ice-boat from Fyen to Zealand once a day. Hence the massing of impatient travellers at the ferry ports, and a complete disorganisation of train services.

It had been a fine experience in its way—this passage of the fifteen or sixteen miles of the Great Belt. The ice was thick nearly everywhere in the journey. It was a pitchy night, and quite out of the question for the captain to strike the exact route he had made that morning in his voyage from Zealand to Fyen. He had then, of course, broken a passage in the ice, and if we could have retraced our steps things might have been easier for us. But scarcely had we started at seven o’clock when the snow whirled upon us from the north, and it soon obliterated the marks of broken ice, which would also, with the aid of the boat’s lamps and clever steering, have served us in our return passage.

Now and then we had come to a dead stop. The floes in front were not to be overcome without repeated efforts. The more determined of us passengers stayed on deck in our furs and ulsters to see how matters were likely to go. It was worth while doing so for the sake of the vigorous sensations we enjoyed. The boat went on when it could, with a melancholy crunching and grinding of the ice; and when from slow our pace descended to slower, and then to absolute inactivity, it was essential to put the engines astern without loss of time, lest the disturbed ice should pack around us in our trouble like wolves about a disabled horse, and so bind us hard and fast—for an indefinite time.

For an hour it was very tedious work—quite as much backward as forward movement, it seemed. Then, however, we had got more into the middle of the sound, where the ice had not, thanks to the Belt currents, yet had time to become so formidably thick. Even here, however, we were sliding on ice rather than steaming through water. The weighty iron bows of the boat were forced well up by the massing of luggage and ballast in the afterpart. The screw aft thus lay deep in the water, out of danger from the floes, which would else soon have broken it; while the tremendous bows, gliding ahead slowly but surely, fractured a channel for us, through which we crawled to our destination.

And so, instead of coming to Copenhagen at the decent hour of ten, we were set on our feet in its deserted streets—splendid wide thoroughfares, some of them—at the dismal hour of two.

Happily, it was not necessary to trouble about luggage. For my part, I just walked out into the snow and piercing air, and entered the first hotel which showed signs of a night porter. The man gaped, took a candle, and led me to my room. One does not usually in the North, in winter, occupy unwarmed apartments. For once in a
WINTER LIFE IN COPENHAGEN. (January 20, 1844.)

By Charles Dickens.

This Grecian temple is the Thorvaldsen Museum—the thing best worth seeing in Europe, north of the Vatican.

The next day broke cold and bright. From my bedroom window I could see hundreds of men with broad wooden shovels casting the snow into heaps. The January sun gleamed on the blood-red new buildings opposite the “Hotel Dagmar.” Below, trams were wending their way up and down the spacious street. Above, the lines of telegraph and telephone wires stretched darkly from house top to house top.

There was no doubting that I was in a Capital town.

Still less was it possible to doubt it when I ate my breakfast lower in the hotel in a large room of marble columns, gilding and mirrors, with the inevitable German waiter in swallow-tails, talking an English that the Englishman would do better to guess at than attempt to understand methodically.

There were about thirty degrees of frost in the air when I went out to take stock of Denmark’s metropolis. Under these circumstances it is vastly more pleasant to go afoot through a strange town than to take conveyance of any kind. Besides, nothing is so educative, in its way, as getting lost in a labyrinth of streets and squares, the relative position of which you wish to understand.

I sought to go due north, in which direction I believed Copenhagen’s chief buildings lay. I succeeded in confusing myself very soon in a series of small streets, the houses of which seemed all devoted to the provision of “Breakfasts” and “Coffee.” I was in fact in the neighbourhood of the Christianshavn Docks. The frozen canals soon told me this much.

Steamers, three-masted barques, and innumerable smaller ships and fishing-boats were all welded together in the ice of the main channels of the harbour. It was a pretty sight, with the frosty red sun on the horizon. Notice boards were stuck about the harbour telling where the ice was trustworthy, and where it was dangerous. But the continuance of the frost had made these posts obsolete. Mariners and others, bulkily wrapped in woolenens, were treading on and fro among the irregular ice floes, regardless of the possibility of their locating the vessel.

Here a fisherman might be seen who was not to be dissuaded from his vocation by Jack Frost. He could not go out upon the Baltic in his clumsy little green boat, but he still meant to earn his livelihood. He had, therefore, cut a hole in the ice, and thence he ladled out dabs and soles and other fish with such ease and in such numbers, that it seemed as if, for his pocket’s sake, he might well pray for January weather all the year round. In fact, however, scarcely one fish in five was saleable. The cold had played havoc with them as well as with the dock labourers, the postal deliveries, the shipping owners, and the capital’s supply of coal. For every marketable fish thus netted to the surface, four or five were promptly rejected and returned to the icy deep, to beguile the next fisherman who indulged in a little wintry angling in the same place.

It was odd, too, to see the multitude of sea-birds as well as ubiquitous sparrows that amused themselves on the ice all among the shipping. They seemed as tame as house cats. Indeed it were hard for them otherwise. With the sound between Denmark and Sweden even faster than the Great Belt, the former had scant chances of a dinner of fish of the conventional kind. They had thus habituated themselves to the new state of affairs. The very boldest of them trod the decks of the harbour craft, and openly declared that they expected to be fed by man. The others played the excellent part of scavengers on the ice. For these there was not a little work, if they were to be consistent scavengers. The offal and nasty rubbish of all kinds cast from the vessels on to the ice was bad enough to see. Much of the refuse was of a kind that even the foulest feeding vulture would have turned up his beak at.

From the docks I at length broke into the heart of the town proper, by a canal-side with quaint old gabled red houses, such as one sees in northern towns on the Continent, but in England nowhere. A stately Grecian temple was in front, with a green dome from which the snow had largely departed. The contrast between this building, with its classical portico and pediment, and the old burgher houses adjacent was keen. And yet really it was not a whit more keen than the contrast between the glowing works of the sculptor to whom it is dedicated, and the frigid surroundings of the works themselves. This Grecian temple is the Thorvaldsen Museum—the thing best worth seeing in Europe, north of the Vatican.
For the moment, however, I neglected Thorsvaldean, reserving the joy as a schoolboy keeps his comfits.

I passed a Royal statue of bronze, snowbedecked; then a Royal palace, more than half in ruins; then another canal; a delightful blood-red range of quaint buildings more than two centuries old, though apparently new as hawthorn blossom, and with a unique tower of twisted dragons, their tails tapering skywards; and so into a market square, where a number of old dames were sitting demurely before little tables of frozen fish, flesh, and fowl, as if they held the thermometer in scorn.

Here, among these stiff sels—I could have used one as a walking-stick—and wooden hens, was a charming touch or two of colour. There were small portable hothouses in the market-place, and from their dewy panes, hyacinths, lilies of the valley, sulphur-hued roses, and other tenderly-nurtured flowers looked forth into the frosty air. It were cruel indeed, if my Danish had not been so lamentably halting, I would have said as much to the flower merchant when he invited me to buy. But he would hardly have sympathised with my fancy.

From the market I struck Ostergade, the Regent Street of Copenhagen, and was instantly convinced that the Danish ladies are first in Europe for complexions. Their frosted cheeks seemed to warm the thoroughfare, and there was the sparkle of exuberant health in most eyes. Moreover, how admirably do furs enhance a woman’s beauty! It seems easy for a lady in furs to appear graceful.

I suppose in the North fur coats and fur jackets are as needful as dress-suits. And one is glad of it. Nothing in the way of rainment has a better appearance. The railway officials, even though they may wear but astrachan, have a lordly look, that they owe quite as much to their apparel as to their impressive physique, and their inner pride in being able to write themselves down as Government employé. The commercial traveller in cattakin and mink inspires reverence; while as for sables, bearakin, and seal, they make robes for gods, and would dignify even the most degraded specimens of humanity.

Hence, no doubt, quite as much as because of their warmth and costliness than new, the extraordinary supply of second-hand furs in the shop windows of Ostergade. One would as soon think of wearing ordinary second-hand clothes as being fitted with one's neighbour's extracted teeth. The same repugnance is not felt for furs that have passed from their first possessor. These are in the like case with diamonds and rubies of price. They can be reset, and it is as if you, their latest owner, then had them first-hand from Nature, with all their charms un tarnished.

After the furs the multitude of cigar shops were noticeable. The Danes are great smokers. Cigars are cheap in the land. You do not here, as in Spain, see venerable dames openly enjoying the dear nicotine; but it is the commonest thing in the world to meet a group of schoolboys, not much more than just in their teens, all sucking at cigars while they cun their Latin grammars. One bright-looking little fellow whom I later met in the train with a Copenhagen Havana between his lips and a geography manual on his knees, told me he was but eleven. I do not know whether his precocious manners were due to his early introduction to tobacco. Certainly, however, this lad was a wonder of intelligence, self-possession, and politeness. We are told in England and elsewhere that it is extremely bad to smoke until we are quite mature men. Perhaps it is. But the injuriousness of the habit thus early fostered does not seem to affect the Danish ‘constitution as, according to the doctors, it affects us.

And yet to Denmark’s credit it must be said that it is not difficult for a person who abhors tobacco to live comfortably in the land. There are non-smoking carriages on the State railways, and the inhibitions are respected. Of course, too, there are also ladies’ cars. You are not permitted to smoke in the better class waiting-rooms at the stations, and in the ladies’ cafés—a feature of Scandinavia—you are again, equally of course, secure from the intrusive weed. Even in the vestibules of the theatres it is unlawful to light so much as a cigarette.

After its furs, and the tobacco shops, and the ladies’ cheeks, Ostergade seemed to me mainly remarkable for its trying pavement. The Copenhagen authorities are commendably brisk in getting the snow removed from the streets almost ere it touches the ground. But they do not interfere with youthful sport in the matter of slides. A lad may polish a most
SOLITUDE—AND A CROWD.

January 20, 1854.

Charles Dickens.

SOLITUDE—AND A CROWD.

One can scarcely conceive of any great work having ever been done in the midst of a crowd. A great building may, of course, be raised in the heart of a great city, right before the eyes of a great multitude of men; but the man who planned that building, who made of it a perfect whole before one brick was placed upon another, wrought in solitude, surely! A statesman may find it necessary, for reasons which are on the surface, to live, as much as possible, in a crowd, but when he desires to do any actual work, he gets as far away from a crowd as possible, to some place where solitude shall be his chief companion. A great fortune need not, necessarily, be a great work; but although it may, at first sight, seem strange, it is probable that the greatest fortunes have been made in solitude. Jay Gould, Vanderbilt, Astor, other of the American multi-millionaires, were notoriously solitary men. I saw, somewhere, that Baron Hirsch always prefaced his greatest coups by prolonged periods of solitary communion. I do not know if the statement proceeds from the financier’s own lips, but the thing at least is possible.

No doubt there is such a thing as being alone in the centre of a crowd. “I never feel so much alone as when I am surrounded by a number of people;” that, or a similar observation, we all of us have heard. And probably most of us have a moment of self-absorption, even when we are in the gayest, most sympathetic company. I have heard men of business say that, when they desire privacy, to enable them to think out business details, they spend an evening at a theatre or a music-hall. This is like the tradesman who protested that he would not miss going to church on Sunday mornings for anything—if he did, he should get his accounts all wrong. Then, again, there is such a thing as the solitude of a great city; and it certainly is a fact that one may be as much alone in London as anywhere in the wide, wide world. But solitude of some sort one must have, if one is to do work of any kind worth doing.

Take, for instance, literary men—men
whose trade is that of the writer. How often do we encounter works of promise, instances of young authors who have started well, but who, having started, get no farther? One cause for this, is not
impossibly, what is called society. It is often said that, to a "writing fellow," social success means literary success—that it is the literary man who moves in the "best" society who "gets on." I doubt it. That is, I do not doubt that the man who
is seen everywhere may, therefore, "get work" of a kind; but that it is work of a kind I have no doubt whatever. A scribbler may, merely because of his social connections, achieve an income of a thousand, or even of two thousand a year, but that such an one would do good work I take leave to doubt. I am not for a moment suggesting such a patent absurdity as that, merely because a man is born the son of a Duke, or of a Marquis, or an Earl, he is, on that account, incapacitated from becoming a first-rate workman at any trade to which he chooses to turn his hands. I am simply questioning the possibility of a man being able to serve two masters. I say that I question if it is possible for a man to give enough of himself to society to entitle him to be called a social success, and, at the same time, to do good work in literature. It is no answer to point, for instance, to Sir Edward Hamley, to Kinglake, to Hayward, to Lady Brassey, to the long list of men and women who, while holding a recognised position in society, produced literary work which, of its kind, was very good, and good as it could be. If anything, these persons prove the very point at which I am aiming. First of all, none of them can be fairly said to have achieved social elevation. They were born in the society in which they lived, and moved, and died—therefore none of their work was done before they received what is called social recognition. I would wager a large sum—if I had it—that, in society or out of it, their best work was done when, in some way or other, they had temporarily excluded themselves from society of any and every kind.

I am alluding to quite a different kind of thing. That was a very decent volume of verses which the Honourable Frank Stigan published when he was at the University. He has never written a line, either in prose or verse, worth reading since. The reason, as I understand it, is simplicity itself. When he came down society took it into its head to make of him a lion—and the Honourable Frank was smashed. Again, take young Slasher. He has done nothing above contempt since "The Kicker Kicked." Why? When he wrote that really clever work of fiction, he was a struggling usher in a country school. "The Kicker Kicked" caught on. His publisher gave him the run of his house—the entree to a "social circle." The circle increased in circumference—it was joined to other circles. For the first time in his life Slasher found himself somebody, and he lost his head. In his struggles to retain, not the literary, but the social position he had gained, he came to grief. So far as one can judge from the stuff he has lately produced, he is destined to write pot-boilers—and poor pot-boilers at that—for the rest of his life. If he had never "entered society," if he had wooed solitude, and kept out of the crowd, the highest positions in literature were within his reach.

Trollope tells us, in his autobiography, that he was amused by what some of the reviewers wrote of those of his novels of which the scene was laid in Barsetshire. These criticisms were so struck by the intimate knowledge which he showed of life in a cathedral city. How excellently he drew his Bishops and his Deans! How close studies he must have made of them in the flesh! Over this pronouncement of the pundite Trollope chuckles. He assures us that, before those tales were written, he had never met either a Bishop or a Dean, nor had he met, to his knowledge, any one who had. He knew nothing, practically, of a clergyman of any sort or kind; nor of life in a cathedral city either. He had drawn on his imagination, and on his imagination only, for every life that he had written.

It is universally recognised that the Barsetshire novels contain far and away the best work that Anthony Trollope ever did. Now, some of the wise inform us that, if a man desires to write a good novel, it is essential that he should only attempt to write of what he knows. How does this fit in with Trollope's declaration? Says Quilp, when you ask him why he frequents five o'clock teas, and garden-parties, and "At homes," and musical evenings, and all the rest of it: "I get my materials from life. If I didn't see life, where should I get my materials?" I believe that many people excuse themselves for always keeping in a crowd, by the assertion that if they were
not actually, physically, bodily, "in the movement," as the slang has it, they would be out of it. It seems to me that these people—and Quilpen—are a little mistaken.

It would be an exaggeration to say that the less you know of a thing the better you can write of it; though, to a certain extent, even that is true. If you go, say, to a place for the first time in your life to-morrow, it is quite possible that you will be able to give us a better, a more piquant—in a sense, a more accurate—picture of it at the end of a week than at the end of a year. Because, in the one case, the impression will be fresh, and in the other, it will have become dulled by constant repetition. So, also, it is quite likely that you will be able to give us a better and a juster description of a person after a short acquaintance than after the acquaintance of a lifetime. Because, in the one case, your point of view will probably be an impartial one, you will at least see with unobscured eyes; while, in the other, with equal probability, the threads of your two lives will have become so interwoven, so entangled, that not only will impartiality be impossible, but, also, your eyes will have become obscured and dimmed; you will not see any one thing clearly because you see so many. In the great multitude of visions the sense of proportion is lost.

Although the thing must not be pushed too far—for instance, it would be, rash to assert that a man is unfitted to write on the rudiments of the Latin grammar because he thinks in Hebrew and speaks in Greek—still, there is truth in the assertion that sometimes the less one knows of a thing the better one can write of it.

"Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits." There is truth, again, in this. I should be the last person to advise any one, in that sense, to keep at home. The individual who, having arrived at maturity, has never been more than fifty or a hundred miles away from the place of his birth is, surely, an individual to be pitied. It may be the fact that "a rolling stone gathers no moss," but, with Lord Dundreary, I should like to know what a stone wants with moss, any how. Is it not written somewhere that moss is a synonym of decay? It is certain that the man of average intelligence, who moves neither and neither, in all the highways and byways of the world, does not become mossgrown, and all the better. No, let every man, and every woman, too, see as much of the world as he or she can; there is a good deal in the world worth seeing, though the oldest inhabitant of Little Pedlington may scarcely think it. But it by no means follows that because one travels, one therefore lives in crowds; the greatest travellers are often the most solitary of beings.

"How much the travelled fool excels the fool who stays at home." I have no reference at hand, but is it not something like that which Cowper says? One would remark, first, that Cowper's was hardly the sort of life one would desire to emulate; certainly he was no great traveller. And, secondly, even he seems to allow that the travelled fool excels the fool who stays at home. And, surely, there is no better recipe for the sharpening even of the dullest wits than the attrition which is inseparable from travel.

The mistake which the man makes who moves in what is called "society," is, that he thinks that, because he moves in society, he therefore, of necessity, sees the world. There is, no doubt, society and society. But society, even at its best, is but a coterie, or collection of coteries, of cliques. Every society has its standards, just as much as Little Pedlington has. You are either of it or not of it; this applies to the "society" of Seven Dials just as much as it applies to the "society" of which so much has been lately written in the magazines. If you are in it, you must obey its rules—and very absurd many of its rules are, just as absurd as the standard of conduct which obtains in Little Pedlington. If you do not obey its rules, you are out of it—you are, as the phrase puts it, "outside the pale of society." No society can be cosmopolitan; the two words are in absolute opposition. For this very simple reason, that the genuine cosmopolitan is not only a man who is at home in every phase of life, but, above all, he is a man who lives just what life he pleases. The life of a man who is in society must, to a greater or less extent, be fettered by the laws of the society, the clique, the set, to which he belongs. And, therefore, it comes to this, that the man who is a member, really and truly an active member, of any sort of society you please—who, that is, lives, moves, and has his being in it—is, necessarily, not a citizen of the world, but only of a fragment of the world, and oftentimes of an infinitesimal fragment, too.

Let a man or a woman, I repeat, see as much of the world as he or she can; but,
unless the pair of them intend to fritter their lives away, let them keep out of the crowd, or, if they must be in it, as some of us must, at least let them not be of it. But, indeed, the advice is superfluous, because the man who does not propose to fritter his life away will take great care that he does not allow himself to become simply one of a crowd, whether the crowd be large or small.

I do not wish to dogmatise—very much the other way. About tastes there is no disputing, and I, for one, have certainly no desire to inaugurate a disputation. If Perkins is ambitious for social success; if he thinks that the only thing worth climbing is the social ladder; if he wishes to gain the entrée of Lady A.'s house, and then of the Countess of B.'s, and then of the Marchioness of C.'s, and then of the Duchess of D.'s, until step by step, he reaches the august precincts of Royalty itself, and becomes actually “persona grata” with Princes, so be it. I am not suggesting, even by inference, that Perkins's ambition may not be at least as worthy as either yours or mine. But I do say this, that I conceive that it is hardly possible that Perkins proposes to leave behind him any, even the faintest, mark upon the world—any work, of any sort or kind, that will endure. There are some who love work merely for the work's sake, queer though it may seem. And I would respectfully hint that those persons would hardly be wise in emulating Perkins.

Not that a worker need necessarily shut himself off—I am assuming the masculine gender—from the society of his fellow-men, or women. But this he must be: he must be in a position to shut himself from their society when he pleases. He must be, so far, free. To paraphrase, I hope not improperly, the line in the well-known hymn—not to be able to obtain solitude when I desired it, “that would be hell for me.” How many persons, poets, divines, philosophers, have given us their ideas of hell! One set of religious sects conceive of it as a region of everlasting fire. The Esquimaux think of it as a region of eternal cold. In all sobriety I think that my idea of an inferno would scarcely be the mighty Fiorentine's—it would be a place in which one would be, for ever and ever, in the centre of a gaping, chattering crowd, in which one could never, never be alone.

Possibly it is a question of temperament, but I, for one, would never like to be a King or Queen, if for one thing only, because of the “fierce light which beats upon the throne.” People cavil at our own Queen because, for so many years, she has come so little into the crowd—society. I, the humblest of her subjects, would—if the humblest of her subjects might so far presume—on that point shake hands with her. Her love of privacy, to me, is Nature's first and chiefest law. I can well understand her saying: “If I cannot have my privacy when I wish and as I wish, I will have nothing.” I know, in her place, I should be of the same mind.

Who has not suffered from the incursions of his friends? I know a man who changes his dwelling-place every few months, and for this cause: he says that when he has lived in a place a short time he begins to know people, so he goes. It sounds churlish, but I am not sure that I do not envy that man because he is in a position which enables him to shift his tent at his own sweet will and pleasure. He tells me that some time ago he was in a certain watering-place, and very comfortable he was. You cannot be in a place without knowing people, so he says, and the acquaintance of some very nice people he quickly made. Particularly of two or three men, some of the very nicest fellows he ever met, only, unfortunately, they had nothing to do with their time, except kill it. Unfortunately, as not seldom is the case with men in their position, they could not be made to understand that he could have anything else to do with his time either. The men came in upon him at all hours of the day. They wanted him to play cricket, football, tennis, cards, billiards, and all manner of games. They wanted him to shoot, to fish. If they wanted him for nothing else, then they wanted him to talk to, and to talk to them. The man in question is the mildest-mannered man that ever breathed; so far from cutting a throat, he would not, rudely, hurt the proverbial fly. He assures me—and from my own experience in similar situations I find no difficulty in accepting his assurance—that it was quite impossible, without making himself positively unpleasant, to get these gentlemen to understand that there were times and seasons in which he preferred his own society; so he left that watering-place. What is more, he informs me that he has got himself in the same quandary in the place where he is now, so he is going to leave that too.

Men are gregarious animals. Some
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more so than others; all now and then. It is the latter class who are the sufferers. Brown plants himself in a country village, say, in the wilds of Andalusia, or of Brittany, as I have done. He wishes to work, and he works. But man is not made to live by work alone. He grows dusty, incapable of work, as Brown is well aware. They tell us that every disease has its remedy, if you can only find it. Brown knows very well, when he suffers from incapacity to work, what is the proper remedy—it is communion with his fellow-men. With a view of applying the proper remedy, he makes the acquaintance of the village inn-keeper; of such of the villagers as frequent his house; perhaps, if Brown is wise, of the local cuki; by degrees, of some of the inhabitants of the country-side. If the village is a Breton village, it is ten to one that there is a fellow-countryman not far away, if there are not two or three. Brown makes the acquaintance of the fellow-countryman, or of the two or three. In a marvellously short space of time he finds that he knows all the country-side, that he has made a too liberal use of his own remedy. Because, unless he is the most exceptionally fortunate of Browns, there is sure to be at least one person among his new acquaintance, if there is not more than one, who wants to play when Brown would like to work, and who, to all practical intents and purposes—so contagious is the spirit of idleness!—insists on making Brown his playfellow. So, presently, and perhaps all too soon, the atmosphere of that village becomes too highly rarified to suit Brown's constitution.

It seems, at first sight, curious that, for a man in Brown's position, there should, practically, be no choice but a choice of extremes; that there should be nothing between knowing too many people and knowing none. Yet, if you enquire into the matter a little closely, you will find that the thing is not so curious as it seems. Selfishness is at the root of it. We all are selfish—I know I am—and I am not so sure that selfishness, at any rate in some of its forms, is quite so egregious a vice as the common conversation of the world supposes. But that is apart from the question.

Brown is selfish; and not only is Brown selfish, but the entire population of that Breton village is selfish. You may be sure of it, because, as I say again, we all are. Brown wants his way, and every creature he encounters wants his way too. It is plain to Brown that it is impossible for him to yield—for him to do so might be to inflict upon himself an irreparable injury. Exactly the same thing is equally evident to all the other folks as well. And this is the reason why—for the village may stand for the world—those men who are only occasionally gregarious have only a choice between extremes, why they must either know too many people, or else know none. Because directly a man makes an acquaintance, he tacitly consents, while he continues that acquaintance, to adapt himself to his acquaintance. If Jones wishes to make Smith's acquaintance, it would scarcely do for him to preface the expression of his wish by a declaration that he expects Smith at all times, and in all seasons, to adapt himself to his convenience, and that he—Jones—never intends, under any circumstances, to adapt himself to Smith's. If Jones did venture on such a declaration, the odds would be very considerable against the acquaintance ever being made. One acquaintance, therefore, presupposes a voluntary, and possibly even pleasurable relinquishment of, very probably, an appreciable portion of our liberty; and it thus follows, as the night the day, that the more we multiply our acquaintance, the less liberty we leave ourselves. As a man advances in years and—for once in a way, we will take it for granted as a natural corollary—In knowledge of life, the more clearly he realizes that in those seasons in which he desires to be a freeman, and to do serious, honest work of any sort or kind, there is for him no choice between knowing too many people and knowing none.

I sometimes hear people say—I trust I may offend no sensitive susceptibilities when I add that they are, for the most part, women—"I cannot endure my own society." Poor creatures! One must be forgiven for suspecting that, if such is the case, other people will be able to endure very little of their society either. Surely men and women, to be worth their salt, must, to a great extent, be sufficient unto themselves. We are born alone, we must die alone; if, during our lifetime, we can never endure to be alone, what invertebrate creatures we must be! Philosophers inform us that, in the deepest sense, we, all of us, always are alone, and, in their sense, the thing is true. It was written up in the temple, "Know thyself!" Well, although a man may not know himself, it is absolutely certain that he knows himself
much better than anybody else ever will or ever can do. We must have all of us been startled, even when in the company of our nearest and our dearest, to find in certain crises of our lives, in certain of our moods and phases, how utterly we have been misunderstood, how completely we have been in touch only with ourselves, how hopelessly we have been alone. But that is not the sort of loneliness Miss Mixer has in her mind when she exclaims: "I cannot endure my own society." She means that she is so resourceless in herself; so destitute of imagination; so incapable of standing erect unsupported; that if she cannot find others like herself to help hold her up, and to help to hold each other up, she will be unable to hide, even from herself, the consciousness of what sort of thing she is. Miss Mixer is by no means alone in her exclamation. Mr. Larkin chimed in, and all the world knows that one would have to have, not nine, but at least ninety Larkinesses before one even began to have the making of a man. That is exactly it. When one comes to consider practically the question of solitude, or a crowd, one is confronted by the fact that a largely preponderating proportion of the constituents which go to the making of a crowd consists of the Mixers and the Larkinesses.

MY COUSIN COLAS.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

We folk of the village of Frahan in the Belgian Ardennes are a stay-at-home race. We never think of going farther than to Sedan on the one side, or Bouillon on the other. We have no reason to travel, and no wish to find a reason. Monsieur le Doyen Hiernaux—who was a learned man, and likely to be right—used to say that this trait in our character was due to the situation of our village, which lies buried in a nook whence we see no distant horizon to tempt us to wander. All around, whichever way we look, are steep wooded hills, girdling the rocky, spur-like ridge at the end of which Frahan is built. Round this spur, and just beneath the encircling hills, the River Semois makes a long, narrow loop. Between the village and the river is a belt of meadow-land, chequered by plots of corn and tobacco plant, while, on the other side of the shallow, hasty current, the slatey rocks, partly hidden by veees, rise precipitously, and the only paths up them are a stiff climb for any but well-seasoned legs and lungs.

The only person in Frahan, however, who found the path trying was Monsieur le Doyen Hiernaux, who had come back from Brussels—a retired seminary Professor—to spend his old age and economize his pension in his native place. Of course he had been a climber in his youth, but during his long absence he had changed in more ways than one—at least so said my father, who was some kin to him, and who remembered him from old times.

When Monsieur le Doyen had settled down among us, time seemed to hang heavy on his hands. He worked in his garden and tended his bees, and gave the cure what help he could, but still he missed his old occupation of schoolmastering, which had become a sort of second nature to him.

"Ah, Dafidae," he called one evening to my father, as we passed his garden wall on our way home from work. "Ah, Dafidae, I want a few minutes' talk with you, or rather with that big lad of yours. I have a plan which I want to propose to you—and to him."

"At your service, Monsieur le Doyen," said my father, in the respectful tone he always used to his learned kinsman; and I, too, was glad of an excuse to stand at the garden gate for a few minutes—for was it not possible, as we talked to the Doyen, that we might catch a glimpse of his niece, Clémence Servais, who kept his house for him?" "Yes," continued the old man, nodding to me, "I have a plan in my head on—"

"You are very kind, Monsieur le Doyen," began, while I blushed and stood silent, "but I fear——" "Wait a moment," interrupted the old man gently. "Let the lad speak for himself. I fancy he is going to fall in with my plan."

I grew redder still. He was right, but if he were so shrewd at guessing my
unspoken words, would he not also guess the motive which prompted them; moreover, what would my father think of the sudden change in my tastes? It required all my courage to stammer awkwardly that "If Monsieur le Doyen did not think me too much of a dunce, I should like it very much."

"I thought so," he replied, with a cheery little air of triumph, "and perhaps you will like it better still when I tell you that you are to have a fellow-pupil. I have already made the same offer to your cousin, the other Colas Dufène. He accepted at once. He said nothing about being a dunce."

"He isn't a dunce," I began eagerly, for I had a wonderful opinion of my cousin Colas, which, however, my father did not share.

"No, he isn't a dunce," he said, shaking his head; "but he won't be a steady pupil either."

The old priest smiled again.

"I know all about that," he said; "but dear me, Daphne, if you knew as much about lads as a long experience has taught me, you would know that the madcaps are not the worst sort."

"I say nothing about the worst sort," persisted my father. "I only say that I'm glad my Colas isn't like him."

"But he is like him," rejoined the other, still smiling. "The two might be twin brothers, as their two fathers are."

"That's as it may be," said my father.

"Thank goodness it's but an outward likeness. If my lad got into the scrapes my nephew gets into, and played the fool in the workshop as continually, it'd be a sore grief to me."

"Come, come," interrupted Monsieur le Doyen; "you're too hard on him. I call him a nice, open-hearted lad; fond of a bit of mischief, perhaps, but good grit after all. I want to help him to spend his leisure hours better, and you may take my word for it he will turn out well."

"I hope he may," returned my father grimly; "but I've known him longer than you, and I think otherwise."

"Colas," said my father, as we walked homeward, "I'd no notion you'd accept an offer of that sort so quick out of hand. Had you heard sighs of it from your cousin beforehand?"

"Nay," I said, "that was the first word I had heard, and I should have said yes all the same, even if Colas had not been mixed up with it at all."

Which was quite true, for the tree of knowledge, of which Monsieur le Doyen offered me to eat, tempted me only for the sake of Clémence Servais.

Clémence was not of our village; she had come from Brussels with Monsieur le Doyen to keep his house, and she differed from any girl I had ever seen in more ways than I could reckon. Her very speech was unlike ours, and when we spoke our patois she did not understand us. She was small and slightly built, with delicate features and a gentle voice; but when I knew her better, I found that her will was as the will of a strong man, and that her heart was as steadfast as the rocks on which our village stood. She always seemed to me far, far above me; yet I loved her so dearly, that for her sake I would have done anything, not to speak of so small a matter as to become the fellow-pupil of my cousin Colas Dufène, and to receive instruction from so kind-hearted an old man as Monsieur le Doyen. But I was barely nineteen, and I knew that at present there could be no talk of my wooing or wedding; so I bided my time, and kept my love a secret from every one, even from Colas, who told me all his secrets without any reserve whatever.

This friendship of ours was a great subject of uneasiness to my father. He was always afraid lest I should come to any harm through it. Not that there was any real harm in Colas, but he was restless and reckless, and seemed to have a different spirit in him from any of us.

"He may be thy next-of-kin," my father would say, "but I had rather see thee less friendly with him. One never knows where a fellow like that will end." And most people were of the same way of thinking; so that Monsieur le Doyen's opinion of him was quite a surprise to both of us, and doubly inclined me to meet his advances half-way.

The lessons in themselves, after all, were pleasant enough. We sat in the old Professor's snug room, which Clémence had put ready for us, and when we had read a little, written a little, and worked a few easy sums, our teacher would lean back in his arm-chair and tell us some story of bygone times or far-off lands, or some great event which formed part of his own varied experience. When the lesson had reached this stage, Clémence would come quietly into the room and take her place at the table with her work, and then,
however thrilling the story, I nearly always lost the thread of it, as, watching the glint of the lamplight on her golden hair and the quick grace of her deft fingers, I built castles in the air out of my hopes and my love.

But Colas would fix his eyes on the old priest's face, drinking in every word and interrupting now and then with an eager question.

"Ah, Colas," he would say when the end came and we rose to say good night, "that sounds something like! If it was only our luck to see the world instead of drowning away here."

"All in good time, my lad," Monsieur le Doyen would answer, "all in good time."

My cousin soon found out that he was a favourite with his teacher, and the two became great friends. So it came about one evening that Colas broached a subject which I know had been near his heart ever since his childhood—his wish to be a soldier.

"Monsieur le Doyen," he began, "do you not think it a great mistake for a man to spend his life at a trade he hates?"

Monsieur le Doyen smiled.

"I suppose," he said, "that you are the man, Colas, and slate-dressing the trade in question?"

Colas assented; and I wondered how any one could guess so quickly what was in another person's mind.

"But, mon ami," he went on, "you must remember that changing one's trade is a serious matter. You are outgrowing the age of apprenticeship."

"I am not too old to learn to be a soldier," rejoined my cousin.

Monsieur le Doyen raised his eyebrows.

"Ah!" he said, "you have a fancy for wearing a uniform. Well, you will draw in the conscription next year, n'est-ce pas?"

"Draw in the conscription!" cried Colas: "yes, and if I draw a good number—which probably I shall not—I shall be a soldier for three years. I don't want that; I want to enlist to serve because I choose to, and for all my life."

Monsieur le Doyen smiled again. Clémence laid down her work and looked at Colas.

"And why do you not enlist?" she asked simply.

"Because," cried Colas impetuously, "because my father is the best slate-dresser in Frahan, and because he has made up his mind I must follow in his steps. He even tries to find reasons why I should be exempted from the conscription."

"If that is so, mon ami," rejoined Monsieur le Doyen, "my advice is that you should try to like your present occupation. With a little good will—"

"Mon père!" blurted out my cousin desperately, "do not bid me do what is impossible. I was going to ask you to speak to my father for me. He would listen to you."

"My lad," was the grave answer, "I have no shadow of right to interfere between father and son."

Colas's face fell, and before he spoke Clémence began eagerly:

"But Colas gives you the right, mon oncle. Why should you not help him! If his heart is in a soldier's life he will make a good soldier. If he hates the slate quarry, how can he be a good workman?"

I was surprised to see that Colas scarcely gave a glance of gratitude to his unexpected supporter. He only echoed her words.

"Yes!" he said, "I should be a good soldier, but a good workman—never!"

Monsieur le Doyen did not speak. He looked from one to the other of us.

"And you, Colas," he said, suddenly addressing me, "do you, too, want to be a soldier?"

"I, monsieur!" I cried, surprised that he, who I fancied could read thoughts, should ask. "No, indeed; I only long for the conscription to be safely over."

Clémence took up her work again, and, in the silence her needles clicked audibly. Colas watched Monsieur le Doyen anxiously.

"Lads," he said finally, "it is already late. Good night! Colas, I scarcely think you must count on my pleading your cause."

He did, however, make an opportunity for speaking of my cousin's future with my uncle Marcel, but with no good result.

"I was a fool to set him on," Colas said to me a few days later. "It has been the finishing touch to the whole matter. My father went into a towering rage and told me that if I enlisted I was no longer a son of his. Then my mother made me promise solemnly not to enlist, and now I have no hope but in the conscription. If I draw a good number, and get once into a regiment, who knows what may happen! Ah, Colas, I will make 'novena' to all the saints that I may get that number."
Before long I, too, began to feel as if I must make "neuvièmes" that Colas might get his heart's desire, for, from the evening on which Clémence astonished me by pleasing his cause, I had noticed something in her manner which filled me with a vague, cruel jealousy. In vain I tried to persuade myself that I was mistaken; that she felt an equal interest in us both. I saw, in spite of myself, that she had a preference, and that her preference was not for me. Moreover, Monsieur le Doyen began to encourage my cousin to spend more and more of his spare time there, and my uncle Marcel took to looking very wise about the whole affair.

"I've made Hieraux understand," he said, "that no more nonsense is to be talked about soldiering, and if the lad will only lose his heart to Clémence Servais, who is a tidy girl, and will have a nice 'dot,' he may come to his sober senses about earning his living as a wise man should, and leave off hankering after a uniform to charm the hearts of silly nurse-maids."

But Colas had not lost his heart to Clémence. He even laughed to me one day over some hints his father had let fall.

"As if I should fall in love with her!" he said. "I don't say she isn't pretty and a good sort of girl in her way. But falling in love is not in my line."

Yes, certainly it would be better for Colas to draw a good number and to go away. I could, perhaps, give up my own happiness to him if he stayed, but Clémence's—that was a different matter.

So the winter slipped away, and in the spring came the day when Colas and I and all the other lads of our age in the district scooped over to Bouillon for the "tirage."

We went shouting and singing, hiding our nervousness under as much noise as we could make. Only Colas was quieter than his wont. When we reached Bouillon we found a dozen other parties all as noisy and as nervous as our own, and we heard that our "arrondissement" was to send up seventy-eight; "un autre," and another paper on which the number was printed was tightly enclosed in a little wooden case, no one knew its fate, until the "scrutateur," who stood behind the table, drew out the paper and read aloud the number, which a clerk immediately entered against the name of the drawer.

"Make haste," said the "scrutateur" when my turn came, and I let my hand linger hesitatingly in the vase. "What do you hope to gain by fingering the numbers?"

I seized one and handed it to him. He drew the paper from its groove and read: "Seventy-eight—Colas Dufrêne, Frahan, seventy-eight; à un autre," and another went and I rushed out into the open air, my heart almost bursting with joy. A few minutes after Colas joined me. There was no joy on his face.

"It is all over with me," he said gloomily. "I wish I hadn't promised not to enlist."

There was great rejoicing in Frahan that night, for not one lad in the village had drawn a number which would oblig him to serve; but my cousin Colas made no secret of his disappointment, and I felt troubled, too, when I thought of Clémence, and of the shadow that was coming between us.

About ten days later, as my cousin and I were on our way to our evening lesson, we saw the burgomaster coming up the street, an official-looking document in his hand.

"Well met," he cried as he reached us. "I was on my way to find you. This"—holding out the paper—"has been sent from the 'bureau de recrutement' for Colas Dufrêne, for which one I can't say."

He looked as if he would like to know the contents of it, but my cousin took it and walked away before he broke the seal. I read it over his shoulder as we went along.

"I see," he cried, before I had mastered its meaning; "they have made out the exemptions, and are calling on the numbers in order to fill the vacancies. And you drew seventy-eight!"
"Seventy-eight!" I gasped; "yes, I did, and is this for me—a summons to march? Mon Dieu! how terrible!"

"Yes," he said bitterly, "for you—that is just how things happen. Curse the whole thing!"

We had reached Monsieur le Doyen's house. He opened the door roughly and went in. There were no books on the table, and Clémence started up as we entered.

"Oh, dear," she said, "I ought to have let you know. I forgot it was so late. My uncle has been summoned to a sick man at Rochehaut—there can be no lesson to-night. Why, what is the matter with you both?" she went on, laughing. "Is it such a disappointment to miss your reading, or are you angry with me for forgetting to send you word?"

"This is what is the matter," cried Colas, throwing the fateful paper down on the table. "Look at that."

She took it up and read it carefully.

"But I do not understand why you are vexed," she said, "This is surely a summons for a conscript in place of one who has proved his right to exemption. Is not that the same thing as if you had drawn a good number? Why are you angry?"

Because it is not for me at all," replied Colas irritably.

"Not for you?" she repeated, "not for you?"

"I did not draw that number," he went on impatiently; "it is for him." And he made a contemptuous gesture in my direction.

Clémence took up the paper again.

"And you?" she said, turning to me.

"Are you glad or sorry?"

"What is the use of asking him?" interrupted Colas. "What has he always said! He hates the thought of it."

Clémence re-read the summons before she spoke again. Then she said slowly:

"After all it is pure chance who gets a certain number. This seems to me very simple. This summons is to Colas Dafrière."

She paused and looked from one to the other of us. My heart gave a great throb, and I saw my cousin's eyes flash.

"For Colas Dafrière," she went on. "Now, you two both answer to that name, you are both of a height, you are both—"

"But, Clémence," I broke in.

"But, Clémence," she mimicked me.

"Now, tell me, which would be better for you: to go and live in some town which would seem like a prison to you, and let home-sickness gnaw the heart out of you, or to stick to a life in which you are happy, and which to Colas is just misery?"

I covered my face with my hands. I wanted to do what was right, but the temptation was very great.

"What is the use of arguing?" she went on. "The moral justifies of the exchange outweighs the surface cheating; and then the numbers are mere chance—arbitrary chance. Here, Colas, take the paper—present yourself."

"But," I pleaded feebly, "If we were found out. If the authorities came to know, and I am sure I could never carry it through."

"Fiddlesticks!" retorted Colas, "you are a fool. There is nothing for you to carry through. All you have to do is to hold your tongue."

We talked it over a little more, and in the end it was I who yielded, though, in truth, none of the arguments they used weighed so much with me as the thought that Clémence and I would be drawn closer by a common secret, and that I should be near to her—I who loved her—while Colas, who took no heed of her growing fancy for him, would be far away—for three whole years.

My uncle Mirel was slow to understand the turn affairs had taken. He had looked on the conscription as a danger safely passed, and his anger and agitation prevented his going calmly enough into the matter to detect Colas's deception. Nor was there any difficulty with the authorities. Personally, Colas answered nearly enough to my description to stand in my stead in the cursory examination. As to me, I held my peace and tried to quiet my conscience, and in a few weeks' time, Colas, being a fine, stalwart fellow, was drafted into a régiment d'élite—the Guides—and ordered into barracks at Brussels.

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CHAPTER IV. THE NEED OF GOLD.

When Philip Gillbanks woke the next morning it was several moments before he could recollect where he was; then the first mental picture which painted itself on his brain was that of the Princess, in all her simple beauty, bending over her embroidery frame and speaking of the work to be accomplished amongst her unregenerate countrymen and women.

"She could accomplish anything she undertook," thought Philip, for the glamour was still upon him. "What a leader of society she would be! And she is the only woman I have yet seen who could carry out Forster's ideal life." Why did the thought of one of them call up the other? Then he remembered her wholesale denunciation of his own class, and a sudden humility swept over him. He knew that much of her accusation was true, he knew that money-getting filled his father's horizon. He knew that his homely mother when alive had found pleasure in her handsome daughter's extravagance and show; he knew that had it not been for Forster Bethune's all-powerful influence he might perhaps have been dragged into a set of horse-racing, betting, pleasure-loving young men, who cared for neither rank, creed, nor learning, but simply for animal enjoyment.

Philip's brave heart could not long be cast down, however. He had a fund of honest delight in life, and was full of generous and unselfish devotion to his friend. If he might not be a leader, he could be the next best thing—a loyal disciple.

These reflections over, he rose and looked out of the window. Daylight revealed but little to him. It was still raining heavily; the mist was in the valley, and crept up close to the walls of the Palace. On his arrival Philip had looked upon the Palace as a public-house; now it was to him a real palace, though certainly one where at present the sunshine was only provided by the presence of the Princess.

When with some difficulty he had found his way to the dining-room, he discovered that several persons had already breakfasted, and that any new arrival was supplied to provide for his own wants. A good fire was burning on the hearth, and on it a kettle was boiling.

To Philip's surprise, Jim Oldcorn suddenly entered. He appeared to be willing and able, in his own fashion, to perform the duties of a butler. The comic mixture of the whole place coming back forcibly to Philip's mind, he could not hide an involuntary smile, especially when Jim Oldcorn addressed him.

"Good day, Mister Gillbanks. Yer a clever fellow to find yer way in this old place; set yourself down and eat what yer can find. The King and the Prince is gan out already. It tu them varra nar ten minutes to eat enough for the day, and I was waiting to getten yer wishes. If it's Merecloon yer wants Til show yer the way. Yano out of this gien it's straight before yer nose, eartin sure."

"Thank you for your kindness, but I'll find my own way now. I only wish to thank my kind hosts before leaving."

"I'm glad you are not gone yet," said
the Duke, entering. "You can go, Oldorn. I'll set the gentleman on his way, for I know your master wants you about that wood."

Oldorn grinned, and Philip, delighted to be allowed a few more minutes at the Palace, slipped a piece of gold into the shepherd's willing palm, which action so much delighted this individual that he could hardly find appropriate words of thanks for his generous benefactor.

"Thank you, sir, thank you, sir, I'm certainly it's kind of yer now. Munny is a yosselfy thing; yidid it we're as nove, wid it everything, as I say to the master."

"Then it shows you are ignorant of most things," said the Duke, smiling and trying to make Philip feel less shy at having his gift mentioned.

"But it's deuced bad to keep," continued Oldorn, without noticing the Duke, "though it can prove o' varra great servis at toimes."

"It's deuced easy to lose," muttered the Duke, still smiling.

When Oldorn had at last retired, the Duke began to eat his breakfast with a deliberation which seemed to Philip quite out of keeping with the rude surroundings.

"I hope the Princess was not disturbed by the rain," said Philip, taking his hand with a circumspection which appeared to Philip quite out of keeping with the rude surroundings.

"I have often thought this must be the case," he said, "and yet at College there were poor men who struggled through a sea of difficulty and came out of it; somehow managing to beat us out of the field. I must say that in actual life I have seen gold at a discount."

"But—" stammered Philip, who had imbied all Bethune's unworldly notions about women, believing that they must cast away the ideas of making marriage a stepping-stone to rank. "Surely the Princess can shine without the help of gold!"

"May I venture to guess that you have never known the want of money?"

"That is true, but—"

"Then you cannot understand," and the Duke waved his hand with slight impatience. "There are cases when a man, even a whole family, would make a mark in the world if they had the tenth part of the gold which in some hands is perfectly useless and usually harmful. I have known many," he continued, after a pause, "who knew that a great career must have been theirs if only the first start could have been made. They would have been leading men in politics or diplomacy; they would have astonished their countrymen, and they would have won the love and hatred of thousands; but the bare fact that they could not keep up any appearance has crushed all their ambition, has lost them to the world and to themselves. You are young, Mr. Gillbank. I do not know if you have any ambition, but if you have, you will, I believe, never feel that it must be crushed."

Philip knew that the Duke must be talking of himself. His young enthusiasm was easily touched by the elder man's hidden bitterness.

"I have often thought this must be the case," he said, "and yet at College there were poor men who struggled through a sea of difficulty and came out of it; somehow managing to beat us out of the field. I must say that in actual life I have seen gold at a discount."

"Because the other cases never came before you—but in one sense you are right. Ambition cannot be killed. If it has to die one death it springs up again in another form. What we could not accomplish ourselves, we hope to see fulfilled in a younger relative."

"You mean that the Princess will—"

"There are stories which cannot be told in cold blood, but you are a stranger and a young man. Perhaps this fact makes it easier to talk to you than to one who knows me more intimately. I shall, I hope, live to see my niece take her rightful position amongst her own set; a position which her birth entitles her to hold, and which her talents—I say it confidently, as I have watched over her..."
education from her childhood—will enable her to keep. But the first start requires money, and that difficulty I shall overcome."

Philip would have liked to say:
"Let me lay my worthless gold at her feet!" But of course this speech was impossible. Perhaps his eyes spoke, for the Duke smiled pleasantly upon him.

"Tell me about your friend Bethune. I believe I was at College with his father, if so——"

"Forster is not at all like his father," replied Philip quickly. "Mr. Bethune is a mere bookworm, nothing more."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, Forster is full of grand ideas which he will work out when he succeeds to his heritage, and even before that time if he has the chance."

"He is a fortunate young man in having such a staunch friend as yourself."

"Oh, I am not the only one," said Philip warmly.

Again the Duke smiled, and Philip did not altogether like the smile.

"Ideas such as you say your friend possesses are like summer snow. I do not mind prophesying that by the time he comes to inherit, he will have diverted himself of all reforming vagaries. I have taken care that the ideas of the Princess shall have no foundation in misjudged self-sacrifice."

It was Philip's turn to smile.

"I am sure Mr. Bethune took great pains with Forster's education. He is an only son, and yet all their ideas are diametrically opposed."

"At present."

"And always will be!"

"That remains to be proved. The chances are very much in favour of my prophecy. But you have done your breakfast, and doubtless you are in a hurry to leave us."

"I should like to thank the——"

"Here she is, and the Queen is with her," said the Duke, rising hastily and going towards the door, which he opened with as much ceremonious deference as he would have done had Queen Victoria herself at this moment stepped down from the state bedroom. Philip stood on one side and bowed respectfully as he saw a tall, delicate-looking lady enter the chamber, followed closely by the Princess.

"This is Mr. Gillbanks, the gentleman whose Oldcorn found on the fell," said the Duke, and the Queen bowed slightly as if a stranger were an object of very little interest to her. She seemed to be a shy, nervous person, with an expression of permanent anxiety—life had evidently dealt hardly with her; she appeared to lean much on her daughter, whose calm haughtiness made a strong contrast to her mother's nervousness. Philip looking only at the Princess again fell under the influence of her strange beauty. This morning she had lost all the excitement she had exhibited the previous evening, and now she merely answered in monosyllables when Philip tried to draw her out. She either considered him of too little consequence, or she was guarded before her mother.

"Jim Oldcorn and the Prince have accompanied the King," said the Duke blandly. "That little feat worthy of Hercules, which they have undertaken, will employ all their leisure to-day, I fancy."

"And very little will be got out of it," sighed the Queen. "That avaricious Leith said the wood was worth nothing at all."

"We may trust His Majesty with a bargain," replied the Duke. "Now, Mr. Gillbanks, if you must leave us, allow me first to show you over the Palace. There are some few heirlooms which are, if not very valuable, at least unique."

Philip took the hint and rose. Bowing low to the Queen he passed on to the Princess.

"I must thank you extremely for your kind hospitality, and I can only say that if at any time I could repay my debt of gratitude, you will have only to command."

"Rash promises," said the Duke, "are proverbially easy to make. Penzie, come and show Mr. Gillbanks the relics. I think he will appreciate them."

The Princess rose a little reluctantly, but Philip noticed that her uncle's will was law to her. In spite of his protestation she now led the way down the long passage.

"Is this the passage where the lady walks?" asked Philip, smiling.

"She would not let me hear her," was the answer, "but this is the room which she guards; any one meddling with our treasures would assuredly suffer for his pains."

The room was small and dark; at the upper and was a glass bookcase of ancient workmanship. The Princess unlocked it, using for the purpose a key which hung at her side.
"This is David Winskell's rapier and his coat. Here are jewels which belonged to his daughter, Penelope Winskell, who was—"

"As proud as the devil," put in the Duke. "Here, you see, are some ancient Bibles, there some iron ornaments, but the Princess must show you the tallman."

Penelope Winskell opened a small box where reposed on the white cotton wool a large pink topaz, set as a locket, through which ran a fine gold chain exquisitely worked.

"This small locket has been transmitted to each eldest daughter of the Kings of the world.

"This is David Winskell's rapier and his coat. Here are jewels which belonged to his daughter, Penelope Winskell, who was—"

Penelope Winskell opened a small box where reposed on the white cotton wool a large pink topaz, set as a locket, through which ran a fine gold chain exquisitely worked.

"This small locket has been transmitted to each eldest daughter of the Kings of the world. There is a penalty attached to any Winskell who loses it or gives it away."

Philip touched it with due respect, and as he returned it he touched the fingers of the Princess, and repeated:

"If ever you need help to which no penalties are attached, you must appeal to me."

"Come," said the Duke, "I will now show you the way out of our enchanted glen."

"But," thought Philip to himself, "I must come again."

THE ROMANS AT TABLE.

It is universally admitted that our ancestors, and more particularly those of Teutonic origin, had "strong stomachs," and like Marryat's Jack Tar—or an ostrich—could almost digest "door-nails"; but I am of opinion that in this physical attribute they were altogether surpassed by the mighty men of Rome. What and how these conquerors of the world did eat! The lower orders, the plebs, seem to have devoured anything and everything, however hard, coarse, or flatulent it might be; while the patricians were possessed with a mania for curious and out-of-the-way viands, specially adapted, one would think, to beget and encourage dyspepsia, and find constant employment for the vendors of quack medicines. A dish was prized for its oddity, rarity, or costliness, rather than for succulence or toothsomeess. Mighty curious reading are the accounts that have come down to us of the great Roman "spreads," such as that which Lentulus gave on his election to the office of Flamen, or that with which Nasidius mocked Horace and his friends. The menus on these occasions would strike terror to the heart of a modern "maitre d'hôtel," or "chef de cuisine." What would be thought of a dish of eel's head, or sea-hedgehog, of thrushes served up on asparagus, and a fatted hen for course number one? Ofaunches of wild venison, and beccaficoes (fig-peckers, "Cucurba hortensis") for the second! Of a sow's udder, a wild boar's cheek, a ragout of fish, ducks, hares, boiled taal, capers, furmenty, and Picentian bread for the third? The wealthy gourmets of Rome cherished a strong partiality for song-birds. Both Horace and Martial refer with approval to roast thrush; and Ovid recommends "a crown of thrushes" as a lover's present to his mistress. Thrushes' breasts were one of the ingredients of the celebrated Apician dish ("Patina Apiciana")—which also included beccaficoes, mushroomrooms, sow's udder, fish, and chickens—rivaling the heterogeneous contents of a gipsy's "pot au feu." Horace relates that the sons of Acritus, to stimulate their appetite for dinner, lunched "on nightingales of monstrous price." And Varro tells us of the aviary of Lucullus, which was also a "salle a manger," so that the epicure gratified his ears and his palate simultaneously, feasting upon the delicate warblers whose congeneres, unconscious of their coming doom, were discoursing meanwhile the most exquisite music. For fish the Roman appetite was nobly comprehensive. It particularly delighted, as everybody knows, in oysters—in the Rutupian ("Rutupiae edita fundi," says Juvenal), imported at great cost from the shores of remote Britain, and the Lucerne, which were of home growth. Also in lampreys—of which, as our school histories remind us, Henry the First partook to such an excess as to induce a fatal illness. Violus

* The taste for blackbirds and thrushes (says Roques) has descended from the ancients to the moderns. They are much appreciated in Germany and in the south of France. The Corsican and Provencal blackbirds are renowned above all others, because they feed on myrtle and juniper berries. Cardinal Fesch, Archbishop of Lyons, had a supply from Corsica every year. One dined at his Eminence's table partly because of his affable manners and the gracious reception he accorded one, and partly for the sake of his blackbirds, the flavour of which was exquisite. More than one Lyonese gourmand waited impatiently for the archiepiscopal clock to strike six, and for these delicious birds to be served up, delighting every guest with their fragrance and their fascinating appearance (tournure). Their backs were ornamented with a tuft of fresh sage, imitating the tail with which they are provided, when perched upon elm or hawthorn, they pour forth their melody. I say nothing (adds Roques) of the fine oil in which they were cooked, nor of the savoury toast, the pungency of which strengthened one's stomach while they perfumed one's mouth.
Pollio fattened them for his table by throwing a disobedient slave now and then into his "vivaria" or fish-ponds. Julius Cæsar served up six thousand, it is said, at one of his triumphal banquets. Also in mullets, of which the great orator Hortensius was so immoderately fond that for three rather fine ones he once gave a thousand sesterces. Also in the conger-eel, which nowadays seldom appears on our tables except in the form of turtle soup. Also in fat pike, anchovies, sturgeons, mackerel, tunny, turbot, gurnard—the "cornuts," whose horns, says Pliny, were sometimes eighteen inches in length. Also in various kinds of shell-fish, such as "balanus," "peloria," and "spondylus."

The principal meal of the Romans was called the " cena," which, as it was the last meal of the day, is generally translated "supper," but in all essential respects it answered to our modern "dinner," and as such I shall treat of it. Let us attend that which was given in honour of the polite and cultured Augustan statesman Mæcenas by the opulent Nasidius. The other guests, on this occasion, are three patricians, and Mæcenas has brought with him as his "umbra" or invited guests, a couple of jesters to make sport when the conversation flag. The company is completed by the presence of a "Nomenclator," whose duty it is to point out with his forefinger any dish that seems likely to escape observation, and thus to prevent the cook's labours from being uselessly expended. The host has spared no expense, as theatrical managers say, in getting up the entertainment, but, unfortunately, the want of a refined taste and a cultivated judgment has marred everything, and an unskilful cook has spoiled some of the costliest dishes. The " cena" is a "coup manqué"; but the programme for the occasion illustrates the lordly scale on which the wealthy men of Rome ordered their entertainments.

What the cost of it may have been, Nasidius does not inform us. On one occasion, however, Lucullus—of whom hereafter—spent one thousand pounds, though there were only three persons at table—Cicero, Pompey, and himself. Vitellius is said to have wasted three thousand pounds on his dinner daily, but in these figures I suspect a good deal of exaggeration.

That was an ingenious idea of the Emperor Geta—as many courses at dinner as there were letters in the Latin alphabet, and in each course the name of every dish to begin with the same letter as that of the course. I strongly recommend it to the notice of the millionaires who nowadays advertise themselves into notoriety by giving dinners. As Nasidius lived before Geta got an opportunity of making the civilised world his plaything, he could not adopt this idea, but in the arrangement of his courses was governed by common usage. As thus:

First is served up a Lucanian wild boar, captured when the southern airs blew gently, and, therefore, supposed to be of exceptional tenderness. Around it lie heaps of rape, lettuce, and radish; also a liberal supply of skirrwork, pickled shad, and the acid loss of Coan wine, all intended to stimulate a jaded appetite. The reader will call to mind that Horace, in one of his Satires (Book II., Sat. iv.), boasts of having been the first to compound a sauce of fish-pickle and burnt tartar—i.e., the crust which adheres to the inside of a wine-cask. With this course are handed round cups of Chian wine and Clusian.

Next a pile of placee and turbot smokes upon the board, accompanied by a plentiful provision of honey-apples—"mellmala," which, however, ought properly to be reserved for a later stage of the repast. Then a lamprey, surrounded by floating prawns; the fish being full of spawn, its flesh is uncommonly firm and good. The sauce is one of exceedingly artistic concoction—the celebrated "garum," made originally from a small fish which the Greeks called "gapor," but afterwards from the intestines of the mackerel. There are also home-brewed wines; oil from the famed vats of Venafrum; a vinegar made from Lesbian wine, and white pepper. Eat, my friends, and be merry! May good digestion wait on appetite; though these be surely things to try the strongest digestion! To say nothing of the stewed aesculapian and the pickled green walnuts—two dishes which Nasidius claims as of his own invention.

The last course which he sets before his guests includes a crane, cut up and grilled.
and freely besprinkled with flour and salt; the livers of geese which have been fattened upon luscious figs; "the wings of hares" ("als leporum"); roasted blackbirds— which reminds us of the "four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie" of nursery fame; and ringdoves fricasseed.

One cannot but be struck with the Cleopatra-like variety of the dishes placed before the Roman diner-out. Every taste seems to have been catered for, and the most fastidious could hardly go away dissatisfied. I suppose this was also the distinctive "note" of the entertainment which Cicero provided for Julius Cæsar, when the latter paid him a visit at his Tusculanum, his charming villa at Tusculum, on the slope of Mount Algidus, looking out over the waters of the blue Mediterranean. I confess I wish I could have been present on that occasion. Why was not the phonograph then invented? The talk between the great statesman and general and the famous orator and philosopher—who would not like to have listened to it?

In a letter to his friend Atticus, Cicero describes this memorable "cena," which had been the cause of profound anxiety, as he could not but remember how active an adversary he had been of the master of Rome:

"What a formidable guest I have had! Still, I am not sorry, for all went off exceedingly well. On the evening of December the eighth he arrived at the house of Philippus, which was so crowded with soldiers that there was scarcely a room where the great man himself could dine. I suppose there were two thousand. I was really apprehensive of what might occur next day; but Barba Cæsaris came to my relief, and gave me a guard. The camp was pitched in the park, and the house straitly guarded. On the ninth he was closeted with Philippus till one o'clock in the afternoon. . . . After this he took a stroll on the shore, and then came the bath. He heard the epigram to Mamuna [a scurrilous one], but showed no annoyance. Then he dressed for dinner, and sat down. As he was under a course of medicine, he ate and drank without disquietude, and in the pleasantest temper. The dinner was sumptuous and elaborate; and not only this, but well cooked, and seasoned with wise converse. The great man's attendants were also entertained very liberally in the other rooms. The rior freedmen and the slaves had nothing to complain of; the superior kind had a reception which was even elegant. Not to say more, I showed myself a genial host. Still, he was not the kind of guest to whom one would say, "My very dear sir, you will look in and take pot-luck the next time you are passing, won't you?" Nothing of political moment occurred between us, but much talk about letters. . . . He was gratified, and seemed pleased with his host."

A standing dish on the dinner-table of the opulent Roman was a peacock. It is said that Hortensius, the orator, was the first to introduce it. Whoever may have been its sponsor, it rose into a rapid popularity. Cicero somewhere says that he was bold enough to invite Hirtius to dine with him, though he could not give him a peacock. Horace, in the second Satire of his second book, makes his peasant interlocutor, Ofellus, rail against it as a useless luxury. Hens and peacocks, he says, are alike in taste—are they?—but the latter is preferred simply because of the unequaled beauty of its brilliant tail and its exorbitant cost.

Brehm informs us that the flesh of the young bird is very delicate, and has "a wild odour" which is very agreeable. He thinks an old bird fit only for stewing. The Greeks must have found it marvellous costly feeding, if it be true, as Asilan says, that a single bird was worth a thousand drachmas—nearly sixty pounds. The esteem in which it was held in the last days of the Roman republic did not diminish under the Imperial régime. Vitellius and Helogabalus served up to their boon companions enormous dishes of peacock tongues and brains, seasoned with the rarest Indian spices. In medieval days it was still held in favour, particularly as a Christmas dish, and minstrels sang of it as "food for lovers and meat for lords." To fit it for the table was no ordinary culinary operation. After the skin—and plumage—had been carefully stripped off, the bird was roasted; then served up again in its feathers, with gilded beak. No; I have forgotten that it was first stuffed with spiced and sweet herbs, and basted with yolk of egg. It floated in a sea of gravy, as many as three fat wethers sometimes supplying the unctuous liquor for a single peacock. No vulgar hands carried it to table, but the fairest and most illustrious of the dames and damsels present at the feast, and its arrival was announced by strains of
triumphal music. Had the bird known 
the honours reserved for its obsequies, 
surely it would, like Kaats, have fallen
"half in love with easeful death."

"By cook and ple!" exclaims Justice
Shallow—little knowing that his every-day
esculation referred* to the old chivalrous
usage of swearing over this lordly bird to
undertake any grim enterprise worthy of
a gallant knight. Did not the royal
Edward make oath on the peacock before
he entered upon his invasion of France?

War to the knife seems first to have
been waged against the stork in the reign
of Augustus, when Tullius Rufus, a
candidate for the praetorship, regaled the
electors with storks ad lib. I am pleased
to add, however, that the slaughter of this
familiar bird, which has never defined
the companionship of man, was avenged
by the refusal of the people to elect its
murderer.

Gallonius, the public orer, a notorious
glutton, whom Lucullus nicknamed Gurges
—as one might say, a Vortex—was the
enterprising spirit who first dined off
sturgeon; an extravagance which made
him the object of severe censure:

The fame
Of a whole sturgeon damned Gallonius' name.

Everybody knows, of course, the famous
Dinner after the Manner of the Ancients,
which Smollett, in ridiculing of Akenside's
classical affectations, introduced into his
novel of "Peregrine Pickle." It was suggested
to him, perhaps, by Dr. King's
humorous proposal of a recherché entertain-
tment to Gaspar Barthius, which was
to consist of "a salacacaby," a dish of fenugreek,
a wild sheep's head and what Sam
Weller would call "trimmings," an elec-tuary,
a ragout of capons' stones, and some
dormouse sausages. Most of the dishes
which Smollett describes he has borrowed
from the cookery book of Apicius—"Ap-
cius Callus de Re Coquinari"—but he
sometimes omits certain of the ingredients
which may have modified their flavour,
and subdued, perhaps, that strong odour
which, according to Smollett, so affected
the nerves of the company, that "one
man took snuff, another resorted to the
device of breathing only through his mouth,
while a third in desperation plugged his
nostrils with tobacco."

The first dish was a boiled goose, served
up in a sauce composed of pepper, lovage,
coriander, mint, rue, anchovies, and oil.
The host, in recommending it, expressed
his regret that it was not one of those geese of
Ferrars, which the ancients so highly es-
temed on account of the size of their livers,
weighing sometimes as much as a couple
of pounds. At each end of the table was a
dish of the Roman "salacacaby," or hotel-
potch; one made of parsley, pennyroyal,
cheese, pine-tops, honey, vinegar, brine,
eggs, cucumbers, onions, and hen livers;
the other identical with our ordinary "soup
maitre." There was also a loin of boiled
veal—which Macanlay so detected that
there was only one object in the world he
hated more, and that was John Wilson
Croker—with fennel and caraway seed, in
a pottage composed of pickle, oil, honey,
and flour; besides a curious hash of the
lights, liver, and blood of a hare, and
what was much more to the taste of the
guests, a dish of roasted pigeons. Over
this last appetising plate ancients and
moderns might join hands—and appetites
—most cordially.

The effect of the classic messes on the
unaccustomed stomachs of the guests at
this strange banquet is described by
Smollett with a plainness I dare not
imitate. When a partial rehabilitation
had taken place, another course was put
forward, in which were several of those
preparations dignified by the ancients as
patatable, or "magnificent." In the centre
socked a cow's stomach, filled with
a composition of minced pork, hog's brains,
eggs, pepper, cloves, garlic, aniseed, rue,
ginger, oil, wine, and pickle. On the
right-hand side, a sow's udder, fried with
oil, sweet wine, flour, lovage, and pepper.
Sow's udder, by the way, ranked high
among Roman delicates; it was one of
the four ingredients which entered into
the Emperor Hadrian's favourite dish, the
"Tetraphamcum"; the other three were
peacock, pheasant, and a gammon of wild
boar in paste. On the left, a fricassee of
milk-fed snails. At the bottom of the
table were fritters of pomplons, lovage,
origanum, and oil, with a couple of pullets
roasted and stuffed according to the recipe
of Apicius.

This course, however, proved no more
satisfactory than its predecessor to the
delicate appetites of the physician's guests.
It was evident that the dishes of the
ancestirs, unlike their writings, were not to
the taste of the moderns; and the rejection
was general when the dessert made it
appearance, for it included plain olives in salt and water. These gave an agreeable relish to the champagne, and the guests fastened upon them with avidity, leaving the host to sing unheeded the praises of "a sort of jelly," which he affirmed to be preferable "to the hypotrochma of Hesychius, being a mixture of pickle, vinegar, and honey, boiled to a proper consistence, and candied assafotida, which he asserted, in contradiction to Anselmbergus and Lister [commentators upon Apollos] was no other than the 'hues Syricum,' so precious as to be sold among the ancients to the weight of a silver penny."

I have omitted to mention the dormouse pasty, flavoured with sirup of wild poppies. Smollett borrowed it from the dish of dormice described by Petronius Arbiter as an item in Trimalchio's banquet. There they are represented as sprinkled with honey and roasted seed of white poppies; and set as an opposite dish to hot sausages—of what rightful ingredients were these composed?—beneath which was a mimic pie of black damsons and red pomegranate grains. Trimalchio's bill of fare, by the way, included several viands which would be by no means unacceptable on a Victorian dinner-table; while Smollett, in his imaginary banquet, has collected all the nastiness he could find in Aphiæus or elsewhere.

The sow's udder was one of those Roman "dainties" which the modern "chef de cuisine" deliberately ignores. In his invitations to his friends, Martial frequently puts it forward as an attractive feature, and it is "favourably mentioned" by nearly all the Latin poets from Plautus downwards. In Trimalchio's feast it figures "vis-à-vis" to a hare whose "wings"—or shoulders,"also"—have been trimmed à la Pegasus; in Smollett's it is served up stuffed, as the reader has seen. According to Pliny, it was in the best condition when cut off within twenty-four hours of the animal's farrowing, and before she had suckled her young. It was improved in flavour, said the epicures, by being steeped in the salt liquor of a tunny fish. I am here reminded that "a sow's hap" is one of the gastronomic luxuries enumerated by Sir Epicure Mammon, in Ben Jonson's "Alchemist," when indulging himself in a vision of the pleasures which the discovery of the philosopher's stone will bring within his reach. His whole catalogue may here be quoted, as Ben Jonson evi-

dently took it from the ancient cookery-books:

We will eat our mullets, soaked in high-country wines, ephantes eggs, and have our oysters boiled in silver shells; our shrimps to swim again, as when they lived, in a rare butter made of dolphin's milk, whose cream does look like opals... My footboy shall eat pheasants, calved salmons, knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have the beards of barbels served, instead of salads; oiled mushrooms, and the swelling succulent paps of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off, dust with an exquisite and piquant sauce.

It would obviously be absurd for the author of a "classical romance," intended to reproduce the manners and customs of the ancients, to pass unnoticed so important a function as the dinner. Lookhart, however, in his brilliant story of "Valerius," touches upon it very lightly. He takes his hero to a superb feast given by a wealthy widow, named Rubella, and he shows us the banqueting-room, from which all light was excluded, save that which streamed from golden candelabra, and from broad lamps of bronze suspended overhead from the high and painted ceiling; and tells us of the guests, twenty in number, reclining on one semi-circular couch, the covers of which were of the softest down, and the framework inlaid with ivory.

"We had no sooner taken our seats," says his hero, "than a crowd of slaves entered, carrying large boards upon their heads, which being forthwith arranged on the table, were seen to be loaded with dishes of gold and silver, and all manner of drinking vessels, also with vases of rare flowers and urns of perfume. ... The trumpet sounded a second time as if from below, and the floor of the chamber was suddenly, as it were, pierced in twain, and the pealing music ushered up a huge roasted boar, all wreathed with stately garnishings, and standing erect on his golden platform as on a chariot of triumph." But here, when we seem about to plunge "in medias res," the author abruptly checks himself and us: "Why," he enquires, "should I attempt to describe to you the particulars of the feast? Let it suffice that whatever idea I had formed of Roman profusion was surpassed." This abrupt dismissal of the subject is unsatisfactory, for a good many readers will have formed no idea of Roman profusion, and will, therefore, be left in the lurch.

Lord Lytton, in his "Last Days of Pompeii," has revived the Roman "coena" with a good deal of vivid colouring and
picturesque detail. At the ample banquet given by Glaucus wild boars were provided; also oysters from Brundusium; an Ambrasian kid; and a course of fruits, pistachio nuts, sweetmeats, tarts, and confectionery "tortured into a thousand fantastic and airy shapes." I have omitted to notice the "preparative initia"—delicious figs, fresh herbs strewn with snow, anchovies, and eggs. The wines of which Glaucus and his friends partook were Chian, fifty years of age, and Lesbian, which was comparatively new, but had been matured by being put to the fire.

This was the kind of dinner given by a young Roman patrician. It will be interesting to compare it with the menu of a Victorian dinner given at any first-class London hotel or restaurant.

On the whole, I should give the palm for picturesqueness to the Pompeian dinner. There is nothing in the Victorian to match with "the wild boar" and "the Ambrasian kid."

One of the best attempts—perhaps it is the best—made by modern writers to reproduce the ancient "coena," is that of Professor Bekker, in his "Gallus; or Roman Scenes of the Time of Augustus." Of course, he closely follows that "coena Trimalchiana" of Petronius, to which I have so often referred; but he makes it pleasantly intelligible to that exacting individual, the general reader. The book is easily accessible, but it will be convenient, perhaps, to transcribe a few passages from the description of the "coena."

Well, then, let us imagine the dining-hall suitably decorated; the nine guests—the number of the Muses, and a favourite number with the Roman dinner-giver—seated on their "lesto," or cushioned couches, with an air of pleased expectancy on their dignified countenances, having previously performed their ablutions and removed their sandals. A couple of slaves enter, and deposit on the table the dishes of the first course. Observe in the centre an ass of bronze, loaded with silver panniers, which are filled with white olives and black, and astride of it a jolly Silenus, from whose wine-skin flows a delicious "garum."

By the way, Lord Lytton, in "The Last Days of Pompeii," places in the middle of the table of Glanucus a "beautiful image of Bacchus."

Close by the Silenus, rarely-dressed sausages smoke upon silver gridirons, beneath which are mimic pies, made up with black Syrian plums and scarlet pomegranate seed. Silver dishes stand all about, containing asparagus, lettuce, radishes, and other garden products, in addition to "lacetis," flavoured with both mint and rus, the Byzantine "murras," and cooked snails and lobsters. The guests fall to, for a while there is silence, and meanwhile the noiseless slaves glide round with the "mulsum," a mixture of Hymettian honey and Falernian wine, in golden goblets.

A second and smaller tray now makes its appearance. Here, in an elegant basket, sits a skilfully-carved wooden hen, with wings outspread, as if she were brooding. From underneath it the slaves take out a quantity of eggs, whereof they distribute to the guests, together with a silver "cochlearis" or spoon, which is used for breaking them. On examination, each egg is found to be made of dough, and to enclose a plum "beccafico," or fig-pecker, seasoned with pepper. As soon as these are disposed of, enter a procession of boys, wearing green garlands, and carrying wall-gypseum amphorae, brimful of sparkling Falernian, nearly a century old. After the guests have drunk, and disposed of these "preparative initia," the first course of the "coena" proper is served, and each man may slake his appetite as he will—tempted by ringdoves and fieldfares, capons and ducks, malted and turbot—or by the fatted hare in the middle, which the cook, with the help of artificial wings, has converted into the highly popular device of a Pegasus.

The second course is heralded by a flourish of horns; it consists of a huge boar, surrounded by eight sucking-pigs—or rather their skillfully-wrought effigies in paste,—and with tiny baskets, woven of palm-twigs and filled with Syrian and Theban dates, hanging from its tusks. The boar is pronounced to be a real Umbrian; but before the guests have made much way into it, the slaves appear with a fresh "ferculum," in which smokes a great fat sow, cooked like unto its Umbrian congener. Lactitus, the host, pretends that the cook has forgotten to disembowel the animal, summons him into the presence, and rates him soundly; whereas the cook flourishes his knife, makes two dexterous incisions in its belly, and lo! a quantity of all kinds of little sausages tumble out. This pantomimic trick, which was not uncommon at great Roman banquets, is received with immense applause.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

"But I dae care, Loui," said Giles, coming near her and bending down.

She was so small and he was so big. The next thing that happened, while the pigeons cooed madly, was that Loui's head rested against Giles's coarse, rough checked jacket, and that his arm was round her waist.

"I niver thocht on anytheng like this," said Giles, after a little, with genuine astonishment. "Did ye, Loui?"

"Na," said Loui.

She had not expected it to come so soon, and she was taken by surprise. His force dominated her, and she was quite satisfied and she was taken by surprise. His force dominated her, and she was quite satisfied.

The next thing that happened, while the comiDg near her and bendiog down.

**Laurel and Sandy, and every one, young and old, kept it in good old Scotch fashion.**

The night of "all the Saints" was not a night to be lightly passed over. It was only then that a great deal of the wonderful borderland 'twixt dull reality and eventful possibility might be entered. Giles and Loui came in for an immense amount of chaff. In the dim uncertainty of the future, as foretold by the "Kali Kastocks" and such proofs, they alone stood on the high and dry ground of surety. Loui was in the height of enjoyment.

"A body niver kens what may happen," she said to Giles, who brusquely told her there was no need to try her fortune.

"There," she said triumphantly, a few minutes after. She had been sitting in front of a looking-glass in the dim light of an empty room, waiting for the prophetic vision to appear, and first Giles and then Sandy had passed behind her.

"There, Giles," she said. "There were twa passed. Mebbe——" but Giles got suddenly angry. It was an outbreak against Sandy more than love for Loui.

"What did ye mean, Sandy, by passin' ahint her? She's mine, I tell ye, mine and nebody else's."

Sandy stared at him in astonishment.

"There's mair than you wad be glad to hae her, lad," said an old farmer, who was sitting by the fire at one end of the large farm kitchen. "Dinna' grudge them their chance."

Unfortunately Loui laughed.

"I'm gaun to see ye hame noo, Loui!" said Giles severely. "There's been eneagh o' this bairn's play."

They were all back in the long kitchen with the heavy rafters and the big open fireplace. Giles and Loui were standing in the partial gloom at one end; the others had grouped themselves near the fire, watching curiously.

"I winna' gang wi' ye, Giles," said Loui, who had no desire to leave the scene which was affording her exquisite amusement.

"And I say ye sail!" said Giles.

"She winna'!" said a voice from the group.

"I'm nae sae sure," said another.

Loui heard it all. Giles heard and saw nothing but her.

"If ye dimna' gang wi' me the noo," he said, "I hae done wi' ye. Ye can tak any one else ye like."

Loui was frightened.

"I'll gang," she said quickly and sullenly.

Giles sighed with relief. The sigh was promptly by his dogged determination to be first or nowhere.

"Guid nicht!" said Loui to the group.

She left Sandy to the end. "Guid nicht, Sandy!" she said meekly, without looking at him.

"I'll see ye hame," said Sandy, losing his head suddenly. "Just alane mair for saikie's saka."

Giles literally shoved Loui out of the house and ran her along, Loui keeping up an undecorous of grumbling all the way.

This incident determined Giles to have the marriage immediately; and so by Christmas it took place. Loui was pleased and happy enough at first. She liked sitting up in the little best room and receiving her visitors.

"You are a lucky woman," said the Dominie, who came to call.

Loui smiled. It was a sweet smile, but it irritated the Dominie; he did not know why.

"Ay," he repeated, "there is a deal of good in Giles, and there's more in him might be brought out with judicious treatment." Loui stared. "It all depends," added the Dominie, and he looked at her hardly. Then he sighed, got up, and said "Good-bye" abruptly.

"Yon's a queer man," said Loui to her husband that evening. They were sitting in the kitchen end by that time. "The Dominie; I dinna' ken what he was talking about."
“I ken,” said Giles, amused. “He just rins on and on, and half the time folk dinna ken what he’s haverin’ about. He dinna care.”

“That fatal mistake of marriage!” said the Dominie, as he thought over his call. “She’s not equal to Giles. She’s not capable of understanding a man like that. He will find out her emptiness soon, and then,” the Dominie paused, “he’ll go straight to the dogs. He never did anything in a half and half way.”

The Dominie was wrong. Giles passed from a complacent lover to a most ardent admirer. It was a pity. If he had taken Loui as she was, they would have had an uneventful happy enough life. Giles fell in love with his wife, and he worried and perplexed her by the very depth of his love. “Loui,” he said one afternoon, coming into the kitchen where she sat stroking her eyes by the window, trimming a hat, “Loui, I canna’ keep oot o’ your sight; I canna’ rechly believe ye’re here, my verrs an.”

“It’s gloamin’,” said Loui practically, “and if ye dinna’ mak’ haste, ye winna hae time to gang my messages afore dark.” At first Giles laughed at these practical replies to his love-making. Then as they got more pettish, and Loui’s tone got sharper, he began to think. “Dinna’ ye love me noo?” he asked one day wistfully.

He had a tactless way of asking her this sort of question at inopportune times. “Of course I love ye,” said Loui, “but ye need na’ gang dinning it in my ears a’ the time. I’d niver get ony wark dene if ye’d ha’e if I did the same, and it’s near impossible wi’ a man in to dean, and bake, and wash.”

“Would you like me oot o’ your wye?” His face was white and set, but Loui was not quick at reading signs. “Ay, there’s sense in that,” she said, “if ye can find aught tae dae.”

Giles went out and sat on the stone dyke near the house. He felt he had had rather a shock, though in the main Loui was right. He thought, rather grimly, it would never have entered his head to ask Loui to get out of his sight. After that Giles set to work to make the little homestead more of a “place.” There were not great possibilities in it, but Giles had never attempted any improvements. By degrees the healthy work interested him; then he developed an inventive turn. Loui had no longer cause of complaint against him for his idleness. He loved her as much as ever, but he repressed himself, and did not “worry” her with his feelings.

“Women hae a curious wye o’ hidin’ their thochts,” he meditated one evening. “Ye never ken wha’ ye are. I has gien up trying to unnerstan’ them.”

He said it complacently. One great charm Loui had for him was her impenetrable reserve. He never realised that what baffled him was the incapacity of a superficial nature, and not the feminine reserve with which he credited her.

The next step Giles took was in accordance with the Dominie’s wish, but it helped to widen the breach that all unconsciously was growing between Loui and himself. “Read, Giles,” said the Dominie; “you’ll find compensations.”

Giles did not know for what, but he took the advice. Loui had taken to running across to her mother’s or a neighbour’s in the evening, while Giles buried himself in books of travel which some instinct led the Dominie to lend him. It did not make him restless, but it did broaden his views. Loui began, on the other hand, to despise the tiny cottage with its small windows and the trim little garden.

“Sandy says he would na’ ask ony one to be his wife till he could keep a salverant,”
plaster seemed to me so remarkable that I straightway entered the house, made my bow to the lady of a certain age at the inner counter, and buttonholed a waiter. By the way, one must be polite in Denmark. It is a bore, I admit, to lift one's hat whenever one enters a shop—perhaps merely to buy a halfpenny match-box—and especially if one is bald as a marble mantelpiece. But it is expected from one. Practice soon makes the custom endurable, though, I believe, never congenial to the Briton, and so in two or three days I could go through a bout of hat-raising with any one, from a schoolboy to a station-master, and that without more than a few internal adjurations to myself not to be such a fool as to mind feeling a bit stiff in the ceremony. It makes all the difference sometimes whether you behave as a Dane in this particular or as an indurated cockney. There is no comparison between the interest you excite in the people themselves in the respective cases.

Here is the bill of fare of my thirteenth halfpenny dinner: Cabbage soup, veal cutlets, the wing of a chicken, with jam, apple fritters, and coffee. The cooking was not altogether after the English fashion; but that was not to be expected. I do not like jam and chicken together. Still, it was easy to eat the chicken and neglect the jam. And, after all, it is much that the meal was served in a cleanly way, with due courtesy from a gentleman in swallow tails, who seemed as enchanted as a Scandinavian can be with a gratuity of three halfpence. Two or three unobtrusive ladies stole in, and made the same kind of meal, and about as many gentlemen. Others preferred a dinner at eighteenpence; but that was not to be expected. They met with the same civility, and were not inordinately mulcted in the bill of fare.

I left the place with my cigar, feeling considerable respect for Copenhagen—a respect that, after becoming intimate with Thorvaldsen, has by no means diminished either in kind or quantity.

For my coffee I went forthwith to the seat of fashion and, as some think, extravagance—the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the first hotel in Denmark.

Here I read the papers and chuckled over the increased hardships of those who crossed the Great Belt after our passage. What did I care if the frost set in so as to cut all except over-ice communication? I, at any rate, had reached port.

It was rather dull in this gaudy coffee-hall. The frost glare was on the windows, so that I could not, as at Venice and elsewhere, see the ebb and flow of human life outside while trifling with my spoon. Of the half-dozen or so gentlemen who entered after me, none were notable as types of anything in particular. There was the inevitable Anglomaniac youth, in high collar, with gaiters to his ankles, who smoked a downright briar instead of his country's cigars. A bull-dog slunk at his heels, and peered forth later to be fed with sugar. This young gentleman drank soda and brandy. It is not such a popular beverage with us as it used to be. Even our novelists have got to substituting for it a whiskey and seltzer. But it was rather droll to see this youngster take it as something "quite up to date, don't you know."

Still, though dull, the café helped me very passably on towards the evening. Then, with the glow of electricity on the square outside the hotel, and on the inner courtyard commanded by my bedroom, I dressed for the royal theatre, which was to present the world with something entertaining that night, said the hotel porter, a gentleman who may generally be relied upon to know everything within the town's orbit.

I was, however, too sleepy to thoroughly appreciate the piece, and also too ignorant. It was a comedy of a high order, and the acting was in keeping with it. I only understood of it certain ejaculatory phrases used by the gentlemen in impatient moments, and certain tender words which sound never more sweet than from woman's lips. It contented me nevertheless.

In the intervals I had adequate opportunity to see something of Copenhagen's youth and beauty. I was disappointed. The young ladies in evening dress were not half so pliant as in furs in the open with the frost kissing their cheeks. Besides, I grow to say, many of them wore a most unbecoming kind of pigtail, which gave emphasis to ears naturally above the common size. As for their mammas, well, they were only their daughters microscopically treated.

Afterwards I hinted to some one that I had really expected better things of the royal theatre on this count.

"Oh, but," said my companion, "they are so amiable that they seem beautiful to us."

There is much in such a plea. Moreover, these girls did look amiable. But how is
a stranger to know if looks and reality concur?
I retired to bed sufficiently satisfied with
my first day in Copenhagen.

The second day in Copenhagen and the
third and successive days were none too
much to give to Thorvaldsen. What
would the town be without the heritage of
his genius?

Doubtless the classic exterior of his
museum harmonizes well with the classic
character of his works and the mind which
begot the works. But Denmark itself does
not seem quite to suit these exquisite
marbles in the nude any more than it
treats with fit regard the historical frescoes
which adorn—or rather ones adorned—the
outer walls of the shrine which guards the
marbles. It is no fault of the Danes
themselves that this is so. They worship
reverently at Thorvaldsen's feet, and allow
him unique. It was the fervour of that
veneration that led them to paint the walls
of this temple of ideals with scenes out of
Thorvaldsen's life career. The frescoes
would have lived passably well in Genoa
or the south, generally assuming that the
pigments themselves were judiciously
chosen. But half a century has more
than sufficed in the north to blear and
disfigure them, so that a cynic has ample
excuse to mock alike them and their
initiators.

No matter. Headless of the incongruity of the frescoes and snow and frost
in close conjunction, I entered the solemn
building, which is temple and tomb in one,
prepared to do homage with any one to
the greatest Dane of the century.

It was another biting day. News had
come in the morning that it was a toss up
whether or not the mail ice-boat would
succeed in cutting its passage across the
Sound to Sweden. Certain enterprise
Swedes had already come to Copenhagen
from Malmö afoot. In fact, a day more
opposed to commonplace tourist energies
could scarcely be conceived. I fully
expected to have the museum to myself.

For a while, indeed, it was so, if I may
except the uniformed custodians who
perambulated the cold corridors in over-
coats, hawked, and rubbed their hands
together, and carried noses of a cruelly
suggestive hue. They are gentlemen past
the prime of life, and therefore unlikely to
be in thrall to overpowering enthusiasms of
any kind. All the same, there was some-
thing genuine about the gesture with which
the first of these old fellows pointed out to
me the contents of the first of the little
chamber chambers, each of which holds one
of Thorvaldsen's chef d'œuvres. But I could
not abide the idea of being personally
conducted through such a sanctuary. I
therefore pleaded profound ignorance of
colloquial Danish, bowed the worthy
cicerone into the background, and went
my way. Such treasures as Thorvaldsen's
marbles must be well guarded. I thought
it no particular hardship afterwards if
whenever I looked away from a statue I
found a custodian's eyes upon me. People
who can find it in them to score their
initials and ribald phrases on cathedral
altars would not mind defiling Thorvaldsen's
Graces, or his Amor and Psyche, in like
manner. To do the Danes justice,
however, it must be said that they do not
thus profane their wonderful museum.

It is impossible in a mere article even
to hint categorically at the marvels done
by Thorvaldsen in his life of something
score years and ten. The Copenhagen
museum shows five or six hundred of
them, great and small, statues, groups,
busts, and reliefs. The mind stumbles
and then suffocates in an attempt to enjoy
and appreciate them in one brief term of
three or four hours. In the very first
cabinet the Ganymedes filling and offering
the cup seem surpassingly fine. But they
are forgotten in the exquisite grace of the
female figures of other cabinets. His
Jason makes as strong an impression as
anything of the kind in the Vatican, and the
same may be said of his Adonis. It is a pity
that we in England have little or nothing
in colossal statuary that would bear com-
parison with his Poniatowski or his
Gutenberg. It was cold work looking at
these gigantic achievements in a hall that
had not yet felt the influence of the
heating apparatus throughout the museum.
Yet somehow the mere sight of them
kept the blood warm. It was as if the
apotheoses of admiration which claimed
to be uttered and were yet suppressed
from lack of auditors ran through the body
in an electric current. Genius can inspire
and exalt; it may surely, also, play the
meaner part of stove or paletot.

To my mind, great as are Thorvaldsen's
statues, his reliefs are even greater.
There is sublimity in the former, but more
sentiment, sweetness, and withal truth to
nature in the latter. Take, for example,
the relief of "Night with her Children,
Sleep and Death." No post on such a
subject could be more expressive than
Thorvaldse with his chisel. Mark the
owl drifting in the ether behind the an-
gellic figure bearing the infant effigies with
eyes fast closed. The mind plunges into
drowsy reveries before this most eloquent
of scenes in marble. Art could not more
entirely fulfill its function of suspending
the individuality of the spectator and, for
the time, saturating him with ideality.
The "Shepherdess with a Nest of Amoynies," or little Cupids, works differently upon the
beholder, but with the like success. The
reliefs of the four seasons and ages of men
—flowers, love, fruit, and decadence—pro-
duce an effect akin to that ascribed to the
early stages of death by drowning. Look-
ing at them one feels them as an epitome
of life; tender, intoxicating, and melancholy as the old man himself, who huddles
over the brazier his fast-chilling dust.
From these it is good again to turn to the
reliefs of Hylas and the Water Nymphs,
with their fervour of strong, lusty life in
the zenith of its enjoyment. There is a
certain voluptuousness in these two treat-
ments of the same subject; but, though it
kindles the blood, it does not amount to
sensuality. The graceful curves and out-
lines of the bodies of the nymphs satisfy;
they need not excite.
From these cabinets of gems in marble,
I passed suddenly into the hall which
holds Thorvaldse's Christ and the Apostles
—gigantically treated. Here one sees the
sculptor at his loftiest pitch. I prefer to
say nothing more about these astounding
figures—save that all the Apostles are as
nothing to the Christ who controls them.
The Salvation Army and revivalists in
general are believed to have done laudable
work in reawakening among the poorer
classes the instinct of religion which had
become torpid in them. I do not feel that
I exaggerate when I say that it seems to me
that Thorvaldse's Christ might serve the
same purpose for rich and poor, the edu-
crated and the uneducated alike, if it could be
led through the civilized world and exhibited
with due ceremony in metropolises and
market-places.
Thorvaldse lies buried in the courtyard
of the museum; the doors letting upon the
granite tombstone open opposite the
chamber of the Christ and Apostles. No
man has a more majestic sepulchre. The
errors of the frescoing to these inner walls,
as well as the outer, and the pent nature
of the surroundings to the bay-crowned
tomb are as nothing to the glory shed
on his dust by its proximity to the most
elevating and refining work in marble the
world can show. Thorvaldse's Christ is
a cult in itself.

The Church of our Lady, which contains
the marble of which the Christ and the
Apostles in the museum were the models,
is interesting only for its association with
Thorvaldse. The obliging old sacristan
who has charge of the church will not be
satisfied unless you affect or show a certain
amount of stupefaction before the monstrous
marbles. Really, however, after the
museum casts, they do not quite answer
expectation. Even the Christ, keeping
tender watch and ward, with outstretched
arms, in the east end, does not please like
the Christ in the museum. The words
"Come to Me" on the pedestal are more
touching as emanations from Thorvaldse's
Christ.

After this admirable collection—worth
journeying from Fiji to behold — the
museum of Northern Antiquities is the
thing best worth seeing in the capital.
You must, at the outset, though, be
patient with the rather tiresome collection
of flints which fills the first three or four
rooms. A very profound antiquity may
deduce much of human interest from these
rows of knives and spear and arrow heads
in variegated stone. But to the common
man, whose imagination is in abeyance,
they are not inspiring.

From the flints, however, we soon pass
to the chambers illustrative of human
progress in the north. One feels better
pleased with works of iron and bronze
than with those of mere stone. Gold and
silver also appear and touch other chords
of interest. One of the most recent of
these finds of precious metal is a superb
bowl of hammered silver, with grotesque
hunting scenes in relief. This treasure,
about a yard in diameter, was unearthed
in 1891 in the Galborg province. A
multitude of gold rings and fibulae also
tell of the wealth of the old Danes as well
as of the pleasant "finds" that may yet be
discovered at any moment among the great
bogs and heather land of mid-Jutland and
Bornholm.

The arrangement of these rooms is
admirable. Thus one passes by one cham-
ber after another; from the periods that
may be termed prehistoric to the period of
early Christianity with its aboriginal saints
in wood, and thence to the later Middle
Ages when men made the labour of love
of a lifetime to carve a single altar-piece of
ivory. Some of the ecclesiastical work
from Huseum—alas! now German territory—is most notable. And from these wonders in silver and copper—git one passes again to an era of huge flagons, crossbows, and coats of mail. A more complete and delectable lesson in national development could not well be had than that of the Danish national museum. It seems a pity that our own vast treasures in Great Russell Street cannot be rearranged more instructively. At present the British Museum is as appalling to the stranger as its wealth is incalculable.

But enough of museums and collections. After Thorvaldsen and the national show, the lesser sights of Copenhagen within walls may reasonably be neglected.

As a town, Copenhagen has few individual features. The few that it has I viewed one morning from the roof of the Round Tower which rises in its midst. I did not view them unmoved, for it was snowing at the time, and no one had thought of trundling wheelbarrows up the inclined staircase for the transference of the accumulation of snow on the summit to a lower level. I looked briefly at the confused area of housetops, church spires, telegraph and telephone wires, at the dark trees of the parklands, and the white Baltic; then shuffled and retraced my steps. The tower is barely one hundred and twenty feet high, but Copenhagen is so flat a town that at this altitude it seems wholly discoverable. There is nothing at all remarkable in the fact that the Russian Empress Catherine, in 1716, drove a coach and four up to the top of this tower. Certainly the gradient is unusually steep, and no well-bred horse would like the circumstantial motion needful to ascend spirally. But the thoroughfare is wide and solid enough, even for an Empress of Russia.

There is a church in the poorer part of Copenhagen with a staircase much better adapted to confer a thrill. This church—Our Saviour's—with a spire nearly three hundred feet high, may be ascended externally to the ball which crowns it. The steps are firm, but unless you have a steady head you may grow very dizzy ere you touch the topmost of them.

From these various vantage points the eye almost involuntarily turns to the Baltic more than anywhere else. In summer the water-way gives life and beauty to the place. Moreover, you may see Sweden beyond. In winter, with hard frost, the scene is of course totally different. Instead of a lively coming and going of great ships and sails, like fleeces on the blue water, all, or nearly all, is rigid. You hear the hammer, hammer, hammer from the Royal Dockyard, and see the vapour eddying lastly from the funnels of a hundred steam-boats. But nothing is in motion on the blue water, which is not blue at all, but white—just a vast snow-clad field, stretching from Denmark to Sweden.

I amused myself two or three times in the afternoon by strolling down to the Custom House, and walking a mile or more out to sea, to watch the blood-red winter's sun sink in the west behind Copenhagen's thin but positive canopy of smoke. It was not smooth walking at all. The ice-boats had fought against the frost as long as possible, and tumbled the blocks edgewise and one upon another, and the snow had come and more than half hid these perilous surfaces. But though rough, I could not even with a hammer have broken through into the nether water. Here and there was a track of bloodstains. Blood never looks redder than when interjected upon snow. Less careful pedestrians than myself had probably hurt themselves on these ice-edges. It was odd thus to stumble up to the hull of first one barque and then another, stuck in the ice and separated from each other by longish reaches, like plums in a poor cake. The "Jane Clark," of Sunderland, lay a gunshot from the "Olsen," of Christiansand, and an American wheat-ship was bound a little farther off. The last of these had clearly made frantic efforts to release herself. She was girdled by a number of fios—a formidable "cheval de flise" for the pedestrian. But neither the hot water from her boilers nor the circular trips of the ice-boat had been able to cut her free; and so at last she had resigned herself to her fate. Her sides, like those of the other captives, were draped with icicles and ice-sheathing, not all of which was good to look upon.

The scene on the Custom House quay on any of these afternoons was suggestive of the hardships that attend an unusually severe winter in the north. Hundreds of dock and other semi-marine labourers were here assembled in knots, stamping their feet and bustling their arms like cockney cabmen. Periodically an official would appear and pin a fresh telegram to the notice-board outside. This told of yet another Danish port rendered inaccessible by ice. The unemployed would shuffle towards it, read it, comment on it, laugh...
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f a little constrainedly as they looked in each other's faces, and then recur to the waterfalls to gaze at the motionless ships and the huge cubes of ice cut from the sea, as indications of the tremendous force a thaw would have to bring upon the land and sea ere things could assume their normal course on the quays. They were neither noisy or aggressive, these unemployed of Copenhagen. But they did not look very happy, poor fellows! Their wives and families in the new model lodging-houses of the north of the town—the Nyboden—were doubtless suffering privations quite equal to their own associated grievances.

After a week I felt that I knew as much of Copenhagen as was necessary to pass a fairly comprehensive Civil Service examination on the subject. To be sure, I had not groveled in its slums, nor even soiled my senses in its "fast" midnight resorts. Of the latter, one especial hive of the dissolute was mentioned as by no means to be neglected by the man who sought to plumb the depths as well as scale the heights of life in the Danish capital. It is a well-known café in a principal street—a place of chartered libertinism. If you enter it before the witching hour you do not see beneath the epidermis of respectability which then still holds over it, though loosening. An hour or two hours later its revels are at their zenith.

Copenhagen is not a very "wild" town; but neither is it a model place to please New England Puritans, with a crusade for villages the inhabitants of which are to live up to the standard of human perfectibility. Shortly after I went to a theatre to see a play called "The Magdalene." It was a poor piece of work, this play. But its author had the audacity in it to depict a woman of a certain class as his heroine, and to render the incidents of her sorry career—a scene, Copenhagen—without mercy and fidelity. What was the result? Night after night this theatre was packed to the hindermost seat of its "parterre." An excited audience of old men and women, young men and women, and children yet years off their teens, gloated over this truthful display of one of the unsightly sores of modern metropolitan existence.

This sort of thing apart, Copenhagen, even in winter, is a pleasant place to a man with skates in his portmanteau, and a certain indifference to the thermometer. I had little time for social festivities, but I enjoyed the harmonious echo of not a few of them as I lay abed in my apartment of the "Angleterre," and listened to the tread of feet and the harps and violins of the nether ball-room. Several marriages "de bon ton" were arranged formally in these state rooms of the hotel during my stay. The parents and relatives and others concerned drove up ceremonially, were still more ceremoniously ushered into the chamber, where, seated at a long table, they put all in train for the final proceeding. And afterwards they danced until the small hours, when I might chance to wake drowsily to listen to the dulled sound of their horses' feet on the fresh-fallen snow outside the courtyard.

There may not be much poetic charm about life in Copenhagen, any more than there is about life in London or New York. But there is human interest wherever there are human beings, and here there are, I suppose, about three hundred thousand of these.

It is a downright, fervid, flesh and blood, real town, with a glamour of unique ideality upon it—the latter due entirely to Thorvaldsen. Without Thorvaldsen it might tend painfully towards unmitigated grossness.

MY COUSIN COLAS.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

I DID not feel very happy or comfortable in my mind after Colas's departure. My uncle's loud lamentations sounded to me like reproaches, and instead of our secret drawing me nearer to Clémence, it seemed rather to make a gap between us.

"It is a matter I am never going to speak of to any one," she said, the first and only time I alluded to it; "we did nothing which we need feel to be really wrong. You had best forget that you narrowly escaped a life you dreaded."

But it was not easy to forget, the more so as I saw that something weighed her spirits down too. Others noticed a change in her besides myself.

"I believe," said Colas's mother, "that Clémence Servals is pining after our boy. We wanted him to say something to her before he went away, but he would not. Never mind, when he comes for his Christmas leave we will have the matter arranged."

But in Colas's letters, which grew always shorter and rarer, he made no mention of leave; and a cold, cheerless Christmas
came and went, and Clémence grew visibly paler and thinner.

"It is the weather," she would say, if any one remarked on it; "this is the coldest winter I have ever known."

She was right, the weather was exceptionally bitter; and after the New Year the dark waters of the Semois, swollen by the rains, began to be flecked with white jagged blocks of ice, which collected above the weir and at every place where they met with a barrier in the shallow river bed.

I still went on with some pretence of lessons with Monsieur le Doyen, but now, when I felt that my chance with Clémence had sunk so low, I had but little heart in the matter. Now and then I got a lecture from my teacher on my indifference to what he called the salt of life. A grain of encouragement from Clémence was all the salt I wanted for my life; and I longed to tell him so, but what was the use? It was, indeed, not only the frost which I found hard that winter.

We sat thus one evening—the old priest in his arm-chair, and Clémence bending silently over her work, while I read lamely from the history of Belgium, when a quick step stopped outside the door, and some one knocked.

"Come in!" cried Monsieur le Doyen. "Come in, and don't let the cold in with you."

The door opened and let in—so much to our surprise that we hardly recognised him—my cousin Colas.

"Mon fils!" exclaimed the old man, while Clémence, her face radiant with joy, sprang from her seat. "Mon fils, why did you not give us the pleasure of expecting you and preparing for you?"

But Colas's only response to this hearty greeting was to hold out his hand in silence with a troubled look on his face.

"You are perished with cold," went on Monsieur le Doyen, when they had shaken hands. "Come and sit by the fire, and tell us when you arrived and how long leave you have."

"I have this moment reached Frahan, mon père," replied Colas in a constrained tone, "and my leave is only for twenty-four hours. Then, as Clémence made a little exclamation of surprise, he went on: "My leave is not for pleasure, I may as well tell you that at once, and I am come straight to you, Monsieur le Doyen, because I can speak to you with less difficulty than I could to my father. You have never been hard on me yet."

"I understand," said the old priest slowly; "you have got yourself into some scrape." My cousin nodded his head. "Ah, mon fils," he went on sadly, "and what has become of that exemplary soldier we used to hear so much about?"

"Do not upbraid him, mon oncle," said Clémence quickly, "before you know what his trouble is. He has come to us—to you—because—because—"

"I am not upbraid him," was the answer. "Go on, Colas."

Then Colas told us a terrible tale of how he had fallen into bad company in his regiment, and had yielded to all sorts of temptations; how, worst of all, he had tried to regain the money he had squandered by gambling; how sometimes he had won, which had taken away his last jot of caution, and how at last, after a persistent run of bad luck, he had borrowed money from a cantine of another regiment to clear himself with his comrades; how she had grown impatient for repayment, and had finally gone to his sergeant, who had reported him; how, luckily, the Captain was a kind-hearted man, whereby he had obtained twenty-four hours' leave to go home and get the necessary sum.

"He proposed I should do so," concluded Colas, "and I accepted the offer; but I knew it would be of no use to go to my father. If he had the money he would never give it me for such a purpose. But I thought that you, Monsieur le Doyen, who have always been so good to me, would have pity on me. I do not know what will happen if I go back without the money. I suppose it will be some terrible disgrace. It is five hundred francs, mon père, five hundred francs! and I will honestly pay you back some day, if you will stand between me and ruin now."

The old man's kindly face had clouded over as he listened to Colas's tale.

"Colas," he said, severely, "what faith can you expect me to place in your promises after those you have already treated so lightly?"

Colas looked at Clémence—he evidently expected her to plead his cause; I scarcely thought she would dare; but I was wrong. She rose from her seat, and going to her uncle's side, took his hand and kissed it softly. He drew it gently from her.

"Yes, ma fille, yes, ma fille," he said, "I know all that, but five hundred francs is a large sum of money."

"It must seem even larger to Colas," she replied, "than it does to you."
He did not answer, but when he had looked into her upturned face, he got up and went into the adjoining room. In a few minutes he returned with a roll of notes in his hand.

"My pension came a few days ago," he said simply, "otherwise I could not have given it to you. I do not know if I am acting wisely. No, no, do not thank me; word gratitude is not what I want from you now."

"You are right, Monsieur le Doyen," said Colas humbly, "my words can have no weight with you; but you shall see, indeed you shall. I will write and tell you how it all ends. God bless you!"

Then he held out his hand to say goodbye.

"Au revoir, monsieur," he said, "au revoir. I shall catch the night mail from Paliseul and be in Brussels before daybreak to-morrow."

"But, Colas," I exclaimed, "are you not going to see your parents?"

"Yes," added Monsieur le Doyen. "Why should you travel all night for the sake of being in Brussels so early? When does your leave expire?"

"At noon to-morrow," replied Colas, "but I had rather go back to-night; and how could I go to my parents? What could I say to them? I would rather they did not know of my coming even."

"Well," I said, "if you are determined to go, I will walk with you as far as Boechant Church."

"No, no," he said sharply. "I had rather you did no such thing. Good-bye all."

We went with him to the door, and in spite of the cold stood watching him. A little snow was falling; we could see his tall figure plainly in the whiteness. He was the only moving thing in the wintry night—every one else was safe at home.

"What is he going down that way for?" I exclaimed, as my cousin turned to the left in the meadow, instead of to the right towards the footbridge.

"Why, don't you see!" said Clémence, "he will cross the river at the weir on the ice, and so he will avoid the risk of meeting anyone on the path. He knows what he is doing."

That apparently was his intention. We stood watching him till he reached the opposite bank of the Semois, and then against the dark background of the rocks he had to climb we lost sight of him.

"He will get to the high-road more quickly that way than if he had gone round the path," said Clémence, as we went in.

The old priest sighed heavily.

"It's a sad pity," he said softly. "A sad pity."

I looked at Clémence. I felt as guilty as if I had been the one who had wasted my substance and clogged myself with debt. I wondered if she, too, were touched with remorse; but she met my glance almost defiantly, as if she dared me to regret the past—even in thought.

The next morning the river was ice-bound, and a thin veil of snow lay over everything. The weatherwise prophesied that we were only at the beginning of what we had to endure, and the old men raked up memories of the famous frosts of bygone times.

Monsieur le Doyen tried hard to persuade himself that it was on account of some complication arising from the severity of the weather that Colas's promised letter did not arrive at the earliest possible opportunity. Then he began to have misgivings; but the worst that he imagined fell short of the truth, as we learnt it only too soon.

News of Colas came a few days after his secret visit. It was brought by a corporal of the Guides and a couple of privates as we sat at our midday meal. My father saw them pass the window. He sprang up exclaiming:

"Why, there is Colas! and he has brought some comrades with him."

We both hurried out—I, full of wonder that he should have returned so soon and again without giving us warning. The soldiers stood in front of my uncle's door; but we soon saw that they were all strangers.

"Mon Dieu!" cried my father, "can anything be amiss?" For we saw my uncle gesticulating eagerly as if he had received an unwelcome communication.

"I tell you," he was declaring, as we came up, "I tell you my son is not here, nor has he been. He has never been near the place since he was ordered away last August. Never once."

The corporal shook his head.

"It won't do, mon ami," he rejoined, "for though I am willing to believe he is not here now, you only place yourself under suspicion by declaring he never has been here. I myself went with him to the Gare de Luxembourg at Brussels and saw him take his place for Paliseul; the station-master there remembers his arrival; a man
from the village up above followed him for a couple of miles hither, and saw him take his way down the hill towards Frahan. Now, after that, what is the use of denying that he came?"

"But, monsieur le caporal," recommenced my uncle, "I am ready to take my oath he never came. Why should he have come suddenly like that?"

The corporal looked very angry.

"Ah, you peasants are less stupid than you try to appear. Your denial only implicates yourself. But, you see, we know too much. The lad came to get five hundred francs. You naturally—"

"Five hundred francs!" interrupted my uncle, the colour going out of his bronzed face. "I don’t know what you mean, monsieur le caporal."

"Mon oncle," I said, coming forward, "I think I can explain. Colas was here on Tuesday night, and he did come for five hundred francs. Monsieur le Doyen lent them to him. He did not wish you to know."

"Well," said the corporal as I paused, "and what then?"

"Then he started off to catch the night mail to Brussels," I said.

"The morning train would have been quite time enough for Brussels," said the corporal with a meaning look at his companions, "and it’s a curious thing that he never went back to Pailseul that night for all his hurry. Did you happen to set him on the way, my lad?"

He asked this with a searching glance.

"No, monsieur le caporal," I replied.

"He preferred that I should not."

"Then," he went on, "you do not know which road he took?"

"Oh yes, I do," I said quickly; "we watched him cross the river on the ice at the weir. Above the slate quarry there."

"Very good," he continued. "Is not that a rather unusual way up the hill?"

"Certainly, monsieur le caporal. He took it because he thought he was less likely to meet any one."

"And whither does that road under the hill lead—that one which ends at the slate quarry?"

"It leads to Alle— to Sedan," I answered innocently.

"Yes, to the frontier. However, you say you saw him go up the hill?"

"I did not say so, monsieur le caporal."

"But I suppose you did see him?"

"Colas," cried my uncle, "you did see him! Say you saw him!"

"Mon oncle," I said falteringly. "Monsieur le caporal—it was dark. The rocks hid him."

"That is quite enough," replied the soldier. "My good man, I fear your son has cut out a sad future for himself. The case is only too clear, and must be dealt with as it deserves. I am sorry I misjudged you—but there—how can one know?"

Almost all the village had gathered round while this scene was going on. At the end of it my uncle turned without a word to any one, went into his house and shut the door behind him. Then above the bustle and wonder and comment which broke out rose the voice of Monsieur le Doyen.

"My friends," he said, "next to the lad’s own father, I suppose this blow falls more heavily on me than on any one. As far as I am concerned, I am quite ready to forgive the hand which did it, and as to you, I beg you to suspend judgement, and to abstain as far as possible from uncharitable comment until we know something further."

But days wore on into weeks, and we knew nothing further, and poor Clémence went about like a ghost. If she would only have spoken to some one of all that must have been on her mind, perhaps she would have borne it better; but she kept the closest silence—even to me. I used now and then to almost smile to myself as I remembered how easy I had thought the wooing of her would be if Colas were once out of the way.

The frost lasted with more or less severity until nearly the end of February, and then the thaw came, so to speak, all in a moment. The older villagers looked grave as they heard the crashing, grinding sound with which the huge blocks of ice detached themselves rapidly from the crumbling banks and began to work their way down stream.

"What is there to fear?" I asked my father as we stood together on our little plot of ground beside the river.

"What is there to fear?" he repeated. "Well, that I can scarcely say, for I have never seen a thaw so rapid. But, you see, during the long frost the Semolds has run so low that there cannot possibly be water enough to carry the lee-packs away round the many curves of its course. They will move down until they find some slight obstacle; there they will mass themselves higher and higher until the water behind them has gathered sufficient force to burst through the wall or drive it onward. I
I was speaking of the great ‘désastre’ of the year ’28, mon frère,’ said my father. ‘Thou, too, canst remember how the ice was dashed out by the current against the mill till it fell in ruins. Look, there was a pack forming which can easily wreck the ateliers of slate quarry. Would it not be better to profit by past experience, and avert disaster as far as possible? Let us collect all the help we can, and break up the mass as it forms. If we cannot keep the river course clear, we can at least do a little towards it.’

My uncle assented, and in less than an hour, along several miles of the Somme’s course, the men of Bochchant and Frahan were doing all they could to ward off the threatened danger. We had already been a long time at work, when some one touched me on the arm, and looking round, I saw Jean Gobinet, Etienne Roux.

‘Colas,’ he said, ‘dost thou know whether thy uncle Marcel is up stream or down?’

I shook my head.

‘I know nothing about him. I have seen nothing but ice-blocks all afternoon.’

‘Well,’ he went on, ‘then thou must go in one direction and I in the other, and if thou art the one to find him, bring him to the weir, and make him understand on the way that there is something terrible waiting for him.’

‘What do you mean?’ I cried.

‘Come this way,’ he answered, ‘then you can see for yourself.’

I think I had guessed what it was before I saw by the light, which was now fading, something of which the outline was blurred by clinging fragments of ice, lying on the grass beside the river.

I stood speechless with horror.

‘It is your cousin Colas,’ said Etienne, lowering his voice as we stood and looked.

‘We found him there a little way below the weir. He was frozen in deep. He must have fallen from the rocks above on to the thin ice that night you know of. He was probably killed by the fall, for his head is fearfully knocked about. Well, after all, it will be some comfort to his father to know that he is not the swindler and deserter he seemed to be.’

I scarcely remember how we broke the tidings to my uncle, nor how he bore it. From the confusion of that terrible evening only one incident comes back to me clearly, and that is how, as we bore poor Colas’s body up the village on the rough bier we had made, we met Monsieur le Doyen and Clémence coming home from vespers.

‘Has there been an accident?’ asked the priest.

But Clémence had caught sight of the discoloured uniform and of my uncle Marcel walking stricken by the head of the bier.

‘Ah!’ she cried, ‘it is Colas—it is Colas.’

Then she sank unconscious to the ground, and her uncle raised her up, and I helped him to carry her home.

The inquest over Colas’s body brought to light no better explanation of his death than that conjectured by Etienne Roux; in fact, no other explanation was possible. Monsieur le Doyen’s five hundred francs were found carefully strapped in his pocket-book, almost uninjured. The good old man devoted them to clearing Colas’s name from the slur which rested on it in his regiment.

‘Why should I not?’ he asked sadly, when my uncle protested a little. ‘I loved the lad, and I have no one now to put by money for since Clémence has gone.’

For, less than a week after we had buried Colas in the cemetery at the top of the hill, Clémence had died quietly, and no one doubted that it was of a broken heart. I alone knew that it was something beyond her love for my cousin that had killed her, though she bade me good-bye on her deathbed without even so much as alluding to the great mistake she had made in trying to serve the man she loved.

And if I have kept our secret until now, when I am an old man, it is more for her sake than for my own.
HOME NOTES.

CLEANLINESS is perhaps rather an odd subject on which to write, but, nevertheless, I am going to devote a short space to it this month. We all know that after great exertion we perspire a great deal, in this way the body gives off through the skin that which it ought not to retain. After this, if the skin is not thoroughly cleansed the pores become choked, and the body is thus obliged to retain what it would naturally lose. I feel sure in these days of athletic women I must number among my readers many who go in for outdoor sports, riding, cycling, golf, perhaps shooting, or at any rate walking with the guns. How do we feel when we return home after an outing of this kind? Very hot, and perhaps our clothes wet and muddy. Our best and safest and most healthy plan is to take at once a warm bath, and to put on clean, dry clothes. If we have been very hot as we get cool we are without this apt to become chilly. If our clothes are damp, or our stockings wet, there is no better way of restoring the circulation than by taking a hot bath, or, if that is not practicable, a good deep foot bath. This is the best preventive of cold that I know. I never fear damp when riding or walking if I know on my return I can have a hot bath.

SATURDAY'S PUDDING.—Take three-quarters of a pound of any cold meat free from skin and gristle, and the same quantity of mashed potatoes. A dessertspoonful of sweet herbs chopped fine, a suspenion of boiled onion finely minced, and half a teaspoonful of grated lemon rind, pepper and salt to taste. Mix altogether with an egg and a little milk. Grease a basin, fill with the mixture, tie a buttered paper over the top and steam for an hour. Turn out, pour over and round a thick brown gravy. Sprinkle brown bread-crumbs over the pudding and garnish with slices of carrot or small branches of broccoli.

THOSE WHO HAVE NO SCALES In their kitchen will be glad to know of two simple plans to measure ingredients for cooking. Take an ordinary teacup—this quite full of flour will be four ounces, so do not take quite so much. Shredded suet is much lighter, therefore a small teaspoonful is two ounces. In this way you will soon find that you are able to measure groceries accurately.

AN EXCELLENT HARE SOUP is made thus: Skin and clean the hare carefully saving all the blood. Break the carcass into several pieces and lay them in a pan with about a gallon of cold water and one and a half pounds of shin of beef; for ordinary soup, bones, either cooked or raw, answer the purpose if broken up. Let it boil up and then skim well, and add a couple of carrots and a turnip sliced, a good head of celery, two onions, one stuck with cloves, eight peppercorns, a couple of bay leaves, parsley, thyme, and a blade of mace. Let it boil slowly but steadily for five or six hours, then strain off the liquor, and when cold remove all fat carefully. Cut the meat from the bones, chop and pound it, rub it and the vegetables through a sieve back into the soup. Season this to taste with salt, a very little Lea & Perrins Worcester sauce, and mushroom ketchup. Heat the soup and meat together, thicken with a little flour, and let it all boil up for a few moments, stirring it constantly, let it cool a little, and add the blood, stirring it steadily one way, till the soup is thick and the colour changed. The soup should be quite hot, but not boiling when the blood is added, or it will curdle. Place a tablespoonful of wine in the tureen, pour the hot soup on it and serve.

SAND BAGS.—I believe I have written before on the value of hot sand bags, but, as I know by experience, these simple remedies are apt to slip one's memory, I will give my opinion on the subject again. One great point about a sand bag is that it never leaks like a hot bottle. Again, its shape renders it comfortable, for it has no hard corners, and it can be used as a cushion. Make a bag of stout ticking about ten inches square, and fill it with dry sand. This can be put in the oven, made thoroughly hot, but before being put into the bed it should be enclosed with a thin flannel cover.

HARIOT SALAD is a very suitable one for this time of year, and only needs to be tried once to be very popular in a household. Soak half of a teacupful of small white haricot beans, remove the skins, place the beans in a saucepan with enough cold water to cover them and a little bit of butter or dripping. Boil till perfectly tender, drain dry, and then cold. Heat a little cold potato. Arrange on a dish and scatter celery sliced rather thin and beetroot over. Pour over any salad mixture preferred, and if you have any endive add it to your salad.
PINS FOR BABIES.—The practice of using common pins in children’s clothing is really nothing less than barbarous. There are some instances where a safety pin may be used, but for the most permanent fastenings in the child’s clothes tapes and buttons are all that is necessary. It is cruel to subject the baby to the risk of being pricked and scratched by torturing pins, when by a little care and trouble on the part of the mother or nurse all this may be entirely avoided. I have known instances of a child being restless all day, and the cause could not be discovered till on being undressed a nasty sore scratch has been found. A pin had, of course, been put into an incomplete garment in a hurry and to save trouble. If a needle and thread is kept in a corner of baby’s basket, the proverbial “stitch in time” may be put in, and save the little one much discomfort and pain.

TO GET UP COLLARS AND CUFFS.—First wash the articles perfectly clean and rinse well, make boiled starch as usual and cook it slowly for nearly half an hour. Use no cold starch and do not sprinkle, but when the collars, etc., are dry, spread them on a damp cloth for a couple of hours. Iron first on the wrong side, then on the right, pressing the iron firmly to produce a nice gloss. If a polishing iron is used, press the heel of it on the surface and the pressure must be even. This preparation is recommended by some to produce a gloss on starched goods. Dissolve slowly over the fire one ounce of the best white wax, one ounce of spermaceti, and a dessertspoonful of common salt. Place in a wet mould to cool. To every ounce of dry starch used, add a piece of this mixture, the size of a nut.

NEW WOODEN VESSELS, such as keds or churns, will generally give a disagreeable taste to anything that is put into them, particularly if they are made of cedar wood. To prevent this, first scald the vessel with boiling water, letting the water remain till cold; then dissolve a little pearlash in lukewarm water, add a little piece of lime to it, and wash the inside of the vessel well with the clear solution. Repeat it if necessary. Afterwards scald it well with plain water, and rinse it with cold before you use it. Wooden vessels should never be allowed to remain out-of-doors unless they are full. If empty, the sun and air will shrink the staves, open the seams, and loosen the hoops and bottoms, so that they will leak directly they are used.

ORANGE CAKE.—I give you my recipe for this dainty cake and hope you will appreciate it. Beat three eggs until they are pale, then add gradually four ounces of castor sugar, and half a pound of fine dry flour, which should have a teaspoonful of baking-powder mixed with it. Now add the juice and grated rind of an orange. Beat all well together. Bake in a quick oven. When cold ice the cake. Make the icing thus: Blend together four ounces of icing sugar with the white of an egg and some orange juice. Spread it on the cake with a knife, which should be dipped occasionally into boiling water. Place the cake in a cool oven so that the icing can dry, but it must not brown.

MONOGRAMS.—You should have the monograms at least four inches in length, and have them worked either in white cotton à la croix, or flax thread of a colour to match the hangings of the bed. Pale pink flax thread would look very pretty with your pale green and pink cretonne. Hem-stitched sheets look well; the hem should be wide, and should have a drawn-thread heading, if not the effect is not much better than an ordinary hem. With these sheets you should have hem-stitched frills to your pillows.

RICH CAKE FOR KEEPING.—Mix two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder with a pound of fine flour. Rub into it half a pound of butter and lard mixed; then add half a pound of sultanas, a quarter of a pound of currants, two ounces of chopped peel, two ounces of chopped almonds, and six ounces of sugar. Beat up three eggs, mix a small teaspoonful of mixed spice in a wineglass of brandy. Add to the egg, and then stir into the cake. If not sufficient moisture, a little milk may be used. Grease a tin, line it with paper, and pour in the cake. Bake in a moderate oven for two hours or two hours and a half. Leave the paper on until the cake is required for use.

ALMOND PASTE.—I have a prescription for almond paste, but I do not often give it, for I find people do not care for the trouble of making it. I advise your doing so, for you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have a pure and safe preparation for the skin. Pound a quarter of a pound of sweet almonds in a mortar, adding gradually the white of an egg to moisten them. When the almonds are reduced to a pulp, add sufficient rose-water and rectified spirit in equal proportions to make a paste. Press this into covered pots, and paste paper over so that the air cannot get to it until required for use.
**HOME NOTES.**

"DO STOUT PEOPLE LIVE LONG?"—This is a question which has occupied the attention of medical authorities from time immemorial. Some argue that the lean kind take longer to shuffle off the mortal coil than their stout brethren. The statistics naturally favour this argument, and no doubt are correct to a great extent, because sufferers from obesity are more susceptible to disease in consequence of the debilitated state of the system when clogged with abnormal adipose tissues; but a curious fact has been overlooked, viz., that corpulence generally commences about the age of thirty-five to fifty, after which time it seems to decrease, therefore, before the proverbial 'three score and ten' is reached, the whilom fat man is by a natural process again reduced to what may only be called moderate plumpness, and thus cheats the statistician. Stout persons can now, thanks to science, reduce their weight in a most extraordinarily rapid manner without the slightest injury to their constitutions or without resorting to those drastic remedies which only operate for a time, or by the continuance of the use of toxic drugs extending over such a period that renders it baneful to the long-suffering patient. Dr. Ebstein, the eminent Continental therapist, recommends the victim to obesity to eat fat meat, while the equally eminent Dr. Salisbury prescribes lean ditto, and the stomach is to risk an accumulation of serious disorders by swallowing a pint of hot water daily, a most nauseous remedy, we should think, and not unattended with danger. The past master in the cure of corpulence is Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., whose book, entitled 'Corpulence and the Cure,' price only six stamps, seems to impress us considerably, for he reduces more weight by his system than the Continental and American physicians, without any of the absurd restrictions which would make life scarcely worth living. He uses simple herbs, the properties of which he seems to possess a more than usual knowledge of, and he makes but little secret of his method, so refreshing and herbal concoctions for various complaints."—"Wetherby News.""* Sunday Times*" says: "Mr. Russell's aim is to eradicate, to cure the disease, and that his treatment is the true one seems beyond all doubt. The medicine he prescribes does not lower, but builds up and tones the system." Book (159 pages) with recipe and notes how to pleasantly and rapidly care Obesity, post free, six stamps.

"CURIOUS EFFECTS IN THE TREATMENT OF CORPULENCY."—The old-fashioned methods of curing obesity were based upon the adoption of a sort of starvation dietary. Would any reader now believe that by the new and orthodox treatment a stout patient can take almost double his usual quantity of food, and yet decrease one or two pounds of fat daily for a time? This is very singular, and directly hostile to previous opinions held by medical authorities, yet it is a fact. The author of the comparatively new system in question explains that the person under treatment is restored to a healthier state in the small space of twenty-four hours, having lost probably two pounds of superfluous deposit, the organs display great activity, and more food is required. By standing on a weighing machine the proof of reduction is incontrovertibly shown daily. In serious cases a five to ten pounds weekly loss is registered until the person approaches his or her normal weight; then the diminution becomes less pronounced, the muscles firmer, the brain more active, less sleep is desired, and finally a cure effected. Compiled reprints of medical and other journals and interesting particulars, including the 'recipe,' which is quite harmless, can be obtained from a Mr. Russell, of 27, Store Street, London, W.C., by enclosing 6d. stamps. We think our readers would do well to call their corpulent friends' attention to this."—"Staffordshire Sentinel."

"CURE OF OBESITY."—Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store St., Bedford Square, London, W.C., has long been famous for his remedy for the cure of obesity. Those who suffer from this difficulty will, by sending 4d. to the above address, receive Mr. Russell's pamphlet containing testimonials from a great number of persons who have been benefited by the treatment, as well as a recipe for it. It matters not what be the weather, or season, those who are troubled suffer equally in hot weather, and in cold; in summer they are overburdened by their own weight, in winter bronchial ailments are set up through the least cold, as the air tubes are not free to act, as they would otherwise do, without the obstruction. Mr. Russell undertakes that persons under his treatment should lose one stone a month in weight, and that their health, strength, and activity should be regenerated."—"Young Ladies' Journal," August 12th, 1892.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

BETTHAM’S GLYCERINE and Cucumber is a valuable adjunct to every lady’s toilet, as the cold weather is very trying to most complexions, causing burning irritation, etc. By the use of Beatham’s Glycerine and Cucumber, which is a pure cooling and reliable preparation for the hands and complexion, the skin may be kept soft and cool and a nice complexion preserved. It is also very useful after washing in hard water, as it refreshes and cleanses the skin, at the same time keeping it in a healthy condition.

A THOROUGHLY good disinfectant is always a desirable thing to have in one’s house, as the atmosphere is liable to get contaminated, unless great care is exercised, from injurious smells from dustbins or drains. A disinfectant that amongst its other good qualities can claim the advantage of being absolutely non-poisonous and can be safely recommended exists in Jeyes’ Universal Purifier, and the danger of catching any infectious disease can be greatly nullified when Jeyes’ Disinfectant Fluid and Soap are used. These preparations have received from well-known medical men the highest possible praise as to their disinfecting qualities. A great advantage these disinfectants have over their rivals is they are easy to use, and they are easily obtainable, all chemists keeping them.

A REALLY amusing toy, and one that at the same time is harmless and absolutely unbreakable, although greatly desired by parents, cannot always be obtained. We are, however, indebted to the Arnold Print Works, of North Adams, Mass., for introducing to the public a very realistic representation of cats, dogs, and piccaninnies. These counterfeits are printed in colours on calico, and are cut out according to the directions given, and may be stuffed with old linen or any kind of old rags and then sewn up. Children with little help from their elders can make them up themselves, and when this is done the toys are prized all the more. Mothers can, however, buy the toys ready made for smaller children. An enormous sale is expected for these toys, as they are cheap and durable, but purchasers should see that the stamp of the Arnold Print Works, North Adams, Mass., is on the calico, as they may then be sure the article is genuine.

A VERY useful and time-saving invention for petticoats and other under-garments is the Vorwerk Skirt Band. It is properly shaped, and can be obtained in various depths and colours. The Skirt Band is woven in one piece with the lining, and the lower edge is left open to take the petticoat, and so all fulness is kept well off the hips, and comfort in wear is assured, whilst the setting of the skirt is admirably maintained.

To all who are now commencing a collection of Postage Stamps, we strongly recommend packet No. 42, from Messrs. Whitfield King & Co., Lacey Street, Ipswich. This packet contains 1,500 used and unused Foreign and Colonial Postage Stamps, price £6, and it would be the most economical way of forming the nucleus of a large collection which would excite the admiration of less fortunate collectors. Their packet No. 11, at 1s. 6d., is also a marvel of cheapness, consisting as it does of seventy varieties of used and unused Stamps; in fact, on looking through their catalogue I find forty-two lots, varying in price from 7d. to £6, any of which are cheap, as all Stamps are guaranteed to be genuine. It is Mr. Whitfield King who has one of his rooms at Morpeth House, Ipswich, completely papered with 44,068 unused Foreign Postage Stamps, valued £669 16s., and containing forty-eight varieties of different sizes and colours, presenting an example of mosaic work which is altogether unique of its kind.

It was but a comparatively short time ago that the first attempt was made by the Independent Order of Foresters to obtain a footing in England for what, according to the published statistics, has been an unqualified success throughout Canada and the United States. However, the High Court, which was opened by Orontyatekha, M.D., the Supreme Chief Ranger, in London in May last, has been followed by similar Courts in Mid-England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. It is evident from this that the Society is going ahead: the aggregate number on the rolls is over 60,000, and the balance at the bankers’ amounts to the handsome total of over £170,000. It is claimed for the Society that it is able to offer more advantages to its members, and at a cheaper rate, than any other Society does. In a number of ways it is explained how the Society is a boon to those who contemplate insuring their lives or providing for themselves in their old age; and those who wish for this information in detail would be well advised to communicate with Mr. R. McDougall, the Deputy Supreme Secretary, 24, Charing Cross, London.
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BY ESME STUART.
Author of "Joan Peligra," "A Woman of Forty," "Kettel of Greatness," etc., etc.

CHAPTER V.

It was a lovely summer’s evening. A delicious stillness surrounded the Palace, and the silence was broken only by the music of the Rothery, flowing between deep banks down the glen.

All the men kind were far away except one, who was pacing slowly up and down his private sitting-room, situated in the west wing of the Palace. In their part of the house the servants talked in subdued voices as if afraid of being overheard, a very unusual proceeding on their part.

In her turret chamber Penelope Winskell sat in a great carved oak chair, leaning her beautiful head upon her hands, and looking sadly out upon the deepening shadows of the glen.

She was dressed in black, and no white fichu relieved the gloom of her attire, but in contrast to the black dress her brilliant complexion was now even more noticeable than formerly.

She was deep in thought, and strangely enough, her thoughts, instead of lingering round her dead mother, had retraced the path back to the time when Philip Gillbanks had been an unbidden guest at the Palace. Then Penelope had treated him coldly, but now she would have liked to see him again. He was a breath from the outer world of which she knew so little, and the admiration which she had seen in his face had lingered almost unconsciously in her memory. Up to that time the girl had lived a life of thought, but since then, quite in spite of herself, nature had taken its own way, and the spirit of romance had crept unbidden in. Her mother’s sudden death had revealed to her the depth of a loneliness which she had not hitherto felt, and which she had never expected to realise. She was now alone, intensely alone except for her uncle. He had educated her, he had taught her to think; and, now she had learnt this, she had nothing round which to centre her thoughts. Sooner or later the wish to love, and to be loved, comes to all women who deserve the title, and Penelope Winskell had, as it were, suddenly stretched out her hands towards the unknown world, craving to know the secret of truest life. She did not explain it to herself in this way, but she knew now that she was lonely. Philip Gillbanks was the only man who had by his admiration revealed to her that she was beautiful, and that she possessed power over men. This was the reason why her thoughts at this moment went back to him.

Her father and her brother seemed to be quite outside the circle of her real life. She could not help despising them or being content to aspire to nothing beyond the mere rude life and emotions of farmers; moreover, she despised them for striving to so little purpose. Penelope knew from her uncle and from her own observation, that slowly but surely the Winskell family were sinking deeper and deeper into difficulties. She knew, too, that the King of Rothery and the heir to the title despised her for being a weak woman, fit only to sit at home with the fastidious uncle, and considered them as merely useless appendages of the King’s family. What good did their learning do? Did it free any...
Penelope was a strange mixture of pride and strong self-will, of passionate affection and selfishness. She could love and she could hate, but in youth there is a coldness often joined to love which sorrow's rude touch alone appears to cure. The young feel strong, and yet have no field wide enough upon which to exercise that strength; and so complex is every character, that it is vain to try to classify them.

The Princess had grown up in this wild if beautiful solitude with two dominant ideas: these being that at any cost the house of Rotbery must be saved from downfall, and that she could not be the only person capable of accomplishing this redemption.

Often in her day-dreams she had seen the ancient glories of the Kings of Rotbery return in full splendour. She had seen the greatest in the land soliciting her hand, and promising her the fame that was due to her ancient lineage. At such times Penelope had walked with a statelier step down the long, dreary passages of the old and dilapidated Palace, feeling that she was indeed a Princess; but again she had become conscious of the boorish ways of her father and of her brother, and suddenly her ideal had fallen. Would Dukes and Earls come and woo this lonely Princess, whose Palace so sadly stood in need of repair, and whose father, the King, took delight in the commonest manual labour, and drank as hard and swore as lustily as the roughest farmer in the dales?

At such times of reflection, Penelope sat in her turret chamber and listened to the music of the Rotbery with feelings of extreme dejection. Then suddenly she would start up and inwardly rage because she was merely a girl, and, therefore, utterly powerless.

"There is but one way in which I can help, and that is by marrying some one rich and great who, because of his love for me, will care about the honour of our house, as much as I do myself."

At this point in her reflections, Penelope would walk down to the Duke's room, which was full of books and strange tomes, and she would come and sit by him on a low footstool. His presence always restored her injured feelings of pride and self-respect. If only he had been her father, the house of Rotbery would have had no fall, and she knew that she would now be mixing with her equals, instead of being merely a penniless Princess, whose mother could not understand her, and whose father and brother despised her for being born a woman.

This evening Penelope had been going through one of these sad moods. Her mother's funeral was over, and the girl now understood how little sympathy she had ever received from her, and how little comfort the Queen had found in her only daughter.

But this thought did not bring repentance. Hers was a strong nature that scorned repentance, yet she now thought more gently of the long-suffering woman, who had found so little pleasure in her life, and who could not understand the weariness of existence so often experienced by her clever daughter.

Penelope's cleverness did not consist in many accomplishments. She sang because she loved singing, but no one had trained her rich contralto voice. When all was soft and beautiful, Penelope, who had always been brought up hand in hand with nature as it were, could laugh and say sharp things to her brother.

When the storms of winter burst over the lonely glen and shook the old gables of the house, then Penelope realised that she was a weak woman, and passion raged within her heart as did the elements among the stubborn trees. Without being able to express it to herself, the girl felt that she was a woman who could make a name for herself, for she knew she could crush her own feelings in order to satisfy her ambition.

To-day for a whole hour, whilst the sun set beneath the rounded outline of the trees, Penelope sat with her head on her hands beside the open window. The soft air blew in and fanned her beautiful cheek unheeded. The rooks flew across the glen on their way to their roosting-place, and the chorus of small birds was gradually hushed. The Rotbery alone, singing its unending song, bounded from boulder to boulder, or ran swiftly in deeper beds, yet going ever onward to the sea, restlessly seeking a larger sphere, unknowing that what it sought would destroy its own identity.

When the darkness deepened Penelope rose slowly and stood by the window. She did not know how beautiful she was, for even Philip's admiration had been somewhat veiled, but she knew that she was capable of great things, and that she had the power to
accomplish them. She wanted the chance only, and then...!

"My uncle will help me," she said aloud, "he can do everything. He is a true Winskell and so am I, only I am a woman."

She opened the door, and, for the first time in her life, she felt a fear of the gloomy winding stairs. Now that her mother was dead she was alone in the turret. A little shudder passed over her, and then she laughed.

"How ludicrous," she said aloud; "as if mother would want to come back to her dreary life! She did not care as much about the Winskells as I do, nor did she appreciate the ghost of my great-aunt."

Penelope had never feared the family ghost. She even had a sympathy with the story of the proud Princess who still watched over the affairs of the Winskells, but she did not wish to meet her mother’s ghost. Her quiet gaze, out of which love had died for want of sustenance, would have frightened her.

In a few minutes, however, Penelope, with an effort of which she was proud, shook off her fears and walked very firmly and slowly down the stairs; and then crossed the large hall, in which no lamp was yet lighted. A large dog, sleeping on the mat, heard her footfall and stretched itself cringingly towards her as if it feared she would not notice it. But to-day Penelope stooped and pressed her hand firmly over his head as she said:

"Nero! Why are you here, I wonder?"

Instead of barking the dog set up a dismal howl which annoyed the Princess, and she impatiently pushed the dog aside.

"Be quiet, Nero. Isn’t this house sad enough without that howl? The family still exists, even though the old prophecy said the doom would come when the Palace should be propped with bands of iron. Hush, Nero; as long as I live there shall be no iron bands."

Then she walked on, the dog following her sadly, as if its duty was to guard her in this solitary house.

After crossing the hall Penzie entered a long passage, the same which Philip Hillbanks had traversed, and, as the girl walked on, the thought of him again returned to her.

He was tall, and strong, and good-looking, but he knew nothing of the old ceiling which a true Rothery must possess. How could he have it? He was a tradesman’s son.

“No," she thought, “no, I will never marry a ‘nouveau riche,’ never. A woman can only love her equal; but I wonder why I think of that stranger, for most likely I shall never see him again."

When she reached the end of the passage she paused before a door; a streak of light came from beneath it and struggled across the passage floor.

Penzie Winskell knocked softly, and the Duke’s voice answered:

“Come in.”

The room was dark, being panelled with oak. The windows looked westward, and reached low down with deep window-sills, which made charming seats for the Princess. As a girl she had spent her happiest hours in this room, being taught by her uncle all kinds of knowledge, much of which, however, forms no part of a modern young lady’s education.

This evening the Duke sat in an old deep-seated arm-chair covered with leather, much worn, but which still stood the test of time, having been good when first made. On a low oak table near stood a lamp, and he leaned a little sideways in order to let the light fall on his book. In the centre of the room, and in the near corner, the fading daylight still held sway, and as Penelope approached her uncle she appeared to him to be a strange visitant, so unusual was the blending of the natural and artificial light which fell upon her. The Duke placed a marker in his book and slowly closed it, whilst Penzie seated herself on the low sill. The Duke looked at her, full of contradictory feelings. He loved her dearly because he had moulded her; he had taught her, he had appreciated the ghost of my great-aunt.”

Penelope claspéd her white, shapely hands over her head, where the tiny curls let loose from an antique comb turned many ways like vine tendrils.

“I have been sitting upstairs and thinking—thinking, till I felt I must come and talk to you, uncle. What are you reading? I don’t know why I am so restless. I want—I want—oh! I don’t know what I want.”
“Well—do you understand? A woman, a beautiful woman as you are, child, is so easily led away by flattery, by what she calls love. She will throw every consideration to the winds to gratify her dreams of love—often a mere passing fancy. I do not speak without knowledge, child. When I was young I would have saved these acres, but now—"

Penelope had never heard her uncle talk of his own past life. She opened her large eyes which flashed so easily, and gazed admiringly at his face.

“Uncle, tell me; you never spoke of it before.”

“Not now, not now, child. Some day, perhaps; but it is your turn now. The only chance for the old lands lies in your power.”

“My brother will marry a peasant. I feel sure of that. What lady would have him? Oh, we are the only real Winskells left, uncle, you and I.”

She rose quickly and stood up to her full height. She was above the Duke’s shoulder, but so exquisitely proportioned that there was not an ungraceful line about her.

“I failed, Penelope.”

“But you shall not. You will believe in me, won’t you?”

“I will try to do so. Listen. You must marry a rich man, but I want you if you can, Penelope, to love him. With your nature it would be dangerous to hate him.”

“I shall not think of myself.”

“Can you help it?”

Penelope laughed. The laugh was not exactly joyous; it seemed to make the old oak shiver. It was so old, and she was so young—so young and so ignorant.

“If I make up my mind to anything, no matter what, you know I can do it. You have often said so yourself. I mastered some of my difficult lessons because you said that I must if I wished to be worthy of the old Winskells. Besides, it is not difficult; and I will obey you.”

“Can you—can you?” said the Duke, half to himself.

“I will wear the talisman from this day, and that will remind me always of my vow.”

Penelope hurried across the room and out of the passage. As she almost ran to the room where it was kept, she fancied she heard steps following her. She paused; then a glow of pride flashed her cheek. The sound must be the footsteps...
of the proud Princess! Evidently she approved of her wearing the tallaman. When she came back to her uncle her face was resolute.

"Uncle, I will save the house of Rothery. You say I can, and I will."

The Duke took her hand and kissed it.

"Well said, child! Together we can save it, and we will."

COINS OF THE REALM.

It would seem to be an ungracious thing to find fault with the coins of the realm. They are so useful in themselves and so welcome in whatever shape they come, that artistic merit may in them be deemed superfluous. And people were very well satisfied, on the whole, with the coinage as it existed during the first half-century of Victoria's reign. The Gælphic profiles on the current coin were bold and straightforward, anyhow, and the portrait of the young Queen showed a graceful and pleasing face to all the world. There is the aspect of Royalty in the head, simply filleted and without adornments, that makes the old Victorian sovereign pleasant to behold. The more recent coinage is equally welcome, but it inspires at first sight a momentary misgiving. Is this, indeed, our English Queen, or is the image of some potentate not of our acquaintance? The latest pattern has more merit and dignity than that of the Jubilee series, but does not come up to one's ideal of a fine coin. But that, indeed, would perhaps be far to seek, and we might have to go back to years B.C. to find a perfect specimen.

A fine coin was that gold stater of Philip the Second of Macedon, which, according to recent authorities, was the model of our first native British coinage. There had been discoveries in those remote days—say, B.C. 356—and a great coinage of gold procured from the mines of Philippi was then set on foot, which proved perhaps not an unmixed blessing to the country, as it may have excited the cupidity of those Gaulish tribes who plundered Greece B.C. 279, and who may have come home with their sacks full of gold, and spread the coins of Greece among their friends and neighbours.

A considerable number of early British coins have been found, chiefly in the southern and western counties of England, which probably date from before the Roman occupation, and point to the existence of British kingdoms of a more civilised character than the Commentaries that Caesar wrote gave them credit for. But it seems that we must blame not the generally truthful Julius, but some unscrupulous interpolator for the statement that the Britons used only barter, and had brass and iron rings for circulating medium. But anyhow the coins are but barbarous imitations of a beautiful original. The head of Apollo is represented by a grotesque profile, the chariot and horses on the reverse of the coin by a sprawling device, such as a child of tender years might draw upon a slate. Inscriptions are rare, but one occurs of some interest, as "Gnobelinn" is Shakespeare's Cymbeline, and we may fancy the coin was dropped by Imogen on her pilgrimage to Wales.

The rude British coins must have soon been superseded by the technically excellent coinage of the Romans, who had mints in London, and York, and Colchester. And, doubtless, the Roman money continued to circulate long after the Legions had left the island. The Saxons, when they came, did not bring with them the art of coining; their rôle was to take other people's money, and they knew the value of it well enough. And they seem to have brought with them rudimentary notions of the penny and the shilling, although at first the sestert was their unit of account. Take care of the sesterces, and the shillings will take care of themselves, was a good proverb in those days. But the Saxon shilling was a moveable quantity, and sometimes represented fivepence, and at others only fourpence. It was William the Conqueror who fixed the shilling immutably at twelve pennies, and gave the form to our monetary system which it still retains. Had he only made it ten how easy would have been the slide into the decimal system, which now seems impossible.

Under the later Saxon monarchs the silver coinage went on merrily. There were moneymen in every important town, with numerous artisans in their employment, but no artists apparently, for their coins are but rude and feeble imitations of Roman models. And there was no great improvement under the first Norman Kings; although they reduced the number of the moneymen, and finally concentrated them all in the Tower, where the "Royal Mint" remained till it was removed.
1810 to Tower Hill, where the guards from the Royal fortress still have it in charge.

During all this period, from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries, there is no trace of any gold coinage in England. Silver was the general medium of exchange, and such gold coins as were current came from abroad— florins from Florence, basnets from Byzantium, and even Arabic coins from the great Mohammedan empires of the East. But on the sixteenth of August, 1257, a Royal writ commanded the Mayor of London to proclaim that the gold money of the King, Henry the Third, should be current at the rate of twenty pennies a gold penny. And this ratio of value between silver and gold has been preserved, with few variations of any consequence, till our own days.

Under the Plantagenets, the coinage of the realm assumed a much higher character. The King's head on the silver coins is conventional, but full of merit; there is no attempt at portraiture, and the same design does duty generally throughout the reign. But it is not till the days of Edward the Third that any extensive coinage of gold is recorded. And then in 1344 appeared the gold noble, a really beautiful coin, rather heavier than our existing "sovereign." On this coin appears for the first time the ship or galley, said to commemorate Edward's destruction of the French fleet at Sluys, in 1340, and an emblem of the sovereignty of the seas now claimed by the English monarch. Thus an old distich is current:

For four things our noble sheweth to me—

Fame, ship, and sword, and power of the sea.

And while the King, armed and crowned, appears no longer on horseback, but riding and ruling the waves; on the other side are armorial insignia and sacred emblems, with the mystic inscription, "L.H.C. Transiens per medium illorum ibat." This is a verse taken from the Vulgate, Luke, fourth chapter, thirtieth verse, translated in the authorised version, "But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way." In those days this verse had a peculiar significance, as it was not only in repute as a charm against perils by land or sea, but was also supposed to be used by the alchemists in their conjurations, and to be repeated by them at the supreme moment of the precipitation of the precious metal, "per medium illorum" signifying, according to some, "by means of fire and sulphur." As people could not make out how Edward came by so much gold, and as it was known that one Hopley, an alchemist, was working for the King in the Tower, this issue of "nobles" was generally supposed to have come out of the alchemist's crucible. And thus the possessor of a "noble" had not only a coin, but a talisman, and a potent protection against fire and thieves and the various perils of land and sea.

The temporary triumph of the house of York has its permanent record in the coins of the realm. Under Edward the Fourth the noble was raised in weight and value, and, being now adorned with the rose as the badge of the house of York, was called a rose noble. Another gold coin of the same value was called an angel, as it bore the image of the archangel Saint Michael. But the Scriptural charm is repeated in all the gold coins of the period, and does not finally disappear until the epoch of the Reformation, when it went its way, with many other relics of earlier days. The ship, also, goes sailing on through the coins of many a reign till it finally disappears under James the First.

Under the Tudors a great change occurs in the coinage, which begins to assume a more modern form. In the older coinage the silver penny weighed, or should weigh, just the pennyweight troy, or twenty-four grains, and two hundred and forty of these pennyweights went to the pound, so that the "£" represented actually a pound of silver, the "s." or solidus, a conventional twentieth of a pound, and the "d," or denarius, the much-enduring penny. But the last was the only denomination represented by an actual coin, and, as in the course of centuries there had been a constant tendency to reduce the weight of the currency, a large readjustment had become necessary. Under Henry the Seventh for the first time the "sovereign" appears as the proper representative of a pound, and a gold standard seems to have been definitely fixed. And with this the shining makes its appearance as an actual coin, the groat having been previously the most handy silver piece, with crowns and half-crowns both in silver and gold.

With Henry the Seventh, too, comes in the art of portraiture in coins, with the advantage of superior art in the engraving of the dies. Indeed a collection of English coins from this period offers a series of characteristic portraits of our
COINS OF THE REALM.

Charles Dickens.

[February 3, 1861.]

The coinage of the Commonwealth of England was introduced by John Evelyn, of "Sylva," who in 1670 suggested the introduction of the milled money, silver coins under the value of sixpence ceased to be struck, and silver pennies disappeared from circulation. But small quantities of silver coins, from a penny to fourpence, have been ever since struck as Maundy money in order that the recipient of the King's or Queen's alms on Holy Thursday may have the right number of pence, corresponding to the number of years of the monarch's age, told out in good wholesome silver.

Threepenny pieces were first coined by Edward the Sixth. For the fourpenny bit, or Joey, so called after the economist Joseph Hume, who is said to have suggested their issue, the coin seems to have vanished altogether, although for a long time it circulated with the threepenny piece, and bus-conductors used to distinguish between the pieces by running the thumb-nail along the edge, for the fourpenny piece was milled, while the other was not.

But for small change Charles's halfpence, which were made current by proclamation of the sixth of August, 1672, long had the field to themselves. They were a first experiment in copper coinage, and the figure of Britannia on the reverse is said to have been designed with the beautiful Frances Stuart, afterwards Duchess of Richmond, for a model.

A good notion of these later Stuarts was the introduction of pewter or tin halfpence, anticipating the "nickel" of American and German small change, which is so much easier of carriage. Inscriptions round the edges of the larger coins instead of milling, such as are still seen on crown pieces, are of the same date. John Evelyn, of "Sylva," suggested the motto, "Decus et Tutamen," which is certainly neat and appropriate, as the inscription is at once an ornament and a defence against clipping and other defacements of the Royal image. And from the same Restoration period dates the practice of making the Royal profile face the same way during the whole reign. Charles the First was literally Mr. Facing-both-ways, as Bunyan would have named him, and Charles the Second makes a volte-face in the course of his reign, but sticks to the right after that. William the Fourth faced to the right, and Victoria faces always to the left in all coins and medals.

There were, indeed, copper coins already in existence, manufactured under Royal patent by some favoured beneficiary. Lord Harrington, the guardian of the Queen of Bohemia, had held such a patent for farthings, which, for a time, went by his name.

I will not bate a Harrington o the sum, writes rare old Ben in one of his masques. Charles started the familiar halfpenny. Pennies in copper came later—not till 1797—so that the once popular expression of "halfpence" for copper coins in general had its justification in the facts of the case.

At the same period, dating from the introduction of the milled money, silver coins under the value of sixpence ceased to be struck, and silver pennies disappeared from circulation. But small quantities of silver coins, from a penny to fourpence, have been ever since struck as Maundy money in order that the recipient of the King's or Queen's alms on Holy Thursday may have the right number of pence, corresponding to the number of years of the monarch's age, told out in good wholesome silver.

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It would not do to forget Queen Anne, whose farthings have won such surprising fame. They are really good coins by
John Croker, and dated 1714, and the Queen's death put a stop to their issue; so that they are really rather scarce, and a good specimen may be worth as much as fifteen shillings. The bust of the Queen on the coins recalls the fact that Queen Anne, on her accession, decidedly objected to being represented on the coins with neck and shoulders uncovered, as had been the custom, and that she was therefore accommodated with a fichu. Some of Queen Anne's guineas bear the inscription, "Vigo," in small letters, and this denotes that they were made from gold taken at Vigo in 1702, when so many rich galleons were captured or sunk. And so "Lima" on guineas of 1745-46 records Anson's successes on the coast of Peru, when he captured the Acapulco galleon, and brought home much treasure in silver and gold.

Another notable guinea, not very scarce, but still prized if only to place among charms and trinkets, is of a type designed by Louis Pingo in 1787, with a spade-shaped shield on the reverse; and these guineas, generally known as "spades," were issued till 1799. The copper coinage, too, of the same period is noticeable: a twopenny and penny piece, of 1797, the first of the kind ever issued, with a heavy rim, and plethoric-looking head of Farmer George, and on the reverse a figure of Britannia, now with lighthouse and shipping, and once more ruling the waves.

The guinea, it will be remembered, retired from the scene in 1817, and was succeeded by the "sovereign," which has reigned ever since without a rival. Among the chief events in its prosperous career may be noted the reappearance in 1871 of Saint George and his dragon, from a design by Piastrucco for George the Fourth—replacing the shield of arms which previously occupied the reverse of the coin. For some time the two models were issued together, but since 1874 George has had the field to himself. A fine George and dragon may be noticed on a "George noble" of Henry the Eighth's time, the saint brandishing a long spear or lance, better adapted for the killing of dragons, one would think, than the short sword with which our latter-day saint is armed.

But perhaps the most startling event in the recent annals of our coinage was the introduction of the florin of 1849—a new coin, designed as the first in a series of tentative approaches to the decimal system. The florin was unlucky at starting, for the words "Dei Gratia," which had figured on the coinage ever since the days of Edward the First, had been omitted. A great outcry was made against the godless coins," which were soon recalled. But a curious fact is that few of them came back, and that some three-quarters of a million of them remain—not in circulation, for they are rarely met with, but hoarded or used as trinkets, keepsakes, or curiosities.

Of more recent interest is the Jubilee coinage, just now superseded by a certainly better model. Connected with this is the story of the sixpences, which when gilt proved to be excellent imitations of half-sovereigns. And this incident is paralleled in the reign of George the Fourth, when a half-sovereign was produced so wonderfully like a gilt sixpence, that the same advantage was taken of the likeness. The Jubilee sixpences, like the half-sovereigns, were recalled, but very few found their way to the melting-pot; they have gone to join the godless florins in the limbo of vanished coins. The same may be said of the shillings with Royal arms on the reverse, of which only a stray specimen here and there remains in circulation.

A GLANCE AT NORTH UIST.

Very few mere tourists find their way to the Uists, North and South. It is just as well that this is so, seeing that the accommodation for them is exceedingly meagre. During the season, at any rate, the two hotels of Loch Maddy on North Uist, and Loch Boisdale on South Uist, are pretty sure to be crowded—with anglers, not sightseers. The man who comes hither at a venture will, in all likelihood, be disappointed, first with the scenery, and, secondly, by the innkeeper's regretful apologies at his inability to receive him. The steamers which carry passengers and the mails to these isles of the Outer Hebrides are far from being the best or the largest of the fleet of Mr. David MacBrayne. And the ordinary holiday seeker will not, unless he is a glutton for sea-breezes, appreciate the need he may be under of making the round tour by boat in futile quest of an anchored roof to his head. The thing to do is to wire to the island you wish to visit, and not to set out in futile quest of an anchored roof to his head. The thing to do is to wire to the island you wish to visit, and not to set out for it until you have telegraphic assurance that there is a bedroom for you. The Uists are not like common British seaside resorts. They have no trim lodging-houses with placards in the windows inviting
visitors at least to take tea in them. The rule of the crofter still holds here, much to the dissatisfaction of the lairds of the land, and a night or series of nights in a Hebridean crofter's but cannot be thought of by an experienced person without grave misgivings.

As the steamer approaches North Uist from the Minch, you are struck by the extraordinary interminglement of land and water here. Rocky and weather-clad capes run out towards the sea, and the sea in its turn rushes and winds into the heart of the island, forming an infinite number of lochs, great and small. These last in their turn are connected with others farther inland and on different levels. If the island were more near the centres of our great towns, it might be adjusted with a little engineering effort into a settlement that for its amphibious eccentricities would rival old Venice herself. Here, however, we are in the wilds. There are two or three rather assuming stone houses built close to the landing stage; there is the hotel; one sees a church, and an institution which may be either a workhouse—an absurd idea here!—a school, or a lunatic asylum; there are also a dozen or so cottages of the old style, with the smoke drifting lazily from their open doors. And that is all, at least as far as human habitations are concerned. Once you have gone half a mile from Loch Maddy—as the township is called—you are surrounded by heather and bog, and lakes and lakens with sprawling arms; hills of no very startling shape are before you close at hand, and in the distance you see the grey outlines of the heights of Harris to the north and South Uist to the south. Sea birds are screeching over your head and across the tidal reaches of water on the right hand and the left. And you will be fortunate if the midges are sparing you the torments they have at their disposal. The road meanders subtly across the green and crimson country, turning with the sinuosities of the waterways, towards the north-west, where the lard of the isle has his abode.

It is quite worth while to climb the first hill that confronts you in your wanderings. The heather is thick on its flanks and tries hard to obscure you. But it need not be difficult to overcome these trials. And there is compensation in the luxuriant perfume, which seems to fill the buzzing bees with an insane ecstasy. Having attained the summit of a few hundred feet above sea-level, the marvellous scene is well declared. North, south, east, and west there is a surface little less flat than the Fens, with a dozen or so rounded, stony, and crimson hills rising from its midst, and water, water everywhere among the land. At low tide this water turns the island into a bewildering archipelago. The number of its islets is countless, and the Atlantic bounds them. Looking along the winding road you see, perhaps, a single human being leading a cow. The heather, mosses, and lichens at your feet are worth some regard, and so are "the insects and entomological specimens which animate the mild air. But Princetown on Dartmoor is a volatile place compared to North Uist, thus seen.

Yet stay; even while you are compassing this poor, dismal, remote tract of land and water, the sun comes from behind the heavy Atlantic clouds and gives instant glory to the island. Its carpet of heather glows with Tyrian brilliancy. The yellow seawrack, which clings to the rocky zones of its tidal lakes, turns dazzling as liquid gold; and the myriad of little lakes elsewhere are like pools of silver. The sense of desolation remains, but it is now to be associated with a spot of dreamlike, entrancing beauty.

It is as well, however, not to come to this romantic little island without a full purse. Civilised mortals are made to pay well for their periodic incursions into the Hebridean wilds. The twenty or five-and-twenty souls who make up the hotel's complement do not come here to save money, but to catch fish. If they may succeed to their heart's content in the latter particular, they may also be relied upon to treat parsimony with scorn. Good days on the lakes are celebrated with champagne, and whisky has to do full service good days and bad days alike.

There is a fine martial flavour about the guests at the table d'hôte. You could tell it at a glance. Those straight-backed, white-haired, tall old gentlemen who sit side by side with such fiercely twirled moustaches must be either Generals or Colonels; even as the dashing young men of forty or forty-five on the other side of the table carry the unmistakeable air of military. In effect it is so. There is some good blood present. The veterans once declared. North, south, east, and west are like pools of silver. The sense of desolation remains, but it is now to be associated with a spot of dreamlike, entrancing beauty.

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shooting begins, when they and their armoursies will betake themselves elsewhere. For the North Uist shooting is not great, unless sea birds may be included in it; though on the other hand seals may be shot readily enough among the rocks of the adjacent isles, many of which are connected with the main island by fords at low water, across which it behoves the traveller to carry himself somewhat shrewdly. These straight-backed, strong-wristed veterans do not unbend readily in general society, but they may be relied upon to thaw comfortably in the smoking-room under the combined influences of cigars, toddy, memories of past sport in many lands, and hopes of good luck on the morrow. They keep their hearts and energies marvelously green upon the whole.

One such I am tempted to limn gently in outline. He was Colonel of a Highland regiment, small, bald as the proverbial billiard-ball, active as a bee, hot-tempered, and delightful. A happy chance threw me into his society for three or four days at one of these Hebridean inns. The tales with which he enlivened the tedium of the dull grey weather—with plenty of drizzling rain—were good to hear and better still to remember. He was Scottish to the core, and had clan records at his fingers' ends. He was further an enthusiastic and most skilful piper. As soon as breakfast was over he would don his Glengarry bonnet, take up his beloved pipes, and begin a methodical course on them, marching to and fro in the hotel room and awakening exceedingly strong echoes. The hotel servants gathered in the corridor to listen to this unwonted concert, and the bare-legged lads and lassies hising to school tarried outside and held their peace reverently, while they forgot the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress and all else except the absorbing music. And all the time the admirable little Colonel marched up and down the room with uplifted head and a fixed gaze. Few pipe-majors could beat him at the pastime. I hope I may never forget him. He was one of the most typical of Highlanders I have ever met, and withal rather curt and ill at ease in a society to which he had not willingly accustomed himself. While I write I have his photograph before me, taken with his pipes. It makes me smile with serene contentment to look at it.

But to recur to Loch Maddy. Entering the harbour if the weather is clear, you notice two large basalt hills, islets, standing boldly from the sea on either hand. These give their name to the place. They are the haven's "maddies," or watch-dogs. One would like to know something about the various craft they have, during the last two thousand years, seen enter here. The Picts were once much at home on North Uist. You may discover their rounded duns on certain of the tiny island spots in the many lakes which give such matchless individuality to the island. Not all the causeways which bound their homes to the shores can be traced, but some can. And by them are white and yellow lilies and tall reeds, offering delectable shelter to the trout in the heat of the day. It is a far leap from the time of the Picts to the eighteenth century. The imagination, however, may occupy itself with the Norwegians and Danes, who were once as much at home in these waters as the Hebridean herring-boats now are. Enough for us to remember the chase for Prince Charlie after Culloden. Loch Maddy was lively with war-ships then. But the Englishmen could not catch the Prince. He dodged them among the inlets of North Uist, and then from islet to islet. And finally Flora Macdonald, whose grave in Skye has now become a landmark to mariners, gave him her memorable aid through the island which has made her esteemed like a canonised saint. Prince Charlie had not a pleasant time up here. He was glad to gather crabs and cockles on the sea-shore, and make his dinner from them; and yet more glad when he could mix cow's brains and oatmeal and enjoy such Royal rissoles. But probably he found Flora's petitcoats and gowns the most trying parts of his experience in quest of sheer liberty, when all hopes of a crown were at an end.

Now and then they have a cattle-fair at Loch Maddy. It is a great occasion. Boat after boat comes in from the isles from far and near, and the steamships also land their four-footed freight. Given fine weather, and one may almost be unmindful even of the midges amid this scene of excellent colour and extraordinary vivacity. You hear the Gaelic sounding on all sides then. It is difficult to think you are in a part of Great Britain. And the lowering of the shaggy, variegated little Highland kine, the bleating of the snow-white sheep—some four-homed, showing their St. Kilda origin—and lambs, added to the neighing of horses and the kicking of the ponies, all in conjunction, produces a fine
A GLANCE AT NORTH UIST. (February 3, 1894) 107

Babel of Mind. Of course, at such a time the canny trader and the itinerant pedlar are much to the fore. They have their booths for gingerbread and ribbons. The villagers from the east coast of the island are almost overcome by the spectacle of so much commerce.

An artist would do well to arrange for a wire from Loch Maddy when such scenes as these are in progress. He would find an embarrassing amount of rich material for his brush. What with the crimson heather; the grey hills in the distance; the Atlantic clouds drifting, like huge white geese, one after the other across the blue heavens; the gleaming water here, there, and everywhere, with its flotsam, its lichenized rocks, and the golden weed tangle which marks the tidal line; the cattle fighting the flies; chest deep in the pools, and the infinite variety of the human element, there ought to be magnificent scope for the realist. A tipsy islander may be found here and there, and an idiot or two—there are many of the half-witted in the Hebrides—as well as a "cailleach" (old crone), who does not mind smoking in public the pipeful of tobacco that has been bestowed upon her by an indulgent stranger. As a study in complications alone the cattle-fair at Loch Maddy would be worth seeing.

But the weather must be civil, else nowhere shall you find a more disconsolate gathering, or one more like to raise in you a sympathetic twinge or two of rheumatism.

Most people who come to North Uist come to fish. They do well. Whether for sea-fish or trout the island, with its ramifications of fresh-water lochs, is an excellent angler's resort. The only drawback is the distance from the hotel of certain of the fresh-water lochs. The only drawback is the distance from the hotel of certain of the fresh-water lochs, and the evening. Weather and purse permitting, however, there need be no great hardship about this methodical view of North Uist's waterways, heather, hills, and moorland, some of which is bog bad to get entangled in.

There are also pedestrians who do not take an interest in fly-fishing. For these I must really write a few lines of warning, inspired—as all strong warnings must be—by doleful experience. Let it be remembered in the first place that though the loch which is called Loch Maddy—and which is just a sea bay with innumerable arms—is only about ten miles in area, it has a coast line reckoned at some three hundred miles. Think of it! Your friend in a boat takes you three or four miles, and then, at your urgent request—you wish to stretch your legs—you wish to stretch your legs—puts you ashore on some heatherly knoll. He does not know what he is doing, and you, in proposing to stroll back to the hotel in time for the seven o'clock dinner, do not know what you are undertaking. Unless you take to the water, in fact, and swim sundry of the channels, you may chance to have a three days' tramp before you!

These channels, moreover, are not very easy to negotiate. They are in many instances blessed or cursed with an exceedingly swift current. Look at them when the tide is coming in. No boat could pull against them unless it were manned out of all proportion to its size. It may be imagined then that the swimmer would have to float at their mercy, and that their mercy might not be kind enough to help him much on his way.

I, for my part, quite lost patience with Loch Maddy one afternoon. Having left the high-road—a capital one, considering—I got involved among lochs and sea inlets, and had finally, after several wasted hours, when the sun had got alarmingly low in the heavens, to make a devious track in a direction immediately opposite to the one in which the hotel lay. It was dark when I reached my quarters, but I was grateful that I had succeeded. To be late for dinner was a small misfortune compared to what might have been my lot, had the night set in wildly—as it well can on these fringes of the Atlantic—and I had found myself forced to seek heather and rock shelter until the morning.

Upon the whole, North Uist is a quaintly gratifying place for a holiday. It is not sensational, though it may obviously become so, especially if you miss the tide in trying to cross the ford from one or other of its neighbour inlets, and get involved in a race for life with the Atlantic waves. Nor, on the other hand, is it bracing. There are days, indeed, when, between vexatious midges and the relaxing air, you feel limp and dismal enough to give up the ghost—if any one were present to relieve you off-hand of your
vital part. But in the end you do not feel dissatisfied with your selection of a touring centre. And that is no small thing.

The worst of the Uists is the disagreeable hour at which it behoves you to depart from or arrive at them. The steamer goes from North Uist to South Uist at midnight, and reaches the latter place at the unfamiliar hour of half-past two in the morning. Nor may you then hope to continue the slumber you may have begun; for it does not stay at Loch Boisdale—the capital of South Uist—but journeys on immediately to the south.

Contingencies, however, as often as not, enable the harassed traveller to finish his night's sleep. We are here in the very homeland of fog and mist, storms and rain. It is never very cold off these Outer Hebrides islands; nor is it ever prostratingly hot. But frequently, just when the visitor has begun to put his portmanteau together in readiness for the landing, the grey haze of the sea thickens and closes in. Then the captain gives the order "half-speed," and finally "stop." Down goes the anchor with a gruesome clanking, and an indefinite "wait" has begun. This is, of course, likely to be a most charming experience if there is a heavy swell on, and the traveller is not without qualms of sea sickness. But it cannot be helped. The outlying rocks of all the Hebrides are not to be faced at a venture; nor can the harbours themselves be tackled without every assurance of a sufficiency of sea-room.

THE BODE.

The sun rode high at noontide, the wind blew from the north. The boat lay trim and taut enough out on the dancing Forth, and blue and bright across the waves lay the long links of Fife. While on the shore the fisherman spoke to his month-old wife.

"Go home and keep the hearth, lass, and weep no more for me; it's lying ripe and ready, the rich harvest of the sea. Wouldst keep me like a bairn at home, when all the men are off. With idle hands and empty pouch, a weakling and a scoff?"

"Go home and keep the hearth, lass, leave fret and dream alone, I'm bound to do my honest best, and God can guard His own. For all thou met a hare yestreen, for all thy dreams were bad, I say, go home, and keep the hearth warm for thine own old lad!"

"Nay, but," she sobbed, "fear bonnie Perth thou know'st thou brought me here, and we who spring of Highland blood we have our own strange bairn."

"My grand-dam had the second sight, and, as I love thee well, I saw thy shroud below thy chin, I know what that would tell."

He kissed the rosy trembling lips, he kissed the drowned blue eyes, he bade her look to laughing seas, and sunny, cloudless skies. He swore the kerchief that she gave was all his jersey showed, and she must be a Lowland wife, nor reck of Highland bode.

Out from the Haven full sailed there went a gallant bark, the sun sank ever the Ochils, the shores of Fife grew dark; the woman sate by her lonely hearth as the grey dawn filtered in.

"I saw his shroud last night, it was abune his chin."

"And long might Highland Mary watch through weary night and day, for the boat that bore her mate from her to far off Stornaway."

"For back to Seaton Harbour full many a coble came, but never with the face she knew, the voice that spoke her name."

"With a babe called for the father who never saw his face, through shade and shine each day she comes; looks from the landing place. Then turns to keep the hearth where he will never enter now, and she says, 'Could I see his shroud to-night, it were abune his brow.'"

THE LATE MR. LYMPEE. A COMPLETE STORY.

If there was one thing on which we Lympets did pride ourselves, it was on the family name. From our earliest childhood we were taught to believe that a Lympet was apart from, and superior to all other men; as my dear father used to say, there were working people, gentry, nobility, and Lympets. The family held the first place in our estimations; we were Lympets first, and Britons afterwards. Not one of us but glories in his birth, and did his best to live up to our proud old family motto, "quod tango teneo." As for our belief in the grandeur of our name, it did not admit of argument. It was almost a part of our religion, and, like the Chinese, we worshipped our ancestors. Not that they had done anything very particular. The mere student of history has possibly never even heard of them; for none of them ever acquired vulgar fame. No violent partisans they! In the broils and turmoils, the wars of parties and the feuds of factions, which marked the stormy..."
youth of England, they mixed but little. They played no prominent part for White Rose or Red Rose, King or Parliament, Stuart or Guisaph. They never attempted to ride the high horse, and as a result, through all the troubles they kept the family seat. In truth, a Lympet had too little to gain to peril his life and lands in any one's cause. By birth he was placed above ambition. Being already a Lympet he could rise no higher, for, like the Rohan, he could make the proud vaunt: "Roi ne puis, Prince ne daigne, Lympet je suis!"

Therefore the Lympets generally held aloof, and when, as sometimes happened, they found themselves compelled to take their stand with one party or the other, they acted with great discretion, and compromised themselves as little as possible. As an instance of Lympet tact in trying times, I may mention the career of the sixth Baron Rockborough, who ascended to the headship of our house in the last year of the Great Rebellion. This nobleman first served in Ireland under Cromwell, who rewarded him with a large grant of land in that country; next, he was created Viscount Cumberground in the peerage of Ireland by Charles the Second after the Restoration; and finally he was advanced to the dignity of Earl of Kilproctor by William the Third, shortly after which just recognition of his merits the good old man passed away, full of years and honours, leaving behind him a name which will ever be fondly cherished by his descendants. As a benefactor of his species—I mean, of course, of the Lympets—he must be placed high above all our other ancestors, and second only to the Founder of the Family, Hugo de Lympet himself, who came over with the Conqueror, and won the estates which remain in the possession of his descendants to this day. And herein lies the secret of our family greatness and our family pride. What a Lympet grasped at the time of the Conquest, a Lympet holds in the present year of grace. For over eight hundred years we have remained firmly planted on the ground gained by our forefather; and if we never availed ourselves of the opportunities by which other families raised themselves to dazzling heights of magnificence, we also avoided the pitfalls which sooner or later swallowed up these same families and their followers.

But though our house has made no great figure in English history, I would not have you think that it has done the state no service. On the contrary, the younger scions of our stock have always displayed a commendable eagerness to serve the country in any department where the duties were light and the pay was fair. It is only when the law of primogeniture is strictly observed that Lympets are possible; and when the law of primogeniture is strictly observed, superfluous sons can be but ill-provided for. But the public service fe, despite the proverb, an excellent inheritance, and one to which the junior Lympets considered they were justly entitled.

I need hardly say that not one of them ever so far forgot himself as to stoop to trade; their sense of what was due to their name was too powerful to allow them to sink so far. So strong, indeed, was this feeling that the daughters of our house often preferred to pass their lives in single blessedness rather than change the dear old name of which they were so justly proud. Few families can boast so many old maids. The ribald have ventured to attribute this fact to the Lympet dowries, which are unfortunately small, and to the Lympet mouth, which is undeniably large, rather than to the Lympet pride. But how can such rude clay sympathise with the noble spark which fires a Lympet's breast? What can they know of the glorious associations which endear the grand old name of Lympet to every member of that noble house?

Unfortunately one cannot live upon a name—at least, not for ever. I lived on mine as long as it was possible, but a time at last came when I found that the Lympet name, highly as we rated it, was of little value on the back of a bill. Commercial people—hard, practical men—looked at it askance, and requested the additional security of some wretched Jones or Smith, who could not trace his pedigree beyond his grandfather. In short, I was becoming financially embarrassed, and, what was worse, did not know how to extricate myself. I had no occupation, no profession. My father had designed me for the Church, for he was the patron of a very snug living on his Irish property; but, alas! while I was still at school, the man Gladstone came along with his axe and lopped the Irish Church away like the diseased limb of a Hawarden oak. Thus prevented from serving the Church, I would have been very willing to serve the state; but—these are evil days for
Lympet,—the system of competitive examination proved a barrier I was unable to surmount, and England lost a valuable servant. As trade was out of the question and the bar offered no opening, I decided to adopt the career for which my talents best fitted me, and to do nothing at all. And I did it in excellent style, too, as a Lympet should; the honour of our name suffered nothing at my hands, I can assure you. My allowances from my father, which was small—for my sisters had to be provided for, and Cumberground, my elder brother, was wickedly extravagant—and a small private fortune which I had inherited from my mother, I employed mainly as pocket-money; almost everything else I obtained on credit. And so, throwing an occasional sop to Cumbernus in the shape of a payment "on account" to the more pressing of my creditors, and resorting to an elaborate system of "paper" when I was in want of ready money, I contrived to live in honourable ease for a good many years.

But Time brings all things to perfection—and bills to maturity. Then they have to be renewed, and a renewed bill is a redoubled difficulty. Living on paper is like skating on ice. So long as it is strong enough to bear you, you can flourish about, cutting figures with the best; but if you overweight it, it suddenly gives way beneath your feet, and you vanish out of sight. Early last year certain unmistakable groans and cracks warned me that my footing was dangerous. Bill discounters who had always honored me began to frown, every post brought letters requesting payment of little accounts, and tradesmen besieged my doors or lay in wait for me in the street. Altogether the outlook was very black, or, at best, dun-coloured. Many a night I sat in my rooms gloomily smoking my pipe and reviewing the situation, but I could only see one way out of my difficulties. My debts were so large that I could never hope to pay them unaided, and where was that aid to come from? Not from my father, who had no money to spare. The Irish property of Kilproctor, from which the chief title of our house is derived, is situated in a particularly lawless corner of the country, the inhabitants of which always had a rooted objection to paying anybody, and latterly under the Land League they have evaded their legal obligations in the most shameless manner, so that most of them owe arrears of rent which they can never hope—and never intend—to pay. In fact the Kilproctor estates might as well be in Spain as in Ireland, for all the money my father gets out of them. No, it was useless to appeal to him, and equally so to apply to Cumberground, who was in debt himself. Obviously there was only one course to pursue: I should have to marry money.

But it was necessary first to catch my heiress. Luckily I knew where to lay my hand on two who, I flattered myself, were disposed to look kindly on me. I had been acquainted with them for about a year, and I had already paid them a certain amount of attention, for the idea of a wealthy marriage had always been more or less in my mind, though I had wished to defer the evil day as long as possible. One was a Miss Merrick, the other was a Miss Slugg. Both were young and both were wealthy, without encumbrances in the shape of fathers. It is true that their fortunes had been amassed in trade; but, after all, that was a trifling drawback. The Lympet pride permitted me to spend the money which had been grabbed up by another; it merely forbade me to spoil my fingers in grubbing it up for myself. The deceased Merrick and the deceased Slugg had grabbed to some purpose in their time, and their daughters were undoubtedly "catches." Which should I strive to land? Miss Merrick was much the prettier of the two, but she was also the elder, and had more knowledge of the world, more suitors, and a better idea of her own value. I could see that she would require skilful handling, and perhaps more time than I had at my disposal. Miss Slugg, on the other hand, was very romantic, rather shy, and not particularly clever. She was not yet of age, and she had seen little of society of any sort. Her father dying soon after she left school, she had not entered the world till she was twenty; and her aunt, with whom she lived, had no very grand acquaintances. My rank was likely to stand me in better stead with her than with Miss Merrick, who had more than one eldest son hovering in her train. Above all, Miss Slugg possessed one hundred thousand pounds, and Miss Merrick only eighty thousand. That settled it. As I had made up my mind to dispose of a share in the Lympet name, it was my obvious duty to get the highest available price for it. My honourable pride would not allow me to depreciate its value by
taking eighty thousand pounds when I could get a hundred. And so I decided on Miss Slugg.

I need not dwell upon my courtship, the course of which was as smooth and untroubled as a canal's. It was also about as dull. For three months it flowed placidly on, and then I proposed and was accepted. But we kept our engagement secret, and I even persuaded Miss Slugg to consent to a private marriage. She had wondered at my request, and had made a few slight objections at first, but the idea soon recommended itself to her. It would be so romantic, she declared. My reasons were not romantic, however. To be frank, I had seen too many marriages spoiled by the meddling interference of lawyers and guardians to risk inviting it in my own case. When Law comes in at the door, Love flies out at the window; sometimes it is even kicked out. I did not want any settlements made which might interfere with my settlement with my creditors and my own settlement in life. Nor did I care to expose my most private affairs to the prying gaze of an impertinent vulgarian. I refer to Miss Slugg's uncle, her father's younger brother. The two Sluggs had made their money together in some way connected with tallow—I have never cared to enter into the revolting details—and I knew that he would be unwilling to let the fortune, which he had helped to make, pass entirely out of the family; for he had a cub of a son whom he hoped to see married to the heiress. I might count upon his opposition as certain, and my debts were heavy enough to make an excellent weapon in his hands. Perhaps he might at least persuade his niece to wait a little, and I could not afford to wait even a few months. My fortunes were desperate; the vultures were already circling round my head. And so I had determined on a private marriage, and had induced Miss Slugg to consent to it.

Our arrangements were simple enough. On the morning after her twenty-first birthday, Miss Slugg would leave her uncle's house quietly, and repair to a church a few streets off, where Belinda, only daughter of the late Oliver Slugg, Esquire, would be united to the Honourable George Lympet, second son of the Earl of Kilproctor. No cards. After the ceremony the happy pair would proceed to the residence of the bride's uncle and receive his congratulations on the auspicious event, prior to starting on their honeymoon. Thus all the loathsome preliminaries would be avoided, the sordid inquisition into ways and means, the distressing family dissensions, the degrading prenuptial measure of settlements. On the whole it was a clever little plan, and one which, I venture to think, reflects no small credit on me.

But I was too true a Lympet to take such a serious step without first seeking the sanction of the head of our house. Three days before the date fixed for our wedding I left London, and travelled down to Rockborough Towers to beg my father's blessing and borrow a little money, which was of even more importance to me. The blessing was a luxury, but the money was a necessity. I had the marriage expenses and the cost of the honeymoon to provide for. I felt—perhaps I was over-sensational—that it would not be right to begin drawing on my wife's resources during a period supposed to be dedicated to romance; that it was too early to commence the serious business of life. Therefore I had decided to ask my father for a loan, hoping that, when he perceived I was about to attain an honourable independence, and was never likely to trouble him again, he would make me a present of the sum required. And as the event showed, I was not mistaken.

It was after dinner, when my sisters had left us together over our wine, that I made my confession, and informed my father that I was about to marry Miss Slugg, the charming young heiress. He did not receive the news with any enthusiasm.

"Slugg!" he said, raising his eyebrows. "What a horrible name! How on earth did you manage to become acquainted with this young person who has the misfortune to be called Slugg?"

"It is her misfortune, as you say, sir," I replied evasively, "but not her fault. Think how terrible it must be to have to answer to the name of Slugg, and pity her."

"Of course I pity her," he said quietly, "but I really do not think I could bring myself to know any one called—Slugg. Pah!"

"I do not ask you to, sir," I returned. "I do not wish you to receive Miss Slugg, but Mrs. Lympet. By marriage she will be justly entitled to a name that kings might envy."

"Exactly. And you propose to bestow this kingly name upon a Slugg. Really, old Simon, first Earl, would turn in his grave could he hear you."
"Judging by our revered ancestor's conduct in life," I remarked drily, "he would be only too willing to turn in his grave were anything to be gained by it. In this matter I am acting as he would do were he in my place."

"Indeed!" said my father, looking reassured. "It is not a foolish love affair, then!"

"I am not so much in love as to have forgotten prudence. Love is said to be blind; my eyes are open."

"And this Miss Slugg is really a prize worth winning?"

"She has a heart of gold!"

"My father's face fell considerably."

"And," I continued, "she has a hundred thousand pounds."

My father brightened up at once.

"Her only relatives are her uncle and his family, with whom I mean to quarrel on our wedding day."

"The name of Slugg!" exclaimed my father.

"My father rubbed his hands together, and the smile broadened into benevolence."

"Thus," I concluded, "we will soon be able to forget that she ever was a Slugg."

"Your sisters will never let her forget it," observed my father. "Still, it is a comfort to reflect that we will not be continually reminded of the fact by the intrusion of impossible relatives bearing that most impossible of names. On the whole, you might have done much worse. A hundred thousand pounds, you say! Certainly the pill is well gilded."

"And pills are only unpleasant when they are kept in the mouth too long," I added. "But the name of Slugg need never be in our mouths again after the marriage ceremony."

"True, true," replied my father; "and certainly the sooner we forget it the better. The young lady should really be greatly obliged to you. Slugg! Ha, ha! I wonder how it feels to be called Slugg."

"I wonder," I said; and then we both laughed very heartily.

After that I had no more trouble. Before we left the dining-room I had obtained his consent and a substantial cheque as a wedding present; and, possessed of his blessing and signature, I returned to London next day.

The following morning Belinda and I were united. Everything went off without hitch, exactly as we had planned it; and before the maiden had been missed from her uncle's house, the wife had returned with her husband to announce the great news in person. Mr. Slugg was in his study when we arrived, and thither at once I repaired "to bear the lion in his den," while my wife sought the morning-room to make her peace with her aunt. For my own part, I was intent on war. I did not wish to be "on terms" with my wife's relations, I wanted to forget the very name of Slugg, and I hoped that in his rage and disappointment, Belinda's uncle might use words so cutting as to sever completely all ties between us. Mr. Slugg showed more self-control than I had expected, however, for he received what must have been most unwelcome news with remarkable composure. He bowed to the inevitable—and with more politeness than I had thought him capable of. Being a business man, he probably looked at the matter from a business point of view. The mischief was done, and all he could say would not undo it; the strongest language in his vocabulary would be of no avail against the few words spoken by the clergyman a short half-hour before, and so he saved his breath. Nevertheless, he surveyed me with a very evil smile, and there was a sad lack of sincerity about the tone in which he wished me joy.

"But what of Belinda?" he concluded.

"Surely I ought to be amongst the first to congratulate her on becoming Mrs. Slugg!" He laid a peculiar emphasis on the word Slugg, which at once attracted my attention.

"Pardon me," I interrupted; "it was a slip of the tongue, no doubt, but you have called my wife by a name which does not now belong to her. Your niece is no longer a Slugg, she has become a Lympet. No one whose privilege it is to be called Lympet would like to be called Slugg anything else."

"Am I to understand," he cried eagerly, "that Belinda abandons the name of Slugg?"

"Does it seem so strange?" I enquired.

"I have always supposed that it was customary for a wife to adopt her husband's name when she married."

"It is the rule," replied Mr. Slugg slowly, "but there are exceptions. Husbands have been known to take their wives' names—for a consideration."

"I would have you know, sir," I re-
torted angrily, "that no Lympet would barter his name away for any consideration whatsoever!"

"A noble sentiment!" cried Mr. Slugg joyfully, looking like a miser who had just found sixpence. "A noble sentiment! You are right, sir. What is a paltry hundred thousand pounds compared to a name so ancient and so honourable?"

A hundred thousand pounds! That was the exact amount of Bellinda's fortune. What did the man mean by such a pointed reference to it?

"And I am ashamed to say I took you for a fortune-hunter!" he continued excitedly. "You—you who kick the dross away and say in effect: 'Let me keep the honoured name of Lympet, I care not who has the fortune!'"

"Excuse me," I broke in hastily, "but if you're talking about my wife's fortune, I do care very much who has it. Hang it all, there's no mistake about that, is there?"

"Surely, Mr. Lympet," said Mr. Slugg, calming down and beginning to look very anxious, "you are aware of the provisions of my brother's will? You must be. You discard the name of Slugg with your eyes open, is it not so? You know the consequences and are prepared to accept them? You would not change the noble name of Lympet for thrice my niece's fortune! Of course not! 'Not for any consideration whatsoever.' I heard you say so."

At his words a cold shiver ran down my back. I knew nothing of the deceased Slugg's will. My information concerning Bellinda's fortune had come to me on most excellent authority, and she herself had told me that she was at liberty to marry whom she pleased after her twenty-first birthday, but of the provisions of the will under which she inherited I was ignorant.

Somehow I had never thought of driving down to Somerset House and inspecting the document. It was an oversight, and I began to fear a very serious one.

"Look here, Mr. Slugg," I said, with a ghastly attempt at jocularity, "we'll discuss those provisions, if you please. They're the proper food for a wedding breakfast."

"You know nothing about the will after all, then?" enquired Mr. Slugg coldly. "I might have guessed it!"

"Of course I know nothing, except that under it my wife inherits a considerable fortune."

"On conditions," murmured Mr. Slugg gently.

"Conditions!" I echoed, shifting uneasily in my seat. "And, pray, what are they? Nothing extravagant, nothing unreasonable, I trust?"

"They seem to me to be reasonable enough; but then," he added with a sneer, "I'm not a Lympet."

"If they're reasonable, I'll comply with them," I said shortly. "I'm not a fool."

"I think I've a copy somewhere," observed Mr. Slugg, rummaging in his drawers. "My brother was a very peculiar man, Mr. Lympet. He had risen from nothing, and he was proud of it. He was also proud of his name, and rightly so, for it was—ay, and still is!—a power in the tallow-candle line. It was his chief regret that he had not a son to inherit his fame. It pained him to think that on his daughter's marriage the name of Slugg would no longer be associated with the fortune he had made, that it would soon be forgotten the money came from a Slugg, and that his grandchildren might pass their lives in ease, and yet be ignorant of the very source from which their portions came. All this, I say, pained him. He looked upon himself as the founder of a family—"

"Monstrous!" I ejaculated, "monstrous!"

"And he did not want his descendants to forget their obligations. His best plan would have been to leave his money to his daughter on condition she married her cousin, who some day will be head of the House he helped to found, but he did not want to fetter her choice. I think he was mistaken, but let that pass. We are considering what he actually did, not what he ought to have done. To be brief, after sundry legacies, he left his fortune to his daughter on these conditions: if she married, her husband was to take the name of Slugg, or the money passed to her next-of-kin, save an allowance of five hundred a year for life—"

"What!" I yelled, starting to my feet. "Moreover," he continued, paying no attention to my outburst, "she cannot touch her capital. The full income is hers for life, but, had she died unmarried, it would have passed to our side of the family, as it will do should she die without issue. Of course, any children she may have will inherit the whole fortune at her death, but they must keep the name of Slugg."

"I don't believe it!" I stammered, sinking back into my chair.
"Here is the copy," he replied, handing it to me. "You'll find it all there, though possibly not in such plain English."

"Alas! it was too true. Amidst all the tangle of verbiage one fact stood distinctly out; the husband of Bellinda would have to adopt her name or forfeit her fortune. What was I to do? Abandon the name of Lympet which I loved, and assume the name of Slugg which I loathed? Impossible! Yet what was the alternative? Genteel poverty. My pride pulled one way, my prudence the other; and prudence won. I had my wife to think of. I could not rob her of her fortune and drag her down from affluence to indigence for a mere sentiment, however noble. For her sake I resolved to subdue my pride and sacrifice my name. To parody Gibbon, I sighed as a Lympet, I obeyed as a husband."

"After all," I concluded, not knowing that I spoke aloud, "by the aid of a hyphen it may be made endurable. Lympet-Slugg! It is at least uncommon."

"If you look on the other page," breaks in an unsympathetic voice, "you will see a clause which provides for any such attempt at evasion. In it the testator declares that he will have no tampering with the fine old Anglo-Saxon name of Slugg, that he will not have it linked to a hyphen, and converted into a hybrid compound. The plain old-fashioned name of Slugg must not be spoilt by any unnecessary additions. My brother loved his name, you see, sir, and, as I told you, was uncommonly proud of it."

"Confound his pride!" I cried, throwing down the will and stamping on it.

"Come, come," said Mr. Slugg, "you need not give way so. You are not compelled to take our name. Of course you mean to refuse! 'No one whose privilege it is to be called Lympet would like to be called anything else!'"

Had I been wavering, the man's gibes would have decided me. By accepting the name of Slugg, I kept his hands from the fortune for which they were itching; and this knowledge considerably lessened the pain my decision cost me.

"That will do," I said coldly. "I think there is nothing to detain us here longer. Let us go upstairs. No doubt you are anxious to congratulate your niece, Mrs. — Mrs. Slugg!"

And that is how I came to be called Slugg. Ah, if I had known the contents of that abominable will when I made my choice between Miss Merrick and Miss Slugg, I would certainly have chosen Miss Merrick. It would have cost me twenty thousand pounds, but the name of Lympet was well worth the sacrifice. As it is, I have won a fortune, but I have got to go through life ticketed with the price I paid for it. Nor is that all. I have children, but I can take little interest in them, for they are not Lympets, but Sluggs. My father is much annoyed with me, and can hardly bring himself to recognise a Slugg as a member of the family; Cumberground chalks me unmercifully, and my sisters call my wife "that creature," and compare me to Esau. But perhaps my greatest cross is the prosperity of the Slugg candle business, which has become a tremendous concern. The hated name flares on every hoarding, flaunts on the backs of novels and magazines, and has become familiar to every ear. And strangers and casual acquaintances will persist in mistaking me for a member of the firm! More than once I have overheard people describing me as "Slugg, the candleman, you know," perfectly audible "saddo." Even my friends do not spare me, for they have bestowed on me a nickname which, recalling as it does all I have lost, costs me a pang every time I hear it. They call me the late Mr. Lympet.

A WITTY WOMAN.

There can be no doubt that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is entitled to a foremost place among witty women. You may suggest that she was at times indulgent; you may credit all the "malicious calumnies" against her circulated by Horace Walpole, who naturally hated a woman as clever as himself, and whose wounded vanity made him an unscrupulous enemy; you may asperse her parts of speech; but you can't deny that she was witty. She began very early. She had not long been married when we find her writing to her husband — Edward Wortley Montagu, Esq. — with polished smartness and a pretty epigrammatical turn of phrase:

"If it were possible to restore liberty to your country, or limit the encroachment of the prerogative, by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you; but, as the world is and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good; riches being another word for
power, towards the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and—as Demosthenessaid of pronunciation, in oratory—the second is impudence, and the third, still impudence... The Ministry is like a play at Court; there's a little door to get in at, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost; people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shine, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved about by everybody, his clothes torn, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him that don't make so good a figure as himself."

Lady Mary was only twenty-six when she wrote with all this point and facility.

At a later date we find her describing with but a few graphic touches her experiences of a stormy passage across the Channel.

"It is hard to imagine oneself," she says, "in a scene of greater horror than on such an occasion, and yet—shall I own it to you?—though I was not at all willing to be drowned, I could not forbear being entertained at the double distress of a fellow-passenger. She was an English lady that I had met at Calais, who desired me to let her go over with me in my cabin. She had brought a fine point-head, which she was striving to conceal from the Custom House officer. When the wind grew high, and our little vessel cracked, she fell heartily to her prayers, and thought wholly of her soul. When it seemed to abate, she returned to the worldly cares of her head-dress, and addressed herself to me: 'Dear madam, will you take care of this point? If it should be lost! Oh, Lord, we shall all be lost! Lord have mercy on my soul! Pray, madam, take care of this head-dress!' This easy transition from her soul to her head-dress, and the alternate agonies that both gave her, made it hard to determine which she thought of greatest value."

After a Continental tour, Lady Mary, in October, 1718, at the age of twenty-eight, took her place in London society as one of its fashionable leaders and most brilliant ornaments. Still in the ripe bloom of womanhood, she dazzled by her personal charms, and could fascinate by the magic of her smile or a glance from her beautiful eyes. Her accomplishments were various; her manners graceful, though assured, and free from the 'gêne' that so often embarrasses the untravelled Englishwoman; and her conversation was charming in its wit and range and depth, for she had read much and seen much, and was gifted with a rare faculty of expression. That such a woman attracted a crowd of admirers is no more a wonder than that such a woman did not object to their admiration, even while she displeased it.

Soon after her return, Lady Mary took up her residence at Twickenham, in the immediate neighbourhood of Pope, his villa, his garden, and his grotto. A frequent visitor was Lord Hervey, the wit and fine gentleman, whose gifts of intellect have almost been forgotten in the obloquy heaped upon him by the malice of the little satirist. So clever a man was necessarily drawn towards so clever a woman, and they became fast friends.

Lord Hervey dying in the prime of manhood, after Lady Mary had settled abroad, his eldest son sealed up her letters and returned them with an assurance that he had not opened or read them. In reply she acknowledged his honourable conduct, adding that she could almost regret he had not glanced his eye over a correspondence which would have shown him what so young a man might, perhaps, be inclined to doubt—the possibility of a long and steadfast friendship being maintained, without any admixture of love, between two persons of different sexes. I do not know why this assertion should not be believed. The scandal levelled at Lady Mary in this case, as in other cases, originated in the inventions of her notorious enemies, Horace Walpole and Pope. That she wrote with a good deal of freedom in her letters, and permitted a good deal of freedom on the part of her correspondents, will not be construed as a proof of improper conduct by any person who, in the first place, has studied the idiosyncrasies of her character, and, in the second, has made himself acquainted with the license of language that in those days prevailed among the most virtuous gentlewomen. Conscious of her powers of wit and ridicule, she used them too profusely; sparing not her friend; nor foe; converting friends into foes, and rendering foes more bitter; laughing at everybody and everything; and sowing enmities around her broadcast. While not defending her occasional coarseness and irreverence—there are things which it is not seemly to jest about or even to write about—I am persuaded she was innocent of all graver errors.
In the quarrel between Pope and Lady Mary, the former unquestionably carries off most of the blame and all the disgrace. The valetudinarian little poet was probably sincere in his passion for the accomplished beauty; was dazzled by her personal and intellectual graces into as strong an attachment as was possible to his selfish temper. This is also Leigh Hunt's opinion; but then such an attachment involves a severe condemnation on his conduct in forgetting, or pretending to forget, that she was a wife and a mother. She was wrong in permitting his addresses; but the truth is, she laughed at them. They pleased her natural woman's vanity, and at the same time gratified her sense of humour. It was certain from the first that they would not know each other long without quarrelling. The poet demanded an amount of flattery and submission which she was the last woman in the world to concede. I suspect that the poet found she was amusing herself with the extravagance of his devotion; but Lady Mary's own statement is, that at some inopportune moment when she least expected what young ladies call "a declaration," he made such passionate love to her that, in spite of her utmost endeavours to be angry and preserve her gravity, she broke out into a fit of immoderate laughter. Thereupon wounded vanity made him her implacable enemy; and he spared no effort to send her name down to posterity besmirched with the filth of his scandal. In the heyday of his infatuation he had celebrated her under the name of Sappho with all the resources of his panegyric. Now he brought all the resources of his hatred to effect her degradation. His first attack was made in the third epistle of his "Moral Essays":

Rufa, whose eye quick glancing o'er the park,
Attracts each light gay meteor of a spark,
Agrees as ill with Rufa studying Locke,
As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task
With Sappho fragrant at an evening masque;
So morning insects that in muck begun
Shine, buzz, and fly-blow in the setting sun.

This was coarse, but coarser still was a couplet which he introduced into his "Imitations of Horace": so coarse that I dare not quote it—so coarse that Pope himself had the grace to feel ashamed, and stammered out a denial that it was intended to apply to Lady Mary.

About the same time our splenetic little poet spurted some of his poisonous ink on Lord Hervey, who retorted in certain contemptuous "Verses addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace." These, which are more bitter than witty, are included in Lady Mary's works, though she always repudiated their authorship. They exhibit few traces of the vivacity of her style; but she may probably have inserted a complete here and there. Pope replied in the splendidly venomous "Epistle to Arbuthnot," in which Lord Hervey's portrait is sketched under that of Sporus with a vitriolic intensity of hate. Lady Mary was not brought within the range of this attack, but Pope continued to gird at her in his letters and conversation until she left England in 1739.

This act of separation from her husband, and self-banishment from the circles where she had reigned supreme, set the tongues of hundred-headed Scandal wagging lustily. Yet it was a simple enough matter after all. Witty women do not as a rule make friends; witty women who are not only witty but fearless, and not only fearless but unconventional, do not make friends but multiply enemies; and I incline to believe that Lady Mary had rendered London society exceedingly uncomfortable for herself and others. Further, she was weary of the old scenes and the old faces; she was weary of fashionable life; and so she left it all. Her husband and herself had always lived upon friendly terms, but with a certain amount of detachment; and being some years older than his wife, he resolved on sticking to his home-comforts instead of following her erratic steps. They corresponded regularly, and of the value of his wife's letters he showed his conviction by the care he took of them.

There was really nothing more at the bottom of it all than this. The suggestion that the separation was at Mr. Montagu's instance, and was due to his disgust with her irregularities, is absolutely without a single corroborative fact; and would never have taken shape but for the firm conviction of a certain order of minds that a witty woman necessarily carries out the alliteration, and is also a wicked woman. "Rumours," said Mrs. Oliphant, "are poor things to hold up before us at a distance of a hundred and thirty years; and even Horace Walpole, even Pope, have nothing but vague irritation to vent against Lady Mary. And Mr. Wortley's letters, after her wife's departure, give us for the first time a certain friendliness for the heavy man, who is glad of her comfort in his composed way, and trusts her in
their common concerns, and cares for her health and well-being. The two would seem after their stormy beginning to have grown into a certain friendship with the years. Perhaps he meant to join her, as several of his letters imply; or perhaps he permitted her to believe that he meant to join her; or perhaps it was held vaguely possible, as a thing that might or might not be, indifferent to the world, not over interesting even to themselves." So Lady Mary departed, and stayed on the Continent for two and twenty years; and all that time the witty woman wrote home to her husband, her daughter, and her friends the most charming letters—letters which are scarcely inferior to those of Madame de Sévigné, for if they are inferior in grace they surpass in vivacity—letters full of happy descriptions and shrewd reflections, the letters of a woman who has seen much and observed much, and knows how to convey to others the results of her experience with graphic force and lucidity.

I could quote many passages in justification of my styling her a witty woman, but I prefer to make an extract which will show her to have been, a century and a half ago, a strenuous advocate for the higher education of women.

"There is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government; in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers, and, perhaps, many crimes. But I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies which raise the character of a man should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed, and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. It appears to me the strongest proof of a clear understanding in Longinus—in every light acknowledged one of the greatest men among the ancients—when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices, as to choose his two examples of fine writing from a Jew—at that time the most despised people upon earth—and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would scarce own they had read the works of such contemptible creatures, though, perhaps, they would condescend to steal from them, at the same time they declared they were below their notice."

MISS GARTH.
A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

MISS GARTH of Boraston Hall was six and twenty years of age. People had almost given up wondering why a woman, young, handsome, rich, and so entirely her own mistress, had not given Boraston Hall a master long ago. Only Jocelyn Garth herself could have told why she remained unmarried, but she was silent on the subject, and she was not a woman whom the impertinent dare question.

In person she was tall and very fair. Her figure was graceful and delicately rounded. Her eyes were very still, and grey, and tranquil, like the waters of a lake; and they were swarmed by eyebrows that were almost black, and fringed with deep lashes that lay dark against her delicate cheek.

She had no companion and no chaperon to keep her company in the old Hall in which she dwelt. She depended entirely for society on a small slip of a golden-haired child whom she had adopted years ago. The little girl, a perfect fairy in grace and prettiness, was the daughter of a cousin who had died abroad, and who had sent home the orphan to the tender care of Jocelyn Garth.

But although she cared for no other companionship but that of the child, she was by no means a hermit. She went to dances and dinners, and gave dances and dinners in return. None could call her unsociable, but many deemed her quiet and uninteresting. People sought eagerly for invitations to Boraston Hall nevertheless. Miss Garth was well known to be exclusive to fastidiousness, and to be asked to one of her dinners or balls stamped one with an aristocratic stamp at once.

Jocelyn was considered in all respects to be a most fortunate woman. She had a positively princely income, the most unexceptionable relations, and a charming old house to live in. Jocelyn kept up the old place in magnificent style. There were antique treasures in some of the rooms that money could not buy.

Every Christmas Jocelyn had a large house-party to which she invited her most intimate friends and relations. The In-
timate friends were few, and the unexceptionable relations were many. Jocelyn made a perfect hostess, and was equally gracious to all. She was never known to make a confidence. Her relations called her "unsympathetic." Their aristocratic breeding would not allow them to go further than that.

The time was drawing near for Jocelyn to assemble her house-party. She sat in her luxurious boudoir writing the usual notes to the usual people, with a troubled expression in her eyes that sometimes crept into them when she was alone.

There would be no refusals, she knew that; and the house-party would be almost precisely similar to every other house-party that she had given ever since she came of age. There would be her aunt, Lady Carstairs, to chaperon the party, together with a couple of Carstairs men and a couple of Carstairs girls. There would be four or five cousins of different sexes—more distant and a good deal poorer than the Carstairs cousins. There would be half-a-dozen people from lonely country houses thirty or forty miles away—and there would be Godfrey Wharton and his sister.

It was when writing her note to the last-named that the troubled look had stolen into Jocelyn Garth's eyes. They were the only people she really cared about amongst the many she had asked. They were also the only people she feared to see.

Jocelyn Garth was not a vain woman, but she had seen that in Godfrey Wharton's eyes once or twice that was absolutely unmistakable. She knew, just as well as if he had spoken the words, that he loved her. She had warded off, as women know how to ward off, an absolute declaration on his part. But the time was coming when she knew she could keep him at a distance no longer.

Five years ago, gossip had linked their names together. When Jocelyn attained her majority and entered into possession of vast estates, it was whispered that Miss Garth and the young Squire of Gratton Park would "make it up together." But as time went on and there was no sign of anything between the young people but friendship, gossip died away for lack of nourishment. It was undeniable that they would have made a fine couple.

The house-party began on the twenty-fourth of December and lasted over the New Year. Lady Carstairs, with two blooming daughters and two stalwart sons, was the first to arrive.

"Well, Jocelyn," she said, as she kissed her niece's cheek, "here we all are again as usual. Nothing has happened, I suppose! No exciting news to tell me!"

Lady Carstairs asked the same question each year, as a delicate insinuation to Jocelyn that it was high time she got engaged. Lady Carstairs hardly thought it was the thing for a young woman in Jocelyn's position to remain unmarried.

"I should have been very humiliated," she once remarked, "if I had reached the age of twenty-six without even being engaged. I had not a fiftieth part of Jocelyn's money, and I don't think I was so handsome. But I had 'go,' which Jocelyn has not, and it always takes with men."

She was piloted upstairs and shown her rooms by Jocelyn herself. There was a good deal of bustle and flying about as soon as she set foot in the house. For a week quiet old Boraston Hall would hardly know itself. Its dignified repose was only disturbed by such a flippant invasion once a year.

Lady Carstairs was languidly explaining why she had only brought one maid.

"At the last moment—the very last moment, my dear," she said, sinking into an arm-chair and loosening her wraps, "the girls' maid gave notice. Such impertinence! And all because I had forgotten that I had promised to let her go home at this particular time. As if this were not holiday enough! However, she has gone home for good now, and I am sure I hope she'll like it. But what are my poor girls to do, Jocelyn?"

"I will lend them Parker," said Jocelyn, smiling. "I hardly ever need her. She finds her life quite dull, and will be charmed to have the charge of two fashionable young ladies."

"So good of you," murmured Lady Carstairs, dismissing the subject comfortably at once. "I think I should like my tea up here, Jocelyn, please. I am quite worn out."

Jocelyn left the room to give her orders, and in a little while was joined by her two cousins. It was wonderful how short a time they had taken to get into elaborate tea-gowns and have their hair curled.

Jocelyn was sitting before a large log fire in the big hall. The rich oak panelling, covered with rare old china and flashing swords, gleamed, softly sombre, in the ruddy firelight. Jocelyn herself, in her white woollen gown with the silver belt, looked particularly fair and handsome against her dark surroundings.
"Tell us all about the people you have got," said Lucy Carstairs, as soon as she was comfortably settled with a cup of tea in her hand. "Is there anybody fresh?"

"I am afraid not," Jocelyn answered, smiling. "It is the same old set, Lucy."

"No one new at all!"

"Not one. We are slow at growing new aborigines, you know. But I can promise you a few exciting young men at the ball. I asked Lady Ellis to bring any one she chose, and she always has a train of eligibles on hand."

"Really, Jocelyn," said Rose Carstairs, "you sometimes talk as if you were a hundred, and quite past all the things that other people care about. You stand outside them as it were."

"And Jocelyn did not answer. She had turned to meet Harry and Edgar, who were lounging down the stairs in velvet smoking-coats.

An hour later and the house was full. There was a great rushing about in the corridors, and calling for maids, and demanding hot water. A great laughing and questioning as to the rooms which they were to have. Merry congratulations that they had met again. A mingling of feminine voices and deep basses; a general frolicsome ness and bustle. The old house had wakened up.

Jocelyn Garth stood in the great hall, greeting with a smile on her lips the last arrival—Godfrey Wharton.

"You are late!" she said.

"I am so sorry, but I couldn't manage to come over with Kitty. You dine at eight, don't you?"

"Yes; and it is only twenty minutes to, now! We must hurry."

She mounted the stairs lightly and left him standing there with words of unspoken admiration on his lips. She always avoided being alone with him for even five minutes together. He bit his lip as he recognised that the old will-o'-the-wisp chase was to begin once more.

"But this time she shall give me an answer," he said to himself, as he followed her slowly up the stairs.

Dinner was a very merry affair that night. So many of the guests had not met since this time last year. There was so much to talk over; so many "do you remember?" interpersed with glances more or less tender; so many promising flirtations taken up again at the point at which they had been broken off twelve months ago.

Jocelyn sat at the head of the table in white and diamonds. Lady Carstairs sat at Jocelyn's left hand, and made comments on the guests in a confidential tone.

"Nobody fresh, I see, Jocelyn? Is everybody really here?"

"Every single soul, aunt. I wish I could have collected a few new people, but there were none to collect."

"Hum—ha!" said Lady Carstairs, with her eyeglass to her eye. "Daisy Carruthers seems to have gone off a good deal since last year. I was rather afraid Edgar would take her. No money, I believe!"

"No money; only birth, Aunt Grace," said Jocelyn in her quiet voice.

Lady Carstairs shot a quick glance at her niece. She had an idea that sometimes Jocelyn was a little sarcastic, and she did not like sarcastic women.

"Birth is all very well," she replied with dignity; "but money is absolutely necessary, nowadays. Young Wharton has grown very coarse-looking," she added, returning to her scrutiny of the guests.

She had a fancy that Jocelyn and Godfrey Wharton liked each other more than was wise. She wanted Jocelyn to marry her own son Edgar.

"Has he!" said Jocelyn, with her most imperturbable expression. "I had not observed it."

"You are so used to him, my dear. I have not seen him for a year."

Jocelyn let the subject drop. She never argued and waxed hot in discussion—which was perhaps one of the reasons why she was deemed unsympathetic.

"Those Bletherton girls dress worse than ever," said Lady Carstairs, going on with her survey. "Couldn't you hint to the fat one, Jocelyn, that magenta velvet looks awful against that yellow skin of hers? Any one can see she has been in India."

"Perhaps she doesn't know she has a yellow skin. It would be a pity to enlighten her."

"Well, well—dear me, Jocelyn, how aged Colonel Tredarth is! Poor old man! It is quite pitiable to see him."

"He has only left off dyeing his hair, aunt. That is really the only difference."

"My dear, how cynical you are! I should not like to say that about one of my relations," said Lady Carstairs with virtuous indignation, and a consciousness that her own hair was not entirely innocent of liquid assistance. "I believe the poor creature's hair has grown white from grief. He never recovered his son's going off in that extraordinary way."
“That was ten years ago.”

“And I am as fond of that child as ever,” remarked Lady Carstairs disapprovingly, as she gave a cold peck at the rose-embossed cheeks. “And spoil her more, no doubt. She should never have been allowed to sit up till this time.”

“You would not have slept if I had put her to bed,” said Jocelyn apologetically.

“Yet she was watching little Aveline’s progress round the room with a smile on her face. All the men were petting and teasing her, and all the ladies were lavishing endearing epithets upon her.”

“But Aveline was a little person of delicacy and discrimination. She put aside with a firm hand the dazzling attentions that were offered her, and made straight for Godfrey Wharton, who was the only person in the room who had taken no notice of her.”

She climbed up into his arms and laid her head on his shoulder, with a nestling gesture that was almost the same as she used to Jocelyn.

Godfrey Wharton bent his head and kissed her softly. Above the little golden head, across the whole length of the room, his eyes met Jocelyn Garth’s.

The look in itself was a caress. She felt as though, in the presence of all, he had kissed her lips instead of the child’s.

She blushed crimson, and hastily turned away her head. Lady Carstairs, who had kissed her lips instead of the child’s.

The look in itself was a caress. She felt as though, in the presence of all, he had kissed her lips instead of the child’s.

And she went to bed in high good-humour.
CHAPTER VI. LOOKING FORWARD.

If you follow the Rothery through the glen by the small path on its left bank, you ascend all the way under the shade of great trees, pines, oaks, and birch. Here and there, through the leafy rifts, the sky shows large patches of blue and white. This glen is the roosting-place of the rooks, and their evening choruses mingle with the roar of the Rothery, the river protesting against any rival sound. In the evening the moths flit about like ghosts of butterflies, and foolishly bump against the sleeping birds. Nature here is wild and lonely, but very beautiful to those whose eyes have been trained to see beauty everywhere.

Penelope Winskill was walking slowly up the glen one evening, ten days after her conversation with the Duke of Greybarrow. She held a letter in her hand, and her free, elastic step quickly got over the distance that separates the Palace from the head of the glen. There was a smile on her face and a new light in her eyes, though every now and then she looked regretfully at the beloved glen, as if she were begging for its forgiveness.

The path ends at a wicket gate, and suddenly one emerges upon a great sweep of bare hillside. On the left lies a long valley, whose winding path you can trace for several miles, and which eventually leads across a mountain pass to Sisepside. On the right a great mountain spur fronts you, with a valley on either side of it. From the wicket gate the long ascent of the high Highfell could be seen, though the real summit was not visible till one had walked for more than two hours up the narrow path.

Penelope loved this view. Here she could watch the clouds as the huge masses swept across the hills and vales, or sank suddenly to enfold a lonely crest in their white arms. She had always known it, and yet there was ever something new in the scene, always something wild and grand which harmonised with her thoughts. There was so much power in those sweeping clouds and in the mountain-tops to resist the opposing force. Force against force. She was young and strong herself, eager to fight destiny in the shape of the slow ruin that was gradually overwhelming the old family, whose glory was its free lands from times immemorial.

To-day she walked some way up the mountain-side, not pausing till she reached a small clump of firs near to which a tiny stream gurgled and tumbled in its narrow bed, mimicking the greater glory of the Rothery. Penelope, selecting a grey boulder, sat down to think. Just beneath her was a reach of quiet shallows, where the stream flowed silently, and where the girl could see her own reflection intercepting the blue of heaven. Like many another girl, as she sat dreaming by the water she thought of love. Love was a power she was only just beginning to understand. She did not even know why it presented itself to her now, when only last year she had been quite contented with dreams of visionary glory. She had grown up without knowing for many years that her life was dull. Her uncle had till now so much filled her life with...
employment, that she had missed nothing else. He had taught her that a Princess of Rothery must be quite unlike other girls, and she had easily imbied these ideas of pride, which even in the best of mortals need but little fostering. Presently she unfolded a letter she held, and read it again:

"DEAREST PRINCESS,—I have been here a week and I have been working hard for you all the time. I have looked up old friends of my youth, and I have been searching for a small house in a good situation. You know that our small means have been the chief difficulty for the maturing of our plans. I think I have seen a way out of this, and I believe I have found a suitable abode. A widow lady wishes to let her house to careful people for a very small sum of money. The house is charming, and is in a good situation, which is half the battle in this strange world of London and the stranger power which calls itself 'Society.' Once I was well acquainted with all its ways, but alas! I have long ceased to be familiar with its haunts.

"You must come when I send for you. I am looking for a lady who will act as chaperon, for society must have no fault to find with you. The rest you must leave to me. You have but to obey. Then, Princess, make up your mind to love one worthy of them, and then choose your husbands. They need not be unhappy because they were not free, like vulgar persons, to choose their husbands. They could love one worthy of them, and then life would be a beautiful thing. She looked again into the pool and smiled. Penelope did not know that she was very like the pictures of Mrs. Siddons, because she had never seen any of them, but her smile pleased her, and her own beauty was a source of pleasure. She smiled as she thought of the man who should come to Rothery as her husband. Some day they would sit on this very stone, and she would tell him what had been her imaginary picture of him.

"He will be tall and handsome. He will have dark eyes and dark hair. He will love our dear home as much as I love myself, and he and uncle will be companions for each other. We shall enjoy long walks together, and sometimes he will take me to London to see the world. I want to see the world for a little while, but I must always live here."

At this moment a dog came bounding out of the copses, and jumped upon her.

"Oh, Nero, you here. Don't bark, but lie down. Jim Oldcorn must be close by." Jim was sauntering along with a broad grin upon his face.

"It's a fine night, Princess, and when Nero see yer he wouldn's cum doon again for my calling."

"Where's the King, Jim? Is he out this evening?"

"He's doon by the green bushes. Git doon, yer silly oald daft Nero! Lenk an' see what wark ye've been makin' on the laddy's gown. D'ye nut think it's a 'thousand' shams to ye?"

"Never mind, Nero, I'll go and speak to my father."

The King was not far behind his constant companion. He stepped out from the trees and stood beside his daughter. Perhaps he, too, was aware of the contrast between himself and the beautiful girl.

"D——n it, girl, you look like the ghost sitting here."

"I wanted to see you," said Penelope, taking no notice of the oath, and, indeed, the King's language was never choice. "I have heard from uncle, and he says he has written to you about my going to London."

"So he has. His crasy letter b here somewhere. Who's to pay the aecocne, I

Penelope read and re-read the letter with a smile on her lips. She felt that she was quite ready to do her uncle's bidding. She must obey, but suddenly also she felt she could love. She would learn to love the husband of her uncle's choice. Princesses need not be unhappy because they were not free, like vulgar persons, to choose their husbands. They could love one worthy of them, and then
"You're a girl, and what's the use of
girls?"
"They can marry those who can redeem
land with their money."
The King looked a few minutes at the
child he cared for so little, because she
was a girl, and because she was so different
to himself.
"A girl makes a mess of everything.
Your uncle has filled your head with
rubbish. You're pretty enough and proud
enough to please the devil, but it isn't pride
that finds a husband who will unloose his
purse-strings; besides, who wants a stranger
here!"
"I shall find him," said Penelope,
stamping her foot angrily, and loosening
her father's arm. "Uncle believes in me,
and he knows I can do it."
"Let me see the bond—and the man
who signs it won't sign it for nothing."
Penelope raised her head.
"Am I nothing?"
"You're well enough as far as looks go,
Penelope, but a husband will want none of
your high and mighty pride. You'll make
a mull of it as did your great-aunt, and
Graybarrow will repent when it is too late.
It's Davy and myself as will save the estate.
We don't want a meddling girl to teach
us."
"Father!" said Penelope, with a world
of reproach in her tone. "Father! you
know that unless something is done at
once—"
The King of Rothery shook himself free
of his daughter with an oath and walked off
to join Oldcorn, who was searching for
some lost sheep. Some neighbouring
rascals had been counterfeiting his own
mark on the King's ewes, and Oldcorn and
he must at once bring the matter home
to them. As to Penelope and her
marriage, that seemed a pure chimera to
him. What man would waste good gold
on another man's land at the bidding of a
girl? Graybarrow had always lived on
dreams, and much they had done him.
Besides—if the old tale was true no gold
was wanted. Ah! but was it true? The
King chanced to himself as he strode
along the mountain-side.
For a long time the girl sat upon the
grey stone, her proud heart swelling at
her father's treatment, and hardening her-
sell against his scorn of her. Then she
rose and stood on the hillside, and crossed
her arms to still the beating of her
heart:
"I will do it," she said aloud. "I—I
will save the Winakells' estate, and then
my father will see that a girl can accomplish
more than he and his son together can do."
Then she laughed a little, the laugh of a
lonely girl who means to do without
the sympathy which should be hers by
right.
"I will not think of myself, I will not
care. If I cannot love, I will do without
it. Many people live without love. My
mother did."
The stars came forth upon the indescrib-
able blue of the evening sky; the moon
was bright over the clump of fir-trees; as
Penelope wandered back to the dreary
Palace. The Rothery seemed to speak new
swelling words of pride, and she loved it
now with a new love which had in it some
of the fierce determination of her nature.
She climbed to her turret room, and when
she had dismissed Betty, she sat a long
time wondering about that future her
uncle had promised her. How would the
great world receive her? A certain shy-
ness mingled with her pride. She knew
so little what society meant or what it
would entail upon her; she only knew that
she was going to fulfil her mission, a
mission not only self-imposed, but which
had been given to her by her uncle, the
man who had made her capable of appreci-
ating many things, the meaning of which
her brother did not even know.
She tried to read, but the words she read
made no impression upon her. She could
see only the big world before her, looking
like a great flame, into which she must
step from out the darkness of Rothery.
Then from the flame also stepped forth the
lover, and he took her hand, and told her
that he was beautiful and that he loved her
with all his heart. Penelope felt her pride
melted before this new hope, and a he
knelt to the flame and stepped forth the
sword's edge, whilst the
moon looked in on her solitude with a
large, wondering eye.
The fabrics of a dream and of a girl's
fair castles soon fade and fall low.
Then Penelope took the big Bible that
had belonged to her mother and opened it,
but she did not heed the words she read,
for another castle was slowly rising from
the ashes of the first, and the mag'ic fabric
was built up again o' endless day dreams,
li which girls who have been brought up
in much solitude indulge naturally, not
from ambition or from love of power, but because of their innate longing to love. This love is the ideal of a pure mind, the love that means to give much devotion in return for devotion, a love where all is equal and in which nothing is disappointing.

Even as she knelt to say oft-repeated words of prayer, Penelope Winskell was full of this personal devotion, full of the great youthful power to love—which seemed to satisfy her better than any religious creed.

Then suddenly she rose from her knees, and the beautiful young face settled itself into an expression which was almost hard.

"What does it matter? He must be rich and he must love me enough to save our Palace and our land. I shall be satisfied with that."

Penelope spoke ignorantly, but even her ignorance was not devoid of heroism. She accepted the sacrifice and counted the cost because she was not now required to pay. Then she looked out once more over the sleeping woods, and listened again to the low murmur of the Rothery before getting into bed. After this she fell asleep, counting more dreams from dreams, more love from love.

The clouds descended slowly over the valley and over the Palace, and wrapped themselves round the Princess who wished to soar above them. The moonlight was blotted out, and before morning the rain was falling with a slow, steady, melancholy patter.

CHAPTER VII. IN LONDON TOWN.

Some days later the Duke of Greybarrow stood by the window of a house in Eaton Square. The London season had begun, and there was a distant and continuous roar of cabs and carriages. The drawing-room, which the Duke had been pacing for some time previously, looked out upon the trees of the square. They made a brave show of green now, and the flowers boldly defied the smoke and were gaudy and well watered. The room itself was prettily furnished, and showed plain traces of a woman's hand. It belonged to a young widow who had lately lost her husband. She had fled into the country, letting her house to Penelope's uncle at a nominal rent. The Duke had been much favoured by fate, for he had been able to hunt up a few old friends, who almost looked upon him as a returned spirit, so much had his existence been forgotten. These old friends belonged chiefly to a certain set whose good nature unfortunately exceeded their powers of paying their debts. One of them, a certain Lord Farrant, a jovial, good-natured man, whose youthful follies had been counteracted by his marriage with a lively heiress, was, however, able and willing to forward "Dick Winskell's plans," as he called them. His wife knew a lady who was acquainted with the ways of society, and who was herself well known, but who, having lately lost her money, was now glad to enjoy the pleasures of life for a season at the cost of a stranger.

The Duke had an interview with Mrs. Todd. He found himself confronted with a short and fashionably dressed lady, very voluble and very much at her ease. His courtly manners in no way subdued her. He would have liked to meet with a lady who talked less, but he considered that Penelope was very ignorant of the world, and would need some one who was neither afraid of it, nor its scorn of ignorance.

The Duke was now watching for Penelope's arrival. He looked thoughtful, as if conflicting thoughts were warring against each other. There was a strange new light in his eyes, as if the world had already roused him from the torpor which had enveloped him at Rothery. He might have been a French Marquis living on the edge of the precipice of revolution, insisting on the accustomed etiquette, and smiling at the danger. He even wondered at himself as he looked round the room.

"It is worth venturing" he said aloud. "Penelope must succeed. Her beauty is of no common order, and she has more wits than the ordinary young ladies I have lately met at the Farrants'. If I can hold out for a month or six weeks, the season will be over or nearly so, and then—well, nothing attempted, nothing done." He smiled again at certain remembrances which were hidden too deeply in his mind for even mental words.

So busy was he with these thoughts that he did not see the cab for which he was watching, and out of which Betty stepped to ring the bell. The Duke hurried downstairs just in time to greet Penelope in the hall.

"Come, that's right Betty will find her own way upstairs. Penzie, let me see you. The roses and the lilacs must bloom in this big, black city." He held her a little from 'him, for he had seen some smart ladies, as he called them, and now he wished to compare Penzie with them.
His smile might have told the Princess that she had stood the test well.
"You are a little pale, but the journey is long. You have not changed your mind!"

Penelope clasped her hands round his arm.
"No, uncle; you see I am here to obey you. I am ready."

"My first command is to think of nothing, my Princess, but how best to enjoy yourself. That will take away the little frown of thought on your brow, which does not befit this gay world. Mrs. Todd comes this evening; till then you and I can enjoy ourselves. When she has arrived I shall go to my club. I have some invitations for you already. All my old friends have not yet forgotten me, you see."

He led her to the chimneypiece, where some invitation cards were displayed, and spread them out before her with child-like pleasure.
"You will soon be at home among the best of them, and Mrs. Todd promises to preside over your wardrobe."

"Oh, uncle, she spoils it all. I must have my own ideas about dress."

"You will be in good hands. Do all that is right; you need not think of expense, Penzle, I have ample—sufficient, that is, for our purpose."

"Are you sure, uncle? I am giving you so much trouble."

He made a deprecating movement with his shapely white hand. These two had entered into a strange contract. The man bent on one object, little understanding a woman's heart; the girl bent on the same object and willing to co-operate in every way, but not yet aware with what dangerous tools she was going to work.

Penelope had stepped, or so it seemed to her, into an altogether different life. She had hardly realised how strange the change would be, how curious to find herself a prisoner between four walls, unable to wander about her glen and her wild hills, or even to go where she liked. Then something of the fascination of the great town struck her mind, as she passed through the crowded streets and beheld the city of which she had heard so much, and of which she had thought at times as of a dark, mysterious place.

"Uncle, how strange it is," she said when she had gone over the house, which was really pretty considering it was in London. "I suppose some persons would hate to live in our Palace, and to face the loneliness of the glen!"

"There is a great fascination in London; I feel it myself. When I was young, Penzie, I was as familiar with London as I am now with Rothery."

"You never speak of that time. What made you come and live at the Palace?"

The Duke sat by the open window and Penelope stood up near the balcony, looking so beautiful in her simple black dress that her uncle's hopes rose higher.

He smiled to himself. His recollections were evidently not very sad, but also not very easily translated.

"It was more prudent to cut oneself off from the fascinations of the world, Penzie. But for you I should not have returned to it."

"Are you sorry?" she said, stooping down and giving one of her rare smiles, which showed of what depth of love she was capable.

"Sorry? I don't know. Some experiences that we have shunned are ever delightful memories even when renounced. But to return to you, child. Mrs. Todd will be coming in a few minutes; after that, remember, you and I will live in public."

"O! course. A stranger can have nothing to do with us—what is really us—but only with the outside life. I can learn soon what is required of me, though you are a little afraid, uncle, that I am only a country maiden."

Penelope laughed a low, musical laugh which it did her uncle's heart good to hear. She was still young at heart, and not incapable of appreciating pleasure. A sudden qualm came over him that he was bringing the girl, unprepared, into a strange world, but he put the thought from him. He had come with a purpose, and with this nothing must interfere.

"The Winskells have always been able to fulfil their self-appointed tasks," he said.
"If anything puzzles you, Mrs. Todd will be able to teach you."

"Oh, I shall be silent and learn; I shall not ask her," said Penelope Winskell proudly, with a pride that would have made a woman of the world laugh till she had fathomed its strength.

"You have inherited your great-aunt's pride, Penzie, and added to it some more of your own. Ah! here is the lady. Remember, I had no time to pick and choose, and she is a lady by birth and a woman of the world."

Before Penelope had gathered her ideas together Mrs. Todd was in the room. A
good-looking woman of forty, dressed in
the height of fashion, and with a smart-
ness of manner and speech which Penelope
had never seen before. Anything but the
innate pride which refuses to be surprised
or to ask questions prevented her from
showing her astonishment, when she was
suddenly seized and kissed and when a
volley of words was directed at her.

"Miss Winskell, I am so glad to make
your acquaintance. How very nice it will
be to act chaperon to you! Oh! in five
minutes we shall no longer be strangers.
Lord Farrant explained everything to me,
and we are all going to conspire to make
you enjoy yourself immensely. Your first
season, too! You are to be presented next
week—Lady Farrant undertakes all that.

Delightful woman, such spirit! She says
I am the only person besides herself who
is never tired. Are you really called a
Princess in your parts? That is quite
romantic. Lord Farrant explained it to
me; such a very, very old family yours is,
quite decrepit with age, he said. I adore
old pedigrees."

"We shall dine at seven to-day, Mrs.
Todd," put in the Duke. "Will that suit
you?"

"Oh, yes, anything suits me. I suppose
you are tired after your journey, but to-
morrow me must go to the dressmaker's. I
know one who is excellent, and so cheap!
I don't tell any one her name, but I shall
treat you as a daughter. Your dress is
rather countrified, you see. Of course it
suits you. I expect everything will suit
you. There are some girls who look well
in anything, and some who never look well
at all. There is a ball at the Farrants'
to-morrow. Can we manage to get a
dress by then, I wonder? O yes, I think
I shall not say so, but I think it is
delightful and romantic! How-

never, that ne^not be mentioned. Vm
sure you'll soon be the fashion because of
your beauty; you are not vain, I see."

"I don't know. I believe that beauty
is a power, and I want that sort of
power."

Mrs. Todd was almost silenced Ibr a
moment by the strange answer, and then
she too made up her mind not to be aor-

sent that you are so good-looking, for it will
make my task comparatively easy."

"It is very kind of you to take so much
trouble for me," said Penelope, only just
able to preserve her self-possession amidst
this avalanche of words.

"Oh! not at all. I was born with a
genius for dress. I dressed my dolls
fashionably when I was five years old, and
I was very miserable if they looked
dowdy. That was my gift, just as some
people are born artists or musicians.
You see, it is quite a delight to me to
have some one who will repay my
trouble."

They had reached the drawing-room door
by this time, and Penelope had made up
her mind to be resigned. She even
laughed at this new experience because
she despised the speaker, though she
meant to be an obedient pupil.

"Positively, all your dresses are of the
same pattern! How very odd, and yet,
perhaps, it is not. Have you never been to
London?"

"Never till to-day."

"Good gracious! How charming! But
you paid visits in country houses?"

"Never," said Penelope. "I have never
left the Palace."

Mrs. Todd could not repress her amuse-

ment.

"At the—the Palace you had visitors!"

"Never," said the Princess gravely.
"My father dislikes strangers, and we lived
quite quietly."

"Quite delightful and romantic! How-
ever, that need not be mentioned. I'm
sure you'll soon be the fashion because of
your beauty; you are not vain, I see."

"How young and yet how old!" thought
the widow; "but how lovely she is!
Perfect in feature, but she has hardly enough animation about her to compete with the fast girls."

"I shall do my best, I can assure you, but I expect you will soon fall in love, with—"

"Oh, no, I am not going to fall in love, Mrs. Todd. I shall marry the richest man who—who is suitable."

The astonished Mrs. Todd was silenced for quite three minutes.

"Oh, well, yes; of course one cannot live without money, and I don't mind owning that I was foolish enough to fall in love with a young officer. We married on nothing a year, and soon repented ever having seen each other, but though I see now that I was foolish, I thought then that I was doing quite the right thing by falling desperately in love."

"Of course you had no higher ideas, but—oh, Mrs. Todd," and Penelope laughed at seeing the look of consternation, "this is my only evening gown, and that was made three years ago to go to a ball."

"A ball! Oh, then, you have been to one?

Penelope laughed again, and Mrs. Todd thought she had never heard such a pretty laugh considering that the girl was so "horribly worldly."

"Yes, our village ball—In the village school-room, lighted with oil lamps, and where the ladies pay threepence; but of course I did not dance. I only went to look on, as the people thought it a great honour for any of us to come to see them dancing."

"Oh, you did not dance!"

"No, but I can dance. Betty was famous for her steps, and she taught me."

"My dear, the whole episode is really very romantic. If you were not so very—she altered "worldly" to—"wise, I should fancy I was living in romantic times."

"I suppose London has no romance, has it?"

"Romance! I should think not indeed. How about your hat? You must not go in for fashion, but for what suits you. People will forgive you everything."

"Why should they forgive me? I mean to become exactly like a London girl till I marry."

Mrs. Todd again received a mental electric shock.

"Oh, well, yes, it's wiser, of course, but I mean your beauty will make people think that all you do is right. You may lead the
its venerable trees. Or of the beautiful Shalimar Gardens at Baghbanpur, laid out for the pleasure of the Emperor, Shah Jahan.

Let us now turn to the West. A joyous little sketch of a Western garden occurs in the animated pages of the "Roman de la Rose." Never was any other spot, says the poet, so rich in trees and in singing-birds. So exquisite was the harmony of the feathered minstrels that he who listened straightway forgot his sorrows, and imagined himself in an earthly Paradise. In this fair garden bloomed the violet in all its beauty, and the modest periwinkle; flowers red and white; flowers of every colour, of high price and great value, very fragrant and delectable. Good spicery grew there also: cloves and grains of paradise, aniseed and cinnamon. Tall laurels and lofty pines threw within its borders; olive-trees and cypresses, branching elms and great forked oaks. Here and there shone crystal fountains, their waters rippling onward with a pleasant sound of melody—just as the poet's verse ripples on, with a music which will be heard for ages.

I love to think of that garden in the "Decameron" where Boccaccio assembles the cavaliers and ladies who had fled the plague-swept streets of Florence, to while away the hours with tales of love and passion. It was an extensive pleasure-ground of the richest verdure, with its bed of lilies; its pleasant grove full of the stately trees dedicated to "Olympie wi^ Its bed of lilies; its pleasant grove full of the stately trees dedicated to "Olympie and to "his son Alddes"; and its same writer's gloomy novel of "Lucretia," where, after sketching the stately mansion of the St. Johns, he speaks of the old-fashioned terrace which skirted it on the garden-side, and led by a double flight of steps to a smooth lawn, intersected by broad gravel walks, shadowed by vast and noble cedars, and gently and gradually mingling with the wilder scenery of the park.

I know of no pleasanter pastime on a day when one cannot get abroad, than wandering among the gardens of the poet and the novelist. For instance, one may betake oneself to the terrace at Belmont, where Lorenzo and Jessica rejoiced in the moonlight and the heavens inlaid with "golden patines," while the sounds of sweet music stole through the "cedars alisey." Or to that garden at Verona, in which Julie and her Romeo tempted Fate and exchanged their passionate vows; or to that at Messina, with the "pleached hedges," where Beatrice placed with the diamond-tipped shafts of her gay wit the fine self-consciousness of Benedick. Or we may turn to Spenser's "Bower of Bliss," with its bed of lilies; its pleasant grove full of the stately trees dedicated to "Olympie Love" and to "his son Aldeia"; and its "arbour green," framed of wanton Ivy, flowering fair, "through which the fragrant Eglaentie did spread his prickling arms, entwined with roses red." And then one remembers those old Elizabethan gardens, with their memories of poetry and romance—well fitted were they to hold the
imagination prisoner! One loves to recall their green banks and blossom-bright terraces; their broad prospects of pasture and cornfield, of hill and vale; their trim arbours garlanded with creeping roses and balmy honeysuckles; their rich masses of the poets' flowers, carnations and gillyflowers, stocks, lupines, and sweet-williams, abounding both in colour and perfume; their long leafy avenues and "wildernesses"; their broad reaches of greensward, soft and smooth as velvet; their dimpling pools and winding rivulets; their tall hedges of holly or hawthorn, and their griffins and peacocks, urns and vases, quaintly moulded in yew and box and laurel. It was in such a garden as this that Sidney meditated his "Arcadia." It was in such a garden as this that Bacon learned to "enjoy the purest of human pleasures" — "the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross wildernesses" — and to know "what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air." For example, "roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells" — that is, do not diffuse them abroad— "so that you may walk by a whole row of them and find nothing of their sweetness; yes, though it be in a morning's dew. Bays, likewise," he continues, "yield no smell as they grow, rosemary little, nor sweet marjoram; that which, above all others, yields the sweetest smell in the air, is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the musk-rose; then the strawberry leaves dying, with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flower of the vines, it is a little dust like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming fresh; then sweet-briar, then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under parlour or lower chamber windows; then pinks and gillyflowers, specially the matted pink and clove gillyflower; then the flowers of the lime-tree; then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of bean-flowers I speak not, because they are field-flowers; but those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are these: that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints; therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread."

Bacon's conception of a garden is worthy of his large and stately intellect; but it was one which only a rich noble could hope to realise. Lord Beaconsfield, in "Vivian Grey," speaks of the pleasure-grounds of Château Déor as carrying out "the romance of the Gardens of Verulam," and it is "a romance" which one naturally associates with such a demesne as Trentham or Chatsworth. An area of thirty acres is to be divided into three parts, a green in the entrance, a heath or desert in the going forth, and a main garden in the midst with alleys on both sides. The central garden is to be square, and encompassed on all sides with a stately arched hedge; "the arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work of some ten feet high, and six feet broad, and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch." And in the middle is to be a "fair mount," with three ascents and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast, "which," he says, "I would have to be perfect circles, without any bulwarks or embossments; and the whole mount to be thirty feet high, and some fine banqueting house, with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass." There are to be fountains, because they are a great beauty and refreshment; but no pools, because they mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. The fountains he intends to be of two natures; "the one that sprinkleth or spurteth water; the other a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty feet square, but without fish, or slime, or mud." Passing on to the heath or wild garden, we find that it is to be without trees, but to contain "some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violet, straw-berries, and primroses; for those are sweet, and prosper in the shade; and these to be in the heath here and there, not in any order. I like also," he continues, in his spacious way, "little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills — such as are in wild heath — to be set, some with wild thyme, some with pinks, some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with periwinkle, some with violets, some with strawberries, some with cow-sorbs, some with daisies, some with red roses, some with liliwm convallium (lilies of the valley), some with sweet- williams red, some with bear's foot, and the like low flowers, being within sweet and slightly, part of which heaps to be with standards of little bushes pricked upon their top
and part without; the standards to be roses, juniper, holly, barberries—but here and there, because of the smell of their blossom—red-currants, gooseberries, rosemary, bays, sweet-briar, and such like; but these standards to be kept with cutting that they grow not out of course.”

Who would not be well pleased to wander in Andrew Marvell's garden, with its vines and melons, its nectarines, and "curious peaches," and, absorbed in contemplation of all the fair sweet things around, withdraw the mind into its own happiness, "annihilating all, that's made to a green thought in a green shade"? Who would not have been content to have enjoyed with Cowley "the blessed shades" he loved so fondly, "the gentle cool retreat from all the immoderate heat in which the frantic world does burn and sweat"?

Then one would like to look in upon Sir William Temple at Moor Park, the gardens of which were originally made by the Countess of Bedford, "with very great care, excellent contrivance, and much art." Temple, who declared Moor Park to be the sweetest place he had ever seen in his life, at home or abroad, describes them with loving minuteness in his essay, "On the Gardens of Epicurus." The terraced gravel walk on which, he says, the best parterre opens, is about three hundred paces long and broad in proportion, the border set with standard laurels, and two summer-houses at the ends. From this walk three descents of stone steps lead into a very great parterre, which is divided by gravel walks and adorned with fountains and statues. As the sides of the parterre are two large cloisters upon arches of stone, and ending with two other summer-houses. Over the cloisters are two terraces covered with lead and fenced with balusters, the entrance to which is from the summer-house. Flights of steps lead from the middle of the parterre into the lower garden, "which is all fruit-trees arranged about the several quarters of a wilderness, the walks all green and leafy, with a grotto" embellished with figures of shell rock-work, fountains and water-works. On the other side of the house spreads a garden of evergreens, "very wild, shady, and adorned with rough rock-work and fountains."

There is a decided note of artificiality about the Moor Park Gardens, and the reader will perhaps agree with Horace Walpole that any man might design and build a sweet a garden who had been born in, and never stirred out of, Holborn. But one must regret the disappearance of the walks and parterres among which William the Third discussed matters of high policy with Temple, and taught Temple's secretary to cut asparagus after the Dutch fashion. Moor Park in the middle of the eighteenth century passed into the hands of the great circumnavigator and Admiral Lord Anson, who spent nearly eighty thousand pounds in arranging and embellishing the grounds under the direction of "Capability Brown." The result was scarcely more satisfactory to Horace Walpole than the original gardens had been. "I was not much struck with it after all the miracles I had heard Brown had performed. He has undulated the horizon in so many artificial mole-hills, that it is full as unnatural as if it was drawn with a rule and compass." Every lover of gardens bails the poet Pope as a foremost member of the craft. Though his grounds at Twickenham were of small dimensions, he contrived, by the inspiration of his own fine taste, and with the assistance of the two great professional gardeners, Bridgman and Kent, and the advice of that brilliant paladin, Lord Peterborough, to convert them into one of the prettiest gardens in England; and we owe to his example and his teaching the abolition of the prim monotonies of the Dutch style, and the popularity of the picturesque or natural style, generally known as landscape gardening. His practice was not wholly free from defects, it is true, and of his dusky groves, and large lawn, and cypress avenue, he was not half so proud as of the tunnel encrusted with shells and spars and bits of looking-glass, which he called his "Grotto." But this folly may be forgiven to him in consideration of the good work he accomplished, and the impulse he gave to garden-cultivation. After his death, his house and demesne were purchased by Sir William Stanhope, who enlarged and improved them—though not in Horace Walpole's opinion. "Would you believe it," he writes to his friend, Sir Horace Mann, "he has cut down the sacred groves themselves! In short, it was a little bit of ground of five acres, enclosed with three lanes, and seeing nothing. Pope had twisted and twirled, and rhymed and harmonised this, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns opening and opening beyond one another, and the whole surrounded with thick,
impenetrable woods. Sir William has hacked and hewed these groves, wriggled a winding gravel walk through them with an edging of shrubs, in what they call the modern taste, and, in short, has desired the three lanes to walk in again—and now is forced to shut them out again by a wall, for there was not a Muse could walk there but she was spied by every country fellow that went by with a pipe in his mouth."

Perhaps poets succeed best in the ideal gardens which they construct in their verse, for there no limitations fetter them; and with a boundless generosity they throw them open to all-comers. We may wander with Tennyson's "Mand" in that garden of roses and lilies fair "on a lawn," where she walked in her state, tending on "bed and bower." Or we may muse in that other garden which the poet has depicted with such tenderly minute touches—which was not wholly in the busy world, nor quite beyond it; where the little green wicket in a private hedge opened into a grassy walk "through crowded lilac ambush trimly pruned"; where in the midst a cedar spread its dark green layers of shade; and the garden-glasses shone in the sunny noon; and every moment "the twinkling laurel scattered silver lights."

Or we may enter the garden of "Aurora Leigh," where the ivy climbed heartlong up the wall, and the guilder rose, at the lightest beck of the wind, tossed about its "flower-apples," and the verbena strained the point of passionate fragrance. Or that fanciful garden in Keats's "Endymion," where grew all tendrils green of every bloom and hue, together intertwined and tramelled fresh; the glossy sprouting vine; theivy withEthiop berries; the woodbins of our English hedges; the convolvulus; the creeper "mellowing for an autumn blush"; andvirgin's bowers—that is, the wild clematis, or traveller's joy—"trailing airily." Shelley's garden—in his poem of "The Sensitive Plant"—is too purely imaginative for "human food," and we turn away to Robert Browning's:

Here's the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short white siren—
Down this side of the gravel walk.
She went while her robe's edge brushed the box;
And here she paused in her gracious talk,
To point me a moth on the milk-white phlox.

A word or two may be said, in conclusion, on the gardens of the novelists, who by the way are too apt, like the poets, to represent them as places of a miraculous character, where the flowers of all seasons seem to blow simultaneously and spontaneously. By some writers, however, they are treated with great delicacy and with sober truthfulness. Scott's description of the garden at Tully Veolan is remarkable in this respect. It presented, he says, a pleasant scene. The southern side of the house, clothed with fruit-trees and evergreens, extended along a terrace, which was partly paved, partly gravelled, partly bordered with flowers and choice shrubs. This elevation descended by three flights of steps into what may be called the garden proper, and was fenced along the top by a stone parapet with a heavy balustrade. "The garden, which seemed to be kept with great accuracy, abounded in fruit-trees, and exhibited a profusion of flowers and evergreens, cut into grotesque forms. It was laid out in terraces, which descended rank by rank from the western wall to a large brook, which had a tranquil and smooth appearance where it served as a boundary to the garden; but, near the extremity, leapt in tumult over a strong dam, or weir-head, the cause of its temporary tranquillity, and there forming a cascade, was overlooked by an octagonal summer-house, with a gilded bear on the top by way of vane. After this feat, the brook, assuming its natural rapid and fierce character, escaped from the eye down a deep and wooded dell, from the cope of which arose a massive but ruinous tower, the former habitation of the Barons of Bradwardine."

If we had time we might ask the reader to visit Clarissa Harlowe's old-world garden at Harlowe Place; or Du Val's, as described by Plumer Ward in his admirable though now little read romance. Or we might accompany Lothair to Corsande's garden, where, "in their season, flourished abundantly all those productions of nature which are now banished from our once delighted senses; huge bushes of honey-suckle, and bowers of sweet-pea and sweet-briar, and jessamine clustering over the walls, and gillflowers scenting with their sweet breath the ancient bricks from which they seemed to spring." Then there is Mr. Rochester's in "Jane Eyre," which was full of all sorts of old-fashioned flowers—stocks, sweet-williams, pansies, mingled with southernwood, sweet-briar, and various fragrant herbs. And, lastly, there is the garden at Chevreaux Manor, in "Mr. Gilfi's Love-story," with its great pond,
where a pair of swans swam lazily with one leg tucked under a wing, and the open water-lilies lay, accepting the kisses of the fluttering sparkles of light; with its smooth emerald-green lawn, sloping down to the rougher and browner herbage of the park; and with its parterres glowing in their various splendours, while verbenas and hollyhokes gave up their finest incense to the airs of heaven.

The subject is a wide one, and I have touched only the borders of it; but what I have said may suffice to indicate to the reader its "potentiality" of interest, if he cares to pursue it further.

NO MORE.

Oh, the soft wind over the sea,
Oh, the soft wind over the dunes,
And the music that sighs to the midnight skies,
In the light that is all the moon's.

The moon's, aye, and ours, who watch by the sea,
And dream of the days that will never be.

For the soft wind over the sea,
And the soft wind over the dunes,
Do but whisper a lie to my sweetheart and I,

In the light that is all the moon's.

For fate is too mighty for him and for me,
Though we dream of the days that will never be.

The winds will laugh over the sea,
The winds will play over the dunes.
And others will dream in the mystical gleam

Of the light that is all the moon's.

But we shall be parted, we two, though we
Still may hope of the days that will never be.

Oh, the soft wind over the dunes,
The low sweet laughter, the quick tears after,

In the light that is all the moon's!

We shall not forget the sweet watch by the sea,
Or the days that we dreamt of, that never shall be.

THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL.
IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

On the eve of the opening of this Canal—which is likely to do more for Midland England than Midland England imagines—I found myself in a Manchester hotel, set to dine face to face with a gentleman from Liverpool. Our conversation soon, and inevitably, drifted upon the one great topic. It was December the thirty-first, 1893. This "one great topic" was not the ending of one year and the beginning of another, with all its unknown vicissitudes. Oh dear, no! The Ship Canal is reckoned in Lancashire as something of more importance than the thoughts that may be supposed to be generated by retrospect and anticipation. The one is a practical matter; the other is commonly held to be an affair of sentiment solely. And the typical Lancashire man is nothing if he is not practical, and pre-eminently practical.

"An amazing work, to be sure!" I murmured, in echo of the tone of the Manchester papers these years past.

"Amazing—not at all!" was the prompt reply. "These fellows here are rare hands at blowing their own trumpet, but after the Suez Canal the Manchester Ship Canal is just child's play. The amazing part of it is—if there is anything at all amazing in it, that is—that forty or fifty thousand deluded individuals should hope to get dividends out of it. Their grandsons may, or may not. For my part, I live for myself, not for my grandchildren."

In objection, I mentioned the opinion of experts at the outset of the undertaking. These gentlemen said that the difficulties connected with the Canal were not financial but merely engineering, and such as hinged on the vested interests which would necessarily be disturbed by it.

"My dear sir," retorted my via-à-vis, laying down his knife and fork—we were at the fish course—"people will say anything. That was to gull the public. The public isn't satisfied to have its few hundreds or thousands as bank deposits. It lives in terror of banks breaking. Besides, it wants more interest than banks pay for deposits. And so it goes in for the Ship Canal, gold mines in the Goodwin Sands—or anything else that can be fixed up in a prospectus."

We argued the matter until the sweets—or rather he did. Then we paused, each much where he was at the beginning.

I might as reasonably expect to hear an account of the good qualities of a man from the girl with whom the man has recently played fast and loose, as have looked for an unprejudiced estimate of the chances of the Manchester Ship Canal from a Liverpool man of this prejudiced stamp.

There was a considerable amount of noise and conviviality that night, both inside the hotel and outside it. Probably never in one spell was more whisky drunk in this famous city—and the Canal was toasted and cheered quite as much as were individuals.

The New Year opened the next morning with a promise that made one fancy dear old Father Time is not averse to libations of spirituous liquors. The normal state of the weather in Manchester in winter is dismal. But "on this aus-
proud occasion"—as was said more than once at civic banquets in connection with the Canal—there was a suggestion of honest sunshine, if only mortals would possess their souls in patience. Nowhere, perhaps, has the sun more effort to make to pierce the terrestrial veil of fog and common smoke. It was clear, however, that on this first of January, 1894, the sun meant to do its best to smile on the Canal; there was a suggestion of possible that it was the same with the Liverpool friend would of course say sarcastically that it was the same with the deadly isthmus who survived the climate. My Panama Canal. The labourers on that dreadful canal it will be delivered in Manchester for five shillings and elevenpence a ton against fourteen shillings and fivepence. Petroleum also must be noticed. By canal it will be delivered in Manchester for five shillings and elevenpence a ton against fourteen shillings and fivepence through Liverpool as hitherto.

But, quite apart from any hopes they may have in the Canal, the working classes have already drawn millions from it. My Liverpool friend would of course say sardonically that it was the same with the Panama Canal. The labourers on that deadly isthmus who survived the climate no doubt earned good money. But it was the "good money" of the "bourgeoisie."
and others. So, my Liverpool friend might protest, with the Ship Canal money. The eight million pounds of ordinary and preference shares represent the sacrifice of the middle and moneymade classes for the working class pure and simple.

The first sod of the Canal was cut by Lord Egerton of Tatton, the chairman of the Company, on November the eleventh, 1887. Since then navvies by the thousand have worked here without interruption. At one time sixteen thousand three hundred and sixty-one men and boys were employed. Much still remains to be done. The docks at Warrington have to be formed, the embankment at Runcorn completed, and a finish put to the sides of the cutting in a hundred places. For a couple of years more, perhaps, men will be at work here by the thousand, and when the Canal is perfected, there will remain the army of permanent servants of the Company—bridge-tenders, dock employés, and all the hundreds of others who are an inevitable part and parcel of a going concern.

Up to the end of June, 1893, no less than eight million eight hundred and sixty-one thousand seven hundred and sixty pounds had been expended in wages and the necessary materials for the Canal. The whole sum absorbed by them was thirteen million four hundred and seventy thousand two hundred and twenty-one pounds, which includes the purchase of the Bridgewater Canal for one million seven hundred and eighty-two thousand one hundred and seventy-two pounds, and land and compensation—especially to railway companies—one million one hundred and sixty-one thousand three hundred and forty-seven pounds. The railway companies have of course harassed the Canal directors very greatly. They were not likely to see their pleasant monopoly taken from them without a protest. But Acts of Parliament have been more potent than railway boards. The nation has empower the Canal Company to compel the railway companies to build bridges and submit to the intrusion of the waterway; though, of course, the Canal Company has had to pay the piper—extravagantly indeed, most disinterested persons think.

To meet this huge expenditure, of course the original eight million pounds was inadequate. A first mortgage of one million eight hundred and twelve thousand pounds supplemented it, and later a second mortgage of six hundred thousand pounds. Nor was this all. Things looked black with the Canal when all this money was spent, and more was wanted. It seemed impossible to continue mortgaging the work, and yet hope that such sums as could be raised would suffice. To put an end to this peddling procedure, the Manchester Corporation at length came nobly to the rescue. "You want more money," these great-hearted and large-pursed gentlemen observed. "Very well. The Canal must not become bankrupt and purposeless. What do you say to five millions? Will that see you through?"

In effect, Manchester lent five million pounds to the Company, and saved the Canal that is to bring her such a rich harvest in return.

Of the total capital of fifteen million four hundred and twelve thousand pounds thus at disposal, at the end of June, 1893, nearly two million pounds remained in the exchequer. No further demands, or rather appeals, are likely to be made to the public on the Canal's behalf. It is already an established fact, with ships steering to and fro on it, and dock labourers are doing on the Manchester wharves the same kind of work with which Londoners are familiar. Thames way, east of London Bridge. A revenue has begun. It remains to be seen if the growth of that revenue is to put the growth of the earnings of even the Suez Canal to the blush.

By the way, it is notorious that our British water canals are most profitable institutions. The Bridgewater Canal—which has been bought by the Ship Canal Company—at the time of its transfer had doubled the value of its shares. The Birmingham Canal shares had, in 1853, increased in worth from one hundred pounds each to about three thousand two hundred pounds. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal, in 1842, paid thirty-four per cent. in dividends, and in the last twenty years have paid twenty-two per cent., notwithstanding the great competition they have had to fight against.

Other instances might be given. But the above may suffice. Surely, the promoters of the Ship Canal exclaim, if these comparatively trivial undertakings succeed so admirably, our famous work may hope for the best, in spite of our enormous liabilities.

But, it may be demurred, will not the railway companies affected by this formidable rival lower their rates so as to cut its throat?

They would, it may be guessed, be only
too quick to do this if they could, for there is no mercy shown in commercial life. But they cannot do it. If they were to carry cotton and wool for nothing from Liverpool to the mill towns, there would still be the Liverpool charges of portage to the bad against them. They would, in fact, have to consent to be two or three shillings per ton out of pocket on all this kind of business. Railway directors there may be—though it is doubtful—whose lust for revenge would urge them to deal this blow to the Canal they hate. But there are shareholders to be reckoned with, as well as their own colleagues. These would soon put a stop to such expensive fanaticism.

And now let us glance briefly at some figures which may help to make the Canal comprehensible. Figures are not attractive to all people. For their own part, feel uneasy in their presence. But in certain relations they are not to be dispensed with, and an account—however slight—of the Manchester Ship Canal would be impossible without them.

Between the Mersey at Liverpool and the Manchester docks, there is a rise in level of sixty feet six inches. The Canal begins at Eastham, on the Cheshire side of the Mersey, a few miles below Birkenhead, and is thirty-five and a half miles long. For the rise in level of course locks are necessary. Of these there are five: Eastham, Latchford, Irlam, Barton, and Mode Wheel.

The Manchester Ship Canal locks are the most picturesque points in the course. We are all used to the congregation of common canal boats at the locks on simple inland canals; and some of us know the charms of the locks on the Thames. But the colour and animation likely to characterize these Ship Canal locks will be something new in English experience. It is one thing for hard-lunged and rather coarse-spoken boatmen to assemble impatiently at an ordinary canal lock, waiting their turn for a rise—or fall. It will be quite another to see a procession of laden steamers or barges preceded by tugs, each with its various style of cargo, its various aspect, destination, and even crew—all tarrying for the lock-master's good offices.

On the first of January a few thousand cameras were used against the decorated shipping in the Canal—and nowhere were these amateur photographers more urgent than at the locks of Latchford and Irlam.

They are enormous contrivances, these locks; all save that of Eastham consisting of two chambers, the larger six hundred feet by sixty-five, and the smaller three hundred and fifty feet by forty-five. At Eastham, the most important point, as being where ships enter and leave the Mersey proper, the lock measurements are six hundred feet by eighty, and three hundred and fifty feet by fifty. There is here yet a third lock, one hundred and fifty feet by thirty.

Half-a-dozen vessels of moderate size may thus be lifted or lowered in the locks simultaneously. On the first of January we were one of a company of six, with a Norwegian timber ship abreast of us, so that we could shake hands with the crew; a Newcastle vessel before us; and another Liverpool tripper, packed with singing and shouting excursionists, aft of us. It was a novel experience, and a proof that there are hardly limits to the performing powers of water and skilful engineers in conjunction.

The average width of the Canal at water level is one hundred and seventy-two feet; its minimum width at the bottom is one hundred and twenty feet. Its least depth is twenty-six feet. With fair helm work there will be no difficulty about one large steamer passing anywhere in the Canal.

At present the Canal is not electrically lighted like that of Suez. Ships anxious to make their way up to Manchester or from it in the night must carry their own electric batteries. We may surely, however, anticipate the time when this great cutting will have the Company's lamps all up its course. There are already signs of two or three young towns on its banks. These baby municipalities will profit by this almost assured illumination. But they must take heed of the children of their citizens. The vertical red banks of the Canal are a most mortal peril to youngsters and adults alike.

Sandstone, red and yellow, marl, clay, gravel, sand, and loam over sandstones—such are the substances the navvies, both human and mechanical, have had to tackle in constructing the Canal. It has been sheer excavation. For this purpose, at one time, the following effective appliances were in use: one hundred steam excavators, including floating dredgers, steam navies, and Boston and Proctor's contrivances; one hundred and seventy-three locomotives, six thousand three hundred wagons, and two hundred and twenty-three miles of temporary railway; one hundred and ninety-four steam and other cranes; two hundred...
and nine steam pumps; and fifty-nine pile engines. Add the sixteen thousand three hundred and sixty-one men and boys, and, the busy scene may be imagined.

The locomotives are still to be seen speeding up and down the somewhat loosely fastened rails, and waggons and men are still thick on the banks here and there. But anon they will disappear. For years, however, the remains of their litter will defy rain and wind.

Horses have been used but sparingly, less than two hundred at any time. One may be glad of this, for the heavy labour would have told badly upon them. It is a work more fit for horse power in the form of steam than for the quadruped integers.

How many horses, for example, would have been required to tackle the removal of the seventy-six million tons of material taken from the Canal bed; and how many decades would they have wanted for the work steam has accomplished in six years?

A single English steam excavator at its best can shift two thousand cubic yards—each weighing one and a half tons—of soil in a day. Such a record speaks for itself.

Nothing so much as the bridges over the Canal impresses a simple observer with respect for the energy and capital and ability spent in the work. Some of the deviation bridges—works forced upon the railway companies by Acts of Parliament—are colossal fabrics, notably that at Latchford, which weighs one thousand two hundred and twenty tons.

The swing bridges, of which there are seven—and more seem necessary, or else the establishment of ferries here and there—are also delightful aids to human self-esteem. It is distinctly exhilarating to see a mass of iron weighing anything from five hundred tons to one thousand eight hundred, revolving in response to the peremptory whistling of a steamer as readily as one's own library chair. That of the Trafford Road, near Manchester, is the largest—weighing one thousand eight hundred tons, and with a forty-eight feet roadway.

One is a little curious about the future of these swing bridges. It is all very well just now when the passage of boats is intermittent. But by-and-by we may expect a continuous “queue” of steamers between Runcorn and Barton. Who will then have to go to the wall: the pedestrian and vehicular public who seek to cross the Canal—by these bridges—or the ships' owners? I dare say my alarm will seem an exaggeration; but time will show.

In concluding this paper, mention must be made of the imposing terminus of the Canal in Manchester. To the stranger the sight is a revelation. Small marvel that the people of Manchester exult with pride in the result.

Here in the heart of Lancashire—almost indeed of England—are two hundred and fifty-six acres of water space for ships, with quays more than five miles long. The horizon on all sides is that of a toiledriven manufacturing town. Of the existence of the sea there is no suggestion save in this park of water, with its scores—soon to become hundreds—of steamers lying comfortably in port.

The spectacle provokes enthusiasm, and Mr. Rawnsley's sonnet in commemoration of this New Year's Day does not seem too exuberant in the presence of these docks:

Now let the ocean wanderers, going free,
Pass in upon the many-gated tide;
By tranquil mead and quiet woodland glide
To that loud harbour where their hearts would be.

To-day "Manchester" would expose the sea;
By still invincible and courage tried
She shares with Mersey's queen her queenly pride,
And claims from far-off lands the shipman's fee.

I well is glad in all her inland rills,
Albeit she hold no more in careless play;
The sounding city where her crossways roar
Hears the great thunder of our island shore,
And, mixed with breath from her ten thousand mills,
She feels sea-breezes on her brow to-day.

A SOMBRE WOOING.
A COMPLETE STORY.

When I fell out of work in the autumn of 1892, I had so little notion I'd be likely to stay out any length of time that I didn't even trouble to look for a job during the first fortnight.

"Ben, my boy," says I to myself, "you shall have a real holiday the same as a clerk."

For a week or so I was as happy as I'd expected to be, which is saying a good deal. It was the time of year when every working man, no matter how little of a grumbler he may be as a general rule, has a grievance against the sun for going on short time, and it was just nuts to me to wake up in the dark, especially on a wet morning, and lie listening to the footsteps pattering past till I dropped off to sleep again. After my breakfast, which I took at a coffee-shop late enough to get a whole morning paper to myself, I'd walk down to the Free Library in Kennington Lane for a good read at the weeklies and
In the afternoons I went about London, learning it I might almost say, for though I’d lived in Lambeth nearly ten years, I knew but little of the Middlesex side of the river.

Twice that first week I went to a theatre and three times to a music-hall, but afterwards I mostly stuck to the library, evenings as well as mornings, partly because when I came to reckon up on the Saturday night, I found my money had melted at a most surprising rate, and partly because I’m really fonder of reading than of anything else in the way of amusement.

By the end of the second week I began to get down-hearted. It wasn’t empty pockets—I had enough put by to see me through the winter if I was careful—or fear of not finding a job after my bits of a spree were over that set me wondering why the world was ever made, or such as me sent into it, but what, for want of a better word, I must call mental indigestion. Just as a man’s stomach gets upset if he takes too much beer—or too much beef either, for that matter—my mind broke down because I overloaded it with print.

I read anything and everything I found on the tables in the reading-rooms, not to mention books out of the lending library I took home with me—if you can call a room with a bed and a chair and a bit of a rickety table in it at the top of a house full of lodgers, a home—and, being but an ignorant chap, it was too much for me. As long as I stuck to the stories it wasn’t so bad. It was the histories and philosophies which bothered me.

They made me feel I was a sort of ant, living for just a little while in a hill which wouldn’t last very long itself. Thousands of ant-hills there’d been, it seemed, since the beginning of things, and some were trampled flat, like Babylon and places in Egypt with names I can’t spell. Others, like Rome, weren’t what they’d once been, and some, like London, were still growing, only, perhaps, to be kicked into dust in their turn. What it all meant I wondered then as I wonder now, only now I’ve other things to think about, which keep me from dwelling till I’m cross’d on the riddle no man, according to the most up-to-date of the philosophies, can find an answer to.

That I should have lost my wits I verily believe, if it hadn’t been for a young woman. By the end of that second week I knew all the regular frequenters of the rooms by sight, and could pretty well tell what time it was by the exits and the entrances of those who weren’t just loafers like myself. This girl, though, was a loafer; that is, I mean she was there at all hours. She looked like a work-girl, too—unless it’s my fancy that girls who go out to earn a living, or part of one, look different to those who stay at home and help their mothers—so I concluded that, like me, she was for the time being out of collar.

At the Kennington library they keep the magazines and many of the weeklies in an inner room, and in that inner room we mostly used to sit—she at the table set apart for ladies with her face to the light, and me a little higher up the room with my back to it. Consequently, if I tilted my chair back against the wall and went in for a bit of a think, I’d often stare straight at her, sometimes without knowing it, and sometimes wondering who she was and what she did. Once she looked up from her book and caught me, and, though she looked down again instantly, our eyes had met. There must, I suppose, have been some sort of sympathy in the glance they exchanged, for after that I began to think I’d like to know her.

She was a nice-looking girl in all senses of the word—though, perhaps, I need hardly say that—but as modest-behaved as she was pretty, so it was a month or more before I got a chance to improve what I felt was already almost my acquaintance with her.

One night early in November I left the reading-room about five minutes after she did, and, as my head was a bit heavy, I didn’t make straight for my lodgings near Spurgeon’s Tabernacle, but turned down a side street, meaning to work across to the Walworth Road, walk up to the Elephant and so home. I had crossed the Kennington Park Road, and was going down New Street—the Electric Railway station’s at the corner of it, if you know that part of London—when I caught sight of that young woman in front of me. I was just going to turn round and go back for fear she’d think I’d been following her, when a chap coming up the street stopped and spoke to her.

"Ullo! my dear," he sings out pretty loud. "This ain’t a time of night for you to be out all by your pretty self. Better lem’me see you home."

Half drunk or more I knew he was the moment I heard his voice, but he might have been a friend of hers or even her
sweetheart, so I stopped aside into a doorway and waited.

"But it is my business," he went on, whereby I guessed she'd told him to mind his own. "It's everybody's business, is beauty unprotected. I'll see you as safe as houses, and I assure you there's been an earthquake or something a little lower down the road which makes it—"

"Let me pass, please," she interrupted, speaking up as if anxious to be overheard, "or I'll call for help."

"Help!" says he. "Help! What the deuce is the girl talking about, when the best help in all London's at her service? I do believe you've been drinking, miss. At your time of life you ought to be ashamed of yourself. What do you think, mister?"

"Why, that you'd best clear off and go home before another earthquake comes along," said I, for seeing how things were I'd come forward. "This young lady's under my care, thank you."

"Oh! Is she?" says he. "Then you should look after her better. In my time we walked alongside our young women, not a hundred yards behind 'em. Good-night."

"Good-night, governor," said I, not sorry to see him stagger off without making a fuss, for he was an oldish chap, and weakly looking, so I didn't want to knock him down.

That was how I came to know Lizzie Wintle. She lived alone in a street off the Walworth Road, and was, as I thought, a work-girl—a tailoress—out of work. Once the ice was broken we soon got very friendly, as we might well have done even if we hadn't taken to each other as kindly as we did, for we were both feeling about as lonely as a policeman on night duty in a quiet suburb, and when you're feeling lonely almost any company is better than none.

It wasn't long, either, before I began to feel that Lizzie's company was better than any I'd ever kept. Though I was nearly six and twenty, I'd never what you might call walked out with a young woman before—not regularly, nor with any idea of sweethearts; and, indeed, I'd no idea of sweethearing Lizzie, not at first.

I was still out of work, for though I'd started to look for it after my fortnight was up, I couldn't find it; and when a man's out of work, he don't think straight off about getting married, unless he happens to be a real warranted A 1 kind of a fool.

No. It was partly in the hope I might cheer her up a bit—any one could see she was getting more and more low-spirited as the weeks went by—and partly out of pure selfishness and for the sake of having somebody to talk to that I took to squirming her about.

We did go about, too, when we got friendly. There's not a free show in London we did not visit that winter, and to those that lay fairly handy, such as the British Museum, the National Gallery, and the Geological Museum in Jermyn Street—we liked that Geological Museum. Nobody hardly seemed to go there, and we could sit and enjoy a quiet talk—we went over and over again.

We were able to have these little outings and still keep an eye on the chance of a job. In my line—the joinery trade—if you don't find what you want first thing in the morning, it's not much use looking for it afterwards, and Lizzie said it was the same in her business. So, after going the round of the shops before breakfast, we'd meet at the Free Library, and spend the rest of the day together.

About Christmas, though, our outings began to get few and far between. Lizzie would say thank you, but she didn't care about going to-day, and I'd either go off in a huff by myself, or sit reading whatever I chanced to pick up without knowing or caring what it was about.

What made me huffy was this. Wherever we went Lizzie had always insisted on paying her share of the expenses, if there happened to be any, such as a 'bus or a tram fare, or perhaps a cup of tea and a slice of bread-and-butter during the afternoon. When she began to refuse to come I guessed it was because her money was running short, and I was vexed that she'd deny me the pleasure of her company through pride about a few coppers.

One night early in the New Year, when I was seeing her home from the library, I hinted at what I felt about it, and did it so clumsily that I hurt her feelings. Consequently there was a sort of coolness between us for a bit. I let my temper get so badly the better of me that I stayed away from the library for three days, and when I went back she pretended not to see me. About half-past twelve she went out to get, as I supposed, her bit of dinner at a coffee-shop near, where we'd often been together. Ten minutes later I followed, meaning to ask her to make it up, but she wasn't there. I ordered a small mutton and potatoes, and, as it happened,
the landlord, who knew us both as regular customers, served me.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" says he. "You're quite a stranger. We thought you'd left this part, or that you and the young woman had made a match of it and gone off on your honeymoon."

"No chance of that," says I. "We're both out of collar. But ain't she been in to-day?"

"No," says he. "We ain't had the pleasure of her custom since you was last here together on—let me see—Monday, wasn't it?"

This set me on the notion she might be trying to make her money last longer by going without her dinner. I bolted my mutton, hurried out and had a look into every coffee-shop round about in the hope of finding her, but I didn't, nor did she come back to the reading-room any more that day, which was Friday.

I was in a fine stew that night. She'd had a watch when I first knew her, but I'd not noticed her wearing it since Christmas, and it was only a little silver Geneva, she'd not be able to get more than ten or fifteen shillings on, so it was likely enough she was in very low water indeed. I felt I'd been a brute to talk as lightly as I had about what was a penny between friends, when it was possible she hadn't one in the world. In London, too, if you lose sight of any one—especially any one who's under the weather—for a couple of days, you may never clap eyes on them again, so at last I made bold to go round to her lodgings and ask if she was still there.

"Yes," said the landlady. "But she's leaving to-morrow."

"Do you know where she's going?" I asked.

"No," says she. "But I hope it's to friends. She's been out of work a long time, and, though she's paid up honourable all that's due, she's no money left I'm certain, and that's bad, especially for a girl. You'll excuse me asking, but are you keeping company with her, young man?"

She seemed a decent sort of body, so I told her exactly how Lizzie and I stood. When I'd done she asked me in.

"We can talk better in my parlour than at the door," says she.

She hadn't given Lizzie notice it seemed, but I suppose the girl's pride was so high it wouldn't let her stay on when she couldn't pay her way.

"I'd never have thought of turning her out," concludes the landlady—Mrs. Parsons, her name was. "But as she said she was going, it wasn't my business to say don't, was it?"

"No," said I. "I can't say it was. I'm almost sure she has nowhere to go, though. If I was to pay you her rent for next week, would you keep her here?"

"I would if I could," said Mrs. Parsons.

"And that whether the rent was paid or not, but I can't keep her against her will, and she's always kept herself to herself, that exclusive, I really don't know whether she'd thank me for interfering in her affairs."

It was likely enough she wouldn't, so having persuaded the old woman not to let the room until she heard from me, I said I'd try to see Lizzie myself in the morning and find out what she thought of doing. She didn't come out in the morning though, nor yet in the afternoon. I loathed about in sight of the door till I was afraid I'd be run in as a suspicious character, as perhaps I should have been, only when I saw the policeman on the beat had his eye on me, I told him I was waiting for my young woman.

I didn't like to call and ask for her, because she might have refused to see me, and besides, even if she had seen me, what could I have said? It was one thing to meet her, as she'd think, by chance and try to find out what her plans were, and quite another to ask her plump and plain what she meant doing.

When she did come out it was after ten. She hadn't a box or even a bag with her, so it didn't look as if she was going to fresh lodgings.

"Perhaps," said I to myself, "she's arranged with the old woman about staying on, and is just going to do a bit of shopping. I won't speak now but follow her."

I thought it would look more natural and accidental like if I came up and said, "Good evening, Miss Wintle. This is an unexpected pleasure," or something of that sort, when she was picking out her bit of meat, or whatever it might be she fancied for Sunday.

But instead of making for the Walworth Road, her handlest market, she went off up New Street, and when she came to the Kennington Park Road she didn't turn to the right where the shops are, but crossed it. I thought she might be going to Lambeth Walk, where things are wonderfully cheap, and not nearly so nasty as some folks think; but near Lambeth Workhouse I lost her, and hurried on,
hoping rather than expecting, I might find her again in the Walk.

I worked it steadily from end to end and back, running my eye over all the crowds in front of the butchers' shops—though for that matter, it's all crowd there on a Saturday night, only the folks jam together a bit closer where they hear the "Buy! buy! buy!"—but I could see nothing of her. What to do I didn't know, so I turned down a quiet street leading to the Albert Embankment to think, and presently I wandered on to the Embankment itself. It was a bitter cold night and rather foggy. The trams were running, of course, but there were very few foot-people about, especially on the river side of the way.

The river itself was full of lumps of ice and heaps of frozen snow floating down with the tide, which was about half ebb, and the scene altogether was about as well calculated to depress a man, who didn't feel over bright to begin with, as it could be. As I stood looking out over the water, and thinking I'd never heard a more melancholy sound than the grinding of the ice-blocks one against another, Big Ben struck eleven. The boom of the bell roused me. I'd been leaning over the parapet about half-way between Lambeth and Vauxhall Bridges, and, as the clock finished striking, I started to walk along towards Vauxhall, meaning to get back to Lizzie's lodgings as quickly as I could and ask whether she'd come in.

I hadn't gone thirty yards before I found her. She was leaning over the parapet, staring at the river that hard, she never noticed me till I put my hand on her shoulder.

"Why, Miss Wintle," says I, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

It sounded even sillier than it looks on paper, but the words being in my mind, slipped out before I could think of anything more suitable for the occasion.

She gave a wild, hysterical sort of laugh, and then burst out crying. I put my arm round her, and she had her cry out with her head on my shoulder.

"Oh, Ben!" she whispered when she'd finished. "Let me go. If you knew what I was thinking of doing just now you wouldn't touch me."

It wasn't hard to guess she meant the river, so I just held her a bit tighter and said:

"Don't talk about such things, deary. Besides, you're all right now, aren't you?"

"Yes," says she, nestling a bit closer.

"But—but I believe I should have done it if the tide had been right up."

"No, you wouldn't," says I, though inwardly I thanked Heaven for the yard or two of shingle which lay between the foot of the Embankment and the edge of the water. "Don't you begin to fancy you ever meant such a thing, my dear, but come and have a bit of supper along with me, and then I'll see you home."

"But, Ben," says she, "I have no home. I've left Mrs. Parsons's."

I broke it to her gently for fear her pride might take offence at what I'd done, but it seemed to have all gone out of her, and she thanked me so humbly that I felt ashamed of having made her even that little beholden to me.

"No, no," says I. "It's me that has to thank you, Lizzie. But come. You'll catch your death of cold if we stand here any longer. Let's walk on, and I'll tell you as we go."

I found it hard to make her believe what a bad way I'd been in when I first got to know her; not because she didn't catch my meaning—she'd been knocked over pretty much in the same way herself when she first found out what a lot more than she could understand there is in books—but because she would have it I was exaggerating for the sake of making out all the gratitude was owed on my side.

However, we were too happy to argue long, much less fall out. What a curious thing love is! I hadn't much more than ten pounds in the world, and poor Lizzie hadn't a penny piece, yet we were as happy as—we, as the night was cold. We reckoned we'd loved each other about a month without knowing it, and we agreed to consider that month as time lost—that was after we'd had our supper, and were making our way to Lizzie's lodgings through the quietest streets we could find.

"And seeing we've lost that time," says I, "don't you think I'd better give notice for the banns on Monday?"

"But, Ben," says she, "remember we're both out of work. How are we to live?"

"To tell the truth, my dear," I replied, "that's just what's puzzling me; but as we've made such a terrible bad job of living apart, we can't well do worse if we try it together."

She had to admit the truth of that, and, under the circumstances, I think you'll agree that an "improvident marriage," as they call it, was the only course open to
us. In about three weeks' time we took
that course, and, Mrs. Parsons being
agreeable, set up housekeeping in Lizzie's
room, which was larger and in many ways
more convenient than mine.

We were down almost to our last shilling
before I found work, but I did find good
work just in time, and, thank Heaven! I've
kept it ever since. We've got two rooms
now and our own furniture—in the same
house, though. We shan't leave Mrs.
Parsons in a hurry, and we're beginning to
put by a bit against the next rainy day.

We still read a good deal, though mostly
novels and at home, and we're so happy
that I tell Lizzie we're out of the fashion—as
nowadays, according to the books, folks'
troubles seem to begin instead of end with
the wedding. She says if that's the case
she doesn't care how long we keep out.
Between you and me, and the baby, no
more do I.

MISS GARTH.
A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

The next day, when Lady Carstairs
sailed into the great hall where afternoon
tea was generally held, she beheld a
stranger there, talking earnestly to Jocely-
lyn Garth.

It was not quite four o'clock, and the
match footmen had not yet disturbed the
shadowy serenity of the fire-lit hall. Two
or three men were lounging about and
talking to each other, but the ladies, with
their flowing tea-gowns, and dimpled smiles
and soft voices, had not yet made their
appearance.

Lady Carstairs wondered curiously who
the man could be. She knew most of
Jocelyn's friends of old. Perhaps it was
some chance acquaintance come to call;
perhaps—at that moment Jocelyn turned
round and saw her.

She had been standing with one hand
resting on the high oak mantel-shelf,
carved by master fingers that had long
since crumbled away to dust. Now her
arm dropped to her side and she stood
away from it.

"Mr. Dalgarno," she said to the new
guest, "allow me to present you to my
aunt, Lady Carstairs."

Lady Carstairs gave a languid bow, and
sank into a great softly-cushioned chair by
the fire. The new-comer aroused no in-
terest in her now she had seen him close.
Rather a handsome, foreign-looking man,
but dressed in the worst taste. Lady
Carstairs wondered that Jocelyn could
tolerate such a person in the house.

After her bald introduction Jocelyn said
nothing for a few minutes. She seemed
as if she did not quite know what to do.
The handsome, badly-dressed man gazed
into the fire after he had acknowledged
Lady Carstairs's bow, and there was a little
smile on his lips. The group of men broke
up and came towards Jocelyn, now that
they saw her attention was no longer
monopolised; the match footmen appeared
on the scene; Lucy and Rose swept down
the stairs in elegant tea-gowns, followed
by the magenta cousin. Jocelyn found
herself in the midst of them all, and was
conscious that many curious glances were
directed towards the flashily-dressed man,
who stood on the hearth as though he were
master of the situation.

She made a great effort.

"Mr. Dalgarno has consented to join
my house-party, Aunt Grace," she said,
moving towards the low tea-table with its
matchless chins and flashing silver. "I
am sure he will be a great acquisition."

"Delighted to hear it, I am sure," mumbled
Lady Carstairs, with her eye-glass
in her eye. She scrutinised the new-
comer severely as Jocelyn performed the
various introductions, and she again won-
dered that Miss Garth could tolerate him
in the house.

Mr. Dalgarno was tall and dark, with
sweeping moustaches and roving black
eyes. In spite of the fact that his clothes
were badly cut, and that he wore too much
jewellery, the man was handsome in a
certain coarse way.

Jocelyn poured out tea with her usual
decision, and smiled and chatted as
graciously as ever. Only Godfrey Wharton
noticed that her eyes were heavier, and her
cheeks paler, than they generally were.

"Have you a headache?" he asked her
gently, as he stood by her to have his cup
refilled.

"No—I think not, thank you," she
answered rather absently.

He still stood by her when he had
received his tea, and his attitude screened
her somewhat from notice.

"I am sure something is the matter," he
persisted, "you need not try to deceive me,
Jocelyn. My eyes are sharp where you are
concerned."

"They are sharp unnecessarily," she
He stirred his tea round thoughtfully, and
his eyes wandered to where Mr. Dalgarno
was standing, making himself agreeable to
Rose Carstairs.

"Where did that man spring from?" he
asked suddenly, with a shrug of the
shoulder in his direction.

"He 'sprang,' as you call it, from the
village inn. He has been staying there
some time, I believe. As he was an old
friend of my brother's I asked him to come
here instead," she answered, steadily. "Is
that an entirely satisfactory report?"

Her voice was quiet, and so were her
eyes, but it seemed to Godfrey Wharton
that the quietness was forced. He aban-
donned his catechism, however.

After tea was over, some of the party
adjourned to the billiard-room, others to
the drawing-room, where they had a little
impromptu dance as a kind of practice for
the coming ball. Dalgarno, after a look at
Jocelyn, went to the billiard-room. Miss
Garth and her aunt were left alone.

Jocelyn knew that a searching examina-
tion was inevitable. She wished to get it
over.

"And now, my dear Jocelyn," said Lady
Carstairs, when the footmen had noise-
lessly removed all the glittering para-
phernalia of the tea-table, "pray tell me,
who is this mysterious stranger who has
dropped upon us from the skies? I thought
you told me that you did not expect any-
boby fresh?"

"I did not, Aunt Grace," said Jocelyn,
answering the last question first, "but as
Mr. Dalgarno must have been very uncom-
fORTABLE at the village inn, I thought it
would only be hospitable to invite him to
stay here."  

"But how did you come to be ac_customed
with him at all? You must know him
very well, Jocelyn, before you ask him
to your house."

"I used to know him very well years ago.
He was one of poor Robert's friends."

Lady Carstairs coughed a little, and
stretched out a shapely foot to the blaze,
meditatively.

"But my dear—excuse me—but if you
are going to take up with all your poor
brother's wild friends you will fill your
house with a very queer set of people.
Robert was not quite irreproachable him-
self as you know. I suppose he met this
man abroad?"

"I believe so."

"And then introduced him to you?"

"Yes."

"But that must have been years ago,
Jocelyn!"

"Eight, I believe."

"Eight years ago, and the man presumes
upon a slight acquaintance all that time
since in order to force himself into your
house! The thing is preposterous."

"I asked him to stay here, Aunt Grace."

"But I cannot allow your generosity to
be so imposed on, my dear. You must
remember you are a young and handsome
woman, Jocelyn, and cannot be too careful
of your reputation. The man is an atroci-
ous ass and I am sure. His hands look more as
if he had been picking oakum than any-
thing else."

Jocelyn suddenly turned away her head,
and her aunt did not see the flush of
crimson in her cheeks.

"You must have been quite a child
when you met him! It is quite impossible
we can keep up with all our childhood's
friends, you know. It sounds very pretty,
but it is not at all practicable. You had
better let me speak to this Mr.—Mr.—
Dalgoni, and explain to him that under
the present circumstances, although you
desire to be kind, you cannot——"

Jocelyn interrupted her.

"You must not do anything of the sort,
Aunt Grace. Mr. Dalgarno is my guest,
and as such I must ask you to treat him."

Jocelyn's tone was very seldom haughty,
but it was haughty now.

Lady Carstairs took an injured air.

"Of course you know best, Jocelyn.
You always do! But I should have
thought you would have taken advice from
one old enough to be your mother."

"This is not a case for advice," said
Jocelyn, rising and leaving the hall
abruptly.

She went straight to the billiard-room,
where her new guest was playing a startling
game with Godfrey Wharton. All the
other men were looking on with some
surprise. Dalgarno had made some extra-
ordinary strokes.

He paused, cue in hand, when Jocelyn
entered.

"Pray don't let me disturb you," said
the latter, looking at him.

He muttered something she could not
catch, and went on with the game. Jocelyn
stood and watched it too. It seemed to
her that it was more than a game that
these two were playing—there was a deadly
earnestness about it that struck her. She
waited with breathless superstition to see who would win.
They were neck and neck at last. Each only wanted three to win.
"Whom do you back?" asked Godfrey Wharton, pausing for a moment and looking at Jocelyn.
She raised her eyes to his, but did not answer. He turned to the table with a little smile — made a brilliant winning hazard—and the game was hers.
Dalgarne threw down his cue viciously.
"My hand is out. It is seven years since I last played," he said, with his slight foreign accent; "and then I think Miss Garth has the evil eye. I was winning till she came."
Jocelyn did not answer. She was looking at him with a curious dilated gaze. Then she turned and went upstairs without another word. At the same moment the dressing bell sounded. Dalgarne started and shivered a little.
"What's that?" he demanded abruptly of the nearest person, who happened to be Edgar Carstairs. The young man stared at him.
"What? The dressing bell?" he said uncomprehendingly.
"Oh, the dressing bell is it? It makes an infernal noise, that's all that I can say. I'm as nervous as a cat to-night."
"Nervous?"
Edgar Carstairs looked him carefully up and down, and wondered privately what made Jocelyn Garth introduce this particularly loose fish into her fastidious home.
"Yes, nervous. You'd be nervous if you had been gold-mining in Africa for years, and been nearly killed by fevers and agues a dozen times over."
He followed the men upstairs, still with a sly look of terror on his face. The hall was empty save for the white-robed form of Jocelyn Garth. The others passed on, but Dalgarne lingered.
"You dress every night here," he demanded.
"Yes; you will find all you need in the Blue Room. You know where it is."
"You've got an uncommonly swell place here," said Dalgarne, glancing round admiringly at the richly decorated walls.
"I am glad you think so."
"Oh, it's a handsome house; and you make a very handsome mistress of it! You have very much improved, Jocelyn!"
"I am delighted to hear it."
"Oh, you needn't take on those fey, confoundedly proud don't-care airs with me. The truth's got to come out sooner or later."
"I will discuss matters with you to-morrow."
"By the Lord, you are a cool one! I thought I should have startled you, walking in like that, and you never turned a hair."
"Why should I? It is only the realisation of a nightmare that I have dreamed for years."
"Nightmare? You were fond enough of me in the old days, my girl! When you dreamed of me then you didn't call it a nightmare."
She shuddered a little. He approached her with a laugh, and tried to take her hand. She stepped back with a look that checked even him.
"If you dare to touch me I will call my servants and have you put out of the house. I have still some authority left, and I am mistress here."
He gave a sudden laugh.
"As you choose," he answered, turning on his heel. "I will humour you for a day or two if you like."
He whistled a bar from a comic song that was popular seven years ago, as he went up the broad oak stairs.
He had a distinct sense of "bien être" as he entered his luxurious bedroom. The delicate hangings, handsome furniture, and ruddy blazing fire were all very pleasant to him.
"After all these years I deserve comfortable quarters," he told himself. "A man might do worse than come home to this—and Jocelyn."
Dinner was rather a strained affair. Jocelyn, in black, looked white and worn. Dalgarne laughed and talked naturally, and had his glass filled dangerously often. The guests were all rather displeased at the strange, unwelcome addition to their ranks that Jocelyn Garth had thrust upon them.
"Where have you put that new protégé of yours?" enquired Lady Carstairs, when the dessert had arrived, and Dalgarne was at his gayest.
"In the Blue Room."
"Next mine!" with a little shriek. "My dear Jocelyn, how very inconsiderate of you! I shan't sleep a wink to-night. The wretch looks quite capable of cutting my throat."
"He hasn't murdered any one yet that I know of, Aunt Grace."
"That you know of! I dare say not. But that is very insecure evidence. You admit that you have not seen him for eight years — —"
"Seven."
"Well, seven then. I understood you to say eight, I'm sure. A man has time to commit hundreds of murders in seven years."

Jocelyn sat silent again.
"All that jewellery of his is false," went on Lady Carstairs, "and I am quite sure his clothes are second-hand. If we all escape with our lives we ought to feel thankful. I shall put my diamonds in your big safe to-night."

A very faint smile curved Jocelyn's lips.
"I will guarantee the safety of your necklace, Aunt Grace."

"I don't feel at all comfortable, I assure you, my dear. The man is quite a Mephistopheles in appearance. How long is he to stay? He is spoiling everybody's pleasure. Edgar is horrified about it."

"Edgar must learn to respect my guests," said Jocelyn icily.
"Oh, but that's quite impossible in this case, my dear. The man has C A D printed all over him in large letters."

"Perhaps it is because those are his initials, aunt," said Jocelyn, with another of those wintry smiles that made Geoffrey Wharton's heart ache as he watched her.

"Are they really? Well, I call that positively an inspiration of Providence—or his parents. I suppose it was his parents who christened him?"

"I suppose so."

The conversation dropped. But later on, in the drawing-room, Lady Carstairs was bristling with indignation again.

Dalgarno, who had had more wine than was good for him, chose to come and plant himself on a chair close by where she and her niece were talking confidentially together. Lady Carstairs drew her skirts aside ostentatiously.

"Oh, there's plenty of room," said Dalgarno, with a coarse laugh. "I can sit a little nearer Miss Garth if you are so pressed. I dare say she won't mind."

Jocelyn sat like a statue, hardly breathing for a moment. She knew that Geoffrey Wharton was standing by and had heard the remark.

"Would you like me to throw the fellow out of the window?" he suggested to Jocelyn, in a tone perfectly audible to Dalgarno.

The latter laughed again.
"Yes, ask her!" he said insolently, twirling his fierce moustache with his scarred and seamy fingers, "ask her by all means, and see what she will say."

Godfrey's eyes were on Jocelyn's face. He made a step forward.
"No—no," said Jocelyn, putting out her hand. "I do not want a scene."

"I cannot stand by and see you insulted."

"He does not mean it—he does not know what he is saying," she answered in a low voice. "Don't you see that he has had too much to drink?"

"All the more reason why—"

Dalgarno, leaning back, surveyed the pair with a smile.

"Miss Garth and I understand one another," he remarked coolly, "and we don't want any interference from you, young man."

Again Godfrey's eyes sought hers. Why was she so completely in the power of this man?

"I cannot stand this," he said hoarsely.

"You must—for my sake," she said piteously. Then turning to Dalgarno, she said, in a different tone:

"I shall be glad if you will withdraw for this evening, Mr. Dalgarno. You are excited, and say things which are best unsaid."

"I shall not go! I have a right—"

Her eyes met the bold flashing ones fearlessly.

"You will go—and now!" she said quietly. "Come with me!"

She rose as she spoke. Dalgarno got up too.

"With you?" he cried with a tipsy hiccough. "That's a very different thing. Of course I'll go with you, pretty one—anywhere, to the world's end!"

As they left the room together Godfrey Wharton felt a sudden deadly faintness steal over him. She was in the power of this scoundrel—alone with him!

"Shall I follow them?" he asked Lady Carstairs in a voice that trembled with emotion.

"Oh, don't ask me!" said her ladyship, with a disdainful shrug of her silken shoulders; "Jocelyn is quite beyond me I confess. I suppose the cultivation of drunken gamblers is her latest fad. I will have nothing to do with the matter."

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MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESME STUART.

Author of "Joan Veilcot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kate of Gretna," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEARNING HER PART.

PENELIPE bore the ordeal of dress with as much patience as she possessed. She did not fully understand her own beauty, and she thought that dress would make her more attractive and more likely to succeed in the object that had brought her and her uncle to London.

She felt more and more like a prisoner, as she realised that Mrs. Todd's society rules were very tiresome. She must take care of her complexion, she must not be seen before her attire was perfect, and she must have her dresses described by the society papers.

The country maiden was too proud to show her surprise at the new code of behaviour that was poured into her ears, so that Mrs. Todd, besides admiring her beauty, looked upon her as the most self-contained girl she had ever met, and silently wondered at her self-possession and worldliness. The first day she had been inclined to think this romantic Princess slightly wanting in animation, but having hinted that cheerfulness and smiles were great helps to social success, she saw Penelope's eyes suddenly flash, as she said:

"Even if they mean nothing!"

"They mean, of course, that a woman is glad she is pleaseing others."

"I don't know yet if I can please, but I shall be very glad if I succeed."

Mrs. Todd was silenced when she heard her own code explained so badly.

"We women have to pretend a great deal, my dear; in fact, we are always pretending, I suppose, but it pleases the men. We pretend that we think them good and clever, when in reality very few of them possess either quality, and none of them have both together."

Lady Farrant came the next day to call upon Miss Winskell. She had heard so much of her from the Duke, that she had told her husband that the girl was probably neither clever nor beautiful.

Lady Farrant belonged to the modern type of society. She was an heiress who had taken care that her fortune should be well secured, for she did not mean to be beggared by an easy-going husband.

"Bob is a jolly good fellow," she told her intimates, "but no more fit to handle money than to be Prime Minister."

She had promised to keep the house going in proper style, but she would not pay his private bills when he ran short, and somehow Bob was always "running short," or he was lavishly generous. He loved gambling, but so long as he kept within due bounds his wife did not lecture him.

When Lady Farrant entered the Eaton Square drawing-room of the Winskells', and saw before her a tall girl with exquisite hair; dark, liquid eyes; a beautiful mouth and a strong chin; she almost stopped short from surprise and delight.

"What a lucky find! The men were right. The girl will make a sensation, and I shall have the credit of bringing her out."

She thought this and then greeted her with a great show of affection, but suddenly remembering the fact that the Princess was poor, she was more cautious than she had at first intended.
"Milly Todd has told me how quite delighted she is to be with you, Miss Winakell. I can trust her to tell you all that is necessary. Have you given all the orders about the Drawing-room dress, Milly? Your young friend must enjoy herself, and I predict a great success for her."

"It is very kind of you to take so much trouble for me. I know my uncle's friends have been very kind," said Penelope.

"Yes, of course. Bob said it was quite a joke his turning up after all these years. Oh, you will soon be 'an fatl' at everything. Girls in our own day catch up all the right things in no time. We are to have several 'lions' at the ball. I think young people ought to enjoy themselves. I never care that she can dance and don't stand doing nothing in the doorways. When people tell me that young men are not as they used to be, I tell them it's their own fault. It's no use spoiling them. I give them good warning when they come to our house that there is no standing room for them. I give a ball for my guests to dance, otherwise they must keep away. I never have any trouble, and the girls have real good times—just as I had when I was young."

Lady Farrant flowed on like a swift though not a noisy stream, and was less tiresome to listen to than was Mrs. Todd.

"By the way, Milly, I have invited the Duke to our small dinner-party on Saturday. It's only a men's party, and I leave them alone; but my brother will escort us to the play. Irving is playing Wolsey on that day, and it will interest Miss Winakell. Do you like plays?"

"I have never been to one," said Penelope; "this is my first visit to London."

Lady Farrant smiled good-naturedly.

"Well! really! It is quite delightful to have a perfectly unsophisticated, 'débutante.' I give you ten days to become worldly, and the change will be amusing."

"She is worldly already," said Mrs. Todd, smiling.

Penelope felt quite out of her element with these women; but she listened, and learnt her new part. She had imposed this task on herself and meant to learn it well. Then suddenly she lost herself in the day dreams she had conjured up on the hillside. She could not realise yet that the old life was gone. She would go back to her glen, but would she then be another Penelope? The thought seemed to take away all the old moorings, at the same time that it made her stretch out her hand towards them. This big, new world she saw now was peopled with persons who did not seem to have any strong purpose; they appeared to be like toy boats on the sea, driven hither and thither almost aimlessly, except when forced forward by the impetus of the tide.

If she meant to attain her object she must become like them, so they said; she must appear light-hearted, and she must laugh. Her uncle, who had done so much for her, should not be disappointed. He had taken so much trouble and much infinite pains, that on her side she must do her best to please him. What was love in comparison with the welfare of the Winakells? The property must soon be sold if—if...

The Princess had only to think of that and all her courage revived. She would not shrink from the task set before her.

A week later Penelope Winakell had won the difficult position of a recognised society beauty. How it had ever been accomplished was a mystery to herself, though Mrs. Todd thought it was owing to her own management, and to Lady Farrant's "able steering," as she expressed it.

It is not by any means every beautiful girl who comes to London with the secret wish to become fashionable who attains this object.

With Penelope Winakell there were several things which contributed to the desired end. In the first place she was certainly beautiful, and possessed a complexion which had rescued her out-of-door life, and so could resist London fatigue. In the second place, society was half amused, half credulous, and wholly pleased by the quiet manner with which the Winakells claimed their titles of courtesy.

The handsome Duke accompanying his beautiful niece also helped to conquer society, and very soon, in that mysterious manner the origin of which is unknown, the whisper ran:

"Have you seen the Princess?"

"What Princess? Who is she?"

"Oh, don't you know? She belongs to a very ancient family who possess titles, by courtesy, of course."

Every one wished to see the Princess, and invitation cards were showered down upon the house in Eaton Square where she was known to be residing for the season. Carriages drove up in a goodly
array, and Lady Farrant and Mrs. Todd began to congratulate themselves that they had nobly launched Penelope Winckell.

Instead of despising the country girl, Mrs. Todd began to shower compliments upon her, which Penelope received with the same quiet coldness as she had accepted the information that she was very countriest. She had her aim in view, and to her Mrs. Todd was 'of no consequence whatever. Still the battle was not yet won. The Princess had not been written about in all the society papers, so Lady Farrant determined to give a fête—she liked the word better than a party—and to make the papers mention "the unique guest," as she herself had named her.

As for Penelope herself, she had one happy hour in the day. This was the hour before dinner, when she sat with her uncle and talked over what she had seen and done during the day. He could not help noticing the change in her—the sparkle in her eyes, the style added to her natural graceful figure, and the brighter repartee. She was learning the ways of the world, and learning the lesson quickly. Once, after one of Penelope's quaint little satirical sketches, he caught himself making a mental comparison between the Princess in the glen and the one now in town.

"Well, Penzie, so the big world does not seem to you quite so much like a prison now as it did at first. Look at this evening's society paper; you head the list of——"

Penelope put the paper away with her hand. Her pride revolted against common notice.

"You are glad about it, uncle. You know that is all I care for. We went to two 'at homes' to-day, and I was introduced to a great many persons I did not care about. But I wanted to show you all these cards. Our neighbours are beginning to call in crowds. These are cards from Lord and Lady Rookwood. Isn't he a cousin of that Mr. Bethune whom Mr. Gillbanks mentioned? Some one said so."

The Duke examined the cards deliberately.

"Yes. By the way, I heard again of this young Bethune somewhere the other day. A very modern exciting young man who goes in for Socialistic ideas."

"But you said he belonged to an old family."

"Yes, certainly he does, but Socialism is fashionable. Young men think the reformer's vocabulary will bring them into notice. In my youth we kept people of that stamp in their right place."

"I will ask Mrs. Todd to come and return the call; I should like to see Mr. Bethune. If he talks to me I could tell him how mistaken you think him."

The Duke smiled.

"I fear he is too far gone, unless——"

The Duke paused. Then he added carelessly:

"They are, as a family, very much impoverished by the failure of their land, I hear. Besides, they were never very rich."

Penelope took one of her uncle's hands in hers. The look of love in her eyes was reserved for him alone. Indeed, in Penelope's life, he alone could call up that look. She had, however, hardly listened to his last remark, being anxious about another matter.

"Where did you go last night, uncle, when were at the theatre? Lady Farrant brought her son with us. He tried to amuse us, but I was so much interested in the play that I hardly answered his remarks."

"That youth has not half his mother's wits!"

"But where were you? I thought you would be at home when we came back."

"Ah! I was rather late. We have a little club for whilst playing, and, yes, we stayed rather late. Do you think I show signs of weariness?" he asked, a little anxiously.

"No—I hope not, because you are doing it for me."

"Well, the doing seems pleasant enough, child. Don't trouble your head about me. Enjoy yourself. That is all I ask of you."

Penelope stood up and laughed.

"I am doing that; yes, I wonder at myself, but I try not to think of the glen and the Rothery. If I begin to think, then I hear it splashing, and then I fancy I am walking straight up the path, and that I am standing on the hillside looking at the tops of the mountains, just as the last gleam of gold has faded away."

"Poetry is at a discount in this big city," said the Duke, with one of his ironical smiles. "Now, I will accompany you to the ball this evening. You are a fortunate individual. Do you know, Lord Rookwood's house is one of the most sought after in town."

"Perhaps I shall see the Bethunes
PRESCHING AND PREACHERS.

What clerical was it who asked Garrick how it was that actors affected, or seemed to affect, their hearers so much more than preachers? There was some truth in Garrick's reply: "Because we speak of unreal things as if they were real, and you speak of real things as if they were unreal." It certainly is a fact that the average sermon, to say the best of it, is delivered as if it were a lesson learned by rote, and not a favourite lesson either. Few and far between are the preachers who preach as if they were themselves impressed by the truth, the reality, and the paramount importance of what they themselves are preaching. I have heard famous preachers in many different parts of the world, but I think that I should not require more than the fingers of one hand to enable me to number those who struck me as feeling what they themselves were saying.

Eloquent preachers one has heard in plenty. Not a few, too, who have attained to a high standard of eloquence. But something more than eloquence is needed if one wishes one's words to leave an impression, either for good or for ill, upon the lives of one's hearers. Eloquence is an intellectual exercise. It is not merely by means of an intellectual exercise that one gains an entrance to men's hearts. The actor knows this. He appeals to the feelings. He wishes his hearers to believe that he feels strongly; knowing that, if he can only induce that belief in them, they will feel strongly too.

It is true that there are preachers who appeal to the feelings. So far they go with the actor. Unfortunately for themselves, and for the cause which they profess to have at heart, as a rule they go no farther. They appear to be oblivious of the fact that, in order to appeal strongly to the feelings of others, it is necessary, first of all, to feel oneself. In the case of the actor it is only the appearance, the close imitation of feeling, which is absolutely requisite. In the case of the preacher no imitation, however close, will do at all. It must be the genuine thing.

The reason of this is simple. An audience goes to a theatre desiring to be deceived. If what took place upon the stage were real, the performance would not be suffered to continue for a moment. If we knew that the actor who impersonates Macbeth had really slain the actor who impersonates Duncan, not improbably the representative of the Thane of Cawdor would be lynched upon the spot. If the villain of melodrama really perpetrated, night after night, a tithe of the villainies of which he is supposed to be guilty, a frenzied mob would raise the theatre to the ground. We know that we are only looking on at make-believe, and it is because we know it that we wish those who are making believe to do it well.

In the case of the preacher it is all the other way. We do not go to the preacher to be deceived. We go to be convinced. In the pulpit acting is not only ineffective, it is worse than ineffective. Instead of gaining our sympathies it repels them. The idea that a man is endeavouring to convince us by pretending to be convinced himself, so far from propitiating us, rouses our indignation. It is almost impossible to conceal the fact that it is pretence. The actor has everything in his favour when he attempts concealment; the preacher, or the orator, has nothing. The assumption of disguise, the arrangement of the lights, the whole construction of the theatre, these things
are all intended to assist illusion; in the pulpit, or on the platform, everything tends to destroy it. More, should there, in the pulpit, be any attempt to assist illusion, even in the slightest degree, so far from welcoming it, we should resent the attempt with scorn, and with disgust.

No. The preacher must produce his effects naturally; from within, not from without. Art can do nothing for him. He may polish his phrases as he pleases; it is doubtful if they will gain him access to a single heart that is worth the entering. He may cultivate emotion, he may simulate hysterics; neither the one nor the other will get him “forrarder.”

Let there be no misunderstanding; it is not suggested that a “fool preacher” may not influence fools. Still less is such a suggestion made of knaves. Mr. Honeyman is found in the present year of grace, outside the pages of Thackeray’s novel. But Mr. Honeyman appeals, and always will appeal, to a peculiar congregation. The fools we have always with us. It is Because this is an eternal truth that Mr. Honeyman still lives, moves, and has his being. But no lasting impression was ever made upon a large body of persons by the Mr. Honeyman. Such an effect is more likely to be produced by the Joe Smiths. They, at least, have the courage of their convictions—or of what they declare to be their convictions.

If the tales which are handed down to us of the effects which were produced by Savonarola are not exaggerated, we may take it for granted that those effects were produced, not by his eloquence, but by his earnestness. In one respect his age was very much like ours. Earnestness was perhaps as rare in Florence as it is in England now. A man in real earnest, especially a man of genius in real earnest, was a phenomenon indeed.

One hears a great deal about the lack of good preachers. I, for my part, wonder what people mean when they speak of good preachers. Do they mean eloquent preachers? It is beyond dispute that eloquence is not given to every man, but still, there are to-day eloquent preachers in all the countries of the world. Do they mean scholarly preachers? They, too, are to be found. I myself have heard, in churches and chapels of all denominations, men who, judged by average standards, might fairly be called good preachers. It might be invidious to name names, but there is a sect in England which cannot claim to have good preachers.

I have heard orators in Roman Catholic churches, many of them. I have heard them in Protestant churches and chapels. Ay, and I have heard them at street-corners.

But the average standard is not necessarily a high standard. What, judged by the highest standard, is a good preacher? A good preacher is, or should be, a man who so demonstrates a thing that all who listen to his demonstration shall accept it as proved. A good preacher is, therefore, a man who does this superficially well. How many good preachers, judged by that standard, have we in the present year of grace? If a man tells you that good is better than evil, and demonstrates this clearly, it is certain, if you are offered the choice of one of the two, that you will choose the good. How is it that so many people choose the evil? There is an abundance of preachers. They preach to us on every topic beneath the sun. Is it because the preachers are bad, their demonstrations imperfect?

One is sometimes constrained to think that if there were fewer preachers, and if they preached to us on fewer topics, the result of their preaching would be more. It is not only that they contradict each other. It is not only that some speak faintly on just those points on which others shout out loudest. There are so many of them. There is not a road, not even a footpath, on which they will let us walk alone. There are too many guides. They not only want to guide us up the Matterhorn, they insist upon guiding us up Primrose Hill. The people of this world are becoming divided into two parts: those who are preachers, and those who are not. Those who are not preachers are not only in a minority, it would almost seem as if they were in a minority which is growing less and less. Soon the preachers will have no one to preach to but each other. Then there will be peace in all the land.

Under such circumstances is it not allowable to suggest that there may be cause for thankfulness in the fact that the good preachers are few and far between? If they were all good preachers, where should we be? If each one of them with whom we came in contact were to be endowed with the power to move us to conviction, what kaleidoscopes lives we should be compelled to lead! There is a story told somewhere of a certain individual who went on a journey round the
world. He must have been a person with what has been called, of late, an “open mind,” or else he must have encountered “perfidious” of exceptional caliber. He was not a traveller, properly so termed. He was what we style a “globe-trotter.” He ran round the world in a year, or thereabouts, as nobody does. He had not time to return from whence he came, he had been “converted,” it would almost seem, to every creed under the sun.

This individual, whom we will call Perkins, started as an Episcopalian. On the outward voyage he conjoined with a Presbyterian missionary. This missionary was such a powerful proselytiser that, by the time they reached Cairo, Mr. Perkins was a Presbyterian. He sojourned in Egypt. While there he fell in with a young Mahometan gentleman, who made so strong an impression on his mind, that, by the time he continued his journey, he would have been willing to suffer martyrdom for the truth of the saying, “There is only one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.” It chanced that, on the ship which took them to Ceylon, there was a member of the Society of Jesus, a charming man. He made a constant companion of Mr. Perkins. When the ship touched at Colombo, Mr. Perkins had again undergone conversion. He had pinned his faith to the Sovereign Pontiff, believing him to be the Keeper of the Keys. He had become a Buddhist, not an Exoteric Buddhist, after the Blavatsky-Olcott pattern, but a real, “whole hog” Buddhist, before he left the land of “spicy breezes.” While steaming to Calcutta, a Unitarian carried conviction both to his heart and to his intellect. He became a Parsee while in the “City of Palaces,” possibly yielding to some occult fascination exercised by the near neighbourhood of the Towers of Silence. When he arrived at Melbourne he was a Hard-shell Baptist. He was several things while in Australia. Falling in love, as he was leaving it, with a Jewess, he almost became a Jew. But, on her throwing him over, he meditated attaching himself to the Greek Church, probably because he had in his mind’s eye the Russian persecution of the Jews, and, at least in that respect, he would have liked to have allied himself with the subjects of the Czar. When he landed at San Francisco he was awed Free-thinker. Between the Golden Gate and Sandy Hook he was so many different things that it would be difficult to give a list of them.

You think that Mr. Perkins must have been a curious character! True. He must have been. Yes, if good preachers abounded, say, even to the extent of one per cent. of the whole company of the preachers, we might be as he was. Indeed, we probably should be as he was. We should chop and change, and change and chop. We should undergo as many variations as there are hairs in our head. Our only safety would be to confine ourselves to a given groove. Having been convinced by Mr. Boanerges, if we wished to maintain our character for mental stability, we should be unwise to trust ourselves out of the range of the voice of Mr. Boanerges, lest, coming within sound of the voice of Mr. Smooth-tongue, we should immediately become converts to the other side. No. Considering all things, regarding the question from a wide and a comprehensive point of view, it is, perhaps, not an unmilitigated misfortune that good preachers are not more abundant than they are.

Still, on the other hand, one is entitled to wish that some of them were better than they are. Surely, if a ninecompoop is out of place anywhere, it is in the pulpit. And yet it is amusing what a number of ninecompoops are to be found there. A man may be, and, indeed, often is, a good person and a bad preacher. Until it is understood that a person need not preach unless he can preach, and yet shall have no cause to be ashamed, we shall have to bear the ills we have. This really is a subject on which a little plain speaking is required. If a man were to turn author, and were to publish works which only want to show that he had absolutely no knowledge of grammar, of the rules of composition, or of spelling; that, in short, he was absolutely without knowledge of any sort or kind: to put it mildly, we should smile at him. Yet, when a man of this type sets himself up to preach, some people seem to think that we ought to hold the man in reverence. Which resolves itself into this: if a man is too great a fool to make a mark at anything else, he is sure to make his mark at preaching. Strange logic, surely! No wonder the bad preachers are as the sands of the sea for multitude.

It is bad enough to encounter preachers of the impossible type in open places or at street-corners. It is worse when we are confronted by them in the pulpits of our
PREACHING AND PREACHERS.  [February 17, 1884.]

It is upon them, first and foremost, that the burden is laid. The chief topic of conversation as the congregations, whether of churches or of chapels, are walking home after service, is the sermon. If the preacher has made a hash of it, as, in the estimation of some of his hearers, he is almost certain to have done, how frank, how outspoken, the criticisms are! Do not suppose that congregations do not know when they have a bad preacher. They know it well—too well. And yet they suffer. And they go on suffering. It does not appear to have occurred to any one that bad preachers should not be encouraged to preach.

But if the professional preacher is, now and then, slightly trying, the amateur preacher is, almost invariably, altogether intolerable. And it is the voice of the amateur preacher which, nowadays, is heard in all the land. He does not necessarily touch on theological topics. Morals and social subjects are more in his line. Not long since I was at a friend's house. After supper some one said something about vaccination. Suddenly a man began to hurl statistics and statements at our heads in a fashion which paralysed us all. He was an amateur preacher, whose line was anti-vaccination. He was one against many, yet the many were beaten by the one. It is not worthy of the voice of Mr. Smooth-tongued we yield to some occult fascination exercised over us. We should undergo as many variations as there are hairs in our head. And yet it is amazing what a number of people are unable to maintain our character for mental consistency. We should chop and change, and change and chop. We should immediately become converts to the point of view of the organization of silence. When we arrived at Melbourne, there was a member of the clergy there who was a great admirer of silence. He had pined his faith to the Society of Jesus, was a charming man.

On this point I once heard rather a good story of how an amateur preacher was hoisted by his own petard.

This amateur's topic was opium. "Down with opium, the curse of India, China, and other countries!" and that sort of thing. It was in a private company. He had been reeling off the usual mass of figures, and as no one knew anything about the subject except himself, or cared anything for it, his figures held the field, until a man, who had hitherto been silent, began to speak. He directly controverted that amateur preacher's statements. He, too, produced figures of his own. The amateur preacher was first amazed, then cowed, then roused to battle. The figures which the assailants hurled at each other darkened the air. But the amateur preacher's were no match for the other man's. We asked churches and our chapels. It would be interesting, in this connection, to ascertain what exactly are the qualifications which each of the denominations expects its preachers to possess. One may be forgiven for surmising that the only qualification which the Church of England insists upon is a social one. It should be remembered that a social qualification necessitates a certain degree of education, but one so often finds in church pulpits preachers who have gentlemanly manners and, apparently, nothing else! Something more than gentlemanly manners is required in a preacher. The Congregational standard is, in one sense, a much higher one. With the Congregational minister preaching is all in all. If he cannot preach he is foredoomed to failure. You never meet in Congregational pulpits quite such bad preachers as you meet in Episcopal pulpits. On the other hand, the Congregational minister is seldom much above the level of his congregation. This follows as a matter of course, since each congregation choose the minister who, at their disposal, is most to their taste. The best preachers get the best incomes. Therefore, again, it follows that the poorest congregations are only too apt to get the worst preachers. Wesleyan Methodism is a compromise between church and chapel. At any rate, congregations do not choose their own ministers. Still, they are allowed a certain amount of variety, and are not constrained to always listen to the same incapable. It would be impossible, perhaps, to say in a few words what the Wesleyan minister's qualification exactly is, but it certainly is not a preaching one. I have heard as bad preachers in Wesleyan pulpits as it would be possible to hear. On the other hand, it is only fair to add that I have heard many whom it would be hard to beat. In the Roman Catholic Church a priest is not by any means necessarily a preacher. It is possible that he has never preached a sermon in his life, and that he never will. A sermon is very far from being an essential part of the Roman ritual. The consequence is that when you do hear a sermon in a Catholic Church, you are pretty certain not to be confronted by the spectacle of a man attempting to do something for which, either by nature or by education, he is altogether unsuited.

If you think it out, the odd part of the business is that no one criticizes a preacher so keenly as his own congregation. For this, doubtless, there is sufficient reason.
that other man, the amateur preacher being gone, whence his figures came. He told us from his own head. They were the inventions of the moment. Seeing that we wondered, he explained that he had had a considerable experience of amateur preachers. He had suffered from them, sorely. And his sufferings had taught him that amateur preachers were apt to get up their sermons, for that is what too often they amount to, in an amateur sort of way. Their figures, imperfectly assimilated at first, become more and more dubious as time goes on, until very shortly they become, as they well may become, so uncertain of the literal correctness of their own figures, that they are altogether incapable of proving the inferiority of the figures of others. Therefore, when an amateur preacher begins to hurl figures, this man hurles figures back again, inventing them as he goes on—exhibiting considerable mental agility in the process, too. Nine times out of ten the amateur preacher is confounded.

I have taken this story to heart. When my maiden aunt, who is an amateur preacher of a particularly painful kind, throws teetotal statistics at my head, I throw what I hope I may, without impropriety, call alcoholic statistics—little inventions of my own—back at her. They confuse her dreadfully, and I have noticed that she is becoming less and less inclined to preach at me.

Bi-metalism is a subject upon which, just now, amateur preachers are holding forth. I never met a bi-metalist—or, for the matter of that, a monometallist either—whose arguments I could not rout, acting on the afore-mentioned gentleman's hint. Not that I know anything about bi-metalism. I do not. Indeed I am arriving by degrees at the fixed conviction that no one knows anything about bi-metalism. No, not one. I have met men who are supposed to be authorities on the subject, but I never yet met one who was able to make it really clear to the understandings of others, or even to make it clear that he really and truly understood it himself.

It certainly does seem to be at least probable that the less some amateur preachers know about their subjects, the more dogmatic they are apt to be upon them. I am acquainted with one of the fraternity whose subject is criminal reform. His idea is—I do not know where he got it from, but I presume from somewhere—that the less you punish criminals, the more likely you are to diminish crime. So far from punishing an offender against the law, you are to make a sort of pet of him. You are to take him away from his criminal associations, and introduce him to respectable houses and model families, and so instil into him imperceptibly, by force of example, a love of higher things. It seems to be rather a funny idea to me, and based on an insufficient knowledge of human nature. But I may not have got it quite correctly. His elucidation of the idea is a very trying one to listen to. But I do know that he supports it, or at least that he imagines that he supports it, by an appalling display of statistics. The word appalling is used advisedly. He is one of those persons who, directly they come into contact with questions of arithmetic, are immediately at sea. The mess he makes of those statistics is horrible to witness. This is the sort of thing:

"Last year there were three thousand four hundred and seventy-eight convictions of all sorts. Of these twelve thousand nine hundred and seventy-six were for misdemeanours, twenty-nine thousand five hundred and thirty were for felony, and the rest were for drunkenness. Of the convictions for drunkenness thirty-six thousand four hundred and ninety-seven were first convictions, while the balance of no less than sixty-seven thousand eight hundred and twenty-three had been convicted more than once. Now for the due and proper custody of these criminals there were required five thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine prisons, and one hundred and forty-four warders and other officers. The total cost to the nation was, in round figures, half a million sterling, or fourteen shillings and threepence per head per annum, or nineteen pounds eighteen shillings and twopence per week; while the sum paid in salaries alone amounted to over a couple of milliions. If these were placed side by side they would form a tower three feet wide and eighteen thousand feet thick. While if the pounds were reduced to sovereigns—I mean, that is, if the pence were reduced to pounds, and were placed one above the other, they would form a bridge across the Channel a hundred feet long, and five-and-twenty miles in width. Now, if you come to consider—what did I say was the number of first offenders?"

He pauses. He consults his notes; then
his memory. It is difficult to say which muddles him most. Yet he maulders on.

There is nothing to show that he would not maunde on for ever if he could get any one to listen.

The man is sane—the picture is, perhaps, a little over-coloured. But he is as incapable of preaching, as he himself might say, in one of his paroxysms of muddle, as the "beasts of the air." Prate he will. What is more, he meditates standing for Parliament, with the view of pressing his theories on the attention of the representatives of the nation. It is a fact. There will be some pleasant hours in that abode of pleasantness when he gets there.

I once answered an advertisement which stated that a furnished house was to let. The house was in the country. I was to meet the proprietor in town, and we were to go down together to see it. When I met him he asked me if I did not know his name—which, we will say, was Jones. I observed that I did not remember having heard it before. He appeared surprised.

"I thought everybody knew it by now. I've been at it long enough."

"As what?" I asked.

"Preaching the doctrine of Art for the Elevation and Regeneration of the Masses."

"Oh!" I said.

He explained. It seemed that he was of opinion that if every wall—the walls of our living-rooms, sleeping-rooms, kitchens, offices, churches, chapels, public buildings—were covered, from floor to ceiling, with pictures, the effect on the lives of those who had to live with them would, in time, be indescribable. I felt that it would, though perhaps not altogether in the direction he suggested. He went on to add that he had put his theory into practice in the house which we were then going to see. I looked forward to the worst—or I thought I did. My anticipations, however, fell far short of the reality. Anything like the "pictures" with which he had covered the walls of the house which he wanted to let, furnished, with them as part of the furniture, I never saw. And the way in which they were hung! There was not an inch of space between any two of them. They concealed the walls like a mosaic. And no miserly told me, actually with a chuckle, that there were, I don't know how many hundreds, or thousands, of them, and that, though they were all "real" oil paintings, they had only "stood him in, frame and all," I think, something like eight and sixpence apiece. Seldom have I breathed more freely than when I quitted that "picture" haunted house.

If the cobbler would but stick to his last! If people would only leave preaching to those who are competent to preach! I take it that it is to indulge in a wild dream to hope that they ever will.

Preaching lends a man an air of importance, or he thinks that it does. And we do so like to think ourselves important!

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**THE AMERICAN HOUSE BEAUTIFUL.**

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The untravelled or travelled and unobservant Briton cannot associate the traditional American whom he accepts as a type—and we all know how exceedingly true to nature all traditional national types are—with the smallest ideas of poetry, imagination, or "soul." To the said Briton, dollars, their making and their spending, are the sole reason for the American's existence on this earth.

Strange to say, although the Briton is not quite right, he is by no means entirely wrong. Dollars are the essence of the lives of five Americans out of six. They think dollars; they talk dollars; and, no doubt, they dream dollars. But the brightness of the exception goes far to redeem the national character, and more, is rapidly softening the natures of the dollar men. The publication of American magazines in England first showed us that there was plenty of "soul" in the increasing people across the Atlantic. The marvellous display at the World's Fair proved to us that Americans possess, not merely a soul to appreciate the imaginative and the beautiful, but the faculty of expressing it in more solid form than print and engraving. As a finishing lesson we would recommend to the still doubtful Briton an examination of the American House Beautiful, in the honest conviction that no absolutely prosaic mind could find pleasure in beautiful surroundings.

We Englishmen are proud, and justly so, of the stately and the cottage homes of our land. There is nothing-like them elsewhere in the world, for they possess peculiar features of their own—the former in their antiquity and their associations, the latter in their own beauty and that of their surroundings. But the great mass of us live neither in stately homes nor in
cottages, and of our residences—externally, at any rate—we have very small reason to be proud. Now, as the Americans have no stately homes of our English type, with the exception of the fine old Colonial residences of Virginia and New England; and as their cottage homes are modern, practical, and consequently ugly, and, as we have said, there is a wealth of refinement in many American minds, they have succeeded in making the villa residences of their big city suburbs the most beautiful in the world. I call them "villa residences," despite the fact that many of them are mansions in size and feature, because they are the homes of business men. The town residences of American business men are beautiful internally; but being in streets and rows they necessarily lack the external features which induce us to select the suburban home as a type of the American House Beautiful.

In a survey of these the first fact which strikes the eye of the stranger is the extraordinary fertility of the American architectural brain in original design. A family likeness pervades all London suburban houses, be they north or south of the Thames. If there be one pretty house, there will be scores exactly like it all around; but until within the past very few years the London suburban builder reared as fast, as cheaply, and, in consequence, as inartistically as he could, with the result that the very great majority of London suburban houses are absolutely hideous. But in an American suburb, let us say for example, Brookline, near Boston, a suburb extending over miles of hill and dale, and planted thickly with houses, it may be asserted that not half-a-dozen buildings are exactly alike. The strain after the original and the striking has, of course, resulted in the erection of a few monstrosities, and of some houses more eccentric than pleasing in design, but the general average is exceedingly high.

In this general originality of house design I seem to see a far greater instance of the much-vaulted American liberty and independence, than in any of the political and social institutions of the country.

After we have surveyed the exteriors of the houses and proceed to their interiors, another new fact strikes us, and this is how very much better the different classes of American business men are housed than are the corresponding grades in our own country. Shop-walkers, counter men, and good artisans go home every evening to houses which in England would not be deemed unworthy of Otty men of good position. The taste in furnishing and decoration may not always be as good as the houses themselves, but there is nothing corresponding to what may be called our London "gentle villa residences"; and the bank clerk, instead of huddling in one yellow brick box in a long row with a big name, shuts himself up for the evening in his own little detached castle, which contains on a small scale all the accommodation and many more of the conveniences of an English gentleman's house. As we rise higher in the scale we reach the American House Beautiful, as distinguished from the American House Magnificent.

Let us take a random type—the Brookline, or Roxbury, or Dorchester house of a Boston merchant. It will be either a "frame house" of weather-boards, painted white or yellow, or it will be on the fine old Colonial pattern of red brick, with white casement windows, and a beautiful porch of the type so often seen in English country halls of the Georgian period. In the former case it will be daringly original in shape and feature, full of odd angles and corners and gables; in the latter it will be square and solid, and differing only from its English prototype in the possession of a deep verandah—a necessary institution in hot weather.

We enter a large square hall, furnished and often used as a room, with a large open fireplace, an ample chimney corner, and in the place of the hideous grate, fire-dogs of polished brass or of curiously wrought iron, set in a recess lined with quaint tiles. It is in the furnishing and decoration of their houses that the Americans so astonish the untravelled Briton. Americans travel much, and when they travel they collect, as the British curio and bric-a-brac hunter knows well to his cost, so that we see the dainty porcelain and the curious bronzes of Japan, quaint odds and ends from Italy and Holland, rugs and hangings from Spain and the East, old German ironwork, old English silver and furniture, disposed in the various rooms with such care and taste that our preconceived notions of vulgar ostentation, as associated with the well-to-do American, are shattered at a blow. The owner may be a self-made man, but our national pride is sadly humiliated when we compare the interior of his home with that of some British self-made men we met of.
Entered from the hall is a beautiful drawing-room, which is sufficient proof that the Woman's Building at the Chicago Fair was no false exemplification of the taste and art of the American woman, so delicate is its decoration, so harmonious is its colouring, and, best of all, so homelike and onregrettable, so absolutely free from the reproach which may be fairly levelled at the average British villa drawing-room—the reproach of looking like a "company" room. A stately dining-room, a billiard-room, and an ample lavatory and cloakroom also lead from the hall—every room, of course, being lighted by electricity, for no gas-lit house would find a tenant in these days.

By the broad and picturesque staircase, with a genuine old English grandfather clock in the angle, we pass to the first floor. Here are the bedrooms, and here are to be noted some of the American domestic features which are immeasurably ahead of ours. The electric system is universal. Just as the American hostess seated at the dinner-table summons the servant by merely pressing a button on the floor with her foot, so can the master of the house light every room on the floors above and below by using one of the half-dozen buttons in the wall of the first landing: a very convenient and efficacious arrangement under such circumstances—extreme ones—as the entrance of burglars into the house. Now why do I say "extreme" circumstances in connection with the entrance of burglars into such a house as I am describing?

Because the undetected entrance of a burglar would be an extreme circumstance, inasmuch as the slightest external interference with any door or window is at once proclaimed through the medium of an ingenious electrical apparatus by the loud ringing of an alarm bell.

"Oh! But you are describing a very superior house!" I hear. Not a bit of it. I have chosen as a type not the residence of a Railway or Pork King, but one of the many hundreds of homes belonging to the well-to-do class of men who work hard for their daily bread and butter.

The bedrooms are spacious, well-lighted, and cheerfully arranged. The ponderous, gloomy furniture of the British bedroom—the great wardrobe, the sarcophagus chest of drawers, the massive washing-stand, and so forth, are absent. Each room has a cupboard as big as many an English dressing-room, and hanging closets. There are pretty fireplaces with tasteful mantles, for, although every American house is primarily heated by hot air, the English open fireplace is rapidly finding favour on account of its cheerfulness. On each floor of a modern American residence there is at least one bath-room; in many residences each bedroom has its own bath-room. And such bath-rooms! Furnished with all that can make the daily necessity a luxurious indulgence, bright with plated pipes and glimmering marble, lavishly supplied with hot and cold water—compared with them our English bath-room is a mere closet, and we think with humiliation upon the proud emphasis with which we advertise a good house as "containing two bathrooms!" A third salient fact about the American House Beautiful which impresses the British visitor is the thoroughness and completeness of the arrangements from attic to basement.

It is a notorious fact that often in what are deemed very good class English houses there is very good reason for not taking a visitor very far beyond the reception rooms and some of the bedrooms. Proud housewives are naturally reluctant to shock their visitors by an abrupt transition from gorgeously-decorated and upholstered family rooms to dusky kitchens and stuffy attics. The lady of the American House Beautiful shows her basement floor as readily as she shows her drawing-room. And with reason. Servants are more difficult to get and more expensive to keep in America even than in England. Consequently, all that mechanical ingenuity can do to supply the want is done, and an English housekeeper would go into ecstasies over the furnace arrangement which obviates the necessity of fire-laying and fireplace keeping; over the laundry system; over the presses, and cupboards, and closets, and drawers fitted into every available nook and corner, and yet leaving a clear, well-lighted, open kitchen which would be a Paradise to many a British Mary Jane.

When the Frenchman accentuated his criticism of the Chicago Fair with an expression of wonder, not so much at the beauty of all he saw, but that such a beautiful creation should be the work of so eminently prosaic and commercial a people as the American, his feeling was exactly that of an English housekeeper visiting an American House Beautiful. To all appearance the average American lady on her travels cannot be associated with a capacity for household management, for she poses
as a light, frivolous, petted creature with no soul for anything but the "having a good time." Nothing is further from the truth. This very daintiness is the quality which so admirably fits the American woman for the proper tenancy of a House Beautiful. Exquisite taste is more often displayed in the house of an American woman who has never crossed the Atlantic, than in the house managed by an Englishwoman familiar with the marvels of all the capitals of Europe. The art of tasteful decoration seems innate in the American feminine soul. The eye is rarely offended by jarring colours, by inharmonious groupings and arrangements, by exaggerations, by ostentatious exhibition of costly belongings, by overloadings or by bare corners, by trumpery make-believes, or by over-studied carelessness. As the French cook can make a good dinner out of an English cook's refuse, so can an American lady do more with a few yards of drapery and lace and a few well-chosen objets of ornament, than many a well-educated, artistically trained Englishwoman with the command of an untinted purse. Nor does constant contact with uneducated, unpolished boors with no souls above the conversion of one dollar into two, and no information beyond the range of the market, as are the lords of many of these American Houses Beautiful, seem to act prejudicially on the nicety and daintiness of the average American lady.

Moreover, she is as good a domestic manageress as she is a domestic beautifier, and not in the best regulated hotels do things work more smoothly than in most American houses. How it is done is not at first apparent to the visitor—say an English housewife who can only keep her establishment in comparative order by giving her entire mind and time to it, by fussing and fuming from morning till night, by keeping ears and eyes continually strained, by, in fact, making herself the servant of her servants, for the life of an American woman is to all appearances simply a life of self-indulgence, of shop-dawdling, of social intercourse, of pleasure-taking. But that it is done is at once evident to anybody who has been the guest in an American House Beautiful.

AN EVIL EYE
A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

"Is your friend, Jim L'Estrange, Laurie?"

"Well, Madge, why not?"

"Nothing—only—he's not a bit like what I fancied!"

"In what way?"

"You never told me he had such a strange, sad face. I declare I never saw any one look like that!"

"Oh, as to that, he's not the luckiest fellow in the world."

"Not? I thought he was rich and young—had come in for a good fortune—"

"Yes. But hang it all, Madge, money isn't everything."

Madge L'ford raised her delicate, sarcastic eyebrows.

"No! I fancied we fin-de-siècle people had agreed it was! Will you tell me what's wrong with your peculiar-looking friend?"

"Perhaps—some time—but I don't know myself all about him. I've only just picked him up again, as it were, since he came back to England."

"Well, you used to rave about him. We girls always were dying to see your grand hero—you can't wonder we formed an ideal. I pictured a sort of delightful Guy Livingstone—Rhoda Broughton creature, and I see—"

"Well, what? I'm sure he's good-looking enough?

"Good-looking! Hum—I don't know. He's got a lovely profile, I grant you, like a first-rate bit of sculpture, but that mahogany-coloured complexion—"

"He's been in Africa—Australia."

"And those curious light-blue eyes, the weirdest eyes! No! You may call him handsome, after a fashion, but not good-looking, Laurie!"

"I call him so," the brother retorted briskly, as brothers do.

"You're sure he's not a villain?"

"You ridiculous little animal! Old Jim—the most generous, kindest chap in the world! He'd do anything for a pal."

"Well, if I had to describe a villain in a novel I should make him just exactly like your beloved Jim L'Estrange—"

"Hush!" The angry caution came too late. Miss Madge's ringing voice travelled pretty far, and she was not aware that Mr. L'Estrange had approached them to greet his school friend, who was excessively wrath with his sister, for he was certain from the peculiar expression on the other man's face that he had heard her candid comment. Madge got a little red, but she carried it off as usual with a high hand. She and her brother were staying with a
country family, the Brandons, of Elistead Hall, who were entertaining a few friends with a small and early dance. On this occasion Laurence Lifford and Jim L’Estrange had met again after a period of several years. The former greeted his friend with hearty cordiality, which Madge thought he received a little coldly; he had certainly a reserved, hesitating, and unexpansive manner. “This is my sister, Jim; it’s a funny thing you never met before.”

Mr. L’Estrange bowed profoundly, and with great gravity, though Madge thought she had detected a gleam of amusement in his peculiar light eyes. She was a young person used to conquest, and with an appetite for admiration, and her brothers had never succeeded in snubbing her as they conscientiously tried to do. She was pretty, lively, “chic”; she had great coolness and frankness of demeanour, could dance and dress to perfection. Naturally the average young man did not hold out against these attractions. But she felt dubious about this young man, who purred and plucked her. He did not hurry to engage her for dances; on the whole he seemed more eager to talk to Laurie. She felt aggrieved, and perhaps something in her hazel eyes told him so, for as she met his, she asked her to be good enough to spare him the next waltz.

“But I’m afraid,” he added, “I’m not up to modern form—I haven’t danced for three years. I’ve been wandering about in uncivilised places where they only dance occroboreus.”

“I wish you’d teach me how!”

“I’m afraid it would hardly look as graceful in Mrs. Brandon’s drawing-room as in an African clearing. If I make a great mess of waiting you must forgive me, Miss Lifford—one soon drops out of civilisation.”

“Oh, if only one could, it would be such fun!”

He smiled.

“You think so? Well, I don’t know; there isn’t much fun in savagery, except for a change.”

“You don’t look as if you found much fun in anything!” Madge said, in her acidulous way. She wanted to “get a rise” out of Mr. L’Estrange, but only succeeded in making Laurie scowl. His friend snubbed her by apparently not hearing what she said, as he went on calmly to make some observation on some local event to Lifford. Madge decided that she disliked the man; that she always did dislike Laurie’s particular friends; and, glancing at him disapprovingly, she wondered what on earth made old Laurie choose a chum so widely unlike himself.

“I wonder now what he is, if not a villain,” Madge thought, “for he is something unlike other people. I’m positive of that. Perhaps a spiritualist; a hypnotist; a theosophist; some sort of queer, uncanny new light. I’ll pump him. I’m awfully anxious to find out what theosophy is. So far, all I know is something connected with teaucups and a most repulsive-looking old woman. If he’s that he shall explain it to me; if he hypnotises he shall try his skill on—on some one else. I’m not going to let any one make a fool of me and order me to do ridiculous antics just for the fun of showing off.”

Mr. L’Estrange danced lightly, but his step was certainly not quite up to date, and Madge, preferring talk at any time to almost every other amusement, soon contrived to come to an anchor in a quiet nook, where she proceeded to try her hand, with marked ill success, at “pumping” Laurie’s chum. Mr. L’Estrange was the most difficult man to get things out of; as he had ever met, yet she felt sure it was only that the machinery was hard to work, not that the material to be worked was not there. She skilfully led the conversation to modern magic, informed him that a certain doctor there, whom she pointed out, was great at hypnotism—had Mr. L’Estrange any experience of the thing?

“None,” he answered carelessly.

“Did you ever try your hand at it? I somehow formed a notion that you would succeed—”

He looked at her rapidly, then turned his eyes away; he was remarkably chary of meeting Miss Madge’s expressive and well-practised glances.

“No. Why should you imagine this? I, if I had the smallest power of the sort I should be more than careful never to attempt to exercise it.”

“But why? They say it is often a most valuable force—”

“H’m—I doubt that. I am sure its danger must be greater than its value.”

“Don’t you believe that some people have curious powers over others?”

There was a slight but marked pause. When he spoke it was, Madge felt, in a markedly artificial tone, with a little laugh.

“People like you, Miss Lifford, must be quite aware that they have!”
Oh, you tiresome wretch!" thought Madge; "there's no drawing you anyhow." Aloud she remarked, haughtily disregarding the implied and conventional compliment, that she had seen most curious things in men, married and she really did not see much difference between that and this hypnotizing, which seemed only a new name for the same thing. "Isn't it odd," she went on, "in these most sceptical, agnostic times that there are such strange beliefs and superstitions afoot? These theosophists, now — " she paused a moment; he showed no interest. Apparently he was not one of the occult either. "Do you know anything about them?"

"No, barely anything. I don't pretend to understand such mysteries."

Madge talked on, piqued at discovering so little, touching first one subject, then another, in her fullest and liveliest fashion. He seemed amused, he was very polite, but he showed no real interest till she touched upon Laurie and their friendship of old. Then the thin brown face lit up, and a strange fire came into the weird light eyes.

"Dear old man! I don't know a better sort than Laurie anywhere."

"You will be interested in hearing that he is just engaged."

"No, really? Is he? I am glad! I hope he'll be as happy as he ought to be. Who is it?"

"She's a niece of Mrs. Brandon's—Georgie Brandon, a very nice, jolly, unsophisticated girl. I think Laurie really is lucky."

"He always was. Good old Laurie always fell on his feet."

"You believe in good luck, not in the moral little stories that insist on good conduct?"

"Yes," he said slowly, and in a dull sort of voice, "I believe in good luck. Then he abruptly changed his tone and asked a shower of questions about Laurie. Madge found herself drawn on to tell him about their jolly life at home, about her four brothers, the noise and fun that went on.

"Do you know what a big family is? Have you many at home?"

"No—there are only my mother and myself. But I never am at home."

"You have a nice place somewhere, haven't you?"

"Yes—but I don't stay in it. My mother and a companion live there. I wander about the world."

"But some day you will settle down; you won't be always wandering!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I fear I shall. One doesn't lose the trick."

The next opportunity Madge had of finding her brother alone she began at once about his friend. She declared she didn't like, she even positively disliked him; he was horribly unresponsive and cold, yet he occupied her mind a good deal, simply as a problem, a puzzle. Madge's nimble and alert brain loved puzzles.

"You said you would tell me what you meant by his being unlucky."

"Well, I don't know that I can exactly. I don't remember what it was that always made people think him so, the idea somehow stuck to him. I suppose it began by—it was a horrid thing to happen to a fellow. I don't like to talk about it, but mind you don't mention it to a soul, Madge!"

"I won't. I can be as dark as any one when I choose."

"He was only a kid when it happened, twelve or thirteen; I met him first at that preparatory school, you know, at Ether. The first term he and his twin brother Ralph were both there; they had no father—people used to say there was something queer about the way he died—and this twin, who was half an hour older than Jim, was beir to the property. He was a bad-tempered chap rather, but jolly enough when he wasn't riled, and awfully handsome. Jim was immensely fond of him; and when they quarrelled, as brothers must, Jim always caved in. Well, in the summer holidays they two went out rabbiting, and somehow or other Jim's gun went off—he tripped, I believe, as they were going through a hedge—his gun flew up, and the charge went through Ralph's head—"

Madge uttered an exclamation of horror. Laurie's usually cheerful face was grave enough.

"Ay, it was a frightful thing. They say it nearly killed Jim. He was off his head for a bit, and he didn't come back to school next term. I did hear that his mother never felt the same for him afterwards; she is, I fancy, a queer sort of woman. Ralph was her pet, and she couldn't get over it with poor Jim. That was the first blight on the fellow, but somehow I don't know that it was the last. I've heard rumours—I am not sure of any of them except another
thing that happened at school. We met at Winchester afterwards. A ball from Jim's bat took a fellow on the side of the head, and killed him soon after. It seemed the most accursed luck, he always had it. Yes, I remember another thing; Jim brought scarlet fever back with him from home, and young Brooks died of it. He had it mildly himself, so had I. One night—we slept next each other in the infirmary—I heard him crying and asked him what the row was. After a bit I got it out of him. He was awfully cut up because he was getting better; Brooks was worse. 'He'll die, you'll see he will,' he said, 'and I can't. There's heaps of people to care about Brooks, and none about me, so he'll die and I shan't.' That's how things go, and I hate everything! Poor old Jim! I wasn't out of it when I said he was unlucky, was I? But I hope times will change, or have changed, with him. I've pretty well lost sight of him, so I don't know.'

Madge for once was silent, she looked pale and troubled. Lightly as she took life, heartless as she seemed, sometimes there were moods of higher feeling in her, and Laurie's story, coming upon her vivid impression of L'Estrange's curious personality, stirred them. Three lives, three young happy lives destroyed, and he the miserable cause! That little bald narrative of the scene in the infirmary seemed to her almost unbearably sad to think of. She did so hate being obliged to feel sad!

"I can understand your feeling awfully sorry for him, Laurie," she said after a pause, "but what made you fond of him?"

"I believe that began it," he answered simply, "being so sorry for him. Then he was such a generous fellow, he hadn't anything but he wanted to give it away; he spent half his time helping any one over work, and he was so confoundedly obliged to one for sticking to him; yet he wouldn't ever chum up, or be really intimate with one. Brave, too, he was, tremendously brave! He'd stand up to a fellow twice his size and take the foolhardiest risks. Just because he didn't seem to care whether he broke his neck or not, he never did. Oh, I don't know exactly why, but I was always fond of Jim L'Estrange!"

"He makes me feel uncomfortable somehow—ill at ease."

"Because he won't flirt with you," her brother retorted with fraternal brutality.

"As if I wanted him to!" with indignation. "I don't say he mayn't be nice—when you know him."

"Oh, he's not nice. I detest your nice men. Poor old Jim's a thundering good sort. If I were in a hobble, I'd go to him sooner than any one in the world. I shall ask him to be my best man."

"Shall you?"

"Yes, if your ladyship has no objection."

"That wouldn't make much difference. Did you introduce him to Georgie the other night?"

"No, I didn't get the chance, but Mrs. Brandon has asked him to our river picnic to-morrow. He tried to back out of it—that's his way—but I wouldn't let him; he ought not to be a hermit, it only makes him morbid."

The Brandons' house was close to a pretty river for boating, and part of the summer programme included frequent picnics, which were most popular among the light-hearted young folks who laughed, played, and made love through the long sunny days. They were all ready at the boathouse, where the several boats were waiting for their crews, and the difficult question of sorting people was pretty well settled before Mr. L'Estrange made his appearance. Laurie had decided to take Georgie, Madge, and his friend Jim in his boat, and called out to them to make haste as the others were starting. Madge was looking a little intently at the new-comer, who, though got up much like the rest, somehow looked different from them all, and she felt piqued to perceive a visible drawing back.

"Am I to go in that?" he said. "I thought I was to have a canoe."

"No, Jack Brandon bagged it. You unsociable beggar, you ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself! Come on. Let me introduce you to Miss Georgina Brandon; my sister you know. Be quick! we ought to have started."

Jim L'Estrange bowed in silence. He did not look at either of the girls, but took his place without a word. Madge felt cross; she was not used to finding men thus unwilling to enter her company, yet the very snub stimulated her to effort. Georgie chose to row, and took the stroke oar to Laurie's bow, so Mr. L'Estrange had no choice but to sit beside Madge and listen to her light and airly chat. He listened and smiled, but did not say much, nor did he more than occasionally glance at her. He gave her an impression of avoidance, yet
there was nothing in his manner that was not courteous and considerate, even to deference.

"I believe he's afraid of being more than coldly civil," Madge told herself. The atmosphere of happy lightness, however, had its effect. Jim L'Estrange warmed; he once or twice laughed a low, curious laugh. It seemed to Madge as if something frozen had thawed in his strange, light eyes. He watched Laurie and Georgie with an affectionate sort of interest, remote, yet genuine. When they landed on the spot chosen for dinner, the lovers naturally wandered off, and Madge drew Mr. L'Estrange's notice to them with a smiling glance.

"Good old chap!" he murmured, "he does look happy. I hope he will be the same ten years hence."

"He wants you to be his best man—you know the wedding is to be in September?"

"Me!" He started with a sudden look of alarm, a sudden pallor. "Oh, no, that is quite impossible. I must put him off that."

"Impossible! Why, on earth? What can you mean?"

"Oh—why—nothing—only that I shan't be in England."

"An afterthought—that was not your reason," thought Madge. She said aloud: "Laurie will be much disappointed then; he has set his heart on you."

"It's awfully good of him, but Laurie has troops of friends; he will have no difficulty. It is quite out of the question for me."

"A man likes to have his particular friend—you were always Laurie's hero."

He laughed under his breath.

"What an extraordinary one to choose!" There was a world of concentrated bitterness in both laugh and tone. Madge, perverse Madge, was conscious of a sudden sensation of compassion that almost amounted to kindness. Faulty, perverse she was, but she could not spoil a truly kind and soft heart. She drew a little near to him; she looked at him now, not coquetishly, but with genuine, honest sweetness.

"One doesn't choose, does one, exactly!" she said softly. "One cares for people one knows not why. And Laurie really does care for you."

"Oh, I'm sure of it! I'm sure of it!" he cried emphatically. "My miserable school-life would have been intolerable without Laurie."

"Then, if you are truly such friends, why should you refuse to be at his wedding?"

"Why!" he repeated in an undertone. "Just for that very reason, to be sure."

"What can you mean?"

She never knew if he would have answered her, for they were at that moment drawn into the crowd. Dinner was ready, and serious conferences had to end. There was one other incident at the meal that drew Madge's attention again. Some gentleman present had been travelling in Greece, and was telling his experiences to Mrs. Brandon. Madge was in the middle of some speech, which she was pleased to find Jim was not attending to. She glanced up at him, and saw that he was intently listening to what the traveller was saying. She listened, too. He was talking about the superstitions of the village; how the peasant mothers disliked hearing their babies praised, and would spit on them or revile them for fear of the evil eye.

"A sort of idea of Nemesis, I suppose. The dread of being too happy and raising the ire of the gods—the old Apollo rage which destroyed Niobe's children. But that evil eye is a queer thing. There was a man in the village who was supposed to have it. He was not a bad man, and not hated. No; they only shunned him. He could not help it, they thought. It was not wickedness, only a curse on him that he brought disaster. Of course I pooh-poohed it; of course I didn't believe it. But an odd thing happened. A mere coincidence, no doubt, but odd. I had bought a young horse, a fine, sound creature, without a blemish, as far as I could see, and I was trying it one day. I went for a good gallop, and got near the village about sunset. As I turned the corner of a winding, rocky path that led to the place, I came upon this man. He was a curious-looking, melancholy fellow, with, I must say, the strangest, wildest eyes. Perhaps a touch of insanity in him, but harmless and mild enough. He was sitting on a stone by the wayside, and got up as I turned. The horse shied at him a bit, and as he came near to pass on, swerved right round and started off. We hadn't gone many paces before he suddenly dropped under me. I got off and looked at him. He was stone dead!"

There was a general exclamation. Madge was looking at Jim L'Estrange, and could not take her eyes away, for something terrified her that she saw there.
"Yes, stone dead!" repeated the gentleman, calmly helping himself to some strawberries. "After that it was useless arguing against the evil eye. The horse had nothing the matter with him; the peasants said he died of that one glance. Of course, it's utter bosh. One doesn't believe in it, but so it happened."

"Why not believe in it! It's true!"

Jim L'Estrange spoke as if he could not help it; strongly, yet quite calmly. Then, before any one could answer him, he got up and carried the fruit to the other side of the party. Something changed the current of talk, and no more passed on the subject, but Madge could not forget it. She had her clue. She now understood, or thought she understood, what marked Jim L'Estrange from the general run of people.

THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL.
IN THREE PARTS. PART II
FROM LIVERPOOL TO MANCHESTER, BY WATER.

EARLY on the first of January, I left Manchester for Liverpool by train, to make the journey back to Manchester by canal. There were a few hundreds of others bound in like manner for the Prince's Landing Stage— with picnic baskets, wraps, and umbrellas, and abounding good spirits.

We had one brief glimpse of the Manchester Docks as we skirted them. Then the January mist closed about us. There were streaks of promise in the gloomy heavens, however, which put hope in our hearts. Even as it was, though cold, the weather was kind for the first day of the year.

A man may just as well look at his fellow-travellers all the way between these two huge cities of Lancashire as seek graces of landscape outside the train window. To persons like Mr. Ruskin this part of England must be a positive irritation. The "blight" of modern inventions is upon it.

"Blight! Indeed!" — a thoroughbred Lancashire man might well retort. "If money, and trade, and the good things that follow in their wake are a scourge, scourge me with them till I cry 'stop.'"

In Liverpool there was a glint of sunshine.

Down by the Mersey the air cut cold from the water, but the fog was thick. So, too, was the crowd of adventurous pleasure-seekers. Half-a-dozen steamers, with bunting from their masts and music sounding on their decks, were taking passengers aboard—or rather getting them impelled aboard.

"For goodness' sake don't push behind like that," cried a portly gentleman in the midst of the strife at the "Fair Queen's" gangway. It was noticeable, however, that even while he spoke, he rammed himself against the person in front of him like an oarsman straining at his oar.

You see, there were to be six hundred of us, and, of course, there was not likely to be sitting room for half six hundred. It was a case of "the foremost get the seats." The voyage was sure to be somewhat lengthy although but forty miles in distance. To stand exclaiming "Oh!" and "ah!" "wonderful!" "a stupendous undertaking!" and the like for five, six, or seven hours on end, was not a prospect steeped in enchantment.

The rest of Liverpool looked on at our departure with much uneasiness. We alone were decorated. The big "Teutonic" lay over against us in mid channel, like a dead thing. Even through a glass, no sign of life appeared on her, and this at half-past nine on a fine winter's morning!

But we had compensation in other quarters. The crimson sun stole up from the smoke, and set the imagination at work at the same time that it dulled the sense of cold that came keenly from the river. Tall chimneys showed through the vapour, and there were shadows even of Birkenhead across the water. Fishing ships went by with their lead-coloured sails all set, moving quietly before the east wind. And the Mersey danced beneath the "Fair Queen's" bulwarks in opaline ripples—blue, purple, fire colour, and green all in a twinking— and dignified the city round about us and that other city now wedded to the sea by Mersey and bold capitalists combined.

It was a scene that C. W. Wyllie, the famous painter of Thames barges and Thames fog effects, would have taken a professional interest in.

We were a strangely-assorted crowd: gentlemen in bearskin coats who had the air of directors, young ladies in very late fashions and high-heeled shoes, knots of the Liverpool young men about town with jets cascading from their lips, and not a few stout commonplace women with their husbands, who began to eat sandwiches...
and refer to bottles the moment our paddles made a stir.

We sang "The Conquering Hero" as a start—at least some of us did. It was a little trying for Liverpool, but that great city did not resent the slight. "The Conquering Hero" recurred frequently. We had it, I believe, at every lock, and now and then we echoed it second-hand, either from the crowd on the banks or the choir on board another steamer. It did as well as anything else, however, and was certainly as appropriate at least as "Auld Lang Syne." There were also "Daisy Bell" and "After the Ball." Two young women with wide mouths, and two lads with fiddles, conspired against us with these touching airs. The occasion was one for reckless gaiety. The hoppers, these little fellows, must have taken on board the "Fairy Queen" ought to have kept them all in clover for a week.

Meanwhile, we are rapidly going up stream. The training-ships are passed. So, too, are the powder magazines, fast moored in the river. Bunches of holly or mistletoe decorate the tops of the masts of these vessels. The growing freshness of the air, as we get away from the shelter of Liverpool's crowded wharves and masses of building, also tells of the season.

And so to Eastham in quick time. A fringe of trees on the banks hints at the vernal and midsummer graces of the water-side resort. So does a cottage with large letters on its wall telling of tea and hot water. The fog has mainly lifted. The bright red of the bricks of the Canal buildings is cheerful to see—much more so, indeed, than the puddy ripple of Mersey's smutty water against the banks beneath the tea-garden cottage. The unpleasant water has dyed the banks black to the high tide mark. One would almost scruple to drown the most delinquent of dogs in such a fluid.

Nothing could have been simpler than our entrance into and exit from the Eastham lock. We were hailed by the lock master, who asked our name and the nature of our cargo—though his eyes might have enlightened him on both points—and then the massy gates of tropic greenheart wood were closed betwixt us and the tidal river. Officials in brand new uniform and two or three score sight-seers—mostly little children from the neighbouring village—looked down upon us in the depths of the lock. But we were soon above them, and then with a cheer we departed from Eastham. The wind blew strong across the river and made red noses the rule with us. There was, however, jollity enough.

As touching this, a meditative gentleman with bleared eyes observed to me:

"There's no county in England where the people have such high spirits as in Lancashire. I don't care where you go, you'll never find them the same as at Liverpool. It's fun all the day long, that's what it is. It does a body good to see 'em."

My friend referred especially to the waggish doings of a certain person, who had just packed up the fog ends of his breakfast in the cover of the penny weekly with the appropriate title of "The Black," and pinned the small parcel with the printed title outside, to the mast-tail of a sloop and rather fat man, who suspected nothing less than that he was being made the butt of a score or two of his fellow-countrymen. This deplorable dupe went to and fro about the boat for an hour, heedless of the gulls that greeted his back. At length he sat down, and crushed the broken victuals asunder from him.

I dare say Lancashire is a more witty part of the realm than it has credit for being. Still, this particular sample of humour did not seem to strike a top note.

For a mile or two we had nothing to admire in the Canal, save the expensive embankment on the Mersey side. For most of the distance to Runcorn, in fact, this embankment has had to be continued. It is composed of enormous masses of sandstone and granite. The embankment cuts off the view of the Lancashire shore of the Mersey. But the deprivation is a bearable one.

At Ellesmere Port there is a dry dock, and a ship was being repaired in it. There was a suspicion of make-believe about this piece of work. It looked as if the vessel had been mounted, and the men sat hammering at its hull, more for the sake of the trippers on this, the opening day, than because she was really in need of repairs. But, of course, it was not so. The Canal Company means to earn a dividend just as soon as it can.

Ellesmere Port is noteworthy, apart from its docks, as being the outlet into the Ship Canal of the Shropshire Union Canal; which traverses Cheshire, Shropshire, and Staffordshire, with connections into Worcestershire and the south. This promises to be an important place on the Canal.
More embankments, the crossing of a couple of small rivers and a few miles of country of no particular interest, and Saltport is reached. We are here at the mouth of the river Weaver—a considerable stream.

The name 'Saltport' speaks for itself. The various ‘wishes’ of Cheshire send their white cargoes hither for shipment. The Weaver was a useful thoroughfare of trade before the Ship Canal cut it off and offered the hand of alliance. Here are the ten Weaver sluices in connection with the Canal, adapted to let loose fifty thousand cubic feet of water per second.

From Saltport on to Runcorn we are in the midst of business. The Weston and Runcorn Canal runs parallel with the Ship Canal, and the famous Bridgewater Canal—now the Ship Canal’s property—lowers itself by a series of locks to connect with the other two canals. One dock succeeds another. Steamers and sailing vessels are taking or unloading cargo. Everywhere flags are to be seen, and crowds of inquisitive folks stare at us as we pass them by.

Runcorn the dismal is at hand. Its gigantic railway bridge here crosses the Mersey to Widnes on the north side. Tall chimneys volute smoke towards the clouded heavens alike here and at Widnes. The river looks less and less attractive; for the tide is out, and the miles of black sand sparkling with greasy stalls, and with the murky stream flowing between those ugly banks, do not make up a picture of delight.

However, every yard shows us more of man’s triumph over Nature. The great railway bridge alone is a fillip to human pride. A train hurtles over it as we flutter our flags beneath it. The passengers wave their handkerchiefs to us. Runcorn’s population also for the moment forget their far from Arcadian modes of life, and salute us from the sandstone banks, up which the red houses of the town climb to the level of the high bridge. The air reeks with chemicals.

From the first of the swing-bridges, just east of the other bridge here, we are hailed with a distant cheer, and the people are hustled off it by the custodians, and its five hundred and seven tons of iron turns calmly on its axis to let our massed passengers between them and the faded blue of the heavens.

Hence to Manchester we are never without spectators of our passage, and their numbers increase as we cover the miles.

The run from Runcorn to Latchford is a nearly straight one of about ten miles, with no lock intervening. In fact, from Eastham to Latchford—twenty-one miles—there is no lock. But there are in all four swing-bridges, which we have to warn of our coming with eerie shrieks and whoistles.

Now, however, we are getting fast on the trail of other steamers. There are also boats in our rear. It seems likely that we shall be badly delayed at Latchford. Among the steamers the “Albatross” of the General Steam Navigation Company, looms large. This is the trial trip of that company too; the captain of the “Albatross” seems none too sure that the Canal is large enough for his boat. But he is disabused when he finds himself thrust into the lock at Latchford with two or three other boats nearly as big as his own, and hoisted as if he were a feather weight.

The cutting from Runcorn to Latchford is not suggestive of difficulty. The banks are, in places, at a sharp incline, and in places perpendicular. Wattle have been used extensively to bind the artificial banks into solidity. The sandstone is ochre-coloured and a warm red. Here and there, of course, one sees more of the careful brickwork embedded into the natural banks, which, as much as anything, tells of the solitude with which engineers and contractors have worked together. All the bricks used in the Canal are of a bluish tint. In all, some twenty million have been required to make up one hundred and seventy-five thousand cubic yards of brickwork.

There is not much population on this reach—holiday spectators apart. The north bank is still wholly in the hands of the contractors. Little locomotives are to be seen gliding up and down, with their chains of loaded trucks after them. Steam navies lift their repulsive bulk here and there. Short rows of residential sheds tell, moreover, of the two-legged navies who have been here camped by their work—with their wives and families, and domestic cats and fowls—for the last two or three years at least. The women folk from these frail temporary abodes—which even a vagabond American would not hold a lofty opinion—flatter theirshawls at us, and their children shout to us. Their husbands, too, desist for a moment from their spade work to give us a flourish of the arm.
Nearing Latchford, we leave on the left—though hidden from us in our sandstone cutting—the extensive works which are to make Warrington a shipbuilding port. Already the various lines of railway about us have become confusing. Trains are seen on both sides of the Canal, two or three running parallel with each other, and crossing the Canal on the great High-level bridge by Latchford, and also behind us toward Warrington.

These tokens give rise to significant conversation among the experienced ones on board the “Fairy Queen.” What duels, to be sure, had to be fought over this ground between the Canal Company, seeking its right of way, and the different railway companies which, inimical to the Canal from the very start, were likely to oppose, tooth and nail, its pretensions to disturb the existing condition of their lines! But they saw things otherwise in Parliament, and the railway directors have had to submit to their lines being altered and bridges built for them. They had some set-off in the claims for compensation that were allowed to make. And, according to many experts, they used this opportunity of bleeding their enemy to the utmost.

Thousands and tens of thousands of people watch our progress into the Latchford locks. The crowd are perilously near the walls of the Canal. To us it seems that very little pressure from behind will urge them into the water by hundreds at a time. But nothing happens. Nothing, that is, except a fusillade of jokes and congratulations; a bump at either our halmstan or our neighbour’s goes momentarily wrong; and our helpless exposure to a score of cameras as we land life and, I hope, dignity to the picturesque scene in the lock.

Some one is hurt, however. The ambulance engine speeds to the front and men dash at a stretcher. We see the victim being supported between two men as we glide quietly away towards the next lock. It would be odd if such a day were lived through without a few accidents.

Irism is the next lock—seven and a half miles more towards Manchester. The characteristic feature of this stage is our ultimate association with the Mersey, much diminished in width after Runcorn is passed. We cross it, and for a mile or two absorb it, and then let it meander away finally to the south just as we reach Irism.

—Mersey is not a pretty stream, and Irwell, which mates with it by Irism, is still less pleasing to look upon. How should they be otherwise, with so much of the sewage of Manchester and other towns entering them unashamedly? For dead dogs, and other such undesirable flotsam and jetsam, they must take almost premier rank in the land. Their colour, too, is profoundly against them. Near Manchester the poor Irwell is constrained into a cascade. Nothing could be more humiliating to the unsavoury stream than the contrast of its dirty bubbles and unwholesome-looking fringes of leaden scum with the glorious snow-white of a Norwegian cataract.

Between Latchford and Irism comes Partington. This is destined to be a useful spot. Its coal basin may prove as profitable as any other of the Canal’s sources of revenue. The Wigan coalfield will now naturally connect with the Canal, which is only a few miles distant. There is also the Haydock field, which is reputed to have an upper crust of four hundred and fifty-two million tons of coal, and which is to be joined to the Ship Canal by a railway. Hitherto much of this Lancashire coal has gone to Garston on the Mersey—nearly opposite Eastham—at a cost of one shilling and ninepence per ton. It will cost but ninepence to be tipped on board steamers at Partington.

From Irism to Barton locks the distance is only two miles. But we made it very slowly. The banks on both sides of the Canal were lined with people. The scene of Manchester was already in the air, and Manchester’s enthusiasm too. We were now well in procession. Welsh boats laden with slate and granite, and the most frightful steam-whistles imaginable, and other cargo-boats sandwiched us. Noise ran riot. Steamer after steamer joined in the diabolical concert of steam-whistling, and the people clamoured their approval of these ear-cracking cacophies of civilisation.

The tumult almost made me oblivious of one of the most astounding achievements in the Ship Canal’s works. Here at Barton the Bridgewater Canal crosses its greater ally by a swing-bridge. This means that every time a tall-masted steamer goes up or down the Ship Canal, a section of the Bridgewater Canal, two hundred and thirty-five feet long, six feet deep, and nineteen feet wide, is insulated—if a land term can be applied to water—and turned on a pivot. The weight of the
bridge and its water is one thousand four hundred tons. Ships of light draught may thus be seen sailing over the Ship Canal, with other ships beneath them.

This aqueduct has been substituted for the famous Brindley's bridge, which here carried the Bridgewater Canal over the Irwell some forty feet above the latter stream.

Mode Wheel Locks served us as the ante-chamber to the great docks of Manchester.

Until this day I had failed to grasp the idea of Manchester's magnitude, audacity, and population. It seemed as if the inhabitants of a metropolis were on the banks here alone, and especially by the docks with their imposing length of border.

More cheers and steam-whistling, and we were landed, after a voyage of about six hours.

At one of the side docks, reckless of the gala air of the hunting on all the sheds and all the ships, a steamer was discharging refined sugar. I could see no other cargo discharged or being laded. The sheds were still dense with the chairs that had earlier in the day seated the forty or fifty thousand shareholders and others, with their wives and relations. Ere long the world will be laid under tribute to all these warehouses with the produce of every kind that Manchester craves, and is determined to have direct.

I shook hands with a casual acquaintance on the "Fairy Queen," whose destination was other than mine. He said he would not for anything have missed seeing what we had this day seen, and as we had seen it. That struck me as rather a large saying. But I quite agreed with him as valuing the impression this voyage had made upon the mind.

MISS GARTH.
A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

It was observed by all that when Dalgarro came down to breakfast the next morning, he was in a very different frame of mind from his last night's mood. Whatever spell Jocelyn Garth had used, she had used it successfully. Dalgarro was deferential to herself, and entirely irreproachable in his manners to everybody else. He treated Lady Carstairs with an almost slavish humility, which, as the latter never cast so much as an eyelash in his direction, was so much humility lost.

"By the way, what became of Aveline last night?" asked Lady Carstairs, languidly eating game pie. "She did not come to the drawing-room as usual."

A flash of trouble stirred Jocelyn's eyes, as a flash of lightning might disturb the serenity of some still lake. But it passed so quickly that only Godfrey Wharton observed it.

"She was not very well. She had a headache," she answered briefly.

Lady Carstairs said no more, and the subject dropped. But Dalgarro, who had been listening attentively, pricked up his ears.

"Who is 'Aveline'?" he asked Rose Carstairs, who was sitting next him.

"Aveline Harberton," replied the young lady succinctly.

"Is she staying here?" asked Dalgarro impatiently.

"She lives here."

Rose Carstairs spoke to Dalgarro only when she was obliged, and then as shortly as possible. But when Dalgarro was bent on questioning he generally elicited answers.

"Is she Miss Garth's companion, then?"

"Miss Garth has no companion. Aveline is a child. Since her mother's death she has lived here always."

Dalgarro asked no more questions, but he had apparently found something to meditate about. He scrutinised Jocelyn's face every now and then with a puzzled look.

After breakfast most of the party hunted up their skates. The air was gloriously keen and clear—an air to make one drunk with exhilaration, as though with strong wine. A sharp frost had held an iron sway for weeks on the home ponds. There was much chatting, and laughing, and clinking of polished steel blades as the party made ready to start.

They were all going—every one of them, except Jocelyn herself and Lady Carstairs. Dalgarro, in an overcoat with a showy imitation sealskin collar, was swinging a pair of skates in his hand which he had borrowed from Godfrey Wharton, who happened to possess two pairs. He thought he might as well begin to enjoy himself as soon as possible. The little business with Jocelyn could wait. He was well pleased with his present quarters, and was in no hurry.

He had not skated for years. The ring of the metal on the clear black ice was as the trumpet of a war-horse to him. He was good at most physical exercises; he
had been debarred from the enjoyment of them for long. He made the most of every flying moment.

Jocelyn crept to her boudoir the moment the chattering, merry, glad-hearted party had set off. She was perfectly aware that Lady Carstairs was only waiting to pounce upon her for an explanation of her own extraordinary tenacity of the night before. She was only safe in her boudoir. That was forbidden ground to everyone.

Once alone, Jocelyn threw herself down on a low couch with a mean of almost unbearable anguish. She had dreaded this moment for years. It had come at last. The Iron Hand which crushes us all alike, which has no pity for the weak, no throb of divine compassion for the happy, had struck her down also. As she lay there death seemed infinitely preferable to the life that lay before her.

She sat up at last, her face ghastly in its pallor, her hands pressed to her aching head. She looked dully round at the exquisite room where she had collected all rare and beautiful things—a room absolutely unique in its priceless hangings, and wonderful chins, and delicate exotic flowers. This room, like herself, had found a master.

A low tap at the door alarmed her, and set her heart beating fast. Who dared to disturb her here, in the solitude which she never allowed to be invaded! Could it be—? Her heart gave a sick throb.

"Come in," she said faintly.

She had expected to see the evil eyes and coarse, handsome face of her strange guest, but instead she met the firm blue eyes of Godfrey Wharton.

"May I come in?" he asked diffidently.

He had never been in that room before. It seemed to him almost like invading a shrine. Everything in it was a reflection of the mind that had planned it. Its delicacy, richness, purity, were all—Jocelyn Garth.

She bade him enter with a faint smile. "I thought you had gone skating," she said.

"I started—but I came back. You look so ill!" he added deprecatingly.

"It is only a headache," she answered; "you must not spoil your morning for me."

He hesitated.

"Of course there is no need to tell you that a morning with you means heaven for me," he answered, with a short laugh. "But I own I did not come back for that alone. Dalgarno is cutting quite a dash on the ice," he added, in a different tone.

"I should have thought he would have been cutting figures instead," said Jocelyn, with an attempt at lightness.

He took no notice of it.

"I came back to see if I could help you," he said abruptly. "You cannot expect me to bear a repetition of last night's disgraceful scene! No man with blood in his veins could stand that a second time."

She turned a little paler.

"I do not think that it will occur again," she said in a low voice.

"How can you tell? How can you possibly guarantee even decent conduct from a drunken brute like that! He may insult you when I am not there—when there is no one near to defend you."

"You saw that I could manage him last night."

"Yes, but at what a frightful sacrifice! Do you want to go through such another scene again?"

"No."

"Then let me kick the brute out of the house! He is making you wretched, even ill. Give me authority to—"

"No. He must stay."

"Why, in Heaven's name?"

"Because there would be a worse scandal if he went than if he stays," she answered steadily.

He looked at her sharply. His eyes took in every detail of the weary face and drooping figure. A great love surged up within his heart, a longing wish to serve and cherish her; to bear her burdens for her; have her for his own, now and always.

"Jocelyn," he said steadily, "you know quite well that I love you. I have loved you for years, and you have kept me at a distance for years, why, Heaven only knows. Jocelyn! Give me the right to guard and protect you, dearest."

He bent down, and taking her hand, pressed it to his lips. She tore it from him with a violent shudder.

"You must not! You must not!" she gasped. "Oh, I have tried to prevent this—you know how hard I have tried."

"Why?" He had let his hand fall to his side, and stood leaning against the mantelpiece, looking at her. "Why?"

"I cannot tell you," she answered, hiding her face in her hands.

"I will have a reason. I insist upon it. It is my duty. A woman does not throw over the man she loves for a mere whim."
"The man she loves?"
"Yes; you love me," he answered firmly.
She looked up at him with horrified, dilated eyes.
"And you ask me to give you the right to defend me against him?" she said, with a laugh that made him shudder.
"I do. Why should I not?"
"Because you, of all men, have the least right to do so."
"Why?" he repeated unmovedly, not taking his eye from the wild, white face before him.
She stood up suddenly, swaying a little, and leaning one hand on the back of the sofa for support.
"Because," she answered slowly, her gaze on the ground, her whole figure trembling with emotion, "because it is not my lover who must defend me against my husband."

Godfrey Wharton uttered a little inarticulate cry, and shifted his position slightly. The silence that followed was so intense that it seemed filled with unearthly sounds.
At last he spoke.
"Your husband! That man! Am I dreaming, Jocelyn, or are you telling me the living truth?"
"It is true," she answered in a flat, hollow voice.

He moved toward her.
"Sit down, Jocelyn," he said gently, "and try and tell me all about it. Perhaps I can help you even now."
She shook her head, but she obeyed him. He sat down on the sofa by her side and took her hand, speaking to her as he might speak to a child.
"Try and tell me all about it, dear. The burden is too heavy for you to bear alone."

Not a word of his own cruel disappointment; of the hopes cherished for years killed in one moment; of the fair dream- castle he had built, now reduced to the greyest of ashes. His only thought was for her.

Jocelyn began her story. She told it haltingly, but the kind hand that held hers seemed to give her strength and courage.

"I met him abroad first. He was a friend of Robert's. He is an Italian. I believe, though I only know what he has chosen to tell me himself. I think Robert had some reason for wanting me to marry him—but I do not know. He fell in love with me—and—and followed me to England. Robert stopped abroad, but he wrote to me and said that Dalgarro was a good fellow, and he hoped we should be married. I was just eighteen then."

"The sound of a word?" muttered Godfrey between his teeth.
"Well—we were married," she went on, in the same hopeless tone, taking no notice of his interruption, "we were married privately one morning, and no one ever knew anything about it."
She paused.
"I was not rich then. Uncle Anthony was still alive, and it was very uncertain as to whether he would leave his money either to Robert or me. He had many other relations, and we were very poor. At any rate there would have been no chance for me if he had known of my marriage. So Dalgarro persuaded me to keep it a secret."

She paused. Godfrey mutely noticed that she never called her husband by his Christian-name. He felt an immense overpowering curiosity to know what it was—what was the name that she had called him by in the days when she was Dalgarro's bride.

She went on.
"I was a governess then, teaching in a school at Harwich. I had to earn my own living, and there was no one to look after me. I went on teaching after we were married. We were in lodgings then for some time."

Her face flushed at the remembrance of those days, and he pressed her hand in silent sympathy. He dared not ask her if she had ever loved her husband. It was agony and shame to think that any other man had called her wife except himself.

"Dalgarro was never unkind to me, but he was away a good deal and I was left very much alone. One night, when we had been married about a year, he came home in a great state of excitement, and told me that he was being pursued—that there was a warrant out against him—that I must help him to disguise himself and escape. I did help him, and he got away. But only to be caught and brought back."

She covered her face with her hands with a shudder.
"Go on," said Godfrey, steadily. He must know all if he was to help her.

"He was caught. It was for forgery. He has been in prison for seven years."
So this man, this convicted felon, with the coarse sin-hardened face and seamed and scarred fingers, was the husband of the beautiful, gracious, refined woman before him, whom he had hoped one day to call his wife. Oh the pity of it!

She went on, still without tears.

"Soon after he—disappeared, Uncle Anthony died. He left me his whole fortune, because he said I was probably the only one of his relations who did not expect it. Then I came here and have lived here ever since."

"How did you know—he was out?"

"I did not know. He is out before his time. He behaved so well in prison!" she answered with a faint laugh. "But when he walked in yesterday—it seems centuries ago already—I did not even feel surprised. I knew that it would come some day. The sword has been hanging over my head for years. It has fallen at last."

He took her hand again.

"Poor child! Poor deceived child!" he murmured tenderly, "I can no longer be your love, dear, but I am your friend always. We will fight this man together."

"He is difficult to fight," she answered dully, staring straight before her.

"The law cannot compel you to live with him."

She drew her head up proudly.

"I would rather die than live with him again—as his wife. But how can I prevent his presence here? I cannot turn my own husband out of doors."

"It must be done, nevertheless. You can give him money."

"I have offered it him, but he will not take it."

He smiled a little.

"In these enlightened days, Jocelyn, no woman is compelled to live beneath the same roof with a man whom she dislikes, even though he is her husband."

"No—I know," she answered, frowning a little.

"Well then, give him the money and let him go. It will have to come out I suppose about—I don't know why it should though. You could make it worth his while to keep quiet."

"He pretends to love me still!" She shuddered again. "I do not want to do anything yet—have a scandal before all these people. I want to get the house-party quietly over before I do anything."

"I understand."

Godfrey had kept his own love and jealousy well in the background until now. He was but human, and it burst forth.

"I cannot bear to think that such a man has called you wife! Oh, it is a bitter blow, Jocelyn. I would give my life to undo the past."

"The past can never be undone," she answered sombrely. "Don't you remember Dumas' words: 'Le passé est la seule chose pour laquelle Dieu est sans pouvoir.' We can never escape the rash consequences of our own mad acts."

Godfrey looked at her—refined, "spirituelle," fair as a lily. By what strange charm had Dalgarne won her?

As he looked at her, she spoke again: this time her face was turned away, and her voice was only a hoarse whisper.

"He—he has a stronger hold still over me, only he does not know it! Godfrey, I have not told you all!"

"What is it?" asked Godfrey Wharton in terrified tones, an icy fear clutching at his very heart.

"When—my husband was in prison," said Jocelyn, "I—oh, Godfrey, cannot you guess?"

She turned her lovely, flushed face to his.

"Avaline—" she murmured, her eyes full of a divine mother-love that swallowed up all lesser feelings of regret and shame, "Avaline—"

"She is your child—and his!" murmured Godfrey Wharton, stumbling to his feet with wild eyes full of a despairing dread. "Oh, this is more than I can bear!"

A dull flush of jealousy and anger—the jealousy and anger that urge men on to kill—surged in his cheeks and made his heart beat thickly. Then it faded and left him deathly white.

He staggered from the room without another word. It was not a time for speech. Words would have choked him.
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
By ESMÉ STUART.
Author of "Joan Felixada," "A Woman of Forty," "Kastell of Graceorne," etc., etc.

CHAPTER IX. UNOCONVENTIONAL.
The Bethunes had come to London, and the fact was chronicled by the society papers, because they were of the bluest blood and because they were related to all the best families in the kingdom, which families formed the magic circle of the best society. Mr. Bethune was a man who had a hobby. He collected ancient clocks and watches and first editions. He hated politics and did not care much about society; but he was a Conservative and did much as his fathers had done before him. He, however, allowed his children to do as they liked; if his family allowed him to collect his watches and his first editions, they might go their own way. He was very kind, very amiable, and the only fault his friends found with him was that he spent his energy on useless matters, and above all that he never found fault with his eldest son's extraordinary fads.

"They are all born with fads," Lady Colmer had said, "and that in itself is a misfortune. Mrs. Bethune never would take her title. She was Lady Anne by rights, her father being Lord Rockwood, but she said the name of Bethune was enough honour for her. She dresses very badly and never can remember the peerage," both of which offences were not easily forgiven by a certain set of people.

"The whole family are ridiculously affecionate," replied Sir Harry Colmer, who did not suffer from demonstrative children, "and the girls are really too strange."

The truth was that the girls were quiet English ladies who did not flirt. Adela Bethune was a small, dark-eyed girl with a bewitching smile and a kind word for everybody. She liked "slumming" and she liked society. She was a universal favourite except with the fast set, who thought her behind the times. Her sister Mary was a musical genius, and could be found playing in all sorts of strange places, but outside the realm of music, Mary Bethune was quite a useless member of society. Dora, the youngest, was the useful one in the household. She remembered dates, she always knew who was invited to dinner, and what invitations had been accepted or declined. She was not out yet; but the family falling of forgetfulness and general oddness was kept in check by Dora, who was universal referee.

She idolised her brother and thought all his ideas were right. This caused her to advocate many contradictory actions which, however, did not seem strange to her because Forster thought them right. In many of his ideas Forster had but one follower and one disciple, but he could always count on this one. Usually he could count upon two, for Phyllis Gillbanks did not often disagree with him.

The Bethunes sometimes came to London for the season, and were very often to be found in town at other times, looking after their several hobbies. The world forgave their odd ways simply because they were Bethunes. Lady Colmer said she did not like people who differed so much from the rest of the world as did the Bethunes; still, there was a certain excitement to be derived from such unconventional people, and the world enjoyed the excitement and was grateful for it.

It was eight o'clock in the morning, a
time when that section of the London world which comes for the season is usually in bed. But the Bethunes breakfast-table was always spread, and the various members of the household came down at short intervals of time.

Mr. Bethune read family prayers at a quarter past eight punctually. He read them whether the household were gathered together or not, but unless Dora was down first to find the places in the prayer-book and in the large Bible, Mr. Bethune wandered hopefully, both as to the date of the day and as to the chapter that should be read.

Forster was earlier than the rest of the family, but usually came in about prayer-time or soon after, and shared in the universal greeting which then took place.

Mr. Bethune received two kisses from each of his children, but on various parts of his head and face. He did not seem to take much heed of these tokens of affection, but if the morning salutation were left out, some time before the end of the day he was sure to mention the fact, and to express surprise.

Mrs. Bethune was a plump, kindly-faced lady. She was very good-natured about going to meetings for the benefit of various societies, and her house was the rendezvous of the many charitable ladies who got hold of her. Happily there was a large room in Curzon Square which was not often used by the family, and here might often be found committees and councils sitting to deliberate upon every imaginable good work.

Some of them were in opposition to each other; Mrs. Bethune never found it out, but thought it so kind of all these nice people to devote their lives to such useful objects. When possible she sat on the committees and voted for everything, usually on both sides of the question. If the earnest workers did not find her support very helpful, at least they were grateful for her room and her five o'clock tea, and called her "Dear Mrs. Bethune," at short intervals, to her face, and "Poor dear Mrs. Bethune" behind her back.

The Bethunes went a great deal into society, because Mrs. Bethune could not bear refusing any one who was so kind as to ask her, but it was not always possible to make sure of her presence. Parties overlapped each other, and she never could be quite certain about dates and hours. Mary was only able to accompany her if there was good music to be heard, and Adela if she were not engaged in helping her friends with their various philanthropic hobbies. The family all looked forward to the time when Dora should come out, as she had at present no hobby, and possessed the only good memory to be found in the house.

Forster was looking round for a profession, his mother said. He had been abroad with Philip Gillbanks, and it was certainly better not to be in a hurry, especially as the dear boy was so full of plans. Forster was his mother's darling, but she as little understood his ideas as those of the many committees on which she sat. She hoped he would marry a nice, quiet girl who would make him happy, but she was a little nervous on that point, because Forster did like such very odd people. With all her universal kindliness, Mrs. Bethune had a certain well-defined class feeling, for though she would not have hurt a fly or the feelings of a Hotteniot, she had a conviction that every one who was not of the same social standing as herself must need a great deal of sympathy. "Poor dear people" she called them, adding, "so very nice, aren't they?" in a tone of apology. Forster's strange friends were mostly "poor dear people," and so were several of Adela's protégés. But she drew a line at the idea of her children marrying beneath the right social standard. She did not care about money, but she was glad her own fortune was tied up so that Forster could not insist on sharing it with the fish-market people he was so fond of visiting. She would say openly that he must have a wife of social standing equal to his own.

Though possessing no title, Mr. Bethune was prouder of his family name than of any title the Queen could bestow. It was said he had refused a baronetcy, and the saying was true.

"One reason of my refusal," he said one day to a Cabinet Minister, "is that even if I accepted a title—an expensive present to receive—my son would not take it up. He thinks titles wrong. That is one of his ideas; Forster has a good many ideas, and I think one's children ought to be allowed a free choice."

As every one knew that Mr. Bethune had refused worldly honours he was admired for it. It was certainly a sign of unusual pride. The Bethunes were more sought after than ever, and poor Mrs. Bethune became still more uncertain as to her engagement list.
This morning the May sunshine was perfect, and the heat was of that pleasant kind which makes London an ideal place for a few weeks in the spring. As usual the Bethunes had dropped in at varying intervals before prayers, except Dora, who was late, and who came in to find her mother reading the wrong Psalms. Her French governess in the meanwhile could not, as usual, find her way about the English prayer-book, so she was diligently turning over the leaves.

"Papa, it's the fifth to-day," said Dora in a stage whisper, as Mr. Bethune appealed to her.

"Is it, dear? Ah, yes! We had better begin again."

After prayers Forster entered, and Dora immediately ran to her brother, pouring out a volley of questions as the two went to kiss their father, who murmured:

"Oh, Forster, is it you, my boy. Where have you been this morning?"

"I had business at the fish-market, and on my way home I called on Philip Gillbanks."

"Rather an early call, wasn't it?" said his mother.

"The family have come to town for the season, and Philip is going to devote himself to his sister. Adela, can you take mother to call upon Mrs. Gillbanks, and show them every attention possible?"

"Yes, dear, of course. Fancy coming to town now when you need not do it," said Adela, and her sweet, bright face made the London room look brighter.

"What is poor dear Mrs. Gillbanks like, Forster?" said his mother. "And, oh! dear Dora, come and sort these invitation cards and see how many parties we can manage to-day."

"Madeleiselle, will you help me? It will teach you the titles of the English better than you can learn them from your French novels," said Dora. Mrs. Bethune had given Dora the choice of applicants for the post of governess, thinking that this was a sufficient guarantee before making her one of the family, because, "Dear Dora always knows nice people at first sight."

"Mrs. Gillbanks is like any other lady, I suppose," said Forster absenty, "but I did not see his sister. I believe she is very handsome. Philip is going to undertake some work for me. Those fish-market lads want a good day in the country, and we are going to manage it somehow."

"Oh, Forster! You'll let me come too!" said Dora.
"What does it matter, mother? If money is the question, the Gillbankses could buy up the Montjoys; but I did think we were above such things." Forster coloured with indignation. "Oh, Forster dear; of course, poor dears, I don't mind. They are all so nice, but London people—"

"We are not London people, and if my friends are not good enough—" Forster stopped short; he knew his temper was nasty at times. "By the way, Dora, Miss Gillbanks is worldly, I think; shall I propose to her?"

"Mr. Gillbanks's sister can't be worldly. He is so awfully jolly," was Dora's reply.

"Dora, that is not the ladylike English," said her governess.

"I hate slangy girls," added Forster, and Dora blushed with shame at her brother's displeasure.

"Everybody says things like that," she murmured. "You are not 'everybody,' Dora," said Forster.

Dora at once registered a vow against slang, though Adela immediately came to the rescue. "Dora hardly ever talks slang. Forster; you should not scold her." Mary rose from the table.

"I'm engaged till lunch-time, please, in my room; don't let any one come in."

"When your violin is squeaking no one wants to come," said Forster quickly.

He could not understand Mary's silent musical life. To him it seemed intensely selfish, but Adela always defended her sister; indeed, Adela never allowed any one to be found fault with if she could help it, especially a member of her own family, so she turned the conversation.

"I wish we could avoid having so many invitations."

"I do my best, I'm sure," said Mrs. Bethune; "I go somewhere every day, and if I can I get your father to go with me. I'm sure it's very good and kind of people to give parties. We don't give half enough, Dora says. Where are you going this morning, Adela?"

"I must go to Letitia's Girls' Club, and, you know, mother, the committee of the Pit Girl Society is to meet here this afternoon."

"They will expect me to take part. Poor dears, I think the agenda says something about making them dress like men. I'm sure it's right, because Lady Grace is
MOTHER dear, you have mixed it up," said Dora. "It was to abolish the work for pit girls. Forster, should girls work at the pit's mouth?"

"Yes, certainly; with proper regulations it is healthful and grand. I wish half our ball young ladies had a month of such work."

"Not in tights, dear Forster; but if you think it right I'll vote for it. I'm sure you know best."

"I'm off to the City. I want to see Messrs. Hume about my pamphlet. They are so slow about the proofs."

"Have I read it, Forster dear?" said his mother.

"No, mother. You would not quite like it. It's a pamphlet about abolishing all titles and all money rewards for merit. It does seem so terrible that we still care about such petty things."

"But the Government means it kindly, Forster. When they offered your father a title they wrote very civilly; they said the Queen wished it. It seemed a pity to disappoint her, but I quite agreed. I'm sure the name of Bethune is better than any title."

"It isn't for that reason, mother. You see, if we expect rewards we can't be sure of our motives. I'm looking about for the man who expects no reward and yet does his duty."

"There's your father, dear. You need not look very far."

Forster smiled.

"I must look outside my own family."

"I don't see why you should. Dora, don't forget the Gillbanks. Give me 'The Morning Post,' dear, and see if the Duchess has come to town yet."

"If Aunt Mary comes to dine here, mother, I shall have an engagement. She irritates me," said Forster.

His lips were set firm, for his aunt, the Duchess, ridiculed all his ideas.

"No, Forster, she won't come. It wouldn't do with those poor dear Gillbanks. She would want their pedigree, and wouldn't quite understand the screws and how really nice they are. Your aunt is very clever, you know, and never forgets her engagements."

"I can't think why the title of a Duchess always sounds smoky," said Adela, laughing, "and yet Aunt Mary would be horrified to hear me say so."

"She says I'm seen too much," said Dora. "She wants me to be shut up in prison till I'm out. I can't bear Aunt Mary. Men don't fall in love with our Mary, and they won't with me, so why should we take care of our complexion? It's only Adela who has lovers. I wish you wouldn't smile so much, Adela dear, and the men wouldn't think you liked them. They do leave so many bouquets for you, and you don't care for any of them."

"Yes, I like them all, but I suppose I shall know when I am in love."

"There's a sale at Sotheby's to-day," said Mr. Bethune, looking up from perusing papers. "The first edition of Marlow's plays is going to be sold. I must go and see about it. When do you want the carriage, any of you? Dora, just make a list of the times and seasons, dear child."

Dora rose, and with a sigh once more began arranging for the family. She declared she worked harder than Aunt Mary's maid, whom Forster called "the white slave."

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**THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL**

**IN THREE PARTS, PART III.**

**A TRAMP BY IT**

There is little enough in the present city of Manchester to recall the antiquity of its origin. On the evening after my trip by the "Fairy Queen," I left the quiet "Mitre Hotel"—my two bedroom windows looked into the calm graveyard of the cathedral and at its illuminated clock, which had not, I am glad to say, a trick of chiming the quarters—and killed an hour in the library. In the vestibule of the building there is a print of Manchester and Salford as they were in 1710-30. No tall chimneys then—or none aggressively assertive! The cathedral tower appears benignly dominant over the pretty little market town. Irwell is shown flowing attractively between its banks in the town's vicinity. A gentleman in the theatrical attire of the early Gætarian time stands in the foreground. And the sky is as clear as an engraver can make it.

From the picture I had but to wander down the gaiest streets—with electrical dazzle here and there—to that confusing mass of railway building known as the Victoria and Exchange stations. Near at hand Irwell sneaketh covertly in its dark and pestilential bed. A more brutal parody of nature as one sees her among the green fields cannot be found than this.
dreary spectacle of Irwell in Manchester's midst, with the horrid fringe of stranded garbage instead of waving rushes and undergrowth, such as the kingfisher loves to flash stealthily by.

Poor Irwell! She cannot help herself. She is devoted to the service of man. Mills buzz and whirl on all sides of her meandering stream in the city; she sees little of the "heaven's own azure"; and her aspect is so melancholy that it is conceivable that ere now a man has tied a brick round the neck of his dog or his cat and huried the victim into the black oose, from sheer murderous impulse provoked by the river. It is the sort of stream Doro might have drawn inspiration from had he been required to illustrate Thomson's "City of Dreadful Night." I forget if Thomson gives his depressing metropolis a river; but he could not have better pilie on its agony than by giving it an Irwell.

And yet of old this brook was famous for its trout, and may continue to be, nearer its source.

Close to the "Mitre Hotel"—which is not of so episcopal a character as its name had led me to imagine—it are two or three remnants of Manchester as it was some three centuries ago. One ancient house in the shambles is especially good to look upon, with its bow gables, its black and white exterior, and its suggestive diamond panes. There are market stalls set in the narrow street adjacent, and just a flavour of medieval life may be had by focusing the fancy upon the house and the hawkers. Hard by, however, is one of the most capacious of the modern city's lunge, and the contrast between this agitated thoroughfare, with its tall-hatted business men, its large shop windows and all the luxuries they display, and the little old house in the shambles is too glaring for modest sentiment to endure.

But enough of these profitless imaginings. I had seen the Canal from the water. Having spent a night of ecclesiastical tranquility at the "Mitre" after the excitement of the voyage, I designed to devote several hours of the next morning to a walk along the Canal banks. Even as a philosopher is not sastisfied with subjective knowledge, but craves also objective knowledge, so I wished to look down upon the Canal from its shores, and still further deepen my acquaintance with it.

I chose my walk at a venture. It was the stage from Latchford to Runcorn. Weather and the road permitting, I might even get on to Ellesmere, but I was not sanguine about that.

Again the portents were singularly bright for the season. There was snow on the cathedral tombstones when I drew up my blind; but ere I had done with my fried sole and the conversation of two genial commercials from London, one of whom was interested in shipments of tinned meats, the sun was out and licking up the snow.

I took train to Warrington, or Warmltont, as they called it in the time of Henry the Third. The docks were still a very tulp bed for the colours of their bunting, as we passed them; and the trumpeting of a steamer could be heard through the thick air. But my companions headed not the docks. They read their papers like the methodical business men they looked, and especially they read the columns of description of the festival of the day before.

Now Warrington from the railway does not tempt silogy. One thinks of it as the natal place of much soap, ale, gin, wire, and so forth—all useful enough commodities, but either smelling offensively in their development or demanding, it would seem, unsightly chimneys and factories.

I was therefore quite pleasantly surprised when I left the railway station and almost at once set eyes on two or three houses, the coervals of that in the shambles of Manchester. The "Barley-mow Inn," in the market-place, is a jewel of a building, with its date, 1661, upon it. It is quaint, as picturesque as all half-timbered and gabled houses are, and piquantly sequestered. I excited some notice by my evident absorption in the old place, with its cosily carved timbers and black oak lintel to its yard.

There is also the "Fox Inn," of the same kidney; and I observed a small butcher's shop, dated 1649, set unassumingly between houses of a much more modern stamp.

For the rest, Warrington has been a place of culture as well as a noted emporium for soap. In the last century the Eyres' press here was locally as famous as that of Baskerville in Birmingham.

Nowadays, however, once these old time houses have been admired, one cannot but notice that clods rule the roost here. We are in Lancashire, yet only just, and the clutter of clogged feet on the paving stones strikes the predominant note of the place—aesy, and of the district extending far north and north-east.
The people, too, talk "Lancashire," slighting the definite article.

I asked my way to Latchford.

"Be you going across Canal?" was the question in rej-indices.

"Yes," said I. "I hope to get across Canal."

"Then," was the reply, "you'll have to take swing-bridge. They open it to let steamboats go past."

Not a definite article anywhere, you see.

I shone to say I did not until this day know that Warrington was on the Mersey. However, if I were Warrington I should be even more ashamed of being on so ill-looking a river. I am quite tired of prattling about the indescribable repulsa-

ness of these black streams of Lancashire; but they thrust themselves upon notice.

A mile or so from Warrington I skirted the Mersey where it makes one of its most graceful curves. On the other side were meadows, with a substantial white house in a park and a church spire of the town riding prettily above the trees. There was a small weir in the river and an inlet with a house on it.

Taking this landscape as it stood, it would look soothing and delightfully rural done on paper by a deft pencil. But Mersey seen with the eyes of sense spoiled all. Its inky flood, the nauseous stains upon its banks and the rubbish it deposited were a grievous disillusionment.

From this standpoint I walked into Latchford village in a few minutes, past "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese," a wayside tavern, the tanner, and the various new gabled houses which brighten the little place.

From a commercial aspect, the Ship Canal ought to be the making of Latchford. I noticed new houses springing up, and also placards indicating land for sale. Had I a few loose thousands, they should go in Latchford land.

There is a drawback, though, to the place for residential purposes. The Warrington and Stockport railway rattles its trains nosily across the Canal on one of the "deviation" bridges. And, as if that riot were not enough, the steamers in the Canal will be blowing steam night and day in their appeals to the lock-masters to prepare for them. Anything more try-

ing to weak nerves than the discords some of these boats raise can hardly be imagined. Heard in the dead of night, they are worse than a concert of cats.

Of course, it is possible to get used to anything. Suburban Londoners, for example, say they do not mind the trains which scream every quarter of an hour past their back gardens. But think of the sacrifice of brain tissue of price—or rather of priceless worth—that such a state of wooden insensitiveness involves.

There were two steamers in the Latchford lock, and I was able to see the process of their raising to perfection. Its simplicity need not be commented upon. One of the boats was merely an impetuous steam-

tug, impatient to get back to Liverpool. The other carried cargo; not a full burden, but just enough to license its owner in sending it to make its début in the Man-

chester docks. Had I tarried at Litch-

ford a score of hours more—a most un-

likely thing, however—I should have seen yet another trial tripper, this time from the sunny Mediterranean, with ropes of oranges binding her masts together. It may be safely said that the great cotton city will appreciate none of the booms of its Canal more than this of getting its fruit straight from the South, much more cheaply than of yore.

From the lock I returned to the swing-

bridge, and joined a little throng of butcher boys, school children, blooming maidens—the air was keen and heightened their colour—and others in admiring the case with which a thousand tons of iron may be sent to the right about by a lever and a man. They cut it rather fine in moving this bridge, to suit the convenience of a gentleman in a dogcart coming from Warrington, who seemed eager to cross. This provoked some mad screeches from the approaching steam-tug. But all went well, and the tug swept along in the muddy water, which it sent in long agi-
tated modulations up the red sides of the cutting.

This cutting by Latchford is remarkable for being the most extensive in the whole Canal. It is a mile and a half in length, with sides as perpendicular as possible, and fifty-five feet in height. Take the average bottom width of the Canal as here available to the surface of the water; viz., one hundred and twenty feet, and there is an easy yet interesting sum for a boy or girl to tackle, to ascertain the number of yards of rock taken from this cutting alone.

By the way, it was here at Latchford that, on the Saturday night preceding the opening of the Canal, an accident occurred which persons afflicted with the
taste for omens might have regarded with discontent. The yacht "Norseman," which, on the first of January, excited so many complimentary exclamations by its beautiful lines and deftly of movement, here and there, lost one of its engineers. The poor fellow was returning to the ship from Warrington towards ten o'clock, and in the darkness and the fog misjudged his movements and stepped into the Canal. Its sheer sides made rescue almost impossible, and he was drowned.

It may as well be repeated: the sooner the Ship Canal Company determine to light the whole five-and-thirty miles of their waterway with electricity, the better it will be for the public. Were I the loving father or mother of five or six young children, as active and curious about novelties as most children, I would not live at Latchford on any account until more precautions than at present exist were taken to prevent access to the Canal sides.

From Latchford I proceeded due west by the new road skirting the Canal. I judged by the crowds on the Canal side here the previous day that a thoroughfare ran all the way hence to Runcorn, some eight miles. But I was soon to be undeceived.

For half a mile or so, there was a road, with terraces of new red houses facing the Canal. The houses were of the fifteen-pounder style, commodious to look at, and I hope more conscientiously built than their comrades of the kind elsewhere. No notice need have been taken of them, but for the fact that they were a reminder that the Canal company holds a quantity of land conterminous with its cutting, which may well be turned to account in terraces like these. Of the total area purchased for the work, four thousand five hundred and twenty acres, no fewer than two thousand five hundred are now surplus.

It is interesting enough to live within viewing distance of the Thames below Gravesend. But here in the North one may do much better. The Ship Canal is not, like the Thames in its lower reaches, haggard by aguey flats for miles. One may live near enough to its water to cast eggshells and cabbage stalks into it from one's back premises—if that were not a crime against the Canal punishable by law. Out of question are long terraces, as will be plenty to see on this waterway. Indeed, I foresee the time when retired “salts” and others addicted to the ocean will be eager to spend their declining days with their telescopes and memories on the banks of the Ship Canal. Let the Company prepare for them by building rows of snug houses on its surplus lands, being suitably lavish in the matter of Venetian masts with weathercocks, derelict figureheads, and the like trifles, so dear to the heart of the superannuated mariner.

But these terraces soon came to an end and I had to turn inland. I struck a high road, with a mile-stone telling me I might reach Frodsham or Chester thence. I passed fields with the tall posts indicative of the rage for Rugby Union football which holds this part of England fast in thrall. The sun, meanwhile, had gone from sight and snow began to descend. It seemed to me a quite futile feast of enthusiasm to continue walking along this hard high-road till I came to either Frodsham or Chester, at this time of the year.

However, upon enquiry, I learnt that anon I might hope to double back to the water, to which I had come to feel oddly attached. Even as it was, I had not lost touch with it, if I may be excused the looseness of expression. I heard the muttering of its steamers, with the occasional more honest and downright shout of foghorn.

Once— it was at the “Ship Inn”— I tried an illegitimate path to the banks. But I had to return. This “Ship Inn” is a hoary hostelry— its crude signboard so proclaimed it. They little thought, who built it and gave it its picture of a schooner with all sails set, that in 1894 ships as big as that on its board would be moving within sight of the little Inn—and not on Mersey either!

The snow ceased, and again the wintry sun broke through the heavy clouds with their edges of liquid gold. Happily I had the wind, which blew with a biting sting, at my back.

I came to Walton, a village that would be engaging if it were not within hearing of the riot of so many trains. I never saw land so cut up by railway lines. But they speak a rural speech in Walton. The lads who urged me to desist from trying to enter the Walton church had a brochure that I enjoyed. But they seemed me in discouragement by assuring me that, as well as they knew, I could not get to Runcorn except by retracing my steps and making acquaintance again with Warrington. Now I had seen enough of Warrington, and I would rather have braced myself
for Frodsham or Chester than have gone to the right about. I fancy that was a thoroughly English trait in me—was it not? I say it without pride, for no man is wholly responsible for, or may reasonably plume himself upon being what he is.

For a moment or two I paused to admire a token of generous condescension on the part of the local Squire. I will not mention the Squire's name. There was snow upon the "token," or else I would have made momentary use of it. In fact, the "token" was just a low and somewhat inconvenient stone date inscribed "Traveller's rest, the gift of—Esq." It was decked with green mould, where it was not white with snow. Seat it could not be called, so much as a stone step. For my part, were I a wayfarer of the weary and necessitous kind, I would try the five-barred gates for a quarter of a mile on either side of this "traveller's rest" rather than risk a chill to the bones by sitting on a cold stone ledge planted in the earth at so inconveniently low an elevation. If his respectability the Squire who set this mark of kindness for the lowly born did it in fanciful atonement for his sins, he may be cordially congratulated. He cannot have gone much astray during his earthly pilgrimage, or else never was man less generous in his bargains.

In Walton they told me I might come at the Moore swing-bridge and thus cross the Canal, and, if I would take the rugged road of the navvies, get to Runcorn. I got this intelligence confirmed ere I viewed it as gospel.

"And the distance to Moore?" I enquired of the kindly hedger and ditcher who had paused, bill in hand, to help me.

"One mile," he said, and I left him, grateful and comforted.

I walked a good Cheshire mile, and asked another man how far I might have yet to go.

"A mile and a half," was the reply, plump.

These trials appertain to rural parts all the world over. You would suppose that the rage for universal education had changed such idiosyncrasies in Hodge and Co. of late. It appears otherwise. Either the true-born peasant is as ignorant of linear measurement as ever he was, or he takes to a lie as eagerly as a schoolboy to a new half-crown. Anyway, he is little to be relied upon for information outside his own most restricted sphere of positive knowledge.

A quarter of a mile farther and I espied the welcome bridge, and a fire of coal at its southern side, round which women, and men, and boys were clustered. The bridge-keepers were at liberty to eat, drink, and talk meretriciously, and they—and their wives—seemed to be doing so.

Once more, therefore, I crossed the Ship Canal. A white fox-terrier dog revolved in an eddy beneath the bridge, drifting slowly towards the sea. How had the poor dead brute come hither? No matter. It is a sight the navigators of this waterway must get accustomed to. Moreover, life has worse spectacles, and more mysterious. In our journey by the "Fairy Queen" the day before we had, at one of the locks, listened to the eloquent levity of a person with the "gift of the gab" on board an adjacent steamer. In the course of his speech, which begat abundant laughter, he assured us he was profoundly interested in the Ship Canal.

"To what extent?" somebody retorted.

"To this extent, gentlemen," was the prompt rejoinder; "the most valuable dog I ever had was drowned in it."

The public of North Cheshire and South Lancashire are entreated not to pollute the Canal with the dead bodies of their pets. Already the poor young stream has a grievance in the sewage that reaches it, directly and by contact with the Mersey. If once the people get into the habit of regarding it as a mixed five-and-thirty miles long, we may give up the fine hopes built upon it as a residential attraction. In time the Manchester sewage will be subjected to a searching system of purification, and only afterwards be allowed to infiltrate into the Canal. May the work be speedily accomplished! It will be a pity if the dock labourers at Salford are compelled to do their work with disinfectants suspended from their noses. Before January the first, there were complaints on this score which much detached from the charm discovered by newspaper writers in this sun-flushed pool of scores of acres in the middle of Cottonopolis.

But to resume my itinerary.

Having at last got on the right side of the Canal, I set my face straight for Runcorn. Certificated high-road there was none. I had four or five miles before me that recalled other rough miles I had travelled; in Florida, for example, along a line of railway in formation, with darkies falling trees on one hand, and laying the metals on the other.

Happily the frost of the night still held.
years old, to be sure—says of Runcorn that it is "much resorted to for bathing in the summer season." It is barely conceivable, unless the bathers are accomplished mudlarks or persons of no fixed calling, who take to the Mersey here in the warm months in quest of floating valuables. However, in any case, I am afraid the Ship Canal will interfere considerably with Runcorn's fame as a bathing place. They celebrated the opening of the Canal as much here as anywhere. And rightly so, for the hundreds of workers on the embankment lodge in the town.

By the water-side, on an elevation, is another mission room for the navvies. Here, on the door, was a placard telling of "half-past four to half-past seven on January the first, 1894. Ninestpence each." Of Runcorn I can think of nothing more to say, except that its Wesleyan Chapel of St. Paul's seems to me the largest and most braggart building of its kind I have ever seen. It carries a façade with two swollen towers. There are foreign cathedrals that at first sight have affected me less than this chapel. But Runcorn's pride—it must be that—will not bear scrutiny. Its lionine magnificence in front goes ill with its sordid headquarters of commonplace red brick.

There was not time on the short wintry day to proceed to the mouth of the Weaver, as I had hoped. Besides, the snow now came in quick, fierce squalls.

I was hungry, and had an hour or two on my hands ere a train would serve me. But the hotel, upon whose mercy I cast myself, could do no better than offer me bread and cheese. The meat had not been delivered. I sat there eating bread and cheese, in company with a succession of clean-locking women, who came and asked for spirituous nips and warmed their toes by the fire. I never saw more reputable topers. They took their fluids almost deprecatingly. One of them, indeed, proffered me a sort of apology: "The inside do get such a chill, sir, this weather," she said.

And now enough of the Canal.

Commerially it seems to have a satisfactory future before it. Its owners, at any rate, have confidence in it. You may not hope soon to pick up shares in it for a mere song.

On the other hand, scenically it does not enthral—at present. The Göta Canal in Sweden is more interesting. But when the Manchester cutting has established itself as one of the world's most populous highways, then things will be different. No reach of England will then be more fascinating, alike to men of a practical turn and men of imagination.

AN EVIL EYE.
A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

The boats returned in no regular order in the evening. People started when they chose, and loitered or hurried as they felt inclined, and that one which contained the pair of lovers seemed naturally to fall behind the rest.

There was one part of the return voyage which no one had considered in any possible way as dangerous, which proved itself so rather strangely. They had to pass close to a weir, after leaving the little lock, which was picturesquely out of repair, and Georgie, who was steering, was much too full of laughing at some joke of Laurie's to pay attention to the ropes. She was, moreover, inexperienced with them. She gave the wrong cord a mighty jerk to free the boat from some reeds, and before any of them had realised there was anything the matter, with the laugh still on their lips, the boat was overturned, and they were all struggling in the water. Laurie naturally seized Georgie. Madge's dress had got entangled with some reeds; she felt the water close over her head, and gave herself up for lost.

She knew no more till she was conscious of a voice, hoarse, strange, and broken, in her ear.

"Not this one, too! Oh, heaven, not another!"

She slowly opened her eyes, to find herself lying on the bank, supported by Laurie's friend, whose ghastly and agonyed face, contorted by strong passion, bent over her. She looked at him vaguely, and repeated the words she had heard in her own mind; she did not put any sense to them till afterwards. He was absolutely transported with wild and trembling ecstasy as he met her eyes; so evidently so that she thought nothing of his holding her hands to his lips and pressing frantic kisses upon them.

"Where is Laurie?" she asked trembling, but not resentful.

"Gone to the mill—with Georgie—to fetch some brandy. You are better? You are not hurt? I thought I was too
late. I thought—heavens! I thought I had killed you too!"

"Mr. L'Estrange!"

"What am I saying! Forgive me. For the moment I was beside myself—you would not wonder if you knew. May I carry you? I don't think you can walk in your wet clothes. You won't mind my carrying you to the mill?"

"No."

Madge found no other word to say; she could not meet his eyes. Something utterly subdued and terrified her. In a moment she found herself gently but strongly raised, and carried on his shoulder as easily as if she had been a little child. His lean and sinewy form had great strength and endurance.

A fire, dry clothes, and hot tea soon revived her body, but her mind did not so speedily recover itself. She could not help a hysterical fit of crying, which she had only power to keep under so long as Laurie and his friend were present. Mr. L'Estrange showed no more emotion; he had resumed his ordinary cold and nonchalant manner; and beyond the fact that he was and remained of a ghastly pallor, kept no trace of the passion that had shaken him. Madge, whose active tongue was seldom at a loss, had not a word now for any one. She had lost all her vivacity and audacious frankness, and was thankful to be driven to Elaterd in the miller's trap and to get to bed as soon as possible.

Her night's rest, however, did not revive her; she had frightful dreams; all the time she felt herself struggling frantically in dark waters, a cold clitch of thin hands seemed dragging her into horrible depths. She woke with a shriek of uttermost terror, and was thankful to find herself in a light and cheerful world, where it was possible to throw off the dread and gloom of the hours she had passed. Yet after the first relief some of the impression remained. Madge could not rid herself of the idea of the evil eye. She, and she alone, had heard these words, "Why not believe in it? It is true;" and these others, "Not this one too—not another!"

A little more and she would have been that other victim. Why was she snatched from the fate that accompanied him? Was her life to be connected with his? What was the meaning of the strange thrill, half horror, half bliss, which had run through her veins when he kissed her hands, when he lifted her in his arms?

Ah, she was not the girl to rescue a man's life, to restore it from despair! She knew herself—vain, frivolous, idle, capricious, often light-minded. Jim L'Estrange's married life needed a stronger and a more loving hand than hers to set it right! But if a woman could do it, Madge thought it would be worth while to suffer a good deal, to give up much, to attain such a destiny.

"Is the poor fellow to go on till he dies shunning every one, afraid even of friendship, feeling himself under a curse? Is there any one strong enough and brave enough to throw in her lot with his, and save him from that dreadful loneliness? Oh, I wish I were the one to say I dared!"

Laurie came in with her early cup of tea to ask her how she was. He sat on the bed and contemplated her gravely.

"Joe, Madge, it's taken a lot out of you! You look like a little ghost. I hope you don't blame me for thinking first of George!"

"My dear boy, of course not. You couldn't get us both ashore. Is George all right?"

"Oh, as right as ninepence. She hardly turned a hair. You were longer in the water. By Joe, what a funk we were all in! As for Jim, he was completely off his head. He vowed you were dead and it was his doing. 'No,' poor George said, 'it was mine. I steered.' But I was in the boat. I was in the boat,' he kept saying. Then he sent me off for brandy. I was glad when he carried you in alive after all. I say, Madge, I really believe poor old Jim thinks he has that ill luck about him. Did you notice how he stared at the fellow who told that story about the Greek Johnny and the evil eye?"

Madge nodded.

"Well, but one can't think there's really anything in it—of course one believes in luck, you know. There's some people that always sweep the board and others that never hold a decent card. But that's different, that's the sort of thing that only hurts oneself, you know. It can't be that a decent fellow like Jim should have the power of harming other people without wishing it. But he fancies he has, that's the worst of it. He refused point blank to be my best man yesterday evening. I couldn't get any reason out of him till I pushed him hard, and then he said he wasn't going to bring any ill luck on me if he knew it. It's awfully run, isn't it?"
"It is terrible, terrible! I can't say what it makes me feel—so sorry, so un- 

speakably sorry for you! But I don't believe, I won't believe that so dreadful a 

fate will go on pursuing you. Things change, times change—we all of us have 

our bad times and our good. Your good ones must be to come!" He shook his 

head in silence. "Don't!" she cried more 

vehemently still, "don't refuse comfort. 

Don't shut happiness out of your life for 

a morbid idea. You say you have never 

brought any harm to Laurie, other people 
too may care for you and help you to be 

happy—some woman. Oh, you cannot 

be alone all your life!"

She suddenly burst into a passionate 

storm of tears, her warm, genial, and 

Sybarite nature was deeply shaken and 
disturbed by the impression of his utterly 

hopeless despair.

He knelt down by her and took her 

hands, faintly trying to stop the current 
of her tears with imploring entreaties to 

her not to care, not to let his unhappiness 

affect her.

"Oh, I'm not so selfish as you think— 

though I am selfish," she sobbed, and in 

her abandonment of her half-hysterical 

mood she laid her face against his shoulder. 

He shrank and quivered.

"Miss Lifford! Madge! For heaven's 
sake—I can't bear it—you tempt me too 
much," he muttered in a hoarse, strained 

voice. "I know it's only pity, divine 

pliy, but you'll force me to say what I 

never must—what no woman shall ever 

hear me say."

"Say it, say it!" she whispered at his 

ear.

Something beyond her own control 

seemed urging her, she felt on the point of 

being ready to give up her will, to 
declare that he must not leave her, that 

she was the woman who must conquer his 
evil star!

"No, no," he cried almost fiercely, "not 

for a million worlds! I've sworn I never 

would. I'm not such a wretch! Madge, 
dear, dear Madge, let me say good-bye for 

ever. Let me go before it is too late!"

She drew away from him suddenly.

"Well, go, then, go, if you can," she 
said bitterly, dashing the tears from her 

face. "I keep no man against his will."

He rose slowly to his feet, yet he 

lingered, looking at her with longing 

wistfulness.

"You don't understand what it means 
to me," he said. "It's tearing something

out of my heart. If I stayed only a little 

longer I could never find the strength to 
go, and go I must. I swore once before 

heaven, that my life should never touch 
a woman's. It's just because I care too 
much that I must let you think I don't 
care at all; just because I—because I am 
afraid of loving you better than honour, 
better than faith, better than knowledge.

I could only do you harm, it is not given 
to me to do good to any living being."

"And yesterday you saved my life!"

"Ah, yes. I must be glad of that! I 
thought I had killed you. I saved you, 
dear, for a happy fate, for a happy man.

Sometimes I think I have a sort of second 
sight. I know there's brightness to come 

for you, and love and hope. And just 
because you were destined for that I'll 
never meddle with and spoil your life, my 
dear. Good-bye, good-bye! Don't fret 

about me, don't think about me any more.

If you can help, only never believe that I 
didn't care for your happiness more than 

my own! Good-bye.""

He stooped to take both her hands, 

meaning to kiss them again, but the same 

strange and wayward impulse that had 

swayed her all through their curious 

interview made her lift her face to meet 

his lips. After all he was human; he could 

not but kiss her passionately. When he 

was gone she hid her burning, tear-stained 

face in the pillow, ashamed to meet the 

light of day. She had never done the 

woofing before, and it had been rejected!

"But it isn't that he doesn't care," she 
told herself, "he loves me and that is why 

he goes away. Oh, my poor, poor Jim, 
you should have let me see if I could not 

have changed your fate!"

Laurie received a magnificent present 

from his friend in a few days, from London, 

with a short note of farewell. Jim 

L'Estrange was starting for New Zealand 
in a week's time. Laurie loudly lamented 

and abused his friend for his wandering 

propensities, but Madge made no re- 

mark. She was well again; but every one 
thought her spirits subdued, and her nerves 

shaken. It was some while before time 

worked its usual cure and she was her 

usual lively self. She never mentioned 

Jim L'Estrange's name, but whenever 

Laurie got a brief, occasional letter from 
him she listened with curious intempests 
to the meagre details which were all she 
could collect.

It was some years after that, and Madge
had been married what seemed to her a considerable time, when one evening at dinner her husband casually mentioned that he had met Laurie in town, and he had told him an old friend of his had gone down in a homeward-bound vessel from New Zealand, in sight of land.

"What was his name?" Madge asked quickly, paling suddenly.

"L'Estrange. Why, Madge, did you know him? Was he too one of the old flames?"

"Don't, Charile," Madge said with a trembling lip, "he was the most unhappy man I ever knew, and I was sure he would end like that—I am sure he would say that it was the best thing that could happen to him. Don't ask me any more about him, and let us talk of something else. I don't want to cry, and indeed it's nothing to be sorry for. He did not know what it meant to be happy."

She started away from the subject and favorably rushed into another. Her husband looked at her a little curiously but asked her no questions. She woke in the night, crying out from a dreadful dream in which she had felt the cold grasp of Jim L'Estrange's dead hands, and seen those fatal eyes of his stare at her from his drowned and ghastly face.

But life was quick to console her, and after all his outcast wanderings the wanderer slept sound.

SOME ALGERIAN CUSTOMS.

AN acquaintance with the Koran and its doctrines teaches us something about the Arabs of Algeria, who, in spite of thirty years of French influence, are still good Moslems, and much addicted to the traditions and beliefs of their forefathers. The few following precepts from the holy book are therefore given, because they have a certain value as portraiture as well as being interesting in themselves.

"God hates the man who has a proud look in the presence of his companions."

"When a man sneezes, his companions must congratulate him; but if he sneezes thrice, there is no need to do so, since he is then supposed to have a cold in the head."

"When a man is ill for three days he is relieved of all his sins, and becomes again as pure as when his mother gave him birth."

"When a fly falls into your cup you must submerge it altogether, and then take it out; because in the one of its wings there is a disease, and in the other the cure for it."

The above, some of which are as sensible as others are eccentric, are fairly typical of the mass of personal and general instruction which the Koran offers to good Mohammedians. They will not stand the severe rational tests of the North, would apply to them, but they serve the superstitious and ignorant Arabs very well. The tourist who travels third class in Algeria and finds himself performe in the society of three or four rather formidable-looking Kabyles in dirty old gowns from their heads to their bare knees, may wonder at the unanimity with which they give him "good morning," but if he understands the Koran he may see sufficient reason for it. He will not then, however, have an inordinately high opinion of himself on the strength of the greeting. For he will know well that, though outwardly civil to him, the worthy fellows really desire anything rather than his company. Nor will he find much comfort in the Algerian proverb which says that the Arabs wear their tunics long in order that, when they approach Paradise, a certain number of the more excellent Christians may enter with them by hanging on to their skirts.

But after a few days' sojourn in Algeria it is impossible not to convict the natives of disregard of the Koran in matters of cleanliness. I have travelled on the main Algerian line of railway with Kabyles over whose garments the procession of unnameable vermin has been constant for an hour—a procession troubled only by the erratic skipping into its midst of other vermin, less obnoxious indeed, but still calculated to make a scrupulous European feel uneasy. Perhaps the men themselves had washed in cold water that morning. But of what account was that if they were content after their ablutions to cover themselves with filthy rags, the mere sight of which provoked the beginnings of nausea?
then approaches her and fires a pistol above her head to signify that thenceforward he has the power of life and death over her. Not infrequently he makes the symbol even more emphatic by firing into her headdress and setting her aflame. This done, little remains except for the youth to lift the lady in his arms and carry her bodily into his house.

The Algerian Arabs inter their dead almost as soon as the breath has left their bodies. They have good authority for this in Holy Writ. "Hasten to bury your dead, in order that, if they are virtuous, they may the more quickly enjoy eternal happiness, and, if they have died in sin you may the sooner get quit of creatures condemned to hell fire."

When a person is at the point of death, friends assemble about the sick-bed; men only if the dying person is a man, and women only in the other case. The Prophet is invoked repeatedly on the dying one's behalf. These prayers cease immediately the person is dead. The body is then at once stretched on the floor and washed with soap and water—or with sand, if water be wanting. Camphor and such perfumes as musk, amber and sweet herbs are then dispensed about the body, which is afterwards wrapped in a long shroud knotted above the head and below the feet. The corpse is thus wholly enveloped. A powder of the dry leaves of the wild jujube and henna may be used as a substitute for the more costly materials.

All being ready for the funeral, the dead body is put upon a bier covered by a silken pall, and carried off at a brisk pace, head foremost, attended, if the deceased was rich, by three or four marabouts or holy Moslems, who repeatedly utter the name of "Allah" on the way.

The grave may be in a garden or a field. In the former case, from that time forward the fruit of the garden will be at the disposal of all the world.

Before burying the body the dead man's turban is cast twice upon the ground, with an adjuration of the Prophet Mahomet. Everything in connection with it is managed with extreme care, for it is a grave sin to cause any suffering to the dead. Bread and figs are distributed to the poor who attend the funeral. How it is clearly to the profit of the dead man to have a large following of pampers, since each seed of the figs distributed assures him a year of pardon for his sins.

With the rich it is not unusual to set up a tent over the grave. Herein a marabout spends a week, praying night and day for the deceased. This cannot be altogether a desirable office for the Moslem priest, because it is usual to have an opening at the head of the grave, ostensibly to allow the dead man to hear the sob of those who come to pay him the tribute of their prayers and regrets. Before the French occupied Algeria shallow burying was customary. This led to much that was unpleasant, and aided the jackals and other wild beasts in their investigations. But it is now forbidden to bury in a grave less than four and a half feet deep. Nevertheless, seeing that it is believed if, after the lapse of a certain time, the dead man's shroud comes to the surface of the soil, it is a sign that Allah has welcomed him as a worthy man, one may suppose as much as possible is still done to aid the jackals in their natural quests, and to defeat the sanitary injunctions of the authorities.

On the day after the burial the friends and relatives come to pray at the grave. When they leave, the women-folk take their place, and sit passing little white pebbles from one hand to the other, repeating one of the many religious ejaculations of the Moslem ritual. They do this for three days in succession, and then leave the stones on the grave.

A curious and pathetic superstition deserves to be mentioned. It is commonly believed that the souls of the dead come out of the graves to associate with those who attend to pay respect to their memory. The souls of adults seat themselves upon the little footstones of the graves, while those of children perch upon the shoulders of their mothers, or sisters, or grandmothers, who may be present. A woman upon leaving the grave moves very gently, lest she should hurt the little soul upon her by suddenly disturbing its equilibrium or swinging it against anything.

The Kabyles more noisy in all their affairs, raise a tumult round their dead. Men and women assemble in the courtyard of the deceased, and wall and beat pistles of iron and copper as an accompaniment to their lamentations. This riot sets the dogs of the village howling and the cattle lowing. The dead man lies in the room, with lighted candles around about him and accepts these tokens of his worth. Professional mourners of both sexes also come to do him honour. They disfigure themselves with mud and mire, being already
sufficiently disreputable in their diurnal rage, and, further, draw blood from their cheeks and foreheads with their nails.

The actual interment takes place with a certain amount of picturesque detail. The dead body is set upon a mule, in front of the rider. The followers are also mounted, and proceed in silence to the cemetery. The next day the deceased's horse, in holiday attire, is led into the public place of the village, and the villagers form a ring round it, moving slowly in a rotatory fashion, and pausing at intervals, while a local bard sings the virtues of the dead man. After each verse the funereal dance is resumed to the chant of a chorus, of which the following is a specimen:

No—he is not dead!
His soul is with God.
We shall see him one day,
No, he is not dead!

Here again we have an instance of the similarity between the customs of the Corsicans and the Kabyles. Another thing. The "ballo tondo" or national dance of Sardinia, is much the same as this requiem of the Algerian mountaineers. The Sardes are a very lugubrious people, but it is certainly odd that their merrymaking and the death ceremonies of the Kabyles should be, as they are, so much akin. In the eleventh century the Arabs did as they pleased with Sardinia; killed its people, reaped their grain, and settled in the land by thousands. This seems to be respectable testimony on behalf of the antiquity of the present—though fading—customs of the Kabyles; also to the singularly dolorous temperament of the people who were the offspring of the cross between Arab and Sardes parents.

MISS GARTH.
A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.

That night Dalgarno made himself agreeable in a most obnoxious sort of way. He sang several songs after dinner in a very fair tenor voice, and his manners had decidedly improved. One or two of the guests were ready to vote him not such a bad sort of fellow after all. He talked freely too about his travels. There appeared to be very few countries which he had not visited.

Jocelyn sat aloof, and wondered how soon the sword would fall. Godfrey watched also, and racked his brains to think of some way out of the difficulty for her.

It seemed to him that there was no chance of concealing this hateful marriage much longer. All the world must soon know that his beautiful Jocelyn was the legal property of the swarthy, handsome man who sang Italian songs and wore showy jewellery, and whose insolence was only kept within bounds by certain considerations for his own personal welfare.

Of course Jocelyn could allow him an income; but that would not do away with the one awful fact that he was her husband. That he was a convicted felon entitled her to no divorce. They two—the fair, proud mistress of Boraston Hall, and the vulgar, scheming forger—would be man and wife to the end of time.

He did not speak to Jocelyn that night, but he was always hovering near her, conscious of her least movement, ready to serve and help her. But Dalgarno, when he did address Miss Garth, did so in a perfectly respectful manner, and there was no need for Godfrey to listen to every word he said.

Lady Carstairs asked again for Aveline.
"I am not going to allow her in the drawing-room again until every one has gone, aunt," answered Jocelyn quietly.
"She gets so excited."
"I am sure I think you are quite right, my dear, only it is such a very unusual thing for you to do! I have advised Aveline's being kept in the background for years, and you always allowed her to do as she liked."
"I must have seen the error of my ways, Aunt Grace."
"I am very glad. I never thought you would. Such a fuss as you always make of the child! She might be your own for the care you take of her."

Jocelyn's face remained unmoved, but Godfrey Wharton, who was standing near, turned away his head to hide the purple flush of jealousy that had crept into his cheeks again.

"Now, at the ball to-morrow," continued Lady Carstairs, fanning herself, "what are you going to do with this Daglonian man? You cannot introduce him to all your guests."
"I suppose Mr. Dalgarno can take care of himself as well as anybody else."
"Oh, better I should say. He has a fund of assured impudence, which might be entertaining if it were not so abominably vulgar. What I mean is that I should
would have been worse than useless to deny that Avelline was her child. She herself had seen day by day with growing terror that her little daughter was very, very like herself.

It seemed to her that there was nothing to be done now. A future with Dalgarno in it was not to be thought of. She shuddered at the bare idea. A future without Avelline was impossible. Was she really to choose between these two fates—almost equally terrible in her eyes?

She remembered that it was the ball that night, and that she must not appear at it pale and heavy-eyed. She must be bright and gay once more, and play her part bravely, so that no one should guess that she was bearing about with her a hideous secret.

Jocelyn moved about, as in a dream, after that interview with Dalgarno. She walked, and talked, and smiled, and ate and drank as usual, but all the while a strange sense of unreality hung about her like a persistent, haunting nightmare—a nightmare not to be shaken off.

As she stood in her own room putting the finishing touches to her costume for the ball that night, she marvelled at her own calmness. In certain crises of life the mind seems to stand still and watch its own agonies with a strange callowness and inertness. Jocelyn's cheeks were bright, her eyes were deep and tranquil, her lips smiling. So the heroines of the French Revolution went to the guillotine with a jest upon their lips, and serenity on their brows.

Jocelyn was down first in the great hall, which had been cleared for dancing as well as the real ball-room. She stood before the fire buttoning her long white glove, and longing feverishly for the guests to come and force her to take her thoughts away from the evil face which had looked on her angiulah with such cruel indifference.

It was Godfrey Wharton who came down the stairs and found her there alone. He had not spoken to her since the previous day. He hardly seemed to know what to say to her now. He stood looking at her in silence. At last:

"I have been thinking about what you told me," he said slowly and with a great effort. "There seems to be no real reason for uneasiness. The—one will demand a high price for going away quietly I suppose? But no doubt you are prepared to give it."

"I would give all I have, but circumstances have made such an arrangement impossible."

"He must be made to listen to reason."

She smiled—a strange mocking smile that seemed to chill him.

"He does not need money. He longs for affection," she said, with a horrible lightness. "He wants a pleasant family life. He already loves his child."

Godfrey Wharton fell back a step.

"He has found out that?"

"It appears so. Think of Avelline calling him father! Is there not a delightful prospect of domestic happiness in the future?"

She was standing very erect, and her eyes glittered with excitement.

"Jocelyn!" he implored, his hand on her arm, "for God's sake take care! You will break down."

"If I had been going to do that I should have done it already. I feel a delightful sense of security, as if nothing could hurt me or move me any more! Break down indeed! You shall see how many dances I dance to-night. Hark, that is the first carriage driving up! I wish they would all come soon. I feel as if I should like to dance for ever."

She held out her programme to him.

"There," she said, "take as many as you want. Our step suits to perfection, and, perhaps, this is the last night I shall ever be Miss Garth. By to-morrow the world may know me as—"

She checked herself. The look in his eyes seemed to bewilder her. She put her hand to her head for a moment.

"Why do you look so sorry?" she said under her breath. "It is not worth while. Nothing matters very much. And life is not an eternity after all. Do not look like that for my sake. I want to be merry to-night."

And, leaving the little scented card in his hands, she went forward to welcome her guests.

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MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
BY ESME STUART.

CHAPTER X. MAKING A SENSATION.

Lady Rookwood's ball was one of the most fashionable and best conducted entertainments, though she and her husband had nothing to do with the very fast section of the aristocracy. Lord Rookwood was said to be led by his wife, but it would appear that she led him well. She liked celebrities, and through the Farrants Lady Rookwood had heard of the Winkseilles, and she had determined to see for herself whether the reported beauty of the Princesses were true. Hence the call and the invitation. The Rookwoods were much attached to their cousins the Bethunes, and Forster, having found out that Philip had come to forward his sister's début, had procured invitations for Clytie and her brother.

Clytie Gibbings had been educated in Brighton and Paris, and she had just returned from the latter city. She was very handsome, and very unlike her brother, and now she had dragged a shy, delicate aunt to town, and had insisted on Philip's coming with them and using his influence with his college friend to procure her an entrance into society. Clytie knew that money ought to unlock every door, so why should she not enjoy the great wealth her father had amassed by a fortunate invention, even if there were no blue blood in the veins of the Gibbings? Her brother had always been allowed to do as he liked, and why should she not have her turn, when nothing but courage and hard work were necessary for success?

Clytie was very dark, with dark eyes, black hair, and olive complexion. She and Philip had nothing in common, as he was incapable of being worldly, but on his side he was an affectionate brother, craving for a sympathy which Clytie could not give. She was her own centre, her own object in life, and the sudden increase of wealth had early crushed any higher qualities which hard work might have developed.

This evening she was very proud of her success, as she found herself distinctly sought after at the ball; she was too much occupied with her partners to notice the Bethunes, who had come late, and to whom Philip was long to introduce her, as if the fact of knowing such unworldly people would counterbalance Clytie's natural tendencieera.

Clytie had just secured an admiring young Lord Harvey, and was at the height of her happiness, when she became conscious of a counter attraction. Lord Harvey had twice stuck an eye-glass into his left eye to gare at somebody.

"Ah, yes. By the way, do you know the lady Lord Rookwood has just danced with? I saw her come in. Awfully pretty girl! There is your brother speaking to her, so he must know her."

Soon after Philip came up to his sister with a radiant expression on his face.

"Clytie, isn't it strange? My Princess is here. You know the lady of the mysterious glen I wrote to you about? She is causing quite a sensation by her beauty."

"Oh," said Clytie, smiling a little scornfully; "that make-believe Princess. How ridiculous!"
"Make-believe! I heard Lord Rockwood himself introduce her as the Princess of Rothery. I assure you the Duke is in his element, and looks like one of the old French nobility, just as he did in that queer Palace."

"But these Winskells are not in the peerage, for I looked for them," returned Clytie, laughing. Her laugh was short and unnatural.

"But you can see for yourself that she is every inch a Princess. No, that big lady is hiding her."

Clytie's next partner claimed her.

Her brother now found himself near Miss Bethune, who said:

"Do tell me about this new beauty my cousin has found. They call her the Princess, and Forster says you know her."

Adela's partner was waiting for her, but she would hear Philip's answer.

"The family name is Winskell. A very old family in the north, I believe. For some splendid bravery an ancestor was called 'the King of Rothery,' and their titles have descended in the family. They live in a Palace, and I was entertained there last year when I lost my way in the mountains."

"How delightfully romantic! I must get Forster to admire her."

Philip Gillbanks was quite raised in general estimation, because he knew the beautiful stranger whom no other person present had ever seen before. Some one said she was a foreigner because some one else had said so. A few declared decidedly that they had never heard of the title, but they received as answer to this statement that it was a Dutch name. There were several noble Dutch families settled somewhere, who had come over with the Dutch William. Her uncle was the Duke of Greybarrow. The nationality did not matter, as they could both speak English. From that evening dated the question asked so often during that short season:

"Have you seen the Princess?"

Clytie Gillbanks lost the chance of being the reigning belle that evening, and she was secretly very much displeased. She put it down to Philip's fault. He always was so stupid, and never did anything for his own advantage or for the advancement of his family.

Philip, however, was, for his part, very happy. He had been so much taken by surprise that he had hardly dared to make himself known to Penelope. Only it happened that the Duke recognised him and approached him.

"I am very glad to meet you again, Mr. Gillbanks. You see I have brought my niece to show her what a London season is like. We have taken a house in Eaton Square. Come and speak to Penelope. I think your friend Mr. Bethune is here. You must introduce me. I knew his grandfather."

Philip followed the Duke, who found Penelope, near Mrs. Todd, surrounded by a group of men. He would have liked to find her alone, for he had often recalled her with surroundings very different from these. Now she was dressed in some beautiful material of pale blue. Her face—so like a picture of Mrs. Siddons, without any sign of weakness—was far more animated than he remembered it. She seemed almost farther off from him here than in the Palace, even with the formality with which she there had hedged herself round.

Penelope had soon learnt one lesson well—to hide the feelings of the moment. She even smiled at Philip, as if she were glad to see him.

"I hope you found your way safely out of our dance without further trouble?"

"Yes, but I often wished myself back again," said poor Philip, stumbling a little over the words. "If I might come and tell you the end of my experiences, I——"

Lord Harvey had managed to get an introduction, and now came to stop Philip's conversation.

"My uncle will be glad to see you," said Penelope, smiling; "do come."

She had learnt that society expects you to appear to welcome everybody.

She was gone, but Forster found his friend still looking after the favourite beauty.

"Forster, do you see her? Isn't she beautiful! You see everybody thinks so. It was not my imagination, as you suggested last year."

"What, the girl with the sham title? It's bad enough when people are forced to inherit their fathers' titles, but, if you need not do that, imagine adopting one! Which is she?"

"She is dressed in blue. There she is, dancing with Lord Harvey."

"Ah!" said Forster, surprised in spite of himself. "Well, she is not quite ordinary, certainly, and she does not look stupid. Has she any right ideas of making herself popular among her own people?"
"I don't know; they must admire and love her; but come along, I'll introduce you to her when that foolish fellow lets her alone."

A little later Forster was talking to Penelope and the Duke of Greybarrow. His perfect ease of manner, born of simplicity, and his quick, enthusiastic replies, made Penelope listen to him with pleasure. She thought she had never met a man who was so devoid of false ideas. He did not begin by paying her compliments, indeed she was a little surprised because he did not seem to be in the least conscious of her beauty.

"My friend Gillbanks has told me about his losing his way in your mountains. I sent him on that expedition, so I feel partly answerable for his blunders but——"

"I have never reproached you," said Philip, smiling, his face showing that he was only too grateful for Forster's advice.

"Your grandfather was a friend of mine," said the Duke, turning to Forster; "he was of course my elder, but we youngsters thought him a very fine fellow."

"He was an inveterate gambler," said Forster, smiling, "so we have to thank him for depriving us of a good deal of surplus coin. Sometimes I wish he had acted differently."

"Yes, indeed," said Penelope, with a little sigh, "if one could force one's ancestors to——"

"Oh, I don't mind much; it was chiefly for other people. Our club could spend it easily; and there would be less need of so-called charity, which is hideous."

"That depends on how it is administered," put in Philip.

"Perhaps; anyhow, I seldom find it well administered. I have a sort of room down in Wansey, one of the most populous of our London parishes, and there our members try cases every Saturday evening."

"Try cases?" asked Penelope, looking with pleasure at the face before her. She understood now why Mr. Gillbanks had quoted his friend. He possessed in a very strange degree the power of attracting others, without being conscious of the fact.

"Yes, any poor man may come and plead his cause, showing reason why he is poor and where the fault has been. They usually put it down to the aristocracy, but the selected members of the club are very keen questioners. It really is an education to hear these cases tried, but ladies are not admitted, and they would hardly appreciate the atmosphere."

Forster's voice was very musical, his enthusiasm was expressed in no unpleasant manner.

"I heard you had very strange ideas," said Penelope. "Do you really appreciate all—these people? Don't you think our lives should be passed among our own equals?"

"My niece is a thorough-going Conservative," said the Duke, smiling.

"Many women are till they see with their own eyes. Where's Adela? You should talk to her."

"Every person has his own special aim in life," said the Princess slowly, because she wished Forster to go on talking.

She did not notice that Philip kept his eyes on her, and that his face expressed supreme admiration.

"Often his own specially selfish aims," said Forster.

"I suppose everyone understands that word differently," answered Penelope; but now the Princess was claimed by another distinguished guest. Lord Bookwood was making himself popular by freely introducing the new beauty.

"Come with me, Philip, I want you to talk to Adela about an expedition for the club. My cousin will lend me the grounds of her house at Richmond. I wish our place was not so far from town. My mother is getting sleepy—I am not surprised—so we shall not stay very long. Come and see us to-morrow and bring your sister with you."

Forster found that Philip, instead of being bored, was anxiously looking at the Princess, and was not angry with Clytie when she said that she must stay as late as possible.

Presently Forster, finding himself in a position from which he could see Miss Winakell, stopped a moment. His eyes rested on her slender neck and on her exquisitely shaped head; then he looked at Philip, thinking to himself:

"I dare say, that would be a good match for her, but Philip is too good for her, though evidently he admires her immensely. She is as proud as Lucifer, I expect, not the wife for such a splendid fellow. I'll try and keep him with me this week, and she will soon be overwhelmed by all this society whirl. Luckless girl, but she will like it."
CHAPTER XI. A GARDEN PARTY.

A week after the ball Forster was suddenly announced to the Rookwoods whilst they were at breakfast. That day they happened to be alone.

His fine forehead; picturesque hair; large, sparkling eyes; clean, well-cut chin; and sensitive mouth, gave him somewhat the look of an actor, without an actor's unmistakable self-consciousness. Forster Bethune was often noticed in a crowd, and it was, perhaps, his good looks which made him popular with people who abhorred his principles. Lord Rookwood, for instance, had no modern advanced ideas about labour and the working classes, but he seldom refused Forster's requests. He prided himself on a certain stability of mind which utterly prevented him from being led away by every new idea. If he ever discussed Forster's eccentricities, which he seldom did with patience, he would say: "Bethune is a very extraordinary fellow; clever, of course, but bitten by the most extravagant socialistic ideas. He hates his own class, and dabbles in philanthropy."

Forster had a supreme contempt for what was said of him, though personally he bore no ill will to the blasphemers. He would listen to the repeated hearayts of himself with a quaint smile on his lips, and the least little shrug of his broad shoulders; then, if he did not laugh outright, he usually plunged into some irrelevant subject in which he was just then specially interested.

"Rookwood, how late you are," he exclaimed, with a smile on his lips; "but it's lucky for me. How do you bear this hard work, Cousin Emily?"

"I am sure you want something or you would not favour us with a visit," said his cousin.

"Well, yes, I want to know if you will let me have your Richmond garden for a cabmen's social gathering. It's difficult to manage because the men are frightfully overworked. Not the master cabmen, but those who work for the big men. It's abominable the number of hours they have to be on the road."

"My dear Forster, you say that of every one," said Lord Rookwood, smiling.

"There isn't a trade that, according to you, isn't down-trodden. Work is a very good thing, and it's my opinion that the lower classes are ruining themselves and us by their idleness." Forster frowned.

"Idleness! I wish you would do the day's work of some I know. But it isn't the work they complain of, only the want of it. We ought to be ashamed of it for them. If any of us idle fellows——"

"I'm not idle by any means! We are fast approaching the time when there will be no liberty, and when a man may not enjoy his own in peace, but only that which he can manage to take from his neighbour. What good will be gained to the populace when charity is dead, killed by robbers?"

"Rookwood, you don't understand; you just repeat the jargon of the upper classes. It isn't your fault, they all do it, but I wish you would come and spend a week at our club."

"Pahaw! Come and spend a week at one of my labourers' cottages at Hawkies, and see if you have anything to complain of."

"I complain of your having three estates, you know, Rookwood. A man can't enjoy more than a certain amount of land or money, after that all surplus merely adds to his cares. We shall have to come to some arrangement some day and then——"

"Pure moonshine all that talk—but about our grounds! Pray how many cabs are to be driven through the gardens?"

"Oh, Jack dear," put in his wife, "of course Forster means well, and Richards will see that no damage is done."

"And he will expect an immediate increase in his wages for entertaining roughs. These gardens are a beastly expense as it is."

"And you are there about six weeks in the year," said Forster with the bright smile, which always charmed Lady Rookwood in spite of herself, and annoyed his lordship because he knew he could not withstand it long.

"Come, Jack, you know it's no use quarrelling with Forster. You may as well write a note to Richards for him, and if any damage is done——"

"You'll let them have some flowers," put in Forster, "won't you? The wives, I mean, like flowers. You see, half the time your flowers are merely grown to delight Richards's eyes, and these people value even a faded geranium immensely."

"I don't pay gardener's wages for your cab-drivers' benefit, Forster. By the way, have you heard that there is likely to be a dissolution?"

"Oh, please don't begin to talk of politics," said Lady Rookwood; "you will fight
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even more over them than you do over the cabmen! Forster won't take any side, so you get no chance of crowing over him, which seems half the fun you get out of politics. Do tell me, Forster, have you seen anything more of the beautiful and mysterious Princess? She made such a sensation at the ball, and I hear she is asked everywhere. That uncle of hers is a very clever and delightful man."

Forster's face brightened up.

"Yes, indeed, I have seen a good deal of her. My friend Gillbanks is there constantly. We have made her promise to come to Richmond, if you will allow your gardens to be——"

"Oh! then you have also gone in for her society, Forster," said Lady Rookwood laughing. "She is the rage. I hear that Lord Harvey is bent on marrying her, but evidently her Royal Highness is not soft-hearted."

"She is a very beautiful woman, and I believe she could be persuaded to devote herself to the work."

"Oh, nonsense, Forster, she is a very worldly young Princess, I believe. I hear it said that she means to make a great match."

"That's the horrid way you women talk of each other. Now, Cousin Emily, mayn't I invite you to your own gardens to join our select lady visitors? I assure you, you will enjoy our day immensely. We shall have a ball, and you can lead off——"

"With the chief cab-driver!"

"Yes! he would talk of it for the rest of his life. Miss Winskell will be quite at home on grass. Gillbanks says the family live in the wildest glen imaginable."

Lord Rookwood, having finished his kidneys, was feeling less irritable, especially as the talk had turned on pretty women.

"Well, Emily, why shouldn't we all go to Richmond that day if there is nothing better or worse to do? At all events, I should save the flower-beds from being stripped."

"I don't suppose you would be wanted," said Lady Rookwood smiling.

"Oh, yes, Rookwood, do come; you will be most useful explaining the foreign ferns and plants to our men."

"Thank you. Shall I be paid for working overtime? Well, yes, I think I will come for my own sake, though I hate this masquerading between the classes. You know both poor and rich are suspicious of each other."

"That's just it; but really it is only ignorance. There, I shall consider this a settled thing. We shall be a jolly party. Adela and Dora are coming. Mary has to take part in a symphony that day, though I tried to get her to fiddle for some dancing on your lawn."

"Poor Mary! She must have turned blue with indignation. Don't you know, Forster, that that sister of yours is considered one of the best amateur musicians in London?"

"Why should that prevent her playing simple dance music?"

"She thinks music is too divine to be dragged down to vulgar uses."

"Then Miss Winskell and Mrs. Todd, her companion, are coming, and Philip brings his sister."

"She is quite a typical 'nouvelle riche,' and gives herself no end of airs," said Lady Rookwood.

"But she is a fine woman," said her husband.

"I wish, Jack, you wouldn't talk of women as if they were all set out in a row for you to award them prizes for their beauty," answered Lady Rookwood, who was decidedly plain, though she was bright and clever.

"Well, I'm off," said Forster. "I'm going to meet Gillbanks, and to consult with him about provisions, now that we have the garden."

"You pauperise these people! Some day you'll be sorry for it," said his cousin.

"No, we don't. Our cabmen pay their expenses, and I know that in order to do it some of them will have to exercise much self-denial."

"Do you patronise the thieves, too?" said Lord Rookwood, not expecting the answer he got.

"The young ones, yes. Poor fellows, they have been very exemplary lately, but now and then they take their fling for the sake of the profession."

"Forster! you ought to be put in prison yourself. That's the only safe place for aristocrats of your sort."

"I hate the word; pray don't use it."

"How do you reconcile your conscience to the riches of your friend?" put in Lady Rookwood, laughing. "I hear that Mr. Gillbanks is extremely rich, and that he is considered a good match for penniless daughters. His sister will be sure to marry well for the same reason; but according to you, Forster, Mr. Gillbanks ought to have parted with all his money long ago."
"I don't keep Philip's conscience; besides, he has an idea that it is nobler to spend money well than to divest yourself of it. He is wrong, but some day I dare say——"

"Poor deluded disciple!" said Lord Rockwood. "Well, I am off to the club."

"You'll put down the engagement, Cousin Emily?"

"Put what down?"

"Our Richmond party. I'll see about boats for the men. Philip is paymaster that day, so you will see the princely style in which everything is done. Money is a useful commodity when it falls into such hands as his. Good-bye. I'll walk with Rockwood as far as his club."

Later on in the day, after the two friends had spent much time in organising their cabmen's party, Philip said hesitatingly:

"Let's come and see that the Princess has remembered her promise to us. You know she is now asked everywhere."

Forster assented. When with Miss Winskell he was himself conscious of being in the society of a woman of no ordinary character, and certainly of no ordinary beauty. He pictured her as being in the future one of the leaders of his reforms. His brain, teeming with ideas, was ever willing to imagine that all those he met would one day take part in his work; for up to this time he had never been in love except with his own half visionary ideas.

To-day, as he and Philip sauntered towards Eaton Square, he had no more idea of any special attraction than he had of converting his cousin Rockwood to socialism. Indeed, when he thought of the Princess, it was with the idea that Philip was in danger of being smitten with the girl's beauty.

Mrs. Todd was standing by the window, talking very volubly to Penelope. Her talk referred chiefly to the gossip of society, but she still could not understand her charge. The mixture of worldliness, pride, and simplicity was beyond her reckoning, but she had not the key to the strong character which a better and a nobler ambition might have moulded very differently.

"Is Miss Winskell at home?" asked Forster absently, wondering if he could persuade the belle of the season to set up a convalescent home in her beautiful glee, whilst Philip was suddenly seized with shyness at the bare idea of approaching his divinity, and hardly knew what to say when he found himself face to face with her in the pretty drawing-room. However, he unfortunately fell to the share of Mrs. Todd, and could only cast sideway glances at Penelope.

She herself was glad to see the two friends, for Mrs. Todd’s company always made her feel sad, reminding her that she was in reality a prisoner. But Forster's presence seemed to do away with all such feelings, and Penelope was happy as she sat listening to him, even though she disagreed with most of his sentiments. On his side, Forster explained all their plans, and began to assure the Princess that her presence would give extreme pleasure to the weary and overworked cabmen.

"My uncle says it is wrong to mix oneself up with the lower orders. They do not understand us at all, and only take liberties," she said when he paused.

Forster’s eyes kindled with indignation; and then, as he looked at Penelope, a new feeling suddenly entered his heart. He pitied this girl, brought up in narrow grooves and without true sympathy for her fellow creatures.

"I won't be angry with you," he said, calming down, and one of the smiles which always won him the hearts of the poor and often of their oppressors lighted up his face. "But you must promise me that for that afternoon at least you will let me show you that the gulf between rich and poor is not so deep and wide as you seem to think."

Penelope shook her head.

"I shall find nothing to say to your common people."

"But, indeed, if you only listen to them," put in Phillip, "they will be delighted."

"And in time you will do more than listen, Miss Winskell," added Forster, whilst the earnestness of his tone brought a smile to Penelope's lips. "You will soon see that our life is not complete unless we find a meeting point with their lives."

"I think all that sounds well, but, indeed, you must not think that I could ever do these people any good."

"Yes, you could do much. We want such women as you to help us. I am soon going to take up my manual work, and I shall be proud to feel that by doing it I shall be learning some of the secrets of a labourer's existence."

"What work do you mean?"

"I am going to learn to be a farmer, so as to know really what tillage entails."
"Oh, don't do that," said Penzle, thinking of her father and brother, "it degrades even one who is nobly born."

"But I shall enjoy it. My ancestors have been settled on our land for many years, and the family likes to boast of it, but I can truly say that we know really nothing of the life of the labourers. Now, on my farm I shall do as the labourers do, and see with their eyes. Then I shall be able to help my London friends by getting them to come and see what toll means. It is the land which teaches all true lessons."

"Your powers will be wasted," said Penzle, still smiling. "I mean also to go back to my home, but I shall——"

She stopped, wondering why she wanted to tell Forster her private affairs, and why she felt inclined to make him acquainted with all her hopes and her ambition.

Philip at last got his turn, but he felt that he could only make stupid remarks, which did not interest the Princess as Forster's words had done, even though the subject was identical and the aim the same.

When the friends went away, Forster was the first to speak.

"Philip, your Princess is a wonderful woman. If one could make her see things properly she would be a power in the land. She has a soul above that of the ordinary pretty girl."

"Yes, isn't she perfect?"

"She has capabilities. Besides, she is certainly very beautiful. Did you notice how easily the colour comes into her cheeks and how her eyes flash? But her pride is of the wrong sort, inordinate pride of birth."

Philip glanced at his friend, and a sudden chill seemed to creep over him. Never before had he heard Forster remark upon the personal charms of any woman as if he were in the least personally interested. But no, it was impossible, Forster would not easily fall in love, and if he did his wife would not be a proud aristocrat, one of the class he thoroughly despised.

Thrusting away this idea, Philip Gillbanks threw all his energies into the Richmond party. If money could make it perfect there should be no stint. He was so glad to further his friend's plans. Forster never wanted anything for himself, though at times, for the sake of others, he made large calls on Philip's bounty.

When the day dawned, Philip found that he thought more of the Princess than of the cabmen. Indeed, when the whole company was assembled on the beautiful lawns sloping down to the water, it was the Princess Philip looked at, not at the Rookwoods nor at his own fashionable-looking sister Clytie, who was much elated at being in such distinguished society, even though she had to accept it mixed up with Mr. Bethune's stupid cabmen. She talked rather loud and tried to patroon Penelope, but meeting only a polite but freezing reception, she had to content herself with Mrs. Todd or with the Duke when he was available.

"Come, Miss Winskel, said Forster, when he had seen his friends all seated at a splendid feast provided by Philip, "I want you to make the acquaintance of some of my club men. They are helpful to-day, learning to give as well as to receive. Miss Gillbanks I see is pouring out tea. How well she gets on with the men; and Philip is a host in himself. If I were to be asked to point out the best and most generous man in London, I should say it was Philip Gillbanks; and now I owe him a debt of gratitude for having introduced me to you."

The two were sauntering down a shady walk, at the end of which six young men were occupied in cutting sandwiches for those who were going in the pleasure boats.

As Penzle followed Forster, she began to experience the strange attractive power he undoubtedly possessed, and which made him so eminently fitted to be a leader, but her pride rebelled at the same moment that she recognised the fact.

"Mr. Gillbanks is of course compensated by your friendship," she said a little scornfully.

"You are cynical because you don't understand his goodness. Gillbanks has no thought of personal reward I assure you. I could tell you many stories of his pluck and of his unselfishness."

"He merely follows you," she said softly, "he said so."

"That's only Gillbanks's way of putting it. He can inspire people to become heroes, then he pretends they were their own sires. He believes you can help us in our work. Of course I know that now your time is very much taken up, but after the season is over——"

"I shall have other work," said Penzle, almost regretfully, for Forster's words stirred up in her visions of many possibilities. But she was now only bent on one object.
"Look how those young men work with a will," said Forster, turning the conversation. "Won't you say something to them?"

In spite of herself Penelope obeyed him. She spoke a few words, and smilingly she took up a knife and began to cut bread and butter. Forster had set the example, and, with the easy grace which always distinguished him, he talked on as if to one of his own people.

"When this is done, come and help us to wait," he said, after a time, and turning to Penelope he added, "Indeed, Miss Winakell, you must not do any more."

The young men's smiles showed that they were pleased, for Forster had the power of attracting the most raw material.

"Do you really like them?" said Penzie as they walked back. "I should do it all from a sense of duty if I did it at all, not because I cared for them."

"You must care for them. The feeling comes in spite of oneself. When Philip Gillbanks succeeds to his father's works he is going to be a model employer, and he will become a true socialist."

Penzie shrank a little from the idea of the model "nouveau riche." Forster was different. He could do these things perhaps because they amused him, not because of any hidden principle.

"Money cannot do everything for a man," she said, raising her head a little. "Of course not, but money is a power which some few people can wield. Most persons allow it to rule them. You will see that my cousin is really rather unhappy to-day, though my friends will do him and his garden no harm."

Forster laughed as he said this, and, taking a short cut, he soon appeared once more among the assembled men.

"Now, Rookwood, you must make a speech," said Forster, putting his hand on his cousin's shoulder. "The men are expecting it. Get the House of Lords out of your mind, or rather no, give us a replica of your last utterance, it will please them immensely."

Lady Rookwood came to her husband's help.

"Tell them you are glad they are enjoying themselves."

"Hang it, I can't. It's too bad, Forster, to take my garden and then to make me pester myself! You know I disapprove entirely of your cant."

"Philip, Miss Winakell has been cutting sandwiches, and the men will talk of it for a year," said Forster, not answering his injured cousin.

"How very good of you," said Philip. "We are now going to reward their exertions by letting them row us on the river. I have a boat ready fitted up for ladies."

"How very sweet!" said Mrs. Todd, and Clytie remarked that she was glad that they also were going to have some reward.

When metaphorically brought to the water Lord Rookwood did drink; in other words he made a short and very kindly speech, which the men applauded, and they further shocked his sense of propriety by striking up, "For he's a jolly good fellow." To Penzie's surprise, she noticed that Forster joined in, and then he began to collect the various water parties which Philip had arranged.

That evening Penzie could not remember what was said and done on the water. She knew that Mr. Gillbanks had done everything in a princeely style, but the only part of the day which the Princess recollected with pleasure, was the short walk she had with Forster Bethune. His face seemed to be continually appearing before her mind. She did not know why she should think of him—she did not even ask herself the question—but she sat for a long time by her open window, dreaming as she never dreamed before.

THE OLD ROAD TO SOUTHAMPTON.

At the once famous corner, where the two great western roads divide, just out of Hounsdown Town, we follow the one to the left, saluted by the trumpets of the gallant Hussars in the barracks close by. An autumnal mist hangs over the landscape, and autumnal tints are spread over the wide fields, where there is more room for their display upon acres of cabbages, marrows, and other succulent vegetables, than on the scanty foliage of the trees.

Bedfont is the first break in the monotony of the road, where a momentary interest is excited by the sight of the curious yew-trees in the churchyard, which, according to tradition, were trimmed into the shape of fighting cocks by some sporting parson of a former century, who thus sought to alleviate the grimy influences of the place. And was not the "Black Dog," at Bedfont the favoured rendezvous
of the coaching men of an earlier generation? Have the B.D.C., or Bedfont Driving Club, had its head-quarters, and the quiet, sleepy village would be all alive with four-in-hand drags steered by the choice spirits of the coaching ring. An earlier record shows how, one September evening in 1765, just at this spot, Bedfont lane end, the stage coach from Exeter was stopped by a dashing highwayman, "well mounted on a bay horse with a switch tail." Whatever we may think of the morality of the proceeding, it was a deed of desperate courage, single-handed to arrest the great lumbering machine with its four or six horses; its dozen or so of passengers, many of whom must have been armed; and to put all under contribution. But the guard was a resolute fellow, too, and levelling his blunderbuss, he discharged a shower of balls at the bold highwayman, who fell dead from his horse, which galloped off nobody knew whither. There would be some compassion among the female passengers for this fine young fellow, wrapped in a handsome drab surcoat, who lay wallowing out his life-blood in the dust; but the men doubtless pronounced him "well served," and his body was dragged off to the "Bell Inn," close by. Thence, according to received tradition, it was carried away in a hearse, and by six horses; while a weeping lady, closely veiled, followed in a mourning coach.

But we shall meet with plenty of highwaymen further on, and may push on for Staines Bridge, time out of mind the chief crossing place of the Thames for those stepping westwards. So that, as a matter of precept whenever there was danger apprehended from the west, Staines Bridge would be broken down to hinder its passage. In later ages it was chiefly dreaded on account of its toll-bar, which there were no means of doubling round or avoiding. There was always a fight among the toll contractors at the periodical auction for the farming of the tolls at Staines Bridge, and all kinds of queer dodges were resorted to for getting the best of an opponent. The levitaition of the latter-day coaching roads was one "Joshua," a Yorkshire lad from Leeds, who by himself and his nominees controlled most of the coaching roads from Land's End to John o' Groats, and who made a station strategic point of Staines Bridge. Its importance may be judged by referring to any of the old road books of the coaching times, which show coaches to Winchester, Southampton, Salisbury, Exeter, Dorchester, Plymouth, Penzance, with many other stages and wagons for these and intermediate towns, and add to these the constant rumbling and jolting of postchales, phaetons, gigs, and tax carts, the continuous rattle of wheels and clatter of hoofs by night and day, and judge if the toll collector on Staines Bridge could have had a happy life, with his hand against every man's and detested even more than the highwayman.

But there is no toll-bar to annoy us now, and we may rattle over Staines Bridge with a glance at the river, which is not at its best just here, but embanked and tidied up, looks brighter than it used to do in that middle period when gasometers and factories were the only prominent objects. And now we are in Egham, and just the crossing of the shining river seems to have landed us, like Bunyan's pilgrims, in a new and more blessed country. Here we have hill and dale, and hanging woods, rich in the dying loveliness of their foliage, with lawns and gardens, and terraces suffused with crimson and gold. Egham is passed, pretty but inconsiderable, with "Cooper's Hill" on the right, crowned by the buildings of the Engineering College. If "majestic Denham," the poet of "Cooper's Hill," could relive those glimpses of the moon, he might point with some pride to the realisation of the prophetic passage in his famed description of "Thames, the most lov'd of all the Ocean's sons," who, in his god-like bounty, finds wealth where 'tis bestows it where it wants, Cities in deserts, woods in cities plants.

From Cooper's Hill you look down on Runnymede, on Magna Charta Island and the windings of the Thames, where the towers of Windsor rise proudly above, and the antique spires of Eton, all embraced in a setting of mingled forest and plain, the plain as Denham describes it, perhaps too majestically,

Low at his foot a spacious plain is plac'd
Between the mountain and the stream embrac'd.
Which shade and shelter from the hill derives,
While the kind river wealth and beauty gives.

But our road avoids the hills and winds pleasantly along past Englefield Green, and then, leaving the sunny, open country, passes into what seems to be a noble forest glade; and, indeed, we are now in the purities of the great forest of Windsor; and although technically, the district was disafforested some centuries ago, yet it is now, perhaps, more forest than ever, in the
sense in which a forest is a woodland scene. Nothing finer could you have in the way of a forest drive than this, with the solemn arcades of its pine-woods, the stretches of golden bracken, the dying richness of all the wild forest growth.

There Faunus and Sylvanus keep their courts, And there is the most pleasant hush and stillness over everything, while the fragrance of pine-wood and bracken flavour the crisp air of autumn.

"You don't ketch me often along down here, not much. You look for me stop of a tram, along by Westminster Bridge Road, that's where you have me!" And then a loud laugh in which other voices join, but with more constraint. "Yes, I 'spect you'll find this too quiet for you, 'Lisa, after what you've been used to."

And here we have Eliza on the wood-crowned height, and this is her estimate of its advantages. But Eliza is clearly coming home on a holiday visit, and desires to impress her sister and another—an old sweetheart, perhaps—with a sense of the change that has come over her. It is a shock to her to find Lubin looking so countenanced, and her sister, too, in her queer little cape and limp-looking skirts. Perhaps Lubin, too, is disenchanted. Is this the bright, rosy-cheeked laa whom I kissed so fondly, and who wept on my bosom as we parted, this tall young woman in the leg-of-mutton sleeves and frilled shirt-front?

But Eliza and Lubin are lost to sight in a turn of the road, and presently we are in sight of the famous old "Wheatashaf," shining white and cheerful against its surroundings of dark forest. There, by the porch, among other autumn leaves, flutters the announcement of the usual end of season sale of the "Virginia Water" coach horses. For here is winter coming upon us, the coaches are knocking off, and the railway boards are exhibiting "Last Excursion of the season" bills. But we are very well here, nevertheless. Summer, autumn, spring, or winter never finds the forest lacking in charm.

A little beyond the "Wheatashaf" is a wicket gate that gives access to Virginia Water, and a hundred yards or so through a thicket of evergreens brings us to the margin of this sweet retired lake. Just now it is a scene of marvellous beauty, for the trees are fully clothed in all the mysterious tints of autumn; and the placid lake, encrusted in woods, reflects the rich colouring of its tufted banks, which rise from height to height in charming gradation of colour.

Here would be another surprise for Sir John Denham's ghost, who naturally would know nothing about Virginia Water, for it was not in existence what time he was in possession of his corporeal substance. Yet the name is well known to him, as that of a stream here flowing out of the forest, and there was also a Virginia Gate close by, so that the name was not invented for the occasion of making the lake, which feat was accomplished by the Duke of Cumberland, soon after the crowning victory of Culloden. Nature, we may say, has fully adopted the human handiwork, and has made of it in this autumn-time one of the fairest scenes to be witnessed on this earth of ours.

Not as much can be said for the cascade which we soon pass upon the road, for there is but a ha'porth of water to an inconceivable deal of stone, and rocks do not jump on each other quite in the fashion in which they are here piled by the landscape gardener. But after this the way through the forest is all one delightful pine-scented track, hedged with the gold of the dying bracken or the faded rose tints of the heather, till we come out upon the commonplace world at Shrubhahill, with the compensation of wider views of a grand broken country of hill and dale, closed in by summits of quite portentous blackness and gloom.

Then the road crosses the railway close to Sunningdale Station, and a few dozen yards further on stands a milestone with the inscription: "23 Miles from Hyde Park Corner." On the left opens out a bridle-path over the heath, that looks wild enough in its contours, although now mostly enclosed and cultivated, and it is a path that is well worth following, leading into the heart of the wild country of heaths and downs, scored by ancient encroachments, some of vast extent, and also by the delving and digging of the modern sapper, what time the camp of Chobham stirred up our military susceptibilities, not long before the notable Crimean War.

But the western highway lies before us, still with the appearance of a wide forest track, yet wide and of a pleasant yellow tint, with a broad footway at the side. It stretches out in view for miles in long swathes, up and down, like the undulations of some vast ocean, but straight as it is there is

Variety which all the rest enforces.

On one side are wild-looking hills, on the
other nurseries and plantations, with every variety of tree and shrub; while at places the road assumes the appearance of a majestic avenue, with rows of forest trees on either hand. In early summer the scene is brightened by the gay tints of acres of flowering shrubs; but autumn is almost better for the splendid show of conifers, which keeps up its bravery for all the winter long. Most strange and beautiful forms of every known species almost of the great family of the fir tribe are here, from the rude, majestic mountain pine to the deodara with its velvet-like masses of foliage, and all growing with health and freedom. Beautiful, too, are the birches, that grow to big trees, with their delicate foliage now all splashed with gold; while beeches tinged with russet red, and the dark fires with their ruddy boles, make an effective background to the whole. Between the trees we have glimpses of fields, paddocks, gardens, and pleasant country houses, while substantial pillar letter-boxes at short intervals remind us that here is no forest wild, but a city in a desert, like that our poet foresaw.

The road is not to say deserted, for at every quarter of a mile or so you meet a little group of wayfarers—a man with a prison crop and a basket half-filled with crockery; a woman with baskets to sell, while another, lone-looking and wretched, is gathering dead sticks, and fallen acorns, and beech mast. A lean man in an American buggy is driving a naked-looking trotter, the butcher and baker go past at speed. And now through the trees one hears a piano, and a vibrant female voice, that sings one of the melancholy songs of the period. It is a powerful voice, far from the pretty white villa screened behind the trees, whose open windows let in the crisp morning air and let out the flood of song.

A little further there is a finger-post, which is evidently new and up to date. No need to scramble up that post and try to light a match, one dark, windy night, to read that inscription. "A mile and a half," says one arm in distinct characters, "to Sunningdale"; the same measure, in another direction, to Windlesham; and a third arm points the way we should go, and for a like distance, to Bagshot. For the whole mile and a half from Sunningdale there is no tavern or roadside inn, and that on an old coaching road is a pretty clear indication of what a desert track this was before the railway age. But here is one at last, the "Windmill," at the cross-roads. Doubtless there was a real windmill on the hill long ago, and a gibeet, too, probably not far off, with a dead highwayman swinging dolefully in the wind.

Still the road stretches on in pleasant graceful fashion—a real forest road with rural scenes let in. Now we have a vast ploughed field, where men and horses, grouped together in picturesque fashion, are taking their midday refreshment, with ploughs and huge rollers and big machines of various kinds scattered around. And we have pastures, too, and the tinkle of a cow bell as the leader of the herd turns this way or the other over the down. Then we come to a steep incline with a pleasant view of an old coaching inn at the foot, with its shiny bow windows and red-roofed stables, and a green in front with trees that shade the dusty highway. And this brings us to Bagshot Bridge, over a tiny ripple of water, and to Bagshot town on the slope of the hill. Here are inns in plenty, leading off with the "Three Mariners," the first indication we have met with of this being a seafaring track. Bagshot Park lies to the right; we passed two or three of its lodge gates, newly painted red, just before descending to the town. Here was a Royal seat, a hunting lodge for Tudors and Stuarts, and its present occupant is evident enough in the signs of the shops, most of which claim some special appointment to the Duke of Connaught.

Bagshot is a breezy, healthy little place, "ruined and desolated by railways," write the chroniclers of the forties and fifties; but that has since risen from its ashes, and with nice shops and quaint houses shows every sign of pleasant prosperity. Over the roofs of the little town show wild-looking hills, and a new red church is perched upon an adjoining eminence. Fine cedars shade the road; everywhere are trees, fine gardens, nurseries, shrubberies; and this is a district that, less than a century ago, was as bare and desolate as could be.

From Bagshot the road winds higher and higher, till you reach an inn of ancient fame, the "Golden Farmer," now renamed the "Jolly Farmer," although neither gold nor jollity is much in the farmer's way just now. But turning round, you will see what a strange, romantic spot this is, with its "horrid" ravine, as savage-looking as you please, while beyond are some of the
blackest looking hills you ever saw, rude, and weird, and solemn, with knobs here and there of awful blackness. In 1753, when a turnpike Act was passed for making that road to the left through Frimley and Farnham, the place is described as the "Golden Farmer." But in an earlier Act of 1727 the spot is described as the "Basingstone," near Bagshot; and a plan of Windsor Forest of the Stuart period shows the Basingstone on the present site of the "Farmer," with Winmore Cross close by, and a gibbet with a man hanging there on the side of the hill; so that the name probably attached to the inn between the two dates before mentioned, and tradition gives the following account of its origin.

Once upon a time the gloomy, desolate track leading to Winchester, Southampton, and the west was infested by a determined highwayman, who waylaid the best appointed carriages and horsemen, and made them stand and deliver. Gold he would have, and nothing else; bills and notes might go free for him; nor would he touch anything of personal belonging, such as watches, jewellery, and so on. This peculiarity, if it did not endear him to passers-by, anyhow acquired for him a certain distinction. People spoke of him as the golden highwayman. But the officers of the law could make nothing of him; he eluded all their researches, and vanished with the same suddenness as he appeared. At the same period flourished a farmer, who farmed some half-hundred acres of the not very fertile heathland. He had sheep also, no doubt, who grazed the wild pasture all round. But anyhow, at fair or market the young farmer was always to be found, buying or selling, with his sack full of money, and always paying in gold. In this way he became known as the Golden Farmer; when some clever runner from Bow Street, putting this and the other together, set a snare, and lo! the golden farmer and the highwayman were one and the same. And soon the golden one was swinging in the wind, and the farmhouse became an inn, with the sign to keep its former occupant in memory.

This is just the place for stories of highwaymen, and here is one, an early one, of this very place. Thus we read of "Robert Throgmorton of an honourable, ancient, and worthy family; William Porter, also of clear blood and respectable ancestors; and Bishop, of no less dignity in birth, admiration of wit, and height of courage." Living together in the city of London in wild, intemperate fashion, but united in the strictest bonds of brotherly affection, they exhaust their means, and to supply their wasteful courses they "go out upon the highway with good horses, good swords, and minds emptied of all virtue." Perhaps Shakespeare had these men in his mind when he makes Orlando ask:

What! wouldn't thou have me go and beg my food, Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce A thievish living on the common road?

Not far beyond Bagshot they overtook two citizens of London, "and one Smith, a merchant of Southampton," riding together. The merchant loiters behind, and Throgmorton and Porter dash up to the citizens, "and these, with affrighted humbleness, deliver up all they possess." The robbers then strip the bridles from the citizens' horses, and turn them loose, and are about to bind the citizens themselves, when they hear a cry for help from their comrade. Bishop had ridden up to the Southampton man, who had dismounted, and demanded his purse. But this last, being a man of courage, drew his sword, and bade the other "keep off." He would only part with his money with his life, and he fought with such determination that, closing with Bishop, he threw him to the ground and fell upon him. But now the robber's two comrades came running up, and Smith, thinking to gain his horse and escape, left the man whom he had held at his mercy, and spared; who rose in fury—the fury of a "gentleman" who has been "sat upon" by a stout merchant—pursued, and ran his man through the body.

The other two robbers were overwhelmed with grief and dismay at the sight of the foul deed. But they do not forget to take the dead man's money—three score and fifteen pounds—and then ride away. But by this time the two citizens left unbound have recovered their horses, and they ride after at a prudent distance, keeping their men in sight till, coming into a peopled country, they raise the hue and cry, which fly along the road, like the fiery cross, and presently the fugitives are surrounded and captured. The robbers had fled towards Oxford, and had crossed the Thames before they were captured, a chase of sixty miles. They were imprisoned in Oxford Castle, but brought to Southwark for their trials at the assizes held on St. Margaret's Hill. Bishop spoke boldly for his comrades at the trial. "Moors," he said, "sake but
one for one. Therefore, let mercy be shown to these poor gentlemen, and let them not suffer for my deed, for I am the guilty man and none other." But no mercy was shown, and the three were hanged together. After death the bodies of Throgmorton and Porter were allowed honourable burial in the churchyard of St. George's, while Bishop was hung up to feed the crows of Bagshot Heath.

Somewhere about here; where these two grim ancient stones stand on each side of the highway—fragments probably of the great monolith that stood here and marked the boundary of some ancient kingdom, the Basingstone of the old maps—it is startling to be accosted by a wild, gaunt figure above the common height of man, with a request to "help a labouring man along the road."

But the man is a good honest fellow in the way of an old navy, who has trudged from Southampton, where he has been at work in the dock excavating line. This is Thursday, and he started on Monday with nothing to carry but himself and the clothes he wears, and yet leaving nothing behind. A cheery old bird he is too; sixty-seven and hard at work all his life; he has worked under the giant contractors of old, he goes on working under the plagues of modern days. Many a load he has sent to the tip, many a cutting he has helped to dig, where now the trains whirl past laden with wealth and fashion. As for the road, he has not much to say about it, except that he found it a pretty dull piece between Basingstoke and Winchester.

It is rather encouraging to meet with some one who has actually come from Southampton this way. But bear in mind that at the "Golden Farmer" we have two routes open to us; one by Aldershot and Farnham, and so by Bentley, Alton—does anybody remember the Alton alehouses and the sandwichs of old times?—and then by New Arlesford into the Itchen valley, a pleasant diversified line of country. But our way to the right between the grim Basingstones is the older way, and not to be beaten in wild romantic scenery.

Certainly the hills about here are the bluest you ever saw; and with a bit of storm looming over them they look quite demoniac. There are wild bolts by the way; but all with gas and water laid on, as the auctioneers' boards inform you; and then you suddenly tumble upon a little town, half forest, and half smart new shops. It is Camberley, and heresabouts the lads from Sandhurst are very much in evidence. You see them at the station bareheaded, all but a friend with a bull-pup who is going off by train, and upon whom they recklessly pour in the floating literature of the bookstall. You meet them tramping across the country, looking very much bored under the guidance of a veteran professor of military sketching; you see them more at home on hired hacks, galloping over the heath to join the hounds at coohunting, and without misgivings as to being taken for the quarry.

What is most surprising to meet in Camberley is a little French boy, quite at home and able to chuck the Camberley boys into fits, if only they will not throw stones. He carries strings of onions on a stick and goes per secrerly from house to house, "Buy' ny oignon sheep!" He, too, comes from Southampton, where whole families land from France with shiploads of onions, and make their way, trafficking as they go, and spread themselves among the Surrey villages. When their onions are sold they go back to their farms and grow some more. Such, at least, is the account that the villagers give, and the bright-eyed, dark-faced little chap is not very communicative. He owns to Brittany, indeed, "from St. Malo, oui, oui," but after every reply it is always impatiently, "Mais voulez vous des oignons, monsieur?"

Beyond Camberley we come to Blackwater, and cross the river by a bridge, "where you can stand in three counties at once," say the villagers. And from that point the road follows a line of country marvellously wild and broken, with wide views here and there over a vast extent of country. It is dreary at places, but at others full of charm. Eversley lies over the hill, and Bramshill Park, a famous old mansion. But villages are sparse and few along our line of road, which leaves the wilderness at Hartford Bridge, and comes into a softer, more settled country. Then there is Hook, with an ancient inn, the "Raven," dated 1653, and Natleysecures, with a tiny Norman church. A short detour to the right brings us to Old Basing, with its mighty earthworks—a huge circular entrenchment still perfect in contours, while the castle of the Pudlets that was held four years for the King by the stout Marquis, in the Civil Wars, has left hardly a vestige behind—and then comes Basingstoke, a busy country town
with a fine church, and on the hill above
a curious "chapel of the Holy Ghost,"
of Henry the Seventh's time. From
here the road is over a wide, woldy, roll-
ing country of downs and sheepwalks,
with thatched villages here and there, until,
in approaching Winchester, all this is
changed. The old Royal city is environed
by pleasant parks and woods, and its high
street is as bright and charming as can
be imagined, with the old gate and
the massive buildings of the King's house
now occupied as barracks. Then there are
the quaint and charming Piazzas, the
market cross, and the passage under the
old houses to the cathedral—Walkelyn's
cathedral, Wykeham's tomb house, where
the bones of Saint Swithin still lie. And
don't let us forget Jane Austen and Isaac
Walton while we are looking for the tombs
of Rufus and the rest.

And there is St. Cross in the way, with
its almshouses of noble poverty, where
you may claim the ale and manchet of
bread that is the due of wayfarers; and so
through the sweet, pleasant country to
Chandlars Ford, where the soft beauties
of the Itchen valley begin to develop,
and presently in a beautiful country of
woods and pastures, with the shadow of
the New Forest behind it, stretches
Southampton Water, its silvery channel
dotted with white sails and streaked with
the smoke of ocean steamers, while
beyond, like a cloud on the horizon, lies
the beautiful Vectis, the ever green Isle of
Wight.

A GREEK PUPPET SHOW.

When we pass in review the progress
which has been accomplished in every
branch of scientific knowledge since the
dawn of the nineteenth century, we are
too much inclined to look down with
compassion on the generations which
have preceded us, and to fancy that the
ancient world was ignorant of the exact
sciences, or despised them as unworthy
of its attention. It seems to us that
Greek and Roman society was prin-
cipally composed of orators and statesmen,
of poets and of artists, whose minds, ab-
sorbed in the exclusive study of man,
were indifferent to the universe which
surrounded them, and cared not to enquire
into its mysteries. It is true that the
nations of antiquity from whom our culture
is mostly derived were more given to
metaphysical and political speculations
than to researches into the laws which
govern the material world, and that when
the Greek philosophers did seek to account
for the various phenomena of nature, their
explanations appear to us childish and
fantastic, from their ignorance of laws to
the knowledge of which mankind has at-
tained only after long centuries of tedious
and painful toil. But even in those days,
when all culture which was not purely
intellectual was apparently undervalued or
deeply reared, there were not wanting engineers
and men of science, gifted with active
brains and dextrous hands, who, though
they could not clearly define the laws
which regulate the action of the forces of
nature, were well acquainted from ex-
périence with many of their practical
applications. The wedge, the pulley, the
lever, the windlass, the screw, the alphon,
and the pump, were well known to the
Greeks some centuries before the Christian
era; while, in the construction of the pon-
derous machines destined to hurl stones
or darts for the attack or the defence of a
besieged city, they showed a thorough
knowledge of the principles of mechanics,
and a remarkable capacity for finding the
solution of the various problems which
they encountered. That they could also
condescend to more trivial matters, and
apply their skill to the planning of in-
genious toys for the amusement of the
public, we may learn from the works of
Heron of Alexandria.

This celebrated mathematician, who
lived in the second century before Christ,
is still principally remembered by two of
his many inventions—namely, the fountain
which acts by compressed air, and the
asopile, a metal sphere suspended on
pivots over a lamp, and partly filled with
water, the steam from which, issuing from
two tubes turned in contrary directions,
causes it to revolve rapidly on its axis. In
his book entitled "Περίπλοκον " he exposes
very fully all that was known in his time
with regard to the equilibrium and move-
ment of fluids, and the elasticity of air
under the influence of heat and pressure.
We find there the first idea of the auto-
matic machines to be seen at the present
day in every railway station; for he shows
how to construct a vase which, on the
insertion of a piece of five drachmas into a
slot, would pour out a certain quantity of
lustral water to the worshippers in a
temple. He describes also, under the name
of "the siphons employed at a confegra-
A GREEK PUPPET SHOW.

(March 3, 1894.)

Charles Dickens.

A fire-engine fully as efficacious as those which were in use so late as the end of the seventeenth century.

Heron is less known as a constructor of automata, though his treatise on the subject is highly interesting, as it reveals to us the simple methods employed by the ancients for producing motive power in the absence of the many resources furnished by modern science. The work was translated into Italian by Bernardino Baldi, of Urbino, in 1669, and into Latin by Couture, in 1693; but it remained practically inaccessible to the majority of students till the appearance of the erudite commentary presented to the French Academy in 1884 by M. Victor Prou, whose translation and notes have been of great assistance in preparing this article.

Heron divides his automata into two classes: the Υδρόγυρα and the Σφαίρα διανύσμα—those, namely, which acted on a moveable stage, which advanced automatically to a given point, and retreated when the performance was ended, and those which represented in a stationary theatre a play divided into acts by changes of scene.

As an example of the former class, Heron describes the apothecary of Bacchus, which was apparently shown on the occasion of some festival on the stage of a theatre or in the centre of a circus. A basement in the form of an oblong chest, mounted on three wheels, supported a pedestal ornamented with pilasters and a cornice; on the top stood a circular temple crowned with a dome, upheld by six columns, and surmounted by a winged Victory carrying a wreath. Within was a statue of Bacchus bearing the thyrsus and a cup. A panther lay stretched at his feet; in front of the temple and in its rear were two altars laden with fire-wood, and beside each column stood a Bacchante. This edifice was placed at a certain part of the stage; it then rolled forward some distance automatically, and stopped in presence of the public. The wood on the altar in front of Bacchus immediately took fire; a jet of milk sprang from the thyrsus, and wine flowed from the cup held by the god. At the same moment garlands of flowers appeared on the sides of the pedestal, a sound of tambourines and cymbals was heard, and the Bacchantes danced round the temple. When the music ceased, the statues of Bacchus and of Victory faced round, and the second altar took fire in its turn. Milk flowed again from the thyrsus, and wine from the cup; the instruments resounded, and the Bacchantes repeated their dance. The machine then rolled back to its former station.

Heron describes minutely the construction of this chariot and the mechanism of its automata. He recommends that the basement and pedestal should be of such small dimensions that there may be no grounds for suspecting that the figures are moved by a person concealed inside. The lightest materials should be employed, all the parts should be accurately finished in the lathe, and the metal pivots and sockets kept well oiled. To ensure that the chariot should follow a given direction, he advises laying down boards, on which furrows, for the wheels to roll in, should be formed by nailing down wooden bars; and Heron may thus claim to have invented the tramway, as he was also the first to demonstrate the motive power of steam.

To move the machine and the puppets it carried, the pedestal on which they stood contained a hopper, filled with millet or mustard seed, the grains of which, Heron remarks, are light and slippery. As they poured out through a small orifice, which an attendant opened by pulling a string when the time came for beginning the performance, a heavy leaden weight resting upon them descended slowly, and a cord passing from it over a pulley to a drum fixed upon the axle of the two larger wheels caused them to revolve, and carried the chariot forward. It was brought back to its place, when the show was over, by another cord, wound round the drum in a contrary sense, which reversed the action of the wheels. Other cords of different lengths attached to the weight, and pulled by it as it descended, moved the pivots on which turned the statues of Bacchus and Victory, as well as a flat ring revolving round the base of the temple, which carried the Bacchantes, and was moved by cords hidden in a groove on its inner sides.

The action of the weight also opened and shut the valves which allowed milk and wine to flow from reservoirs placed in the copula of the temple, through pipes passing down one of the columns to the cup and thyrsus held by Bacchus. The altars were made of metal, and within them burned a lamp; its flame lighted the pile of chips and shavings through an orifice closed by a bronze plate, which was pulled aside at the proper moment. The garlands which appeared suddenly on the four sides of the
pedestal had lain concealed in the cornice, where they were supported by trap-doors held by a pin. When this was withdrawn the doors gave way, and the garlands, weighted with lead, fell into their places. The rattling of tambourines, and the clashing of cymbals, which accompanied the dance of the Bacchantes, were imitated by leaden balls falling upon a drum, and rebounding from it upon brassen plates. The cords which produced these movements were fixed to the various parts of the machinery by means of loops passing over pegs, which became detached, and fell off when the action of the puppet was to cease. It was, therefore, necessary to rearrange the cords after each performance, a tedious operation, but clockwork moved by a spring was still unknown.

To the automats just described, Heron preferred those which acted in a stationary theatre, as they allowed the choice of a greater variety of subjects. He proceeds, therefore, to describe a little tragedy in five acts which represented the legend of Nautilus; Philo of Byzantium, a contemporary engineer, had invented its mechanism, and Heron hastily claimed to have much perfected and simplified it.

The adventures of Nautilus, King of Euboea, and of his son Palamedes, were related in the poems known as the Epic Cycle, of which only a few fragments remain; but we know from later writers that Agias of Troezen, in the "Nostoi," and Stasimus of Cyprus, in the "Cypris," have sung the treacherous murder of the son, and the vengeance of the father upon the Greeks returning from the siege of Troy. In these poems Palamedes seems to have been represented as another Prometheus, a master of all the sciences and a benefactor to the human race by his useful inventions. Alone among the Greek chiefs he had led no soldiers to Troy, but his universal knowledge enabled him to render important services to the army of the Greeks, and in the legends which have come down to us, he is opposed to Ulysses as the type of a nobler kind of intellect, strongly contrasted with the selfish cunning of his enemy, to whose treachery he fell a victim. Palamedes was said to have discovered that the madness, under pretence of which the King of Ithaca sought to escape from the obligation of following the Atrides to Troy, was merely feigned, and during the siege he provoked still more his animosity by deriding his want of courage. A false accusation of treason to the Greeks was brought against him by Ulysses, and the adroitly concocted proofs which supported it made it appear that he corresponded with Priam, and was on the point of betraying the Greek army to the Trojans. Achilles and Ajax of Locris, the friends of Palamedes, were absent at the time, and he was stoned to death by the Greeks, uttering no lamentations over his fate, but merely saying, "I pity thee, O Truth! for thou hast perished before me."

When, after the fall of Troy, the confederated chiefs were returning to their homes, the Greek fleet was assailed off the island of Euboea, near Cape Caphareum, by a violent tempest raised by the anger of the gods who were irritated by the pillage and destruction of their temples, and Athené hurled a thunderbolt on Ajax, son of Oileus, to avenge the desecration of her shrine, whence he had dragged the priestess Cassandra. Nautilus seized the opportunity to destroy the murderers of his son. He displayed a torch at the most dangerous part of the rocky coast; the Greeks steered their vessels towards it; and most of them were wrecked and many warriors perished.

Such was the tale which Philo of Byzantium had chosen to represent by means of automats, and Heron did not consider it beneath the dignity of a man of science to take up the work after him, and seek to execute the movements of the puppets by more simple and efficacious methods.

The little theatre—which he calls ἀνεμός, a tablet or picture—stood upon a short column; it was ornamented with a pediment like a temple, and was closed by folding-doors instead of a curtain. These swung open of themselves, and displayed a view of the seashore, with groups of workmen busily engaged in constructing ships. Some were sawing, others hammering; others handled the aneg or the hatchet, and Heron assures us that their tools made a noise like those of real workmen. After a few minutes the doors closed, and when they opened again the scene showed another part of the coast, with the Greeks dragging their vessels into the sea. At the beginning of the third act there appeared merely the sky and the sea, over which the Greek fleet presently came sailing in battle array, while dolphins bounded alongside, springing out of the waves. Then the sea became rough and stormy, and the Greek ships, formed in line, ran swiftly before the wind. The fourth act
showed the coast of Eetoea, and Nauplius
was seen brandishing his torch, while Athene
advanced and stood beside him to show
that he acted as minister of her vengeance.
The doors opened for the fifth and last time
on a view of the wreck of the Greek ships
on the rocks of Cape Sapharum, and Ajax
was seen struggling through the waves
towards a temple which crowned the
promontory. Athene appeared again, a
peal of thunder was heard, a flash of
lightning struck Ajax, who disappeared,
and the tragedy came an end.
The theatre in which these puppets
were shown must have presented a certain
resemblance to the well-known pictures
with cardboard figures moved by clock-
work, and driven from them by the
changes of scene and the doors opening
and closing automatically, which divided
the performance into acts. The mechanism
was exceedingly simple and ingenious.
The moving force was a heavy weight sliding
in a hopper filled with sand. The Greek
shipwrights who appeared in the first act
were painted on the scene at the back of
the theatre, their arms bearing the tools
being alone moveable; the pivots on which
they were fixed passed through the picture
and carried on the other side a lever
which rose and fell by the action of a
toothed wheel and a counterweight.
The scenes representing the sea, the coast, and
the shipwreck, were painted on thin linen,
and kept rolled up out of sight in the
upper part of the theatre, where they were
held by a peg; and when this was withdrawn
by the action of the weight they fell into
their place. The views of the ships sailing
past in good order as a fleet, and then
driven by the gale, were painted on a long
band of paper, which was drawn across the
stage between two rollers hidden on each
side of the proscenium. The dolphins
were mounted on a drum fixed beneath
the stage, and, as it turned, they rose and
fell through a slit in the flooring. The
device of a lamp hidden in a metal box,
which was employed to light the altars in
the apotheosis of Bacchus, was again adopted
to produce the flame which lit up the
stage, and was supposed to proceed from
the torch held by Nauplius. A thin slip
of wood painted and gilt represented the
thunderbolt which struck Ajax; it was
weighted with lead and slid along two
tightly stretched cords, painted black so
as to be invisible. At the same instant,
another scene painted like the sea was let
down suddenly, and hid Ajax from sight,
whilst the thunder was imitated by the
falling of leaden balls upon a drum. The
folding-doors which served as a curtain
and hid the changes of scene, were opened
and shut by a very ingenious contrivance.
The pivots upon which they turned
descended into a chamber placed beneath
the stage. There they were connected by
CORDS wound round them with a horizontal
shaft, which, by making at given intervals
a half-turn backwards or forwards, pulled
the doors to and fro. To produce this
oscillating movement the shaft carried on
opposite sides two rows of pegs, to which
a cord connected with the weight was
attached by loops, in a zig-zag pattern, and
as the weight descended, it pulled altern-
ately one side or the other, after a lapse
of time regulated by the length of cord
allowed to hang loose between the pegs.

Though Heron does not state the fact, it
is probable that, during the performance,
the action of the puppets was accompanied
and interpreted by the recital of the poem
on which the little drama was founded.
For pantomimic scenes were usually danced
not only to the sound of the flute, but to
that of a chorus which sang the legend
acted by the mimi. It is also probable
that many other episodes, either from
Homer or from the Cyclic poets who sang
the adventures of the Greek heroes sub-
sequently to the siege of Troy, were
exhibited to the people in a similar fashion,
for Heron concludes his treatise by re-
marking that all theatres of automata are
constructed and worked on the same
system, though they differ from each other
according to the subject of the play
represented.

"WHAT WILL MRS. GRUNDY SAY?"

This, probably, is the most widely-
spread of all popular quotations. For
almost a century it has been current in
English society and literature. And not
only that, "Mrs. Grundy" has gradually
become a personification of all that is most
respectable and law-abiding in our social
order. She has been elevated into a sort of
fetish—a goddess whose behests must
be attended to under penalty of ostracism
—a species of modern "She-who-must-be-
obeyed."

"Mrs. Grundy," in fact, is the embodi-
ment of the national instinct for propriety
—an instinct which cannot readily or safely
be ignored or violated.
How comes it that this name, of all names, has been bestowed upon the great arbiter of morals and manners? Why "Mrs. Grundy," any more than "Mrs. Brown" or "Mrs. Robinson"?

The story is a curious one; and, in order to tell it, we must go back in thought to the year 1800, when a play by Thomas Morton, called "Speed the Plough," was produced successfully at Covent Garden. The work was of no great literary or dramatic merit. The main features of the plot are absurdly melo-dramatic, and some of the language is exceedingly high-flown. The piece, however, is happy in some of its comic characters. Very little interest attaches to the woes and loves of Henry Blandford, who is hated and persecuted by his uncle, Sir Philip, because his father did that uncle wrong; but, on the other hand, Sir Abel Handy, the foolish "inventor," and his conceited son, Bob, are diverting people; and Farmer Ashfield and his wife, who befriended the unlucky Henry, are not only entertaining, but very true to nature.

It is to Dame Ashfield that we owe the famous and familiar query—"What will Mrs. Grundy say?" Mrs. Grundy, in the play, is the wife of Farmer Grundy, and a neighbour of the Ashfields. She has no part in the action of the piece, but figures constantly in the conversation of Dame Ashfield. The truth is, the latter lady is jealous of Dame Grundy. The two are rivals, apparently—socially and in business. The very first thing we hear of Mrs. Grundy is that, in Dame Ashfield's opinion, her butter is "quite the cracker of the market." When the curtain rises, Dame Ashfield comes in from the town, and tells her husband that "Farmer Grundy's wheats brought five shillings a quarter more than ours did." Then follows the reference to the other Dame's butter; and it becomes clear that Mrs. Grundy is a favourite subject of talk with Mrs. Ashfield.

"Be quiet, wool ye?" cries old Ashfield; "alway ding ding Dame Grundy into my ears. 'What will Mrs. Grundy say?'

'What will Mrs. Grundy think?' Carn't thee be quiet, let her alone, and behave thyself pratty!"

"Certainly, I can," says the Dame. "I'll tell thee, Tummas, what she said at church last Sunday."

"Canst thee tell what parson said? No! Then I'll tell thee. A' said that envy were as foul a weed as grows, and cankers all wholesome plants that come near it—that's what 's said."

"And do you think I envy Mrs. Grundy, indeed?" says the Dame.

"Why don't let her alone, then? I do verily think, when thee goes to t'other world, the worst questions thee'lt ask be if Mrs. Grundy's there. Zoa be quiet, and behave pratty, dooe."

But the Dame cannot be quiet. No sooner is this rebuke out of her husband's mouth than she begins to tell him how she has met a procession of coaches and servants belonging to Sir Abel Handy, and how a "handsome young man, dressed all in lace, pulled off his hat to me, and said: 'Mrs. Ashfield, do me the honour of presenting that letter to your husband.' So there he stood without his hat. Oh, Tummas, had you seen how Mrs. Grundy looked!"

"Dow Mrs. Grundy!" cries the irate farmer; "be quiet, and let I read, wool ye?"

The letter is from his daughter Susan, and mentions that Sir Abel Handy has just been married to Nelly, a former servant of the Ashfields. At once Dame Ashfield recourses to her dominant idea.

"Our Nelly married to a great Baronet! I wonder, Tummas, what Mrs. Grundy will say!"

So, again, when Evergreen, the gardener, enters, and says, "Have you heard the news?" "Anything about Mrs. Grundy?" asks the irresistible lady. No; the news is about Sir Philip Blandford, Henry's uncle; and that leads to a reference to Henry himself—Henry, who, at this point, knows nothing of his parentage—"Poor Henry," as Evergreen calls him.

Then Evergreen is invited into the farm-house, Dame Ashfield offering him a mug of harvest beer, and promising to tell him "such a story of Mrs. Grundy!"

After that the allusions to Dame Grundy are not quite so numerous, though numerous enough. Again and again we are allowed to see that she is never wholly out of her neighbour's thoughts. What Mrs. Grundy may think of Mrs. Ashfield we are not permitted to know, but to Mrs. Ashfield Mrs. Grundy is evidently an object of unceasing concern.

When Bob Handy comes across Dame Ashfield as she is making lace, and asks her whether that occupation is "a common employment here," she replies:

"Oh, no, sir; nobody can make it in these parts but myself. Mrs. Grundy,
Indeed, pretends; but, poor woman, she
knows no more of it than you do."

Later on, the Ashfields become aware
that Susan is in correspondence with Bob
Handy, and are uneasy at the thought of
her being the object of that young buck’s
attention.

"I don’t like it a bit," says the farmer.
"Nor I," adds his wife. "If shame should
come to the poor child—I say, Tummus,
what would Mrs. Grundy say then?"

"Doom Mrs. Grundy! What would my
poor wold heart say?"

However, Dame Ashfield is a good soul,
after all. When she and her husband
espouse the cause of Henry against his
uncle, their landlord, the latter threatens
to distrain for rent, and, for the time,
they have before them the prospect of
poverty. Rather, however, than throw
Henry over, they are prepared to make
the necessary sacrifices, and the Dame is
willing even to sell her three silk gowns.

"I’ll go to church to a stuff one," she
says, "and let Mrs. Grundy turn up her
nose as much as she pleases."

And, in so saying, she furnishes Henry
with the most decisive proof of her favour
and friendship.

The good lady has her reward. The
play closes with the certainty of her
being able to triumph over Mrs. Grundy
in the most crushing and convincing
fashion. Bob Handy’s intentions, it seems,
are honourable. He relinquishes the
opportunity of marrying the heiress, Miss
Blandford—who falls to the lot of her
cousin Henry—and determines to wed
Susan Ashfield, whom he truly loves.

"Drabbit," says old Ashfield, "I shall
walk in the road all day to see Sue ride
by in her own coach."

"You must ride with me, father," says
Susan.

"I say, Tummus," observes the Dame,
"what will Mrs. Grundy say then?"

In a subsequent scene, where Susan goes
out with Sir Abel and his son, the old
farmer cries:

"Bless her, how nicely she do trip it
away with the gentry."

"And then, Tummus," says the Dame,
"think of the wedding."

Ashfield (reflecting): "I declare I shall
be just the same ever. Maybe I may
buy a smartish bride, or a silver back-
stopper, or the like o’ that."

The Dame (apart): "And then, when
we come out of church, Mrs. Grundy will
be standing about there."

Ashfield (apart): "I shall shake hands
agreeably wi’ all my friends."

The Dame (apart): "Then I just look
at her in this manner."

Ashfield (apart): "How dost do, Peter?
Ah, Diak! glad to see thee, wi’ all my
soul!" (Bows to the centre of the stage.)

The Dame (apart): "Then, with a kind
of half curtsy, I shall——"

At this point the two come into collision,
and the farmer cries:

"What an wold fool thee be’est, Dame!
Come along, and behave pratty, doo’e."

Obviously the play must have made a
distinct impression both at its first per-
formance and subsequently. Not other-
wise can we account for the extraordinary
vogue of the sentence which heads this
article. That sentence, practically, is all
that remains of the play. Though the
piece ran for forty nights on its original
production, and though it was afterwards
revived with Mathews and Elliston,
Munden and Dowton, successively in
principal parts, it has gradually faded out
of the theatrical repertory, and is now no
more seen. Yet a single passage in it has
penetrated wherever the English language
is spoken, and a fragment of the author’s
brain has been accepted at last as typifying
the Spirit of British decorum.

Something of this may be owing to the
excellence of the original interpretation of
Dame Ashfield. This was supplied by
Mrs. Davenport, an actress of high rank
in her day. Her impersonation may have
struck our great-grandfathers and grandmothers
as so delightful that they could not but
repeat to themselves and to one another,
in their houses and elsewhere, the query,
"What will Mrs. Grundy say?" which
she had made so humorously effective, and
which consequently has been handed
down to the third generation. Or it
may simply be that the audiences of
1800 were profoundly impressed by the
Dame’s truth to life—by the admirable
naïveté of her allusions and references
to her rival. Anxiety about the thoughts
and opinions of one’s neighbours was
never, perhaps, more happily portrayed
than in the person of this quaint outcome
of Thomas Morton’s fancy.

**Miss Girth.**

A Story in Five Chapters.

Chapter V.

"And you must bring your delightful
Italian bandit with you! I positively in-
It was Lady Ellis who spoke, as she said good-bye to Jocelyn in the faint dark dawn of the winter’s morning. Jocelyn had just refused her invitation to spend New Year’s Eve at Graystone Manor, alleging a previous engagement to ghosts as her reason.

“It is really very good of you, Lady Ellis,” she said, “but I do so like to have my blood curdled once a year, and—”

“I won’t hear another word! We will dance the new year in instead of telling horrid stories of stupid people dressed in white. Your burglar—Lady Carstairs insists he is a burglar—waltzes divinely, and I shall not forgive you if you do not bring him!”

Jocelyn was standing in the great hall, saying good-bye to various guests during this speech, and she only gave a little smile that might mean anything. She had told Godfrey Wharton that she meant to be merry that night, and she had kept her word. Flushed and brilliant and beautiful, she had danced till the wintry dawn gleamed faintly in the leaden sky—danced with a gaiety and recklessness that terrified Godfrey, even while it enchanted him. Never to the end of his life did he forget that night. The slender white figure, light as a feather, whirling round the room with feet that seemed winged and that never felt fatigue. When she was dancing with him he tried to get her to stop, to rest, but she only said, without looking at him:

“Don’t speak to me—don’t look at me! I must not stop. Don’t you see that I must keep going on?”

Dalgarno was almost the only man who did not dance with Jocelyn Garth that night. He never went near her; only watched her from afar with a little evil smile playing round his handsome lips. He had his victim so completely in his toils that he could afford to loosen the cords that bound her a little now and then.

“So it is all settled,” was Lady Ellis’s last remark to Jocelyn as she kissed her in the great hall; “we will dance the new year in, and I will lend you all the carts and horses I possess to take you back to Boraston Hall again. We will send the servants to bed and have a regular lark. I have quite fallen in love with Mr. Dalgarno.”

Jocelyn sank into a chair by the blazing fire when she had said good-bye to the last guest, and stretched out her hands to the ruddy flames. The house-party, in various stages of excitement or limpsness, stood about yawning.

“Five o’clock,” said Lady Carstairs, who had been longing to hide her bismuth complexion in bed for the last four hours. “My dear Jocelyn, we really must try and get a little sleep; and we are to go to that dear, energetic, Lady Ellis to-morrow, too! Good gracious, how worn out I shall be! Come, girls, get off to bed, if you want to have any complexions left at all.”

She went up the stairs at the head of a procession of more or less battered damsels, whose elaborate dresses had been ruthlessly torn by clumsy masculine feet.

Jocelyn remained for a moment absently looking into the fire. She was thinking that to-day was the last day of the old year. What would the new one bring her?

“Are you cold?” asked Dalgarno suddenly, coming up to her, and speaking for the first time that evening.

“No,” she answered, without looking at him.

“I thought you were, as you got so close to the fire. But you have colour enough for anything. You danced them all down, Miss Garth. I never saw such spirit.”

He spoke in a low voice, looking at her steadily all the time. The colour suddenly left her cheeks and she became very white.

“Do let me advise you to get some rest while you can, Miss Garth,” said Godfrey Wharton, coming forward with a glass of wine in his hand. “You look quite worn out.”

She drank the wine obediently, and held out her hand in silence to say good-night. Dalgarno held out his too, but she did not even look towards him, and went up the stairs with the heavy, dragging step of one who is suddenly fatigued to the verge of exhaustion.

The two men watched the slim white figure till it disappeared.
It was no easy matter to drive over twenty guests to Graystone Manor, which was nearly six miles off.

"The brougham and the family coach will hold at least a dozen," said Lady Carstairs, when she at last made her appearance, languid, and yawning, and exceedingly cross. "Then the dog-cart can take four, and I don't see why the Dalgamo man can't walk."

"It is raining, aunt," said Jocelyn, with a glance out at the streaming skies and muddy road.

"Oh, is it? Well, I suppose you will have to hire a fly, then. Don't put the Dalgamo man anywhere near me, Jocelyn. I prefer a dog-cart and a flood to being within a mile of him."

"I think you will find I have arranged everything comfortably," said Jocelyn, with a faint trace of weariness in her tone. "You and the girls and Miss Carrington will have the brougham, and some of the men can go in the family coach. A couple of cabs will bring the other people, no doubt."

"It is a breakneck road from here to the Manor," said Lady Carstairs discontentedly, "and if it is a dark night James will drive us into the Black Pond, I have no doubt. I hope he won't be tipsy."

"I will answer for James's sobriety."

"I wish we were all going to stay at home. It would be much more sensible in my opinion. It is all very well for you young people, I have no doubt; but there is nothing for me to do but eat, and midnight suppers ruin one's digestion and temper."

But when the party set off in their brougham, and their family coach, and their cabs, the fun began again, and Lady Carstairs recovered her good humour. The night was wet and intensely dark, but the brougham was comfortable enough, and the air's 'lass' drive gave her time to get a little nap.

Lady Ellis greeted them with effusion. "You dear good child," she said to Jocelyn, "you are so late that I was half afraid your ghoshts had run off with you in revenge for your not having kept your promise to them. We are going to do all sorts of wild things to-night, Lady Carstairs," turning to the Dowager with a pretty little smile. "Lord Ellis declares he wants hide-and-seek and blindman's buff."

Lady Carstairs smiled indulgently.

"So long as you leave me in peace and
plenty,” she responded, “you may do what
you like.”

“And we are to have a wishing circle at
twelve o’clock,” went on Lady Ellis, “and
everything we wish for will come true. I
am going to pray for a diamond tiara that
I saw in Bond Street the other day, and
that Ralph wouldn’t buy me.”

Lord Ellis, a burly, red-faced, good-
humoured man, listened with a smile to
his wife’s prattle. He struck one as a little
heavy for blindman’s buff, and too big for
hide-and-seek. But in the meantime the
music had struck up, and already several
couples were whirling round the room.

Lord Ellis offered Jocelyn his arm, and
escorted her to a seat.

“I must find you a partner,” he said.

“My wife has warned me that I am not to
dance myself. This room is over the
dining-hall, and she says I should go
through on to the supper-table.”

Dalgarne suddenly appeared at his
elbow, and Lord Ellis moved away.

“May I have the pleasure of this
dance, Miss Garth?” he asked formally,
standing before her.

She looked up at him with denial in
her eyes.

“I am not dancing to-night,” she an-
swered coldly.

“Why not?”

“I am tired.”

He paused for a moment. Then he
seated himself by her.

“If you do not mean to dance this
evening, neither do I. We will talk to
each other instead.”

She rose, with a sudden intense gesture
of repulsion.

“Anything but that,” she murmured
bitterly, laying her hand on the arm he
offered her.

“You would dance yourself to death
rather than be obliged to talk to me for a
couple of hours, I know,” he answered
with a sneer. “Unfortunately I am not
Mr. Godfrey Wharton, you see.”

He slipped his arm round her slender
waist before she had time to reply, and
whirled her in among the dancers. It was
the first time she had ever Waltzed with him.

She felt faint, and weak, and dizzy.
Nights of sleeplessness had brought her
nerves to a state of tension that the least
sound intensified. The music was too loud;
the dresses too gay; the scent of the
flowers too oppressive. She felt now and
then as though she were in the clutches
of some terrible nightmare, and she closed
her eyes. But when she opened them it
was to find that she was still in Dalgarne’s
arms; still whirling giddily round the room.

“Are you tired?” he asked her every
now and then.

“No,” she answered each time, and they
danced on in silence. Dalgarne’s strong
arm clasped her with a firm, easy touch.
Lady Ellis was right when she had said
that he knew how to waltz.

The music stopped at last, and Jocelyn,
almost stupefied, dropped into a seat.
Dalgarne stood by, fanning her with an
air of proprietorship.

“You had better come into the con-
servatory,” he remarked after a pause.

“It is cooler there.”

She rose obediently. She seemed to
have no will of her own left now; only a
dull compliance with the wishes of the
inevitable in the shape of Dalgarne. He
laughed a little as they sat down together.

“Well, it wasn’t so bad after all, was
it?” he said. “Our steps suit fairly well,
I think.”

She did not reply and he went on:

“I can see it has been a little too much
for you. I am not going to ask you again
to-night. You shall have a last fling if you
like, Jocelyn.”

He laughed a little again as he said this,
and then went on:

“That young Wharton is as great a
fool about you as a man can be! But I’m
not jealous. You are one of those women
whom one can trust, Jocelyn, and I’m not
going to spoil sport as long as you keep
within bounds.”

He rose and strolled away as he spoke,
leaving her sitting there white and ex-
hausted. She had not spoken to him
during the dance. She did not speak
now.

At midnight the wishing circle was
formed, and a large ring of laughing
people clasped hands round the big bunch
of mistletoe that dangled from the ball-
room ceiling. Jocelyn took her place as
in a dream. She was conscious as she
crossed her hands that Godfrey Wharton
had possession of her left one. It was
only when a hush and silence had fallen on
all, when the first silvery strokes of the
clocks were chiming on the midnight air,
that she found that Dalgarne was at her
other side.

The irony of fate! That while her
lover, her friend, held one hand in his
warm, kind clasp, the other should be pos-
sessed by the husband whom she hated!
“The New Year has come!” muttered Dalgarno, stooping low to whisper the words in her ear. “The New Year that we are to spend together, Jocelyn—you and I, and Averine!”

Godfrey Wharton dropped Miss Garth’s hand, and walked away pale to the lips. He also had heard those words.

And now the party became rather riotous. Dancing was abandoned, and childish games were played by grown-up people with all the zest of gayest infancy. Dalgarno was at his merriest. There was a suspicion of too much champagne about him, but he had only drunk enough to make him insolent. Lady Ellis drew in her horns a little. She confided to Jocelyn that the fascinatining bandit had rather too Italian manners.

Jocelyn, who was sitting apart, looking white and tired, made no reply, but Lady Carstairs answered for her.

“Italian manners! I believe he came out of a circus or some place of that kind. I expect to see him jump over the tables and chairs in a minute. He is perfectly incomprehensible, and so is Jocelyn. How she ever allowed——”

“Please don’t begin again, Aunt Grace. The house-party will be over to-morrow, and then you can say what you like.”

Lady Carstairs shrugged her shoulders, but said no more, and soon after the New Year party broke up. Lady Ellis insisted upon Jocelyn driving home in her own pet carriage, which only held two.

“I know that you were crucified to death coming,” she said; “and you are as tired as can be. Lady Carstairs——”

But Lady Carstairs was already in the brougham, and the other vehicles had lumbered off into the darkness. Jocelyn and Godfrey Wharton and Dalgarno were left together.

They looked at each other.

“How’s this very awkward,” said Lady Ellis. “I think, Mr. Dalgarno, you had better try and find a place in the brougham.”

Dalgarno laughed, and showed his white teeth.

“And leave Miss Garth and Mr. Wharton to a pleasant tête-à-tête. No thank you!” Godfrey made a step forward. His eyes flashed. Jocelyn laid a hand on his arm.

“Give way!” she murmured, “or there will be worse to come!”

“I have obeyed you long enough,” he answered in a low voice. “I will not leave you alone with that drunken brute.”

“If you two are going to quarrel over poor Miss Garth,” said Lady Ellis, coming to the rescue with great tact, “I shall insist on her driving off alone and making you both walk home.”

“I am going to drive. Wharton can do as he likes,” said Dalgarno determinedly. He tried to force his way in by Jocelyn’s side.

Lord Ellis came forward and shut the carriage door quietly.

“Drive on!” he said to the man; and the little carriage disappeared into the darkness, bearing with it only Jocelyn Garth.

Lord Ellis turned to Dalgarno.

“It is no longer raining,” he observed, “and the night is quite warm. I dare say you and Mr. Wharton can find your way home together. I am sorry I cannot offer you——”

Dalgarno broke into an oath.

“How dare you come between me and my wife?” he cried with drunken fury. “Yes—my wife I say! All the world will know of it to-morrow! All the world will know that you are either mad or drunk,” said Lord Ellis, looking at him.

Dalgarno’s handsome features were inflamed with passion.

“Ah! you think so, do you? Well, I can wait! But as for walking home with that fellow,” pointing to Godfrey Wharton, “I’ll——”

“I have no desire to force my society on you,” said Godfrey coldly. “The road to Boraston Hall is straight enough——”

“Straight enough for me to find it without your help,” retorted Dalgarno.

“I never missed my way in my life, and I am not likely to miss it now. When we meet again you will lower your colours, my fine fellow!”

He stumbled off into the darkness.

Godfrey, Wharton and Lord Ellis looked at one another.

“Is he drunk or mad?” demanded the latter.

“Both, for aught I know.”

“Is it safe to let him go home alone?”

“I don’t see how he can miss his way very well. Besides, I shall keep him in sight,” said Godfrey Wharton, buttoning his overcoat. “Good night.”

“Good night. Keep him in sight at a distance. Such men become dangerous at close quarters.”

They parted, and Godfrey Wharton hurried on after Dalgarno. He knew
The New Year has come. " mattered Dalgamo ... men become dangerous at close quarters." They parted, and Godfrey Wharton hurried on after Dalgamo. He knew

Dalgarno stumbled heavily on, flushed with wine and anger. To think that they had dared to separate him from his lawful wife! To think that they had imagined that he would for one moment have allowed that wife and Godfrey Wharton to drive home together! He flushed more angrily still as he thought of it.

Presently he heard footsteps behind him. Prison life had sharpened his faculties, and he had the acute sense of hearing that the Red Indian possessed. He knew that it was Godfrey Wharton who was following him, and he had no intention of walking home with Godfrey Wharton.

He stood aside until the footsteps had come closer, passed on, and died away in the darkness and the silence of the night.

Then he walked on himself. He thought of Jocelyn—of the riotous, delightful, uproarious life he meant to live in Boraston Hall; of the money he meant to spend; of the horses he meant to ride.

The fumes of the wine he had drunk mounted still more to his head. The still, warm breath of the night had no power to dissipate them. He became bewildered presently and stood still to recollect himself.

"To the left," he said, half-aloud, "yes, I remember turning to the left."

He turned to the left, down a dark, narrow road.

He had not been walking long when his feet touched a more slippery surface. He paused again. Where was he?

On and on he went, until suddenly the slippery surface gave way — crumbled beneath his very feet. Something cold, and dark, and wet crept up about them. He stood still with the sweat of agony chill upon his forehead.

It was the Black Pond!

He tried to retrace his steps, but the treacherous ice, only partially thawed, gave way at every turn.

The cold, dark, still water crept farther up — up to his knees now. His eyes, straining in the pall-like darkness, almost burst from their sockets. Oh, Heaven, for help!

A strangulated cry, hardly human in its shrill anguish, rang upon the silent air. At the same time Dalgamo heard, borne to him on the soft wind, the silvery chimes that welcomed the New Year!

With a stifled cry, with hands cut and bleeding, through catching at the sharp, ragged edges of the ice, he sank lower — lower still! A numbed feeling came over him. In a few minutes he had ceased even to struggle, and the dark waters of the Black Pond closed silently over Jocelyn Garth's husband.

He was brought home, after much search —a ghastly, dripping figure with distorted features, and cut and bleeding hands—and buried in the churchyard where the Garths had been at rest for generations. The funeral took place from Boraston Hall itself.

Dead, Jocelyn Garth acknowledged his rights, as she would never have done of her own free will had he lived. All the world now knew that Adolph Dalgarno had been her husband.

"I knew he was something very disagreeable the moment I set eyes on him," said Lady Carstairs by way of sympathising with her niece, "but I never thought, Jocelyn, that he was ever anything as bad as that."

But Jocelyn's heart was more tender to him dead than it could ever have been alive. Her mind wandered back to the days when he had first called her wife. She had loved him then—and he had been the father of her child.

Aveline has a dim recollection of a tall, dark, handsome man who came to her one day in her nursery, and promised her all sorts of fairy things if she would come and live with him. But sometimes now she thinks it must have been all a dream, as she looks up into Godfrey Wharton's clear blue eyes, and calls him by the name of "father."
HOME NOTES
AND
ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HOW TO BUY BEEF.—Every mother or experienced housekeeper should take her young folks with her to market and teach them what and how to buy. Beef is beef, as we all know, but there is a great difference in the quality of various parts of beef, and even in the same parts, which depends on the age and fairness of the animal. When you can make a choice of beef, which I find I can generally do in a market, take that which has a loose grain, with bright red lean and yellowish fat, which is pretty sure to be ox beef. Good cow beef is a little firmer, with a whiteish fat, and meat not quite so red. The flesh of poorly fed or old cattle may be known by its dark red colour and hard skinny fat, with more or less horse gristle running through it. If you press the lean meat with your fingers, and the dent rises up quickly, you may know the meat is from an animal in prime condition; if it rises slowly, or not at all, do not buy, but leave the joint for those who do not know good from inferior meat.

HOW TO MAKE COMMON SOAP.—This is a recipe which I am often asked, and I think by publishing it I may benefit many of my readers. For making fifty pounds of fat into soap about seven pounds of caustic soda are necessary. Only spring or river water should be used. Some use a lay of the same strength, others commence with a weak ley. First put your fat into the pan, and then add about half your caustic soda to as much water as will cover the fat. As the boiling continues add your ley by degrees. When the whole is transformed into a clear liquid in which neither ley nor fat can be discovered, and the paste no longer drops from your stirring-rod, but slides down in long threads, the process is completed. Pour it into frames, and in a day or two it may be cut up.

INSECTS do not breathe through the nose and mouth. Down the body run two main pipes. These pipes extend out branches to right and left like a network, extending to the extremities of the body, even to the ends of the antenna and to the claws. Each main tube receives the external air through nine or ten spiracles or breathing holes, placed at intervals along the sides of the body. The spiracles are made watertight and dust-tight by a strong fringe of hair which completely guards the entrance.

DO NOT LET CHILDREN DRINK TEA OR COFFEE.—Mothers are constantly writing to ask me whether they should give their children tea or coffee. My invariable answer is "No," for they excite the nervous system unduly, and, to some extent, injure the digestive process. This fact is becoming more and more admitted by men who study the subject from a scientific standpoint. I know how the habit of tea-drinking begins, mothers drink it themselves and then children wish for it too. At first they are given weak tea, mostly sugar and milk, but this is only a stepping-stone to that which is strong, and thus the habit is acquired. I wish all my readers to realise that milk, water, and many juices of fruits are naturally more pleasing to the juvenile palates, and "not" injurious to their nervous systems. Tea and coffee are both, in mere essence, poisonous. They are, therefore, frequent causes, in adults, of irregular action of the heart, headaches, sleeplessness, and other disorders. Can they possibly do less to the very delicate systems of the young?

EXCELLENT CHILDREN'S MEAT PUDDING.

— Make a paste of half a pound of flour, and four ounces of shredded suet, a pinch of salt, and a hill of cold water. Roll out the paste rather larger one way than the other, and half an inch thick; spread on the crust half a pound of raw beef minced fine, pepper and salt, and, if approved, an onion boiled for a minute or two, finely minced. Roll the pudding up neatly and tightly in the form of a bolster, taking care the meat is well kept in. Wet the edges of the crust and press well together. Tie the pudding in a floured cloth and put it in a saucepan with sufficient boiling water to cover it. Boil gently for an hour and a half; serve with gravy in a sauce-boat. This pudding with a little stewed fruit to follow, makes a most nourishing and wholesome dinner for children.

CLEAN YOUR COPPER BOILER THUS:—

Get half a pound of potash and put it into a vessel, then pour one quart of boiling water over it. This done, allow it to soak for half an hour. Then get a good hard scrubbing brush and dip it into the potash; rub well round the sides of the boiler, let it soak for a few moments, then scrub again. Be careful not to dip the fingers in the chemical, because it may burn them. After the boiler is thoroughly scrubbed with potash, rinse with plenty of warm water.
THE QUEEN'S GLOVES.—The Queen has a large hand. She takes seven and a half in gloves. Her fingers are extremely short and out of proportion to the size of her hand. The Queen will wear nothing but black gloves; generally they are of kid, but sometimes she wears Nubée gloves. These also must be dyed black. Her Majesty commenced to wear one-button gloves at the beginning of her reign. Today, when every woman with any pretensions to style wears six buttons, the Queen has only got to four. She refuses altogether to conform to fashion. She only wears about two dozen pairs of gloves a year. Each pair costs eight shillings and sixpence. In fact, the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and the Empress of India is decidedly economical in her glove bill. There are a great many fashionable women who think nothing of a glove bill if it only comes to £100 a year. Many women will spend £30 on gloves during the six weeks of the season by wearing two or three pairs a day.

A CURIOUS anaesthetic used in China has recently been made known. It is obtained by placing a frog in a jar of flour and irritating it by prodding. Under these circumstances it exudes a liquid which forms a paste with the flour. This paste, when dissolved in water, has well-marked anaesthetic properties. After the finger has been immersed in the liquid for a few minutes it can be cut to the bone without any pain being felt.

LIGHT IN A SICK ROOM IS VERY NECESSARY.—There is nothing really so depressing to an invalid as a dark room; it is as if the attendants were anticipating the death of the patient; and if the reason of it be asked the answer is as inconsistent as the act. The reason usually offered is that the patient cannot bear the light, as though the light could not be cut off from the patient by a curtain or screen, and as though, to darken one part of the room, it were necessary to darken the whole of it. The real reason is an old superstitious practice, which once prevailed so intensely that the sick, suffering from most terrible diseases—small-pox, for instance—were shut up in darkness, and their beds surrounded with red curtains during their whole illness. A more injurious practice really could not be maintained than that of insisting on darkness in sick rooms. It is not only that dirt and disorder are the results of darkness, but a great remedy—sunlight—is lost, and that loss cannot be replaced.

HOW TO CARE FOR SPONGES.—Nothing in the bathroom should be so carefully looked after as the sponge. That but little consideration is given to it is daily shown in the forlorn and neglected appearance of this very necessary adjunct to cleanliness. Instead of being left to dry in the sponge basket, it is, as a rule, dropped down in some corner and allowed to soak, or given a one-sided chance on the sill outside the room. It is simply useless to expect to keep your sponges in a sweet and wholesome condition so long as they are treated in this manner. In the first place, they must not only be thoroughly washed, but, in order to prevent their becoming foul, each part of the sponge should be exposed to the air. Fastidious women see to it that this toilet article is each week cleansed by dropping it into water in which a large lump of soda has been dissolved, afterwards boiling it for sixty minutes, when it is rinsed in cold water and given a sun bath until entirely dry. Always rinse all soapy suds from your sponge and then throw it into your basket, which should be hung just outside the bathroom window. A sponge cared for in this fashion will never be slimy, sour, or musty.

ANCIENT COMIC PICTURES.—Although they had no comic weekly papers like our own, the people of ancient times enjoyed a joke, and have left us proof of that fact in the relics which have come down to us of some of their artistic productions. Evidently human nature has not changed much in the course of five thousand years. A drawing on a tile in the New York Museum represents a cat dressed as an Egyptian lady of fashion. She is seated languidly in a chair, supping wine out of a small bowl, and being fanned and offered dainties by an obsequious tom-cat with his tail between his legs. There is in the Museum of Turin a papyrus roll which displays a whole series of such comic scenes. In the first place a lion, a crocodile, and an ape are giving a vocal and instrumental concert. Next comes a donkey, dressed, armed, and sceptred like a Pharaoh; with majestic swagger he receives the gifts presented to him by a cat of high degree, to whom a bull acts as proud conductor. Another picture shows a Pharaoh in the shape of a rat, drawn in a carriage by prancing greyhounds. He is proceeding to storm a fort garrisoned by cats having no weapons but teeth, whereas the rats have battle-axes, shields, and bows and arrows.
HOME NOTES.

TO CLEAN VENETIAN BLINDS.—Follow my instructions and I am sure that you will clean your blinds, or even paint them, each year regularly at the spring cleaning. Let down your blinds, secure the pulling-up cord to its hook at the side, and unite the knots at the bottom of the blind. Slip out the thin laths one by one, but be careful to leave the two cords hanging very straight. In this way remove the whole blind except the thick lath at the very bottom (which is kept in its place by the webbing) and the top of the framework. The former can be removed by taking out the nails at the bottom of the laddering; but this is quite unnecessary, for it can easily be wiped and washed, as also the whole of the framework, without further trouble. The laddering and cords should be wiped with a damp cloth. Put the laths singly on a table and wash them with a soft brush and soap and water. Dry them thoroughly and restore to their places, one by one, re-thread the cord and knot firmly. If you should paint the laths, be careful that they are quite dry before being re-threaded.

STewed Hake Steaks.—Take two nice hake steaks of one inch thickness and trim off all superfluous skin, etc. Put a teaspoonful of water in a saucepan (large enough to hold the steaks), add three quarter ounces of butter, a little lemon rind, a few sprigs of parsley, and seasoning of pepper and salt. Let this boil for a few moments, put in the fish, stew very gently till done. When cooked on one side, turn the steaks. Take out the fish and keep it hot on a drainer. Strain the sauce and thicken it with butter and flour, add a few chopped capers and lemon juice. Arrange the steaks on a dish, pour the sauce over and garnish with fried parsley. At seaside places, where people get tired of hake cooked in the usual old-fashioned ways, this recipe will prove a great boon.

DOUGH NUTS.—The great secret of success in making dough nuts is to have the fat boiling before attempting to cook them. Therefore, always remember fat is not boiling till it gives off a bluish smoke. Here is a good recipe:—Mix into a light dough three cupfuls of flour, one tablespoonful of sugar, a saltspoonful of salt, one ounce of butter, one egg, a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, and two teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar. If the egg is not sufficient to moisten the whole, add a little milk. Form into neat balls, drop into boiling fat, fry a light brown, and sprinkle with sugar before serving.

A NEW CURE.—A young lady, who was the proud possessor of a pair of dainty feet, was tormented by a corn upon the little toe of the right foot. Chiroprodists had dug into it in vain. One day a friend advised anointing the offending corn with phosphorus, which the lady in a weak moment did, but forgot to tell her husband before retiring at night. It had just struck twelve when the husband awoke, and was startled to see something sparkle at the foot of the bed. He had never heard of a fiery in the neighbourhood, nor did he ever remember seeing such a terrible looking object as the toe presented. Reaching carefully out of his bed till he found one of his slippers, he raised it high in the air and brought it down with terrible force upon the mysterious light. A shriek and an avalanche of bed-clothes, and all was over. When at last he released himself from the bed-clothes he discovered his wife groaning in the corner. He had struck the phosphorated toe!

THE "Blue Peter" is a three-cornered flag with a white square in the centre. The word "Peter" is a corruption of the French word "Partir."—to go. The flag is hoisted as a signal to any one in the town to whom any member of the crew owes money, that the ship is about to sail, and thus give them an opportunity of collecting the amounts due; and also to tell any one on shore belonging to the ship to come on board. In the Navy in olden times it was a recognised custom that debts could be paid by the "fore-sheets," that is to say, if any member of the crew could evade his creditor until the fore-sheets was run up, he might content himself that no claim could be made against him for anything which he had purchased at the port from which the ship was about to sail.

JAPAN YOUR OLD TEA-TRAYS by this recipe:—First clean the tray thoroughly with soap and water and a little rottenstone, then dry it by wiping and exposing it to the fire or in the air. Now get some good copal varnish, mix with it some bronze powder, and apply with a brush to the denuded parts. After this set the tray in an oven at a heat of 212 or 300 degrees until the varnish is dry. Two coats should make it equal to new. I have given this recipe to private friends and it was pronounced excellent. If you had compiled with my oft-repeated request, and given me your address, you should have had your reply much more quickly.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

**Medicated Prunes.**—I am not at all astonished at your request for, as you term it, “an old-world recipe.” If people would only take these simple remedies instead of highly advertised medicines, I am sure it would be far better for them. Here it is, and I trust you will find it as excellent as the one you used before. Take a quarter of an ounce of senna and manna (as obtained from a druggist) and pour on it a pint of boiling water. Cover, and set it by the fire to infuse for an hour. If the vessel in which you prepare it has a spout, stop it up with a roll of soft paper so as to prevent the strength evaporating. When the senna and manna have been an hour by the fire, strain the liquid into a china-lined saucepan and stir in a wineglassful of really good treacle. Add half a pound or more of the best prunes, putting in sufficient to absorb all the liquid whilst stewing. Then cover the vessel tightly, and let the whole simmer for an hour or till all the stones of the prunes are loose. If stewed too long the fruit will taste weak and insipid. When done, place it in a dish to cool and pick out all the stones. These prunes are so good that they may be given to children for their supper.

**Domestic Weights and Measures.**—Sixty drops of liquid make a teaspoonful.

Two teaspoonfuls of liquid make one dessert-spoonful.

Two dessert-spoonfuls of liquid or four teaspoonfuls make one tablespoonful.

Four tablespoonfuls of liquid make one wineglassful, or two ounces.

Sixteen tablespoonfuls of liquid make half a pint.

Eight tablespoonfuls of liquid make one gill.

Two wineglassfuls also make a gill.

A heaped quart measure, or four large cupfuls of flour, makes one pound.

A full tablespoonful of flour makes half an ounce.

Ten eggs go to one pound.

One pint, or two large cupfuls, of granulated sugar make one pound.

Two and a half cupfuls of castor sugar make one pound.

One tablespoonful of butter makes one ounce.

One large cupful of butter makes half a pound.

A simple tonic that prepares and strengthens the stomach somewhat for its coming work and abuse is a glass of cold water taken upon rising in the morning. One has no idea of the value of this pure remedy of Nature’s own until tried. Its effects are as noticeable as those of powerful drugs. Sensitive stomachs, very delicate constitutions, should begin with hot water, gradually lowering the temperature till cold water is used. It is amazing how robust and able this will make one feel. The usual trouble is, it is tried a few mornings and then omitted and forgotten. To feel in good health and spirits is ample compensation for the perseverance.

**Fish in Jelly.**—One pound of salmon, tinned or freshly boiled (a pint of shrimps added to it is an improvement), two hard-boiled eggs, one quart of stock, one tablespoonful of tarragon vinegar, one ounce of gelatine, half a teaspoonful of salt, and a seasoning of red pepper. Place the stock in a basin, add the gelatine, and let them stand for half an hour; then add the vinegar, salt, and pepper. Pour all into a saucepan, and place it on a slow fire. When the gelatine has melted, whip it all briskly till it boils. Draw the saucepan to the side of the fire and let it simmer for twenty minutes. Rub all through a flannel bag or a straining cloth, and let it almost set. Wet a mould well, pour a layer of jelly into it, then a layer of salmon freed from all skin and bone, then place another layer of jelly, then a layer of hard-boiled egg cut in slices. Continue filling till all the ingredients are used up. Melt any jelly that remains and pour over all. When quite set turn out on a dish and garnish with salad. Chopped capers are a great addition if scattered on to the salmon.

**Every Household should contain a Rag Drawer, or a shelf in some store-closet set apart for this special purpose.** Old linen sheets, after having passed through the turning, darning, and patching stages, should be tightly rolled up and stowed away in the linen drawer, as old rag is often found to be invaluable in cases of sickness. Discarded flannel garments, marino vests, etc., are most useful for all kinds of domestic purposes. It is well to remove all buttons and bands from these before placing them in the drawer. Ancient socks make splendid iron-holders by cutting them into proper shape and covering with a piece of canvas or chiffon. Ripped open and roughly tucked together old socks (especially knitted ones) make excellent rubbers for polished floors. Old blankets, when too much worn for any other purpose, should be torn into squares, the edges roughly overcast, and used for scouring cloths.
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CHAPTER XII.
LUCK TURNS.

After this, Penzie's smiles came more readily. She went out a great deal, but it was only when she met Forster Bethune that she cared about her galas. The world called her proud, but asked her all the more to join in its amusements.

She received several offers, which she refused after referring them to her uncle, who invariably found that the lovers were not rich enough. Penelope did not trouble herself at all about them. Her uncle decided for her, and she was not inclined to remonstrate. In truth the admirers did not give her any uneasiness. Mrs. Todd, who guessed the truth, dared not question Miss Winskell; there being something about her which stopped even that loquacious lady. Society, however, said that the Princess was much more agreeable than she had been at first. She managed to be charming as well as beautiful, having at last learnt the secret of speaking much and meaning little. At first she was impatient of it all, now she was sorry as the days passed away, especially if she had not met Forster Bethune. She was also very friendly with Philip Gillbanks, and she was constantly meeting him. In fact he seemed to know by intuition where she would be found, and by some means or other he would be there. They talked chiefly about Forster and his doings, or rather Philip talked and she smiled and listened. Philip believed that she was interested in hearing about the work which occupied the friends, and he even told Forster that the Princess was at heart one of his disciples. This soon brought Forster to her side, and then Penzie's whole countenance changed, though no one noticed it. The very sound of his voice brought strange enchantment. She did not call her feeling by any name, and she did not argue about it. She did not even know that what she felt was the sweet folly called love, and Forster himself did not guess why he was glad when she took such a decided interest in his various hobbies. But he made his mother ask the Winskells to dinner, so that Adela should make friends with the beautiful Princess.

Penelope gave up a dance at Lord Farrant's in order to go to the Bethunes' dinner-party, much to Mrs. Todd's surprise, but Penzie instantly declared that her uncle liked dinner-parties, and this served as an excuse.

On that evening she took a long time over her toilet, though she was not usually very anxious about her appearance. She tried on two dresses before she could decide which suited her best. Never before in all her life had Penzie been consciously vain.

When she came downstairs ready dressed, Mrs. Todd exclaimed:

"I declare, Miss Winskell, you are the only person who could look well in that pale brown dress, but it really suits you; only would not your blue silk be more suitable for the occasion!"

"The Bethunes are very simple people," said Penelope; "they are not like the rest of society, who look at people's clothes before they look at their faces."

"I must say I like well-dressed women. It's all very well for people who are rich..."
to go about looking dowdy, but it doesn’t
do to be shabby when you have a limited
income.”

Mrs. Todd was going to dine with
some friends of hers, as Penelope did not
require her. The widow declared privately
to them, that she was delighted to be free
of the Princess.

“She is very beautiful, very calm, and
really gracious. She is clever, too, but she
has no heart,” said Mrs. Todd to an old
friend, who answered candidly:

“You were not troubled with too much
heart yourself, Louisa.”

“Oh, well! I never pretended that I
wished to be poor, but this strange girl
actually told me she was going to marry
for money.”

In the meanwhile Penelope was happily
awaiting her uncle, who returned rather
late to dress for the dinner-party.

When he entered she noticed a shade of
gravity on his usually beaming countenance.

“What is the matter, uncle dear! We
are alone, and for a few hours we shall be
happy.”

He held her at arms’ length and smiled.

“The matter is that I have kept you
waiting, and the Bethunes will be im-
patient.”

Penelope did not say more; indeed, after
the short drive was over; she forgot her
momentary anxiety — especially as she
suddenly found herself in the midst of the
Bethunes, with Forster himself talking to
her. His mother and his sisters welcomed
her with the pleasant courtesy which is rare
in society, but which was habitual to them.

“We wanted you to ourselves, so Forster
said we need not have a real party. There
are only his friend Mr. Gillbanks and one
or two more coming.” This was Adela’s
remark, whilst Mrs. Bethune added:

“Forster says you are very sympathetic
about his plans. It is very good of you,
I’m sure. Of course we like his poor dear
odd people. His cousins, the Rookwoods,
don’t approve of them; but you see they
don’t hear him talk about them as much
as we do.”

“There is Mr. Gillbanks, yes, and there
are the Dewbrys. You are to sit between
Forster and his friend so that they may
make sure of your conversation! Mother,
don’t forget that General Dewbury takes
you in. Now and then mother seizes the
arm of the wrong man, and we have to
part them by force.”

Penelope found everything delightful.
The Bethunes realised in their home life
of home happiness such as she had never before experienced, and for a time she had forgotten her life object. These people were not rich, but they were happy. Penelope looked at the picture as a London child might gaze at green fields or at vast forests for the first time in its life. When they were in the hall, and her uncle was talking to Philip Gillbanks, Forster stood close beside her, and suddenly he paused in a brilliant description of a thieves' lodging-house. Penelope looked up to see the reason of his pause, and, as their eyes met, both smiled.

"I stopped because the contrast between you standing here and the sight I have seen to-day in that den came over me so forcibly," he said.

"Does not the contrast between yourself and them strike you?" she asked with a sigh.

"No. I never have time to think of it. Besides, what is the difference? Merely one of accident of birth."

"But that is such a vast difference, it is everything."

"When you had learnt to care about these people as human beings you would forget it too."

"Oh, no. I don't think I should."

"I'm sure you would," he said simply.

"It is because you have never thought about it. In the next generation women will play an important part in public affairs; then we shall expect them to be real helpers."

"A woman can do so little," said the Princess humbly. She was softened, feeling that she, too, could be another woman if Forster Bethune wished her to change.

"I shall call to-morrow, if I may, and show you some plans Gillbanks has had prepared for us. We want to attach a dwelling house to our club-room, where ladies will come and spend some time. We don't want them to do much, but just to lead their quiet lives there, and to let the poor man see something beautiful. They do not realise that a woman's greatest power lies in being herself."

"They might be disappointed if they knew more of us; but do come."

For one moment he kept hold of her hand, and Penelope felt a thrill of happiness.

"Thank you," he said; "I shall come. You are very good."

Philip came up to her at this moment, and his face said more than his words when he heard that Forster had promised to show her the plans. He fancied she was already a firm disciple.

"May we call it the Palace?" he asked.

"It will remind me of my first visit to you."

"No," said Forster quickly. "Gin is the only idea that our people have in connection with a palace. The Princess must live there first to make them change their ideas."

Penelope and the Duke drove home in silence. She was so full of her own thoughts that she did not notice his unusual silence. When they reached home the Duke gently drew Penelope into the drawing-room.

"Come in here, child, I want to talk to you; we must soon be going home again."

Penelope started a little as she stood near the window and gazed at the cold moonlight. How glad she would have been to have heard this some time ago; now it seemed merely to give her pain.

"But, uncle, we cannot go before——"

She paused, unable as formerly to talk openly about the important topic.

"I have not quite calculated all our plans, Penelope; but beyond this week we must not stay."

Penelope knew what he meant.

"Oh, uncle, the expense you mean. I had almost forgotten."

"I have not been quite so fortunate as I was at first; but we have succeeded, child, we have met the world on its own ground, and no one has known we are beggars."

Penelope lifted her head proudly.

"No one has even guessed it. Only, how you managed to hide it has been a mystery to me."

"Has it?" The Duke touched the girl's fair cheek and smiled. "I meant it to be a mystery, but you shall know all to-morrow. You have a right to know that you have succeeded."

"Succeeded?" murmured Penelope, a cold chill creeping into her heart.

"Yes, child, you were bound to do that, only I was hoping for better things, and I waited."

"I have done as you told me; I refused those foolish offers."

"Yes, yes, they were mere windbags. Now you must finish your task. Are you still of the same mind?"

"Yes, quite of the same mind," said Penelope in a low voice, because she doubted her own words.
"You will act, Penzie, and say nothing. You have always done that."

Penzie slowly raised her eyes to the moon swept by clouds. Why was a chilly feeling creeping over her? Before she had been quite ready. She was still and she would be perfectly obedient.

"Of course I shall. Tell me."

"To-morrow, child, to-morrow. Good night, my Princess."

CHAPTER XIII. THE END OF THE QUEST.

Penelope was alone in her room. The end to which she had always looked forward with such a steady gaze was nearly reached, but she was still to walk blindfold; she had not to see it till the next day. At last she started, and her face was diffused with a hot blush.

Forster had said he would come! It was Forster that her uncle meant. He loved her, and she loved him. That was the solution of the riddle, and through her duty had come her happiness—a new, strange happiness which she had never known or understood before. All the mysteries of life seemed unfolded before her; all that was perfect and beautiful on earth had come to her. This was the secret of the poets—the meaning of so much that she had read, but which her proud nature had never before understood.

She knelt down by the arm-chair and spoke the word softly: "Forster, Forster." She could be humble for his sake; she would do as he bade her; she would go among his poor people, the people he loved, and she would learn their ways, and he would teach her how she could help them—she and Forster together. Then her mind flew back to the family circle she had just left, full of mutual trust and confidence. That was all new to her, strange and beautiful. Her love for her uncle was not at all like this. She had loved him because he had taught her and cared for her, but it was the love of a devoted pupil more than the love of a child. In the future she would have that family life to help her. Forster's people would be her people. They must teach her how to help him, who thought so little about himself. She would be proud to be his disciple and to follow him. The old home would be restored by one who would care for it because it was her home, and—

Before this Penelope Winakell had been merely the fair temple of an idea; she had not perfectly developed. This night, as she rested her head against her arm, she felt that she was changed, that her heart of stern resolve was taken from her, and that instead she received the heart of a woman, strong and steadfast in love. She laughed softly at her former self. The ideal had been grand. She did not wish it altered; but this state of existence was far grander.

She loved. She loved Forster, and he was worthy of being loved.

She did not understand him yet; he differed from her as much as day from night; but she recognised something in him that was superior to anything she had ever known. Men had seemed to her early experience beings of meaner substance than herself, except her uncle, who was her master. She had been quite wrong, for now she felt that she knew a man incapable of base ideas or of anything vile. Women were really the inferior beings, and she, a foolish girl, had encouraged her pride because her ignorance had been great. In future she would try to learn the right estimate in which men and women should be held. She had much to learn, but now her eyes were open. The great world was made up of men and women, in whom Forster believed because they were his fellow-creatures. To her it was a wonderful and startling creed, but it was his creed, and she would ask him to teach her.

The night crept on, but still Penelope sat there, dreaming through a world of happiness of which she could only seize the central idea. She loved, and was loved. She knew it now, that secret which the world kept so safe that secured from the reach of meaner natures. She had never understood it before. It was utterly different from anything she had ever experienced or imagined.

Then at last she fell asleep just where she was, and the sunlight came to kiss her awake, and, startled, she jumped up and laughed as she had never laughed before.

Life was beautiful, and the sun was beautiful, and London was a fairy home of delight, but she must hide everything from Mrs. Todd. Mrs. Todd! Penelope was sure she had never loved and that she knew nothing about it. That was why she was so unsympathetic and so very uninteresting.

She dressed herself hastily and hid all traces of having kept, such a long vigil. She was strong and not easily tired, so, with a smile on her face, she ran downstairs.
Mrs. Todd was alone in the dining-room.

"Where is uncle?" Penelope exclaimed, for he always breakfasted with them.

"He begged me to tell you that he was called away on business, but that he would be in before luncheon to make up for his early disappearance."

Penelope was a little disappointed, but she said nothing.

"My dear Miss Winskell, you missed a delightful ball last night, for I went to the Farrants' after all. I found my friends were going, so I ran home to dress, and I assure you it was a perfect dance. But everyone was angry at your non-appearance. One lady told me that she knew her brother had come on purpose to be introduced to the belle of the season."

Penelope raised her head in her usual haughty manner.

"I know enough of society now to know what it means, and indeed I was glad to avoid a crowded dance."

"The Bethunes are dear, eccentric people; still, they are not very lively when compared with the Farrants."

Penzie never argued a point with her chaperson. She bustled herself with the tea, and felt herself slipping back into thought, which was hardly civil to Mrs. Todd.

"What made the dance more amusing was the fact of Mrs. McIntyre's presence. She never comes with her husband now. They say the two have agreed never to appear together."

"Why do they do that?" said Penzie absently.

"Dear, innocent Miss Winskell, really you ask delightful questions. She is a very modern lady, and has always a young man dangling after her. As to the husband, well, they came to words on the subject of a girl he admires immensely."

"It is very stupid of them to give cause for the senseless gossip of their neighbours."

"Senseless gossip! When people who are married behave like this, the world talks of course, but it's my belief that the world would be very unhappy if no one gave them the chance of gossiping."

"I should be too proud to show what I felt."

"You indeed! I quite imagine that you would say nothing, but few are as brave as you are. I was not at all happily married, but I took care to let every one know it. It was some comfort. If I had held my peace I should have received no sympathy, perhaps only blame."
Mm. Todd was alone in the dining-room, and so I ran home to dress, and I avoided a crowded dance.

She was restless this morning, though she tried to occupy herself with writing a letter to her father, very much doubting if he would ever read the letter; then she felt a deep blush overspread her face when she heard a ring at the door. Was it Forster Bethune? She had never before been touched, and all Forster's words were to her as the words of a prophet.

"But your money," she said slowly; "could you give me that?"

Forster misunderstood her.

"Yes, yes, of course. You would have as much right as I have myself to say how it should be spent. Simplicity is a man's greatest help to a nobler life. To live without money is to live twice."

Penelope liked this ideal; it suited her present frame of mind. But she felt that she must make it plain that if she lived in poverty, her husband's money must belong to her family. She had never believed it possible that she should have love as well. She had not known the meaning of the word as she knew it now.

Penelope was a little disappointed, but she would say nothing, for she always breakfasted with them; it is the fashionable topic. "Oh!" she said almost under her breath. "You would soon recognise the impossibility of prancing about society, the world for he always breakfasted with them. She never comes with her husband now."

She felt that it was quite natural, and indeed she was glad to have them; it was some comfort if she had held her peace I should have received no sympathy, but for whatever you call it, when once you had taken in the oneness of humanity, it would become as impossible to you to spend—" he paused and smiled—"one of those smiles which spurred on others to self-sacrifice—"moments on your dress that was not absolutely necessary. You would reject luxury for love of those whose mental capacity had not reached your own level. Your title of Princess, to be real, must be earned among your village brothers and sisters. You must be their Princess. Will you do all this? I know you are capable of great things."

"Yes, yes, I could do it," said Penelope, suddenly rising and standing near the window, where the scent of mignonette was wafted in upon the warm breeze.

"I knew you could. I want you for this work, but it is useless to begin if you turn back, you must not answer at once."

Penelope looked at him now. Was it only the work he meant? He was close beside her, and took her unresisting hand.

"Penelope—it is a name which means so much. I would give you all I can give to a woman, a part of my life's work. A man's wife is the crown to his labour; one with him and with his thoughts. I would never degrade your beautiful womanhood by making you a man's plaything. Penelope. You are a queen by right of your womanhood, having inherited all that your sisters are striving still to gain."

It was a very strange courtship, but Penelope did not think so, and did not notice its unreality. Her heart had never been touched, and all Forster's words were to her as the words of a prophet.

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The revelation had come to her so suddenly that it seemed to alter her whole nature, and she shrank from being more explicit in her words. She was sure that Forster would have enough for the needs of the Winkell estate, if they themselves lived simply, as he suggested. Indeed, she had been used to nothing else, and it was only since her present visit that the manners and customs of the rich had become familiar to her. She had not rebelled, because she had believed that her own future would be certainly cast in the same mould; but Forster had opened out a new view of things, and that view included poverty.

The dream was beautiful; all the more so that it had developed itself like a wondrous flower which expands in a night, and is only perfected at sunrise.

She held out her hand to him shyly, and he took it, though he did not try to kiss her, but only held her hand firmly clasped.

A hansom drove rapidly to the door, and Penelope started.

"That is my uncle," she said. "Wait a few moments. I will go and meet him." She walked slowly from the room, and met the Duke just entering the library.

"Penelope, come in here a moment, child. Who is there?" he asked, noticing a man's hat.

"Mr. Bethune."

"Ah!" He shut the library door, and took both her hands. "Penelope, my dear child, the luck is turned. We must leave London as soon as possible."

"The luck! What luck?"

"Mine; but it is of no consequence. My dear child, I have found your future husband."

Penelope flushed for the first time at this word.

"I know. I am ready to obey you, uncle. You know I am."

"I know; and really, considering all things, it's not bad. I have looked into all the affairs, and really Philip Gilbank's fortune is as safe as the Bank of England."

Penelope repeated very slowly: "Philip Gilbanks?"

"Yes, his father is a millionaire."

THE SWEETS OF POPULARITY.

It may be doubted whether men crave popularity or wealth the more. True, the race for hard cash is about the most striking feature of life as we live it nowadays; but then what is at the back of that desire to be rich that seems innate in us
THE SWEETS OF POPULARITY. [March 10, 1864.]

all? Is it a craving merely for beds of cider down, obsequious domestics, champagne every day, and carriages to drive about town in? Or is it the deep ingrained yearning to make a large figure among one's contemporaries, to shine as a philanthropist or a politician, to become a byword, in fact, and a theme for newspaper comments?

Well, there is no denying that a good many of us have low, sensual ideas; and think of money as little better than the safest possible vehicle to carry us to domestic bliss and luxurious ease. Nevertheless, if you take three men, sound in body and mind, and of the average moral calibre, methinks two of the three would rate pounds, shillings, and pence for their effect in promoting the joys of the heart and the head, rather than of the stomach and the senses in general.

Mark at how early an age the appetite shows us. A man need not be a father to know that a child is seldom so well pleased as when he is the nucleus of an admiring throng. I have seen a baby in arms as it were convulsed into ecstasy because a couple of other mothers had joined its own mother in apparent worship of its first budding tooth. Perhaps there was pain at the root of the tooth just at the time. If so, the pain was completely outmatched by the pleasure of being the butt of a little eulogistic notice.

One's first spell of school-days hurries the appetite smartly into a passion. Every school has its divinity, and his sway is often infinite in its own little sphere. I remember well how I, for one, revered the youth whose personality ruled the roost in the dormitory of the school to which I was promoted from the leading-strings of nurses. He was notable chiefly for an imitative manner, a fine vocabulary in abuses of the masters over us, a loud voice, a big body, and an amazing coolness in emergencies. When all's said, he had the making of a great man in him—at least, I fondly fancy so. But he has not come to the front among us bigger boys, though years back he had but to say "Do this," and it was done immediately.

He seemed to have a glorious career—in the dormitory. Yet perhaps he never fully appreciated the blessings that fortune had wrastled about his brow. He was then, I expect, like a strong man who has never sinned: quite unconscious of the value of health. Probably, from babyhood upwards he had played the part of magnet—alluring others though himself unmoved. Out of question he would have been astonished if one day all we youngerst had, by compulsory, joined in neglecting him, and refused him his meed of admiration by deeds, words, and looks. The experience might have been as good for him as a bout of mild illness for the man who takes his health as a matter of course.

I am told that girls are much more susceptible to praise and reverential treatment even than boys. It seems hardly credible, but my informant—the mother of five girls and four boys—is in a good position to know. Certainly I have watched with interest how a knot of little maidens will hang round one of their party, and worship her most palpably; and how her eyes have sparkled with delight in the homage. And I have seen with pain the sullen, inglorious face of the girl whom none of her companions want to have anything to do with out of school hours, and the glances of envy with which she has acknowledged the superiority of the popular girl.

It is, perhaps, hard even for the accomplished coquette to say why she practises those peculiar aptitudes she has from Nature. I suppose, however, the truth of the matter is that she likes to be liked—thus differing not much from the rest of us. Yet if she is wise she would do well early in her decline to borrow a little from the pessimists, and convince herself of the fleeting nature of all mundane pleasures, and their insufficiency. She may thus both eat her cake and have it.

But it is among adult men that the case for popularity is at its strongest. Whether in the world of letters, of sport or politics, popularity at all cost seems the goal aimed at.

There is in my town a very able lawyer, still in the prime of life. At twenty-five he was recognised in the district as a coming power—local or national, as he pleased. He was familiar with platforms, and he cut a bold figure on them. He was handsome, hail-fellow-well-met, and with a small private income. He was under thirty when he was elected Mayor of the borough, and exercised nominal rule over a hundred thousand persons. For the next ten years he lived and flourished under the sunshine of unvarying success. Every one acknowledged his abilities, latent and declared; it only remained for him to do credit to his admirers by some downright performance. But he seems to have preferred the glamour

Charles Dickens.
of mere popularity to aught else. This spoiled him, and nowadays, though, as I have said, still but middle-aged, people look at him as if he were a comely wreck on a sandy shore. He drinks daily at the close about three times as much as he can carry with grace, and spends probably twice as much money annually as he earns. As may be imagined, he is not an ideal husband. His wife and he disagree vigorously, and his children are about as headstrong as possible.

It is not a very edifying spectacle to see two professional pugilists pouding away at each other for a championship. The belt or the purse they are struggling for, however, may, without exaggeration, be rated as an inferior lure to the regard the winner will obtain from such of the world as is interested in boxing feats. The judge hands the winner his prize with a few set words of congratulation. But those who are more nearly touched by his success crowd round him, salute him as "good old Joe!" or "good old Peter!" smile on him eye to eye, and perhaps lift him shoulder high and proclaim him, for the nonce at any rate, an uncrowned king. These are the best moments of his lifetime—assuming, of course, that his conscience does not charge him with obtaining his victory by unlawful conduct.

As a rule, and to say, it seems as if those who are so impatient to become popular lose some of their moral sense. They consecrate themselves to the one idea. Whatever stands in the way of their service must either be overridden or disregarded. These words have been imputed to Lord Nelson: "Never mind the justice or the impudence, only let me succeed." They may be true or false in their application, but they are a capital illustration of the present argument. It is a case of hit or miss, heads or tails. The recklessness may win glory or result in ruin. One must take one's chance: the game here is worth the candle. As the mother of old exorted her son:

Success shall be in thy course tall,
Success in thyself, which is best of all,
Success in thy hand, success in thy foot,
In struggle with man, in battle with brute.

Success and popularity may more often than not be read as synonymous terms.

It is a pity that the laurels which crown the popular man should be prone to wither so quickly. But it cannot be helped. The thing to do is to accept them with a brisk self-assurance of their fragility, and to hang them as relics in one's treasure-house even ere the leaves have lost their suppleness. The man who is the lion of a day may, if he will, have a very fair time indeed while the day lasts. Only, he must not get fancying that it is going to be a day of eternal duration.

In literature and art popularity is nearly everything. Without it the leaves and fishes will not be of the best and freshest. There is, of course, a certain gratification—acute in proportion to the genius—in imaginative work for its own sake. But when the spell of sweet absorption is over, and it is remembered that others hold but a mean opinion, if an opinion at all, about the achievements that seem all in all to the worker, then come the pangs that wait upon neglect.

A first book is to its author pretty much, I should suppose, what her first baby is to the young mother. "How in the world will it turn out?" he asks himself, even as the proud young mamma wonders about her little unresponsive trophy. If popularity comes it is like inches to the statue. It is a test to the individual, and no mistake. His disposition will have none more potent to face in three score years and ten. Even misfortunes are easier to bear with dignity or without loss of precious tracts of character. "Another publisher!" he gets into the habit of exclaiming when his bell sounds and a visitor is heard approaching.

It is delightful to be wooed by the very persons whom old the author has, with great reluctance, trained himself to woo. The legends of Grub Street do not prepare us for any marked show of prudence or tact in the author who, of a sudden, leaps to the top of the tree of fame. Yet, nowadays, our knights and esquires of the pen enjoy their delirium sagely, and discount their celebrity with a shrewdness worthy of the Hebrews. If publishers urge them to write to order, they book the undertaking. Thus one brilliant volume may be the forerunner of a score of moderate and bad books. The age is tolerably philosophic, though it does live at a mad pace. Our men of letters, who are in a sense its embodiment, may be trusted not to lose their heads when the world startles them with the glad cry, "Well done!"

Few authors, however, can keep their popularity as our master singers keep their voices and, therefore, their popularity. Upon the whole, our leading sopranos and tenors and our brilliant actors and actresses seem to have the best of life—if popularity,
unqualified, be the test. It is, of course, a
fine thing to be the Premier of a great
country, and be cheered and entreated to
make little speeches even at railway
stations in the middle of a journey. But a
Premier has to do battle every minute of
the day for his fame. He is vilified as
a matter of course. He makes false steps
which bring upon him indescribable
obloquy and remorse, and often he is
worsted in the fray, and has to hang his
head and accept hootings and abuse where,
not long ago, he was presented with gold
boxes and as much mob-praise as he
could bear without getting his ear-drum
split.

Not so those who sing to and act before
us. They go from triumph to triumph,
and taste the sweets of their successes like
no other people. When they have colds
in their throats they withhold their pre-
sence—at least if they are wise. The public,
having established the precedent of ap-
plauding them, never afterwards fails to
applaud them. There is a career of sun-
shine—and cheques.

This, too, must be trying to the
personality, though perhaps less so than
most forms of emphatic success, since the
superiority of a great singer or actor, once
acknowledged, is seldom subsequently called
in question. Miss Bremer tells a pretty
story of the Swedish nightingale which may
be repeated here. "I asked Jenny of
what she thought on a certain night in the
midst of her greatest success, and the
simple reply was: 'I remembered that I
had forgotten in the morning to sew a
string on my cloak.'" Not every "prima
donna" is as well endowed with sweet
simplicity as was Jenny Lind, yet most of
them in time wear their fame as easily as
an old and cherished mantle.

There is something ludicrous about the
enthusiasm a leading politician excites in
the mob whose mouthpiece he claims to be;
and something almost pathetic, too. Time
after time I have heard statesmen received
by the crowd whom they have risen to
tackle, with that monotonous hymn, "For
he's a jolly good fellow!" The politician
does not always, or indeed often, look like
"a jolly good fellow." He is too much in
earnest to be that. And, moreover, there
is frequently a little twitching of the lips
that tells how the canticle jars on him.
He, if any one, knows how fickle is the
popular voice on whose acclaiming he
depends. Still, he may well be excused if
for the moment he dismisses sober reason
to the background, and rejoices in the
present popularity that is his.

Never indeed was political prominence
more acknowledged than now. From the
time a man begins to be cartooned in the
papers, he may be deemed a statesman.
Thenceforward he is public property, and
treated as such. It depends wholly on the
measure of his sensibility whether he finds
his position pleasant and stimulating, or
purgatorial. In the latter case we may at
once assume that Nature meant him to seek
popularity in another of the various domains
she so kindly opens to us as incentives to
eager living.

A man's standing towards his contem-
poraries is never really known until he is
dead. It is when he is represented by a
vacuum that the estimate of his popularity
or the contrary may be relied upon.

Oblivious notices are not the most credible
of newspaper paragraphs, yet they, too,
have their value. It is the same with
epitaphs. The phrase, "beloved and re-
pected by all who knew him," is the
proudest posthumous comment a man can
excite. But the frequency of its use makes
one a little suspicious of it. One is often
irreverent enough to fancy that could the
dust beneath the tombstone thus inscribed
become reanimated and call on the com-
posers of the inscription, their love would
not prove good for much. Perhaps even they
would refuse the resurrected corpse a
hearing, and have him shown to the door
without delay. One never knows.

Of tombstone praise, the most reasonable
exianse seems to be that in the epitaph of a
man in Bedfordshire, which so impressed
Count Beust one day: "He was as honest
as is consistent with the weakness of
human nature." I give it from memory,
sure only that I have not marred its spirit.
This is not suggestive of a high degree of
popularity, but it gives us some solid
ground to build upon.

BLACKPOOL

BLACKPOOL is to the hard-working folk
of the large towns of Lancashire what
Brighton is to the moneyed classes of the
metropolis. This gives it a character all its
own. There is not a watering-place in the
United Kingdom to compare with it in
this respect. The people you meet on the
sands of Blackpool are generally of the
kind who proclaim, in their own particular
dialect, that they mean to have "a high
A man's standing towards his contemporaries is never really known until he is dead. It is when he is represented by a后代 that the estimate of his popularity is most acknowledged than now. From the present notoriety that is his, the politician plauding them never afterwards miss to applaud them. Theirs is a career of sunshine and cheques. They go from triumph to triumph, but never long ago, he was presented with gold which braved upon him indescribable joy — and cheers. The public, in their throats they withhold their pre-
of residence here per head on these conditions would prove that even as the air of Blackpool declares it "the sick man's physician," so its comparative cheapness announces it "the poor man's friend." For, the more opulent there are hotels and hydropathic establishments enough; but though nothing can be said against them, they are distinctly of a much lower order than their fellows at the fashionable resorts of the south coast.

The town has had a singularly rapid rise, even for a watering-place that "supplies a want." People who yearn to make fortunes in landed estates need not leave England for the quest. Blackpool is one instance in many of the truth. Forty years ago green fields stretched to the sands which are now fringed with houses of a rather mellow appearance. Forty years hence, we can scarcely doubt, the town will have trebled its area, and the distance between its boundaries and those of that very different little gem of a place, St. Anne-by-the-Sea—famous for its links — will have shrunk almost to thinglessness. With improved train services Blackpool's fortunes must grow. As it is, the people who live here and go daily during the week into Manchester—a ride of an hour and a half each way—are numbered by scores. There is, of course, no question as to the superiority of Blackpool's air to that of Manchester. Why, in the near future, may not the town develop into a mere "annexe" of the great city of mills and cotton? Even now it almost merits to be called Manchester-by-the-Sea, though to be sure many other large towns of Lancashire and the West Riding also shoot their thousands hither. It may become the "week-end" sanatorium of the north-west for aught we can tell.

With quiet weather this unique place may be enjoyed idyllically if you choose your spot of sand or grassy bank with methodical discretion. Even on Bank holidays it is possible to find a sandbank not wholly appropriated by sprawling humanity. But Blackpool is sometimes favoured with weather that is not at all quiet. This, too, is a feature of the town. A high spring tide, with westerly gales, swells the waves far over the stout piers, deep-set in the massive sloped embankment which supports the promenade, and sweeps the parade of the delicate and dilletante. A storm here is something to remember. During October, 1893, for example, a barque very civilly allowed itself to be wrecked against the roots of the chief pier, which it knocked about badly. You may still see the timbers of this luckless vessel garnishing the shore—touching the very parade indeed. They do not often get so strong a spectacle as this in Blackpool, and it was to be expected that the photographers would make the most of it. But the fact that life and the weather in most of their phases may thus be tasted here is out of question one of the merits that most commend the place to the regard of the people.

On any fine day from June to September—a Sunday preferably—it is quite a study for a person of an observing turn to stroll up and down the two miles of Blackpool's promenade. From six o'clock in the morning until ten at night people swarm here like ants about the metropolis of an ant-hill. The seats are occupied to the very ridges of their back supports. Loco-motion is a matter of patience. If the sky is a serene blue, the sight is worth seeing. And a tolerable breeze from the sea makes things lively for the young women, who are sure to be decked in high hats, offering most seductive temptations to the wanton winds.

The other day chance took me to the town for a couple of score hours. It was a Saturday at the outset. No more unfortunate day can be suggested to a visitor for his introduction to Blackpool—especially if he has not thought it worth while to wire for a bedroom to one of the hotels. This fact is, of course, intensified on the eve of Bank holidays. I, for example, drove from one hotel to another, and so on, until it seemed probable that I might have to charter the carriage for a bedroom. There was no need for the hotel clerks and young ladies to tell me they were "full to the smoke-rooms." Every corridor teemed with gay Lancastrian bucks, with cigars between their lips, and all manner of rollicking paeans on their tongues.

I had at length the luck to get received in a very humble house "for working men." It was a fine stroke of irony—this neglect of an establishment designed specially for them by the hard-working tourists who had rushed hither for the "week-end." The man who at home is a working man, and is not ashamed to appear as such, when he takes a holiday chooses to pose as a person to whom a crown more or a crown less is of small consequence. He does not care to brand himself openly as an artisan by seeking "working man's accommoda-
dation." Rather, he seems to flatter himself that the pale lavender checked suit, the green satin necktie with the diamond pin therein—it must be a real diamond—the twisted moustache, the doorwalker or the "Tom-o'-Shanter," when jauntily, and most of all his manners, entitle him to be received as a person of some distinction in establishments where swallow-tailed waiters and attendance charges of eightpence daily are the vogue.

Well, there is no earthly reason why it should not be so. This is a free land, and the tendency of the age is towards a levelling down of the mighty by inheritance to the rank of those who honestly earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. But it is not in many places as in Blackpool that this lesson is brought home with such force to one's understanding.

Towards ten o'clock on a conventional day in the season the promenade is at its most vivacious pitch. There are donkeys on the sands—if the tide permits—in troops: sleek, mouse-coloured quadrupeds, indifferent to the touch of ordinary walking-canes. One after another the visitors take to the donkeys, and are mildly scourged up and down between the curling waves and the throng of holiday-makers. These last enjoy the entertainment. Materfamilias holds her sides with laughter—good to see—as she watches her worthy spouse at such pastime. And the children scamper at the ass's heels, roaring their loudest at the unusual spectacle of daddy as a cavalier.

Of course, too, there are nigger minstrels and vendors of many things. The ambulant photographer is much to the fore here. Life at Blackpool in the season is not hedged in with an insufferable number of "stereotype" restrains. Tom, Dick, and Harry soon scrape acquaintance with Jane, Suean, and Molly. It is managed with cordial laughter and acquiescence on both sides. Away they go arm in arm up the sands, a certain prey to the man with the camera. Their captor arranges them in a lovely group, and from that time forward the chance incident in their young lives gets raised to the dignity of an episode and a memory.

Best fun of all is it to see how the people go to their doom in the broad-beamed boats that are tricked up in the guise of yachts. They enter the boat by the family—father; mother; the girls, who are, or pretend to be, so anxious about their ankles in stepping over the gunwale; and the exultant, mischievous boys. At length the craft is laboriously extruded into the waves. Even the wind at first seems to shirk the task of impelling such a compact load of human beings. But these soon have quite as much motion as they desire, and an hour or two hours later they are set ashore pale and tottering; the older folk irritated by the downfall of their expectations, the young ones still weeping frantically over the most disagreeable cheat.

After dark, with a full moon on the water, one may enjoy some commonplace romantic ecstasies from either of Blackpool's piers. But the authorities do not keep the piers open to the public until a late hour. They sweep the young men and young women towards the landward end with a startling want of courtesy. No doubt this is the natural outcome of circumstances; but more than aught else it seems to tell that Blackpool's clients are not of the kind who themselves waste words in supererogatory civilities.

A FESTIVAL AT BENARES.

The blazing sun of an Indian March is pouring down with pitiless glare on minaret, dome, and shrine. Thousands of pilgrims are floosking into Benares to celebrate the commencement of the Hindu year with a great religious festival, but only a momentary glimpse of the brilliant crowds can be obtained until the heat declines. Every ray of light between the green lattices of the hastily closed gharry is a ray of blistering flame as we drive to the cantonments, where Europeans dwell under military protection in a less fervid and lightning-charged atmosphere than that of the city, disturbed as it is by frequent fanatical outbreaks from the friction of the different races comprised in a vast floating population of pilgrims.

As several hours must elapse before we can quit the darkened hotel, cool with swinging punkahs, and fragrant with piles of roses, we take a preliminary excursion into Indian history, and discover that Benares, under the name of Kashi, was recognised in the year 1200 B.C., as "an authentic fragment of the oldest Past." The venerable Hindu city is certainly one of the oldest historical sites in the world, but only shadowy glimpses reach us until B.C. 500, when Benares emerged into a distinction which placed it on the highest pinnacle of religious fame, and influenced
the entire continent of Asia. A new light dawned upon the spiritual darkness of the eastern world when the Prince Siddharta withdrew from the vice and luxury of his father's court at the foot of the Himalayas, and went forth as an ascetic to seek deliverance from evil. Years of penance failed to solve the problems of humanity, or to reveal the hidden wisdom so earnestly desired; and renouncing asceticism, Siddharta gave himself up to profound meditation under the famous peepal-tree of Gya, the result of his mental absorption being the train of thought which was afterwards elaborated into Buddhism.

Buddha was a true philanthropist; he sought the Brahmin sages, to whom he communicated the revelation bestowed upon him; returned to his father's kingdom with a message of hope and healing; and then wandered from city to city, consoling thousands of troubled souls with tidings of light and liberty. Benares became a Buddhist capital; pilgrims resorted thither from every part of Asia; and Brahminism was driven from the field, though not destroyed. Forced back upon itself and increasing in intellectual subtlety, it adapted itself with consummate skill to varying tribes and castes, gradually undermining the more mystical and subjective Buddhism, and finally expelling it from India.

In the twelfth century Benares again became a Brahminical capital, and another foe, fierce and iconoclastic, spread the terror of its name and sword as far as Buddhism had extended the olive-branch of peace. That foe was Mohammedanism.

To the love of conquest and plunder was added the passionate desire to shatter the strongest citadel of the Brahmin creed. Religious zeal wrecked the temples, and razed the city to the ground. Benares was rebuilt and regained by the Hindus, but in the seventeenth century the Mogul Emperor, Aurungzebe, determined to exterminate Brahminism by fire and sword. The city was sacked, mosques were built from the stones of the demolished temples, the Brahmins were crushed under the feet of the elephants in the triumphal processions, and the images of the gods used as steps for the faithful Moslem to tread upon.

But Benares again rose from her ashes, and a century later passed under the sway of Warren Hastings.

When the noonday heat is over, two rival guides offer their services. One, with his dark face wreathed in smiles, salams profoundly, and pointing to his companion, says in English:

"This fellow only eat rice. I good Christian. I eat beef—not everything! Only one caste and one God upstairs."

This confession of faith fails to create the desired impression, and we reject the promising convert for the fanatical Hindu, who stands by in scornful silence, his black eyes blazing with wrath, and his forehead marked with the mystic "Tilak," to show that he has worshipped in the temple of his god.

A dusty road thronged with pilgrims leads into the heart of the city. Women, with orange or crimson skirts wound round their slim figures, bear brass lotahs on their heads for the sacred Ganges water, and their pretty brown arms laden with clanking bangles contrast becomingly with their flowing draperies. White robes are relieved by broad stripes of pink or purple, and the sketchy costumes of the men consists of a gandy turban with a red or amber scarf folded round their bronze-hued limbs. White ozen with gilded horns draw heavy loads of wood for funeral pyres, and Nautch girls wearing green masks and tinselled helmets are followed by a group of women with faces painted yellow, in obedience to the law of their caste. They all wear gold or silver nose-rings; every forehead bears the red or white "Tilak," marked vertically for the Shivaites, horizontally for the devotees of Vaisnu, and the tinkling of innumerable anklets makes a musical accompaniment to their stately walk. Children clad only in the brown suit with which Dame Nature provides them, dart in and out of the dazzling throng, and copper-coloured babies tumble about in the dust, at the feet of numerous beggars, who drive a remunerative trade by the roadside. The beating of tom-toms before the dancing girls, the thrumming of sitars, and the monotonous chanting of Vedic hymns by hundreds of guttural voices, increase the weird effect of the extraordinary procession. At length the straggling houses become more frequent, and we pass mansions with wreaths of green leaves above every lintel, to show that no Christian foot may cross the threshold. The dwellings of rich and poor mingle in heterogeneous confusion; tumble-down huts prop themselves against lofty palaces, and many of the narrow streets are only available for pedestrians. Tier after tier the shrines and temples rise
above the broad blue Ganges, and the marble shafts of two magnificent minarets form the climax of the impressive picture. Some of the buildings along the shore have assumed additional picturesqueness from the subsidence of their foundations, causing the pinioned masses of stone to alip into the water, where they have obtained secure positions at apparently dangerous angles.

The famous brass bazaar is our first destination, and the dark corridors offer a welcome retreat from the blazing sun; while the dim alleys gleam with the lustre of the polished metal, fashioned into trays, bowls, and lamps, bells, images and avatars, cups and flagons. The primitive tools used for the most elaborate designs consist of hammers and punches. A man in rose-coloured turban and orange scarf picks out the minute and intricate pattern of an exquisite tray with an iron knob and a rusty nail; the artistic moulding of every ornament displaying the inherited instincts and cultured tastes of an ancient civilization. The brilliant avenues of the silk bazaar, lined with the fairy fabrics of Oriental looms, offer a bewildering variety of attractions. Brocades, mingled with gold or silver thread, form the celebrated "Kinkh," a glittering material of great value fit for royal robes; and gauzy textures, apparently woven of moonshine and mist, festoon the long arcades with shimmering folds of rainbow hue. These miracles of Indian handicraft are executed by the Moslem inhabitants of Benares, who occupy the district of Madampura, and trace their descent from the skilled artisans formerly employed by the Mogul Court. In one of the shadowy lanes gold-beaters draw out gold and silver wires into threads finer than the thinnest silk; the dark faces of the white-turbaned workmen as they bend over the red flames of the crucible suggesting the practice of some mystic rite. Diving beneath a low-browed arch we reach the toy bazaar, where shining lacquer work is stacked up in endless variety of form and colour. The lac, prepared from the gum of the peepul-tree, and held against the toy as it turns on the lathe, when melted by friction to the desired consistency gradually hardens upon the revolving article, the finishing touch being given by the pressure of a palm-leaf upon the surface to render it smooth and glossy.

Emerging into a narrow street, we encounter a tribe of pilgrims from the Chinese frontier, with flat Mongolian features, long pigtailed and flowing garments of striped Tibetan cloth. The leaders of the band twirl their praying machines, silver cymbals filled with parchments, prayers supposed to be offered every time the little cylinder revolves. Boys in blue skirts and wearing long silver earrings bring up the rear, their almond-shaped eyes roving round the unfamiliar scene with mingled awe and amusement.

Benares contains more than five thousand Brahmin sanctuaries and three hundred mosques, besides the myriads of smaller shrines in every crevice and corner where a devout worshipper can find room for the image of a Hindu god. The principal temples are surmounted by the flashing trident of Shiva the Destroyer, the tutelary divinity of the sacred city, though every Hindu deity is worshipped by turns in Benares. A reverential crowd surrounds a party of somnolent fakirs, smeared with ashes, painted yellow, and spotted from head to foot with red lozenge-shaped prayer-marks, their credit accounts with heaven being too long to be chalked on the forehead, and requiring a larger surface for registration. Their matted hair descends to the waist, and every face wears a pitiable expression of pain and patience. One bony wreck performs extraordinary gymnastic antics, and another stands with skeleton arms extended, rigid from long disuse.

Now the crowd thickens round the Durga Kund, or Monkey Temple, dedicated to the goddess Durga, authoress of pain, sorrow, and death. She is worshipped by the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes in order to appease her wrath and avert her vengeance. In the centre of the temple court numerous monkeys gambol and chatter as they climb about an ancient tamarind-tree, and the sedate-looking head of this lively family sits on a bough and peels us with leaves, as though resenting our intrusion within the sacred precincts. The worshippers give alms in food to these sacred monkeys, which are dedicated to Durga, and placed under her protection. An upright post in the quadrangle serves as a sacrificial altar, the animal's neck being inserted within a central slit like a double-pronged fork. The executioner with his axe faces the temple, and an acolyte pulls the hind legs of the victim until the neck is sufficiently stretched for one blow to sever the head from the body. Failure in this particular betokens evil to the offerer of the sacrifice.
A priest is beating a drum before the temple to summon the worshippers. Stalls of votive wreaths surround the walls, and thick garlands of orange marigolds or white temple flowers are hung round the necks of the faithful, and carried in their hands as peace-offerings to the savage goddess. The stone horses of Durga, supposed to bear her forth by night on her errands of wrath, flank the portico with barbaric forms and lion-like faces. Two bronze bells hang from the domed roof, and as the noisy, irreverent crowd presses up, laughing and talking, to the very steps of the shrine, a solemn Brahmin drowns the uproar of voices by the deafening din of a bronze hammer, while his attendant holds out a brass dish for offerings of money. The image of Durga possesses a golden face, ten arms, a necklace of pearls, and a crown of brazen serpents. Votive wreaths suspended from her neck and piled up at her feet conceal her glittering robes, but the mirth and gaiety of the crowd seem unrestrained by the presence of the terrible goddess, a formal act of worship sufficient to satisfy her requirements.

From this unedifying spectacle we pass to the Wall of Knowledge, beyond a stone bull which receives homage from a knot of pilgrims clad in scarlet. A red canopy covers the sacred spring of Gyan Kafe, and a cloth spread over the opening prevents votive offerings from falling into the wall, but in spite of this precaution the quantities of rice and flowers which sully the water make it offensive with the constant decay of vegetable matter. A Brahmin serves out the precious liquid to the pilgrims, who drink it thirstily from the brass cups as though enjoying the overpowering odour of sanctity. Every drop is paid for, and the owners of the well are men of vast wealth, though as clamorous for baksheesh as the beggars who crowd round the steps. Ganges water forms part of every votive offering. The worshippers dash it into the well, offer libations to the images in the surrounding niches, and drench the stone pavement until the whole place is a black swamp of mud. The sacred spring marks the centre of the holy city, and a mosque erected as an insult to the Hindu community towers conspicuously above the clustering temples, and occupies the former site of a sanctuary dedicated to Krishna. His image, overthrown by Moslem zeal at the sacking of the temple, according to Brahmin tradition, prudently cast itself into the well.

Beyond a spiral shrine sculptured into filmy marble lace, the three towers of the Golden Temple reflect the glory of the orient sun on thin plates of beaten gold. A booth on the threshold glows with garlands of red and purple blossoms; alternating with the favourite marigolds; the temple is crowded with fantastic images, sprinkled by the worshippers with Ganges water from their brazen lotahs, before they descend into a walled enclosure to rub their faces with the talls of the sacred bulls, and kiss the mouths of the pampered animals which mingle with the crowd and eat the countless wreaths that are strewn upon the ground. A twisting street lined with temples leads to shops filled with images and all the elaborate paraphernalia of Hindu worship. The silver shrine of Sanichar—the planet Saturn—lights up a dark angle between the two crumbling towers of the Cow Temple, the dirtiest spot in Benares, sacred to the Goddess Amnapurna, the female providence of the city. The sanctuary contains three famous shrines, dedicated respectively to Ganesh, the elephant-headed God of Wisdom, Parbat, his mother, and Hanuman, the monkey god, represented as a crowned ape. Beggars rend the air with cries for help, though gifts of rice and money from the worshippers enable these professional mendicants to pass an easy existence. The temple court, with grey Brahmin cows standing knee-deep in wreaths of marigolds, on which they graze, is the favourite place of worship, a prayer and prostration sufficient for the shrines, and all further devotions being paid to the sleek herd of Amnapurna’s earthly representatives, which are embraced with ecstatic devotion. Image-makers pursue their calling in a mouldering arcade, adorned by a figure of Ganesh, smeared with red lead, and furnished with feet, ears and trunk of solid silver. An open space further on bristles with spiral shrines, and on their marble steps, Brahmin pundits read aloud the sacred “Shastras” to the passing multitudes.

Western associations are so incongruous with the character of this typical Oriental city, that a group of buildings comprising college, town hall and hospital of modern date and English origin, appear as startling anomalies amid the countless memorials of alien races and conflicting creeds. The disused mint, which flanks the tokens of European occupation, offered
an asylum to our countrymen in the dark
days of the Indian Mutiny, and from the
adjacent palace an English judge of Benares,
during the Insurrection of 1799, kept the
destroyed Hindus at bay with a spear.
The original form of Hindu theology seems
practically buried beneath a dead weight of
legendary accretion, and the superstructure,
raised to abnormal height by centuries of
growth, renders it difficult to estimate the
value of the foundation.
From Brahma, the Creator, every kind
of existence originated, but the worship of
Vishnu, who floats wrapped in dreamy
abstraction on the lotus-covered waters
which drowned a former world, was found
too mystical for the multitude, and ten
avatars, or incarnations, were devised in
order to popularise it. The first five are
wholly mythical, but with the sixth we
touch historic ground in Rama, the priestly
hero of the Sacerdotal caste. The seventh
avatar was the warrior Rama Chundra,
whose deeds are sung in the Indian epic
of the Ramayana, and whose name is on
every lip. The morning salutation is
"Ram, Ram," the funeral cry of every
caste is "Ram sat hali"—the self-existent
one. The pilgrims pursue their way
exclaiming, "Sita Ram! Sita Ram!" and
his victory, aided by the monkeys and
their god Hanuman, over the demon god
Ravana, is commemorated by an annual
festival. The eighth avatar is Krishna, a
popular defender of his country, worshipped
with intense enthusiasm under the form
of a flute-playing shepherd standing on a
serpent's head. The ninth avatar is
Buddha. This was a masterly stroke of
Brahmin sagacity, as by acknowledging
him to be a divine incarnation, his
adherents were gained, and the necessity
for a separate creed abolished. The tenth
avatar is yet to come, unless, as some
assert, it may already be found in the
English monarchy! Shiva, the third
divinity of the Hindu triad, is described
in the Shastras as, "He who destroys life
to renew it," but popular devotion appa-
rently stops short of the saving clause,
and recognises him as the Destroyer only.
Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Pre-
server, and Shiva the Destroyer, centralise
the idea of a triune godhead.
When the purple beauty of a starlit
Indian night succeeds to a fiery sunset,
we wend our way to the sacred river.
Lanterns carried by pilgrims, and flaring
torches on arch and shrine, chequer the
city into mysterious breadth of light and
shadow. Weird figures of Ganesha, the
guardian of each native house, stand out
in startling relief from the blackness of
the towering walls, and the river reflects
the illumination from strings of coloured
lamps, which blaze above the steep bank
in twinkling festoons of light. Boats with
red lanterns at the mast and flaming
torches at the prow, enhance the brilliance
of the scene, and carriages roll along filled
with native magnates in embroidered robes
and jewelled turbans, or money-lenders in
flowing muslins and tall black hats. Veiled
ladies peep from curtained litters borne by
attendant slaves to richly-decorated private
boats, and thousands of pilgrims flock to
the edge of the healing waters. Those in
front stoop down to kiss the sandy shore,
and lay their hands in the sacred current;
others prostrate themselves with tears of
joy and cries of penitence on attaining the
goal of so many hopes and prayers. A
gaily-clad group of Scindias and a
sturdy tribe of Nepaleses, with the native
"Kutcheri" in every belt, have travelled
a thousand miles on foot through mountain
snow, pathless jungle, and burning plain
to reach this supreme desire of every
faithful heart. Old and young, rich and
poor, hale and sick, are all represented
here. Some in every pilgrim band, worn
out with toil and travel, only reach the
Ganges to die, but to them death by the
holy river is only the gate of Heaven.
The wild and melancholy scene is intensely
pathetic, and it is impossible to gaze un-
moved on the vast multitudes of struggling
sons longing for light and purification.
Taking a boat, we push out to some
gilded barges, where Nautch girls are
dancing in tinselled robes, with hands and
feet adorned by heavy turquoise rings. As
the dreamy Nautch proceeds, the dancers
don a number of glittering veils and
mantles, in addition to the spangled
garments, which look suffocating on this hot
Indian night. Tom-toms beat, and un-
known instruments discourse barbaric
music; a guttural voice chimes in with
the nasal twang of the East, and an actor
attracts a swarm of boats round the red
corne on which his stage is erected.
The play in dumb show consists of grinnings
and grotesque attitudes, and to uninitiated
minds appears a very rudimentary per-
formance, but the muslin-robed Hindus
smoking narghiléhs on their gaily-painted
boats are convulsed with amusement.
Jugglers, snake-charmers, and fortunet-
tellers attract crowds of spectators, and
A FESTIVAL AT BENARES. [March 10, 1894.]

the number of illuminated boats is so great that one could easily cross the mighty Ganges by stepping from one deck to another. Only the intention of returning at sunrise induces us to quit the fantastic spectacle. It is midnight when we leave, and at five a.m. we launch again on the blue waters, crimsooned by the flush of dawn. The curving domes and spiral shrines of stone and marble reflect the deepening glow of the sky as we row past the palaces of Hindu rajahs, who come to die at Benares as a passport to Heaven. The ceremonial bathing in the Ganges forms the great morning act of worship, and the bathing ghâats belong to different races, so that each pilgrim band possesses an accredited status in the holy city. Long flights of crumbling steps descend from the towering shrines to the water's edge. The river is already full of bathers, throwing the sacred water over each other from brazen lotahs, with the symbolical rise of their intricate creeds. Some stand absorbed in prayer, with thin brown arms raised towards heaven, and careworn faces bathed in tears. Groups of high-caste girls in filmy white veils step daintily into the river, their slaves waiting on the bank. Gray-bearded men and bright-faced boys descend the steps of a neighbouring ghâat chanting a wild mantra; and crowds of sick or infirm worshippers are carried or assisted down the steep stairways, and supported by friendly hands as they dip themselves in the healing flood. A ghâat where Brahma is supposed to have sacrificed ten horses sanctifies the most unclean, and at an eclipse—always a sacred phenomenon in India—the vanguard of pilgrims generally get pushed into the water melior volume by the dense throng behind them. The stately observatory above this ghâat was built by a Rajah of Benares who reformed the calendar, and the instruments of brass and iron with which he worked out astrological problems are still contained within the walls.

As the morning sun sparkles on the brazen tridents above the pinnacle and shrine, the crowds increase. One ghâat is thronged by pilgrims in green and gold, another is densely packed with white figures, and a parti-coloured mass beyond displays the shifting brilliancy of scarlet, orange, and purple. We land at the Ciankia ghâat, the seat of serpent-worship lined with brazen images. Sixty shrines surround a tank above the steps, and carved snakes cover a stone pavement beneath the green boughs of a tremendous peepal-tree. Although make-worship is dying out, one day in the year perpetuates the ancient devotion; when offerings of buffalo milk, marigold wreaths, and Ganges water are presented at the Serpent's Well, beneath a stone canopy encircled with a sculptured cobra.

Hundreds of tiny flags, red, green, and yellow, disguise a lovely Nepalese temple of fretted marble. The supplication inscribed on every fluttering pennon is supposed to be repeated whenever it waves in the breeze. The idea of offering prayer on the wings of the wind belongs primarily to the mountain tribes of the Himalayan frontier, who experience the full might and majesty of the wild gales which sweep round the snowy heights, and with unconscious poetry press the motive power of Nature into the service of faith, imagining the tempestuous air as the resistless force which bears their petitions to Heaven. As the sea wave washes the Manakarnika ghâat, the sanistum sanctumum of Benares, and the chief place of pilgrimage. Below it lies the Cremation ghâat, black with the increasing mass of charred human dust round the ever-burning funeral pyres which are kept alight by ghoul-like figures of the lowest Hindu caste. Some of the smouldering logs are surrounded by mourners rocking to and fro as they watch the lurid flames, and many of the dead are undergoing their preliminary steeping in the Ganges. The fire from which the pyres are lit is the monopoly of a man who, though of lowest caste, is one of the wealthiest citizens. Upright stone monuments of former "Satâs" sacrificed here rise from the blackened ashes, and, as we watch the grim scene, a few bones are raked from the burning embers into a basket and thrown into the Ganges, when another body is placed beneath the wood, and the feet covered by the scarlet cloth which bound them when plunged into the river.

The slender minarets of Aurrungzebe's mosque soar above the temples and vanish in aerial pinacles which seem to prick the hot blue sky. Though the plain whitewashed interior offers no point of interest, the view from these lofty minarets repays the toilsome ascent. The irregular streets and crowded ghâats of the city at our feet look like moving ribbons of gorgeous colours. Straw penthouses and red or orange umbrellas lean over flower-stalls, and shelter intending bathers from the sun. Blossoms and lamps float on the water, offerings to Gange, or tributes of affection to the
blessed dead whose ashes rest in the cleansing tide. On the alluvial plain of the Ganges, dark forms move about a pink field of Persian roses, gathering the petals from whose the famous atar is distilled. Green rice fields and yellow-flowered dál alternate with plantations of Indigo, "bluest of things green, greenest of things blue," protected by hedges of castor oil plants, a line of white poppies on the horizon marks the beginning of the opium district. Beyond a cluster of thatched huts under plumpy palm-trees, the ruinous mounds of Sarnath, and the round tower wherein Buddha turned the Wheel of the Law, break the monotony of the level landscape with mementoes of the time when the presence of the great native reformer consecrated the city which now rejects his teaching. The sacred peepul-tree before the gate of the mosque is enclosed by a dense multitude, muttering their mantras with painful monotony as they walk round the gnarled trunk in the flickering light and shadow of the featherly leaves.

We descend to the Temple of Bairamath, the invisible city magistrate who rides upon an equally invisible dog. Packs of dogs are fed daily at the temple gates, and a polite Brahmin waves a fan of peacock's feathers over our heads as a safeguard from the assaults of demons, before conducting us to the tank behind the shrine. This marble bath is regarded as the goal of the sacred pilgrimage, and every Hindu who completes the circuit of the holy city crowns the feat by a final plunge into the muddy waters dedicated to the ghostly guardian of mysterious Benares.

Our own pilgrimage is over, and we take a farewell glance at the religious capital of India from the grand railway bridge which spans the Ganges, and links Benares with modern thought and western progress. Our desultory ramble may not prove wholly unprofitable if we learn thereby a deeper sympathy with those spiritual aspirations of our common humanity, which, like seeds buried beneath a weight of earth, shoot upward through the surrounding darkness towards the unknown light of Heaven.

MURTY MULLIGAN'S REVENGE.
A COMPLETE STORY.

When the tide is in, the great Atlantic is not a stone's throw from the village street. If you stood at the door of Patrick Casey's "general" shop, you could see the boats, fastened to the black stakes that leaned in the sloping shingle, rising and falling to the music of the tiny waves that drummed against their bows. At low tide they lie still, lolling on the golden sand with its patches of red-brown gravel showing here and there; and the long damp seaweeds, that seem to stretch their brown and amber arms in longing to the receding ocean, make all the air pungent and refreshing. It is a little place—Gurtheen—standing, as it were, with its feet in the water; a little place that holds many a friend of mine—men, ay, and women too, of no high rank, but with simple, kindly, human hearts. I was the son of the doctor who served the tumbledown dispensary, with its green bull's-eye window-panes and little red blinds. It was whitewashed within and without, and its low window-sill made a comfortable baking place for the loiterers, for it occupied a prominent place in the village, between Casey's "general stores" and Hennessey's public-house. I can remember nothing of my mother but the soft, cool touch of her hand on my head once, when I was a child and very ill. Sometimes I fancy that I remember her voice, but I think it is only a voice heard in some dream that I cannot remember. Yet, perhaps, it is hers all the same. They say my father never was quite the same after my mother died. He devoted his whole life to the healing of his sick, and helping every one he could, except me, his son, whom he left to his old housekeeper and the village schoolmaster. And so I grew up, "the pore dother's goosoon," pitied and made much of by the warm-hearted peasants. I shared their sorrows with them, and they strove to share their joys with me, with a respect and tacit delicacy that kept the social inequality well defined; for my father was of good family, and I always had my rights as "wan av the ould shocht."

Now, as I sit by my cosy fire of an evening with the curtains drawn to keep out the London fog, nothing rests me so much after the long day of office work as the memories of that little corner in Ireland where my childhood and boyhood were spent. Gazing into the glowing coals, I let my pipe go out, and once more stand, in fancy, on the top of Mount Corrin, which rises behind the village. Looking northward, away from the sea, there is the bog—the bog of Tinnimuck—stretching away, away in the sunset, till the land grows
green again, and the furze-clad hedges and grey stone walls that sharply define the green fallow and brown pebblyland make the distant slopes look like some huge chessboard. Behind all, the hills of Kerry —Mangerton and The Paps—are a darker blue against the glorious blue of heaven. And there, too—there, still more faint and blurred—is the jagged summit of the Devil's Punch Bowl. How beautiful it all is! How the amber beams of the dying sunlight blend with the rich tones of the vast stretch of brown! Here and there the ricks of turf stand black by the black pools, and with the great patches of rich dark brown show in bold relief against the tan, where the ground is drier; and, last the picture may be too sombre, the burnished gorse and purple heather have come to dwell on the little hillocks that raise their heads, high and low, above the damp peat. As the pale rays slant athwart the brown, a purple haze hangs over all, but it does not conceal the tiny dots of scarlet that move below, where some thrifty peasant has pinned up her skirt before she fills a creel with the rough sods.

Then I turn to look seaward, out over the chimneys almost hidden by their soft blue smoke, where the houses huddle together down below. The vast plain of water, violet-hued in the darkening light of evening, is deserted, save for a brown sail or two where a fisher from Berehaven or Bantry creeps along home. How costly the village nestles at the margin of its haven Mount Corrin, on which I stand, towers at its back; while to the right and left the hills of Corrigeen and Corrigmore rear their great brown bracken-covered bulwarks, that shelter both the village and its little harbour. There lie the fishing fleet, almost at their owners' doors; not much of a fleet indeed—half-a-dozen clumsy black boats, two punts, and Doolan's cutter.

The last, a sombre marine antiquity, was the chief source of income to her owner. She made sluggish expeditions to Berehaven or Bantry, coming back with a cargo of slate, flour, or artificial manure, to be retailed by Patrick Casey. When fully manned her crew consisted of Mike Doolan, master and owner; Mrs. Doolan, his wife; Mickey Doolan, his son, aged fourteen; and "Boxer," Mickey's dog, an unscrupulous yellow terrier with ears that didn't match, and only half an inch of tail. That dog always sneaked about as if he were "wanted," and kept his wretched little appendage tucked tightly down, as if he feared that such a strongly-marked feature would identify him and lead to his arrest. Mike Doolan was a little man with one eye—he lost his eye when he got the cutter—but there is a story about it.

I remember him a wiry young fellow with black hair and two piercing black eyes. He lived in a little shanty—where, indeed, he still lives—half-way up the hill of Corrigeen on the west side of the haven, and there he managed to support himself and his old mother by working as a day labourer here and there, and keeping a few sheep on his bit of land. Then Mike fell in love, and loved Norah Daly with all the intensity and jealousy of his Celtic temperament. But big Murty Mulligan loved her too, with equal intensity and more jealousy. They had been sworn friends, these two who now were rivals. Together they had plodded barefoot to the low, whitewashed National school at the east end of the village, and together they had protected and made much of little Norrie Daly, their schoolfellow, who trotted between them in the whitest of plincores and a little scarlet cloak. But it was the raw love of boyhood then; now it was the mature love of manhood, with its wild longing for sole possession.

Norah lived in a tiny cottage on the hillside about two miles from Garthess, where she kept house for Owen Daly, her grand/father, an old man bedridden by age and rheumatism. They were very poor, for there was no one to dig the bit of land, and labour was dear. But the work was well done, nevertheless. Old Daly's potatoes were never a day later than those of his neighbours, and his oats were always threshed and stored before the weather broke.

"Sure ould Daly hav ne'er a wan at all to do a han's turn fur him," Mike would say when I accosted him in the dim evening light, stealthily hastening up Corrigeen, with a shovel or a scythe on his arm.

Another evening it would be Big Murty Mulligan, who strode up the hill with his flail or his spade slung across his shoulder.

"Tis late you are going to work, Murty!"

"Why then it is that, yer honour," Murty would answer with a sheepish smile. "But there's an ould man above here—mebbe ye've heard av him—wan Daly; an' 'tis in the bed he is all his time, wid pains in the bones av him; an', sure, 'tis as good for me to give him a han' now an' thin."

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On these occasions Big Murty always spoke as if old Daly were a mere casual acquaintance, whom, probably, I did not share with him; and I liked him for this little conceit. Well he knew that Owen Daly and I were old friends, but in his eagerness that his services to the old man should pass unnoticed lest they should in any way be connected with Norah, he persistently ignored my acquaintance with the little household on the hill, and never mentioned the girl he was serving for. So, for many a day, the old man lived in comparative luxury. All the reward his willing workmen sought was half an hour's chat by the turf fire, while Norah sewed next the candle at the window. They never met, these two men—at least, not at first.

Once, when driving out of the village in the dusk—for my father would take me to distant sick calls to hold the mare—we met Mike slouching down the hill carrying his spade, and with only a surly "good night" to fling to us.

Later, as we passed Daly's, there was Big Murty in his shirt-sleeves, digging briskly in the growing light of the moon, and lifting a verse from "Lannigan's Ball." I knew then that he had forestalled his rival; and felt sorry for Mike, who was my favourite. But on another evening it was Big Murty who flung past, trying to conceal a pair of shoes beneath his flannel wrapper, and afterwards I had a glimpse of Mike on his knees by Daly's turf rick, busily stripping the wool from a struggling sheep by the light of a bear-eyed lantern. He had won the race that time.

It was on a misty October evening that I saw them next, as I took a short cut over Corrígmore Hill, and came out by Daly's borrow. There they were—both of them—storing turnips in a pit at the end of the yard. I stayed awhile to chat with them and watch them. They didn't speak to each other except to suggest or recommend something connected with their work; and then their eyes never met as they took counsel concerning the business in hand with an appalling solemnity.

Once Norah came to the cottage door. Instantly they both raised their eyes to look, but turned them on each other at once—each to see if the other saw—then ashamed of being mutually convicted of spying, their heads fell over their work again, and were not raised until the girl had disappeared indoors. Though I was only a boy in my "teens," I was so struck by this little scene that I have never forgotten it; and, at the time, I realised as far as a boy can realise such things, how deeply these men felt. After that I often managed to pass old Daly’s of an evening, and now I can piece together the glimpses I had of the tragedy that was working itself out with Mike Doolan's story, and was told me long years after.

Days, weeks, and months sped by, but if ever there were need of the work of men’s hands at the little homestead on Corrígmore, there were the two figures—one big and burly, the other small and slight—plying spade, scythe, or flail in the dust. There was a tacit agreement finally, so I learned, that when there was work to be done "above," one or both would be there as soon as their own work set them free.

"Above" was the little cottage on the hill, and by that term it always went on the rare occasions on which either had to mention it to the other; to everybody else it was the usual "old Owen Daly’s." They spoke not a word of love to Norah, who would sit demurely sewing or knitting when old Owen had one of them in—they never were in the cottage together—to rain thanks and blessings on the head that cared less for all the benisons of the saints of Heaven than for one glance of one woman of earth; and that a slight, barefooted girl, who was herself all she could bestow on any man.

"Lord love ye," the old man would say, "'tis ye’re good to the pore! Heaven’ll give ye yer reward, for 'tis for the love av Heaven ye dig the bit av land widout. Divil a wan o’ me that can give ye anythinc, an’ 'tis ye that knows that same!"

Then the hypocrite at the hearth would bend his guilty head lower, and steal a sidelong glance at the long black lashes, which on these occasions were never raised to unveil the deep grey eyes.

And so they waited. Owen Daly was old and feeble, but, as long as he lived, so long would his grandchild dwell with him, his only comfort and the dearest thing in the world to him. It was no use for the boys to walk to and from mass with pretty Norah, or look in on a Sunday, uncomfortably splendid in their best coats and ravishing ties. In vain was their respectful deference to "Mister Daly, sir"; of no avail their anxious enquiries, "An’ how are ye gettin’ the health agin, this fine weather?" The simple-hearted old man gratefully made suitable reply, and gra-
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amongly recounted the symptoms of the past week, calling on his granddaughter to bear witness to the truthful record of the same and to the gratifying sympathy with which it was received. Sometimes a neighbouring farmer would come in deadly earnest to seek encouragement in his wooring from the maiden on the hill, and, at such a crisis, a strange instinct never failed to bring Mike and Big Marty on the spot. Then they combined their forces, and joined to rout the invader. Should he linger for a whole day, he would never get a chance of seeing the object of his visit alone, and rarely managed even to include her in the conversation, for one or other of his rivals never left his side, while both displayed a marvellous resource of conversational power in his honour. Thus, wooded covertly on all sides but openly on none, pretty Norah Daly went about her duties demurely from day to day. Big Marty Mulligan would have readily sought his fate at her hands, had he any hope of her deserting her grandmother, or of the latter leaving his old home to dwell with a son-in-law; for hadn't Marty a cottage with a stairs in it—a real stairs, not a ladder—and two acres and a quarter of land, besides the cutter that lay below in the haven beneath Mike Doolan's cottage? Marty was well off, with no one but his old mother to provide for, and a little money in the bank at Bantry. He was a fine fellow, too, and many a girl would be proud to have such a man to take her to mass and fairs, though his hair was more red than brown, and his eyes might have been a deeper grey. But while Marty had himself, and the land, and the cutter, and the cottage with the stairs to offer; Mike Doolan had only himself, a shanty with no stairs—for there was nowhere to go up except the thatch—and one big, bare, stony field. Mike would brood over this difference in their fortunes when he came out of his door in the morning, and the first thing he saw was Big Mulligan's cutter, with her great brown sail with the patch of dirty white in the middle, flapping lazily in the breeze at his very feet. Many an oath did Mike, in the bitterness of his heart, launch down the rocky side of Corrigeen Hill, at the cutter that rested on the water like a great moth drying the dews of night from its brown wings. Why did he persist in thinking of Norah Daly? Sure, when the old man died, Big Marty would have no bother at all, only to take her by the hand and carry her off to the priest. And what could he say? Nothing at all, except that he'd give the blood of his heart for her—always; yes, even though she married Marty! But that would be no use since he hadn't the money.

Nevertheless, with all his philosophy, Mike went on loving and slaving for the girl. So did Marty. It was the old story, only there were two Jacobs serving for the one Rachel, and the end was to be sooner. For one morning—when the usual little knot of loiterers basked in the sun at the dispensary window—some one lounged up with the news that Owen Daly was dead. Big Marty and Mike were there at the time, but when the rest murmured their regret and recalled the virtues of the dead man, they said not a word; only their eyes met for one instant, and each read in the burning look of the other a declaration of war; then, with some muttered excuse, they left the talkers and went their different ways. They met again that night at the cottage on the hill, where Owen Daly was being waked by his friends and neighbours. For many a day they had not been under the roof together, and now they sat; one on each side of the still, seated figure: staring into the glowing turf fire, and never raising their eyes except to throw a glance, full of pity, at the slender figure bowed in an agony of grief where the head of the dead man lay. As the night grew the little cottage filled with a sympathising crowd of men and women, and whisperers grew bolder until the room was a buzz of conversation; but still the two men sat motionless, each striving to look into the future and binding himself by all the oaths he knew to accomplish his end by means fair or foul.

All through that night and the next they sat, torn by passions and racked by conflicting hopes; while between them the dead body, in which like passions and like hopes had once dwelt, now lay resting—cold and still—a grim contrast to the living. On the third day was the funeral, and after that things went on as usual, only it was known in the village that, within a week, pretty Norah Daly was leaving the place, to live in Macroom with an aunt who had come to bury "old Owen," and still stayed with her niece. Then the two men knew that they must know their fate immediately, or lose all hope for ever.

It was the fourth night after the funeral when Mike buttoned his coat to withstand
the driving rain, and, with his teeth set, stepped out of his cottage into the darkness. His mother covertly watched him go without showing the slightest interest in his movements until the door closed behind him, and then, in a moment, she was on her knees before the little crucifix that hung over the settle, wildly entreat ing the Blessed Mother for her son's safety and welfare.

Meanwhile, Mike strode down the hill, through the village, and up the hill of Corrigmore, taking a longer path along the edge of the cliff that went sheer down to the beach below, for he wished that no one might know of his visit. The rain had stopped now, and the moonlight came fitfully through the clouds that were hanging southward, trundled down the sky. Half-way round the hill Mike turned to climb the slope, that, descending on the other side, he might approach the cottage from the back. As he faced the hill, a figure appeared on the summit, hurrying down the very path he was to take, and by the light of the moon, which at last had found an opportunity of giving the earth all its rays, Mike recognised the broad shoulders and swinging gait of Big Murty Muligan.

He paused where he was, on the edge of the cliff where, thirty feet below, the dripping rocks and slimy gravel stones like sliver in the silver light; and, farther out, the great Atlantic leaped madly up the beach to drag the screaming shingle down. Not until he was within a few paces of the stationary figure did Big Murty seem to see it. Then he stopped short, and flinging his hat to the back of his head, wiped the perspiration from his brow with the back of his hand, and Mike saw that he was pale as death, while his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

"'Tis late ye're walking out," said Murty, staring full into the other's face.

"No lather than yerself," answered Mike, returning the stare defiantly.

"An' mobbe now," said Murty sarcastically, "I might make so bold as to glis where ye're goin'!"

"That's no business at all av ye're, Murty Muligan," said Mike shortly— moving as if to continue his way. But Big Murty stepped in his path, his eyes flashing from beneath his scowling brows, and his clenched teeth showing white between his lips. For a minute they faced each other in the moonlight, while their deep breathing came faster and louder, and the storm of passion that was rising in their breasts grew stronger and fiercer till it held complete mastery over both. "Why should I let ye come or go?" blessed Murty at length, as if talking to himself.

"I tell ye let me pass," said Mike fiercely, stepping forward and roughly shoving his opponent. But Big Mulligan hardly stirred; he only leaned forward to peer more closely into the other's face, with eyes that yet seemed to glare at nothing — and grasping Mike's uplifted arm like a vice, again he hissed softly to himself: "Why should I let ye come or go?"

For a moment they stood thus, fierce hatred burning in their eyes, Jill the sea seemed calling to them to strike, the wind screaming to them to kill, and all the night cried murder!

Then they closed and sought each other's throats. To and fro in the moonlight they swayed and stumbled, breathing in long labouring sobs, striving and straining each to get the other down in the grass, where he might kneel on his chest and strangle his life away with both hands. Now the bigger man prevailed, now the smaller, and the end was far from near when Murty managed to snatch his sailor's knife from its leather sheath, and struck his opponent prone on the grass, with the blood that looked black in the moonlight gushing from his temple. The sight of the dark stream on the white face half buried in the grass, and the warm sticky dampness on his fingers, made Big Murty almost mad. He kicked the prostrate form savagely twice, and then, with a wild excited cry, flung away the weapon, and stooping down seized the foot of the unconscious man to drag him to the edge of the cliff, which was but a few yards off. He dragged him to the very edge, and stooping lower, exerted all his strength to cast the body down on the rocks beneath. But Mike's coat had caught in something—a stump of furze, perhaps—and with an oath, Muligan lent all his strength to another attempt. The next moment there was a hoarse cry, and Big Murty Muligan fell backwards over the cliff, Mike Doolan's boot firmly grasped in both his hands. A sickening thud on the rocks below, and a groan that was lost in the roar of wind and sea, and the fray was over.

In the early morning some fishermen, taking a short cut to the shore, found Mike...
Doolan lying with his head in a great crimson stain on the grass. They raised him pitifully, and were bearing him away when some one, catching sight of the signs of the struggle that showed in the trampled turf, peeped curiously over the cliff, and drew back immediately with an oath half smothered with horror. After a shrinking glance at the awful object below, four of the party hastened down to the beach by a steep zigzag path further on. With bated breath and dry lips they raised Big Murty, telling each other in whispers that there had been "bad work between them two, an' 'twas the way Mike Doolan, Heaven forgive him, threw Big Murty over — rist his soul this night!" For they thought Murty was dead, while Mike still breathed.

Mulligan's cottage was nearest, and thither they bore the two men. A crowd seemed to spring up immediately round the low doorway, and half-a-dozen eager messengers sought the priest and doctor—the latter of whom, my father, reached the spot first, just in time to help to hold Murty's mother, who struggled to wreak her vengeance on the prostrate form of Mike Doolan. When the room was cleared of all save the priest and the old woman weeping by her son's head, feebly wiping the blood from his lips with the hem of her apron, and lovingly murmuring to him as if she saw before her, not the stalwart form of a man, but the baby she had nursed thirty years before — my father made his examination. Soon the verdict was known. Big Murty was suffering from internal injuries that would probably prove fatal, though he might recover consciousness before the end; while Mike was safe, except that he would never use one of his eyes again.

Presently the door was opened to a peremptory knock, and Mike's mother was kneeling by him, while an astute-looking police sergeant whispered with Father Murphy. Fortunately the two women did not meet, for Big Murty lay on his bed in the inner room, while Mike was propped up on the settle in the kitchen. The day woman, and still the watchers watched. The good priest waited that he might be at hand to drive the dying man when consciousness returned, and the officer in the hope of obtaining a deposition from him in the presence of my father, who was a magistrate. At last, with a great sigh, Big Murty Mulligan opened his eyes, and feebly tried to spit the blood from his mouth, and the sergeant bestowed Mike, who sat in silence by the turf fire, into the sick-room.

"Have ye anny charge to make again this man?" asked the officer, as Mike stood sullenly gazing from his bandages at his foe. Murty turned his head slowly to look at him, and when their eyes met a scowl settled on his features, and he seemed about to speak; but the priest, who knelted by his side, whispered something to him, and the scowl changed to a look of awe. From one to the other he looked, the awe and evil striving for mastery in his face, until at last he turned his face wearily to the wall and muttered:

"Lev me be awhile."

For nearly ten minutes no one stirred, and the silence was only broken by the low wailing of the mother and the muttered prayers of the kneeling priest. Then Big Murty turned his head slowly back and looked Mike full in the face with a scowl of intense hatred. Struggling to speak, he raised his clenched right hand on high to denounce his hated rival; but his mother, raising her head from the pillow, saw only the hand stretched above his head, and silently drawing a little crucifix from her bosom, put it into the tightly locked fingers that mechanically opened to clutch it. When he held it he glanced upwards, and again the awe filled his face, and he slowly drew it down until it was before his eyes. It was a little black cross, carved from bog oak, on which hung the body of the dead Christ, and as the dying man gazed at it, all the evil fled from his face, and great tears forced themselves from his swollen lids. For a minute he lay thus, until a great sob tore his bosom, and, kissing the cross, he looked up with eyes that were softened and sad, yet not altogether sad, and, speaking with a painful effort, said in a low, husky voice:

"Mike Doolan mustn't be bleasme furthis. 'Twas all me that done it to myself. Mikey, boy, will ye forgive me before I go!"

At the first words Mike's face showed nothing but surprise, but when he heard the broken voice calling him by the old name he had not heard since they were boys together, he flung himself on his knees by the bedside with a choking cry, and seized the great brown hand that was extended to him.

"Whist, Murty, avic," he cried; "sure I had murther in me heart, I had."

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"Have ye anny charge to make again this man?" asked the officer, as Mike stood sullenly gazing from his bandages at his foe. Murty turned his head slowly to look at him, and when their eyes met a scowl settled on his features, and he seemed about to speak; but the priest, who knelted by his side, whispered something to him, and the scowl changed to a look of awe. From one to the other he looked, the awe and evil striving for mastery in his face, until at last he turned his face wearily to the wall and muttered:

"Lev me be awhile."

For nearly ten minutes no one stirred, and the silence was only broken by the low wailing of the mother and the muttered prayers of the kneeling priest. Then Big Murty turned his head slowly back and looked Mike full in the face with a scowl of intense hatred. Struggling to speak, he raised his clenched right hand on high to denounce his hated rival; but his mother, raising her head from the pillow, saw only the hand stretched above his head, and silently drawing a little crucifix from her bosom, put it into the tightly locked fingers that mechanically opened to clutch it. When he held it he glanced upwards, and again the awe filled his face, and he slowly drew it down until it was before his eyes. It was a little black cross, carved from bog oak, on which hung the body of the dead Christ, and as the dying man gazed at it, all the evil fled from his face, and great tears forced themselves from his swollen lids. For a minute he lay thus, until a great sob tore his bosom, and, kissing the cross, he looked up with eyes that were softened and sad, yet not altogether sad, and, speaking with a painful effort, said in a low, husky voice:

"Mike Doolan mustn't be bleasme furthis. 'Twas all me that done it to myself. Mikey, boy, will ye forgive me before I go!"

At the first words Mike's face showed nothing but surprise, but when he heard the broken voice calling him by the old name he had not heard since they were boys together, he flung himself on his knees by the bedside with a choking cry, and seized the great brown hand that was extended to him.

"Whist, Murty, avic," he cried; "sure I had murther in me heart, I had."
"’Twas me that vexed ye," said the other slowly; "an’ I’d have kilt ye then, ony fur the boot av ye comin’ off in me han’s, glory be to God."

"Haul, hauld, Murty, dear," sobbed Mike, with his head bowed low over his friend’s hand. "Don’t ye shaphe like that. Sure God knows ‘ts I had murther in me heart. Tell me ye have me forgiven, now!"

"Tis ye that must tell that to me; ’twas I that vexed ye," repeated Murty. "Listen till I tell ye," continued he slowly. "I was comin’ back from the cottage when I met ye. Ye know what carried me there. Well, she towd me I had ne’er a chance at all wid her, and whin I got mad, an’ ripped out a curse at ye, she up an’ bid me git out av her sight altogether; an’ thin I knew ’twas ye was the man, an’ be the time I met ye on the cliff I was purty nigh mad, God forgive me."

"Sure He will, He will. God is good."

"Wait awhile; there’s worse than that," said Murty feebly, wiping the bloody froth from his lips with the back of his hand. "Whin I opened me eyes here," he went on, after a pause, "an’ seen ye standing be the fut av the bed, the divil took hould av me agin, an’ I knew if I towd thin that ye threw me down on the beach to murther me, that ye’d swing fur it sure, an’iver git her ather all. I made up me mind to accuse ye before thin all, an’ I lying there wid me face to the wall; but whin I turned to tell the lie, wid me flat up to hiven—God forgive me—I found the little crucifix in me han’s; an’ whin I took a look at it, an’ seen the blessed Jesus wid his pate arms stretched out to save us all, I—sure I couldn’t do it—praise be to God, I couldn’t do it."

There was a pause for a moment. Every one was now kneeling round the narrow bed.

"Give us a sup of cold wather, Mikey, boy," gasped Big Murty. "I’m dyin’ now, an’ before I confess I want to make a will. Ye haven’t much to support a wife, Mike, but I’ll put ye in the way av it—please God. Will ye be so kind, sor," turning to my father, "as to write down on a bit av paper that Murty Mulligan wills the cutter below in the bay to Michael Doolan, an’ all that’s in her, along wid the two ounces av tobacco that’s hid under a bucket benathe the tiller av her; an’ keep her head a thrife to the starboard, Mike, whin the wind’s behind ye; she have a bad warrant to go astiright."

Many a year has sped since the dying man sought to make reparation at the last, but if you stand in the breezy graveyard on a Sunday morning you will see the cutter below at her old moorings, resting after the week’s work; and, when first mass is over, there are always two figures—a man and a woman—kneeling by yonder grave—praying for the soul of Big Murty Mulligan.
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
By Esmé Stuart.
Author of "Joan Viland," "A Woman of Forty," "Estelle of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV. TRUE TO HER WORD.

Not for an instant did it occur to Penelope to rebel. She had come to do her uncle’s bidding, indeed she had unconditionally agreed to do it, but she had made herself believe that inclination and duty were hencforth to walk hand in hand. Only a minute ago she had been intensely happy, and her whole nature had risen to meet that other nature so much nobler, so much grander than her own; and then with his few words her uncle had shattered her dream castle.

"Philip Gillbanks — Mr. Bethune’s friend!" she said absently. "Does he understand?" She was forcing herself to be calm and to speak without betraying emotion.

"Oh, yes, he is desperately in love with you. It was love at first sight, he says, and he will fulfil all the conditions I impose."

"I have had other offers, uncle. Is he the best? Forgive me for asking you, but he is not well born." Her voice was hard now, but perfectly calm.

"No, but a lion who is caught in a net must stoop to accept the help of the mouse to nibble away the string. It will not be the first time. Besides, the other offers, Penzie, were from men of rank certainly, but all were either poor or extravagant. They wished to make you their wife because of your beauty. Philip Gillbanks loves you for yourself; the rest we must overlook."

Penzie was silent for a moment, and her uncle continued:

"I wish he had been born a Bethune and had possessed the Gillbanks money. Mr. Bethune is a mere beggar in comparison, and, besides, he is bitten with that Radical nonsense. By the way, he is upstairs, you said. I don’t want to see him yet, I am busy. Can you get rid of him?"

"Oh, yes, uncle, certainly. We can lunch alone."

Penelope looked at her uncle, and suddenly she noticed that his handsome face looked haggard, and that his right hand shook a little as he opened the door for her. "He is in trouble," she thought. "He has done this for me, for us. What is the luck that has turned?" As she slowly walked upstairs the truth flashed into her mind. Her uncle had earned this money by gambling; the money that had brought her into this charmed circle of society and had caused her to know Forster was won at play!

Should she rebel? But no, a Winkeall had never broken faith; perhaps her uncle might be disgraced, he, the noblest and best Winkeall—that must never happen.

As she reached the head of the stairs Penelope Winkeall felt herself transformed. She had descended them with a beating heart, ready to love and to be loved, ready to be moulded by the man who had called forth her noblest instincts, but now she must be strong in the power of her woman’s will and of her ancient pride. She had come to London determined to marry a rich man. On her arrival this had seemed perfectly easy; she had never thought of dreading it; it was only now that the sacrifice appeared great and terrible. As a class she despised the “nouveaux riches,” and she must accept one of them as her husband.
She loved Forster because he was a leader among men, and she despised Philip, his friend, because he was a mere disciple. She found now that she must marry him because he was rich, and her vow compelled her to obey.

She must obey, and an evil spirit seemed to enter into her very soul as she clenched her hand and repeated to herself:

"I must marry Philip Gillbanks, but I shall never love him. I can love but one man."

She opened the door and walked up to Forster Bethune, who was standing where she had left him. He was gazing out of the window in an absent manner, evidently seeing nothing that passed till Penzie's footstep roused him.

She held out her hand. She wanted to feel his touch once again, the touch that was magical and which made her his slave.

"Penelope—have you really come back to work with me?"

"No," she said, "I have come back to say that I cannot do it. I thought just now that I could, but—it cannot be."

Forster Bethune seemed to wake up suddenly from his dreamy happiness. He was so much accustomed to succeed, and to carry conviction with him, that this sudden change was more than he could understand.

"But just now—you said—"

"I spoke without thinking! I feel that your work is beyond me, and that, that—forgive me, Mr. Bethune, for a moment's mistake."

A flash of anger spread over Forster's handsome face. He looked very noble, and the pride of birth came out now in spite of himself.

"You spoke of money just now. Have you found out that I am not rich enough?"

He was very scornful in his tone.

Penelope saw now that her only defence was the old pride which towards him was only assumed.

"It is true. You forget that your wife must have more money than the wife of a cabman. I must marry a rich man."

"Then I was mistaken in you," he said, his eyes flashing contempt. "Your beauty has given you strange power over men, but you will some day—"

"You need not prophesy," she said in a low, bitter tone; and then she saw that he was gone, and that she was quite alone.

"If I had known, if I could have guessed," she thought, sinking down into a chair and pressing her burning eyeballs.

Suddenly the door opened again, and a servant entered to tell her lunch was ready.

Penelope waited only one minute to look in the glass. She was surprised to see that she was not changed. There was the same face she was accustomed to see; she was still the same outwardly, whilst inwardly she knew she was another being. She had loved, but she had voluntarily given up the man she loved.

She found her uncle waiting for her.

"I think, child, you had better know in case you hear anything. Lord Farrant has got me out of my difficulty; he has lent me the sum necessary to pay my debt of honour, but we must leave town as soon as possible. Gillbanks is coming this afternoon. He very properly asked me if he might see you. Well, we have settled everything; he is most generous. Everything is safe for the future. You have saved your father's house, Penzie."

"I shall do as you tell me," said the girl quietly. "But that other debt, uncle; we must repay it as soon as I am married."

"Yes, as soon as you are married."

"There must be as little delay as possible."

"Yes, I have kept enough to pay off the servants and any stray bills, and then to get back ourselves."

Penelope felt at this moment that nothing she could do could repay this devotion, but the sacrifice required of her was one she had not understood, it was a cruel sacrifice.

"Uncle, if Mr. Gillbanks comes this afternoon, can you see him and tell him I will marry him?"

The Duke looked at his niece, and a faint colour came into his face.

"You must see him yourself, Penelope. He is in every way worthy of you."

"Not by birth. No, I only marry him for his money, and because the house of Winshall needs it."

"But Bethune likes him. He is a good fellow. I hear nothing but praise of him."

Penelope was silent.

"Yes, of course, you must see him. He worships the ground you tread on, as books say. You are fortunate, child. Some men would——"

"You and I quite understand each other, dear uncle; we never pretend. I don't love Philip Gillbanks, but I am going to marry him. He does love me, and he wants to say that he has won me. We know that it is nothing of the sort.
He happens to be richer than—than Mr. Bethune, for instance. If Mr. Bethune had been the richer of the two, I would have married him, that is all."

"Bethune will marry a common person. He has ideas about the people. You must see Gillbanks. He will not expect much from you. You are to have a handsomely settled, and really a most generous allowance. You will want for nothing."

"You mean, uncle, that the estate will be saved?"

"Yes. I must leave you, dear, after luncheon, and go into the City to wind up some important affairs. Mrs. Todd will return to the Farrant's to-day. I have settled it with Lady Farrant, and she understands there is need for speedy departure."

"We shall go back to Bothery," said Penelope. "We seem to have been away such a long, long time. Yes, let's go back at once. London is becoming stiff. I can't breathe here, I can't live here."

The Duke looked at his niece with a strange expression on his face. He had never before seen her so petulant.

"Forgive me, Pensie, for this haste; I could not help it."

In a moment Pensie controlled herself.

"I was only saying that I was glad, very glad, uncle, that we are going home. I know what life is now; I am satisfied."

"You have been a great success."

When her uncle was gone away, Penelope looked round the rooms trying to realise what had happened. She seemed only able to see Forster Bethune standing by the window and speaking with indignation of her conduct.

"I might have been his Princess," she said fiercely, for she was beginning to realise more and more every minute that she could not love any but the one man who had that mysterious power over her.

Mrs. Todd's eager step on the stairs brought her back to mundane ideas.

"Dear Miss Winskell, have you heard that I am obliged to leave you to-day? Dear Lady Farrant says she has spoken to your uncle, and that he has agreed to let me go. She has a young cousin in the house and is suddenly indisposed, and she says I can make everything go, and that I must come. She knows your stay here is short, but I am in despair."

Penelope appreciated Lady Farrant's kindness and tact at this moment.

"Of course, we would not keep you under the circumstances," she said quickly.

"I shall come back the first minute I can, you may be sure; and I hear a little rumour—of course, just the slightest whisper—of something pleasant which has been decided about you."

"Do you mean my engagement?" said Pensie impatiently. "You know I came to London to find a husband."

"Yes, many girls do; but do pray put it less broadly, dear Miss Winskell. It sounds so odd. I must not stay a moment. I shall only pack a few things and send for the others. It is such real happiness to be wanted by one's old friends. There is the telegraph boy. It must be for me. No, it is for your uncle."

Penelope took the orange-coloured envelope and put it on the chimney. It must be about some of her uncle's money worries; doubtless it was of a private nature.

As Mrs. Todd ran downstairs she met Philip Gillbanks in the hall. His face was beaming with happiness, and his radiant expression could not be hidden.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Todd as she got into her cab, "I thought it was Mr. Bethune whom she was going to accept. What a strange girl! Not like any one else I have had to do with. That poor young man will repent at leisure, I expect; but he is rich, and that will please her. What a mercenary woman she is, and as proud as Lucifer! I shall enjoy myself much more with the dear Farrants."

With these words Mrs. Todd shook the dust off her feet and retired to pastures new.

CHAPTER XV. LOVE ON ONE SIDE.

PHILIP GILLBANKS had risen from Hades into the seventh heaven, when he had found his wooing suddenly made so easy for him. He had expected to be repulsed. He knew he was unworthy of this beautiful Princess, but he was very deeply in love. He had fallen in love at the Palace, and the ideal woman he had then mentally created had been always in his mind. He loved Penelope with the unreasoning, absorbing passion of a "preux chevalier." He knew she was proud and not easily to be won, but even Forster, who never flirted or fell in love, had owned that the Princess was not an ordinary type of woman, but that she was one to whom worship must be given, and who was as superior to the sex as she was above the ordinary little artifices common to the female character.
The Duke had bidden him come and woo her in person, and he had almost promised Philip success. He knew that latterly she had been unusually kind and gracious to him; in consequence he had become more hopeful, guarding his secret more jealously, for even to Forster he could not mention it. Indeed, he hardly liked to own to Forster that he must now give him divided love. His belief in Forster's cause was as strong as ever, but his first duty must in the future be his Penelope, that is if he were fortunate enough to win her. If——

But suppose he should not be really accepted by her? Suppose the Duke had been too hopeful? Philip's hand trembled as he said the ordinary "How do you do?" and his heart beat fast when the servant shut the door and retired, leaving him alone with the Princess.

Penelope, on the contrary, was very calm; she held a piece of work in her hands, and, as she sat down, her eyes were bent upon it. She did not help Philip with a look or a word.

"The Duke said I might come and tell you all," he said, after a pause. "From the first moment I saw you I have loved you, and only you. Give me as long a probation as you choose, only give me hope at the end. I know I'm not worthy of you, and I know that my family is not nobly born as yours is, but we have an unblemished name, and we mean to keep it. My father has no other son, and he will agree to anything your uncle or your father may suggest. For myself, I only ask for your love. You have all the love that I can give or shall ever give to a woman, and, Heaven helping me, you shall never know any sorrow that I can keep away from you."

Penelope was silent. At this moment she felt that she hated Philip all the more because his words were noble; she would have been more satisfied had he been worthless, and had she been able to hate him with good reason; but no, Philip Gillbanks was noble-minded and devoted—but he was not Forster. He was willing to sacrifice himself for her good, while Forster, on the contrary, had asked her to sacrifice herself for him.

The pause lasted so long that she felt obliged to speak.

"I want you to know one thing first, Mr. Gillbanks. I shall marry the man who will let me go my own way, who will sacrifice his money for the building up of my home, and who will be satisfied to take me as he finds me, without requiring protestations of affection, which I cannot give. If you accept this, I will be your wife."

Philip was staggered by her words. The feeling that she consented to marry him, and yet only consented in this cold manner, frightened him a little, but the next instant he interpreted her coldness by his own warm feelings. His Princess was not like other women; he had always recognised that fact. She was outwardly proud and cold, but no woman could resist such love as he would give her; he would teach her the meaning of love.

He sat down beside her and took her passive hand. He would have given all his wealth if she had pressed his a little, or shown one sign of love. But no such was visible.

He kissed her hand passionately, and she did not resist him.

"I think I can love enough for two of us," he said, "if only you will accept the gift I give you—my life's devotion and my entire trust. Penelope, do at least believe in that! For without belief in me you cannot become my wife."

"Forster Bethune's friend cannot be untrustworthy," she said, and Philip was too unsuspecting to be struck by this strange answer.

"Thank you; I do owe all that is best in me to Forster. To be with him is to believe in life's best gifts of love and work. You will let me go on with that work even if our home is at Rothery! I have thought it all over, darling. I will show to the world that your husband must be noble in deed if not rich in ancestors. In your dales there are many lives to be made better and happier, all the more, perhaps, because they are not in such abject poverty as are our London people. My wife shall be their true Queen."

"I shall be what I have always been," she said proudly, for Philip's words displeased her. She could not forget that by marrying him she was stooping from her high position.

"Yes, darling, what you have ever been—the beautiful Princess of Rothery. You know I have enough money to gratify any fancy you may have, any wish you may express."

Penzie was wearily wondering how soon Philip would go away, when a ring was heard.

"That is my uncle's step," she said, starting up. "There is a telegram waiting for him which I must give to him."
The Duke’s face had lost its look of sadness, and when he entered the drawing-room and saw that Philip was there, he shook him warmly by the hand.

“Welcome, Gillbanks. I see you found that Penelope was waiting for you. Let me congratulate you, my dear fellow.”

“Indeed, I can hardly believe my happiness,” said Philip, looking shy and disconcerted, “but I shall try to make her life one long ray of sunshine.”

“Rothery will hardly ratify that promise, but you will find that it is not a bad place to live in, after all.”

The Duke was all smiles as he spoke. He opened his telegram and glanced at it, then cast a rapid look at Penelope.

“I must go home at once to Rothery. Look, Penzie, some one sends this telegram—Come at once. What can it be? I do not like leaving you alone. By the way, Gillbanks, will you come with me? Your presence may be necessary, and besides, you must interview the King, though you need have no fear of a refusal from him.”

“Certainly, sir, I can be ready at once, if you like—I wish to be of real use to you,” he added, turning towards Penelope.

“But you must not stay here alone. I am sure Mrs. Bethune would take you in.”

Penzie’s heart gave a leap, but she restrained her wishes.

“No, let me stay here alone, uncle, to pack up, and I will follow you as soon as possible.”

She was glad that this unforeseen interruption to Philip’s courtship had come. He would be out of her sight for a little while. Perhaps, when she saw him again she would have schooled herself to go through her task with true fortitude; but in any case she could not, she must not, go to the Bethunes.

An hour later the house was silent and deserted, and the servants were told to say “not at home” to any callers who might come.

As far as the London world was concerned, the reign of the Princess of Rothery was over. She threw herself on the couch and remained in this position for several hours, trying to kill her love for Forster by forcing herself to see that she could never have lived the life he would have required of her but at the end of her meditation, she said to herself:

“It’s not true, it’s not true, I could have done it all for him! Why did God give me the power of loving this man? Oh, Heaven! I take it away. I never knew what it meant when I played with fire; but I must not be weak. I have pledged myself to obey uncle. I must marry Forster’s poor-hearted disciple. I must, I must! He will build up the house again, and save the Winakells from being swept away from the face of the old dales. They have a right to live there, and a right to rule there. I must do it. If only I could marry him at once—now, to-day—and have done with it. I would if he had not gone away. I must, I must do it, but I shall never love him, never!”

At last she had to rouse herself.

She and Betty began to work hard. The other servants were dismissed, and the house was restored to order before she received a letter from her uncle.

“DEAR PENELope.—We were only just in time to see your brother breathe his last. There was a boat accident on the lake. The craft capsized. Your father was also thrown out, but he managed to swim to the island. Then, not seeing David, he plunged in again to try and save him, but he had struck against a rock, and all is over. Your father is very ill, but he can just give consent to your marriage, which must be gone through at once—for this last misfortune has unlifted your father for further exertions. He sits all day in his chair outside on the terrace gazing at the lake. He cannot forget his fate, and will not attend to business. The estate must be saved at once, for the creditors are already beginning to buzz about our ears. Gillbanks has offered to do the only thing that can be done now—i.e., to buy back the whole place privately, in your name. Nominally all is to go on as usual, but Rothery will, in future, be yours, and not your father’s. I shudder to think that we nearly failed; however, Gillbanks says you are not to be troubled with details. The wedding must be strictly private, on account of your brother’s death. You will want no finery, and no fuss. We were on the brink of ruin, but now we can breathe freely again. You have done a noble work, Penelope, and your reward has already begun.—Your affectionate Uncle,

“GREYBARROW.”

In a dream Penelope Winakell left London, and in a dream she returned to her old home, but she looked upon it now with new eyes. It was the price of
her sacrifice, and this knowledge was at the same time bitter and sweet.

In a week she was to marry Philip Gillbanks quite privately. From respect to her sorrow he had left Rotbery before her return, but he had written her a long letter full of love and devotion, which she did not even read to the end. When she approached her father he looked at her strangely, and then remarked in broken sentences:

"It was to be the girl, after all. You have all your great-aunt's pride, Penelope, and she was a match for the devil. The King of Rotbery might as well be dead, for a stranger is coming here. It is your doing, girl."

"Not a stranger, father," said Penelope, "but the man I am going to marry."

"A man with no pedigree. Ay, ay! A man who can never be your equal!"

STAMBOL Revisited.

STAMBOL at night, in the darkness and gloom, among a labyrinth of lanes and narrow streets, the clue to which we have lost. And here, at the end of a narrow passage, further progress is altogether barred by an iron-grated gate with gilded spikes. A dark, suspicious-looking figure lurks in the angle of the wall; the yelping of dogs is growing louder and louder, as if one of the ferocious packs that haunt the streets of old Stamboul had scentcd out the hated Giaour. Where can we be? Not far, probably, from the Seraglio, and visions of unhappy creatures crammed hastily into sacks and pitched into the Boophorus to drown at their leisure, give a lurid kind of interest to the situation. But the cry of the pack is now eaiser and ferocious, and there is nothing for it but to shake and hammer at the gate on the chance that somebody may be at hand to open it. And then some one discovers a bell-chain, which he tugs at lustily, and which rings a bell a long way off; and at the summons there appears at the grating a huge black porter with a lamp in his hand, the light from which gleams upon a lively of crimson and gold. His white teeth, his glittering eyes, his polished skin, all seem to shine ferociously upon us, as he bawls out what is probably a denial of our right of way.

But after all, what gate is there that judicious backsheesh will not open? Our Mauritanian giant grins from ear to ear as he recognizes the profile of Victoria. He unlocks the gate, and points to a row of twinkling lights at the end of the broad avenue that opens before us. "Yonder is Stamboul Bridge. You know that, sir?"

Yes, we have our bearings now we are among shops, and streets, and glittering cafes, while the murmur of a myriad tongues is heard as the crowd passes gaily to and fro. But as, like Mr. Pickwick after his memorable interview with Dodson and Fogg, we feel a little ruffled by our late adventure, we will follow his example by taking a little refreshment. In the cafe which we entered, and which was quite Parisian in its arrangements, there sat at one of the little tables a pleasant, military-looking man, with grizzled moustache, and a pretty girl, apparently his daughter: no doubt visitors, like the rest of us, to old Stamboul.

"Things are changed," he said, as he offered us a light for our cigarettes, "since I last saw the place at the end of the Crimean War. There were divans then, and you smoked tobibouquets as long as from here to yonder, and a black slave lighted you up with a glowing lump of charcoal from the brazier. And the coffee, with the grounds in it, and the sweet-meats! And you might see the turbaned Turk, with a long beard, squatting majestically in a corner, and the veiled woman peeping at you with glorious eyes. All gone now," said the Colonel, with a sigh.

"But the 'baccy is pretty good still."

"Try von of desse," said a deep voice beside us, and turning round we saw a stout, middle-aged Greek in a red fax, who proffered a handful of cigarettes. "Try von, sar. Try von, ma'maselle," turning to the young lady, who looked a little doubtful.

The Colonel declined stiffly for self and daughter; but the rest of us partook of our new friend's tobacco without misgivings.

The effects of that Greek's cigarettes were very curious. Not poppy, nor mandragora, nor any drugs inside or outside the pharmacopoeia could be credited with just that particular influence. A sort of easy credulity, coupled with a sublime indifference to the limits of time and space, seemed to take possession of our senses. The Greek eyes us keenly, with glittering eyes, entertaining us meanwhile with softly-uttered reminiscences of the former glories of his country; for his country it was and would ever be, as the Ottoman horse were
STAMBUL REVISITED. (March 17, 1862.)

only so many vagabond squatters on the land.

"Gently!" cried the Colonel. "Don't fall foul of our ancient allies."

The Greek smiled bitterly.

"Well, you have seen our beautiful city, as it rises proudly from the sea, the real capital of the Christian world; you have seen the venerable fame of St. Sophia, the earliest and the grandest existing temple of our religion, where now the usurping Moslem pray. Your guide would show you that obscure, dirty square, the Almeidan; where once rose the splendid structure of the Hippodrome, where Emperors themselves would contend in the glittering chariot races. These and a few scattered columns, here and there a few ruined arches, what else is there to show for the innumerable public buildings, the theatres, the baths, the courts of justice, the noble palaces of our Christian Emperors!"

"Well, it's a very picturesque old place," said the Colonel cheerfully, "and I'm much pleased with it. Come, Cortina, I think it's time to take our seats for the show."

What did he mean, that Colonel? Anyway, he politely took his leave, and my companions—we were casual acquaintances who had made a party to explore the city—departed one by one, and left me alone with the Greek. He called himself Manuel—Manuel the third—and when I asked "Why the third?" he replied curtly: "Because the second was dead." And if he meant Manuel the Emperor, no doubt he was right, for the poteniat in question was sending round the hat for the relief of Constantinople, then threatened by the Turks some while Anno Domini 1400, in London and elsewhere, when our domestic affairs were in such a tangle that nothing could be done for him.

An allusion to this drew from Manuel a rhapsody on the ancient glories of his beloved city, the seat of mightiest empire from the days of Constantine, the new Rome, that outshone and outlived its grey old rival; and, rising above the flood of barbaric invasion preserved the laws, the learning, the civilisation of the West, as in a sacred casket. And what scenes the old capital had witnessed, what contrasts and strange dramatic shows! Justinian, the rude peasant's son, with his Empress, the beautiful Theodora, late of the Imperial Circus, but now, in all the glitter and magnificence of royalty, proceeding to their own splendid church of St. Sophia. Belisarius, too, the restorer of an empire, now blind and old, we may see as a mendicant at the gate.

Or we may search for the porphyry chamber in the great palace, where the heirs to the empire were brought into the world, or sometimes summarily dismissed from it, and there we may picture Irene, the great Empress, deaf to the supplications of her own son, condemning him to blindness and a wretched prison, and departing triumphant in her golden chariot with its four milk-white steeds, each led by a patrician of high estate—and yet destined to end her days in a wretched cabin, earning a precarious crust by the labours of the distaff. And now we have an Emperor slain by turbulent soldiers at the very foot of the high altar of St. Sophia, as he keeps the feast of Christmas, and his rival repulsed for that one day only from a death in the fiery furnace of the Imperial Baths, dragged from his prison and enthroned in the seat of empire, with the rusty fetters still clanking about his wasted limbs.

Ah, what plots, what murders, what abominations in the ghastly old city! See yonder woman, splendidly daring and wicked, who marches through parricide and domestic treason to a guilty throne, dragging a wretched lover in her train, and all to perish miserably at last! Or, whirling past the blood and tumult of centuries, we may hear the trumpets of the crusaders at the gates, as they pass on to rescue Jerusalem, and to whiten with their bones the barren fields of Palestine. Or again as the chivalry of France and Flanders and the galleys of Venice come against the hitherto unconquered city, and we see blind old Dandolo the first to mount the breach in the ruined wall.

Our friend Manuel has not much to say about the rule of the Latin Emperors which followed the joint-stock occupation of Constantinople by chivalry and commerce. It all happened more than six centuries ago, but he is still sore about the affair, and prefers to dwell upon the revenge of the Greeks, and how with a handful of men they broke through the Golden Gate and swept the place clear of the Moshul hordes. And then he discourses in a melancholy tone of how the last fatal siege by the Turks was brought about, and the sad end of it when the Moshul swarmed into the Sacred City, and the Sultan spurred his horse over the marble pavement of St. Sophia, and turning at the high altar pronounced over the crowds of fugitives and suppliants the laconic formula..."
of Islam: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his Prophet."

At this point in Mr. Manuel's narrative I fell asleep. The cushions were luxurious, the air, charged with Eastern perfumes and incense, was of a soft and drowsy character, and there might have been some narcotic property in the tobacco—hashshash, perhaps. And I am under the impression that when I was in this somnolent state, my friendly Greek took me by the arm and led me into the street, and I have a vague impression of hearing a musical performance, and passing among brilliantly lighted shops, and finally of being introduced to a number of characters, not unfamiliar by reputation, but whom one would not expect to meet in the flesh.

There was Aladdin in his Chinese wig-wam, assiduously rubbing his wonderful lamp, while its genius, blackest and handsomest of the race, appeared obediently with a banquet of fruits and wine. The fisherman, too, was there by the margin of the enchanted lake, with the brazen vessel that he drew from its depths, and the cloud of smoke, and the huge genie scoured by hope deferred, who promised to assassinate his benefactor (as if he were an editor) for not having brought him out before. We were introduced into the royal kitchen, and saw the magic fish that the fisherman had drawn from the enchanted lake, as they reared themselves upon their tails and saluted the fairy who stepped through the wall. We followed that fascinating legend till we came to the King of the Black Isles, half man and half block marble, who did not seem to take the situation as seriously as you might have expected. And with these were a crowd of other figures as you see things in a dream.

"Now come along, I will show you something," said my guide, as if what I had already seen had been nothing, and he hurried me up the steps of an old battered-looking tower—it was the tower of Galata, he said, that the mail-clad knights of Europe had knocked the polish off, lang syne—and soon we came out upon the battlements and gazed around.

It was full daylight now, and there was old Stamboul lying bathed in sunshine. There was Seraglio Point, the white palace rising among the masses of verdure, the blue Bosphorus, sprinkled with snowy sails, and Sentari shining among the dark cypress groves on the Asiatic shore. Kaiks were shooting to and fro, the masts and flags of the ships, the piratical-looking zebecques, the honest British funnel and iron smout, were all mixed together at their anchorage, the crowd was pouring over the bridges, the sapphire waters of the Golden Horn curved sinuously out of the field of view. Minarets and cupolas without number rose one above the other. You might hear the call of the muezzin from the balcony in the lofty tower.

'Tis the hour when rites unholy
Call each Moslem soul to prayer.

"Very pretty indeed!" It was the voice of the Colonel, who, with his daughter, had joined us on the battlements. "But I should like you to have seen it in 1854."

"Thank you, papa," said Orphina; "what a veteran I should be!"

"See the old barrack hospital over there," continued the Colonel, "and the cemetery where eight thousand of our fellows are lying."

"I wish," said a stout, dignified lady, who was also gazing upon the scene, "that they would put a label on the things, so that you might know what you are looking at."

"A sort of silly sign, ah?" suggested the Colonel. "Not a bad idea; might be carried out in London. 'St. Paul's,' 'The Monument,' in huge letters—against the sky."

During this colloquy Manuel had vanished without leaving a cigarette behind. And abandoned to my own devices, I descended from the tower, and following the general stream of people, I found myself on Stamboul Bridge, crossing among the crowds I had just now watched from the tower. The masts and prows of ships mingled pleasantly with the arches and domes, and arabesques and latticed windows behind which beauty's eyes might be launching dangerous glances. A crowd of kaiks hung about the landing-place, while a tall coloured man in the Sultan's livery was shouting vigorously,

"This way to the boats."

A kaik by all means, and to the hall of the one thousand and one columns by way of the Golden Horn. Other people jump in; the more the merrier, and these are very merry people indeed. They have just been visiting some Pasha's establishment, and are in high delight with the manners and customs thereof.

"Look here, Arabella, how'd you like to set there in that there beautiful 'arem?"
"Not for me," replies Arabella. "Catch me in them pink kick-slylickies! Not but what it's money easily arnt."

The joke seemed to please them all very much, and they laughed till they almost rolled out of the skirt. Our keekee looks over his shoulder and remonstrates in his native tongue.

"Pardonous," cries Harry. "Governor, what do you have them vegetable marrers on the 'andles of your cars for!"

Shade of Albert Smith! Did he not ask that very question in the overland mail, and has it never yet been satisfactorily resolved? But we get a little more solemn as we pass under the dim subterranean arches and float gently into the hall of the columns, with their quaint Byzantine capitals and grand massive alignment.

It is pleasant floating along by mosques and fountains, by delicate Moorish arches and rude cyclopean walls. And it is equally pleasant to wander among the crowded streets; to watch the carpet-weavers at work at their cumbrous looms, and the embroderers stitching in sprays of gold and silver. There are no languishing maidens at the fountain now, shrieking in mock terror as the young Glaser rides by, and after hasty glances to make sure that no turbanned dervish is in sight, dragging forward the most bashful of their band, and snatching the yashmak from her blushing face. The fountain itself is dry, and the languishing maidens are haggard matrons by this time. And where are the Arab steeds at so much an hour, and the troops of dogs that ran snapping and snarling at your heels?

But the pigeons coo softly as they flutter from tower to tower, and the lizards sun themselves on the old crumbling walls. And here is the mosque of some old Moslem saint or sultan, all empty and deserted, with no scowling Believer squatting on the prayer rugs, no guardian or mollah to look for backsheesh, no reader, and no Koran; although everything waits in readiness for the coming of the Faithful.

Pleasant too are the basarbas full of nicknacks, the pretty Greeks who offer cigarettes, the cafes in cool corners, the pretty girls who wait upon you—whether from Smyrna or from Shepherd's Bush.

"What, ain't you coming to see the show, Mister?" cries friendly Harry, seeing his late companion at a loss. "Here you are, Block E, now come along!

And something like a show it is; and if Childe Harold had really been in it, it is a question whether he would ever have come back to his native land. A troop of jingling dervishes would smooth the brow of care itself, and bring a smile to the lips of dull melancholy.

And now there is a shouting of servants and running footmen, a hurly-burly of carriages. Is it that some great Pasha holds a reception? But this is surely very like the Addison Road, and you red omnibus one would swear was going to Hammersmith. Adieu, Stamboul! but au revoir, too, for we mean to find that Greek again, and get a few more of his famous cigarettes.

Scottish Social Life in the Olden Time.

There are some aspects of the past which have an interest for others than the antiquary or psychological student, and a deeper interest, let me add, than that which arises merely from a gratified curiosity. While its romantic and picturesque scenes attract the attention of even the most ordinary observer, its graver features, with their suggestions of weighty truths and valuable morals, appeal to all who are conscious of the strange perversity of the human mind. In fact, as all history is more or less a record of the errors and follies of mankind, those chapters which treat of a past not too remote to engage our sympathies can hardly fail to embody a warning, or a counsel, or an encouragement capable of being utilised by ourselves. Such I take to be the case with certain passages in the social life of Scotland—a social life by no means of great antiquity—which have recently been illustrated by the research of competent enquirers. They show, for instance, to what wild extravagances the credulity of mankind can descend. They show the wide range of the superstitions of the common people, the way in which they coloured their everyday life, the curious manner in which they were mixed up with almost every Incident. And we might be disposed to ridicule, or rather to compassionate the weakness of our forefathers, if we did not remember that the present generation is, unfortunately, not without its follies and ineptitudes also; that we are not yet in a position to assert our entire freedom from the taint of ignorance and credulosity, or to plume ourselves upon our superiority over the generations which have preceded us.

I shall not dwell upon the characteristics
of a Scottish Sabbath, because these have been insisted upon "ad nauseam," and the most has been made by unsympathetic writers of its original gloom and dreariness. Nor need I enlarge upon that strong yearning after knowledge which has always possessed the hearts of the youth of Scotland, nor on that wise and liberal educational system which Scotland owed in a great measure to the sagacity of John Knox. The success which her sons attained in the different departments of literature and commercial enterprise, the arts and the professions, was due to their admirable parish schools, in which the son of the laird sat side by side with the peasant's son, and both received a sound and comprehensive education. For twenty shillings per annum each underwent a careful and thorough training which, if he were a lad of parts, fitted him for entering the University. When the time came for his removal to Aberdeen or Glasgow, thither he trudged on foot, with his little all in a knapsack slung from his sturdy shoulders; and during the "sessions" it was a hand-to-hand fight with poverty which the eager youth gallantly fought while prosecuting his studies with unfailing resolution. I suspect there is little now of that self-sacrifice and dour tenacity which was so common in the student-life of Scotland fifty or a hundred years ago, when a few potatoes and salt herring served for dinner, a basin of porridge for breakfast and supper, and the whole expenditure of the academic year was covered by twenty and even as little as sixteen pounds. Graphic sketches of this lapse and painful transition from knowledge to ignorance are given in two or three of George MacDonald's earlier works, and they are not less truthful than graphic. The present writer knew a minister of the Scottish Church who, in his student days, had earned, by teaching during the winter, the wherewithal to cover the expenses of his college terms, and these expenses had never exceeded eighteen pounds. I am inclined to believe that knowledge was more valued when it was obtainable only at such a cost of self-denial, of patient endurance, of heroic fortitude; and I am sure it was more thorough, and became more entirely a man's own when it was thus arduously wrung, so to speak, from the reluctant goddess by strenuous mental travail and even physical suffering.

A strange world was that of the Scottish peasant in the time of which I write. His hard-headedness and matter-of-fact stolidity are among the commonplaces of superficial writers, who have failed to perceive the wild, original imaginative power that lay beneath the surface, and how close was his contact with the invisible world of fancy; how he loved to feed his mind upon its wonders, on its signs and omens and portents; how thoroughly he believed in its existence, and in its influence upon the fortunes of humanity. From the crede to the grave he went his way, attended, as it were, by the phantoms of this mysterious "other world"—always recognising its warnings, always seeing the shadows which it cast of coming events, and so burdening himself with the weight of what we now call his superstitions, that surely he must have stumbled and sunk beneath it but for that living faith in the Almighty which he derived from his religious creed.

The fire and force of the Scottish imagination are seen and felt in the ballads of Scotland; its fertility is conspicuous in these superstitions—in the folklore of the common people, their traditions and social customs.

Thus, on the birth of a child—to begin at the beginning—it was imperative that both the mother and babe should be "sained"; that is, a fire-candle was carried thrice round the bed, and a Bible, with a hannock or some bread and cheese, was placed under the pillow, and a kind of blessing muttered—"propitiate the good people." Sometimes a fire-candle was set on the bed to keep them off. If the new-born showed any symptom of fractionsness, it was supposed to be a changeling; and to test the truth of this proposition, the child was placed suddenly before a peat-fire, when, if really a changeling, it made its escape by the "lenn," or chimney, throwing back words of scorn as it disappeared. There was much eagerness to get the babe baptised, lest it should be stolen by the fairies. If it died unchristened, it wandered in woods and solitary places, lamenting its melancholy fate, and was often to be seen. Such children were called "tarans."

Allan Ramsay, in his "Gentle Shepherd," describing Mause, the witch, says of her:

At midnight hours o'er the kirkyard she raves,
And hooks unchristened weans out of their graves.

It was considered a sure sign of ill fortune to mention the name of an "unchristened wean," and even at baptism the name was usually written on a slip of paper, which was handed to the officiating minis-
ter; that he might be the first to pronounce it. Great care was taken that the baptismal water should not enter the infant's eyes — not because such a mishap might result in wallings loud and long, but because the sufferer's future life, wherever he went and whatever he did, would constantly be vexed by the presence of weepers and spectres. If the babe kept quiet during the ceremony, the gossips mourned over it as destined to a short life, and perhaps not a merry one. Hence, to excite a cry, the woman who received it from the father would handle it roughly, or even pinch it. If a male child and a female child were baptised together, it was held to be most important that the former should have precedence. And why? In the "Statistical Account of Scotland," the minister of an Orkadian parish explains: "Within the last seven years he had been twice interrupted in administering baptism to a female child before a male child, who was baptised immediately after. When the service was over, he was gravely told he had done very wrong, for, if the female child was first baptised, she would, on coming to the years of discretion, most certainly have a strong beard, and the boy would have none."

I pass on to the honeyed days of "wooing and wedding," and find them prolific of what Brand calls "the superstitious notions and ceremonies of the people.

If a maiden desired to summon the image of her future husband, she read the third verse, seventeenth chapter, of the Book of Job after supper, washed the supper dishes, and rested to bed without uttering a single word, placing underneath her pillow the Bible, with a pin thrust through the verse she had read. On All-hallow Eve various modes of divination were in vogue. Pennant says that the young women determined the figure and size of their husbands by drawing cabbages blindfold—a custom which lingers still in some parts of Scotland. They also threw nuts into the fire—a practice prevailing also in England, as Gay has described:

Two hazel nuts I threw into the flame,  
And to each nut I gave a sweetheart's name;  
This with the lowest bounce me sore amazed,  
That in a flame of brightest colour blazed.  
As blazed the nut, so may thy passion grow.

Or they took a candle and went alone to a looking-glass, eating an apple, and combing their hair before it; whereupon the face of the future spouse would be seen in the glass, peeping over the foolish girl's shoulder. Burns describes another of these charms. "Steal out unperceived," he says, "and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed, I sow thee; hemp-seed, I sow thee; and him—er—that is to be my true love, come after me and pon' thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'come after me and show thee'—that is, show thyself—in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'come after me and hark thee.'"

It is curious to read that the wedding-dress might not be "tried on" before the wedding-day; and if it did not "fit," it might not be cut or altered, but had to be adjusted in the best manner possible. The bride, on the way to church, was forbidden to look back, for to do so was to ensure a succession of quarrels and disasters in her married life. It was considered unlucky, moreover, if she did not "greet" or shed tears on the marriage-day—a superstition connected, perhaps, with that notion of propitiating the Fates which led King Amasis to advise the too fortunate Polycrates to fine himself for his prosperity by throwing some costly thing into the sea.

It was thought well to marry at the time of the growing moon, and among fisherfolk a flowing tide was regarded as lucky. Childermas Day was regarded as singularly unfortunate. Notions and customs such as these were plausible enough, to be sure; but before we measure them thus harshly, we must ask ourselves whether our weddings nowadays are wholly free from superstitious observances; whether we do not still fling old slippers, and another with showers of rice the "happy couple.""

On the occasion of a Northern wedding, the young women of the clachan, with bride-favours at their bosoms and posies in their hands, attended the bride early in the morning. Fore-riders announced with shouts the bridegroom's arrival. After a kind of breakfast, at which the bride-cakes were set on the table and the dram handed round, the marriage ceremony was proceeded with. Then bride and bridegroom went in gay procession to the latter's house, the pipers playing their merriest tunes, and the well-wishers of the wedded pair shouting themselves hoarse. The rest
of the day was spent in dancing and merry-making. If the couple had little stock and less money, they started off next day with cart and horse to the houses of their friends and relatives, and collected doles of corn, meal, wool, or whatever else the generous donors could afford.

It is needless to say that the "last scene of all" was invested with every attribute of grotesque terror which the popular imagination could invent. Before it took place the light of the "death candle" might be seen hovering from chamber to chamber, just as the Welsh see the "frett-light," or "dead man's candle"; the cock crowed before midnight; or the "dead-drap," a sound that broke the silence of the night after that of rooks, falling slow and monotonously; or three dismal and fatal knocks were heard at regular intervals of one or two minutes' duration; or over the doomed person fluttered the image of a white dove. As soon as the spirit had departed, the doors and windows were immediately thrown open, the clocks were stopped, the mirrors were covered; and it was held to disturb the repose of the dead, and to be fatal to the living, if a tear fell upon the winding-sheet. Thus, from the cradle to the grave, superstition and life went step by step together; nor did the former, even at the grave, relinquish its hold upon the minds of men.

Shaw, in his "History of the Province of Moray," records that when a corpse was "lifted," the bed straw on which the deceased had lain was carried out and burnt in a place where no beast could come near it; and it was thought that next morning might be seen in the ashes the footprint of that member of the family who would be the next to depart.

Pennant, in his "Tour in Scotland," relates that, on the death of a Highlander, the corpse being stretched on a board, and covered with a coarse linen wrapper, its friends laid on its breast a wooden platter containing a small quantity of salt and earth, separate and unmixed; the earth as an emblem of the corruptible body, and the salt as an emblem of the immortal spirit. All fire was extinguished where a corpse was kept; and it was reckoned so ominous for a dog or cat to pass over it, that the poor animal was immediately killed. He also describes a very singular custom, to which I have found no reference in any other writer, of painting on the doors and window shutters "white tadpole-like figures" on a black ground, designed to express the tears of the neighbourhood for the loss of any person of distinction.

In a Scotch village the funeral of one of its inhabitants is made the occasion of something very like a general holiday. Every decent villager, whether connected with the family of the deceased or not, puts on his black coat and top hat, and follows the corpse to the grave. Cake and wine are always served before the funeral procession departs.

Witchcraft was associated in Scotland with numerous singular observances. The farmers, to protect their cattle against its malefic influence, placed rowan boughs and sprays of honeysuckle in their byres on the second of May. To preserve the milk of their cows they tied red threads about them, and, when they got the chance, to defend themselves from evil charms, they bled the unfortunate woman whom they supposed to be a witch. No faith was more firmly rooted in the mind of the Scotch peasant in the seventeenth century than the belief in witches and warlocks, and the potency of their enchantments. Everything that went awry, in cottage or barn, in byre or meadow, every disease that affected men and women, every murmur that beset cattle, the scantiness of the crops, the unseasonableness of the weather, was attributed to witchcraft.

A whole country-side would go in terror of the witch's power. In the reign of James the First, who was himself a firm believer in it, Scotland was given over to a mania about witchcraft, and reputed witches were hanged or burnt or drowned in great numbers. Greenside, in Edinburgh, was the scene of many of these judicial murders. In Aberdeen they took place at the market cross. The last execution in the south of Scotland was at Paisley in 1696, when one of the victims, a young and handsome woman, when asked why she did not defend herself with more ardour, replied: "My persecutors have destroyed my honour, and my life is no longer worth the pains of defending."

In the north of Scotland an execution took place as late as June, 1727. But the following instance of credulity is of a still later date. A worthy citizen of Thurso, having for a long time been tormented by witches under the usual form of cats, broke out one day into such a storm of wrath, that one night he attacked them with his broadsword, and cut off the leg of one less nimble than the rest. On taking it up he discovered, to his intense surprise,
that it was a woman's leg; and next morning he discovered its owner in the person of an aged crone, whom his hasty action had crippled for life.

That fancies so wild as these, and habits and practices of such extravagance, should have existed in Christian Scotland among an intelligent population down to a comparatively recent date, might be matter of wonder if we were not aware of the tenacity with which men cling to the "use and wont" of the past. Nor, offensive as some of these may seem from a moral point of view, and trivial as are others, is it wise to treat them too contemptuously. For this at least they help to prove—the difficulty humanity has felt in realizing to itself the idea of a living, personal God and Father, ever watching over the welfare of His children, chastening them for their good, but never refusing them the light of His countenance when they seek Him with faith in the hour of sorrow and darkness. Because unable or unwilling to keep clearly before their minds this consoling and strengthening idea, they have yielded to the follies of superstitious credulity; have put their trust in omens and charms and incantations, and have invented the diablerie of witchcraft, in the vain hope of deciphering the riddles of the future, and averting the blows of destiny. But we must not, as I have hinted, deal too sharply with the follies and fallings of those who have gone before us. We too have our weaknesses, our superstitions; we too make our petty attempts to read the secrets of the coming years, and presume to speculate on the mysteries of the world unseen. We too are slow to remember that God is Love; to remember the Divine Fatherhood, and to put our unfailing trust in His inexhaustible tenderness, His patience, and His ever-watchful care.

**SPRING.**

* As sometime after deathlike swooned  
  The life, that in the strongest cell  
  Of being keeps her citadel,  
  Flows out upon the death around,  
  Flows out and slowly wins again  
  Along the nerve-way's tangled track,  
  Inch after inch her kingdom back  
  To sense of subtly joyous pain;  
  Till he that in the silent room  
  With bent hands chafes her finger-tips,  
  And lays his warm lips on the lips  
  Whose cold hath quenched his life in gloom,  
  Feeds all at once a fluttering breath,  
  And in her hands an answering beat,  
  Feels the faint, far-off pulses best,  
  And knows that this is life from death—

**MRS. RIDDLE'S DAUGHTER.**

Mr. Charles Kempster Writes to Mr. David Christie.

When they asked me to spend the Long with them, or as much of it as I could manage, I felt more than half disposed to write and say that I could not manage any of it at all. Of course a man's uncle and aunt are his uncle and aunt, and as such I do not mean to say that I ever thought of suggesting anything against Mr. and Mrs. Plaskett. But then Plaskett is fifty-five if he's a day, and not agile, and Mrs. Plaskett always struck me as being about ten years older. They have no children, and the idea was that, as Mrs. Plaskett's niece—Plaskett is my mother's brother, so that Mrs. Plaskett is only my aunt by marriage—as I was saying, the idea was that, as Mrs. Plaskett's niece was going to spend her Long with them, I, as it were, might take pity on the girl, and see her through it.

I am not saying that there are not worse things than seeing a girl, single-handed, through a thing like that, but then it depends upon the girl. In this case, the mischief was her mother. The girl was Mrs. Plaskett's brother's child; his name was Riddle. Riddle was dead. The misfortune was that his wife was still alive. I had never seen her, but I had heard of her ever since I was breeched. She is one of
those awful Anti-Everythingites. She won't allow you to smoke, or drink, or breathe comfortably, so far as I understand. I dare say you've heard of her. Whenever there is any new craze about, her name always figures in the bills.

So far as I know, I am not possessed of all the vices. At the same time, I did not look forward to being Auntie all alone in a country house with the daughter of a "Woman Crusader." On the other hand, Uncle Plaskett behaved, more than once, like a trump to me; and, as I felt that this might be an occasion on which he expected me to behave like a trump to him, I made up my mind that I would sample the girl and see what she was like.

I had not been in the house half an hour before I began to wish I hadn't come. Miss Riddle had not arrived, and if she was anything like the picture which my aunt painted of her, I hoped that she never would arrive—at least, while I was there. Neither of the Plasketts had seen her since she was the merest child. Mrs. Riddle never had approved of them. They were not Anti-Everythingite enough for her. Ever since the death of her husband she had practically ignored them. It was only when, after all these years, she found herself in a bit of a hole, that she seemed to have remembered their existence. It appeared that Miss Riddle was at some Anti-Everythingite college or other. The term was at an end. Her mother was in America, "Crusading" against one of her aversions. Some hitch had unexpectedly occurred as to where Miss Riddle was to spend her holidays. Mrs. Riddle had amazed the Plasketts by telegraphing to them from the States to ask if they could give her house-room. And that forgiving, tender-hearted uncle and aunt of mine had said they would.

I assure you, Dave, that when first I saw her you might have knocked me over with a feather. I had spent the night seeing her in nightmares—a lively time I had had of it. In the morning I went out for a stroll, so that the fresh air might have a chance of clearing my head. And when I came back there was a little thing sitting in the morning-room talking to Aunt—I give you my word that she did not come within two inches of my shoulder. I do not want to go into raptures. I flatter myself I am beyond the age for that. But a sweeter-looking little thing I never saw! I was wondering who she might be, when my aunt introduced us.

"Charlie, this is your cousin, May Riddle. May, this is your cousin, Charles Kempster."

She stood up—such a dot of a thing! She held out her hand; she found fours in gloves a trifle loose. She looked at me with her eyes all laughter—you never saw such eyes, never! Her smile, when she spoke, was so contagious, that I would have defied the surliest man alive to have maintained his suavity when he found himself in front of it.

"I am very glad to see you—cousin."

Her voice! And the way in which she said it! As I have written, you might have knocked me down with a feather.

I found myself in clover. And no man ever deserved good fortune better. It was a case of virtue rewarded. I had come to do my duty, expecting to find it bitter, and, lo, it was very sweet. How such a mother came to have such a child was a mystery to all of us. There was not a trace of humbug about her. So far from being an Anti-Everythingite, she went in for everything, strong. That hypocrite of an uncle of mine had arranged to revolutionise the habits of his house for her. There were to be family prayers morning and evening, and a sermon, and three-quarters of an hour's grace before meat, and all that kind of thing. I even suspected him of an intention of locking up the billiard-room, and the smoke-room, and all the books worth reading, and all the music that wasn't "sacred," and, in fact, of turning the place into a regular manse. But he had not been in her company five minutes, when bang went all ideas of that sort. Talk about locking the billiard-room against her! You should have seen the game she played. And sing! She sang everything. When she had made our hearts go pit-a-pat, and brought the tears into our eyes, she would give us comic songs—the very latest. Where she got them from was more than we could understand; but she made us laugh till we cried—Aunt and all. She was an Admireable Crichton—honestly. I never saw a girl play a better game of tennis. She could ride like an Amazon. And walk—when I think of the walks we had together through the woods, I doing my duty towards her to the best of my ability, it all seems to have been too good a time to have happened in anything but a dream.

Do not think she was a rowdy girl, one of those "up-to-daters," or fast. Quite the other way. She had read more books than
I had—I am not hinting that that is saying much, but still she had. She loved books, too; and, you know, speaking quite frankly, I never was a bookish man. Talking about books, one day when we were out in the woods alone together—we nearly always were alone together—I took it into my head to read to her. She listened for a page or two; then she interrupted me.

"Do you call that reading?" I looked at her, surprised. She held out her hand. "Now let me read to you. Give me the book."

I gave it to her. Dave, you never heard such reading. It was not only a question of elocution; it was not only a question of the music that was in her voice. She made the dry bones live. The words, as they proceeded from between her lips, became living things. I never read to her again. After that, she always read to me. She read to me all sorts of things. I believe she could even have written a leading article.

One day she had been reading to me a pen picture of a famous dancer. The writer had seen the woman in some Spanish theatre. He gave an impassioned description—at least, it sounded impassioned as she read it—of how the people had followed the performer's movements with enraptured eyes and throbbing pulses, unwilling to lose the slightest gesture. When she had done reading, putting down the book, she stood up in front of me. I sat up to ask what she was going to do.

"I wonder," she said, "if it was anything like this—the dance which that Spanish woman danced."

She danced to me. Dave, you are my 'fidus Achates,' my other self, my chum, or I would not say a word to you of this. I never shall forget that day. She set my veins on fire. The witch! Without music, under the greenwood tree, all in a moment, for my particular edification, she danced a dance which would have set a crowded theatre in a frenzy. While she danced, I watched her as if mesmerised; I give you my word I did not lose a gesture. When she ceased—with such a curtesy!—I sprang up and ran to her. I would have caught her in my arms; but she sprang back. She held me from her with her outstretched hand.

"Mr. Kempster!" she exclaimed. She looked up at me as demurely as you please.

"I was only going to take a kiss," I cried. "Surely a cousin may take a kiss."

"Not every cousin—if you please."

Wisht that she walked right off, there and then, leaving me standing speechless, and as stupid as an owl.

The next morning as I was in the hall, lighting up for an after breakfast smoke, Aunt Plaskett came up to me. The good soul had trouble written all over her face. She had an open letter in her hand. She looked up at me in a way which reminded me oddly of my mother.

"Charlie," she said, "I'm so sorry."

"Aunt, if you're sorry, so am I. But what's the sorrow?"

"Mrs. Biddle's coming."

"Coming? When?"

"To-day—this morning. I am expecting her every minute."

"But I thought she was a fixture in America for the next three months."

"So I thought. But it seems that something has happened which has induced her to change her mind. She arrived in England yesterday. She writes to me to say that she will come on to us as early as possible to-day. Here is the letter. Charlie, will you tell May?"

She put the question a trifle timidly, as though she were asking me to do something from which she herself would rather be excused. The fact is, we had found that Miss Biddle would talk of everything and anything, with the one exception of her mother. Speak of Mrs. Biddle, and the young lady either immediately changed the conversation, or she held her peace. Within my hearing, her mother's name had never escaped her lips. Whether consciously or unconsciously, she had conveyed to our minds a very clear impression that, to put it mildly, between her and her mother there was no love lost. I, myself, was persuaded that, to her, the news of her mother's imminent presence would not be pleasant news. It seemed that my aunt was of the same opinion.

"Dear May ought to be told, she ought not to be taken unawares. You will find her in the morning-room, I think."

I rather fancy that Aunt and Uncle Plaskett have a tendency to shift the little disagreeables of life off their own shoulders on to other people's. Anyhow, before I could point out to her that the part which she suggested I should play was one which belonged more properly to her, Aunt Plaskett had taken advantage of my momentary hesitation to effect a strategic movement which removed her out of my sight.
I found Miss Riddle in the morning-room. She was lying on a couch, reading. Directly I entered she saw that I had something on my mind.

"What's the matter? You don't look happy."

"It may seem selfishness on my part, but I'm not quite happy. I have just heard news which, if you will excuse me saying so, has rather given me a face."

"If I will excuse your saying so! Dear me, how ceremonious we are! Is the news public, or private, property?"

"Who do you think is coming?"

"Coming? Where? Here?" I nodded.

"I have not the most remote idea. How should I have?"

"It is some one who has something to do with you."

Until then she had been taking it uncommonly easily on the couch. When I said that, she sat up with quite a start.

"Something to do with me? Mr. Kempster! What do you mean? Who can possibly be coming here who has anything to do with me?"

"May, can't you guess?"

"Guess! How can I guess! What do you mean?"

"It's your mother."

"My—mother?"

I had expected that the thing would be rather a blow to her, but I had never expected that it would be anything like the blow it seemed. She sprang to her feet. The book fell from her hands, unnoticed, on to the floor. She stood facing me, with clenched fists and staring eyes.

"My—mother?" she repeated. "Mr. Kempster, tell me what you mean."

I told myself that Mrs. Riddle must be more, or less, of a mother even than my fancy painted her, if the mere suggestion of her coming could send her daughter into such a state of mind as this. Miss Riddle had always struck me as being about as cool a hand as you would be likely to meet. Now, all at once, she seemed to be half beside herself with agitation. As she glared at me, she made me almost feel as if I had been behaving to her like a brute.

"My aunt has only just now told me."

"Told you what?"

"That Mrs. Riddle arrived—" She interrupted me.

"Mrs. Riddle! My mother! Well, go on!"

She stamped on the floor. I almost felt as if she had stamped on me. I went on.

"My aunt has just told me that Mrs. Riddle arrived in England yesterday. She has written this morning to say that she is coming on at once."

"But I don't understand!" She really looked as if she did not understand. "I thought—I was told that—she was going to remain abroad for months."

"It seems that she has changed her mind."

"Changed her mind!" Miss Riddle stared at me as if she thought that such a thing was inconceivable. "When did you say that she was coming?"

"Aunt tells me that she is expecting her every moment."

"Mr. Kempster, what am I to do?"

She appealed to me, with outstretched hands—actually trembling, as it seemed to me, with passion—as if I knew, or understood her either.

"I am afraid, May, that Mrs. Riddle has not been to you all that a mother ought to be. I have heard something of this before. But I did not think that it was so bad as it seems."

"You have heard! You have heard! My good sir, you don't know what you're talking about in the very least. There is one thing very certain, that I must go at once."

"Go! May!"

She moved forward. I believe she would have gone if I had not stepped between her and the door. I was beginning to feel slightly bewildered. It struck me that perhaps I had not broken the news so delightfully as I might have done. I had blundered somewhere. Something must be wrong, if, after having been parted from her, for all I knew, for years, immediately on hearing of her mother's return, her first impulse was towards flight.

"Well?" she cried, looking up at me like a small, wild thing.

"My dear May, what do you mean? Where are you going? To your room?"

"To my room! No! I am going away! away! Right out of this, as quickly as I can!"

"But, after all, your mother is your mother. Surely she cannot have made herself so objectionable that, at the mere thought of her arrival, you should wish to run away from her, goodness alone knows where. So far as I understand, she has disarranged her plans, and hurried across the Atlantic, for the sole purpose of seeing you."
She looked at me in silence for a moment. As she looked, outwardly, she froze. 

“Mr. Kempster, I am at a loss to understand your connection with my affairs. Still less do I understand the grounds on which you would endeavour to regulate my movements. It is true that you are a man, and I am a woman; that you are big, and I am little; but—are those the only grounds?” 

“Of course, if you look at it like that—” 

Shrugging my shoulders, I moved aside. As I did so, some one entered the room.

Turning, I saw it was my aunt. She was closely followed by another woman. 

“My dear May,” said my aunt, and unless I am mistaken, her voice was trembling, “here is your mother.”

The woman who was with my aunt was a tall, loosely-built person, with iron-grey hair, a square, determined jaw, and eyes which looked as if they could have stared the Sphinx right out of countenance. She was holding a pair of pinces-nez in position on the bridge of her nose. Through them she was fixedly regarding May. But she made no forward movement. The rigidity of her countenance, the cold sternness which was in her eyes, of the hard lines which were about her mouth, did not relax in the least degree. Nor did she accord her any sign of greeting. I thought that this was a comfortable way in which to meet one’s daughter—and such a daughter!—after a lengthened separation. With a feeling of the pity of it, I turned again to May. As I did so, a sort of creepy-crawly sensation went all up my back. The little girl really struck me as being frightened half out of her life. Her face was white and drawn; her lips were quivering; her big eyes were dilated in a manner which uncomfortably recalled a wild creature which has gone stark mad with fear.

It was a painful silence. I have no doubt that my aunt was as conscious of it as any one. I expect that she felt May’s position as keenly as if it had been her own. She probably could not understand the woman’s cold-bloodedness, the girl’s too obvious shrinking from her mother. In what, I am afraid, was awkward, blustering fashion, she tried to smooth things over. 

“May, dear, don’t you see it is your mother?”

Then Mrs. Riddle spoke. She turned to my aunt. 

“I don’t understand you. Who is this person?” 

I distinctly saw my aunt give a gasp. I knew she was trembling. 

“Don’t you see that it is May?”

“May! Who? This girl!”

Again Mrs. Riddle looked at the girl who was standing close beside me. Such a look! And again there was silence. I do not know what my aunt felt. But, from what I felt, I can guess. I felt as if a stroke of lightning, as it were, had suddenly laid bare an act of mine, the discovery of which would cover me with undying shame. The discovery had come with such blindsling suddenness, that, as yet, I was unable to realize all that it meant. As I looked at the girl, who seemed all at once to have become smaller even than she usually was, I was conscious that, if I did not keep myself well in hand, I was in danger of collapsing at the knees. Rather than have suffered what I suffered then, I would sooner have had a good sound thrashing any day, and half my bones well broken.

I saw the little girl’s body swaying in the air. For a moment I thought that she was going to faint. But she caught herself at it just in time. As she pulled herself together, a shudder went all over her face. With her fists clenched at her sides, she stood quite still. Then she turned to my aunt.

“I am not May Riddle,” she said, in a voice which was at one and the same time strained, eager, and defiant, and as unlike her ordinary voice as chalk is different from cheese. Raising her hands, she covered her face. “Oh, I wish I had never said I was!”

She burst out crying; into such wild grief that one might have been excused for fearing that she would hurt herself by the violence of her own emotion. Aunt and I were dumb. As for Mrs. Riddle—and, if you come to think of it, it was only natural—she did not seem to understand the situation at the least. Turning to my aunt, she caught her by the arm.

“Will you be so good as to tell me what is the meaning of these extraordinary proceedings?”

“My dear!” seemed to be all that my aunt could stammer in reply.

“Answer me!” I really believe that Mrs. Riddle shook my aunt. “Where is my daughter—May!”

“We thought—we were told that this was May.” My aunt addressed herself to
The girl, who was still sobbing as if her heart would break. "My dear, I am very sorry, but you know you gave us to understand that you were May."

Then some glimmering of the meaning of the situation did seem to dawn on Mrs. Riddle's mind. She turned to the crying girl; and a look came on her face which gave one the impression that one had suddenly lighted on the key-note of her character. It was a look of uncompromising resolution. A woman who could summon up such an expression at will ought to be a leader. She never could be led. I sincerely trust that my wife—if I ever have one—when we differ, will never look like that. If she does, I am afraid it will have to be a case of her way, not mine. As I watched Mrs. Riddle, I was uncommonly glad she was not my mother. She went and planted herself right in front of the crying girl. And she said, quietly, but in a tone of voice the hard frigidity of which suggested the nether millstone:

"Case that noise. Take your hands from before your face. Are you one of that class of persons who, with the will to do evil, lack the courage to face the consequences of their own misdeeds? I can assure you that, so far as I am concerned, noise is thrown away. Candour is your only hope with me. Do you hear what I say? Take your hands from before your face."

I should fancy that Mrs. Riddle's words, and still more her manner, must have cut the girl like a whip. Anyhow, she did as she was told. She took her hands from before her face. Her eyes were blurred with weeping. She still was sobbing. Big tears were rolling down her cheeks. I am bound to admit that her crying had by no means improved her personal appearance. You could see she was doing her utmost to regain her self-control. And she faced Mrs. Riddle with a degree of assurance which, whether she was in the right or in the wrong, I was glad to see. That stalwart representative of the modern Women Crusaders continued to address her in the same unflattering way.

"Who are you? How comes it that I find you passing yourself off as my daughter in Mrs. Plaskett's house?"

The girl's answer took me by surprise.

"I owe you no explanation, and I shall give you none."

"You are mistaken. You owe me a very frank explanation. I promise you you shall give me one before I've done with you."

"I wish and intend to have nothing whatever to say to you. Be so good as to let me pass."

The girl's defiant attitude took Mrs. Riddle slightly aback. I was delighted. Whatever she had been crying for, it had evidently not been for want of pluck. It was plain that she had pluck enough for fifty. It did me good to see her.

"Take my advice, young woman, and do not attempt that sort of thing with me—unless, that is, you wish me to give you a short shrift, and send at once for the police."

"The police? For me? You are mad!"

For a moment Mrs. Riddle really did look a trifle mad. She went quite green. She took the girl by the shoulder roughly. I saw that the little thing was wincing beneath the pressure of her hand. That was more than I could stand.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Riddle, but—if you would not mind!"

Whether she did or did not mind, I did not wait for her to tell me. I removed her hand, with as much politeness as was possible, from where she had placed it. She looked at me, not nicely.

"Pray, sir, who are you?"

"I am Mrs. Plaskett's nephew, Charles Kempster, and very much at your service, Mrs. Riddle."

"So you are Charles Kempster! I have heard of you."

I was on the point of remarking that I also had heard of her. But I refrained. "Be so good, young man, as not to interfere."

I bowed. The girl spoke to me.

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Kempster."

She turned to my aunt. One could see that every moment she was becoming more her cool, collected self again.

"Mrs. Plaskett, it is to you I owe an explanation. I am ready to give you one when and where you please. Now, if it is your pleasure."

My aunt was rubbing her hands together in a feebile, purposeless, undesired sort of way. Unless I err, she was crying, for a change. With the exception of my uncle, I should say that my aunt was the most peace-loving soul on earth.

"Well, my dear, I don't wish to say anything to pain you—as you must know!—but if you can explain, I wish you would. We have grown very fond of you, your uncle and I."

It was not a very bright speech of my aunt's, but it seemed to please the person for whom it was intended immensely. She
run to her, she took hold of both her hands, she kissed her on either cheek.

"You dear darling! I've been a perfect wretch to you, but not such a villain as your fancy paints me. I'll tell you all about it—now." Clasping her hands behind her back, she looked my aunt demurely in the face. But in spite of her demureness, I could see that she was full of mischief to the finger-tips. "You must know that I am Daisy Hardy. I am the daughter of Francis Hardy, of the Corinthian Theatre."

Directly the words had passed her lips, I knew her. You remember how often we saw her in "The Penniless Pilgrim"? And how good she was? And how we fell in love with her, the pair of us? All along, something about her, now and then, had filled me with a sort of overwhelming conviction that I must have seen her somewhere before. What an end I had been! But then to think of her—well, modesty—in passing herself off as Mrs. Riddle's daughter. As for Mrs. Riddle, she received the young lady's confession with what she possibly intended for an air of crushing disdain.

"An actress!" she exclaimed.

She switched her skirts on one side, with the apparent intention of preventing their coming in contact with Iniquity. Miss Hardy paid no heed.

"May Riddle is a very dear friend of mine."

"I don't believe it," cried Mrs. Riddle, with what, to say the least of it, was perfect frankness. Still Miss Hardy paid no heed.

"It is the dearest wish of her life to become an actress."

"It's a lie!"

This time Miss Hardy did pay heed. She faced the frankly speaking lady.

"It is no lie, as you are quite aware. You know very well that, ever since she was a child, it has been her continual dream."

"It was nothing but a childish fad."

Miss Hardy shrugged her shoulders.

"Mrs. Riddle uses her own phraseology; I use mine. I can only say that May has often told me that, when she was but a tiny thing, her mother used to whip her for playing at being an actress. She used to try and make her promise that she would never go inside a theatre, and when she refused, she used to beat her cruelly. As she grew older, her mother used to lock her in her bedroom, and keep her without food for days and days—"

"Hold your tongue, girl! Who are you that you should comment on my dealings with my child? A young girl, who, by her own confession, has already become a painted thing, and who seems to glory in her shame, is a creature with whom I can own no common womanhood. Again I insist upon your telling me, without any attempt at rhodomontade, how it is that I find a creature such as you posing as my child."

The girl vouchsafed no direct reply. She looked at her with a curious scowl, which I fancy Mrs. Riddle did not altogether relish. Then she turned again to my aunt.

"Mrs. Plaskett, it is as I tell you. All her life May has wished to be an actress. As, she has grown older her wish has strengthened. You see, all my people have been actors and actresses. I, myself, love acting. You could hardly expect me, in such a matter, to be against my friend. And then—there was my brother."

She paused. Her face became more mischievous; and, unless I am mistaken, Mrs. Riddle's face grew blacker. But she let the girl go on.

"Claud believed in her. He was even more upon her side than I was. He saw her act in some private theatricals—"

Then Mrs. Riddle did strike in.

"My daughter never acted, either in public or in private, in her life. Girl, how dare you pile lies upon lies?"

Miss Hardy gave her look for look. One felt that the woman knew that the girl was speaking the truth, although she might not choose to own it.

"May did many things of which her mother had no knowledge. How could it be otherwise? When a mother makes it her business to repress at any cost the reasonable desires which are bound up in her daughter's very being, she must expect to be deceived. As I say, my brother Claud saw her act in some private theatricals. And he was persuaded that, for once in a way, here was not a case of a person mistaking the desire to be for the power to be, because she was an actress born. Then things came to a climax. May wrote to me to say that she was leaving college; that her mother was in America; and that so far as her ever becoming an actress was concerned, so far as she could judge, it was a case of now or never. I showed her letter to Claud. He at once declared that it should be a case of now. A new play was coming
out, in which he was to act, and in which, he said, there was a part which would fit May like a glove. It was not a large part; still, there it was. If she chose, he would see she had it. I wrote and told her what Claud said. She jumped for joy—through the post, you understand. Then they began to draw me in. Until her mother's return, May was to have gone, for safe keeping, to one of her mother's particular friends. If she had gone, the thing would have been hopeless. But, at the last moment, the plan fell through. It was arranged, instead, that she should go to her aunt—to you, Mrs. Plaskett. You had not seen her since her childhood; you had no notion of what she looked like. I really do not know from whom the suggestion came, but it was suggested that I should come to you, pretending to be her. And I was to keep on pretending, till the rubicon was passed and the play produced. If she once succeeded in gaining footing on the stage, though it might be never so slight a one, May declared that wild horses should not drag her back again. And I knew her well enough to be aware that, when she said a thing, she meant exactly what she said. Mrs. Plaskett, I should have made you this confession of my own initiative next week. Indeed, May would have come and told you the tale herself, if Mrs. Riddle had not returned all these months before any one expected her. Because, as it happens, the play was produced last night—"

Mrs. Riddle had been listening, with a face as black as a thunder-cloud. Here she again laid her hand upon Miss Hardy's shoulder.

"Where! Tell me! I will still save her, though, to do so, I have to drag her through the streets."

Miss Hardy turned to her with a smile.

"May does not need saving, she already has attained salvation. I hear, not only that the play was a great success, but that May's part, as she acted it, was the success of the play. As for dragging her through the streets, you know that you are talking nonsense. She is of an age to do as she pleases. You have no more power to put constraint upon her, than you have to put constraint upon me."

All at once Miss Hardy let herself go, as it were.

"Mrs. Riddle, you have spent a large part of your life in libelling all that I hold dearest; you will now be taught of how great a libel you have been guilty. You will learn from the example of your daughter's own life, that women can, and do, live as pure and as decent lives upon one sort of stage, as are lived, upon another sort of stage, by 'Women Crusaders.'"

She swept the infuriated Mrs. Riddle such a curtsey. . . . well, there's the story for you, Dave. There was, I believe, a lot more talking. And some of it, I dare say, approached to high saluting. But I had had enough of it, and went outside. Miss Hardy insisted on leaving the house that very day. As I felt that I might not be wanted, I also left. We went up to town together in the same carriage. We had it to ourselves. And that night I saw May Riddle, the real May Riddle. I don't mind telling you in private, that she is acting in that new thing of Pettigrew's, "The Flying Folly," under the name of Miss Lyndhurst. She only has a small part; but, as Miss Hardy declares her brother said of her, she plays it like an actress born. I should not be surprised if she becomes all the rage before long.

One could not help feeling sorry for Mrs. Riddle, in a kind of a way. I dare say she feels pretty bad about it all. But then she only has herself to blame. When a mother and her daughter pull different ways, the odds are that, in the end, youth will prevail. Especially when the daughter has as much resolution as the mother.

As for Daisy Hardy, I believe she is going to the Plasketts again next week. If she does I have half a mind—though I know she will only laugh at me, if I do go. I don't care. Between you and me, I don't believe she's half so wedded to the stage as she pretends she is.

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A LITTLE COQUETTE.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Hilda Clifford became engaged to Lord Langridge, people held up their hands in astonishment at his choice and her luck. No one had ever imagined that Hilda would make such a match!

She was the daughter of a retired Colonel, and though considered fascinating, was not by any means pretty. Lord Langridge, however, was head over ears in love, and rapturously happy that Hilda had designed to
accept him. The young lady in question was quite frank about her own feelings. When Lord Langridge was on the verge of proposing, she sat over the fire with her especial friend Lucy Gordon, and discussed the matter freely. She was wearing a new and expensive gown that afternoon, and fingered the costly stuff softly as she talked.

"This is mother's last effort at getting me married," she announced, with a sweep of the hand that included a coquettish hat and a set of furs that lay upon the sofa, just as she had thrown them off. "She has really spared no expense this time, Lucy. It will be very hard lines for her if Langridge does not come to the point after this.

"You have the oddest way of talking, Hilda! I wonder what Mrs. Clifford would say if she heard you."

"She would put things in a different light, no doubt," said Hilda negligently, "but when I saw that boa I knew at once that this was my last chance, and I must grasp it."

"Your last chance! And you are only twenty-one!"

"I know, dear. But I am the kind that goes off very quickly," said Hilda resignedly. "In three years' time I shan't be fit to be seen."

"I wonder you have never got married before, you have such a way with you," said Lucy admiringly.

"I have cultivated that, dear. It has been the result of years of experience of mankind. I am not pretty, but I early determined to be fascinating."

"You have succeeded admirably. And I have heard you called pretty."

"That has always been my highest triumph. I am not good-looking for even two minutes together; but if I feel called upon to exert myself, I can make any man ready to swear that I am lovely."

Hilda looked into the fire for a moment and then laughed a little.

"Lord Langridge admired my hair the other day," she went on, "and I said, 'It isn't all mine, you know.' You should have seen his face! I told him that the older I got the more hair I meant to have. He looked awfully shocked. I do wish he wasn't quite so serious."

"How old is he?"

"For-r-r-ty," said Hilda, rolling her r's and her eyes at the same time.

"You like him, don't you, Hilda?"

"Oh, he is a pleasant little thing," turned Miss Clifford, with a slight yawn. "I have no doubt he will let me have my own way in everything. He is going to propose to-morrow."

"How do you know?"

"I am going to wear a new frock, and mamma will leave the room to find her thimble, when he calls. She will be away a discreet space of time, and when she comes back I shall be wearing an enormous half-hoop of diamonds on the third finger of my left hand. Lord Langridge, who will have been sitting very near me, probably with his arm round my waist, will colour scarlet. And I shall explain things with graceful self-possession, and mamma will call me her dear daughter, and ask him to be kind to me, and—"

"Hilda, do I wonder you can talk like that! I think you are very unfeeling and—and horrid."

"It's the way I have been brought up that has done it," returned Miss Clifford, with a slight hardening of the mouth.

"Upon my word, Lucy, there are very few things in heaven or earth that I respect or care for."

"I wonder how it will turn out? I shouldn't care to be in Lord Langridge's shoes."

"Ah, there you are wrong. I shall make him a model wife. I do respect him though I don't love him, and I shall be as affectionate as possible. When I die I shall no doubt be called 'a faithful and devoted wife,' on my tombstone."

"Have you ever had a spark of sentiment for any man?" asked Lucy, looking at her friend curiously.

"Oh, dear me, yes," replied Miss Clifford, raising her eyes, which were undeniably pretty, to the ceiling; "I have really cared for three or four."

"How tiresome you are, Hilda! You are never your real self even with me. I believe there was only one person who ever did understand you. And that was Captain Curwen."

The flickering firelight showed that Hilda had turned a little pale. But otherwise she did not falter.

"Captain Curwen was a very disagreeable person," she rejoined lightly. "He had a way of treating me as if I were six years old, and rather imbeciles into the bargain. Oh, no, I couldn't possibly stand Captain Curwen."

"I shall always believe that you were cut out for each other, nevertheless," said Lucy determinedly; "and why he left for
India in such a frightful hurry, I never could make out.”

Hilda stood up and stretched out her hand for her hat, which she arranged carefully and coquetishly above her dark curls.

“I think he went because he was annoyed with me,” she said deliberately.

“I believe the quarrel began about a hat he didn’t like. Yes, on the whole I honestly believe he went to India because of that. It seems a trivial reason, doesn’t it?”

“I don’t believe it,” said Lucy flatly.

“Oh, but it’s true,” said Hilda, disposing her costly boa round her neck, and surveying herself admiringly in the glass.

“It was a pork-pie hat too, I remember. Poor Teddy Wick admired it very much, and asked me always to wear it when I went to meet him. Captain Curwen thought I was forward when I told the dear boy I should never wear any other since he liked it so much, and he said the hat was hideous. We had a desperate quarrel over it, and called each other all sorts of names.”

“There was something more than that, I am sure.”

“I dare say there was,” said Hilda negligently; “but what does it matter now that it is over and done with?”

“He was desperately in love with you, Hilda, and knew how to manage you to perfection. A nice handsome poor Lord Langridge will find you!”

“I hate to be managed. Captain Curwen was a dear, I admit, but I never remember any one who made me so cross.”

“He was very good-looking.”

“Oh, yes. A great improvement on my poor Langridge, I must say. I don’t know how I shall stand those little side whiskers of his. And he will have to grow a moustache. I hate being kissed by a clean-shaven man. One might as well kiss a woman at once.”

She paused for a moment, and then held out her hand.

“Good-bye, Lucy. Wish me joy.”

“[Conducted by]

“I am going to be very careful—oh, desperately so for about six weeks. I shall make an arrangement with Langridge that I may burst out every now and then. I must have my day out like the housemaids.”

“Oh, Hilda, don’t marry him,” cried Lucy fervently. “If you feel like that about it you will be miserable. Marriage isn’t for a few hours or a few days; it is for the whole of one’s life. Think of that, Hilda! The whole of one’s life!”

“I don’t want to think about it. Why should I bother myself about disagreeable things? There is nothing so bad for one’s looks as thinking. It brings no end of wrinkles at once.”

She went out into the hall with a light laugh. As Lucy opened the front door for her, she turned for a moment and kissed her cheek—a very unusual demonstration of affection on her part.

“I am not worth thinking about, Lucy,” she said, “so don’t worry your little head any more about me. I mean to marry Lord Langridge, and be very happy.”

“If a determination to be happy will make you so,” said Lucy, watching her friend go down the steps, “I dare say you will be one of the brightest people living. Only—it doesn’t!”

But to this piece of philosophy Miss Clifford did not reply, and Lucy shut the door and went back to the fire with a little sigh.

“Poor Hilda!” she said to herself. “She is very wilful and very fascinating. She deserved a better fate. She is to marry a man she does not love. What could be worse than that?”

But Hilda, walking briskly along the country road, whose frost-bound surface was almost as hard as iron, was not wasting her time in self-pity. She was not at all sure that her fate was such a hard one. True, she had lost for life the man she had really loved, but she flattered herself that she had got over that loss, and was settling comfortably down into unsentimental common-sense. Langridge was rich, amiable, and tremendously fond of her. What more could a woman want in any husband? As his wife she would be high up in the social scale, and could satisfy every ambition. She meant to shine in society. True, there was always Langridge in the background, an unwelcome accompaniment of his wealth and his rank, but Hilda thrust the thought of him resolutely away, and occupied herself with him as little as possible. She
thought about Captain Curwen still less, and, in short, was in a very comfortable frame of mind altogether.

As she drew near home, and the pale wintry sunset was gliding the distant red roofs of the village cottages, she became aware of the fact that Lord Langridge himself was on in front. She had a good chance of surveying her future lord and master. His short, sturdy figure was as clearly outlined against the sky as was the lean, leafless skeleton elm-tree that looked black against the pale gold background.

Hilda moderated her pace a little in order to scrutinise him at leisure.

"Langridge is not beautiful," she said to herself critically, "but I am sure he must be very good. When we are married I shall have to stop his wearing those loud plaid trousers. The poor boy has no taste."

At this moment, something—inseit, perhaps—made Langridge turn round and see her. He immediately wheeled about and hurried towards her, his honest face beaming with delight.

"This is indeed a pleasure! Do you know, Miss Clifford, that I was on my way to see you?"

"So I imagined," returned Hilda, giving him a careless hand, "as this road has only one house in it, and that is ours."

By this time Langridge was walking beside her. Hilda noticed for the first time that she was taller than he, and reflected that this was a great pity. It would spoil the appearance of things when they went on together. Hilda was not partial to little men.

"How fortunate I turned and saw you!" pursued Langridge, with a delighted expression. "Fancy, if I had found you out when I called!"

"It would have been a frightful calamity."

"Frightful to me. I do not believe that you," with reproachful tenderness, "would have cared in the very least."

"Oh, I am not so inhuman as you think me. Since you have taken the trouble to walk over from the Abbey, I should have been really sorry to have missed you."

"How kind you are always! You almost make me believe sometimes that you like to be bored by my visits," said Langridge tentatively.

"You don't bore me—much!" said Miss Clifford, smiling at him.

The smile undid the severity of the words. Lord Langridge took fresh heart.

"It is a lovely afternoon," he remarked, as the gables of Hilda's home rose in sight at the end of the long country road down which they were walking, "don't you think it is a pity to go in just yet?"

The words were commonplace enough, but they were spoken rather breathlessly. Hilda, skilled in those signs of coming events, reflected for a moment whether she would prefer Langridge to propose to her in a country lane or in the drawing-room at home. She decided on the country lane. There was less opportunity for the display of sentiment and emotion. She felt very little inclined for either this afternoon. Down the lane they accordingly went.

The daffodil sky was paling, and the air from across the fields blew fresh and clear. The beauty of the afternoon was waning quickly. Hilda looked at her companion steadily for a moment.

He was not a romantic figure. His good-humoured face was round and red, and boasted the little black side whiskers that Hilda abhorred. His gait was clumsy, and his figure the kind which is the tailor's despair. No fine clothes could ever make Langridge look elegant. Could she bear this short, stout, good-tempered little man as a lifelong companion? She sighed, and turned away her head.

Langridge, who had been nervously slashing at the leafless hedges with his stick, now gathered up his courage, and took the plunge.

"Miss Clifford—Hilda," he said with a final alacrity, that spoke volumes, "you must have known for some time what my feelings are for you. I am a bad hand at expressing these things, but the long and short of it is that I love you, and that I will have no other woman for my wife."

She did not answer, and he stole a look at the pretty profile under the big plumed hat.

"I know I am not fit for you," he went on humbly. "I am too old, and too serious, and too plain. But no handsome young fellow could ever love you more than I do."

He put out his hand and laid it on her muff, inside which her own were tightly clasped. She was quite surprised, now that the supreme moment had come, that she felt an irresistible desire to refuse, once and for ever, to become his wife. But she knew that the impulse must not be given way to.

"I fully appreciate the honour you are doing me, Lord Langridge," she said slowly,
her eyes fixed on a distant line of trees, "but——"
"For Heaven's sake, don't say that you are going to refuse me!" he broke in agitatedly. "I couldn't live without you. Indeed, I couldn't, Hilda. You have no idea how strong my feeling is towards you. And when you talk about my doing you an honour—you whose shoes I am not worthy to—to black," said Langridge, casting about him for a suitable simile—"you make me feel terrified for fear that after all——"
He broke off again, his face working.
"Don't do it, Hilda!" he said imploringly.
This time she turned and looked at him, and their eyes met. The expression in hers was a little hard.
"I am not going to refuse you," she said slowly, "but I want to tell you something first."
"I could listen to you for ever!" cried her suitor rapturously.
"It is merely to say that I do not love you."
Langridge's face fell; and then brightened again.
"Of course, not as I love you. I couldn't expect that at first. But I will soon teach you."
Hilda would have preferred having lessons from some one else, but she resigned herself to the inevitable. After all, what did it matter! She was not likely to love again.
"If you don't mind having me on such conditions," she said, abandoning her hand to him with a little smile, "why, then——" He stooped and kissed her fingers, rapturously happy. He did not envy any man alive at that moment. The commonplace world became a glorified Paradise to him.

Half an hour later Hilda entered the drawing-room of the red-gabled house. Her mother was sitting there, busy with some fancy work. She looked up with enquiry on her face as her daughter entered the room.
Hilda's cheeks were a little pale. She undid her boa, and took off her hat.
"Congratulations, mamma," she said, with rather an hysterical laugh; "the boa and hat have not been thrown away. They have done it between them. I have promised to marry Lord Langridge in six months' time!"

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CHAPTER XVI. A FRIEND'S VIEW.

The old Palace was very silent during the following week. The servants walked softly down the long, lonely passages, sorrowing for the young master and bewildered by the helplessness of the old man whose life until now had been so active. It was the Duke who now took the direction of affairs, whilst Penelope sat with her father and attended to his wants. She was home again; the old love for the wild glen and for all the beauty of the mountains came back tenfold, but it now seemed to her mixed up with her love for Forster Bethune. She wanted to know how he would like to hear the dashing Rothery, and to watch the great bare hills and the more distant mountain-tops.

But underneath all this feeling was the terrible, oppressive thought, "I must marry Philip Gillbanks, I must. I was always prepared for it, and I must obey my uncle. Why did I not do it at once, before I had seen Forster? I then perhaps—would love have come? He is very kind, and he loves me. Perhaps it might have been otherwise, but now, now it is impossible to forget Forster; and yet I must, I must forget him."

She walked down the long passage and listened for the soft tread of the ghost, but she only heard the echo of her own footsteps upon the stones. The ghost would not appear to her because she was going to demean herself. Then she thought that she would marry Philip Gillbanks, but that she would be as a stranger to him, and he must be as a stranger to her. His reward would surely be great enough if he could say that he had married the Princess of Rothery; that must suffice him. She hated his money, at the same time as she knew that it was necessary to the Winakells and the reason of her misery.

She made no preparations for her private wedding. She had brought back enough dresses from London to last many months, and she would wear one of them; which one seemed to her of no consequence. Her uncle, on the contrary, busied himself to make one part of the old wing at least temporarily comfortable and fairly weather-tight. The ghost's boudoir must be Penelope's morning-room, and there were several more rooms near to it which could be set apart for the young people. The village carpenter was set to work to make a few repairs, but not a soul, not even old Betty, was told the truth. It might shock their feelings; but then the Duke knew it was absolutely necessary. The settlement could not be signed till the marriage, and the principal could not be touched till Penelope became Mrs. Gillbanks Winakell. The Duke had insisted upon the family name being adopted by the purchaser of the Palace.

So during all those days Penelope went about hardening her heart against Philip. His daily letter was sometimes answered by a few lines, chiefly on business, and she raised her head more proudly as she stepped out into the lonely glen, feeling that at least she was saving the lands; though the price to pay was heavier than she could have foreseen. Her face stiffened more and more into an expression of pride that was unnatural in one so young and so
little accustomed to the world. As she walked up and down the glen with her great dog Nero, she was very unlike a bride elect, and it was only in her uncle’s presence that she made an effort to appear without the slight frown which was now almost habitual to her.

She wanted to know what Forster thought of her strange engagement, and yet she did not like to ask. The whole episode appeared like a dream, so sudden had been her departure from London. She blamed herself for having made a mistake, and she was angry with both Forster and Philip for having brought her into this miserable state of mind. Once she had hoped to return home full of the delight of an accomplished mission.

In the meanwhile Philip had hastened back to London to inform his friends of his happiness. Owing to certain transactions with the Duke and to the sudden death of Penelope’s brother, no one but his father had been told of his engagement. He could hardly believe it himself. Indeed, he was overjoyed when he had found his suit encouraged by the Duke, and still more astonished when he had implied that his niece would certainly receive him favourably.

Philip did not guess the reason, for to him it seemed as if rich men of title, who were said to have proposed to the Princess, would certainly have been preferred to him. Had she wished it, of course Miss Winakall could have accepted much richer men than himself. Philip was not vain, and from this he could only conclude that Penelope loved him, and he was willing to believe that pride alone made her receive his advances with such reserve. When she was his wife, then he would soon show her how entirely he loved her, and how willing he was to own her superiority. The death of the hair, the journey north, and the hasty decision of the Duke about the wedding, had not left Philip a moment in which to think of himself. When he reached London again, in his first moment of leisure he besought himself to the Bethunes’ house to find Forster, in order to tell him the wonderful news.

Mrs. Bethune was in the drawing-room alone when Philip was shown in, and as usual she received him very cordially.

“I am very glad to see you, Mr. Gillbanks. It was only this morning that Forster was saying he could not imagine what had become of you, for you did not appear at the club on his special night; however, you must not let him become too encroaching. Forster forgets that every one cannot devote his life to the cause. I told him you had your sister to see after. He is coming in soon, so do wait for him. I don’t know what has come to him lately. He is so very absent-minded. He introduced Adela as his wife the other day, and she had to pull his coat, and to tell him he really was not married.”

“Forster is absent!” said Gillbanks, blushing as if the allusion were personal.

“Indeed—”

“Dora says he must be in love. I can’t fancy Forster being in love at all, can you?”

“Oh, no! I’m sure he is not in love.”

“I am glad you agree with me, because, ‘entire nous’, dear Mr. Gillbanks, I do dread Forster’s taste in that line. He will fall a victim to some poor dear thing who can’t find a good situation.”

Philip laughed, and just then Forster entered. His face brightened at the sight of his friend.

Mrs. Bethune left the two together, and Forster began at once.

“I thought you were ill or lost. I was going round to your house this evening, Philip. You were so much wanted the other day.”

“I’m so sorry. Yes, I ought to have telegraphed; but I wanted to come and tell you myself. Do you know, Forster—can you believe it—she has accepted me.”

“Who has accepted you?” said Forster, suddenly turning towards his friend.

“The only woman I should ask, of course—the Princess. But I’ve been living in a dream ever since; I can hardly believe it myself.”

Forster sat down by his mother’s writing-table, and pretended to be looking for some writing-paper.

“You have asked her to marry you? And she has accepted you? My dear Philip—”

Forster paused.

“Yes, it is extraordinary. I don’t wonder you are surprised. I can hardly believe it myself, and report says she has had heaps of offers, so she—”

Forster still searched for paper, and for a few seconds his face was hidden. When he turned again towards Philip his face was paler, but he was quite calm.

“This is news. Yes, I am surprised. I can hardly understand it, but I wish you joy, Philip, of course, all joy. Tell me,
does she—no, I mean how long has this been going on? I saw her brother's death in the papers, and heard she had left town."

"Yes, indeed. It is awfully sad. I went with them to Rothery. It seems like a dream that I have really won her."

"Phil, are you sure she—"

"Sure she accepted me! Yes, sure. Her uncle is most anxious that the wedding should take place at once, for this death has thrown everything into a hopeless state of confusion. The father is useless. He was nearly drowned. Such a queer old man! I have told you about him. Penelope really wants protection and some brightness in her dull life. Down there all seems so quiet and sad. Of course, I would rather have waited longer, so that she should know me better, but I have to obey the Duke."

"But this should not be," said Forster, trying to speak calmly. "Phil, have you really considered it all round?"

"You did not know it was earnest, perhaps; but with me it was love at first sight."

"She is very beautiful, and she might become a great power, but she must learn to love you, Phil. Are you sure——?

No, I don't quite understand the haste, only I've no right to interfere. Does she know what a lucky woman she is?"

"Nonsense, Forster, the luck is all on my side."

"They are inordinately proud."

"They have a right to be."

"Right! No one has that right. But I am the loser."

"Only for a time. For the present I must give her all my energies. The old place wants repairing. I think she trusts me, and she believes in my love. Forster, if you had loved her, I should have had no chance. You are the only man really worthy of her, but I can't pretend to wish to give her up. She seems to me as if she were too good and too beautiful for this earth, and if it weren't for the Duke—but he was entirely on my side, and she trusts him immensely."

"Forgive me, Phil, but is she marrying you because the Duke tells her to do so?" said Forster slowly.

"Why should you ask that? She might marry any one. I have to see after many things before the wedding. I'm not allowed to ask even you to it, Forster, so that I shall indeed feel very privately married. The brother's death naturally makes all this imperative."

Forster once more turned away; then suddenly he put his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"Phil, don't do this thing. You don't know her enough; besides, there is the work. You will never return to it."

Philip laughed. It was so like Forster to think "the Cause" came before anything else.

"I know I'm an unprofitable servant; but, indeed, Forster, you must be a little pitiful to the weak. I can't live without her. Of course it's terribly sudden, but that is the Duke's doing and hers. I have it in black and white."

"I'm a fool to try and show you the danger. I don't know if Penelope Winkell can love any one. She is one of those women one reads of sometimes, who can destroy but cannot create love. She could love but once. Philip, give her up."

"The higher call is not for me," said Philip humbly. "I wish I'd confided sooner in you, but it seemed like saying one wanted to propose to an angel from heaven. She is so self-contained and so beautiful; she is like no other woman I have ever met."

"That is true, she might have become——"

"Yes, one of your best disciples; I know I am depriving you of that homage, Forster, but her uncle assurred me she was not really averse to marriage, only very difficult to please. Imagine what a miracle it is that I can please her, and that she can even put up with me, but it's true. Forster, wish me joy even if I have disappointed you."

"One word more, Phil. Have you forgotten that you are rich? Forgive me, but I can't believe she is worthy of you. Is it possible that——"

Philip Gillbanks reddened and looked hurt.

"Forster! What an idea! Of course the Winkells are poor, and my money is entirely at their service; but to think my Princess cares for filthy lucre is ludicrous. If she did there was no reason why she should not have accepted Vernon Heath. He is fabulously rich."

"Heath! Did he want to marry her?"

Forster's face expressed disgust.

"I can't stay any longer. The Duke wants me to do some business for him."
"All right. Look here, Philip, you are the most unselfish man in creation, but you know what I think about it. I hate the whole business. These wretched Dukes and Kings who play at——"

But Philip was gone.

"My Princess has thought me worthy of her," he said to himself, as with a smiling face he went about London to do the Duke's bidding.

CHAPTER XVII. UNWELCOME.

"What, the Princess is to be married off no better than a gipsy!" cried Betty, when she at last heard the news. It was the evening before the wedding.

"There's no luck to a weddin' wid oald acquaintance," said Oldcorn. "Mister Gillbanks was a strange solgist the first neet he drew his chair to t' fire an' set hissel here. Ah dar say he thowt hissel t' happiest o' mortals, but, hoover, afoor long he'll come see a crack as ivver he knew when he starts here. Mister Gillbanks wud be a gay bit better minding his shop.

"His shop! As if he's got one!" said Betty.

"Sear they say. Gwordle heard it hissel."

"Tis trading, you silly! His father is in the big line with something, but Mr. Philip himself is a big gentleman."

"I hear noo! His father and he is just the same. There's no King's blood in his body. An' al! My stars! The Princess should a' wed a King."

"Moneys the king now, Jim. Up in London I saw a sight o' things you know nothing about, and Miss Penelope couldn't have married in fine style now her poor brother's lying dead and hardly cold in his grave."

So spake the underlings, whilst the King, whose mind was becoming somewhat clearer and his temper more crossed-grained, began bitterly to reproach the Duke. If the estate were saved, it would be at the expense of a marriage with one who could boast of no drop of blue blood.

The Duke alone was firm. He had weighed all carefully. He knew full well that his niece might have married an aristocrat, but that not one of them would have propped up the ruined house of Rothery. Only Philip Gillbanks's love had stood the test.

The Duke was a man of the world. In his heart he disliked a mesalliance as much as did his niece, but such things were now done every day, and the misfortune must be borne with true courage.

Penelope had offered no remonstrance. His one fear had been that she would not ratify his choice; but she had said nothing, and he was proud of the Princess. She understood the meaning of self-sacrifice as well as he did, when great difficulties had to be faced.

On this grey evening the chill autumn feeling had crept into the air, making the Rothery glen sad in its beauty, as Penelope stepped out. The old dog followed her as if he understood her feelings, his tail between his legs, and keeping close beside her instead of bounding forward along his favourite paths.

As she came out of the Palace the Princess noted many things around her as if she were seeing them for the last time. Near the front door, and on the spot where the distant lake could be seen, her eyes first rested upon old Jim Oldcorn, standing near the King's wheel-chair. The old man could not endure to stay indoors, but preferred being brought out, so that like a wounded lion he could still watch the scenes of his many exploits. His language was even less choice than of old, and patience was a virtue he held in contempt, so he sat growling to himself and cursing the fatal accident that had deprived him of his son and of his own great strength. He had never cared much for Penelope, and now the sight of her often seemed to bring on a fit of temper. Faithful Jim Oldcorn, like a sturdy oak, could bear much and could weather any storm which the King raised. No opprobrious title hurled at him by his master appeared to disturb his placid temper.

"Who's that?" growled the King as he heard Penelope shut the hall door.

"It's nobody but the Princess," said Jim calmly; "'de want any transahunks with har?"

"Tell her to come here," said the King, seasoning his remark with a few oaths; but Penelope was already approaching of her own accord.

"Jim Oldcorn, if any one comes and enquires for me, say I am in the glen," she remarked somewhat imperiously. Jim nodded and moved away a few steps as he muttered to himself:

"Ah wadin' t' fessel' ta neahbody if ah didn't like him. He'l' a' strange bride, but it sarret him rest. There's no mixin' smo' beer with the King's wine."
“Come close to me, Penelope. Curse it! I’m a mere wreck, and my hearing is getting bad. What does Greybarrow mean by all this fooling? He says I gave my consent. If I did it’s because you were only a woman; but my lad’s gone now, gone—he'd have saved the old place.”

“Would he?” said Penelope coldly, though the colour rose to her cheeks.

“You know, father, that he would and could do nothing of the kind. As for your consent, you care little enough. You have never troubled yourself about me, because I was only a woman.”

“I wanted sons and I had but one—but one, and he’s taken from me. The parson came and preached resignation. The devil take him, he hasn’t lost a son. What does he know about it? I would have set the dog on him if I could. He knew I was tied, or he never would have dared to come and preach to me.”

“Is that all you wanted to say?”

The old man paused and looked up at this proud daughter. Her pride equalled his own. It could not be crushed, and therefore he hated her. He collected his thoughts a little, and then burst forth again.

“No, I wanted to tell you that this pale-faced milkscap whom you have promised to marry has no right to come here. I won’t have him near me, so keep him out of my sight. If you will go your own way, I will have none of him. A tradesman, too, a man of no birth, and you demean yourself to marry him. Your aunt would never have fallen so low.”

“I have promised to marry Philip Gillbanks because it will save the property of the Winakells,” said Penelope proudly.

“Save it! I could save it. You think your interference was wanted. I tell you that at the right time the property would not have been sold.”

Penelope laughed scornfully.

“I trusted my uncle. Happily he has known how to help me and how to preserve the old rights.”

“You have sold the land of your fathers to a man of low birth. Heaven forgive you, Penelope.”

“I have not done so,” she answered, clenching her hand, but too proud to show the anger she felt. “Everything that is done will be done in my name. A Winakell alone shall save the property.”

“And how will you save yourself? Get along with you, Penelope. You are not daughter of mine. If you and Greybarrow choose to meddle, you must go your own way, and the devil go with you.”

Penelope walked away, and old Nero followed her as a mute follows a coffin.

She entered the glen, and here the roar of the Rothery appeared to harmonise with the wild tumult of her brain. Her father she had never loved, but he was her father, and something in the very fierceness of his impotent rage seemed to unite her to him and to make his words sting because of their truth. How could she have done this thing so lightly? Now that the time was come it seemed terrible. She did not love Philip; she hated him, because she had learnt what love meant. An evil fate in the form of love had come to chastise her for fancying she could do this thing in her own strength of character.

She followed the path in its ascent towards the higher land, keeping always close to the misty roar of the Rothery, feeling as if she were pursued by her father’s curses. Her uncle, who alone could have soothed her, was gone to meet Philip. It was sixteen miles to the nearest railway station, and when he came back Philip would be with him.

At last she reached the end of the glen, and gazed at the distant mountains. Grey clouds were slowly passing over the valleys, and occasionally a gleam broke through the grey masses, then quickly faded away again. The mountain-tops looked very, very far away, and all around was sadness which seemed to wrap the whole of her being in wordless despair.

“How can I save myself?” she repeated softly several times. “How can I! There must be some way. Why should I be sacrificed when my father does not even thank me for it? Why not let it all go! It is not too late even now. Let us be beggars, but let me be Forster’s wife. He cares nothing about money. He cannot understand the pride of the old traditions. In that he fails. Yes, he fails: I am stronger than he is, and I will be strong unless I can find some way out of it.”

She rested her arms on the top of the little gate and gazed out upon the open land. The voice of the Rothery was quiet here. It had but a child’s voice, and had not yet been seized with the mad rage which possessed it lower down.

“I will save myself. I will. He will be too weak to resist.”

Her lip curled in scorn of Philip Gillbanks, and she pressed her hand against her burning forehead.
AMONG THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

WHEN Saint Patrick made a clean sweep of the reptiles in Ireland, he did not press the matter with the fairies. No doubt the good old saint saw that they would be sorely missed by his simple peasant folk; for the "little people" of the Irish interfere oftener for the good than for the evil of mortals. So, while the toads and the snakes plunged, at the saint's bidding, into the sea and swam mightily to gain Scotland's southernmost shore, the sprites held their tiny sides in laughter, and went back rejoicing to their raths and cromlechs, now more theirs than ever. And there they dwell, in the wood and in the meadow, on the hill and in the dale, and wherever the moonlight falls softly enough to dance upon and lights every drop of dew that hangs on flower or tree. Many there are who have no particular profession or dealings with man. They are content to drink the dew, and bathe on the honey the miser bee has overlooked in his quest; to ring the changes on every peal of blue bells, whose chimes, we are told, come only as the fragrance thereof to mortals; they shunt to make the drowsy daisy ope her eye to the moon, and make the burnished butter-cup a lordly helmet for their impish heads.

How long she stayed there she never knew. The glen seemed full of strange shapes fitting about. A hawk poised on an apparently motionless wing far above her on the bare hillside, and a lark flew up to sing one last evening song of unpremeditated joy. A little elf wriggled across the path, and a large bird flew nofally above her.

Suddenly she seemed to feel an irresistible power forcing her to turn and look back down the darkening glen. She resisted the feeling as long as she could, but at last she turned round and gazed down the path. He was there, she saw him coming, shadowy at first, then clearer. A tall man, with the honest, firm step of one who fears nothing and hopes everything. For one moment Penelope allowed herself to believe that it was Forster Bethune—only for one moment—then all her being revolted at the step she was going to take, and an evil pride took possession of her. By that sin fell the angels, and Penelope was a woman.

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through an old graveyard that lay round a ruined church. He loved spirits assuredly, but such spirits as he measured by noggin when the property of another, and which he swallowed and measured—roughly—by inches when it was his own. His faithful spouse "Judy" always met her lord at the entrance to the graveyard, when he had been somewhat detained of an evening by society engagements. The stout knight of the needle would then settle his crutch firmly under his right arm, grasp "Judy" with his left hand, shut his eyes very tight, and request prayers for his mother, who lay buried near.

"Pray for me mother, Judy," he'd say, "pray for the soul of me mother. Bad scran to ye, Judy, if ye don't pray I'll hit ye a polthogue av me crutch!" Thus they twain passed through the dreadful night.

But these are a never-do well lot who content themselves with practical jokes on all who fear or think evil of them. Others there are who have a profession, or mission to men. To the former class—the professional gentlemen—the Leith-phrogan (pronounced Lepracham) belongs. He is the fairy cobbler, and, when the moon gives him light, he plies his trade dill- gently, seated on some little stone or tuft of grass in the dew-bespangled field. His mode of dress is uncertain, but he usually—in the South, at any rate—affects a high-crowned brown hat, with a little brown feather stuck in the front. His jarkin is of untanned mouse-skin, and his tights are of the same material. A pair of stout little brogues of his own making shield his fairy feet from the sharp-pointed grasses and pebbles, and a busklike apron completes his working dress. And there he sits on the moonlit side of some hedge, crooning to himself in the ancient Irish tongue, and tapping away busily with his tiny wooden hammer. The sticky gum of the fir-tree is his wax to wax the spider's web withal that he may bind sole to upper; his nails are the prickles of the thistle; a stout thorn from yonder bramble-bush his awl. He is who can tell where lies a hidden treasure, or even give to him who can hold him a purse of gold. Happy the wight who hears the busy "tap-tap" of the sprite's hammer and can dare to grasp and hold this little Proteus, who transforms himself into divers shapes to elude his captor. When he has done all he knows, and still is firmly grasped, he returns to his own form, and may be bound, but only by manacles made from a plough chain or a clue of homespun yarn; and then he is content to buy his release by disclosing the treasure. But even then he will cheat mortal if he can, as the following chronicle—"An' divil a lie in it," said old Tim, when he finished—will show. Tim Flannigan was an old man when he used to tell us the story, but he never had varied one detail, and called all the saints down from heaven to bear witness to the truth thereof with a freedom that impressed the listener with the fact that the holy band were under a lasting obligation to Tim Flannigan of Ballymuck, and were only too glad to oblige him with their testimony to anything he asserted, especially in the matter of fairy cobblers.

"'Tis no lie I'm tellin' ye," he'd say. "It happened to me as true as I'm settin' here shomkin'. 'Tis nigh on thirty year back now, an' I was young thin," he'd add, with an air of one who foresaw contradiction, but was not going to stand it, "not more nor a fairish gossoon, but I was the divil of a likely bhyo. I tak two boonses to the fair av Corrigeen that mornin', and sowed them well, too, to a jobber from Cork—wan Murphy. You couldn't but know him, he's buyin' ahiill; he has a grey whisheker and wan eye turned to the north."

"But, Tim, about the fairy. Can't you—"

"Arrab, beaisy, an' I'll be tellin' ye. 'Twas half duallin', an' I laving the fair, an' whin I got to the cross-roads—where they bate Foxy Jack, the water-bailiff, for summoning the boyes that killed all the salmon—begorra, by that 'twas pitch dark night, ony for the moon, an' it was as light as day. I tak the near way through Biddy Mahoney's farm there, an' I was just goin' through the gap into the big field beyant the house, whin I heard a sort of rappin' t'other side av the fence, like them thrushes—bad luck to the robbers—whin they wait a sheltie-head on a shtone to git at the mate av him. 'Glory be to God this night an' day,' says I to meself, 'an' is it aften snails ye are now, ye thief of the world, whin ivery public-house is shut long ago, an' ye ought to be ashleep? An' with that I wint up to the fence, threadin' as soft as a cat, to see the divil at his supper. But, be Saint Patrick, if ye saw what I saw ye'd be dead long ago with the fright. There he was, the Leith-phrogan, settin' on a stone, an' knockin' the sprites into a little
owid brogue he was mendin'. He was mighty busy with the job an' never lifted
his head, but wint on wellin' away an'
shin' a bit, fine an' sazy, to himself. Be
the holy phoker, me heart made wan leap to
come out at me mouth, but me swalla' was
too dry for to let anything up, or, be-
gorra, down syther, an' back it fell aign
to the bottom o' me stomach, an' stopped
there. "Cop the blackguard, Tim dear! I
says to meself, an' wid that I throw
me owld hat over him, an' leppin' over the
few stones there was in the gap, I put wan hand on the crown av the canbeen an' with
the other I took a haunt at me lad under-
neath it an' 'pull'd it out. Arrah, don't
be talkin', 1's thin he had the scoldin'! He
was a deel, an' blackguard, an' most
outrageous, an' ivry word av it in Irish.
Thin he commenced plantin' little spalpeens
of thorns in me fingers—faith, he'd got his
pockets full of thim—an' diggin' holes in me
fists wid a thorn he had for borin' the
soles av his brogues. 'Have conduct,' says
I, 'or, be the holy fgy, I'll make porridge
of ye're head agin a shtone.' Wirra! he
let wan squeal, an' 'twas a scrawlhin',
scratchin' cat I had in me han'. But I
prised him tighter for that, an' he thried
me wid iviry bashte he could think av,
'cept cows an' such; he always kept small.
'Give me ye're pot av gould,' says I, whin
he was tired av changin' hisself into
waysels an' rats an' other monsters, an'
was in the shape of a Christian want
more—though, Heaven forgive me, I didn't
mane he was a real Christian. 'Give me
yer gould,' says I, shakin' the thief fit
to bring his br' ges off his feet. 'Tis
buried below that thistle,' says he, pointing
the vegetable cut to me wid a han' like
the saw av a rat. 'Be herrin', says I,
'I'll mark it for mesell,' and wid that I
whipped off me garter—for I had a fine
pair av knee-kreesches on me that Micky
Doolan—rest his soul this night!—had
made an illegant fit for me afarthe me
granfather was buried, an' a nate pair av
grey stockin's as long as me leg. No
sooner did I give him his liberty than he
went out like a candle, an' I niver see him
again, but I put the garter round the
thistle an' was off like a Jack hare for a
spade. Divil a soul I told, an' at day-
break I was there wid two spades an' a
shovel an' a crowbar an' a pick, an' a sack
to hould the money. First thing I saw in
the field was a thistle wid me garter round it, an' I adtracted the spade in nxf it
an' took wan look round—'tis the last look,'
says I, 'that I'll ever throw, a poor man.'
Tare an' ages, what did I see? There
was hundrads av thistles in the field, an'
ivry wan had a garter like mine around
it! Sure, 'twould take twinty men twinty
months av Sundays to dig deep under
thim all, an' all the parish would be there
in the morn'in to know what I was diggin'
Biddy Mahoney's field for. Begoorra, I
begin to chry, an' wint strait home to
me bed an' aleep 'tilt broad day; an' ivry
wan said I was drunk whin I spoke of it;
but the holy saints of hiven know I hadn't
a sup taken.'

To doubt the veracity of Tim's story
would be to put you everlastingly in his
black books. He certainly believed it him-
self, and so did his neighbors. His
account of the Leith-phrogan is what is
generally accepted in the southern counties,
but those who go deeper into the matter
find in it a quaint allegory, probably of
Druidical times. The little fairy cobbler is
the type of industry, and would teach the
unthriftys sons and daughters of Hiberna a
healthy lesson: that the captor of the fairy
must never let go his hold, no matter how
the sprite changes his form, insinuates,
we are told, oneness of purpose; while the
only munies that can bind him, the plough
chain and the clus of homespun yarn, are
emblems of the two chief industries of the
country. The former symbolises drift
in agriculture—and to the farmer or
peasant the Leith-phrogan disclosed the
position of treasure hidden in the earth—
the homespun yarn refers to the then
especially lucrative employment of spinning,
and to the merchant was the pure full of
gold apportioned. By this quaint myth
the peasant was encouraged to ply his
industry in the fields, where he would
ultimately win for himself a reward in
gold; while the trader was to spin and sell
his yarn, which would finally endow him
with a purse of untold wealtl.

It is hard for the Sassenach to grasp
how real their fairy lore is to the
peasantry in Ireland. To them it is al-
ways possible that the Leith-phrogan may
be seen cobbllng the brogues for his brother
eels. Indeed, many a one has heard him
leading his nails in sole and heel, but he
has been warned of the approach of mortal,
and left the eager seeker seeking. They
never are abroad in the moonlight but a
fearful hope is present that the fairies are
at hand, to be heard, at least, if not
seen. But the terror of the unknown is
very great, and Paddy, who never cares to
be far from his shanty after nightfall, is wont to bethink himself of a prayer or two when alone in the darkling fields or lanes. Any sudden noise or unusual sight in the dusk calls forth a burst of pifty that, if it lasted, would entitle the startled sinner to a halo in the next world.

Another member of the fairy community is the Gean-canach (love-talker). He, unlike the Leith-phrogan, piles no trade, but is an artist, his profession being that of love-making. A good-for-nothing little imp is he, who frequents lonely valleys and lanes, and appears to the terrified milkmaid lurching along with his hat alone over his wicked little eyes and smoking a "dhudeen." He never has been known to even enter into conversation with the frightened maid, who flees at the sight of him; but he is ever eager to show himself, and, no doubt, is somewhat affronted at the cold reception he always meets with. Many a time, in the lightsome summer nights, does Molly, the milkmaid, rush into the firelit kitchen, where the hens dosing in the coop by the door, and, perchance, an evil-looking donkey sulkily picking untidy mouthfuls from his heap of grass on the floor, all contribute their share to the civilisation of surroundings that banishes the eerie sensation of a supernatural presence. In the blunders, with her pale face buried in her apron, and seating herself with a tragic haste on the settle ejaculates: "Saints preserve us! The fairies are out to-night. "Divil mind ye," is her fond mother's comment, not, however, without an uneasy glance at the open door, "fit for ye be knittin' a stocklin' for himslef within be the fire, than gladiatirin' down the boren." "Him- self." It may be explained, is the term by which the head of the household is known. Of course it is the rascally Gean-canach that has frightened Molly, and by this time he is sucking his dhudeen harder than ever, and apostrophizing mortal beauty that does not appreciate his elfish proportions. Very unlucky is it to meet the little "love-talker," and he who is disconsolate for the love of a maiden fair is said to have met the Gean-canach. But he again has his lesson to teach to him who will learn; for he personates sloth and idleness, and the excessive pursuit of pleasure; and as he is of bad repute and unlucky to all who look upon him, so will the thieving mortal who passes his time in love-making and smoking his pipe forfeit his reputation and become a companion to be avoided.

Unlike his cousins, the Leith-phrogan and the Gean-canach, the Clohbar-seann is never found in the sweet-scented fields and under the silver-white moon. He takes up his abode in the dank cellars where wines grow old; and lurks in the black, dark corners where the fat casks screen him from a chance ray of light. When the night is deep he creeps out and clambers to the round back of a barrel. With fairy awl he bores a tiny hole, and sucks the wine through a wheat straw. Thus he has been seen, lifting merrily matches of racy ditties, made by the fairy bard who dwells on the hillside and writes songs for his brethren on the back of a poplar leaf. Dearly the little tippler loves the cellar of a hard drinker, and in his cellar he drinks and sings the night through while good wine lasts. When Sleep, inconstant as his brother Death is constant, forsakes your pillow, then, at midnight, listen, and you will hear his shrill revelry coming faintly up through the darkness to your silent room.

Many members of the aërial throng keep watch and ward over treasure hidden in earth or water, or over the dead man's grave and stone, and the trees that overshadow it. Where a lonely tree rears his head apart from his brothers of the forest, in some empty waste, there is treasure hid, and through the night fairy sentinels pace about it, that no mortal hand may grasp the coveted gold. Fantastic shapes they take to scare away the daring wight who would essay to enrich himself with the mystic store. When the wind moans in the cold and slight there may be seen two huge black dogs sitting one on each side of the tree, or a black cat and a bull, joined in a strange fellowship, pacing round the sacred spot. And woe to him who cuts a branch or even breaks a twig! Fall disease or dire calamity will bring him to a speedy end. And many a little lake or spring has, too, in its cool depths untold treasure; but jealously does the White Lady guard it from profane hands. He who would peep and pry in dusk-time for glint of gold will be maddened by her white, sad face peering up through the green weeds and warning him away with a look that freezes the blood. The trees, also, that stand in God's acre, and the stones that mark where a man's head once lay, are their care. Misfortune is the lot of one who dares to disturb the deep sleep of death by breaking or dealing lightly with one of these.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

But of all creatures of the spirit world that have dealings with men, the pitiful Bean Sighé—Anglicé Banshee—is perhaps the best known in Ireland. She is spoken of as being a fairy, but we would be more inclined to use the term spirit; for she is not one of the "little" people, but appears in the shape of a woman of human size. She may, however, safely be classed under the genus "good people," a euphemistic term which the simple peasant applies to all "sperrites." She is the woman "of the piercing wall" who foretells the death of some loved one by piteous weeping, which is heard, sometimes, for three nights before the death takes place; or by appearing suddenly, clad all in white, only, however, to melt from view in an instant with a mournful shriek.

Many old families have a Banshee specially told off to give warning of the approaching death of a member; and these are proud of their ghostly retainer, treasuring up the weird legends of her tidings of disaster shuffled forth under the cold moon. Indeed, she herself comes of an ancient stock as old manuscripts show.

When Medbh, the powerful Queen of Connacht, made her expedition long, long since against the Ultonians, a Banshee met her who foretold how that great slaughter of hosts would come to pass and many heroes on both sides would fall. To Connacht's Queen she came in the form of a fair woman who stood by the shaft of the chariot "with twenty bright polished daggers and swords, together with seven braids for the dead, of bright gold, in her right hand." Asked who she was and from whence, she replies: "I am Felth-llinn, the prophetess of the Fairy Rath of Cruachan!" and again and again she cried to Medbh, "I foresee bloodshed, I foresee power." In another old manuscript the prophetess is recorded to have appeared, with less dignity, in the shape of a red and white cow, to a favoured champion warring against the ancient Cuchullainn. There she appears to have joined with her duties of prophetess the office of the Leannan Sighé—of which more anon—for, it is written, she was "accompanied by fifty cows, having a chain of bright brass between every two of them," a strange band, come to injure Cuchullainn; and their leader assumed the shapes of a black elk and of a greyhound, that she might the more easily confound and overcome him. But the Banshee of to-day comes only as the harbinger of death, flitting and sobbing in the darkness round the doomed house, and disappearing with a shriek of despair from him who has the courage to look upon her.

The Leannan Sighé, alluded to above, was the familiar spirit that was wont to accompany the champions of old on their fighting expeditions, and often saved them when human aid was of no avail. This mysterious being—now lost sight of in fairy lore—was the Irish genius, who appeared to whomsoever it favoured in the shape of a person of the opposite sex; though to warriors it sometimes came in the form of a man who, invisible to the opponent, guided the weapon of his charge and shielded him from deadly strokes. It was a Leannan Sighé that rescued Eoghan Mor (Eugene the Great), King of Munster, from his enemies, by causing that the rocks and great stones on the field of battle should appear to them to be the men of Munster, so that they hewed and hacked at the stones instead of at their opponents. But this invisible ally has not, as has been said, lived through the ages as have the Leith-phrogan and the rest. If it had it would, no doubt, have taken up politics of late years as a pursuit offering the best field for exercising a bellicose partiality.

Yet there on the green hillside and in the old cromlechs dwell the fairy throng: the "little people" that love to shock the old puritan owl with their revels, and to punish the coward who shuts ears and eyes and hurries on if their merry laughter reach him, or the flashing of their fairy feet in the moonlight catch his eye. And there they will ever dwell while the simple peasant dwells with them, who loves to tell their pranks, treasures up their legends in his heart, and for whom they do exist a real people, with a real history and a real kingdom of their own.

THE RHINE FALLS IN WINTER.

Bâlé, at six o'clock of a January morning, after the run from Olais without change of carriage, may be said to be sleep-inducing. But I found my energies recruited by the "cafés an lait" and warmth of the refreshment-room, with the bustle of a variety of travellers around me. There were men for Davos and men for St. Moritz among the crowd, and the one nearest to me at table seemed quite surprised that any Englishman should be at Bâlé at such
a time—in January—and not be on his way to the sunny, sweet-aired Engadine.

After breakfast I held brief communion with a railway official, well buttoned against the piercing air of the platform: the very engines were bearded with icicles, be it understood. Was Schaffhausen conveniently accessible, and could I return thence in time for dinner in the evening? There seemed no manner of doubt about it; in fact I had a choice of routes—I forget how many. Moreover, if I would allow the official to take my ticket for me, I might almost that very moment step into a train which would carry me speedily to Winterthur, which was as much as saying to Schaffhausen.

This was irresistible. The obliging man brought me a third-class return, which, for a relatively small sum, allowed me to spend eight hours in the train. It would have been a tedious experience had I not travelled third class and been in a corridor car. For the day opened in a languishing way, with fog, and never fully revealed the brightness one expects in the South. Nor were the pines and red-tipped willows and birches of the nearer landscape very engaging; nor, after a while, the green river courses and the shadowy, fat-sided houses and spires of this part of German Switzerland. Besides, the heat in the car was a thing to marvel at, contrasting it with the outer cold. Twice I moved gaspingly to different seats. But it was no use trying to escape the parboiling that the Swiss railway authorities think profitable for their clients. Wherever I went I found myself over a steam-pipe, which periodically let loose its vapor. Had I been a potato I should have been cooked in my jacket. As it was, I could only try my heartiest to become acclimatized, and in the meanwhile seek diversion in my fellow-travellers.

We were a red-faced company. I was early astonished by the prevalent blackness of eyes. The local cast of face was indeed rather Spanish than aught else; and largely Jewish also. I first got an inkling of this latter characteristic in the conduct of a youth, patently Semitic, who fastened himself into the most sequestered corner of the car and carolled to himself the canticles from a book in Hebrew type. My companions paid no heed to this amiable freak. At length, however, with a radiant countenance, the young man shut the book, yawned—it was an air for yawning—and proceeded to balance his cash. The blue-hooded women, with baskets of eggs and poultry that protested against their travels; and the vigorous-looking men with double chins; who constituted the majority among us, chattered on, and no one but myself seemed to notice these significant traits in the young Jew’s conduct.

At Winterthur I was set down for an hour. The mist was cold and clammy, with a tendency towards positive rain. Winterthur’s large houses and factory chimneys did not look seductive. I preferred to sojourn in the refreshment-room, where the midday meal was beginning. The dish of the day was “erbeen” soup. Railway porter after railway porter came in and took his dish of it. I, too, yearned towards it in the abstract; but the foolish belief was on me that “erbeen” meant “worms,” and I could not bring myself to try worm soup, though I had no doubt it was made palatable. Now I know better, and that it was simple, nutritious pea soup which swelled the bosoms of the different persons who indulged in it, and which, together with bread and beer, seemed to constitute so satisfying a meal.

Scenically, I suppose this is the least romantic district in Switzerland. And yet there is something pleasant about heavy-browed cottages, ochre or pale blue, and bulbous-spired churches almost tomato-red, contrasted with green pines and snow at its whitest. We sadly wanted a more gracious canopy of sky, however. But the Rhine soon came to give piquancy to the landscape. It travels hereabouts nearly as fast as an ordinary Swiss train, and its bottle-green waters, broken by many a rapid, are held between high banks wooded with trees, which in winter look snug in their foliage of dried brown leaves.

At Dachsen I left the train to walk to the Great Falls, and so on to Schaffhausen’s old city. The air was bracing and the road as hard as iron. I could hear the water’s roar in the distance. The sense of expectation grew keen. I knew that the aqueous tumult was in process in the valley before me, on the other side of which the huge shape of the pale Schweizerhof rises, with its background of wooded hills, like a mansion for an emperor. In the season this hotel enjoys a gay time. Brides and bridegrooms come here for their honeymoons, to gaze from their windows upon Rhine’s agitated waters lit by the moon’s tender beams; and commonplace tourists of all kinds clutter in its halls. But January is not the season, or anything like it.
Schloss Laufen brought this lesson home to me. The snow lay deep and unswept in its courtyard, whence the approach to the Falls on the southern side is made. The hotel-restaurant here had its shutters up, and having forced the heavy door unaided. I wandered for a minute or two from naked room to naked room, seeking a landlord or waiter in vain. No matter. The quaint little Laufen church with its red body and spire of tiles, red, blue, and green, was as good to see in January as in June, with its mellowed wooden porch and its graves set with little iron crosses. So, too, was the Schloss gateway, becrest, with the date 1546, legibly preserved on it.

But I had not come to Laufen to be disappointed, so I rang the castle bell loud and long. The Schloss guards this bank of the Falls and takes toll of a franc per person from visitors. In olden times perhaps its inmates did even worse things. Rhine's voice here might well outcry the voices of victims whom Schloss Laufen wished to be speedily and completely quit of.

It was comforting to see the door open in response to my summons. The lad who let me in was not abnormally astonished. He exacted the franc, drew my unheeding attention to the variety of useless articles in the hall adorned with pictures of the Rhine Falls, which were for sale; and then turned the key on me in the Schloss Gardens, so that I might wander at will down to the riverside and hold solitary communion with the elves and sprites of this most famous place. Almost immediately—and though I was a hundred or two feet over Rhine's level—the river's spray touched my face. The babble of course was terrific—far too much for the lunges of any but the best paid of clearons.

But the snow lay deep and untrod here as in the castle courtyard—and there was ice under it that made the zigzagging descent awkward in places. There is a summer-house on a “round-point” for the use of visitors. It has windows with diamond panes, blue, green, yellow, and crimson, so that looking through them at the Falls you may dye these latter any of the four tints you please. It has also a plaintive inscription inside: “Please, do not write your name on the wall, but in the strangers' book.” The comma after “please” is most touching, and so is the Ollendorfian turn to the sentence from the middle. But the appeal seems necessary, though my countrymen are sinners in this respect far less than the Teutons themselves.

Even from the summer-house the scene was a great one. The Rhine is here about one hundred and twenty yards in width, and in a distance that might be covered by a stone's throw, it casts its waters nearly a hundred feet downwards. True, I did not see the spectacle at its grandest. Above the Falls the heads of rocks innumerable rose higher than the blue-green swirl of waters, and the river could by no means in January sweep through space with the fury it shows in early summer, with the first melting of the snow. Still, I had compensation for the diminished volume of the river in the extraordinary cumber of ice and snow in its midst. The spray in fact frosts in the air and descended upon the trees of Schloss Laufen and the ice-boles of the Falls themselves in sparkling beads of hail. And the water thundered from one level to another, through and over ice palissades and excrecences of huge size, the turquoise tints of which were delightful to look upon.

Of course, however, I was not satisfied with this relatively remote view of the river’s agitation. I descended to the water's level, in the heart of the turmoil, and in a shower of the frozen spray. Hence I could look across to the pinnacled icetales which break the Falls midway, and which appear the most fearsome spots imaginable for investigation. And yet, had it been the season, I could have called for a boat, rowed to the base of the largest of these rocks, and clambered by a stone staircase to the canopied summit thereof.

In summer this achievement would seem daring enough to those of weak nerves; yet, methinks, though the bellowing of the waters in January is less extreme, the added trial of ice on the rock steps would have made this ascent injudicious. Be that as it may, I could not accomplish it. I rang the bell for a boatman at the place indicated, and tarried for him in the snow and spray of ice. But he came not, as I might have expected, and I had to be content with the deed in fancy alone.

Schaffhausen claims to be supreme in Europe for the magnitude of its Falls. I suppose those of Troltshütta on the Gotha in Sweden may, however, almost be bracketed with them. They have the advantage in height, and in the beauty of their banks far superior. But these Gotha Falls are spread over a distance of nearly a mile, whereas the Rhine at Schaffhausen does not mince matters. On the other hand, they can be appreciated with less effort than the Rhine Falls demand. Without a
which I was to be carried saunteringly back to Bâle. From the heights of Neunhausen, level with the assuming Schweizerhof in its woods and gardens—now all snow-decked—I had one more charming view of what I had journeyed to see. Then I gave myself up to the hard highway, with its bullock-drawn carts, its little school-maids with flaxen pig-tails, and its many cafés and restaurants, each with a name that borrowed one or more of the attributes of the Falls. These cafés, however, like the larger restaurants near the river, had suspended their functions on behalf of votaries of the picturesque. You could not in mid-January sit in their vine-sheltered gardens or terraces and drink Rhine wine in honour of the noble stream. Their thick doors were shut fast, and the air was keen enough to justify their double windows.

Schaffhausen itself is a very engaging old town, distinctly medieval in many of its parts, in spite of the modern mills with electric light which have grown in its suburbs along the river's course. It has a huge old remnant of a castle, and gated entrances, and houses with bowed windows of irregular outline, and bright frescoes on the outer walls of many of its residences. Were I a manufacturer of theatrical scenery, I would make Schaffhausen a close study. As it is, however, one is prone to treat it as nothing but a stage on the way to the Falls.

I was glad to seek rest in the train after my slippery tramp of three or four hours. The extraordinary comprehensiveness of my ticket may be realized when I say that it set me down anon at Zurich. Zurich is the Birmingham and Manchester of Switzerland, though more beautiful by far in its situation than those two towns put together. At another time I should have rejoiced to make its acquaintance. This evening, however, I wished myself farther on my way. I have never been in such crowded waiting and refreshment-rooms as those of the Zurich station. At length, however, we were summoned to the so-called express, and after another trying period of semi-suffocation by hot steam, Fâle was regained.

MASQUERADES AND TEA-GARDENS

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The Royal House of Stewart, with all its manifold failings, its weaknesses and vices, its indolence, selfishness and inherent
obstinate, had one good quality; it was ever a lover of art, a patron of artists. Vandyck found his home at the Court of Charles the First; Ben Jonson was the friend of James and Ann of Denmark. For them he produced those wonderful masques which were the outcome of his poetic fancy, to which he gave full rein. His pure and elegant verse, the refinement which characterised these artistic conceptions, and made them differ widely from all other pages, completely captivated the imagination of men like Bacon, Whetlock, Clarendon, Selden, while the studious benchers of Gray's and Lincoln's Inns caught the enthusiasm and inaugurated masques of historic fame. The rugged Puritanism of the Commonwealth put its iron heel upon all such frivolities. Under its rule the nation became "nakedly and narrowly Protestant." Every outlet for artistic feeling was barred, any appeal to men's senses was proscribed. No artist ventured to produce a work with either an historical or religious tendency; his art rose no higher than a good portrait or a hunting scene. Stage plays were counted godless, masques were inventions of the devil himself. Had not Henrietta Maria, the Popiah Queen, taken pleasure therein? Had not money been spent upon them which should have fed the starving poor? This portion of the denunciation could not be gainsaid. The sums expended on the production of the masques was a serious count in the indictment against them.

Under the Commonwealth the English people learned to take their pleasures soberly. Tea-gardens came much into fashion; a visit to Bagnigge, Cupers or Marrowbone gardens made the general holiday outing of both upper and middle classes, and during the days after the Restoration it so continued. Charles the Second, whose absolute Court was an open scandal, durst not, for fear of the Puritans, introduce any godless amusements, such as masques and the like, although Pepys tells us that in his closest some of the wanton beauties of the Court occasionally performed a masque for his delectation, in which my Lady Castlemalme, assisted by the Duchess of Monmouth and others, would dress up in gorgeous habiliments and dance with vizards on. Here was indeed falling off from the courtly pageants of Jonson and Campion. One masque took place during the Gay Monarch's reign, and is indicative of the reckless profanity of the time. This was the Dance of Death—an imitation of

George the First is usually looked upon as a stupid, plodderish German, but his Hanoverian Majesty, for all he looked so dull, was passionately addicted to amusing himself. Herrenhausen, the electoral palace, was a coarse reproduction of Versailles. There was a rustic theatre where, in George the First's young days, the shameless old Platen, his father's favourite, danced and sang in the masques which were performed with a poor attempt at pageantry. Our George had grown up with these tastes, and didn't relish the virtuous severity he found in his new kingdom. He looked about for some one to help him to amuse himself, and he found John James Heidegger, who was waiting for a Royal patron to appoint him King of the Revels and pay the bill of the entertainment. Heidegger was the originator of "masquerades." He could in no way be said to be a successor to Ben Jonson, neither could these entertainments, which were oftentimes degrading exhibitions, compare with the refined and classical "masques." Heidegger was nevertheless a man of a certain sort of talent; he also enjoyed the reputation of being the ugliest man of his time, and he had the good sense to appear proud of this distinction. Pope alludes to him in the Dunfas:

And lo! she bred a monster of a fowl, Something betwixt a Heidegger and owl.

Fielding likewise introduced him as "Count Ugly" into the "Pleasures of the Town," and Hogarth often made him the subject of his pencil.

The first masquerade produced by Heidegger at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1717, produced a storm of disapproval. The Grand Jury of Middlesex "presented" the fashionable and wicked diversion called "the masquerade," and particularly the contriver and carrier-on of masquerades at the King's Theatre, in order that he might be punished. The Grand Jury, however, knew their duty better than to punish the King's purveyor of pleasures. The name, however, was altered to "ball" or "ridotto." Practically it was the same thing, and the revels went on until 1724, when the Bishop of London entered the field and denounced these immoral entertainments from the pulpit. Hogarth likewise, who had begun to sati-
rise the follies of the town, produced in this year the first of his masquerades and operas, a satire against Haldekker's popular entertainments. The picture represents a mob of people crowding to the masquerade. The leader of the figures, with a cap and bells, and garter round his right knee, was supposed to be the King, who, it was said, had just given one thousand pounds to Haldekker. The purse with the label, "One thousand pounds," which a satyr holds immediately before His Majesty, is an allusion to this, and strengthens the probability of the story. The kneeling figure on the show-cloth or sign-board pouring gold at the feet of Cuzzoni, an Italian singer, with the label, "Pray accept eight thousand pounds," was designed for Lord Peterborough (Swift's Mordanto).

The death of George the First and the advent of the new King made no change in the fortune of masquerades, unless it was to strengthen their position. Under George the Second they attained a social standing which gives them almost historical importance. His second Majesty of Hanover was devoted to such entertainments. When he went on a visit to his little kingdom he gave splendid entertainments. In 1740, after his Queen's death, he had a magnificent masquerade in the Green Theatre at Herrenhausen (the Garden Theatre), with screens of linden and box and a carpet of grass. The stage and gardens were illuminated with coloured lamps. Almost the whole Court appeared in white dominoes, like spirits in the Elysian fields. Another time, still in Hanover, he went to a ball at the Opera House attired as a Turk—the grand one—with a magnificent aggrafe of diamonds in his turban, and his dear friend Lady Yarmouth as a Sultana.

England would have been dull after these festivities only for Haldekker. The Royal purveyor was still the "dens ex machina," who might be said "to teach Kings to fiddle and make senators dance." He boasted that, by kindly superintending the pleasures of the nobility, he netted five thousand pounds a year. A rival attraction, however, was rapidly rising, before which he had finally to strike his colours. Vauxhall Gardens was now to take the field, and keep it for more than a century against all comers. It was well said of this well-known resort "that a wealthy speculator was its father, a Prince its godfather, and all the fashion and beauty of England stood round its cradle." This would, however, have to say to its re-incarnation. The gardens were known to the sober tea-drinkers of the Commonwealth and Restoration under the name of Spring Gardens. Samuel Pepys went there by water one summer's day in company with his wife and two maids, Bet and Mercer, and enjoyed himself mightily, as indeed the little man was wont to do wherever he went. In 1712 Evelyn, that sweetest of English writers, writes in his delicate fashion:

"Spring Gardens are especially pleasant at this time of year"—it was the month of May. "When I considered the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choir of birds that sang upon the trees and the tribe of people that walked under the shade, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mohammedan paradise."

Although it pleased a thoughtful mind like Evelyn's to sit and enjoy nature in Spring Gardens, they were by no means so popular with the common herd as either Begnigge, Cupers, or Marrowbones Gardens. The last-named cated for the amusement of all classes; the attractions of its bowling green, dog sights, illuminations, not forgetting Miss Trusler's cakes, drew all the world there, although it was by no means a safe road, and robberies were frequent. Perhaps this latter circumstance had something to say to the preference given to Spring Gardens after it came into the hands of the enterprising Jonathan Tyers, under whose direction it lost its old name and was given that of Fauxhall, which afterwards became Vauxhall. Tyers was either a man of a certain amount of taste, or he had good advisers. The natural beauties of the gardens were not interfered with; the leafy groves where the nightingales sang were not cut down; walks were made in different directions; a fine orchestra and organ were added, with statues, pictures, and ornaments, and in June, 1738, it was opened with a "ridotto al fresco," at which Frederick, Prince of Wales, was present, and the company, numbering four hundred persons, wore masks and dominoes. It has been alleged that Hogarth, who was in all things a good friend to Tyers, suggested to him "masquerades" as the best means of filling his pockets. Considering the manner in which the painter satirised Haldekker for a simi-

* Trusler was the proprietor of Marrowbones Gar-
dens, and when other attractions began to fail, he institut ed "Breakfasts," for which Miss Trusler made cheesecakes and fruit tarts, which had a well-deserved reputation.
lar enterprise, this advice would seem hardly consistent, and would not have been in keeping with Hogarth's otherwise upright character. That he took great interest in Tyers's speculation is certain. He helped considerably in the work of embellishment. To him were attributed most of the pictures which adorned the different pavilions; but Mr. Dobson, who has gone into the matter very closely, is of opinion that Hogarth only contributed one painting—that of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyne, which it was whispered thinly disguised the likenesses of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and Anne Vane, his mistress. The painter likewise designed one of the tickets, and allowed Frank Hayman to reproduce his "Morning, noon, evening, and right." For this goodwill Tyers presented him with a perpetual card of admission for six persons.

In its infancy Vauxhall had to contend against powerful rivals. Sadler's Wells was a popular place of resort; Marylebone still commanded a fashionable following; and Heidegger enjoyed the exclusive patronage of the King. The favour of the Prince of Wales was, on the other hand, given to Tyers. For him a pavilion was specially erected in front of the orchestra, where he was often to be seen. His patronage, however, was not of much account, his constant quarrels with his Royal parents placed him in the background; and to be in favour with him was sure to mean disgrace with the Court. Vauxhall, therefore, did not rank as the first place of entertainment until after the death of its first proprietor,* who was succeeded by his son Thomas—the Tom Restless of Dr. Johnson's "Idler." Tom was a clever, enterprising, somewhat erratic individual. He made many improvements in the Gardens, which soon began to attract the world of fashion, the more so that no efforts were made to puff them into notice. On the contrary, we are told "that a disdainful reticence waas affected by way of contrast to the touting advertisements of such places as Sadler's Wells and Marylebone. A statement was made that the Gardens were at the service of the public, and that it was the affair of the public to keep them up." Meantime, it is only probable to suppose that the initiated, or, as the slang of the present day has it, "those in the know," were aware that they would be well entertained and sure of finding the best of good company.

"It is an excellent place of amusement," said Dr. Johnson, "which must ever be an estate to the proprietor, as it is particularly adapted to the English nation, there being a mixture of curious show, gay exhibition, music, vocal and instrumental, and last, but not least, good eating and drinking for those who wish to purchase such regale." The philosopher went there often to enjoy the air, which was most salubrious. The arrangement of the gardens had been brought to great perfection; the walks originally laid out by Jonathan Tyers were enlarged and beautified. There was the Grand Walk; and the South Walk with its triumphal arches, three in number; and the Counter Cross Walk—painted by Canaletto—the Italian Walk; the Dutch Walk; the Temple of Comus; the Chinese Pavilion; and the Grove. The quadrangle which enclosed the Grove was occupied by a range of pavilions, booths, and alcoves, fitted up for the accommodation of supper-parties. Some of these were reserved for persons of distinction; the pavilion fronting the orchestra was larger and handsomer than the others. This was the one originally built for Prince Frederick of Wales. Here were Hayman's four Shakespearean pictures: "The Storm in 'Kloq Lear';" "The Play Scene in 'Hamlet';" "Ferdinand and Miranda from 'The Tempest';" and "A Scene from 'Henry the Fifth.'" The space between this pavilion and the orchestra was where the crowd assembled—a sort of march past of the company, who gathered here to hear the concert and stare at one another. We can pass them all in review: the women in their graceful saucies, the men in their embroidered coats and lace ruffles, their hats under their arms. Here are all the familiar faces which we know as if we had lived in their day—Johnson and Reynolds, Goldsmith, Boswell, the Gunning's with their train of admirers, and the company standing on the benches to look at them. Horace Walpole arm-in-arm with George Selwyn, Fanny Burney trying to look modest, Mrs. Thrale, Lord Chesterfield, and

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* J. Tyers loved the place he had made so beautiful, and shortly before his death had himself carried thither to take its last look at it. He had made a handsome income, and had purchased for his own use Denbighs, near Docking, Surrey, which now is the property of Mr. Cuhitt, who entertained there the Prince Consort. Tyers's garden contained amongst other curiosities a sermon, not in stones, but in boxwood. A representation of the Valley of the Shadow of Death in two compartments—the end of the infidel and the Christian. Such quaint devices were common in the old gardens. The writer remembers seeing in the garden of one of O'Connell's followers insulting remarks upon Lord John Russell, cut in box.
the Earl of March with La Rena, the Prince Regent, and the Great Commoner. What a shifting panorama! Not one is missing, Rowlandson's illustration gives us a glimpse at some of these worthies; it is an acquaintance from Rowlandson's picture, and is a graphic portraiture of the scene.

A summer's night, and all the world of fashion is here. Madame Wechsel stands in the front of the music gallery, with a vast number of fiddles and violoncellos behind her. She is discoursing the sweet strains of either Handel or Dr. Arne; but her eyes are fixed upon two figures in the front row of listeners—if we consider the picture carefully, we find that nearly all the eyes turn in the same direction—a young pair, most attractive by reason of their extreme youth, good looks, and high position of one—they are Florizel and Perdita. The Prince is costumed in a strawberry-tinted coat with blue facings, a lace ruffler, a black cocked hat on his head. He is evidently pressing his suit hard, to which pretty Perdita is listening, her head a little to one side. A dainty figure she is in white satin train, evening bodice, and lightly powdered curls. Her expression is a mixture of archness, innocence, and coyness. The whole assemblage watches the scene.

Major Topham, one of the tops of the day, openly sticks his glass in his eye and stares impudently. A gentleman with a wooden leg has the chivalry of a hero, and only looks furtively at the fair one—as does the dwarf close by her. Two ladies affect indifference to the flirtation, and seem engrossed with one another; but we notice that the one in blue is glancing from under her eyes in the Royal direction. These two are said to be the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Duncannon. With no positive grounds beyond conjecture, the supper-party, in one of the boxes to the left, is also supposed to consist of Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith, and Mrs. Thrale; the last-named, however, unless it be meant for a caricature, is singularly unlike the lady. The supper-party on the left-hand side is evidently made up of rich citizens out to enjoy themselves. The food is their attraction; and they do not heed the music or stare at the Prince and his mistress. Jackson, the waiter, is opening for them a second bottle of champagne, although, to judge by their looks, they already have had enough.

Another picture of Rowlandson's shows us the beau monde dancing al fresco. The occasion is evidently some festivity, for the orchestra and gardens are illuminated.

On cold or rainy evenings the concerts were given in the music-room, where there was an elegant gallery for the music-lovers. The ceiling was fan-shaped, like those of the Adam brothers (it may have been after their design, the music-room not being in the original plan); it was highly decorated, as were also the columns, and has a resemblance to Zucchi's adornment of Lord Derby's house in Grosvenor Square. The panels of the walls were gradually filled with paintings, principally by Hayman. Mr. Taylor gives a long list of his pictures, including that of the female dwarf, Madame Catharina, who was one of the attractions of the place. The concerts given in Vauxhall were of exceptional excellence. They usually began at six, and some of the best musicians of the day took part. Dr. Arne often conducted, and his sweet songs were always popular. Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Wechsel, and her daughter, the beautiful and gifted Mrs. Billington, Signor and Signora Storace, Incledon, Brahams, Mrs. Bland, and Miss Stephens all sang here. There was likewise a stage, where ballads were produced; while in the garden rope-dancing, pyrotechnic displays, balloon ascents alternated with varying success. We must not omit one of the great attractions, notably to the young, the Dark or Druid's Walk, which was arranged purposely for the delighting of lovers' vows. On both sides there were rows of lofty trees, which met at the top and formed a delightful canopy and shade even in the hottest weather; the finest singing birds built their nests here, and the sweet chorus was delightful. Some of the bushes were supposed to be enchanted, and discovered—by means of a musical box concealed in the shrubbery—faery music.

Walking through the Dark Walk, however, was not encouraged by judicious chaperons. Young ladies who respected themselves and were well brought up, would not enter it unless by daylight or in company with papa or mamma. In most of the novels and romances of the day the Dark Walk figures—the heroine generally managing to find her way there and to get involved in a distressful situation with the villain of the story, from which she is ultimately rescued by her honourable lover; generally a most desirable husband. Evelina got herself there and went through the programme, was insulted by a party of rakes, championed by Sir Clement...
HERMITS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

At first sight you might be inclined to question the existence of the modern hermit. The Census returns, with all their queer farrago of occupations and callings, make no mention of his peculiar way of life. Nor does the hermit, as such, appear in any of the directories, Metropolitan or provincial. But he exists all the same, and in considerable numbers; and not only he but she, for the hermit may be of either sex. The hermit is one who goes out into the wilderness to live alone, so the ancient fathers tell us, and nowhere is it easier to carry out the eremitical plan than in the wilderness of a great city such as London. The difficulty, indeed, with any one of narrow means and possessed of no great wealth of friends, is to avoid falling into the ways of the recluse. The necessity of earning daily bread keeps most people in the kind of stir that averts positive stagnation, but when this is removed by some slender kind of provision, the tendency to a life of seclusion is even encouraged by the roar of traffic and the passing of busy crowds.

And we shall not be surprised to find hermits in Drury Lane; there was one not many years ago, a fresh-looking rustic, after the fashion of the farmer of Tilbury Vale.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he, who lived in a garret for years, and died there in absolute solitude and seclusion. Early in the morning a few years ago, you might have met a pleasant-looking dame, in black, with the bonnet and shawl and general costume of A.D. 1830, and a little troop of dogs kept strictly in order, who would disappear in one of the narrow courts behind St. Martin's Lane, where she lived as much apart from all the world about her as the most rigid votaries of old times.

But what would you have said to the sight such as might have been witnessed not so long since, of an elderly lady encamped in the back garden of a large house in a pretentious neighbourhood, surrounded like Robinson Crusoe with goats, and dogs, and cats, but with hardly as good a shelter from the weather? As it happened, the drill-ground of one of our volunteer regiments abutted on the encampment; and the genial young fellows made great friends with our lady anchorite, who was excellent company, by the way, and full of anecdote. They built her a capital little hermitage of boards, they fetched and carried for her, and made quite a pet of the old lady—and even proposed to adopt her as the titular mother of the regiment. But one day the myrmidons of the law descended upon the little settlement, and the poor old lady was driven out to seek shelter where she could.

Another London hermit was an Irish gentleman of good family and of some means, who lived in a narrow cul-de-sac out of Holborn, in the midst of a swarm of poor Irish, his countrymen. Poor as they might be, they none of them lived so frugally as the "jentleman" who was known to be one of the "rulz outz sort," and was respected accordingly, and who, indeed, made himself useful among the
community, writing letters, and occasionally settling trifling disputes, while he was exonerated from any share in the free fights that decided more knotty causes of controversy. At his death it was found that he had led this penurious life in order to speculate more freely on the Stock Exchange, which he had done for twenty or thirty years with such mixed success, that though he left no debts, neither was there sufficient to pay his funeral expenses.

Some twenty years ago there lived in a little Welsh town on the sea-coast, in the upper room of a humble cottage, a scholar and divine, once a fellow and tutor of his college, who on some evil report affecting his good name, had abandoned all his appointments and disappeared from the knowledge of all his old associates. He led a blameless life, associating only with the very poor, and living on the frugal fare appropriate to the hermit's cell:

A scrip with herbs and fruit supplied,  
And water from the spring.

But the Welsh have a natural tendency to a life of seclusion and meditation, and stories are told of some of their bards who spent the greater part of their lives hardly stirring from the box bedstead built in the thickness of the wall, which would well represent the couch hewn out of the rock of the earlier anchorites.

Yet another Welsh anchorite of recent times had the curious notion of sleeping all day and roaming about during the night, and this in a country village where there was nothing going on after nine p.m.

The champion hermit of the century, however, was Lucas of Radecotes Green, near Hitchen, a sketch of whom formed the framework of an early Christmas Number of "All the Year Round," entitled "On Tom Tiddler's Ground." Lucas's forbears were wealthy West Indian merchants settled at Liverpool, who had acquired a small landed estate in Hertfordshire. Here the hermit lived the life of any other country gentleman of moderate means till the death of his mother, to whom he was warmly attached, in 1849, when he was nearly forty years old, an event which seems to have wrecked him altogether. The pleasant, modest country house and its lawns and gardens were given up to neglect and decay, while its owner bestowed himself in a wretched outhouse, with a blanket for all his apparel by day or night—and a very dirty blanket at that, fastened at the neck by a wooden skewer—and for a couch only a heap of ashes. Yet he does not seem to have courted notoriety, but rather to have had it thrust upon him. But he had neighbours in the literary world, and soon obtained a notoriety to which he did not seem averse. Anyhow, he was not unfrequently interviewed in succeeding years; but he was an awkward subject—"credence eruego"—as he seemed to have an insatiable curiosity as to the circumstances of his visitors, and assailed them with a crossfire of questions, while he was impenetrably reticent as to his own way of life.

When Lucas was a boy an old lady was still living who carried the hermitic record to well into the previous century. Old Mrs. Lawson, of Coldbath Square, who died 1816, is said to have been born A.D. 1700—but this is probably a mistake—in Essex Street, Strand; whence she removed on her marriage early in life to a wealthy but elderly husband, to the then rural neighbourhood of Coldbath Fields. Left by her husband's death a young and wealthy widow, it was perhaps some unlucky affair of the heart that first inclined her to seclusion. Anyhow, she lived a voluntary prisoner in her own house all the rest of her life, retaining still the garb of her early years, when George the First was King.

With ruff and cuffs and fardingales,  
ev'en to the days of the scanty skirts and  
clinging robes of the Regency.

Contemporary with Lady Lawson, as she was always called in the neighbourhood, was Lord Byron, the uncle of the poet, who, after killing his neighbour Chaworth in a brawl at a London tavern, retired altogether into seclusion at New-
stead, varying the monotony of existence by training the crickets of his lonely hearth — so the story runs — and with such success that they would dance around him in a ring. When the old lord died, tradition adds, the crickets left the house "an masse." Naturally, Lord Byron's humbler neighbours set him down as a magician and the crickets as evil spirits, who had gone to attend him in another place.

For the notion that the secrets of nature could be best worked out in age and seclusion, with spells and meditations deep and subtle incantations, long commended itself to popular belief. And Milton seems indefinitely to share it when he invokes for his old age

The hairy gown and mousy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth show,
And every herb that dips the dew.

Milton's aspirations for the peaceful hermitage have been shared by many others. Even the genial and social Sir Walter Scott had imagined for himself a lonely cell by St. Mary's Lake near the "bonny holms of Yarrow." And Wordsworth himself would have been no bad tenant for the hermitage on St. Herbert's Isle, in Derwentwater, that St. Cuthbert had once visited, who himself loved so dearly a solitary life.

In the "Black Dwarf," too, Scott has pictured that morbid sense of physical imperfections which leads so many to a life of practical seclusion. On the other hand, in the jolly hermit of "Ivanhoe" he brings the hermitage pleasantly into connection with vert and venison, and the jolly companions of the merry Greenwood.

The genuine medieval hermitage was more often found in the city than in the forest. Victor Hugo gives us a description of one in the heart of Paris, the cell of Madame Roland, of Roland's Tower, who, for grief at the death of her father in the crusade, shut herself up for the rest of her life. "And here for twenty years the desolate damsel awaited death as in a living tomb, sleeping on a bed of ashes without even a stone for a pillow, clothed in a dirty sack, and subsisting on the charity of passers-by." Could it have been that our Lucases had read the famous romance of Victor Hugo, and had modelled him after Madame Roland? Hugo pictures another Parian anchorite, "who during thirty years chanted the seven Psalms of penitence from a heap of straw at the bottom of a cistern, and even more loudly than ever at night; and to this day you may think to hear his voice as you enter the Rue du Païs-qui-parle." This kind of hermitage, by the way, can be paralleled in England, for at Royston there is a hermitage cut out of the chalk thirty or forty feet below the surface, accessible only by a narrow shaft, so that the voice of the penitent would literally cry from the depths.

There were hermitages, too, attached to most of the principal churches. St. Paul's had one, if not more, and doubtless the Abbey too. A cell attached to the Church of St. John's at Chester was reputed to have sheltered the unfortunate Harold, who, according to this tradition, recovered from his wounds, and lived as a humble anchorite for many years of the Conqueror's reign.

A still earlier legend is of Guy of Warwick, who, returning as a Palmer from the Holy Land, assumed the hermit's frock, and lived for years all unknown in a lonely cell adjoining the gate of his own castle. Here he lived on alms daily supplied to him as one of a company of thirteen poor men—a medieval thirteen club — at the hands of his faithful wife, who regularly entreated their prayers for the safe return of her dear lord. The dour old Guy remained unmoved, and it was only in his last moments that he revealed himself by sending to his wife the ring she had exchanged with him at her bridal.

Then there is the ballad of the Hermit of Warkworth, in which the hermit is represented as sheltering young Percy, Hotspur's son, who, disguised as a shepherd, has won the heart of a noble damsels whom the hermit presently unites him. And this is the true rôle of the hermit in romance, as witness Friar Laurence in "Romeo and Juliet," whereas Goldsmith in doubling the parts of hermit and lover, as in Edwin and Angelina, suggests a hermitage "à deux" which, however pleasing, seems to contravene the rules of the game.

As for the hermit in his religious aspect, we shall find him of most respectable antiquity. In the early centuries of our era the Thebaid of Egypt was almost crowded with them, and women as well as men embraced a life of seclusion, which was not, however, without its social features. So that to be quite alone one had to climb to the top of an obelisk or pillar like the famous Stylites. Saint Anthony, too, was one of the hermits of the Thebaid who
found the company to be met with rather oppressive. But the tradition of this mode of life seems to have been handed down to the Celtic Church, and its religious settlements seem to have been rather clusters of anchorites than monasteries of the more regular pattern.

But, indeed, the hermit belongs to all the religions of the world. He is in full swarm among the disciples of Buddha. The Brahmins consider the ascetic life as the final and necessary stage of existence; the Mohammedans have their solitary dervishes. And where there is no particular religious sanction for the life, people take to it of their own accord. All of which only shows that in the general current of social and gregarious life, there are numerous eddies and backwaters, which draw insensibly towards solitude and seclusion.

A LITTLE COQUETTE.
A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

HILDA and Lord Langridge had been engaged three months. During that time she had alternately fascinated and perplexed him. She was never in the same mood two days together; she changed like the wind. Sometimes she was gracious and almost tender, and his heart beat high with hope; sometimes she was cold and scornful, and made him absolutely and completely wretched. But in whatever mood she was, she never failed to charm him. Her caprices only served to augment a love which partook of the nature of blind infatuation.

"I don't know any other man alive who would put up with me," she said one day in a fit of remorse after she had been treating him particularly badly. "You must tell me if you want to be off your bargain, Langridge."

But Langridge was so shocked at the idea that the queen could do wrong, that she was really touched, and called him a dear, and sent him away happy.

They had been engaged in November, and it was now the end of January. Lord Langridge talked of giving a ball at Fairholmes Abbey, where Hilda was to queen it as the future mistress of the fine old place. Hilda was enchanted at the idea. She had become feverishly restless of late, and seemed to need continual excitement to keep her from flagging.

"It will be perfect," she said delightedly. "I shall enjoy it ever so much. Things were really getting too dull to be endured."

"I am so glad you are pleased, my pet," said Langridge, his round face beaming with pride at the idea that he had hit upon something to please her. "You shall have the ordering of the whole thing, invite all the guests, and do exactly as you like with everybody. It shall be your ball, and you shall be queen of the evening."

Accordingly one wet, raw, misty February day, he rode over to the red-gabled house to consult Hilda about some final arrangements. The ball was to take place on the morrow, and Hilda had already been two or three times to Fairholmes Abbey with her mother to see that things were to her liking. She had had many caprices, some of them very expensive ones, but Langridge was her slave and obeyed her in all things. He had even knocked down the wall between the morning-room and the dining-room in order to make a particularly magnificent supper-room, which was to be decorated with garlands of Marshal Nia roses. Nothing was too extravagant for Hilda just then.

As he entered the garden-gate and walked up the path, leading his mare by the bridle, he met Hilda herself, issuing forth from the hall door. She was attired in a close-fitting ulster and a small hat with a veil. Her boots were strong and thick.

"My dear Hilda!" said Langridge in great astonishment and distress, "you surely are not going out this morning?"

"As you see," returned Hilda determinedly, lifting a strong sole for his inspection. "I am going for a tremendous walk. I have been bottled up all day, and now I have burst."

"But," objected Langridge, with a piteous look at the soaking earth and streaming sky, "it is not fit weather for a dog to be out in."

"Oh, but I am a very strong dog, you know," returned Hilda, starting off down the path with an air of determination, "and I never take cold. It is better than stopping indoors in the house and going mad—which I should inevitably do. You wouldn't like me to go mad, would you, Langridge?"

"Don't talk so childishly!" said Langridge, losing his temper a little. "You must at least wait until this rain stops."

"It will not stop all day. Good-bye."

[Charles Dickens]
I am coming with you,” said Langridge firmly.

“You are going to do nothing of the kind. I wish to go for a walk alone.”

“But I came to ask you about the ball——”

“I am sick to death of the ball,” returned his betrothed pettishly. “Go and ask mamma anything you want to know.”

Langridge followed her, still leading the mare. The red-gabled house possessed no stables.

“I don’t want to consult your mother. I want to consult you.”

Then for goodness’ sake consult me now and have done with it,” cried Hilda, standing still in the rain, with a little stamp of the foot. “What is it? If only you knew how absurd you look, dragging that great animal after you all down the path!”

“I dare say I often look absurd in your eyes,” said Langridge, a little ruffled; “but I came over on purpose to——”

“I know! I know!” cried Hilda, in a fever of impatience. “What is it? I am in an awful temper this morning, Langridge.”

“So it seems,” said Langridge.

“That speech was dry enough to make up for all this rain,” said Hilda, recovering herself a little and laughing. “Tell me what you want and let me go.”

“You have forgotten to ask Mrs. Dalrymple to the ball,” said Langridge, in a tone of determination, “and I want to know why!”

“Mrs. Dalrymple? The widow with the Piccadilly weepers, do you mean? I never meant to——”

“Piccadilly weepers!” ejaculated Langridge, in a tone of horror. “Whatever do you mean?”

“Aren’t they Piccadilly weepers, those muslin things and streamers? I am sure I thought they were. I don’t like her, anyhow, and I don’t want her. She is so frightfully pious that she seems out of place at a ball. Her conversation always makes me feel as if I had been in several churches.”

Langridge turned towards the house with a hopeless gesture, and Hilda started off as fast as her feet could carry her. Langridge tied his horse to a tree and entered the house. Mrs. Clifford greeted him with smiles.

“I am so sorry,” she began, “dear Hilda has just gone out. She insisted on walking over to the village in spite of the weather.

I told her how very angry indeed you would be if you knew it.”

“I told her that myself,” returned Langridge, walking over to the window and staring out at the dripping trees and the dismal little pools under them, “but my wishes did not seem to have any effect upon her.”

“Dear Hilda seemed a little restless this morning, I thought,” said Mrs. Clifford apologetically.

After a pause the figure at the window said, without turning round:

“A woman who is happy and contented is very seldom restless, Mrs. Clifford. I have sometimes thought lately that Hilda is neither the one nor the other. If—if I am not the man to make her happy, if—it is not yet too late to draw back.”

Mrs. Clifford looked up in great alarm, and determined to give her foolish daughter a piece of her mind on her return home. A throb of terror shook her at the mere thought of Hilda losing such a chance after all. ”

“Hilda is perfectly happy,” she said hurriedly. “I am sure she has everything a woman can want. You indulge her every whim. The fact is, you spoil her,” she added, with tentative playfulness.

“Hilda is of too decided a character to have her head turned by attentions from me,” returned Langridge a little bitterly.

“I have done my best to make her happy, and I honestly believe that I have failed. I can only do my best,” he added with a sigh. “And she has only to ask for her freedom back and——”

“My dear Lord Langridge,” said Mrs. Clifford, in the greatest alarm, afraid that Hilda had done or said something past forgiveness, even by her humblest slave, “I assure you that Hilda would be heartbroken if she thought she had offended you. Whatever has she done?”

“Nothing, nothing,” said Langridge hastily. “Perhaps it was only fancy. She—she was restless and unhappy, I thought. I could not bear it if I thought I made her unhappy,” he added in a low voice.

“But she is not unhappy! I assure you she is not. Why, she is devoted to you.”

Langridge smiled a little grimly, and turned the subject by speaking of the ball.

“The dining-hall looks rather fine now that wall is down,” he said, going over to the fireplace and standing with his back to it. “There is no denying that Hilda
has perfect taste. That idea of only having certain flowers in certain rooms is very pretty."

"The Abbey will look like a huge conservatory," said Mrs. Clifford, falling readily into his mood, "and I am afraid these whims of dear Hilda's are very expensive."

"If she is pleased, that is all I care for," said Langridge abruptly. "What flowers does she want to wear herself? I must send her a bouquet."

"She will wear a black gown," said Mrs. Clifford, her tones betraying that she had fought over the subject with Hilda. "So absurd of her! To dress like a dowager when she is only twenty-one—and almost a bride, too."

The word "bride" roused Langridge for a moment. "I wish she would wear white," he said wistfully. "She looks so lovely in white."

"I will tell her what your wishes are," said Mrs. Clifford eagerly. "It is not too late to change, and—"

"Please say nothing about me. My wishes are only likely to influence her the other way," said Langridge with a slight return of his former bitterness.

"Oh, but I shall make a point of it! Hilda must not be allowed to become unreasonable. As for flowers——" she hesitated.

"I suppose she is not going to wear any?" said Langridge, with rather a hard note in his voice.

"She says not. Really, I don't know why Hilda has taken such foolish fads into her head. One would think she was bent on making herself look as plain as possible," said Mrs. Clifford in a vexed voice.

"Hilda could never look plain. And she shall have her own way in everything," said Langridge, with a sudden resolute return to good humour, "even about not asking Mrs. Dalrymple."

"Dear Hilda does dislike her so," murmured Mrs. Clifford apologetically; "but, of course, your wishes——"

Langridge laughed. "My wishes again! I have no wishes but Hilda's. Still, Mrs. Dalrymple is an old friend, and I am sorry she has not been asked."

He walked over to the window again, and once more surveyed the gloomy day. Then he announced abruptly that he must be going, and rode off in a puzzled frame of mind.

In the meantime Hilda had been ploughing her way steadily along the country road that led to the village. A keen wind had sprung up and blew gloomily through the black hedges. It was impossible to hold an umbrella up, and she walked along with bent head. The battling with the wind seemed to take some of the fierce restlessness out of her. She recognised a force in nature more restless than her own spirit. The exertion seemed to calm her.

"There is nothing like a good tear in a blustering wind for knocking the ill-temper out of one," she thought, as she turned to go home after she had finished making her purchases. "I feel almost amiable now, and certainly not half so restless. I wonder if poor Langridge is stillcooling his heels at home waiting for me?"

A heavy grey mist was shrouding the landscape with a sort of ragged curtain as she walked along. A fringe of grey cloud hung so low that it obscured the tops of the trees. As her mental excitement wore off physical reaction set in, and Hilda began to feel wet, chilly, and miserable.

"I hope I have not caught cold," she thought as the wet mist clung about her; "it would be very hard on Langridge if his future bride appeared at the ball with a red nose and tearful eyes. Colds in the head are so unbecoming."

Then her thoughts ran on the dress she was going to wear. She had insisted on black—but it was a glittering black which would sparkle with every movement, and show off to perfection the dazzling whiteness of her neck and arms. The more simple her attire the better taste it would be, she decided. She did not wish to jump into white satin and orange-blossom before it was necessary. As for flowers——

"They only get withered and faded," she said to her mother. "If Langridge asks you, be sure you say I do not mean to wear any. He is certain to send me some forget-me-not or sentimental rubbish of that kind."

The wind was abating a little, and she ventured to put up her umbrella again. On ahead she could see the figure of a man coming towards her through the mist. For one impatient moment she thought that it was Langridge who had come to meet her. A second look told her that the figure was too tall and shapely to belong to the owner of Fairholme Abbey.

The stranger also had his head bent, and his collar well up to his ears. As
they passed each other Hilda peered curiously at him to see what he was like; at the same moment a gust of wind suddenly turned her umbrella inside out. She gave a little cry of distress; the umbrella was flapping and straining like some huge bird that was bent on carrying her off as its prey in the darkness.

The man with the overcoat pulled up to his ears stopped politely, and asked if he could render her any assistance.

"Please throw the thing over the hedge for me," said Miss Clifford with a gasp of fatigue. "I have got my fingers all mixed up in the handle, and I feel sure I shall be up in the clouds like a new sort of comet unless you help me."

The umbrella handle was one made to sling on the wrist, and for a moment she could not free herself from it. The stranger subdue the struggling thing, and took it from her.

"Am I really to throw it over the hedge?" he asked, looking at her.

She had been too occupied before to notice his face. But now she scrutinised him with sudden alarm.

"Yes, please," she began. "I——"

The umbrella was over the hedge in a moment, and the stranger had lifted his hat and passed on with a smile. She stood irresolute for a second or so, looking after him. Then something stronger than herself seemed to urge her to action. The stranger had not gone many paces. She sent a feeble cry after him.

"Captain Curwen!"

He turned and came up to her, a smile still hovering over his lips.

"So you have decided to recognise me at last," he remarked, without offering her his hand.

"At first I didn't know—I wasn't quite sure——" she faltered.

"I knew you in a moment; and I found you in a scrape as usual; you used to have a faculty for getting into scrapes, Hilda."

He called her Hilda, and spoke to her in the old superior, domineering way—just as he was used to, she thought. He had not changed in the least.

"Are you stopping here long?" she asked him.

"In this particular spot? No, for I shall be soaked through, and you too. Only you are soaked already. You had better run home and get your wet things off."

He turned and walked beside her, and she obeyed him weekly. She had called him domineering, and said that he treated her as a child. He did so still; but she bowed to the master hand.

"I have come home for good," he announced abruptly, as she did not speak.

"Oh, indeed! Here?" said Hilda rather faintly.

"Of course. My mother would never forgive me if I settled elsewhere."

"I suppose not."

They had wonderfully little to say to each other, these two who had not met for so long. Hilda seemed tongue-tied, and he made no effort to break the silence. At the cross-road he stopped and held out his hand.

"I must say good-bye. You are looking very pale and tired, Hilda, but otherwise you are very little changed. Not quite so sprightly as usual, perhaps; but that is easily accounted for by the depressing weather and the loss of your best umbrella."

She shook hands in silence, and they separated. As she walked in at the gate of the red-gabled house, she told herself that she hated him more than ever.
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
By ESME STUART.
Author of "Joan Veilacot," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestell of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVIII. ON CONDITION.

PHILIP saw no grey in the Glen, but only a beautiful soft light of evening time. His Princess was there, and she had sent word that he was to follow. His heart was full of her. His ideal was so high, so beautiful, that it lifted him out of himself into a region that he had never explored before. As he walked on, not too quickly, for the whole place was full of her, he vividly remembered his first arrival in cold and wet. He recalled this very Glen which had then seemed to him like a region of everlasting night, and honest Oldcorn only like some evil gnome luring him to destruction. He had indeed lured him, but it was to a palace, and to the Princess, and the whole world had become fairytale to him.

In Philip's mind the past seemed non-existent. Forster's words he remembered not at all. The money transactions which he and the Duke had discussed, were to him a mere detail. The only thing that mattered at all was the fact that his Princess was won. There was nothing worldly about her, nothing sordid in her character. His own sister Clytie had taught him what a woman could become who was proud of her riches, proud of her beauty, and proud of being able to attract notice. Philip knew that all this was unworthy of the attention of a noble mind. His Princess had never demeaned herself to anything mean or small.

When he came in sight of her, for Jim Oldcorn had delivered the message, Philip felt as if he were hardly worthy to approach this woman. He was conscious also of feeling dumb, and as if poor common words were all too worthless to offer her. Of himself he did not think at all, his mind was full of her beauty, which all London had applauded; and of her incomparable nobility, which he alone could fully understand. Suddenly he saw her standing against the evening sky, which by contrast with the gloom of the Glen looked strangely light. He saw that she was leaning against the gate, and he wondered whether she was thinking—of what? Her thoughts were too sacred for him to intrude upon, even to himself. A knight of chivalry had never worshipped more humbly than did Phillip at this moment, when he saw Penelope turn and come slowly towards him.

He took her outstretched hand with a new awe, trembling at the touch of her finger. This first passion was as sacred to Philip as his religion. He had never loved another woman, and this precious gift was beyond his understanding. He did not miss her greeting, for his own words were very few because of his deep emotion.

"My darling—I have come," he said.

"In the future, will you trust me with yourself? Will you let me do everything for you—and think for you? This has been a sad trying time for you, I know, but it will be a happiness to us both to avoid all public fuss and show."

"Yes," she said, as she felt some reverent kisses on her hand.

"My Princess! Do you know, sweetest, that I cannot believe this is truth and reality? I feel that I am in a beautiful dream, and that I shall not be allowed to realise all that my inmost being would fain..."
show you of love. Shall we sit here a moment on this fallen tree—that is if you are not cold?

Penelope obeyed, but she did not come nearer to him than she could help, and he felt that she was not able to understand all the words he wanted to pour into her ears. He was silent from intense fear of saying something which she might not understand. The great dog came close up to them, and snarled in low tones at the stranger; then he laid himself close to his mistress, as if to guard her from harm.

"He does not understand that I am a new protector, dearest."

"No; he and I have been too long accustomed to loneliness to—accept any other life easily," said Penelope slowly.

"Yes, I know, my Princess; you are brave and loyal to the core. You have had a long, weary time of loneliness, but now it will be always as you like. You must never let me hinder your wishes. Do you understand? You are to do as you like. I have dedicated my life entirely to you, not for any selfish view of my own, but for your happiness alone. Can you realise that?"

"Forster would have been my master," were the words which floated dimly through Penelope’s mind. She shrank from Philip’s entire unselﬁshness; it only added to her annoyance.

"Thank you, Philip." She spoke the name with a slight hesitation. "You are very kind, I know; but you will understand that, brought up as I have been, my liberty is very dear to me; that I—I can give you so little."

"I asked for so little; only the right to love you, my Princess."

"Yes, you asked for that, and—and I granted it; but you may repent. Let me say it now at once. Philip, it is not too late to draw back if you repent of the bargain."

"The bargain! Penelope, dearest, there is none between us."

"Yes, there is; you do not understand. I told you that I—I would marry you—I would marry you to be your wife in name—but—love I cannot give so easily. You know that love cannot be called up at will." Penelope spoke in a low voice, but there was no tremor in the tone, each word was clear and distinct.

"You said, dearest, that I was not to expect protestations of affection. You know I have never asked you for any. I told you that I could love enough for two of us. You must let me do that. I do not ask for anything but—Penzie, my dearest—tell me that you trust me entirely, that you will allow me—"

"I gave you the conditions of our marriage," she said, with the slightest shade of irritation in her voice. "If you cannot accept them, would it not be better to—"

"Don’t use that word," said Philip, in a low voice, as if the very sound hurt him. "You have chosen me from the many who, I know, would have been only too happy to be your—"

At this moment the Duke’s step was heard coming quickly towards them, and Penelope started up as if she were afraid of being found talking to Philip.

"Come," she said, "my uncle is close by. But remember you are accepting me with the full knowledge of how little I can give you. We need not mention it again, need we?"

"There you are, Penelope! The Glen is extremely damp this evening; you are courting rheumatism. Gillbanks, if you can spare a few minutes, I want you. You two will have plenty of time in the future to talk."

"Then I will take Nero out on the mountain and come home by the lane," said Penelope, turning towards her uncle. He could not distinctly see her face, but he recognised the proud reserve of her tone. The Duke was a little uneasy as he drew Philip away.

"So everything is ready for to-morrow, Philip! The person and the man of law," he said, laughing a little.

"Yes, everything," said Philip dreamily.

"And you still think you had better take her for a honeymoon to Switzerland?"

"I had not time to ask her. Everything has been so hurried. I must do just as she likes."

"Of course. Penelope is used to having her own way in many matters. She is not named a Princess for nothing."

Philip was silent. He did not like to hear his future wife discussed even by her uncle.

"We have kept it very quiet," continued the Duke, "even from our household. Under our peculiar circumstances it was better. You must not mind if the retainers growl a little. They are still sore over the death of the heir of the Winksills. Our ways are very conservative in this out-of-the-way glen; but Penelope has seen the great world now."
"Yes, and the world has seen her," said Philip, smiling.
"Her father is sadly broken down since that day. He cannot get over his son’s death. Penelope was never the same to him, never. You must not mind, Gillbanks, if he does not welcome you as he should—as I do."
"I can understand," said Philip; "you know I am willing to devote my life to her. To-morrow all the papers will be signed. After that this house and all this property will legally belong to my wife. Everything is to be done in her name. Can you make her father understand it?"
"Perhaps; I don’t know. Anyhow, my poor brother will bear it but ill. We must make allowances. Let me manage it all. I would advise you to take Penelope away to Switzerland, anywhere where she will go; so that her father may gradually understand everything and become accustomed to a new régime."
"Penelope must decide."
"Very well, I will talk about it to her. She is still walking in a dream, for this sad shock has come upon us all very suddenly."
"But surely there was not much sympathy between the brother and sister?" said Philip, remembering former days in the old Palace.
"Personally hardly any at all; but you, Gillbanks, can perhaps hardly understand the old feudal feeling of the family."
"No, I have none, you know," and Philip’s smile was like bright sunshine after a storm.
"It is very difficult to explain," continued the Duke; "it seems reincarnated with each new generation. For instance, Penelope has it very strongly developed. She would go through fire and water merely for the honour of the Winkells, even if the loss of that honour hardly touched her personally. Her own wishes are as nothing compared to this other inheritance of family honour."
"That is what marks her out from thousands of other women," said Philip.
"Have I not always seen it and recognised it in her?"
"Ah! Well, perhaps. Here we are, Gillbanks. Now I shall take you to your own room, and later on I will come to you with the papers, and we can finish talking over the plans. You are resolved to sink the money on the repairs of the Palace?"
"Yes, I am quite decided. The Princess must have a home fit for herself," said Philip, smiling; "besides, it is really better done at once. I can trust you to see after it and do it in the way she would best like. I might not understand as well as you do. If Penelope prefers going abroad whilst this is being done, so much the better for me. I shall have her to myself. We might even meet the Bethunes. She liked them, and I see she is fastidious in her likings."
"But once she loves, she is as firm as a rock. That is part of the Winkell inheritance. There have been wild Winkells—the race is not exemplary—but we are always firm of purpose."

The Duke led Philip into a part of the Palace which he had not seen on the occasion of his first visit. The southern turret was old and dilapidated, and as Philip followed his conductor, his practical eye noted, as the candle-light fell on worm-eaten beams and cracked masonry, all the repairs that would be needed. The Duke opened a door on the second landing, and Philip saw that he was in a very pretty octagon room, which looked over the Glen upon the beautiful mountain chain beyond. There was a small fire burning on the open hearth, and a table was set, on which was spread a substantial supper. A door in the corner opened into a bedroom which the Duke pointed out to Philip as the one prepared for his use.
"You will be undisturbed here, Gillbanks. It was once the Prince’s room. Poor fellow, he did not mind decaying beams, as you see, but the aspect is charming. Penelope prefers to remain alone this evening. Ah! Gillbanks, I was right, though. She was a splendid success in town, wasn’t she? For once she saw life as it should be seen."

The Duke’s eye kindled; it was as if he had said that he too had seen life as it should be seen.
"Yes, but Penelope did not really care for the world. She is superior to it."
"I don’t know. I imagine that under some circumstances Penelope would take to the world kindly. I must leave you now, and I will come back to you when she goes to bed."

CHAPTER XIX. SELF-SACRIFICED.

In the Duke’s study Penelope Winkell sat by her uncle’s side. They had been silent a little while. One of his hands was on her shoulder, and with the other he held hers. At last the Princess spoke:
"Do you remember our conversation here before we went to London, uncle?"

"Yes, certainly; we said we should save the house of Rothery, and we have done it. But we shall regret the old times, Pens. I shall be dull without you, my child. I have had no time to realize it till this moment."

Penelope caught her breath quickly.

"I had forgotten that! I have been thinking only of myself."

"No, not of yourself, but of Rothery."

Penelope was silent for a few moments, and then she said:

"It is really settled, isn't it? Philip Gillbanks' money will save us!"

"Yes, certainly; he is the most generous, the most thoughtful of men. He worships you, Penelope."

Penelope made a little impatient movement.

"Oh, you know, uncle, I never thought of myself in the matter at all. A man of no birth can have nothing to do with me."

The Duke coloured. He had hardly expected his niece to speak thus on the eve of the wedding. "Gillbanks is a gentleman by feeling and by education, Pensie."

"The cloven foot is always seen sooner or later, always—and when one least expects it."

"He is to be your husband, Pensie.

The Duke felt obliged to speak, feeling capable of moralising up to this point. "Oh, yes, of course; but——" then Penelope paused; even to her uncle she dared not, she must not speak plainly, and yet she could turn to no one else. She felt the deep loneliness of her position as she had never felt it before. Her very strength seemed weakness in this hour. Oh, if her sacrifice had meant happiness, if it had been no sacrifice at all! She had accepted it so lightly, and Heaven had taken her at her word. Penelope rebelled against fate.

"I don't know any other man who would act as this one is doing," continued the Duke. "He is more than liberal, he is princely."

"He is glad enough to become allied to the Winkleis—you forget that. Besides, uncle, have we not often discussed it? These 'nouveaux riches' spend money to increase their worth in the eyes of the world."

"Well, often they do, but don't be unjust to Gillbanks. The world will say you have done well for yourself."

"Because it will know nothing about it.

So few would do what we have done for the honour of their name." The Duke smiled. He saw his own follies exaggerated in Penelope's mind, and admired them, though secretly he could not altogether agree with her. "Honestly, child, I did the best I could. The others made fair promises, but only he, only Gillbanks would give blindly. Then I can trust him. I can trust you to him. Had he been a bad man I should have had qualms, though you can——"

"The man was of little importance, so that he had the money. I should know in any case how to take care of myself," said Penelope in a low voice. "But, dear uncle, do not let us discuss this subject any more. It is done—finished. I want your help about the future. What about my father? He will hate Philip Gillbanks, I know he will."

"He will accept the money, and that prevents open hostility. But we must keep them apart. I advise you, Pensie, to go for a wedding tour. The repairs shall be begun at once. I must be here to watch over them, and I shall have 'carte blanche' about the money."

"You will enjoy brinks and mortar, and you are the only man who can be trusted with the old house. Don't let them spoil it—but I know you will not. As to going away—yes, I think you are right. Philip Gillbanks and I had better go away alone, and learn to live our new lives. He will do anything I tell him."

Again the Duke coloured, though the darkness hid the fact.

"You must remember what you owe to him."

Penelope started up.

"No, no, uncle, don't speak like that. I cannot become a supplicant; that is impossible. He knows exactly what he undertakes, and what I undertake. He takes me on my own conditions."

"He is a brave man, Pensie," said the Duke, smiling; "but come, it is late. At all events your marriage will not cost much. The privacy is necessary, and I must say it is very much more agreeable than a wedding at St. George's, Hanover Square, would have been."

Penelope stood up. She put her hand up to her neck, and took from the folds of her dress the topaz locket.

"Uncle Greybarrow, this is my inheritance. If I part from it, you will know that the penalty that follows will be deserved."
"Still superstitious, Penzie! The Windskells are bound to be. Child—you must be happy. Tell me you will be happy!"

"Happy! What does the word mean?" she said impatiently.

"Most women are happier married. You will have a very indulgent husband."

"If I shall have saved our house from ruin, and I shall have known what life means, uncle," answered Penelope. Then she stood up and put her arms round her uncle's neck, and for a few moments laid her beautiful head on his shoulder. They were both taking leave of the old life, the life they had lived so much together in poverty and loneliness.

"I have never thanked you enough, dear uncle. All that has made life worth having you have given me, more than I can tell you. If it had not been for you, I should never have been to London, or seen——"

"You enjoyed it? That's right. But the future is bright still, dear, very bright."

"Enjoyed it! No—not that—I seemed to live, just to live. All these years I have existed, I suppose. I had ideas—yes, you remember, uncle—ideas about reforming people, and teaching them, and all that. I was foolish—but I learnt more than I can ever teach."

He did not understand her meaning, but stroked her head softly.

"I am proud of you, Princess—I shall not now see the fall of the Windskells. For years I have dreaded that ruin must come, but you and I, you and I, saved it. Good night, child. Sleep well before your marriage day. I shall tell Betty to pack your trunk in case you go to-morrow."

"Tell Philip I will go. Let us go directly the wedding breakfast is over. It will be best."

Then the Princess moved away and retired to her own room, where Betty was grumbling and packing, and invoking strange divinities to forgive this marriage or to bring vengeance upon the house of Rothery, which had so far forgotten its duty as to sanction a wedding before the heir had been duly mourned.

When the old woman had left her, Penelope locked her door, and sat down to think. To-day was hers, this evening of to-day; after that, after this. "There is only one man who should dare to claim me," she murmured, "only one. Not this man, not this Philip Gillbanks."

She sat down and looked over her treasures—childish things which she had put into a separate box and locked up. Then a few London relics: some flowers Forster had given her at Richmond, one note he had written to her as to the hour of meeting; that was all she had belonging to him and to that episode. Philip's relics she tore up. She would have liked to pull off the diamond ring she wore, and to throw it far away out of the window, but she dared not. Finally, she undressed and went to bed with one firm determination in her mind, and no prayer on her lips. She could not pray.

Far into the night Philip and the Duke talked on. They discussed business matters, made rough sketches of repairs and improvements, and put down probable costs. They did not mention Penelope again, except that the Duke gave her message to Philip concerning the journey.

"Then let it be so," he said, smiling.

"I will telegraph to-morrow to reserve a carriage, and we can sleep at Charing Cross. She must need rest. On those Swiss mountains she will get back her colour. She is rather pale and weary. You will trust me with her, will you not?"

Then the Duke smiled and assented, and Philip also went to bed, wondering at his own happiness, and wishing he could have Forster's sympathy and his presence on the morrow. Suddenly his friend's conversation came back to him, and the recollection of it made him almost glad that Forster could not come. The last act of the bridegroom was to thank Heaven for this most precious gift about to be given to him. "I have many blessings, more than I deserve," he murmured, "much more."

LONDON IN THE POETS.

Although London has never appealed to the imagination of its inhabitants in general, nor its men of letters in particular, in quite the same way as Paris, and though with considerable truth a modern poet has apostrophised it as:

City that waitest to be sung,
For whom no hand
To mighty strains the lyre hath strung
In all this land,
Though mightier theme the mightiest one
Sung not of old,

yet from early days the story of its streets has been told in verse, and few of our poets have not somewhere in their works referred to the metropolis. Often they
are more appalled by its vast extent than fascinated by its attractions.

The fair aspect of the town in the seventeenth century is borne witness to by Milton in language which to-day might seem somewhat exaggerated. Knowing well the busy hum of men—Alderegate Street and St. Bride's, Whitehall and rural Holborn—he must have loved it not a little when he exclaims:

Oh City founded by Dardanian hands,
Whose towering front the circling realms commands,
Too blest above! no loveliness we see
In all the earth, but it abounds in thee.

Cowper, again, at a later period—lover of the peaceful pursuits and joys of country life though he was—asks:

Where has pleasure such a field,
So rich, so thronged, so drained, so well described
As London—enlarged, enlarged, and still
Increasing London?

thinking, perchance, of his careless days in the neighbourhood of Southampton Row, spent in "giggling and making giggle" with his fair cousins, or later, when as a Templar he formed one of the little circle of Westminster men who composed the "Nonsense Club," and dined together every Thursday by way of promoting the feast of reason and the flow of soul.

To Shelley's sensitive soul it was not the streets of brick or stone, but the men and women who trod them, often in sorrow, that won his regard. Flitting as he did from one temporary residence to another, few parts of the West End could have been unknown to him from the day when in company with Hogarth he arrived at the lodgings in Poland Street, attracted by a name which "reminded him of Thaddeus of Warsaw" and of freedom. Later, too, in his lodgings in Half-Moon Street, where the poet loved to sit in a projecting window, book in hand, what strange contrasts must he not have perceived in the busy stream of life in Piccadilly! Thus he writes of London as:

That great sea whose ebb and flow
At once is deep and loud, and on the shore
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more,
Yet in its depths what treasure!

In a similar way the sadness of a great city affected the mind of William Blake, who in his "Songs of Experience" says:

I wander through each chartered street,
Near where the chartered Thames does flow,
And mark in every face I meet,
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

Other poets, however, have touched their lyres with a lighter hand. These sing of the world of fashion and of pleasure under various guises, with here and there a note of regret for the past:

- The quaint old dress, the grand old style,
- The mots, the racy stories,
- The wine, the dice, the wit, the bile,
- The hate of Whigs and Tories.

The motley show of Vanity Fair appeals to them, the lights and shadows of that world "where the young go to learn, and the old to forget." These writers of "vera de société," dealing with London life, recognize that often

The mirth may be feigning, the sheen may be gler, but with admirable philosophy are brought to confess that

- The gingerbread's guilt in Vanity Fair.

What memories are aroused by the mention of St. James's Street and Pall Mall! To the poet St. James's Street is one of classic fame, peopled with the ghosts of bygone celebrities:

Where Sacchiarini sigh'd
When Walfer read his ditty,
Where Byron lived and Gibbon died,
And Alvanley was witty.

This same Lord Alvanley, of Park Street, St. James's, is spoken of in Captain Gronow's Reminiscences as being perhaps the greatest wit of modern times, though from the anecdotes of his skill in this direction which have come down to us, the statement must be taken with a rather large grain of salt. His dinners in Park Street and at Malton were considered to be the best in England, and, according to Gronow, he never invited more than eight people, and insisted upon having the somewhat expensive luxury of an apricot tart on the sideboard the whole year round. The Lady Dorothea Sidney, to whom, under the sweet-sounding sobriquet of Sacchiarini, Edmund Waller addressed so much of his love-poetry, was not, according to Johnson, "to be subdued by the power of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain." In 1639 she married the Earl of Sunderland, "and in her old age meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him when he would again write such verses upon her. "When you are as young, madam," said he, ' and as handsome as you were then."

Sheridan wrote of

The Campus Martius of St. James's Street,
Where the beau's cavalry pass to and fro
Before they take the field in Botten Row,

and a modern poet recalls the memory of

The plats at White's, the play at Crock's,
The bumpers to Miss Gunning,
The bonhomie of Charlie Fox,
And Selwyn's ghostly funning.
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An exile from London would rejoice to greet once again "the long-lost pleasures of St. James’s Street," and a similar spirit breathes in the well-known verses of Charles Morris on Pall Mall:

In town let me live, then, in town let me die,
For in truth I can’t relish the country, not I.
If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,
Oh! give me the sweet shady side of Pall Mall.

A sentiment such as this might have given pleasure to Charles Lamb, or even such an inveterate lover of the city as Johnson, who, on a certain occasion, when Boswell suggested that as a constant resident he might grow tired of it, exclaimed: "Why, sir, you find no man at all intellectual who is willing to leave London. No, sir, when a man is tired of London he is tired of life, for there is in London all that life can afford." Notwithstanding which opinion, we find Johnson indulging in a grumble against certain shortcomings of the metropolis in his "London," written in imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal. Its cosmopolitan character even at that period comes in for severe condemnation, "the needy villain’s general home," as he calls it, which:

With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state,
and goes on to say:
Forgive my transports on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a French metropolis.

The insidious state of the streets is also borne witness to as follows:
Prepare for death if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sap from home.

But, to return to Pall Mall, we find Gay praising it in his "Trivia" or "Art of Walking the Streets of London," a work which contains much that is of interest as regards the city in the days of Queen Anne.
"Oh, bear me," he cries, "to the paths of fair Pall Mall,
Safe are thy pavements, grateful is thy smell.
At distance rolls the guided couch.
No sturdy carmen on thy walks encroach."

While St. James’s Street and Pall Mall thus share the poetic tribute of praise, other parts of London are by no means forgotten. The bustle of Cheapside, the quiet of the Inns of Court, the full tide of life in the Strand, the majesty of the river—all these are to be found recorded in verse. Chaucer has sung of the gay prentice who would sing and hop at every bridal, and who loved the tavern better than the shop, and

When ther any riding was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thither wold he lepe,
And till that he had all the sight yefts,
And danced wal he would not come again.

Further citywards the crowded markets of Eastcheap in the reign of Henry the Fourth are recorded by John Lydgate in his "London Lostpenny":

Then I hyed me into Est-Chepe,
One crys rybbs of bafe and many a pye;
Powder poates they cluttered on a heape,
But for lack of money I wyght not spede.

Slow tells us that this part of the town was frequented by butchers, and also cooks, "and such other as sold victuals ready dressed of all sorts. For of old time when friends did meet and were disposed to be merry, they went not to dine and sup in taverns, but to the cooks, where they called for meat what they liked, which they always found well-dressed at a reasonable rate." John Gilpin was a linen-draper in Cheapside, according to Cowper:
Smack went the whip, round went the wheel. Were ever folks so glad! The stones did rattle underneath As if Cheapside were mad.

Wood Street has been immortalized by Wordsworth, for the thrush at the corner with its glad note brought back the memory of country sights and sounds to "Poor Susan":
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Then the "Mermaid Tavern," near Broad Street, with its memories of Shakespeare and rare Ben Jonson, has appealed to the imagination of later poets. "What things have we seen done at the 'Mermaid'!" was a favourite quotation of Charles Lamb, who loved at the "Salutation Tavern" to recall those "nimble words so full of subtle flame" which rejoiced the hearts of the old dramatists. Keats, again, asks:
Soul of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choiceer than the Mermaid Tavern?

The Temple calls up a host of equally interesting associations, and has inspired many a bard from the time of Spenser, who wrote of

Those bricky towers,
The which on Thames’ broad aged back doe ride.

Once, indeed, you could
Stand in Temple Gardens and behold
London herself on her proud stream aloft,
And here Shakespeare places the scene of the choosing of the red and white rose as the respective badges of the Houses of York and Lancaster. Then, again, we think of Ruth Finch waiting for her lover there where

The fountain’s low singing is heard in the wind
Like a melody bringing sweet fancies to mind,
Some to grieve, some to gladden,
Many other parts of the town are touched upon by the poets; but to enumerate them all would prove an elongated tale. Thus tavern life has a poetry or verisimilitude of its own. Who does not remember the "Tabard Inn" in Southwark, and the pilgrims, "well nine-and-twenty in a company," who would ride to Canterbury? Of again, the association of Tennyson with the tavern in Fleet Street, pulled down, alas! in 1881:

O plump head waiter at the Cock,  
To which I must resort,  
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port.

Andrew Marvell's verses remind us of the sundial which once stood in the Privy Garden at Whitehall, and of the escapades of the Merry Monarch's courtiers:

This place for a dial was too insecure,  
Since a guard and a garden could not defend,  
For so near to the Court they will never endure  
Any witness to show how their time they misemploy.

Much has been written of Westminster Abbey:

They dreamed not of a perishable home  
Whate'er thus could build.

The last words of Henry the Fourth, according to Shakespeare, were:

Bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie.  
In that Jerusalem shall Henry die.

At the old Gate House prison of Westminster, Richard Lovelace wrote the beautiful song,

Stone walls do not a prison make.

The beauties of the Parks and of Kensington Gardens have been celebrated in verse:

Of all parts of England Hyde Park hath the name,  
For coaches and horses and persons of fame,  
going the old ballad. A modern poet asks concerning Rotten Row,  
Who now performs a caracole,  
and continues,  
We're clad to climb a Perthshire glen,  
There's nothing of the haute decole  
In Rotten Row from eight to ten.

Matthew Arnold loved the countrified aspect of Kensington Gardens:

In this lone open glade 1 lie,  
Screened by deep boughs on either hand,  
And at its end to stay the eye  
Those black-crowned, red-boled pine trees stand.

As a contrast to this rural calm we have another post praising Piccadilly:

Shops, palaces, bustle and breeze,  
The whirling of wheels and the murmur of trees,  
By night or by day, whether noisy or stilly,  
Whatever my mood is, I love Piccadilly.

Thus have "Ballads of Babylon" been sung in all ages in various keys.
IDLING AT MONTE CARLO.

The baggage men at Genoa winked at each other when I bade them register my portmanteaux to Monte Carlo. My thoughts, too, were elsewhere, and my eyes sought the region of my pockets somewhat compassionately. But in truth they made a mistake, for I fancied I was going to the fair spot as a victim. I believe I have learnt better than that. Besides, I had but three spare days at my disposal and money left only for their provision. I did not contemplate playing the fool with my few surviving napoleons, and bringing myself to the humiliating point which compels either a peremptory wire to England for funds, an appeal to the hotel-keeper, or a visit to a Hebrew with my watch and chain in hand to back my request for a loan at about one hundred per cent. per diem.

No, the true way to catch the flavour of this most alluring nook is to go as a spectator of the folly of others. The Casino administration don't want such visitors. Their notices in the salons observe that persons who do not play are not invited to take seats at the roulette tables. But, on the other hand, they cannot in decency ask every applicant for a ticket to the rooms: "Does monsieur propose to risk any money, and if so, how much?" Nor would such a course profit them. It would make too little allowance for the insidious fascination of the game.

The administration wisely therefore inscribes in its ledgers the names of all decently dressed persons—and some scarcely that—who take off their hats to it in the official "bureau" and proffer their request. That was how I came to be standing with the rest at the middle table in the middle room of the suite of gaming apartments; this, too, only an hour after my arrival at the hotel.

Never had the beautiful coast seemed to me more lovely. In England bitter, humid cold had held us shivering. Here the sunshine was like a caress. The sea throbbed blue against the russet rocks with their garniture of aloes and prickly pear. One walked gaily up and down the steep roads free of overcoat, charmed by the distant purple headlands; Monaco's bold fortress rock; the gay villas, white-faced, profuse in ornament, and red-roofed; and tickled in thoughts at least—perhaps in pocket to boot—by the two assuming pinnacles of the Casino, like the nases' ears of human imbecility set jeeringly towards the heavens.

The old set of people, of course. Over-dressed women, tinkling with jewellery and leaving behind them in the mild, still air an asphyxiating trail of lavender or "poudre de riz"; white-haired men, spruce as Generals, with the brightness of eye that appertains rather to sweet seventeen than hoary seventy; damsels fair to see, but not good to know; undergraduates from our English Universities, exalted with hope or with ominously clouded faces; colonists with pockets full of money, which they are prepared to empty in their enjoyment of what they call "a little flatter"; seedy, absorbed persons who are thinking still, as they thought years ago, how on earth they could have been mad enough to play on the previous day against their luck, and so lose those precious forty or fifty francs; and amid these haunters of the tables, shrewd valetudinarians, Germans of all kinds, from the student to the bridegroom—his bride is nearly sure to be pretty—and a multitude of ladies of an uncertain age, who love the music and excitement of Monte Carlo in the season, though if you mentioned the tables they would shake their heads in sorrowful condemnation of the iniquity!

I suppose while gambling continues to be licensed here, there will be little variation in the character of its patrons. "A bad season, monsieur!" the hotel porter had murmured to me, as I passed in hand, in the hotel hall.

So much the better, thought I. A bad season meant a front room looking on the water, which I knew would anon be lit by a full moon and with the tides of Monaco's lamps climbing the darkness like—like nothing except the modern presentation of a rocky town seen under civilised conditions after sunset.

It was even so; I could not have been more snugly or picturesquely situated. This settled to my entire contentment, I strolled to the Casino. The chief commissioner, or ticket distributor—to give him his more plebeian but exact title—was in an unshalled temper when I, too, demanded admission. He pretended that my French accent was difficult for him—an absurd thing. And after that he seemed to think that he and his masters were doing me a favour in subscribing my ticket—a still more patent absurd thing. He and I, in fact, parted with bows as insidiously gentle as those of two diplomatists who have,
metaphorically speaking, just been shaking the national fist in each other’s faces.

“Faites votre jeu, monsieur!”

The old cry, here, there, and yonder; the old sounds and smells that it recalls; the chink of gold and silver; the rattle of the ball; the murmurs of mortals, and the suffocating sweetness of a hundred different perfumes on as many different skins; all mingled in the luxurious rooms that shun ventilation as they would a convocation of the world’s clergy.

“I say, what a nuisance—I’ve got no more with me!”

I heard the words close to me. A handsome woman spoke thus to a martial-looking gentleman with white moustache, waxed, and the air of half a Mephistopheles. The gentleman professed desolation, pleaded poverty the most dire, opened his palms, smiled, and sent his attention back to the table.

The lady rustled softly elsewhere. The odds are about four to one that she tried a Briton next, and the younger the better for her chances.

At this table the number fourteen had twice occurred in four spins of the ball. You may imagine the consequences.

At each end of it the gamblers struggled to put their crowns and napoléons on the “middle dozen,” or the pair, trio, quartette, or transversal including the number fourteen. This same number was also largely covered as a sole investment. A millionaire or something of the kind had just arrived at the table. He had a bundle of one-thousand franc notes in his hand, two or three of which the table’s cashier obligingly changed for him. This gave him a double handful of gold pieces; and these gold pieces he dispersed about the table with an indifference to method that evidently wrung the vitals of the habitués and habituées who trade on five-franc pieces alone. The numbers from twelve to sixteen he almost covered with his gold. As a final freak, he threw a five-hundred franc note upon zero.

This venture brought the gentleman about eight hundred francs, and cost him rather more than three thousand.

“Serve him right!” said the looks of the five-franc people as plainly as could be.

But the millionaire only smiled and prepared to be more lavish than ever. Though the number thirty-three had come up instead of fourteen or any of its neighbours, he did not mean to desert these likely “teens.” Again he scattered his gold; and again his losses were several fold his gains. Yet a third time he ventured.

Five thousand francs were spread about the cloth. A note for a thousand francs lay upon number fourteen.

The good gentleman at any rate provided us with a little agreeable excitement. But number three came up, which had been by him totally neglected.

Then he went his way elsewhere, no more concerned at having dropped about five hundred pounds in two minutes than you or I would be to lose a pin.

So coy a dame is Fortune, and so irritating, that she must needs the next spin bring number fourteen once more to the front. The five-franc players looked at each other. The millionaire ought not to have been so impatient. If he had increased his stakes once more he would have made that table’s bank totter.

I left the rooms to draw a full pure breath outside. How big the trunks of the palms have grown! One may look about in the tropics a good deal and fail to find such superb specimens of tropical trees.

The vigilant gendarmes, in their bright crimson and blue, are as numerous as ever in the gardens. It is a bore that they should spoil the vistas as they do. Even as the lackeys within the Casino are for ever turning their eyes about the floor, searching for dropped pieces, so here in the gardens the soldiers have an uncomfortable air of practised psychologists.

They seem to be straining to read what is in your mind as you wander in these glorious green avenues, steeped in solitude though within stone’s throw of the Casino.

I have seen an enthusiastic German botanist followed to and fro here for minutes by a suspicious man in crimson and blue. The botanist was seedy in his attire, and as absorbed as the genius is supposed to be. He looked like one meditating about the insufficiency of life unless cheered by the luck at the tables that had not been his portion.

By the sea, on the semicircular green beneath the terrace, above which the Casino lifts its meretricious face, they were pigeon-shooting. A hundred or two visitors were watching the sport—so it is called—chatting under parasols, laughing and jesting. When the shot was heard they looked to see if it was a kill or a miss. Perhaps the bird was hit, but not mortally. It fluttered round and round and settled on an adjacent roof. Or it was hit badly and the brick retriever had no difficulty in
fetching it to have its neck wrung as a finale. Under the stimulus of these scenes, the visitors laughed, and talked, and jested, and the ladies congratulated themselves and their gowns on the regal weather.

There to the concert-room, at half-past two in the afternoon, to stare at the wealth of carved work and gliding everywhere; and to yawn—until the famous band began to play.

About a thousand of us were present—I write at a venture—and nine hundred or so were yawning in the first five minutes. Not from weariness of the music. That were unlikely. One does not hear such instrumentalism elsewhere. But the polluted air oppressed the lungs. I, for my part, felt a hot desire to kick off the gilded dome, and take my chance of the falling chandelier—a thing that looks tons in weight—all for the sake of a pure breath or two from outside, and a glimpse of the natural sky.

Thence back to the saloons for the interval.

An English Member of Parliament interested me for a few moments. He was here with his daughter, a pretty and, I judge, excitable girl.

"Will you have a coin?" he asked her, smiling, as they stood by a trento-quarante table.

"Y-e-s," was the reply, with a blush, as if the thought occurred that it was not quite proper.

The girl put the napoleon on the cloth nearest to her. She knew, of course, no more than Julius Caesar what she was doing.

"Oh—it's gone!" she turned and exclaimed with a start, when the cards had settled its fate and the croupier took it to himself.

"Will you have another?" asked papa, still smiling.

"Oh, yes," said the girl.

This time there was a win.

"Let it stay," said papa, with the confident face of one who knows things.

It stayed and doubled itself twice.

"I think that ought to do for you," then observed papa, and he playfully touched the girl's chin.

The latter took her gold pieces blushingly. There was an eagerness and yet wonder in her face that made one anxious. She did not seem at all to want to return to the concert-room.

From the Casino I strolled into the town, which has stretched itself largely of late.

The jewellers' windows are as attractive as ever. The diamonds therein make one blink with their brightness.

"Will not monsieur enter and make a selection? There are some charming pendants for watch-chains that monsieur may like to distribute among his friends."

So spoke a courteous lady, coming upon me from a shop.

The pendants in question mostly bore inscriptions of the amorous kind: "Think of me!" "Thine for ever!" "My heart and thine!" and that sort of thing.

I made my excuses to the lady, but she insisted. It would, she said, help monsieur to kill an idle quarter of an hour, if he allowed her to have the pleasure of showing him some of the shop's pretty trifles.

I yielded and was lost.

However, it was the easiest thing in the world to console myself with the reflection that the cost of the gold trifle with the loving words upon it was less than the single napoleon I might risk—and lose—in one instant on the green cloth tables over the way.

A flower shop!

This, too, was good to see. The roses, and violets, and lilacs, and camellias—in mild January! How could the temptation of sending a small box of the pretty gems—containing the diamonds under—he resist?

Then on in the day's declining sunshine by the high-road that leads, eventually, to Nice: past one white hotel after another; villas, palatial and elegant, perched on the chimney-pots of those beneath them—so it seemed—lodging-houses, pensions, shops; with the bright ripple of the Mediterranean seen away on the left, and Monaco's headland growing nearer.

As a building site these primeval cliffs and olive-woods of Monte Carlo must at one time have looked difficult. But money works marvels. The red mountain of the Dog's Head will soon, one could imagine, have nothing but residences to gaze down upon betwixt itself and the sea.

Anon it is time to dress for dinner and prepare for the pleasing conundrums of one's neighbours. The air is so mild, and the moon's beams on the water so fair to see, that I dress with the window thrown wide open. Monte Carlo's lights are only conjecturable—or rather half so—but those of Monaco frown the southern horizon.

While I wash I hear the chink of money in the next room. Has he—or she—lost or won? Perhaps the truth will soon out.
But no. One must not expect childish confidences between strangers at these Monte Carlo dinner-tables. The silences are, rather, most eloquent—for a time.

I am cheek by jowl with a German having a most comfortable stomach, and with a hooked nose. The idea occurs to me that he is a money-lender. Now I know better, and apologise to his memory for the casual imputation conjecture put upon him.

Anything—even inexorable cadacity—seems better than this funereal reticence over the fish as well as the soup. I proffer a remark to my neighbour. He does not take kindly to it at first. As clear as anything, he suffers from a temper of some description. But I do not let him glide out of my hands thus easily.

And by-and-by I have my reward. His little local history is soon told to me, with impressive lowerings of voice.

Large, firm-natured man though he is—it is written on his features—he has come hither from the north merely for a little bout with the tables.

"I give myself a holiday and I bring with me three thousand marks—one hundred and fifty pounds—and I hope it shall last me three weeks. But I have not done well—I have not, and that's the truth. Yesterday I play from two o'clock until ten, and I lose eight hundred marks in the time."

I mention the evening hours that will succeed dinner and the possibility of better fortune awaiting him. It is a lesson in human nature's credulity to see how this strong-minded person grasps this message of hope held out to him by a stranger. And from that time forward the gentleman's tongue requires a bridle rather than a laxative.

Afterwards the methodical stroll through the gardens with a cigar. Hundreds are in the same case, and the Casino is our common goal.

Within there is no sitting room in the vestibule. In one corner a gaudy, painted woman is puffing at a cigarette brazenly. She exchanges nods of good-fellowship with passing mankind. Two or three are turning their pockets inside out in the crowd—reckless of making the public the confidants of their misfortunes. Some are coming from the rooms with heads erect and smiles of triumph, their hands fondly in their pockets among bank-notes and gold pieces. And to and fro between the marble pillars of the hall, as motley a host of mortals as you may see anywhere pace up and down, smoking, and chattering, and muting. A dozen or so ladies with white hair are among the crowd. Old men are still more numerous. There are maidens with bare shoulders, indifferent to the bold looks they excite and the contemptuous glances shot at them by others of their sex. A few sheepish youths are with the rest of us, directing greedy eyes towards the rooms to which their veracity denies them the much-desired privilege of entrance.

Another concert at half-past eight, with inconquerable drowsiness in its train. I fairly sleep through two of its choicer "morceaux," and so do others.

After this one more hour's excitement and semi-suffocation at the tables suffices—for the night. I see a woman make a frenzied and tearful appeal to the croupier for money that she vows was hers though filched by another. The croupier shrugs his shoulders; he is used to such tears. Were they of the crocodilean kind? Who shall say?

I do not like the tables towards eleven o'clock, the closing time. It seemed better to see the night into its last hour seated outside, with a cooling drink and another cigar, and the lively procession of the elated and the disappointed passing before me as on a canvas done in colour.

Then home to the hotel, and the mosquito curtains, and the radiant moonlight on the water as seen from the embroidered pillow to my bed.

The man who goes to Monte Carlo to play misses the flavour of Monte Carlo. He is one of the ingredients of the dais—for the service of such outsiders as myself on this occasion.

THE CHILDREN.

Only to keep them so,
Soft, warm, and young;
The wee, feeble fingers,
The babbling tongue.

Tears that we kiss away,
Smiles that we win;
Careless of knowledge,
As guiltless of sin.

Only to keep them so,
Frank, true, and pure;
Of our full wisdom
So lovingly sure.

Our frown all they shrink from,
Our hat their law;
Our store, whence all gladness
They fearlessly draw.

Only to keep them so,
Sweet hands that clasp,
Sweet lips that laugh for us,
Sweet tones that ring;

Girls that we train to wave,
Foot that we guide,
Each fresh step a wonder,
Each new word a pride.
Only to keep them so!
Women and men
Are the times that circled us
Lovingly then.
Gentle and good to us,
Patient and strong,
Guarding our weaknesses,
Bearing us long.
Tenderly snatching us,
Old thoughts and ways,
That scarcely keep measure
With life’s rapid days.
Good to us—waiting.
Our sunset shows fair!
But, only to have them so,
Just as they were!

REMINISCENCES OF AN EGG COLLECTOR.

All men and most women at some time in their lives have a mania for collecting. This mania takes many forms and lasts for various periods—sometimes all the life, notably when the matter accumulated is money.

With schoolboys perhaps the favourite objects are postage stamps, crests, and birds’ eggs. Autographs, postmarks, botanical and geological specimens, stuffed birds, and coins are also gathered in; but few of the many hobbies taken up are followed out and studied in a methodical, useful manner in after life. Boys tire as they grow older, and the collections are lost or destroyed, and often valuable acquisitions pass out of sight and knowledge.

Elementary but reliable scientific books are so cheap now that they are within the bounds of any schoolboy’s pocket-money, and a little less spent on “tuck” would enable him to get a good grounding in his particular hobby, and make him take more interest in his collections, so that they might become a useful pleasure to him all his life. Let him be very careful to label all his specimens with the date and locality, and the correct name if he is certain about it, and pay special attention to the fact that the labels must not on any consideration get mixed. Carelessness in labelling is a very bad, but a very easy fault.

It is such a temptation to put the name of some rare species to any specimen that in any way resembles the description or prints, without any regard to the fact that perhaps the specimen in question may only have been taken once or twice in the country. This fault is very easy to fall into in the case of birds’ eggs, a form of collecting prominent in my mind. The eggs of many species of birds vary so much that there are several distinct types, many of them closely re-

sembling those of allied species. I well remember the number of species an ambitious schoolfellow of mine coined out of about a dozen eggs of the common guillemot, a very good example in point. Another instance is the little blue egg of the dunlin or hedge accentor. Many a schoolboy imagines he sees a resemblance in the shape, size, or colour of the redstart’s eggs, and promptly labels some of them with that name, without any regard to the fact that he took the eggs out of a nest in a hedge, and probably might have seen the bird if he had taken the trouble to look. The eggs of warblers and ducks give scope for an endless amount of fraudulent naming, for such it certainly is. A rough note-book, with a few facts about the locality of the nest, the shape and materials it is built of, number of eggs, and appearance or behaviour of the bird, is always useful, and will prevent or correct error in after years.

If the boy takes care of his details and follows up the pursuit, he will some day be glad of the drudgery, and will not only find that his collection will be useful to him and to others, but that it will be a source of never-ending pleasure in recalling to him remembrances of the happiest days of his life.

The collection must not be an accumulation of as many specimens as possible, that is a useless cruelty.

The wholesale destruction of life never makes a man scientific, nor is it an edification to any one. Let the lad collect carefully—what he wants and only what he wants, and do it all with the spirit of love for the best life the treasures he is allowed are placed round about him and put within his grasp. Let him care far more about the note-book than the cabinet or the gun.

It is of the memories brought up by looking over a collection that I propose to write—not the scientific value. That speaks for itself. Each specimen taken by oneself recalls the spot and the occasion; bought or exchanged specimens never have this value. The mere accumulation of numbers can never teach much or give this special pleasure.

Opening the drawers and glancing down, our eyes light on a clutch of kestrel’s eggs, and the subtle influence of memory carries us with it, and we are in a small wood on a well-preserved estate.

In front of us is a tall, smooth-boiled tree, and by our side the keeper with his gun. Just over the edge of the nest we can see the tail
of the bird projecting. The keeper moves a few paces away to where he can command a clear reach of sky, and then we smile the tree with our sticks. Off flies the lady to her doom. The keeper rapidly raises his weapon, takes a quick sight, and the murdered mother falls at our feet. A smart shin' up the tree, and eggs and mother are ours. Note how rubbed and denuded of feathers her poor maternal breast is.

Poor kestrel! Our desire for you and yours prevented us from giving our opinion that you were a very harmless bird in the coverts, and much preferred mouse to pheasant.

Next to the kestrels, a clutch of merlins carries us to the rocky cliffs of Wales.

The sea is breaking with a roar on the rocks below us, tossing the long brown seaweed about in a mass of foam. An oystercatcher is whistling anxiously on a rock near the water. Two rock pipits have followed us in great alarm for a quarter of a mile, and are just turning, satisfied that we are safely past their cozy little nest, when up rises the little blue hawk with a chattering scream, and dashes away round the point. Her mate is sitting watching on a wall near at hand, and quickly follows her. A careful search for a few minutes, and in a roughly scratched hollow on the top of the cliff we find her four red eggs, and the prize is ours. On these same cliffs we remember how, suspended by a cow’s halter borrowed from a neighbouring farm, we stop by step descended the precipitous crags to take a kestrel's nest.

What a curious sensation it was, as we left hold of the friendly rocks and bent down to the nest, with the waves curling and surging on the ugly stones below! A great black-backed gull’s egg recalls an island close at hand; and how we sat waiting for the tide to go down sufficiently for us to run across the slippery rocks—for it is only an island when the tide is up—only to find the nest empty and the birds gone. We obtained the egg later from a farmer who had taken it.

Another glance, and we are back in a Cheshire fox covert—peering into a sparrowshawk’s nest containing five beautifully mottled eggs. The keeper said he placed a trap in that nest the year before, and sure enough, under the eggs and a layer of sticks is the rusty but still unprung trap that failed in its fell purpose.

Then the scene shifts to a larch plantation by the side of one of the most beautiful lakes in Cumberland, and in a tree overhanging the path we are almost touching a tawny owl, seated on three eggs in the old nest of a carrion crow. What delightful memories that owl’s egg conjures up; a peaceful spring evening, a lazy drift in a boat, no light save from the stars and the soft sheen of the water, net a ripple disturbing the glassy surface, not a sound but the occasional quack of a mallard or the chuckle of a belted waterhen. Suddenly from the wooded bank comes the weird, mournful, but beautiful note of the tawny owl. Hardly have the echoes been thrown back from the mountains when far up the lake another answers, and then another, till the quiet night resounds with their musical calls.

A very prettily marked clump of eggs of the familiar little robin takes us to perhaps one of the wildest and most striking of all the English lake district scenes. We are standing in the road that leads up the lovely valley of Wastdale; to our right lies the calm but awesome lake, with the dark, steep scree rising sheer from the deep water opposite. In front is that wonderful panorama of peaks—Sea Fell, The Pikes, Great End, Great Gable, Green Gable, and the winding tracks over Styhead, Scarf Gad, and Blackfell, finishing with Pillar and Steeple on the left.

Close to the rooks our eyes wander to five pearly white eggs, nothing but empty shells of dipper or water-ousel; but we, looking at them, remember lying on the grass in one of those beautiful stony valleys by the side of a clear, babbling Cheshire trout-stream, which only a few miles below changes its crystal transparency for the “dank and foul stuff” of manufactories and dyeworks, and flows on to pollute that great artery of the north—the Mersey. Here, above the smokes and din of works, all is “unstained.” The ring-ousel is singing in the heather above us, the distant crow of the grouse sounds from moors, the trout rises in the deep pool at our feet.

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow and dreaming pool,
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle and foaming weir.

Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall, where the church bell rings,
Undistilled for the undistilled,
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

And there might be the varied water-ousel singing under the bank. What a pretty little song it is! Now he dives into the water and runs along the pebbles at the bottom, searching for caddis worms, then
jumping on to a stone he shakes the glittering drops off in a perfect little shower, and bows and curtseys to us; when here comes his mate, settling one minute near him, as if to enquire if all is safe, then up she goes to her sheltered nest under the overhanging bank. We rise and walk across the stream, and then begins a chapter of accidents.

The nest is high up, ten feet above a deep pool, and there is only a narrow ledge below. We cannot reach it from above, so we must try the ledge. One of us, in turning a sharp corner, places his foot on a projecting piece of wood; there is a sharp crack, a wild clat at nothing, and a rapid plunge into the icy cold water. One stroke and the ledge is reached. Then the wet and lighter robber shines on to the shoulders of his companion, and can just manage to reach the nest. Stretching up, he feels for the little opening, and out pops the frightened dipper, betraying her front door.

Feeling for the entrance, he loosens two big stones, which roll on to the pate and shoulders of the supporting thief, cracking his crown, but happily he stands firm.

The eggs are handed down, and once more we are safe on the bank; one very damp and cold, the other with a broken head; but in possession of the five unbroken eggs before us now.

Here let me warn the young collector, warn him from experience of my own. However valuable the prize, it can never justify him in risking his life or even his limbs. Little annoyances and adventures like the one just mentioned only add zest and fun to the enterprise; but if cliff climbing is to be attempted, far more serious consequences may ensue unless great care be taken. Always remember two facts: first, that you cannot always climb down safely where you can climb up with ease; and secondly, that every foot and hand hold must be carefully tested before any weight is placed upon it, for in many places a slip means a funeral.

We were climbing for jackdaws' nests one day in Wales. The cliff was some two hundred feet almost sheer from the sea. My companion was above me; and finding the rock rotten and insecure, I called up to him, "Be careful, it is loose." The next second he shot past me, dropping upon a ledge twenty feet below. In a few seconds before he spoke my feelings were not envious. What if he is killed? What if a limb is broken? How shall I get him home, miles away from help? But a reassuring though melancholy voice came from the ledge below, "It is rather loose"; and luckily nothing but a little stiffness was the result.

Had the ledge not been there, or if it had been narrower, I probably should never have cared to relate this experience. After that we were more cautious, and consequently our fate was better than that of a poor little lad who, when taking herring-gulls' eggs close to this spot, dropped over and was never seen again. The chapter of accidents, with the explanation, "while searching for sea-birds' eggs," is a very long and a very sad one, and no boy can be too careful.

Still scanning the collection, our eyes rest on the big, rough-shelled eggs of the fulmar petrel, and we are in thought standing in the bows of a small steamer, tossing up and down on the huge billows of the Atlantic, leaving the coast of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides behind; Lewis and Harris looming blue and misty to the north-east, North Uist and Benbecula to the south-east. Far away on the western horizon a little grey rock rises—

the island of St. Kilda. Flying by, with no concern for us, are solan geese; their long, powerful, pointed wings carrying them straight to and from their rocky homes of Boreray, an island of the group. Now one circles high in air, and closing his wings, drops head downwards like a stone with a mighty splash into the water, and we know that some poor fish has met its doom. Puffins, razorbills, and guillemots are thick upon the water. Kittiwake and herring-gulls follow in the wake of the boat, with barks and laughings, watching with their keen eyes for any stray morsel fit to eat that may be thrown overboard.

No British sea-bird can compete with the fulmar in aerial evolutions. Watch them rising and falling with the waves—or swooping round with one wing-tip hardly an inch from the surface, but never touching. We may watch for hours and apparently see no wing stroke; the bird seeming to keep up with us simply by gliding through the air on outspread pinions set at different angles to the breeze.

Then the landing on the slippery rocks of that interesting island, the most westerly inhabited rock of the Hebrides; visiting the curious little colony, who depend almost entirely on the birds that swarm there, and upon charity, for the inhabitants are terrible beggars; the greetings, the bargainings, the noise, the smell,
are things never to be forgotten. The fulmar harvest is at its height, and most of the men are away catching the young birds, but we obtain some of this year's eggs from the women. It is evident that ornithologists have been there before us, for all the eggs are carefully and neatly side-blown with drill and blowpipe. Where is there another spot in our islands at all like St. Kilda—the semicircular line of huts with corrugated iron roofs, facing the only safe landing-place, the only bay in the group. Behind the street, as it is called, the land rises rapidly to that great cliff, Conagher, one thousand two hundred and twenty feet above the sea, with an almost sheer precipice on the western side. In front of the "town" the island of Doon, barely separate from St. Kilda, shields the bay and makes it a fairly safe anchorage save in a north-easter. How we remember all the too short time spent on the island! Even now a sniff at the eggs brings back even more forcibly how the island seemed to reek of fulmar oil; the food, the clothes, the people, the very houses reeked with the pungent odour.

Some puffins' eggs, and we are away and on another island, this time in Cardigan Bay. Never do we remember a more perfect scene; the sparkling sea is a rich deep green, the air is a dancing haze of heat, the whitewashed walls of the lighthouse on the island near are dazzling in the sunlight. In front of us is a simple wooden cross; a priest stands by our side, pointing out where they have dug out in the sods the rough plan of a monastery. A motley group of men stand by—his assistants—a curious gathering to meet in Protestant little Wales: a Welsh and an Irish priest, a few Welsh lads, and two or three swarthy Spaniards.

The monastery was never finished; a few years later we heard with regret of the death of Father Hughes, the originator of the scheme. We remember seeing and hearing him, as he crossed the bay alone in his little sailing boat, singing merrily as he steered for his island home.

As we stand there talking to our genial host, and listening to the deep boom of the bell-buoy, marking a treacherous rock near, our eyes are wandering to the crowded bird-life round us.

Wherever we look are puffins—puffins standing in crowds at the mouths of their holes; puffins flying up and down; puffins in shoals on the water below us; puffins here, puffins there, puffins everywhere.

What humorous-looking birds they are, with big ungainly but brightly coloured beaks, short red legs, and squat bodies! They are exceedingly tame, and allow us to come within a few yards of them, before shuffling away and dropping over the cliffs into the sea. How we stand and laugh at their ridiculous faces, and how they croak and gurgle back at us!

The ground is honeycombed with their burrows, and nearly every hole contains an egg. How they bite and scratch us with their huge bills and sharp claws as we drag them out; for though their legs look very weak, their talons project beyond the web, and soon draw blood. While we are getting the eggs one of the boatmen calls, "A seal, a seal," and runs off to fetch a gun—too late, luckily for the seal, who sinks rapidly out of sight. The ledges below us are covered with guillemots and razorbills, and looking landward we can see across the miles and a half of sparkling water that the cliffs of the coast-line are white with swarms of these same birds. We are told of "mackerel cocks" flying and calling at night; birds that come with the mackerel and are seldom seen in the daytime; and we are lucky enough to see a string of Manx shearwaters hurriedly flying across the water, and conclude that these are the birds they mean.

Once more we are in Cheshire, pushing a boat amongst the reeds of one of the most strictly preserved of the meres.

Suspended high up among the tall stems we discover the lovely deep nest of the little reed-warbler; and note how the bird scolds us, as it hangs sideways on a stalk.

Near at hand is a floating mass of decomposing rubbish that contains four eggs of the great crested grebe. Note how the careful mother, before slipping quietly under the surface, has covered her eggs with dirty flags. They are so stained with the green slime that no amount of rubbing will ever make them regain their original purity. There is the bird swimming far away now, her long thin neck straight up from the water, crowned with the nuptial crest of feathers, her body nearly submerged beneath the surface. With a graceful bow she almost leaps out of the water, and disappears under the surface to rise again fifty or a hundred yards away.

The metallic-voiced coots are swimming about outside the reeds, ever keeping a watchful eye upon our movements; and
from the banks we hear the harsh grating cry of the sedge-warbler.

From Cheshire to Northumberland is a long stride, but with a glance at these black-headed gull's eggs we can stop it; and we are standing by a marshy pool, on the high ground overlooking the valley where Surrey pitched his camp, when he led his troops to Flodden Field. The water is covered with the little white gulls, while hundreds more fly croaking and screaming over our heads. Mallard spring up from their nests; a pair of teal follow them; and round us, on nearly every clump, are clutches of the beautiful mottled eggs of the gulls. The birds are not often disturbed up here on the moors; and after choosing a few varied specimens we leave them to settle down again, and retreat followed by a few poor weeping blackbys for a mile or so.

Then on to the rocky islands of Wales again, where the common terns lay their two or three eggs on the bare rock; where we scramble about and take what we want; while our boatsman keeps his craft from being beaten to pieces against the jagged rocks with an oar, and argues in Welsh to a man who has rowed out to prevent us from disturbing the birds, and threatens us with the utmost rigour of the law, which does not terrify us much.

And then to the shingly beach, where the more local lesser tern breeds; where we sit for hours watching the valiant little sea-swallows chasing the marauding black-headed gulls and crows away from their eggs. If these thieves can find the eggs they must have keen sight indeed, for we might pace up and down for hours and never come across a single nest, unless we accidentally trod upon one; for the lesser terns' and ring-dotterels' eggs are so perfectly coloured in unison with their surroundings that mere searching for them will only waste time and temper. But we sit quietly on the sandhills, and soon the foolish bird drops down straight upon the nest. Fixing our eyes upon the spot, and not allowing our attention to be distracted by the bird when she rises, we walk straight to the spot, plant a stick in the sand and work carefully round it, and within a yard or two we invariably find the nest. Even then if we take a look round, it is difficult to find it again, the harmony of colouring between the eggs and the pebbly sand is so complete.

Then literally into a rabbit-hole, digging away with a borrowed spade and our hands, until we grab out sixteen shalducks' eggs, ten feet from the mouth; only two of which we can take, as they are chipping and will shortly be hatched. Of the two unhitched eggs, one contains a dead youngster, and the other is added. Oh, the horrors of blowing them! Again, sitting one on each side of a pall, blowing ourselves out of breath, and making our heads and ears ache, getting out the contents of one hundred and twenty guilelemotes' eggs, every one of them with different markings!

Next, standing by a mere-side, disputing with a foolish swan for the possession of her unfertilised eggs. We reach them with a scoup at the end of a long stick, for we dare not venture within range of her powerful wings. She hisses and flies with the savagerness that only a swan can show; but we take two or three, and leave the poor deluded bird to continue sitting on the remainder till she tires, for they can never hatch. So memory carries us to various scenes and through many incidents. Searching the moors for curlews, golden plover, and twite; the woods for blackcaps and hawfinches; the hedgerows for shriftes and many smaller game; knee-deep in a stream, grubbing out a filthy kingfisher's nest; climbing for jays, carrions, and jack-daws; and lying down on the sand to watch ring-dotterels to their nests. -Moor, marsh, wood, hedgerow, lake-side, and sea-coast, each with its special treasures and individual beauties.

And so one could go on yarning about every self-taken specimen in the cabinet; each one has its individuality in the memory of the collector, and though they may be pretty objects, or of scientific value to the outsider, the real pleasure to be derived is only to be enjoyed by the person who has actually assisted at the taking of the specimen; who watched the mother bird, and noted her beauties; who saw the scenery and enjoyed the fresh air, the sun, and the rain—for under certain circumstances rain is not at all bad. Let the lad who collects learn to love the objects he collects; to take more than a passing interest in them; and what is only a hobby in his youth will be a lifelong joy and pleasure to him.
Her mother glanced at her sharply and disapprovingly every now and then.

"You had better go for a good quick walk, and get a little colour into your cheeks," she remarked after breakfast was over, at which meal Hilda had eaten nothing.

"You will look quite plain to-night if you don't take care. I should like you to do Lord Langridge credit."

"Yes, I suppose I ought to," said Hilda languidly, "especially after he has had that wall pulled down on purpose for me. But I am afraid this is one of my plain days, mamma. I am sorry to say they are getting more frequent."

"If you persist in dressing in black, you will look positively haggard," said Mrs. Clifford disapprovingly.

"People will think that I am head over ears in love, then, so it is all right. I don't think a person in my interesting position should be in vulgar health."

"At least you will go out for a blow?" said Mrs. Clifford, abandoning the subject of the black gown as one too hopeless to be further considered.

"No, I think not, mamma. I shall have plenty of exercise to-night, you know."

"You are so obstinate," said Mrs. Clifford fretfully; "you go out in all weathers usually, and on a lovely day like this you mope indoors. You are very trying."

Hilda. Langridge was very displeased with you yesterday."

"Was he?" said Hilda carelessly.

Mrs. Clifford valiantly repressed a desire to crush her with the suggestion Langridge made yesterday about breaking off the match. She felt that Hilda was quite equal to saying that she was glad that Langridge had come to his senses at last.

True to her resolution, Hilda did not go out, but the evening found her looking very far from plain. She had managed to call up a colour to her cheek and a sparkle to her eye. Langridge would have no reason to complain of her looks.

They entered the magnificent ball-room a little late. Langridge hurried up to greet and welcome them.

"Does it look nice? Is it all right?" he whispered anxiously to his fiancée as he led her to a charming alcove, hung with the costly garlands that she had chosen.

Hilda gave a glance round, and replied languidly that everything was "quite nice." In reality she was rather impressed by the magnificence of the room, but it was just as well to keep Langridge cool.

"The oddest thing!" he began, as he sat down by her, "that fellow Curwen's turned up again! Run up against him yesterday afternoon. We used to be rather chums years ago. He isn't a bad sort."

Hilda opened her soft plumed black fan.

"I hope you didn't ask him here to-night?" she said rather sharply.

"I—I'm awfully sorry. I asked him without thinking," stammered Langridge in confusion. "Don't you like him? I felt I couldn't do anything else."

"Oh, it doesn't matter!" said Hilda.

"Another man is a good thing, perhaps."

His anxiety for fear that he had offended her being relieved, Langridge edged a little nearer, and began to compliment her on her dress.

"You look perfectly lovely to-night, Hilda," he remarked admiringly, as he watched the graceful figure in the black and jet that fitted her like a sheath.

"I am glad you like it. Mamma wanted to deck me out in white satin; but it savoured too much of the bridal garland for me. I don't want to be a victim before my time.""

"A victim!" said Langridge, in a low voice, taking her programme in his hand, and mechanically writing his initials opposite all the waltzes.

"A willing victim, of course," said Hilda cheerfully. "Come, Langridge, you and I must open the ball, you know!"

The band struck up, and they began to dance. Langridge was not a good waltzer. Hilda did her best not to lose her temper.

"If you didn't tread on my toes quite so much, and hold me with such a fearful grip, I fancy we should get on better," she suggested breathlessly, after they had canoned into the fourth couple.

"I'm so sorry. I'm afraid I'm very clumsy. But it's jolly, isn't it?"

His face was beaming. Its expression of delight suddenly irritated Hilda.

"It may be jolly, but it is most fatiguing. I really must sit down. My dear Langridge, I should die of suffocation if I danced often with you, and my clothes would be torn to shreds."

Langridge stood back against a wall with the air of a schoolboy who has just been severely reprimanded.

"We will sit out the waltzes, then," he remarked presently, "it will be just as nice."

Hilda yawned behind her fan, and contemplated her programme, which was quite full. She deliberately ran her pencil through four of Langridge's dances.
"It is such bad form to be always dancing together," she said, "and as for sitting out instead, we might as well be Hodge and Betsy at once."

Langridge felt that Hodge and Betsy, in spite of their vulgar unconventionality, would probably have enjoyed themselves more than he was doing.

Hilda sat back and surveyed the room. The ball was a brilliant one, everything that money could do had been done, her programme was crowded, every attention was paid her, she was the queen of the evening. She wondered if she had ever felt so unhappy.

Captain Curwen came up before the waltz was ended. Hilda had been conscious of his presence the moment he had entered the room. Langridge suddenly remembered his duties, and hurried away to greet some new arrivals. Captain Curwen dropped into the vacant seat.

"What made Langridge burst into this ball?" he asked languidly, after a few commonsensical exchanges had been exchanged, and the umbrellas subject had been worn more threadbare than the umbrellas itself. "He's a good little chap, but not quite up to this sort of thing."

Hilda comprehended at once that Captain Curwen was unaware of her engagement to his host.

"Why should he not give a ball?" she demanded.

"Oh, no reason whatever! But goodness gracious me, don't you think that tear-roses, and Waltzes, and Langridge sound rather incongruous?"

Hilda's glance followed his. It rested on Langridge's short, stout form reclining ungracefully near a bank of ferns and roses. He had never seemed so utterly commonplace in her eyes.

"The room looks bigger somehow, too," went on Captain Curwen, looking round; "surely the man has had the wall taken down! What tomfoolery?"

He took her programme and looked at it.

"Full up, I see. But there is an extra after supper. Will you give me that?"

He pencilled his initials without waiting for a reply, and walked away.

Hilda sank back with flushed cheeks. She felt she could not tell him of the engagement.

She went through the dances almost mechanically after that. The music seemed too loud, the dresses too gay, the room too light, the perfume of the flowers too heavy.

The ball was a brilliant success, no doubt, but she had never enjoyed anything less. Now and then she caught a glimpse of herself in the glass, and was struck with the almost serpent-like grace of her own figure, clad in that sheath of glittering black. She recognised that she was looking her handsomest. A wild, coquetish desire came over her to have Captain Curwen at her feet again. She had made him care once; she would make him care again.

Her dance with Langridge passed almost unheeded. He trod on her toes as heavily, and tore her gown as clumsily as ever; but she never said a word. Langridge was well pleased.

He took her in to supper, and saw that she had everything she wanted before he attended to his other guests. Hilda took all his devotion as a matter of course. She had always done so.

When she re-entered the ball-room it was on Captain Curwen's arm. Only a few couples were waltzing slowly round. The room was almost empty.

He slipped his arm round the glittering waist, and they went circling round together. A very different waltzing this from poor Langridge's scrambles and tumbles. They retired into the conservatory before the music stopped, and ensconced themselves comfortably behind a large palm. Captain Curwen took her fan, and began to wave it to and fro.

"I have just learned who knocked the wall down," he said, smiling at her. "Langridge has informed me that you have made him the happiest of men. Allow me to congratulate you."

Hilda gave a little gasp. He knew that she was engaged; he knew and did not care! "Thank you," she answered after a moment's pause, during which she collected herself for battle. "Yes, I am responsible for the wall and the roses, and all the other absurdities which you found so incongruous."

"They are not incongruous for you—only for Langridge," he returned, smiling. "I remember you had a leaning towards fal-lals and triviality always."

He could remember her tastes and not feel a pang that they could never now be of any real interest to him! She felt furiously angry that the power she had once had to move him was no longer in existence.

"Langridge says you are to be married in three months," went on Captain Curwen, without a trace of regret in his voice. "I hope you mean to ask me to the wedding."
"Oh, certainly," answered Hilda, with a strong effort repressing her desire to forbid his presence at that ceremony once and for all. "I—well be delighted. I believe Langridge is to be decked in orange blossom as well as myself. It will be a very pretty sight."

He laughed a little.

"No doubt, I wouldn’t miss it for worlds! Langridge will look very handsome in orange blossom," he added meditatively.

She took her fan from him and began to play with it.

"I suppose your mother is very glad to have you at home again!" she said, with a determined change of subject.

"She says so. She thinks, however, that I shall find Curwen Manor dull after the dissipation of an Indian life."

"And shall you?"

"At present I feel as if I should be dead of ennui in a week. I dare say your wedding will cheer me up."

"I don’t know why you keep harping on my wedding," said Hilda rather sharply.

"It appears to be the one exciting event of the day. Every one I meet asks me how I think you are looking, and how I think Langridge is looking, and whether it is not the most delightful arrangement possible. I am getting quite into the swing myself. I feel I want to talk about nothing but white slippers and kid gloves, and veils and wedding cake."

"How very kind of you! You used not to take such a deep interest in these frivolities in the old days."

"The old days!" He looked at her steadily for a moment. Her eyes met his defiantly. It was as though two antagonists were measuring swords before a duel.

"We are both a good deal wiser since those old days, Hilda. You and I have determined to take the world as we find it—which is by far the best plan."

"You have grown quite philosophical," said Hilda with a short laugh.

"Isn’t that a great deal better than being disagreeable—which is what you used to call me in those old days you speak of?"

"I don’t know whether it is an improvement or not," returned Hilda venally. "I only know that it makes me think of copy-books—and I hate copy-books."

"You have quite a new set of likes and dislikes. I used to find it rather difficult to keep up with the old ones. I am afraid my brain will not bear the strain of another list."

"It is Langridge’s brain that has to stand that strain, fortunately," she responded. "I am thankful to say that none could bear it better."

"No, I should say you were quite cut out for one another," said the Captain amiably. "Langridge is the soul of good nature, and would put up with anything."

"Thank you."

"Don’t mention it. I am delighted to bear witness to Langridge’s power of endurance. You would be quite beyond most men."

"I suppose you think that Langridge is a fool for wanting to marry me?" said Hilda, with an angry flash.

"Not at all. Some men require constant excitement—and difficulty. I should think you would supply him with both. You must not mind a few home truths, Hilda. Remember, I have known you ever since you had a pigtail and wore short frocks;" he added, smiling.

"I can only remember how horrid you used to be," retorted Hilda impatiently.

"Oh, I am a perfect brute, I know—but an unintentional brute after all," said the Captain, smiling again. "You think that I have not improved in these three years?"

"You are worse—much worse," answered his companion, with a shake of the head; "you were hardly to be put up with before, but now you are simply insufferable."

He rose with a little bow, and offered her his arm.

"Let me lead you to Langridge," he suggested; "the very sight of him puts one in a good humour. He looks as if he would like to play skittles after the ball is over. He is bubbling over with energy. Langridge used to be rather good at skittles."

At this moment Langridge’s round face appeared at the entrance of the conservatory. He saw the couple at once.

"Oh, here you are," he exclaimed triumphantly, "I have been looking for you everywhere. This is our waltz, Hilda. Shall we sit it out?"

Sitting out a waltz with Langridge was not quite the same thing as sitting out a waltz with Captain Curwen.

"Oh, we will dance it by all means," Hilda said hastily.

As she walked away on Langridge’s arm she was perfectly aware that Captain Curwen was scrutinizing her at his leisure.

She wished for the hundredth time that Langridge was a little taller. There was a
want of dignity about a man who only reached a little higher than her shoulder.

She was heartily thankful when the ball was over. She resolved never to ask Langridge to give another. By the end of the night he was hot, dishevelled, and redder than ever. He followed her everywhere to whisper unwelcome compliments in her ear.

"All the fellows are in love with you," he whispered ecstasy one.

Hilda's glance went to the doorway, where Captain Curwen was standing with a perfectly blank expression of face which betokened extreme boredom.

"Are they?" she said. "I am afraid you exaggerate, Langridge."

But he averred that he did not, and that it would not be natural if every one were not smitten. Who could help loving his Hilda?

But his Hilda was only engaged in angry meditation as to why Captain Curwen had made no effort to dance with her again.

CHAPTER IV.

"Nothing could be more unfortunate than his turning up again like this, just when he isn't wanted," said Hilda forlornly.

"Really, Lucy, I think Providence manages things very badly. We were all so comfortable before."

Lucy, who was sitting well into the fire with her gown pulled up to keep it from being scorched, replied discreetly that it was "a pity."

"A pity, indeed! It is a great deal worse than that. It is intolerably bad taste on his part. Of course it is just like him."

"You couldn't expect Captain Curwen to stay in India for ever, Hilda."

"I never expected him to do anything that he ought to do. But, at least, he needn't have chosen this particular time for settling down in our midst."

"Perhaps it is just as well that you are not yet married," said Lucy slowly.

"I wish to goodness I was, on the contrary. I hate Captain Curwen quite as much as he hates me. Langridge is worth a dozen of him though he is so podgy. But all the same he is very upsetting."

"How did he behave at the ball? I wish I had been there. It was just my luck, having this swelled face."

"He was as impertinent as possible, and said Langridge and I were cut out for one another."

"Do you call that impertinent?" said Lucy, smiling.

"Yes, I do. Poor Langridge was looking his very worst, and the wretch knew it. I wish the poor boy's legs were a little straighter."

"And Captain Curwen did not succumb to your charms again?"

"Hardly! I might have been the veriest scarecrow for all the compliments he paid me. How I should like to bring him to my feet again!"

"Fascinating work for a little coquette like you. But I should say that it was playing with edged tools."

"There isn't any fun in playing with blunt ones, Lucy! No, I shall certainly do my best to bring down that young man's conceit a little."

"You don't seem to consider Lord Langridge much in this playful little scheme of yours," said Lucy.

"Langridge isn't a bit jealous. And he is awfully thick-headed. He wouldn't know it if I carried on a flirtation under his very nose."

"He isn't nearly such a fool as he—— as he——" Lucy ended in some confusion and looked appealingly at her friend.

Hilda laughed.

"You needn't be afraid of offending me, my dear. I am not sensitive about Langridge. Perhaps he isn't!"

She departed soon after this, a dainty figure in her fur and bright-winged hat.

On the road home she met her victim. She stopped and held out her hand.

"How do you do?" said Captain Curwen, accepting the hand and the situation with equal gravity. "I hope you are none the worse for your dissipation?"

Hilda flashed a look at him from eyes that used to move him to an inward tumult in the old days.

"Do I look any the worse?" she asked coquettishly.

He scrutinised her calmly, and she flushed a little.

"No, no, I suppose not," he remarked. "Of course you are three years older than when I last saw you."

"That means——" Hilda, mortified.

"Nothing more than what I said. One cannot defy time," he answered coolly.

"I think you are the very rudest person I ever knew," said Hilda very angrily.

"Yes, I know. I have accepted the situation, and I thought that you were doing the same. I am a brute, of course."
After a silence he went on:

"But I heard some very flattering remarks made about you at the ball. As Langridge’s future wife, you naturally excited much comment. Would you like to hear them?"

"Not at all, thank you."

"There is no accounting for tastes. I should have thought you would have jumped at the chance of seeing yourself as others see you."

"I find seeing myself as you see me quite enough."

"Oh, you may always trust me to tell you the truth, Hilda."

She stopped and looked at him.

"Are you always going to be so horrid to me?" she asked him plaintively.

Captain Curwen privately thought her mouth very pretty at that moment, and her whole expression positively enchanting, but he only replied serenely:

"Not horrid. Oh dear, no. I will pay you the most florid compliments if you like."

"But they will not be sincere," said Hilda, pouting.

"Well, perhaps not," agreed the Captain readily; "but sugar-plums are always pleasant. We don’t stop to ask what they are made of."

"Copy-book again!" said Miss Clifford, with a shrug of her shoulders, resuming her walk. "You have only two styles of conversation—both equally disagreeable."

The red gables were in sight now, and when they drew near the gate Hilda held out her hand to say good-bye.

"It is four o’clock—just tea-time. I am coming in to see your mother."

Hilda put her hand in her muff again, and went through the gate he opened for her. She did not press the self-invited guest to enter. When they got into the drawing-room Langridge was there before them, in the full enjoyment of tea and muffins. Hilda noticed at once that his flaring blue tie accorded ill with the large cheek suit he wore.

"What a colour you’ve got!" said Langridge admiringly, rushing to get a chair for her, and upstepping a small table on the way. "You look as fresh as a daisy after the ball. Doesn’t she, Curwen?"

Captain Curwen replied with smooth politeness that Miss Clifford was looking charming. Hilda’s colour became more brilliant than ever. She devoted herself entirely to Langridge after that, and did not speak to Captain Curwen for the rest of the afternoon. Langridge was enchanted. She had seldom smiled upon him like this. He told her about the greenhouse he was building for her, and asked if she thought a bow-window would be an improvement to the drawing room.

Hilda entered into the plans with animation, and even went so far as to choose the colour for her boudoir furniture, which she had refused to consider before.

"Come over to the Abbey to-morrow—you and your mother," said Langridge, in the seventh heaven of delight. "I want your advice about the window. I think it should be on the south side."

Hilda graciously accepted the invitation, and Langridge promised to give them lunch.

"You come too, Curwen, old fellow," he added, giving the Captain a slap on the back that made him winces; "you are up to all sorts of dodges in the way of architecture, I know."

Hilda opened her lips to speak, but closed them again quickly.

"I shall be delighted," said the Captain pleasantly.

It was positively intolerable to Hilda that Captain Curwen should go over her future home with her. She knew his quiet smile of superiority so well. How he would look when Langridge said or did something more clumsy than usual!

"Whatever possessed you to ask him, Langridge?" she demanded crossly, as soon as the Captain had left the room.

"I thought he might be able to advise us about the bow window," replied Langridge, the exuberance of his spirits somewhat sobered by her tone. "He is having something of the sort done at Curwen Manor, and he might give us a wrinkle."

Hilda said no more, but Langridge understood that he was in disgrace, and departed much crestfallen.

But at the morrow’s lunch she was brighter than ever, and made herself enchanting to both the men. She sat on Langridge’s right hand and absorbed his whole attention as usual, but she was quite conscious that the dark eyes opposite her were regarding her quizzically.

She hated the whole thing.

They went over the Abbey after dinner, leaving Mrs. Clifford to slumber peacefully in an arm-chair. Hilda was graciousness itself, and praised the greenhouse and admired the bow window, and gave her orders for future alterations with the air of a little duchess. Langridge was more delighted than ever.
"To think that in three months' time you will be here for ever," he murmured rapturously in her ear, when Captain Curwen was looking out of the window. He accompanied the words with a pressure of the hand that meant volumes.

But the prospect of a mortal eternity spent at the Abbey, with Langridge for perpetual companion, made Hilda shiver.

"Are you cold, dear?" asked Langridge solicitously.

"Cold! No, I am burning hot," she answered, tearing her hand from his andShowling him a fevered cheek. "Please don't worry me."

At this moment a servant came with a message for Langridge, which necessitated his leaving the room for a few minutes.

Captain Curwen and Hilda were left alone. The former was still looking out of the window.

"It is a fine view," he remarked at last, as if he saw the necessity of making conversation, "and some of the rooms here are really superb. It will be delightful to be the mistress of such a place."

"You," said Hilda faintly.

"You look very hot," said the Captain, regarding her in some surprise at her blushing cheeks.

Hilda rose suddenly.

"It is because I—I," She had almost been on the point of saying that she had been irritated beyond endurance; and that she was more ashamed of her future position than proud of it.

"A little agitated, I dare say, by this visit to your future home," said the Captain coolly. "I hope that I may be a welcome visitor here!"

"I hope you will never, never come," said Hilda, with a burst of passion. "Certainly I shall never ask you."

Captain Curwen smiled a little under the small raven moustache that had concealed so many expressions in its time.

"May I ask why I have offended you so deeply?" he asked. "I do not think you can be so foolish as to dislike me because I tease you a little sometimes."

"I don't choose to explain my reasons to you. I shall be surprised if you come after what I have said."

"So shall I—very. You may be quite sure, my dear Hilda, that I shall never trouble you after you are married. Till then I shall consider this a burst of petulance, and continue to tease you as before."

Hilda had been quite sure that the Captain had lost every spark of feeling that he had once had for her, but now, looking up into his eyes, she was surprised at a certain expression in them that belied the coldness of his words.

She went home in a thoughtful mood.

Next day she astonished her mother by saying that she should like to be married immediately.

"My dear Hilda, how very extraordinary you are! Married immediately, indeed. A man in Lord Langridge's position can't be married in a hole-in-the-corner sort of way like other people. He must be ridiculous in love to make such a suggestion as that. And the trousers not even begun! It is out of the question, Langridge must be mad."

"It is not Langridge's idea. It is mine," said Hilda firmly.

"Then I call it more extraordinary still. Indeed, to be in such a hurry is hardly—hardly the thing, in fact. You will excuse my saying so, Hilda, but it is very unusual for the woman to hurry on the marriage."

"I don't care in the least whether it is usual or not."

"My dear, you must not be unreasonable. You cannot go and ask Lord Langridge to marry you at once. It is a shocking idea," said Mrs. Clifford, much ruffled. "Let me hear no more of it, Hilda, I beg."

Hilda relapsed into silence after this. She had done her best, and if things went wrong it would not be her fault.

Soon after this, Langridge departed on a three days' visit to London to see about the boudoir hangings, and order some jewellery for his future bride. Hilda said good-bye to him with a light heart. At least she should have three days of freedom.

On the second day at dusk the front-door bell rang, and Captain Curwen was ushered into the room where she was sitting. The afternoon had closed in, and the room was in twilight save for the ruddy flickering of the dancing fire.

"Mamma is out," said Hilda, giving her unwelcome guest two reluctant fingers.

"I think I will wait till she comes back, if you don't mind," he answered, sitting down with great composure. "I have a message to give her from my mother."

"Couldn't you leave it with me?" said Hilda, with a delicate suggestion in her manner that his visit was unwelcome.

"I am afraid not, thanks."

He sat back in his chair and watched her fixedly, perfectly aware that she was uneasy under the scrutiny.

"So Langridge is away?" he said at last.
"Langridge is away—yes," she answered.
"Buying the diamonds for which you are selling yourself," said the Captain, with
languid scorn. "I met him at the station
before he went, poor chap!"
"How dare you speak to me like that!"
cried Hilda, flashing angry eyes upon him.
"I have borne with you long enough. I
will not be insulted by you."

She rose to leave the room, but he got
up also and barred her progress. They
stood facing each other, and the firelight
showed that both were very pale.

"Is the truth an insult?" he asked her
sternly. "I have stood by and watched
patiently hitherto, but now I want to save
you from yourself. If Langridge were
poor instead of rich, would you marry him
still in three months' time?"

She dropped her eyes. "My affairs are
nothing to you," she said haughtily. "Let
me pass, please."

"Not for a minute. Sit down, Hilda."
Something in his voice terrified her.
Mechanically she obeyed.
He surveyed her in silence for a
moment. Then he spoke very quietly.

"I want you to choose between me and
Langridge—now."

She looked up at him breathlessly.
"Choose between you!" she faltered.
"Yes, choose between us. I am not
going to make love to you, Hilda. I did
too much of that in the old days. But
I came home from India determined to
marry you if you were free."

"I am not free."
The words were spoken very low, but
he heard them. He pointed scornfully to
the diamonds on her hand.

"You are bound by that," he said
steadily, "but it is a bond that is not
unbreakable. Will you sever it?"

She did not answer, and he went on:

"There is less shame in breaking a tie
like that, than in giving yourself body and
soul for ever to a man you do not love."
"How do you know I do not love him?"
she asked, raising her eyes defiantly.
He laughed derisively.
"Because you love me!" he answered.
"I do not."

He surveyed the defiant face again.
"Poor Langridge!" he said simply. "So
he is to be sacrificed to your pride and
ambition, is he? I consider that I never
did him a truer turn than when I asked
you to choose between us. To marry the
woman you love is purgatory unless the
woman loves you."

He made a step forward and held out
his hand.

"But since you have made your choice,
I will go. I only hope that your marriage
will turn out better than I expect. Of
course, it is needless to say that I consider
Langridge is a very fortunate man."

She shuddered away from the out-
stretched hand and hid her face.
"What am I to do?" she moaned.
"Choose!" repeated the Captain, smiling
at her.

She held out her hand without looking
at him.
"Take it off!" she whispered.
He drew off the diamond ring and placed
it on the table.

"Lift your eyes," he commanded, "so
that I may see whether you love me—as
I love you!"

But she kept them hidden, and he kissed
their lids instead.

"What about poor Langridge?" she
asked him later, when, blushing and happy,
they sat hand in hand in the ruddy-twilight.

"Langridge? Oh, he must build up his
wall again!" said Captain Carwen, smiling.

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"It was a bad job Mammy left us—wasn’t it, Daddy?” said Boy. It is possible the child had some other name, but no one had ever heard him called by it. He was simply and unostentatiously “Boy.”

There was something very strange the master with Boy. Now and again he was so cold that his teeth chattered in his head; indeed, he had to look over his shoulder several times to make sure that no one was playing him a trick, and pouring cold water down his back. Then he would burn as if his poor little body were all on fire, two hot red spots would come upon his cheeks, and his breath grow short and fast. Then he would fling out his little hot hands, as if fighting for air. This last gesture troubled Frillums dreadfully.

Frillums was that long-suffering creature, a performing dog. What his original intentions as to breed might have been, no one could say. What he had achieved was being a first-class mongrel, with a supreme intelligence, and a heart so big and loving that it was a wonder it did not burst his ill-bred carcasse. His ears had almost the power of speech, so intensely alert were they; and his tail possessed a greater variety of mood than the tails of other dogs. He was a whitha, rough-haired beast, with a faint suggestion of bull about his head, and had apparently come to the conclusion that he had been born with a large frill round his neck; indeed there can be no manner of doubt that he would have felt distinctly uneclothed and uneasily without it. It was a stiff and uncompromising frill, but he had got used to it, and never, save on one lamentable occasion, had been known to gnaw it; an occasion, it must be confessed, when edible supplies had run painfully short for some while back, and mistakes might be looked upon as excusable. Two more items regarding Frillums, and our description of him is complete. He had two lovely black-spectacled eyes, which gave him a knowing and judicial aspect, and he adored “Boy.”

When, therefore, Frillums saw those little burning palms flung out as though in wild entreaty, was it any wonder that his first idea was rats; his second, that there was something, anyhow, that ought to be killed, since something was worrying his little master? In the excitement and uncertainty of the moment, Frillums walked round the table on his hind-legs, playing an imaginary tambourine with his fore-legs, and then stood squarely and defiantly on his head, with his heels high in air.

Boy watched the dog’s antics with a little wan smile. There was no audience to see; but it was always a good thing for Frillums to rehearse his tricks.

Then the sick child’s thoughts went back to the mother he had lost—the mother who would have held his aching head upon her bosom, and bathed his hot brow with
her tears. He could look back and remember many times when she had cried over him, like that; remember her in her spangled skirt and tartan scarf, when—as the Queen of the Highland Glen—she had been dancing all day, more or less. She did not always find it a remunerative occupation, and the royal supper was apt to be unpleasantly scant—hence those tears; not for herself, but for Boy. The life of those who wear the motley may be one of tempting variety, but it is not one of certainty—rather one of cruel ups and downs, momentary upliftings and bitter depressions. A few days' rain, and the street tumble is reduced to penury; a spell of hard frost, and a days' takings may be almost nil.

But we must return to Boy and his little lament over the mother who was gone.

"It was a bad job, Daddy—a bad, bad job for us two."

It is a hard thing to look sentimental when you are painting a scarlet grin upon your countenance; but the heart of the acrobat was big within him as he heard Boy talk like that. Wasn't it enough for the raindrops to be splashing on the small square window that gave such a poor light for his toilet, but that the child must add his little wall to the depressing influences of the day? It would not have done to let a tear find its way down the chalk-white face, and follow the elaborately smooth surface, even blurring, perhaps, the scarlet smile that was now nearing completion; but the mountebank turned his eyes towards the little figure on the shabby bed by the door, and said, with a break in his voice:

"Yes, my lad—a bad, bad job indeed."

The man had done his best for Boy, whose head rested on an old frilled jerkin neatly rolled into a kind of bolster, the while a sack had been tenderly folded over the shivering shoulders, and firmly secured in place by a slickly-hued jewel supposed to represent a genuine cairngorm, and once, alas! used for the adornment of the poor Queen of the Glen!

The grass was not yet green upon the nameless grave where the poor Queen lay, and Boy was more than ordinarily quick and intelligent for his nine and a half years; hence, every detail of the loss that had desolated his young life was quick and fresh in his remembrance. He could call to mind exactly how she looked in the narrow, uncomfortable-looking box some one had put her in. By her side lay a little waxen figure, very like the dolls he had so often seen in the shop-windows. The woman of the house they lived in then, had told him his mother had "gone up to heaven."

The child looked up at the very grimy ceiling of the room, but drew from it no shining idea of a possible abode of light and glory. Rather his mind clung to what had been her next suggestion—the little image that lay upon his dead mother's arm would have been his "brother." This brother in the clouds of imagination absorbed him; not only did he take the form of a possible playmate, but dazzling notions of acrobatic feats that might have been, threw him into ecstasies.

That was in days of prosperity and sunshine that seemed ever so long ago now, though in reality but a very little time since. Sorrow lengthens out the days and the years, so that we lose all reckoning of time; and really while the poor Highland Queen lay gasping out her life, time stood still to Boy and Daddy. As for Frillums, they just had to let him follow the poverty-stricken funeral, and afterwards to lift him from the hapless-up cloths beside the grave, and carry him home one wriggling protest. In time, things had brightened up a little. The bitter January days were over; now and then came a soft wind from the west, and bunches of snowdrops and golden crocuses were sold at the street-corners. Food and shelter had still to be worked for, though two lay still and cold in the churchyard.

But now another evil had befallen: Boy was stricken down, and the acrobatic business aorn of half its attractiveness. He had struggled very bravely, poor little fellow, to keep on his legs; but two nights ago, Daddy had had to carry him home—a sad little procession, with Frillums for chief mourner, Frillums with tail between his legs, and head and ears drooping—not a kick left in him, you would have said if you had seen him, let alone a somersault.

And now elevenpence halfpenny had represented yesterday's takings for the rain had rained, and the wind had been from the east, and people with blue noses and nipped fingers do not care much about standing to see a dog turn head over heels, balance itself on a rope, jump through a hoop, or even stand on its head and play the tambourine like a Christian. Frillums was as plucky as his little master.
on these occasions, and would shake the rain from his ears and dash at the tambourine as if he loved it. But the harvest gathered in was poor. Elvenpence halfpenny was hardly a vast sum upon which to set out to buy a little delicacy or two for a sick child, a bit of fuel, and supper for a man and a dog; especially when the glaring fact that four weeks’ back-rent for the shabby room up four pair of stairs was due, would thrust itself under your nose as it were.

"It will be a jolly good job when I'm better, won't it, Dad?" said Boy's piping treble presently; and Frillums, catching a hint of something hopeful in his master's voice, again ran rapidly round the room on his hind-legs, and then came down on all-fours, and barked three times for the Queen—a sort of royal salute that he always gave on demand, and occasionally volunteered in moments of joy.

"Oh, it will so, Boy," said Daddy, who had now entirely accomplished the broadest and most telling smile, and was pulling out the ruffles of his jerkin in the hope of making them look a little less tumbled and dejected.

"They don't like the pole trick half as much when I'm not there, do they, Daddy?"

"Not half as much."

"They always think I'm going to fall, don't they?"

"Of course they do."

"And that makes them cry, 'Oh! They like to cry, 'Oh!'"

"Of course they do."

"Once a woman cried—do you disremember—and Mammy got cross, and said: 'Do you think I'd let him take the kid up if he couldn't hold him?'"

"She did—Heaven bless her!"

Boy was silent for a while. One of those bad shivering spells was on him; and he didn’t want to shake more than he could help, lest Daddy should be sad all day thinking of it.

"I wasn’t afraid," he said at last, as the chill passed off; "it’s lovely being up so high, and don’t I tie my legs tight round your neck, and fling back with a go! Oh, Dad, I do hope I’ll soon be well. It’s heavy for you, having to carry the pole all yourself, and beat the drum, and spread the carpet out, and I’m sure you must be lonely without."—here came a catch in Boy’s breath—"without Mammy, and without me, and with only Frillums—poor Frillums." Frillums was dancing like a dervish beside Boy’s bed, finally leaping up and falling to licking the poor little slashed face in a frenzy of love and concern.

From all this chatter on the part of Boy, it will be seen that the father was a humble member of the great class called "banquises," with no ambition towards what is called the Grande Banque, but content to be one of the Petite Banque, or carpet men, who perform in the streets or at small provincial fairs. He himself did the part of the "underneath man," the chief applause falling to Boy, who in the tightest of tights, shortest of jerkins, and merriest of smiles, seemed as bonetailed as an india-rubber ball; his curly golden head, pretty features, and artless expression winning the hearts of all female spectators, and drawing the copperers from mysterious recesses of their muddled garments. At what is called bending backward, and at the curvet, a difficult trick, Boy was a marvel; and his monkey’s somersault never failed to charm. Then, while the father and son took the needful rest which all this posturing renders a necessity, Frillums had his innings. Frillums was ever ardent to begin, and loth to leave off. He loved the applause of the multitudes, be that multitude never so unsavoury; and there can be no doubt that his droll figure, serenely walking on his hind-legs, as if to the manner born, and carrying a tin canor balanced on his front paws, caused the inpourings into that receptacle to be more generous than they otherwise would have been.

But, alas! as has been said before, the petite banquise is the sport of the weather, and a run of wet days spells poverty and privation. Worse things sometimes, as now, when Boy had got soaked through his flimsy dress, and the chill had entered the marrow of his little bones, and laid him prostrate with alternate burnings and shiverings, and every now and then a pain through his chest like a knife being stuck in and drawn out roughly.

The banquise was just saying goodbye to Boy—having put a glass of cold water, and an orange, carefully quartered, within his reach—when the door was stealthily opened, and a head, a most unprepossessing head, thrust through the aperture, while a pair—It would be a hollow flattery to call it a hand—grasped the lintel.

"Oh, there you are, Mr. Julins," said a harsh voice, at the sound of which Frillums
HIS ONLY CHILD.

retreated under the bed, growing fiercely from his retreat.

"Yes, here I am," replied Mr. Spavin, or Professor Julius as he was more frequently called; but it must be confessed he had a useful air, which betrayed itself in spite of the chalked face and crimson check-pieces.

"That's very interesting, that is," said the raucy voice, a tall, shambling body now allowing itself to be visible as a sequel to the unempted head; "but it 'ud be a blamed sight more interesting to me to know where your money was."

"I am starting off now, Mr. Spavin, to try and earn some," said the Professor; "the rain has cleared off, I see, and maybe I shall make a good day of it."

"No, you don't," said Spavin, shaking his ugly head, "you don't get over me that way. You know it 'ud take you a month of Sundays to make what's due to me, by your capers—there's four weeks, and two goes of skirts!'— Why, what's that? What's that?" and before the father could interfere, Mr. Spavin had clutched the poor bit of tinted glass that held the sack about Boy's shoulders, and torn it from its place.

"You call yourself an honest man, do you, and keep a stock of jewelry on 'and, when you owe for rent? This 'all do nicely to hasp my Sunday neckerchief, this will; they'll think a lot of this at the 'Spotted Dog,' they will."

The acrobat held out his hand, and there was a tremble in his voice as he spoke.

"Give me back that brooch, Mr. Spavin," he said; "it was my dead wife's, and it is, I assure you, worth but a few pence. I am sorry to be in your debt, and I feel you have a right to be on me, an honest right; still, look at my boy—how can I turn out into the streets with the child like that? I feel that I have no right here."

"There's orpitals for sick folk. Send the lad there—and take yourself off," said Mr. Spavin.

At this, up started Boy with a hoarse cry:

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy, don't send me away where I won't see you any more—don't, don't!"

"You shall not go, my boy, you shall not be taken from me," cried the poor acrobat, soothing the excited child as best he could. Be it said, however, that Mr. Spavin was well within his rights, though he pressed them ungracefully, and even brutally. Not without some misgiving either, if one might judge by an uneasy glance cast now and again down the dingy passage that led to the stair-head.

Like many a greater man, Mr. Spavin was "afraid of his misfits," as the saying goes. But the coast was clear; and so he took up his parable again, lowering his voice somewhat, nevertheless, for fear of accidents.

"It all comes of me 'bourming scums, that's what it is; it all comes of 'avin' a man on my premises as makes his livin' by tumbling in the streets. It stands to sense now, don't it, as a man can't be of much account who takes to such tricky ways as that to try an' earn his wittles—eh? The very name's agen 'em, now, ain't it? And I tell you what it is, Mr. Julias, coming close up to the individual in question, who was resting against the bed and holding Boy tight, and snapping his fingers in his face, "it's my opinion as you're on the sneak."

"On the sneak!" said the other, amazed.

"Yes, on the sneak. Does it stand to sense now, I ask you, that a man would go and paint his blooming face different to what nature made it, if he weren't in 'idin' for some job or other?"

"If you don't look out," said Mr. Julias, turning his scarlet grin and chalk-white face full upon his opponent, "I shall be giving you a good hiding in a bit."

But just then Mr. Spavin made a diversion by springing about two feet in the air, and coming down on his feet with a blood-curdling oath. Frilums had nipped him daintily in the fleshy part of the leg. No blood was drawn, but the pain was sharp, and Spavin hopped about, not silently either, on one leg, with almost as much agility as though he had been an acrobat himself. The noise brought Mrs. Spavin to the scene, and from that moment Spavin was a different man.

The lady was long and lean, and "did" her hair in the window-curtain style of many years ago; but under her painfully tight apron-string there beat a woman's heart.

"Whatever are you a-do'in' of, Amos?" she said, in a thin, astonished voice, looking at the antics of her better half with much disfavour.

Amos held on to his injured leg and explained matters.

"It was the damned dog," he said.

"Then you've bin a-aggravatin' of it, Amos. And whatever is the matter with the poor child there? Why, he's tremblin' like a haspen, so he is—and Mr. Julias, too, quite out like."

"They owe us money, Susan Mary," said
Mr. Spavin, "and I've been a-puttin' of the case plain and simple-like."

But Susan Mary was not in a patient mood. "Of course they owes us money," she said, tossing her head so that some dangle-ments upon her black lace cap rang quite a little chime; "and sorry they is to owe it, as well I know, and glad they'll be to pay it. How many times have I told you, Amos Spavin, that I won't have you a-'arrowin' of the tenants! Do anything else you like, says I, but leave the tenancies to me."

"My dear," said Spavin, "you're a very superior woman, no one will deny that; but rent is rent, and a matter of four weeks is too."

Mrs. Spavin lost her temper. "Can't you see as the child is ill, and the man druv? Don't you know as his wife is scarce cold in her grave, and his heart nigh broke?"

Assuredly the man she spoke of was trembling now, and his poor white and crimson-patched face was twitching with emotion. Oh, the irony of the motley when the heart is swelling even to bursting! Nor is the clown the only one who has to play the fool while the tears that burn have to be kept back, and the ache is in the heart. Life makes these claims upon our courage sometimes, teaching us to endure, and to wear the mask of the mummer bravely.

There was one ray of comfort in the acrobat's heart as he set off, with Frillums at his heels, on his day's march, and that was Mrs. Spavin's goodness. Christians take many forms, and of these Mrs. Spavin was one.

"Be good to the little chap," he said, as he passed the landlady by the doorway, and she watched him downstairs with her head a good deal on one side, presently appealing to the "general girl," who, dusty and forlorn-looking, was struggling with a broom taller than herself.

"What a way them actor-gentlemen has with them, Sallner—they reg'lar twines themselves around your bean—which my own cousin on the mother's side, once removed, ran away from a good 'ome to follow a livin' ask woltong that belonged to a carrywan, and all because he'd a talking tongue of his own. Now set that broom down, and run away and make a bit of hot toast and a sup of tea for that there suffering himmercent; we shan't miss it, and it 'll bring a most almighty deal of comfort to his por little inside."

And surely Mrs. Spavin's sup of tea may take rank alongside that "cup of cold water" of which we have all read.

CHAPTER II.

It was a day of sudden showers, in which the raindrops struck upon the leaves, and danced upon the pavement; and of little bursts of sunshine, in which the drops glistened like jewels, and the flags alone bright like shining ribbons unrolled as far as the eye could see. April was showing her changeful face of smiles and tears, and the London season was waking up to life; and crossing at Piccadilly Circus was a serious undertaking. Not only were the baskets at the corners of the streets heaped high with flowers, but branches of flowering shrubs, and even boughs covered with delicate young green leaves, were to be seen also. It was as though the country had come running to the town, and cried out jubilant: "See how fair I am, waking from my winter sleep, and adorning myself to greet the spring!" Little ragged children looked longingly at the pretty massed blossoms, and hung about near where the women's busy fingers were making up tiny bouquets for sale. The poor do love flowers so much, perhaps because so often out of their reach!

Most of us know what it is to feel very much alone among a gay and busy crowd, and how the light-heartedness of those around us seems to emphasize the sadness of our own thoughts, the desolation of our own hearts. It was so with the street acrobat as he and Frillums spread their carpet and went through their various performances in this side street or that, attracting but small and unprofitable audiences, it must be confessed. It all seemed so dull, stale, and unprofitable without Boy! Even Frillums felt the blank, and went through his tricks with less eagerness than usual; actually dropping the tin saucer more than once, and now and then standing still, gazing wistfully down the long, seemingly endless vista of a street, and giving a plaintive whine.

The sudden showers, too, were against poor Mr. Julius, for people hesitate to stand still when loitering may mean getting wet through. Their only stroke of luck the whole livelong morning was a sixpenny bit dropped in Frillums' tray by a dainty little lady out shopping with her mother, and so taken with the dear "walking dog" that
she could hardly be induced to get into the carriage that awaited her.

Food once in the day was a necessity, and his master felt that Frillums deserved a captain's biscuit, after that sixpence, so one was bought, and twopennyworth of plum duff for Boy's supper. Now it must be confessed that in this last purchase Boy's Daddy did not show himself the best possible judge of the most suitable food for a child suffering from pneumonia; still, the plum duff was well-intentioned, and sat comfortably in the side breast-pocket of the frilled jerkin. Mr. Julius had a theory that trade, from his point of view, improved as the day waned. In the earlier hours people's minds were too intent upon business to find place for festive inclinations; but after luncheon-time, business energies became less smart and keen. Well fed, and serenely conscious of a morning well spent, a man's or woman's steps might well linger to watch a show; his or her hand was more ready to be slipped into the pocket and extract the shining copper. Then in the grey of the early evening, folks took to sauntering; out in what may be called the near suburbs of London City, the districts north-west and south-west, lovers would linger side by side to call all the freshness and novelty of the light evenings, that prolonged and gentle radiance that has all the winter been lacking. The wife of the man who lived in a semi-detached villa, or a smart terrace, would start, a child in each hand, to meet the house-father, and bring him home in triumph.

All these ebbs and flows of life in and about a vast city are known to all wandering musicians and all banquises, who make their profit out of them. A well-dressed woman of the middle classes, with her children about her, was always a glad-some sight to Julius and Boy, and Frillums had been known to make quite a small fortune, stalking gravely on his hind-legs round such a group, and then suddenly and unexpectedly standing on his head, to a chorus of tinkling laughter. Then would come a bit of conjuring, balls tossing in the air, one following the other in regular sequence, a whole string of them rising and falling; somersaults, single and double, the bend backwards, and Frillums turning rapid "cart-wheels" from one end of the carpet to the other. What laughter, what delight among the children!

But the pole trick was the cleverest "coup" in the whole performance. It could not be done often in a day, it takes too much out of the man; when it is done it is always a success. It has about it an element that fascinates—the element of danger. The man may not break his neck or his back; on the other hand, he may. No one would own to these emotions, but there is no doubt they exist in many a breast. It was most exciting to see a sort of telescopic pole opened out, each length pinned into security with a stout iron peg, and then the whole set up on end with no greater support at the base than a shallow ring of iron; more exciting still to see the white and scarlet mountebank climb steadily to the slender point of the pole, thereon balance himself like a swimmer in a summer sea, awaiting the ascent of Boy, intently watched by Frillums from below; delightful to see Boy spring to the arms of his sire, fold his slender legs round that sire's neck, and so, hanging head downwards, slip the full length of the pole, safely carried to terra firma, and thereon turning a perky somersault to assure the audience he was none the worse for his flight pick-a-back down the unsupported and improvised switch-back. It was poor enough sport to Mr. Julius, performing his pole trick alone, or even carrying Frillums up upon his shoulders, "faste de mieux"; neither did Frillums appreciate the swift descent, but usually gave a distressful whine as the pair came down, and would be tremulous about the legs as he staggered about with his tin saucer subsequently.

Still, the best had to be made of things, and the thought of the money due for rent stung Mr. Julius to exertion like the strokes of a flail. Mrs. Spavin made the best of things, but she was a poor woman, and must be paid—somehow. As the day wore on, the sudden clouds came no more; the sky was clear and serene, paling as the sunlight died. Even in the long, bare streets the western breeze blew soft and balmy, and here and there a star twinkled behind the long rows of house-roofs and chimney-stacks. Other stars of a more earthly kind, to wit, the lights in the drinking-shops at the corners of the streets, began to twinkle too, and the lamp-lighter set others ablaze in the tall lamps over which he presided.

Our acrobat knew that his best time was coming, and a certain sense of satisfaction stole over him. His luck had been good since that frugal dinner we wot of; the plum duff nestled cosily in his pocket, and
his thoughts seemed full of Boy. With a lightened heart he spread his carpet just beyond a refreshment bar that blazed like a constellation; then he beat the little kettle-drum that hung across his shoulder by a strap, and Frillums whirled round on his hind-legs like a thing possessed.

Folks began to gather round; at first one or two, then in little groups, then like bees round a honey-pot.

"I shall have a good time, this time," thought the good Julius to himself, "and then I shall set off home to Boy."

That is the way with us mortals; we say I shall do this or that, and all the time fate has laid out quite different plans for us. Even so it was written, as you will presently see, that Mr. Julius was to take not one farthing from that large audience of his; the largest and the best that he had had for many a day.

Never had he performed better; never had Frillums shown himself more keen in acting up to his master.

The backward bend came off grandly, and the sight of a man walking on all fours, inside out, like an inverted frog, appeared to yield intense delight to the lookers-on. The conjuring part of the entertainment was always just so much rest, also the grand performance on the piccolo, to which Frillums danced so elegantly. Being, as all good workmen must, really fond of his work, our banquiste was so engrossed in the double backwards and forwards somersault and rapid convet, that he failed to notice a strange and sudden alteration in the demeanour of his audience.

Instead of watching the mountebank and his dog, they were all staring in one direction—right on ahead, down a handsome and fashionable thoroughfare, closely abutting, as is often the case in London, upon the narrower street, with its flaring gin-palaces at the corner.

Then, at first gradually, later with a rush, the concourse of people from which the acrobat had hoped great things, even to the partial satisfying of Mr. Spavin's demands, melted away like snow in sunshine, and he and Frillums were left lamenting.

Not only was this so, but men and boys came running down the pathway; passing coachmen came to a halt, asking each other from their high perches, "what was up?"

Then a voice shouted "Fire!" and the cry was taken up on all sides, while people seemed to start up out of the earth or to fall from the clouds, so quickly were they massed together, so densely did they crowd along; so did they run, and rush, and bawl, each one seeming to outvie his neighbour in the clamour he could make.

The acrobat was swept along with the dense stream of human creatures that gathered and surged about him. Carpet and drum and folded pole were left behind; he had but time to catch up Frillums, squeeze him tight under one arm, and then let himself drift. On and on, then came a halt—but such a halt!

It was like finding oneself in a human whirlpool; for one or two bewildered policemen could not do much in the way of keeping order. The point of interest to all was a block of large and handsome houses, of which the end one belched forth volumes of smoke from its second and third-storey windows; while now and again a fiery tongue of flame darted through the rolling masses of grey vapour. Mr. Julius found himself jammed in, just opposite the scene of the fire; then, all in a moment, like a parted stream the crowd was clenched asunder, and a desperate man, hatless, coatless, begrimed with smoke, was dragged into an open space that had been cleared, Heaven only knew how.

There he stood, a terrible figure, tears streaming down and furrowing his blackened cheeks, his hands outstretched—now to the heavens that seemed so pitiless, now to those around him—promising gold, gold, gold, to any one who would save his boy!

The man was as one mad, and kept clutching those nearest, and crying, "He is my only child—my only child!"

They said this, and they said that; the engines and escapes would be there directly; some even vowed they heard the hard gallop of the engine-horses; many tried to climb the burning stairway; one, a servant of the house, was brought out senseless. It was one of those terrible fires that smoulder and smoulder, and then break out suddenly like a flood, and cut off retreat. The master of the house had been out with some friends; the servants in the basement storey; the child asleep in his nursery—the child for whom the mother had given her life. Filmy curtains hung about his little bed, dimly hangings at the windows. So far, the closed door had kept the flames back, but outside the fiery tongues licked the panels and made them crackle.

The crowd below grew like an in-coming tide, though in reality only a few moments had passed since the cry of fire was raised.
Surging like a sea, the people swayed this way and that, the centre of all the tumult that wild, despairing figure, the father of the child who was known to be in the blazing building. But all at once, a hush fell upon the crowd—an awful stillness, broken only by the sound of long-drawn breathings that were almost sobs. A window in the third floor had been slowly opened, and a little white figure had crawled out on to the ledge. Happily one of those shallow sailed-in coping-stones for plants ran across the window, and this gave the child room to crouch half in and half out, and something to hold on to.

A fearful background to the little helpless figure was made by the flicker of flame—a flicker that caught the gleam of golden hair, and the dead-white beauty of a small uplifted face. If a crowd can be cruel, it can also be kind.

Some one stripped off his coat and held it extended before the starting eyes of the wretched father; some one else spoke earnestly to him, and besought him not to call to the child.

"If you do he will jump down," said this wise counsellor, and a sort of protesting groan rose up from those within hearing. Many voices called out for a ladder; scores would have rushed up to the boy's rescue had there been a ladder at hand—yes, though the flames were now breaking out from the windows below. There is plenty of courage in the world, and only occasion is needed to call it forth.

Some new houses were being built a little further on, but alas! no ladder was there. The man in the motley went with others to search; the scarlet grin was still there, and he seemed as one who jested with death and danger, but he was terribly in earnest, and his heart big with pity and resolve. A scaffolding had been taken down in one place, and three or four slender poles lay upon the ground.

"Help me to bring along one of these," said Motley, and they helped him, nothing believing.

He gave his directions in a clear, plain manner, and presently the tall, mast-like pole was standing straight under the window where the little white figure still crouched and clung, held firm by as many hands as could reach to grasp it tight.

The acrobat stepped up close to the man, who was now on his knees in the dust and mire, with only hoarse, bubbling sounds coming from his ashen lips.

"I will save your boy, if I can, only keep very still. I, too, have an only child," and the red grin on the speaker's face made the words sound like a grim jest, yet in the tones of his voice was a resolute resolve; and as he threw his head back and looked at the summit of the mast, his eyes were those of a hero.

The silence that then fell on all was wondrous, and slowly but surely the white-jerkin'd figure climbed up nearly to a level with the open window.

Nearly, but not quite.

A woman in the crowd cried out, and in a moment her face was crased against a man's shoulder to silence her.

Frilloms, tenderly held in the arms of a stranger, shivered and shook, but had been trained never to give tongue without orders.

The silence was terrible in its completeness. Then all heard a quiet voice speaking authoritatively to the child:

"Jump—as near me as you can; do not be afraid; I will catch you."

The banquet had balanced himself on the top of the pole, his legs twisted in some inexplicable manner about the body of it. His arms were free and outstretched.

There was a moment's breathless pause, and then the child rose and placed one little naked foot on the shallow iron tracery round the coping-stone.

A fiercer flicker of flame in the room behind threw the white figure into vivid relief, caught anew the radiance of the golden hair.

Then, one swift and horrible moment, and the child was in the acrobat's arms, the two figures swaying slightly backward for an instant, then growing steady.

They saw—that sea of pallid faces all turned upwards, that throbbing, silent waiting crowd—they saw the child climb upon the man's shoulders and knit his arms about his neck; they saw him glance downwards where the flames from the lower window were now licking the pole like living tongues bent on destruction, and with a flash he was down through the flames, and caught and held, while some one carried the child to the father, who, almost fainting as he was, clasped him to his breast and broke out sobbing like a woman. Where silence had reigned now was wildest tumult, shouts and cheers, and mingling with these the rumble and roar of the coming engines, and the crash of the falling stairway within the doomed house.
Mr. Spavin had been what he called "glorifying" at the "Spotted Dog," with the poor Highland Queen's trumpery brooch stuck in his necktie—unknown to Mrs. Spavin, you may be sure—and drinking as many glasses as he could get at any one else's expense. He was conscious rather painfully in his guilt, though supernaturally solemn as to countenance, and capable of the most cutting irony. When close to his own door, whom should he catch sight of but his defaulting tenant, the mountebank, also hurrying home.

But such a mountebank!

Sans drum, sans pole, sans everything, save poor Friliums!

Such a Friliums!

Tail drooping, ears to match, frill all torn to shreds, following at his master's heels the very picture of abject misery and depression. Mr. Spavin stood still—that is, leant against a friendly wall, pushing his cap to the very back of his shaggy head, and leering at his tenant.

"Well," he said, "you do look a sight! So the bobbles have been after you at last, and you've had a run for it! I told you I knew you was on the move, didn't I? A man don't paint his face and make his dorg stand wrong side up for nothin', cuss me if he does!"

The acrobat's face, once so white and red, was begrimed with smoke and dust; his dress was torn, and scorched in places; his hands blackened, his white conical cap not to be seen; he was in truth a sorry sight.

Mr. Spavin came, in a rather uncertain line, it must be confessed, to meet him; intercepting him just as he was about to place his foot on the doorstep.

"No, yer don't," said the glorified one, with overpowering solemnity. "I'd have you to know as mine is a 'spectable 'ouse, and you owes me a month's rent. I must have my door—or, hout you go!"

The grimy, blackened object before him broke into mocking laughter, unclosed his clenched fist, and there, glittering in the light that was just above them, lay not one, but many golden coins.

The exclamation that escaped from Mr. Spavin must not be written down here. It was expressive, but hardly polite. The whole aspect of the man changed.

"My dear Mr. Julius, if I have been a little—what shall I say, blunt—forget it. I am an Englishman, and bluntness is the national—what d'ye call it?—ahem! you have had great luck to-day—great indeed. After you, sir! bowing politely as the door opened, cleverly pulled by a string from above.

Mr. Julius rushed up the narrow stairs, followed madly by Friliums, and into the room where he had left Boy that morning.

There was a bright fire in the room, and by its light he could see Mrs. Spavin bending over the bed; she had a spoonful of something in one hand, her other arm was under Boy's head.

"Boy, Boy!" cried the father, flinging himself on his knees on the bare boards, and catching the child's hand in his, "see, I have lots of money now, I can buy you everything you want—everything to make you well."

But Boy took no heed. He looked at the poor begrimed, yet loving face, with eyes that did not see. His breath came with a strange rattling sound; his lips were livid, and stretched over the white teeth.

Mrs. Spavin had moved to the fireplace, and was crying quietly by the fender.

"What is this, Mrs. Spavin?" almost shouted poor Julius. "What is the matter with my boy?"

"Which it's more than I can say, Mr. Julius," said the frightened woman, tempering with truth, and shaking like a leaf.

"My God—is he dying?"

She made no reply, only wrung her wispy apron as one wrings clothes that are newly washed.

Then Mr. Julius acted very strangely, so much so that she came to the conclusion he had gone off his head.

He spun the sovereigns in the air one by one, till, in their swift revolving, they formed a golden ring—laughing out loud the whole. Then he asked her, first, how much he owed her, and paid her on the spot; then to leave him, which she did.

Ten minutes later a respectably, if poorly-dressed man came hastily out of Mrs. Spavin's respectable abode, hurried to the end of the dingy street, and called a cab.

This was an incident never to be forgotten at Spavin's. In telling the strange story of Mr. Julius the acrobat, in after years, Mrs. Spavin always paused solemnly after the sentence, "Then he called a cab; Spavin saw him with his own eyes." She paused to note the effect of this stupendous statement upon her hearers. People who "called cabs" were rare at Spavin's. But perhaps we had better tell the rest of this strange night's adventures in Mrs. Spavin's own words.
A COMEDY IN CRAPE. [Conducted by A. L. HARRIS.

"I've half a mind to try it," said Mr. Timothy Yabsele. "Of course, I know it's a risk, but then, siah is life. From the moment you draw your first breath you're beset with trials and tribulations and risks of all sorts. There's danger lurking in the infestations of your feeding bottle, and rocks ahead, with convulsive to follow, in the cutting of your own teeth. The question is," reflectively chewing the

Money and influence can do a good deal; and, in course of time, Mr. Julius aspired to the Grande Banque, that is, the profession of one who performs at dances of the first class. His salary was ample one, and Boy was sent to school. The lad showed much talent in various ways, among other things promising to be a great musician.

And so a high destiny was his; and happy days were in store for the aerobat and his only child.

A COMEDY IN CRAPE.

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"I've half a mind to try it," said Mr. Timothy Yabsele. "Of course, I know it's a risk, but then, siah is life. From the moment you draw your first breath you're beset with trials and tribulations and risks of all sorts. There's danger lurking in the infestations of your feeding bottle, and rocks ahead, with convulsive to follow, in the cutting of your own teeth. The question is," reflectively chewing the
end of the penholder, "the question is, whether, with so many risks ready made and lying in wait for you round every corner, it's worth your while looking up a fresh one for yourself? I dunno, I really dunno, what to be at. Soon's ever I get myself pretty well screwed up to the point, the shop bell's sure to ring; and by the time I've done serving a customer I'm all run down again."

He paused to run his hands through his hair, which had already—what there was of it—somewhat of the appearance of the crest of a perplexed cockato. Having done which he again fell to studying a small slip of printed matter which lay before him.

"I can't but admit as it reads well," he observed, still as though addressing an invisible third party. "It reads well; the question is, would it work as well as it reads? I think I'll just run over it again."

The text of the above soliloquy proved to be an extract cut from the advertising sheet of a local newspaper, and ran as follows:

"Matrimonial Agency; strictly private, confidential, genuine.—Mrs. Wilkins has several respectable widows, age thirty-four to forty-five; suitable for small tradesmen and others. Write in confidence to nine, Crab Apple Row, Cowslip. Stamped."  

Mr. Yabsley again had recourse to the penholder while he continued to muse aloud:

"I'm what you might call a small tradesman myself—small but saucy. The thing is, do I want a widder? I've managed without one for a matter of five-and-fifty year, and I might have done so comfortable till the end but for that dratted advertisement. Ever since it caught my eye I've been sort of unsettled, not knowing my own mind two minutes together. I don't doubt but what a widder'd be companionable; and I do find it a bit lonesome sometimes after the shop's shut and the boy gone home. But then I've heard as widders is ticklish handling, and she mightn't hit it off with Jacob."

Jacob was the cat, and a by no means unimportant member of the ménage. At the moment referred to he was sitting with his eyes fixed contemptuously on the top bar of the grate, and had just come to the conclusion that he could relish a bloater for his supper.

"Jacob," said Mr. Yabsley, disturbing his train of thought, "what's your opinion of widders?"

Jacob turned his head slowly round, looked at him for a second or so, as though casting the matter over in his mind, and then winked.

"Jacob," said his master reprovingly, "you're a rank bad 'un."

Then rumpling his hair, thirdly and in conclusion, he remarked decisively:

"Anyhow, I'll sleep on it."

The shop, which bore the name of "T. Yabsley" over the door, was a tobacconist's and newsmonger's—the composite business being conducted by T. Yabsley with the aid of the boy. The latter took down the shutters, swept out the shop, cleaned windows and knives, broke crockery, and made himself generally useful, in return for three and sixpence a week and his dinner.

When the tobacconist came downstairs next morning his face was still wearing the worried, irresolute look which he had taken to bed with him.

He was a precise, spare little man, clean shaven, with the exception of two small straggling tufts of side whiskers; which whiskers, together with the residue of a head of hair, were, like his clothes, of a useful drab tint. He wore spectacles and a blue necktie with white spots, which last article of adornment he fondly believed bestowed upon him a sporting air, not altogether incompatible in one whose stock in trade included the "Sportman" as well as "The Christian World."

Having taken in the milk and boiled the kettle, he next proceeded to cook his own breakfast; for the boy did not put in an appearance until later; for, with the exception of a woman who came in now and then to "clean up," Mr. Yabsley "did" for himself.

There were sausages for breakfast, and having carefully wiped out the frying-pan, he set about cooking these delicacies with a dexterity that bespoke ample experience.

The sausages frizzled gaily. Mr. Yabsley gazed beyond them into futurity.

"'Suitable for small tradesmen,'" he mumbled, turning them with a fork.

"'Ages thirty-four to forty-five.' Which, under the circumstances, would be the most suitable? A thirty-fourer or a forty-fiver? Being a fifty-fiver myself, I should say—"

Here in his preoccupation he mistook the handle of the frying-pan for the poker, with such fatal result that the sausages rolled in the cinders, while some of the boiling fat took Jacob between the
joints of the harness and made him swear like a trooper.

"Drat it!" exclaimed Mr. Yabsley, "I'll write for a widder first thing after breakfast."

And before another hour had passed over T. Yabsley's head, a letter bearing the superscription, "Mrs. Wilkins, nine, Crab Apple Row, Cowaltp," had been despatched on its way.

The letter though short was to the point. It simply said:

"Please forward sample widow on approval."

Mr. Yabsley's hand shook a good deal that day, and some of the best birds' eyes was scattered on the floor. Also, he once ran the risk of offending an exceptionally serious-minded customer by proffering "The Family Herald" in the place of "The Methodist Recorder."

"I rather think," he communed, apropos of this, "I rather think as I shall turn this branch of the business over to the widder—that is if she turns out satisfactory. Bless me, though!" with a start, "under these circumstances, she won't be a widder, she'll be Mrs. T. Yabsley."

He looked round nervously as though to assure himself that there was no one lurking within earshot.

"Timothy, my man, he continued, "you must be uncommon careful, or you'll be compromising of yourself, that's what you'll be doing. And now I come to think of it," he continued, visibly disturbed, "I have heard as widders are main artful. Bless me, I wish I'd never sent that letter! Why, a sample might turn up at any minute, and the boy gone home to his tea and never no knowing how long he'll take over it."

The perspiration broke out upon his forehead at the thought of his unprotected condition. Accordingly he retired to his parlour behind the shop; and, whenever the bell rang, his eyebrows might be seen cantantly reconnoitering over the top of the red moreen curtain that shielded the apartment from the public gaze. Still he did not feel altogether safe until the shutters were up, and the door of the establishment secured for the night.

He came downstairs next day feeling quite light-hearted, and ate his breakfast with a relish. The boy was late that morning—you could have counted the days in the month when he wasn't late on the fingers of one hand. Still this was more than just the usual half-hour behind time which was only to be expected.

Mr. Yabsley waited for him some while, promising him a dressing down when he did put in an appearance.

"I s'pose I'll have to take down the shutters myself, after all" he remarked irritably. 'I've a good mind to stop it out of that boy's pay. Anyhow, I'll give him another five minutes."

So far from any result being attained thereby, he might just as well have kept the five minutes, for at the end of that period there was no boy, and the shutters were still blocking out the daylight. Whereupon, vowing vengeance, which he was perfectly aware he would never have the strength of mind to carry out, he proceeded reluctantly to perform the derogatory task of taking down his own shutters.

He had only just attacked the second or so when his attention was attracted by a slight cough, which seemed to come from somewhere up in the air, and turning round sharply he was, as he subsequently described it, struck all of a heap to find that it had originated from a black, brooding giantian female figure, which, as it loomed before his startled eyes, appeared to cut off the street and the sky and humanity generally, and leave him a solitary, isolated atom beneath the shadow of his approaching Fate.

Even then, however, there was an instant's pause before his mind allowed itself to grasp the full significance of that black-garbed form. Then it coughed again, a cough that was at once interrogative and introductory, and Mr. Yabsley perceived that it wore weeds! Those weeds seemed to choke his very soul. It was the sample!

Still grasping the shutter, he retreated step by step until he had gained the comparative safety of the shop. The sample followed.

A third cough of a more assertive nature than the other two made the little tobacconist's knees knock together. Then:

"T. Yabsley, I believe!" came the enquiry in an insinuating voice about a foot above his head.

"Yes, no—that is, quite so," he gasped.

"I've come about the advertisement," it went on.

"Who—what advertisement?" stammered Mr. Yabsley, with the intent of gaining time, and still making a shield of the shutter.

"You know," was the significant answer, with a simper that had the effect of a cold door-key upon his vertebrae.
A COMEDY IN GRAPE.

If I could only put the counter between us," was his despairing thought.

"You know," repeated the apparition—if the term could be applied to sixteen stone or so of solid flesh and blood. "The advertisement you wrote about. Oh, you needn't try to deceive me, you naughty man!" and making up a forefinger case in sanitary black cotton—when I say sanitary, I mean to imply that there was no lack of ventilation. "You naughty, naughty man!"

She came a step or two nearer to him, the floor quivering beneath her tread. "It's too bad of you, that it is!"

She was a fat woman as well as tall, with a flat, flabby face, surmounted by a rusty crape bonnet, and she carried a bloated umbrella and a reticule gorged to repletion.

Mr. Yabsley gazed up at her as he might have done at the dome of St. Paul's, while his circulation seemed to come to a deadlock and the colour fade out of his necktie.

"Suitable for small tradesmen," he murmured.

The face smiled a sea-serpent-like smile that appeared to swallow up all its other features. Then, as though resolved to beat about the bush no longer:

"You wants a wife, don't you?"

The effect of this bombshell was to cause the tobacconist to drop the shutter like a hot potato, and make one dive for freedom under the counter.

He came up dusty but desperate. "No," he cried, shaking his head violently, "no, certainly not."

"Oh, yes, you do," with unimpaired cheerfulness, "you wants a wife, a nice, sensible wife, one what's been married before, and so'll know how to make you comfortable."

Then, dropping umbrella and reticule, she clasped both hands, and gazing affectionately round at the stock in trade, exclaimed:

"And how comfortable I could make you, there's no telling!"

"I don't want to be made comfortable," exclaimed Mr. Yabsley eagerly.

"Oh, yes, you do, ducky."

Ducky! That he should have led, a respectable, sober, law-abiding existence for five-and-fifty years only to be saluted as "ducker" at the end of it!

"My name," he began, righteous indignation momentarily overcoming craven fear, "my name is——"

"T. Yabsley," interrupted his charmer, bending over the counter and laying out a box of wax vestas as flat as a pancake with her elbow. "And what does T. stand for? Thomas, or Titus, or Theodore, or Tobias, or what?"

"Tubal Cain," murmured Mr. Yabsley wildly.

"And a very nice name, too. You've never asked me mine."

This with a skittishness that made the lids of the tobacco jars rattle.

"It's Susan, Susan Bundle, though not for long. I hope—meaning the last—but you can call me Susy, if you like," making a playful dab at him across the counter with the bloated umbrella.

Mr. Yabsley dodged the umbrella, and she only succeeded in smashing a clay pipe.

"It's a mercy she's the size she is," he thought. "She'd stick tight if she tried to get at me round the counter."

"You can call me Susy and I can call you——"

"Tiglath Pileser," muttered the tobacconist, with a sudden upheaval of old, crusty, Sunday school memories.

"My favourite name," cried Mrs. Bundle, ecstatically. "So, Tiggy, dear, we'll look on it as settled."

"Woman!" exclaimed Mr. Yabsley, fired with a sudden resolution. "What do you mean, and who do you take me for?"

"T. Yabsley," with a smirk.

"But I ain't. Nothing of the sort," he shouted.

The smirk trailed off at one side of the mouth, only to reappear at the opposite corner.

"Get along with you," with lumbering playfulness. "As though I didn't know better. Ain't there the name T. Yabsley over the door? And who else are you if you ain't him? You're a bad, bad man, that you are, to try and deceive a poor, lone, lorn widdie."

"That's the name, right enough," explained Mr. Yabsley. "But he's gone away."

The flabby countenance became a trifle elongated.

"Gone away—and when's he expected back?"

"Never."

The last traces of the smirk melted away, and the jaw dropped.

"Never," she repeated after him. "Then I should like to know who's going to pay me my railway fare? One and threepence, Parliamentary, it were, and——"

A sudden lifting of the cloud from the
A sudden awful thought assailed him. That boy! He had quite escaped his master’s memory during that last terrible quarter of an hour. At any moment he was liable to turn up and blast the fair structure of mendacity that had taken so much pains to rear. Something must be done, and that speedily. By fair means, or foul, the premises must be cleared, and, having none of the former at his command, Mr. Yabsley once more had resorted to the basest duplicity.

“I’ve been turning it over in my mind,” he commenced, leaning confidentially over the counter, “and—well, I don’t know, but it seems to me that there’s just a chance you might catch him after all, if you was to be quick about it.”

Passing to note the effect of the bait, he was encouraged on his downward course by the fact that though the disconsolate one’s tears did not immediately cease to flow, yet it was evident that she was now sobbing with one ear open.

“You see,” he continued, “he’d got to catch the express at Cowalip, and I says to him at the time he’d got all his work cut out to do it.”

The sobs had ceased, and it was plain that the victim was hanging upon his words.

“If only that boy don’t turn up and no customer don’t come to give me away, it’ll be all right,” was his inmost thought. “Now,” holding up an impressive forefinger, “I s’pose, betwixt you and me, as he misses that train, which there’s many things unlikelier. There mayn’t be another for hours, and he’d just have to hang about the station until—”

There was no occasion to complete the sentence. Giving her face a hasty and final polish with the corner of her shawl, she made as though to throw her arms round the tobacconist’s neck.

“Bless you,” she cried, “you dear, kind soul! Bless you for those words!”

Mr. Yabsley dodged the embrace as he had the umbrella previously.

“Now, don’t you lose a minute,” he urged. “And mind, he’s a tall man with a bald head, and a brown overcoat with a velvet collar and a cast in his eye.”

Mrs. Bundle collected her belongings, and was half-way to the door before the words were out of his mouth.

“Don’t forget the velvet collar,” cried the tobacconist, following her to the door, “and it’s his left eye.”

“Oh, I’ll remember right enough, and,
what's more, I'll never forget what you've done for me, never."

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Yabaley.
"I'd have done as much for anybody.
Don't you waste another second. Good
morning, and—she's gone, she's really
gone at last. Yah!" apostrophising the
back of the moving mass, "call you Susy.
Indeed, you—you boa constrictor! I
should just like to hear myself."

It receded farther and farther, finally it
turned the corner and disappeared like a
vast black blot from T. Yabaley's mental
horizon.

"Bless me, what a morning it's been!"
he exclaimed. Then, looking up at the
name over the door: "When I think of
the lies I've reeled off by the yard, it do seem as though it ought to be Ananias
'tead of Timothy."

Whereupon, his mind reverting to the
subject of the still partially closed shutters:
"Drat that boy!" forgetting with
what leniency, not to say gratitude, he
had regarded his absence so very recently,
"I'll dust his jacket for him when he does
take upon himself to turn up. I've a good
mind to——"

All this time he had been gazing one way
—that was up the street; now he turned to
look down the street.

"I've a good mind to give him——"

Heavens! What was that? Three
figures were approaching from that
direction. One—masculine, juvenile, and
corduroy clad with regard to the lower
limbs—was easily recognised by his master.
He was strolling along at an easy pace,
engaging, as he came, in light and agree-
able converse with two sable-clad female
figures that walked on either side of him.

Mr. Yabaley's jaw dropped and his knees
seemed to give way under him. Even
had there been time, he lacked the capacity
for flight.

"That's him," he heard the boy exclaim.
"That's T. Yabaley—which T. stands for
Timothy—as you was asking for. I'm
afraid I'm a bit behindhand this
morning, he went on, addressing his
master; "but I've been a-drowning of
some kittens. They belonged to our cat.
There was six on 'em, and I drowned 'em
one at a time. It was prime!"

The lust of slaughter glittered in his
eye, and he was proceeding to details,
when a prod from one of his gentle escort
recalled him to a sense of matters of less
moment.

"I heard these yer ladies enquiring for
you down street, and offered to show 'em
the way."

Something in the tobacconist's speech-
less glare made him quail.

"I guess I'll be taking them there
shutters down," he remarked, sheering off
and leaving the hapless T. Yabaley to his
double fate.

Of the two fresh specimens of the
opposite sex which now confronted him,
one was tall, bony, and angular; the
other was short, broad, and a trifle less
aggressive-looking. Both wore deep black,
and each showed a widow's cap inside her
bonnet. Having looked him well over
from head to foot, the tall, bony woman
opened her mouth and observed:

"Mrs. Smallchick."

Whereupon the short, stout one, follow-
ing suit, remarked:

"And Mrs. Longcloose."

Mr. Yabaley, vaguely comprehending
that this was introductory, stared from
one to the other and mummured the
formula:

"'Suitable for small tradesmen.'"

"Just so," assented number one briefly.

"Praps we'd better walk inside," pro-
posed number two.

So Mrs. Smallchick led the way, and
Mrs. Longcloose brought up the rear; the
tobacconist being in the middle, in which
position he only seemed to lack handcuffs
to present the appearance of a condemned
malefactor.

Having pinned him up against his own
counter, they both opened fire at once.

"Me and Mrs. Smallchick——" began
the short woman.

"Mrs. Longcloose and me——" began
the tall one.

Pausing simultaneously, they proceeded
to indulge in mutual recriminations.

"You never will let me get a word in
edgeways," was the former's accusation.

"You're always a-interrupting of me," was the companion comment.

"Well, I like that," from the one.

"Well, of all the untruthfulness," from
the other.

"But there, I might have guessed."

"But there, I knowed how it would be."

There was an interval of a second or
two, at the end of which they made
another attack upon their victim.

"You want a widdier?" said Mrs.
Smallchick.

"Which is to say a wife?" insinuated
Mrs. Longcloose.

"It's the same thing," snapped the former.
"Not at all," contradicted the latter.
"What was Mrs. Wilkins's own words?" (She's a widder wanted immense, which, as you and Mrs. Longdose is both widders by marriage——"
"Mrs. Wilkins, she says to me, she says, 'Here's a gent's seen my advertisement, and's written to me for a wife, and seeing as you and Mrs. Smallchick is both on my books, to say notthink of living next door to each other; if I was you,' she says, 'I'd go over first thing to-morrow morning, as the situation might suit one or t'other, if not——'
"'Which I've every respect for you, Mrs. Smallchick,' she says, 'and I think it'd suit you to a T—that being the inhumbl of his Christian name, and——'.
"'Mrs. Longdose, ma'am,' she says, speaking low and confidential, 'never have I seen the finger of Providence pinting straighter than I see it pinting to you at this minnit. Mrs. Longdose, ma'am,' she says, 'I names no names, and I makes no illusions, but if ever there was anybody cut out by nature's own hand for the situation, you are that person.'
"When I was a gel," remarked Mrs. Smallchick, 'pinting wasn't considered manners, and as to cutting out, strikes me nature couldn't have had much of a pattern to go by, or praps the scissors was blunt.'
"Some folks," was the retort, "do seem to have been cut on the cross to that extent, as act straightforwardly they can't."

Here Mrs. Smallchick looked at Mrs. Longdose and smirked, and Mrs. Longdose looked at Mrs. Smallchick and sniffed.

Meanwhile, the bone of contention had pastively submitted to being wrangled over, which, considering the way he was hemmed in, was the only course of conduct open to him. And yet it seemed as though he ought to have some voice in the matter, though, up to the present, neither of the ladies had allowed him an opportunity of exerting it.

"Goodness only knows how they'll settle it between 'em," he thought. "Anyhow, they can't both have me."

By this time the shutters were down, but observation having shown the boy that his master's attention was too well occupied in minding his own affairs to be cognisant of the proceedings of his subordinate, the latter had strolled off, and was now agreeably employed in conveying a vivid impression of the kitten episode to a congenial spirit.

Within the shop there was a momentary lull while the competitors recovered their breath.

Mr. Yabsley took advantage of the same to make an effort to review the situation. Would it—could it be possible, by reverting to strategy, to escape from this second position of peril, in spite of the odds being so much against him?

But before he could do more than grasp the merest outline of a scheme, the onslaught was renewed.

"I'm sure the business seems to be all as I could wish," remarked Mrs. Smallchick, casting a critical eye around, "though I will say I prefer a corner shop as a rule."

"What I should call snug," observed Mrs. Longdose, looking about her with a proprietorial air, "though praps not just as I should wish to see it. But then, what could you expect with no one to see after things?"

Here Mr. Yabsley was goaded into a primary but unsuccessful attempt at self-assertion.

"I don't know——" he began.
"Of course you don't, you poor dear man," interrupted Mrs. Longdose.
"No, indeed, it isn't likely for a minnit," interpolated Mrs. Smallchick.
"That's what we've come about, sent direc by Providence."
"By Mrs. Wilkins, and strongly recommended, which she's less likely to be test in than the other party."
"Mrs. Smallchick, ma'am, this is past bearing!"

Then don't you bear it a minnit longer'n you're obliged, Mrs. Longdose, ma'am. There's the door handy."
"Which is just what you'd like, I've no doubt, Mrs. Smallchick, but I'm not aich a fool as I look."
"Looks is mostly deceitful, Mrs. Longdose, as I'm well aware."
"Really, ladies, really," the tobacconist's voice was raised in expostulation. "Don't let us have any unpleasantness, pray don't. I assure you, I'm not worth it."

"I never said you was," replied Mrs. Smallchick. "but so long as the business is all right——"

"Of course, there's no denying the business is the first consideration," interrupted Mrs. Longdose.

"The fact is," went on Mr. Yabsley, running his hands through his hair distractedly, "what with one thing and another, I hardly seem to know what I'm doing. It isn't only the rates and
A COMEDY IN CRAPE.

[March 13, 1894.]

Charles Dickens.

"Bankrupt!" was the double exclamation.

"Why, you never mean it!"

Mr. Yabsley shook his head dolefully.

"Twopence three farthings in the pound, if that," he added with a groan, which it is to be hoped was one of contrition.

But there was a glimmer of suspicion in Mrs. Smallchick's eye.

"Why, the business looks all right, and you keeps a boy!"

"A boy! Ah!" from the boy's master, "that's where it is. I'm obliged to keep him. If I was to give him notice, I'd have to pay him his wages. It's cheaper to keep him on and owe 'em to him."

"Why, you old ruffian!"

"Bringing us over here on a wild goose chase!"

"You ought to be horsewhipped, that you did!"

"You go answering advertisements, indeed! I should like to know what you mean by it!"

"A perfect man-trap, that's what you are, a-laying snares for the widdler and the orphan."

"The truth is," explained the culprit feebly, "the truth is, I thought I might meet with some one with a bit of money, that'd set me on my legs again."

"Set you on your legs! I feel a deal more like knocking you off 'em altogether. Mrs. Longelose, ma'am, we've been deceived shamefully!"

"Mrs. Smallchick, ma'am, I couldn't have put it better myself."

"I'm only a weak woman," exclaimed Mrs. Smallchick, towering a head and shoulders above the cowering Yabsley, "but when I think how I've been took in, I declare I could shake you till your teeth rattled in your head."

"Don't do that, ma'am, pray," he implored, "for they don't fit too well at the best of times. Think," and he groaned louder than before, "think of the escape you've had."

"He's right there," put in Mrs. Longelose, "oh, we've had a escape, a nanner escape. Think of our hard-earned savings as he'd have swallowed up."

"Swaller," cried Mrs. Smallchick, "he'd swaller any think; that man. But there, if I stop another minnit I shall be doing him a injury. Let's leave him to his deserts, and rub the dust off our shoes on the door-mat as Scripture says."

With a final shower of vituperative epithets, they gradually departed. Mrs. Smallchick came back once to put her head in at the door, and salute him as a "disreputable old cockroach," but Mr. Yabsley, being by this time, as it were, morally waterproofed, merely groaned deprecatingly.

"I reckon I could hardly have told more lies to the square inch if I'd been putting up for Parliament," he lamented some five minutes later. "It's perfectly awful how easy it seemed to come to me once I'd got my tongue in. They just slipped off it like it was greased."

He tottered to the door, and looked out.

It was a fine spring morning, and the village street was wearing its most picturesque aspect; but to the tobacconist's jaundiced eye the world was black and blighted with widows. The sky might be blue and flecked with clouds like the fleeciest Shetland wool, the leaves might wear their tenderest green, the tilled roofs blush their reddest and the windows wink regularly in the sun; they winked in vain at T. Yabsley, who, after carefully reconnoitering, ventured to raise his voice sufficiently to summon the boy.

"Thomas," he said, "just come and mind the shop. I'm fagged out. And, Thomas, seeing it's Saturday, you can put up the shutters early, and take a half-holiday. And, Thomas, if any one calls and wants to see me—any lady, you know—especially any one in mourning, say I've gone away for a few days."

The boy nodded, and his master vanished into his den, only to reappear in a few seconds.

"Thomas, here's your wages and two-pence over, and if you like to say I've been a little queer in my head lately, why, I'd look over it for once."

Thomas nodded again, and grinned delightedly.

"You lemme lone, I'll akse 'em proper."

Mr. Yabsley was a little taken back at the promptness with which his assistant prepared to carry out his hint.

"Don't—don't overdo it, Thomas," he entreated. "At least—that is—only if you find they won't go peaceable. My gracious! Who's that?"

It was only a customer for an ounce of shag, but Mr. Yabsley bolted into his retreat as though it had been a rabbit hole, and he its legal tenant.
"If this sort of thing is going to last much longer, Jacob," he remarked to the cat, "you'll be advertising for a situation next, for I believe another day would about finish me. Why! bless me! I never thought of that. I'll write directly to that woman Wilkins, and get her to cut 'em off at the root."

So seizing pen and paper he sat down, and hastily scrawled the following lines:

"T. Yabsley's compliments, and please not to send any more widows. P.S.—I've changed my mind."

To Mr. Yabsley's unspeakable relief, and Thomas's bitter chagrin, no more ladies in black appeared upon the scene before closing time; whereupon the latter, having put up the shutters and bolted his dinner—his master following suit by bolting the shop door after him—departed in joyful haste.

"Thomas," were the tobacconist's parting words, "whatever you do don't forget to post that letter, and mind you're here to your time on Monday."

The first part of the afternoon passed quietly enough, and after a while Mr. Yabsley left off staring at the sound of approaching footsteps, and was actually beginning to read the paper with some degree of interest, when the clock, striking the half-hour, reminded him that it was time to put the kettle on for tea.

Having done so, he was about to resume his seat, when—a tap, light but distinct, at the outer door seemed to curdle all the blood in his body.

Jacob heard it, too, and turned one ear enquiringly in that direction.

"It's another of 'em," groaned the tobacconist. "Well, anyhow, I needn't let on to hear."

It came again.

"I ain't going to let you in, not if you tap ever so." "Tap—tap—tap. Something in the steady, monotonous persistency of the sound made the cold perspiration break out upon his forehead.

"This is awful. I ain't a woodpecker, nor yet a holler beech-tree, but if this is going to keep on there's no knowing when it'll be back."

He looked at Jacob for inspiration, and Jacob looked at him, as much as to say: "Why don't you see who it is? It might be the milk or the cat's-meat."

"I reckon I'd better open the door half an inch or so, and say I'm out, and no knowing when I'll be back, or she'll be rousing the whole street."

Tip-toeing across the floor, he proceeded, with infinite precaution—and his heart in his mouth—to open the door the least crack in the world.

"Not at home," he cried tremulously through the aperture, and was about to slam and rebolt it when the words, "Lor, Mr. Yabtley, air," in a familiar and ex postulatory voice, caused him to reconsider his intention—his heart at the same time resuming its normal position with a flop of relief.

"Why, Mrs. Wardle, if I hadn't clean forgot all about you."

It was the woman, previously referred to, who "washed and ironed" him, and generally came in on a Saturday afternoon to tidy him up for Sunday.

"I dunno what's come to my head," he added, opening the door just wide enough for her to squeeze through; "seems like as though it'd been overwound." Then with an air of affected indifference: "I s'pose you didn't happen to see any one hanging about outside?"

But Mrs. Wardle hadn't noticed nobody.

Next day was Sunday. Mr. Yabsley was a little doubtful as to the safety of church-going; but finally decided to risk it, and would have enjoyed the service but for the unusual attentiveness and urbanity of the pew-opener, who twice came to ask whether he felt any draught from the ventilator, and generally smiled upon him in a way that caused him to recollect, with a nervous shudder, that though she was a pew-opener by profession, she was a widow in private life.

Was it possible that she had any inkling of what had happened? Mr. Yabsley chewed the cud of this reflection during sermon time, and very impalpable he found it.

Monday morning came. The boy was astonishingly punctual, being half an hour late to the minute.

About eleven o'clock Mr. Yabsley, who was dusting some of the articles in the window, was aware of a sort of eclipse, as though some dark, opaque body had intervened between him and the sun. Looking up, he was almost paralyzed at the sight of a female in black, with her nose pressed against the glass, attentively..."
regarding him. As soon as she caught his eye she smiled and nodded.

The tobacconist’s jaw dropped, and there was a wild, hunted look about him that might have moved a heart of stone; but it had no effect upon the lady outside beyond moving her from the window to the door. Entering the shop, she was just in time to catch sight of her prey disappearing through the opposite door, which he secured behind him and then sat down to think.

At first he ransacked his brain hopelessly; the woman, meanwhile, rapping impatiently on the counter.

Then a means of escape, so simple that he was amazed it had never before suggested itself, rose up before his mind.

"Why not say I’m sullied?"

At the same moment there came a tap at the door.

"Who’s there?" demanded Mr. Yabdey.

"Please, sir, it’s me," was the answer in the tones of Thomas.

He was a lanky, growing boy, and it was surprising what a narrow space he managed to squeeze through.

"There’s a lady wants to see yer most pertickler," he remarked, with a backward motion of the thumb. "Come on approval, that’s what she says, and I wants to know whether I’m to skeer her off or what?"

"Thomas," said his master, "of course you posted that letter on Saturday?"

"Oh, lawk!"

The delinquent fumbled for a moment in a trouser pocket, prior to producing the letter in an extremely dirty and much crumpled condition, with a piece of toffee still adhering to it.

"I been and clean forgot all about it."

"Thomas," with the calmness of despair, "you’ve been the ruin of me, I shouldn’t wonder. However, you can tell the lady I’m much obliged, but I’m sullied."

Thomas went accordingly, and Mr. Yabdey awaited the result with his ear to the keyhole. He heard the sound of voices, one rather high and shrill, with an accent of determination that boded ill. Then Thomas’s knuckles applied for readmission, and he was allowed to enter with the same precautions as before.

"Well," anxiously, "what did she say?"

"She says you may besuited, but she ain’t, and she insists on a personal interview."

"Oh, she does, does she. Very well then, Thomas, you can look after the shop. I’m going to bed."

All the rest of the morning there were constant bulletins passing between the shop and the chamber over it.

"Ain’t she gone yet, Thomas?" Mr. Yabdey raised his head from the pillow to enquire for about the ninth time.

"Not her, and what’s more I come to tell yer as there’s a couple more come by carrier’s cart. I told ’em you was in bed, but they said as they reckoned they’d wait till you got up."

"Thomas," cried the tobacconist, "I’ve been a good master to you, haven’t I?"

"I don’t say you ain’t."

"Very well then; go downstairs and tell ’em not to be alarmed, but you don’t like the looks of me, and, judging by the spots, you’re afraid it’s either measles or small-pock. Anyhow, say I’ll be down directly, and I hope they won’t think of going without seeing me."

A few minutes later the sound of the shop door banging violently was followed by that of retreating footsteps and gradually receding voices.

The boy came grinning to report that the charm had worked.

"Thomas," said the tobacconist, sinking back exhausted, "you can put up the shutters, and if any one else comes, say I’m dead."

At the end of half an hour or so another tap at the door roused him from the state of semi-unconsciousness into which he was sinking.

"That you back again, Thomas? Whatever’s up now?"

"It isn’t Thomas, it’s me, Mrs. Wardle, come to see if I couldn’t do anything for you, and I’ve brought a little beef tea."

The beef tea was good. Mr. Yabdey sat up and disposed of it with relish. After which Mrs. Wardle rearranged his pillows and tidied up.

She was a comfortable, natty little woman, hardworking, too, and honest as the day, with a brisk sort of way about her that did you good. It did Mr. Yabdey good.

Having put everything straight and drawn down the blind, she was about to take her departure, when a sudden exclamation made her start.

"Lor, Mr. Yabdey, sir, are you took worse? Shall I run for the doctor? Is it in your back, or legs, or where?"

"I’m not worse, I’m better, a lot. It was just a sudden— Mrs. Wardle, I declare I never thought of it before, but you’re a widder, ain’t you?"

"Well, sir, you ought to know by this
time, seeing I've been one this ten years and more."

"Mrs. Wardle," propping himself on one elbow, "there's been a lot of women about the place to-day wanting me to marry 'em. I've managed to get rid of 'em for the present, but there's no saying when they'll be back again and carrying on worse'n ever. Mrs. Wardle, there's only one way of getting even with 'em as I can see. You've washed and mended and generally done for me for some years. 'Spose you was to marry and do for me altogether?"

"Mis-ter Yables! I declare I never did! I'm that stuck up as never was!"

"You know my ways," continued the ardent wooer, "and you'n Jacob have always got on well together. Somehow, it's just struck me as I might do worse, and, anyhow, you'd be able to keep off them other harpies. And, Mrs. Wardle, the bands might be put up next Sunday, if convenient."

"Well, Mr. Yables, sir, though I should no more have dreamed of such a thing! Still, I don't know but what—"

"Then that's settled, and I'm very glad I happened to think of it. You can tell Thomas to take down the shutters, and if any one else should apply for the situation, you can say the vacancy's filled up."

A DOWNSTROKE.

By A. MOBERLY.

CHAPTER I.

The postman trudging up the lime-tree avenue of Holme Royal in the bright sunshine of a June morning was made the victim of a daring outrage. A band of three desperadoes stood in wait for him at the first turning, the muzzle of a gun was pointed at his knees, and he was commanded to "Stand and deliver!"

"You may take me prisoner, Missy, and welcome, but I've got to be killed before I give up my letters, you know."

The bandit leader looked darkly at him from under the big newspaper cocked-hat that covered her yellow curls, and fumbled with the big sword stuck in her blue saab; while her aide-de-camp laughed at the joke, as only a red Irish setter can laugh, his pretty pink tongue curling and his feathery tail waving high. The third, more bloodthirsty, removed his thumb from his mouth, and was proceeding to extremities with a flashing tin trumpet, but rescue was at hand.

"Hallo! What's this? Robbing the mail? Lucky I'm a magistrate. To prison with the lot of you."

Mr. Carteret stepped from out the shrubbery, picked up the second brigand and put him on his shoulder, took the letters and papers from the postman, and walked off whistling.

"Give the newspaper to poor Pat to carry," commanded the bandit chieftain rather breathlessly, as she trotted along trying to keep pace with her father's long strides. "He does so like playing at postman. There! Go find the mistress, good dog! Now Baby Claude may carry some, and then he won't put his thumb in his mouth."

"He won't take them. He hates the sight of a letter as much as I do."

"So he does. He put all his Christmas cards into his breeches and milk. Why does men hate letters, father?" pursued Cisca, who had a taste for philosophic enquiry.

"Got to answer them."

"But you doesn't. You let mother write your letters, just as I does for Baby Claude when he gets an invitation. Oh, there's mother!" and taking the lead—as the womenkind of the Carteret family were rather given to doing—she bustled up the verandah steps to where Mrs. Carteret awaited them, standing in the French window of a bright little morning-room filled with roses and sunshine.

Roses on the walls, on the old-fashioned chintzes, in the big silver bowl on the table, stuck in the belt of Mrs. Carteret's white gown, and meandering all over grandmother's quaint treasures of china in the corner cupboards. Rose-scented wafting in with the sunshine and fresh air through the open verandah window. It was a room to make the veriest lie-a-bed forgive an eight o'clock breakfast.

"Seven letters for you, Mama. Are you glad? Why?"

"Of course I am. They bring news of friends and—and—all sorts of pleasant things," Mrs. Carteret answered, smiling. She was young, happy and pretty, one of those women to whom friends and pleasant things come by right of nature. She tore off two envelopes, while the butler brought in the coffee and omelette. Cisca scrambled into her chair, and Baby Claude drummed impatiently on the table with his spoon, making round eyes at the bread and milk.
"Here's—oh, a bill from the bookmaker at Crownbridge, and another from Vere and Oxford's."—Mr. Carteret was rude enough to laugh—"and a note from Jennie Trevor. Now we shall hear when she's coming. Five-thirty this afternoon. You shall go with father to meet her if you are good, Cissie—don't forget to order the luggage-cart, George. An invitation to a haymaking party at the Rectory; will Jennie be too fine and fashionable a young lady for that, I wonder? She was a regular romp seven years ago. Here's a dinner-party at the Cedars—that will dispose of every day she is with us except Thursday. What can we do then, I wonder?"

"I've got to drive over to Crownbridge to meet those lawyers in the morning. Suppose I take her? I can give her some luncheon at the 'Crown,' and show her the Minister, and then drive on to Bridge Park and see the kennels."

"They are sure to catch you and keep you to tennis and supper if you go to Bridge. You'll have a lovely drive home by moonlight."

"Aren't you coming, too?"

"Can't. There's a G.F.S. committee meeting on, and I have to preside, and, George, here's a notice about that charity. I wish you'd get elected churchwarden next year—or let me. We can't leave the management in the present hands. Now, Cissie, say grace."

Trivial—most trivial chatter. A commonplace, beautiful, happy little family scene; yet, as we treasure the toys and trifles that a loved dead hand has touched, so in days to come Mabel Carteret found herself dwelling on each idle word, each detail of the picture; solemn brown-eyed Baby Claude feeding seriously, Cissie discursive and important—very like herself as she admitted amusingly—and her great, silent, solid George, with his slow, indulgent smile lighting his handsome face whenever he looked at her. Pat on the verandah outside basking in the sun, an occasional glance or cock of the ear indicating the intelligent interest he was taking in the conversations.

The party soon broke up and dispersed. The children trotted away with nurse, George strided off to the Home Farm, Pat accompanying him affably as far as the end of the avenue, from whence he invariably returned to look after the house during the master's absence. Mabel, left to herself, started gaily on her morning's routine of inspection, from housekeeper's room to stables, from conservatories to the pretty suite of rooms destined for her visitor, with perhaps a touch of extra particularity, in view of her guest's possible criticisms. Jennie, her oldest and best-beloved friend, had spent the long seven years since they had met studying life and enjoying it after the latest modern fashion of "the bright and beautiful English girl," while Mabel, in her placid and humdrum, albeit dignified existence, had followed her career with a mixture of astonishment and admiration, in which envy had no part. Deep in her simple, self-satisfied soul was fixed the conviction that to be the mistress of Holme Royal and the wife of George Carteret was a lot surpassing that of all other women—only she was concerned that Jennie should admit it. Her progress ended in the library, George's special haunt. It was cool and shady and silent. She put the few papers lying about tidily under the letter-weight, gave an altogether unnecessary dusting to the pipes on the mantelshelf, and picked up a stray driving-glove that she found lying on the floor, putting it to her soft cheek in a foolish and entirely unaccountable manner. George's photograph hanging near her own peculiar chair caught her eye, and she laughed and almost blushed. "You're a darling!" she murmured to it confidentially. "You will think that I don't look older than Jennie yet, in spite of seven years' marriage, and am still ever so much prettier; and you'll tell me so, and you never say what you don't believe." Then she fell to remembering the days of long ago, when people told her that George Carteret was not young, or rich, or clever enough for beautiful Mabel Trent, and she had had but the one answer to give them: "He is the one man in the world for me, and I am the one woman for him."

"And it was true, and every year has made it truer," said Mabel, smiling at the portrait.

Then a sudden knock at the door made her start guiltily away and seat herself hurriedly in George's great library chair. Only Pat, after all. He shoved the door open and marched in, tail erect, his beautiful amber eyes shining with delight, and a letter held softly in his brown lips—a square envelope with an address in type-writing.

"Oh, you dear dog! Where did you find it? How could they have dropped it?" And Mabel, without more ado,
opened it. It was so manifestly a circular that she had no hesitation in doing so, though it was addressed to her husband. George's hatred of pen and ink had passed into a proverb. Had it been even a private letter of the most confidential nature it would sooner or later have come to her, she knew, either to write or dictate the answer. Thus it was no scrapule that made her stop suddenly in the act of tearing it open and re-read the direction: "To G. Norman Carteret, Esq., Holme Royal, Bronschem, Loamshire."

"Norman." It was the name her husband used to be called by in his young days, but never since she had known him. When, by the death of his elder brother George, he became heir of Holme Royal, it was considered desirable that he should use his first name, and continue the line of George Carterets that had held the property for many generations. "Norman" struck her as unfamiliar and impertinent somehow, and set her against the communication from the beginning.

Thus it ran, in italics type:

"Norman,—I am in London, ill, poor, and so friendless that I must even come for help to you—to you who have most likely forgotten my very name, and believed, or at any rate wished to believe me dead any time these thirteen years. I have heard that you are married. I leave it to you to make my existence known to your wife or not. I shall not be the one to make trouble. Let me hear from you before the end of the week, unless you prefer that I shall come to you. Perhaps you may not care that your home should be haunted by a ghost from the past—your past. I can promise that, once laid, it shall darken your path no more. I have kind friends abroad, and if you will send me the means of returning to them, you shall hear no more of her who was once,

—Yours,

"Nora Vane."

Mabel's face slowly crimsoned as she read, and her brows knitted. What a letter! All the more repulsive from its crude clearness of type—addressed to her husband by a woman of whom she had never heard. A woman who claimed his past, who called him "Norman," who wrote in a tone of mysterious familiarity and defiance. There was no other "Norman Carteret," no cousin between whom and her husband any confusion could exist. A woman whom her husband had wished to believe dead! Why! Thirteen years ago! That was before she had ever heard of or seen him, when she was in the school-room. And he! He had been a student at Bonn about that time, she remembered. It had been a freak of his freakish father to send him there, and to send for him home again a year or two after. Vane! Now she remembered the name. He had English friends there—a Mrs. Vane and her daughter, or daughters. They had a house outside the town, and were so kind to the young English students there. Mabel's lip curled. She thought she knew the sort of house, and lady, and daughter—particularly the daughter. They are to be found near several University towns. But how dare this Nora, after all these years, write as if—

"George will explain it all," she declared to herself sturdily, folding up and pocketing the letter. "It's his affair, not mine." It was with an effort little short of heroic that she went through the rest of her morning's engagements without allowing herself to glance at the clock unnecessarily, or look down the long avenue by which George would return.

The luncheon bell rang at last. Cissie and Claude in their clean pinafores and newly-brushed hair were in their places, and the chicken had been carved before Mabel heard his voice in the hall. Not his voice only, unluckily. A neighbour, full of some stable disasters, had accompanied him home, and was to be dropped at his own gate when George drove to the station to meet Miss Trevor. After luncheon George left her to entertain his friend while he interviewed his bailiff, then the two men and their cigars disappeared stablywards. It was not till the dog-cart was actually at the door and Cissie demanding the driving-seat, that she could catch her husband for a hasty minute in the hall.

"George, here's a letter; just look at it and tell me how to answer it."

"Can't you do it yourself!" he asked, taking it with a comical grimace of distaste. Then his eyes opened wide as he read, and a look, first of incredulity, then of annoyance, crossed his face. He crumpled it into a ball and tossed it away into a corner.

"Answer it, not I! It's a fraud, and an impudent one."

"But who's Nora Vane?"

"No such person. Dead, years ago."

"Really. Who told you so?"
"The man who ought to know best. I'm coming, Harris—get in. Five minutes late. We shall keep Miss Trevor waiting."

"But, George, what do you mean to do?"

"Nothing. Write yourself if you like, and say so," and he was off.

Mabel picked up the crumpled ball of paper, smoothed it out, looking at it with less bewilderment and more distaste than before. She remembered those people at Bonn perfectly now. They were musical, literary, or artistic, she thought—not a recommendation to the little Philistine.

"If George had only stayed at home and gone to Oxford as an English gentleman should, there need have been none of this worry," she thought. "Anything may happen abroad." She had no shade of mistrust of her husband, only of the company into which he might have strayed without her being at hand to protect him.

"It must be some mistake about the death. It can't be a fraud, or she wouldn't have asked to see him. Well, she shan't."

Mabel could vividly realise George's helplessness in face of a piteous appeal, and had already made a clean sweep of sundry damsel in distress, importunate widows and such-like, who used to beset the open-handed young Squire. She thought long and carefully. "I will see her myself. I shall be alone on Thursday. I will accept her offer of coming here. If she's an impostor she'll keep away altogether; if she is really one of those Bonn people, why then—it will be better to have her when George is safely out of the way," she decided. To take no notice might subject George to a fresh application. The affair must be ended, and promptly, and she was the woman to do it. To the real Nora she was prepared to behave generously, due explanation being given. So without further ado she despatched a note to the address given, regretting that Mr. Carteret's absence from home would prevent his seeing Miss Vane, and appointing Thursday for the lady's visit. Then she dismissed the disagreeable subject.

The five-thirty train duly arrived, and with it Miss Jennie Trevor—also Miss Trevor's big French trunks, and her tennis racket, golf clubs, violin and camera, her fox-terrier, banjo, fishing-rods, easel and sketching umbrella, and other necessaries of life. Jennie was a very good specimen of the modern young lady, tall, smart, and many-gifted. Jennie was equal to rubbing it off though. She was a brilliant young person, who carried her own atmosphere with her—or created one—wherever she went. The dinner-party given in her honour that night was the liveliest on record. The simple country men and maidens were quite astonished to find how brilliant they could be under the magnetic influence of the gay young stranger who sang them the latest song, told them the latest society gossip, and taught them the latest absurdity in after-dinner diversions.

"What charming friends you have, Mabel!" she exclaimed as the last departed.

"I'm ashamed of myself for talking and laughing so much, and I've promised—oh, what have I not promised! To try Mr. Harris's mare—to photograph the Abbey—to row to somewhere. I must write it all down before I forget." She stooped to pick up some of the numerous envelopes with which Pat had strewn the floor in the exhibition of his last accomplishment, and which he was now conscientiously conveying one by one back to the library waste-paper basket. Mabel gave a little start as she saw the one in Jennie's hand.

"Ramington," pronounced Jennie, looking at the address. "Very badly done, too."

"Why? Doesn't everybody write alike with a machine?"

"Not a bit of it. Some folks' typing is as bad as their writing. Mine was worse, I believe, the only time I tried it. This, you see, is not spaced properly—not room enough left for capitals—and look, the small 'n' has been struck every time instead of the 'm,' and the third stroke added after with a pen—just the blunder that shows most in your address. Well, now for my engagements. About fifteen for to-morrow, and a dozen for the next day. And the next!"

"That is the day you go to Crowbridge with my husband, and I am left at home to my own devices."

CHAPTER II.

MISS TREVOR brought George Carteret's handsome pair of chestnuts home on Thursday afternoon, unaccompanied except by the groom, taking the awkward turn into the lime-tree avenue in a workman-like manner, and bringing the horses up with an artistic flourish at the front door exactly as the clock chimed a quarter to dinner-time.

The house was silent, and the hall seemed empty as she entered. Coming
suddenly upon Mabel's white face and dress In the library doorway, she came as near to a start and a scream as her well-trained nerves would allow.

"Where is George? I want him at once!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry. I was to tell you that somebody—you'll know all about it—somebody whose signature is wanted for some deeds, can't be in Crownbridge till to-morrow morning, so to save another journey Mr. Matthews, that nice old agent, is going to put him up to-night. We didn't go to Bridge Park. Mr. Carteret thought I'd better get home in daylight. Anything wrong? Children well? You looked so pale it startled me."

"Nothing wrong. I must see George at once, though."

"You can't go now, Mabel! You couldn't get home to-night—and there's nowhere for you to stay. The 'Crown' is full, we couldn't get a private room to lunch in. And the horses——"

"No, of course. They can't go out again, and there's nothing but George's hunter in the stable just now. I must write after dinner."

"Now, what is the matter?" Jennie asked herself as she hastily completed her dinner toilette; "she isn't ill, nor the children. Business, I suppose, but why can't it keep a day! She looks just as if she had been peeping into some Blue Chamber in our absence."

Mabel was herself at dinner, at least, all that a hostess should be, and Jennie was a discreet young person of vast experience, so a casual observer might have remarked nothing amiss at the pretty 1755-1760 dinner, or in the evening that followed; Jennie sitting in her basket-chair in the verandah listening to the nightingales, and Mabel in the softly-lighted drawing-room writing at her davenport till bed-time.

"George will not be home to-day," Mabel announced at breakfast next morning; "I am so sorry. We must ask Walter Harris to come with us to the flower show instead."

"I heard the groom go with your letter last night," Jennie answered placidly.

"Cissie, am I to take your portrait or Pat's this morning?"

"George mayn't be home before Monday," Mabel went on. "He has more business to get through than he expected."

"What a pity! Do you think I might ride Champion while he is away? I'll take such care of him."

Decidedly, if there were anything amiss, Jennie would not be the one to notice it.

So two days slipped by, full of June sunshine and mirth, roses and haymaking, tennis and strawberries and cream, but on the third Jennie up and spoke:

"Mabel, when a place gets full of poisonous gas or vapours, what would you do?"

"Do? Open a window, I suppose, and let it out—or get some fresh air in somehow. Why do you ask? Is it a conundrum?"

"No, a parable. There are noxious fumes of some sort poisoning your moral atmosphere, I know. Can't I blow them away?" She glanced from Mabel's pale face to her untouched coffee. "I'm very, very inquisitive, I know I am. I can't help seeing that something is up, and I want to know what it is."

"What have you seen?"

"It began on Thursday. I thought it was just married folks' ways that made you look so miserable when I told you George couldn't come home, and that it was sheer affection that kept you writing that volume of a letter to him all the evening. But you never cheered a bit when you had got his answer, and have been going as in a dream ever since. If you were engaged you couldn't do more! Tell me all about it, dearie. You always used to tell me everything in the good old days, and you never repented it, did you?"

"No, Jennie, never! But I'm not wretched, though. Not a bit. I've no reason to be," Mabel protested stoutly. Then she looked wistfully into Jennie's bright face. "I will tell you all my troubles. You are so much cleverer, and have seen so much more of the world than I, you may see some explanation. George isn't good at writing, or he could give one directly. I wonder sometimes whether I have been blundering into a trap by my own obstinacy and self-sufficiency. But come into the library, we can talk quietly there."

Jennie picked up her knitting and followed her hostess. There was a locked despatch-box on the table, which Mabel opened in nervous haste, as if she feared she might change her mind. She took out three papers and passed one to Jennie. That astute young person read it without exclamation or enquiry till the end.

"Who is this Nora Vane?"

"An old friend of George's. Dead, he
assures me. He was for taking no notice of this, but as usual, I wanted to manage everything myself, and wrote telling her to come here and I would see her. So she came."

"I understand. On Thursday, was it not? What was she like?"

"A little woman; not young, and not quite a lady, I thought. She kept her veil down, and sat with her back to the light. But she says she is Nora Vane, and can prove it; and she says—she dares to say to me—that she is George's wife!" said Mabel, coming to the point with a vengeance.

"An attempt at extortio, of course."

Jennie's voice was studiedly calm, but her knitting needles stumbled and clashed together, and the Kilburn orphan who got that sock found an unaccountable knot in his ankle.

"I was too angry and horrified to stop her. I thought she must be mad and I let her go on. Then she told me how George used to come to her mother's house at Bonn, and fell in love with her at first sight; and how her mother, having proper pride, sent her off as governess in an English family—governess, with that accent!—and George followed her to Emz, where they were married by the English chaplain, and then his father recalled him to England."

"Did she give you dates of these events? It seems as if it would be easy to contradict her."

"Oh, she had the dates of George's movements right enough, and showed me his letters to her from England arranging for her to follow him. He dared not ask his own people to receive her, but he worked upon the feelings of his aunt, Lady Margaret Wade, who befriended her, and kept their secret. Then she told me plainly that she was disappointed to find that George, instead of being the eldest son and heir, was dependent on a very severe tyrannical father. They parted soon of another, and agreed to part. She went to Russia as governess—saw her way to a brilliant marriage—and sent home news of her death as the best way of ridding herself of her husband. She didn't marry, lost her situation, came to grief in some way, and found her way back to England. That is the story."

Jennie looked at her friend in amazement. Her cheeks were flushed with anger, and she spoke in a voice white-hot with indignation, but of confusion or alarm showed no sign.

"But you say she had letters——"

"A bundle of them. She wanted me to examine the dates and postmarks, but wouldn't trust them in my hands—and books with her name and George's, and a marriage certificate. I told her to take no further trouble to produce evidence, as nothing she could bring forward would weigh with me for an instant."

"My dear Mabel! And she——"

"Lost patience and asked what would convince me, and I said my husband's word, nothing more or less," answered Mabel superbly. "Then she told me to take any two of the letters and show them to George and ask if he denied them. She shuffled them together and held them to me, and I took two."

"The two she intended you to take. Ah, I know how that's done," murmured Jennie. "May I see them?"

They were written on the rough grey paper George still preferred, in his usual telegraphic style, and unquestionably in his handwriting:

"DEAR NORA.—Awfully sorry not to have written sooner. No good news. Mater impracticable, so never mentioned your name. Aunt Marly comes to-morrow. Keep up your heart.——Yours always, "G. NORMAN CARTERET."

The second was longer:

"DEAR NORA.—Took Aunt Marly into our confidence. Wouldn't listen at first, ended by sending you her blessing. Start as soon as you can. Wouldn't do to come for you, I suppose, but I'll meet you at Harwich. Don't fret, all will go right now. Tell you all when we meet.—Yours, "G. N. C."

"P.S.—Bring the Marriage certificate with you. Auntly says it won't do in England, but I know better."

Jennie's breath hardly served for a further question.

"And the certificate?"

"That seemed a regular one. 'George Norman Carteret, to Honora Beresford Vane.'"

"And you told all this to George? And said you believed him—'quand même'?"

"There was no necessity to add that," replied Mabel with dignity. "Here is his answer."
Jennie read the few lines on a sheet of note-paper:

"DEAREST.—Nora died years ago. If she didn't there's an awful muddle somewhere. Can't explain now. Home on Monday, I hope.—Yours ever, "G. N. O."

Jennie's imperturbability gave way.

"Mabel! And he never denies it!"

"Denies it! Why should he? His letter is enough. I know him."

"Glad you do," murmured Jennie to her stocking. "I don't."

"Married folks' ways" were getting too much for her. But a glance at Mabel's white face and dark-ringed eyes made her pull herself together with all her sharp wits at her friend's service once more.

"We'll assume that George has a perfectly satisfactory explanation of all this, then, only he doesn't feel equal to expressing it in writing. Can you tell me anything more your visitor said?"

"She begged me to reflect on my position if she put the case into her lawyer's hands; to consider the scandal, whichever way it ended; to think of my children. She offered to go back to Russia, leaving all her proofs in my hands for me to destroy when I chose, if I would but give her a hundred pounds for travelling expenses and promise her a small annual sum."

"I know that was coming—but you didn't! Not a sixpence, I hope?"

"I paid her fare and her cab from the station, of course, that was only right; but I told her that if her story had been true, she would have taken from me what no money could buy back. Then she got angry and said I had better think it over. I might put an advertisement in 'The Times' before that day week, unless I wished her to go direct to George—"

"Why hadn't she begun with him and insisted on seeing him first? It would have simplified the whole business so enormously. He would have paid handsomely to keep all this from you. She doesn't want to see him, and—yes!—you didn't have to ask why she used a typewriter, did you?"

"No. Why shouldn't she?"

"Because she is afraid of his seeing her writing. She isn't Nora Vane and she hasn't a bit of Nora Vane's writing to copy, that's what it is. Just see how vague her letter to him is, too. She has nothing definite to threaten him with. She has concocted that story and prepared those forgeries for your benefit only. Many a woman would have let herself be blackmailed for less."

Jennie's voice and spirits rose as her convictions grew. Mabel shook her head sadly.

"I am afraid of her, Jennie. Though I don't believe her, others may. She can annoy George out of revenge—raise a scandal in the neighbourhood."

"Then we must be beforehand with her. We must hunt her down, frighten her, threaten to have her up for extortion, find her out and all about Miss Vane as well!" cried Jennie in the full swing of enjoyment. "Of course we can do it. Here's her address, the note and the envelope, that's something for a detective to go upon."

"Jennie! If it could be done!" Mabel echoed, taking fire from her friend's enthusiasm, filled also with righteous wrath and the desire to punish.

"Of course it can. I don't precisely know how to set to work, but I can tell you who does—my editor, Mr. Herbert Dudley, of the 'West End Review,' you know. By the way, he wanted to see me soon about a story of mine. Let's wire to him, order early breakfast, and go up to town by the nine forty-five to-morrow!"

CHAPTER III.

"I've thought of something more," Jennie announced suddenly. She had got her way, and the two friends were rushing townwards by the morning's express, with a carriage to themselves. "Can't we apply to Lady Margaret Wade if she is alive?"

"But she isn't. She died just before our wedding. She must have been a foolish, romantic sort of woman, I think. She actually married an actor—years younger than herself," said Mabel, with bated breath. "To be sure, he didn't live long," as if that somewhat condemned the offence; "but she always kept in his set—actors, artists, and that sort of people, you know. She would have been the very one to encourage a mésalliance."

"It was an artful touch to bring her in, wasn't it?" Jennie said thoughtfully.

"Then here's another point. Do you see this letter has the same fault as its envelope—an 'n' in place of an 'm' all through! Looks as if it were the machine that was wrong, not the operator."

Mabel responded languidly. The cold
fit was following on the hot. Her courage was fast ebbing away. She had misgivings as to the wisdom of her errand; didn't fancy the notion of the private detective, and wasn't sure George would approve. Mr. Herbert Dudley's name gave her some confidence. She never read his articles, but she knew that Royal Highnesses contributed to his magazine, and she was sure he would not lead her into anything unbecoming. Still, she wished herself back at Holm Royal many a time before they arrived at the office of the "West End Review," and were ushered into the editor's presence.

Miss Trevor had taken up novel writing, as she had gone in for skirt dancing or church embroidery in her time, but with not quite the same amount of success, and there was much to discuss before her MS. had a prospect of acceptance. She was unsatisfiably anxious to get to Mabel's business, and "rushed" her own with impolite haste.

"Mr. Dudley, do you know a detective—\(^{2}\) she had begun, when Mabel's face caught her eyes. She was standing near the editor's table, her cheeks pale with excitement, her eyes fixed on the open drawer from which Jennie's novel had been extracted. Some loose sheets of MS. lay at the bottom.

"Mr. Dudley, I must see the writer of this! Will you help me?"

He turned with surprise to the woman whom a moment before he had mentally labelled as "that handsome, stupid chaperon of Miss Trevor's."

"I can introduce you," he said doubtfully, gathering up the sheets and placing them in her hands. "She is a dear old friend of mine. That is a child's story, the prettiest you ever read, by Honor Bright."

"Oh, the darling! I love her things—or his, which is it?" exclaimed Jennie.

"A lady, Honor Bright is a real name. She is old, blind, and so crippled that there is little left of her but brain and hands. Almost friendless, too—\(^{3}\)

Mr. Dudley stopped abruptly. Jennie had seized the MS. eagerly, and was turning the pages with flurryed fingers. At the last her eyes met Mabel's and flashed in amusement. Italic type, and the letter "m" replaced by "n" from beginning to end! "Tell Mr. Dudley, please," Mabel gasped, dropping into a chair; and Jennie, nothing loth, obeyed with discreet reticence.

"You shall see her at once," he declared.

"I have half an hour to spare. But don't be too sanguine. It is impossible that she can have anything to do with your adventures. Such an accident might happen to more than one machine—though it is unlikely. Do you mind walking? She lives close by."

It was a quiet, old-world nook of London to which he conducted them; a shabby, sunshiny square of tall, dingy houses. He opened a door with his key, and admitted them into a dusky, silent hall. As they followed him upstairs they heard the sharp, irregular click of a typewriter growing more and more distinct, till he opened a door on the first-floor landing and disclosed the operator. An invalid couch stood in the south window, and full in the sunshine lay, propped on pillows, a small, worn figure with a beautiful, bright, sightless face and two tiny, swift-moving hands. Near the couch, at a small table, a middle-aged woman with a pleasant, heavy face sat correcting some proofs. The room was sparsely, meanly furnished, except for a full-length portrait on the wall, some pots of choice flowers on the window seat, above which two canaries were singing, and the invalid's satin overlay. She turned her face towards the door sharply.

"Dudley, my dear boy! At this time of day. And who have you with you?"

"Two ladies who want your help, godmother. Mrs.—ah—Carter, and Miss Trevor. I read her story to you last night, you know. But it's your typewriter they have come to see."

"And what do they want with my familiar spirit—my delight—my companion?" asked the old lady, caressing the keys with her worn, ivory finger-tips.

"I love it, Miss Trevor. It brought me back to the world from which I thought myself cut off for ever. I never begin to use it without first saying grace, and praying for a blessing on the giver."

"Hush, godmother! don't be profane," said Mr. Dudley with a conscious look.

"I used to be profane, frequently, in the old days, I admit. When I had a secretary and heard my own compositions read aloud to me. Now this catches my thoughts as they run."

It was like any other Remington, except for the keys, which had the letters in relief so as to be legible by touch. It stood on a stout invalid's table across the couch. It had a cover with a lock and the key hung on a cord round her neck.
"And who uses it, except yourself?"

"Nobody! Never, never again," she exclaimed with energy. "Never since that fool of a doctor insisted on trying it one day, and Mary Burgess, there, hadn't nerve enough to knock him down and put it out to his rear. He banged two letters together and damaged one. But it can easily be repaired if I could but resolve to part with it for a time. It has got no worse, has it?" She looked full of apprehension.

"Not a bit. It really doesn't signify," Mr. Dudley assured her. ("We rather like it," put in Jennie.) "But could nobody possibly get at it?"

"How? I lock and unlock it myself, and the key never leaves me. And no one could touch it without my hearing."

"Oh, but do look at this," Jennie began heedlessly, then stopped in confusion, but Mabel took up the word, and for the second time that morning the story was told.

"She did it! There could be no one else. I know it must be the same! That hateful creature with the dry, nimble fingers like a monkey. That spy!" The poor little woman almost lifted herself up in her excitement.

"She means the nurse who came in to take my place when I had to go home at Easter," the attendant explained. "I had no idea how much she disliked her, or I would never have left."

"The spy!" the invalid went on with growing excitement. "I could hear her creeping about, peeping and prying. She searched my drawers, she read my letters. Do you think I couldn't feel when they had been pawed over? I felt her stirring about the room at night, I smelt the candle burning. She found my old diaries and read them as she sat beside me. I knew the creak of their backs. She dragged me one night, I know. She stole—oh, nothing of value, she was too clever for that; letters and papers from the box of Nora's things. I felt two were gone when I asked for it, but I can't tell which—only the bundle had been re-tied. She wanted autographs to sell, I suppose. And you say she tampered with this, too? Oh, blind, blind and helpless that I am!" The insult to the typewriter seemed the most grievous injury of all.

"Who was this woman?" Mabel asked.

"A nurse out of employment, who was lodging in the house. Miss Burgess had to go home suddenly on business, and we took this woman as her substitute on the landlady's recommendation," Mr. Dudley answered. "She seemed to know her business."

"Oh, that she did! The highest walks of the begging letter writing profession, I should imagine. She was nearest fingered than you, Mary, and a woman of education. She corrected my proofs beautifully, and had a fine imagination of her own. She took me in completely at first by her knowledge of Nora's works."

"Nora! Nora who?" demanded Jennie breathlessly.

"My daughter, Miss Nora Vane," with a majestic wave of the hand towards the portrait on the wall. "Perhaps you know her best as Mrs. Cyril Houghton. That is considered a fine likeness of her as Lady Myrtilla in her own play of 'Second-hand.'"

Mabel and Jennie gazed at the brilliant young face, and the remembrance of the pathetic little story of the gifted young actress's short, beautiful life, filled Jennie's eyes with tears.

"Was she Nora Vane? I never saw her, but I know her plays. I have acted in 'Wedding Favours' myself."

"That was the most popular, but I like it least. It was taken from a German one, 'The Marriage Certificate.'"

Light was streaming upon Mabel.

"When did she come to England? Did you know my husband, George Carteret?"

"Norman," corrected Mrs. Vane quickly, "my own dear boy. It was he who helped Nora when she would come to London to seek her fortune—ambitions child. I could not come with her. It was the beginning of my blindness. But he moved heaven and earth and all his family to help her. Lady Margaret Wade took her up. Who's that? Dudley! don't let any one come in!" There had been one or more unnoticed taps on the door. It now slowly opened, and George Carteret entered with a hesitating step.

"Mrs. Vane! They told me I should find you here. I have been searching for you for years. Why, Mabel, have you found her first, after all?"

"Look here," said Jennie to "her editor," "if you want to get back at once, let's go. Those three have hours of explanation before them, and they don't want us. Come along, and I'll tell you the whole story. It's a better one than mine."
THE VISION.
BY S. E. P. E. L. L. I. M. S.

"I have never pressed thee, dear," he said.
(The wild waves rage over Whitby Scar)
But thou know'st, for a month they sailed away.
An' twice thou hast counted a year and a day
With never a word of the 'Flying Spray.'
For sure thy Jen is dead.
"Then thou wilt never hold me close and near;"
(The wild waves roar over Whitby Scar)
"But thy lot is lonesome, and drear, and hard,
An' if thou wilt give me thysen to guard
I'll never ask thee for more reward;
An' I love thee very dear."  

At last she sighed: "I will be thy wife."
(The wild waves thundered o'er Whitby Scar)
For she started to lean on his tender care.
It is ill on a lonely path to fare;
And never a woman but fail would share
The roses and wine of life.

The wedding-day drew on space,
(The long waves call upon Whitby Scar)
When there ran a lad to his cottage home,
Who bade him "haste his ways and come,"
And with pious eyes and white lips dumb,
She looked up in his face.

At last she whispered, "No wedding-day."
(The white waves surge over Whitby Scar)
Will ever bring me, dear, to thee.
A vision came in my sleep to me,
And I know he lives, though the angry sea
Roars o'er the 'Flying Spray.'

"I saw him—dear, it is hard on both us—"
(The deep waves roll over Whitby Scar)
"I saw him weary, and worn, and white,
But the pledge I gave in his hand shone bright.
He kissed it under the young moon's light,
And said, 'We keep our trust.'

"An' he pointed to the crimson skies,"
(The low waves whisper on Whitby Scar)
"An' cried. 'My love, it is not for long,
Though youth is fair, and time is strong,
And Heaven puts straight what earth makes wrong.
A smile was in his eye.

"I doubt Thee used thee very ill!'
(The grey waves wave o'er Whitby Scar)
"But thou are tender and true to forgive,
For the bit of time I have to live.
To-night the best have left my hve
An' thou wilt be happy still.'"

Or ever another April came,
(The blue waves laugh upon Whitby Scar)
They laid the pale girl to her rest,
And will sought to lay on her quiet breast.
The heartsease flowers she loved the best,
For her weary watch was done.

That very day on a tropic isle,
(A nice tide bobbed upon Whitby Scar)
A lonely man lay down on the sand,
A broken sixpence in his hand,
And passed to the undiscovered land;
His dead lips wore a smile.

OSCAR FAUSSET'S WILL.
BY W. B. TYNDALL.

CHAPTER I.

"How beautiful, Oscar! Really you will have to make your will now."

The words were words of warning, but the scene at that spot seemed instinct
with the very fulness of life. It was the

height of a hot June following upon a
moist, growing spring. The flowers which
bloomed around Kingscote House, and
climbed up its deep-red walls, were at their
brightest; the turf of the smooth lawns
cut into terraces was as green and smooth
as nature could paint it; the long stretch
of descending woodland country, over
which the eye wandered until it rested
upon a boundary ridge of blue hills in
the distance, was thick with foliage at its
richest.

Three people stood upon the terrace
before the garden front of Kingscote House
—a sister and two brothers. They had
come upon a pleasant errand. The youngest
of the three, Oscar Faussen, by a sudden
stroke of fortune, had come into possession
of the house and many acres of the country
over which he was looking.

An old man, who had hardly seen him
during his lifetime, had bequeathed this
slice of his estates to Oscar Faussen. To
him, the youngest, because John Faussen,
the elder brother, had already the place
belonging to his family in the North, and
Rosa Malcolm, the sister, was married, and
so out of the dying man's ken.

The three looked down upon the brilliant
country with different thoughts passing
through their minds.

John Faussen was pondering upon the
old barracks in Cumberland which he
could scarcely keep up, its falling rents and
the inherited mortgages, which weighed
upon him every year with a heavier burden.
He rejoiced in the good fortune of his
brother, but how pleasant it would have
been for himself if a little slice, a few
thousands, had come his own way!

Rosa Malcolm, through the hot mist
which shimmered over the fields, saw the
glimmering vision of a country parsonage,
rather shabby, rather poor, with a figure
she loved walking in its ill-kept garden;
and three little children playing, who were,
like their house, a trifle shabby and not
too well kept. Very well would it have
been for her if some of the fortune had
passed through the parsonage gate.

But as for Oscar Faussen, to whom all
had come, his thoughts were less easy to
read. They whirled about too swiftly
between a small, mean studio, which
already seemed to be disappearing in the
distance, and a palace of art with the
shape of Kingscote House. Perhaps be-
tween studio and palace, drifting upon the
sea of his thoughts, there appeared at the
surface the vision of the struggling country
parsonage which he vowed to himself to succour, and the stern old house besiegéd by its difficulties which he could now do something to free. Still the palace was first in his mind, and there was in it a ruling image not the least like either of his companions.

"You must make your will now."

"Indeed I must," he answered. "What a change! How could old Keswick have come to leave all this to me?"

"It is a beautiful place," said the elder brother. "I wish that I had half your luck, Oscar! What a contrast between this bright south country and that gloomy old barrack among the slate hills! Let me have Kingseote, and you shall have Castle Fausset with all the family gods to-morrow."

"Not I," said his brother, laughing. "You are a bad bargainer, John, and, as you say, I am a lucky fellow. Yes, Rosie, I must make my will. Fancy it being worth while. I feel changed already."

His sister hung upon his arm, and looked up at him fondly. Oscar had always been her favourite brother, perhaps because he had been of weaker health and stronger imagination than the other.

The three turned away from the terrace front and went together round the house. Everywhere was there some new possession to admire, some new plan for Oscar Fausset to make and for his companions to sympathise or laughingly to disagree with. The idea of ownership was so novel to him—a week was not yet gone since he had heard of his good fortune—that, looking at the place and knowing that it was all his, he could scarcely fancy that he was not in a dream. His imagination went rioting into the future. By his side he saw a figure unknown to his companions, and the steps of children kept pace with his own as he went to the upper rooms, and he imagined their laughter coming up to the open windows from the garden outside.

Early in the afternoon his brother and sister left Oscar Fausset to pursue the acquaintance with his new possession alone. He stayed at Kingseote House for a busy week, in which he was fully employed about the estate, making arrangements for carrying it on until he returned, and choosing an agent to represent him in his absence, and to take the future drudgery of the place off his hands. Here was to be a palace of beauty, and into his own part in it nothing sordid or worldly should enter.

In the midst of these visionary designs he found time to go for a day to Princeton. Princeton, eight miles from Kingseote, was the nearest considerable town. There he spent a day with a solicitor, and returned to Kingseote House, having followed the suggestion of his sister, and made his will.

Mr. Gregory, the chief lawyer in Princeton, had merely a hasty acquaintance with the Faussets. If he had known Oscar he would have protested against the provisions of the will which he was asked to draw. That document—from his knowledge of the affairs of the Fausset family—was not what he would have expected. But at a first interview it was too soon for him to interfere. There were other brass plates in Princeton which proclaimed rival solicitors, who would be willing enough to outset him from the lucrative business of the Kingseote estate. So he permitted his new client to sign a document of which he could not approve, and trusted to the ripening by neighbourhood of their future acquaintance to induce him some time in the future to modify it.

Oscar Fausset returned to London well pleased. The untidy studio, in which for the last few years he had lived and worked, bore for him an air of novelty after the glories of Kingseote. He looked curiously at his own sketches lying about the room, at the big canvas upon the easel, and near it upon the floor the palette with its uncleansed brushes. The mean fireside, the screened-off bed, the faded window-curtains, even the roar of the streets and the grey London twilight outside, already seemed to him like the vanishing recollection of a dark dream from which he had suddenly sprung wide awake.

He straightened the gas-pipe over the chimney-piece, drew the curtains across the window, lighted the gas and looked round him at the familiar place which had been peopled by so many bright dreams, darkened by so many disappointments, and which had suddenly become so hateful to him. A bundle of letters lay upon the table. He tossed them aside one by one unopened, until he came to an envelope which bore the postmark of Princeton. It was a copy of the will which he had made there. Lighting a pipe, he sat down by the naked grate, and began to run his eye over the document. It was short and to the point, embodying what he had intended and making clear enough the injustice which, as the lawyer thought, it would effect. Here is the epitome of it.
To a few old friends various small legacies; to John Fansset five hundred pounds; to Rosa Malcolm, his sister, two thousand pounds; and to Clara Gesson, splinter, daughter of Captain James Gesson, "the residue of the estate of which I am now possessed or shall hereafter become possessed."

Yes; that very night he would see her. In a few short hours he would be by her side. He had thought out his plans every day for the last week, and they had come to this.

First, he would place the copy in her hands as something which it would be a trust to her to keep for him. Some excuse would rise to his tongue when the moment came. The insecurity of his lodgings, the value of the document, his own carelessness, which was between them a butt of common chaff, would carry him through.

Then, when she had taken the paper, that which he told himself had long been an ill-kept secret between them should at last be revealed. He would bid her open the will; side by side they would read it, and she would know how much he loved her. As soon as possible they would go down to Kingcote, and, like another Lord of Burleigh, he would show all that she had gained through him.

Clara Gesson saw Oscar as he entered the ball-room at the house of Lady Havers. She was struck by the change in his appearance. Usually he lingered before he could summon courage to approach her. But to-night he came at once and quickly to where she was sitting. She looked at him as he threaded his way through the room. Somebody stopped him as he came, and seemed to be very insistent on taking him by the hand. She could see that he bore the delay with scant patience.

"How happy he looks to-night!" she said to herself. "He has sold a picture, I suppose, or got a commission. About fifty pounds' worth of happiness, as his market goes. What a blessing is the artistic temperament! Down enough generally, but by the least puff blown above the steepest heights."

That night Miss Gesson happened to be a little biter. She owed her darker moods more to her way of living than to her own temperament. Her lines had not fallen in pleasant places. She was the daughter of a man born to fortune, who had let his desires over-run his means, and now lived by his wits. She had been left motherless so young that she could not be said to have known a mother, and the life which she had led of late—recently brilliant abroad, at home of discomfort and almost poverty—had hardened and hurt her. These circumstances had given her really great beauty a bizarre tone which marred it.

Of late her eyes had become a little too daring, her ways a trifle loud, her voice somewhat careless.

A more complete contrast to Oscar Fansset could not be found, but it was the very force of the contrast which conquered him. He would have laid the world at the feet of this Olsopatra. In her were centred all his wishes and hopes and artistic dreams. Now that he had come to her side he was happier than she had ever seen him. He met her glance boldly, took the empty chair next to her uninvited, and altogether behaved more like a man, and less like a dreamer, than she had ever known him. She looked at him with curiosity.

"You have some good news," she said. "Tell me what it is. Whom are you going to paint?"

"No one," he answered, "that I have heard of. Orders hang fire, and my studio is choked with my rubbish. What do you mean?"

"What do you mean yourself?" she replied, "by looking as if you were treading on air, and were ready to knock the stars with your head?"

"An old smile," he said. "Has one no right to look happy, where every one seems to be so happy?"

He hugged himself in the knowledge that as yet she knew nothing. His secret had been well kept, though, to be sure, he had been congratulated on his way to her side, and he had feared that she, too, would know. And this thought permeating his mind showed how sure he felt of her, how great his trust in her was.

It took him some little time to manoeuvre her away from the crowded ball-room. But at last, sauntering together through the room, they made their way down a passage to a conservatory which, lighted and warmed, made a pleasant harbour for the flirting or the wearied.

So far his dream was being fulfilled in truth. Here was the very place for which he had hoped. The scent of the flowers pleased his senses; their colours, mingled and confused by the shaded glow of the electric lamps, made a fitting frame
for the figure by his side. He let his
gaunt rest on her for a moment—on her
face with its daring beauty subdued
by the soft light; on her quenched figure
and the dress with its heavy folds which
became it so well. For a moment only. He
felt that if he looked too long his courage
would slip away from him, and to-night, if
ever, it must be screwed to the sticking
point. He drew two chairs together, and,
as they sat down side by side, he held out
the envelope towards her.
"Will you take care of this for me? " he
said. "I have no place to put it. It is
of importance, and I should feel safer if it
were in your keeping."
Upon his own ears the bland words fell
coldly, but his hand shook as he offered
the paper to her.
Clara Greeson turned half-round and
looked at him. There was a frown of eager-
ness in his face, the paper was shaking in his
grasp like a wind-shivered leaf. She could
not understand the situation, but her life
had taught her never to lose a chance.
She took the envelope and began to read
the address.
"You are not to look at it," he said.
"At least not yet."
"Very well," she answered. "How
yielding I must be to-night to obey such a
mysterious behest!"
The words seemed to him a good omen.
The bosom of her dress was covered by a
complicated mass of lace. It seemed the
happiest moment of his life when he saw
her hide this paper—just as he had told
himself that she would hide it—among the
lace which clung round her.
Fate could not have fashioned for him
a fairer opportunity. His chance had come
and not a soul was near them. Before she
well understood his intention, he had
seized her hand and was speaking, he knew
not what words of love and entreaty.
Upon his mind and here were painted
two different pictures. He saw Kingscote
House, as he had seen it a week ago,
brilliant in the sun of midsummer. They
two were standing upon the terrace, and
looking together over the bright country
which stretched away from them to the
blue hills in the distance.
But the picture which Clara Greeson saw
was tinted with no such glowing colours.
She saw a poor studio which was untidy
with canvases and smell of paint; a life
in dreary lodgings; a long waiting upon
fortune which might never come; a weary
time of disappointments and postponements
which she knew that her nature could not
endure.
She liked this boy well enough. He
looked very handsome now as he gazed at
her. She had flirted with him as she had
flirted with many others. But she did not
love him, nor, at that time, anybody else.
Her decision was made at once; and the
words, however kindly spoken, struck
down at a stroke the hope which had
seemed to him the very foundation of his
heart.
For Oscar Fausset, a builder up of
dreams until they appeared certainties, the
revelation of feeling was too hard a blow.
He went, he knew not how, from the house,
leaving her where he had spoken.
It was not until he had returned to his
studio that thought enough came back to
him to remember that the copy of the will
was still in her possession. But the re-
membrance passed away from him as not
worth thinking about.
He rose next morning after a sleepless
night, feeling as if he were wearied out by
a long illness. He was himself astonished
by the haggardness of his own face. The
familiar surroundings irritated him. A
picture which he had begun before he went
down to Kingscote stood upon an easel.
It caught his eye, and he went and looked
at it. The sketch had pleased him. Now
his ambition seemed to be dead, and,
kneeling the canvas sideways with his
hand, he sent it and the easel with a
cratter to the floor. The sound aroused
him. If he stopped among these familiar
objects where everything was remi
of a life which was now closed, he would
die.
He dragged out a cabinet, packed it
hastily, and taking down a "Bradshaw"
from the book-case, sat with it in his hand,
wondering where he should go. The
advertisement of an hotel in Liverpool
cought his eye. He would go there, and
thence, when he had bought his outfit, to
America for a time.
But before he went he would repair one
mistake which he had made—a mistake
springing out of that other and greater
error which had left him, in the midst of
the first blush of his good fortune, caring for nothing. He sent a letter to Mr. Gregory, the solicitor at Princeton, stating his desire to have destroyed the will which he had left in his possession.

The answer reached him in the hotel at Liverpool. He had taken his berth in a ship which was to sail for New York the next day. He was prepared to start, and only waited for the letter from Princeton. With that the last moorings which held him to his old life would be cast off.

It had happened that the solicitor was away from home when the letter reached his office. His son carried out the instructions which it contained. Here is the answer:

"DEAR SIR,—We beg to inform you that in accordance with the instructions contained in your letter we have to-day, in the temporary absence of Mr. Gregory, senior, destroyed the will left by you in our custody. We shall be glad to hear from you whenever you have come to a decision as to a fresh will, and remain, your obedient servants,

"JOHN GREGORY AND SON,
"Solicitors, Princeton."

The business-like consistencies of this short note pleased Oscar Fausset. All was now ready for his departure, and he found himself looking forward to the voyage with a measure of hope, which stirred for a moment the black shadow which had fallen upon him.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN FAUSSET came down to breakfast at Castle Fausset in a cheery mood. The morning was fine. His brother-in-law and his sister were staying with him. Rose's presence always brightened the dreary old place, and he liked to hear the voices of the children as they rambled in the grounds. He remembered, as he listened to them calling to each other in the shrubbery, what a delight in his own young days its overgrown walks and natural hiding-places had been to him. He turned over his letters while his sister poured out her coffee, and began opening them.

"How I wish you were always here, Rosie," he said. "It makes the place so cheerful. The voices——"

He stopped in the midst of the broken sentence, and turned white. His sister looked up at him. In his hands was a letter. It was trembling so that he was scarcely able to read it.

"Terrible news, Rosey," he said. "Terrible news. Yesterday morning poor Oscar was found dead in his bed in an hotel in Liverpool."

The voices of the children were hushed. There were no more sounds of joy round Castle Fausset that morning. John Fausset sat alone in his study, while his bag was being packed and the dog-sari got ready. At first his thoughts only rested upon the brother who had been so suddenly called away, but gradually he could not refrain from thinking how much this sudden stroke might mean to him. Oscar had gone just when ample fortune had come to his hands, and before he had had the time to stretch out his fingers to take it. Probably he had made no will, and the point to which all his thoughts tended as he drove to the station and throughout the journey to Liverpool, was that the old house, which had been encumbered during the lifetime of his father and his own, might be freed at last.

He had sad duties to perform in Liverpool of which little need be said. The medical evidence convinced the coroner's jury without difficulty; and John Fausset, after the funeral of his brother, was free in less than a week to take his homeward journey. He took the dead man's papers and effects with him. Almost the first which he examined was the letter from the Princeton solicitors relating to the destruction of the will.

This letter astonished him. He was surprised to learn that Oscar had lost so little time in making a will, but he could not in any way account for its sudden destruction. At present there was no explanation for this, nor for the presence of his brother in Liverpool and the steamboat ticket which was in his pocket-book. However, the will was destroyed—there seemed no reason to doubt that—and both he and his sister, whatever were the contents of the short-lived document, were now, as next of kin, the heirs to the dead man's estate. Still there seemed to John Fausset a mystery about the whole affair which he was anxious to unravel.

After a few days' stay at Castle Fausset, he determined to go down to Princeton. There he could see the solicitor, who would be able to tell him all about the matter, and afterwards he could drive over to Kingscote House. John Fausset found Mr. Gregory seated in the snug private
OSCAR FAUSSET’S WILL.

[March 12, 1894.]

I do not quite understand this note from Gregory,” said John Fausset, looking across the breakfast-table at his sister. “He wants to know if I have any evidence that the copy of Oscar’s will was destroyed; and asks me to make careful search among any of his papers which I may have in my possession. Now what does he mean by that, Rosa?”

“Only some legal formality, John. What else can it mean? There is no use in a copy of a will, is there?”

“Certainly none, as far as I knew. But what can make Gregory so anxious to find it?”

In a few days a second letter arrived from the solicitor, which, though it offered no explanation, was very disquieting to John Fausset.

The letters of administration had been applied for, but had not been obtained. It would be very convenient if Fausset could come down to Princeton to consult with Mr. Gregory upon a difficulty which had suddenly arisen.

A coldness came over John Fausset as he read the formal words. Nothing as far as he could understand but the discovery of another will could now draw back the cup from his lips, and it seemed impossible that his brother, in the few hours which had intervened between the letter authorizing the destruction of the will and his sudden death, could have made a second disposition of the property. Still, try to reassure himself as he would, there was evidently something amiss, and John Fausset went the long journey to Princeton with a quaking heart.

He found Mr. Gregory in his office.

“The solicitor’s manner was not reassuring; he was very grave.”

“We have applied for administration, Mr. Fausset,” he said, “as I wrote to you, and we find that a caveat has been lodged.”

“A caveat!” said John Fausset.

“Yes. A firm of solicitors whom we know, and by reputation not well, have stopped our application.”

“I do not understand what you mean. How could they stop your application? There is no other will, is there?”

“That is what I have brought you all this way to ask you, sir. Can you answer the question?”

“I cannot think it within the bounds of possibility. My poor brother must have been struck down within a few hours after receiving your answer that you had de-

The first allusion of trouble came in a letter from Princeton.
stroved his will. If he had intended to
make another, why should he have troubled
himself to write to you? The second
will would have invalidated the first."

"Just so," replied the solicitor. "Just so."

A sudden thought struck cold upon John
Fausset's heart.

"Are you sure it was the will," he said,
"and not the copy which you destroyed?"

A civil little smile played about the
corners of the solicitor's mouth. He lifted
a speaking tube attached to his desk and
called down it:

"Tell Mr. Miles that I should like to see
him."

Miles Gregory appeared at once. He
bowed to the client at the informal intro-
duction which his father made in the
words:

"Miles, this is Mr. John Fausset. He
wishes to ask you if it was the will of the
late Mr. Oscar Fausset which you
destroyed or merely a copy of it."

"The will, certainly," the junior partner
answered. "The signatures which I cut
from it are in that safe. See, here they
are," he continued, opening a drawer and
taking out a slip of paper. "Oscar Fausset
and two witnesses, the signatures of my
father and myself."

"The signature is undoubtedly," said
John, looking rather sadly at his brother's
handwriting. "Would not the copy also
be signed?"

"No," said Mr. Gregory. "It was
an accurate copy carefully made, but there
was no necessity to sign it."

"Then where does the trouble come
from, and how can it be serious?"

"We do not yet know," the solicitor
answered. "But we shall presently learn.
I thought it better to see you so that you
might be able to assure us that no other
will had been made. Are you certain
that your brother destroyed the copy before
his death?"

"I have no positive evidence. It was
not among his papers. It seems natural
to me that he should have destroyed it.
What use would it be to him or to anybody
else?"

"Yet I wish we had direct evidence,"
said the lawyer. "Matters will develop
themselves in a few days. Are you going
to stay in Princeton, Mr. Fausset?"

"Can I go over to Kingscote? What
is my position there?"

"You have no legal right in Kingscote
House at present, though there is nobody
with the power to turn you out."

"Thanks. I will remain in Princeton."

As John Fausset left the room, Mr.
Gregory turned to his son.

"Miss Clara Gesson has the copy," he
said. "I wonder who and of what sort
she is. Mark me, Miles, we are in a
difficulty here. There is trouble ahead."

John Fausset took rooms in the inn at
Princeton, and remained there in anxious
suspense. He was glad when his sister joined
him. She came with her husband, hoping
to find out for herself more than her
brother in his guarded letters had cared
to tell her. Her presence did Fausset
good. Her disbelief in such injustice and
her inability to comprehend that there
could be any law with power to deprive
them of their inheritance, when once the
will had been destroyed, braced his nerves
and gave him strength. He was much
more hopeful when the solicitor sent for
him. Boss and he went to the office
together.

"There is trouble," said Mr. Gregory.

"As far as we can learn, a copy of the will
has been found."

"What then?" said Fausset. "If it
is only a copy, surely it is valueless."

"That depends," the lawyer answered.

"The business is in acute and not over-
scrupulous hands."

"But the will was destroyed," Mrs.
Malcolm said. "And that is an end of the
matter."

"The law moves cautiously, my dear
madam, and does not settle matters quite
so quickly. Suppose that it had been
destroyed accidentally——"*

"But my brother's letter shows that such
was not the case."

"Or illegally!"

"What then?" John Fausset asked.

"Why then,—mind you, I do not say
that it is so in this matter, but still there
have been cases and it has been done—
then it is quite possible that a copy of the
will might be admitted to probate."

"Do you mean," said John Fausset,
"that now, though my brother has given
definite instructions to have his will de-
stroyed, and though these instructions
have been carried out, this copy, which has been accidentally preserved,
can be used as if it were his valid
will?"

"There is that possibility, I regret to
say," the solicitor answered. "It is a
delicate point, and I cannot pretend to
decide it. I have asked you to come to
me to-day to propose that we should go..."
together to London to consult an eminent authority on this subject. I have already written to Mr. Fischer, Q.C. His word in such a matter is the law. He can receive us the day after to-morrow, if you are so inclined."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Malcolm. "We will both go. I cannot credit such injustice."

The heart of John Fansset sank within him as he listened to the Princeton solicitor explaining the state of the case to Mr. Fischer. The eminent Queen's counsel listened for a few moments, then he stopped Mr. Gregory.

"You say that your son destroyed the will of the late Oscar Fansset?"

"Yes."

"Was Mr. Fansset there at the time?"

"How do you mean?"

"Was he present in the room at the time of the destruction of the will?"

"No, certainly not. The will was destroyed at Princeton. Mr. Oscar Fansset was then in Liverpool."

"Do you know this copy to be authentic?"

"If it is the one which I caused to be made in my office and checked with my own hands."

"Then you cannot go into court."

MR. Gregory looked sadly into his hat; John Fansset seemed to shrink up together in his chair; Mrs. Malcolm, only, rebelled against the death-sentence.

"Do you mean," she said, "that this copy will run as if it were my brother's will?"

Fischer went to a bookcase and took down two volumes. He opened one, and put his hand directly upon a page which he showed to her. In it she read that for the destruction of a will to be of effect, it must be destroyed in the presence of the testator. Then he opened the other book and pointed out decisions in three cases. Seeing that with her dazed eyes she could make nothing of the print, he read the three extracts to her in sonorous tones. As she listened she found only the slender consolation of knowing that, though she had thought her brother and herself were the two most unlucky persons in the country, there had been at least three people who, by the interpretation of a law designed to meet quite another set of circumstances, had been plunged in exactly similar misfortunes.

"What are we to do?" said Mr. Gregory.

"That is not my affair," said the Q.C. "I can only give my opinion upon the law!"

"There is no hope!"

"You cannot go into court. But if I were in the place of your clients, I should put a bold face upon it, bluster about the fight you are going to make, and hope to obtain a compromise."

"Thank you," the solicitor answered, "we will take up no more of your time."

"What did you say?" said John Fansset, as they came out into the street.

"I said, sir, that I have a fool for a son."

"No!" answered the other. "It is fate. He could not have reached my brother before his death, if he had started at once for Liverpool."

With such small consolation they parted.

CHAPTER III.

At Aix-les-Bains spring is a season of smiles and tears as elsewhere. But, though the snow-gusts and rain-storms are long in going, nowhere are the sunny days fuller of promises. On a brilliant morning in mid-April John Fansset stood at the door of his hotel. The house was at the foot of the market-place and faced the mountain. The crowd which passed before him was very novel to his sight.

The sound of the confused cries of the sellers in the market-place; the sight of bright colours and quaint garments, of the white hotels and the pretentious bathing-establishment; and above all the cluster and noise, the silent, clear-cut cliffs of the snow-covered mountain rising calmly into the blue sky, made up a scene which gave him a new interest for the first time for months.

John Fansset had passed a winter of anxiety. Now, in early spring, Kingscote House seemed as far away from him as ever. The action had not yet been brought into court, and no compromise had been agreed upon. He had determined to leave England for a few weeks, and had broken his journey at Aix-les-Bains on his way to Rome.

Leaning against the porch of the hotel and surveying the novel scene which displayed itself before him, he already felt less harassed. The English-speaking waiter had detected his nationality and was hovering near him, flitting the dust with a table napkin from the little white tables set close together under the awning.

Presently John Fansset felt somebody
brisk by him, and saw a lady pass down the garden of the hotel and take her way into the market-place. He watched her as she stopped at a stall and bought some flowers, and walked slowly on out of his sight amongst the chaffering fruit-dealers and sellers of small wares.

"Who is that lady?" he said to the waiter.

"Oh! yes," the waiter answered, "since some days. An English messe vairrey jolly."

"Jolly!" said Fausset, thinking of the tall and rather stately figure which had caught his eye. "Very jolly!"

"Jolly," said the other, "vairrey well. What d'ye call 'im? Pretty, vairrey pretty."

"Ah! and is she here alone?"

"No, m'sieu, but it is the same thing. She is with her father. He is ill during much time, vairrey invalid."

"Indeed. What is the matter with him?"

"One says it is the podagre."

"The what?" said Fausset.

"What d'ye call 'im?" said the waiter, showing his gleaming teeth. "It 'ave 'im by the toes."

"Oh!" said Fausset. "The gout. And he is here to drink the waters. What is his name?"

"Saysong," the waiter answered.

"Eh? Saysong? Curious name! Do you mean Sassoon, waiter?"

"Vairrey well, m'sieu. You are right. Salsong—that is it. Vairey difficult for pronounce."

John Fausset found no difficulty in making the acquaintance of Miss Sassoon. It was easy to manoeuvre himself into a place next her at the table d'hôte, and he found her quite willing to talk to a fellow-countryman. After a few days, Fausset found himself accompanying her upon the morning ramble through the market-place, and from thence a walk upon the slopes of the mountain followed as a matter of course.

The father did not make his appearance. It seemed that the gout had him, as the waiter said, pretty tightly by the toes. For this Fausset was duly thankful, and the daughter seemed to have no regrets. There was a fascination in this informal friendship; in the snark talk at dinner surrounded by strangers; in the walk in the crisp morning sunshine, or the scramble up the steep mountain paths until they touched the first fringe of snow, and pretended that they dared to go no further.

Week after week Fausset delayed his departure for Rome, until the time drew near to which he had limited his tour, and when he had determined to go back to London and fight out the vexed question of his brother's will. But somewhere above, in the transparent blue sky, unknown to him, a bolt was forging, which in its fall was to change all his life, and perhaps to supersede the jurisdiction of the law courts.

The change began with an adventure. More than once of late, Fausset and Miss Sassoon, growing more daring, had passed from the bare mountain-side by devious tracks, and had stood together upon what they chose to think was eternal snow. But spring reigned still in Aix-les-Bains. Later on, under the hot sun of summer, much of this snow would rush rambling down the mountain cliffs to swell the lake below. Already the increasing heat was beginning to have its effect, and more than once they saw the cloud of white dust which marked the track of an avalanche.

It was from this cause that their adventure came. They were standing together upon a narrow path which wound, half-protected by a ledge, round the side of a cliff, and were looking down upon the miniature town below them. Suddenly the air was full of a rush and rattle; a momentary darkness enveloped them. By an almost involuntary action Fausset flung one of his arms round his companion, and held her against the cliff, shielded by his own body. He was just conscious of a sense of shock, of being buffeted by a power which he could not resist, until blackness fell upon his eyes and the light of day swept away from him.

When he awoke he was lying upon the cliff-path, half covered by snow, and his companion was kneeling by him, holding his head upon her knee. He looked up into her face and met her eyes looking into his, full of sorrow and anxiety for him. At last he struggled to his feet. Below him was the gulf down which the avalanche had plunged. The overhanging ledge of rock which had broken the force of the falling snow was all that had saved them. But he was more hurt than he had thought. A piece of rock hurled down amid the snow had lacerated his right arm, and his back and loins felt as if they had been crushed. It was a difficult struggle for him, leaning upon the arm of his companion, to get down the mountain paths. When at last, almost exhausted, he reached
the hotel, the doctor ordered him to bed and kept him there for a week.

A great disappointment awaited him when he could go downstairs and sit under the awning in the hotel garden. His first thought was to ask the waiter about the Sassoons. The answer annoyed and surprised him.

"The m'sieu 'ave recover, and say 'ave leaf Aix sees five days."

Still more vexations was it that their destination was unknown. They had gone on a tour, the waiter said, through Italy, and where they might be now was for him—a shrug of the shoulders.

Fausset could get no more information from the hotel manager. The friendship which had so charmed him had made an abrupt ending. There was nothing for him to do but to make as quick a recovery as he could and go back to England.

There, still suffering from the physical shock which he had undergone, and as much from the soreness of heart which had been added to it, he passed a miserable month trying to force the matter of the will to a decision, but continually foiled by the dilatory tactics of the solicitors who were against him.

"It is a good sign," said Mr. Gregory in his office at Princeton; "but it surprises me. The delay is all from the other side. They cannot feel safe. I should not wonder if something were saved after all."

The monotony of waiting was at last interrupted for John Fausset by an urgent letter from his sister. She was in London, and wanted to see him immediately. He found on going to her hotel that she had received a letter which perplexed her.

The letter was anonymous. It said that the writer earnestly wished to see Mrs. Malcolm upon the subject of the late Mr. Oscar Fausset's will, and that such an interview, if granted, would no doubt lead to a settlement of the matter in dispute. The desire was added that the interview should be with Mrs. Malcolm alone.

"It is most mysterious," John Fausset said, "most mysterious! I wonder who the writer is. You ought not to see him alone. Let him say what he has to say before Gregory and me. We cannot have any hole-and-corner compromise in a matter like this."

"Yet, John," his sister answered, "it looks like a chance. And it would be so useful if we could save something. Can it not be arranged?"

"Alone?"

"Well, at first. You and Mr. Gregory, if you liked, could come in while it was going on. There would be nothing to prevent you. Your presence would not be likely to thwart the compromise if it were once broached."

To John Fausset this seemed a very simple plan, and feasible if not quite fair. Still, he was dealing with opponents who, he was long assured, were altogether unjust. To set such a snare in ordinary circumstances would not have been possible for him. But here were people who were trying to make capital out of the sudden death of his brother, and obviously against the dead man's wishes. Any weapons were fair against such combatants. The end of his thought was to agree with his sister's scheme. The old solicitor, unwilling to see the prize slip away from him, gave his consent to accompany Fausset.

At the time appointed for the interview Mrs. Malcolm sat in a private room in the hotel, awaiting her visitor. As the clock marked the appointed time, the door opened and a lady was ushered in. Mrs. Malcolm rose in surprise. She had been bracing herself for a struggle with some keen-minded, unscrupulous lawyer, come for the purpose of overreaching her. With a woman it seemed that the whole affair at once took a different aspect.

The new-comer was tall, dressed in mourning, and veiled. She stood where she had stopped on entering, a yard or two from the door.

"I am Mrs. Malcolm. Did you write desiring to see me?"

"Yes," said the other; "it was I who wrote. I wished to give you this."

She brought out her hand from under the cloak with a long envelope in it, and held it towards Mrs. Malcolm.

"I do not understand," the lady replied.

"Who are you? And what is this?"

"When you have this you will not care to enquire who I may be. You had better take it. It is what you have long desired."

How Mrs. Malcolm would have acted she did not know. At that moment her surprise was so great that she could not think. This interview was so utterly different from what she had expected that she found herself dazed and without the power to act. Here was what might be the disputed copy of the will offered to her at a distance of a few yards, and she could not make a step, or put forward her hand to take it.
OSCAR FAUSSET'S WILL.

In the midst of her bewilderment the door opened, and John Fausset entered with the solicitor. There was a moment of awkward silence. Mrs. Malcolm remembered afterwards that she saw the extended hand of her visitor tremble as the two men looked at her.

Gregory broke the silence. His question was the same as Mrs. Malcolm had put: 

"Who are you, madam?" he said. "And what may this be?"

"Never mind," was the answer. "While you can get it, take it. I may repent.

The voice touched a chord which vibrated at once through Fausset's memory. He sprang forward.

"Miss Sassoon!" he said. "You here! What is the meaning of this? Why did you leave Aix so suddenly?"

The visitor raised her veil and showed him the face which he had last seen when, battered and half-fainting, the doctor had led him into the hotel at Aix-les-Bains.

"Forgive me," she said, "if I allowed you to deceive yourself. The name by which you called me was not mine. I was lonely at Aix, and my name would have put an end at once to our pleasant friendship. Pardon me if I allowed a mistake which gave me some happiness. Then you saved my life. I owe it to myself to be at peace with you. Here is the matter in dispute between us. Take it, and let me go. I am Clara Gesson!"

John Fausset stepped back. His mind flew to his first morning at Aix. The stirring scene, the brilliant sunshine, the snow-capped mountain, and the waiter flicking the flies from the marble tables, and struggling with the English language. In the man's mispronunciation all the mistake had occurred. He and his enemy had sat and walked and talked together, had flirted and thoroughly enjoyed the company of each other, until a chance incident had deepened the feeling between them, causing her flight and his own sudden retreat to London.

Now she stood there with the treaty of peace held out in front of her, and he could not take it.

Mr. Gregory came to the rescue.

"I beg your pardon, young lady," he said, "but I do not quite understand all this. You are Miss Gesson, and you are Miss Sassoon. We have long supposed you to be our enemy, and Mr. John Fausset halls you eagerly as his friend. We are at this moment prepared to meet you in the law courts and you come here with the bone of contention in your hand, begging us to take it. What does it all mean?"

Clara Gesson smiled sadly enough. In her black dress, and with the softened look upon her face, she was very different from the bold, hard beauty, who had driven Oscar Fausset from her feet.

"That you had better take it while you can get it," she said; "and leave me to go my own way in peace."

"And your father. What will he say to this sudden surrender?"

"I am free. My father is dead."

"Dead!" cried John Fausset.

"He died at Como three weeks after we left Aix-les-Bains."

There was a short silence, during which the solicitor looked searchingly at the girl. Since he had taken up this case he had made himself conversant with the affairs of the Gesson family. He knew thoroughly the raffish adventurer and his method of life. He knew how hardly the daughter had lived. He knew the law; that she held a fortune in her hand if she cared to take it; that she now stretched forth her hand to give it up. He knew the greatness of the sacrifice, but he could not understand the reason for making it.

"Are you left very rich then, Miss Gesson?" he said.

The girl intuitively felt the knowledge of her questioner.

"I am provided for," she said evasively.

"In what way? Come, come, Miss Gesson. You must be frank with us, and I shall be so with you. I know that your father can have left you nothing. How are you provided for?"

The girl's eyes sank. The sacrifice which she was making was plain to her. The strain of the interview was breaking down her nerve.

"I have a situation," she murmured, without raising her eyes. "I am provided for."

Then John Fausset was carried away by an impulse of which at his age he should have been incapable. He ran forward and flung his right arm round Clara Gesson, holding her as he had held Clara Sassoon upon the mountain above Aix. The copy of the will fluttered down upon the floor.

"Come, come, Mrs. Malcolm," said Gregory; "let us go. It seems to me very likely that there is going to be a compromise after all."

One morning, not very long afterwards,
Mrs. Ross Malcolm gave to Miss Clara Geeson quite a charming little locket set with pearls and diamonds. Two hours later Mrs. John Fausset presented to her sister-in-law a deed of gift of exactly the amount which she would have inherited if the copy of Oscar Fausset's will had never been preserved.

A SIMPLE EXPLANATION.

By MARGARET MOULE.

CHAPTER I.

If there was one thing Salford was more proud of than another, it was its Convalescent Home. It was quite new; its erection had been the Jubilee commemoration that approved itself to Salford; and it was the only one in the county.

These facts will explain the profound interest that sat on the brows of seven men gathered together in Salford one spring morning. For these seven were the committee of the Convalescent Home, and they were gathered to decide a point of infinite moment to that establishment: the appointment of a new matron. They were assembled in a room with dark wire window-blinds to each of its three windows, and a collection of neat japanned boxes grouped in symmetrical order on shelves around the walls. There was a worn mahogany table in the middle of the room, round which the seven were sitting; and there were two clerks in an outer room, each ardentely engaged, at this moment, in drawing the other on his blotting-paper.

Clerks and blotting-paper, table, blinde, and room, were the property of a little man in a long coat, who sat on the right side of the chairman at the top of the table.

The chairman was the Vicar. Why the Vicar always was elected chairman on these occasions, when he was the worst man of business in Salford, the rest of the committee best knew; or rather, they did not know, as they had more than once frankly owned. "It seems the proper thing to do," Mr. Norton would say, with a depressing wriggle of the skirt of his coat. Mr. Norton was the little man at the top of the table.

The Vicar beamed benignantly at the table through glasses which, being put on at the wrong angle, were just out of his proper line of vision, and thus caused him to slant his gaze upwards. He was tapping the table feebly with a pen, and evidently had something to say, but a trim, neat man with an alert air at the opposite end was too quick for him.

"I should like it to be understood, gentlemen," he said, in a decided voice, "that I, for my part, am ready to place perfect confidence in these testimonials."

"And coming from you, Doctor, we think a lot of that!" struck in another member of the committee. He was a short man with red hair, wearing a black coat that sat so uncomfortably upon him about the sleeves as to shadow forth the idea that it was not a garment he customarily wore. This was the fact. Mr. Mott was a grocer; "in a large way of business," he himself would have added. And shirt-sleeves were his comfortable daily wear.

A little murmur of incoherent acclamations followed from a short man with an amiably smiling face, the manager of the Salford bank. It was echoed languidly by a middle-aged man by his side, who considered that acclamations was the only reasonable course for a man of peaceful intentions.

"Twenty-nine!" said the chairman oracularly, after Mr. Mott's speech and its echoes had subsided. "Twenty-nine is——"

"A great deal too young!" The words were very quietly spoken. They came from the seventh member of the committee. He was sitting between Mr. Mott and the bank manager.

It is a frivolous comparison to make, but there was in Mordaunt Dennisson's personality, to an imaginative mind, an ever-present suggestion of the hero of that most pathetic of myths, Beauty and the Beast.

He was very plain; "ugly" would have been the word used by every woman in Salford. The effect of an awkwardly broad forehead, high cheek-bones, a heavy mouth, and a chin that threatened to recede, was heightened by the dull complexion that made the whole of the clean-shaven face one brick-red sort of hue. It was redeemed only by a pair of singularly frank and direct blue eyes; but even they were ill-set—much too sunken, beneath ragged and scanty eyebrows. His was also rather short, and heavy in figure. The suggestiveness lay not in his actual plainness alone, though; there was something about him that carried its perhaps fanciful appropriateness further; and this something was a certain frankly modest consciousness of all
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION.

By mabel mohle.

CHAPTER I.

Mordaunt Dennison rose. Apparently what he had to say demanded a standing position.

"I agree with precisely one-half of what you say," he began abruptly. "We do
want energy, skill, and cheerfulness; you are quite right there. But it is possible to procure them without combining with them beauty, coquettishness, and inexperience—three wholly unnecessary adjuncts," he added, with a touch of sarcasm. "Which adjuncts you will assuredly find yourselves burdened with if you engage Miss Kerr."

Thereupon he sat down very quietly, but the attributes ascribed to Miss Kerr had been so emphasized by him as to penetrate vaguely to the outer room, and there to cause one of Mr. Norton's overworked clerks to express to the other a disturbing wonder as to "what Dennison was slanging the rest about."

The emphasis also penetrated to the Vicar's inmost sensibilities, and roused there an uncomfortable suspicion which did at times just struggle into life in his mind, namely, that something was expected from him as chairman. He was vaguely wondering whether he should tap forthwith on the table with his penholder, or whether it was expected of him that he should say "Order!" when his doubts and difficulties were cut short by Dr. Vinter, who started to his feet with a movement that jerked the table.

"It is time this thing was settled one way or the other!" he said. "Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the question of Miss Kerr's engagement be at once put to the vote."

Mr. Mott and Mr. Norton rose almost before he had done. Mr. Norton sat down again with a wriggle; and Mr. Mott said, ponderously, that "he begged to second the motion."

The Vicar pulled himself together, if not rapidly, at least steadily. He dropped the penholder, and proceeded to set in motion the time-honoured British machinery for deciding doubtful points. Ten minutes later Miss Ethel Kerr had been elected matron of the Salford Convalescent Home by a majority of six votes to one.

CHAPTER II.

"So I have thought it well to give you a simple explanation, Miss Kerr, that you may quite understand any temporary brouhahas in our good friend Dennison."

The Vicar was standing half in and half out of a doorway at the side of the entrance hall at the Convalescent Home, with the words "Matron's Room" painted across the panels of its door.
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION.

windows. Opposite the nearer window was a fireplace, the afternoon containing a small bright fire. The sofa on which Miss Kerr sat was close to the fire. It was a pretty little sofa, covered in the newest of cretonnes. Scattered about the room were two or three inviting basket-chairs, and small tables. There was a writing-table, which looked, in spite of daintiness in all its appointments, very practical and business-like, in the window opposite the fire; and there was a great cage of canaries in the further one.

There were pictures on the walls; and there was on the table a glass of violets. Everything bore traces of the graceful finishing touch which only a womanly woman can give to a room, and which in itself is comfort.

Miss Kerr had been established at the Salford Convalescent Home for four days only; and it had only taken two of those days to transform the bare outlines of her private room into what the youngest member of the staff, Nurse Rose, described as "a really lovely place."

Once more Miss Kerr rubbed the tears of laughter out of her eyes; and then putting her little handkerchief into her apron pocket with a quick movement of a firm, strong hand, became suddenly grave, and a quick frown clouded her forehead.

"Incompetent! Too young for my work!" she said musingly. "And pray why should this man, whoever he may be, sit in judgement on me?"

"Come in!" she added, in answer to a knock at the door.

It was opened by Nurse Rose, a little woman with bright dark eyes, and a pleasant smile. She had a card in her hand.

"Matron," she said, "Mr. Mordaunt Dennison has called. Shall I bring him in?"

Miss Kerr stretched out her hand for the card; the frown just showed itself again on her forehead, and then a little flash came into the blue eyes.

"Four, Gray Street," she read, half aloud. "Nurse Rose," she went on, looking up quickly, "your people live here. Who is this Mr. Dennison? What is he?"

Nurse Rose cast a furtive glance towards the door.

"Mr. Dennison?" she repeated, with evident surprise in her tone. "I don't suppose you've been down Gray Street yes, though. His shop is on the right-hand side as you go towards the church—a big bookseller's."

"His shop!" repeated Miss Kerr, with an indescribable intonation. "Ah! Yes, Nurse Rose, bring him in, please," she added. "And you might see that some tea is sent here, will you? I suppose I had better give him some."

The last sentence was spoken to herself.

Nurse Rose had left the room with flying footsteps. A moment later the door opened again, and, unannounced—for Nurse Rose, having conveyed him to the door, had left to see about the tea—Mordaunt Dennison entered.

In spite of his plainness and heaviness, Mordaunt Dennison was never awkward. He was too absolutely free from self-consciousness to be awkward. The first thing that struck Miss Kerr, and it struck her with a curious astonishment as belonging to "a tradesman," was his dignity of manner. She found herself unable to do quite what she had intended. Yet her manner was chilling enough as she rose from the sofa and said, with the gesture of a princess at least:

"Mr. Dennison, I believe. Pray sit down."

Mr. Dennison did sit down; concealing with successful ease the fact that he had been prepared to shake hands. He sat down in the full light of the lowering March sun as it streamed through the further window. And in that light Miss Kerr perceived him to be what she mentally specified as "the most frightfully plain" man she had ever seen.

There was an unusual stiffness about Mordaunt Dennison, but it came from no realisation of her point of view regarding himself. On the contrary, it came from his own realisation of the fact that Miss Kerr was far prettier than her photograph, and quite the most beautiful woman he had ever seen; and the stiffness made his manner almost freezing, as he said:

"You find your rooms here comfortable, I trust?"

Miss Kerr was nonplussed for a moment. His voice, like his dignity, was, to her, unexpected. Also, it was difficult to maintain a cold and crushing demeanour to an individual who expressed his appreciation of it by using the same himself.

But she collected herself in a moment. This man must be shown at once his place and her knowledge of it. For a mere tradesman—a tradesman who had dared to object to her—to sit there cool and
collected while she felt at a loss, was not to be borne. She would "dispose of him" at once, she said to herself.

"Thank you, yes," she replied coldly.

"It is very good of you to give yourself the trouble to come and enquire as to my feelings about them, in your business hours."

She accompanied the words with an emphasis that was a covert sneer. Miss Kerr was more or less a "great lady" by birth, and she knew as well as any other of the set she was born into how to sneer politely.

But the occasions on which, through life, she had used this accomplishment might have easily been counted up on the fingers of one hand, and the fact that she found it necessary to do so now was a curious testimony to the insinence the personality of the stranger "tradesman" was exercising on her.

A slight flush made Mordaunt Dennison's plain face planter yet. But it was not perceptible to Miss Kerr's eyes, and no single other trace of any discomfort was visible about him.

"My time is my own," he said quietly, "and I am glad to place any of it at your service."

He paused. Miss Kerr apparently had no response ready. She played with the frill of the sofa cushion nearest to her. Mordaunt Dennison meanwhile seemed to change his tactics slightly. The stiffness gave way to a simple, self-possessed dignity.

"I waited until to-day," he went on, "thinking you would scarcely be prepared for visitors earlier; but the transformation you have effected here has indeed been rapid and complete."

He accompanied the words with a glance at the pretty room that was meant to make them into a compliment. A spirit of absolute rudeness rose in Miss Kerr. To have her sneer ignored had irritated her more than she knew; to have itcondoned, so to speak, and put aside was more than she could bear. She dropped the frill of the cushion, and turned so as to face Mordaunt Dennison more fully.

"You will pardon me," she said in a sarcastic tone, "if I fail to understand how the satisfactoriness of the arrangements I make for my personal comfort can concern you, Mr. Dennison. But since you are so good as to think that they do, I am indeed gratified to have satisifed you in this particular. I understand I am likely to do so in no other."

"Indeed!" Mordaunt Dennison said slowly, and turned his direct eyes with the word full on Miss Kerr's face. The absolute coolness and apparent indifference of the tone and gesture had an effect on Miss Kerr like oil on a smouldering fire. It turned her cool insolence to personal resentment. Five minutes after Mordaunt Dennison had gone away she was wondering at herself, and trying vainly to account for the sudden rush of passion that flamed her cheeks as she said hoibly and hastily:

"Yes, certainly. You think me incompetent?"

"I have had no opportunity of judging," was the reply.

"You think me—" she hesitated; she could not say to him that she knew he had spoken of her as too pretty. "You think me too young and too injudicious for the position?" she said wrathfully.

"You will pardon my saying that you are scarcely giving me cause to alter my opinion."

The justice of the words, and the quiet force with which they were said, checked Miss Kerr for an instant. She looked at Mordaunt Dennison's imperturbable, quiet face, and felt a trifle ashamed of herself. But it was only for an instant.

"Your opinion!" she said freckly.

"Fortunately your opinion is of absolutely no moment to me."

Mordaunt Dennison rose. Miss Kerr rose, too, and the two stood facing each other.

At this auspicious moment Nurse Bose came in with the tea. She drew the little table towards them, and set the teaspread upon it. Neither Mr. Dennison nor Miss Kerr spoke. Suddenly the latter said in a forcedly polite tone, obviously for the benefit of Nurse Bose:

"You will let me give you some tea?"

"No, I thank you," was the answer.

And with a dignified bow, Mordaunt Dennison left the room.

Miss Kerr dismissed Nurse Bose with a courtesy that surprised that good little soul, walked to the window, and stood staring into the canaries' cage.

Meanwhile, Mordaunt Dennison walked down the rough gravelly road towards Seldorl. His plain face was drawn into lines of thought, and his clear eyes, even though they were fixed on it, did not seem to perceive the stones on the road.

Some eighty years before, Mordaunt Dennison's grandfather, a man of Quaker descent and beliefs, who therefore wholly failed to see any barrier between gentility
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION.

“I don’t care what you are or are not supposed to be! What on earth is the good of being the boss of a place, Ethel, if you can’t do what you like?”

“Oh, but think of the committee, Harry! Suppose we met them!”

“Suppose we meet Mentor, for instance!” he retorted mockingly.

A little angry flush of colour darted into Miss Kerr’s face. She tapped her foot angrily against the leg of the footstool in front of her chair.

“Don’t talk nonsense, Harry,” she said shortly. “Mr. Dennison may make himself as horrid as he likes, but I don’t care a fig more for him than for any one else; rather less, in fact!”

It was a lovely evening in the middle of May. Two months had gone by since Miss Kerr’s appointment as matron of the Salford Convalescent Home. During those two months the satisfaction with which the committee—one member thereof—had received her, had blossomed into enthusiasm. She was “so remarkably pleasing,” the Vicar said to every one he came across, in season and out of season. “Such an affable young person,” Mr. Mott declared. These two sentiments were echoed in varying forms by the bank manager, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Norton; while Dr. Vinter rarely came away from the Home after his daily visit without saying to himself in a tone of self-congratulation that “really that young woman’s head was screwed on the right way.” So highly indeed did Dr. Vinter think of Miss Kerr that he had been only too willing to embrace a suggestion made to him by her. About five weeks before this particular May evening Dr. Vinter’s assistant had suddenly proved a failure and had been summarily dismissed, leaving the doctor somewhat at a loss and in the midst of a heavy press of work. When Miss Kerr stepped into the breach by suggesting that a young cousin of hers might possibly prove eligible for the vacant post, he thankfully acted upon the idea. She did not know much of Harry West, she said frankly; they had not met for years. But Dr. Vinter made light of that. The young man was Miss Kerr’s cousin, and he considered himself fortunate to get him.

The female population of Salford cordially echoed this opinion when Harry West put in his appearance at Salford. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, with more than his share of the rather orthodox good looks comprised in fair hair, good eyes,
and a fair moustache. In addition to this, his social instincts were of the most highly developed order, and he was unanimously agreed to be "quite an acquisition."

The approval with which the young man was regarded grew and strengthened as the weeks slipped by; but the appreciation with which the whole of Selford, prompted by the committee, regarded Miss Kerr, decidedly fell off, as far as the female Selford was concerned, as it became evident that Harry West apparently meant to lose no opportunity of making up or lost time in improving the acquaintance of his pretty cousin. He spent all his spare moments in the matron's room, and all his spare energy in inveigling Miss Kerr either to come and brighten by her presence his own distinctly contrasting habitation, or to take walks with him. Before very long there were numerous pairs of eyes in Selford that looked with disapproval upon the matron of the Convalescent Home.

Among these the one pair of eyes that had looked upon her with disfavour from the first remained apparently the keenest and most direct. During the two months of Miss Kerr's residence in Selford, Mordaunt Dennison had seemed bent upon justifying his first impression of her as derived from photographs and written statements. He had watched her from week to week with tactful criticism, and at the fortnightly committee meetings the criticism had been no longer tactful. When the enthusiasm of his brother committee-men had reached its flood, its meanderings inevitably found themselves stayed by a quiet adverse comment of which neither the justice nor the reticence was to be impugned. When the visit of inspection which always ended the committee meetings was covering Miss Kerr with a mantle of glory, it was always Mordaunt Dennison who gently but firmly detected and pointed out the rift inevitable to all such mantles.

The expression of Miss Kerr's face now, as she retorted upon her cousin's allusion to her "mentor," implied that she had returned this criticism with interest to the considerable development of her sentiments towards the "tradesman" who had taken the liberty of objecting to her. An understanding of the position which Mordaunt Dennison held in Selford had necessarily come to Miss Kerr, but the contemptuous curl of her pretty lip as she finished her statement asserted with almost unnecessary vigour that she for her part entirely declined to concede it to him.

Her cousin laughed.

"Ah, but you really should," he said, "after the pains he takes to improve you!"

"How long will it take us, Harry?"

Miss Kerr had risen impetuously, her eyes flashing with almost unnecessary vindictiveness.

"Oh, about half an hour, I should say," he returned carelessy. "And it's only just half-past nine."

"Wait while I go and get my things!" she answered impulsively.

Harry West sat down in the easiest chair near to him as she left the room, but in an incredibly brief time the door reopened to admit Miss Kerr, looking prettier than ever with the brightness of her flushed cheeks enhanced by her outdoor bonnet and cloak.

"I'm ready, Harry!" she said rather defiantly. And the two set out together.

Their destination was a little plantation just outside Selford, known by the somewhat enigmatical name, given it in a more sentimental age, of "The Walk of Delight." It was celebrated for its nightingales.

Harry West had developed a sudden desire to hear those birds, but though they were singing almost clamorously when the two reached the plantation, they did not appear to make any great impression on him. Nor did Miss Kerr pay much attention, as it seemed, to what she had been brought to hear. There was an odd little air of excitement about her, a curiously tentative flash of defiance in her blue eyes; and the hand she had laid, at Harry West's urgent request, just inside his arm, was just a little tremulous and shrinking.

The conversation in the Walk of Delight was carried on mainly in a fluent monologue by Harry West. Perhaps the least abstracted contribution to it on Miss Kerr's part was the little sigh of relief that escaped her when the gate of the plantation finally closed behind them.

"We had better walk fast, Harry," she said; "It must be getting very late!"

Harry West looked down at her with a smile which threatened to develop itself into a laugh.

"I know it's Dennison that's on your mind," he exclaimed. "I should cheer up if I were you! He's safe in the bosom of his family at this hour."

Miss Kerr snatched her hand from his arm, and gave her head a little contemptuous toss. Her shrinking demeanour vanished, and her pose was almost aggressively alert and confident.
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION.

CHAPTER IV.

It was about two o'clock on the following afternoon, and Miss Kerr was writing letters; that is to say, she was sitting at the writing-table in the window, and to judge from the pile of addressed envelopes beside her, the correspondence demanding her attention was heavy. But none of those envelopes had as yet any letter inside it, and on the sheet lying on the blotting-pad before her was inscribed the date and nothing more. She was sitting with the pen poised in her hand, staring blankly out of the window.

On her pretty face was an expression that had never shadowed it before. The nurses that morning had found Miss Kerr for the first time fretfully impatient and irritatedly unreasonable. Miss Kerr's eyes were very bright and very cold; upon her forehead two lines as of thought or intense irritation had gravely themselves deeply; her pretty mouth was set in a hard, determined line. The whole told of something between anger and distress. On the end of her penholder were several rows of little dents, and while she stared out of the window she bit it with a fierce gesture of self-contempt.

A footstep on the gravel outside made her look up. She dropped the pen with a sudden movement, and started to her feet, turning towards the door with a look which was expressive of an almost wild desire to escape, and which settled gradually into a half-concealed defiance and a struggling fear. She was still standing staring at the door when a knock came upon it, and she started violently.

"Come in," she said, in a voice curiously like her face. The door opened to admit Mordaunt Dennison.

Mordaunt Dennison was a trifle pale, and his keen, direct eyes looked even keener than usual. He held himself very upright, and seemed to bring in with him an atmosphere of his own; an atmosphere of decision.

Before he could even turn to shut the door behind him, Miss Kerr spoke.

"Won't you sit down!" she said rapidly and brusquely.

Mordaunt Dennison gave no sign of having heard her. He shut the door silently, and as silently took two or three steps towards her.

"Miss Kerr," he said, "I must apologise for disturbing you so early in the day, but I want to speak to you on a rather important matter."
A SIMPLE EXPLANATION. [Conducted by

"Let's go round by the town, Harry! ... apologise for disturbing you so early in the day, but I want to speak to you on a rather important matter."

Mordaunt Dennison gave no sign of surprise. Miss Kerr seemed to be occupied in tracing out the pattern of the carpet; she neither lifted her eyes nor spoke.

"That one step is," he went on, "to come, as I have now done, to you, and to impress upon you the desirability of your setting aside such motives as you doubtless have for silence on the subject, and proclaiming to the committee and to the world in general, the state of the case as to your relations with Mr. Harry West."

"My relations with Mr. Harry West!" Miss Kerr had raised her face with a violence which made the movement almost a jerk, and she was gazing at Mordaunt Dennison with blank astonishment in her eyes, and her colour coming and going.

"You see," he went on steadily, "it would be of comparatively little consequence if it were only I who had seen you. But that, I fear, is hardly possible. People's words are apt to outrun their judgement, and might, unless the facts were known, manage to cause you a great deal of unpleasantness, and even involve you in some discredit."

"The facts!" Miss Kerr's exclamation was a sort of gasp.

"Yes," he said quietly. "The fact of your engagement. Of course you are engaged to Mr. West?"

Miss Kerr rose almost tumultuously from her chair.

"But I'm not," she cried. "I never dreamed—oh, I never dreamed of such a thing! I couldn't even think of such a thing! Harry West is my cousin, and as my cousin I like him and am fond of him, but I should no more think of marrying him than of marrying—of marrying—" comparison seemed to fail Miss Kerr.

"You are not engaged to him?" said Mordaunt Dennison slowly.

"Of course not!" repeated Miss Kerr. "Is it likely?" she added vehemently. And she turned and began to pace rapidly up and down the room.

"Then why—"

Miss Kerr stopped suddenly and confronted Mordaunt Dennison, who had risen from his chair, her hands clasping one another almost convulsively, her eyes wide, and every muscle of her face quivering.
“Why did I go out with him last night?” she cried passionately. “Why do you suppose? Because I was tired of being found fault with for trifles! Because your incessant carping and criticism is more than I will stand! Because your constant injustice and persistent prejudice cried out for some sort of justification. You’ve got your justification now! Take what steps you like upon it!” Miss Kerr threw herself down upon the sofa, buried her head in the cushion, and broke into a storm of unaccountable sobs and tears.

For a long moment the sound of her sob was the only sound that broke the silence of the room. For a long minute Mordaunt Dennison stood motionless, his face growing paler and paler, and that curiously pathetic dignity strengthening second by second. Then he took two steps towards the sofa.

“Miss Kerr,” he said, very gently and very humbly, “Miss Kerr!”

There was a special meeting of the committee of the Convalescent Home next day. It had been requested with much unaccountably sorrowful circumstance by Mr. Mott. He had contrived, indeed, to invest the occasion with so much unexplained solemnity, that the face of each member as the committee assembled one by one in Mr. Norton’s office, was fraught with vague yet fearful foreboding. Mr. Mott sat in majestic silence until the entire meeting was assembled, Mordaunt Dennison being the last arrival. Then he rose.

“Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,” he began solemnly. “It is my onerous task to have a very unpleasant duty laid upon me. I must ask you, gentlemen of the committee, to prepare yourselves for bad, I may say the worst of news.”

Here Mr. Mott paused, looked round the room, and gave three melancholy coughs of a preparatory nature.

“Gentlemen,” he repeated. “A lamentable occurrence indeed has come to my ears, I may say to my eyes. I was driving home, gentlemen, on the night before last from my son-in-law’s at Glenton. My wife had been spending the day there, and I fetched her home in my trap. We were just outside the town when my wife remarked to me: ‘Peter, look there!’ Following her wish I looked, and I saw the lamentable circumstance which I now lay before you—Miss Kerr at ten o’clock walking arm-in-arm in the Salford Road alone with Mr. Harry West. Gentlemen, I can only ask you, what is to be done?”

With another cough Mr. Mott sat down. In the midst of the dead silence that filled the room, Mordaunt Dennison slowly got up from his place.

“Mr. Chairman and gentlemen!” he said. “The occurrence which so exercises Mr. Mott is capable of a simple explanation. This explanation I am happy to be able to give you. But before proceeding to do so, I think it right to inform you that Miss Kerr has promised to be my wife!”

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PRINCE ASPHODEL.

BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER L

WHEN, on a certain chilly January evening, Reggy Gunston—aged twenty-two—shut behind him the door of his mother’s house in Panderton Square, he believed himself to be not merely one of the most miserable, but one of the most ill-used men in town. Only three hours earlier he had proposed to Madge Ainslie and had been rejected, and, figuratively speaking, he still staggered under the blow.

“The matter was right in saying that she was merely amusing herself with me, and I was indeed a callow fool,” he muttered as he turned out of the Square. “A presumptuous boy was what she called me—as if she had not led me on from the first! And I would have shed my heart’s blood for her. A presumptuous boy!”

In that phrase, although he did not know it, lay half the sting of his rejection.

His mother had not been in when he reached home, for which he was thankful; so he had written her a note of three lines, telling her what had befallen him, and had then fled the house.

He walked onward, heedless in which direction his errant footsteps might lead him; shunning as much as possible the main thoroughfares; and choosing instinctively those dull and quiet streets where, after nightfall, the tide of life seems nearly at a standstill.

How long he had been walking he could not have told, when, on turning the corner of a long, dismal street, he found himself in a huge flaring thoroughfare, which was wholly strange to him, and was evidently a converging point for the traffic from three or four different arteries. Reggy’s abstraction was broken up, and he stared around him with some curiosity. He had
not the remotest notion whereabouts he was, but he did not trouble himself to enquire. Every cab-driver in London knows Pendragon Square.

Not being minded just yet to set his face homeward, he turned into the seething stream of humanity, and began to slowly shoulder his way through it. Ten minutes later he found himself opposite the gally-lighted entrance to what was evidently some place of public entertainment, and on casting his eyes upward he saw, framed in a transparency over the portico, the words "Thalia Theatre." It was a place he had often heard of, but had never visited, situated as it was in an unfashionable part of the town, and altogether outside the radius of his ordinary peregrinations.

Regy's eyes, turning to a poster, there read:

"To-night, and every night, the enormously successful Pantomime entitled, 'The Princess with the Golden Locks, or King Hocus-Focus, and the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe.'"

Then he glanced at his watch, which pointed to a quarter past nine.

"Why not drop in for an hour? I may as well bore myself here as anywhere else." There was plenty of room in the stalls, and in one of them he presently ensconced himself. He had seen more pantomimes when a boy than he could remember, but of late years he had felt himself to be superior to this class of entertainment. To-night, he looked for nothing but to be bored, and bored he seemed likely to be.

To our hipped young man the whole business seemed terribly insipid and depressing, but his was perhaps the only solemn face in the house. At the end of half an hour he told himself that he had had enough of it.

Accordingly he rose to go, but next moment he sat down again, for just then, there bounded on from the wings a character he had not seen before, in the person of a tall and graceful girl, attired in mauve silk tights and alabaster satin doublet to match, whose appearance at once arrested his attention. By the time she had been three minutes before the footlights, Regy no longer felt any desire to quit the theatre. Turning to his programme, he read:

"Prince Asphodel, Miss Maude Sinden."

"But that, of course, is only her stage name," added the man to himself.

That Miss Sinden was a pretty girl was undeniable; and there was a certain grace and refinement about everything she did, which the almost entire lack of similar qualities on the part of those by whom she was surrounded only served to bring into more marked contrast. But it was neither her good looks nor the refinement of her acting that attracted Regy after a fashion which was an utter surprise to himself. He had seen a number of young women in his time, chiefly on the burlesque stage, who had conspicuously excelled Miss Sinden both in looks and ability, but never one who had cast over him a spell at once so sudden and unaccountable. As he watched her and listened to her, he asked himself again and again in what this subtle and elusive charm consisted, but at the end of the evening he could only reply that he was no wiser than at the beginning.

Next night saw him again in the stalls of the Thalia, and the next, and the next after that, by which time Madge Ainslie's image had receded very considerably into the background of his thoughts, and he had made the surprising discovery that the wound inflicted by her was not nearly so deep as he had believed it to be. His mother, between whom and Miss Ainslie there had been no love lost, had merely said, when he met her at breakfast on the morning after his rejection: "I am very sorry for you, dear, in one sense, but unfeelingly thankful in another. You have escaped a great misfortune."

It was at the breakfast-table three days later that an exclamation of pleased surprise on his mother's part, who was engaged in the perusal of a letter she had just opened, caused Regy to look up and say:

"What's your good news, mamzie?"

Mrs. Gunston finished her letter before answering. Then she said:

"Your Aunt Goring has written to tell me that a long-awaited event has come to pass. Your cousin, Barbara Howarth, has arrived from Australia, After staying a few weeks at Moorhurst, your aunt and she will come to town together. Dear child! I shall indeed be pleased to see her. Both you and I, Regy, must do our best to give her a good time while she's with us."

Regy made a little grimace to himself.

"It's to be hoped that she'll prove to be presentable," he said drily.

"Girls brought up in the bush are, I believe, sometimes—"

"Regy, how dare you! As if my sister's daughter could be anything but presentable!"

Percy Howarth, the father of the young lady in question, and Regy's father had been fast friends as young men, and the fact of
Charles Dickens.

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their having married two sisters had only
served to knit their friendship still more
closely. But after Howarth, in the hope of
bettering his fortunes, chose to make his
home at the Antipodes, Colonel Gunston and
he, although they kept up a regular corre-
spondence, never met again. This corre-
spondence it was which gave birth to the
idea between the long-parted friends that it
would be a desirable and pleasant thing if,
when the son of one and the daughter of
the other should be old enough, they should
see their way to fall in love with each other
and ultimately marry. It was a notion
which took a strong hold of the Colonel's
imagination, and when, a couple of years
later, he lay on his deathbed, he spoke of
it to his wife as being one of the few things
the fulfilment of which he would have
liked to live to see.

Regy, while loving and respecting his
father's memory, and desirous of carrying
out his wishes in all reasonable things,
 inwardly resented having his future thus
summarily disposed of, and being fully
persuaded that his mother would do her
best to further her dead husband's wishes,
he looked forward to the arrival of this
season from the bush with no very
pleasurable anticipations.

When Mrs. Gunston had completed her
usual morning round of duties, she sat
down to reply to Lady Goring's letter.
With what she wrote we are in no way
concerned, except as regards one passage,
which ran as follows:
"You ask me, my dear Henrietta,
whether I know of any one who is in want
of a really competent governess. As it
happens, that is exactly what I myself am
in need of. For some months past I have
had cause to be greatly dissatisfied with
Miss Meadows. Carrie and Gracie do not
get on to my liking. They are naturally
quick children, yet they seem to be scarcely
a bit farther advanced than they were a
year ago. In short, before your letter
came to hand I had made up my mind to
get rid of Miss M., and I shall at once
give her a quarter's salary in lieu of notice.
You may, therefore, engage for me in her
place the Miss Tew of whom you write in
such glowing terms. I am quite willing
to take her on your recommendation, and
to accept her as the paragon you describe
her as being, till Miss herself shall give me
reason to think differently."

A week later Miss Tew, with one modest
trunk of belongings, arrived in a four-
wheelers at Pendragon Square.

CHAPTER II.

Night after night found Regy Gunston
in the stalls of the Thalia Theatre, drawn
there by an attractive force into the origin
of which he did not trouble himself too
curiously to enquire. It was enough for
him that it existed, and that he derived a
certain sense of quiet enjoyment from
yielding himself up to it. So long as
Prince Asphodel was in evidence, he
had eyes and ears for all that went on on
the stage; but when she no longer occupied
the scene he leant back in his seat, and
stared at vacancy. More than once or
twice he found it needful to assuage to
himself that he was most certainly not in
love with Miss Maud Sinden, yet he never
paused to ask himself where his unwise
infatuation for one so far below him in the
social scale, if persisted in, might ultim-
ately land him. He knew that with the
end of the run of the pantomimes, Prince
Asphodel must of necessity vanish from
his sight for ever, but, meanwhile, he was
determined to see as much of him— or her
—as possible.

It was on the sixth occasion of his
visiting the theatre that, at the conclusion
of the performance, he found himself one
of a small crowd congregated round the
stage-door, awaiting the exit of that other
crowd whose labours for the night were
over. Presently they began to appear,
some singly, others in little groups of
threes and fours. Regy, keeping well in
the background, scanned each likely figure
closely. At length he was rewarded. Al-
though the flaxen wig she had worn on the
stage was gone, and although a veil hid three-
fours of her face, he felt morally sure
that it was Miss Sinden whom his eyes had
picked out as by instinct from the rest. On
reaching the corner of the short street in
which the stage-door was, as it were,
hidden away, she shook hands and bade
good night to two other young women,
and then plunged into the busy throng of
vehicles in the main thoroughfare. Regy
unhesitatingly plunged after her, and when
he had reached the opposite side in safety,
thought for the first few seconds that he
had lost her. Then he caught sight of her
through a momentary winnowing of the
crowd, and after that he found no
difficulty in keeping her well in view.
Presently she turned into one of the side-
streets, which at that hour were com-
paratively deserted, so that she was now
enabled to increase her pace, Regy, mean-
while, following some fifteen or twenty yards in her rear.

A walk of half an hour brought Miss Sinden home. When Regy had seen her safely indoors he went away satisfied.

One evening, about a week later, as Miss Sinden was on her way home, followed at a discreet distance by Regy, who never failed now to act the part of her unseen escort, three young fellows the worse for drink, coming from the opposite direction, and walking abreast, on finding themselves face to face with the girl, at once joined hands and, with loud whoops and yells, began to dance madly round her. The next thing the rascals were aware of was the sudden appearance on the scene of a tall stranger, who, after planting a blow in the face of one, which left him with a pair of black eyes for a week to come, seized the others with a grip like a vice, and, after bringing their heads into violent contact two or three times, sent the pair of them sprawling into the middle of the road. Then, raising his hat, he said quietly to the trembling girl:

"Miss Sinden, will you oblige me by taking my arm, and allowing me the pleasure of seeing you home?"

She obeyed without a word, being at the moment almost too bewildered to know what she was about. The three "larrkins," having picked themselves up, apparently came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour, and betook themselves off, but not till they had launched a few parting gibes at the receding couple.

The girl was the first to speak.

"I am really very much obliged to you," she said. "I think their intention was more to frighten than harm me, and certainly they succeeded in the attempt."

Then a moment later she added, with a little surprise in her tone: "But you know my name!"

"Is there anything wonderful in that, when it is there, on the programme of the Thalas, for all the world to see?"

At that instant they were passing a street-lamp, and the girl utilised it to take stock of her companion more particularly than she had hitherto done.

"Why do you start?" queried Regy.

"Did I start?" she asked with a little laugh. "If I did, it was because I was surprised to find in you the gentleman who for the past fortnight or more has witnessed from his seat in the stalls every performance of the Thalas pantomime."

"Is there anything remarkable about that?"

"Something very remarkable indeed. Whoever cares to see the same pantomime more than once, or at most twice? So, of course, your being there night after night got to be talked about in the theatre; till at length everybody began to ask who you were, and what could be the object that brought you there as regularly as the clock came round."

"I am infinitely obliged to 'everybody' for the interest taken by them in my affairs," said Regy dryly. "That I had a certain purpose in acting as I did may at once be conceded, otherwise I should have been little better than an idiot. What that purpose was, Miss Sinden might perhaps not find it difficult to guess."

There was a brief pause; then came the answer, spoken hesitatingly:

"I was never good at guessing things, and if I were to try in this case I'm sure I should go quite wide of the mark."

Regy had expected some such answer, and was not disappointed. He had said as much as he intended at this, their first meeting. Perhaps when he saw her next he might venture to say more; but, indeed, as yet he had by no means made up his mind how far he intended to carry his venturesome and foolish experiment. It was enough that for the present he seemed to be drawn forward as by invisible cords, against which he had neither the will nor the power to struggle.

"I was not aware that I was propounding a conundrum," he said laughingly. "In any case, we will leave the answer till another time—if, as I sincerely hope and trust, Miss Sinden, I may have the happiness of meeting you again. The last part of the sentence was spoken with a fervency of utterance not to be misunderstood. "But before another word is said," he went on, "it is only right that you should know who I am—that is, provided you care to know. My name is Gunston—Regy Gunston—and I live with my mother at sixteen, Pendragon Square. But here we are at your home—already."

"What, Mr. Gunston, you know where I live!" cried the girl as she withdrew her hand, a little abruptly, as it seemed to him, from the shelter of his arm.

For the first time Regy felt at a disadvantage.

"The fact is, Miss Sinden," he began lamely, "that I—in point of fact—"

"That you tracked me from the theatre
to my home. Oh, Mr. Gunston! And how many times have you done that, pray?"

"The present will make the seventh occasion."

The girl was silent. She was evidently at a loss what line to adopt. On the one hand, if she were to assume to be offended, she felt that her anger would be the merest pretence. She was fully aware, even from the little he had already said, that she and she alone was the bright particular star which had drawn him night after night to the theatre, and in that knowledge there was a subtle flattery which bereft her of all power to chide him. Then again, in view of the service he had rendered her to-night, how could she blame him for following her? Finding herself thus nonplussed, she took refuge, with feminine gull, in a side issue.

"By the way, Mr. Gunston, that name is Fanny Mardin—not nearly so aristocratic as the other, is it? My father is dead and my mother, and, I, and my two younger sisters, rent the first floor where you see the light in the bow window. We are obliged to work hard in order to keep the home together, such as it is."

She spoke with an added sparkle in her eyes and, as it seemed to Regy, with a slightly defiant air.

"Like your mother, Miss Mardin, mine also is a widow," said Regy with a sort of grave tenderness as he raised his hat for a moment. Both tone and action struck a chord in the girl's emotional nature. From that moment she began to regard him with changed eyes. "Do you know, Miss Mardin," Regy went on presently in a lighter tone, "I like your real name much better than your stage one. I do, really. It sounds to me simpler and more natural. But I must not detain you longer. If the hour were not so late, I would ask you to do me the great favour of introducing me to your mother."

Fanny—to give her her proper name—gaped. His audacity took her breath away. But a moment later she asked herself whether she was sure that his request was the result of audacity. Might it not have been prompted by some deeper, some far different feeling? And as she put the question to herself, the warm blood seemed to course more swiftly through her veins. In most things she was a girl of quick 'resolves, and in less than a dozen seconds her mind was made up. She would introduce him to her home and her mother, and challenge the result.

"Do you really mean what you say, Mr. Gunston?" she presently asked. "Do you really wish to make my mother's acquaintance?"

"I give you my word, Miss Sinden, that I was never more in earnest in my life."

"Very well, then, if you will follow me I will introduce you to her."

She tripped up the steps, produced her latch-key, opened the door, and, going in first, motioned him to enter. The entrance hall, from which a wide, unpainted staircase led to the upper floors, was lighted by a paraffin lamp on a bracket.

"Be careful how you ascend the stairs," said Fanny. "They are old-fashioned, and have one or two awkward turns."

She went up first and Regy followed. On the first landing, from which three or four doors opened, a smaller lamp was burning. Without pausing, Fanny opened one of the doors, and holding it wide, said to some one inside:

"Mother, I have brought a gentleman to see you, who says he is very desirous of making your acquaintance."

"Gracious me! Fanny, you might have given me time to change my cap," exclaimed a pleasant, if slightly querulous voice.

"It's not your cap, ma, but yourself Mr. Gunston has come to see." Then to Regy, who had halted on the threshold: "Enter, Mr. Gunston, and allow me to introduce you to the ancestral halls of the Mardin family."

Regy went forward, and, hat in hand, made a low bow to a worn but refined-looking woman, who still retained many traces of former good looks, and who was half sitting, half reclining, on a long, cushioned wicker chair.

"Mother," resumed Fanny, "this is Mr. Reginald Gunston, a gentleman of such singular tastes that he has not once missed seeing the Thalia panto for the last fortnight. To-night, on my way home, I was beset by three young roughs, and I cannot tell what might have happened had not Mr. Gunston, who, by a remarkable coincidence, happened to be close at hand, come to my rescue. After that he was good enough to offer to see me home, and, lastly, he asked to be introduced to you."

She had taken her hat off, and the silky
colls of her dark brown hair, having escaped from their fastening, fell in a heavy mass round her neck and shoulders. Her cheeks were flushed, her large gray eyes sparkled with a sort of mischievous defiance. Her tall, lithe figure was set off to perfection by her close-fitting gown of dark homespun. Never, to Regy's thinking, as she stood there, divested of all the adventitious aids of the theatre—if aids they be—had she looked so charming as at that moment.

"I am extremely obliged to you, Mr. Gunston, for your kindness to my daughter," said Mrs. Mardin, while a faint colour suffused the pallor of her cheeks, "and I am very glad you have afforded me the opportunity of thanking you in person. It is not pleasant that Fanny should have to run the risks of the streets at so late an hour, but what must be must, and no one has ever attempted to molest her before. You will, I am sure, excuse my not rising, when I tell you that I suffer with my spine, and have been a partial invalid for years. But pray be seated. Fanny won't be gone more than a minute.

All this was said very simply and naturally. Mrs. Mardin was evidently superior to her present position. What Regy said in answer to her he could not afterwards have told.

As Fanny slipped out, a younger girl entered.

"This is my second daughter, Hatty, Mr. Gunston," Mrs. Mardin now said. "She has been to fetch the supper beer, and—but what have you done with the beer, child?"

"It's on the landing, ma," replied Hatty, flushing to the roots of her auburn hair.

"What made you leave it there? Bring it in at once, my dear."

Hatty, complying without a word, brought in a highly-secured can containing a quart of "six-ale."

"And this is the third and last of my daughters," resumed Mrs. Mardin. "Stand up, Linda, so that Mr. Gunston can see you."

Then from a footstool in the space between the invalid's chair and the fire there stood up a child whom Regy had not seen before, holding a kitten in her arms.

"She is eight years old, and, unhappily, blind; the result of an illness when little more than an infant," said the mother.

A lump rose in Regy's throat as the sweetly pathetic face confronted his for a few seconds, and then sank out of sight again as silently as it had appeared.

"But surely," said the young man, "you are not without hope that her sight will one day be restored to her!"

"Several doctors have seen her, each of whom gives a different opinion, and it is just because of those different opinions that we allow ourselves to hope. Meanwhile, Mr. Gunston, I assure the child is by no means unhappy." Then turning to Hatty: "And now, my dear, will you lay the cloth for supper?"

"Oh, ma!" said Hatty, as if in protest.

If her mother heard her she took no notice, but turned to Regy, who was on the point of rising to take his leave.

"We always wait supper till Fanny comes home, so that we can all have it together," she said. "I think we enjoy it more than any other meal; at least, I'm sure that I do. We live very plainly; we can't afford to do otherwise, but if you will join us to-night, Mr. Gunston, I'm sure we shall all esteem it as a favour."

The offer so frankly made was as frankly accepted. Regy took off his ulster and handed it to Hatty. As he did so, Fanny reappeared, and as soon as the table was laid it was drawn up beside the invalid's chair. Then Regy took a seat opposite Mrs. Mardin, with one of the girls on each side of him, Fanny doing the honours of the table and attending to every one. Linda was given her supper where she sat by the fire.

Had Regy known Mrs. Mardin for a dozen years that lady could not have been more frank and outspoken about family matters than she was that night. She may have been actuated by the same motive that had incited Fanny to introduce him to her mother and her home—the determination that, should he choose to keep up their acquaintance, he should do it with his eyes open and with a full knowledge of their position and mode of life. Thus among other things, Regy learnt that when the pantomime season should be over, Fanny had no immediate prospect of another berth, but that a friend had interested himself on her behalf with the manager of the Duke's Theatre, and that there was every likelihood of her being engaged there for the next burlesque, whenever the present one should have run its course. He was also told how Hatty, who was just turned sixteen, was taking lessons of a well-known ballet master, who spoke of her as being one of his most promising pupils, and prophe
great things of her in time to come. Then Mrs. Mardin spoke of the work she herself did, assisted at every spare moment by her daughters, which was that of making caps, chiefly the cheap sort worn by domestic servants.

It was not hard work, she went on to say, but the pay was so poor that had they not all laboured early and late, they would have found it a hard matter, plainly as they lived, to make ends meet. Even the nimble fingers of little blind Linda were utilised, she having taught herself to bend and shape the crowns of stiff muslin which compose the foundation of the caps in question. To Regy it was a lesson of how some poor folk live, which he never afterwards forgot.

When at length he could no longer delay his going, he shook hands with each in turn, but Linda he kissed. There was no word said on either side about his coming to Carton Street again, but both Mrs. Mardin and her daughters felt assured that they had not seen the last of him.

"You’ve made a fair mash, Fan, this time, and no mistake," said Hetty, who sometimes indulged in more slang than her mother approved of, as soon as he was gone; "and, oh my! ain’t he a regular swell! Not one of your make-believes—anybody can see that—but one of the real upper crust."

Fanny did not answer, but Mrs. Mardin said:

"Mr. Gunston is a gentleman, and we are not concerned with anything beyond that."

To herself little Linda said:

"The first time Jack comes I shall tell him."

CHAPTER III.

MRS. GUNSTON, who ordinarily was one of those women who never allow either their likes or dislikes to influence them, "took to" the new governess, before the latter had been many days under her roof, as she had never taken to any of Miss Tew’s predecessors. Mrs. Gunston was a busy woman, being connected with a number of philanthropic and charitable schemes, and her correspondence was necessarily somewhat voluminous. Heretofore she had found a pleasure in doing all her letter-writing herself, but now she installed Miss Tew in the position of her amanuenses, and not only did that, but took that young person with her to sundry of the meetings she made a point of attending, and even not infrequently for a drive in the Park. Never had Carrie and Gracie had such holiday times before.

Agatha Tew was a slenderly-built girl of medium height, with a creamy skin, jet-black silky hair, and delicately curved eyebrows. Doubtless her eyes also were black, only no one ever saw her without a pair of close-fitting, smoke-tinted spectacles, which had the effect of making her look considerably older than her years. She was very alert, ready-witted and vivacious, and went about all her concerns in a bright, self-helping way which sometimes caused sympathetic people to stare. To conceive that she had ever "moped" for a single hour of her life seemed out of the question. She always dressed with a certain Quaker-like precision and neatness.

To Regy, Miss Tew was simply "the governess." When he encountered her at breakfast, or luncheon, he treated her with unfailing courtesy, but beyond that he hardly noticed her at all. That his mother should set such apparent store by her did not surprise him. It was only one specimen of the more of Mrs. Gunston’s "fads."

Of late, that is to say—during the past three weeks or so—Regy had not once dined at home, except on a Sunday, which was quite at variance with his practice before that time. His mother, who was under the impression that he had taken to dining at his club, forbore to question him on the point. She believed that Miss Alnique’s rejection of him had wounded him deeply, and she wisely considered that the more he indulged in such mild dissipations as his club admitted of, the less time would be left him for brooding over what could not be helped. But a question young Perrydew put to her one day, when she encountered him in the Bow, filled her with vague alarms. "What have you been doing with Regy this long time?" quizzed the young man. "None of the boys at the Corinthian have set eyes on him for a month or more."

What Mrs. Gunston answered she hardly knew, but she satisfied Mr. Perrydew somehow. What she had heard troubled her, but still she refrained from speaking to her son. Young men will be young men, and she did not wish him to think that she was desirous of prying too curiously into his affairs.

Two or three mornings later, while making one of her weekly tours about the house in order to satisfy herself that nothing was being neglected by the servants, she found herself in her son’s bedroom. There her eyes were at once
Attracted to a couple of cabinet photographs on the chimney-piece. She took them up and examined them. Evidently they were both likenesses of the same person, a young woman, although in one case she was represented as wearing the dress of everyday life and in the other the tights, trunk, wig, etc., of the stage. The face was an attractive one, with nothing commonplace or vulgar about it, as Mrs. Gunston at once admitted. One likeness bore no name, save that of the photographer, but the other was inscribed, "Miss Maud Sladen as Prince Asphodel." Long and earnestly the mother gazed, first at one likeness, and then at the other; and, when she put them down, it was with a strange, sick feeling at her heart.

Looking round the room, she saw on the toilette-table a crumpled-up piece of paper, the presence of which offended her sense of order. She picked it up and mechanically smoothed it out, and then she saw that it was a theatrical programme. With fingers that trembled a little, she arranged her pince-nez and began to read, feeling nearly sure what she should find before she reached the end. Nor was she mistaken. Half-way down the list of characters she came to the same name that was inscribed on one of the photographs, and after that she read no further. As she crushed the programme in her hand, she told herself that she knew now why for the last month her son had never dined at home, and had never been seen in his club.

Mrs. Mardin and her daughters had rightly surmised that they had not seen the last of Mr. Reginald Gunston.

The next afternoon found him at Carton Street. He had ventured to bring Mrs. Mardin a few flowers—they were expensive orchids from Covent Garden—and a doll for Linda. Both presents were very graciously received. Mrs. Mardin felicitated herself on her foresight in having put on her best cap and draper her shoulders in an old but very choice black lace shawl, which never saw daylight except on occasions of high state and ceremony. Both she and Hetty were hard at work. Fanny had gone to the City to take some completed work, and bring back a fresh supply of material. Remy stayed for an hour, chatting lightly and gaily, and partook of an early cup of tea with Mrs. Mardin before he left.

Earlier in the day Hetty, who was one of those girls who have all their wits about them, borrowed a Post Office Directory from the public-house, and proceeded to hunt in its pages for Pendragon Square. The result of her search seemed highly satisfactory.

"Sure enough, Mrs. Gunston lives at number sixteen," she said to her mother. "And it must be a regular tip-top square, because Lady Tamworth lives at number seven, and Sir Somebody Something at another number, and a major-general at another. Oh! I do hope he'll make up to Fan and ask her to marry him. Only think, mother, what it would mean to all of us!"

She sighed, and turned up her eyes, and clasped her hands. She was an ambitious young monkey.

And now it came to be an understood thing that Mr. Gunston should accompany Fanny home—not by any means that he always went indoors with her, but commonly parted from her as soon as they came within sight of the house. Still, about one night in three he would accept Fanny's invitation, which she always gave in the shape of a message from her mother, and stay to supper. Few days passed without some token of remembrance from him reaching the little household in Carton Street, chiefly in the shape of flowers, but often accompanied by a parcel of hot-house grapes or other choice fruit, or by a box of bonbons for Linda. Both Mrs. Mardin and Hetty began to treat Fanny with a degree of deference they had never accorded her before. They felt that the fortunes of the family were in her hands.

Although Linda's love for the beautiful doll which had been given her amounted almost to ecstasy, she had a loyal little heart, and more than once she whispered to herself: "When Jack comes I'll tell him all about Mr. Gunston." But day after day went by, and "Jack" never came.

Jack Goff belonged to the Fire Brigade, and at this time he was located at the Great Digby Street Station, which is within half a mile of Carton Street. His family and the Mardins had been intimate for years, and as long as he could remember he had loved Fanny. That the girl was aware of his love cannot be doubted, but she neither encouraged nor repelled him; still, by degrees it came to be tacitly understood between the two families that some day the young folk concerned would make a match of it.

But Jack's poverty held him back. He was not in a position to offer Fanny a
home worthy of her acceptance, and till he could do so he would remain resolutely dumb. When, however, a few months before the opening of our narrative, by the death of a relative he came in for a legacy of four hundred pounds, he at once sought an interview with Fanny. But by this time she had taken to the stage, and was just then engaged for a minor part in a burlesque at one of the outlying theatres. The life fascinated her, and she was unwilling to give it up, even for the sake of Jack and his four hundred pounds. Deep down in her heart she felt that she loved Jack, and had no doubt that one day she should become his wife—but not just yet. So she temporised. She had no present intention of marrying, she told him, but if he cared for her as much as he said he did, he might ask her again that day twelve-month, and then she would give him a final answer. What that answer would be she thought she could pretty well forecast already. But at that time Regy Gunston had not appeared on the scene.

It was the last night but two of the pantomime when, on turning the corner of a certain street on her way to the theatre, Fanny found herself confronted by Jack Goff. She had often wondered why she had seen so little of him of late—surely it was not possible that he had given her up!—and, while inwardly resenting his absence, she had derived therefrom a certain sense of relief. On no account would she have had Jack and Regy come face to face.

"How you startle one, coming suddenly on one like this!" she said with a nervous laugh, as he stopped in front of her and blocked her way. "I was afraid you must be ill, or something, it's so long since we've seen anything of you."

"That's what you choose to say," he answered sullenly. "But you always did like to do the polite, Fan. I don't suppose you've given one minute's thought to me since I saw you last."

"You're welcome to think so if you like," said Fanny, with a toss of her head. "But I can't stand here any longer. I'm late for the theatre as it is."

He stood aside and made way for her. She turned and held out her hand as if to bid him good-bye.

"Ah," he said, "I'm not going to leave you like this. I'll walk part way with you—if you may."

Fanny did not answer, but set off with quickened step, Jack striding by her side.

"I don't see why a young woman who's escorted every night from the theatre, shouldn't be escorted to it as well," he presently remarked.

"What do you mean?" she asked, with a ring of sharpness in her voice.

"Just what I say." Then, after a brief silence, he went on in a voice which betrayed how hard he found it to keep the jealous passion which was surging in his heart from carrying him beyond himself: "Oh, I know all about your having been seen home every night for the last month or more by some West End Johnnie. I'd like to twist his neck—cursc him! And I'll do it, too, afore I'm much older."

"Oh, no, you won't, Mr. Jack Goff," replied Fanny, in quiet, cutting tones. "If it comes to twisting necks, as you call it, you'll find Mr. Gunston a good deal more than a match for you. But I suppose you've been setting your little brother Mike to spy on me. I can quite believe it of you."

"And if I have, what then?" he broke out passionately. "For all you've cold-shouldered me as you have, you're still to me the dearest thing on earth. Oh, Fan, Fan, why do you allow this to follow you about as he does? Why does your mother allow it? Such as he can mean no good to such as you."

Fanny came to a sudden halt, and turning on him with flaming eyes, said, with a stamp of her foot:

"How dare you, Jack! How dare you say such things to me! Nothing that has passed between us has given you the right to do so. Mr. Gunston is a perfect gentleman and—and—Oh I go—go before I say something I might afterwards regret. Don't come another yard with me."

They were nearing the theatre by this time, and, being really late, as she had said, Fanny had begun to take off her gloves so as to save time when she should reach her dressing-room. As she did so a diamond hoop on one of her fingers flashed in the gaslight and dazzled Jack's eyes.

"Yes, I'll go," he said bitterly. "I've seen and learnt enough. I suppose this"—indicating the ring—"is the sort of gift a 'perfect gentleman' makes—of course, with the most honourable intentions—to any young woman on the stage who happens to take his fancy."

Fanny caught her breath, while a vivid blush leapt into her cheeks.

"It was a birthday gift, and concerns nobody but myself," she said. "Some
people remember my birthday, while it suits others to forget it."

She was gone before Jack could frame a word in reply.

"And there now! I really did forget it," he muttered ruefully as he stared after her.

That night Fanny walked home alone. About nine o'clock a hurriedly-written note had reached her, brought by a commissionaire.

"Am summoned by telegram to the bedside of my uncle, who is dangerously ill," it ran. "Cannot tell how long I may have to be away, but will make a point of calling on you immediately after my return, when I hope to put a certain question to you which I now regret I did not put before I was called away."

Fanny turned pale as she read. But that night it was neither Regy Gunston's ring, nor his note, that she kissed in the privacy of her bedroom and then placed under her pillow, but a somewhat faded photograph of Jack Goff.

CHAPTER IV.

Next day, as Fanny was leaving the theatre, she felt her arm touched by some one as if to arrest her attention, and on turning, found herself confronted by a slender, quietly-dressed young woman who wore a pair of smoke-tinted spectacles.

"Pardon me," said the stranger, in a voice at once low and penetrating, "but am I right in assuming that I am addressing Miss Maud Sinden?"

"That is the name I'm known by on the stage," replied Fanny.

"Then, perhaps, you will allow me to walk part way with you. I have something of importance to say to you."

Fanny bowed assent and proceeded on her way, while Miss Tew, for she it was, kept side by side with her.

"You are, I believe, acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Reginald Gunston?" resumed the governess presently.

Fanny gave an involuntary start.

"I certainly have the pleasure of Mr. Gunston's acquaintance," she said coldly.

"For the last month or five weeks, if I am rightly informed, he has not missed a single representation of the Thalía pantomime. I, too, have witnessed the performance to-night, and I need no wizard to reveal to me the attraction that has drawn Mr. Gunston there so often."

Fanny stopped short.

"You are an entire stranger to me," she said. "I neither know who you are, nor by what right you address me in so singular a fashion."

"My present position is that of governess to Mrs. Gunston's daughters. I have come to you to-night because Mrs. Gunston has discovered why her son never now spends an evening at home, and because the knowledge has made her a most unhappy woman."

"Mrs. Gunston has discovered——"

"Her son's infatuation for Miss Sinden."

Fanny had resumed her homeward progress. What Miss Tew had just told her had sent a sudden chill to her heart.

After a minute's silence, she said:

"Has Mrs. Gunston commissioned you to tell me this?"

"She has not. I have come entirely of my own accord."

"Why should anything she may have discovered, or have been told, make her unhappy? What does she take me for?"

"For nothing that is not virtuous and proper—of that I'm fully assured. Her fear is lest her son should persuade you to engage yourself to him."

"And why shouldn't he engage himself to me if it suits him to do so? He's of age, isn't he, and his own master? Why shouldn't he choose a wife wherever he likes—provided the one he wants cares enough for him to marry him?"

"There's one very good and sufficient reason why he shouldn't do anything of the kind. For Mr. Gunston to marry a young woman either in your stallion of life or mine, would mean nothing short of positive ruin. Mr. Gunston's income is a very limited one, and were it not for an allowance from his uncle, he would not be able to live half as expensively as he does.

Neither is Mrs. Gunston at all well off, and, when she dies, two-thirds of her income will die with her. In short, Mr. Reginald is wholly dependent on his uncle, who is the representative of a very old family and one of the proudest men in existence. Were his nephew to marry beneath him, or contrary to the old man's wishes, not a shilling of the latter's money would go to him; and what, in that case, would become of him and his wife?"

It was a question Fanny did not feel called upon to answer, even had any answer been possible.

"And now, my dear Miss Sinden, let us suppose a case," resumed this merciless young woman. "Let us suppose that Mr.
Gunston, in defiance of all opposition, has chosen to marry some one whose position in life is as inferior to his own as yours or mine. What happens? His uncle discounts him, his mother refuses to recognise his wife, his friends look askance at him, or cut him dead—in point of fact, he becomes a social outcast. In such cases society shows no mercy, none whatever. He retires with his wife to a cheap lodging, and before long he begins to brood over all that he has sacrificed for her sake; and then follows the inevitable doubt whether he has not paid too dear a price for that pretty face which so took his fancy, but which is already beginning to fade, and of which he is already beginning to tire.

Again there was a space of silence, while the two kept on their way side by side.

"Why have you, whom I never saw before, chosen to come so far out of your way to tell me this?" demanded Fanny at length.

"Certainly not for Mr. Gunston's sake, but for his mother's—and for yours, if you will believe me. If I see one of my own sex drifting on to shoeless and quicksand, shall I not warn her of a danger of which I believe her to be ignorant?"

"You talk to me," said Fanny, with a break in her voice, "as if Mr. Gunston and I were engaged. But we are not engaged, nor—nor do I think we ever shall be."

Mrs. Gunston, on the day following her discovery of the photographs, had slipped on a piece of orange-peel as she stepped out of her brougham, the consequence being a severe sprain of the ankle. As she lay on her couch she could think of little else than those terrible photographs, and of all the unknown dangers which Regy's possession of them might imply. Then, out of her perplexity and the fulness of her heart, she had unburdened herself to Agatha Tew.

A little later in the day, Miss Tew, having, as she said, a private matter of importance to attend to, had asked to be allowed to have the evening to herself. It was a request which wrung a somewhat reluctant consent from Mrs. Gunston. What the matter of importance was which the young governess set herself so resolutely to accomplish, we know already.

It was past midnight when a hansom set her down in Pendragon Square.

"My dear child, where—where have you been till this late hour?" cried Mrs. Gunston, the moment she set eyes on her. "You don't know how anxious I have been about you."

Then Miss Tew sat down by the invalid's couch and unburdened herself.

"And you tell me that, as yet, there is no positive engagement between the two?" said Mrs. Gunston, when she had heard all there was to tell.

"Miss Sinden assured me there is not, and she does not strike me as being a girl who would try to impose upon any one with a deliberate falsehood."

"Then the wretched boy may yet be saved! Oh! my dear, how can I thank you sufficiently for this night's work? You have lifted an immense weight off my heart. Yes—yes, now that we know so much, we shall find a way to save him!"

There were tears in her eyes and tears in her voice. Rarely had Mrs. Gunston been so moved.

Her hand was resting caressingly on the girl's. After a little space of silence, she said, smiling through the tears which still shone in her eyes:

"And now, my dear one, I have a surprise in store for you. Your aunt Goring arrived quite unexpectedly this evening without having sent me any premonitory word. When I say your aunt Goring, you will be aware that I know all. Oh! child, child, how could you play me such a trick? But I will not chide you—indeed, I forgive you from the bottom of my heart. Only, for goodness' sake, take off those horrid spectacles, and never let me see you with them on again!"

The girl stood up, and did as she was told, feeling as if she were one burning blush from head to foot. It was, indeed, a pity that two such glorious eyes should so long have been hidden. They flashed one look at Mrs. Gunston, half-humorous, half-pathetic, then she cast herself on her knees and hid her face in her aunt's bosom, for she was none other than Barbara Howarth, that cousin from the bush of whom Regy had spoken so slightly.

She had persuaded Lady Goring into allowing her to personate Miss Tew in Pendragon Square. She was genuinely wishful to see and judge this English cousin for herself, whom her father was desirous that she should wed, while he himself remained in ignorance of her identity. The real Miss Tew, who was under considerable obligations to Lady Goring, had raised no objection to lending Miss Howarth her name and testimonials for the time being, on the understanding
that the position should still be hers when that young lady should have brought her little comedy to an end. One thing Miss Howarth does not know to this day, which is, that Lady Goring wrote a private note to her sister a few posts after the girl’s departure for London, revealing the real personality of the self-styled Agatha Tew.

Happily for Mrs. Gunston, she was not called upon to interfere in any way between her son and Miss Mardin. When Reggie got back home, three days later, his uncle being much better, he found the following note awaiting him:

"DEAR MR. GUNSTON,—In the note you sent me when you were called suddenly from home you said that immediately on your return you should make a point of asking me a certain question. If the question to which you referred is of the nature I suppose it to be, you must not ask it. It would be useless to do so. I am now the promised wife of another.

"My husband is to be belongs to the Fire Brigade. We have known each other since we were children. That he loves me very dearly I have long been aware, but when he proposed to me some months ago, I would give him no promise. At that time I was not willing to give up my stage life, so I told him that if he still cared for me, he could ask me the same question in a year’s time. Then you appeared on the scene, and I willingly admit that I was flattered by the attentions of one so much my superior from every worldly point of view. Still, I think that all through Jack had my heart in safe keeping.

"Last night, on my way home, I found myself, one among hundreds of others, looking on at the burning of a house which had been let out in floors to different families. Several engines were at work, and it was said that everybody had been got safely out. Then all at once a woman rushed into the crowd, screaming out that one of her children was still missing. She had left it asleep in a room on the top floor. By this time either flames, or smoke, or both, were pouring through every window; but the escape was at once planted against the house, and one of the firemen began swiftly to climb it. It was my Jack! I knew him the moment I set eyes on him. The crowd watched him as if they had only one heart among them. They saw him reach the window, they saw him enter the room, and in silence they waited till he reappeared with the child in his arms wrapped up in a blanket. Then a great shout went up, and everybody breathed again. When still about twenty feet from the ground he became enveloped in a great sheet of flame and smoke which was pouring from one of the lower windows. An instant later, overcome, senseless, he came crashing to the ground. The child was unhurt, but Jack had to be carried to the hospital, and I am told that many weeks must go by before he will be able to leave it.

"DEAR Mr. Gunston, the moment I saw Jack disappear in the burning house, my heart seemed to go out to him in a way it had never done before. I felt that I loved him far more dearly than I had known, and that I could never marry any other than he. To-day I have seen him and told him so. He says that I have made him very, very happy.

"I have nothing more to add. I return herewith the diamond hoop you were kind enough to give me on my birthday. Under the circumstances, it is far too valuable a present for me to think of keeping."

"FANNY MARDIN."

More than a year has gone by since Fanny’s letter was written. Reggie and his cousin have not yet made a match of it; indeed, he is far from sure that Miss Howarth would accept him if he proposed to her. But what may be hidden in the future no one can tell.

Mrs. Gunston made Fanny’s troubles and her especial care; and at her desire and expense Linda has been seen by an eminent specialist, who holds out every hope that, as she grows stronger, her eyesight will gradually come back to her.
HOME NOTES

AND

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Sоotсh Collops and mince are two very different things, the former being decidedly superior in every way. For it you require about one pound of lean steak free from skin and fat. Mince it carefully. Dredge a little flour over it, and season with pepper and salt. Melt about an ounce of butter or dripping in a saucepan. Then add the mince, stirring it constantly for about ten minutes. Then pour over it a grill or rather less of boiling stock, stir it well, and, if necessary, dredge in a little more flour. Fry some three-cornered pieces of bread, arrange them round the dish, and pour the collops into the centre. Scatter a little chopped parley over, and serve.

Cheese Rice.—Boll a quarter of a pound of rice slowly in a pint and a half of water till tender. Drain away any water that is not absorbed. Shred two ounces of cheese. Put it in half a pint of hot milk, and with it half an ounce of butter. When dissolved, add the rice, and season highly with cayenne and salt. Butter a pie-dish, fill with the mixture, scatter grated cheese over, and bake for half an hour.

Celery Sauce is very good for serving with boiled fowl instead of white sauce. Make it after my recipe and it will be much appreciated. Roll two large heads of celery in salt and water till tender. Cut it in small pieces and put it in a saucepan with three-quarters of a pint of milk. Blend together two ounces of butter and a tablespoonful of flour, add it to the sauce. Simmer all together and then pass through a wire sieve. Heat the sauce again, season to taste, and pour over the fowl.

Lemon Roly-poly is a dish which one does not often meet with, but is one that will be popular now that fruit will be getting scarce. Make a nice light suet crust, roll out thin, spread with lemon-curd (the same as would be used for lemon cheesecakes). Roll up, wet the edges, tie in a cloth, and boil for three hours.

Cheese Toast.—Cut some buttered toast into neat squares and spread with this mixture: Soak a tablespoonful of bread-crumbs in a little milk, add a beaten egg to it, season highly with made mustard, salt, and cayenne. Lastly, stir in two and a half ounces of grated cheese. Place in the oven to brown. Over each dust a little chopped parley, and serve.

How to Make a Will-o'-the-Wisp.—Of course you know that a real Will-o'-the-wisp is the effect of hydro-carbon gas generated by decomposing organic matter in a marsh, and in a state of combustion. But did you know that you could produce this phenomenon in your own homes? This is how it is done. Take an open-mouthed glass jar and place some baking soda in the bottom, over which pour a little diluted sulphuric acid, muriatic acid, or strong vinegar. Then the jar will fill with carbonic-acid gas. Now lower a lighted candle into the gas until it goes out, leaving the top of the flame still burning upon the surface of the invisible gas. The flame will be fed by the gases coming from the smouldering wick. This Will-o'-the-wisp lasts but a short time, but it may be reproduced by raising the candle until the wick relights, then lowering it again. In order to make a success of this experiment, see that the air of the room is very still.

A Basket Cradle is fast going out of fashion, and for it we substitute the swinging iron cot, which has its disadvantages, to my mind, in its facility for rocking. There is really no better cradle than an ombol splint clothes basket, with a nice flat horsehair pillow in the bottom for a bed and a small down pillow at the head. When the baby is fed it can be laid in the basket and its digestive organs will not be upset by too violent rocking. A great feature of the basket cradle is its portability, for it can be carried by the handles to any room where the mother or nurse wishes to work; it can also be taken out of doors and placed in the shade so as to give the baby fresh air without being carried. It can equally easily be taken into the house at night, or set on two chairs by mother's or nurse's bed; till she retires herself, and places the cradle on two chairs near her. I have often noticed that where a basket has been thus used the child goes to sleep easily without rocking, and consequently much annoyance is saved in putting the "baby to sleep," and by the time it is too old to be satisfied with its basket, the child can be put into an ordinary bed or cot.

Malta Tart.—Line a pie-dish with some sponge cake crumbs, then spread over a layer of raspberry jam. In a basin, mix together an egg, its weight in butter, sugar, and flour. Flavour with a little lemon. Spread this over the jam and bake in a quick oven. Serve either hot or cold.
**ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

**SALMI OF PHEASANT.** — Joint a cold pheasant, cut into small neat pieces. Take the carcase, skin, etc., and stew gently in a little good stock. Season with a suspension of onion, some peppercorns, a little lemon peel, and a bay leaf. Strain the gravy, return it to the saucepan with the juice of half a lemon, and half a winglass of sherry. Place the meat in the pan. Let it simmer gently for half an hour. Arrange the meat on a dish. Thicken the gravy, pour over, and place fried sippets round.

**APPLE FOOL.** — Stew some apple as if for sauce. Flavour with lemon rind and cinnamon, and sweeten to taste. When cold, place the apple in a glass dish. Beat up some cream with a little sugar, and roughly pile it on the top. Sprinkle over it some sugar coloured with cochineal. A quarter of a pint of thick cream should be enough for this dish. If the cream is not thick, the white of an egg beaten with it will improve it.

**HOW TO PROVIDE AN ECONOMICAL DINNER is a question I am always being asked to advise on, and I trust that this recipe will prove a boon to those who endeavour to make both ends meet on a very slender income. Procure two pounds of the scrap-end of a neck of mutton (the part next to the head), with a sharp knife take out all the bone, roll up the meat and then cut it into neat collops, about half an inch thick. Dredge these with flour and brown quickly in a frying-pan, then place in a saucepan with a quart of water. Slice and fry a good-sized onion and add it to the meat. Let all come to the boil, then throw in equal quantities of carrot and turnip cut in slices — say a large cupful of each — and season with pepper, salt, a sprig of parley, and a pinch of powdered herbs. Cover closely and simmer for one and a half hours. The bones will make some nice broth with pearl barley and vegetables, or may be stewed with the meat if preferred. Cost 1s. 1d., and, with a dish of potatoes, it makes a good dinner for six persons.

**ECONOMICAL WHITE VEGETABLE SOUP.** — Take two quarts of white stock or milk-and-water, add to it a head of celery cut small, half a turnip, two onions, and two potatoes. Boil till tender, and then pass through a sieve. Return to the saucepan, season with cayenne and salt. Thicken with a tablespoonful of cornflour, stirred smoothly into cold milk. Boil up, and serve with fried croutons. Cream is always an improvement to white soup.

**CLOTHING AT NIGHT Is a subject I wish to draw attention to, for most people do not study it sufficiently. First, I would advise every one to fold back their thick, heavy cotton counterpanes on retiring to bed. These weigh down the body without giving much warmth, so that the body is working during sleep, and is consequently less refreshed in the morning than it should be. Except the sheets, all coverings of the bed should, if possible, be of wool, which gives the greatest warmth in proportion to its weight. Naturally, the number of blankets to be used must vary with the weather and season. If there be too much warmth, the body is relaxed, the skin made sensitive, and health consequently impaired. On the other hand, if there is too little warmth, the body is wasted by the loss of heat. For night garments flannel is best, and especially so in the case of the very young and aged. The sick demand great consideration in the matter of bed-coverings, and require it to be constantly altered with changes of temperature. There is an old rule for health which I think applies especially to the night hours. Keep the feet warm and the head cool.

**ROCK CAKES.** — A quarter of a pound of fine flour, half a teaspoonful of baking-powder, and an ounce of castor sugar. Rub into this two ounces of butter, then add two ounces of sultanas or chopped dried cherries, and an ounce of citron-peel. Mix with an egg. Make into a stiff dough. Place pieces the size of a walnut on a greased baking-sheet, and bake in a quick oven for ten or fifteen minutes.

**PIA SOUP.** — Sake a pint of split peas in cold water for a day. Then put them on the fire in a saucepan with two quarts of water, an onion, two carrots, and a slice of lean bacon. Boil slowly till tender. Then put the peas through a sieve, and return the soup to the saucepan. If too thick, add a little water. Season with pepper and salt, serve, and with it hand fried bread and dried and powdered mint.

**MELTON PUDDING.** — Procure a pound of lean pork, cut it into pieces about an inch square. Line a basin with a good crust. Put in a layer of pork, season with pepper, salt, and a little powdered sage. Then a thin layer of suet melted, and the same at the top. Bake for an hour and a half. It is better than boiled, as it is very tender. Serve with some gravy.
HOME NOTES.

COCOA-NUT ICE.—Put one pound of the best loaf sugar, broken into lumps, into a saucepan, and pour over it half a pint of water. Let it stand half an hour, and then place it on the fire and allow it to cook for five or six minutes. Remove the scum, and boil the sugar until it is thick and white; then stir into it a quarter of a pound of the whites of a fresh coconut, finely grated. Stir unceasingly until it rises in a mass in the pan; then spread it as quickly as possible over sheets of paper which have been dried before the fire. Remove the paper before the ice is quite cold, and let it dry.

VARIETY IN WORK IS TRUE RECREATION, and without it no one can long continue healthy or in good spirits. This fact is well understood by many busy people, who so arrange their work that no one pursuit is allowed to monopolise more than a reasonable part of each day. Not only, though, is change of work essential, but a proper provision for recreation will be made by those who desire to enjoy the perfection of happiness. To me there is no sadder sight than that of a person who, having worked hard all his life in one narrow groove, finds, when the necessity for work is over, that he has no resources, and must continue that work or suffer perfect boredom. It is well, therefore, for all busy, hard-working people to cultivate a hobby, if they have not a natural liking for any particular pursuit, which will absorb their few spare hours of recreation.

IN LIFTING A CHILD use both hands, and place them so as to clasp the body about the waist or hips, and the body should be raised without any force being exerted upon the arms. The arms of children are not intended to serve as handles for lifting or carrying; strains, dislocations, and fractures, causing deformity and imperfect use of arm and shoulder, result from the careless use of these limbs. Make TOMPATO SAUCE from this recipe, and you will be delighted with it. Peel one gallon of ripe tomatoes, and five pods of red pepper; cook until tender. Steam through a coarse cloth, then stir thoroughly into it two ounces of salt, two ounces of black pepper, half an ounce of allspice; add one pint of vinegar. Boil slowly for three or four hours; whilst still warm, bottle and cork tightly. This will keep for years, so should be made when there is a good crop and tomatoes are cheap.

SATURDAY'S PUDDING.—Take three-quarters of a pound of any cold meat free from skin and gristle, and the same quantity of mashed potatoes. A dessertspoonful of sweet herbs, chopped fine, a suspension of boiled onion finely minced, and half a teaspoonful of grated lemon rind, pepper and salt to taste. Mix all together with an egg and a little milk. Grease a basin, fill with the mixture, tie a buttered paper over the top, and steam for an hour. Turn out, pour over and round a thick brown gravy. Sprinkle brown bread-crumbs over the pudding, and garnish with slices of carrot or small branches of broccoll.

RICH CAKE FOR KEEPING.—Mix two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder with a pound of fine flour. Rub into it half a pound of butter and lard mixed; then add half a pound of suet, a quarter of a pound of currants, two ounces of chopped peel, two ounces of chopped almonds, and six ounces of sugar. Beat up three eggs; mix a small teaspoonful of mixed spice in a wineglass of brandy. Add to the egg, and then stir into the cake. If not sufficient moisture, a little milk may be used. Grease a tin, line it with paper, and pour in the cake. Bake in a moderate oven for two hours or two hours and a half. Leave the paper on until the cake is required for use.

MUSHROOM SAUVOURY.—Fry half a dozen croutons about the size of the mushrooms which you have. Fry the mushrooms in butter, season them highly with pepper and salt. Take half a teaspoonful of each of minced onion, chopped parsley, thyme, and half quantity of grated rind. Blend all to paste with butter. Just before serving, put a small piece of the mixture into each mushroom.

STEWSED APPLES AND CUSTARD.—Peel some nice large cooking apples and carefully remove the core. Boil half a pound of loaf sugar in a pint of water, with a strip of lemon peel. When the syrup is clear, place the apples in it, and let them simmer gently till cooked. Then set them aside to cool. When the dish is required, cut three sponge cakes in slices, and lay them on a silver or glass dish. Pour the syrup over this, only using so much as the cake will soak up. Then arrange the apples in the top, sticking each with strips of blanched almonds. Into the centre of each apple place a piece of red currant jelly, and round the dish pour a good thick custard. An economical custard may be made with a pint of milk, two eggs, and sufficient cornflour to thicken it.
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

VEGETABLE CURRY.—Cut some onions in thin slices, and fry them a good brown in butter; add a breakfastcupful of milk in which a tablespoonful of curry powder has been mixed. Let all boil together for twenty minutes, stirring the whole time. Then add the vegetables you wish to curry, which should have been previously parboiled, and let the whole simmer by the side of the fire for about an hour. Potatoes, peas, turnips, and carrots can be used, either together or alone.

PLAIN SWEET BISCUITS are very delicious for tea and can be kept in a tin always ready for use, much longer than cake. Try this recipe for them. Take half a pound of flour, half a pound of ground rice, quarter of a pound of castor sugar. Make into a stiff paste with milk, flavour to taste with lemon or any essence. Roll out thin; cut into small biscuits, and prick them. Bake in a moderate oven till crisp, but not too brown. To make these biscuits a little better, work one and a half ounces of butter into the flour.

HINTS ON PASTRY-MAKING.—An adept in pastry never leaves any part of it adhering to the board or dish in the making. Pastry is best when rolled on marble or a very large slate. In very hot weather the butter should be put into cold water to make it as firm as possible. If possible make pastry early in the morning and keep it as much as possible from the air till it is baked. Salt butter, if well washed, makes a fine flaky crust. Keep pastry as dry as possible, adding water by degrees only. It should be baked in a quick oven.

FLUMMERY IS AN OLD-FASHIONED SWEET that one seldom hears of now, so I was surprised at your wishing to make it. Here is an excellent recipe. Dissolve one ounce of gelatine in one pint of boiling water, and let it stand for two hours. Pour into a saucepan with a quarter of a pound of sugar, the juice and peel of a lemon, and the yolks of four eggs. Set the pan on the fire and stir the contents till it boils. Then strain through a flannel bag, and when almost cold pour into a mould.

GOLDEN TART.—Line a pie dish with short crust. Take sufficient golden syrup to fill the dish, thicken it with bread-crumbs, and add the grated rind and juice of a lemon. Stir well together, pour into the dish, cover with paste, and bake in a quick oven. Sift sugar over and serve either hot or cold.

OUR lady readers will now be preparing their Spring and Summer Costumes, and when doing this they should see that the linings are protected with good dress shields, and the very best that can be procured are the Canfield Patent Seamless Dress Shield, which are far superior to the old-fashioned Indiarubber ones, which soon become stiff and unpleasant, and will not last nearly as long as the Canfield. The Canfield Dress Shields are proof against the most profuse perspiration, while they do not become hard or strike cold. They also can be easily removed from the dress and washed, which is another great advantage over all other so-called dress protectors. As there are many imitations placed before purchasers, ladies should take care that they are purchasing the genuine article by seeing that they are stamped with the word "Canfield" and "made in the U.S.A." These celebrated shields may be obtained through all drapery houses. The wholesale agents for this country are Messrs. Wm. E. Peck & Co., Manchester House, Friday Street, London, E.C.

We beg to draw our readers' attention to a specific for the cure of Eczema and kindred complaints: Cullwick's Skin Ointment. This has been found to be a very effective remedy for eczema, skin irritation, and ulcerated sores generally. Numerous testimonials have been received by the proprietor, and the ointment is not only of a very healing character but is pleasant to use. Cullwick's Skin Ointment is procurable at all chemists, or may be had direct from the proprietor, Mr. Martin, Chemist, Southampton.

LADIES WHO SEW A GREAT DEAL often complain of soreness of the mouth and lips, and do not know the cause of it. This has constantly been found to be the result of biting off thread instead of using a pair of scissors for cutting. In the case of silk thread the danger is well recognised, for to harden it and give it a good surface it is very usual to soak it, during the process of manufacture, in acetate of lead. In some cases where seamstresses and dress-makers have persevered in this practice, serious results have followed, and even, I am told, lead poisoning.

RICE WATER.—The water in which rice has been boiled should not be wasted. It makes a good foundation for vegetable soup. Or it may be sweetened and flavoured with lemon. When cold it makes a refreshing drink, which is very good to be given to children.
NEW DEPARTURE IN INSURANCE.

The INDEPENDENT ORDER OF FORESTERS

Gives Life Assurance at Rates slightly above Actual Cost—that is, at less than half the usual charges of Life Assurance Companies. The Premiums are based upon "The Combined Experience Table," which has been prepared by a Committee of eminent Actuaries from the experience of 17 British Life Offices. This Table of Experience equals 20,000 Years; the Average Premiums of Insurance Companies; the Rates of the I.O.F.; and the Saving effected by joining the ORDER.

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The full sum assured is payable at death. All premium paying of ordinary members in the I.O.F. ceases at 70 years of age, when one-tenth of the amount assayed is paid to them annually, the unexpended balance being payable at death. The entrance fees are very moderate, 17s., 10s. 6d., and 10s. 3d., per annum, and £1,000, £50, and £25. Court Dues (10s. to 12s. per annum) have to be paid by each member.

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Part 64

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A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
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CHAPTER XX.
"You deserve a holiday from ladies' committees, mother, you really do, and I am sure Dora ought to have a rest from card-sorting; besides, I, too, want a quiet time."

Thus spoke Forster Bethune when the season was at its last gasp.

"You have overworked yourself, dear Forster; we always said some such thing would happen. I wish your cabmen would give you a lift now and then. You never will take a carriage."

"Why should I! I have two legs and two arms. My cabbies would be glad enough to stretch their legs sometimes. Honestly I want a rest, though; at least, some doctor says so because he doesn't know what else to say."

"Oh, Forster! have you been to a doctor? And you never told me," said Mrs. Bethune, alarmed.

"No, I met Ellis Hope, and he prescribed without any of the usual fooling. I told him I had not been ill, and that the workmen never get rest, so why should I?"

"But, Forster, you are not a workman. I wish you would not always class yourself with those poor dear people."

"Dora, what do you say—am I not a workman?"

"I wish you would try to be idle for once. Mother, let's take a real holiday and do nothing," exclaimed Dora; but Adela interposed.

"Father says we can't afford it. Hinckman has thrown up a farm."

"We can do it very cheap, and I'll be mother's maid, and mademoiselle need not come back, so there will be her salary," said Dora, with her usual talent for settling the affairs of the family.

"But you can't leave mademoiselle in the lurch," said Forster quickly. "That is against all rules of employers."

"Oh, Forster, I didn't mean that, of course; but she does want to go home. She has had some money left her. She must come and pay us a long visit when she has forgotten my name."

"I had better go out as a mother's help," said Adela, smiling, "if poverty is the order of the day. I should not like to be really poor, nor would you, Forster, if the reality came close to us."

"Why not? I think I could live at our club for a week on exactly the same money that our fellows live on," said Forster, laughing.

His mother looked horror-struck.

"Forster, you must remember, they have not the same—how shall I say?—inside organisation as you have."

"Not such a strong one, you mean, having had to live on all sorts and conditions of scraps. Now, if all the wealth of England were distributed more evenly—"

"I'm sure Lady Dunlop proved that that would be useless," said Mrs. Bethune, trying to remember some arguments. "I think the shoeblacks would not get more than a farthing each; no, it wasn't that, but it was something."

"Well, it was something to the shoeblacks' advantage, I suppose," said Forster; "but about Switzerland. If father takes Mary home, they will both be happy. He
can stay in his library, and she in her study with the fiddle, and we will go and ape the rich."

"Forster! How delightful! Adela and I, you and mother. How very joyful — I mean how too delicious," cried Dora, collecting a bundle of invitation cards and throwing them into a paper basket. "No more parties to go to, and Aunt Mary won't look severe because it is quite fashionable to rough it in Switzerland; Archbishops and Dukes do it."

"But really, Forster, I can't leave your father. No, I must be at home; you three shall go."

"You must come, mother, because the girls will want a chaperon, I suppose. Adela will meet so many of your young men, and Dora will be wild. I want to organise a kind of Cook's tour for my club men."

"Oh! that's the reason of Switzerland," said Dora, a little disconcerted. "I was surprised at your suggesting anything nice without a motive. It's very tiresome always to think of other people, isn't it, mother?"

"You will not have that poor dear Mr. Gillbanks to help you. By the way, Forster, he really has married the Princess. I couldn't believe it when you told me, but I saw it in some paper. Where was it, Dora?"

"I kept it for Forster to see. The Princess lost her brother, so it was all very quiet; but Mr. Gillbanks might have asked you, Forster."

Forster took the paper and read the announcement.

"I had a note from Philip written on the eve of his wedding," he said, hardly glancing at the paper.

"I wish the Princess had not married Mr. Gillbanks. I hear it said everywhere that it was for his money," remarked Adela slowly. "I met Mrs. Todd the other day, and she says quite openly that Miss Winshall only came to London to find a rich husband. She did not look worldly, did she, mother?"

"She was a beautiful woman, and she belonged to such a really old family; it is a pity she married for money."

"A pity she married Philip Gillbanks!" exclaimed Forster, his eyes flashing a little. "Yes, it is; he is a hundred times too good for her."

"He is very nice, certainly, and your friend, Forster; but of course his father is——"
love. He had answered Philip's note with one equally short; merely wishing him happiness, if it were to be found, and ignorant of the fact that Philip was taking his bride abroad. He himself wished to get away; but to go off alone and wander aimlessly and selfishly was not possible to him — hence his suggestion, which had been received with such delight by Dora, if not by the other two ladies.

So, struggling against a fearful feeling of apathy, Forster began preparations, and began also to try to organise a party of young East End men to start with him. Mrs. Bethune was rather horrified when she was told that she was to form part of a Cook's personally conducted tour, but after having expressed her conviction that of course it was all right if Forster did it, and that the poor dear young men would enjoy it immensely, she was partially reassured by hearing that she should travel in a first-class carriage, alone with her daughters, though Forster was going with his friends. Mr. Bethune and Mary both hastened to their country home, with a feeling that the rest of the family had strange ideas of pleasure, but that, on the whole, it was safer to allow them to go their own way, for fear of hearing remarks on their peculiar hobbies.

Mary suddenly developed an idea of joining a village orchestra, which, as her mother remarked, would be charming if she could keep her choir in tune. Mr. Bethune was also delighted to be leaving town, because a rich neighbour having died in his absence, his library was to be sold. The neighbour had many first editions, and Mr. Bethune was torn between the conflicting emotions of proper respect and feeling for the dead, and of delight at the chance of buying his coveted books.

Adela was now full of plans for Forster's men, and she made nine housewives and nine bags for the party. Forster engaged a whole carriage, five on each side being the correct number, and he wished to travel as they did and to allow himself no privileges.

The meeting at Charing Cross was a sight which Mrs. Bethune never forgot. The nine young men appeared, headed by Forster, whose handsome and aristocratic appearance no simplicity could efface. The weighing of the luggage was not difficult, and there was no extra charge for it, though Mrs. Bethune's huge trunk made her feel quite ashamed of her needs. Forster had asked Lord and Lady Rook-
came in usefully, even when she most disapproved of the Bethune eccentricities.

"If you meet the Princess, give her our love, and tell her she might have invited us to her wedding," said Dora.

"Oh, the Princess! Yes. Is it really true she has married Mr. Gillbanks? Jack was surprised, for Lord Arthur was supposed to be very much 'pride'-but then Mr. Gillbanks is very rich, isn't he?"

"Yes, I believe so; at least, Forster always had enough money for his club from Mr. Gillbanks, but he thinks he is too good for the Princess."

"Oh, well, that is a friend's view! Oh, here is Jack, and where are the peaches?"

Lord Rookwood was seen coming quickly along the platform, trying to appear as if he were in no way connected with a lad who walked behind him, carrying a large dish of peaches. Forster turned towards his cousin, his face all smiles.

"That is kind, really, Jack. Let me introduce you to my right hand, Tom Smith, Lord Rookwood—see what he has brought us. We are beginning in grand style, but after this we are going to do everything cheap, you know. Jack. This is only the first rocket of our humble fireworks."

Lord Rookwood backed out of view of the party as soon as politeness allowed, and drew Forster with him.

"Why don't you go with your mother in a sensible manner, Forster?"

"But I am going with her. Don't pity us, we shall do very well. It will be a nice change for me."

"A nice change! Good heavens! Well, I'm off to the moors. Emily is going to fill the house with people."

"Then I reserve my pity for you. I find all this society business very distasteful."

"We saw more of you this season, however. Do you know it was reported that you were going to marry the fair Princess, but Gillbanks ran away with the Jubilee bun."

Forster winced a little.

"Yes, Philip Gillbanks has married Miss Winskell."

"A mere affair of money, I hear."

"I don't know."

"Well, don't forget that a wife makes a difference, and leave Gillbanks alone. A man's not worth his salt after he's married. I tell Em that. You must go, I see the guard coming. If I thought he would believe me, I would warn him that he has a lunatic with him. If you meet the Princess, give her my respects."

"She is at home, I believe. The father met with an accident. I say, Jack, why don't you join us?"

"Make the eleventh! No, thank you. Good-bye."

ROUND LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

In winter or summer, in shine or in shower, the prudent pedestrian will avoid Lincoln's Inn Fields. Nowhere does the wind blow more keenly, or the sun strike with more scorching power. And in crossing that vast area there is often neither shade nor shelter to be found. And yet in making a bee line from west to east, or vice-versa, by court and alley, slum and shabby street, say between Piccadilly Circus and St. Bride's, you are pretty sure to come out in Lincoln's Inn Fields. There is a practicable direct and easy way, indeed, alike for vehicles and foot-passengers, where from Lincoln's Inn Fields, the old-fashioned Cranbourn Street, dimly recalling the once famous alley and its fops, is continued in Long Acre, for centuries the abode of coach-builders, and so, with a slight dislocation at Old Drury, by the more modern Great Queen Street right into the Fields, and leaves you planted there to find your best way out, or to raise a sun-stroke at one time, or a soaking at another, by venturing across the dreary waste.

All the more tantalising is it on a hot summer's day to see enclosed by grim iron railings in the centre of the "Fields" a pleasant, shady oasis, with trees and turf, which would make an agreeable short cut to the gate of Lincoln's Inn, but from which the public is rigorously excluded. Five acres or more of pleasant garden, in the very heart of "London-beyond-the-walls," and for the most part of the day an utter solitude; here surely is something that might be altered for the better. Indeed a good many attempts have been made to secure the site as a public garden, open to all who pass that way, but hitherto without success; and a bill promoted by the County Council will be introduced in the ensuing session of Parliament to make a public garden of the place, with the proviso that no noisy games shall there be played. For there is a somewhat natural dread on the part of the lawyers who occupy the stiff and solemn-looking houses about the Fields lest all the turmoil of
a noisy, crowded, slummary neighbourhood should be brought into these quiet precincts by the attraction of such a pleasure-ground. The Benches of Lincoln's Inn have no such fears, but then they are almost out of earshot. There will be no "wigs on the green" in defence of the threatened seclusion of the Fields. It is the wigless branch of the profession whose opposition is dreads—the great family lawyers who dare to congregate; the silent, unseen rulers of the realm, who, in their safes and deed-boxes, hold the title deeds of half England and the secrets of the great families whose fortunes are attached thereto. The shade of Talking-horn still haunts these not Elysian fields; the interests of the Dedlock family are still his anxious care.

From the quiet and deadly dulness of the Fields it is but a step to a widely different scene. Through Portsmouth Place, where lawyers' chambers suddenly give place to lodging-houses at popular prices, and where a knot of fierce-looking women are holding spiritual discourse, it is but a step to a narrow paved court, once called Bear Yard. There was, doubtless, a bear-pit close by in Shakespeare's days, and the yard was a tennis court and then a theatre, "Little Lincoln's Inn Theatre"; but it is all spick and span now, red brick and smart railings and ground glass windows. It is the usual ward of the Strand Workhouse; and never in the palmiest days of the Bear Yard stage did it boast of fuller houses. Soon after one p.m. people begin to arrive, and form a queue under the shelter of a covered alley. Dragged, haggard women, some with children in their arms, crouch on the steps; while the men, in every variety of tattered garments and without a sound boot among them, fold themselves up as tightly as they can so as to offer the least possible surface to the searching wind.

Beyond the yard is a Board School, its narrow playground just now swarming with small children wrapped up in all kinds of faded garments, but generally well shod, and as lively and noisy as they can be. They are the children of coster-land, the nippers of whom we hear in the music halls, and the sharpest and most active little fry anywhere. They always tire anywhere if they be met with. And it is these nippers who are mostly concerned in the opening of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and whose irritation, like the Huns among the polished civilisation of the Empire, is dreads by the grave and reverend Signiors of the law. Then there are the general inhabitants of the country lying between Covent Garden and the Fields, the bulk of whom are connected with the market, or dependent on it in some way or other. The region is one that is packed as tight as it can hold, and that in the dingliest and queerest of courts and alleys, where all kinds of queer industries are carried on.

Here is a man outside his door, with a great earthen vessel that would have held the captain of the Forty Thieves, and is full of potatoes of a size and elegance of shape that would win a prize at any cottagers' show. These potatoes he is carefully washing and polishing one by one. "The best o' fruit and the best o' cooking is what you get at the Royal York Potato Cane," and truly the potato in perfection is to be tasted only at the street corners.

Further on, where a wider street breaks the line of allies, you may see a grizzled coster running his pony up and down and trying to effect a sale to a younger member of the fraternity, whose lady, adorned with a tall hat and ostrich feather, seems equally interested in the bargain, while a friend with a long whip smartens up the pony's action. The whole street shares in the excitement of the deal, and every door shows a knot of women in deshabille who seem vitally interested in the matter. At the next corner you may meet a group of flower girls, with empty baskets to bear witness to a good day's trade, but not too tired to exchange a little playful badinage with friends and neighbours. Hard at work in a little shop with its front knocked out, are half-a-dozen women and girls making chip baskets for the coming strawberry season; a reminder of spring even in the very lap of winter. And in an adjoining driftway are packed a battery of empty barrows, waiting to be hired by adventurous traders, whose working capital does not "run to" a private vehicle of that description.

Altogether it is a pleasant and varied region, this coster-land, although dingy enough, and sometimes bordering on the disreputable; but its limits are soon reached, and presently we are in Sardinia Street, which is, as it were, the Entry Street to the locality, with the Sardinia Chapel on one side, which has long ceased to have any connection with the Sardinian Embassy from which it derives its name, but is now the chief Roman Catholic church in the neigh-
bourhood. The chapel, it will be remembered, was gutted and partly burnt, together with the Ambassador's residence in the Fields, at the very beginning of the Gordon riots in 1780. The Embassy and chapel had been since 1648, at which date the buildings on this, the west side of the Fields were first erected. And a gloomy archway that seems almost crushed by the weight of the ponderous houses above it brings us again into the Fields.

There is a quaint and ponderous dignity about this side of the Fields, and our interest in the buildings is enhanced by the suggestion that our excellent Welsh architect, Inigo Jones, who designed Whitehall Palace and Aberglaenlyn Bridge, is also the author of these grandiose mansions, once occupied by great nobles, or high dignitaries of the law. But the grand mansion at the upper corner of the Fields, where Great Queen Street enters—the footway carried beneath the end of the house, in a tunnel of brick and masonry—this fine old house, with the double flight of steps to its imposing entrance, and the grassy courtyard and rusty iron railings, is of somewhat later date, and was built by the Marquis of Powis, a devoted adherent of James the Second, shortly before the fall of that monarch. In after days it belonged to the Duke of Newcastle, Prime Minister under Farmer George's reign, and you can fancy the crowds that struggled up or down the stairs as the Minister gave his grand receptions, or at night the glare of the torches, the cries of link-boys, the struggles of footmen and chauffeurs and powdered coachmen, where now is the silence of the grave.

But at night the Fields, though the resort of the finest company, were not the safest place in the world, even for those with coaches and lacqueys. To this we have the testimony of Ralph Wilson, an eminent highwayman who might have been an eminent lawyer, had his gifts turned that way, for he had been articled to Mr. Dixon, of Lincoln's Inn, a very eminent and honest practitioner in Chancery. But instead of poring over law books, Ralph took to evil company, and presently, with Jack Hawkins and another, well mounted and armed, astonished the town with daring robberies at people's very doors. "One night in August, 1720," writes Wilson, "when all mankind were turned thieves"—he alludes to the South Sea Bubble and the general scramble for wealth—"we robb'd a coach against the dead wall in Chancery Lane, another the same night in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in going off we stumbled upon my lord Westmorland, with three footmen behind his coach; we robb'd his lordship, but with a great deal of difficulty, for the watch poured upon us from all parts. Yet at the fire of a Pistol over their heads they retired as fast, and gave us an opportunity of getting clear."

We can fancy the panic among the honest Dogberrys, but it must be remembered that they were mostly amateurs at the business, and that their lives were probably not insured for the benefit of their families. Nevertheless they had the chance without going out of the parish, for at the "Ball and Dragon," at Lincoln's Inn Back gate, according to a prospectus of 1704, for seven shillings and sixpence down you might insure five hundred pounds at death, being far better terms than are offered nowadays, but subject to the realisation of a whip of half-a-crown a head, to which all subscribers were liable on the death of a brother member.

The Fields were at that time a wild open space, where booths and huts were run up, and mountebanks practised and charlatans held forth. There was the oratory of preacher Henley, who brought round him by his eloquence all the butchers of Newport Market:

Preacher at once and Zany is thy age,
as Pope describes him, while in another passage where the poet parodies Milton's grand lines:

High on a gorgeous throne that far outshone
Henley's gilt tub.

he is justified by the fact that the pulpit of the preacher was draped with gold lace and crimson velvet, while the special liturgy was of a very ornate description. The post gives us another glimpse of the Fields in describing the rivalry of the playhouses:

Dare is the conflict, dismal is the din,
Here shouts all Drury, there all Lincoln's Inn.

For at the time he wrote all the world, gentle and simple, were pouring into the Fields to struggle for places at Rich's Theatre, where Gay's "Beggars' Opera," with all its pleasant license and abandon, was electrifying the town.

But of this theatre, the old "Duke's" Theatre, and one of the two "patents" now represented by Covent Garden, not a trace remains. Its site is covered by the back part of the College of Surgeons, which rears its handsome front
on the south side of the Fields. It
does not add much to the gaiety of the
scene, especially since the students, who
were formerly examined in its halls, have
been relegated to the new establishment
on the Embankment. Nor has its museum
any particular local interest—unless the
skeleton of Jonathan Wilde should suggest
associations with past worthies of the
locality, or the bones of the Irish giant
recall the unscrupulous methods of the
great John Hunter in getting possession of
favourite subjects.

Of a more cheerful character is the museum
of Sir John Soane on the other side of the
way, where if you are lucky enough to hit
upon the right day you will enjoy the sight
of the finest " Hogarth " extant, and of a
really beautiful collection of curios of all
kinds, and bring away the impression that
you have been the guest of a courtly pro-
fessional man of the early century, in his
house as he lived three-quarters of a century
ago. His dinner-parties, indeed, must have
been feasts of the Barmecides, for the
kitchen is the cell of a monk, the wine-
cellar a classic mausoleum, and all Egypt is
crammed into the "coals"; where you
would expect the china cupboard is a
niche devoted to Shakespeare, and in every
hole and corner is something curious,
intaglio, gems, rare missals, illuminated
manuscripts. The only regret is that the
courteous host is barred from speech by
the conditions of ghost-land, and can give
no description of his treasures.

But we have not yet quite done with
that jealously guarded enclosure that re-
resents for us the freedom and sometimes
riot of old Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was
there, you will remember, that the scaffold
was erected for Lord William Russell's
execution, and people have often queried,
why should they have brought the poor
man all the way from the Tower just to
have his head chopped off? But they
forget that just over the way, on the
other side of Holborn, then a rural scene,
was Bedford House, the great mansion
of the Russells, and that probably from
the upper windows of the house could be
seen the dreadful apparatus of death, and
even the dull thud of the axe be heard
by those who listened. So that the exe-
cution in this spot was, in fact, a threat,
or a warning to the powerful Earls of
Bedford—the compliments of Stuart to
Russell.

The delusion that we are still among
the fields in reality, is strengthened by the
such a matter he would not concede that there could be such things as trifles; truth was truth, and lies were lies, whether they were big or little ones.

I gave way to him at the time—he was so very sure—but on one or two subsequent occasions, on which I met him, I made a mental note of some of the remarks he made, and one night I brought them up against him, and routed him. I asked him why he had not come by a certain train from town. He answered, in that grave way of his, as if he were measuring his words: "I meant to, but I just missed it by a second." I had him on the hip. I asked, when I confronted him with his own statement, how he knew that he had missed it exactly by a second. He reflected, and then allowed that he had missed it by perhaps a minute; the train must have been leaving the platform when he entered the station. He had been guilty of a very common form of exaggeration, what may be called exaggerated accuracy. Again, he was unfortunate in his lodgings. To be accurate, his landlady was not a perfect cook—she made him suffer. He was telling us that, on one occasion, she had been particularly trying. "The whole dinner," he said, "was completely spoiled." I brought this also up against him on the momentous occasion on which I was convincing him by the evidence of his own mouth. I wanted to know how he knew that the whole dinner was completely spoiled. Was there no portion of it, for instance, which was only slightly spoiled, not any portion of the meat, not any portion of the vegetables, not any portion of the rice pudding? Indeed, I wanted to know how he knew that any portion of it was completely spoiled. I showed him, in his own dictionary, that to spoil meant to render useless. Was he prepared to assert that his landlady had rendered one portion of that food which she had prepared for him wholly and absolutely useless? He looked at me askance. A peculiar gleam came into his eyes. He had fallen again. Still once more. He was a vehement politician. He was very fond of declaring that a prominent politician on the wrong side had "nothing" in him. When I enquired, mildly, if he did not consider it a monstrous exaggeration to say, of any man, that he had nothing in him— for the meaning of the word, vide as before, the dictionary—he began to use language of the most exaggerated kind towards me.

But I do not remember to have heard him afterwards claim to be, at least in this respect, not as other men are.

If exaggeration were proscribed, and the proscriber had power to enforce his own proscription, a large number of people would, practically, be debarred from ever opening their mouths to speak. Exaggeration, in a certain class, is born of ignorance. Not long ago I heard some Brighton excursionists assuring each other that, next to London, Brighton was the largest town in England. It was an exaggeration born of ignorance. I have heard Brightonians themselves assert that Brighton is the finest town in England—we must many of us have heard similar statements made by inhabitants of other third, fourth, and even fifth-rate places. I recollect a Deal boatman—who had never been farther inland than Canterbury, and on that occasion, unless I err, his visit had been paid to Canterbury gaol—sententiously informing me that, taking it all in all, there weren't no place equal to Deal, not nowhere. All such statements are, surely, merely exaggerations, born of something very much like ignorance.

"I reckon there ain't anywhere a lad like our Jim." I heard an old countryman say that only a day or two ago, and he meant it. Under what form of exaggeration would that come? "If you want tatties you try Mr. Bates's; there never were such tatties as his." Under what form is that? "My dear, you will never get anything done half as nicely as you get it done at home." Who among us has not heard some such remark as that? Is that the exaggeration which is born of ignorance too?

The exaggeration which is born of ignorance is, indeed, not confined to any particular class—it is universal. There is a lady who said, "I dare say we walked fourteen miles." She showed what she dared to say when she said it, because as a matter of fact they had walked, perhaps, seven. The simple explanation is that she is no judge of distances, and that the seven had really seemed to her to be fourteen. Ignorance of the meaning of figures is wider spread. Another lady was crossing a field in which there were a colony of rocks. "I should think," she said, "that there were thousands." There were possibly, over a hundred, but it was all the same. A man I know walked over Dartmoor. He was saying that Princetown prison is cold because it is placed so high.
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Some one asked him how high it was. "Oh, I suppose over three thousand feet." I hardly think that Princetown stands on such an elevation as that. Few persons can measure a height with their eyes. I stood with three others at the foot of one of the mounds which are to be found on the top of a famous tunnel. We each of us wrote down on a separate slip of paper how high we thought it was. The difference between those four estimates was startling. I do not, to this day, know how high that mound is; but at least three of us must have been egregiously wrong.

Some persons are so constituted that they can scarcely open their mouths without allowing exaggerations to escape from them. There is, for instance, the impulsive person who is addicted to the use of superlatives. "That is the nicest girl I ever met," says Jones of, perhaps, half-a-dozen different girls in the course of a single week. In the same way he assures his friends that each new book he happens to chance upon is either the "worst" or the "best" he ever read. In this respect Miss Gusher is even worse than Jones. Where he is satisfied with one superlative she insists on half-a-dozen. Jones is a dancing man. He says of each fresh dance he honours with his presence, "My dear fellow, it was the nicest dance I was ever at." But listen to Miss Gusher! "My dear Mand, I am quite sure the Crashers' was, without any exaggeration, the very nicest dance I was ever at, the very nicest! And there were the sweetest men—one in particular. He was the loveliest man I ever saw! And such a dancer—he was the best dancer I ever danced with! I never danced with any one whose step went so perfectly with mine! And then there was another—in fact, there were several—indeed, I should think there were quite half-a-dozen of the very best dancers I ever saw! And there was the most perfect floor! And the loveliest supper! Were you at the Balstrodes' the week before? You ought to have been! I don't think I ever enjoyed myself so much in my life, I'm quite sure I didn't! There were the most charming men! And the finest dancers! By the way, were you at the Palmers'? Wasn't it exquisite? Did you ever see finer dancers? I never did!"

And Miss Gusher goes through a list of perhaps twenty or thirty dances, protesting that, in each and every detail, each was the "very best" she was ever at. She is not at all conscious how odd her remarks would look if they confronted her in black and white.

I sometimes ask myself of how many words the average English-speaking person's vocabulary consists. The number must be very limited. Nothing else can explain the fact that so many people have what may be called "stock phrases." The use which they make of these stock phrases is but another form of exaggeration.

Some time ago I "sat under" a clergyman who was addicted, in his sermons, to the use of the phrase, "most vital question." Some would think that there could be but one "most vital question." He thought otherwise. According to him the phrase was a sort of compound noun of multitude. He would touch upon half-a-dozen different topics, each of which was apt to be a "most vital question." In fact, I doubt if he often touched upon a topic which was not a "most vital question." That, by showing an almost cynical disregard for the just value and meaning of words, he might be showing his congregation an example of what looked very like wilful exaggeration, was, I feel sure, a reflection which never occurred to him.

If you were to tell Major Pilkestaff that he habitually exaggerates, I am inclined to think that there would be something approximating to an argument. And yet I do not believe that I exaggerate when I say that possibly a hundred times a day the gallant Major declares that something or other is a "most extraordinary thing." "Most extraordinary thing—just met Porter on the pier." "Most extraordinary thing—last night I had no trumps two hands running." "Most extraordinary thing—our cat has kittens." I do not know how many "most extraordinary things" Pilkestaff imagines that this world contains, but I do know that he never suspects that he exaggerates.

Nor do I think that Miss Mawle has a notion that she exaggerates when she speaks of so many things being a "perfect providence." "It was a perfect providence that we fixed the treat for Tuesday." "It was a perfect providence that I was in when Mrs. Trusman called." "It was a perfect providence that I brought my purse." Have you observed how anxious Mr. and Mrs. Roper are that their children should speak correctly? They are down upon the least exaggeration. The other day Tommy Roper was describing a cricket
match, in which, according to him, he had played a prominent part, describing it, I am bound to say, in somewhat flowery language. His father struck in, “Don’t exaggerate, my boy, don’t exaggerate, stick to the literal truth!” He turned to his wife. “I wish I could induce that boy to remember that there is not much difference between an exaggeration and a lie.” And then almost immediately after, Clara Roper, st. thirteen, began to tell us about one of the girls at her school. If she is anything like the portrait Clara painted of her she certainly must be a remarkable young woman, and not by any means a nice one. So her mother seemed to think; because this is what she said: “My dear Clara, are you quite sure of what you say? Do be careful! Before you exaggerate I wish you would consider what mischief you may do.”

Of course, the Ropers are right. It is to be wished that all parents were equally careful in checking any tendency towards exaggeration which their children may evince. It is painful to see how many children do exaggerate. And it is such a dreadful thing, especially in the young. In the old we do not notice it so much. Though some observations made both by Mr. and Mrs. Roper, when Tommy and Clara were not present, struck me, judged by their own standard, as being rather odd.

It was at dinner. Soup was served. Mr. Roper took a spoonful.

“I see, Mrs. Roper, that your cook wishes to poison me again. This isn’t soup.”

“My dear, it’s only a little too salt.”

“A little too salt! I should think she’s put all the salt in the pariah into it. It’s nothing but salt.”

Mrs. Roper turned to me, when the servant had taken the turnip out of the room.

“What trials servants are! There are no good servants nowadays, absolutely none. As for a good cook—there isn’t such a thing.”

I feel that it is, perhaps, a little unfortunate that Mr. and Mrs. Roper are not, in their turn, possessed of parents willing and able to correct any slight exaggerations of which they may be guilty.

Exaggeration is a good deal a question of character. In some men we exaggerate more than in others. It is probably, no exaggeration to say that every man exaggerates when he loses his temper; and, at least, equally may this be said of every woman. Hawkins is, in his normal condition, a capital fellow; careful of speech, slow to wound another person’s feelings. But he is the more or less proud owner of a temper. If there were such a thing as a Lost Property Office for Tempers, on six days out of seven one might confidently reckon on finding Hawkins’s temper there. It is seldom in its owner’s keeping; and when it is not in its owner’s keeping he scarcely ever speaks without resorting to exaggeration. Everything is, on those occasions, against him. All is for the worst in this worst of all possible worlds. The clerks in his office are made to feel this particularly. If one of them omits to dot an “i,” he is made to feel that he has been guilty of a crime which, regarded from the most merciful point of view, is equal to murder. Of the appalling weight of testimony which his wife and children could give of the husband’s, and the father’s, capacity for exaggeration one is afraid to think.

Again, who does not know how Mrs. Griffin can exaggerate—and she does exaggerate when her temper is lost, stolen, or strayed. And do you remember what things Miss Ayh and Miss Bee said of each other when they, as it were, fell out upon the way? In what exaggerations they indulged! And when those two charming sisters, Clara and Emily Roper, quarrel—as they do, perhaps twice or thrice a day—what shocking exaggerations they permit themselves to use!

Dyspepsia lends itself to exaggeration just as much as the good digestion which waits on appetite. The pessimist, like the optimist, has a natural bend towards exaggeration. The world contains both good and evil. If you average it up you will find that it is essentially a world of semitones, of compromise. The pessimist, who sees nothing in it but bad, exaggerates in about the same degree as the optimist, who sees in it nothing but good. He who is starving can see nothing but suffering, crime, misery. He who has dined well, and whose digestion is as good as his dinner, is apt to be certain that life is a perpetual feast.

Faddists are the masters of the Ignoble Art of Exaggeration. If one wishes to avoid exaggeration, one is careful to measure one’s speech; one is never in extremes. Faddists seldom measure their speech; they are almost invariably in extremes. Teetotallers; anti-smokers; anti-vaccinators; anti-everythingites; vegeta-
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rises; the people who would "put down" fiction, the rational enjoyments of the Sunday, theatres, dancing, cards, billiards, so many of the things which make life worth the living; if these people did not exaggerate, they would for ever hold their peace. Unfortunately, exaggeration is too often their only weapon. The clear, dry light of truth is not for them. They could not live in such an atmosphere for an hour. It would be well if our weak-kneed brethren could be brought to understand what a plain and certain fact this is. It might bring peace and comfort to their minds.

"In medio tutissimus ibi"—the middle path is the path of safety. That used to be a sentence in the Latin grammar which we used at school. The saying is true enough. Be moderate; avoid extremes; adapt your habits to your constitution. Live your own life; be master of your own life. Above all, do not make a trade of exaggeration. Exaggerate neither with the testotaters nor with the drunkards; "In medio tutissimus ibi"—you will go safest in the middle. You will certainly walk nearest to the truth.

The more attentively one considers the subject, the more clearly one perceives how almost universally prevalent is the vice of exaggeration. One supposes it is a vice. There are the clerics at one end, and the politicians at the other. The clerics of all the creeds. There is the Mohammedan, who tells you that if you do not do certain things certain other dreadful things will happen. There is the Buddhist, who assures you of the paramount and, indeed, vital necessity which exists why you should do certain altogether different and entirely incompatible things. And the same positive, and, in truth, superlative assertions, meet one nearer home. The religious atmosphere, all the world over, is too apt to be crowded with exaggerations. One seldom enters a place of worship, belonging to any one of our nine hundred and ninety-nine different sects, without hearing at least—well, say one exaggeration, uttered by the parson in the pulpit. This may seem a dreadful thing to say. But though 'tis true, 'tis pitey, pity 'tis 'tis true.

We get on to safer ground when we approach the politicians. Every one recognises that there is exaggeration among them. We all of us have Radical friends who will be the first to allow that the Tories habitually deal in what it would be courtesy to call exaggerations; while that the Radicals are, of their nature, compelled to exaggerate, none will be readier to admit than the Tories. If, on the other hand, you go to a third person, an Individual who cries a plague on both their houses, you will find him prepared to concede that both parties—all sides—exaggerate alike. And, possibly, that third person will not be so far out as he might be. One is almost forced to the painful conclusion that faddists, clerics, and politicians make what may be called a trade of exaggeration.

And who remains? There is exaggeration in the professions. Take medicine. Is not an exaggeration of knowledge part of the stock-in-trade of the average medical man? The less he knows, the more he exaggerates his knowledge. He may not say in so many words that he knows, but he desires to impress you with the belief that he does. Is not that of the very essence of exaggeration? Few things are more difficult to diagnose than the ailments of little children. The child itself cannot say what is the matter with it. Very often those in charge of it cannot clearly explain. Constantly that walking encyclopedia—and a very useful encyclopedia he is; I am not under rating his usefulness one jot—the general practitioner, has no more notion what is the matter with the babe he is called in to attend than the man in the moon. But it would be unprofessional to confess his ignorance. On the contrary, he exaggerates his knowledge—not only what it actually is, but what it, by any possibility, could be. He assumes an air almost of omniscience. He looks wise. He hums and has. He prescribes a powder. He changes the medicine the next day, and again the day after. He peddles and palters. The child recovers, or it dies. In the one case he exaggerates his responsibility for the child's recovery, which he very easily can do, since, for the result, he is wholly and entirely irresponsible. In the case of the child's death I wonder of what exaggeration he is guilty in the certificate he gives?

Where would the man of law be, if he were confined to the strict letter of the truth? If he were not, occasionally, allowed to deviate into the byways of exaggeration, would he not cease from off the face of the earth? How many of us would patronise the lawyer, and still more the barrister, who was sworn, at all times and at all costs, to his clients to tell and to suggest the truth, and nothing but the truth? If it were not taken for granted that solicitors and counsel will exaggerate,
within limits—wide limits sometimes—and to the best of their ability in the interests of their clients, litigation would be no more.

If exaggeration is rampant in the professions, it is not because it is non-existent in the trades. Very much the other way. Look at the advertisement sheets, and see. If you believe what you read there, every tradesman is offering the best value for money. Not one of them ever offers anything else. Every man Jack of them offers you a genuine bargain. Beginning with Cutter, who offers you a suit of clothes, with an extra pair of trousers, "given away," for one guinea—marvellous value; and ending with Snip, who, if he wants five, or even ten guineas, for his suit of clothes, does so because for style, finish, and quality they are simply unsurpassable. Indeed, considering what they are, Snip has no hesitation in affirming that they are the best value for money that ever yet was offered. Exaggeration is the very life of modern commerce. It is the atmosphere in which it lives, moves, and has its being. Whether the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, ever was told by tradesmen and commercial men, may be a matter of doubt. They certainly do not allow any considerations of accuracy to fetter them to-day. The other day I was in a village post office, in which is carried on the business of a general shop. An old lady was purchasing a rashee of bacon. Of the assistant who was serving her she made enquiries as to its quality. Said that assistant, "Never put my knife into a better piece of bacon in my life." Quite so; no doubt. That assistant was up-to-date. Only yesterday I was at a famous tailor's. I wanted to know what was the wearing capacity of some cloth which they were showing me. Said the shopman, "You never saw anything wear like it in your life, sir." It was only a figure of speech, but that gossipy shopman was own brother to the village assistant.

In an age of competition, exaggeration is inevitable. It is one of the results of the struggle for life. We live fast, we speak fast. If we wish to be accurate, we must weigh our words; that would necessitate our living slowly. More, judged by the standard of the time, it would necessitate our being dull. Exact meanings require exact expression. It is surprising what a number of words we should have to use if we were always to say, or to try to say, exactly what we mean. With all our efforts, we should sometimes fail. We must exaggerate, not necessarily always or even often, but certainly sometimes, if we wish to talk at all.

And since this is so—and if you doubt that it is so, I should like to live with you for a month, and take down every word you say or write "literatim et verbatim," I would give you, out of your own mouth, the canary proof—it is just as well to bear in mind that it is more than doubtful if exaggeration is, in any sense, improper; not to speak of its being a crime; that is, exaggeration of a certain sort. A lie is a lie, and if your intent is to deceive, whether you do so by means of exaggeration or of a lie direct, your position is the same. You have tampered with the truth; let us hope that you have not also, and at the same time, proved yourself to be a scamp. Though, mind you, there are lies which merit the cross of honour. Possibly, one of these days the present writer may have an opportunity of proving to you that that is certainly no lie.

But in exaggeration of a certain sort there is no intent to deceive. It is a fashion of speech—no less, no more. This is an illusive age; an age of phrases; almost a stenographic age. A few words convey, and are intended to convey, a large meaning. Verbal accuracy is all very well for grammarians, and, for the matter of that, for laymen. But it by no means follows that a scant appreciation of the sense and authority of words is necessarily a sin. Would you tell that clerical friend of mine that by the constant reiteration of that favourite phrase of his, "most vital question," he offends? Against good taste, morality, what? For my part, I am doubtful if he offends against anything. He is a scholar. He knows, if any man does, that there can only be one "most vital question." He knows that what that question is has taken all the wit of all the ages to determine, and that we are still, some of us, in doubt. He is aware that, at any rate, this much is certain, that ninety-nine and a considerable fraction per cent. of the subjects which he so glibly sums up for his congregation under the common heading, "most vital question," are very far indeed from being anything of the sort. The simple fact is that when he says that such and such a topic is a "most vital question," he means that it is a question of more or less importance. He merely conveys his mean-
ing in a peculiar, and one might almost say, characteristic form of words. He himself knows what he means, and those who hear him also know what he means. Just as I knew what the tailor’s shopman meant when he said, of the piece of cloth, “you never saw anything wear like it in your life, sir.” He meant that it was a good article, and that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, it would wear well. He merely expressed what he meant in a formula of his own.

Literal verbal accuracy is, practically, impossible. We may be accurate when we deal with figures, because figures are themselves so many formulas. But words are pretty well what we choose to consider them. When we say that two and two make four, no one may impugn our accuracy. But, probably, no man ever yet described a woman’s face without convincing somebody that he had exaggerated in some particular. When Miss Guiler describes the dances which she so much enjoys in that flowery way of hers, it is at least open to doubt if she herself is conscious of her own exaggeration. Her desire is to give expression to her feelings. It is at least conceivable that her feelings are so amazingly strong, that, even by constantly resorting to superlatives, she is only able to give inadequate expression to them all.

The person who makes up, or who endeavours to make up his mind, that so far as he is himself concerned, he will never fall into the sin of exaggeration, wastes his time. To begin with, if he does not exaggerate in his own opinion—he probably has a very high opinion of himself, or the poor fallible creature would scarcely endeavour, by means of a resolution, to declare his own infallibility—he is certain to do so in the opinion of others. So much depends upon the point of view. Take this, by way of illustration.

Mrs. Barnes (at dinner): Mary and I saw a dreadful thing to-day. We saw a cab run away, and that it might have been a dreadful thing, that’s all.

Mrs. King (Mrs. B.’s mother): My dear John, I don’t like to hear you talk in that cynical way. I assure you that it was indeed a terrible spectacle. The frightened horse dragging the—

Mrs. B. (equivocating): Frantic cab!

Mrs. K.: No, John, not frantic cab. I don’t exaggerate—dragging the cab along that crowded thoroughfare; people shrieking, drivers shouting, lives imperilled, property endangered. Emily is quite right—it was a most dreadful thing to witness.

Charlie (Mr. B.’s brother): My dear people, nothing nowadays is dreadful unless there are at least a hundred people killed.

Mrs. B.: Charlie! Who is exaggerating now?

That is the question which they are left discussing—who is, or rather, who was.

As has been said, the foregoing is merely an illustration of how much depends upon the point of view. We may take it for granted that neither of the ladies had any wish to indulge in the use of exaggerated language. Their experience of catastrophes was limited. What seemed to them a dreadful thing, seemed to the gentlemen an everyday occurrence. The moral of which is, that you will find that the person of the largest and most varied experience, of the most extensive knowledge of men and of affairs, and of the most scholarly attainments, is, as a rule, the person who is least likely to be led into the highways and byways of exaggeration.

A SUNBEAM.

The wet winds are sighing, the rain patters down,
The sere leaves are drifting, the low heavens frown,
The oak logs are crumbling to red fervent heat,
The dull night is closing—I want you, my sweet.

Oh soft arms that clasped me, oh red lips that kissed!
Oh sweet voice that called me through sorrow’s grey mist!
Oh little hands holding, oh golden curls tossed,
Oh dear "ways" that won me from all I had lost!
Oh big tears in bright showers, oh smiles that flashed after,
Oh great brown eyes lighting to quick happy laughter,
Oh sudden caresses, oh weé glancing feet,
Oh sunbeam in sadness!—I want you, my sweet.

THE ZERMATT VALLEY IN WINTER.

On the ninth of January I had seen a notice in the recreation room of the Montreux Kurhaus to the effect that the
ALL THE YEAR BOUND.

"Monte Rosa Hotel" in Zermatt would remain open throughout the winter. This set me thinking. Even the wagers of franc pieces on the little horses which constitute the gambling attraction of this Kurraal could not distract me from my notion. The limit here is one franc. That does not lead to ruin, except by a very long and sinuous path.

Again, in my hotel I ran against a Briton who by chance had years ago found his way to Zermatt in February. He described it as a great experience, though he did not seem to like the discomfort of an hotel quite unprepared for him, in which he had to tarry cold until fires were lit to thaw him. But that was years ago; and the winter was, he admitted, a severe one. The walk from Visp plunged him repeatedly into snow to the thigh, and he was done up when he came under the lee of the Matterhorn.

This winter of grace 1893-4, on the other hand, seemed exceedingly mild all over Switzerland. I had climbed a few thousand feet above Montreux, and found comparatively little snow, though a delightful keen air in contrast to the mildness down by the lakeside. In short, I could not resist the temptation to speed up the Rhone valley. If the Fates were kind, I would walk from Visp to Zermatt, get up to the Gorner Grat or some such accessible point of view from the valley, perhaps get over the Théodule Pass into Italy, and at least find my way on to the Simplon. Walking tours in Switzerland in winter are not fashionable. It is hardly to be wondered at. But, methought, with exceptionally little snow on the ground, the pleasures of such a tour might put those of a summer tour in the shade on more counts than one.

The next evening found me at Visp, after a tedious long journey in the train. At least it would have been tedious as well as long, but for the sights it afforded. The weather was astonishing: so hot that the natives were to be seen lounging about by gates and near the station precincts just as if it had been August. A bright sun was on us till it was time for it to get behind the snow-peaks. These were delightful to see. The snow was melted from the huge rocky banks to the valley on the north side; but on the south side there was enough of it to give bold colour to the scene. Rhone, in the middle of the valley, ran blue and shallow in its stony bed.

At St. Moritz I came across a brace of Englähmen and two of my countrywomen, also bound for Zermatt. This looked well for the "Monte Rosa Hotel." I believe last winter was the first in which the hotel was opened for the cold season, and barely a dozen people came to it, thereby entailing loss on the Sellers. Things certainly seemed to promise better for the second winter.

But soon after St. Moritz the short day closed in. There was gloom indescribable over the gorge of the Trient when we passed its northern extremity, and the steps to the Fall—much reduced—looked like toy steps in the faint light. Overhead, the snow-peaks held the red flush of sunset for a while. Then we had the stars and a slip of a young moon — and nothing more determinate for external illumination. The night closed in bright and keen, and the Swiss railway guards stirred up the train's fires so that we travellers were half cooked in the hot steam with which they considerably flooded us.

Visp and the "Hôtel des Alpes" were reached something after the dinner hour. The hotel porter snatched at my baggage as if he feared I might change my mind and postpone staying here until the summer. But though no visitor was in the hotel and none expected, my welcome was of the warmest, and in less than half an hour a meal was ready for me that belied the apologies the landlord wasted upon it. Whosoever finds himself at Visp and the "Hôtel des Alpes" may be recommended to clamour for some of its stewed prunes. The prunes are of the valley, and finer and better-flavoured fruit I never tasted.

A cigar and another bottle of Fendant and my feet to the stove made the rest of the evening pass pleasantly. Then a good night in a large black room, with two or three degrees of frost in it, made me ready for the morning.

I was called at six—which seems early in January. But it was not a minute too soon for my programme. The excellent landlord had breakfast ready by half-past six, and at seven I put my head into the nipping outer air, knapsack-girdled, and rejoiced in the stillness, the beauty of the starlight, and the glow of the snow of the Balfrinhorn towards which I set my face.

"It is better here than in London—like this," said my landlord—he had spent a memorable year or two in our metropolis, for his "English's" sake, and had brought back to Rhone Valley a lively remembrance of our fog.
I agreed with him and set out. The air caught me at the ears and set me tingling. But it was so good to breathe.

When I got into Visp's dark, slippery streets a church bell began to tinkle. It sounded well in the silence. The dim forms of schoolboys also asserted themselves, with their satchels in their hands. Education at seven fifteen a.m. seemed an impossible thing. But it is in their energy for self-improvement—in mind and purpose—that only too many of our Continental friends are beating us hollow.

I have enjoyed many delightful hours afoot on this little globe of ours, but none to compare with these early ones on this day. To begin with, there was the pageant of sunrise—carried through before my eyes to the smallest detail. I saw the stars pale, and the blue of the zenith grow more solid; and then the glorious rose flush of day took the topmost peak of the Baldfrohnhorn before me, and the Bietaschhorn in the rear. It was long indeed before the sunlight grew commonplace, and by then I had other things to see.

The road was in capital trim. I even stirred dust on it, so that I was surprised to see the midsummer look of my boots when full day was declared. The Visp, down in its bed to the right, babbled noisily among its reaches of ice, with thin snow on the ice. The sloping vineyards had had their snow melted into them, but the frost had bound their soil into the hardness of pottery. High up the multitudes of little red-brown chalets caught the eye, and made one wonder how their denizens reached them. And the waterfalls that in summer make this valley walk so tumultuous were all frozen rigid. In places they had solidified across the road (which as roads go, is a poor one), and the treading was dainty. But upon the whole, what with the bracing air, the coolness, the absence of wind, and the cloudless blue overhead, as well as the easy walking, the conditions for a walk were unrivalled.

In an hour and a half I was at Stalden, and that in spite of a halt at the picturesque old bridge a mile north of it, with its little chapel—sadly scorched with the initials of summer tourists—and central shrine to boot.

There was some snow just here in the village, and I might have done better to take to the railway line for a few miles. Of course trains do not run here in the winter—though if all winters were like this year's they probably would soon begin. But the line in the lower parts was as free from snow as the road at its best.

The villagers of Stalden were mostly assembled round a wheel just achieved by a wheelwright, and which seemed to be provoking much praise. But I distracted them a bit. They were evidently unused to the sight of a knapsacked tourist in January. Their smart houses contrasted well with the drifts of snow close adjacent.

From Stalden to St. Niklaus exacted two hours. The total distance from Visp to St. Niklaus seems to be ten miles, with an ascent of about sixteen hundred feet. The comparatively short time the walk took me is a proof of the excellent conditions under which I made it.

No part of the road looked more impressive than from above the deep gorge of the Visp, an hour or so past Stalden. The veining of the frozen waterfalls in the sides of the gorge was particularly fine, and the sunlight on the tops of the mountains. It was a pity the sun could not get at the valley itself. Only at rare intervals did I tread into a patch of its radiance.

There was a fair amount of snow in the pine-woods on the east side of the valley just past Kalpetran. But I would not have had it otherwise in spite of its slipperiness: the green of the pines went so well with it, and the rocky boulders among the tree-trunks, with their touches of golden or olive lichen.

All the same, I was glad when St. Niklaus's onion-shaped, silver-gilt church-tower appeared in sight, and I could think with hope of the downright déjérou I had earned.

Here I was in the sunlight, and the sloppy snow told of its power. I was not surprised to hear that the glass showed but one degree above freezing-point, even in the shade.

The large hotel was, of course, shuttered up, but Rovina's café-restaurant, they told me, could feed me. Rovina and his wife were indeed only too glad of the commission. Nor were they to blame if the half duck they served me was grievously undercooked, so that I was fain to make my meal mostly from the sundries. Meanwhile a St. Niklaus cobbler was reinvesting my boots with nails. I should have felt tolerably secure on the Matterhorn itself, even in winter, with the pointed lumps of iron with which they dully studded me.

I am half ashamed to say I dallied two hours at St. Niklaus: eating, and drinking,
and smoking. Methought if I had already covered nearly half the distance to Zermatt in three and a half hours, I might reckon seven or so for the whole journey, in spite of Herr Baedeker’s mention of nine hours for it. But at length I took on my knapsack again.

After St. Niklaus it seemed to me that the waterfalls and curtains of icicles which draped the valley sides took more desirably the varied tints of the same ice in Norway in winter: amber, green, pale blue, and the rest. Of course it may well be so; though it depends more upon the colouring matter in the soil through which the water descends than upon anything else.

I had now the noble Weisshorn and his companion peaks to absorb me. Soon, too, the Breithorn with Matterhorn junior have in view—speckless masses of snow. I was more than ever convinced that winter is the time for touring in Switzerland. Nothing could have been finer than the Weisshorn’s pointed summit, with the blue of the nether glacier contrasting with its whiteness. And I was inconvenienced neither by a roasting sun, nor the dust stirred by my own boots and those of other pedestrians, let alone carts; nor did the scream of trains evoke unhallowed echoes from the precipitous brown rocks on either hand.

There was here just enough snow to sledge on. They were cutting timber in the woods high up to the left, and shooting the logs riverwards in places. Save for this excitement all was still. I had one lively moment, however, when the trunk of a pine-tree, some ten feet long by one in diameter, came crashing down with terrific impetus from the hillside, and made a huge dent in the road only a couple of yards before me, where it touched ere bounding into the Visp far below. It was a genuinely narrow escape. They do not thus imperil the lives of tourists in summer.

At Randa I halted to take coffee in the house of a sick Italian. The afternoon was closing up with an uncertain look that I did not like. A veil of greyish mist gripped the high peaks, without wholly hiding them. The sun had gone, and the cold came on keen. I made all haste on to Zermatt, therefore. If snow was in the air, the sooner I was housed the better.

So through Tasch, with its reaches of the frozen Visp on which I could have skated, but for the snow. And at length I turned with the road and saw the Matterhorn in front, looking like a sheeted giant. The twenty-two mile walk was at an end. So far, well. The morrow might take care of itself.

It was just here—practically in the village—that a couple of sledge dogs caught me up. They bore my compatriots of St. Moritz. If they felt half as cold as they looked, and I looked half as warm as I was, they must have doubted if they had followed the better way of gaining their haven. Probably they had spent scarcely less time on the road than myself.

I did not stay at the “Monte Rosa” after all. The “Gorner Gratt Hotel” was also open, and its two feminine attendants spirits intercepted me. I could hardly have done better for myself. Much kindness have I met with at the hands of homely innkeepers in different parts of the world; but seldom as much as here. I felt extremely well at ease as I sat with my feet in hot water and listened to the chatter of the hotel Fräulein, a girl of but eighteen or so, who has achieved peaks with as little effort as members of the Alpine Club.

There was another reason why I was glad to be where I was. A dark-browed man was drinking wine in a room, and the landlady whispered to me that he was a smuggler. She could not tell whether he purposed that night to make the attempt to pass into Italy, or the next night or the next. But it was his métier to do this sort of thing when the weather conditions seemed favourable. If I seriously thought of forcing the Théodule and so getting to Brenil, the smuggler—was a guide ready to my hand.

But these poor fellows—who take heavy weights of tobacco and mouth-organs on their backs for comparatively small profit, apart from the risks of snow and customs’ officers—had quite recently had a bad shock. On New Year’s day one of them had been killed by an avalanche up by the Schwarzen Hotel. It was an avalanche of his own shifting, but that made no odds to his fate; and, instead of getting across the frontier, he had to be carried down to Zermatt, where he lies in the churchyard.

The moon was almost too new to make these adventures desirable, however, and I did not come to terms with “mon seigneur le contrabandiste.” Ere dinner was ready I had opportunity of judging of the moon. The night cleared gloriously, and Jupiter and young Madame Luna lit up the Matterhorn to perfection. A fox’s barking and nothing else broke the stillness of the
valley and the village, as I leaned on the railings and enjoyed the fair scene.

After dinner, I arranged with one of the Lauber lads to be specially conducted in the morning to the Gorner Grat. Of course, in summer, no one would think of a guide for this festive standpoint, where people almost have to take their turns for a view. But the Grat stands some ten thousand three hundred feet above sea level or five thousand feet above Zermatt itself, and with about a foot of snow in Zermatt it was conjecturable that there were several feet up there, with the need of step-cutting in places. Moreover, there was to be a toboggan down the winding path of the hill which leads to the "Riffelalp Hotel," and the sledge to carry to the hill-top.

Again I was favoured. The morning was perfect, and when we started into Zermatt's streets the pink flush of day was on the Matterhorn, a sight for gods as well as men. There is very little demand for guides here at this time of the year, and young Lauber, I doubt not, excited some envy. But he bore himself well in the midst of his comrades as we passed them by. We had an ice-axe apiece. More luggage seemed unnecessary, of course excepting the luncheon, which was arranged at my guide's back so that his body's heat might interfere with its congelation.

Work could not have been more pleasing than ours, as we zigzagged up through the woods in the fine keen air, with the Matterhorn and his neighbours clear to their smallest details whenever we chose to turn and look at them. Perhaps it was a little dismal to see the various refreshment huts "en route," so tightly shut and barred with snow. For it was thirsty work as well as enjoyable. But it would scarcely have been better to see them in the full favour of their custom, as in the dog days.

We were barely two hours in getting to the green-shuttered "Hotel Riffelalp" from the river-side. No house could have looked more bleak and yet bright in mid-winter; for the sun broke upon it while we sat on its steps, and the wind from Monte Rosa surfed round against us from the Gorner glacier.

The snow, here, was deep and scarcely trodden. A dog ran out from one of the caretakers' huts and greeted us with yelps and grotesque curvetings in the snow—into which, at times, he almost disappeared.

From the "Hotel Riffelalp" we climbed to the higher hotel—eight thousand four hundred and thirty feet up—through more and more snow. We had to go cautiously in the steeper places, as a bad slip might well have established a young avalanche, in the middle of which, or even on the top, it would have been at least uncomfortable to travel down to the level.

On the stone terrace of this hotel also we rested for a minute or two, facing the Matterhorn, which seemed absurdly near, and with the splendid range of peaks from the Dent Blanche to the Weisshorn wholly and minutely exposed to us. The sun was here almost oppressive. It melted the snow on this side of the hotel, and the Breithorn was visibly smoking under it. The only clouds against the blue were the innocent strips of transparent cirrhi which resulted from this melting process near the Breithorn's summit. They hung towards the Matterhorn like banners. But the Matterhorn studiously declined to be veiled—would, in short, have none of them.

It was tiresome scrambling up the remaining two thousand feet. One moment we were in snow almost to the middle, and the next stumbling over ice rocks. The wind, too, was keen as the sun was hot. I felt the latter burning through my neck's epidermis. But we were encouraged by the ever-increasing beauty of Monte Rosa in front, with the Lykammm and the Twins. Castor and Pollux especially looked most alluring—like a couple of gigantic sugar-loaves. They also smoked under the sun, though less heartily than the Breithorn, which looked the simple mountain it is—in summer. Once across the Gorner glacier, whose blue ice was hidden by snow, it seemed we might have clambered up the Breithorn in an hour. But, of course, the depths of its snows had to be taken into account. Probably the attempt would have been fatal to the pair of us both without ropes.

The Grat hut at last. It was exceedingly welcome, though locked and with all the litter of the last autumn's last debatch of bottles visible through its windows.

I prefer not to say anything about the view we enjoyed. It could not have been more impressive and more uncompromising. The white Alps far and near lifted their heads towards a sky that was never bluer, even on the hottest of midsummer days. Young Lauber, like many of his fellow professionals, is rather a taciturn lad. But he had a brief burst of gladness in the
prospect, ere he opened his satchel for the bread and meat.

In spite of all, our victuals were frozen somewhat annoyingly. The bread in particular was a test to the teeth. But no matter. There was no doubting our appetites, and I believe we would have tackled the Zermatt slices, though they had been as hard as granite. As for our Fendant, it needed no fee to make it extort praise—at all events from me.

We lunched with our backs to the breeze, eying the Matterhorn; and long ere we had finished my feet were itching to be off. It was not to their taste, all this snow. But pipes had to be lit ere the downward movement was begun, which promised to be almost too easy.

It was not that, for the Grat's ice-clad rocks had to be taken as carefully in descending as in ascending. But it was the better of the two experiences.

Our subsequent glissade through the Riffalp woods was a bone-tryingly business, not without risks. Had there been a uniform covering of snow it would have been different. As it was, my back would rather have made the descent twice over in the ordinary way.

Ere returning to the hotel, we deviated to the Gorner gorge through snow deep enough for anything. Here was a change with a vengeance from its summer presentment. The river ran under ice for the most part, scores of feet down in the rocky channel, which in the hot days it fills almost to the gallery. But it was worth seeing in the snow, with the Matterhorn filling the space at its head that the pines and rocks on either hand left unoccupied. Nor was there anything to pay for the spectacle. The Zermatt worthies who guard its entrances and its exits in summer were not here now.

This seen, we made for the hotel. The day was near its close. The Matterhorn's background had paled, and there were signs of stars.

If my landlady and her daughter had had kind the previous evening, they were kinder still now. The tales they told me of Zermatt doings will long stay in my mind.

The next morning—Sunday—I again put on my knapsack, and, reluctantly enough, turned my back to the Matterhorn. The odd thing was that though methought I walked my best, the return twenty-two miles took me a longer time than the walk uphill the other way. I suppose the greater heat had something to do with it. This afternoon the glass was two or three degrees above freezing point in St. Niklaus. Be that as it may, and though I saved a mile or two by the railway, it was dark ere I got back to Visp.

A more notable three days' tramp I have not had anywhere. Davos must look to itself. With such winters as the last one, Zermatt is bound to become as popular a winter resort, nearly, as it is in summer.

TIT FOR TAT.

A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

"You are a flirt!"

"I am not!"

"It is rude to contradict."

"It is worse than rude to assert what isn't true. It is libellous."

"And don't you know that the greater the truth the worse the libel? Therefore, to say that you are a flirt is libellous because it is true."

"Well, I don't care if I am; so there."

"I never supposed you would care. I believe you are utterly incapable of caring for anybody or anything except yourself," he said coolly.

"You didn't think so always."

"No; one has to learn wisdom by experience unfortunately."

"Why 'unfortunately'!?" she asked quickly.

"Because the process of disillusionment is a painful one, and takes up a lot of time that might be more profitably employed."

"And you regard the time that you have been learning to know me—all the time that we have been engaged, in short—as time wasted?"

"Unquestionably."

"Then—we will waste no more," and she raised her blue eyes to his, a scornful light in them. "You are free, and I—"

"No, no; don't act impulsively, or you may regret it afterwards," he said soothingly, in the tone in which he would have addressed a passionate child.

"I am free, too"—she paid no attention to his interruption—"free to flirt as much as ever I like."

"And no doubt you'll do it—not that our engagement has been any hindrance,
From the "Hotel Bißfelalp" we climbed to which, at times, he almost disappeared. In the middle of which, or even on the top, it was conceivable that there were some one thousand feet above Zermatt in the morning to the Gbmer Orat. Of course it is, he assented; "but I don’t see that we can help that now."

"Need we say anything about it—just yet, I mean?"

"You can please yourself about that; I shall not mention that our engagement is broken off if you don’t; but—"

"Yes!" as he paused impressively.

"As it is broken off, I intend to amuse myself. You would have no right to complain of that in any case, as it is what you have been doing yourself all along."

"I don’t care," defiantly. "We shall know that we are nothing to each other, but we won’t tell the world so for another six days."

"Exactly. But, of course, you won’t expect me to be dancing attendance upon you all the time. I’ll do what is necessary to keep up appearances, since you wish it, but—"

"I wish it! What do you mean?"

"Why, if you don’t want to tell the world, I suppose you don’t want the world to guess! For myself, I am absolutely indifferent on the subject."

"I see what you mean—yes, we had better keep up appearances."

"But beyond that we are of course absolutely indifferent to each other."

"Oh, of course!" impatiently. "Dance attendance upon whom you like, flirt with whom you please. It is nothing to me, and less than nothing."

"Thank you," he said gravely. "Is there anything more to be said, I wonder? Oh, yes; that badge of slavery I gave you, Trix—I beg your pardon, I should have said Miss Rainham."

"It doesn’t matter," hastily, "We must keep up appearances, you know."

"Yes, but not when we are alone. That
ring, Miss Rainham, that you have done me the honour of wearing as a sign of our engagement——"

"Yes, I will give it back to you at once."

"No, no; don't pull it off—yet. Better keep it till you leave this place," he replied. "Don't you see it is still necessary that you should wear it to deceive the world, though we shall know that it means nothing?"

"But, Tom—Captain Despard, I mean—how shall I return it to you?"

"You can give it back to me when we part. Are you tired?" he added abruptly.

"No; why do you ask?"

"I thought you might be, as we seem to have been standing here a most unconscionable time, and——" he glanced in a casual sort of way down the path to where a slight, girlish figure could be discerned amongst the rose-bushes.

"And Miss Robinson has just come out to gather roses? I see," said Trix, following the direction of his eyes, and flashing hotly. "No wonder you are in such haste to get rid of me."

"Not at all. I am in no hurry for a few minutes, but as I see young Marchmont and some of the other men are going to the tennis-ground——"

"It is too hot to play. I am going into the house."

"As you please. Then I may consider myself dismissed?"

"You must; and I am only sorry I have taken up so much of your valuable time," and she turned away.

"Oh, never mind that. You have taught me a useful lesson, so the time has not been altogether wasted."

"And that is?" pausing and looking back over her shoulder.

"Never to take a woman seriously."

She laughed a scornful little laugh, and left him.

He stood looking after her for a moment, then strode off down the path, and joined the pretty dark-haired girl among the roses.

Little Miss Robinson looked up with a smile as he approached.

"Well?" she said anxiously.

"Yes," he replied, taking her basket from her. "I am quite free to help you now."

"And—do you think it wise?"

"Very wise; the wisest thing I have done."

"I hope—oh, I do hope—you will prove right."

"Time alone can show, but anything must be better than——" he broke off abruptly. "Come, there are heaps of roses still to be gathered. I will tell you all about it while you are getting them."

She was a long time getting them.

Trix, glancing from her window half an hour later, saw the two figures still lingering amongst the roses; and she laughed and sang a gay little song to herself as she ran lightly downstairs to join the tennis-players. The morning was certainly no cooler than it had been half an hour ago, but Trix had changed her mind apparently, and no one that day played more indefatigably than she, or seemed in such high spirits.

Yes, it was very pleasant to be free—free as air; and to feel that no one had a right to watch her with jealous, miserable eyes, or reproach her if she chanced—as not infrequently happened—to make herself too agreeable to her companion for the moment, or dance too often with the same partner. These things had chafed her often, she remembered, during the period of her brief engagement to Captain Despard; she wondered now how she had ever tolerated his interference for six long weeks, and smiled a little scornfully at the thought of her own exemplary behaviour. Whether an impartial observer would have pronounced her behaviour so irreproachable as to merit that scorn is another matter.

Yes; she was free now: and—so was he! That was the only drawback to her satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

"How pretty Trix Rainham looks tonight!" exclaimed a lively young matron to her partner, in the pause between two dances.

"Yes; and how desperately she is flirting! I wonder Despard stands it. I wouldn't, if she belonged to me."

"Oh, he has no right to be censorious, for he is just as bad himself. He does it more quietly, I grant you, but there is nothing else to choose between them. Just look at him now with Fay Robinson! This is the fourth time he has danced with her already, and the evening is not half over yet. I wonder Trix stands it, if you come to that."

"I shouldn't have thought Despard was a flirting sort. He never seemed to have eyes
for any other girl than Miss Rainham a week ago."

"A week? A couple of days, rather! Well, all that is changed now, and he seems supremely indifferent to her flirtations."

"And she to him."

"Oh—I suppose so."

"Do you doubt it?"

"I haven't said so."

"No, but you implied it. Yet she seems enjoying herself immensely."

"Especially when he is in the room. Oh, she is having a very good time undoubtedly, and she wants everybody to know it."

"Well, there's no harm in that."

"Not the least."

"I suppose you think——" but she interrupted him quickly.

"Oh, no, I don't; I never think; it takes too much out of me. I see my partner bearing down upon us, so you must come to what conclusions you please about Trix and her fiancé. I know I should come to a very prompt conclusion if I were she; and so would my engagement."

"Take care; she will hear you," he cried warningly; but the warning came too late.

Trix, had they only known it, had heard the words distinctly; but they were not altogether unexpected, and nothing but her sudden flush betrayed that she had done so. Even the shrewd young matron was left in doubt on the subject, a doubt that her own wishes soon converted into a reassuring certainty, and she easily convinced herself that the girl's heightened colours could only have been due to the exertion of dancing, or some too flattering remark of her partner's.

"I think this is our dance, Trix!"

The girl turned quickly at the well-known voice, and her blue eyes flashed as she said:

"I had no idea we were so far down the programme as that. Are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"Quite sure; and——lowering his voice a little——I really think you had better give me this dance——for the sake of appearances, you know."

"Oh, appearances!" scornfully; yet she took his arm, and moved away. "Much you care for appearances."

"I never professed to do so," coolly.

"But out of respect to your wishes——"

"You accord me a duty-dance? Thank you. I'm quite willing to let you off it."

"No, no; we'd better go through with it now."

But after a few turns she asked him breathlessly to stop; she was tired, she said, and wanted to rest, and——

"Very well, we will sit it out, then," he said. "Shall we make for the stairs? There are a good many exhausted couples there already."

"No; it is so hot in the house. Can we not go for a turn on the terrace? It is stifling here."

"As you please," resignedly. "Perhaps it will throw dust more effectually in the eyes of the world."

She made a movement of impatience.

"It is rather late to think of that now," she said, as they passed through the open window on to the wide terrace that ran before the whole length of the house.

"Indeed! And why?"

"After your conduct to-night every one must suspect——"

"Pardon me, my conduct can have no interest for you. I no longer presume to criticise yours, and you must be good enough to let mine alone."

"But don't you see that people will talk?"

"Of course, but what of that? They always do."

"Remarks are being made already. Your marked flirtation with that Miss Robinson is——"

"My own affair, and hers, Miss Rainham."

"Oh, you are welcome to amuse yourself," she cried passionately.

"Thank you. I fully intend to."

"But you might surely do it without making a laughing-stock of me."

"I think you exaggerate a little," he replied. "But in any case we are quits on that score. I no longer reproach you, and you are quite free to indulge in as many marked flirtations as you please, so far as I am concerned. What more can I say?"

Nothing, truly; and it is probable he might have said less, and yet have given her more satisfaction. The ways of women are wonderful, and past finding out; and Trix was herself at a loss to understand why her flirtations had suddenly lost all flavour, and ceased to interest her, because they no longer excited the jealous wrath of her sometime lover. She paced along beside him for a few moments in silence, and he saw that her face was very pale; far paler than could be accounted for by the soft summer moonlight.
I fear you are tired," he said, and there was polite concern in his tone, as though he were addressing the merest chance acquaintance, but nothing more. "Shall we return to the house?"

"Oh—presently. Miss Robinson can wait a few minutes."

"I am not engaged to her for the next two dances; so if you like to take a turn round the garden——" 

"Don't you find her very stupid—after me, you know?"

"On the contrary, she is a most charming companion."

"Really! Why, she has absolutely nothing to say."

"I have not discovered it, yet I have seen a good deal of her the last few days. At least, whatever she does say, she means."

Trix made a little grimace. 

"What a very uninteresting person she must be," she said meditatively. "Poor Tom, I had no idea it was so bad as that!"

"Do you wish to go round the garden, Miss Rainham, or do you not?" he asked coldly.

"No, I don't. You are too dull for anything, and I am engaged for the next two dances, if you are not."

"Am I to have the pleasure of taking you in to supper?" in a perfectly colourless tone.

"Yes—for the sake of appearances; but for my own inclinations—no."

"Which is it to be?" he persisted quietly.

"Which do you advise?" she asked, pausing at the window, and facing him in the moonlight. "I'll leave it to you."

"I advise nothing," looking back into the blue eyes steadily. "Please yourself."

"I will—and Mr. Marchmont! He has been bothering about it all the evening.

"Quite right; don't disappoint him, Trix. I must resign you now to your next partner."

So they parted—pleasantly, for it was in the flaunting gaslight; and the eyes of the world—their little world—were upon them.

Trix felt convinced that she should find Charley Marchmont—the eldest son of the house, and a very good-looking young fellow—far more agreeable company than the man she had jilted; but though she worked very hard, and strove to be her usual gay, coquettish self, the attempt was by no means so successful as could have been wished; and young Marchmont had never found her so difficult to get on with as he did that night.

It is possible that the sight of Captain Despard sitting in the conservatory, engaged in earnest conversation with Fay Robinson—who was looking prettier than ever in the subdued light—may have had something to do with her ill-humour. But however that may have been, Captain Despard appeared to enjoy himself amazingly; and Trix could not but feel that he had somehow succeeded in turning the tables upon her in a most humiliating manner.

And yet he had kept his word to her in every respect. She had nothing really to reproach him with, and that was the most annoying part of the matter.

CHAPTER III.

Five days had passed since Trix and Captain Despard had decided that their engagement had better cease, and the last evening had come.

On the morrow they were both to leave the pleasant country house where they had spent the last few weeks together: but they had scarcely exchanged half-a-dozen words save in the presence of others since the night of the dance; and those few had not been of a nature to modify the strained relations which existed between them.

On this last evening there was again a dance at the Manor House, to which many beside the house-party were invited; a brother officer of Captain Despard's was also expected, but he had only arrived after dinner was over, and dancing had already begun before Trix saw him.

She had wondered whether Captain Despard would take an early opportunity of introducing him to her, and smiled rather drearily at the thought of what a base fraud she was, posing as his fiancée, while all the time they were only waiting till this visit should be over to announce that their engagement was broken off for ever. Of course, if he were really trying to keep up appearances, he could scarcely fail to do so; and Trix watched with rising excitement for the arrival of this brother officer of her lost lover's, of whom she had often heard him speak in terms of warm affection.

They entered together, and, without so much as a glance in her direction, passed on into the conservatory, where she had
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Indeed! And why?"

"I might have forgotten altogether, and gone on forgetting; and that would have been extremely awkward."

"Why do you stay here?" she asked abruptly. "Fay Robinson will be wondering what has become of you."

"I think not."

"But she will miss you."

"No;" and he laughed as at some pleasant recollection. "Miss Robinson will gladly spare me for a little while."

"I don't understand you."

"No! Have you ever understood me, do you think? Though we were engaged for six weeks, I doubt whether you ever really understood me."

"We were engaged," she repeated, and there was a little catch in her breath that almost stopped the words. "Yes; it is over now."

"Do you regret it, Trix?" he said softly.

There was no answer for a moment, and he watched her in silence. How pretty she looked in the pale moonlight, even though her face was carefully averted from him, and he could see nothing but her delicate profile against the dark shadows beyond. The light dress she wore and the white flimsy shawl harmonised admirably with her exquisite colouring, and gave her an ethereal look that was not usual to her, and charmed by its very novelty.

"Do you regret it?" he repeated; and Trix, instead of answering, turned upon him with a desperate effort to recover her usual careless gaiety of manner.

"Why do you stay here asking impossible questions! Don't you hear that they are playing your favourite waltz? Why don't you go in and amuse yourself?"

"Because I can amuse myself far better out here," he replied deliberately.

"Oh! Have you and Miss Robinson quarrelled?"

"Certainly not. Whatever put that idea into your head?"

"I thought—— I can't understand why you are here."

"Do you wish to know?" he asked.

"You told me to flirt with whom I pleased, you may remember?"

"Yes;" as he paused for a reply.

"Well, it pleases me to flirt with you—you have no objection, Trix?"

"Flirt—with me!" she cried. "Oh, how can you, Tom? It—it is insulting after all that has passed."

seen Miss Robinson disappear not five minutes before.

It was too much.

Trix felt that she could bear no more; and stepping quietly out on to the terrace, she wandered off down the garden; and as the glimmering moonlight shone through the trees overhead, she passed on through ever-changing alternations of light and shade, of shine and shadow. The night air fanned her flushed face, and dried the hot tears that rose to her blue eyes; but it could not soothe her passionate pain, or cool her burning wrath with herself, with Captain Despard, with all the world. This was what her foolish flirtations had brought her to, and now——thanks to Fay's charms—it was too late to repent; he was lost to her, and it would be worse than useless to try and win him back.

Thus thinking, she reached the spot where they had agreed to part on that sunny morning nearly a week ago. A rustic seat beneath one of the spreading chestnut-trees had been a favourite resting-place with them both in the earlier, happier days of their engagement; and there Trix sat down to reproach herself with her folly and brood over the past, before returning to play her part in the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room, whence the festive strains of dance music came faintly to her ears.

Presently she looked up with a start; some one was approaching across the dewy grass, and in another moment Captain Despard stood before her.

"Rather cold for sitting out in that thin dress, is it not?" he asked. "Anyhow, I've taken the liberty of bringing you some one else's shawl, which you will oblige me by wearing."

"I am not cold, thank you," she replied somewhat unsteadily, for she had not yet got her voice quite under control.

"You soon will be, though, if you sit here much longer," and he quietly settled the matter by wrapping the shawl around her.

"I—I am going in again directly."

"Not for a few minutes longer, I think, Trix," he said, in a tone of conviction, as he seated himself near her.

"You forget"—bitterly—"we are alone, Captain Despard. There is no need to keep up appearances now."

"True; I suppose it must have been the associations of this place that almost made me forget—your hint was most opportune."
"And do you think it was pleasant to me to see you and Fay Robinson always together? Do you not know—"

"I said the 'woman I cared for,' Trix. I cannot flatter myself than I am the man for whom you care."

"Oh, Tom, forgive me! I do care—I do, indeed!" she cried, and with that the long pent-up storm of emotion grew too strong for her, and she broke into passionate tears.

"Trix, dearest! are you sure, quite sure?" he said tenderly, as he drew her to him till the golden head rested on his shoulder. "Remember, it must be all or nothing now! I love you too well to have you unless that is clearly understood."

"And you, Tom—I love you, too," wistfully.

"Oh, you need not fear for me," he laughed. "I am no flirt by nature, but only by expediency."

"And Fay—"

"Is a good little soul, dear, and has been privately engaged for some time to Bob Grey. They said I might tell you, but don't let it go any further at present. That is why he came here to-night."

"And does she know—"

"That I love you better than all the world besides? Yes, of course she does, and nothing else matters."

"No," she said thoughtfully, "nothing else matters—now. But, oh, Tom, you made me very miserable!"

"And you me, darling; so we may cry quits there! After all, you treated me very badly, and I only gave you sit for tat!"

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CHAPTER XXI. RESTLESS.

Forster's party made quite a sensation down the line. At first the experience of travelling considerably subdued the already jaded spirits of the East; but, when the crossing was over, the strange sense of freedom began to affect the young men, and from henceforth, whenever the train stopped, some of Forster's tribe might be seen making a raid out of their carriage, seized with the desire to see everything. From the balconies of the foreigners to the sudden appearance of the ticket-collector, all contributed to raise their spirits. Jokes flew round, and by the time Paris was reached, Forster was fairly wearied by his efforts to keep his flock together. He missed the ever helpful Philip, who was always ready to relieve him of some of his responsibilities, but having found a cheap hotel for his "lost tribe," as Dora called them, he so far broke through his rule as to seek out his mother and sisters at the Normandie. He wanted to show off to his friends the Louvre and Notre Dame, and anything else he could get in on the morrow, and so meant to get up early.

"There you are, Forster!" exclaimed his mother. "It does seem strange to see you alone; I was so afraid those poor dear young men would end by making you quite ill."

"It was rather warm, and they wanted to smoke a good deal, but on the whole we have enjoyed ourselves immensely," said Forster, smiling.

"My dear boy! You don't really mean it! It is so very good of you."

"Mother! please remember that it is not good of me. You don't know how my heart sinks when I see what a holiday means for these young fellows. They simply can't realise it. They have been slaves for so long that they don't know how to be free."

"But there are no slaves in England. It is not at all legal, and there are all kinds of laws about employing young people. I know this because Lady Lucy Rodney read them out to us the other day. I remember it because I got rather confused about workgirls. I thought they might not work after eight o'clock, even for themselves, but it was not that quite. Poor dear girls, I'm sure I should like them to be quite idle, at least not that, because that would make them restless, but it is difficult to arrange it all. Are you going to dine with us?"

"I had dinner with my party, thank you, mother, but I'll rest here till you come up again. Dora, mind you talk to your next neighbour, and do use your best French."

"Not if he is English," interposed Mrs. Bethune, "because some English people are so shy of airing their French. When I was young we spoke French quite as well as Madame de Sévigné. I used to know some of her letters by heart, but Adela and Dora are not fond of her."

"I wish she had married Fidélion and made all one thing of it. 'Télémaque' and Madame's letters were my youthful enemies," said Dora.

"My dear! French Bishops never marry. At least, we never hear of it."

"No, of course, I suppose it was impossible; but you always say married life improves people. I don't believe it would improve Forster."
Forster smiled. Once upon a time he would have been displeased.

"I can rest in peace now I am not married. There is your dinner-bell."

"I do hope your wife won't have to go abroad with your parties, dear," said Mrs. Bethune. "It would be so awkward for her."

"I shall never marry, mother, so don't waste your pity on this imaginary lady."

"Oh, you must really, Forster. Not a poor dear girl of no family, but a—"

They had reached the hall, and Dora was seen over-looking the names in the visitors' book.

"Look, Forster, isn't it funny? That is certainly Mr. Gillbanks's writing, only in his worst style. 'Mr. and Mrs. Gillbanks Win wall.' He has taken her name. How odd! Did you know they were abroad?"

Forster turned pale; but Dora did not notice this, as she had to follow her mother and Adela. Forster remained in the hall staring at the names. It seemed like a dream to him. He tried to imagine the Princess with Philip, and he could not do it. "She is so proud and beautiful, so simple and so kind."

"It is strange, very strange," he said to himself; "but Philip would not listen to reason." Then he turned away, and walked slowly upstairs, to wait for his mother and sisters. He was very fond of smoking, but it was against his social creed to smoke more than his friends could do, so he resisted the temptation, and took a book from his pocket. The book was not of a very exciting character, and he found his mind wandering to Philip and Penelope, his wife. His wife! How strange that Philip should have been so infatuated by a woman who was evidently as proud as Lucifer; a woman who had nothing in common with him, and whose strange education must quite unseat him for the life that would suit Philip Gillbanks. Deep down in his heart, Forster felt pained at Philip's desertion, and at Penelope's rejection of him. He had always found that he could easily lead men and women. He had never cared much about this till he had discovered something in Penelope Winakell which, in a mysterious way, made life sweeter. Now he tried to think of reasons to account for his sense of injury. She was proud, selfish, money-loving. Her beauty had been her snare. In all these ways she was unworthy of devotion, and certainly she was unworthy of Philip.

Something was wrong with the machinery of the world. Socialism required a man to have no cares of his own; it required one whose heart was whole, and Forster felt that at this moment his soul was not entirely at one with his party. Then he despised himself for shirking his duty, self-imposed though it was. He wanted Philip back with him, and he wanted, almost more, his own peace of mind restored to him. It was the first time that Forster's feeling of the perfect continuity of the pleasure of life had failed. He woke up from a long happy dream of doing, to an unpleasant reality of vain thinking.

When the ladies returned to their private sitting-room Forster was by no means inclined to talk.

"Oh, Forster!" exclaimed Dora, "I wish you had been at the table d'hôte, there was such a pretty girl there. Mother, who is always looking for your wife—just like the lady who was always looking for the robber under her bed—declared that she would exactly suit you."

"Her brother was a clever, odd-looking man," added Adela; "he must be an author or something of that sort."

"They have been here some time, for the sister has never been to Paris before, and so I asked her if she had seen the Princess. I mean I described her."

"How you did talk, Dora! You are certainly not shy," said her mother.

"When I was young my parents never sat at table d'hôte."

"I am glad we are not tied by prejudice now. Well, Forster, she recognised my description at once, only she said that the beautiful lady did not look at all like a bride, and the bridegroom, who had a reddish, boyish, nice face, seemed to be very attentive to his wife."

"Dora, how can you gossip about my friends?" said Forster, and Dora blushed.

"I thought you would like to know. I do hope we shall meet them. The Princess is not like any other woman I have seen."

"Well, now I think she has either no soul or too much," said Adela. "I never could make her out. She was proud, of course, but not exactly of her beauty. I'm glad she is not our sister-in-law!"

"What is the name of this pretty girl, Dora?"

"Ida De Lucy. Isn't it romantic? I told her we were going on to-morrow, and she said she thought Paris was fascinating, and that she had still much more to see, but her brother does not like big cities."
"I must go," said Forster, rising. "Your conversation is frivolous, Dora. Anyhow, don't gossip about Philip's wife. A friend's affairs are sacred. Good-night, mother, I shall meet you to-morrow; I have telegraphed to reserve a dépendance at Vidars, so that we shall not be in your way.

"Oh, Forster! In my way! I am so glad, dear boy, to think that all your friends can enjoy themselves. But I wish you had come alone. You want rest, I am sure of it, and in this way you will get none."

Forster wandered up and down the Rue de Rivoli before he returned to his cheap hotel. Dora's careless words had been anything but soothing to his mind. What did this marriage signify? Still more, why had he himself fallen in love with this woman, whom Adela pronounced to have too much or too little soul? He could not sleep that night; the heat oppressed him; and the next day he found life a real burden. His party became all at once a heavy responsibility, and this feeling caused Forster to blame himself severely.

He was glad enough when late at night they reached their destination, and, after seeing to everybody's comfort, he threw himself on his small Swiss bed, and at last fell asleep. He felt weary the next day, but was less anxious about his party. The young men were to be let loose among the woods and mountains to enjoy themselves in their own way. The only stipulation he made was, their safe return every evening in time for a late supper. He wanted to teach them to love nature for its own sake, not because he told them it was beautiful, and he wanted to make men of those sickly-looking East Londoners. For himself he only wanted rest and solitude.

When he appeared at déjeuner Dora ran up to him.

"Oh, Forster, you do look tired! Mother and Adela are resting, but I am ready to come with you. Isn't this a pretty place? Where is your party?"

"I shall let them alone now. They will be happy learning to be happy, so now I will allow you to have your turn, Dora."

"Monsieur and mademoiselle have seats here," said the waiter, "near the other English visitors."

Forster sat down and gazed at the faces round him. There were none which roused his interests. The chairs next to his own were empty. He thought he would prefer being next to foreigners, but was too lazy to interfere with the arrangements of waiters. In a short time he heard steps, then before he could turn round Philip had put his hand on his shoulder. But was it Philip? How strange he looked—something was gone out of his face, only the old affection was unchanged.

"Forster, how strange that you should come here. Your sister is with you!"

Forster rose as if in a dream, and held out his hand to Penelope.

Philip said no word of introduction. Why should he? And Penelope appeared as exactly as if she were in a London drawing-room, that it was almost difficult to realise that she was now Philip's wife. Happily Dora was not shy, and immediately broke in with:

"Oh, Mrs. Gillbanks—no, it's Winsekell, isn't it?—I saw it in the papers. This is nice! Forster has been dull and tired, and you will cheer him up. He missed you so much. We have brought an East End party. This is a nice quiet place, and we are hoping to have long expeditions. I am glad! Forster, let me sit near the Princess. We must call you that still. It seems so natural, and you look just like one. Mother will be glad to see you, and so will Adela."

Philip took the chair next to Forster.

"It does seem strange that we should meet," he said quietly—very quietly.

"Yes," said Forster. "What made you come here?"

"I like this place," said Penelope to Dora; "it is something like home; only the snow mountains look so wonderful. I have never seen them before. Yes, I do like travelling."

Dora expected some ecstatic remarks about Philip, but none came. Her youthful ideas were a little disappointed. Then her thoughts went to the other extreme.

"Of course they don't want to be like common lovers. Yes, it is nice, very nice of them. How pleased Adela will be. She is beautiful; I wish Forster had married her. A sister-in-law like Penelope would be charming."

Dora, looking up, saw Forster's eyes fixed on his plate.

"I believe," said Dora to herself, "I believe that Forster did want to marry her, and that is why he is so odd now. How very strange; but I won't say anything about it. Poor old Forster! And how horrid of Philip Gillbanks to cut him out!"

CHAPTER XXII: PHILIP'S WIFE.

MRS. BETHUNE was delighted to hear Dora's news. It was charming to have
that dear, sweet, pretty Princess in the same hotel; and Forster would cheer up now that his friend was with him again. They could both go with those poor, dear fellows; and Dora and Adela would amuse the Princess. The kind soul settled everything, and it was only needed for the actors to do all that she expected of them for the play to end happily. But actors are proverbially tiresome, and Philip Gillbanks, when he followed his wife into the salon that evening, did not look nearly so happy as Mrs. Bethune expected. As to Forster, he did not appear at all, much to Philip's disappointment.

"I suppose he is with his young men. How very tiresome it is that Forster will think about his duty, isn't it, Mr. Gillbanks? At least, I know it's right; but now that you are married, you need not trouble yourself about entertaining those who have no claim upon you."

"Penelope, do you mind if I go and see after Forster's people?" said Philip.

"Do go," answered Penelope, in quite an indifferent voice, as she took a chair near to Adela.

Philip came back to see that his wife's chair was drawn close to the window, from which she could see an exquisite panorama of mountains, now deepening into grays and purples. The party had taken possession of a small salon, leaving the big drawing-room to the foreigners, and it might have been a social evening in England, so entirely were they left to themselves.

"Are you comfortable," Philip said, fetching a cushion for her, "and can I get you your book?"

"No, thank you, I shall like talking to Mrs. Bethune. Do arrange any expeditions you like; I prefer sitting in the woods to-morrow."

"Are you sure? If Forster should really want me, it might be as well to go; but you—"

"I shall want nothing," said Penelope coldly, and Philip went away.

Mrs. Bethune was not observant; only Dora's sharp eyes noted the expression of Penelope's face, whilst Adela remarked, laughing:

"You are not like Emily Rookwood. If Jack wants to go somewhere she always insists on going with him. It is so foolish of wives to be so exacting."

Penelope looked up at Adela, and the look seemed to Dora half questioning. But she was silent, and it was Mrs. Bethune who continued:

"Your wedding was a very quiet one, of course. We should have been so glad to have attended it, you know, dear Mrs. Gillbanks."

"Mother, Mrs. Winskell you must say."

"Ah, yes, thank you, Dora. I shall call you Princess, if I may; it is easier. We feel as if you belonged to us, because Forster used to talk about you so much. I may say so now?"

"Thank you," Penelope answered suddenly, "it is so kind of you to say that. I feel lonely now that I am so far from home. I am so glad you came here. I hope you will stay a long time, as long as we do. I don't like being abroad very much, but the Palace is being done up, and my uncle thought it better we should go away."

"Of course you miss your dales, but you have your husband now, dear Princess."

"No one can take uncle's place," said Penelope, suddenly raising her head.

"You know he is far more to me than my own father. I obey him in everything. Yes, in everything. It is quite right, quite right."

"People have to obey their husbands," said Adela, smiling. "I wonder if I should! I am sure Dora would not, she is so much accustomed to rule us all. I pity the man who undertakes to rule her."

"I always obey Forster," said Dora, "because he is always right. He misses Mr. Gillbanks so much. Do you know, Princess, he says men are no good when they marry."

"Why not?" said Penelope. "I shall not prevent Philip doing his duty."

"Oh! but you are his duty. Forster knows that Mr. Winskell must think only of you now."

Penelope was silent, and Dora noticed then and afterwards that she was always silent when Philip's name was mentioned. The happy family life of the Bethunes seemed to give a home feeling to the small salon, and Penelope, so little accustomed to the companionship of her own sex, began to enjoy it. She even laughed over Dora's recital of the table-d'hôte conversation, which she picked up and repeated with clever accuracy.

It was quite late before they separated, but when they met the two friends in the hall, Forster came forward to shake hands with Penelope. There was but little light in the passage, and nothing betrayed the Princess's change of colour.

"Will you forgive me for having kept your husband so late? We were arranging
an expedition for to-morrow," he said simply.

Philip went up to his wife, but he did not address her.

"I am so glad you are able to make us useful," said Penelope. "Can I help you in any way?"

"You? Oh, if you would come and see us start. There are some of the same young men here whom you saw at Richmond."

"Dora and Adela are going to teach me my duties," she said, smiling, as Dora admiringly put her arm into hers.

"I told our Princess, Forster, that you make us all work. She will be as willing a slave as we are if she stays much longer with us. You men can go when you like, we mean to arrange pleasantries of our own. Adela and mother can dawdle about, and we shall roam."

"Good night," said the Princess suddenly, for Philip was holding a candle, and she followed him.

Forster dawdled about a little while longer with his sister, and then returned to the dependance. He argued out with himself that he must become accustomed to Philip's new life, and that he must accept the fact of his marriage with Penelope. It was utterly foolish to avoid them, in fact as far as Philip went it was impossible. He could never disclose the sudden hope he had once had, nor his more sudden downfall. He must stifle regret because there can be no such thing about another man's wife, that man also being his friend.

Forster faced the danger at once, for he knew that the very sight of Penelope was a pleasure to him. That he could not help, but need that it drove him from seeing her. He could not understand the marriage. The idea which had made him warn Philip that he was being married for his money, would not retain its hold upon him in presence of Penelope's simplicity. She looked too beautiful for such sordid motives to belong to her. One thing troubled him, however; Philip had not once mentioned his wife to him, and the eagerness with which he threw himself into the old plans was unnatural in a happy bridegroom. But Forster felt that Philip was not likely to confide in the man who had tried to dissuade him from marrying the woman he adored. Should he begin the subject, and should he confess the truth? No, he could not tell him that a few days before her engagement, Penelope Winakell had allowed Forster to hold her hand, and had almost allowed him to believe she loved him. Forster argued the matter backward and forward, and could not reconcile himself to any theory he formed on the subject. He must go on facts. This beautiful woman, the only woman who had ever inspired him with love, was Philip's wife. Philip was his friend of long standing, and his wife must be his friend too. Nothing more, but surely nothing less. This could not be wrong, and as for the rest, it was buried in a deep grave. At this moment, his wound was a little healed by Philip's cordial manner. It was the old devotion, the old trust, but surely something added to it. It was as if Philip silently appealed to him for sympathy in some trouble which he could not put into words, and Forster's mind refused to understand the appeal. Then Forster resolved to think no more of the matter. He had already given way too much to dejection, now he felt strengthened. He could, he must, return to his first duty, that of proving his principles as to the equality of man. This evening, therefore, life was brighter for him than it had been a week ago.

"It really is very nice," said Mrs. Bethune, as she looked out upon the beautiful mountains from her balcony window. "It is so pleasant to have met the Princess again. Did you notice, Adela, how people turn round to look at her?"

"No wonder; she is a picture of stateliness, beauty. But do you think she is your idea of a bride?"

"Poor dear Mr. Gillbanks is hardly enough of the lover, I should say."

Dora was in the next room, and put in her word as she usually did.

"Mr. Gillbanks does everything for her, mother; he watches her every movement. I'm sure he is a devoted husband. If they do not agree, more likely it is the fault of the proud Princess."

"She is quite right to be calm," said Adela. "I hate people who spooh in public. You know Jack wouldn't take any notice of Emily the first few months of their marriage. He said it was bad form."

"I wish I understood people who marry," said Dora. "When I marry, it will be some one just like Forster."

"Then you will certainly be an old maid, Dolly. There isn't another Forster," said Adela.

"He would be angry if he heard you say that. Good night. I dare say if we
saw the Princess in private, she is very devoted to the 'preux chevalier,' as Forster calls him."

"Dora shut her door, but to herself she said:

"I shan't talk about it, but I shall just notice. I believe the Princess hasn't married for love, at least, not for the usual love. Philip Gillbanks is nice—yes, he is very nice. After Forster I would not mind marrying a man like him."

On the east side of the house, there was a suite of apartments which the Gillbanks-Winskells had taken. A private sitting-room and three other rooms—two on one side, and one on the other side of their sitting-room—made up their charming quarters. The hotel-keeper made Philip pay double for each room, but that was of little consequence to him.

Philip had wished Penelope to have a maid, but there was no time to choose one, and Penelope preferred being without one. She had never been accustomed to the help of much personal service. The third bedroom Philip used as a study, leaving his wife to write in their salon.

This evening they met on the balcony, and stood a few minutes side by side. A spur of Mont Blanc was glistening in the weird moonlight. The Dent-du-Midi towards the south raised its wondrous head into a blue sky, with an effect not reproducible by words or colour. The deep Rhone valley that separated them from the mountains was not visible from where they stood, but the gulf, though hidden, was there.

"Penelope," said Philip softly, "you must try and not look so sad." He did not give her any endearing title, though his very soul seemed to be unveiled in his eyes.

"I did not mean to look sad," she said coldly.

"I am glad the Bethunes have come, it will make this place more cheerful for you."

"Yes, they are very kind; I do like them."

"Forster is glad of my help. You do not mind, do you?"

"Mind! Oh, no. I told you, Philip, that you are to go on as if—as if I did not exist. We have agreed about it; we need not discuss it again."

"Agreed! Don't use that word, dearest. I have obeyed you. You have told me you do not love me, and that—"

"I told you so before we married," she put in quickly.

"Yes, I know, but I—I did not then understand your full meaning."

"That was not my fault. I did not love you then, I do not love you now. I obeyed my uncle, nothing more."

"I shall not complain, dearest, because I don't think you know what you are doing. I don't believe that—"

Penelope turned away a little impatiently.

"I told you at Paris, Philip, what I had decided. Of course you might be different, and you might compel me to—but—"

"Hush, dearest. Don't say any more. You told me you would be my wife only in name, and I said then that I would wait till I had won your love. I love you more than I love myself. I love you, Penelope, and I promised to devote my life to you. Perhaps I could make you love me, but I would rather wait and win the right. Dearest, my wife in the eyes of God, I shall win you yet."

"You promised to avoid all these scenes," said Penelope wearily. "I am grateful to you for respecting my wishes, very grateful. I did not think things would turn out as they have done. I knew I must marry for money, because of uncle's wishes, but—but—"

"—you know the rest. You were not deceived by me, at all events. You blindly deceived yourself. Now we have agreed that anyhow the world shall never know our difference of opinion. A Winskell does not ever shirk her duty." Penelope had spoken quickly and impatiently, very differently to her usual manner.

"You are tired, dearest; I won't keep you up any longer." He took her hand and kissed it respectfully, as if she had indeed been a Princess, far removed from him and his poor interests.

"We can be free of each other, you need not ask me always before you settle anything. Settle it all as you like."

"Don't you care at all for me, Penelope?" he asked in a low voice.

She made another impatient movement.

"I wish you would not go on asking me such questions. I told you the exact truth at Paris. I married you because my uncle made me see it was my duty. I always obey him."

"He did us a great wrong, dearest," said Philip, leaning against the balcony, and looking furiously at the beautiful woman who was his wife only in name. "He must be mad to have allowed you to do such a thing. Suppose love were to—tell me, dearest, I must ask, I must. Have you
COUNTRY CHARACTERS.

To thoroughly enter into the human interests of a country life, one must put aside the impression that small farmers and agricultural labourers are necessarily a dull class because they assume a some-

what stolid demeanour when seen once a week in the ceremonious discomfort of their Sunday clothes. After many years' acquaintance, perhaps some trifling accident suddenly reveals that the gruff, weather-beaten old man, whose conversational powers seemed strictly limited to an interchange of greetings, is really a potential humorist of the first order. Life to him is by no means the monotonous round of drudgery that it appears on the surface. The behaviour of his fellow-labours, their antecedents, money difficulties, and family affairs in general, afford him ample food for reflection and critical comment. Even in the most remote country districts his circle of acquaintances is far larger than one's own, owing to the fact that he instinctively exchanges a few words with every passer-by on his way to and from work.

Upon the whole, it may be said that people employed in agricultural labour take but little interest in general news. They read an occasional local paper, and an account of the death or funeral of some county magnate excites a certain amount of attention, but many pieces of news of an intrinsically interesting nature are apt to fall flat, simply because they respond to nothing in the hearer's former experience. "My son is always wondering at me for reading about those foreign wars and fightings. But there was a soldier come to our parish when I was a young girl, who'd fought the French many a time," said an old farmer's wife to me one day. That glimpse of a red coat in early youth had given her an interest in military matters to the end of her days. Mrs. Thompson's memories were all the more vivid for being so strictly limited. During considerably over eighty years she lived in one country neighbourhood, without any of those ambitions to take railway journeys, go to the sea-side, or visit London, which produce so much restlessness and discontent in a more enterprising generation. She was a typical representative of the old-fashioned class of farmers; in person somewhat gaunt and stern; with thick, iron grey hair drawn down in deep curtains over her temples, and surmounted by a monumental erection of black lace. A black stuff dress, a little rusty from steady wear, was gathered in quite imperially all round her waist, and a small brown knitted shawl completed her costume. One could see at a glance that she was hard-working and truthful in no common

ever loved! No, it is impossible, or you could not have done this thing!"

Penelope flushed angrily. These scenes had never entered into her calculations.

"If I have, or if I have not, will make no difference to you, Philip."

She turned her back on the beautiful scene, and passed through the window into the sitting-room.

Philip followed her.

"Yes, it does make a difference to me. If you do not know what love is, darling, I will teach you what it means. You shall see that a man can be unselfish, in what concerns his own happiness, and that he can love a woman for herself; that she can be to him as an angel from heaven. My dearest, I can and I will teach you all this, if you will be patient and open with me; if you tell me you have never loved another."

Penelope had her hand on the handle of her bedroom door and she turned round still more impatiently.

"Why do you persecute me! I told you everything at Paris, everything but that. I have never seen but one man I could care about, but my personal inclination is nothing in comparison with my duty."

"You have seen one man you could love?"

"Is this keeping your promise?"

"No—I am afraid not, but I must know. How can I win you if—if—"

"I wish you would not talk about winning me. Can you be any one but yourself?"

"Then you can love, Penelope!"

"Love, love! Oh, I could have loved that man, but it was not to be. You need not be afraid of any scandal. A Winskell never disgraced herself or her family." Penelope raised her head proudly as she stepped into her room and shut the door.

Philip stayed in the balcony till far on into the night. He strove with God and with the darkness that surrounded him. But at last, all the words that came to his lips were:

"I did not know, I never guessed she meant that, but Forster warned me. I must be brave, I must."
degree, also that she would have but little mercy on those who fell short of her standard of virtue. She was always to be found in the long, old-fashioned kitchen of the farmhouse; where scarcely sufficient light penetrated through the low, widelatticed window for one to discern clearly the huge sides of bacon and pieces of pickled beef that hung from the ceiling.

The more ornamental features of the room were a corner cupboard of shiny old oak, a tall eight-day clock, and a row of orientationally bright brass candlesticks ranged along the high narrow mantelpiece. An old brass punch ladle and some gigantic snuffers completed the list of what one might term Mrs. Thompson's bric-a-brac. Two or three steel bits, a curb chain, and a pair of spurs hanging on nails inside the large open chimney would have to be classed rather under the head of useful implements.

The ceremonies attending a visit to Mrs. Thompson were as unvarying as Court etiquette. After establishing me in a cushioned arm-chair standing in the most painful proximity to the fire, my hostess would retire deliberately to a side-table and, opening a drawer, produce a black silk apron, which she substituted for the great cotton wrap in which she had been previously enveloped. Then, having removed a black bonnet, which she was wont to perch on the top of her cap whilst going about the yard, she would return, and seating herself on a stiff wooden chair, prepare for the luxury of an idle talk. Constant bodily activity had become such a rooted habit with Mrs. Thompson that she clung to it almost up to the end, although the strain of managing a farmhouse was obviously too much for her strength. When at last, yielding to the repeated entreaties of her friends, she was persuaded to spend a portion of the day in the parlour, resting on the "lounge," instead of busily superintending the kitchen work, she appreciated the change no more than a great Commoner, whose fighting days are over, enjoys the dreary dignity of sharing in the peaceful councils of the Lords. These extremely simple habits were solely traceable to old-fashioned farmhouse traditions, and were in no way due to penury. Speaking one day of a servant girl who had an annoying habit of satisfying her curiosity by prying into all the available drawers and cupboards, Mrs. Thompson incidentally mentioned to me that she disdained her bedroom being meddled with, as she kept a bit of loose money in the table drawer. "Well, might be eighty—might be a hundred pounds perhaps!" Why such a sum should have been left in a table drawer when she had a prosperous banking account is a mystery; but the habit probably dated from days when banking accounts were not so common as they are now.

When mentioning servant girls, I touch on the bane of Mrs. Thompson's life. Brooding over their moral deficiencies occupied an incredible amount of her time, when increasing age debarked her from more active occupations. In the early days of our acquaintance I fondly hoped that the grievance might be merely temporary, and fade away at the next domestic change. But as time went on I gradually discovered that the reigning "girl" was invariably the worst of her species. There was nothing of which Mrs. Thompson did not in turn suspect them, from the lowest depths of moral turpitude to tampering with the contents of her work-box. Her characteristic habit of slowly rising from her seat in the midst of a conversation, and stealthily creeping to look behind the door, was mainly owing to the presence of the girl in the back kitchen. It is scarcely to be wondered at that girls engaged yearly at the hiring fair in the neighbouring small town, without a shred of character being demanded from their former employers, should not turn out to be much help or comfort. But it was the traditional method of obtaining farmhouse servants, and consequently Mrs. Thompson could not bring herself to deviate from it.

In amusing contrast to Mrs. Thompson there lived on a neighbouring farm a family where the daughters had been brought up quite in the modern style—tennis playing, dancing, and performances on the piano being included in their education. It is needless to say that these accomplishments incurred the old lady's unmitigated scorn. "All well enough for the folk who have nothing else to do!" she would say, with the air of one who makes a handsome concession to the demands of art. But hearing of these new-fangled doings naturally sharpened her eyes to the shortcomings of the whole family. "I've been told," she said to me once, in a sepulchral whisper, "I've been told by those as know for certain, that Mrs. Harding has to buy her hand before ever the year's out!" After this awful revelation she was evidently
satisfied that my opinion of Mrs. Harding could never be quite the same as before. All this old-fashioned prejudice showed a mind sadly narrowed by running in one groove for the best part of a century. However, when on meeting Miss Harding one July day, and enquiring after the progress of the haymaking, she heartily replied that she knew nothing about the farm work, I felt some sympathy with the strictures of the older generation.

In the eyes of elderly country people the great increase of educational advantages is a mere snare, leading young people into much waste of time through reading story-books and writing constant letters to their lovers. One old cottage dame was never weary of diluting with shocked annoyance on the fact that her grandchildren were set to learn "a nonsensical bit of stuff of which a body can't make head or tail," instead of confining their studies mainly to working samples as in her young days. It was an unheard-of waste of time, according to her views, to learn anything but the Bible by heart; and certainly the trial scene in the "Merchant of Venice," which I subsequently discovered to be the task in question, did seem rather over the heads of juvenile agricultural labourers. Whether the children derived any benefit from it is more than I can say. I only ascertained that it was taught by order of the examiner, and that great difficulty was experienced in making the children comprehend the plot of a Shakespeare play.

If one is anxious to appreciate one's neighbours impartially, it is necessary sooner or later to face the fact that standards of conduct differ considerably in different classes. For instance, in certain circles, drunkenness, if not so excessive as to interfere with business, is no disability. Many farmers and labourers, men of most engaging qualities in other respects, are absolutely broken down in health at a comparatively early age by years of excess. They are conscious of it themselves, and the fact is well known to their neighbours, but neither from one nor the other does one hear any expression of blame or blame. They refer to their past drinking or fighting propensities as merely the natural weaknesses of youth, or, if they regret them, it is mainly on account of the worldly folly displayed in such a waste of health and strength. In the light of sins they do not present themselves. Of course these remarks do not apply to habitual drunkards, but only to the class of men who return home once a week in the condition that is best described as being "market plert."

At one time I had ample opportunities of investigating this singular mental attitude as exhibited by an exceedingly genial old farmer, who was dying some twenty years before his time from a sheer breakdown of strength, consequent upon a too riotous enjoyment of social gatherings. A more courteous or entertaining host it would have been difficult to find, and detailing his experiences to a sympathetic listener was one of the few amusements left to him when he was at last confined to the house by his increasing infirmities. Being of Welsh extraction, though now renting a farm on the English side of the border, it follows as a matter of course that he took an immense interest in theological questions as represented by the minute differences between one shade of dissent and another.

"And there are folks so careless they couldn't tell you the difference between a Methodist and a Latter-Day Christian!" he exclaimed indignantly one day, when reflecting on his neighbours' shortcomings.

Mr. Morgan's dissent in no way interfered with his attending the parish church in the absence of a conveniently situated chapel, and he evidently regarded religion in any form as an eminently interesting subject for discussion. But coupled with this religious bent of mind was a most incongruous appreciation of the coarser pleasures, which led him to dwell lovingly on the days when life had been one unceasing round of fights, fairs, and drinking bouts. Like many of his class he possessed in a remarkable degree the gift of narrative, and his stories were so funny that I have sometimes weakly attempted to reproduce them. But scorn of the old man's dramatic delivery and tolerable provinicialism they fell very flat, and were even calculated to excite censure on account of their doubtful moral tendency. There was one reminiscence in particular of how Mr. Morgan sold a blind horse to an acquaintance, whose reasoning faculties were temporarily in abeyance, and of his subsequent adventures in connection with this feat, that was related with such much humour that while listening one almost lost sight of the moral obliquity of the proceeding. Mr. Morgan's own appearance by no means suggested a minute attention to personal adornment, nevertheless he had his standard of the amount
of show that besetted various stations in life. "Who'd think to see her, with no more shape than any sack, that she'd been a woman worth a good bit of money when Thomas married her?" was his comment on a neighbouring farmer's wife who had certainly neglected her figure to a deplorable extent. The old man was especially proud of the method in which he had dealt with an attack of influenza, and glosely mentioned that it had been much commented on in the neighbourhood. His procedure had the merit of extreme simplicity. He went to bed and continued to drink whiskey till his consciousness failed him; and in his own mind he was completely satisfied that he had achieved a safe and easy cure.

The way in which poor people take situations for granted saves them an infinity of trouble. Visiting a cottager's wife one day I found a most dishevelled old tramp sitting at the table, carefully breaking pieces of bread into a bowl of hot water. Whilst making his meal he gave me a rambling account of his birth and parentage, from which I vaguely gathered that in early youth his prospects had been of the brightest, and that his education had embraced a knowledge of music and various foreign languages. Now, however, owing to somebody's fault, he was reduced to begging his way about the country and sleeping under hedges. He continued his journey as soon as the meal was finished, bearing off with him a most unsavoury-looking bundle that he had left in the back kitchen. It appeared that though the old fellow was undoubtedly crazy, there was some truth in his story. His nominal home was in a distant village, but from time to time he would start off on little tours, living frugally enough on what he collected as he went. He was no particular friend of my hostess's, as I had at first imagined, but was in the habit of calling at her house once or twice a year, and borrowing a basin of boiling water, in which he used to soak the scraps of bread he had begged by the way. These visitsations she took without the smallest surprise.

"He says as how he was a gentleman born," she remarked, rising to put the door open after his departure, "but he be a terrible dirty old fellow now, and no mistake. I've seen him go to sleep in a breath of air after he've been 'ere!" Country people, though as a rule exceedingly averse to parting with money, have no corresponding objection to giving away money's value in kind. Indeed, on certain traditional occasions they are almost recklessly profuse, as on St. Thomas's Day, when many an old-fashioned farmer's wife will give away materials for plum puddings to such poor people as present themselves. This custom of "gooding" or "mumbling" day, as it is called, is much abused; many cottagers who would never think of begging at other times appearing shamelessly as mendicants on this one day. At Christmas also there are farms where "sixpence and a mince pie as big as a plate" may be had almost for asking.

Speaking generally, one does not encounter much extreme poverty in the depths of the country. Of course there are cases in which some lonely old man or woman will live for years mainly supported on such scraps as their neighbours can spare them, sooner than go into the workhouse. How they exist at all is something of a mystery, but it is to be remembered that in the country there are many trifles to be obtained free of cost, for all of which the poor in town have to pay hard cash. The amount of wood collected by the women and children of a family for consumption during the winter is, in some districts, very considerable. Then there is the patch of garden ground, capable of an infinite variety of treatment. Of late years there has been a tendency to imagine that laying out unusually large gardens with new cottages must of necessity confer a benefit upon the tenant. That this is not always the opinion of the cottagers themselves I have on the authority of an old man, who, by sheer energy and hard work, has risen from being an agricultural labourer to the position of bailiff on a considerable estate. He maintains that a quarter of an acre of land is sufficient for any one to cultivate after work hours, and that a greater quantity either taxes a man's strength beyond what is beneficial, or, more often, is utterly neglected. As a rule farmers allow their men potato plots, which they work for them with the rest of the plough land, thus saving an infinity of spade labour. Indeed it is rarely that one sees the whole of a cottage garden under cultivation. Whatever may be its size, a large proportion is usually given over to weeds and waste heaps.

It is difficult for any person, accustomed to the country, to realise the important part that pigs play in the lives of most fairly prosperous cottagers. All through the autumn months, if one requires a woman...
to give extra help in the house, one is apt to be met by the reply: "Please, I don't rightly see how I can leave home for the whole day, seeing as we've put up our pig to fat." The difficulty is sometimes to be got over by allowing the charwoman to run home and minister to the wants of her fat pig. But a time comes when even this expedient fails. You are not met with a downright refusal, which would be considered an extreme rudeness by a country woman, when speaking to a social superior. "Well, I don't know how ever I shall manage to come, for we shall be killing our pig all next week!" she replies, in a tone of reproachful embarrassment, and though the words sound undecided enough, this is really an intimation that the speaker would not leave home for anything short of a summons to a parent's death bed. More than once I have been surprised to find sick old women, who had been hitherto affectionately nursed by their married daughters, suddenly left to wait upon themselves at a very injudiciously early stage of convalescence. Some such dialogue as the following has ensued:

"And indeed I don't feel able for much," says the old woman, "but there! my daughter couldn't stop away from home no longer."

"I hope her children are not ill!" is my natural enquiry.

"Oh lor' no! nothing of that! But she's got her pig to kill on Monday, so she were like bound to go."

When one takes into consideration that the value of a fat pig is probably about seven pounds; and that, in addition to having fed and tended himself, it is the woman's place to undertake all the lengthy and laborious salting of the meat after it is cut up; it is small wonder that she regards the annual visit of the pork butcher as ushering in the most important week of the year.

It is sometimes curious to notice the points on which poor people relax their rigid habits of economy. One knows respectable families in which, from constant sickness or a series of misfortunes, the bare necessaries of life have been sometimes difficult of attainment, and who nevertheless have the walls of their rooms hung with numerous photographs and coloured pictures in more or less ornate frames. This remark is made in no critical spirit, for it is surely conceivable that in the long run more satisfaction may be got out of contemplating these little treasures than could possibly be afforded by a few extra meat meals.

A far less satisfactory expenditure is involved in the constant short railway journeys to the nearest town which of late years have become a fixed habit with the majority of cottagers. On market day every little station within ten miles or so of a country town is crowded, not only with farmers' wives going in to sell their butter and poultry, but also with half the village women intent on making their weekly purchases and meeting their neighbours. The journey is made on the smallest pretext. "Please, mum, Tom wanted a pair of boots, so mother's took him to town to get them." I was told on one occasion. The idea of taking a child's size, and bringing the boots back to him, never seemed to enter their minds, any more than the fact that railway-tickets add considerably to the expenses of the said boots. Of course some of the women are fortunate enough to get lifts in carts, but even then I doubt the expediency of a weekly visit to town, for as a farmer's wife once remarked: "The worst of going among the shops is one generally brings home something that one don't really want."

The practice of walking great distances has been almost abandoned by country people since the increase of railways. An old man who combines shoemaking with farming a bit of land, tells me that years ago he and his wife used to think nothing of carrying their fowls and ducks to the market town, seven miles off, and returning laden with household purchases. Now, every labourer's wife goes in by train. The thin ready-made boots, which, on account of their fatal cheapness, are so universally worn, form in themselves an adequate reason for not attempting to walk the distance. That these constant journeys to town are not necessary for the replenishing of household stores, is proved by the fact that, when incapacitated by illness, people manage to do very well without them. Indeed, it is customary now for bakers' and grocers' carts to run through even remote country districts once or twice a week.

In connection with the walking exploits of former generations, I must mention a farmer's wife who in her earlier days had habitually carried great baskets of cream cheeses to two market towns, situated respectively at about ten and fifteen miles from her house, the return journey also
being performed on foot. She saw nothing particularly wonderful about this feat, and lived to a great age, although it must be owned that the form taken by her last illness was probably due to having previously overburdened herself. During her last years she used to ride a small white pony to market, and appear upon it in great state every autumn at the harvest thanksgiving service, when she made an annual lament over the grave of her first husband, in the parish churchyard, quite undeterred by the presence of the excellent man who did duty as second.

The contrast between the mental attitude of the different generations in village life is very marked. At one end of the scale we have the school children, conversant with many branches of general information, as defined by a Government examiner. At the other end is the old grandmother, still firmly believing in signs, spells, and wise women. The parents occupy an intermediate position, being very proud of their children's scholastic successes; and yet with a vague feeling of confidence in the older knowledge, of which they are more than half ashamed. Quite lately an old woman eagerly enquired if I had noticed anything wrong about a field of wheat belonging to a neighbouring farmer. Upon my replying in the negative she hastened to explain that since the wheat had come up it was apparent that by some mistake a line had been missed in sowing, and this was, everybody knew, the surest sign of a death in the farmer's family within the year. She said it was "the talk of the place," and added with grim anticipation: "Well, those who live will see, before the year's out!"

Certainly a touch of superstition does wonderfully heighten the picturesque interest of a narrative. Mrs. Evans, for instance, is a practical, hard-working farmer's widow, usually immersed in the labours of a large farmhouse. Yet if you can find her at leisure—which is seldom, the intervals of dairy work being taken up with much brewing and washing—you will soon learn that she has had strange experiences. She will freely tell you, in her curiously modulated Welsh voice, how her poor husband was brought home at midnight, on his pony, dying from the effects of a drunken quarrel. The whole scene is dramatically reproduced after the lapse of years; how she waited up hour after hour for her man to return from market. "A good husband, he was," she says, "and never gave me a cross word except when he was in drink." Her pent-up indignation breaks forth as she dwells on how the two farmers quarrelled as they rode home together along the dark country road, and how the people in a wayside cottage, hearing strange sounds of strife, presently came out and found her poor man lying unconscious, half immersed in a pool of water. As soon as the day broke Mrs. Evans sent off to her mother's house to beg that she would come and help nurse the injured man. But the old woman returned a flat refusal. It seems that during the night she had been much alarmed by a large white bird fluttering against her window. Of course after such an unmistakable passage of death her son-in-law's illness could but end in one way, and she absolutely declared to be mixed up in an affair which was destined to terminate in a coroner's inquest.

Her most gloomy anticipations were fulfilled, for not only was there an inquest, but—still more terrible to the uneducated mind—a post-mortem examination to decide on the immediate cause of death; all of which Mrs. Evans describes with a superabundance of realistic detail.

As might be expected, Mrs. Evans has implicit belief in the medical efficacy of charms and spells. Being recently in some danger through a sudden attack of hemorrhage, brought on by over-exertion, she went, it is true, through the preliminary form of sending for the local doctor, and partially following his advice. But in her innermost heart she was not very sanguine about the results of his treatment, and openly expressed her intention, should he prove incompetent to deal with her case, of calling in an old woman, who was reputed to have done wonders under similar circumstances. "She do say some words over you, I don't rightly know what they be; but there's many a one that she has cured after they've been given up by the doctor!" That was Mrs. Evans's account of the healing process, detailed with the utmost good faith. However, she was not able to test the old woman's powers in her own person, as, contrary to all expectation, the regular medical practitioner was eminently successful in restoring her to health.

Whilst visiting amongst cottagers one cannot help remarking the extraordinary lack of common sense displayed in bringing up children and nursing the sick. Careless ignorance, quite as much as poverty, is accountable for the wonderful mixture of
insuitable substances upon which the
babies are too often reared.

"There! He don't seem at all well, that
he don't! Maybe it's a bit of cork that he
swallowed when he was having a drink of
father's elder that's upset him," said a
labourer's wife to me one day, when ac-
counting for the sudden indisposition of
her child, aged two. Upon another occasion
a woman explained to me how she had
gone on an excursion to the sea-side,
which involved rising about four a.m.,
followed by six hours in the train, and a
return at midnight, because she thought it
would do her two children—one a baby
in arms—so much good to have some sea air.

There can be no doubt that poor people,
although losing many lives, are saved much
anxiety by their fatalism and belief that
illnesses are inevitable evils. Whilst the
desperate man and the squire are worrying
and fretting lest their families should suffer in
some prevailing epidemic, the other inhabi-
tants of the village are seldom terrified
into taking the smallest precautions against
infection. Of course, any isolation of the
patient in an ordinary cottage is clearly
impossible, and even if it could be managed
would run counter to all traditional
methods of exhibiting sympathy by per-
petually running in to exchange a few
words with the sufferer. Every allowance
must be made for the neighbourly kindness
that is often exhibited during outbreaks of
illness, but when all this is taken into con-
ideration, much danger might be avoided
if people could repress their curiosity to
personally examine specially unattractive
forms of disease. I have been told of a
cottage woman who proudly carried about,
and exhibited to her friends, pieces of skin
from her child, who was peeling after scarlet
fever. It has also come under my
own observation that in a wayside public-
house there can be several scarlet fever
cases and a death from diphtheria, without
visibly diminishing its popularity as a
place of resort whilst the illnesses ran their
course.

When recently visiting a bed-ridden old
woman of eighty, who was suffering from an
attack of congestion of the lungs, I found her
permanently established in a corner of the
kitchen, with constant cooking, drying of
newly-washed clothes, and occasional shoe-
making, going on round her bed. It was
mid-winter, and there were four doors to
the room—one leading straight into the
garden—through which a constant stream
of neighbours were for ever coming and
going, to enquire into and comment on the
condition of the invalid. Yet my old
friend had lived in that kitchen day and
night ever since she became bed-ridden,
more than a year before, preferring it
with its constant noise, bustle, and con-
tending smails, to the comparative isolation
of a bedroom. And—granted the possi-
ibility of existing at all under such con-
tions—it was certainly much more cheerful
downstairs. When at her worst, and ap-
parently in a most critical state of health,
she found more comfort in quenching her
feverish thirst with sips of home-brewed beer
out of a tea-cup than in any other fashion.
The discomforts of the situation were in no
way apparent to her; in fact both she and
her family were evidently convinced that
no possible pains had been spared to con-
duce to her recovery. Curiously enough
the lung mischief passed off with far less
trouble than might have been anticipated,
showing that a condition of things which
would be absolutely intolerable to one
class of invalid is in no way detrimental to
another.

On the all-important subject of sport,
the different views of various country
people are very strongly marked. One
steady old mason of my acquaintance, at
the first indication that the hounds were
in the neighbourhood, would throw down
his tools, and run after them all day;
whilst another equally industrious work-
man could scarcely conceal his contempt
for the amount of time and money ex-
pended on such sports. One day, finding
a little village boy busily engaged in try-
ing to push an unwilling cat down a hole
in a bank, I elicited from him that the
ambition of his life was to keep a dog
and hunt things. In the meantime, he
had obtained permission from the good-
natured farmer to try and catch a rabbit
with the help of his mother's cat, which
was participating in the sport much against
its will. Some months later, hearing that
the child was ill, I went to his home,
and found him lying in bed half uncon-
scious. Presently, however, he started
up, and excitedly muttered some words
that I could not catch. "He takes your
muff for a dog, ma'am," explained the
poor mother. "His mind's running on
a dog all the time. We got a bit of a
china image of one, thinking it might
quiet him—but it ain't no manner of use." Poor
Willy's ambition was not destined to
be realised, for this proved his last illness.

Upon the whole, it may be said that
visiting country cottagers is a decidedly interesting occupation. In a purely agricultural district, the poverty is seldom of a distressing nature, and though many labourers' wives work hard—more especially if they are sufficiently prosperous to keep a cow, pigs, and poultry—yet their work is of an interminable nature, that can always be cheerfully set aside in favour of half an hour's gossip. They are a singularly easy class of people to get on with, provided one makes the necessary mental effort to enter into their circumstances—to properly appreciate, for instance, the sense of loss sustained by an old woman when an unusually hard frost breaks the fragment of a glass bottle in which she has kept her blacking "for a matter of forty years." A few local expressions have to be mastered in every fresh fresh scene: to properly appreciate, for instance, the sense of loss sustained by an old woman when an unusually hard frost breaks the fragment of a glass bottle in which she has kept her blacking "for a matter of forty years." A few local expressions have to be mastered in every fresh scene:—"Be it right cool, indeed!" The sufferer who observes with a groan: "Lov, I haven't enjoyed such a Christmas as this for rheumatism—no, not for years!" is certainly not expressing himself as we do. But a little reflection and imagination will gradually elucidate the knotty points. Above all, if one wants to learn anything of cottagers' private views and habits, one must have patience and plenty of time to spare. Country people cannot be hurried, and the bare suspicion that you are examining their traditional lines of thought in an unsympathetic or critical spirit will at once reduce them to a stolid silence.

BOMBAY.

In the golden glow of a radiant sunset the noble harbour of Bombay presents a scene of unrivalled beauty. The towers and spires of the shining city rise from a floating veil of amber mist; and the deep blue water, breaking in ripples of flame on the sandy shore, suggests some heavenly vision of the glassy sea mingled with fire. The feathery palms of the island-studded bay look black as night against the burning sky. Fantastic boats with bent spars and tawny sails dart between steamers, ironclads, and floating batteries, the guttural chants of native boatmen mingling with the songs of English blue-jackets, and the clamour of the unknown tongues which render cosmopolitan Bombay a second Babel.

The little fishing village of Mombasa, rented to Biego in A.D. 1548 by the King of Portugal for a handful of silver coins, passed through many strange vicissitudes before reaching her present commanding position as Queen of the Indian Seas. On the marriage of Charles the Second with his Portuguese wife, Catharine of Braganza, he received the island of Bombay as a portion of the bridal dowry, and in 1664 ceded the malarial spot to the East India Company on payment of an annual rent of ten pounds in gold. At this date the population only consisted of ten thousand souls, but the last census registered the number of inhabitants at eight hundred thousand, showing an increase of one hundred and twenty thousand in the preceding decade, while the population of Calcutta remained stationary, and that of Madras diminished during the same period. The early Portuguese settlers in Bombay were so deeply impressed by the natural beauty of this Eastern paradise, that they designated it "A ilha da boa vida"—"The Isle of Happy Life"—a prognostication doomed to disappointment, for the hapless Europeans did off like flies in the fatal atmosphere of Mombasa, now the healthy and beautiful city of Bombay. Even thirty years ago the camping-ground on the present esplanade was known as "Asdama,"—"the place to bury strangers in"—but green maidens and stately avenues have replaced stagnant pools and miasmatic swamps, until the fiends of fever and cholera are almost expelled from their former fastness. European enterprise and native munificence combined to secure civic prosperity, and the vast sum of seven millions sterling was expended on architectural and sanitary improvements. Bombay, unlike the majority of great ports, possesses no river, and occupies a cluster of islands artificially connected with each other and with the mainland by means of causeways and viaducts, which form a peninsula and create one of the finest harbours in the East. The original fortifications being out of date and useless for modern warfare, have been partially demolished and efficient defences erected in their place. Three-fifths of the population are Hindus, mainly divided into Vishnavites and Shivalites, distinguished from each other by the vertical
or horizontal "Tilak," or "prayer-mark," on the forehead. Two hundred thousand Mohammedans and fifty thousand Parsees inhabit distinct quarters in the native town; and, though the comparatively small number of twelve thousand souls, represents the European element, Western influence predominates, and the presence of gas, electric light, and tramways in the Hindu quarter demonstrates the success with which English energy carries the war of progress into the very heart of the enemy's camp. A network of streets converges round the superb railway station, a chef-d'œuvre of modern architecture, with pink and white domes rising above vaulted halls supported on granite pillars, and enfolded by balconies, where the sculptured parrots and peacocks of Royal India surround the symbols of British sovereignty.

As the sun sinks below the horizon the strains of the band echo from the brown balconies of the picturesque Yacht Club, and carriages of gaudily-clad natives and white-robed Europeans fill the spacious area of the Apollo Bunder, a noble stone quay which commands one of the fairest sea-pictures in the world. Silvery clouds of pigeons wheel and flutter round the tall warehouses of grain which line a row of wharves laden with bales of cotton, each native merchant contributing his quota of corn towards the support of these feathered pensioners, who pass their little lives in unmolested security. Universal kindness to birds and animals characterises the historic creeds of the East, and in the famous Pinjrapool of Bombay, bullocks, dogs, and birds, otherwise homeless and starving, find food and shelter together with the numerous aged and decrepit animals for which this asylum was erected by native charity.

From the broad verandah of the hotel, shaded by the over-arching trees of the University gardens, we look down upon a curious phase of native life, exhibited for the special entertainment of the "sahib-loc." Performing monkeys execute various gymnastic feats; conjurers swallow fire and swords with stolid impartiality; and snake-charmers, with a deadening din of tom-toms, lure their glistening cobras from baskets of plaited palm-leaves, until the lithe brown bodies of the would-be sorcerers are enfolded with gruesome mantles of coiling folds. Although the fangs of the snakes are drawn, and the terrible hoods are spread in fruitless rage, the operation needs repetition every two months, and the carelessness of long habit creates a certain amount of apprehension. An emerald-green snake wriggles across the road only to fall into the clutches of a mongoose, for this pretty little animal, harmless and affectionate to the world in general, is the deadliest enemy of the snake tribe, killing even the drenched cobra instantaneously by breaking the back with a sudden jump. A man clad only in a yellow scarf and turban opens a mouth stained with the vivid vermilion of betel-juice, to show that the mango-seed just swallowed has already become a small tree with green leaves pushing towards the light. A woman appears next upon the scene, bringing a crying baby in a closed hamper of bamboo. A dozen swords are instantly thrust through the interstices amid the ear-piercing yells of the supposed victim; but as soon as the formidable blades are withdrawn, the nine-lived infant tumbles out of the basket, and sausages to the assembled audience, holding out her tiny brown hand for the well-deserved "bakshish." As the fun waxes fast and furious, sundry quarrels and recriminations between the rival magicians attract the intervention of the native police, who, "dressed in a little brief authority," symbolised by red turban and blue tunic, soon disperse the performers, bag and baggage, hastening the enforced departure with unlimited kicks and thumps summarily received. The chimes from the clock tower of the University and the cawing of the scavenger crows, which darken the trees in countless numbers as they flock home to roost, never permit more than a comparative silence to fall on the street, and the brilliant groups of all nations gathered in the great hall of the vast hotel make it an epitome of the many-sided life and world-wide interests which distinguish Bombay. The cantonments extend along the shore on either side of the fort, and end at Colaba, where a lighthouse on a rocky point marks the outer horn of the wide inlet known as Back Bay. The officers' bungalows, with their thatched roofs shaded by clustering palms and set in green nests of tropical verdure, look ideal retreats of luxurious repose, and every opening in the walls of foliage shows some blue creek or winding arm of the sea.

The crowding monuments in the nave of the composite English Cathedral recall the early days of the city, so fatal to the
first European colonists that almost every tablet records some tragic or premature severance of the thread of life. Reading between the lines of the crumbling tombstones, with their inflated epitaphs and pompous inscriptions, we learn to estimate aright the heroic acts of courage and self-sacrifice by which the forgotten founders of Bombay laid the foundations of the present Indian Empire. A noble choir, rich in fretted alabaster and costly mosaic, accentuates the rude simplicity of the earlier edifice, but a sympathetic tenderness for the memory of a past so deeply fraught with pain and peril forbids the destruction of the shrine built by the English pioneers who bequeathed such a rich inheritance to succeeding generations.

The boundless wealth and fertility of Western India are exemplified in the multitude of indigenous products piled up on every side of the great Crawford Market, where spacious halls filled with glowing fruit and fantastic vegetables extend in aisles of gorgeous colouring, which converge like the spokes of a gigantic wheel round the central dome. Pyramids of gardenia and tuberose breathe the rich aroma of the tropics, and unknown blossoms of pink and crimson hue drop their heavy bell among yellow allemandas and purple orchids. Rapidity of decay equals luxuriance of growth under an Indian sun, and the flowers already begin to fade in the hands of the brown maidens who sit before every stall stringing garlands of dewy marigolds and fragrant jasmine-buds for the Hindu sanctuaries, which, though numerous in Bombay, present no special feature of local interest. The great Walkeshwar Temple, on the edge of a sacred Tank, attracts a vast concourse of pilgrims, but the reputation of this favourite shrine is only due to the traditions connected with it as the original stronghold of Brahminism in Mombasa.

The verdant groves of Malabar Hill offer a welcome retreat from the noise and heat of the tumultuous city, and every green lane between the banks of choice ferns and radiant exotics is a miniature Eden. The flag on Malabar Point waves above the tower of Government House, surrounded by flower-wreathed bungalows and stately mansions buried in the rich foliage of this favourite European suburb, which commands magnificent views of the broken coast washed by the turquoise sea. A forest of cocoanuts fills the foreground, and the dark wall of the Syadri Mountains beyond the white houses of the sea-girt city intensifies the vivid blue of sky and water. A fleet of fishing-boats catches the sunset light on bamboo masts and tawny sails, gliding through the transient pageant of departing day into the velvet darkness of the swiftly-falling night, and the dazzling constellations leap out one by one into the infinite spaces of the over-arching heavens until they palpitate with coruscations of quivering flame. A glance at the fiery splendour of the Southern Cross or the blazing belt of Orion in these Eastern skies, explains the secret of the magnetic spell which drew the sages of old to read in these far-off worlds the messages sent from heaven to earth, and to unravel the tangled skein of human destiny by the mystic march of the silent stars, regarded with the unconscious poetry of Oriental minds as "the thoughts of Brahma."

The bright and animated streets of the native town are crowded with grotesquely painted temples, fire-houses and mosques, which form appropriate frames for the endless panorama of brilliant living pictures which are unrolled before our wondering eyes as Moolam, Parsee, Hindu, Bunnia and Mahatta mingle with Arab and Negro, Malay and Chinese, savage-looking Bebloches and bewildered islanders from the surf-beaten shores of the Laccadives and Maldives. Representatives of almost every Oriental race augment the seething tide of humanity which ebbs and flows through the great Bhendi Bazaar in dazzling waves of colour, though "nature unadorned" undoubtedly occupies the foremost place. The scanty retail trade of olden times has developed into an annual total of one hundred and sixty million sterling, three-fifths of which goes and comes through the Suez Canal, the life-giving artery which quickens the stagnant pulses of the East into vigorous motion.

The great Indian port which attracts this vast concourse of people is.pre-eminently a stronghold of the Parsee community. These descendants of the ancient Persians migrated hither from Surat when the commercial prosperity of the early colony declined in consequence of the establishment of the East India Company in Bombay, to which they transferred their capital, thus constituting the new settlement the principal seat of commerce. Untramelled by the philo-

sophical subtleties of the Hindu, or the narrow prejudices of the Mohammedan,
keen and brilliant intellect of the Parsee possesses a power of adaptation which secures for it a conspicuous place in the mercantile world as well as in those mental attainments now accessible to every subject in the British Empire, irrespective of race or creed. The advantage of a connection with Surat was promptly realised, and the enterprising Asiatic emigrants crossed the Persian Gulf, bringing the produce of their pearl fisheries to the Dutch and Portuguese factories, even before the English gained their first footing in India through a treaty granted by Shah Jahan A.D. 1615 to Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from James the First to the Mogul Court. This contract permitted the nucleus of the East India Company to build a house at Surat, to bear arms, to exercise freedom of religion, and to settle mercantile disputes. The rapid increase of the great mercantile organisation soon required a wider sphere of operation than the circumscribed area of a fortified "factory," and the shrewd Parsees, following in the footsteps of the progressive Western community, established themselves in Bombay, and became an important element in the hybrid population.

In mental and physical endowments the Parsee differs as much from the native races as he does in costume and creed. Bodily strength, untiring perseverance and vigorous energy have brought him to the front, and England possesses no more loyal subjects than the members of the alien colony which holds itself absolutely distinct from the native population of Hindu and Mohammedan origin. The keen face, kindly smile, and musical voice of the portly Parsee, who addresses us in irreproachable English, indicate a type of humanity cast in a totally different mould from that of his Oriental fellow subjects. Freedom from the yoke of caste conduces to success in the practical business of life, the Zoroastrian creed, inaccurately described as "fire-worship," being in reality a form of monotheism, equally exempt from the narrow bigotry of Islam and the superstitious materialism of Brahminism.

The ancient faith of the Persian race arose on those Caspian shores where land and sea are alive with the leaping flames of the naphtha, which coloured the fantastic dreams of the distant past, and suggested the visible presence of divinity upon the mystic altar of Nature. The sacred fire, kindled at some blazing font on Persian soil, accompanied the wanderers from their native land; and, as the Greek colonists lighted a lamp from the dying embers on their forsaken heartstones, and bore it across the sea to kindle the light of home in the country of their adoption, so the Persian exiles carried the hallowed flame to consecrate the new temples of their faith on an alien shore. The chosen emblem of divine glory receives no actual adoration, and the text of the Zend-Avesta, ascribed to Zarathustra himself and regarded as the sole rule of Parsee faith and practice, attributes an equal symbolical value to sun, moon, and sea, commanding that the devotions of the faithful should be offered to the Supreme Being in the presence of one or other of these typical signs, which proclaim His divine power. In obedience to this ancient law, which sought to draw the heart "from Nature up to Nature's God," the first red streak of dawn shows the sandy shore lined with crowds of Parsees, who dote thither, book in hand, to offer up their morning prayers as the sun rises in his strength, and the music of the rolling waves swells the chorus of praise. When the raging billows of the south-west monsoon break in foam and thunder upon the strand, a dense throng of worshippers comes forth in homage to the Creator of the awe-inspiring scene, and the impressive fervour of the chanted supplications blends in harmonious concord with the mysterious voices of the deep.

The entire costume of the Parsees symbolises the mysteries of religion. The gauze shirt, bound with the sacred cord of Kusti, must be woven with seventy-two threads to represent the chapters of the ""Irshnsh,"" and the twelve knots of the heavy tassel signify the twelve months of the year and represent the perpetual obligation of sacred duties. The embroidery of the sloping black hat carries out a further doctrinal significance, and in the white head-bands of the women warp and woof form an elaborate cryptograph of Zoroastrian theology. Even the mode of wearing the silken sari of pink, primrose, azure, and green, is prescribed by ritual law, though the linen head-band gets pushed further back, and the floating folds of the brilliant veil occasionally combine coquetry with orthodoxy. A solitary instance recurs to memory of a fuzzy fringe framed by head-band and sari, and contrasting strangely with the Asiatic face and beautiful historic dress of the wearer; but the Parsee beauty rarely ventures on such a decided protest against the tyranny of custom and creed.

The possession of unlimited wealth en-
ables the Parsees of Bombay to exercise important control over the fortunes of the city, and rows of splendid mansions in the suburb of Parel show the status of the colony which identifies itself with Western progress while retaining original character and ancient faith. The superb carriages and horses of Parsee ladies contribute to the brilliant effect of Esplanade and Bandar, when fashionable Bombay assemblies round the Yacht Club at the close of day, and the liberty accorded to Parsee womanhood paves the way to a distinct position in the Indian future, for the Zoroastrian maiden remains unfettered by the bondage of "purdah" or the iron chains of caste. Although the Parsee exercises greater religious liberty and wider toleration than his Hindu and Mooslem compatriots, he shows implicit obedience to the precepts of his religion, and scrupulously observes the broad lines of demarcation laid down for his guidance. European feet wander almost at will through Brahmin temple and Mohammedan mosque, but the Parsee fire-houses are jealously guarded from unauthorised intrusion, and Western curiosity must halt unsatisfied on the threshold of the forbidden ground, or content itself with a visit to the unique burial-place on Malabar Hill, where the mysterious "Towers of Silence" rise among the vast vegetation of a melancholy garden.

Plots of crumbling steps ascend through a tangled wilderness of banyan and palm to a level plateau crowned by five squat white towers. The wide parapets of each roofless edifice are darkened by crowds of brown vultures, which haunt the dreary cemetery and prey upon the dead bodies which are thrust through a cavity in the side of the building to an iron grating in the centre of the hollow tower. The creed which regards fire as the emblem of Divine Power and Purity necessarily forbids the use of the sacred element for the purpose of cremation, and provides a ghastly substitute for this general practise. From time immemorial the aboriginal inhabitants of the East have buried their dead in a mode which ensured the immediate destruction of the bodily frame, and the barbaric rites of Persian sepolture fulfil this requirement with incredible rapidity. The terrible birds swoop down in scores upon their helpless prey, and in a few moments the disjointed bones drop through the grating, every remaining particle being at once absorbed by filtration into the earth beneath. The custodian shows a model of the internal arrangements, but though the horrors enacted within the walls are veiled in darkness, the spell-bound silence of the gloomy garden seems fraught with portentous meaning, and the flapping of leaven wings on the battlements emphasizes the brooding hush which lingers round the haunted Towers. The rank and straggling undergrowth suggests decay rather than life, and every ragged palm or distorted banyan seems writhing under a mysterious curse which blights the terrible spot. The dark shadows of the crowding trees, the staring whiteness of the ghastly sepulchres, and the cruel patience of the ghoulish birds, like embodied fiends hungering for their prey, enhance the horrors of the barbaric rites which the unchanging laws of ancient Persia sternly enjoined on her children as of binding obligation.

The steaming heat of November necessitates an early start to the palm-clothed island of Elephants, six miles from the mainland. The transitory freshness of the radiant dawn vanishes long before the boat arrives at the landing-stage, and with heads protected by sun-umbrella, pith helmet and puggaree, supplemented with the thick folds of numerous handkerchiefs, we slowly and cautiously ascend the in- terminable steps to a group of those wonderful cave temples which, as monuments of human energy and industry, have been compared to the Pyramids of Egypt. The largest of the three strange sanctuaries of a distant past is one hundred and thirty-two feet in length and width, though only twenty feet high. Rows of massive pillars with sculptured capitals support the overhanging roof of virgin rock, the huge slabs which form the sides of the hoary shrine being carved in high relief with fantastic representations of Hindu gods. A gigantic three-sided bust faces the main entrance, and symbolises the Brahmical Trinity, the hybrid form and features indicating the composite character of the Supreme Being, described in the Shastras as "the God who is neither male nor female." On one of the broad ledges peculiar to the formation of the trap-rock stood the stone elephant from which the name of the island is derived, but the iconoclasts of earlier days, who mutilated and defaced the images of the gods, removed the figure of the sacred animal. Weird statues of Shiva with his wife Parbutti, of Vishnu, of Indra and
the elephant-headed Ganesa loom out in mysterious outlines from the shadowy twilight of each dim interior, where numerous cobras haunt the crevices in the layers of rock, though they seldom show themselves now that the caves of Elephanta have become a favourite resort of the public.

The luxuriant isle, teeming with rich vegetation and crowned with stately palms, is almost uninhabitable. Here and there a narrow path winds into the green recesses of the thick jungle which clothes hill and vale with interlacing trees, and a few native villages nestle in the heart of the woods, but the fever-stricken spot proves so fatal to human life that only those imbued by long habit can brave the perils of the malarial snake-den which was formerly known as "Ghasapuri" —"The Hill of Purification." The cave-temples are of unknown antiquity and probably of Buddhist origin, but, when the purer creed was banished from India, the ancient sanctuaries hewn in the rocks and hidden by the forests were converted by the Brahmin authorities into Hindu shrines. The lives of the custodian and his wife in the adjoining bungalow seem passed in perpetual conflict with snakes and fever, for which even the liberal stipend of the Government appears but very inadequate remuneration.

As we return across the steaming harbour the shimmering atmosphere waves and dances like a floating veil between heaven and earth; the blue sea fades into a milky pallor, as though blanched by the intolerable heat; and the heavy foliage of every palm-fringed islet droops in the blinding glare of the blistering sun. Bombay resembles a city of the dead as we drive past the closed shops and darkened houses of the European quarter to the slumbering hotel, where a drowsy punkah-wallah takes his siesta in the verandah with the cord of the punkah wrapped round one bare brown foot, which stirs as we take refuge in darkness and silence, with the great fans winnowing lastly overhead. The frosts and fogs of distant England seem no longer an unmitigated evil when contrasted with the fierce tyranny of an Eastern sun, though countless modern appliances soften the stresses of climate and the bitterness of exile to the successors of those early colonists, who bore the burden and heat of the day unalleviated by the comforts which are now brought within universal reach of luxurious Anglo-India.
a haughty shoulder upon five or six houses
of the same height as itself joined on to it
on that side, which houses, including the
Priory, when Kings and Queens kept
state at Sheerton, had been dignified by
the title of "Maid of Honour Row."

When, however, maids of honour took
flight from Sheerton in the train of Royalty,
and the fine old houses found themselves
tenantied by other and less exalted person-
ages, the Countess foresaid, either from
expediency or obstinacy, had refused to
vacate the best house in the Row, which
being the end one had the advantage of
a better view and of being almost
surrounded by its own grounds, and had
maintained herself in the odour of ex-
clusive ness by building a wall with a hand-
some stone coping almost up to the level
of the first-floor windows between her
neighbour's forecourt and her own, carry-
ing it as a dwarf wall surmounted by a
massive iron palissading round the house-
front, to which a covered way led from
imposing double doors in the wall to the
main entrance.

The Countess had also added a wing
joining on to the back of the house
nearest the second in the Row, which wing
extended to the end of the neighbouring
gardens, and so, turning a stern red-bricked
back pierced only by three upper windows
insolently overlooking without being over-
looked, coldly overshadowed and kept out
the sunshine from its humbler neighbours.

A very long and lofty room, which
occupied the ground-floor of the wing, had
been decorated for a music-room. Above
were three good-sized bedrooms lighted by
the above-named windows.

The Priory was sufficiently well fur-
nished, though the carpets and hangings
might have been fresher, but it was com-
fortable and, above all, cheap; so a bargain
was struck with alacrity on both sides, and
in the following week we migrated to
Sheerton.

The transference of such a family was a
truly formidable business. We were the
despair of the porters both at Waterloo
and Sheerton. Congestion of the traffic
seemed imminent. But two empty com-
partments were found at length for my
family and the two nurses—the other
servants having gone on to the new house
in the morning—and sundry packages
which my wife pertinaciously declined to
lose sight of, light skirmishers to the main
body of perambulators, baths, trunks, and
even rocking-horses, and our big mastiff

Duke, who had been forgotten until the
last moment, in charge of our one male
retainer, "Buttons."

These impediments at length disposed of,
the train moved off amid pathetic injunctions
from my wife "not to be late home," and
frantic waving of little hands from carriage
windows, to which I could only respond in
the comprehensive formula "All right,"
and waving vigorously in response to the
little ones, I left the station, an object of
respectful pity to the assembled railway
servants left to make the most of their
three minutes' breathing space before
another patrician should appear and
make their lives a burden.

CHAPTER II.

"THE IRON TONGUE OF MIDNIGHT."

HAVING concluded my business in town,
I, like a good husband, refrained with
Spartan self-denial from going to my club,
and only appeared at the Priory—why
"Priory" no one, not even the omniscient
house-agent, could say—in time for dinner,
well knowing that that dinner would be
hastily got up in the confusion of removal,
and would be consequently indigestible. But
my wife would have it so, and I submitted.

The dear children, divided between the
desire to try their new beds and their
anxiety to "tell papa what they thought
of the new house," compromised the
matter by first going to bed and then
appearing in the dining-room in their
night-dresses "to see papa," to the horror
of all responsible for the maintenance of
nursery discipline. They were easily
induced to return to their warm nests by a
promise that papa would pay them a visit
after dinner.

The carrying out of this took up time,
the children being broad awake and
garrulous to a degree; as also did the
circuit of the house, made with a queue of
the women at my back—the maids looking
half scared at what they called the "un-
known" of the place, in order to ascer-
tain, not that locks, bolts, and bars were in
proper working order—I had seen to that
in my previous visits—but that they were
manageable by the servants, who would
thus have no excuse for unfastened doors
and windows in the future. Having also
ascertained that the gas was equally easy
of manipulation, I found that the evening
had passed, and it was ten o'clock before I
went to my room to commence the two
hours' work I had promised myself to
complete before the morning.
The children had been housed in the body of the house on account of the warmer aspect.

The end room of the wing being isolated from the rest of the house, I had chosen it for my study; the next served as my dressing-room; and the one nearest the main part was our bedroom. All these rooms had doors opening on to a corridor, running along the length of the wing on the garden side.

I found myself in good vein for writing. The house was deliciously quiet. My window was open; for it was one of those soft, warm October nights which are more genial than many a night in summer. The air was clear, and the soft, deep darkness without seemed to watch at my window like a bodily presence.

After making an usual sprawling flourish at the end of my article, I jerked down the pen with a sigh of relief, threw myself luxuriously back in my chair and looked at my watch. It wanted five minutes to twelve.

At this moment, and without any warning, a strong gust of wind, coming no one could tell why or whence, swept into the room and blew out the lamp, leaving the night silent as before. And then the iron tongue of midnight from the tower of the old Norman church standing lower down the hill, about half-way between us and the town, told twelve with a stentorian volume and solemnity that seemed to fill the room in which I was sitting with almost deafening sound. I had considered the performance of the clock-bell rather mean and tin-kettleish in the daylight, but now the noise was almost terrible.

Duke, chained in the stable-yard, appeared to find it so too, for he broke into a prolonged howl.

I forgot to mention, in describing the house, that the coach-house and stables were situated at the back in a paved yard running at the back of the gardens of Maid of Honour Row, and closed at the end by big wooden gates opening upon a narrow back street. This yard was separated from the lawn at the back and side by a wall, in which was a door that could be looked at night.

As I sat in the deep darkness, rather amused than not at the vagaries of wind and sound, and at Duke's umbrage thereat, I was conscious of a curious under-current of sound like the small, shrill piping of the breeze through a keyhole. Without thinking of it, I became aware that the noise acquired volume and expanded into long-drawn sighs, or rather groans, and to my surprise and alarm resolved itself into a human cry for help.

I rushed to the window. The cry was there more distinct, and unmistakably an appeal from some woman in dire distress. I could even make out the words, "Miss Reay!" with the last vowels long drawn out, and making an inexpressibly sad and blood-curdling sound in the dead of night.

"What is it?" I shouted. "Who is there, and what is the matter?"

No answer, but a gurgling sound as though a hand had been placed over a mouth.

The struggle seemed to be going on at the end of one of the gardens below me, or in the stable-yard about half-way down. The dog's lugubrious whine still continued, and, relighting the lamp, I prepared to go down to the yard.

At this moment my wife, pale as death, rushed into my room, followed by all the maids and children equally white and horrified.

"What is it? Who is it? What is the matter?" cried my wife, re-echoing my own words. "Oh, Geoffrey, my love, you shall not go down alone."

Before I could reply the cries were repeated, and all the women and children looking ready to faint, my wife flew to the window in desperation and repeated the inevitable formula to the accompaniment of Duke's howling.

No reply came, but a window in one of the houses was thrown up, a night-capped head was protruded, and an instant voice enquired:

"What's all this row about? I'll lodge a complaint against that howling brute at the Bench to-morrow, or my name isn't Joseph Simmons."

"Pardon me, sir."

"But the dog is of little consequence compared with that poor creature in distress, whoever she may be. Will you not come and assist me in discovering what is the matter?"

The man burst out laughing, to my great disgust.

"Oh," said he, "you are another of those fools who believe in ghosts. The two last tenants of that house left after a short time on account of voices which were heard at night, not only by one person, but by all in the house—servants, visitors, children—every one was bound to awake and hear the voices. Nobody outside ever hears
them, and the only voice I object to is that of your confounded animal, which is enough to raise the very dead."

I began feebly to apologise for disturbing our neighbour, when the cries recommenced, but more faintly, as though the utterers were becoming exhausted.

"Go to night," said the man at the window imperturbably. "I must decline to assist in investigating moonshine, though I shall not fail to look into the matter of that ghost-raising dog," and he closed the window with a bang.

As for me, I could stand the horror and suspense no longer, but slipping my revolver into my breast-pocket, and taking a big stick, I went down the stairs two at a time, to find the austere Buttons at the foot in company with a constable, whom he had intercepted on his beat.

This officer was civil, but firm in his refusal to join me.

"It ain't no manner of use, sir," he said; "this ain't the first time we has been called in, but nobody can't find no-thing. Oh, yes, I know what it's like, but you'll find, sir, as the neighbours won't stand the dog," said the constable as he moved off.

All was again quiet when I, with Buttons, whose teeth chattered with fright, unbolted the door into the stable-yard. Duke had ceased to complain as we threw around the light of our lanterns. Nothing unusual was to be seen. The great alms waved gently in a light breeze that had sprung up, and a neighbouring chanticleer began to crow lustily. And then we were left in peace. But on every succeeding night, as long as we remained in that accursed Priory, were we treated to this midnight horror, when every soul belonging to the house was compelled to wake up and listen and be appalled.

CHAPTER III. "GIVE HER A LITTLE EARTH FOR CHARITY."

I need not say that the next morning I found me at the house-agent's office very much earlier than he wished to see me. He appeared to expect me, however, and evidently anticipated rough weather.

"Well, sir," thundered I, "what do you mean by letting a house with such a drawback as has the Priory?"

"Drawback, sir!" he began. "A most eligible, low-rented—"

But I cut him short with:

"Yes, the house is cheap enough, but it is also exceedingly nasty. You know what I mean well enough—the last two tenants stayed only a very short time. You know the reason, and I demand that the agreement be at once cancelled and the deposit money returned. We cannot remain at the Priory."

The agent saw that it was no use trying to brazen the matter out.

"Well, sir," said he with an air of relief, "I must give in. You are the third tenant of that troublesome house that has told the same story. But before you take action in the matter, let me beg you to listen to my motives."

"Your motives are nothing to me, sir," I retorted hotly. "We shall leave in a week at farthest—our own house being in the house-painters' hands, we cannot return at once. If what is right is not done by that time you will hear from my lawyers."

"Perhaps if I appeal to you in the name of humanity, you may be inclined to listen, sir," he persisted.

"Humanity," said I, with a bitter laugh. "When you have inhumanly exposed a delicate woman with a family of young children to such shocking circumstances as those of last night, and rendered us practically homeless!"

"It is all true, sir, but I think if you saw the lady—the owner of the house, Miss Reay, in whose interests I have acted—"

"Miss Reay!" I shouted. "Why, that was the name used by the voice in crying for help."

"I admit that, sir, though I never have heard it," he rejoined. "No outsider has, which might make it somewhat difficult for you to establish a case against us, one of the other tenants being dead and the other in San Francisco. And what advantage would you gain? Miss Reay hasn't one penny-piece to rub against another, and you would not care to take the house in judgement, I suppose—it is in the market."

"Make your mind easy about that," I retorted. "There are the servants, and I have invited a whole army of visitors to remain with us one night at least. But you may give me Miss Reay's address."

I was actuated by simple curiosity in going to Chiswick to look for Miss Reay. I found her living in a poverty-stricken little house near the Mall—a tall, spare, frightened-looking lady, who almost fainted when I told her my errand.

"Now, Miss Reay," I said peremptorily, "you must tell me the history of this
house, and I will deal as leniently with you as I can."

With shaking hands she motioned me to a chair, and then, sitting on an old sofa, after two or three attempts she began:

"Three years since I was conducting a prosperous ladies' boarding-school at Bayswater, when in an evil hour I listened to the persuasions of my brother and removed my school to the Priory, in the purchase of which I sank nearly the whole of my savings.

"Matters never went well with me afterwards. The pupils did not like the house. The servants said it was haunted, but I hoped they would settle down. I knew nothing of my neighbours, excepting that my cook, a garrulous woman, declared that the upper windows in the centre house in the Row were always closely shuttered, that smoke issued from the chimneys at all hours of the night, and that the gardener had repeatedly found the wicket in our stable-yard gates open in the morning, though he had locked it overnight. I paid no heed to these stories, feeling that all the peculiarities had been accounted for when cook said the people were foreigners.

"About three months after I had settled at Sheeton I invited a few friends to spend the evening with me, and, as most of them resided in town, it was necessary to take supper early.

"Crossing the hall between eight and nine o'clock, I heard the voice of my little nephew Philip, who spent most of his time with me.

"The music had probably disturbed his slumbers. I ascended to his bedroom—the front one nearest the neighbouring houses and adjoining mine—the first room in the wing. The dear boy needed some pacifying. I took him out of his bed, wrapped a shawl round him, and placed him in my lap by the window, and was only too glad, being an old-fashioned person, that he persisted in repeating 'Tinkle, tinkle, ickle 'ear,' from beginning to end.

"As he did so with his cherub face turned to the sky, I saw my tall second housemaid pass the dwarf wall in front of the house and go down the Row towards the town. Thinking something might be wanted in the house, of which she was in quest, I was greatly startled when Philip said, 'Look, auntie, Mardaret down in garden.' Throwing up the window, I was just in time to see Margaret, her white 'cloud' round her neck, disappear down the area steps of the centre house of the Row.

"Now I had brought up this girl from a child of twelve years old, and was much attached to her."

Here the narrator almost broke down, but soon was able to continue.

"I was exceedingly vexed, for I had forbidden my servants to gossip with neighbours, least of all with such neighbours. Slightly apprehensive too, I could not tell why, I threw a shawl over my head, and after putting my little pet back into his warm nest, stole quietly out of the house, and knocked at the area door of number three.

"The servant who answered it declared that Margaret had not been there. I insisted that I had seen her enter. The girl was obstinate and I came away.

"At this moment the supper-bell rang, and I was not much surprised to see the cook assisting the parlourmaid.

"'Where is Margaret?' I asked.

"'She's gone to bed with a headache,' stammered cook, who was a new importation.

"Supper was ended, and there was no Margaret. My guests took their departure towards eleven o'clock, and still the girl had not returned. I thought it time to demand of her evidently frightened fellow-servants what had become of her.

"In their terror, the girls admitted that Margaret, having really a headache, had slipped out to take a turn, and had agreed in returning to call upon the servant at number three, whom she had spoken to at church, in order to gratify their foolish curiosity concerning the mystery of the shattered windows, and so on.

"My alarm was now very great. We searched the house, and with lanterns explored the garden, calling loudly upon the girl's name. The door into the yard was locked as usual, the gardener taking the key as well as that of the back gates with him, in order to obtain admittance in the morning.

"Almost desperate, I put on my bonnet and went boldly and knocked at the front door of number three. The servant said that her master and mistress were from home, and again protested that my maid was not there.

"Encountering the policeman on his beat on my way back, I told him of my trouble and begged him to go to the house I had just left. He declined to do that, saying that probably the girl would turn up before long, but that he would 'keep an eye on number three.'"
"My state of mind may be imagined; but for the sake of my assistants and pupils, who were all huddled together like frightened sheep, I made the best of the matter and attempted to go to bed. It was a dark night in October. A low wind swept through the trees and round the house, and died away. As it swelled again it seemed to bring to my ears a wailing sound like a voice in distress. I listened intently, and to my horror heard my own name three repeated in accents of pain in Margaret's voice. I flew to the window and called out:

"Margaret, oh, where are you?" 

"I am here, in the stable-yard," she answered faintly. 

"Why did you not knock at the garden door? We have been looking for you," I said. 

"Because I am hurt; I cannot move," she replied, still more faintly. 

Horrified, I turned to find all the household behind me, terror-stricken. 

"Now," said I to the servants, 'you must go and fetch Barton instantly, but bring the keys yourselves.' 

"Two of them went off, and I turned to the window to comfort poor Margaret with assurances of speedy assistance, though it was some distance to the gardener's cottage. 

"I gathered that she had gone to number three, and that, hearing my voice enquiring for her, she had escaped into the garden; that the servant-maid there had helped her to the top of the high fence, from which she had fallen on to the flagstones of the stable-yard; that the other girl, unaware that she was hurt, had hurried back into the house, fearing to be caught with a visitor, and not doubting but that Margaret would find her way home by the garden. 

"At length, hearing footsteps and the creaking of hinges in the direction of the back gates, and not doubting that Barton had come to the rescue, though I wondered that the maidservants had not arrived first, I took my candle and descended, desiring the young people to go back to their beds. 

"This they of course declined to do, and in their dressing-gowns and with loosened hair, followed me towards the garden door. When about half-way across the lawn, we were transfixed with horror to hear a placing shriek from Margaret, followed by the cry, 'Oh, Miss Reay, Miss Reay, they are murdering me!' Then a gurgling noise as though she were being strangled. I rushed to the door and shook it, calling out that help was at hand; and at this moment the front door-bell rang violently. It was the servants with the key. I snatched it, and flew to the door, bidding the girls lock it behind me, and advanced with my lantern into the yard.

"But there was no sign of Margaret. I threw my light from side to side, feeling that the murderer's eyes might be watching me, for I had now no doubt I had heard my poor girl's death-groan. Stay, what was that near the fence? I stooped; it was a long silver arrow, used by Margaret as a brooch to pin her 'cloud,' as she called it. A quantity of white wool was tangled in the brooch, as though it had been torn from her wrap; other fragments of wool lay around, with one of the tassels which finished off the ends of the scarf. I ran down to the gates with some intention of pursuit, and there encountered Barton; and then I fainted, and knew no more until I came to my senses after weeks of brain fever.

"Nothing more was ever heard of poor Margaret, though nothing was left undone which the law could do in order to find traces of the perpetrators of the crime. On searching number three, a complete coiner's plant was found in the upper storey, the owners having escaped. It was supposed that they, habitually using my gate, had come upon poor Margaret, and, thinking her a spy, had made short work with her. But every night at twelve o'clock was this dread scene re-enacted to us who were inmates of the house. My school, of course, was utterly destroyed, and I have lived in the hope that some people might be found less sensitive than we to these awful sounds. But now I give up hope."

With these despairing words this poor helpless and forlorn schoolmistress sank back upon the shabby sofa and swooned away.

Whether Margaret was murdered or kidnapped remains a mystery, but the recurrence of the weird sounds at midnight is a fact known to all who have been the unfortunate tenants of the Priory at Sheen.
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
BY ESME STUART.
Author of "Joan Fielding," "A Woman of Forty," "Kestil of Greatmore," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIII. DISILLUSIONED.

TOWARDS evening the diligence always lumbered into Vidares in a delightful manner, and its arrival was accompanied by a great deal of whip-cracking, with a very minute increase of speed. The diligence did not come up to the "Hotel Rose," but discharged its passengers at the village post office, which was one of half-a-dozen chalets. Dora Bethune went every day to see the arrival, for it was just before table-d'hôte, and she could usually persuade the Princess to accompany her. Dora had now become deeply attached to Philip's wife. Her beauty fascinated her, and the strange look of inward reflection and absent-mindedness charmed the girl of seventeen, who was ready to find life romantic, and delighted, moreover, to get a listener to her many stories of Forster. Very little was seen of Forster himself, or of Philip, except at meal-time, and then Philip always took care that his wife was comfortable, and had all she required. No one could help noticing that when he was with her, Philip's attention and watchfulness were never ending, and yet, at the same time, Dora saw that the Princess always looked happier, and smiled more, when her husband was not near. But, young as she was, she kept her own counsel, and allowed her mother to sing the praises of a perfect marriage.

Penelope spent much of her mornings alone in her room, or in wandering out in the woods near by. She had there found a charming retreat, and she would establish herself with a book and some work, pretending to occupy herself with one or the other, but if the weather were warm, she would generally lean back and dream dreams—sad enough, but sweet in comparison with the reality of the present.

She had never guessed, during that pleasant time in London, when she happily followed the stream of society, what it was she was doing. The will of her uncle had been law, and her heart had never spoken. She had lived among her dales and her mountains, almost: forming a part of nature herself, and consumed with the love of the soil on which she had been born. To save it had been her one thought, and now this wish was accomplished. She had obeyed, she had married Philip, and now she rebelled against the result. Was she old home worth her present suffering? For she did suffer daily and hourly. The very fact that Philip was near her, that he had a right over her, and that his intense goodness and unselshines were her only safeguards, angered her. She felt that she was daily losing something of the old serenity, something of the nobility that had been hers by right of birth and of character. She lived a life at war with her thoughts, attended with an unreasoning dread of Philip. Some day his devotion must be worn out; some day she must give in and own herself conquered; or she must openly break the slight but hateful chain which bound her to him. What she had said to Philip was true enough, she was not the woman to disclose her feelings to any one. She felt glad to be near Forster. She liked to watch him without being seen, but she rebelled at the idea that he was Philip's friend. If he knew, what would Forster
say! He would not believe that she could have done this thing. She seemed to see this now, living so much in company with his sisters and his mother. All these persons had crystal souls, there was nothing about them that they wished to hide. At times she wished to blame her uncle, but the old allegiance was too strong. They both possibly had been wrong, but at the time they had seen no other way. If it were all to begin again, she would probably do again what she had done, only she would pray that it might be another, not Philip Gillbanks—who's goodness repelled her, because she could only return it by dislike.

"In time, however, I shall learn to be patient, I shall be indifferent instead of angry," she said to herself. "I will master this feeling, and I will be happy. I will not let him cloud my life. I am young, and I must be happy. I want to enjoy life, since I cannot have love. If you knew, Forster, what would you say? You, who are born to command. I would have loved you and helped you. Oh, this hateful money! I hate it, I want to be poor again. Why had I to save the estates?"

Then she tried to drive the thought altogether away from her. She must be content to be as she was, with no love to give, nothing but a feeling of gratitude, which was hateful to her because almost forced on her.

These were some of Penelope's thoughts as she dally sat in her hidden corner of the fir wood, or alone on the balcony of the little salon with the western view. She liked watching the varying lights and shadows on the distant mountains. These were more beautiful than her own, but the home-sickness was very strong at times. She wanted Nero, she wanted the old dark passages, the old pictures. Even the steps of the ghost would be welcome now. Here life was modern and strange, and only the Bethune party appealed to her as something so good and true, that the longing to be like them and to tell them everything often seized her. But this could not be. She owed that to Philip. She must not disclose the great wrong she had done him. Not that Penz called it by this name. She only blamed him for marrying her, regardless of her own disinclination towards him. He had been a fool, and why pity a fool who was only suffering from the consequences of his folly?

Thus passed these days of outward peace, when one evening there was a knock at the door, and Penelope said, "Come in," dreading to see Philip, but quickly schooling herself to appear calm. It was only Dora's beaming face which appeared. The Princess had never known the happiness of having sisters, and her heart went out to this bright young girl, whose face was the mirror of guileless happiness.

"Oh! dear Princess, come and see the diligence coming up the hill. It is bringing back what Cousin Jack calls 'Forster's menagerie.' You should have seen how angry Forster was when he once heard Jack say this. He gave him quite a long sermon about the future of England. You know Forster really thinks that some day the poor will rise up against the rich, and that there will be a sort of French Revolution in England. Jack only says 'Nonsense' after one of Forster's talks. What have you been doing all day? Mr. Gillbanks-Winskell is good to leave you so much with us; it is all for the sake of helping Forster."

"I'm so glad he can help your brother."

"Do, dear Princess, come out now. Isn't this a lovely place? Is your dale country prettier?"

"Oh, it's prettier to me, of course, it is home. If you like, I will put on this big hat and come with you."

"You do look lovely! I remember Forster saying once that he thought you were the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. I never remember his admiring any other woman before. He never was a lady's man." Dora looked at Penelope out of the corner of her eyes, but she could detect no sign of any special pleasure in her face. Evidently the Princess did not mind whether she were admired by Forster or by any one else; she had no vanity.

"I wish you were vain," said Dora, laughing. "If I were as pretty as you are I should be vain, but we are none of us pretty. I mean we girls. Of course, Forster is handsome; he stole all the good looks of the family."

"A woman's beauty is only useful for two things," said Penelope almost to herself. "To win the man she wants to marry, and to keep the affection of the man she loves."

"It sounds as if you meant two persons, Princess," laughed Dora. "Oh, come at once. Berger, the coachman, is going so much more quickly than usual."

The two hurried through the hotel grounds and soon found themselves near the post house, where a Swiss official was
bustling about with as much show of importance as he could adopt. He and another man turned to look at the Princess as she passed them. Her beauty seemed to them to belong to another sphere, as if an angel had come down to walk in the Swiss village. The slight sadness of expression on her face—an expression which she did not trouble herself to hide whilst alone with Dora—surprised the rough, jovial official.

"She has lost a child, poor lady. I can see that in her face," he said to his companion.

"What nonsense you talk, Franz!" replied his wife. "The beautiful lady is a bride."

"Then she has not married the right man, if the face means anything. Ah! there is old Berger coming up."

The diligence rattled up at a great pace for the last few yards. The top of it was crowded with men, and from the chace of legs and arms Philip and Forster came down, accompanied by a gentleman with hair just touching his coat collar and blue spectacles. Then from the inside emerged a young lady, whom Dora at once greeted as Miss De Lucy. In a moment Philip was near his wife.

"Dearest, how nice it is to see you here. We have been out a long time," Philip always came back to her full of hope and love. Some day he believed that he should see a look of love light up the face of the woman he worshipped.

"Dora made me come, and I see she has found a friend." Penelope looked again, but involuntarily it was to see what Forster was doing. She saw that Dora was introducing him to a girl, whose face was so gentle and spiritual that the want of great beauty was hardly missed. Her blue eyes might have been larger, but could not have looked more tenderly at man and beast; her fair hair and dreamy eyes were not dazzling, but full of spirituality.

Penelope distinctly heard Dora's words.

"So Paris has not kept you longer. I never expected to see you again. This is delightful. Forster, you heard me talk of Miss De Lucy."

"We have already spoken to each other. I am so very sorry that my party prevented you from having an outside seat," answered Forster, but his mind was wandering.

"It was hot certainly, but the carriage we tried to hire was engaged. The drive is over now, and it is delightful to find acquaintances."

"Here is another lady you have met before," exclaimed Dora, going towards Penelope.

Ida De Lucy looked at the Princess—for Dora had given her the history of her name—somewhat shyly.

"How strange we should meet here again! A lovely place to come to. My brother will be happy to join your expeditions."

The party walked slowly towards the hotel; all, that is, except Forster, who, after one glance at Penelope, turned away to join his young men, whilst Philip kept near Penelope.

"We have had a famous expedition this afternoon, and were glad to be brought back by the coach. The spirit of adventure is slowly creeping into the East End blood," he said.

"We are thinking of making a picnic to some woods, and climbing the mountains behind this house," said Pensie, smiling towards Dora. "Miss Bethune challenges me to walk with her to see the sun rise."

"The Princess really believes she can climb better than I can. But will you allow her to come, Mr. Winckell? Married people have to obey their husbands."

"A Princess must please herself," said Philip, as if he were speaking in fun.

"Then we wish to go to-morrow. Can't we tempt you to come with us?"

Philip shook his head.

At table-d'hôte the English were placed together, and had it not been that Philip seldom laughed, a stranger would have thought them a merry party. Mr. De Lucy was an amusing contradiction; fond of setting every one straight, he was also really considerate for his sister. His conversation was now chiefly about passes, guides, the quality of snow and ice, and the wonderful ascents of the Alpine Club men.

"You cannot get more enjoyment out of your climbs than we get out of our walks," said Dora.

"I wish you would persuade my son Forster to join you in some expeditions," said Mrs. Bethune. "He fancies that if he cannot take the nine young men he has with him, he must not indulge in any climbing."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. De Lucy under his breath.

"He says people waste money over endless ascents," put in Dora, "and I'm sure it's true; and then some of the Alpine
men are rather tiresome with their long stories."

"It is all new and delightful to me. My aunt made me promise not to climb, otherwise I would willingly join George in his expeditions," said Ida.

"Then," said Adela, "you must join us in our small excursions. We mean to take the lovely walks here and leave the passes for the men. They will find it very dull without us, won't they?"

Ida smiled.

"It is very good of George to let me travel with him. If it were not for him I should never leave England, so you see I try to behave with due meekness."

Thus the happy talk continued, and Penelope learnt much.

The ladies retired early, Dora promising to knock the next morning at the door of the Princess to be sure she got up.

"I only hope Mr. Gilbanks-Winskell will not be angry with me," said the girl.

Phillip was smoking outside under the portico, talking to Mr. De Lucy, and when his cigar was finished, he strolled over to the Dépendance to help Forster with the next day's programme. When he returned, Penelope had retired to her room. He sat a long time alone in the salon. The window was wide open. He leaned his head upon his hand, and his mind went over and over again the event which had led him to his present position. He had believed that he could make his wife love him. He had been a fool, he had not understood the warnings he had received, but had wilfully blinded himself. There was now no reason for blindness; he knew everything, he saw it all. He saw that his wretched money had been the cause of his misfortune. Any other man would have served the Duke's purpose as well. He would not call Penelope mercenary. For herself she cared nothing at all about money, her tastes were simple, but for her house, for her uncle, for her family, for the cursed pride of the old family she had done this thing. If he had known, he would have given up his money, and tried to win her for himself. But what could he do now? Again he roused himself and fought against despair; only cowards despaired. Had he not adopted Penzel's motto: "Absolutus sum Ignavis!"? The strain of keeping up appearances was, however, very great, especially before Forster. He was so glad to be once more with him, and to help him. He liked finding himself again among the old East End friends. The break had been short, but what a difference it had made! The joy was taken out of it. His own trouble weighed heavily upon him, and it was only by making a supreme effort that he went through each day's work and pleasure. He began to think deeply of the future; how he should best face it. Suppose he could not win Penelope's love? But no, he would not think of that—not yet, at all events, when he had been with her so short a time, and the trial was so new.

Very early the next morning, Dora tapped softly at the door the Princess had indicated, and, without delay, Penelope appeared. She even smiled at Dora's exclamation when she saw her companion dressed in blue serge ready for any climbing.

"This is delightful. No one is awake except the hall porter. Poor man, he did not relish calling me. I had to tread softly for fear of mamma and Adela. I suppose you woke Mr. Winskell?"

"I don't think so," said Penelope, and very soon they found themselves following a lad with a lantern through the small wood, then up a winding road which led on to a mountain. It was still chilly, and the two walked quickly till Dora begged for mercy, for she could not keep up. Up and up they walked, Penelope's quick, springing steps making nothing of the ascent, and every now and then she lifted her head to enjoy the smell of the fir-trees. She felt once more free, once more as if she were treading her own mountain path. It was too delightful. Suppose all that marriage episode were a mere dream; suppose that now she was awake and was free; free to choose her own life and—free to love!

The road wound up steadily till it reached a wide alp, over which their boots sank into boggy ground, whilst the dawn came slowly creeping on. The boy was silent, but careful and thoughtful beyond his years, as are many of his young countrymen.

"He says there is a chalet where we can get warm milk," said Dora, who could chatter French with ease, whilst the Princess only spoke it with difficulty. "I feel as if I were in an enchanted wood, and you an enchanted Princess, doomed to walk through the wood till a beautiful knight should come and deliver you."

"I think it is true," was the answer, spoken in a low voice. "I don't feel as if I were really myself. In my own home I
often went out early, and there I would walk half-way up the great mountain before breakfast, then sit near a small wood, and feast my eyes on all the valleys and the hills, or on the clouds and their shadows. You must come and stay with me, Dora, when we go back."

"Yes, indeed, and I hope you will ask Forster too. He loves wild things and out-of-the-way places; I know he would love it dearly."

"He has not much time, I suppose, to pay visits?"

"Mother says that he must soon have a real rest. These young men are to go at the end of ten days, and then we shall get him to ourselves for a little while. He won’t indulge in anything luxurious, only sometimes he forgets, and we get our own way. What good will it do any one if he is sacrificed to ideas of equality? After all, Forster is not the equal of any of these men, though they are nice enough."

"Mrs. Bethune is happy in seeing his duty so clearly mapped out for him."

Then the two had to save their breath for the climb. The mystery of the great forest wrapped them round, till once more they reached the open, and climbed the last steep ascent to the lonely chalet. The early breakfast was eaten as if both were really starving, and then there came the call to bid them come and see the sun rise. It was bitterly cold, but that was, of course, a secondary thought. Suddenly the sun seemed to burst from its hidden resting-place, and to shed light and glory over all the exquisite view.

Far away in the horizon rose the pink chain of the Bernese Oberland with tender shades and tender lights merged into each other, whilst nearer rose wooded or sharp peaks making a fitting foreground for the picture. On the left shimmered the pale-blue lake, hardly discernible from the pale-blue sky; and nearer to them, woods, mountains, and beauty in every form.

"Isn’t this exquisite!" cried Dora; "we are well rewarded for our climb! It seems to me, Princess, as if you were yourself crowned by this sunlight. I wish Forster were here too; how he would admire it all!"

Penelope turned round and smiled at Dora.

"Your wishes are granted by the fairies. Look, I should say that figure was your brother’s."

In a few moments Forster stood near them, and gazed with intense and silent pleasure at the glories of the sky and the mountains."

"What ever made you come, Forster?" said Dora, going up to him."

"I could not sleep, so I thought I would follow your example. Could you not persuade Philip to come?" he said, turning towards Penelope, and looking at her with a feeling of wonderment which he could not altogether hide. Then suddenly the feeling turned to secret wrath, as she answered:

"Oh, no; besides this short expedition is beneath the notice of a man."

"If we go on we shall come to the three little lakes. They are quiet and rather mysterious-looking. Philip and I brought our family here the other day, and they were so delighted with the echo made by the perpendicular rocks, that I thought they would never leave off shouting out their names."

"I dare say you joined in too, Forster! What did you and Mr. Winakell call it?"

Forster did not answer. He had thought of calling out the name of Penelope, but had stopped himself in time.

"Let us have some more breakfast, then," said Dora, "and come with us. This is delightful. We shall be home before late déjeuner; but perhaps, Forster, you cannot spare the time?"

"Yes, I can. Philip is going to take my place. Mother wanted to take a long drive to-day, and I promised my escort. Very well, let’s go in for café-au-lait; even a poor man can afford that beverage. But Mrs. Winakell may want something more substantial."

"Indeed I don’t," said Penelope, forgetting her own troubles in the pleasure of life, of youth, and of the beauty of the scene, coupled with the presence of Forster.

"Let’s enjoy ourselves for no other reason," said Dora. "Self-denial has charms, I know, but only second-hand charms."

"Self-denial has charms which you have not yet understood, Miss Dora," said Forster, laughing. "Her appetite has never failed; you will see for yourself that a first meal makes no difference to her," and he turned towards Penelope.

They talked nonsense for a little while, and ordered large jugs of hot milk, and having drunk it they started on towards the dark lake, shut in between rocks, and
reflecting the changing shadows of the clouds.

Dora developed a taste for digging up ferns, and she enlisted the help of the boy, whilst Forster and Penelope walked on in front. At first they were silent, then, as they neared the lake, they paused and waited for Dora.

Penelope wanted to tell Forster all the truth. She longed to show him why she had led him to believe that she was free to be loved and to love, and then why she had suddenly turned away from him. But the barrier between them was too great. They must be as strangers if they met, and there must always be that unexplained story between them.

Suddenly Penelope became desperate. She felt as if she were stepping down from the high pedestal on which she had always lived, and that she must throw all her prejudices to the four winds. She would try and be natural with Forster; she would talk to him as if Philip did not exist, and as if she were once more a free-hearted girl.

"This reminds me of home," she said, smiling, and Forster wondered why she did not smile oftener, so much did her face gain by it. "You have never seen my dales, Mr. Bethune; I am longing to show them to you."

"Dora and I must make a pilgrimage there some day, but I don't know when that will be. After these friends of mine go back to London, I shall have a month's holiday, then my winter work will begin again. I have lately been thinking seriously of going abroad."

"Of going abroad! Why!"

"I want to find land where I could train some London men to farm work. I tried it in England, but the experiment was not successful. One wants a new country to teach people to begin a new life. I have six men in my mind—married men—and I believe that, if I want and lived with them, I could train those six to become future pillars of our colony."

"But General Booth is doing all that."

"Not as I want it to be done. I want to take only a few, but I want to give myself to those few. When you take up a mass you must also have a multitude of officers. How can you be sure that these officers will not wreck the whole scheme? It is personal sympathy that alone answers."

"Why do you want to devote your life to strangers?" she asked, feeling as of old drawn towards this man and his wild plans.

"Why? Because I suppose I see some good in it."

"But it will be lonely. You must let Philip go with you." Penelope felt impulsive. Forster looked up suddenly at her, but he saw no emotion or surprise on her face. She had merely made a natural suggestion.

"Philip has your home and you to look after now."

"Oh! he will not really be wanted at Rothery. As long as my father lives he will be King of the place, you know, and I am afraid there may be friction."

"You will prevent that."

"I! Oh! I can't. I have no influence with my father. My uncle is the best peace-maker, but even he fails very often. Besides, we all really feel he has a right to be obeyed. He is the head of the family." Penelope instinctively raised her head.

"Would you and Philip really join the work?" asked Forster, his old enthusiasm suddenly breaking through his wonderment. "That would be a grand thing indeed!"

"It would help you, you mean?"

"Not that only; it would give stability to the work. People would see then that there was truth in the fellow-feeling which unites us to all classes. One can do nothing without a very high ideal."

"I should like Philip to join you—yes, very much. As for myself, I must not leave my uncle. He must dispose of me, and he wants me."

"You would let Philip go without you?"

"Yes, indeed, especially if he were of any use to you," she said, raising her eyes to Forster's face, and then surprised to see his astonishment.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Winskell, but—but may I speak?"

"About what?" She raised her head at once. With her, pride was always very near the surface.

"About Philip. You know he is my best friend. He has always helped me and believed in what others called my maddest ideas. Well, now that he is married I must not claim him, even if—"

"Yes, you may. I am not sure, indeed, if he will not suggest it himself. He will be miserable at Rothery."

Again Forster looked at Penelope. He could not understand her.
"When a man leaves his wife the world——"

"I did not think you cared about the sayings of the world," she said impatiently.

Dora came up at this moment, her arms full of many unrooted ferns.

"Forster, I shall take them home, and they will look charming in the shrubbery."

"If you transplant these ferns from their native surroundings they will not grow."

"Oh, that is so true," said Penelope quickly. "Even in this beautiful world I feel I could not be happy. It is not like my own wild glen. Come, Dora, let us go on the lake; I see a boat at the little landing-place."

Dora was only too willing, and all three stepped in.

She and Forster each took an oar, and the Princess sat opposite to them. Then they rowed across the silent and dark waters of the inland lake. The perpendicular cliffs rose on one side, and above towered the sad pines, sending far shadows on the still waters.

"Isn't this delightful! I wish you had not renounced the world quite so much, Forster, because we should then get a holiday oftener. What shall you do, Princess, when you go home to your wonderful old Palace?"

Penelope sighed very softly.

"Oh! I don't know. I shall begin the old life again. I used to take walks with Nero, and work, and read with uncle, and listen to Jim Oldcorn's complaints or stories; but I was always happy in the old days."

"But didn't you visit poor people and all that sort of thing? We do. Adela loves poor people, and so do I; at least, I love those in our village, and of course I like Forster's people, because they are his."

"No, I don't like poor people. Our miners don't care about visits, and besides, uncle doesn't wish me to go about among them."

"Mr. Winskell loves Forster's people, doesn't he, Forster? And they adore him. He never puts on any air of condescension. He is perfect with them.""}

"Philip knows exactly what to say to them, especially if they are in trouble," said Forster.

Penelope looked away at once and changed the conversation.

"Isn't this little quiet spot perfect? It is warmer now. What a pity we cannot stay all day here."

Forster rested on his oars and looked at the dreary scene, which was yet so full of beauty in its loneliness.

He had a strange feeling that the beautiful woman whose character was so little to be fathomed had not a good influence over him. He wanted to ask her for an explanation of the mystery of her marriage, but he dared not.

"We must not stay very long, Dora," he said, after they had rowed round the lake.

"We may be wanted at home; besides that, we have some way to walk."

Penelope smiled as she said:

"Duty is always troubling one with vain regrets if we do not follow her, and if we do, then there are other regrets!"

It all seemed a pleasant dream to Penelope. The walk home was very lovely, and the sunshine flecked with gold streaks the downward path that had been so dark when they had ascended it in the early morning.

"Philip must come here with you another day," said Forster, trying again to find an answering tone of pleasure.

"I think coming twice to a spot spoils one's pleasure," said Penelope. "It just destroys the first vivid impression of it."

"If he is at home to-morrow, we will have tea at Darvâ, a charming village, and just the right distance for an afternoon's walk," said Forster. "Adela and this new friend can come too. I will send an order in the morning for a special tea to be prepared."

"Thank you," said Penelope, as if she did not much care, all the young joy going out of her voice.

As they neared the hotel, Forster was divided in his mind as to whether the Princess were the most lovable of women, or the most heartless of wives. He could not decide this point, and so he resolved to believe the best of Philip's wife. His own romance was quickly losing its reality. She was, he said, much too selfish to be the woman he had taken her for. He could never have moulded her to his own ways. He could never have persuaded her to come, as his wife, to found a new colony under the sun of Africa.

When Penelope once more stood on her solitary balcony, the world seemed more beautiful than ever before. She sat down and dreamt of the might-have-been.

"I could have been a good woman with him; but now—now—I must only be a patient one. Oh, uncle, you never guessed what you were doing!"
A COW-BRUTE TRAGEDY.
A WESTERN SKETCH.

It was the loneliest and longest ride I ever had without any of the boys with me, and from a certain incident that happened, it stands out clear in my memory, although I have forgotten many other more eventful things in my Western life. For one thing I acted wrongly in the matter, and held my tongue when I ought to have spoken out; but still, even now, although I can see how wrong it was, I am afraid I should still keep silence if I had to spend the same day all over again.

We had had a fine early autumn that year, one might almost call it a late summer, and the boys were all busy in the many corn patches along the creek, when we heard that the raspberries were ripe up Wild Cat Mountain. Now, the mountain raspberries meant much to us, for on them and the wild plum we based our hopes of jam; and it had always been the custom at berry time that all the ranch people should join in an expedition to pick the fruit for winter use, and camp out several days up the Canon. This particular year, however, the boys declared they could not go, so busy were they in the corn patches and alfalfa fields, which they declared—and rightly too, I am bound to admit—were of far more importance than gathering a few pounds of berries for jam.

We tried persuading them, we tried coaxing, we even tried appealing to their love of good things, but it was all in vain; although they dearly loved jam tarts, yet not one of them would leave the corn patch. So we women gathered in solemn converse in the churchyard, after church on Sunday, and a small rebellion took place. Go we would for the berries; if not with the boys, we would go without them, and show our menfolk how very well we could manage by ourselves. Seven of us settled to go, and, although the boys grinned very much when they heard of it, I could see they did not like our decision. Not that there was any danger, but there was a little difference of opinion in the matter; Jack declaring, and as a matter of course all the other boys on the creek backing him up, that there would be plenty of time to get the berries in a week's time, when the corn would be stacked, and they could come with us. But, as every woman who has had anything to do with jam knows that after fruit is ripe a week

on the bush spoils it, we knew better than to agree to that dictum, and we determined we would not lose our jam through waiting. It meant plenty of work, we knew that well enough. There would be firing to collect, and fires to be kept up; there would be the horses to be seen to, and alas! worst of all, there would be water to fetch for the kettles and washing up; besides our usual work on such expeditions, the cooking. As for fetching water for purposes of ablution, that did not trouble us; there was the creek at hand, and we would all bathe in that. But still we knew, when all was said and done, that the absence of the boys meant a lot of extra "chores" for us; as for the boys, they were more than irksome over the whole affair, but when they laughed, the more determined we all felt to show them how exceedingly well we could manage without them.

So we decided to start on Wednesday. Monday being the universal washing day, we knew from sad experience that if we postponed that domestic festival, we should get behindhand all the rest of the week, which although it seems but a little matter, would yet make a great difference in a household where there was only one pair of hands to do everything. Wednesday would give us time to clear up after the wash, and to do the cooking, for we had not only to cook for ourselves, but to leave sufficient to last our menfolk till we returned. The boys proposed, half-laughing, that as we were so independent we should, after we had picked our berries, ride on to Hunter's Park, and give an eye to some of our cattle outfit, which had been driven up there for pasture early in the summer, and left under the care of a Mexican cattle-help; but we did not see this at all, and thought we should have quite enough to do to look after the horses and ourselves, to say nothing of the berries. Monday and Tuesday passed quickly enough, and I surveyed my larder shelves on Tuesday night with a great sigh of relief, although at the moment I felt very tired and not at all inclined for the morrow's expedition. However, a good night's rest soon set that to rights, and the long day's ride would be resting. All was ready now for my departure; upon the shelves of the "dug-out" which did duty for a larder stood a godly array of brown crusty loaves and yellow pats of butter, a large puncheon of stewed apricots, and two apple tarts, besides a couple of large cakes, a boiled ham, and two beef roasts. All this was for the
A COW-BRUTE TRAGEDY.

April 21, 1894.

Charles Dickens,

boys' consumption alone, and I fondly hoped there would be enough left to prevent cooking when I first returned, as I knew the berries would want to be "jammed" at once.

My own little store of food stood on one side, naturally limited, as I was going to ride: half a ham, a couple of loaves, some butter in a jar, coffee and sugar, and a tin of condensed milk, a couple of the ever useful gunny sacks being provided to tie them all up in. E., who was going in her buggy, had offered to take bedding enough for us both, and I had already conveyed across to her ranch several tin lard pails to pick my fruit in. She would also take a frying-pan and kettle, plates and cups for us both, so as to give Rory as little as might be to carry besides myself. So then I called the boys in, and they were very pleased at the food provided. I do believe they had thought that in my excitement over the berries, I might have left them short, and after I had showed them their provisions, they condescended to take a little interest in my proceedings. Not that they did not wish me to have a good time, but there had been some difference of opinion as to when the good time should be. They had thought the berries might have waited a week, when they would have been able to go also; but as I knew very well they would have been far too ripe by then, I had to have my own way, and, well—relations had been a little strained between us in consequence. They had called me "obstinate," and I had called them "unkind"; perhaps very hot weather, combined with more work than you could have got through, is apt to be trying to the best of tempers. So, when the olive-branch was held out, I am afraid I clutched at it with most unbecoming eagerness, and when this was followed up by the offer of a well-beloved hunter's knife to take with me, I felt that the reconciliation was indeed complete.

I was to start about four next day, so as not to travel in the extreme heat, and reach our camping-ground the same night, so as to climb up the mountain early in the morning before the sun got high. So, as the boys said they would knock off work for an hour and start me off, I got a nice afternoon tea ready, and we had a pleasant half-hour together before I went. They mounted me on Rory, tied the gunny sacks on, saw me across the Santa Fé track, gave the pony a cut, and he and I were 'loping over the prairie towards the Divide, the ranch rapidly becoming a black speck in the distance.

After a bit, however, I pulled Rory in; we had a long way to go, uphill for the most part, and I did not want my dear little Bruncho to get tired. It had been hot when I first started, but before we began the first steep climb the air perceptibly cooled. It had been a long, dry summer that year. All along the horse track were great cracks in the grey earth; even the grass was dried to the same uniform colour. No green was to be seen anywhere, but the poison ivy was already turning to crimson, whilst here and there there were great patches of flowering cactus, and once or twice, where the ground had been disturbed by the plough of an enterprising settler, were clumps of sunflowers, it being a curious fact, and one I have never heard accounted for, that wherever you break ground in that part of Colorado, the sunflower immediately springs up, even if there should be no plants of it within hundreds of yards. Even along the fire-guard on each side of a new railway track you see it, sometimes the smaller kind, sometimes the larger, but always the ubiquitous sunflower is to the fore.

But in late June, when there has been a hot summer, the prairie has lost most of its prettiness, a uniform greyness being the prevailing tint. Up the "Divide" we toiled, or rather Rory did, and I was glad when we reached the crest, and saw below E.'s buggy, for I had only been to the foot of Bear Canon once before, and it did not feel over sure where to turn off once the Divide was passed. But I had hoped to fall in with some of the party before then, and as matters turned out I was not mistaken. Rory and I soon caught up E.'s "outfit," and I got in, hitching up my pony at the rear. It was certainly rather steep going down, but after Western fashion we galloped along, passing another buggy on its way to Sedalia, which, as we were two women and alone, kindly turned out of the track for us to pass, also in Western fashion; had it been a loaded waggon, however, it would have been our place to have drawn aside and made way for the menfolk, every one being of good Dr. Johnson's opinion as to "respecting the burden" out West. At home, too, I had been taught ever since I drove

The rule of the road is a paradox quite.
In riding and driving along,
If you go to the left you are not to go right;
If you go to the right you are wrong.
But here you always "went to the right," unless you were a "tenderfoot" just out. E's buggy was well loaded up with our bedding and no end of food, as she was a generous little creature and always took double shares, in case any one else fell short. And we turned off safely towards Bear Creek, a blue column of smoke rising far up in the thin, fine air, showing us that some of our party had already arrived at the camping-ground and had built their fire. Sure enough, too, when we got up to them preparations for supper were being actively carried on on the other side of the creek. A big fire was blazing, and kettles were already slung across it. We lost no time in unhitching the two horses, watering them and picketing them out with a long rope on a nice patch of mountain grass at no very great distance; then we set to work, got some scrub oak together, covered it with pine-boughs, and laid our comfort-bags upon the tops—these were to be our beds. After that every one collected wood whilst the light lasted to keep the fire in during the night, and then, feeling we had well earned it, we set to work upon our supper. And oh! how hungry we all were, and how we did justice to that meal, although the viands were not very varied, consisting as they did of broiled ham, bread-and-butter, and pumpkin pie. The only drink we had was arbuckle coffee with condensed milk, but the mountain air is so different from the prairie, that one felt the want of nothing else, the thin, rare air coursed through your veins as though it were champagne. I thought it was a funny-looking camp, seven women all told, and not a man or a shooting-iron amongst us. If only our friends at home could have seen us then, camped as we were at the bottom of the Foot Hills of the great Rockies! There was no one in the great loneliness to molest us. The fire would keep the coyotes and mountain lions off; we were very peacefully inclined and had no wish for any of their skins. All we wanted was a plentiful supply of wild raspberries to see us through the long winter.

Somehow in the neighbourhood of great mountains I never want to talk, and I suppose the rest of our party felt the same, for gradually the chatter died away, and we all crept to bed, taking it in turns to attend to the fire during the night. It was a lovely night, the sky so blue as to look black; the stars were very brilliant; and the moon was shining so brightly that I could see to read a newspaper that had been flung down at a little distance. I think I laid awake some time after the others had gone to sleep; it was all so new to me. I heard the wall of a distant coyote and the far-off scream of a mountain lion, and I wondered what sort of reception we should meet with did a bear, attracted like ourselves by the berries, come across camp. Then I began to long intensely for the boys, and then—my idle speculations ceased, and like the others, I fell asleep, but I am ashamed to say that, unlike them, I never woke to take my turn at the fire-tending. When I did awake it was dawn, the tops of the snowy peaks ahead were already tinged a rosy pink, and in another moment it was sunlight. The sun, however, has very little power so early in the day, as we found to our cost as we plunged into the creek for our morning's bath. The water was icy cold; even the water snakes had no life in them, and glided off instead of winding in and out of one's limbs—a very creepy sensation. Indeed, so sleepy were the fish that we caught a brace of fine trout in our hands, which made a nice addition to our breakfast-table. With the exception of this dish, breakfast was simply a repetition of supper, and after we had finished we put up some lunch, for we did not intend to return to camp till evening.

It was now about four o'clock; in England the ground would have been dripping with dew, but there was no trouble of that kind here, everything being as dry as a bone. Our path up the mountain was a rough Indian trail, as they are called, allowing of only one person passing up it at a time, and very uncomfortable walking it was, full of large stones which rolled away under one's feet, and coarse gravel, very loose, in which your feet sunk at every step, whilst the fine powdery sand amongst it flew up in your face as you set your foot down. But it was a delicious morning, and the higher one climbed the more exhilarating the air got, till one felt that in spite of the slippery foothold one could walk on for hours and hours.

Higher up still the whole of one side of the mountain was tinged with crimson; this was the raspberry patch, and, reaching it, we soon filled our pails. How bountifully Nature had spread her table in that wild country all round! As far as the eye could reach lay the ripe red berries, growing in such abundance that the leaves of the plants were hardly to be seen for the fruit, and you could gather a quart without
moving from where you stood, off the little low bushes barely two and a half feet high. In fact they grew so low that you could sit down and fill your pail, and many of us did, picking meantime, children’s fashion, “two in the mouth and one in the basket.” And these berries had certainly a most delicious flavour; they beat the common garden raspberry in that, if not in size. There was plenty of other wild fruit, too, all round—black currants, growing on prickly bushes with gooseberry-shaped leaves, large and fine; whilst the wild gooseberry itself, very small although nice for pies, grew on a smooth-wooded bush, and had leaves like our home currants. Then there were the wild plums and cherries, the latter of which grew like red currants all down a stalk—these last made capital jam, but had rather a peculiar flavour if you ate them uncooked—the plums were golden green when ripe, and very nice eaten any way, whilst the wild grapes were very delicious. But the raspberry was certainly the best of the wild fruits, and we were in luck, too, for no one had been before us, which we had been rather afraid of, as we heard they were selling at a dollar and quarter the pound in the city, and many people used to live out on the mountains in berry time and sell them, as they fetched such a good price. Right in the middle of the great patch, growing on an overhanging ledge of rock, were some bright blue flowers. I struggled towards them and found they were gentians; and we came across many of them before we had finished our berry-picking. I promised myself a few roots to take back, and in scrambling after flowers I believe I afforded a good deal of amusement to the Western girls, who were there for the purpose of picking berries, and did not allow any side issues to interfere with what they intended to do.

As the evening came on space, we prepared with full pails and tired bodies to scramble back to camp again. But if it had been troublesome clambering up the face of the mountains, it was ten times worse to go down. After a bit I came to the conclusion that the easiest way upon the whole was to sit down, grasp my pail firmly in both hands, and slide along as well as I could, but some of our party had far too much pride to condescend to that mode of proceeding.

Anyway, we all got to camp at last, very tired, exceedingly dirty, and, shall I confess it, not a little cross! Oh! how we longed that evening for the boys to fill the kettles and collect the wood, and how I wished, let the berries have been as overripe as they might, that I had waited till my menfolk had been able to come too. Men somehow never seem to get as tired as we do, or if they do they are too proud to show it. I was for eating a piece of bread-and-butter and going to bed straight off, and only wished to stretch out my limbs on the pine boughs and go to sleep.

But the others were more used to the life, and insisted on a good supper first, and I must say that after that and a dip in the creek I felt a different person. And when we went to bed I did not feel at all inclined for sleep. I watched the fire lazily, much interested in the tarpentine oozing out of the pitch-pine logs. The air was cool, almost with a keen chilliness that reminded one of the dawn; there was no wind to speak of, but every now and again a little breeze would spring up, sometimes, so it seemed, in the pine-tops, bending them backwards and forwards with a gentle soughing, like the lapping of a summer sea on a sandy beach, and then for a few moments the scent of the pine needles would fill the air. We were burning cedar logs, too, amongst the other wood that evening—cedar-trees growing on the Foot Hills in great profusion—and these smelt very fragrant whenever a fresh log was thrown on. It was as light as day. Everything that stood at all upright was defined by monstrous black shadows, that might have stood for the shape of some unknown monster of the woods; even E.’s homely buggy looked in its shadow like an enormous crouching animal, perchance Bruin himself. And the horses were so uneasy, that there was evidently something prowling round—and I was the only person awake. I got up and threw fresh logs on; there was a horrible fascination to me in it all. I felt I must have some one else to share my vigil, so I awoke E. To my astonishment she did not seem as all impressed, but muraured, “Oh, bother, go to sleep,” and turned over on her side. And presently, although I had intended to keep watch all night for the unknown horror I felt sure was not far from camp, I too succumbed and did not wake till morning. We started on our berry-picking much later that day, and were well in the middle of it when an exclamation from one of the girls called us to her, and when she pointed to a sort of cave under an overhanging ledge of rock, we saw in the
soft sand an impression of some heavy creature's sleeping form, and of four clearly defined claws.

"Bear," said E., laconically, but otherwise she did not seem to mind much; adding that she "concluded we were going home, so it did not matter." But for me the joy of the berry-picking was over, and I was very thankful when we struck camp and started early in the afternoon. It was time, too, for some dull, heavy-looking clouds were hanging over Pike's Peak, in the distance, and the weatherwise amongst our party foretold one of the rare summer storms, so that I was doubly anxious to get home, as I knew I must ride part of the way by myself. E. and I started together and she whipped up old Nell with much promptitude, for she did not much like the look of the weather. But Nell was far too accustomed to go her own pace to be properly impressed by her mistress's anxiety. She merely twitched her ears angrily as the lash flicked them, and then turned her blinkerless head round and looked at E., more in sorrow that E. should so far forget what was due to her horse, than anger, and then calmly took her own pace up the Divide again.

As we got on the ridge of it the storm burst out. I say burst out, for without any other warning the clouds rent apart, and a great sheet of water fall down upon us. Keeping dry was out of the question; the rain filled up the buggy, our feet were over the ankles in a pool of water; it was just hopeless to drive on, we had to stand still and let the storm do its worst upon us. The thunder crashed above our heads, and as for the lightning, the way it lit the scene up, ran along the wire of the telegraph poles, and played round the brass of the harness, was something awful to witness. Such a pale blue, evil-looking flame as it was, too, whilst the whole air felt charged with electricity.

But the storm was over almost as suddenly as it came; the sun shone out again bright and warm. We dried ourselves as well as we could; all the bedding was soaked, of course, but as we were going home that did not matter much. As for the raspberries they were all tightly shut up in tin lunch pails, so they were safe. Then we baled out the bottom of the buggy with the tin dipper, and started off again.

But E. still prophesied more storm, and as we parted company on the ridge of the Divide, advised me to get home as quickly as I could, and not to lose my track, as very likely I should find some fresh "washouts" on the way. I waved my hand in reply, and Rory and I lopped away down-hill; I nursing carefully a five-pint can full of raspberries in my lap, as I was determined the boys should have some stewed fruit for supper.

But alas! E.'s prediction turned out only too true; part of the track had been washed away and I had to make what I thought a small detour in consequence. Now, the prairie has a peculiar formation; it looks as if an ocean of Atlantic billows had been suddenly petrified, the bluffs standing for the waves, and each being mountainously like the other. Moreover, it was growing dusk, the swift-falling dusk of the great West, and by some unlucky chance I missed the right bluff, and when I thought I should strike the track again there was no track to be seen. With a vague idea, a very foolish one, too, that I could see better if I dismounted, I got off Rory and peered around, needless to say with no greater success. I then resolved to mount again, but this was easier said than done, with my pailful of berries, to which I still clung womanfully. However, the feet was last accomplished, and then I am ashamed to say that I wept bitterly, and let Rory wander to and fro at his own sweet will. From this refreshment—and indeed it did me a great deal of good—I was aroused by the sound of horse's hoofs thudding down the bluff behind me. I was frightened at first, thinking it might alarm Rory, but with intense thankfulness I perceived a red-hot spark in front of it; the horse had a rider, and I gave voice to what sounded, even to myself, a very quavering and weak cattle cry.

The rider riumped up short beside me with "Great Scot"—only, the word was not great Scot—"if it ain't a gal!" I cannot even now say how comforted I felt at hearing that oath—I hope the recording angel has wiped it away from my friend's record long ago—or how thankful I was to be in his company when the storm broke out once more, and he sheltered me as best he could. But for a cow-boy he was strangely silent, and it was so dark that I could not see him even, only the lightning lit up his face for a moment and I caught sight of a jagged scar high up on his left cheekbone. Well when the others had he was kind enough to me and piloted me to the Santa Fé track, but when I asked him to come in and rest he gave a grim sort of chuckle and said, "Guess not, thanks," and
Charles Dickens.

A COW-BEUTE TRAGEDY.

[April 21, 1894.]

Moving from where you stood, off the little... girls called us to her, and when she pointed to a sort of cave under an overhanging ledge of rock, we saw in the

Confess it, not a little cross! Oh, how very tired, exceedingly dirty, and, shall I mode of proceeding. Far too much pride to condescend to that firm in both hands, and slide along as well as I could, but some of our party had

After a bit I came to the face of the mountain, it was ten times worse had been troublesome climbing up the scramble back to camp again. But if it

Had finished our berry-picking. I promised myself a few roots to take back, and in issues to interfere with what they intended picking berries, and did not allow any side

Trying after flowers I believe I afforded them and found they were gentians; and

Bright blue flowers. I struggled towards the middle of the great patch, growing on

Being before us, which we had been rather afraid of, as we heard they were selling at a dollar and quarter the pound in the city, and many people used to live out on the mountains in berry time and sell them, as

And these berries had certainly been troublesome clambering up the

But the raspberry,

and many people used to live out on the mountains in berry time and sell them, as

But the raspberry, the latter of which grew like red prickly bashes with goosebump-shaped

Really "no man's land."

Out of revenge, instead of driving the cattle off, they had cowardly poisoned the "salt licks" which had been left for them, and one of the neighbours, going up to give a look to the outfit, had found several of the poor brutes in great agony, whilst others were lying dead by the side of the creek, where they had rushed to assuage the burning thirst given them by the poison. Several of our cow-brutes had been killed, and the boys were half mad with indignation, and I felt my blood boil within me, too, as Jim Sanborn, who was staying to supper, described the sufferings of the poor animals. And they all seemed sure that the perpetrator of this cruel act was one Steve Flash.

"Tell you what, boys," declared Jim, "if that varmint has hidden himself, he will make tracks for the depot before long. Great Scott! If we could catch him I reckon all the boys in Detion County would let daylight into him, an' no mistake. One could tell him anywhere by that cross-cut scar on his cheek, the beauty. It's lucky the girls didn't come across him berrying, for he passed General Ranch we know."

"He made tracks across the Divide and boarded the cars at Poncha," growled Jack, as he drank his sixth cup of coffee.

And I, I kept silent, kept silent till now. For had I not seen upon the face of the man who had succored me in that dreadful storm a livid cross-cut scar, high up upon his left cheekbone? And, although I felt that I had in this case done wrong and lied by implication, I am not sure I would not do it still if it had all to come over again.

GREAT MASTERS AT WORK.

Between the seasons, when winter is taking a hesitating leave, and spring has hardly made up her mind to come in, is the time above all others for forming the acquaintance, or renewing it, with public galleries, museums, and institutions of that kind. The stir of revival that nature experiences at this season has a kind of reflex action on our spirits, and disposes us to deeds of enterprise; but prudence bids us not go far afield or venture beyond the regions of cabs, and omnibuses, and underground railways. There is light, too, without glare, and the Olmmerian gloom of the foggy days of winter is replaced by a pleasant alternation of sunshine and shade.

Under such circumstances it is pleasant to hear of something new in the way of a gratis exhibition, and general thanks are due to the director and staff of the Print-room in the British Museum, for the arrangement, in the public gallery of a very fine collection of studies and drawings of the great masters of the various foreign schools. Even apart from their artistic value, there is a strong interest attaching to these relics of the mighty spirits of old. Through what chances and changes must some of these old sketches have passed from the moment they were hastily dashed in to seize some passing expression or varying attitude, to that of their present appearance, neatly mounted and labelled in a London gallery! There is something, too, of the marvellous about the origin of this assemblage of designs and studies, the greater part of which belong to the collection of the late Mr. John Malcolm of Poltalloch, and have been lent for exhibition by his executors. Fancy Raphael, Da Vinci, Titian wandering in the Highlands, which when they lived were almost an unknown land!

As to what manner of man was the artist of the early Italian schools, we may form an idea from the very first drawing in the collection by Masacio, one of the early Fathers of modern art, whose works are as rare as they are precious. Here we have a painter absorbed in his work, squatted on a rude bench, and dressed anyhow, in Phrygian bonnet with a heavy fringe coming down so as to shade the eyes, and a doublet and hose of no particular hue or texture. The swell artist had not yet made his appearance, although
he came later on, for the great artists
did not long rub shoulders with Popes
and Princes, and the high and mighty
in general, without acquiring some taste
for show and splendour. But the artist
in cowl and frock is more characteristic
of the period, such as Fra Angelico, who
gives us drawings of saintly figures, and
Fra Bartolommeo, later the friend of
Savonarola and the sharer of his exalted
visions, in whose studio work this col-
lection is very rich.

These men devoted their art to the
service of religion; but what a different
kind of brother was Fra Filippo Lippi,
rather corresponding with the notion of him
who “laughs ha ha!” and quaffs to the
same effect than to the ascetic type of artist.
It was he who carried off from her convent
the beautiful Lucrezia, and a son Filippino
—to prove even a better artist than his
father—blessed the irregular union. Ac-
cording to received notions of discipline
among religious orders, here was a matter
for the wailing up of the culprit within

Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall,
as in the well-known case described in
“Marmion.” But our lovers came off
better than might have been expected.
The Pope relieved the pair from their vows
and blessed their union, although it is said
that unforgiving relatives of the damsel
who held the family dishonoured by the
connexion, satisfied poetic justice, by giving
the artist a dose of poison which carried
him off in the prime of life. But the son
lived to be a great artist, and some of his
sketches adorn the walls of this gallery.

Filippino’s great master Botticelli is also
here represented in a fine drawing of
“Abundance”—a woman, tall and fair and
richly dressed, surrounded by jolly, happy
children; and very happy and jolly
must have been the children of that period, if
they were as real as we see them through
the eyes of the great masters. For that is
one of the great charms of such a collection
that one gets a glimpse of the real human
beings of past ages, through eyes that are
of greater power and compass than our
own; while in the case of finished pictures
we get idealised compositions, reduced or
elevated as the case may be to the
dimensions of things in general.

Nor are there wanting in these sketches
suggestions of the varied incidents of an
artist’s life. There are two sketches by
Gentile Bellini—a Turkish soldier in a
peaked hat, suggesting in shape the
grenadier caps of Dettingen and Fontenoy;
and a Turkish woman, handsome but worn,
unveiled and wearing a curious peaked
headress, like the witch’s hat of our
old prints. These no doubt were taken at
Constantinople not very long after its
capture by the Ottomans. The soldier
himself might be one of those who swarmed
over the wall of the golden city. The
bullet of his musket may have found its
billet in the heart of the last of the
emperors of New Rome. The new master
of the city, the great Mohammed the Second,
had something of a taste for art, superior to
that of the effete old Byzantine world, and
he requested the Venetian senate, always
the friends of those at the winning end of
the broomhandle, to send him an artist of
the best. Perhaps they thought they could
best spare Bellini, who was originally of
Padua, or his spirit may have been un-
usually adventurous; anyhow, he sailed for
Constantinople in a Venetian galley, and
was courteously received by the Sultan, to
whom he exhibited some of his works,
among others a “Head of John the Baptist
on a charger,” which he naturally thought
would suit his highness’s taste. The Sultan
was a connoisseur in heads, and shook his
own a little. The Baptist’s head, he ob-
jected, showed a portion of neck, which
does not appear under such circumstances,
and to show the artist what he meant he
called in the executioner, and bade him
strike off the head of an unhappy slave.
The spectacle was too realistic even for an
impassioned artist, and Bellini retired
horror-struck and sickened, and determined
to return home as soon as he conveniently
could.

Here, too, we have a fine drawing of a
head by an artist whose fame was eclipsed
by Raphael, and whose existing works
hardly justify the high estimation in which
he was held by his contemporaries. But
the drawing shows the power of a great
master, and such undoubtedly was Il
Sodomo—a hot-headed, reckless genius,
a friend of Princes and ennobled by Pope
and Emperor, but who has left little to
posterity worthy of his great powers. And
this brings us to Raphael himself, who is
always great, and whose sweet-eyed, serious
Madonna appears in her original model, a
soft, demure, perhaps a little too demure,
but thoroughly lovable maid. But the
museum was already rich in Raphael’s
drawings, and the Malcolm collection does
not add anything very important.

There is a beautiful drawing of an earlier
GREAT MASTERS AT WORK. [April 21, 1894.]

master, Andrea Mantegna, the author of the famous “Triumph,” which is to be seen at Hampton Court. In this it is a lovely woman, who does not stoop to Folly, but walks, open-eyed yet seeing nothing, to the verge of destruction, led on by “friendly” hands of young men in a similar predicament as to powers of vision, while Folly enthroned cracks his fat sides in cynic mirth.

Another fine drawing, the “Finding of the Cross by the Empress Helena,” is by Peruzzi, and its architectural background reminds us that the master was equally great in the composition of buildings as of pictures. A noticeable incident in this artist’s career was the sack of Rome in 1527, when he was not only plundered of all his goods by the Imperial soldiers, but forced, through shame, for his purposes, to paint a post-mortem portrait of the Constable Bourbon, who was killed in the assault, by no less a hand than that of Benvenuto Cellini. If we are to believe that great but somewhat boastful person’s autobiography.

Nor is great Titian without representative sketches here, chiefly studies for backgrounds, which show a fine feeling for trees and rivers and rocky mountains; and Da Vinci is seen at work in a scratchy, tentative way. One of the wonders of such a collection, indeed, is how they — the great masters—worked with anything that came to hand: with crayon, chalk, charcoal, sepia, Indian ink, charcoal or silver point. They model you a hand or arm or whole figure from the life with as much apparent ease and certainty as a baker moulds a loaf; nor have they any care as to how they arrive at the result—a wash, a rub, a scratch, does the business — the light of heaven shines in a smear of chalk and the darkness of the inferno is revealed in a smudge of ink. Probably because they served a long and hard apprenticeship, had grown up in studios and workshops, had been licked with the lash and had paint-pots thrown at their heads, did they acquire this easy, infallible method of theirs. Not that this explains the whole of the mystery, but it may go part of the way.

But when we come to the French school we are on artistic terra firma. How clever and cold is Clouet in his portrait of Mary of Lorraine, Queen and Regent of Scotland, and mother of Mary of Scots. Here, too, are delightful landscapes by the great Olaus, one, especially, of a bridge and trees, suffused with light and full of atmosphere, and yet in the simplest of mediums. But it would take a lifetime to learn his secret. Even Turner never quite attained it, although he may in other respects have surpassed his master.

With the men of Flanders, too, we make acquaintance— with their burgomasters, and knights of quality, and their buxom, solid "Graces," and the Dutch with their boats and barges.

The slow canal and yellow blossomed vale, wharves and street scenes, and the general ambibiousness of the natives. Or we may drink our fill in pot-houses with Van Ostade, play skittles and bowls, or flirt with the stout peasant girl or burghees’ daughters. And there are the stalls of the dealers in game, in fish, in fruit—marmalades and jams, and paintings of Charles I., or the picture of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke. The picture of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke. And pictures of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke. And pictures of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke. And pictures of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke. And pictures of the Queen’s picture, the Countess of Pembroke.

And we have Peter Paul Rubens, too, showing his force, not in too solid flesh, but in charming landscape. There is a sketch of a river and distant hills that one would swear to as a scene on the Wey not far from Guildford; a village green with old barns about it and cottages, that looks remarkably like Worpleston Green in the same neighbourhood; and a moated grange that is strong of Lincolnshire or east Yorkshire. Yet although Peter Paul was in England in 1630, and was then knighted by Charles the First, still it was on a diplomatic mission, and it is hardly likely that he had time to wander around with his sketch-book.

Another distinguished sketcher is Van Dyck, who gives us a beautiful landscape study of an English lane, soft and sweet with all richness of cloud and foliage, such a lane as we may still chance upon in some lucky ramble, as did the great Sir Antonio in the days when Charles the First was king. And he is not the only artist who shows in an unexpected light. To turn to the German wall, who is Adam Elsheimer, who shows such charming landscape studies of country round about Rome and Frankfurt! The very same who painted martyrdoms in miniature for the cabinets of the rich and devout, when the seventeenth century was still young. And there is Albert Durer, too, our old friend whom we acknowledge at once in the old horse, all skin and bone, ridden by Death, so grim and old and shaggy; but we have him also...
in the medieval city perched up on the hill, its gateways, battlements, and peaked turrets, and the old place seems to come before us as in a dream, with the soft clamour of the bells and the tangle of noises from all the workers and craftsmen, and the babble of voices that hardly ceases by night or day.

In contrast with this, how quiet is our great city of to-day, noisy enough with its traffic, but when that is out of hearing almost as silent as the grave. And in this gallery, in a remote corner of the Museum, the quiescence is almost oppressive. Not many people have found their way here yet, and it is a way that is not too easy to find, and that fetches a sudden turn among honest British pots and pannikins that throws not a few off the line. And to have finger-posts here and there, "This way to the Drawings," might be deemed a slight upon the more permanent attractions of the establishment.

But people drift in as the morning goes on, girls and their sweethearts, Harry and Arabellas, who laugh contentedly, and walk round when nobody is looking. Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins, too, out for a holiday, and in behaviour quite dignified as becomes people who own a pony and cart. In fact, Mr. Hawkins finds the place a little too free for him, and complains that "these here old toffs weren't too particular of what they made pictures of." Then comes a connoisseur and his friend, who each gloat upon beauties that the other does not see. And they rapidly rattle through the stand of engravings rich in examples of Marc Antonio, "the finest things in the world," says a collector with enthusiasm, but grates his teeth as he finds some that he covets and can't get. Nobody wants to run away with pictures in their great gilt frames, but a rare engraving must be a great trial to a conscientious collector.

But here are some small connoisseurs a patched and particoloured skirts and mickers, a little group of youngsters sent here by a careful mother to be out of mischief; the place is rife with such bands if urchins on Saturdays when schools are closed. And these little urchins find the winging frames of the stand of engravings capital plaything. They had not counted on anything so amusing, and at it they go, playing at a circus, probably; till policeman hears the clatter and comes p. The policeman of the future will take his children by the hand, and explain the technique of engraving, will discourse on different states, will explain how such an engraving "with the first trees" may be of priceless value, and worth nothing without, or vice versa, and what a charm there is in an imperfection if it only is unique. And those children will go home, and perhaps become great engravers like Robetta; or the Mantegnas, skilful with brush and burin; or Campagnola; or the famous master of the Rat Trap. But we have not got so far as that yet, and the policeman of to-day contents himself with a laconic admonition to "cut it." And they cut it accordingly, their little hob-nailed boots clanging over the polished floor. And we also will cut it.

ANTAROTICA.

In geographical circles generally, and in those of London and of Scotland particularly, the subject of the renewal of Antarctic exploration is being eagerly discussed. To some extent the experimental voyages of the three Dundee whalers last year are to be credited with this revival of interest in the unknown regions of the South Pole, but, in fact, it is held as a scientific reproach that these regions are unknown. Then, again, there are so few worlds left to conquer in a geographical sense that we, as a nation, cannot afford to be backward. As far as the Arctic regions are concerned, we have done practically nothing since the Nares expedition managed to drag over the ice a few miles nearer to the North Pole than any of their predecessors—and then came back sooner than was expected. But in the Arctic regions there is not much room for anybody until Dr. Nansen has had his chance; and in Antarctica there is unlimited scope for observation and discovery, because little has yet been seen, and less discovered.

It is not England alone that is concerned just now about the Antarctic regions. The Norwegians are bent on testing the value of the fishing grounds there, and though some whalers they sent south last year were not very successful, it is said that renewed efforts on a larger scale are about to be made. For the Americans the southern whaling and sealing waters have always had attractions, and the American Geographical Society is now organizing a regular scientific expedition. The chief promoter is Dr. Frederick Cook, who
accompanied the Peary expedition to the Arctic. It is not to be on a very extensive scale. Dr. Cook proposes to buy a steam-whaler of about three hundred tons, to provision her for three years, and to start on the first of September next for the South Shetland Islands. He will call at the Falkland Islands to fill up with coal, and steaming south will enter the first practicable opening in the pack. His idea is to reach land before the winter begins, and then to pursue the work of exploration with dog- sledges. A large life-boat is to be taken, in which, should the vessel be lost among the ice, the party can return either to South America or the Falkland Islands. The expedition will only number some twelve or fourteen persons, all told, and is estimated to cost ten thousand pounds, which does not seem a great deal for the purpose.

But why is it that we know so much less of the Antarctic than of the Arctic? How is it that while scores of expeditions, year after year and century after century, have gone to wrest, or to try to wrest, the secret of the Northern icy circle, one might almost number on one hand all the organised explorations that have been undertaken in the Southern icy circle!

Well, one reason is that the Arctic has not always been wooed for itself, but as a means to an end. Men have gone thither more often to find a passage by the north-west, or by the north-east, to Asia and India, than to find the North Pole. Then, too, the Arctic circle is reputedly more habitable and hospitable than the Antarctic, and the cold is not so intense—at least, so it has been generally supposed, although there seems now some reason to doubt the superior inclemency and rigour of the Antarctic. The Arctic is certainly richer in animal and vegetable life—even up to the farthest limits yet reached—than the Antarctic has been found to be in not the remotest parallels. In the Arctic a summer sun does penetrate the frozen recesses, and makes gentle for a brief period the home of the walrus and the Polar bear. But in the Antarctic there is no summer sun, no thawing of fords and smiling of Arctic verdure.

It is a region of Eternal Winter and of unmelting snow, where—so far as is known—not a single plant finds life within the inner circle, and where never a living creature roams. The zoologist is not drawn to the Southern Circle as he is to the Northern, and yet the attractions for him are great because they have all the charm of the unknown. It is believed that only a few of the hardest birds build in a few of the sheltered corners of the Inner Antarctic; but who knows? Who can say that deep within those awful solitudes may not be revealed the mystery of the life of the fur seal when he vanishes from the waters of the North Pacific? Or that on some Antarctic continent or island may not be found the priceless remnant of the Great Auk tribe? We know not, at any rate, what riches or poverty may be there until we go to see. And nobody has yet gone to see—beyond the fringe.

It is a curious fact that no one has ever wintered within the Antarctic, many as have been the expeditions and ships' companies which, compulsorily or voluntarily, have wintered in the Arctic. There has been no need to do so, for there has been no possible goal beyond, such as India, which first led our mariners into the Arctic; no scientific romance such as has characterised the quest for the Northern Pole.

And yet another thing differentiates the Arctic from the Antarctic. In the North there is, unless Dr. Nansen is grievously mistaken—a pole surrounded by water. In the South there is a pole surrounded by land—a Polar basin as opposed to a Polar continent. While the books and essays, the theories and journals, which have been published concerning the Arctic regions would fill a library, handful of volumes contains all that has ever been printed of records in the Antarctic. Let us take a brief look at some of these.

"When we cast a retrospective glance at the history of knowledge concerning our planet," said Dr. John Murray, of the "Challenger" expedition, in a recent address to the Royal Geographical Society, "we find that nearly all the great advances in geography took place among commercial, and in a very special manner among maritime, peoples. Whenever primitive races commenced to look upon the ocean, not as a terrible barrier separating lands, but rather as a means of communication between distant countries, they soon acquired increased wealth and power, and beheld the dawn of new ideas and great discoveries. Down even to our own day the power and progress of nations may, in a sense, be measured by the extent to which their seamen have been able to brave the many perils, and their learned men have been able to unravel the many
riddles, of the great ocean. The history of civilisation runs parallel with the history of navigation in all its wider aspects."

We do not find that the mariners of Prince Henry the Navigator, of Portugal, penetrated to the Antarctic, although they were the first Europeans to double the Cape of Good Hope; but not long after Columbus discovered America, Vespucci announced the discovery of a new world in the Southern Hemisphere. It is said that the first expedition to the South Polar regions was despatched from Peru. Governor Mendosa, in 1567, despatched his nephew to look for "Terra Australis Incognita," which he did not find. A Dutchman, named Dirk Gerritsz, discovered what are now known as the South Shetlands in 1598; a Frenchman discovered the island of South Georgia in 1675; and another Frenchman, Kerguelen, in 1772 discovered what he at first believed to be a mountainous Southern continent, but afterwards found to be only a barren island, which now bears his name.

In point of fact, the first navigator to do any real work in the Antarctic was our own Captain Cook. When he went out on his first two voyages, the maps were filled up with imaginary continents bearing a variety of fancy names. But on his first voyage Cook demonstrated New Zealand to be an island, and that if there was any Southern continent it did not extend as far north as the fortieth southern parallel. On his second voyage he reached the seventy-first parallel, and proved that if there is any continent it must be within the Antarctic Circle amid eternal ice. He believed, however, that a tract of land within the circle extended to the South Pole, and projected further north in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans than elsewhere; and that this land would be always inaccessible because of the ice. "The risk one runs," he said, "in exploring a coast in these unknown and icy seas is so very great that I can be bold enough to say that no man will ever venture farther than I have done, and that the lands which may lie to the south will never be explored. Thick fogs, snowstorms, intense cold, and every other thing that can render navigation dangerous, must be encountered, and these difficulties are greatly heightened by the inexpressibly horrid aspect of the country. A country doomed by nature never once to feel the warmth of the sun's rays, but to lie buried in everlasting snow and ice. The ports which may be on the coast are, in a manner, wholly filled up with frozen snow of vast thickness; but if any should be so far open as to invite a ship into it, she would run a risk of being fixed there for ever, or of coming out in an ice-island. The islands and floats on the coast, the great falls from the ice-cliffs in the port, or a heavy snowstorm attended with a sharp frost, would be equally fatal."

This is a dismal picture, not worse, perhaps, than has been presented by some others; but Cook was wrong in his prognostications, for other navigators have penetrated further south than he did.

True, they are few in number, and have not added greatly to the sum of our knowledge, except, of course, the renowned Sir James Clark Ross. The reader may like to have the following records of the highest latitudes reached in the South Polar Circle, to refer to now when exploration is being resumed:

From this it will be seen that Sir James Ross has out-distanced all other explorers in these regions. His chief object was to make magnetic observations. He had previously "spotted" the north magnetic pole, and he sailed within one hundred and sixty miles of the south magnetic pole. He took soundings and temperatures, and reported on the sea-creatures observed.

Three times Ross crossed the Antarctic Circle, and on one of these voyages he discovered and named Victoria Land, a vast mountainous tract extending to the seventy-eighth parallel, and in the longitude of New Zealand—a range of mountains rising to a height of fifteen thousand feet, terminating in the volcanic cones of Mount Erebus and Terror. But where in other lands there would be indentations and harbours, there the glaciers fill up the valleys, and stretching far into the sea, form key headlands from which huge bergs are constantly being detached.

At the foot of Mount Terror was found a perpendicular ice-cliff rising to a height of two hundred feet, which was followed for a distance of three hundred miles without a break being seen. "To the north-westward," he wrote, "we observed a low point of land, with a small lاهل off it, which we hoped might afford
us a place of refuge during the winter, and accordingly endeavoured to struggle through the ice towards it until four p.m., when the utter hopelessness of being able to approach it was manifest to all, the space of fifteen or sixteen miles between it and the ships being now filled up by a solid mass of land-ice. Had it been possible to have found a place of security upon any part of this coast, where we might have wintered in sight of the brilliant burning mountain, and at so short a distance from the magnetic pole, both of these interesting spots might easily have been reached by travelling parties in the following spring.” But “it was painfully vexatious to behold at an easily accessible distance, under other circumstances, the range of mountains in which the pole is placed, and to feel how nearly the chief object of our undertaking had been accomplished; and few can understand the deep feelings of regret with which I felt myself compelled to abandon the perhaps too ambitious hope I had so long cherished of being permitted to plant the flag of my country on both the magnetic poles of the earth.”

That was fifty years ago, and no one has gone so far since. It is now generally believed that had Ross been provided with a steamer instead of a sailing-vessel, he would have successfully carried out his design. The “Challenger” is, we believe, the only steamer that has crossed the Antarctic Circle, but she was not constructed for work among the ice, and could not proceed far. Dr. Murray, however, who was with the expedition and has given much attention to Antarctic phenomena, is satisfied, from the evidence, that there exists within the South Polar area a vast tract of continental land, of probably about four millions of square miles in area; and that there is a chain of active and extinct volcanic cones forming a continuation of the great volcanic chain that more or less surrounds the whole Pacific.

The formation of icebergs has been graphically described by Dr. Murray. The huge glaciers above mentioned project more and more into the sea until, when a depth of some three hundred or four hundred fathoms is reached, they break off in great masses one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet above the sea, and sometimes several miles along. These ice-islands couring about the Antarctic Sea come into violent collision with each other, and the broken fragments mixing with salt water, ice, and snow, form what is known as pack-ice, which is the great obstacle to navigation. The waves dash against the steep sides of the ice-islands and cut them into caves, and gullies, and ledges, in which the sea-birds swarm. Then, as they drift with wind and current towards the north, they become worn, till, and turn over, and split up into the pinacled bergs familiar to the voyager in southern waters as in the North Atlantic. Deep in their icy recesses they carry the boulders and earth of the Antarctic region to deposit on the ocean floor of warmer climates as they melt.

The predominating winds in Antarctica are southerly and south-easterly. And it is the effect of the annual snowfall and evaporation there in relation to these winds, that makes Antarctic observation so necessary to a right understanding of the meteorology of the whole globe.

The last visitors to this remote and inhospitable region were the Dundee whalers of last year, and they, like their predecessors, found it a region of gales and calms, of wet fogs and blinding snow, but with alternations of charming weather. Mr. Bruce, who accompanied the expedition as naturalist, presented the following picture to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society:

“Long shall I remember the Christmas Eve when we were fast anchored to a floe. There was a perfect calm; the sky, except at the horizon, had a dense canopy of cumulus clouds, which rested on the summits of the western hills; and when the sun was just below the horizon, the soft greys and blues of the clouds, and the spotless whiteness of the ice as it floated in the black and glassy sea, were tinted with the most delicate of colours—rich purples and rosy hues, blues and greens, passing into translucent yellows. At midnight, the solitude was grand and impressive, perhaps the more so since we had for well-nigh a week been drifting among bergs with dense fogs and very equally weather. No sound disturbed the silence; at times a flock of the beautiful sheath-bills would hover round the vessel, fanning the limpid air with their soundless wings of creamy whiteness. All was in such union, all in such perfect harmony; but it was a passing charm.”

This was in midsummer, for December in the Antarctic corresponds with June in the Arctic, and the variations of temperature were found less than in London. But the gales were sometimes terrific, even in summer, and once for ten hours the vessel...
steamed as hard as possible against the wind and only made one knot. How Cook and Ross managed without steam is marvellous.

Much has been said about the severity of Antarctic cold, but Mr. Bruce concludes from his observations that the difference between the summer and the winter temperature in Antarctica is not so great as in the North. Of course, no one has ever yet spent a winter within the Antarctic Circle, and this is only surmise, but it is based on scientific premises.

Dr. Donald, who also accompanied this expedition, gives the following description of another Antarctic phenomenon—the fog. "The fogs are frequent enough and dense enough to be very troublesome; yet they have a peculiar beauty of their own. In the morning, as a bright sun begins to dispel the fog, there first appears a "fog-bow," or as the sailors call it, a "fog-schaffer" or "scavenger"—their belief being that this bow eats up or removes the fog. It is in the form of a perfect circle, the two ends appearing to meet beneath one’s feet. Soon after this, luminous points appear in the fog, and gradually extend into patches. I have counted as many as twenty of these. As the fog lifts a little more, each of these patches is seen to be suspended immediately above an iceberg. Then the fog finally disperses with a rush, leaving a bright sun and a cloudless sky, and every promise of a magnificent Antarctic day. Many of the fogs, however, do not disperse in this accommodating way, and may last for days."

Antarctica is poverty-stricken in the way of fauna and flora, but is rich in scientific interest, and the Royal Geographical Society are now moving towards organising a national expedition for prolonged observation in a thorough manner. At a recent meeting of the Society there was a great gathering of renowned Arctic travellers and navigators, and scientists of fame, who entered into the project with enthusiasm.

The land of Antarctica is barren, but all over the floor of the Antarctic Ocean, says Dr. Murray, of the "Challenger," there is a most abundant fauna, apparently more abundant and more peculiar than in any other region of the ocean’s bed. More knowledge is needed on this point by biologists, while meteorology is interested in the matter of the winds and temperature, to which we have already referred. The theory of ocean currents has to be tested not merely by such exploiters as Dr. Nansen has undertaken in the North, but by what we have yet to discover in the South. Then as to physography, Professor Neumayer, the celebrated German scientist, says: "It is certain that without an examination and a survey of the magnetic properties of the Antarctic regions, it is utterly hopeless to strive, with prospects of success, at the advancement of the theory of the earth’s magnetism."

The proper objects of the contemplated expedition are thus formulated by Dr. Murray. To determine the nature and extent of the Antarctic continent; to penetrate into the interior; to ascertain the depth and nature of the ice-cap; to observe the character of the underlying rocks and their fossils; to take magnetic and meteorological observations, both at sea and on land; to observe the temperature of the ocean at all depths and seasons of the year; to take pendulum observations on land, and possibly also to make gravity observations at great depths in the ocean; to bore through the deposits on the floor of the ocean to ascertain the condition of the deeper layers; to sound, trawl, and dredge, and study the character and distribution of marine organisms.

This is a large order, but it is necessary of execution for the definite determination of land and water on our planet; for the solution of many problems concerning the Ice Age; for the better determination of the internal constitution and superficial form of the earth; for a more complete knowledge of the laws which govern the motions of the atmosphere and seas; and for authoritative indications as to the origin of terrestrial and marine plants and animals.

It is not a dash for the South Pole that is advocated, for indeed little is expected to be gained by attaining that particular point. It is a "steady, continuous, laborious, and systematic exploration of the whole southern region with all the appliances of the modern investigator."

How is it to be gone about? Two steamers of a thousand tons or so will suffice, and they should be fitted out for a stay over three summers and two winters; the party being divided at suitable spots for winter observations. After landing the winter parties, the ships, it is intended, will—to escape being frozen in—steam to the north and continue marine observations along the outer margins of the ice. If necessary they can run to Australia or the Falklands to refit, and return with
A CORSICAN AFFAIR.

A COMPLETE STORY.

I.

ANTONIO FORLÌ was certainly dying. The sweat on his face and his difficult breathing told of it quite as much as the prayers of the priest, who every now and again came to a pause and lowered his head so that he could look over his spectacles at the sick man.

Forlì's wife and his son Cesaré were also in the room.

The former's sobs were continuous. She was on her knees by her husband's bedside, holding the crucifix as the priest had directed her, and at each pause in his reverences petitions she broke out into ejaculations of startling energy. One of her cries seemed to bring sudden vitality into the sallow, pinched face of the dying man.

"By the Virgin and San Antonio," she screamed, "have we not suffered enough wrong—we Forlì! Let there be a blood reckoning between the Leonetti and us. Oh, my poor, handsome husband, see to it when thou art in Paradise."

"Chut! chut!" interposed the priest quickly. "Remember, woman, that he has been anointed. The time for such thoughts has passed."

But Antonio himself did not seem to think so. Wrestling himself up so that his back fell against the wall, he opened his mouth as if to speak, and waved a weak hand towards his son Cesaré.

"Come to thy father, son," said the woman with apparent asperity.

Cesaré Forlì was but sixteen, though he had the muscles and stature of a man, and also the firm expression of a man on his dark face. He was Corsican to the toe-tips.

Again the priest tried to interfere.

"The Holy Mother," he exclaimed, "likes not such compacts. Be advised. Let earthly dissensions be forgotten, and give thyself wholly to God."

"May I be forgotten of God if I do!"

said the sick man in a cavernous voice that sounded very grim. There was a flash in his dark eyes as he spoke. Then he turned to his son.

"I am going," he said, and it was as if he pitied himself; his wife's moans broke out afresh. "I am going, my son. But there is work for thee. Spread to the Sartene province of Corsica—ah! the dear land, I die exiled from it!—and there kill first Giovanni Leonetti. Shoot him in the back as he shot thy dear brother who is in Heaven. And afterwards kill all the other Leonetti in the land—like rats."

"I command you!" cried the priest.

"This is infamy."

But the dying man's voice rose above the priest's.

"It is not infamy, it is duty. See to it, Cesaré. Place thy hand on my breast—ah!"

He slid down into the bed again and lay gasping. The lad, without moving a muscle of his countenance, did as his father bade him and stood watching the struggles on his father's face.

"He is going," whispered the priest to the woman.

The latter rose to clasp her husband once more in her arms. But with a final effort the exile opened his mouth to speak.

"Swear," he sobbed, staring at the lad, "swear, or I—"

He could not finish. Even while Cesaré was murmuring the words, "I swear it, father," with his right hand still on his father's breast, the man's jaw slipped and his eyes lost their life.

"It is a pity," said the priest, as he blew his nose with a loud report and drew near, "men cannot be sensible in their last moments. But there, it is breath wasted to reproach him now; you Corsicans are all alikes. Cesaré, I absolve you from your bond to your poor father."

The lad lifted his eyes to the priest, but said nothing.

"Promises of so sacrilegious a kind, extorted by the dying, are not to be kept. In fulfilling them, you do but protract his presence in purgatory. Dost hear me, my son?"

But the woman herself responded. She turned an infamed face upon the priest.

"Father Correggio!" she said, with terrible earnestness, "may the boy rot in this world and the next, for ever, if he forgets his oath. The living as well as the dead bind him."
The priest shrugged his shoulders, folded his spectacles, put his breviary in his pocket, shook his skirts to make sure they hung freely, shuffled to the corpse and made the sign of the cross on its forehead—with a protesting movement of his own head the while—and then murmuring "Benedetto!" left the room.

"They are devils—those Corsicans!" the good father said to himself as he crossed the threshold.

BARELY a month later young Cesare was in Corsica with his gun. His was a pitiful errand, but he did not seem to think so; neither did his mother, who from the mainland sent prayers and blessings in his wake, and confidently awaited his return with the blood of the clan of the Leonetti on his immature young hands.

In Bastia the lad bought black clothes like the native Corsicans; they went well with his set countenance and fierce eyes. His gun was his father's. It was old, but he believed it would do its work. It had shot men ere this. The experience might be of service to it and Cesare himself.

And so from Bastia Cesare walked down the coast-line to the south, by the vineyards and through the orange groves of many a fertile though rather pestilential little village. He had nothing to do till he got to Porto Vecchio. For a week he could live the life of an honest man, enjoying the good gifts of sunshine and bewitching landscapes without either remorse or forebodings.

From Porto Vecchio he was to strike into the mountains, and lay his snares for the Leonetti, who had their dwellings among the sources of the Stabiacco.

It was a happy week, this that he spent between the mountains and the blue sea. But at the sight of the walls of Porto Vecchio, he remembered his responsibilities to the uttermost.

Yet another brief respite was allowed him, however.

At the inn where he stayed was a lovely young girl named Caterina. She could not have been more than fifteen, though her large sombre blue eyes had a woman's expression. They twain soon made acquaintance. The girl's mother was taken by Cesare's looks, and would fain have learnt all about him. But, of course, that was impossible. Nevertheless, the three days the lad spent in this ancient town were enough for both Cesare and Caterina.

"I will come back for you, my angel," said the lad, when on the fourth morning he had shouldered his gun and prepared for his hideous undertaking. "Be true to me."

The girl's eyes answered him sufficiently. But her tongue also bore witness for her. "Thou hast all my heart, dear Cesare," she whispered.

From early morning until late in the afternoon the lad clambered among the oaks and precipices, wondering how his task would come to him. He was bound for a little village high up. Here he meant to mature his plans, in the very midst of the Leonetti he had come to destroy.

But when it was near sundown, he fell in with a young man hardly older than himself, whose vivacity and gift of persuasion had a strange power over him. "I am bent on a dark business," he told Cesare. "'Tis no less than bloodshed. We are in vendetta. Will join me?"

Cesare looked thunderstruck. "I, too, am here in vendetta," he stammered out.

"Good; then let us take an oath of friendship. You help me this afternoon, and then I will do for you what you do for me."

"What is the name of the doomed one?" asked Cesare.

"That," replied the other, "I do not tell thee. Neither am I inquisitive about thy quarrel."

Then the thought flashed to Cesare's mind that it was a Leonetti who was being pursed.

"I am thine," he said, offering his hand.

"And I thine," said the other; and they swore an oath in the matter.

This done, at the bidding of his friend, who said he might be called Carlo, Cesare loaded his gun afresh. Together they then stole by a craggy path towards a highland glen, or rather basin, occupied entirely by a mountain torrent, a few pine-trees, innumerable boulders, and a single black-browed hut.

"He has been away a long time," whispered Carlo; "perhaps he thinks he is forgotten. Ah! he shall be taught differently."

It was arranged that, having crept as near as possible to the house in the dusk, they should lie concealed behind the rocks

The formation of icebergs has been graphically described by Dr. Murray. The huge tract of continental land, of probably about three hundred or four hundred fathoms is more into the sea until, when a depth of some three hundred or four hundred fathoms is reached, they break off in great masses one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet above the sea. At times a flock of the beautiful sheath-bill, which rests on the ice as it floated in the Arctic, and the variations of temperature there were found less than in London. But the gales were sometimes terrific, even in summer, and once for ten hours the vessel proach it was manifest to all, the space of five miles between it and the land-ice. Had it been possible to have gone so far since. It is now generally considered for work among the ice, and could not have been more than fifteen, though her large sombre blue eyes had a woman's expression. They twain soon made acquaintance. The girl's mother was taken by Cesare's looks, and would fain have learnt all about him. But, of course, that was impossible. Nevertheless, the three
until the man came out, or showed in his doorway.

The plan worked only too well.

In less than a quarter of an hour a tall, broad-shouldered man opened the door to look forth.

"It is he!" whispered Carlo; "shoot!"

The victim dropped on the threshold.

The two young men did not wait to hear more than one cry from the woman who rushed to the stricken man. They hurried down and down, and drew breath only when they were near the village of Carlo's home.

Here, when the houses showed, Cesare put the question that had of late hovered on his lips:

"Was he a Leonetti?"

The other laughed as he replied:

"Mother of God, no! I am a Leonetti! He was a Forli—the last of them in Corsica."

Cesare was like to faint—at first. He had not been bred in Corsica, and was unused to such shocks. Then he grasped his gun, and, looking Carlo in the face, said:

"I, too, am a Forli."

But Carlo, uplifting his own gun, shouted:

"Remember our bond—we are friends. I have sworn, and you have sworn."

Cesare yielded to the persuasion.

"It is terrible!" he muttered.

Nevertheless, he consented to go home with Carlo, who gave him the name of Pinello to make it possible for him to receive the hospitality of his family.

III.

GIOVANNI LEONETTI lived in the village. He was uncle to Carlo, and a stalwart Corsican to boot. He never moved five steps from his house without his gun—loaded.

Cesare slept little this, his first night in the thick of Corsican feuds. He was thinking of his father, of Caterina, of the man he had shot—his own father's half-brother, as it turned out—and of the vengeance he would sooner or later wreak on young Carlo.

But Giovanni Leonetti was to die first. His mother had told him why, ere he left the mainland. The man had shot her first-born, Angelo, when he was a pretty boy of eight—had shot him as you or I would shoot a partridge. It was not of course from personal enmity, but merely in perpetuation of the traditional feud. Im-

mediately afterwards the police had taken Antonio Forli. Antonio had shot two of them in his successful attempt to escape. And then he and his wife and the little Cesare had evaded the island.

The little Angelo remained unstoned for.

Giovanni Leonetti came and stared at Cesare.

"What is thy business in the mountains?" he asked. Something in the lad's face made him uneasy.

"He has none, uncle," said Carlo, answering for him. "He was lost, and he did us a service in helping to finish off Giacomo Forli."

"Good! then we are friends," replied Giovanni. But if he could have seen the hungry look in Cesare's eyes, when he turned to go, he would have amended his words.

"Be patient," said young Carlo to Cesare; "you have bound me to aid you, I will do it. The afterwards shall take care of itself. Only tarry till his granddaughter comes from the town. Let him see her; they are so fond of each other. Between ourselves, Cesare, I love that girl; but she loves not me, though perhaps she will do it. Let him see her once more, and then we will decide it. There is the family feud, and there is the personal bond. The latter is stronger with the individual, the former with the clan. I would, however, we had never met."

"And I," said Cesare. The lad was perplexed. There were times when his hot blood urged him to take Carlo's life at once. And again there were times when he sobbed to himself that it was impossible he could kill his companion.

For three days this strange life went on. On the fourth day, at noon, when Cesare came in from the mountains, whither he had been roaming with his wild thoughts, Carlo told him the news.

"She has arrived."

"Who!" asked the other.

"Come and see," said Carlo.

They crossed the green village square, with the great chestnut-tree growing in its midst, and approached Giovanni Leonetti's house. Then they entered.

"Good day, cara mia," exclaimed Carlo.

The girl he addressed turned, and Cesare stepped backwards with a thumping heart.

"Caterina!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

It was she, sure enough. But, though she was at first confused, she had the tact
of her sex, and it was not difficult for her to explain to her grandmère her meeting with Cesare as if it were the most trivial matter under the sun. But the spark of jealousy had been struck in Carlo's soul. He saw more than his uncle saw. And when they were outside again he taxed his companion with it.

"Hast said aught of love to that girl, my friend?" he asked.

"What is that to thee?" retorted Cesare, all his pride of family in a flame.

"Good, or rather bad!" rejoined the other. "It makes things simpler, though it will mean the saying of more masses."

There were few words exchanged between the young man that day. Late in the evening, however, Carlo, who had become saturnine in the extreme, called Cesare to the door.

"Let us talk," he said, "under the chestnut-tree. There is a moon. You will not want your gun,"

"I trust you," replied Cesare, and together they went out.

Then, with a numbed heart, Cesare listened to Carlo's cold-blooded plan for the shooting of his own uncle. The old man went out early every day to see to his goats. They were to follow him by stealth the next morning. The rest would be easy.

"And afterwards?" suggested Cesare, almost trembling: his thoughts were with Caterina.

"Afterwards—we will see," responded Carlo, and his thoughts also were with Caterina.

They returned to the house in silence, and in silence each went to bed.

The morning opened with mist and rain. But that was nothing. They were used to both in the Corsican highlands. Neither deterred old Giovanni from seeking his goats, gun in hand. And neither kept the two lads from getting on his track and following him over the slippery rocks and wet grass until the opportunity presented itself.

They were close on his heels at length. He had stopped to light his pipe, with his back to them. Carlo gently touched his companion on the shoulder, pointed, and whispered:

"Behold your quarry!"

No shot could have been simpler. In one instant Cesare had his gun extended, and the next the rocks echoed with the report, and old Leonetti lay on his face, shot through the heart.

"Let us see how it has gone," said Carlo quietly.

They turned the old man over. He was dead as Julius Caesar.

Thrilled with a demoniacal sense of elation, Cesare now offered his hand to his friend—to have it rejected with such scorn as few but Corsicans can express by word and look. Carlo was aboil with passion—for his family's and his own sake.

"That is over," he said hoarsely, referring to their recent friendship. "There is no feud in all Corsica more mortal than ours. Load thy gun."

"But, Carlo——" began the poor lad.

"But nothing. I owe a life for his here——pointing at his uncle's body——"and another for thy insolence in forestalling me with—with her."

Then Cesare understood. The pride of the Forli was a good match for the pride of the Leonetti.

Without another word the lad reloading.

"Ten paces will do," said Carlo, "the signal shall be the croaking of the first raven after we are in station."

These were the last words they exchanged.

For nearly a minute they stood, each with gun levelled at the other's forehead. There was a raven hard by on a withered pine-trunk, but it kept deathly silence for full fifty seconds. At last it croaked.

"Bang!"

The two guns fired simultaneously, and almost simultaneously the two lads fell dead.

NOTE

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"There is Forster making himself agreeable to that Mr. De Lucy," she said, watching the retreating figures. "This rest has quite answered for him; he is much better and more cheerful than he has been of late. I wish he were more like other people."

"Oh, no! I don't wish that. He is perfect," said Penzie quickly. "One can believe in him and trust him."

"It is very kind of you to say this. I know I am a partial mother, but I am glad you can appreciate Forster, though being a bride, your husband must be—"

"Philip thinks the same," murmured Penzie, wishing people would not talk of her husband. She tried so hard to forget him.

"Mr. Winakell is a wonderful man himself. If you had been my daughter-in-law, dear Princess, you would have had to hear Mr. Gillbanks's praises often sounded. Forster is so partial to his friends. Has he told you about this dreadful idea of a colony? Lord Rookwood will be made to take it up, and at the bottom of his heart I know he hates colonies."

"Yes, I am almost sure Philip will want to go with him. You would be happier if he did."

"No, no, my dear Princess. Your husband must run no risk. I can't bear to think of Forster out there, but Forster says it is much healthier than the East end of London, and it is only for a year they will want leaders."

"I promise you that Philip shall go with him," said Penelope suddenly.

"No, don't make promises. The poor dear blacks of Africa won't dare to set up so many men. They do eat men somewhere in Africa, I know, but Forster says he will avoid that district. I wish he
The night was calm, if chilly. As she looked out on the courtyard, she saw Nero lying asleep on the flag-stones. She gazed at the moonlight playing on the trees of the glen, and making black shadows in the crevices. Life was quiet and peaceful here on the outside.

Suddenly as she gazed, Penelope saw the big dog stretch himself and cock up his ears. Then he rose slowly and stretched himself again as if he were conscious of a noise, but evidently it was not one hostile to his owners.

“Nero!” She was bending out of the window. “Nero! What is the matter?”

Nero looked up at her and wagged his tail. His look was almost human; then he trotted to a little door just underneath Penelope’s window. She heard a footstep and the stomp of a stick. It must be her father. He ought not to be going out at this time of night. His madness would lead him into danger. Penelope wrapped herself up in a dark cloak and determined to see what would happen. She must guard the old man if possible, since he could not now guard himself.

Opening the door quietly she walked along the passage, and went down some little back stairs. All was silent, for the servants were fast asleep. She walked softly on tip-toe for fear of frightening the King, then having reached the door she saw that it was ajar. Her father had certainly gone out. She stepped out into the courtyard and looked around. Just at this moment the moon shone forth, and Penelope saw the old man slowly groping his way round the enclosed space, now and then tapping the bricks with a small hammer.

What could he be doing? Never had she seen her father thus employed. Had his madness taken this form, or was he looking for something? She walked across the yard and coughed a little, so as to her make her approach heard.

The King turned round sharply.

“Father!” she said. “It is only me. Why are you out so late?”

“Why are you out so late?” he repeated. “Come here, Penelope. You are my child and true to the old traditions. Eh! Yes, I know you are, but you doubted me. What did it mean? Eh! Why was my son killed, killed, and why were you left? Come close, Penelope, and listen. Tell me, why have you brought this stranger here? Eh? What does he mean by lording it over me? Why did he bring his money here?”
"Hush, girl. I'll tell you, I must find it."
"Find what?"
"Why, the money of course. It's somewhere, but that cursed accident deprived me of my memory."
"The money! There is none. You are dreaming; it's all fancy," she said impatiently.
"Fancy! Ah! That's you all over, Penelope—you and Greybarrow. I tell you that money is somewhere. I must find it. Somewhere, there is enough and to spare. Your old aunt wasn't such a fool as you are. She knew we should want it, and she left me the secret. I kept it well, but now, curse it, it's gone, and I must find it—I shall find it. It's under some stone, Penelope. Don't tell any one, I'll find it. I shall try all the places round about, and yet it seems to me it wasn't quite near the house. It was—it was—A man's only a block without a memory. Here, Penelope, try yourself."

He handed her the hammer, but she turned away, wondering what she should do. The crazed brain could not rest if this was the ruling idea.

"Wait a moment. I am tired. I'll rest now; but, Penelope, don't suppose I can't see. You hate that man. E'n a Winakell never married beneath her yet. Do you know the story of your great-aunt? She loved a man of mean birth. Do you think she married him? No. She—shall I tell you? She poisoned him—ah!"

The King looked at his daughter in a way which made her shudder.

"Come away, come back to the house."

The old man seemed to calm down then, and he followed her weekly. She helped him into his own room in the old turrett, where he would allow no one to keep watch over him.

Then she returned to her own chamber, only to find Philip at the door.

"What is it? Can I help you? Oh, dearest, I saw you go out. You must let me watch your father, and help you. I am here for that."

"You, Philip! Of course you can't. He hates strangers. No—you can do nothing, thank you."

Philip left her alone. His face was getting stern and set, but he never uttered a word of complaint. Sometimes when despair seized him, he wondered what evil fate had driven him to this place of sorrow, and why he had not, on that cold evening, been allowed to perish on the dales. Then he took himself to task for his cowardice.
"I must win her. I must win her. She's worth any sorrow. Oh, Penelope, my darling, if you loved you would love so truly!"

ABOUT FLAGS.

The use of symbols and devices to represent communities and assemblages of men, as well as particular signs by means of which each member of a crowd might be distinguished from his fellows, must be a deeply rooted tendency in human nature. It has existed among all races from the earliest times; manifesting itself in various ways according as national traditions or individual caprices determined the choice of an emblem. One of the first forms under which this custom appeared was probably that institution, partly political and partly religious, known as totemism, which still survives in many American and African tribes. Under this system, each clan venerates as its progenitor and guardian divinity some animal or plant, the image of which serves as the hieroglyph of the clan in its picture-writing, and is inscribed on the tombs of the warriors instead of their personal names. Thus, among the North American Indians, the Wolf, the Tortoise, and the Deer; among the Bechuana of South Africa, the Crocodile, the Lion, the Monkey, and the Elephant; are the emblems and names of various tribes. They are the objects of worship, and the members of each tribe abstain from wearing the skin or eating the flesh of the animal which they look upon as their ancestor and patron.

Among the more civilised nations of antiquity, the emblems which personified the state were derived from the religion of the state, and the standards under which the King marshalled his subjects and led them to battle were the representations of the national deities, or the symbols of their attributes. The most ancient records of the everyday life and institutions of bygone generations which have come down to us are the paintings and sculptures in the tombs and temples of Egypt, and there may be seen the soldiers of Thothmes and Ramses grouped according to their different provinces round a great variety of standards. These were not flags, but wooden or metallic images, brilliantly coloured and borne on tall poles decorated with floating streamers. Among them are seen the heads of Isis and Atheta; tablets inscribed with the monarch's name; and emblems of the gods, such as the sparrow-hawk of Horus, the crocodile of Sebek, and the jackal of Anubis.

The ensigns of the armies of the great empires of Chaldaea and Assyria do not seem to have been so numerous or so varied as in Egypt, to judge by the representation of the campaigns of Assur-bani-napal which is furnished by the bas-reliefs of Korsabad. The few standards shown there consist of circular discs bearing two bulls running in opposite directions, or the image of Assur, the tutelary divinity of the country, standing on a bull, and in the set of discharging an arrow. These figures are mounted on the ends of lances ornamented with tassels, and fixed to the front of the chariots of the generals.

A nation of warriors like the Jews would naturally be well provided with ensigns, and they are mentioned when in the wilderness the Children of Israel were ordered to "camp by their troops, ensigns, and standards, and the houses of their kindreds, round about the tabernacle of the Covenant." The sacred text does not describe the nature of these standards, but the Rabbinical commentators of the Middle Ages have supplied the deficiency and given minute details with regard to them; deriving the emblems of the four leading tribes from the mystical animals of the vision of Ezekiel, or the prophecy of Jacob to his sons; and the colours of their flags from the precious stones on the breastplate of the High Priest; on which the names of the twelve patriarchs were engraved. Thus we are told by Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel that the silken standard of Juda was of three colours, corresponding with those of the sardius, topaz, and carbuncle, and bore the figure of a young lion, as well as the names of the three tribes, Juda, Issachar, Zabulon, and the words, "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered and Thine adversaries be driven away before Thee." The standards of the other leading tribes were after the same fashion. That of Ephraim bore the figure of a young man; that of Dan a basilisk, or according to others an eagle; and that of Beuben a stag instead of an ox; "for Moses the prophet altered it, that the sin of the calf might not be remembered against them." As these figures were embroidered and not graven, the Talmudic writers maintained that they did not infringe the prohibition directed against the images of living things; but,
ABOUT FLAGS.

in all probability, the Jewish ensigns must have been like the Egyptian, wooden or metal tablets of various shapes set upon lances, for the Hebrew word for a standard means a thing which shines from afar, and they were certainly not emblazoned with any emblem forbidden by the law.

There is no indication in the Iliad, nor in any more recent classical writer, that the Greeks ever carried flags in battle to mark either the nationality or the subdivisions of their troops. It is true that when Hector had routed the Greeks and driven them back to their entrenchments, Agamemnon is described as hastening through the crowd bearing in his hand a purple cloak; but this was not a banner, but an improvised signal to rally his soldiers in a moment of disorder. It was only at a much later period, when the Carians, a race of warlike mountaineers, who, like the Swiss in modern times, served as mercenaries in many lands, had initiated the custom of adorning their shields with devices, that the warriors of the different states could be distinguished by the letters or badges which they carried on their shields. The signals mentioned by Thucydides, which ordered the galleys to advance and engage the enemy, probably consisted in raising a brilliant shield or helmet on a lance, and equally primitive were those described by Polybius at the battle of Salamis between the Peloponnesians and the Macedonians, when Antigonus ordered his Illyrian troops to attack as soon as a linen tunic was hoisted on the slopes of the neighbouring mountain, while the cavalry were to charge when they saw the King wave his red cloak in the air.

In the Roman army, on the contrary, there was a very highly-developed system of military ensigns, which, just as among modern nations, were regarded not merely as a rallying point for a given body of men, but as an emblem of the State, and were therefore surrounded with a veneration which degenerated into idolatry. From a tactical point of view the Roman standards were of more importance than the flag at the present day, for the movements of the troops were entirely regulated by them. According as they were raised and carried forward, planted in the ground, or turned towards the rear, in obedience to the sounds of the horns of the “cornufones,” the army broke up its camp and marched, or retreated and halted. In the camp the standards were planted before the General’s tent, where their presence sanctified the spot as though it were a temple, and rendered it a safe depository for the booty collected by the legion; it was to the standards the soldiers swore allegiance, and the first step of a pretender who sought to become Emperor was to seize the standards, as he thereby secured the fidelity of the legions. On feast days the “dusty, awe-inspiring standards," as Pliny calls them, were anointed with perfumes and decorated with garlands; on days of mourning they were stripped of their ornamental, and if, when the order to march was given, their bearers found it difficult to loosen them from the earth, it was looked upon as a fatal omen.

The Romans believed that the first ensign given by Romulus to the band of outlaws he had collected on the Palatine was a handful—"manipulus"—of hay raised on a pole, and that thence the smaller subdivisions of the legion took their name. It is not recorded at what time more artistic devices replaced this rude contrivance, if, indeed, it ever had any existence; but it is certain that previously to the time of Marius five ensigns were carried in the Roman armies: the Eagle, the Wolf, the Minotaur, the Horse, and the Wild Boar. Marius abolished these with the exception of the Eagle, which was thenceforth carried at the head of the legion by the "aquilifer," under the guard of the "primipilus" or first centurion. The thirty "manipuli" of two centuries each, into which the ten cohorts composing the legion were divided towards the end of the Republic, had their special standards, which were carried in front of the "manipulus" during the march, and stationed in its rear during a combat. The ensign of the cavalry was the "vexillum," a small square banner attached to a crossbar at the end of a lance, and carried by each "tirma," or squadron. The basilarevii which wind round the column of Trojan, and record that Emperor's campaigns against the Dacians, are the principal source from which we have learned all that we know with regard to the arms and accoutrements of the Roman soldiers. We see there the forms of the different standards carried in the legions, and the strange costumes of their bearers, who were clad in the skins of wild beasts, whose open jaws enveloped and covered their helmets. The eagles, originally of silver, but under the Empire of gold, were set on the top of a pole covered with silver and decorated with
crowns, commemorating the victorics won by the legions; they grasped the thunder-bolt, and their wings were extended in the act of flying. The standards of the "manipuli" consisted of a lance shod with iron that it might be firmly fixed in the ground, and ornamented with tassels and "phaleres," or embossed disks of silver, such as were given to soldiers as rewards for valor. Above these was usually a cross-bar bearing the number of the cohort, and from it hung purple ribands ending in silver ivy-leaves. On the summit was a lance-headed or an open hand, the symbol of fidelity; or a small shrine with the image of a deity. The ensigns of the Praetorian guards, instead of the plain silver "phaleres," bore golden crowns of laurel and small busts of the Emperor, which were torn down and replaced by others according as that very turbulent body of soldiers raised one pretender after another to the throne of the Caesars. As these busts were not attached to the standards of the troops of the line, an image of the Emperor was carried in the ranks of the first cohort of every legion by an "imaginer"; divine honours were rendered to these portraits, and Josephus describes the grief and indignation with which the inhabitants of Jerusalem learned that Pilate had introduced by night into the Holy City ensigns bearing the image of Caesar, which his predecessors had always refrained from doing out of respect for the religion of the Jewish people.

The Eagles and their idolatrous worship were abolished by Constantine after the vision he had seen while marching against Maxentius, when a cross of light had appeared to him in the sky, surrounded by the words "Εὐ τῶν ἔρωτα σαυτὸν symba—"In this sign thou shalt conquer." He adopted thenceforth a standard called the Labarum, consisting of a lance carrying on its summit, within a wreath, the letters "Χ Ρ"—CHR—the monogram of the name of Christ, with a crossbar below it which held a purple banner bearing the images of the Emperor and his family, embroidered in gold and gems; and this continued to be the Imperial ensign of Rome and of Constantinople while those empires lasted.

The Germanic tribes, before whose repeated attacks the institutions and the civilisation of Rome gradually crumbled away and finally disappeared, were accustomed, as we know from Tacitus, to guard in the depths of their forests images of wild beasts, which were brought out and carried at the head of each tribe when it started on an expedition; and it is possible that from these ancestral emblems, combined with those inspired at a later period by Christianity, were derived the ensigns and armorial bearings of modern Europe. It would, however, be tedious, and in most cases impossible, to attempt to trace the course of this evolution, and the history of the two most ancient and interesting flags, those of France and of England, will suffice.

The monarchy of the Franks was the first to rise out of the ruins of the Roman Empire, but nothing certain is known with regard to the standard under which the Kings of the first race led their troops. We only know that from the time when Clovis visited the tomb of Saint Martin at Tours while on his way to attack the Visigoths, and brought away with him the Saint's cloak—"capa," or "capella"—this relic seems to have always accompanied the Merovingians in their wars. The portable oratory in which it was carried received from it the name of "capella," and the monks who bore it were called "cappellani": whence the words "chapel" and "chaplain." But it is now well established that the Kings of France did not carry as their standard the blue flag of the Abbey of St. Martin. That was borne by the Counts of Anjou as "advocati," or protectors of the Abbey, as the red flag of the Abbey of St. Denys was carried by its chief vassals, the Counts of Vexin, in the same capacity; and the only national flag which can be proved to have existed before the time of Philip the First—1060-1108—was the pennon given by Pope Leo the Third to Charlemagne. A mosaic picture which once filled the apse of the banquetting-hall built by Leo the Third in the palace of the Lateran, and a copy of which Benedict the Fourteenth caused to be placed beside the chapel of "La Scala Sante" close to the Basilica, represents the Emperor kneeling before Saint Peter, who gives him a blue flag ending in three points and ornamented with six roses. This was probably the flag which, according to the song of Roland, was first called the "Roman" flag, and afterwards "Montjoie," by which name the barons of Charlemagne hailed it when asking impatiently to be led to battle. It may be observed incidentally that the origin of this celebrated war-cry is one of those puzzles over which antiquaries have much disputed without arriving at any definite result. Some have derived it from the "Mons Gaudii," the hill of joy; now Monte Mario outside Rome, where Charle-
magne probably received the banner in presence of his troops. Others say that a "Montjou" was a calm raised on a field of battle as a sign of victory; others, again, that it was a pile of stones by the roadside to show the way, and that when the word was joined to the name of a saint—such as "Montjoie St. Denys," the war-cry of the Kings of France; "Montjoie St. André," that of the Dukes of Burgundy; "Montjoie Notre Dame," that of the Dukes of Bourbon—it meant "Follow the Saint's flag which leads the way to victory."

When Philip the First, upon the extinction of the male line of the Counts of Vexin, and the reversion of their fief to the crown, inherited the title of "advocatus" of the Abbey of St. Denys, the red flag of the Abbey became the national standard, under the name of the "Oriflamme." In later times a miraculous origin was ascribed to the new flag, and popular legends related how, together with the azure shield charged with golden lilies, it had been brought from Heaven by an angel at the time of the baptism of Clovis, and given to a hermit living near St. Germain-en-Laye to bear to the King. The etymology of the name has been another source of sterile discussions among the learned. It seems, however, to have been derived from the flame-like appearance of the cloven red pennon, as it waved in the air from its glided lance. When the King was about to enter upon a campaign he took the flag from the Abbey with much ceremony. Surrounded by the great feudalatories of the Crown, the monarch, putting off his cloak and girdle, went in procession to the altar, where were enshrined the bodies of Saint Denys and his fellow martyrs, and on which the flag, detached from its staff, was laid during the celebration of Mass. At its conclusion the King gave the Oriflamme to the knight chosen to carry it, who was sworn on the relics of the martyrs to sacrifice, if necessary, his life in its defence, and who then placed it round his neck, and thus carried it till the time came to raise it on the field of battle, where it took precedence of every other standard. At the end of the war it was brought back to the Abbey, placed again on the altar during Mass, and deposited in the treasury.

The first King who took the Oriflamme with these ceremonies was Louis the Sixth, when, in 1124, he prepared to repel the invasion of the Emperor Henry the Fifth; but no engagement took place, as the bishops and nobles of France raised so large an army that the Emperor withdrew his troops; and Louis the Seventh was the first King before whom it was carried in battle during the Crusade of 1147. The Oriflamme led the armies of France in the Crusades of Saint Louis, and in the long wars against the English and Flemish; it was taken for the last time with the usual solemnities by Louis the Eleventh, when about to march against the Duke of Burgundy in 1465, and the last information with regard to the old flag which had had such a glorious history is given by Frère Jacques Doublet, a monk of St. Denys, who wrote, in 1536, that for many years he had seen the Oriflamme held by the statue of an angel fixed against the pillar to the left of the altar of the Holy Martyrs; and he quotes the description of it given nearly a hundred years previously by the Royal Commissioners, who made an inventory of the treasures of the Abbey. It was a standard of very thick "sandal" felt in the middle like a pennon, very much worn, and wrapped round a staff covered with gilt copper, and ended by a long sharp lance.

The Oriflamme was replaced by another banner, which for many years had been carried immediately after it—the Royal banner of azure, charged with golden lilies, an emblem of which the origin cannot be traced with certainty. Some antiquarians have supposed that it represented the yellow flower of the iris in the blue waters of the marshes of Friesland, the primitive home of the Sicambrian Franks; others have derived it from the shape of the iron heads of the halberts and javelins carried by those warriors. The "fleur-de-lis," however, is found in many countries besides France, and ornaments the crowns and sceptres on the seals of the Emperors Barbarossa and Saint Edward the Confessor. Louis the Seventh—1137–1180—seems to have been the first King of France who wore the lilies emblazoned on his shield and embroidered on his Royal mantle. They were at first in indefinite number, but Charles the Sixth reduced them to three, as they have since always appeared on the arms of the Kings of France. This blue flag was in its turn supplanted by the white flag; but the exact date of the change cannot be fixed. According to M. Marius Sepet, the latest authority on the subject, a white cross had always been the badge of the French, as the red cross had been that of the English; this white cross was added to the blue flag during the
Yet in a child’s blind, ignorant faith he went
On his strange errand, with nor doubt nor fear,
Yet humbly grateful for the scroll I sent
To make his passage to his idol clear;
Chancing to know the man whose word could break
Through rule and wont, for my poor pilgrim’s sake.

Another day, following to Harlem, I
Asked of my city magnate of his guest,
Who, struck by his was cheek and eager eye,
Told me that morning he, at my request,
Had led him to the mighty organ, where
He left him in a mood half trance, half prayer.

And for an hour, he said, the rolling waves
Of thunder music, over roofs and floors,
Through massive columns, over storied graves,
And through the great Cathedral’s open doors,
Had flowed, in grand, majestic harmony.

O’er listening earth, up to the listening sky,
Then sank to silence, utter and profound.
No lingering cadence floated on the air;
Down the long aisles died no sweet singing sound.
As, vaguely started, we two entered there,
Treading with awestruck footsteps, strangely soft,
The winding staircase to the organ loft.

Crimson, and gold, and blue, the noonday light
Through storied panes fell on the yellow keys,
Tier upon tier: and on them, still and white,
Lay the old man’s thin fingers, as at ease;
While through the painted clerestory windows shed,
A golden glow lay on the hoary head.

Leant on the oaken back of his high seat.
A radiant smile was on the quiet face;
Such smile as those we’ve loved and lost may greet.
And, in the silent, solemn, holy place,
We, as we speechless stood and looked on him,
Felt he was listening with the Seraphim.

To music sweeter than the lovely strains
That fed the fancies of the lonely boy;
To music richer than the dreamy gains
That gave the tired man his hours of joy;
To music such as rings in heaven alone
From harps of seraphs round the great white throne.

Whether he died because the frail heart-strings
Snapped at the answer to his lifelong cry;
Whether because, as in all earthly things,
The dream transcended the reality;
Whether his granted wish brought good or ill,
I cannot tell: decide it as you will.

THE GLAMOUR OF SPRING.

I HAVE remarked that in my town the rates have a knack of rising in spring; that is to say, the councillors assembled cannot resist the seasonable impulse. A pretext is easily discovered. Either a new area has been condemned, or a acre or two of old houses have to be pulled down at the town’s expense, or a new sewage system, which in September seemed objectionable, seems admirable and irresistible in April or May; or generosity of a sudden runs rampant in the civic mind as sap in the trees, and it is decided unanimously to raise the salaries of all the corporation officials, and whitewash and renovate every public building in the borough. We burgesses are not concerned deeply to investigate the causes of this phenomenon. We have got used to it. So many pence

in the pound—or in a happy year but so many farthings—additional rate now seems as natural in the spring of the year as to see and hear the larks betwixt the brown fields and the blue, cloud-flecked heavens.

There is no doubt about it: when we have fairly done with winter’s ice and snow—or think we have—our spirits are prone to leap with an almost extravagant degree of elation. The time of hope and promise has begun. The mind, like the creative or regenerative principle in nature, has been torpid for three or four months; and it has, again like nature—of which it is a microcosm—acquired strength in repose. If from November or December you have been brooding over an idea that seems to have great material or other profit in it within you, you may look to the spring to start it abruptly into practical existence. The fortune that at Christmas seemed a possibility is now a solid probability: you may even think of the castle, not necessarily in the air, which will be your eventual reward for your various cogitations. They were dismal and desperate enough at times, these cogitations, quite uncheered by aught except passionate desire. But now that the leaves are budding, and the birds carol against each other like Welshmen at a national festival, all doubts sounds from your mind. The world seems a good place and you see your way to carve a fortune out of it, and perhaps gain the veneration of mankind into the bargain.

I know a man of letters who is peculiarly susceptible to this vernal impetus. He has had, he tells me, fair success in the literary groove, which has, in spite of himself, claimed him for its own. But he has never been satisfied with the world or himself, because he has hitherto failed to write a three-volume novel of sufficient merit to please a certain most exacting publisher. He has written nine or ten novels; but they are in manuscript. Each, he fondly hopes, is an improvement on its predecessor. Perhaps he is right in his hope; I cannot tell. He has read to me passages from several of them, which are certainly replete with good sense and not devoid of humour. But then that says nothing for the creation as a whole, and it is as a whole that a novel must be judged. However, regularly as the spring comes round, this persevering ant of a man recurs to his mournful piles of rejected manuscript, and packers his forehead over them as he sanguinely attempts to discern wherein he has failed to fulfill...
his purpose. And even while his mind ploughs its way through this vast and melancholy litter, an idea for a new effort grips him and imperatively insists upon development. Thus, with the new spring, comes the beginning of a new novel. There may be only new disappointment and wailing at the end of it; but of that he knows nothing in the spring, any more than the rosebud that breaks so charmingly in June reeks of its miserable decay in August or September. He is consoled for a time, and that is much. He may even succeed at last, and so get instant compensation for his many autumnal and wintry fits of green despondency and black despair.

It is the season that especially appeals to persons engaged in what I may term creative pursuits—artists, authors, composers and inventors. The poet now has his finest fits and purest inspirations. Nature accompanies him with her many voices, and lifts him to ecstasies unknown later in the year. He no more of us can now revel in what Rudyard Kipling describes as the "clean, clear joy of creation, which does not come to man too often last he should consider himself the equal of his God, and so refuses to die at the appointed time."

But though these men profit exceptionally by the vernal breezes, and the vernal sunshine, and soothing rain, we all share in the gain. What are the spring fashions but an outcome of this engrained seasonal longing for change? The weather has much less to do with the matter than sheer instinct. Even as the trees and shrubs now get new garments, so do our wives and daughters, who are more natural than ourselves, determine to be endowed in like manner.

Again, who that has but a dozen square yards of garden does not know the pleasure and pride they can confer? It is one thing to compose a poem or an opera, and one thing to till a plot of ground, sow seed therein, and tend your young cabbages or flowers until they have come to their prime. And there is little difference fundamentally in the kind of joy of these two pursuits. As Dr. Armstrong, in his old-fashioned but vigorous verse on "The Art of Preserving Health," reminds us:

To raise the insipid nature of the ground
Is to create, and gives a godlike joy,
Which ev'ry year improves.

Thus the commonest and meanest of gardeners or peasants may, if he will, taste of the rapture that attends upon the highest kind of intellectual effort. A bed of spring onions ought to be enough for the purpose.

But the chief stimulus of all that comes to us with the mild westerly winds is the one that stirs our hearts. The birds begin their courtship, and the lambs are in the field. In like manner the breath of love breathes among us and sets many a tender maiden heart gently beating for the first time. The moonlit evenings of April are responsible for much, and so is the coquettish aspect of the country, when all the trees and hedges are in the first bloom of their verdure. The blackbird in the ash strains his throat to tell something of the fervour of his feelings. The youth sitting under the ash with his life's idol pillowed fondly against his shoulder, is also at his best, while he raffles to the girl who wears with the tale of his passion and his determination to make her wedded life with him one long sweet psalm of joy. True, the odds are that our young friend does not fly to quite so lofty a pitch as this—does not even aim at such an elevation. But the occasion, and the season, and the melodious blackbird overhead, all combined, bring the lovers into a state of mental transport which stirs the imagination to its deepest depths. Perhaps the lad's theme is all—or nearly—on the simple text: "I'm getting a pound a week now, and next year it will be thirty shillings, and we can live on that, can't we, my darling?" Even if it be so, it will suffice. The maiden fancy, like the maiden heart, is, in April or May, free of all fetters. It can make an Adonis of Caliban, and see an endless vista of felicity in the married life that begins with love and thirty shillings a week, and goes on to middle age with nine children and still but thirty shillings a week. The sweet spring glamour is over all; and the cuckoo murmuring in the wood puts the crowning touch to the romance that for the moment possesses all existence.

There is a story told of a servant-maid and a carpenter who began their wooing in youth. Circumstances hindered their marriage. The servant-maid in time grew into a housekeeper. She was still unwedded; in fact, she had become a middle-aged woman. The carpenter still loved her and was still true to her. But gradually they talked less and less about marriage. Their intimacy for nine months in the year was one of firm, tried friendship merely. Only when the spring came round did the carpenter renew his more ardent vows and wishes—with entreaties, faint yet still
The youth of the country make ready for the morris-dance, and the merry milkmaid supplies them with ribbons her true love had given her. The little fishes nibbling at the bait, and the porpoises play in the pride of the tide. The shepherds entertain the princes of Arcadia with pleasant roundelays. The aged feel a wind of youth, and youth hath a spirit full of life and activity; the aged hairs refreshen, and the youthful cheeks are as red as a cherry. The lark and the lamb look up at the sun, and the labourer is abroad by the dawning of the day. The sheep’s eye in the lamb’s head tells kind-hearted maids strange tales, and faith and truth make the true-lover’s knot. It were a world to set down the worth of this month; for it is Heaven’s blessing and the earth’s comfort.”

Life has changed its tone since the author of “The Twelve Moneths” wrote this. But it is still possible to feel that the right note is struck here. We have no morris-dances nowadays, and it may be doubted if any British milkmaids now look into the eyes of lambs for instruction in affairs of the heart. But the wise angler still, as in Charles the Second’s time, goes to the riverside as early in the year as he can, to tempt the trout in the season of their most confiding innocence. There are no such baskets of fish got in garfish, magnificent July, as in bright, fickle April; and it is far gayer to throw the fly to the music of the carolling of birds than to the buzz of goats grazing in the fever of their brief existence.

Instead of morris-dances we Britons of the nineteenth century have excursion trains and other innumerable temptations to judicious vernal junketing. We have the Easter volunteer manoeuvres, the chestnut trees of Bushey Park, the last football matches, and the beginning of cycle tours. And our hearts are much the same as the hearts of our forefathers, so that love’s spring flourish is as earnest and lusty as ever it was, in spite of a metropolis of bricks and mortar housing four or five millions of mortals apart from the sunlit meadows and the ripple of silver streams.

I suppose among its other attributes the spring may be credited with the most emphatic attempts at turning over new leaves in moral matters. Nature then seems so good and kind that it appears easier than at other times to chime in with her, and be no longer an unnatural son of so generous a mother. The March...
winds may purify a character as well as a
tract of malarious land, and the showers
of April are full of promise and fertilisation
for the future. If failure comes one year,
why may it not this spring—or the next, or
the next—be followed, for good and all, by a
crowning success? At least, we may be en-
couraged to try, and trying, some people
tell us, is only a little removed in order of
merit from full-blown success itself.

ENGLISHMEN IN AFRICA.

ONE wonders where England would
have been, as regards her standing among
the nations, if the ideas of which we have
heard a good deal of recent years had been
current some centuries ago. If, for in-
stance, attacks which have been made upon
the recent proceedings of Englishmen in
Africa had been made upon the proceedings
of certain Englishmen in the days of
"suld lang syne." True, Englishmen have
been used to being attacked, but scarcely
to being attacked from the same quarter
from which these recent attacks have come:
from which these recent attacks have come:
from which they have not been used to being attacked
by their own kin and kin.

There was a time in England when the
word "patriot" was looked at askance by
decent men. And rightly so. There are,
to-day, patriots and patriots. There is
the patriotism of the gentleman who,
metaphorically, desires the world to tread
upon the tail of his country's coast, for the
sake of "creating a little diversion." And,
especially, there is that new sort of
"patriotism," which is the characteristic of
the "patriots" who are so keenly deafened
to keep untharnished the stainlessness of
their country's honour, that they would
rather see her beaten than victorious in
undertakings of which—for severely moral
reasons!—they disapprove. This is a
curious sort of patriotism. In England it
is quite one of the features of the day. In
France, or in Germany, or in the United
States, or in any part of the world except
in England, persons who indulged in this
sort of patriotism in public places would,
in a remarkably short space of time, find
themselves in a position of singular dis-
comfort. In England we manage things
in a different way.

We are indebted for this sort of patriotism,
possibly, to a misapprehension of plain
facts. Without, for the moment, approving
or disapproving of recent events in Africa,
one thing seems certain, that, if English-
men had not behaved in the same way over
and over and over again in the days
which are gone, England, instead of being
one of the greatest nations which the world
has seen, would not only be one of the
smallest but it would, probably, not be a
nation at all. Present day geographers
would describe it an appanage of one of
the great powers—say of France, as, the
conditions being what they are, the tale
of Malt is an appanage of ours. Possibly
such a state of things would accord with
the views of some of our modern patriots.
In such a case it might be that they would
be inveighing against the greed and the
cowardice of the Englishmen who were
struggling for Independence.

Moral force is a beautiful thing, although
not infrequently it is difficult to know what
is meant by moral force. But, if Jones runs
a race with Brown, let the pundits say what
they will, moral force will not win the race
for Jones; if he does win, it will be be-
cause he runs faster than Brown. So in
the race which is always being run between
the nations. Moral force may be a beauti-
ful entity, but beautiful entities do not score.

We have been told that the whole of the
recent events in Africa have been in the
nature of a commercial speculation. That
a number of desperate men, of adventurers,
went out there for the sole purpose of
making money. One would like to know
what has been the guiding impulse of men
since the beginnings of time, but the
desire of making money! What has popu-
lated America with white men but the
desire of making money! What colonising
expedition was ever undertaken, the root
idea of the promoters of which was not the
desire of making money! This is no new
thing. As things are, money and life are
practically interchangeable terms. We are
all struggle-for-lifers. If a man cannot
get money, i.e. life, where he is; if he is
wise, if he has any of the essence of man-
hood in him, he goes to where he can. In
some form or other the desire of making
money has belled out the sails of all the
ships of all the explorers which the world
has known. It wafted Drake across the
waters, and Frobisher, and Columbus, and
Cortes, and Pizarro—not to speak of the
Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vikings, the
Saxons, those unsanctified freebooters who laid
the foundations of the world. It was the
desire for money which sent Englishmen in
haste to Oceania—just as it is that desire
which is sending the peoples of all the
countries of Europe to what is rapidly
ceasing to be the Dark Continent. We have spent our blood and our substance in the endeavour to obtain an entrance; why should we, alone of all the peoples, decline to pass through the door which we ourselves have opened?

Let us avoid tall talking. Let us keep off that sort of moralistic platform which reminds us so inevitably of Mr. Pecksniff. Let us look plain facts in the face. Who among us has not a son, or a brother, or a relation of some sort, or at least an acquaintance, who is of the number of those who are making history in Africa? And why, as a rule, have they gone there? Is it not because the press at home is so great that it is becoming harder and harder for the average man, and especially for the average young man, to keep his feet in the crowd?

It may be replied,—by some persons it is replied,—that that is no reason why we, any of us, should go to a land which is not ours, and treat it as if it were our own. In thus replying, the individuals who are laddling out from the stock which they keep for their friends the morals which they wish us to accept as ours, seem to think that they have finally disposed of the question. They are mistaken. Surely, even slight reflection would show them that the question is one which bristles with complications. That to answer it as they seem to suppose that it can be answered would be to strike deep at every social and political, and one might almost add, moral institution at present existing in the world.

Socialists tell us that all men are equal; that they all have equal rights; that, in particular, they have all an equal right to the things which are. Surely, they do not intend their doctrines to apply only to some particular portion of the earth's circumference. If they intend their doctrines to have universal application, then, obviously, from the Socialist standpoint, we Englishmen, as men, have a right to a share of Africa. It is—always from the Socialist standpoint—absurd to suppose that one black man, merely because he is black, has the right to monopolise territory for his own extravagant, and, indeed, purposeless gratification, to the exclusion of, at least, ten thousand other men, to whom that very territory would mean the difference between life and death.

"Good" Radicals are beginning to insist that land is common property—not, of course, land in England only, but land all the world over. If that is so, why should we, merely because we are Englishmen, be debarred from the enjoyment of our common heritage in Africa?

Theorists apart, our own common sense, our own hard experience, tells us that the charter of our rights is the strength to assert, and to maintain, them. So long as we are strong enough to hold our own, we hold our own; very little longer. This applies alike to individuals and to nations. It may seem a hard fact; some facts do seem hard; but it is a fact. It may not be the case in another world; it is in this. Practically, every foot of land in Europe, at the present day, is being held by the strong hand, and the strong hand only. In spite of their protestations of peace and of goodwill, the nations watch each other with jealous eyes, with their hands for ever stealing towards the handles of their swords. It is not because they love fighting for the fighting's sake. It might have been so once upon a time; it is not so now. It is because the feeling is growing stronger and stronger in the minds of men, that existence is, after all, in a great measure a question of the survival of the fittest; that the weakest goes to the wall; that the crowd is becoming so great that it is only by the exercise of its own innate strength that a nation, like an individual, can save itself from being trampled under foot.

Great Britain, geographically, is nothing at all. It is a mere spot on the earth's surface. But it is filled with a host of prolific men and of prolific women. Its already teeming population continually increases. To suppose that, in perpetuity, it can find room, within its own limits, for all its sons and daughters, is to suppose a patent absurdity. One might as reasonably assert that the piece of land which is sufficient to support a man and a woman, will be, also, sufficient to support all their descendants through endless generations. Our sons and daughters are, probably, as virile as their forbears, for which we, who have borne them, surely have cause to give thanks. What is to become of them? Are they to go under? Are we to dispose of them at their birth? Or are they to dispose of us, and so exemplify the survival of the fittest by causing youth to triumph over age?

This is not a problem which is peculiar to England. It is a problem which is besetting all the historic nations, both of Europe and of Asia. It is even beginning
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in the first place, did they come to be in their possession? The odds are considerable that the answer would be—by right of conquest. Why, then, to put it on the lowest grounds, should they object to being ejected—the process being attended by circumstances of incomparably less cruelty—in their turn, as they ejected the former proprietors of the soil?

One has read in one way or another a good deal about the occupation of Britain by the Roman legions, but one does not recall many passages in which that occupation is spoken of as a crime. After the Romans went, other people tried trips to Britain, and pretty havoc some of them seem to have played, until, finally, the Normans came to stay. One has also read a good deal about these transactions, but, again, one does not recall many passages in which they are spoken of as crimes. And yet if our treatment of Lobengula was criminal, how much more were those things criminal? Is it because they took place so long ago that we do not think of them as crimes, or is it because we are aware that it is in no slight degree to those very transactions that we, as a nation, owe our greatness? Do we not know that if a great future is in store for Central Africa, one step was taken forward towards that future when a handful of Englishmen laid the Matabele low? The same unbinding code of morals cannot be applied to varying sets of circumstances. Loyola spoke correctly, out of the fulness of a wide experience, when he more than suggested that there are righteous crimes. What sane man would deny that the practical extinction of the Red Indian—crime, surely, according to every moral code, though it was—has not been justified by the history up to the present day, and by the promise for the future, of the United States of North America?

It is difficult to write dispassionately of contemporary events. The air is charged with electricity. Each man has his own axe to grind. It is not easy amidst the hubbub to perceive clearly who has the best claim to the grinder's. It is more than probable that mistakes have been made in Africa—mistakes of a kind which it is impossible to excuse. But it is just as probable that such mistakes have been made on both sides; indeed, on all sides, for the sides are many. The main question at issue is the question in which this story a day has troubled philanthropists and politicians alike—the question of the white man and the black; of the man who calls
race. She was tall and slight, her fair skin warmed into a faint pink at the cheeks, her eyes were blue as the river in sunshine, and her hair was golden as the track of light upon the water.

When they reached the brow of the first hill to begin the steep descent to the lower level where the farms were, Monsieur Michaud got down from the buckboard and walked, while Madame drove. Corinne watched the sure-footed pony plucking his steps as he zigzagged down the stony slope, but Marcelline's gaze wandered dreamily across the plateau below to the blue St. Lawrence, spreading himself twenty miles wide to take the green Isle aux Oudres on its bosom. From that height she could see over the island the main channel of the river bordered by the farther shore, a wavy purple band upon the horizon.

"There is no longer ice in the river," she said presently.

"No," replied Corinne; "Antoine will be well on his way to the fishing-banks by this time."

"When he ought to be at the plough," said Madame bitterly. Her other sons were all settled on farms near her, and she could not forgive the youngest for leaving the few acres around the old homestead which his father had reserved for him.

"Antoine was always fond of the water," pleaded Corinne for her twin brother.

"He went without his mother's blessing, and no good will come of it," replied Madame sternly, as her husband reseated himself and took the reins.

"Vex not thyself, ma mère," he said.

"Antoine has departed in a poor boat with a difficult captain, and rest certain he will be back by haying time."

"He had better be home by then, the ungrateful one—to go off without leave of his parents, without even saying adieu!"

"He had said adieu to Marcelline, but she did not think it necessary to mention that circumstance. Why should she tell her aunt, never too sympathetic, that Antoine had gone off in passionate haste because she had refused to marry him? It was but three days since they had walked together to the wharf to wait for a parcel expected from Quebec by the Saguenay boat, which touched twice a week at that port. Had the steamer been on time, or had Marcelline looked less fresh and sweet in her first summer gown, the declaration might not have come just then, for it took the girl by surprise.

"I love you like a sister, Antoine. Have I not been your sister ever since uncle brought me home when I was only twelve?"

"I have never thought of you as a sister," cried the impetuous Marcelline. "I have loved you always, and I always shall, but I will go away, and then you will learn to care. One values not the sheep-dog that lies ever at the door."

He sent a message home to his mother, and embarked straightway on a schooner that happened then to be setting sail from the wharf.

Marcelline had not regretted her decision, but still on that slow drive home from church down the break-neck hills, her mind occasionally recurred to her uncle's expression, "a poor boat."

The Michaud farmhouses, roughcast and coloured yellow, stood several fields distant from the main road, across three ravines down which the spring torrents were rushing. Corinne jumped down from the back seat while the "quatre roux" was in motion, and ran forward to open the gate leading into each field, waiting also to shut it. She was active as her brother and almost as strong. Nothing seemed to tire her, but her unceasing energy, even the overflowing affection for herself, often wearied the sensitive Marcelline. With the twin cousins equally devoted to her, she had sometimes felt herself between two fires, but now that the fiercer flame was removed she hoped that the time would never come when she would miss its warmth. Undemonstrative by nature, she did not wish those who loved her to be too much like herself, and she noted, not without a twinge of jealousy, that Corinne seemed on the verge of setting up another idol in her heart in the shape of Lucien Potvin, the miller's son.

There were the usual number of Sunday visitors at the Michaud homestead that afternoon. It was still too cold for the elderly people to sit out of doors, but the young ones sunned themselves on the gallery at the front of the house.

At the top of the steps leading down to the tobacco-garden sat Lucien Potvin near the feet of Marcelline, who was swinging gently to and fro in a rocking-chair of home manufacture. Corinne watched the pair, though she kept up an animated conversation with a cousin from the village. He did not look strong, this young miller. Fair he was, like Marcelline, but he lacked the gold in his hair and the red in his
Corinne had seen the two, but was too proud to interrupt a tête-à-tête, and would have passed on with a wave of her hand but Lucien went to meet her.

"Corinne," he said, "will you not come in the boat with us? The tide is not yet far enough out for you to get to the fisheries, and Marcelline will go if you do."

Marcelline's wish was enough for the sturdy cousin, as Lucien knew it would be. Love for her was the one bond of union between these dissimilar natures. She had never done anything in particular to deserve it, had just been her gentle, cheerful self, and they worshipped her.

"If Marcelline wants to go on the water, I need not hurry myself. I can go too," said Corinne, and forthwith the three embarked in the clumsy boat which moved steadily enough with the sail up, though the tide was so far out that it bumped several times on the large boulders before reaching the main current of the river. Truly it was a tame affair, this going boating with Lucien compared to last summer, when Antoine had taken the girls out with him on the roughest days, when the motion was like tobogganning on a steep hillside. Marcelline remembered that once they had stuck fast on the huge boulder over there whose head was now far out of the water, and Antoine had at once jumped out into the river up to his shoulders, and by sheer strength had lifted the boat off. He was too impulsive, that Antoine. Why could he not stay at home and be sensible?

"Look at the seal, Marcelline," said Lucien, breaking in upon her thoughts, "over there, sunning himself on the rock."

He was light brown on the back, and showed greyish white below as he slid off into the water at their approach. Lucien was well-informed, could indeed read English, and told the girls many interesting things about the habits of the seal, and also of the porpoises that were tumbling in the distance; but what was that compared to Antoine's bold dash after the animals themselves?

They stayed out till the sun drew near the edge of the high hills behind the village, shining red on the tinned church steeples. Then Lucien brought the boat to the edge of the mudflats which extended nearly a mile from the shore, and, the tide being almost far out, besides the anchor he put two iron supports at her sides to keep the boat from tipping over when the water left her high and dry.
“You stay here, demoiselles, while I go ashore, and I shall bring out the hay-cart to drive you in.”

So saying, Lucien took off his shoes and stockings, rolled up his trousers, and scrambling over the side waded and ran towards the mill.

“If Monsieur Lucien thinks I am going to wait to be driven in, he is mistaken,” said the independent Corinne, and his back was no sooner turned than she, too, stripped barefoot, tucked up her skirts and splashed away, pail in hand, towards the fisheries to collect any flounders, smelts or sardines that might have been left by the receding tide in the little pool at the angle of the two fences of brushwood.

Marcelline sat still.

“I am honoured;” she thought, “being driven in! Antoine has carried me ashore many a time, but of course I could not let Lucien do that. He is not strong enough, for one thing. Antoine is like a giant; but he can be gentle too. I wonder why he has not written! Perhaps he will not get tired so soon as they think.”

Lucien drove up in the hay-cart, urging his fat Canadian pony, the best-fed horse for miles around, to its utmost speed, which was not great. He had taken time to spread a buffalo robe over the straw in the bottom of the two-wheeled vehicle. Strange to say Lucien never missed Corinne, but drove ashore very slowly, sitting on the front of his cart with feet hanging down at the side, while Marcelline sat in the middle, leaning her yellow hair against the side rail, and through the opposite bars watching the shadows deepen on the purple hills which stood boldly out into the river beyond Baie St. Paul. Something about that familiar scene recalled so forcibly her absent cousin, that she was miles away in thought when Lucien spoke.

“Marcelline,” he said, leaning back to look better into the refined, delicate features of his companion.

“Well, Lucien,” she replied, without taking her eyes from the distant hills, and the request, whatever it was, died on his lips. He, too, turned his eyes to the dark blue mountains with a look even more wistful than her own.

There was a dance at the Michaud farm-house that evening. The expected violinist did not turn up till late, but a youth from the village played the accordion, and those who sat round the low-celled kitchen stamped their feet in time. The men danced together and then the maidens, in oddition figures. Lucien went on his knee to Madame, asking leave to dance with Marcelline, but the sult was obdurate. None but married women might dance with the man. There were no round dances, but Monsieur and Madame, as straight and supple almost as any young couple in the room, went through some steps facing each other. When Madame was tired, her married daughter skipped lightly into her place to keep the measure going, and when the perversion broke forth on Monsieur’s brow, a younger man came to the front, and so on, thus changed places until all had had a turn.

The company sang in the intervals, and Lucien, who had a tenor voice naturally light and sweet, excelled himself in “Les yeux bleus et les yeux noirs.” The blue eyes were evidently his favourites, for ever and anon he glanced at Marcelline, while poor Corinne wrestled desperately with a strange new feeling which made her feel something akin to hatred for her gentle cousin.

About nine o’clock there was a fresh arrival, the belated violin player. He must surely have been the worse for liquor, or he would not have burst out there, before them all, the news he had heard at the wharf:

“The schooner that Antoine went away on has sunk just below Todoma. She was a leaky boat; no one was saved.”

“But Antoine! Surely he is not drowned!”

“That I know not. The boat touched at Todomas. He may have got off there. If so, he will soon be home.”

“Oh, yes!” said the father. “He was sure to land there. He would know by that time the boat was not safe.”

“Ah, yes,” said Madame, “Antoine is the bad penny that always turns up.”

“He knows he cannot be spared longer from home,” said Corinne; but Marcelline said nothing. Only Lucien noticed that her face grew white as the folds of her kerchief; and, when next he looked towards her chair, it was empty. Pulling his cap drearily down to his eyes, and without a farewell word to any one, young Pouvin strode out into the darkness with an old pain renewed in his heart.

“She does care for him, after all!”

It seemed so indeed when day after day brought no news of the wanderer, and Marcelline drooped like a lily whose stem is broken down near the root. She lost her
Marcelline. [April 28, 1864.]

You and Madame must make her go for your sakes.

But she is too ill—-

She may be while she is going away, but coming back she will be better. Do you not remember how Madame Edmond was cured of her rheumatism, and François Tremblay of his lameness! Our good lady of Beaupré loves not them more than us.

If she will only consent—-

You must make her, Corinne, though we should have to carry her on board. I shall come for Madame and you two at four o'clock in the morning.

For days Marcelline had been lying in the high four-posted bed which nearly filled her small bedroom, that had a door opening into Corinne's, and another into the sitting-room. It seemed barbarous to insist on her taking that rough ride down to the wharf, but she had grown so light that Corinne carried her easily to the miller's buckboard. There, with a pillow behind her, and Corinne's stout arm and shoulder to rest upon, she made the journey to the wharf with comparatively little fatigue, for Lucien drove slowly.

There were many passengers on the steamer, some going only so far as Baie St. Paul, others bent on pleasure merely, but the larger portion were devout worshippers on their annual pilgrimage. These spoke hopefully to Marcelline of the healing power of the Bonne Sainte Anne, and assured her that she would return on that same boat a different creature. She only smiled a little. She had no faith herself, and was making what she believed to be her final excursion, merely to please her aunt and cousin, who sat one on either side of her as she lay on the lounge in the stuffy little cabin. Through the small window astern she could look out at the St. Lawrence, smooth as glass in the morning sunlight, except the track which the paddle-wheels of the steamer had whipped into foam, and she kept thinking, thinking of the boat which had sailed away in the other direction never to return.

One after another they rounded the bold headlands of the north shore, past the tiny villages with their big churches exactly nine miles apart, till at last the mountain of Ste. Anne came in sight, with the great cathedral at its base looking like a toy church in comparison.

Was there ever such a long wharf?

Marcelline thought, as she was driven slowly from the boat-side. With hushed voices and silent tread, the formerly noisy,

appetite, the colour left her face; but her eyes glowed a deeper blue from the centre of dark rings.

The hay was more than ready to cut before Monieur Michaud hired any one to help him with it, for he said:

"Antoine will be here in a few days."

But the baying time passed, and still he came not.

"He has been bound to have his season's fishing after all," said Madame severely. But often she shaded her sunburnt face with her still browner hand, and watched the small sails which now and then dotted the shining river to the east.

"Perhaps he is in that boat rounding the point just now."

Corinne did the work of a man, that summer, besides helping her mother indoors; for Marcelline became weaker as the weather grew warmer. She was forced to give up the school. Going up and down the hill was too much for her, and she made the same excuse for neglecting Mass, though she had always been driven there.

It was Corinne then for whom Lucien watched on her way to and from the fisheries to ask daily for Marcelline.

"Lucien," said the girl to him one day, as she rested on the large boulder half-way up the hill, while she sat on the rail fence beside her, "Marcelline grows no better."

"No!" he replied, looking earnestly at the softened face of his companion, which was gaining beauty in his eyes during this anxious time.

"She was spitting blood last night; and such a fit of coughing! It broke my heart."

"I spoke to Dr. Vallée in the village to-day."

"Yes! What did he say, Lucien?"

"He said he feared consumption for Marcelline."

"Oh, Lucien!

And stout-hearted Corinne bent her sunburnt face into her hands, and let her tears fall among the tommy cads in her basket.

For the first time in his experience Lucien felt himself the stronger of the two. He moved over to the big stone beside her, and gently patted her shoulder.

"Never despair, Corinne! We shall save her yet."

"But how? What can we do?"

"Listen, my friend. There is to be an excursion to Ste. Anne on Monday from here and from Baie St. Paul. We shall take her there."

"But she does not believe—she will not go."

"You and Madame must make her go for your sakes."

"But she is too ill—-

"She may be while she is going away, but coming back she will be better. Do you not remember how Madame Edmond was cured of her rheumatism, and François Tremblay of his lameness! Our good lady of Beaupré loves not them more than us."

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thousands of people entered the large silent 
church, where they were greeted by the tall 
pyramids of crutches of the cured. There 
was a special service for the pilgrims; and 
the white-robed priests, high up at the right-hand 
side, exhorted them to that faith 
which could remove mountains. 

Upheled by her aunt and cousin, Marcelline 
tumbled to the statue of the Bonne 
Saine Anne, and fell on her knees with the 
group there. In the rebellion of her heart 
she had asked no spiritual comfort from 
the Church, and it was more in weakness 
than in faith that she knelt. As in a dream 
the familiar words of the Mass fell upon 
her ears, and she shed bitter tears for 
her lost love and her blighted life. She 

had been no great sinner that such 
desolation should have come upon her. She 

had neither father nor mother, brother nor 
sister, and the one on earth dearest to her 

had been taken away before she knew that 

she loved him. 

One of the kneeling crowd jostled 
er slightly, and looking up resentfully she 

saw that it was a little blind girl, turning 
her sightless eyes upwards, while her lips 

moved as she fingered her beads. On the 
other side of her was a woman holding a 
baby, on whom Marcelline saw the stamp 
of death. The mother held it out to the 

statue of Sainte Anne, and cried aloud in 
her agony that the child might be healed. 

Then there was a man with a misshapen 

head, stretching it forth in supplication; 

another shaking with fever; and a third 

vindicating his innocence, for his eyes roamed 

restlessly as he muttered to himself, and 

his friends kept hold of him. Others 

there were, both men and women, all 

bearing the impress of care and pain, if not 

otherwise deformed. Such a woeful group 

Marcelline had never even pictured to 
herself, and as she bent her head again the 

tears fell, not for herself alone. 

"What am I, O Holy Mother, that I 
should alone expect to be happy in this 
world of misery? I have been weak and 
selfish, make me strong." In token of 
remorse and repentance she took the treasure 
locket from her neck, and added it to the host 
of trophies hung before the Bonne Saine Anne. 

It was a firmer and braver Marcelline 

who rose to her feet when the service was 

over. She would not take Corinne's arm 

down the passage, and at the Convent near 
where Madame took her charges, she ate a 
little without being urged, for the first 
time since that sad Queen's Birthday. 

"Truly a marvelous cure!" said the 
villagers. 

It was a warm, dark, cloudy night, and 
she persisted in sitting on deck all the way 
home, watching the phosphorescence on the 
water. She seemed in a strangely uplifted 
state, and Lucien and Corinne exchanged 
joyful whispers that were a little mixed 
with awe. 

It was very late when the home wharf 
was reached, but no one would have recog-
nised the drooping invalid in the tall 
"demoiselle" with the steady walk. Some-
body waiting near the lantern seemed to 
know her—somebody in a rough sailor 
dress with face burned even darker than 
its natural hue. That which Marcelline 

had renounced was given back to her. 

"Antoine!" she cried and held out both 

hands, while he clasped her close, regardless 

of Lucien and Corinne, who after the first 
exclamation stood back—the sister a little 
jealous that even one so dear as Marcelline 
should be rewarded with twins' first thought. 

Lucien pressed her hand in the darkness. 

"We must be the first to each other 
now, Corinne." 

She nodded her head gravely, but said 

nothing. Madame was off the steamer by 
this time and she was not so silent. 

"So you have come back, have you, 
Antoine, now that the haying is over? 
Where have you been—making us all 
think you drowned!" 

"I did not hear till to-day that the 
schooner I went from here on was sunk. I 
was not surprised, for she leaked badly. I 
left her at Tadoussac and went up the 
Saguenay on another, and I have made 
efficient enough money to pay for my share of 
the haying, mother, and to set me and 
Marcelline up housekeeping, if you will let us 
get married." 

"Humph!" said Madame. "If it had 
not been for the Bonne Saine Anne it would 
be her coffin only you would have to buy." 

Antoine pressed more tightly the hand 
on his arm and whispered in his masculine 
unbelief: 

"What has cured thee, Marcelline? 
Was it Sainte Anne or Saint Antoine?"

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HOME NOTES

HOMINOUS.

TO MAKE BLACK-LEAD INDELIBLE ON ZINC LABELS.—The part of the label intended to be written on should be rubbed over with pumice-stone. Then write on it with a black-lead pencil, and when the writing has been exposed to the air for a few days it will become indelible. If the label should by any means get covered with mould, it may be washed off and the writing will reappear. It is best to make labels for this process of old zinc.

TO CURE A BEEF TONGUE follow this recipe, and you will be delighted with the result. Make a brine by adding to three gallons of water half a pound of salt, three quarters of a pound of dark brown sugar, and one ounce of saltpetre. Let all boil together and skim, then remove the brine from the fire, add a quarter of a teaspoonful of cayenne, and when quite cold put in the tongue. They will be fit for use in a week, and will be found of a colour and flavour to satisfy the most fastidious.

WHITE GINGERBREAD.—Ingredients necessary are one pound of flour, half a pound of butter, one ounce of ground ginger, the rind of one lemon, half a pound of castor sugar, one nutmeg grated, half a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, one gill of milk. Rub the butter well into the flour, add the sugar and the grated lemon- peel, ginger, and nutmeg. Mix these well together, make the milk just warm, stir in the soda, and work the whole into a nice smooth paste. Roll it out, cut it into cakes and bake in a moderate oven for about twenty minutes.

THIS METHOD OF CLEANING CARPETs will, I hope, suit your purpose. Rub on with a flannel this solution: Two gallons of water, into which half a pound of soft soap is dissolved, and four ounces of liquid ammonia. Afterwards rub the carpet dry with clean cloths. If you send me your address, repeating your other question, I shall have much pleasure in writing to you.

YORKSHIRE TEA CAKES.—Rub six ounces of butter into two pounds of fine flour, add two eggs well beaten, one pint of milk, and one ounce of German yeast. Knead well, put it into a bowl, cover with a cloth, and set before the fire to rise. When the dough commences to crack, divide into cakes, roll them up lightly, let them rise before the fire for a few moments, and bake for half an hour.

ON PRESERVING FRUIT.—In many economical households one hears that preserving at home has been given up, as it is so often an unsuccessful process. This seems a great mistake, and I maintain that if certain conditions are ensured failure is out of the question. The fruits must be fresh, freshly gathered, dry, and perfect of their kind. All germs in the bottles or jars used, received by contact with the air or otherwise, must be destroyed by heat, in the form of boiling water. All germs of microscopic animal or vegetable life in the fruits, germs of fungus, growth, etc., must be quite destroyed in the cooking process. When this has been done the air must be completely excluded, so that all germs will be kept out. The surest way to secure all these conditions is to put the fruit into bottles or jars, and after partially sealing them, put the jars into a large saucepan of cold water, place it on the fire, and let it gently come to the boil and keep it cooking slowly till the fruit is sufficiently cooked. Then keep the jars in the water till it is cold, seal the jars tightly, and turn on end. If jars leak they are liable to ferment, and if they do not leak no air can carry the seeds of fermentation to the contents. Fruits that require sugar to make them palatable are safer if it is cooked with them. The mould constantly found on the top of fruit in jars, when the rest of the fruit is uninjured, has its origin in germs from the air that settled on the uncovered jars before they were sealed up. Therefore it is best to cover the jars as soon as possible. Fruit preserved with these precautions carefully observed will keep in sound condition till it is in season again. I have lately been having in tarts gooseberries which were preserved last year.

TO KIPPER SALMON.—I have never had the good fortune to have a whole salmon to spare for this recipe; but as you so often have, I hope you will find it excellent. Take a large-sized salmon in good condition, gut it and clean it thoroughly, also scale it, but do not wash it. Then split it and take out the backbone. Let it now be rubbed with a quantity of salt and brown sugar and a little saltpetre, all well mixed. Allow it to remain with this briny mixture about it for a couple of days, pressed tightly between two boards. After which spread it open and stretch it out flat with small pieces of wood. Then suspend it from the roof of the kitchen to dry, or, if desired, smoke it with wood.
THE WAY TO PREPARE MEAT FOR CHILDREN. — When small children first 
take to meat it is always difficult to know 
in what form it can be given to them, 
without upsetting their digestion. The 
following is the method prescribed by a 
well-known children's doctor: Cook a 
mutton chop on a griddle very lightly, so 
that all the juices is left in the meat; then 
cut the meat off the bone, carefully taking 
away every scrap of fat. Cut the lean up 
and then pound it in a mortar, and pass 
through a rather coarse sieve, with some 
dry bread, and, for a healthy child, a little 
sabbage, but no potato. Put the mixture 
on to a warm plate and pour hot beef-tea 
over it. This should not be given to a 
child younger than eighteen months, and 
at first not oftener than twice a week.

CHOCOLATE SOUFFLE PUDDING is not 
very extravagant at this time of year when 
eggs are cheap, and is a very dainty 
pudding. Place two ounces of chocolate 
in a basin, standing it in a pan of boiling 
water till the chocolate melts. Then stir 
it into one pint of boiling milk with two 
ounces of sugar. Add three tablespoonfuls 
of flour and one of cornflour, which must 
be rubbed till smooth in a little cold milk, 
and strained. Stir in a lump of butter 
about the size of an egg. Cook until the 
mixture is smooth and thick. When this 
mixture is a little cool add four eggs, the 
yolks and whites beaten separately, and a 
flavouring of vanilla. Bake about half an 
hour in a pudding dish placed in a pan of 
bolling water.

BACHELOR'S OMELET.—Take a teaspoon-
ful of flour, beat up two eggs, and with 
half a teaspoonful of milk make into a thin 
cream, add a pinch of salt and a few grains 
of cayenne. Melt in a small frying-pan 
two ounces of butter, when very hot pour 
in the mixture. Let the pan remain for a 
few minutes over a clear fire, then sprinkle 
upon the omelet some chopped herbs and 
a few shreds of onion; double the omelet 
dexterously and shake it out of the pan on 
to a hot dish. A simple sweet omelet can 
be made in the same way, substituting 
sugar or preserve for the chopped herbs.

TO CLEAN ALABASTER OBJECTS.—Alab-
aster objects are liable to become yellow 
by keeping, and are especially injured by 
smoke, dust, etc. They may in a great 
measure be restored by washing in soap 
and water, then with clear water, and 
polishing with shave-grass. Grease spots 
may be removed either by rubbing with 
tsile powder or oil of turpentine.

WORLD'S FAIR AT CHICAGO.—Messrs. 
C. J. van Houten & Zoon, at the "World's 
Fair" at Chicago, have again upheld 
the reputation of their well-known firm. Their 
handsome detached building in Old Dutch 
style on the Michigan lake aroused general 
interest. The building is of two storeys, 
consisting of six attractively furnished 
rooms, where twenty girls, attired in Dutch 
costumes, had more than enough to do to 
satisfy the requirements of the multitude 
of visitors. From June until the close 
of the Exhibition about seven hundred thou-
sand cups of Van Houten's Cocoa were 
degustated, a number never reached at any 
other Exhibition where the firm has ex-
hibited. Not only did Van Houten's 
Cocoa receive the highest award, but 
Messrs. Van Houten's Exhibition Archi-
tect, Mr. G. Wijnen, received a medal for 
the building, the only award given to an 
bldect for an unofficiol building in the 
Exhibition Grounds.

TO CLEAN WOOL OF LAMBSKIN.—First 
wash the wool thoroughly with a solution 
of curd soap and rainwater. Rinse all the 
suds well out, and allow it to dry thoroughly. 
Procure a box with a good cover, place 
some laths across it in the middle, on 
which place your skin, wool downwards. 
Take an iron shovel, heat it till quite red, 
and place it on an iron to prevent its burn-
ing the box, then put upon it two rolls of 
brimstone, and cover the box over with 
both a lid and a blanket. In two or three 
hours your skins will be pure white and 
all insect life will be destroyed. I am 
sorry you did not give me your address, 
for then you should have had a more 
speedy answer. You need not be afraid 
of my not liking to write to one so far off, 
for I have many letters from Australia 
and have been delighted to hear that 
I have been of use to my correspondents 
there.

TO CLEAN SOUP WITHOUT IMPOVERISH-
ING IT.—Make your stock, and when it is 
cold remove all fat and strain it through 
muslin. Cut very small one pound of lean 
beef freed from skin and fat. Place it 
in a saucepan, pour the stock upon it, and 
put it at a distance from the fire, just to 
 simmer for about an hour, not to boil. 
Then strain it through a flannel bag. The 
residue will go into the stock-pot again. 
Soup made from fresh meat or bones will 
be quite clear if fried a nice brown before 
having the water added to it. The frying 
must only be enough to brown the meat on 
the outside.
"Looing about the grounds of the Chicago Exhibition," says Mr. Howard Paul, writing in "The Caterer," "as I did, without any hard-and-fast rule, with a view of observing the people rather than the exhibits, I came upon many queer types, and I think the most obnoxious was the inquisitive visitor. There is a class of people who will ask questions at any moment of anybody who is handy, about the most commonplace matters. I took refuge at last in the British building, and was writing a letter. "Are you allowed to write here?" was the first volley fired at me by a goggle-eyed stranger, who stared at my pen as if he suspected it of deadly possibilities directed against his peace of mind or safety. "It looks like it," I replied, as curtly as was consistent with courtesy. "How much did this building cost?" I affected not to hear, but he did not take the hint. "Did England build it herself?" he continued. I attempted a smile as I looked up, but I fear I badly mutilated it. "Yes, it's constructed from a plan drawn by Mr. Gladstone, who came over in disguise and put it up with his own hands." I thought the absurdity of this remark would choke him off, but there came back a persistent "Bless my soul, you don't tell me—didn't he have any help at all?" But I fled to escape further persecution.

An Irishman found himself for the first time pacing the deck of a large vessel bound for the States. He had his eye in his mouth, but the wind being high, he had been unable to light it, and was in search of some sheltered spot where he could strike a match. He soon espied the stairs leading to the saloon. "Just the place," thought he. He stepped down a few stairs, and having lighted his pipe, sat down to enjoy a comfortable smoke. Just then the captain approached, who, somewhat startled, asked Pat what he was doing there. "Can't you read?" he asked. "Yes, a little. Not much," replied Pat. "Well, can you read that notice up there?" pointing to the words, "Gentlemen are requested not to smoke." "Yes," replied Pat, who cooly went on puffing his pipe. "You can't," said the captain, his temper rising. "Then why don't you go somewhere else and smoke?" "Oh! that notice has nothing to do with me," said Pat. "Nothing to do with you? What do you mean?" "P'what do I mean? Why, that I'm no gentleman, and it would tak' a mighty dale to mak' me one."

In the year 1839, when the Basalane had taken Varna, nobody would venture to break the news to the Sultan Mahmud. The Vizier, Khosrow—at that time Seraskier and General in the army—was to have undertaken this duty, as besetting the dignity of his rank. On meeting the Sultan he detected signs of a gathering storm, and feeling that the moment was unpropitious, he confined his remarks to subjects of trivial importance, and took his leave. On coming away he met Abdullah Efsendi, physician in ordinary to the Court, who enquired in what mood he had left His Majesty. "I am thankful to say," Khosrow promptly replied, "he has taken it better than I anticipated." As soon as the doctor entered the audience-chamber, he said, with an air and in a tone of sympathy: "Sire, the Almighty does all things well, and we shall have to submit." "What has happened?" said Mahmud, rather surprised. "For the sake of a hair plucked from the lion's mane, there is small need to about 'Victory.'" "What do you mean! Explain yourself!" the Sultan here broke in impatiently. "It was written—" "Speak, I tell you! shouted Mahmud, with a terrible voice. "Sire, notwithstanding the unbelievers have taken Varna—" "Varna taken!" howled the Sultan. "Varna taken!" And with a kick he sent Abdullah spinning on the ground. The downy Vizier afterwards laughed at the success of his ruse.

"Two of our more distant neighbours," writes Mr. W. R. Le Fauv in his "Seventy Years of Irish Life," were Considine of Dirk and Croker of Ballingsard, both men of considerable property, and each having in his hands a large farm. It was a moor point which held the richer land; each maintained the superiority of his own. At one time Considine had a farm to let. A man from the county of Kerry, where, the land is very poor, came to see it, with a view of becoming tenant. "My good man," said Considine, "I don't think you are the man to take a farm like this. It is not like your miserable Kerry land, where a mountain sheep can hardly get enough to eat. You don't know how the grass grows here! It grows so fast and so high that, if you left a heifer out in that field there at night, you would scarcely find her in the morning." 'Bedad, yer honour,' replied the Kerry man, 'there's many a part of my own county where, if you left a heifer out at night, the devil a bit of her you'd ever see again!'
**HOME NOTES.**

AND

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To Make Black-lead Indelible or ZiNO Labels.— The part of the label in contact with the ink must be dried to prevent the water from spreading it. If the writing has been exposed to the air for a few days it will become indelible. If the writing has been exposed to the air for a week, and will be found of a colour and texture till it b in season again, I have observed will keep in sound condition till it b. I have accordingly observed will keep in sound condition till it b in season again.

A gentleman, after taking tea with a friend who lived in St. James's Palace, took his leave, and stepping back immediately fell down a whole flight of stairs, and with his head broke open a closest door. The unlucky visitor was completely stunned by the fall, and on his recovery found himself sitting on the floor of a small room, and most kindly attended by a neat little old gentleman, who was carefully washing his hands with a towel, and fitting with great exactness pieces of sticking-plaster to the variegated cuts which the accident had occasioned. For some time his surprise kept him silent; but, finding that the kind physician had completed his task, and had even picked up his wig and replaced it on his head, he rose from the floor, and, limping towards his benefactor, was going to utter a profession of thanks for the attention he had received. These were, however, instantly checked by an intelligent frown, and significant motion of the hand towards the door. The patient understood the hint, but did not then know that for the kind assistance he had received he was indebted to George the Second, King of England.

Daniel O'Connell made a pilgrimage to the shrines of St. Thomas of Canterbury every year, and he used to tell the following anecdote about his first visit: "I did not know the exact spot where the saint fell martyred, but the verger showed it me. I knelt down and kissed the stone which had received his life-blood. The verger, in horror, told me that he would be dismissed if the Dean saw that he allowed any 'Popish work' there. I, to console him, asked him his fee, and he told me it was a shilling. I gave him half-a-crown, saying the additional one and-sixpence was for his fright. He thanked me, and having carefully looked out into the grounds, he said: 'He's not there, sir; you may kiss it again for nothing. When a real gentleman comes, I let him do as he likes.' I think," added O'Connell, "that he wanted another half-a-crown, but, though I was never in office, I remained on that occasion under the crown."

The late Sir Andrew Clark was amongst the earliest doctors to distinguish between the use of alcohol as a stimulant and its supposed medical qualities as a cure of half the ills that flesh is heir to. He discouraged the morning glass of sherry and biscuit, and would never tolerate the idea that anything of this sort was of medical service. If medicine, why take it daily? To many who consulted him he put the question insinuatingly: "Pray, what wine do you like best?" "A glass of port," replied the unsuspecting patient. "Exactly the thing you must not take," said the doctor. Sir Andrew was himself temperate, and even abstemious. A dignified Dea once saw him take a glass of wine, and remarked jokingly: "I am sorry, Sir Andrew, to see that you do not apply to your own case the recommendations that you give to others." "And I assure you," said Sir Andrew, "that it has been the regret of my life that so many of the clergy do not practice all that they preach."

**PRACTICAL CHARITY.**—The late Mrs General Lascelles, when more celebrated as Miss Cusley, the singer, was once treated to contribute to the relief of a widow, whose husband had left her in a very distressed condition. She gave her guineas, but desired to know the poor woman's address; and in three days called upon her with nearly fifty pounds, which she had in the interim collected as a masquerade in the character of a "Beguin." (a begging nun).
The Way to Prepare Meat for Children. — When small children first take to meat it is always difficult to know in what form it can be given to them, following is the method prescribed by a well-known children's doctor:ook a mutton chop on a gridiron very lightly, so well that all the juice is left in the meat; then cut the meat off the bone, carefully taking away every scrap of fat. Out the lean up and then pound it in a mortar, and pass dry bread, and, for a healthy child, a little over it. This should not be given to a child younger than eighteen months, and very extravagant at this time of year when at first not oftener than twice a week.

Put the mixture into a basin, standing it in a pan of boiling water till the chocolate melts. Then stir in the mixture with the yolks and whites beaten separately, and a mixture is smooth and thick. When this is a little cool add four eggs, the chocolate SUFFLÉ Pudding is not Bachlor's Omelet.— Take a teaspoon of flour and one of cornflour, which must be quite dear if fried a nice brown before having the water added to it. The frying must only be enough to brown the meat on the outsides.

IN QING It. — Make your stock, and when it is cold remove all fat and strain it through a flannel bag. The residue will go into the stock-pot again. Then strain it through a flannel bag. The stock-pot.

TO CLEAH ABSTER Objects.—Alas—

PROCURE a box with a good cover, place some laths across it in the middle, on which place your skin, wool downwards. Take an iron shovel, heat it till quite red, and have—been delighted to hear that for I have many letters from Australia for then you should have had a more sorry you did not give me your address, which place your skin, wool downwards. Take an iron shovel, heat it till quite red, and have—been delighted to hear that for I have many letters from Australia for then you should have had a more sorry you did not give me your address, which place your skin, wool downwards.

To Clear Soup Without Improveshish—

Take an iron shovel, heat it till quite red, and have—been delighted to hear that for I have many letters from Australia for then you should have had a more sorry you did not give me your address, which place your skin, wool downwards.
A DELICIOUS PRESERVE OF ORANGES AND LEMONS.
In 1-lb., 2-lb., and 3-lb. Glass Jars and White Pots.

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Gives Life Assurance at Rates slightly above Actual Cost—higher than at least half the usual charges of Life Assurance Companies. The Premiums are based upon the "Combined Experience Table," which was prepared by a Committee of eminent Actuaries from the experience of 17 British Offices. This Table EXAMPLES gives the cost for £40; the average Premium of Insurance Companies; the Rates of the I.O.F. SAVING EFFECTED BY JOINING THE ORDER.

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The full sum assured is payable at death. All present paying of ordinary members in the I.O.F. ceases at 70 years of age, when one-tenth of the amount assured is paid to the annuitant, the unexpired balance being payable at death. The entrance fees are very moderate, £10 payable in 17½ years; £20, £1 10s. 6d.; £40, £2 8s.; £60, £3 15s. 6d.; £120, £2 10s. 8d., and £1,000, £3 15s. 6d. Costs (Ins. 10s. to 12½ per annum) have to be paid by each member.

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Consisting of wide Bell Skirt and Fashionable Frock made from the John Noble Cheviot Serge, trimmed Black Braids, and ready for immediate wear, in Black, Navy, Slate Myrtle, Gruen, Reseda, or Tan. Packed in box and carriage paid for 8d. extra. Every purchaser is delighted with these truly remarkable Costumes.

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Are also supplied in the same Serge, with saddle top, long & wide sleeves, belt and pocket; and the following prices are to be seen that most ladies would refuse to make the frocks for the cost, even if the materials were supplied free—

Lengths as in above cases:
Price 12s 6d. each.
Postage 1s 6d. extra. The lengths stated are from top of neck to hem of skirt hand in front. Satisfaction guaranteed or money returned.

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A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
BY ESMBE STUART.
Author of "Jean Falaco," "A Woman of Forty," "Kettell of Grosten," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVI. A MOUNTAIN STORM

Penelope did not for one moment believe that there was any truth in the old man's words, but, when she was again alone, the idea troubled her as a nightmare might have done. It was not the least likely that there should be money hidden, of which her uncle knew nothing; but suppose such a thing were true, suppose her sacrifice had been in vain? Penelope stamped her foot with indignation even though she was alone, but the next moment she repudiated the bare idea of secret wealth, and blamed herself for entertaining it. She would watch her father closely, and see if the mania returned to him.

Tired out with her thoughts, she at last returned to bed and to sleep, and the next morning she met Philip in the dining-room. They never spoke of the night's events, and when the Duke entered, the three might have been once more in the London house.

State and luxury had replaced the old ways, and the Duke's handsome countenance beamed with quiet delight. This was the life which he had desired and sought for. He and Penelope had raised the crumbling edifice once more from its threatened ruin. They had conquered fate.

No stranger could have guessed from Philip's demeanour that everything was not perfect with him in his marriage. His attentions were never wanting, and he talked to the Duke as if at this moment life were a very pleasant experience. He must respect Penelope's wishes, even if these came near to breaking his heart. He was supported by the hope, present every minute of the day to him, the hope of winning her yet.

"I cannot blame her," he would often think; "she tried to make me understand and I would not do so. I am alone to blame, alone."

When he knew Penelope was in her sitting-room busy about her work, he would wander forth alone and ponder over his ruined life. Where was his energy, and what had become of his hopes of working for the good of others? The very state and riches that now surrounded the Palace were distasteful to him. He preferred the simplicity at which he and Forster had always aimed. Perhaps he ought to have resisted the infatuation which had led him into this false position; he ought to have chosen the life of self-sacrifice. But these thoughts at other times appeared unworthy of him. He loved Penelope with the love and worship which a knight of old might have given to the lady of his choice. He must accept the pains and penalties of his love, and some day—all his meditations ended thus—some day all would come right.

In the meantime he and the Duke were excellent clerks of the works. Now that money was forthcoming, there were plenty of ways of spending it. The only difficulty arose from the various moods of the King. For days he would remain in his room, then he would suddenly emerge, at night prowling around the castle, and by day wandering about the glen near by. Hammer in hand he would creep round the premises, tapping the stones and looking for some-
thing. The faithful Jim Oldeorn constituted himself the King's keeper, and for hours he would patiently follow him, helping him in his imaginary search for hid treasure. But if the King by chance met Philip, then a strange rage seemed to take possession of him; his muttered curses and his invectives were painful to hear, and the only cure was for Philip to take himself as soon as possible out of his father-in-law's presence.

To the outward eye, life at the Palace was now by no means an unpleasant thing. Besides luxury of the ordinary type, the Duke was glad enough to take Philip out shooting or fishing, and the joys of sport were compensating elements in his lonely life. His favourite pastime was to wander forth alone to the tarn high up on the big mountain, and there to fish for hours in the wild solitude. Here he watched the clouds hurrying by, speculating on the mystery of life, and his own life in particular, till the moment when the trout had to be landed, and then all sorrows passed away in the excitement of the moment.

One day as he sat near the tarn, he saw in the distance a figure making for the edge of one of the mountain spurs. He felt sure that it was Penelope going up the great mountain alone. Hidden behind some grey boulders, he watched her with an intense longing to be near her. The path was not without danger, but the Princess, as he knew, was well accustomed to climbing her own mountains, and as she mounted the steep slope, Philip wondered if there were on earth another woman as beautiful as this one. He saw her at last reach the narrow path on the edge. From this point here was stiff climbing among boulders, stepped up and rising higher on each other till the summit was reached. Presently he saw that something had happened, for the Princess stood still, and Philip guessed that she had somehow found herself in such a position that she could neither go up nor get down. In a moment he left his od, hurried across the ledge, and began hastily to climb the slope. It was steep and difficult, but shorter than going round to the beginning of the ascent. As Philip limbed he heard the low rumble of distant thunder. This made him strain every nerve to reach Penelope. Being so much beneath her she had not seen him, and it was only when he was close beside her hat the Princess was aware of her husband's presence.

"What is the matter? I saw you could not get on," he exclaimed.

Penelope blushed. She hated to be found in this helpless condition, and by Philip, too!

"Yes, I can't get up or down, and there is a storm coming on." Penelope laughed a little.

"I will climb above you, and then I think I can get you up. To jump down might be dangerous."

There was some danger for Philip, but he never gave that a thought. Soon he was in a position to help his wife, and after a few moments he had lifted her up to another ledge. Ten minutes' more climbing brought them safely to the top. But the storm had travelled more swiftly than they had climbed. Hardly had they stepped upon the flat summit than the heavy black cloud seemed to burst over their heads. The lightning flashed forth down the pathway of the rain, and the husband and wife seemed to be mere powerless atoms in the war of heaven.

"Come quickly," said Penelope, taking her husband's arm. "There is a shelter on the top; we must get under the wall." Clinging to each other they staggered forward. Never had either of them witnessed such a storm. The lightning was appalling, the thunder echoed round the mighty circle of mountain-tops.

In five minutes they reached the shelter, such as it was, and crouched under the wall. Every now and again the clouds were riven, and a view of distant mountains and lakes revealed, as if by the help of a magician's wand, all the beautiful country which lay spread out before them; but the next instant the clouds swept over the scene, and all was again dark.

Philip was so proud that Penelope had accepted his help, that he blessed the storm, and as he tried to shelter her he longed for the moment when he might fold her in his loving arms. Now, however, he dared not do so; there was a barrier between them.

"You will catch cold, dearest," he said presently, for the stone bench on which the rain had beaten down was a chilly resting-place.

"Let us go home, then," said Penelope, rising; but at that moment a loud thunder-clap followed by a flash of brilliant forked lightning forced her to retreat again.

"I have never seen such a storm as this," she said. "It is very grand.

"And very awful," added Philip. "I
can't bear to think what you would have 
done if I had not been below at the barn."

"Somebody would have come after a 
time," she said, "but I am glad you were 
there. It was a foolish position to have 
got into.

"Pensie, if you would let me always help 
you," he said softly, but Penelope turned 
herself away and pretended not to hear.

"We must get home; uncle saw me go 
out, he will be anxious."

When at last they could venture forth, 
Penelope was forced to accept Philip's help 
to get down the dangerous rocky ledge, 
which was a much nearer way home than 
the following the pony track. And when 
they had safely accomplished this task, and 
Penelope was more sure on the mountain 
ledge where the barn nestled, Penelope, though 
breaking through water and wind, made no more 
the worse for the adventure. As for Philip, he was 
comparatively happy. He picked up his foraged 
rod and the basket of trout; then the two 
walked home down the mountain slope, 
always having in sight far below them the 
trees of the Rothery glen. At last the 
storm ceased, only the distant rumbling of 
thunder was audible, and occasionally 
lightning was seen far away over the 
distant hill-tops.

When they reached the glen gate, Pensie 
was rather weary, and she voluntarily placed 
her hand on Philip's arm. At this moment 
it seemed almost sweet to her to find this 
support ready for her, and always willing 
to bear her burdens. Was the time coming 
when she should get to look forward to 
seeing Philip near her? She felt very 
lonely and desolate at times, and he was 
always good and patient with her.

Some such thoughts came slowly to her 
heart, and made her lean more heavily on 
Philip's arm, and he, looking at hers, saw, 
hardly dared to believe his eyes, as he saw a 
softer expression on the face of his Princess. 
They had reached in silence the middle of 
the glen, for the roar of the Rothery utterly 
prevented any conversation, when Penelope, 
looking up, saw a tall, manly form coming 
towards them. The hand on Philip's arm 
trembled a little, and Penelope paused.

"Oh! I am glad to meet you. No one 
knew where you were, Philip, and the storm 
had made the Duke anxious about your 
safety." Forster held out his hand to 
Penelope, who, loosening her hold on 
Philip's arm, only murmured an astonished 
greeting.

"You are surprised, I see, but I have 
made hasty plans, and I wanted to consult 
you—both of you. So I left my people in 
London and came here.

Then Penelope, looking at Forster, felt 
that this was indeed the man whom she 
could have loved, and the other—oh, 
Heaven! the other was bound to her.

"You are welcome," she said; but Philip 
no longer felt Penelope's hand resting on 
his arm.

CHAPTER XXVII. NOT WANTED.

PHILIP and Forster were deep in con-
versation that evening in the library, whilst 
Penelope was sitting in the drawing-room 
with her uncle. She wanted to make sure 
that her father had no real ground for his 
mania about hidden treasure.

"You are sure, uncle, that it cannot be 
true?" she was saying for the second time.

"True, Pensie! Impossible! There was 
an old tradition that your great-aunt left 
some treasure, but that was made up merely 
to account for her ghost. No, believe me, 
do you think if I had believed in it that I 
should have left a stone unturned?"

"I am glad you say that, because—oh! 
uncle, you know that I promised to obey 
you for the sake of our house, but then—I 
hardly understood all that it meant."

"Philip is all, and more than all, I 
thought he would be. A more generous 
man hardly lives."

"Yes, I know he is generous—very 
generous."

"You have no cause to repent?"

"No—no, because we were poor, you 
know; because, uncle, there was no other 
way; but suppose there had been hidden 
treasure or any hoarded money my father 
knew about, oh, then—then I could not 
agree him."

"It is quite impossible, make your mind 
easy. By the way, what has Forster come 
for? A fine fellow, but he should have 
been a parson."

"We asked him to come, you know, 
when we were abroad; and Philip misses 
his friend."

"I think you certainly come first."

"But I have lost my liberty," she said 
under her breath.

"The matrimonial chain does not weigh 
very heavily, and besides, use can almost 
change our nature."

"With a man's nature, perhaps; I miss 
my freedom."

"You will sigh for the fitter some years 
hence, Princess."
Penelope did not for one moment believe that there was any truth in the old man's words, but, when she was again alone, the idea troubled her as a nightmare might have done. It was not the least likely that there should be money hidden, of which her uncle knew nothing; but suppose such a thing were true, suppose her sacrifice had been in vain.

Penelope stamped her foot with indignation even though she was alone, but the next moment she repudiated the bare idea of secret wealth and blamed herself for entertaining it. She would watch her father closely, and see if the mania returned to him.

Tired out with her thoughts, she at last returned to bed and to sleep, and the next morning she met Philip in the dining-room. They never spoke of the night's events, and when the Duke entered, the three might have been once more in the London house.

State and luxury had replaced the old way; and the Duke's handsome countenance beamed with quiet delight. This was the life which he had desired and sought for. He and Penelope had raised the crumbling edifice once more from its threatened ruin. They had conquered fate.

No stranger could have guessed from Philip's manner that everything was not perfect with him in his marriage. His attentions were never wanting, and he talked to the Duke as if at this moment life were a very pleasant experience. He must respect Penelope's wishes, even if these came near to making his heart bleed.

He was supported by the hope, present every minute of the day to him, the hope of winning her yet.

"I cannot blame her," he would often think; "she tried to make me understand and I would not do as I am alone to blame, alone."

When he knew Penelope was in her sitting-room busy about her work, he would wander forth alone and ponder over his ruined life. Where was his energy, and what had become of his hopes of working for the good of others? The very state and riches that now surrounded the Palace were distasteful to him. He preferred the simplicity at which he and Forster had always aimed. Perhaps he ought to have resisted the infatuation which had led him into this false position; he ought to have chosen the life of self-sacrifice.

But these thoughts at other times appeared unworthy of him. He loved Penelope with the love and worship which a knight of old might have given to the lady of his choice. He must accept the pains and penalties of his love, and some day— all his meditations ended thus—some day all would come right.

In the meantime he and the Duke were excellent clerks at the works. Now that money was forthcoming, there were plenty of ways of spending it. The only difficulty arose from the various moods of the King. For days he would remain in his room, then he would suddenly emerge, at night prowling around the castle, and by day wandering about the glen near by. Hammer in hand he would creep round the premises, tipping the stones and looking for a lock.
That evening he stood by the window of
the upstairs sitting-room till Penelope
entered, after saying good-night to her
uncle.
"Tell me, dearest, do you want me to
go?"
"I have no right to dictate," she said
slowly.
"But you think it best?"
"Yes. Your presence makes my father
worse."
"Then I will go; but, dearest, when I
am gone, who will remind you of me?"
He took her hand and kissed it.
"I am not likely to forget you. It will
be much better for you to see more of
life."
"I will go, and when I come back you
may be in need of me. I shall leave
everything in order, in case——"
"Oh, you will not be gone for long. In
these days a voyage to Africa is nothing."
He said no more and left her, and then
Penelope heaved a sigh of relief. She
would be free from his presence for a time
at least.

It was of course whispered in the Palace
that there was something very strange
about the marriage of the Princess, but
these whispers never reached her, and the
feeling of loyalty was so strong that no
hint of the truth found its way to the
neighbourhood.

But the departure of Philip could not be
hidden. He gave out that he was going
away for a short time on business; but then
it must be very urgent business that takes
a man away from a beautiful young wife. If
there was a fault, it must be the stranger's
iniquity, and in private Betty and Jim
Oldcorn discussed it. They would rather
have bitten off their tongues than have
uttered a word in the presence of the new
and grand domestics with whom they were
at open feud.

Forster put off his departure for two
days, so that Philip might start with him.
The conversation turned on land, on build-
ing, on implements. Forster seemed to
regain his old spirits, now that Philip was
to be his companion. Penelope herself
was happier, and gave a helping hand to
the preparations, living in the present
pleasure of watching Forster, and wonder-
ing why fate had so cruelly deceived her.
Philip, too, was glad to be once more of
use to the world, once more with his
friend and leader—for his was a wonderful
devotion—but underneath the outside
excitement was the ever-gnawing thought,

"Will she forget me if I go away, or will
my obedience to her wishes make her love
me?"

The King had been very quiet since
Forster's arrival. He had not appeared at
all in public, and had wandered less at
night. Penelope hoped the fancy for
hidden treasure was passing away.

The last evening came—a fine warm
autumn evening. The sunset had shed
a golden hue over the russet leaves, and
here and there the Rothery caught glimpses
of the sky, and reflected the glory of its
gold.

Penelope had superintended Philip's
packing, which was modest enough, and
leaving him with Forster she called Nero,
and took her favourite walk up the glen.
Her step was lighter than it had been for a
long time; she felt as if the past few
months were blotted from her memory,
and as if her light-heartedness were coming
back. She had not gone far when she was
stopped by seeing her father walking in
front of her. Jim Oldcorn was with him,
but the two did not hear her till Penelope
came up to them.

"It is getting late and damp, father," she
said. "You should not be out."

"I was waiting for you, Penelope. Leave
me, Oldcorn. The Princess will come home
with me."

Penelope turned back, sorry to have
missed getting to the top of the glen.

"So you've had company," said the old
man, hobbling beside her. "A fine young
man. I've seen him though he didn't see
me. Why did you not marry him,
Penelope? Eh?"

"He was poor. I married, as you know,
to save the house."

"What nonsense! You and your uncle
are a couple of fools, that's what you are.
Did I ever ask you to marry a man who is
no better than a tradesman? Since when
have the Winkells wed with those beneath
them?"

"I cannot listen to such talk," said
Penelope sternly.

"You are proud, I know it, I know it,
and you hate him. You thought you
would go your own ways and I let you go.
Your brother knew better. Why was he
killed? A girl is of no use, no use at all."

"Of no use! Look at our house now.
Who has made the Palace habitable?"

"You and your uncle have amused your-
selves, but I won't have that low-born
fellow about the place. I'm King yet, I'm
King yet."
"You forgot, father, that I bought the lands that were about to fall into the hands of the mortgagees," said Penelope.

"I tell you, you amused yourself. Listen, Penelope. Tell me where I have put it. I could buy it all back if—it—the devil take it, I can't remember the place. I know it, I alone and your brother, and now he's dead."

"You imagined it, father. There is no treasure except such as my marriage supplied."

"Your marriage. Ha! ha!" and the King laughed.

"My uncle says so."

"Greybarrow is a fool. His fine ways and his learning take you in. Books! what's the use of books? Your books did not save the estate. Penelope, if you were to help me to remember, I could help you even now."

"Help me. How?"

"To get rid of that man. You hate him—don't I see it—and so do I."

Penelope stood still.

"He is going away with his friend. I don't want any one's help."

But the idea took shape in her mind:

"If we only had wealth I could repay him, and—and—I could be free."

The King continued:

"But if we could find it. I tell you it is somewhere, and I shall find it."

It seemed to Penelope as if the tempter were setting her to sell her soul.

When she turned round she saw that her father's mood had changed, and he had hurried away into the Palace garden. At the same moment, a tall figure came towards her. She felt that it was Forster, even before he came up to her.

"I am glad to have found you, Mrs. Wimshurst," he said. "I wanted to speak to you."

AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENTS.

A short time ago, at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, a paper was read by the Honourable James Inglis, Chairman of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce, on the "Recent Economic Developments of Australian Enterprise"—that is, the development of new industries, and the more economic working of the old—which presents Australia and her resources in so novel an aspect to most of us, that we have to confess our utter ignorance of our distant colony. In passing, let it be under-
been planted; that all the existing valuable timber—the great forests, the cedar lands in the north, the hard wood of the interior—belong for the most part to the State, and that in them the colonies have an almost incalculable asset. But this by the way. Let us return to the wave of agriculture. In New Zealand in five months, one hundred and forty thousand souls have been put on the land, and only fifty allotments have been abandoned out of all those applied for. In Victoria the scrub lands have been pierced with railways, and lands which were thought to be worthless are rapidly being reclaimed. In Gippsland, hemp, flax, jute, and China grass are being cultivated, and to ensure good seed the Government supply it to those who desire to make proper experiments.

The great Central Division of New South Wales is about to be thrown open to farmers, not, to quote from the "Sydney Mail," "that the land heretofore held in great squattages has been eaten out, or has failed to support sheep, but it is found that the best of this country is adapted for agriculture, which is more remunerative than stock. Accordingly, great areas have been given up by the pastoralists for wheat-growing, on such terms as make the owner and the tenant sharers in failure or success."

The people of Australia, too, are learning that crowding into a few towns is not the way to success, and the outcome is a large increase of what Mr. Inglis calls family or cottage settlement. It is true that large areas of wheat lands are taken up by capitalists; but a wonderful activity is displayed in many minor industries. Vineyards, orange groves, fruit orchards, bee keeping, poultry raising, market gardening, horticulture, silk farming, are being made fresh avenues for employment; while perfume factories, distilleries for eucalyptus oil, jam factories, corn flour factories, fruit drying and preserving, and many other industries are springing up in large numbers.

But one of the most important factors in this agricultural wave is the discovery of artesian water in the west, which has added to the empire, without strife or bloodshed, a territory as large as the United States—a territory which is supposed to be impossible of cultivation for lack of water, but which in fact has been found to cover an almost inexhaustible supply. From one of these artesian wells no less than three million gallons of water is obtained per day; from another there runs a regular river over one hundred miles long, which at the bore is twenty feet wide and six feet deep; while from others lagoons and inland lakes have formed. And this vast area—Mr. Inglis computes it as at least thirty million acres suitable and open to the operations of the small settler—has been turned into a land with a soil rich beyond description. In summing up his account of this agricultural development, Mr. Inglis dwells on these points as indisputable: "that the area of our lands fit for productive occupation has been immensely enlarged; that agricultural settlement is everywhere rapidly increasing; that cottage industries and 'petite culture' are increasing in a like ratio; and that Australia is rapidly entering on a period of greatly augmented productiveness, of accelerated industry, of a rapid expansion of her export trade, and of increased activity and prosperity. The opportunities for promising investment of capital and labour are such as cannot be excelled by any other land with which I have any acquaintance, and the best proof lies in the readiness with which the colonists themselves are backing the sanguine outlook by their vigorous prosecution of new enterprises, no less than by the transplanted fortitude in braving reverses which, I believe, are only temporary, and which have been in great measure produced by causes quite beyond the immediate control of the colonists themselves." Such, then, is Mr. Inglis's account of the agricultural development, such is his sanguine outlook for the future. Sanguine indeed it is, but who shall say it is too sanguine if the work is attacked with industry and perseverance!

Passing on we come to Dairy Produce, which of late has been very successful, and in Mr. Inglis's paper this success is attributed to one of the features of this new industrial development—the increase and extension of the co-operative principle. To illustrate this principle of co-operation, which we are told has made the butter and cheese-making enterprise a success, and has contributed largely to the rise of the frozen mutton trade in New Zealand, the one case of the Bernina District Cold Climate Farm Dairy Company is instanced. At the annual meeting last February it was reported that during the previous six months the sales had amounted to thirty-four thousand eight hundred and sixty-four pounds. The profits showed a dividend of twenty per cent., a bonus of three shillings per share,
and bonus to the consignors of one-half per cent. of the produce sent for sale, while a balance of four hundred and thirty-nine pounds was carried forward. The same principle is carried out in the great Sugar Company of Sydney. Here, as in the dairy factories, the farmers raise the product, and the company's mills do the rest. Soap and candle works and wool-washing establishments are worked in the same way, and Mr. Inglis would like to see the system generally taken up—in indigo, tea, coffee, rape, mustard, and linseed oil. He would have the farmers combine to run a central mill, each farmer guaranteeing a minimum of raw material, and the co-operative mill would do the rest, while each circle of producers or combination of circles would have their own agency for sale, shipping, and insurance.

In the old industries, too, the same revival is witnessed. The wool trade is carried on under better circumstances. The breeds are being improved; new fodder plants are constantly being experimented with; and with better means of improving the pasture, the grazing industry is carried on more efficiently and economically than ever before. In another old industry, the economical improvements and developments are wonderful. In Hillgrove, which Mr. Inglis represents in Parliament, ten years ago there was one antimony-and-gold mine worked in haphazard, wasteful fashion. "The rich veins only were worked. The ore was roasted on open bonfires on the bare hillside, and all the antimony was dissipated in flames, and there was enough gold lost in the tailings to make handsome dividends for shareholders under modern management." Now the ores are burnt in furnaces of most approved patterns, and a flourishing town takes the place of the old slum habitation of ten years ago. In many such mines the tailings of the olden times are being worked in scientific manner, and are yielding up treasures almost equal to the original product of the mines, while in Tasmania has been discovered "a veritable mountain of practically pure oxide of iron, with coal and limestone close by. This ore, tested, has been found to contain ninety-nine per cent. of oxide of iron."

But the last discovery on which Mr. Inglis touches reads almost too marvellous and valuable. We have to picture busy collieries at Tilbury Dock, in relation to Wales or Newcastle, and we can have an idea of what this discovery means. A seam of coal has been struck, some ten feet thick, on one of the main promontories of Sydney Harbour. The depth is considerable—nine hundred yards—but shallow when we take into consideration that the Royal Commission of Mines has laid down one thousand five hundred yards as a workable depth. The coal is good, and the importance of the discovery lies in the fact that it can be shipped into the largest steamers at a saving of some three shillings per ton on the average cost of carriage and handling from the nearest existing collieries. Experts report that no practical difficulties exist, the cover being sound sandstones and conglomerates, without a flaw or break, and absolutely dry. Mr. Inglis sums up this discovery as follows:

"I am not indulging in vain rhetoric when I say that in the whole world there will be no other metropolitan city with a coal-mine in operation within its town boundaries, and in such favourable position that the coal can be rolled down the shoots from the pit's mouth into the largest ocean-going steamers, lying not a cable's length away. Cheap coal, with quick despatch, means a great impetus to the trade of the colony, and can be computed in plain, matter-of-fact figures by the least imaginative." It does indeed read like a fairy tale.

Such are the main features of a most interesting paper which Mr. Inglis winds up with a forecast, in wishing the success of which we can all join him, that "are the advent of a new century the progress of Australia in all that constitutes true national greatness will be found—under a federated flag, in close union with the dear old Motherland—such as will eclipse in brilliancy and stability all that has ever yet been chronicled of our wondrous Anglo-Saxon race, even in the days of our quickest expansion and of our most splendid achievements."

Such is Mr. Inglis's forecast, which may be objected to as being too hopeful and sanguine; but it is formed from the experience and opinions of one who for thirty years has been watching the growth, difficulties, and what he now believes to be the approaching triumph of Australia. We have a large market for her food supplies over here, and the more we can depend upon our colonies for such supplies in the place of depending upon the supplies of foreign countries, the better for the safety and prosperity of our great Empire.
IN THE BOX TUNNEL.

A TALE OF TO DAY.

MRS. EDWARD SOMERSET paced up and down the platform at Paddington in company with half-a-dozen of her dearest friends who had come to see her off on the first railway journey she had ever undertaken by herself. For in a small, a very small way, she had become quite a heroine in the eyes of a certain set, the pioneer of the downtrodden, much misunderstood British Matron; and as such received not a little adulation and éclat from those of her friends who yearned yet feared to break off the drested marshal yoke, and those of them who had never had any husbands at all, but were quite sure that if they had they should not be husbands worth speaking of. Helen Somerset felt very proud of herself as she waited for the west-country train that lovely autumn day, upheld as she was by the applause of the half-dozen women around her, and not a little astonished, if pleased, at her own independence. Foremost amongst her friends, and those by whose advice she had mainly acted, were Agatha Albany and Lilian Barton, the first a handsome, stylish-looking woman of an uncertain age, who had the emanicipation of her sex greatly at heart; and the latter, a pretty, laughing girl of eighteen, who had joined the movement as she would a tennis club, and for the same reason—that she expected to find it "Awful fun, you know."

It was Lilian, commonly called "Lil," who broke the silence next.

"Oh! If this is not the very biggest joke I was ever in, Nell. But tell me where, when, and how was the deed of separation—beg pardon, Agatha, I mean the declaration of freedom—signed?"

"The what?" asked her friend, a little uneasily, her colour coming and going, and her eyes fixed upon a nearly new portmanteau and Gladstone, with E. S. upon them in big white letters.

"The deed, you know. Come, Nellie, tell us all about it. I do wish I could have been present myself, it must have been such fun. How did he look, and what did you say, and did you shake hands when you parted for ever and say you bore each other no malice, or what?"

"If you mean the deed of separation, Lil, it was signed at Ted's—I mean Mr. Somerset's—lawyer's, somewhere in the Temple," and Helen sighed a little. No, they had certainly not said good-bye as she had wished to at that interview.

"The Temple!" repeated Miss Albany.

"A fitting name indeed for the place where such a deed was signed; far more suitable to be called such, than the places in which the so-called rites of matrimony are celebrated! Let me congratulate you, my dear Helen, upon being so far superior to the prejudices of your sex, as to be one of the first to throw off the wretched chains of—"

"Yes; thank you, Agatha. I dare say it's all right enough," interrupted Mrs. Somerset. "I wonder, I do wonder if that stupid porter has labelled my things properly."

"He is bound to do so by the laws of the Company," said Miss Albany a little severely; she did not like her speeches to be interfered with and broken into, when she had once "got steam up," as Lilian profanely called it; and she had been about to give the rest of her party the benefit of a speech, or rather a portion of one, that she was going to read that night in her capacity as chairwoman of the "Anti-Matrimonial Alliance of Emancipated Females." "But still, I always see it done myself; there is no trusting a man in anything!"

"I suppose I ought to have seen it to myself also, but Ted—other people, I mean, have always done all this for me. And I haven't even a maid with me to-day. It was stupid of Lemaire to go and get ill to-day of all days."

"But it is jolly to be travelling all by oneself," cried Lilian. "You can have such fun, perhaps pick up some one nice to look after your things for you; there's no telling. Now you have gone through the what-you-may-callums in the Temple of what's-his-name, as Agatha calls it, you are quite independent. In fact, you may say you are starting off for the new 'up-to-date' honeymoon all by yourself. Quite a new departure, Nell; but I don't know, I really do not know," and the speaker shook a curvy head, "but what the old way was better. Oh, dear me, yes, in some ways, not in all, the old plan had its advantages. But perhaps you are only having fun, and will make it up again with Ted Somerset soon?"

Helen's fair face flamed up hotly.

"I do wish, Lilian, you would not persist in looking at the whole affair in the light of a vulgar everyday man and wife quarrel. You must please regard it from
AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS.

been planted; that all the... and sixty-four pounds. The
profits showed a dividend of twenty per 


cents., a bonus of three shillings per share,

three million gallons of water is obtained
one of these artesian wells no less than
an almost inexhaustible supply. From
but which in fact has been found to cover

— a territory which was supposed to be

of artesian water in the west, which has

In this agricultural wave is the discovery
industries are springing up in large
factories, cornflour factories, fruit
drying and preserving, and many other
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— that the land heretofore held in
farmers, not, to quote from the "Sydney
Wales is about to be thrown open to
Government supply it to those who desire

promoted and to ensure good seed the
hemp, flax, jute, and China grass are being
are rapidly being reclaimed. In Gippsland,
lands which were thought to be worthless

fifty allotments have been abandoned out of
sons have been put on the land, and only

first standpoint. Mr. Somerset and
I have agreed to part for several reasons; he is—well, he is altogether absurd in his
ideas of married life, which he seems to
think ought to be at the best a kind of
slavery, and considers it quite
enough for a woman to be fed, clothed,
and to have a more or less comfortable
home. And I, with my idea of the higher
life in store for our sex, could not be
content with this. In fact, we agreed in
nothing but to separate. I won't be
"minded over by any man."

"Quite right too, dear Helen," urged
Miss Albany. "And I am a proud woman
to-day if any poor words of mine have led
you to this decision, and persuaded you, in
the sacred name of womanhood, not to
bear any more with the caprices of an
unreasonable man, who happens for the
time being to be your legalised tyrant."

"O-oh!" Lily Barton drew a long breath.
"You do put things so well, Agatha. But,
Nell, what would you do if you were to
meet Ted—it would be just a little awk-
ward, wouldn't it?"

"Behave as I should to any other man
I know slightly," replied her friend re-
provingly, and then got very pink, as a
tall, fair man, followed by a porter, came
up and took possession of the portmanteau
and Gladstone which had seemed, with
reason, so strangely familiar to her. An
amused smile was on his face as he sur-
veyed the group before him; then, raising
his hat, he walked off, taking his way
towards the train which had just come up,
unobserved by the others, who had been
listening fast with their ears to it.

"Don't you bow when you meet any one
you know? " enquired Lilian. "Oh, Nell,
Nell, you both looked awfully ashamed of
yourselves!"

But Helen was mercifully saved the
trouble of replying. Miss Albany came
bravely to the rescue, declaring that Helen
only showed proper pride by declining to
take any notice of her husband, and that
she was glad to see Mr. Somerset looked
thoroughly guilty, as indeed he well might
do.

"Yes, that's it. I tried to, but—-Oh,
dear Agatha, do you think this is the
train— and I cannot see that porter any-
where. I wish I'd thought to ask Ted, he
always looked after the things; I mean—I
mean," she added, seeing Agatha's face of
stern astonishment, "it would be so awk-
ward to get to the Pengelly's, and have no
things, you know!"

Lilian burst out laughing.
"You will be the death of me, Nell! I
should think that under present circum-
stances even Agatha would not have the
cheek to ask a 'put away' spouse to look
after her things for her."

"I cannot conceive ever finding myself
in similar circumstances, Lilian," Miss
Albany was beginning to say, when her
speech was cut short by a cry of: "Take
your seats, please, take your seats, this
way for the express. Where for, lady?"

And Helen, still vainly looking for the
truck containing "her things," was bundled
into a carriage, her friends trying to pacify
her by promising to go and lock up the
recalcitrant porter. Presently, to her great
joy, they returned with the news that the
boxes were safely in the rear van, but they
were only just in time to say good-by, and
the train was beginning to move when
Lily, who seemed to have some private
jokes on, put her head in at the carriage
window.

"Good-bye, Nell, take care of yourself,"
she cried. "And I say, don't be frightened,
but the 'legalised tyrant' is in the next
compartment!"

The train steamed out of the station,
gathering speed as it left brickers and
mortar behind it, and tore away into the
green country, where the hedgerows were
already decked in the russet and gold of
their autumn garb; and Helen was left
to her own reflections, not altogether
pleasant ones either, to judge by the
pucker between her brows, which was
certainly not caused by any paragraph in
the journal she was reading. Presently
the paper was laid down, and she gave
herself up to dreamily gazing out of the
window, where meadows, hedgerows, and
villages were passing rapidly before her
eyes. And somehow in like manner her
married life began to unfold its past, and
each succeeding scene to unroll itself before
her "mind's eye" once more. She saw
the lavender hedge in the old-fashioned
garden, where Ted first spoke of love; she
could even distinguish the scent of the
pale blue spikey blossom; she heard
anew the congratulations of her friends
and relations. For her love-story had all
run smoothly until, by her own act, she
had written "finis" at the end of the first
volume, and closed the book for ever. In
fancy, too, she stood again in her white
robes in the village church, falttering out
the solemn words "Till death us do part."
But it was not death that had parted
IN THE BOX TUNNEL.

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them at last; indeed, when she came to think of it, Helen could hardly tell what had done so. There had been a man's hasty temper and a woman's self-will; a few bitter words, forgotten almost as soon as spoken by one, that rankled for ever in the other's mind—many little grievances which culminated in that interview in the lawyer's chambers only a week ago.

"Till death?" Helen always hated to think of death; it was a word that seemed to have nothing to do with Ted and herself in their vigorous young life, so full of health and happiness. If she ever thought of it at all, she removed it to some dim future, when even she would be old and grey, but still have Ted's hand to cling tightly to, and Ted's arms to hold her fast till she could feel no more. She was always, however, a coward when she thought of death, this poor heroine of our tale—not a proper heroine at all, I fear—for even in her most unhappy moments she never wished to die, and speedily dismissed the thought of her latter end, and comforted herself by thinking instead of all Ted's misdeeds; but somehow, now she was left to herself, there almost seemed excuses to be made for his conduct, bad as it could not fail to be, and, as she told herself over and over again, it certainly was. Poor Helen, left alone with only her proper pride for a solace, found it, now she had no admiring audience, a not altogether satisfactory companion; it needed Agatha and Lily to offer is soothing sop. Mrs. Somerset's proper pride, and Mr. Somerset's hasty temper, that was what the separation really meant; and she gave another sigh as the train slowed down into a big station.

"Five minutes allowed for refreshment," shouted the porters.

How Helen longed for a cup of tea! But she was sure if she once left the carriage she would never find it again, so she gave up the idea. Not so her friend in the next compartment; she saw him get out, evidently on tea intent, and though he never looked her way, she knew, by some magnetic sense, that he had seen her also. Presently he came back; he had had his tea. Oh, the selfishness of man! But if only things had been as they were once, she would have had hers also. Numerous little instances of his care of her now began to obtrude themselves upon her memory; but she kept a stiff upper lip. She was not the woman, so she told herself, to let sentimental memories get the better of her common sense. What would Agatha say? And she took up a book the said Agatha had given her, a novel of a pronounced type of the new matrimonial departure, in which the heroine was so pure, so sickenet at the idea of life with the man she had chosen, that one was tempted to enquire why a person of such intense delicacy of feelings ever wanted to get married at all?

But even "Idina" was laid down after a few moments. Mrs. Somerset's own personality was far more interesting to its owner than the most impassioned utterances of the priestess of her new cult, and she abandoned herself to her own thoughts, till a prolonged whistle broke in upon them. The train was going to enter the great Box Tunnel. Helen had always had a childish dread of tunnels, which she had never entirely outgrown, although, to do her justice, she endeavoured to fight against the feeling, and now resolutely took out her watch, and reminded herself, for she was travelling over well-known ground, how long it always took to go through the Box Tunnel, and how many moments must elapse ere they again emerged into daylight. Then she tried to read again. But somehow the woes of the pure Idina and her sinful husband were not interesting. Helen's own thoughts were still less so, for there were some natures in which mental worry always gives place to physical discomfort, and our poor little heroine was one of these. Every other thought gave way to eager glances at her watch, and many wanderings as to when the tunnel would end.

Hours seemed wrapped up in the moments, and yet only two of these had past. And then? Then there came a shrill scream from the engine echoing through the length of the train; a crash of splintered woodwork and glass, a sudden upheaval of the carriage, a flare of flame flashing past in the thick darkness, then screams of pain and cries for help, as the steam and smoke together became suffocating. There were screams, too, in the carriage where Helen was—some one must be hurt; for one moment she almost thought it must be herself, but was reassured as she felt able to stand up without pain, but what—what—if—If—those in the next compartment had not been so fortunate? At this moment, to add to her horror, the lamp, which had been flickering up and down ever since the accident, gave one sudden flare, and then went out, leaving the carriage in total darkness. To this day
Helen cannot say how she did it, but somehow she got the door open, and groped her way through the thick and sulphury darkness to the next compartment and went in.

There was a light there from a match, which its sole occupant had just struck, when Helen flung herself into his arms. All her proper pride had departed as she clung to her "legalised tyrant," crying:

"Oh, Ted, dear, are you hurt? Take care of me, please, I am so frightened!"

The guard came round presently with his lantern, to say that another train had been sent for to carry the wounded and unwounded to Bath, that there was no more danger, and that, as far as he knew, no one was fatally injured. The man seemed as an angel of light to most of the passengers with his reassuring words.

But one couple came across seemed perfectly happy and content with the situation—a wrecked train in the middle of the longest tunnel in England might have been an everyday incident to them—and being a man of some experience in certain matters, he merely told them that the train would be up in ten minutes, and shut the door again.

"One mooning, I should say," he muttered. "Loz', it be a strange experience to start wedded life with, for sure!"

But that the guard was not altogether wrong in his conjecture, although he had jumped a little hastily at conclusions, the following letter will show:

"GRAND PUMP HOTEL, BATH,
"September 19th.

"DEAREST LILY,—You were quite right, a honeymoon alone is a 'triste' affair. Will you be surprised after this to hear that Ted and I have made it up—made it up, too, in a tunnel, of all places in the world! You have heard all about the horrid accident we were in—isn't it lucky my boxes were not hurt at all? Well, I can't write much about that, dear, it was perfectly awful; but Ted and I found out somehow we had made a mistake, and that horrid deed is so much waste-paper now; we are having a fresh honeymoon here to celebrate the happy event. I am awfully happy and so is Ted; but Agatha weighs on my mind; I must write to her, I suppose.

"The trees here are lovely, and quite up-to-date.

"My love and Ted's, and good-bye.

"Affectionately yours,

"HELEN SOMERSET."

"P.S.—I do think Ted is nicer than before.

"P.P.S.—Do break the news to Agatha, there's a darling—I daren't."

When Mr. and Mrs. Somerset again traversed the Box Tunnel some weeks afterwards on their way up to town to take up their old-new life in their Chelsea flat again, it was perhaps pardonable under the circumstances that they edged up to each other's side rather closer than there was any occasion for, and as they emerged into daylight again, the lady made the observation, a totally superfluous one in the opinion of her fellow passengers:

"Do you know I feel quite sorry to say good-bye to the dear old tunnel!"

IN A GARDEN FAIR.

WHEN Nature dons her bridal wreath
Of virgin bloom on pear and plum,
When from the chesnut's opening sheath
Gray bells appear, and underneath
The baby fingers come;

When on the curtain of the air
The elm-tree weaves her brodered gauze,
When lilacs tall and sweet-briar,
And privat hedgerows everywhere
Shut out the wider scene;

In this enchanted garden ground,
New-born beneath the springtide's breath,
I quite forget the world around,
And almost—what mine eyes have found
In the deep gulfs of death.

THE QUEEN OF IRISH SOCIETY.

1. IN SEARCH OF FAME.

MR ROBERT OWENSON, "the great London actor," was starring at Shrewsbury, that quaint, old-fashioned town, with its timbered gables and noble avenue of lime-trees. Among the public who went to the play was a maiden lady of a certain—or, perhaps, uncertain—age, named Mistrees Hill. The great London actor was handsome, accomplished, insinuating—in short, he was an Irishman. By chance he was introduced to the fair Mistrees Hill, who, struck by his appearance and conversation, straightway fell in love with him. With a precipitation possibly accelerated by the lady's uncertain age and the fear of friendly interference, the lovers eloped, were married in due form, and lived happily ever afterwards; and their little romance would have been forgotten long ago had they not become the parents of one of the most remarkable women of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Owenson's original patronymic was MacOwen, and he claimed to be descended
from a noble Norman family, a branch of which settled in Connought during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. However, the fortunes of the family had so far decayed that Robert became sub-agent to an Irish landlord. But the stage proved a more congenial field of labour than the estate. He went up to London, where a distant relative—one Oliver Goldsmith, not altogether unknown to fame—introduced him to Garrick. By Garrick’s advice the Irish “Mac” was changed into the Saxon “son,” and transferred to the end of the name; so Mr. MacOwen became Mr. Robert Owen-son, “the great London actor.”

Some time after his marriage, Mr. Owen-son determined to take his bride to “the old country.” On his way a remarkable, if not wholly unexpected event occurred: while the vessel was ploughing her stormy way from Holyhead to Dublin, Mrs. Owen-son was taken ill, and before they reached land presented her husband with a daughter. That daughter, the subject of this sketch, never revealed the secret of her age—in fact, she detected any allusion to it—but it is generally understood that she was born on Christmas Day, 1777. The father, being a most affectionate man, was delighted at the little girl’s advent; and she was named Sydney in honour of an Irish Viceroy.

Robert Owen-son opened the National Theatre in Dublin. It failed, and he became deputy-manager of the Theatre Royal. Afterwards he visited Castlebar, Sligo, and Athlone, with a company which included his little daughter, then only eleven years of age. At this time she figured on the playbills as “The Infant Prodigy”; and a veritable prodigy she appeared, being very fragile and inimitative for her years, though a most precocious child. When she was eight years old, her sister Olivia was born, to whom she was always deeply attached.

Sydney’s first teacher was one of those ragged geniuses which Ireland has so often produced. Her father discovered a stunted, half-starved, shabby, stockless youth, besmeared and besmirched, among the proprieties and paint-pots of the Fishamble Street Theatre. This humble individual, Thomas Demody by name, had translated Horace, Virgil, and Anacreon, and had written original poems while displayed much humour and learning. Robert Owen-son was a kindly soul. He took the young fellow into his own house, made him his daughter’s tutor, gave him introductions to friends, got him a start in life—and so the poor, friendless, ragged youth suddenly became famous. But alas! Demody had contracted a fatal fondness for that enemy of his peace, the bottle. With much learning and not a little talent, he lacked strength of will to resist the temptation that so easily beset him; so he succumbed to its fascination, and soon became a hopeless wreck.

Meantime, Sydney was growing older if not much bigger. Her childhood was spent in the society of actors, amid the jealousies and frivolities of the green-room. Life, however, was not a bed of roses. It was often a hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door. She says herself that her father was frequently torn to prison for debt; her mother many times on the point of begging with her children. These disagreeable circumstances were borne with a philosophic good-humour - racy of the soil, and do not appear to have permanently damped the lively spirits of the family.

When Sydney had reached the age of thirteen she lost her mother, who seems to have been a very worthy woman. The kind-hearted father was extremely fond of his two motherless children, and gave them a great deal of care and attention, taking them out for a country walk twice every day. He determined also to give them the best education his means would allow. Sydney was sent first to a Dublin school, and afterwards to a more fashionable academy, Madame T censor’s, of O'lon ter House, where, amid more serious subjects, music and other social accomplishments were not neglected.

Upon “finishing” her education the little lady began to show a spirit of independence, and determined to be no longer a burden upon her father. She made her first venture in literature with a small volume of poems, published by subscription, which gave her an entrance into literary society but was not by any means a pecuniary success. Then as now, poetry was a drug in the market. Literature not proving as remunerative as she expected, she became governess in the family of Mrs. Feathers ton na gough of Breh-kin Castle, who had a town house in Dominick Street, Dublin. From this house Sydney Owen-son, attired in some old cloak and bonnet, set out one morning to find a publisher, taking in her hand the manuscript of “St. Clare,” tied up with rose-coloured ribboun. In her Autobiography she relates
her adventures with great vivacity. At a bookseller's shop in Hanry Street a small boy was sweeping down the steps.

"Is the master in?" queried the lady.

"Which av thim? The young master or the ould wan?" asked the boy with an impudent stare.

"Here," says Miss Owenson, "a glass door at the back of the shop opened, and a flashy young yeoman in full uniform, his musket on his shoulder, and whispering 'The Irish Volunteers,' marched straight up to me.

"The impudent boy, winking his eye, said:

"'Here's a young ouni wan'ts to see you, Master James.'

'Master James marched up to me, and chucked me under the chin. I could have murdered them all. But that was dignified in girlhood and authorship beat at my heart, when a voice from the parlour behind the shop came to my rescue by exclaiming:

"'What are ye doin' there, Jim! Why aren't ye off, sir? for the Phayrix and the Lawyers' corps marched an hour ago.'

"An old gentleman, with one side of his face shaved, the other covered with lather, and a towel in his hand, bolted out in a great passion.

"'Off wid ye now, sir, like a sky-rocket!'

"Jim went off like a sky-rocket, the boy began to sweep again with great dilligence, the old gentleman popped back into the parlour, and presently returned, having completed his toilet.

"'Now, honey, what can I do for ye?'

"I hesitated. 'I want to sell a book, please.'

"'To sell a book, dear? An ould wan, maybe—for I sell new wans myself.'

"After some further conversation, Mr. Smith informed her that he did not publish novels; but, moved by her evident distress, recommended her to Mr. Brown of Grafton Street.

"Mr. Brown took her manuscript and asked her to call again in a few days. Meanwhile, however, she left Dublin with her mistress, and heard nothing further. A day or two after returning to town, she had occasion to visit a friend. While waiting in the drawing-room she happened to take up a book to pass the time. It was her own novel of "St. Clair!"

Straightway she called upon the publisher, who said he had been unaware of her address. He gave her four copies for nothing, "which was all the remuneration she got." It was not much; for, though the book was not a great novel, it was almost as good as a text-book on astronomy, history, and metaphysical lore.

Before she ceased to be a governess, she wrote "The Novice of St. Dominix." Francis Crosseley, her ardent admirer, copied out the whole six volumes for the press! Many of our modern lady authors would bless their stars if Heaven had sent them such a man. And yet Francis's labour was in vain; his idol did not marry him after all.

II. A LITERARY LIONESS.

SYDNEY OWENSON went up to London in search of a publisher—in those days a long and perilous journey for an unprotected girl. However, she arrived safely at the "Swan with Two Necks," and found out Sir Richard Phillips, who was pleased with her looks and conversation, accepted her novel, and—best of all—paid her for it at ones. She spent the money on a characteristic manner: part of it she immediately remitted to her father; with part of the remainder she bought "an Irish harp and a black mode Cloak."

Sir Richard caused her to reduce the novel to four volumes. It would have been better had it been still further condensed. However, it proved a success, one of its admirers being William Pitt, who is said to have read it more than once during his last illness. Perhaps Pitt was a better politician than a critic; but it must be remembered that Smollett, and Richardson, and Fielding were no more, and that Walter Scott had not yet begun to charm the world with his enchantments.

Whatever may be its merits, the book was favourably received by the public; and Miss Owenson returned to Dublin commissioned by Phillips to write an Irish novel. She spared no labour in collecting materials; took a trip to Connaught to study her subject at first hand; and in 1806 produced her celebrated novel, "The Wild Irish Girl," for which she received three hundred pounds.

She had at first intended to call it "The Princess of Innamore"; but at the suggestion of Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar), she changed the title to the one it now bears.

The book was a signal success. It ran through seven editions in two years—a remarkable sale in those days when readers were comparatively few.

According to Mr. Hepworth Dixon, the
story of "The Wild Irish Girl" is founded on a curious incident of the author's own life. Mr. Dixon's account may be thus summarised:

Richard Everard, a young gentleman of good family, fell violently in love with Miss Owenson. The father of the young man discovered the attachment, and was highly displeased. The son had no money, no profession, and no industry. Miss Owenson was also penniless, though she had both talent and energy. The father called upon her, stated his objections, and tried to obtain her promise not to marry his son. She had not the least inclination to marry his son; but nobody likes to be forbidden to take even a course they are not inclined to. Still she spoke so wisely and conducted herself so pleasantly that the father was deeply smitten by her attractions, and proposed to marry her himself instead of his son! Miss Owenson wanted to marry neither; so she politely declined the offer. However, the elder gentleman became the firm friend of her father, and kept up a long correspondence with her, confiding to her all his private affairs, and entreaty her to use her influence over his son to turn him from his evil courses.

The history of this curious friendship is detailed in "The Wild Irish Girl." The character of the Princess of Innamore was afterwards identified with Miss Owenson; and until her marriage she was always known in society by the sobriquet of "Glorvina."

Few people now read "The Wild Irish Girl." The characters are too unreal, sentimental, and didactic for popular taste at the present day. Yet it contains many fine descriptive passages, and a great deal of valuable information about Irish history and Irish antiquities.

After "The Wild Irish Girl," Glorvina published "Patriotic Sketches," which touched upon the vexed questions of the day. Then followed an operetta in which her father appeared. Shortly afterwards the old man finally left the stage, his wants being provided for by his talented and dutiful daughter.

Meanwhile, her sister Olivia had grown up into a handsome young lady. She occupied a situation as governess, where she fell in with Dr. Arthur Clark, who is described as being "a dwarf in size but a giant in intellect." The doctor, with the courage of a dwarf, proposed to the handsome governess; she accepted his proposal; they were married; the Duke of Richmond, then Viceroy, knighted him; and so the beloved Livy became Lady Clark.

Glorvina herself was not without lovers. She was "petite"—very "petite"—and slightly deformed, it is true; but she was pretty, lively, witty, and altogether charming. She had always been fond of society, even before she was a governess at Nanagh House, when that redoubtable fire-eater, John Toler, Lord Norbury, puffed and blew, and praised her singing in his own comic way. Now that she was a lass, society received her with open arms, and wooers were not wanting. A mutual attachment sprang up between her and Sir Charles Ormsby; but this Sir Charles was not the man of destiny; and so the affair came to nothing.

In 1808 she paid a second visit to London. Her fame had preceded her, and she was welcomed in the highest circles, political, social, and literary. Longmans published her next novel, "Woman; or Idas of Athens," an inferior work, which the "Quarterly" attacked with a heavy club in its usual savage fashion.

III. COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

Among the members of the "haut ton" who had been especially pleased with Miss Owenson's writings were the Marquess and Marchioness of Abercorn. The novels were indeed delightful, but the author was more. Glorvina was charming, she was unique. Glorvina must come to Baronscourt and live with them. Glorvina hesitated. She loved her independence. But the temptation was irresistible; and the little woman went to Baronscourt to amuse by her wit the stately representatives of the princely house of Hamilton.

They were very kind to her; took her to London, where she sat to Sir Thomas Lawrence for her portrait, in which she looks exceedingly youthful, though she was then about thirty-three; got her an invitation to dine with the Princess of Wales; and appear to have repaid her in their grand fashion for the amusement they derived from her society.

At Baronscourt, under the shadow of the Tyrone mountains, Glorvina wrote "The Missionary," but neither streams nor hills appear to have given her inspiration. "The Missionary" was poor stuff. The Marchioness of Abercorn "yawned over it dully." The Marquess declared it "the greatest nonsense he had ever heard in his life."

Perhaps Glorvina heard of this candid
criticism. There are always people who take a malicious pleasure in repeating such things with emendations and additions. Glorvina had raised herself in the world by her own exertions; she was a woman of self-reliant spirit. Her dependent position at Baronscourt was neither free from vexations nor altogether to her taste; so one fine day she packed up her trunks and left that noble mansion.

But "The Missionary" proved a failure. The author began to feel that her popularity was waning. She had saved some money; but she was of a charitable disposition, and neither her father’s needs nor the other claims upon her charity could be neglected. In these circumstances she thought it prudent to return to Baronscourt, where she was still welcome, and where, perhaps, she had not been so badly treated after all.

At that time the family physician of the Abercorns was a certain Dr. Morgan. He was an English surgeon, a widower, amiable, cultured, talented, and accomplished. Glorvina was then thirty-four, but she had the appearance and manner of a girl. The doctor, who was about the same age, had seen a good deal of life. Somehow or other the sober man of the world fell in love with Glorvina, with her pleasant voice and fine eyes, her harpings and her singing, her pretty airs and graces, her waywardness and her wit. Sometimes she thought she reciprocated his passion; sometimes she was doubtful. They had a long correspondence, which furnishes a great deal of curious reading. The suspected flirtations, the bickerings, the protestations, the petty jealousies, the bursts of devotion, the reproaches, the sarcasms, are very entertaining in their way; but one cannot help thinking occasionally that there is an air of unreality about them, as if they were intended to be read by more than two pairs of eyes. Then the lady had hangings after a title; the doctor, worthy man, had none. However, this difficulty was overcome; for—probably through the influence of the Abercorns—Dr. Morgan was knighted by the Duke of Richmond. Even then the little woman procrastinated and put off the wedding-day, much to the annoyance of the ardent lover. The Abercorns, who favoured the match, began to grow indignant, and at length the Marchioness took the matter boldly into her own hands.

"One cold morning in January," we are told, "Miss Ovensen was sitting by the library fire in her morning wrapper, when Lady Abercorn suddenly opened the door and said:

"‘Glorvina, come upstairs directly and be married; there must be no more trifling.’

"Her ladyship took Miss Ovensen’s arm, and led her upstairs to her dressing-room, where the family chaplain was standing in full canineals with his book open, and Sir Charles Morgan ready to receive her. The ceremony proceeded, and the wild Irish girl’ was married past redemption."

In this somewhat dramatic fashion Glorvina became Lady Morgan. The happy pair continued to reside at Baronscourt for over a year. Before the end of that year Lady Morgan lost her father, a bereavement which she felt very keenly.

After leaving Baronscourt, the Morgans set up housekeeping in Dublin; and a little later Lady Morgan published "O’Donnel," for which she received five hundred and fifty pounds. "O’D’onnell" is generally considered her best novel. Sir Walter Scott spoke highly of it; but Croker attacked it in the "Quarterly" with much vigour and more venom. However, Croker might do his worst; what did it matter? Lady Morgan was about to see the dearest wish of her heart realised; she was beginning to reign as the queen of Dublin society, a princess in her own right and in her own court.

IV. THE REIGN OF THE WILD IRISH GIRL.

For many years Sir Charles Morgan’s house in Kildare Street was the focus of Dublin fashion. During the season it was crowded with celebrities of all descriptions and from all parts. At one time or another Lady Morgan numbered among her acquaintances nearly everybody of distinction who came to Dublin or London.

Glorvina was a delightful hostess. Society seemed to be her natural sphere. Her features were well-formed, her dark eyes luminous with feeling and intelligence, and her smile was singularly sweet. She played on the harp with taste, and sang the songs of her native land in a clear, sweet voice which in her younger days was much admired. Her manners were charming; her conversation sparkled with wit, humour, and information. Moreover, she was odd, eccentric, original; the frank audacity of her remarks was often very refreshing. She could tell Irish stories so comically that it was impossible for even her high-bred audience to resist a hearty
laugh. In short, she knew the art of pleasing to perfection.

Dress, however, was Glorvina's great "cape." For her, fashion was simply "fickle." She always dressed in her own fantastic way, whatever might be the prevailing mode. Behold her, then, at one of those Viceroyal balls where she often appeared, fluttering about in a white muslin gown and green saha, without feathers or train, sporting a close-cropped wig bound with a fillet of gold! No wonder this odd little woman of fifty-five, with her strange costume and strange ways, created quite a sensation among the fair women and brave men who thronged the Castle ballroom.

Lady Morgan was a staunch Liberal, a constant and consistant lover of her country, though by no means a bigot. With the populace of Dublin she was almost as great a favourite as Dan O'Connell himself. When she went to the theatre, or any other place of amusement, she was welcomed with noisy demonstrations of regard. Some unknown genius made a "pomme" about her, which is very racy of the soil:

Och, Dublin sure, there is no doubbin'.
Is the greatest city upon the say;
'Tis there you'll hear O'Connell spoutin',
An Lady Morgan makin' 'tay.

Beggars and tramps in the streets lifted up their voices and blessed her with Keith's fervour and fluency—as well they might. She recorded the remarkable benediction received from one old woman to whom she had given sixpence:

"Och, thin! May the Lord bless yer awate honour! An' i' my hair on yer head be thurned into a mowild candle to light yer soul to glory!"

In conversation Lady Morgan was most entertaining. Many of her best sallies had reference to subjects of the hour, which have now lost much of their interest; but many others are worth preserving. Her favourite invitation to a married gentleman was: "Be sure you come, and bring the woman that owns you."

Nothing could hit off that tuft-hunting little poet, Thomas Moore, better than this: "Moore looks very old and bald, but still retains his cock-sparrow air."

Of Colburn, her publisher, she said:
"He was a man who could not take his tea without a stratagem."

When she was introduced to the learned Mrs. Somerville, she said: "I have long revered you without presuming to understand you."

Describing a party at which she had met a number of celebrities, "There," she said, "was Miss Jane Porter, looking like a shabby cannonez; there was Mrs. Somerville in an astronomical cap. I dashed in, in my blue satin and point lace, and showed them how an authoress should dress."

Again she speaks of Miss Porter: "Then popular as the author of "The Scottish Chiefs": "I met Jane Porter. She told me she was taken for me the other night, and talked to as such by a party of Americans! She is tall, lank and lean, and lackadaisical, dressed in the deepest black, with rather a battered black gauze hat, and an air of a regular Malpomene. I am the reverse of all this, "et sans vanité," the best dressed woman wherever I go. Last night I wore a blue satin trimmed fully with magnificent point lace and stomacher, 'à la Sévignée,' light blue velvet hat and feather, with an argosette of sapphires and diamonds. 'Voilà!' "

"Voilà," indeed! That odd little woman, four feet high, old enough to be a great-grandmother, parading herself "à la Sévignée," must have been a curious spectacle; and no doubt Jane Porter thought so. Yet it was a harmless sort of vanity after all.

During her reign in Dublin, Lady Morgan was not idle. She and Sir Charles went to France in 1815. On their return she published "France," a book that contained picturesque and lively sketches of that beautiful country. The usual "slashing" article by Croker soon appeared in the "Quarterly." Lady Morgan replied in her novel, "Florence MacCarthy," in which Croker is held up to ridicule under the name of Crawley; but her caricature was not very successful.

In 1820 she issued a work called "Italy," after a tour in that country with her husband. Italian society being then little known by the average Englishman, her frank and fearless descriptions of it caused no small stir. Of course the "Quarterly," "savage and tartly," fell upon her tooth and nail. It spoke of her "indelicacy, ignorance, vanity, and malignity"; and it declared that "this woman is utterly incorrigible!"

"The Life and Times of Salvator Rosa" was "this woman's" next attempt in literature. Colburn gave her five hundred pounds and a velvet dress for the copyright.

"The O'Briens and the O'Fiherty's" appeared in 1827; then followed "The Book of the Boudoir"; and in 1830 a
second work on France was produced by her indefatigable pen.

About this time Irish politics underwent a complete revolution. Catholic Emancipation had been achieved, a reform which both Sir Charles Morgan and his wife had cordially supported. But after Catholic Emancipation was accomplished, society in Dublin began to change. Lady Morgan could not change with it, so she broke up her court in Kildare Street, and removed with her household gods to that great centre of the literary, political, social, and artistic universe, London.

V. THE SINKING STAR.

The Morgans took a house at Albert Gate, near Hyde Park, where the little queen set up her gay court without delay. It was soon visited by the rank and fashion, as well as the "littérateurs," of the metropolis. But the duties of social life were quite insufficient to absorb the energies of this wonderful little woman. Literary work never lost its attraction until she was laid under the sod. In 1838 she published "The Princess," containing descriptive sketches of life in Brussels. About the same time a paternal Government awarded her a pension of three hundred pounds in recognition of her services to Irish literature. Possibly this only stimulated her to fresh exertions; for in 1839 appeared "Dramatic Sketches from Real Life," and in 1840 the first two volumes of "Woman and Her Master," which—like many another great work—was left to the world unfinished.

But the shadows of sunset were beginning to gather on the lower slopes. In 1843 Sir Charles died. He was a singularly amiable man whom everybody liked. He had been the kindest and most indulgent of husbands; they had lived very happily together for thirty-one years, and his death was a severe blow to his sorrowing widow. Nevertheless, the buoyancy of her spirits could not be subdued. She recovered her natural gaiety. But in 1847 the death of her beloved sister, Olivia, nearly broke her heart. The companions of her youth were all passing into the Silent Land, leaving her the lonely survivor of early glories.

Still she did not give way. The living, breathing, pushing, struggling world was around her, and she was still both in it and of it. She was always young—she detested dates, she said; and she made it a rule in early life never to allow her temper to be ruffled by anything. And, indeed, the little woman never did grow old. We are all just as old as we think we are; as the great master of the human heart observes: "There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

Accordingly, Lady Morgan went on writing books, visiting her friends, and giving parties and receptions until the end. On Christmas Day, 1838, being then eighty-one, she gave a birthday dinner-party, at which she was as merry as a cricket, telling droll stories, and even singing a comic Irish song, "The Night Before Larry was Stretched," which, she said, "being written by a Church dignitary could be nothing but good words!" A week after this appeared her "Odd Volumes," being a passage from the history of her own eventful life.

She was always a busy bee. Her biographer tells us how she spent her time: "After working all the morning from the moment she awoke till two in the afternoon—her dinner-hour—and sending the friend who worked with her, home, completely tired out, Lady Morgan dressed for the day, and seated herself on the small green sofa in the drawing-room, as fresh as a lark, ready to receive visitors, to hear and to tell the newest gossip of the day; and she frequently had a large party in the evening, till she retired at last declaring 'she was dead.'"

However, the end was not far off. The luminous eyes were to grow dark at last, and the noble head to be laid low. On St. Patrick's Day, 1839, she gave a musical morning party to a fashionable gathering, at which she was as gay and festive as ever. But she caught a cold, from which she never rallied; and on the sixteenth of April, 1839, she passed peacefully away from the world she had so long loved and amused.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

BY MARGARET MOULE.

Author of "The Thirteenth Apostle," "Catherine Meldrum's Burden," "Blessed are the Poor," "The Poor's Ameul," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

Dr. Meredith was feeling aggrieved. His horse had gone dead lame, and his tricycle, with which he tried to supply the place of a second steed, had, he had discovered that morning, a broken tyre on one of the wheels. He had been compelled, with a few private expressions of his feelings, to send it to be mended, and he
was now trampling the length of a country lane on foot. This was by no means a satisfactory arrangement for a doctor whose every moment was filed up, and more than filled up, with claims on his time and attention which overlapped each other, so to speak, from seven o'clock in the morning to any hour of the night. And he may be forgiven for allowing his irritation to appear on his face as he splashed through the mud.

It was April, and the main roads were dry, but lanes overarched with brambles and trees are apt to take their own time to become passable in comfort. This especial lane was known as the “Hollow Holes,” and well deserved its designation. It was pretty enough in summer; the few tourists who found their way to that out-of-the-way corner of Devon unanimously pronounced it “charming.” It was, they farther declared, the very picture of a Devonshire lane.

The dwellers in and near Mary Combe—which was the time-honoured local contraction of Combe Saint Mary—thought otherwise. They regarded it with varying degrees of distaste; the villagers looking upon it as one of their trials, which, being inseparable from the lot of man on this globe, must therefore be endured with passive resistance; the “gentry” spending much angry breath in vituperation of over-seers, highways boards, road surveyors, and all and sundry who might be supposed to be responsible for its condition, and for the fact that it was, from one direction, the only approach to the village.

Dr. Meredith had taken his fair share in this said vituperation before now, but at this present moment he was not reasoning about its cause; he was solely occupied in blaming the ill luck which led him through the Hollow Holes on a day when he had the great misfortune to be on foot. It was nearly one o’clock, and Dr. Meredith had been up and hard at work since half-past seven. He had just ended a six miles’ tram; he was tired, worried, and hungry; this morning he had only had time for a very scrambling and scanty breakfast; he was still a good quarter of an hour from home, and had yet another patient to see before he could hope to reach it. On this state of things the delay caused by the stickiness of the Hollow Holes came like the proverbial last straw. Dr. Meredith gave way to a muttered exclamation as he splashed himself for the second time in extricating himself from a cart-track, and strode ahead with angry vigour. But with the exclamation his mind made a sort of rebound from this last irritation, and, as an overworked brain will often do, fell back on its more serious subjects of worry.

He pulled a little pocket-book from his breast-pocket, unfastened it hastily, and ran his eye along the closely-written list of his afternoon’s engagements.

“Let me see,” he said to himself, in a sort of half whisper which was as anxious and irritated as was his face. “If I get off by two, that ought to do me. Old Fordham promised to have his beast ready by then, and if I make the old hack go, I might get the Woolton and Kingsgrave work through by four. That would let me get the Norton people, old Bury’s daughter, and Matthews seen in time to take the Orange and Jennie Ashcroft on my way back, and get home by seven, I think. It must, that’s all. For I must be ready for the club by then, and I equally must see all these people to-day. I must be sharp in starting, though, or it’ll be a tight fit.”

At this instant a quavering old church clock at some little distance began to sound the first of a series of struggling strokes. Its sound floated uncertainly across the soft spring air, and Dr. Meredith broke it in his reflections to count the strokes instinctively. There were two for each quarter.

“A quarter to one,” he said to himself hopefully, as the third set quivered out. “That’ll do!” But the fourth began as the words were uttered. “One! By all that’s good!” he exclaimed, “I shan’t get much more than a look at any lunch!”

With the redoubled energy of a man for whom a quarter of an hour more or less is of serious importance, he quickened his pace until it was as fast as any walk, which is not a run, may be.

Three minutes later he had come to the end of the Hollow Holes and into the bright glare of the April sunshine. Immediately in front of him lay a broad, irregular common, with a rough track running across it. On one side of the track was a pond, gleaming in the April sun like a mirror, and round it a brood of ducks was being mercilessly chased by a little group of children in plaits.

“Here!” shouted Dr. Meredith, “you go home to your dinners, and leave those ducks to get theirs, or I shall come and see your mothers!”

With an alacrity that proved Dr. Meredith to be a power in their eyes, the pina-
fores scattered themselves in the direction of the cottages which lay on the edge of the common.

Dr. Meredith strode on to where the rough track left the common abruptly. Here, as if to mark its increased dignity, it was mended with stones. That is to say, a great heap of them had been cast down upon the worst part of it, and then left for the passer-by to walk over or avoid at his will. He took the circuitous little track which proved that most people preferred the latter course, and entered upon a village street.

It very confidently asserted itself to be a street, and for the dwellers in it doubtless preserved all the characteristics which represented that term to their minds. Resolved into its component parts, it was a fairly broad road, bordered on either side with cottages of various sizes and forms; most of them set back in gardens; gardens so irregular and varying in shape that the edge of the road was by them made to consist of a curving line, meandering from a yew hedge which enclosed a fair-sized garden to a paling which shut in a narrow strip of potato ground, and so on throughout the length of the whole street. Here and there the line was broken by larger houses than the cottages; small farmhouses, with their small yards and "buildings" at their backs, and a few houses evidently belonging to the "bestermost" inhabitants of Mary Combe.

Dr. Meredith walked up the street quickly. It was very empty and silent, the whole population being more or less engaged in using the "dinner hour" to the best advantage. About five hundred yards from the entrance to the street he stopped. On his left was a house standing back in a long yard, and the contents of the yard—heaps of planks, a half-made wagggon, and a small cart which had lost a shaft—proclaimed its owner's calling plainly even without the "Thomas Wilson, carpenter," inscribed on a board over the house door. Dr. Meredith opened the yard gate, strode through it, and knocked sharply with his knuckles on the house door. The knock was unanswered. He waited a moment, and then, lifting the latch, he entered.

"Wilson!" he said in a raised voice, "Wilson!"

At the end of the narrow stone passage appeared a man in his shirt-sleeves; a man whose harassed, anxious face lightened considerably as he saw Dr. Meredith. The latter wasted no time on preliminaries.

"Well, my good fellow," he said tersely, "I suppose I can go up! How is the wife, ah!"

The shadow that had lifted itself from the man's countenance fell again heavily.

"I was just putting on my coat to come for you, sir," he said. "She's been very bad all this morning. Yes, sir, go up, if you please."

"I'm sorry for that," was the response, and almost before the words were spoken, Dr. Meredith had turned up a narrow stair which he evidently knew well, and with a word of announcement had opened the door of a room at its head. It was a small, neat room, which gave an impression of containing absolutely nothing but a bed, on which lay a woman's figure propped up with pillows. The window was opposite the door, and through it the full strength of the spring sun fell on Dr. Meredith, and lighted up every detail of his face and person. His figure was tall and broad; there was a certain "wall set up" air about his bearing that gave an impression of quick, alert movements, and at the same time betokened in him the possession of considerable dignity and self-respect. It would be difficult, evidently, to presume upon Dr. Meredith's good opinion; and he would be a bold man who thought of attempting it. But if any stranger had, from this, reasoned that Dr. Meredith was stiff or ungenial, the impression would have been quickly dispelled by his face. It was a very pleasant face, not only in feature, though persons who described Dr. Meredith as "good-looking" were neither wanting nor in error when they did so. Its expression was at once keen, sympathetic, and strong. And the three characteristics seemed to find scope to display themselves everywhere—in his firm mouth, which was not concealed by the very small moustache he wore; in his square forehead, and his keen eyes, in which last they were all accentuated and deepened by a touch of quick humour. It was a face that deserved trust quite as much as respect; and in the eight months that had elapsed since he came to Mary Combe its inhabitants had learned to give Dr. Meredith both.

He stepped quietly up to the bed, and as he did so every trace of the irritation and worry that had possessed him in his walk disappeared as completely as if they had never been. A voice, face, and manner that were wholly kindly and sympathetic greeted the woman before him. He might
have had an hour to spare instead of being pressed for every moment.

She was a young woman of about twenty-three; evidently in the last stages of decline, and as evidently unaware of the fact, but possessed wholly by that pathetic incontrovertible hopefulness which is one of the ineradicable signs of the end.

"Wilson's been worrying me to let him go for you all the morning, sir," she began. "My cough's been rather bad, and I thought I'd keep up here; but I seem better in myself. It's just the wind's turned colder, I make no doubt."

"No doubt, Mrs. Wilson!" was the cheery answer. "And now, let's see what it has done to you."

Ten minutes later, Dr. Meredith descended the narrow stairs again, to find Wilson waiting for him below.

"What do you think of her, sir?" was his anxious question.

"I think she's low this morning, my man, certainly," Dr. Meredith said. "But keep her spirits up, and here, too. I'll change her medicine if you'll send one of your boys up at once for it. And I'll look in again this evening some time."

Without waiting for Wilson's thanks, Dr. Meredith strode on up the street; and as he walked the worried expression re-asserted itself like a returning cloud.

"Mrs. Wilson!" he murmured.

"Where on earth can I get her in this evening? I will, though! That's certain. Now for some lunch. I shall do it yet by two."

He stopped as he spoke at a house standing further back from the street than any he had yet passed. It was surrounded by a brick wall, a gate in which he opened and walked through a fair-sized garden to the front door. It stood ajar, he pushed it open hastily, entered, and opened a door on his right hand. This he let fall together again with a sound of irritation.

"Mrs. French!" he called, loudly.

"Mrs. French! I'm waiting, please, and in a great hurry!"

With these words he went back into the room into which he had glanced and sat down at the end of a table, where a tray covered with a white cloth, and bearing the modest burden of one single silver fork, seemed to indicate a dim future prospect of luncheon.

"I do believe no woman knows what punctuality means!" he ejaculated angrily.

"When I told her, too, the last thing, that I should be hurried!"
“Oh, I don’t know, sir; that I couldn’t say. But that ain’t all, sir; while he was talkin’ to me a man came from Stoke Vere Rectory; he brought a message, would you go as soon as you could, she Reverend Swinton has hurt his wrist or something o’ that. And I gave Bill that message, too, as he was goin’, and sent the man back home alone.”

“Anything else?” Dr. Meredith spoke with a grim terseness which was quite lost on Mrs. French. She was wont to describe her master as a “short, quick gentleman,” and this, to her, embraced every phase of feeling on Dr. Meredith’s part.

“No, sir,” she answered; “nothing of no importance. Only Mary Brown’s grandchild drank a lot of the old man’s cough stuff by mistake, and she sent her here after you. But Alfred Johnson’s gone along to her, she said.”

“Then Mary Brown’s grandchild is settled for ever by this time!” muttered Dr. Meredith under his breath. At the same moment he rose from his scarcely-tasted lunch and pushed his chair away. “Fordham’s horse will be here for me directly,” he said. “When they bring it, tell them to saddle it at once, please.”

He seized his hat and went hurriedly out of the front door, and down the village street in the direction of the dwelling of the aforesaid Mary Brown at a pace which, if they had not been accustomed to seeing him always in a hurry, would have startled the phlegmatic male population of Mary Combe, which was just setting out for its afternoon’s work.

Alfred Johnson was a boy of eighteen, of “superior” parentage in Mary Combe, who had been taken on, at his own earnest request, by Dr. Meredith, to “learn something of dispensing, in order to try for a dispensers’s situation later on.” Believing the boy to be fairly intelligent, Dr. Meredith had sanguinely hoped that some slight lessening of labour to himself might be the result. He had long realised how much too suavine he had been, and he had further laid strict orders on the youth in question never to meddle with anything or anybody, on his own account.

A quarter of an hour later he returned, mounted his waiting horse, and set off twenty minutes late on the round that had already been so full of pressings appointments that it could hold no more, with two more to be squeezed in, and Mrs. Wilson to be seen on his way home.

He left the village by the opposite direc-
frock. This was by no means so ingeniously an attire as might be imagined. Miss Rose Swinton took care to have all her "things" made according to the very newest lights she knew of, and there were all of these in the elaborations of her blue gown. She knew herself to be a pretty girl, and she had long ago ordained that her prettiness should be set off to the best possible advantage. A great deal of red-brown hair, a pair of large, wide-open blue eyes, and a pretty mouth, made up a very attractive whole. The beautiful hair was "done up" in the newest and most elaborate fashion, to correspond with her gown; and the hand she held out to Dr. Meredith was poised at an angle carefully studied from what she had learned, in a recent visit to London, as to the habits of "smart people." One of the ambitions of Rose Swinton's life was to be considered "smart.

Her days were at her own disposal, for she was the mistress of the Rectory. Mrs. Swinton had died at Rose's birth, and the only other daughter had long been married. Most of her father's spare time was absorbed in the archeological pursuits which were his one mania; therefore, save for the very slight amount of parish work she did to please her father, she was free to cultivate "smartness" to her heart's content, and to gather about her to that end all the young members of the neighbouring clerical families who chanced to sympathise with her longings.

"I began to think that you had not got my message," she continued.

"I did not get it so soon as you intended," he answered. "But I am sorry I could not have got here earlier in any case. I hope——"

Rose Swinton interrupted him.

"Come in," she cried, "and I'll send Joseph to your horse. Father is in his study. We've not seen a single soul all day; he and I have been absolutely alone together—a dull fate for the poor dear thing, even before this happened."

She was preceding him along a passage as she spoke, and breaking off, she turned and threw a glance over her shoulder, a glance that seemed to invite him to contradict her, and she gave a smile which showed a lovely row of even white teeth.

Dr. Meredith, apparently, did not see the glance. He made no response, but seemed to arouse himself from a sort of abstraction, as he said quickly:

"How did your father meet with this accident, Miss Swinton?"

"You know what he is," was the answer, given with a light and very pretty laugh.

"He was up a ladder, deciphering some inscription or other in the church; it slipped, and he fell. Fortunately it was a very short one. But how he got off with nothing but a hurt wrist, I can't conceive. Here we are," she added, stopping before a door. "Go in, will you, Dr. Meredith, and I'll go and see about some tea for you."

Paying not the slightest attention to Dr. Meredith's emphatic statement as to the haste he was in to get back, Rose Swinton walked rapidly across the passage towards the drawing-room and rang the bell for tea. She was accustomed to disregard people's assertions if they chanced to differ with her own point of view.

There was a smile on her pretty face which very thinly covered considerable irritation, when Dr. Meredith emerged from Mr. Swinton's study, followed by his patient, and prepared then and there to take his leave of Rose, who stood waiting in the doorway opposite to welcome him to tea.

"No, thank you, Miss Rose," he said, "Indeed, it's absolutely out of the question. I'm glad to tell you that your father's wrist is not put out. It is only a very severe wrench and bruise. But, my dear sir," he added, turning to Mr. Swinton, "it is a perfect miracle that it is no worse. You really should forswear ladders."

Mr. Swinton, a quiet, meek-looking man of about sixty, assented patiently to this remark. Mr. Swinton's way of meeting life had been to assent patiently to all it brought him, including his daughter.

And he found it both well and necessary to pursue this quiet course of action for some moments after Dr. Meredith had said a final good-bye. The latter, meanwhile, was urging the weary energies of "Fordham's beast," to the utmost limit compatible with consideration for them. And, by dint of so doing, he contrived to reach Mary Combe and his own house by five minutes to seven, leaving himself thereby just time to dismount and take his way to his small consulting-room, in time for a group of "club patients," who expected him on two nights a week to be ready and desirous to listen to their account of whatever ills they might be enduring, and to assuage them, then and there, for ever.

This process was over at half-past eight,
and then Dr. Meredith went out to give Mrs. Wilson that second "look in" which he had promised. This done, he sat down at length to a meal, which was nominally dinner, but which, by reason of its long delayed and much over-cooked condition, presented scarcely enough sustenance to be called by that name. He gave up the effort to get through Mrs. French's frizzled cookeey, and fell back on bread and cheese, glancing at intervals as he ate towards a door at the end of the room, with an expression of weariness that seemed to say that his thoughts were occupied with some further duty that remained to be done on the other side of that door. Such, in truth, was the fact. The door communicated with the rooms that he used as surgery and consulting-room, and no sooner had he ended his meal, than he rose and took his way through it into the surgery to do some dispensing, and to undo whatever confusion Alfred Johnson's efforts might have prepared for him in the course of the afternoon.

Mrs. French and the girl who helped her "do for" Dr. Meredith, came in and cleared away the remains of his meal, and then Mrs. French, whose experience of life had induced in her a great respect for what she called her "proper rest," took herself and the girl to enter upon it, leaving the house quiet and still. The only sound in the sitting-room was the crackling of the small fire, pleasant enough in the chill of the spring night, when flames flickered cheerfully on every detail. It was a square room, with ugly old-fashioned fittings; a heavy oak dado and cornice, both painted a mustard-coloured yellow; and a red flock paper.

The house itself was old. It was one of those curious old houses which are to be found, in some parts of England, in almost every village; the former dwellings of that race of small landed gentry that has so nearly passed away. It had been standing empty for a long time; in consequence of that, and various structural defects, Dr. Meredith had obtained it at a low rent.

But none of its rather ugly fittings could make the room seem other than comfortable. Dr. Meredith's possessions: his neat writing-table, his book-cases, his easy chair, and one or two good pictures, gave it an air of life that was pleasant enough.

It was striking eleven by the same old quavering church clock, whose quarters he had counted in the Hollow Holes at one o'clock, when Dr. Meredith re-entered his sitting-room. His face was white with actual weariness, and his brow was drawn into a sharp frown from fatigue. He let the door fall together behind him, and walked slowly towards the table in the middle of the room, dragged out a chair from it with a weary awkwardness and let himself fall into it heavily. He sat there silently, resting his two elbows on the table, and supporting his chin in his hands for several minutes.

"It's more than one man can do, with the best will in the world!" he said at length, with a sort of hopeless groan.

"And what on earth am I to do, I should like to know? I can't coin the screw to pay an assistant. I wish I could, that's all!"

He stared steadily at the red flock paper as if vaguely hoping that an answer of some sort might evolve itself from the very walls. At last he rose languidly, and taking the lamp, placed it on his writing-table.

"I'll write before I get quite too fagged," he said, as he took some note-paper out of a drawer and sat down. "And I'll tell her; one must have a groan sometimes."

He drew the paper into position and began to date his letter; after the date he wrote:

"My dearest Althea"

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A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.
BY ESME STUART.
Author of "Joan Felicit," "A Woman of Forty," "Estelle of Greystones," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVII. FREE FOR A TIME.
"Come into the glen," she said. "The evening is warm, we shall be undisturbed there."

The two walked on a little way in silence. The Rothery tumbled and roared beside them deep down in its rocky bed, and the trees above only answered by silence. There seemed a hush everywhere except close by the rushing torrent. Penelope was suddenly conscious that she was filled with happiness, that all nature spoke in soft words, and that she must make the most of this moment of joy. Forster's very presence was happiness for her, and she knew it. He seemed to be thinking to himself as he walked by her side, and it was not till they had reached the end of the glen, and were once more out of sound of the roaring torrent that he spoke. Penelope was not impatient. She was only anxious to prolong the time; she was happy in his presence, and his silence was sweet balm to her troubled spirit.

"I ought not to be keeping you," he said at last, "but now that all is ready for our departure, I have a fear——"

"What is it?" she laughed softly.

"That I am doing you a great wrong by taking Philip away. In the old days my mother used to warn me that I was too masterful, and that I made him do all I wished. She spoke half in fun, but there was truth in it, I know. Now it seems that the old power is not gone, I thought that though his affection is strong, his marriage must break the chain."

"Marriage does not destroy love," said Penelope, not knowing what else to say.

"No, of course not, but Philip is giving up a great deal for me—for our work, at least."

"He does not find enough to do here."

"But he should have thought of that sooner. He—am I using my right of friendship too freely?"

"No, no—say what you like."

"He may have higher duties than those he is going to undertake."

"I should never keep any one back from duty," said Penelope in a low voice, feeling that she was sinking very low in her own estimation.

"He hardly realises your generosity and your nobility," said Forster, suddenly thinking how much he had misunderstood this woman, and that, had he won her, he would have won a perfect woman. Was it possible that Philip was unworthy of her and incapable of realising all she was? Sympathy is a dangerous gift when offered to a married woman, but Forster was blinded by the impulse of the moment. He took Penelope's hand which was resting on the sill. "You are a very noble and a very generous woman. You may be sure that the thought of you will help me much in my work. If life had been other than it is, if fate had chosen another path for us both—but as it is, as it is, you must remember that I shall try to remind Philip that he has other duties than to me."

Forster had once fancied himself in love with this woman. He had dreamed a dream, which placed her in a position where she could forward his ideals, but strange to say, it was only at this moment
that love in its most insidious form suddenly shot his arrow to the mark. All who needed protection appealed powerfully to Forster, and only at this moment did Penelope appeal to him in this way. Philip was his friend; but Philip had lightly wooed, and too lightly won, a priceless treasure. He saw it all clearly. Philip had been in love with an ideal woman, and had misunderstood the noblest reality. Now he was lightly seeking for more exciting work, because the quiet, dull life in this lonely dale was not to his taste. This Princess, so nobly born, so truly descended—not from royal blood, but from the blood of heroes—could suffer without complaint. Forster had thought himself safe. His friend's wife could have nothing to do with him, could not appeal to his heart; and now suddenly in this lonely glen, here on the wild hils, he found out that no one can be safe from the snare of the cunning little god who is mocked at by many, but who can make himself feared by any of whom he vouchsafes to take notice. "Philip is unworthy of her," he said to himself. "He leaves this priceless treasure as one leaves a toy of which one is wearied."

"Mrs. Winskell, will you tell me, have you well considered your lonely position here? Ought Philip to—to—"

"Hush," said Penelope softly, in a voice Forster had never heard before. "hush; what is settled is best. Besides, I shall know you are the better for Philip's presence."

"What does that signify?"

"You are Philip's friend," she said almost under her breath. "Come back now."

He turned slowly, and the two walked down the glen path. All the schemes that Forster had cherished seemed suddenly as nothing compared with this woman's happiness. He) never did anything by halves, his character was too enthusiastic for that, and the very nature that had enabled him to do great things was now the cause of his danger. The very silence that seemed to fall on them was dangerous; or was it that Penelope's hidden love was communicated by some invisible power which rules us more than we can understand?

Before they reached the end of the glen, Forster paused.

"This may be the last time we meet," he said, feeling that, because it was the last time, he might say things which otherwise it would have been impossible to say.

"You know that once, for one short hour, I hoped you would have lived my life. I may say it as a dying man may say some things, otherwise unspeakable. I think that love is like leaven, it spreads swiftly. God orders our lives, and some very beautiful and precious gifts for which we may long are given, not to us, but to our friends. Still, some day you may want help, which I alone can give you, and if so—if so, will you accept it, without any doubt or any misgiving?"

He took her hand and felt it trembling.

"Am I displeasing you?" he said very humbly.

"No, oh no."

"Well, if that time ever comes, if I can do anything for you, will you ask me?"

The ideal world has its own region, and in some natures the ideal triumphs over the real. I am going to work for my fellow-creatures, but apart from that life there will be a kingdom where an ideal woman will reign. It is very, very beautiful to know that you will think of his work, and of the workers."

Penelope's heart was beating fast. How could she have prepared herself against this? How could she have foreseen that Forster would lose his ordinary calmness? She wanted to tell him that she had never loved any but him, that for his sake Philip was nothing to her, and that pride and poverty had driven her into this his situation. How could she tell him this? No, she could not; besides, it would destroy his ideal of her. She did not know how it was, but she saw that he endowed her with virtues which were not hers, that her sin had fallen on Philip's shoulder, and that he was thus forced to accept a position in which her pride and her uncle's will had placed him. But this was for the last time, she thought—which words have spread a carpet of gossamer over many a precipice.

"If ever I want your help, I will ask you. I would rather ask you than any one else. Take Philip with you and let him help you."

They paused one moment, the one moment when on both sides there was only a thought of what life's ideal happiness might have been.

"You are a very noble woman. A true Princess, such as even a republican like myself can admire. Remember your promise."

"I will," she answered, but for the first
time in her life she was not proud. She
would have changed her title of honour at
this moment if—if Forster could have
taken Philip's place and Philip's right over
her.
"Good-bye; I shall not see you to-
morrow," he said, trying to shake off a
feeling of sadness which he could not
resist, for till this evening he had seen
his future only in a golden haze, and now
all the hereafter seemed full of uncertainty.
"At times, very seldom I am glad to
say, there comes a feeling that I have
undertaken a profitless labour, and that the
people themselves will reproach me for
trying to change them."
"No, no, that is not possible," said
Penelope, raising her head and looking
at him for one moment full of earnest
enthusiasm.
"You are right, it is not possible.
For one moment I felt a coward. Good-bye
once more."
Forster left her suddenly, and Penelope
walked slowly homewards. Her uncle met
her at the door.
"So you will remain with the old people,
child," he said, with a half-laughing, half-
serious expression.
"Of course, I shall never leave my poet,
uncle. You and I have been too long at
the helm to give it up willingly."
"I have been promising no end of
things to Philip; but as I told him, the
Palace is not as exciting as colonial
farming.
"He is right, quite right to go. He
will be of immense service to Mr. Forster."
The next morning Penelope heaved a
sigh of relief. "I am free," she said," free
for a little time."

CHAPTER XXXIX. A YOUNG LIFE.

The winter had been very severe, heavy
falls of snow had covered the mountains
and glens in the dale country, and seclusion
was not only a name but a reality for
the inhabitants of the Palace. Spring had
come there very slowly, and summer had
delayed her arrival. But at the home of
the Bethunes spring was a delight and a joy.
They understood how to make themselves
happy in the country, and frequent visitors
kept them from becoming too much ab-
sorbed in their own pursuits.
Mr. Bethune was a true recluse. He
shut himself up in his study with his first
editions, and vegetated to his heart's con-
tent. Dora alone could entice him away
from his books, now that she was a come-
out young lady. These were her reasons
for leaving the school-room.
"Now that Forster is away, mother really
cannot do without me," she said decidedly.
"Adela has given herself body and soul to
teaching the village lads to carve, and
Mary is composing an oratorio. I wonder
for what past family sins one of us is made
musical, and the others have a craze for
doing good! It's no use my taking to
good works; I have to be a walking dic-
tionary. Mother never remembers the
day when the mails go to Africa, unless I
remind her. Then I have to write to
Forster every week. I must leave the
school-room."

Mrs. Bethune was sure Dora knew best,
so Mademoiselle disappeared in tears, and
Dora came out, not in the ordinary signif-
cance of the word, for she went to no
balls nor parties, but was simply more at
the beck and call of the whole household.
Parties were reserved for the London
season; whilst in the country the Bethunes
led a quiet life, varied by occasional
visitors in the house.

When leafy June arrived there was a sud-
dden cessation of letters from Forster. Dora
declared that her brother's epistles were
very uninteresting, he spoke of nothing
but the land; but Mrs. Bethune reproved
her for saying that Forster could do
anything wrong. He was the greatest
hero the modern world could show. If
only he would make haste and come back!
"I do wish he had not taken up the
agricultural idea," said Dora. "Father
thinks it is all right, and so do you and
Adela, but—but—"
"My dear, when you have such a
brother you should not criticise him.
There is no one at all like dear Forster."
"But, mother, there is Mr. Gilbanks-
Winkall. Why did he change his name?
He is doing just the same thing, and yet
no one calls him a hero."
"Of course not, Dora; you see he only
followed Forster. Your dear brother led
the way. It is a great thing to be a
pioneer."
"That is the word people use now. I
suppose it means coming first somewhere.
Forster was always first at everything
good and clever. I am very anxious about
his not writing. Mr. Winkall might
have sent us a line."
"Mother, it does seem odd, doesn't it,
that he left his wife just to follow Forster?
Adela says it is Forster's influence which
made the Princess sacrifice herself, and let her husband go to Africa.

"Yes, dear, I am sure Adela is right. I hope when Forster comes home he will try and help the lower orders in some less painful manner. Poor dear boy, I can’t bear to think of him in that Dark Continent."

"It doesn’t seem so very dark, and I believe they are all enjoying themselves very much. They have no parties or dates to remember."

"He will come back so tanned," said Mrs. Bethune sadly, "and his complexion was so healthy. Well, I do hope those poor dear people will make haste and learn all they can learn from Forster and release him."

"But, mother, that isn’t the point. Somehow I think this experiment has been a failure."

"Oh, no, Forster never falls, dear. What can make you think this?"

"I don’t know, but he used to have all his heart in it, and now it isn’t there. I am sure it isn’t. He writes rather like a blue book. He never mentions Philip as he did formerly. Altogether——"

"Really, Dora, you think too much. Your brother has always been right, ever since he was a baby in arms. He always was so good. He never cried as you did."

"Well, there’s Mrs. Goodman to be visited to-day. She is ill, and Jim Goodman has asked me to step down to see his mother. He always says ‘step down,’ as if we lived on pedestals."

"He understands the difference of rank, you see. Of course it doesn’t really matter, but——"

"Forster’s ghost will come if you use the word rank. I’ll leave you to deal with it, mother. By the way, all the Hartleys are coming to-morrow. Last time they came we all forgot it, and nothing was ready for them."

"Yes, it really was dreadful! You were in the school-room. I’m sure, Dora, you are a great comfort to me. You are the only one of my children born with a memory."

Dora Bethune was soon on the way to the village. The Castle, so called from its ancient ruins, part of which had been repaired and transformed into a modern building, was, in truth, the centre of the village community. Every cottager knew that in case of need, help could be obtained there. If a cow or a pig died, Mrs. Bethune was sure to head a subscription for another of the same kind, unless Mr. Forster were at home, in which case the cottager knew better than to ask for public sympathy. Mr. Bethune could also be easily worked upon about repairs, and Miss Adela was for ever providing outfits for first places. These good people often erred against the laws of political economy, but they had the reward of popularity, and the pleasure of hearing others disparaged in their favour, against which invidious flattery few can be quite proof.

Dora reached Mrs. Goodman’s cottage, wondering what she could say to sympathise with the poor woman, whose husband had been buried the previous week.

"I never have lost a husband," thought Dora, "so I cannot imagine what it feels like. I wish the Princess were here; she has been parted all these months from her, so she could explain. I wish he and Forster had never gone. Somehow or other I feel sure something is the matter with him; I am sure of it."

She knocked at the cottage door and was bidden to come in. The old lady was sitting in her arm-chair, with her hands folded listlessly on her lap. Her spectacles were by her side, laid on an open Bible.

"Ah, Miss Dora, it’s you, is it? My son said he would ask you to look in. And how’s Lady Bethune? I’m sure she’s grieving for her son. There’s nothing but sorrow in the world, Miss Dora."

Dora was not at all of that opinion. She was full of life and hope for the future.

"Mother does want her son back, of course, but she knows he is making himself useful, and then she likes getting his letters. She told me to ask if there was anything you wanted, Mrs. Goodman."

"You’ll give my duty to her, Miss Dora, but there’s little that I want. My poor man being dead and buried has put me about dreadful. I don’t seem to know where I am, my dear."

"Of course," said Dora, thinking that "put her about" was a strange way of expressing sorrow for a husband’s death; but after all it was the truth.

"But I would not have it otherwise, my dear. He was a good man to me when he wasn’t in drink, and Jim is a steady lad, thank Heaven."

Dora talked on for some time, but she was thinking of what Forster had often said, that until the mind is raised above sordid care, it cannot appreciate the higher beauty of life.

As she came out of the cottage she found herself face to face with a gentleman.
She is staying in London with some relations. She was much interested in hearing about Mr. Bethune's settlement. Your brother actually managed to fire her young mind with his ideas.

Mr. De Lucy laughed a little scornfully. "Have you been writing a book on your travels?" asked Dora, a little irritated with the stranger for not admiring Forster.

"I took notes certainly, but I shall take care not to publish them. These hasty travellers' tales are really too common."

"You want to find perfection," said Dora, "so I suppose you will spend your life in looking for it." With her quick, keen insight Dora often hit the nail on the head. Mr. De Lucy winced mentally.

"It will, at all events, hurt no one but myself. I shall not have led any one astray."

"I think it is better to lead people astray from good motives than not to lead at all," she said.

"Better to lose two lives than one, you think!"

Arthur De Lucy looked at the girl with a half-smile of contempt. She had developed so much since he had seen her abroad, that she seemed almost to be another person. She had stepped suddenly over the borderland between childhood and youth.

"We don't know what using oneself for others means, I expect. For instance, Forster never could lead others astray."

"You have great faith in your brother, but infallibility is a dangerous doctrine. I have never found it satisfactory."

"I am sorry for you," said Dora, laughing. "You do not know the joy of trusting any one perfectly."

"Nor the disappointment of it. I have no faith left in humanity. Society is hollow, and if it takes up good works it is purely to follow a fashion."

"What horrid Ideas!" said Dora, getting angry, and wishing Mr. De Lucy had never come, but hospitality made her hide her feelings, especially as they had just reached the Castle. The front door opened into a spacious and somewhat gloomy hall, full of relics of past Bethunes. The floor was inlaid with mosaics, representing Neptune, Venus, Dolphins, and Centaurs, copied from a Roman pavement. A former Bethune had been artistic in a wrong manner, wishing to bring Italy near his Castle, and not seeing that each country should have its own artistic centre and its own fashion.

stopped, but it was the stranger who spoke first.

"Excuse me, but I think I am speaking to one of the Miss Bethunes."

"Yes, and I have seen you before," said Dora, smiling; "but where? At—at—now I know. You are Mr. De Lucy. I am going home, will you come with me?"

"I was making my way to the Castle. I am the bearer of a message from your brother."

"From Forster?" Then with a sudden rush of colour, which made her look very pretty, she added: "Is there anything the matter? If so, tell me first; it would kill mother if—"

Dora looked up into the young man's face, but read in it nothing alarming. She noticed once more how handsome he was, and how quiet and composed was his manner.

"Don't be frightened. He has been ill, but he is on the high-road to recovery—and is coming home in the next ship. I was sent to Africa for my health, and I happened to come across the Rockwood settlement. We met almost as old friends."

"Tell me about him. Is Mr. Winakell coming back with him? How glad the Princess will be! You remember her, Mr. De Lucy?"

"Perfectly; one cannot easily forget her; but I believe Mr. Winakell is not coming, indeed it was impossible for both leaders to leave at the same moment. His influence there has been marvellous, especially since Mr. Bethune has been laid up with that low fever."

"Why did he not tell us? Please make light of it to my mother."

"Most likely he will be almost well by the time he reaches home. That is really all the bad news I bring. The settlement is quite a success, but I thought your brother seemed less contented with his ideas than formerly."

"Oh, that is impossible; Forster is so true, so steadfast."

"You know we do not agree about the lower orders. I look upon his enterprise as wasted labour. We had long discussions about it. He is living like a cottage, and the hut which he calls his house would surprise you."

"He believes in his principles, you know. Forster is a real philanthropist, not a make-believe."

"It will all break down—oil and water will not mix."

"But where is your sister?"
The hall door stood open, and Dora led the way through a small drawing-room into a larger chamber looking out upon green lawns and cedar-trees, and all that could delight the eyes and the imagination.

"Your brother left a very beautiful home for his hut," remarked Arthur De Lucy, still in his sceptical voice, "so we must conclude that the hut has hidden charms."

"Then you do not believe in disinterested devotion?"

"No, at least I have never seen it."

"But your sister—?"

"Ida! she is a child in mind, and besides, she finds me a convenient courier. If it were not for me she would lead a dull, narrow life with her aunt; as it is I take her abroad often, and her affection for me is very interested. I don't mean that she would say so, but then, where is the man or woman who is perfectly honest?"

"I can't hear to have you say that. Now I will find mother. You won't mind waiting a moment; I must prepare her for your arrival. My sister Adela is in the village. She has a class of boys on half-holidays. Father is out, I fear."

"Do not hurry, Miss Bethune. I can admire your cedar-trees from here."

When she was gone Arthur De Lucy walked slowly round the large drawing-room, examining pictures and making mental notes.

"The family is so sure of its own birth and its own position, that the son can afford to be peculiar. It will not last long. I saw signs of weariness in his enthusiasm. This time he has carried it too far. That friend is the true hero in my estimation; but what an odd thing to leave his wife so soon! It was a case of marrying for money, I suppose. He bores the show without putting himself forward. I should say that the noble secon of the Bethunes rather unnecessarily snubbed his friend. Well, it is a shame to destroy this girl's faith. By the way, if I were not sure of the contrary, I should say that she was genuine, but, like Ida, she is too young to have a choice. She has more character and backbone than my little sister. However, she is a girl who invites contradiction, and that is 'the mark of the beast' in the feebler sex, I fear."

There were sounds of footsteps, and Mrs. Bethune tumbled rather than walked into the room. She held out both her plump hands to Arthur, and her face was full of smiles.

"You are indeed welcome. A friend of dear Forster. I do call it kind of you to have come to us in order to give us news of him."

"My news is scanty, I fear," said Arthur, in the quiet, gentlemanly manner which at first attracted others to him. "Mr. Bethune has been ill with an attack of fever, and his friend and the doctor decided that he must return home as soon as he could travel to Cape Town."

"But it's not serious? He is better? Oh, poor dear Forster, I knew some day he would kill himself for others. I know it's quite right theoretically, I mean, but when—when it comes to this—"

"You feel, as I do, that it is nonsense."

"Oh no, mother, you don't," said Dora, hurrying to the rescue. "You said Forster was quite right, so please don't turn round and contradict yourself."

"He is quite right, of course, dear Dora; I know it's quite right to be poor and lowly. The Bible says so, but it only means when—when—I mean in your own country."

"Just so," said Arthur; "there is nothing in the Bible, I believe, about founding labour colonies for the thriftless."

"But I feel sure Forster means for the best. He thinks it is his duty, and he always was like that," said his mother.

"He may have seen cause to alter his mind," remarked Arthur carelessly.

"I do hope he has. Well, we shall see him soon. Dora, put down the probable date, dear."

Dora fetched "The Times" and hunted up the date of the next ship. Arthur De Lucy looked at her with secret annoyance, because she did not fall into any of his preconceived pictures of womankind. He cultivated a low opinion of them, and this young girl, so perfectly capable, so natural and ladylike, found no counterpart in his gallery.

"He will be here in ten days, I think; but how strange Mr. Winskell did not write to us about it! Forster might have sent a line."

"Forster never likes writing," said Mrs. Bethune, who could not bear to hear any fault found with her son. "And how was Mr. Winskell, Mr. De Lucy?"

"He was certainly overworking himself."

"It was very good and kind of his wife to spare him. Poor thing, she has led a dull life since her marriage. Her father is a great tie to her."

"They were an uncongenial pair," said
Arthur carelessly; "but that is a very common occurrence."

"You are quite mistaken, isn't he, Dora? It was quite a love match," said Mrs. Bethune, horrified.

Dora blushed; she thought it was very rude of Mr. De Lucy to discuss the Princess's private affairs.

"They are our friends," she said; and Arthur was angry at the girl's rebuke.

"You will stay the night, won't you, Mr. De Lucy?" said hospitable Mrs. Bethune.

"Everybody does who comes to this out-of-the-way place, I assure you, and my husband will want to see you. If Forster would think of himself sometimes, and turn into a country gentleman, it would be such a relief; but I dare not say this to him. He has such beautiful ideas about raising the working classes. He is quite a saint.

Arthur accepted the invitation. His London rooms were a little dull, and his sister wanted to come into the country. Why not take lodgings near the Bethunes? Dora Bethune might inspire Ida with more energy. He propounded his plan, and Mrs. Bethune at once suggested his taking the Vicarage, which was to be let for two months. The Bethunes were not going to London for the season this year, but meant to stay in the country, especially if Forster came home. The Bockwoods were coming as soon as possible to them. Mrs. Bethune had already found out all about Arthur De Lucy. His family antecedents were all that could be desired, and he himself was known as a minor poet. She almost feared, too, that if the Vicarage were not let, Forster on his return home would fill it with one of his parties from the East End. She had seen enough of them in Switzerland.

Mr. Bethune was very cordial to the stranger. He was an intellectual, literary man, and such men were not found every day in the country. He took him to his library and allowed him to handle Elzevir and Aldine to his heart's content. But when Arthur returned to the drawing-room, he found Dora quite a Philistine about first editions.

"Books are made to be read," she said calmly. "Papa cares more for the outside than for the words of wisdom they contain, I believe. Bookworms lose all sense of out-of-door life, I think. They become like fossils. We are a very odd family, you see, for we all differ."

Adela was as smiling and placid as usual. She was dressed in a soft mauve material, which appealed to Arthur's fas-

tiduous taste, whilst the shy, silent Mary, who only answered in monosyllables, was to his mind all that a lady should be.

"Dora thinks she is born to set us all straight," said Adela, smiling, "and she is right. I don't know what we should do without her; she can put new strings in Mary's violin, and she does the boys' club accounts for me. She keeps mother up-to-date, and dusts the Elzevirs."

Arthur was lounging in an old-fashioned arm-chair, and his taper fingers smoothed out a wrinkle of the old brocade.

"I am sure Miss Dora is very useful," he said, looking towards that young lady, as she busied herself with mending the back of an old book. He saw the picture of a healthy and sparkling young girl. There was nothing aesthetic about her, her freshness was her greatest charm, but it was just this freshness that amused him.

"I think a woman is made to adorn life, not to keep its wheels oiled. I prefer the type that sits at home and does nothing—at all events in the evening," he said carelessly.

"I think such a woman would be very tiresome to live with," said Dora; "at all events, a man who expected one to sit idle would be terrible."

"Mary answers to your requirements," laughed Adela; "unless she has her violin in her hands, she is always idle."

Mary blushed with shyness.

"I am not idle, Adela. I am thinking all the time. You can't understand a musical mind."

"I meant true idleness," said Arthur, driven on by the spirit of contradiction. "A woman should neither sew nor think."

"Nor mend old books," said Dora.

"Here is my twentieth, and I shall go and look for the twenty-first!"

"Dora could manage a whole colony," said Mrs. Bethune sadly. "I can't think where she gets her energy from. It is not from either me or her father."

When Dora was alone with her sister, she gave vent to her opinion of their visitor.

"What a dreadful man, Adela! I want to contradict all he says. Isn't it strange that I admired him abroad? I hope he will go away quite soon. I really almost hate him. He doesn't appreciate Forster and praises up Mr. Winakall, who ought to be hung for forsaking his beautiful wife, I wish mother had not suggested the Vicarage to Mr. De Lucy."

"But the pretty sister was charming,
and at the bottom he is not really disagreeable."

"Nothing matters now that Forster is coming back, but all the same I don't like this man," was Dora's answer.

SULTAN AHMED'S CAPITAL.

The glory which once encircled Ahmedabad has long since passed away, but although the historic capital has fallen from her first estate of regal splendour, she still occupies an important position as the principal city of Gujarat, and the second of the Bombay Presidency.

Tawny domes and brown minarets of the Indo-Saracenic architecture which forms such an important link in the history of native art cut sharply into the glowing blue of the November sky, and surmount a long line of battlemented walls embowered in the feathery foliage of neem and tamarind. The crowding trees of converging avenues, which lead to the city gates, are inhabited by a colony of long-tailed monkeys, formidable in appearance and of appalling size. Hundreds of beady black eyes peer forth from the leafy fans, and wrinkled hands pelt the passing multitudes with twigs and branches broken off in mischievous eagerness. Quaint brown-coated figures swing by their tails from the ends of forked boughs, or climb up the grey trunks to a lofty perch among the fluttering leaves, and family parties tumble about on the withered grass. A baby monkey tries to shake off the grasp of his mother's skinny hand as she restrains his rambling steps with one encircling arm, while foraging with the other for fallen fruit, finally giving up her unrelenting offspring to the whiskered paterfamilias, who alternately cuffs and coaxes the weird little form which he carries off to a distant tree. The veneration shown to these poor relations of humanity throughout the State prevents the reduction of their numbers by Government decree, though their thieving propensities cause continual annoyance. The cult of the monkey meets with comparative forbearance, as being less dangerous to the community than the ancient serpent-worship of the locality, a devotion not yet extinct in conservative India, but gradually yielding to the pressure of English influence and the temptation of the rewards offered by Government for the destruction of venomous reptiles.

A romantic story, like a faded rosebud found within the pages of a dusty chronicle, throws a poetic glamour round the chapter of Indian history which commemorates the foundation of Sultan Ahmed's capital. The Mohammedan conquest of Gujarat was accomplished at the end of the fourteenth century by the Viceroys of the Emperors of Delhi, and the increasing power of the Royal delegates at length enabled them to form an independent dynasty. Ahmed, the second Sultan of the new régime, when riding on his elephant through the jungle which clothed the lower spurs of the Rajputana mountains, became enamoured of Sipra, the beautiful daughter of a black Bheel chieftain, as she came to draw water at sunset from a shallow river which crossed the monarch's path. The burnished brass of the lotah poised upon the graceful head emphasized the dark loneliness of the girl as she stood among the green fronds of the tall bamboos which fringed the stream, and the susceptible monarch succumbed to the untaught charms of the startled wood-nympfi, who became a star in the galaxy of beauty which adorned the Royal Zenana. When the Sultan espoused his dusky bride he determined, in true Oriental fashion, to honour his lady-love, and to immortalize his own name by building a new capital on the banks of the brook where the mysterious hand of fate met the barbaric maiden and led her to a throne.

Before carrying out his resolution, Ahmed, with the characteristic submission of a faithful Moslem, desired the Sheikh, who acted as private chaplain and keeper of the Royal conscience, to invoke the Intercession of the Prophet Elijah, by way of obtaining the Divine permission. The necessary aid was secured, and the prayer granted on condition that four men bearing the name of Ahmed could be found in Gujerat who had never omitted the prescribed evening prayer when the cry of the Muredas from the minarets rang across the city at the sunset hour. The monarch and his dervish, Sheikh Ahmed Katta, at once supplied two of the required quarteaks, and with great difficulty another pair of Ahmeds was discovered whose devotions had been observed with unfailing punctuality. The foundations of the new city were laid, and in A.D. 1413 Ahmedabad, beautiful as a dream, rose upon the rocky banks of the Sarbamsi river. In accordance with those vague notions of "meum" and "tuum," deemed
in no wise inconsistent with the utmost fervour of ecstatic piety, the splendid marbles of two ancient Hindu cities were pillaged to supply the building material of the modern capital. So great was the architectural genius of the native artists, refined by centuries of civilisation, that they surpassed their Moslem conquerors, and the buildings of Ahmadabad, rich in historic interest and intrinsic beauty, show the ingenuity of the plastic minds which, by the subtle assimilation of two opposing styles, contrived to blend local Hindu practice with foreign aims and ideas. A noble citadel enclosed the Royal palaces and subsequent tombs, erected on a plateau forty-three acres in extent, and defended by massive fortifications. Richly-veined alabaster and precious woods were imported from distant States for the decoration of the capital, and as the mosques and mansions rose on every side, merchants, weavers, and skilful craftsmen were attracted to Ahmadabad, which soon became a flourishing centre of trade and manufacture. The great wall which still surrounds the city was built by Sultan Mahmood Begada; towers of defence were erected at distances of fifty yards apart, and the folding teak doors of the eighteen city gates bristled with sharp iron spikes to prevent the wood being battered in by the heads of the besieg ing elephants. After the death of Mahmood in A.D. 1511, the fortunes of the city began to decline. The power of the Gujerat Kings waned, their revenues were reduced, trade was crippled by Portuguese competition, and the harassed State impoverished by the quarrels of turbulent nobles. The reigning monarch failed to quell the tumult, and in A.D. 1572 the malcontents called in the aid of the Emperor Akbar. He entered Ahmadabad almost without opposition, made Gujerat a province of the Mogul Empire, and appointed a Viceroy. Under Mogul sway the city retrieved her fallen fortunes, and attained the zenith of her fame. In A.D. 1695 she was described by a Portuguese traveller as "the greatest city of Hindostan, nothing inferior to Venice for rich silks and gold stuffs curiously wrought with birds and flowers." When the Mogul Empire began to decay in the early years of the eighteenth century, Ahmadabad was distracted by the rivalries of the Imperial nobles, and during a decade of disorder was twice sacked and captured by the Maharratas. In 1753 they besieged the city for the third time, and for a score of years it remained in their hands. In 1780 it was taken by the English after a gallant assault, but afterwards restored to the Maharratas, until, in 1818, at the overthrow of the Palakha's power, it reverted to the British Government, and became the head-quarters of the northern division of the Bombay army.

The picturesque city is unspotted by any incongruous medley of that Western element which invariably destroys original form and local colour, and the Oriental conservatism of Ahmadabad enables the spectator to view the distant past through a medium of present reality, which needs no aid from imagination to brighten the tints of the picture. Ancient palaces of native magnates and wealthy foreign merchants line the mouldering streets, the exquisite carving on beam and jolt, lintel and doorpost, clear and sharp as though but recently chiselled. Broken pavements sparkle with glass mosaic, vaulted gateways wretched with arabesque sculpture span the narrow alleyways, where cats and monkeys clamber about the roofs in friendly proximity, and every winding lane contains a wealth of lavish ornament on dusky arch and broken fountain. The richly-decorated galleries and cornices of latticed zinnas almost meet across the narrow thoroughfares which diverge from the principal streets, "broad enough for ten bullock-carts to drive abreast," according to the chroniclers of Ahmad's reign. Tapering minarets rise unchanged in their stately grace, and soaring domes, etherealised by the sharp curves of Mogul architecture, resemble gigantic bubbles resting for a moment on the massive solidity of the main building before vanishing into air. Sunny street and shadowy lane frame brilliant pictures of native life, almost unchanged in external aspect since the days of Ahmadabad's power and pride. Every thoroughfare glows with a shifting kaleidoscope of dazzling colours, and the tints of purple, orange, rose, and green look gay as a bed of tulips. Dusky arms glitter with innumerable bangles, and slim ankles bend under the weight of brass and silver circlets edged with tinkling bells. Golden buttons and huge rings sit with turquoise and seed-pearl direct attention to the shapely brown noses which they adorn, and disagree frames every ear, the jewelled drops, large as decanter stoppers, resting on the shoulders. Feet and fingers laden with massive rings suggest a possible derivation of "The Lady of Banbury Cross."
from the same Aryan source which originated many of the well-known nursery rhymes.

The costume of the men varies from the flowing robes of the turbaned Mohammedan, and the twisted sheet of the full-dressed Hindu, to the simple brown garb provided by Nature. The black figures of barbaric Bheels, armed with bows and arrows and disdainful any further personal attire than a row of stone amulets threaded on a string of beads, recall the romantic Royal Marriage. The warlike Bheels, resisting the modifying influences of time and civilization, cling tenaciously to every historic rite which tacitly admits the nominal supremacy of their sense clan, and even at the installation of a Rajput chief, though this haughty “child of the sun” traces his long descent from an avatar of the god Vishnu, the mystic “silks” must be traced on his brow by a Bheel chieftain with blood from his own finger or foot, as the Royal Signet which alone can ratify the ceremony.

Between richly-carved houses and fantastic bazaars with their Oriental mixture of splendour and squalor, we join the throngs which stream through sunlight and shadow in moving ribbons of gorgeous colour. Stalls of pottery, beads, and bangles jostle shops filled with the elaborate paraphernalia of Hindu worship. Brown faces peer across golden piles of plantains and scarlet mounds of pimentos, hedged by spiky vegetables of purple hue and unknown species. Betel-nut sellers crouch in the shade of overhanging gables, with baskets of deep green leaves, smearing them with lime as they wrap them round the nuts which stain every mouth with vivid vermillion. The shops of gold-beaters and braziers, with their flaming crucibles and deafening hammers, flank stalls of dusty and worm-eaten scrolls in Persian and Sanskrit, presided over by turbaned Mohammedans, who smoke their hubbub-bubbles undisturbed by customers. Brilliant silks and cottons are drawn from dyers’ vats and hung up to dry on lines stretched across the side-streets, the wet folds overhead dripping on the passing crowds, apparently unconcerned by additional splashes of carmine, yellow, and blue on their rainbow-coloured robes. The completion of al-fresco toilets occupies a considerable share of public attention. Friendly hands pour water over bronze-hued limbs as a late sleeper rises from his rickety wooden “charpoy,” having spent the hot Indian night in the open street. Sleek black tresses are oiled and combed with studious care, and though the Hindus invariably sit down in the thick dust of the highway to rest after his exercises, the native taste inclines to theoreti cleanliness, and ablutions are repeated at intervals throughout the day. Quiet yellow and scarlet “ekkas” jolt along the rough roads, drawn by hump-backed bullocks, with girt and painted horns. Shaggy black buffaloes blunder about in an aimless way, which requires the constant supervision of a brown boy lightly clad in a blue necklace, who seizes ragged tail and twisting horns according to the exigencies of the erratic course pursued by the bewildered herd.

Grumpy fakirs roll in the dust, and perform extravagant antics before an amusing crowd, which applauds every gymnastic feat accomplished by the emaciated fanatics, whose only garb consists of the red or white lozenge-shaped prayer mark which covers their lean bodies. Naive girls in tinselled masks gyrate slowly to the sound of tom-tom and conch-shell. The sharp twang of a violin sounds from the lattice-loaded corridor of a haveli, and a string of camels ambles down the street in a cloud of dust we dive under a horseshoe arch into a green court shaded by mango-trees, and surrounded by a wooden cloister used as a carpet factory. A dozen boys knot the many-coloured wools or strings stretched over a rude frame, and a man in the centre of the group dictates the pattern to his pupils, who work out its exquisite design with incredible speed and dexterity; their thin brown hands darting up and down with unerring accuracy, while the rich groups of softly-tinted flowers in an arabesque bordering grow as though by magic under our wondering eyes.

A second courtyard is devoted to wood carving, another local industry which displays the artistic genius of the inhabitants, by boldness of design and delicacy of finish.

In the cavernous gloom of an ancient oil-press, which occupies an arched crypt beneath a ruined tower, a patient donkey crushes a load of olives under heavy grindstones after the unchanged fashion of antiquity, and a man sits on the mow grown legs embroidering white silk with flowers and foliage in gold and silver thread. The serene unconsciousness of any incongruity between dusty surround
Charles Dickens.]  SULTAN AHMED'S CAPITAL  [May 12, 1894.]  443

ings and dainty handiwork is a phase of native character which contributes to the picturesque charm of Indian cities. Every trade and occupation is carried on in public, and the street is practically the home of the Hindoo citizen, for the shanty where he stows his few worldly goods, probably consisting of an iron kettle and a “charpoy,” is only regarded as a shelter from the rains.

We take refuge from the noonday sun in the beautiful Jain Temple, encircled with elaborate carving which represents a lifetime of labour spent on every marble column. Images of Buddha in gold, silver, and alabaster line the walls, and the diamond-studded eyes of the statues glitter with baleful light from the mysterious gloom of each sculptured niche. From the barbaric magnificence of these native shrines we turn with relief to the chastened beauty of the Jama Musjid, crowned by fifteen sunburnt domes. Marble vases of polished pillars gleam through the dim twilight of the vast interior, where the sculptured lace of the arched windows excludes the heat and glare of day. A door in the east wall of the court which contains this superb mosque leads to the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed, a domed building containing a group of white marble tombs. A vaulted gateway opens into a second court, surrounded by the tombs of the Queens, beautiful in form and detail, and encircled by screens of pierced alabaster. Beyond the Jama Musjid a superb stone structure known as the Tin Darwaja, or Three Gateways, crosses the main street. Passing beneath the vaulted arches, we reach the ruined Bhadar, a scene of desertion and decay, but rich in architectural relics of world-wide fame. One of the crumbling mosques, now used as a public office, is adorned with such exquisite tracery of snowy marble in stems and branches, that Fergusson, in his “History of Indian Architecture,” declares it to be “more like a work of nature than any other detail that has ever been designed by the best architects of Greece, or of the Middle Ages.” A deeper interest belongs to the mosque of Rani Sipra, “not far from the Astodiya Gate,” and the beauteous vision of pale marbles and roseate stone encrusted with wealth of chiselled embroidery is considered one of the fairest temples in the world. This sacred edifice is locally known as “The Gem of Ahmedabad,” and many touching traditions linger round it. As the court of the mosque contains the tomb of the Sultan’s barbaric Begum, we may conclude that the Bheel maiden, “forgetting her own country and her father’s house,” embraced the faith of her royal lord and lover. A tiny stone slab at the side of the Sultan’s sculptured monument marks the grave of her favourite cat, which expired—so the story goes—on hearing of the decease of its mistress.

When the heat of day declines we drive through avenues of gum-arabic, peepul, and tamarind, to the beautiful Kankerla Tank, a noble artificial lake made by one of the early Kings. Luxuriant gardens fringe the shore with thickets of banyan and palms, brightened by blossoming trees of red poinsettias and gold mohur. Marble steps lead down to the water, and a tesselated causeway crosses the blue tank to an inlet of flowers and ferns. A gilded kiosk crowns a rocky knoll, and a balcony draped with a curtain of purple Bougainvilleas commands exquisite views of lake and sky transfigured by the glow of a flaming sunset. A wonderful peach-like bloom flushes the fiery gold, and a pageant of changing hues surges across the radiant heaven in waves of rose and violet light, like the overflowing tide from some invisible ocean of glory beyond earthly ken. Even the clouds of dust are changed into showers of powdered gold, and the amber light lingers over the earth as though loth to die away. The clear-cut shadow of every tree lies in a dense black cone upon the sun-bathed grass, and the gnome-like figures of native “bhoeties” filling goat-skins at the water’s edge to slake the road which encircles the lake, look as though carved in ebony. The red and white “earths” of native women make patches of colour under the tamarind-trees, where rice for the evening meal is cooking over a fire of sticks. Brown hands are hastily thrust into a bag which lies on the ground, and a shower of rice is thrown into the water, that the visitors may see the great shoals of fish which spring up to catch the precious grains. Green parrots flutter homeward to roost, and the burning day of India fades into the “purple peace” of the moonlit night. The gorgeous colouring of Oriental life and landscape is subdued into sable and silver, and in the deepening gloom which veils earth and sky, the very silence of eternity seems to fall like healing dew upon the restless and passion-tossed heart of the sad and weary world.
THE MONTH OF MARY.

All the fields are gay with "bluettes," all the river banks with broom;
Where the west wind sweeps above them, aways each long scasis bloom;
Where the sunshine dazzles downward, blue, and green, and white, the waves
Roll upon the golden sandbanks, crash beneath the hollowed caves;
Where the low breeze laughs and whispers, the green aspen shadows vary.
Nature to the earth is calling, "Waken, 'tis the month of Mary."

Deck her altars with the flowers, blossoming for fate so fair;
Light the tall white candles for her; fling the incense to the air;
Drape in snowy robes the children, who, all fresh and young and sweet,
Come to pay their virgin tribute at the Virgin Mother's feet;
Bring the first-fruits of the orchard, of the vineyard, of the dairy,
Give the best and brightest to her; is it not the month of Mary?

Chant her hymns when morning brightens over sea and over land,
When the sunshine dyes to glory her carved Image on its stand.
Chant her hymns when moon is fullest over bright and over bay,
Touching to a solemn beauty the great mountains far away;
When the moon makes silvery pathway, fit for foot of fitting fairy,
Rising from sea depths to tell us: waken, 'tis the month of Mary.

Prown who will and mock who dares it: in these cold and careless days,
It is good, this happy worship; it is good, this people's praise;
Good to see the gifts unsparing, good to see the lighted shrine.
Good to see, 'mid doubt and drifting, something left of the Divina.
Of all followers of the Virgin-born, of judgements harsh be chary.
And with the childlike sunny South, salute the month of Mary.

THE OLD ROAD TO CAMBRIDGE.

The way to Cambridge begins at Shoreditch Church, of which the classic portico, and queer but not unpleasing tower, show hardly in the doubtful light of a spring morning, and lies straight onward, under the iron girders, where there opens out a prospect beyond, not of groves and flowery meads, but of the dingy-looking roofs of Kingland, and of a vast wilderness of almost squaflid dwellings, without relief from tower or turret, temple or theatre; a workhouse, a factory, or a police-station being the only buildings that rise above the general roof-line. As dull, and straight, and flat as you please is the Kingland Road, but it may have been pleasant enough in the days of Hobson, the carrier, commemorated by Milton, who must have passed this way often enough when a student at Cambridge.

Things are more lively and pleasant about Stoke Newington, no longer an ideal retreat for a quiet domestic poet like Mrs. Barbauld, or such an one as good Dr. Watts, whose last resting-place is in Abney Park Cemetery, the opening to which, with glimpses of white tombs and statues, is perhaps the brightest thing we have yet seen on the way.

When you come to the rise to Stamford Hill a change comes over the scene, the road widens, broad sidewalks appear, protected or ornamented with posts and massive chains. Here is a region of wealth and comfort, and here we get glimpses of the marshy plains of the Lea, all in the freshest green of spring, and of purple heights beyond seen through a shimmering haze of verdure.

And then we come upon Tottenham and a lane leading to Bruce Grove. The Kings of Scotland once were lords of Tottenham, and though the castle has made way for a big modern building, the grounds adjoining or part of them have been converted into a public park. And there is Scotland Green on the other side of the road—a queer Dutch kind of scene with a little river flowing through, and bridges to each man his cottage, and queer little courts of weather-boarded cottages, and bridges again, and more courts, which are not affairs of yesterday, but had their share in what was going on lang synne. And what nice old-fashioned, dignified red-brick houses back in the sunshine behind their great gates of twisted ironwork! There is one with a sundial on the gable end, and the motto, "Ut umbra sumus," which seems a good sundial motto and Horatian, too. And the old almshouses are still there with their heavy chimney-stacks and low-browed doorways, and the little gardens in front bordered with cockleshells, and the dedicatory inscription of the founder, Baltassar Sanches, whom old Bedwell describes as "a Spanyard born, the first confectioner or confeit-maker, and the grane master of all that professes that trade in this kingdom." But if Sanches was the first, good Bedwell, how shall we account for the confeit-makers' wives who swore so softly and soothingly according to one Master William Shakespeare?

A pleasant chronicler is old Bedwell, once parson of Tottenham High Cross, whose book is dated 1691, and dedicated to Hugh Lord Coleraine, "Lord and Cheese
Commander there." In his time the main road from Scotland to London "was along our highway," and so it was in Elizabeth's days, and earlier still, even to the era of the heroes' wars. It is, in fact, the old North Road, older even than the old North Road of our coaching days. Parson Bedwell himself was a scholar of some repute, and employed upon the then authorised version of the Bible, and he edited an amusing old poem descriptive of the "Tournament of Tottenham," which was fought with staves for the hand of Tibbe, the daughter of Randell the Reeve, the prize being won by Perkin the Potter. As to which Bedwell writes: "The red-brick earth fit for Bricks—yes, and for Potters, too, Perkin, who wonne and carried away the bride, was of that occupation, and lv'd by that trade here." No Tottenham pottery has come down to these latter days.

That we have come to the end of Tottenham Street is certified by the appearance of the famous "Bell" at Edmonton. The sign is of the Gilpin period, but the exterior of the inn itself is modern. The "wash" too, where he made such a splash, has long ago been bridged over. More recently the "Bell" was a house of call for Charles Lamb, who would often accompany his friends as far as this to drink a parting glass ere they took the stage for London. In Edmonton Church on the left is the tomb of "Gentle Ella." But in his time Edmonton was almost a country village, while now to see the rows of houses springing up everywhere is quite bewildering. It is the same in Tottenham, too; these places have almost doubled their population in the last ten years. It seems to rain small houses, and after a little fine weather long lines of cottages are seen growing up like rows of cabbages. Soon the whole of the great Lea valley will be thickly packed with an immense industrial population. Then we may bid adieu to the old traditions of the place. How King Alfred drained Tot'tnam marshes, and thus dished the Danes, who had sailed up to Ware with the flowing tide, by leaving them stranded high and dry with their galleys. Or of the "merry devil of Edmonton," originally one Peter Fabell, astrologer and alchemist, who sold himself to the Evil One, but managed to evade his bargain, and whose sonorous threat may be remembered:

I'll make the brined sea to rise at Ware,
And drown the marshes unto Stratford Bridge.

And who will then care to remember the witch of Edmonton—less happy than the wizard—whose fate it was to be burnt, A.D. 1621. The village green is still in existence where this holocaust took place, and close by is the Edmonton station, from the platform of which you look down upon a fine old house, a vast and rambling place, with charming grounds about it, and one grand old cedar of Lebanon that stands there like a giant contemplating the army of pigmy cottages that hems it round. A workman standing by with his fork recalls how, in the heavy snow of two years ago, a huge branch, loaded with snow, broke off with a report like that of a cannon. What a work of beneficence it would be to rescue that grand old tree from the builder's axe, and to turn that pleasance into a public garden!

You may call it country if you like, but it is still street all the way from London, though pleasant enough with glimpses of the green meadows by the river, and the heights of Epping Forest, while on the other hand we have the peak of High Barnet and the ridge of Hadley woods. Then we have Ponder's End, with its plashy road to the forest, past the huge thundering water-mills that once belonged to the Knights Templars. Enfield High-way shows its rows of shops, and beyond is Enfield Wash, the scene of a wonderful cock-and-bull story of an abduction by gipsies, of which one Elizabeth Canning was the heroine, some time in the last century. The gipsy race is still to be traced about Enfield in dark and handsome female faces. There was good trade in fortune-telling along here, what time the gay bloods posted down with four or six horses to Newmarket, ribbons and stars as plenty as blackberries, and all agog for fun, and flinging about chaff and gulleys with lordly indifference.

With so many wealthy travellers on the road it might have been expected that the highwaymen would have made a good harvest; but the highway seems to have been bordered with dwellings from the earliest times, and there were few lonely stretches of road within reach of London where the robber could ply his trade to advantage. Yet Macanlay tells us how, after the peace of Ryswick, a band of discharged soldiers, thirty or forty in number, built themselves huts by Waltham Cross, and with sword and pistol levied contributions on all who passed that way. The district, too, had its own noted high-
wayman, Dr. William Shelton, who was born of respectable parents at Turnford, Essex, on the very highway, and was "prentice to a 'potency' at Enfield. He would have run off with the 'potency's' sister, of Stoke Newington, where he was assistant, but was captured, and caged for the attempt, and at last he carried off a widow's daughter, married her at the Fleet, and drew her fortune from the City Chamberlain. Then, like Smollett, having little practice at home, he got an appointment as surgeon abroad, and sailed for Antigua, where he lived a jolly life, a prime favourite among the islanders. But roystering and drinking brought him into trouble, and he came home to settle as a doctor at Buntingford, and afterwards practised at Braughin, both places on the Cambridge road. Failing to make a living by his drugs, he bought a pair of pistols and a good horse, and was soon well known and very successful on the highway, where his courtesy and pleasing manners soon won the admiration even of his victims. But all this did not save him from the gallows at Tyburn, where he suffered in 1732.

Another local practitioner was John Everett of Hitchin, whose father had an estate of three hundred pounds a year. He was bound prentice to a salesman in the City, but was 'pressed' like Billy Taylor and sent to sea. From his ship he volunteered into the army; served in the wars; was discharged; and became successively catchpole, foot-guard, turnkey, and tapster. In this last capacity he kept the "tap" at the Fleet Prison, and might have made a fortune out of the poor debtors, but shared the disgrace of the keeper who was discharged after an enquiry ordered by the House of Commons. On this he took to the road, captivated a widow of fortune by his dashing gallantry, married her and spent her fortune, and then to the road again. But he had lost touch with the profession, and soon disgraced himself by turning Queen's evidence, after which he fell to the level of a mere footpad, and as such was executed in 1729.

Turpin also was of the neighbourhood, and it was on the Cambridge road, not far from Waltham Cross, that he overtook King, another famous highwayman, and not knowing or recognising him, demanded his money. King laughed and proposed a partnership, which Turpin accepted. The pair had a retreat in a cave, it is said, in Epping Forest, whence they sallied out to pray upon travellers to Cambridge and Newmarket. In the end King was surprised and captured at some tavern on the road, and Turpin, unable to rescue him, shot him, and so saved him from the gallows.

With such tales as these we beguile the way till we come in sight of a fine and ancient cross.

The stately cross of Elnor, Henrietta's wife, writes an ancient poet, who would assuredly be plucked in "history," but a genuine and most interesting monument of antiquity.

The upper part of the cross has been well restored, but the lower stage is wondrously preserved, considering all the ill-usage and neglect it has suffered, and carries the three leopards of the Plantagenses, its arms of the Queen, and other bearings of heraldic significance. At one time the cross was almost built into the wall of an adjoining tavern, but now the whole area has been cleared, and wears a quaint and pleasant aspect, the road a little further on being spanned with the sign of the "Four Swans," which claims to have been on its ground before the cross, and has witnessed Queen Eleanor's funeral procession, and entertained the throng of knights and barons bold who followed in its train. Opposite is the "Falcon," and doubtless both the houses were good at coaching inns, and now entertain a good throng of cyclists and others.

And although a mile from the high-way, it would not do to miss Waltham Abbey, the square tower of which shows owls the green meadow flats. How rich are these meadows which we pass, pastured with happy-looking cows; and how pleasantly the many river channels wind among them! A high arched bridge with quaint old-fashioned houses beyond give passage to the town. Below is the lock, with a barge coming slowly in, and over a green hazy screen of willows and poplars rise the tall chimneys of the Small Arms Factory, while every now and then a dull rumble from the proof-house tells of arms preparing for the cruel work of war. As for Waltham itself, it is all gunpowder and explosives. You ask an agricultural-looking man how things are looking, expecting to hear about the crops. "Well," he says, shaking his head, "Oordite and Schultze's powder's pretty busy, but black powder's as flat as ever so." And then remembering how .

The old Lee brags of the Danish blood,
THE OLD ROAD TO CAMBRIDGE.

and that crossing it one enters the old Danesleigh, as settled between Alfred and Guthrum, you ask, "Is this the old Lee?" A youth replies: "This ain’t no Lee, this is the Gv’ment river."

The old High Bridge Street leads straight to the west front of the Abbey Church, and there is a pleasant path through the old graveyard, with a seat round the bole of a once noble elm, a path which issues in a pleasant antique fashion under an old gate-house, and so into the quiet little town, with its quaint gabled houses, not strikingly picturesque, but not glaringly out of keeping with their antiquity. The church ends abruptly, chancel and transepts are gone; somewhere by that mound of turf stood the high altar, and there undistinguished beneath the accumulated mould of centuries reposes the dust of Harold—"Infelix."

To gain admission to the church it is necessary to find the old lady who has the keys, and the rumour of the town has it that she is at work, inside, with the doors locked. But a little lasse is found who is bidden to "make grannie hear," and the sight of the little golden-haired girl trying to rattle the big iron grille, with the bulk of the old church looming above her, is not unsuggestive. But even in stronger hands the grille won’t rattle much; when a strong-armed youth appears, who shows how to clatter the big wooden gates inside, with a sound like thunder. "Wake Duncan with your knocking," or Harold rather, but there is no result as regards the old lady. Perchance she sleepeth, or she may be a little hard of hearing, and the walls are thick and strong! Then grannie appears from a quite unexpected quarter, not having been in the church at all, and everything goes well.

That the grand old pillars within, the Romanesque arches, the quaint mouldings, really were part of Harold’s church is pretty generally acknowledged. And the story of the finding of the Holy Cross, in honour of which the church was first founded, is as well attested as such narratives can be. It was found in Someretshire at a spot that still abounds in Roman remains, among which there is nothing improbable in the discovery of Christian emblems. The lord of the district, Tovi, the standard-bearer of Canute, came to view the wonderful find, and ordered it to be placed on a waggon drawn by twelve oxen, so that it might go where it listed; and of all places in the world it would only come to Waltham, where the Dane had recently built a hunting lodge, and there a church, probably a wooden one, was raised to receive it. Anyhow, there was a good English relic and a good English miracle for the encouragement of those who vowed with Harold that they would keep England for the English. So Waltham became the shrine of the nation’s hopes, and Harold adorned it with all the richness of Byzantine workmanship, inlaying its walls and pillars with brass—of which traces, it is said, are still found. And here, returning victorious from the fight of Stamford Bridge, Harold first heard of the Norman invasion; and here he put up his prayers for victory, when Turkill, the sacristan, saw the crucifix bend, as if in sorrow. In the fight the war-cry of Harold was "Holy Rood!" And to the Holy Rood two faithful brethren of the cross brought back his mangled body.

Harold the King is still honoured in Waltham. The old lady with the keys speaks of him with a hushed respect, that contrasts with the familiar tone adopted to the "good gentleman" in ruff and doublet whose effigy sleeps in the corner there, beside the good lady his wife, and above the good young gentlemen and ladies his children kneeling all in a row. And you must not leave Waltham without seeing Harold’s Bridge, the relics of a very ancient bridge over the mill-stream not far from where the Abbey fishponds were, and past the old gateway, which is all that is left of the domestic buildings. Coming back you will probably find yourself in Romeland, now the cattle market, the rents of which, tradition says, once went to the Holy See. And although the town lies low, and the marshes and watercourses give anguish suggestions, yest here as old Fuller says, who once was parson here, "As many pleasant hills and prospects are, as any place in England doth afford."

Resisting the temptation to follow a pleasant field-path over the green hills towards Copt Hall, let us return to the highway towards Cambridge, where the long street of Chequhent presently begins; running on in undulating fashion, not quite a town, and yet rather more than a village. Over there fine clumps of trees and tufted groves mark the site of Theobalda, an ancient seat, once the favourite residence of James the First, but long since dismantled and pulled down. And
by the church which is a good way on
there should be Pengelly, where Richard
Cromwell ended his days in retirement
under the name of Clarke. Visitors, per-
haps, had better ask for him under the
latter name, for nobody seems to recognise
that of Cromwell. "Never heard of him,"
said one old lady. "But then, I ain't
been here many years." But the feature of
Chesthunt is not its houses, but its
gardens: acres of glass, miles of subter-
ranean hothouses called pits, from which
issue red tomatoes, juicy green cucumbers,
and all kinds of novelties for the London
markets. Roses, too—everybody knows
the name of Chestunt for roses.
From Chestunt the road runs on in
pleasant undulatory fashion to Ware, whose
name is supposed to represent the weir
that the Danes built to keep up a good
head of water for their ships. How
it happens that the road passes through
Ware is told succinctly by old Camden:
"When the Barons warred against King
John were waxed hotte, this Ware, pres-
suming much upon their lord the Baron
of Ware, turned London Highway to it."
But the bridge was claimed by the ballif
of Hartford, and closed by a chain of
which the said balliff kept the key.
Whereupon Baron Sayer de Quinoc coming
that way, broke the chain and threw it
into the river, and threatened to throw
the balliff after it. From which time it
seems the bridge has been free.
Ware has been too prosperous with
its malt-kilns to have much of a history;
though the Industry is an ancient one,
and an Elizabethan poet writes:
Then by the Crowne and all the innes of Ware,
And so approaching to the late built bridge.
They see the barges loading malt space.
Elsewhere, the writer speaks of the
"guested town of Ware," alluding to the
numerous travellers, and, perhaps, to the
great bed which may have served as the
"table round" of the knights who met at
the great tournament of Ware.
It is a pretty country all about, with
e enamelled meads and crystal streams,
among which rich maltsters have built
themselves pleasant mansions. And so to
Buntingford through Puckeridge, where
the old pack is still in existence which
Joynd delight ed to join, and from
whose Holly farmers and rustic squires he
drew the inspiration of many of his best
sketches.
And now we come to a country of rolling
downs, with Royston Heath as a culmi-
nating point crowned by ancient barrows
and tumuli. And the steep High Street
of Royston, with the "Bull" at the top,
leads us to the dull level of Cambrid-
shire, with church steeples scattered here
and there, and one or two pleasant villages
on the way, but with nothing to arrest
the attention till we reach the group of
Trumpington and the cutakites—of a pias
and sober character—of the old county
town and famous seat of learning.

CRUEL KINDNESS.

"That is Tom Whipple," said a friend
to me as we sat one evening in the
smoking-room at the "Addison." "I'm
never has a good word for anybody."

Then my friend went on to give a
catalogue of the evil deeds wrought by
Tom Whipple's tongue; how this and
that reputation had been blasted; how
the happiness of half-a-dozen families had
been destroyed, and the financial credit
more than one house of business damaged
by its malignant wagging, till I began to
feel that the man's personality had a queer
sort of fascination for me.

As long as we sat in the club smoking-
room I could not keep my eyes off his
face, and as I walked home through
the crowded streets, and as I lay awak-
ening that night, it haunted me as
the manifestation of a power which wired
evil rather than good—as near an approach
to the classic Miltonic Satan as one can
hope to meet in this workaday age.

Having reviewed once more his de-
structive career, I began to speculate on
the justice and wisdom of allowing such
pestilent wolves to roam the earth, and to
figure, as a sort of paradise, a state of
things in which no one should speak of his
fellow save in laudatory words, where
anything like a disparaging remark should
be visited by severe penalties; when, sud-
denly, my brain was flooded by a rush
current of memories, memories which
taught me that I was living in a world
governed by compromise, and that there
is not one of the problems of our being
which ought not to be looked at from
more than one side. It would not even
do to lay down, as an unarguable pro-
position, that a world in which all evil
speaking, lying, and slandering were un-
known must of necessity be a pleasant
world to live in. The pendulum might
swing too far over to the other side, and
CRUEL KINDNESS.

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We might be landed in a state where the honey-pot alone was in use. In the world as we know it there is no very close approximation to this condition; but here and there one may come across people who have a good word for every-body, and a very deluge of honey and butter for all those whom they write down as their friends. The consequence of this over-expenditure of sweetness is not fortunate. Horace has wisely set it down that the sage runs in danger of being classed as a fool, and the good man as a knave, should either one pursue his favourite virtue "ultra quam satis." So it is with these over-charitable folk. People around them soon begin to gauge the value of good words which are showered upon everybody alike, good, bad, or indifferent; and as to their special friends, who are favoured with their commendation and made the object of their good deeds, they come off the worst of all. We may like our friends well enough, but it is by no means so sure that we shall like our friends' friends. We certainly shall not like them—nay, it is almost certain we shall begin to detest them cordially—if we have to listen to the singing of their praises in season and out of season.

In Mr. Barlow's day the ingenious youth used to be taught how the Athenians, becoming weary of hearing Aristides called the Just, sent him about his business, and this untoward fate is one of which the intimate friends of good-natured people are most in danger.

Of all the friends I have ever had, or ever shall have, I cannot fancy myself liking any one more than I like Mrs. Riversdale—or shall be more exact and more candid, and say more than I liked her up to the time when she was seized with her sudden and violent attachment to Mrs. Jenkins! Mrs. Riversdale was good to look at, clever, witty, sweet-tempered, and companionable in the highest degree. She was one of those people—one does not meet too many of them—whom one is always glad to see and sorry to part from. Elderly gentlemen adored her; she was the idol of children; and undergraduates—terribly critical fellows these—have been heard to say that they approved of her. She was the delight of a large circle, giving out the warmth and radiance of a sun of society to all near, when in an ill-starred moment Mrs. Jenkins—a most worthy woman, and one of whom I, albeit strongly provoked, wish to speak with all kindness—thrust herself, an Intrusive asteroid, into our system.

The first time I met Mrs. Riversdale after this untoward event I was conscious of a change. There were many familiar subjects, innocent banalities, over which we were in the habit of gossipping pleasantly whenever we might meet. There were reminiscences of a Swiss tour, during which we had foregathered, and divers experiences collected together in riverside rambles, which would invariably crop up during the first hour of our meeting, so pleasant were the associations hanging round them. Then I wrote a little, and Mrs. Riversdale sketched a little, and of course it was always necessary to discuss the scribblings and smudgings we had each perpetrated since we last met. But on this fateful occasion I was not long in finding out that, for my companion, the past above described had lost its charm. I found it impossible to get in half-a-dozen words about any of the dear old topics without some attempt on Mrs. Riversdale's part to shift the conversation round to Mrs. Jenkins. Mrs. Jenkins dominated the loftiest peak we had ever scaled in the Bernese Oberland. She meandered through the lush flats of Eynsham and Bablock Hythe. She was the point of sight in every sketch, and the central interest of every story. In short, King Charles the First's head, as apprehended by Mr. Dick, was nowhere compared with Mrs. Jenkins in the matter of ubiquity.

I soon discovered that it would be necessary, figuratively speaking, to give Mrs. Riversdale her head. I hoped that, if I should allow her to talk about the excellencies of Mrs. Jenkins for an hour or so, we might then get back to discourses of and long syne; but not a bit of it. She found it necessary to give me a full account of Mrs. Jenkins's youth and bringing up, of her marriage and settlement in life, of her many virtues, and of the unprecedented series of misfortunes which had since befallen her. This last-named catalogue seemed inexhaustible. I lost all count of time, and sleep fell upon me, and I slumbered on till I was aroused by the bang of the door behind Mrs. Riversdale as she left the room, offended at my want of interest in her friend. This was the first little rift within the lute, the first shadow of a misunderstanding that had ever fallen between us, and it was all for the sake of—Mrs. Jenkins.

But Mrs. Riversdale was far too sweet-
tempered a woman to harbour any resentment for a trivial slight like this. The next time we met—it was when she paid us a visit in town—she was as amiable and enthusiastic as ever, and she had not been long in the house before she said she hoped she wasn't disturbing our plans in any way, but she had fixed to meet Mrs. Jenkins that afternoon, and go to inspect the Poplar Girls' Reformatory, in which Mrs. Jenkins was deeply interested, and very likely she wouldn't be back till to-morrow morning, or perhaps evening; everything must depend on Mrs. Jenkins's arrangements.

Now as we were rather proud of knowing such a charming woman as Mrs. Riversdale, we had planned a little dinner for that same evening, and a little luncheon party for the morrow, to show her off to our other friends. Here was a cold douche, a blasting of all our plans. I ventured to make something of a protest, explaining what our arrangements were, but Mrs. Riversdale cut me short at once. There was no help for it. If she didn't go to Poplar Mrs. Jenkins would be disappointed, and such a contingency was unthinkable.

Of course, she was sorry not to meet our friends, but——. She did not finish the sentence aloud, but I knew well enough that she finished it mentally—"but what are all these compared with Mrs. Jenkins!"

From this it will appear that Mrs. Jenkins was no light trial to Mrs. Riversdale's friends, even when the world was going well with her; but the worst was yet to come with the advent of those misfortunes to which allusion has already been made. I forget now whether they arose on account of some banking collapse, or through the downward career of the rupees in India, or through the agricultural crisis at home. It matters very little what might be the cause of her calamities. The origin thereof would very soon have been annihilated by the overwhelming presence of the result as set forth by the activity and eloquence of Mrs. Riversdale. From this time forth, good soul! her entire energies were consumed in getting up and administering a series of Jenkins endowment funds.

First of all, Mrs. Jenkins was to be made comfortable for life. To compass this the governors of a charity for decayed gentlewomen were assaulted by Mrs. Riversdale, on pleas on which would not, I fear, have stood severe cross-examination, and compelled to disgorge a portion of their funds for Mrs. Jenkins's benefit. Next the Prime Minister himself was attacked with the view of getting a grant from the Civil List, but this attempt failed, and then the great bazaar movement was initiated. In this Mrs. Riversdale had her work cut out for her, but she did not let the rest of the world remain in ignorance of her mission. The rest of the world was informed in good set terms that it must come over and help her, and it was at this period that the loyalty of her friends was put to its severest trial. It happened that, shortly after it had set in, we went to pay her a visit, and I will remember that she would sit from morning till night over a complicated bit of embroidery for a Jenkins bazaar, hardly able to spare the time to give a word to her guests; but if I should happen to take up a book or a newspaper, or if my wife touched the piano, we were reminded sharply enough that the picture-frames I had promised to decorate were hardly begun, and the Shetland wool, concerning which my wife had made a rauch covenant, wouldn't get itself made into shooting stockings and Cardigan vests simply by being looked at. I will simply remark that the picture-frames and the woolly articles were all ready by the date of the bazaar. The picture-frames were bought by a blind old gentleman, and as to my wife's handwork, I wear one of the Cardigan vests myself in cold weather. It was left over unsold, and Mrs. Riversdale wheedled me into buying it, a transaction somewhat like seeing the kid in its mother's milk; but as the money all went to Mrs. Jenkins I suppose I ought to be satisfied.

After the bazaar there came a rush of private theatricals, out of which, strap as it may seem, Mrs. Riversdale reaped a handsome profit; though I have been led to understand that this triumph was only achieved by the sacrifices of several life-long friendships. In any case, bazaars and theatricals combined brought in enough money to set Mrs. Jenkins going; and those friends who still remained loyal to Mrs. Riversdale began to hope that they had heard the last of her protégée; but we had forgotten that the waifs and strays at Poplar, in whom Mrs. Jenkins took a kindly interest, were still to be considered. More bazaars and more theatricals followed, and consequently more deflections of long-suffering friends. An opportune call to the other side of the world relieved me from any share in the last-named move-
ment; but I had not set foot in England more than a fortnight before I heard that Mrs. Riversdale was enquiring after me, as she wanted me to help her in getting up a "café chantant," the latest invention of charitable torture, the proceeds of which were to provide the eldest Jenkins boy with an outfit as an emigrant to British Columbia. My wife developed a bronchial cold just in time to allow us to effect a retreat to Torquay; but the "café chantant" was a triumphant success notwithstanding.

Not long ago I met Mrs. Jenkins by chance, and passed an hour or two in her society during a railway journey; and, in spite of the weary times I had passed, and of the bread and water of affliction I had eaten and drunk on her account, I was constrained to admit that she was a very charming woman. As I said good-bye to her with regret, I could not help feeling that I should have absolutely fallen in love with her, had not her præbles been sung to me too long and too loud by her zealous friend, and had I not been made to purchase heaps of things I did not want, and to make a fool of myself as an amateur comedian, all for her benefit. Mrs. Jenkins was well-dressed, and had everything handsome about her, and travelled first-class, so I at least had evidence that I had not trolled under Mrs. Riversdale's whip in vain. I did not think it prudent to ask any questions about the hope of the family in British Columbia. I trust he is doing well in the backwoods, and that he will remain there; for, should he find the work too hard and the surroundings too rough and distasteful, and elect to go in for the army or the diplomatic career, I am quite sure that his mother, aided by Mrs. Riversdale and her forced recruits, will set to work to manage it.

I have recently alluded to Mrs. Jenkins's amiability and charm. I am quite sure it is on account of these, and for no other reason, that I do not cordially detest her; had she been a mere good-natured common-place person, I should not have found a word to say in her favour. But if I had been introduced to her by Tom Whippley's abuse and innuendo, and not by Mrs. Riversdale's excessive eulogy, I should have kicked him downstairs, and have enrolled myself her devoted champion ever after; indeed, I fancy if I were to hear that worthy discourse after his wont about the most ordinary uninteresting person I know, I should at once discern in that person talents and virtues he or she never possessed and never dreamt of claiming. I have often wondered what could be the use of people like Tom Whippley, and lo, I have found out.

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DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOYLE.


CHAPTER II.

Close to one of the windows of the dining-room of a house in Bloomsbury stood a girl with a letter in her hand. She had gone to the window for a better light by which to read it. For although the time of year was April, it was one of those mornings not uncommon in London in early spring—mornings in which everything seems to be overspread by a dull mist, unlike a fog in that it is thin and light in substance, and yet very like a fog in the dim yellow light it produces. This sort of mist is generally the prelude to a bright day, and it is possibly this fact; possibly the curious chill, fresh feeling of spring that pervades it even in the dullest of streets and squares; which gives to it an extraordinary and almost exhilarating sort of suggestiveness.

The dining-room was characteristic of the kind of London house, a house neither obviously rich nor obviously poor, and its appointments were neither exactly comfortable nor uncomfortable. There was no definite fault to be found with any one of them; the rows of worn, leather-cushioned chairs were well kept and carefully dusted; the sideboard was solid and good, with a polish on it that had gone a long way to obliterate its chips and dents, and the very few ornaments on the mantelshelf were valuable in their way, and had received nothing but careful handling. The effect of the whole was marred simply by a generally smudgy look that pervaded everything, a sort of dull dinginess that was by no means the result of untidiness or want of preciion, but was simply inherent in the conditions of the room, and seemed like a sort of emanation from the dull outlook.

Against this background of room and window the girl's figure stood out very distinctly. There was a clearness about its outlines that seemed to isolate them sharply from the surroundings, and to accentuate the contrast between them and it. It was a slight figure, or perhaps it would be
truer to say a thin one, for there was nothing whatever of delicacy or fragility about it. It was firm, well knit, and well proportioned; the figure of a woman who possesses, and has always possessed, excellent physical health; and the thinness was a mere normal characteristic, such as her height, which was rather remarkable, being several inches beyond the conventional womanly five feet four.

Her head, which was bent over her letter, displaying thereby a graceful curve in a neck set on strong, rather square shoulders, was beautifully shaped, and covered with thick dark hair, brown, with a good deal of colour in it. It was very curly, and being cut quite short, clung in little close rings all over the back of her head and all round her smooth forehead. Beneath a pair of straight, dark eyebrows, delicately traced in spite of their darkness, were large grey eyes. A strong and rather compressed mouth completed the character of a sharply-cut chin, which slightly over-accentuated the oval form of the face. It was, taken altogether, a very remarkable face, and the most remarkable point about it, as about every other face worthy of notice, was its expression. This consisted in a mixture very rare, and very difficult to describe; for it was at once calm and self-possessed, and eager and enthusiastic. In this combination lay its charm, for charm it had, as no one who knew its owner ever attempted to deny.

She looked about twenty-seven years old; as a matter of fact, she was twenty-five.

Her dress was a plain grey tweed, as severe in style as any woman's dress may be, and no ornament of any kind was visible about her, except a ring on the left hand, with which she had grasped the window-frame. It was an unusual hand when observed carefully, and by no means the ordinary woman's hand. The fingers were long and firm, with a certain character about them which was plainly the outcome in some way or other of their possessor's life.

She came to the end of the letter and turned back, slowly and thoughtfully, to the first page again. The grey eyes fastened themselves on the beginning for the second time. "My dearest Althea," were the words they read. Slowly, and with long pauses, during each of which they gazed abstractedly into the yellow mist outside, they followed the three pages of neat, masculine handwriting to the close, and finally were concentrated with a very thoughtful expression in their depths as they reached the end, where the writer's name was squeezed into the corner.

"James L. Meredith," that name was.

Then they were very suddenly lifted, and the girl cast a quick glance round the dining-room, as if to assure herself that she was alone, and then she caught its letter up, and held it close to her face for a moment, so that her cheek rested on the writing. With a quick flush she took it away again, and once more glanced hurriedly about her, to find herself still alone. The flush faded, and the grey eye settled themselves back into the same steady gaze at the mist; a gaze that seemed to say that the brain behind them was in perplexity, or indecision, or doubt, or all three.

Althea Godfrey's actual position in the dim dining-room on this April morning was oddly typical of her position in the world; for, as she was actually alone, so was she practically alone in life.

She had been born in India, and before she was five years old she had experienced more travelling than falls to an English-born child's lot in three times as many years. Her father's regiment had been moved from one station to another, and he had been appointed to different commands many times before he settled down with the prospect of some years' quiet before him. This quiet he and his young wife turned at once to account by making the preparations that both had long known were imminent, for sending their only child away. Mrs. Godfrey was to take the little Althea to her married sister in England. The day was fixed, their passage had been taken, and all arrangements made, when a sudden outbreak of cholera attacked the station. On the day on which the steamer sailed both father and mother were lying in their graves, and the tiny, frightened child was crying bitterly because she had called them so long, and they would not come back. Stranger hands comforted the child, took care of it during the beginning of its lonely life, and a few months later brought it to the aunt who had been expecting it.

Lady Carruthers was considerably older than her dead sister, Mrs. Godfrey. She was a well-meaning, kind-hearted woman, and thoroughly determined to do her duty by "poor Althea's little girl." But she had no children of her own, and understood them but little. She was a widow of many years' standing, who had found the
best solace for her widowhood in a large amount of what she called "social intercourse," and more ill-natured people spoke of as "constant gadding about." Consequently, though she was most careful as to the child's material and mental advantages, she did not come much into contact with her nieces during the child's growing-up years, and Althea grew up in circumstances of comparative isolation, which early began the development of a naturally clear brain into a decided tendency to think for itself on wholly original lines.

She had for a governess a woman who, trained on the very newest lines, gave the receptive girl plenty of work to do of a sort which aided this process materially. Althea eagerly learned all she was taught, and just as Lady Carruthers was awaking to the consciousness of two facts, namely, that Althea was eighteen, and that she was "inclined to be peculiar," and resolving that her introduction into society should therefore take place without delay, by way of a wholesale corrective, Althea herself presented a request that she might now go to Newnham or Girton at once.

Lady Carruthers gasped. It was late; she had just returned from a dinner-party when this request was preferred. Her first action was decided enough. She sent Althea to bed while she proceeded to think it over. The request had taken her wholly by surprise. After an hour, during which the plan suggested was revolved in her amased mind from every point of view that mind possessed, she mentally gave in. The girl should go "for a time," she decided.

She was influenced chiefly by two considerations. First, that Althea's personal attractions at this stage were still very undeveloped, and she might have been described simply as a tall, dark girl, with an absorbed expression. Time would improve this, Lady Carruthers thought, and make her more "presentable." And secondly, she knew that it was rather "the thing" to be a clever woman nowadays; and the fact of a little extra learning might give Althea a position in society later, she thought. And, moreover, deep down in her own heart there was a consciousness that she was very thankful for a personal reprieve. She was not one of those women who enjoy a chaperon's position, and the thought of her social duties to Althea had often weighed on her soul a good deal. Money difficulties in the question there were none. Colonel Godfrey had left what was for his daughter a sufficient, if slender income, and this was, of course, at present devoted to her education.

So the matter was settled, and Althea went to Newnham for "a few months," as Lady Carruthers put it.

The "few months" stretched themselves considerably. Althea came home at the beginning of each vacation so serenely and confidently persuaded that she was, as a matter of course, to return at the end of it, that Lady Carruthers did not even endeavour to gain say that confidence. Possibly she stood a little in awe both of it and of the manner, a trifle commanding, and more than a trifle assured, which, as she expressed it, "Althea had picked up at Cambridge." And the only demurrer she ventured on was a vague reference now and then to "when you are presented, my dear," or "when you see more of society, Althea," all of which were met by Althea with an impenetrable silence, which might or might not give consent.

Neither the silence nor the commanding manner were wholly characteristic of Althea, however. They were both tempered by qualities both lovable and likeable. Her high spirits were "the life of the house," the servants declared when she left it, and her quiet consideration for her aunt's feelings and wishes was evinced all day long in details. This last fact made the blow which fell upon her at last all the more difficult for Lady Carruthers to realise.

It was soon after Althea's twenty-second birthday that this bolt emerged from the blue. The evening was warm. Althea's birthday was in June, and the vacation having begun, the two were together in Lady Carruthers's drawing-room in Kensington. They were quite alone. The companionship whom Lady Carruthers had, some few years back, added to her establishment was accustomed to efface herself, comparatively, during Althea's vacations, partly from tact, and partly because she was somewhat painfully sensible of having little in common with Miss Godfrey.

It was after dinner, and Lady Carruthers, having no engagement for that evening, had settled herself down to enjoyment in a comfortable chair.

Her novel had slipped down on her knees, and she was agreeably conscious of a softening of all her perceptions, when, quite suddenly, Althea, who had been sitting silently in the window, pushed
back her chair, rose, and approached her aunt.

"Aunt Felicia," she said in her full, clear voice, "I feel that I ought to tell you that I have brought up my mind about my future. I have been long deliberating, and I have now decided. I mean to be a doctor."

It is absolutely impossible to describe the result of these words. "Aunt Felicia's" mind found the situation so perfectly incomprehensible that it simply refused to take it in, and contended itself with recollecting from it as incredible—for that night.

To all the objections, objections, arguments, and expectancies that were launched at her on the next morning and throughout many and many a succeeding day, Althea turned a perfectly deaf ear. She did at first, it is true, enter collectedly and composedly into a discussion with her aunt. But having in the course of it ascertained that Lady Carruthers founded her opposition solely on the principle that it was "so dreadfully unladylike and so horrid" for a woman to become a doctor, she gave up any further argument, and waded unconcernedly through rivers of angry tears on the part of her aunt.

She was not hard-hearted, she was not obstinate, she had simply prepared herself for opposition and braced herself to meet it. She took all the steps necessary to begin her career with quiet determination; and in silence, as far as Lady Carruthers was concerned.

When the latter discovered that nothing she could say or do made any impression on Althea; that she might, in fact, just as profitably dash herself against the rocks at the Land's End in the hope of moving them, as argue with her niece; she rose in her wrath, and exercised what authority was left for her. She declared that Althea, if she was set upon "her own undutiful and unladylike way," should no longer live in her house. With a mixture of ideas at which Althea, in after days, often smiled, she said that she "could not and would not have dissections and skeletons and that sort of thing where she was, to say nothing of the infection it would bring." Althea must find herself a home somewhere else. This Althea quite composedly proceeded to do; she arranged to board in the house of a girl friend who lived in what Lady Carruthers spoke of contemptuously as "some miserable street in Bloomsbury."

Then, on the last night in her old home Althea had, so to speak, "given the lie" to all her former proceedings by clinging round her aunt's neck as she said good-night, and saying in an odd, broken voice: "You'll forgive me, Aunt Felicia—some day—if I get on well!"

Since then three years had come and gone. They had left Althea where they found her, in a material sense that is to say; for she was still, on this April morning, boarding in the same house for which she had left her aunt's. They were very far from having left her where they found her from a mental point of view.

She had worked hard and well at her chosen profession; she had shrunk from nothing in the way of work, and nothing in the way of experience. And she had displayed in it marked and considerable ability. The steady yet enterprising work of a brain beyond the average told, and quickly brought as a sequence, position and notice. No student of her year had gained either higher distinction or more respect than Althea Godfrey. And perhaps no one was more popular. To be respected is by no means always to be liked. It often involves, on the contrary, being disliked; but Althea, among a set of women whose temperaments and minds were as varying as their faces, who were alike in nothing whatever save in the love of their profession, had won herself a place which was firm and fixed in every heart. And, last, but by no means least, she had won for herself the strongest and warmest affection from the people with whom she lived. Her friend, Lucy Graham, the daughter of the house, had married and left it within a year of Althea's coming to it. And Althea had, as it were, slipped to some extent into her vacant place. For the overworked Mrs. Graham, always struggling with the cares and needs of the family; the girls, whose ages ranged from nineteen down to nine; and the hardworking father and brother, whose daily work in the City had so few breaks in its monotony, Althea made a part of their lives which they would reluctantly have spared.

The life of a house whose income is not more than just sufficient for its needs was very different from that to which Althea had been brought up in her aunt's house. But it was, perhaps, better for her; and, certainly, no life of easy plentifulness would or could have developed Althea's temperament in the same way. And that she was happy in it had been obvious from
the first, obvious even to Lady Carruthers, who exacted from her niece duty visits in which her interest in Althea’s surroundings had been curiously inconsistent with her emphatically expressed hatred of her chosen path.

By degrees the duty visits grew more and more frequent in number. Lady Carruthers appeared to be so far mollified by the fact that “Althea looked so well and dressed so nicely,” that she insisted on her niece’s appearance at whatever social function she herself might be holding. To this, Althea, whenever the occasion in question did not interfere in any way with her work, consented readily enough. And gradually “Lady Carruthers’s niece” became rather a feature in Lady Carruthers’s entertainments. How the appellation crept into “Lady Carruthers’s clever niece,” that lady herself best knew.

It was at one of these parties of her aunt’s that Althea met the fate which, as one of her fellow-students said, would be “the undoing of all her work.”

It was a large dance, and Althea was looking extremely attractive in a new and very pretty gown. When towards the end of it a man was introduced to her as “Dr. Meredith,” she gave him only scanty notice at first. She particularly disliked young medical men; they were apt to launch much shallow sarcasm at her profession; a proceeding which made Althea’s usually controlled impulsive temper flame up as little else could. This man, however, attracted her attention by completely ignoring the subject of their common profession, and talking to her as Althea said to herself, “like any other woman.” She said it gratefully at first, but as the evening passed and no reference whatever of a personal nature was made by him, she grew agrieved. Did he think women doctors beneath contempt? she asked herself angrily, in the course of her next morning’s lecture. And she found her mind straying from a complicated and delicate bit of dissecting, to an attempt to analyse the expression of Dr. Meredith’s eyes. A day or two later she met him again at Lady Carruthers’s house, and left it with the same feeling of anger against him; the same unreasonable desire to know what he thought of her. In short, Althea fell in love; fell in love hopelessly and completely, with the man who had thus irritated her. She was very angry with herself; the more so when she found that she could not, as she had intended to do, tear this deplorable weakness from her, and fling it away. More and more against her will, but at the same time better and better, she loved him. And when, some two months after their first meeting, he quite unexpectedly and suddenly proposed to her, Althea said to him that he must give her time, and then went straight home and wrote him the happiest, most perfect acceptance that a proud and maidenly woman could.

This had all happened a year earlier. In the interval Dr. Meredith had left London for a country practice, leaving Althea there, still working steadily. She told her lover that she meant to finish what she had begun, even if her dream of a separate London practice for each of them never became an accomplished fact. But shortly before this April morning she had ended her course, and further, had become fully qualified. There was no immediate prospect of their marriage. Dr. Meredith wished to work up the practice and offer his bride a better income before she became his bride; therefore Althea was looking about her for some temporary work which should fill her time and energies meanwhile.

This was not hard to find. Among the rather small circle of women doctors and their friends, Althea Godfrey’s name had, during her course at the school, become well enough known as that of a clever and very promising student, and when the conclusion of her work more than justified her reputation, it quickly became evident to her that more than one channel was open to her energies. She had begun by trying the one that best suited her, and only two days earlier she had made an appointment for an interview with the Superintendent of a Private Nursing Home; an appointment for twelve o’clock on this very morning.

Her destined meeting-place was fully an hour from the house in Bloomsbury, and the little clock on the dining-room mantelpiece was ticking away steadily, and getting well over the ground between the quarter and the half-hour past eleven. Still Althea did not move. She seemed to have forgotten the time, to have forgotten everything to do with her surroundings, for she stood motionless, perfectly motionless, gazing into the mist with the letter in her hand.

A letter from Dr. Meredith was not in itself enough to abstract and absorb her thus. During the months of his absence from London he had written to her with an un-
failing precision that had before now roused
the mirth of the Graham family. It was
evidently, whether suggested by the letter
or not, something in her own thoughts that
absorbed her so fully.

The clock chimed the half-hour. Althea
neither moved nor heard, and she did not
so much as turn her head when the dining-
room door was opened and a girl of nine-
teen looked in.

"Thea!" she said cheerily. "Why,
Thea, I thought you were gone out long
ago! I sent Jennie to your room with
your shoes, as you asked me, nearly an
hour ago!"

Althea started, flushed violently, and
let her hand fall from the window, all at
once.

"I thought you had an appointment, or
something," continued the girl, with ev-
dent amaze displaying itself on her face.

She was rather pretty in a conventional
way. She had bright colouring, and
plentiful light-brown hair; all her pre-
tensions to beauty being enhanced by a
good-tempered expression.

Althea turned fully round, slowly; a
dazed look was slowly fading from her eyes.

"So I had, Bertha!" she responded.

"I'm not going to it, though. I think
the can Jennie take a telegram for me?"

"Why, of course!"

Bertha Graham answered readily, and
then a wondering look came over her
face; she came up to Althea, and laid a
hand on her wrist.

"Thea," she said, "there's nothing
wrong, is there?"

Althea laughed gently; a very re-
assuring laugh it was, and with it the last
traces of the dazed look disappeared.

"Not the least bit!" she answered,
putting her one hand, letter and all, on
the girl's shoulder. "I'm thinking whether
I shall take some work that has offered
itself in the country, that's all! Look
here, Bertha," she added, "I shan't want
Jennie to go out with that telegram. I'll

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MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

By ESME STUART.

Author of "Joan Pellaco," "A Woman of Forty," "Kate of Greystone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FORTNIGHT later the Bethune household had hardly got over their excitement about Forster’s return, although for three days he had been waited on hand and foot by Dora and Adela, and had listened to endless sympathy from his mother about his illness through over-exertion for those “poor dear labouring people.”

“It was the climate, mother, not the people,” Forster repeated several times, then he quickly dropped the discussion, as he dropped most discussions concerning Africa and his work there.

He was certainly much altered, and was still weak with frequent return of the fever at night; but he declared that he was fast mending, and that the sea voyage had done wonders for him. He should soon be himself again, and would then go back to his work. There had been many enquiries about Phillip, and Forster spoke much of his goodness during his own illness, and how well his friend had nursed him.

But though on the face of it everything seemed natural, Dora’s keen intuition discovered a flaw. One evening Adela found her in tears, and to see Dora crying was a very sad sign. The sisters were sitting by their boudoir window, which looked out upon the ruins. The June evening was warm and pleasant, and the moon added beauty and mystery to the decay of the past.

“What is the matter, Dolly, dear?” said Adela, “Has something terrible happened?”

“Yes, it’s Forster.”

“Forster! Why, he was much better this evening. You are as bad as mother, who says—”

“No, it’s not that; but oh, Adela, he is so much changed.”

“Changed! Yes, he is thinner and paler, and not very talkative; but he is still weak.”

“I don’t mean that. Forster is altered in himself—I know he is. He has lost his—his—how shall I explain it?”

“His elasticity, I noticed that; but really, Dora, it is only the fever, or the result of it.”

“No, it’s not fever. You know three years ago he was much worse than he is now, but it was just then that he—he taught me so much.”

“But you were so young then. You don’t need all Forster’s ideas now; you have enough of your own.”

“But, Adela, he has lost his enthusiasm. Where is it gone to? Only last year, when we first went abroad, you know he had it; it was there. He cared just as much about those young men as he did about us. I can’t bear to see Forster so much changed.”

“Really, Dolly, you exaggerate. Forster is very much disappointed at having to leave the work and his friend. He must be worrying about that.”

“He doesn’t even speak of Philip Winskell as he did formerly. They seemed like brothers then, now—Adela, I can’t help thinking they have quarrelled, or that they are not the friends they were formerly.”

“I can only say I heard him tell mother how Philip Winskell sat up with him night
after night, and nursed him as if he were a child. "I'm sure you are wrong."
Dora gradually left off crying. She was now a little ashamed of herself.
"I know it's silly, but Forster has always been my conscience. If he should leave off caring about his work, I should feel as if—"
"As if what?"
"As if the world were coming to an end."
"Mother would be delighted. I know in her heart she does not appreciate Forster's object in life. She would much rather he married. By the way, the De Lucys have arrived. Ida De Lucy looked more lovely than ever as she flitted about the garden this evening. She called out to me to tell me that it was like being in fairyland, and that she hoped you would soon come and see her. She must be about your own age, Dora."
"But her brother might be there. He is so obstinate and disagreeable, and I don't seem to care about anybody as long as Forster is like this. Adela, he is changed."

Adela was not imaginative enough to see the change, so Dora said no more. Where was the use? But the next day, while she was sitting with her brother, the feeling came back to her with greater certainty than before.

It was a beautiful evening, and Forster was lying down on a couch drawn up close to the open window. Mrs. Bethune and Adela had gone to a garden-party. Mary was in a turret-chamber with her violin, and Dora had volunteered to stay with her brother, though he declared he wanted nothing. The girl was copying some music for her sister, but every now and then she glanced at Forster, and noticed that he was not reading.

She suddenly rose and came to sit by his side.
"You feel worse than you will own, Forster. I'm sure of it. That stupid doctor—"

Forster was changed. He looked thin and gaunt, for the fever had left its mark upon him. He smiled at Dora's outburst.
"No, I am much better. Dr. Crane says so. By the way, Dora, you have changed since I left last year. You have become a woman. You were a child when I left you."
"Well, you see, it was time one of the family grew up. We don't seem to be quite like other people—as a family, I mean."

"Is that your opinion? Why do you say so?" said Forster, smiling.
"I can't help thinking so, now I am older. You, Forster—well, you are unlike other men—Mr. De Lucy, for instance; he spends his time in amusing himself. You never did that; only somehow you have lost your old enthusiasm. It's his horrid African fever, I suppose, which is the cause of it."
"I suppose it is. Directly I can get back what you call the old enthusiasm, I must return and release Philip. He must come back."

"Why didn't he come with you?"
"I could not persuade him to do so. I thought the work would suffer. But was my work, Dora—mine. I ought not to have let him in for it."
"He went of his own free will. You would never persuade any one to do wrong."
"Hush, Dora, don't talk nonsense. I'm no better than other men."
"But you are, Forster, dear, ever so much better. I want you to— to— Oh, I don't know what I want; I want you to be yourself again."

"What do you say to coming with me, Dora, to see that queer old Palace where the Princess is buried? I ought to go and see her."
"Why ought you? She has not been very sympathetic about you. I wish I could understand the Princess."

"Understand her! She is a noble woman."
"You did not think so always, Forster."
"I did not understand her. Look how disinterested she was. I feel as if I— I— Shall we go?"
"Will it do you good, Forster?"
"Yes, it will cure me, I think."
"Then let's go; we must have the doctor's leave. Oh! it will be delightful going with you. How long shall we be away?"
"I must get a month's change of air. After that I shall be quite myself again. I know I shall, and I can go back and finish the work. Jack will be rewarded if it is a real success."

Forster's eyes brightened, and Dora was satisfied. He would be himself again when he was well.
"You must write to Mrs. Winakoll and ask her if she will have us," said Forster, after a pause.
"But haven't you yet written to her about her husband?"
"No; I left that to Philip. I meant to go and see her as soon as I could."

When the others came home Dora was eager with her news. Forster felt that change of air would set him up, and the Princess would certainly be delighted to see them.

No one made any objection, except Mrs. Bethune, who thought that Forster could not be nursed among those poor dear, odd, wild people, but Dora's presence was to secure Forster from being killed through neglect, and the letter was written. Dora noticed that Forster was very restless for the next few days, and several times asked her if she had heard from the Princess. The answer came after a short delay:

"MY DEAR DORA,—I am very glad you propose coming to see my dear old home. It is perfect now. The Glen is in its beauty, and the Beechery is still quite noisy in spite of the dry weather. I was sorry to hear your brother was invalided home. I hope this northern air will do him good. My father is no better, he certainly gets more feeble, but my uncle is in excellent health and spirits. The Palace is at last complete, and everything has been done to his satisfaction. He will be delighted to rattled down the many miles of pass and to do the honours of it.—Your sincere friend,

PENROPE WINSKELL."

The note was handed round and Forster kept it. He said he would answer it, but Dora had to arrange for the journey, and she found out that Forster had forgotten all about answering Penelope's letter.

In the meanwhile, Arthur De Lucy and his sister came very often to the Castle. They seemed to make themselves quickly at home, and, indeed, no one could be long with the Bethunes without doing so. The house door was always open. Any one who dropped in was expected to stay to the next meal, whatever it might be, and, except Mr. Bethune's study, the whole house was made free to the world. It was natural to collect round Forster's couch, and Arthur De Lucy seemed especially contented to sit there and quarrel with Dora. Forster looked on and smiled, and put in a gentle deprecating remark when words ran high, for Dora refused to be crushed. The discussion usually ended with an aphorism on Arthur's part, and a game of tennis with Dora, Ida, and Adela to make up.

Every one took to the handsome, lazy minor poet, except Dora, who could not forgive his utter disbelief in any good resulting from Forster's work. Quite unexpectedly, Lord and Lady Rockwood came down from London for a few days' country air, and to see Forster. It seemed dreadful now to Dora to have two foci instead of one. Lord Rockwood sided with the minor poet, in spite of all the substantial aid he had given to his cousin Forster. Dora only fought the more bravely, and a very merry party was the result. But Jack Rockwood remarked:

"Well, I think this time you are hard hit, Forster. You are certainly not the same man that you were. I hope you will give up all that farce, and settle down in England like a sensible fellow."

The two cousins were alone, and Forster was a little off his guard as he answered somewhat absently:

"I shall go back as soon as I am strong enough. We are getting on splendidly at Rockwood. Indeed, Jack, you ought to be proud of your settlement. It will bring you more fame than anything else your lordship will ever accomplish."

"If it proves your mausoleum; and what will my aunt say? By the way, what does Philip Winskell mean by his long absence? His was rather a strange sort of marriage, wasn't it?"

"I don't know. Philip is utterly changed. Don't say anything about it, but we had words on the subject. He has behaved awfully badly to his wife. Just as I said something must be done, I fell ill, and my lips were closed because Philip nursed me day and night."

"Well, that must be between him and the proud Princess! I confess I never understood the business. They say in town she married Philip for his money."

"Don't say a word against her. You know that Dora and I are going there next week."

"Better come to Scotland with us."

"No, thanks; Dora has always promised to visit the Princess. She took a great liking to her. It will do me good, too, for the place is loneliness itself."

"Humph! It's all queer. I advise you to leave that business alone. So Philip Winskell still stays at Rockwood?"

"He said it was fatal to leave it, and, of course, he was partly right and partly wrong. I think if we leave the men to themselves a little while, we shall see how they can walk alone. I told him so, and he allowed the truth of my arguments. He
promised that if it were necessary he would come back."

"I should advise his returning as soon as possible. People will talk if—"

"Don't mention public opinion! You know it has never had any weight with me."

"That's true. Halloa, look at Dora and the minor poet. What a pity they can't—"

"Dora hates him. They are always quarrelling."

"The sister is the prettiest little girl I've seen this season."

"Yes, pretty, but insipid. Her brother thinks that the right thing for a woman."

"The poet is a little behind the times."

"Or else in advance."

"Perhaps so. The next generation will cultivate themselves carefully, and will take more pains to preserve their beauty than the modern girl does. There's Dora in the sun without a hat. She cares no more for her complexion than if she were a Hottentot."

Forster looked idly out of the window, then he sank back again into his arm-chair.

"She is wrong, however. A beautiful woman has more power than—than anything else on earth, Jack."

"Not in your case. I should say a gutter boy would more easily win your sympathy. There's my wife beckoning to me. She is evidently unable to keep the peace between Dora and that poet."

Lord Rookwood strode out laughing. His wonderful good temper and his sense of fun made him a guest who was always sure of finding a welcome.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The carriage stood at the door, but no one was down early enough to see the travellers go off except Adela. Just as she was pouring out the coffee for Forster and his sister, they heard footsteps on the gravel.

"Why, it's Mr. De Lucy," she exclaimed.

"That's too bad," said Dora, blushing with righteous indignation. "What has he come for? It's rather cool to come so early. It is only half-past seven."

"Whether cool or not, the minor poet entered the dining-room.

"Good morning. I've come to breakfast with you. I'm usually up early, or at least I wake early, so I thought I had better see the last of you."

"We certainly are surprised at your early arrival," said Dora, jumping up to cut herself some ham at the side-table.

"Won't you let me do it?" said Arthur.

"You know, Miss Dora, that I like roses in a woman."

"Yes, of course I know that; you have said it often enough. But the sight of you makes me feel doubly energetic."

"I have a bad influence over you, I see."

He took a chair and sat down, resolutely disregarding Dora's movements.

"Forster has really made up his mind to travel," said Adela, coming to the scene.

"The inducement to travel must be strong," said Arthur, in his usual drawing tone.

Forster rose and went to the side-board.

"I want to get well. Dora, sit down, and don't hack the ham in this fashion. De Lucy, will you have some?"

"Not the piece hacked by Miss Dora, please. I know she has no sense of an relative to a slice of ham."

"Here is a rustic appetite." Dora ate in silence, feeling very insignificant with the poet. She wanted to tell Adela a hundred things which must be done in her absence, but which she did not much want to do in De Lucy's presence.

"Adela, here is the key of the tin money box which contains the boys' cricket money. This is the padlock of the library book. This is the key of my private drawer. There are some violin strings in it if May wants some, and here is the list of the garden-parties which mother has said I would give her much pleasure to accept."

"Yes, dear," said Adela a little shyly, for she was conscious of Mr. De Lucy's attentive gaze. "I won't lose them; I quite understand."

"That's not all," continued Dan.

"Betty Duke must be paid her half-crown weekly; don't forget, because she feels so injured if one does not remember. Then Dummy Dan must come and help to weed the paths. He never gets many weeds out, but don't tell father, only give him sixpence for doing it."

"I had better write it down," said Adela.

"No, you can remember. Dan must pick up the tennis balls the days Mr. De Lucy plays, because he sends them into the bushes, and he is too lazy to pick them up; but that will come into the sixpence."

"Yes, really, you exaggerate. Forster is very much disappointed at having to have the work and his friend. He must be worrying about that."

"He doesn't even speak of Philip Winskel as he did formerly. They seemed like brothers then, now Adela, I can't help thinking they have quarrelled, or that they are not the friends they were formerly."

"I can only say I heard him tell mother how Philip Winskel sat up with him night..."
"I'm listening, Miss Dora, and feel
highly flattered that you are thinking of
my needs in your absence."

"The balls get spoiled if they stay out in
the rain," said Dora. "There is something
else, but I can't quite remember just now."

"I hope Miss Bethune will be let off the
rest," said Arthur solemnly.

"Now I can't talk any more. I must
eat as much as possible, as we have so little
time for meals on the way north."

And as good as her word, Dora began
eating in earnest.

"Women should live on honey and
wafer," said Arthur; "but I see you
have not brought your sister up on such
fairy food."

Forster laughed, but he soon plunged
into a conversation with the poet about the
best way of keeping Polish Jews from
cheapening labour. Arthur could talk
extremely well when he was not too lazy.

When the carriage came to the door De
Lucy announced he was coming to the
station with them, as he always enjoyed a
morning drive, and in spite of Dora's look
of disgust she had to put up with his com-
pany. However, as the poet still continued
his conversation with Forster, she had no
more occasion to quarrel with him.

"Good-by," he said as she jumped into
the railway carriage, "I hope you won't
mind telling us all about the Princess,
Miss Dora. She is my ideal woman; or
she was when she sat doing nothing."

"I shall go out shooting, I hope, in the
glen and on the mountain-side," were
Dora's last words, and then De Lucy saw
her no more.

He looked after the train some time
before he satttered home, and returned to
breakfast with his own sister, to whom,
however, he did not reveal his early
morning doings.

"Now, Forster, I have got you to my-
self," exclaimed Dora. "We shall be
happy. It is a long time since we have
had a holiday. I wonder what the Palace
will be like, and if the Princess is changed!
I am glad you wanted to go, as I have
always longed to see that romantic glen.
Do you remember how Philip used to rave
about it?"

"Yes, he used to do so. I believe he
does not like it now. I think, Dora, if you
are not tired, we will go straight on to
Rothery. We can just get there by night-
fall."

"It will tire you too much," said Dora,
wondering at Forster's remark; then when
he disclaimed, a little impatiently, any idea
of over-fatigue, she said no more.

"Forster is changed, quite changed,"
she meditated. "He is ill, or there is
something on his mind. Has it anything
to do with Philip?"

As she could not settle this question she
gave herself up to the pleasure of travel-
ing, and tried to think of something
else. Her girlhood had been full of joy,
no cloud had risen on her clear horizon,
but the mystery of life was beginning to
arouse her dormant imagination. Sooner
or later every soul is faced by this
impenetrable wall of mystery. Why have
human beings been placed in the world?
What is their highest duty? And for what
ultimate purpose are they designed?

A life of active work for others had
been Dora's ordinary outlook, but she had
taken this so much as a matter of course,
that deeper difficulties were only just
now dawning upon her. She had been
accustomed to lean on Forster's opinion,
and this had been her conscience, but now
that her prop seemed suddenly to fall her,
the certainty of life disappeared.

She could not explain all this to herself,
for it was all vague and confused, but this
it was which had planted a new element
of doubt in her mind.

Forster was very weary before they
entered the carriage which was to convey
them to the Palace. It was a long drive.
The moonlight happily was brilliant, and
enabled them to pass safely over the steep
pass and to rattle down the many miles of
desert into the lonely glen. When they
reached the head of the lake they had taken
a short distance to drive, and Dora was
only too thankful when Forster at last
roused himself to say:

"We are turning into the drive, Dora.
I can hear the voice of the distant
Rothery."

"I am afraid you are dreadfully tired,
Forster."

"Only rather tired."

Then he sank back and drank in the
beauty of the scene, but with the beauty
came back the vision of the woman whose
image had so often haunted him. He re-
membered the last sight of her so well.
It had haunted him during his weeks of
illness, and for her sake he had upbraided
Philip, and had quarrelled with his best
friend. He had not recognised it at part-
ing, but now he had found out the secret.
He knew he could say nothing—must say
nothing—to her, but all these months he
had had one wish, which was going to be realized. He must see her once more. He had raged at the thought that she was Philip's wife, and that Philip was beside him, calmly working with the best of them, indeed, working better than the best of the little band of settlers. He had hated himself for feeling angry with his friend, because he could live without seeming to remember Penelope, but when he tried to remonstrate, some invisible ghost seemed to rise up between him and Philip. His motive was not free from a feeling he dared not own, and dared not analyse. Long before that last interview with Penelope, how intensely happy the remembrance had made him, but still he felt lowered in his own estimation for wishing to come here. Last time he had said some things which he had no right to say, and his excuse had been that he should never see her again; but how was it that he was here once more, that he was going to see her, and that Philip was far away working on the lonely settlement—working and waiting for Forster's return!

Forster felt like Dora, though with very different motives—that he was only now beginning to live, and to understand what was meant by the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. It had never come to him before, and he rebelled against the trial now it had burst upon him almost unawares. He felt like a lonely traveller overtaken by a violent storm, of which no barometer had warned him. Was it his fault that he was unprepared?

Forster had so long been a leader of others, he had, without conscious conceit, so naturally directed the souls of other men, making excuses for failings, that he had never imagined himself in their place. He had despised the sins which had surrounded him, because he had no temptation to fall into like errors; but now—now! with one more allaying of his conscience, Forster replied to the silent voice:

"I cannot do otherwise. I must see her—I must see her once more!"

He not only felt this, but he was conscious of the failure of his will-power to resist. Psychological problems surround us in far greater numbers than we realise. The attractive power one human being may possess over another is a well-recognised fact, but this power may be put forth, as it were, quite suddenly, without visible reason, and when least expected. Someone, who for months, years perhaps, has been quite powerless to attract us, may suddenly appear in another light. The strength to resist is then certainly, but before this is recognised, all the will brought to bear, the moment of resistance may be over, and the way to ruin may be only too easy and too sure.

But Forster had not yielded without a fight. Dora's presence, he said, was his safeguard. With this innocent, high-minded child with him, how could he be led into saying words which he would afterwards regret? His refrain was:

"I only want to see her. I want to be sure that Philip is unworthy of her."

The old-fashioned carriage swept round the drive, and suddenly they were at the Palace door.

Dora looked at the picturesque pile of building and was enchanted.

"Forster, here we are! What a beautiful house! How romantic it all is! And look there is the Princess herself."

The front door had been thrown open by the menservants; the light from the central hall made a halo behind and around her. She might have been a Hebe risen from some mysterious sea of shadow to an equally mysterious light.

Dora, innocent of all ideas save the present enjoyment and her fears for Forster's health, was very happy. She ran up the steps, and was delighted by seeing no change at all in the beauty of the Princess. Indeed, she had more colour than formerly, and much less haggardness of bearing.

"Dora, I'm glad to see you at last. Are you tired, dear?" The voice was quite gentle. "And how is your brother?"

"Here he is; dreadfully tired, of course, but he will not own it."

"You shall go to your rooms at once. I have given you the turret chambers, and the sitting-room there is at your disposal. Come and see it, for your dinner is there."

She had addressed all this to Dora, but at the same time she felt that Forster was grasping her hand. Then she opened the door and called her uncle. The Duke had just finished his dinner, and now hurried forward.

He looked younger, happier, indeed radiant. He had all that his heart could desire now in the way of state and luxury. That was apparent everywhere, and to Forster, who had known the Palace in its days of decay, it seemed like a fairy habitation, and quite a fitting casket for the person of the Princess.
"Welcome to Rothery," said the Duke warmly, and with the exquisite courtesy of manner which was natural to him. "So you have at last found your way to this secluded spot."

"Oh, we live in seclusion also," answered Dora. "I love the country. How beautiful it all looks in the moonlight! I feel inclined to run out and explore the glen."

Forster was really tired, too weary and too inwardly agitated to say anything, and after a few words he retired to rest.

Dora was not to be persuaded to follow his example. She insisted on visiting some of the old rooms, especially the ghost chamber; then at last she too retired to rest, and Penelope wished her uncle good night.

When she was alone the Princess knelt down by the open window, and looked out into the still moonlight. It was unusually warm and still. No bird was singing. She had thought of Forster very often on lonely evenings, and she had wondered whether he was thinking of her. She had rebelled against the remembrance of Philip that would intrude, and she had tried to persuade herself that law cannot bind affections.

Now he was here under her roof.

She must not allow him to guess her secret, but she would be happy for a little while. She could look at him and feel that—that—no, she must not feel thus. Then, rising, she impatiently shut the window and went to bed, and night resigned in the glen.

SUCCESS.

SUCCESS is, not seldom, so much like failure, as to make it difficult to distinguish the one from the other. The words become, practically, synonyms. The man whose success is envied by the unthinking crowd, is, only too frequently, himself aware that he is a failure. He knows that his whole life has been a failure; that, in none of the things he set himself to do, has he succeeded; and yet his career is held up for admiration among the careers of other of those heroes of the popular imagination—successful men.

What constitutes success? The making of money? Not necessarily. The popular acceptance of the notion that money means success is productive of an inconceivable amount of pain, disappointment, misery. As a matter of plain fact, there is no necessary connection whatever between money and success. A man may make, as they phrase it, millions, and yet may live and die an unsuccessful man. How often has a young man started in life dreaming the dreams which are youth's best heritage, and gone on adding money to money, to find that with each fresh addition another of his dreams has vanished, until he becomes sour-faced, spleenific, solitary—and a millionaire. Can the life of such an one be correctly described as successful?

The man who can carry his illusions with him to the grave, surely he is one type of true success. Consider what it means. Such an one, much more than the proverbial poet, must be born, not made. He must have a truly singular disposition. His must be that precious gift of the gods—the capacity for always seeing things on their brightest sides. There must be a silver lining to his every cloud, and the silver lining must be the only part of the cloud which he can see. He must be of a gay and of a continual courage. He must never be cast down, and nothing must ever still the laughter which is in his heart. One must wish, sometimes, that oneself were such an one. For this man must always walk in fairyland, in that world of wonders where whatever is is best. With what material fortune will he meet? It is hard to say. For one perceives that in one faculty he must be lacking—in the faculty of differentiation. If good and evil fortune are alike to him, surely he will not go out of his way to strive for good. Why should he? There will be no difference between the one and the other to him. One suspects that, at best, such an one would be a philosophic vagabond, a constitutionally light-hearted, don't care sort of fellow, who would come into the world with nothing, and who would go out of it with almost as little. Yet, though his last resting-place were a pauper's grave, who can doubt that, from his own particular point of view, his career would be an illustration of one type of true success? How many of us, who, in the colloquial sense, are successful, might change places with him to our own advantage?

As our experience widens, the conviction is apt to force itself upon us that success is like that crock of gold, which, in our childhood, they used to tell us should find buried at the end of the rainbow. Just as the end of the rainbow is never reached, so the farther we advance the farther success recedes. As age begins to press upon us, and we become wearied, we con-
Ibis conversation with Forster, she had no Charles Biokens.

MARRIED TO ORDER.

"I am listening, Miss Dora, and feel highly flattered that you are thinking of me," exclaimed Dora. "We shall be happy. It is a long time since we have seen each other, and this has been Dora's last word, and then De Lucy saw the rain," said Dora. "There is something in your absence that I can feel, but I can't quite remember just now." The rain had haunted him during his weeks of illness, and for her sake he had upbraided himself. "I shall go out shooting, I hope, in the morning drive, and in spite of Dora's look of disgust she had to put up with his company. However, as the poet still continued to quarrel with him, Arthur could talk of fairy food." "Yes, he used to do so," I believe he said, "but now he had found out the secret which, as he fancied, he had put his whole heart, his noblest aspirations, his first workmanship, had been rejected by the hanging committee of the Royal Academy. He is one of those unfortunate persons—surely the most unfortunate folk on earth—who mistake the desire to be for the power to be. He still paints; he still sends his pictures to the Academy; they are still refused. Not improbably he would have lost his fortune well lost if he could only succeed, on his merits, in being hung on its line.

We are frequently told that if success only comes at last, its arrival blots out the memory of a long line of failures. Is it degree this is true; but only in a degree. Success does make a difference. The man who has sent six books into the world, which have all been failures, and who makes a huge success with his seventh, pays regard as a joke the failure of his previous mix. He occasionally does—by no means always. The man who, having failed in five professions, succeeds in his sixth, may treat his five experiences as material for laughter. It depends. That success can and does come too late in a truce vision the inculcators of the doctrine of "Self-Help" are continually neglecting. And yet the thing is certain. There comes a time in the lives of many men in which success is a matter of practical indifference. Indeed, worse, when the advent of success adds to their already overflowing cup of bitterness the element of irony. One can pay too dearly for everything; one is continually paying too dearly for success.

Such a case as the following is by no means uncommon. A man, in his early youth, thought out and perfected an improvement in—no matter what. The improvement had nothing to do with his own trade, but it continually occupied his thoughts, and in season and out of season he spoke of it to whoever would listen. But, so far as practical results
were concerned, no one could be induced to listen. The man was an expert at his trade, but as time went on the demand for experts at that particular trade decreased until now, for some years, to all intents and purposes, there has been no demand for them at all. Without work, or at longer and longer intervals, with work which was more and more poorly paid, with no one to help him realise the dream of his life, and to listen to his recipe for the making of a fortune, he began to console himself with drink. He became an habitual drunkard. His home was broken up; his wife and daughters were obliged to leave him in self-defence. His daughters have long since had homes of their own. And at last, after more than thirty years of waiting—and such a thirty years!—he has found a listener. His idea is being acted on. It promises to succeed even beyond the man's own expectations. But, so far as he is concerned, success has come too late. What use is it to him? He is an friendless, wireless, childless tippler. He can get all he wants for a pound or thirty shillings a week. Set him beside a pint pot, he is happy; success will only mean a multiplication of the pint pots. If it had even come after only fifteen years of waiting! Now no measure of success will compensate him for the past; far less will it obliterate it. Nothing now will make him what once he might have been. Success to him at this time of day is worthless; it has come, as it comes to many a man, too late.

The man who, in the face of long-continued ill-success, can keep himself pure and unsaddled by the world, who, as the servants say, can keep his character, is a rare quantity indeed. Success, we are told, tries a man. So it does. Perpetual failure tries him even more. It tries him in every possible way in which a man can be tried. It tries his courage. It requires the courage of a hero to enable a man, beaten again, and again, and again, to advance with undaunted front towards still another series of defeats. Few things take so much out of a man as a thrashing. If the thrashing is repeated perhaps a hundred times, what then? Continual failure tries a man's judgement. No severer test, indeed, could be applied. The old rhyme has it, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Yes, but how often is the trial to be repeated?

Perseverance is commendable—in theory, but not always, by any means, in practice. Multitudes of men would have succeeded in one walk of life if they had not persisted in persevering in another. When to give up, when to own that one's quest is hopeless, when to acknowledge that one is beaten—this is a matter which requires the exercise of the nicest judgement. It is one with which the continually unsuccessful man is sure to be confronted. Oft-repeated failure tries, what may be called, a man's sanity of vision. The temptation is almost irresistible to belittle the men who have succeeded where he has failed; to look at them with jaundiced eyes. His own failure is perniciously apt to affect the clearness of his outlook. Is it not notorious that the average poet is an unsuccessful man? To him the whole scheme of creation, the whole world, and all that it contains, is a failure—because he himself has failed.

But in nothing, probably, does continual failure so try a man as in the matter of his own personal self-respect. For the unsuccessful man, nothing is easier than to be honest; for the unsuccessful man, nothing is harder. This does not apply only to honesty in the legal sense, though you will find, if the records of our criminals be examined—it is written here with no ironical intention—that, almost universally, they are unsuccessful men. Failure, marking them for its own, has driven them along the paths of the fraudulent. But one can be dishonest, both to oneself and to others, without being criminal. There are a thousand petty tricks and methods of procedure, which in their essence are dishonest, which continually assail the man who falls; which continually offer themselves to him, on every hand, in the guise of friends and of assistants. Failure is, primarily, the secret cause of drunkenness, all the world over. No more insidious temptation comes to the unsuccessful man—comes to him, too, in the guise of a friend—than alcohol. The average man has not much backbone; when failure takes from him the little which he has, the result is collapse. In his helplessness, he almost invariably turns for relief to the anæsthesia of drink.

There is still another furnace of flaming fire in which the man who is a failure as of course is tried. Such an one, in some sense in which we, all of us, may well pray to be delivered, is alone. To begin with, such an one, necessarily, shrinks from his fellows. There is a feeling of humiliation which is inseparable from constant failure,
and from which no man can be free. The probability is that the better the man, the more surely will this feeling of humiliation drive him from the company of his fellows. The invertebrate creature, being, possibly, pachydermatous—nature has its compensations!—when he falls, is wont to begin at once to sponge. The finer animal avoids its fellows lest he should seem to sponge. Whether they are vertebrate or invertebrate, the position of men who are failures, in the end, in this respect, is the same—they are alone. It may be a hard saying, but it is a true one—the man whose life, from any cause whatever, has been a failure, is absolutely friendless. He has friends neither of his own house—if he has none—or of anybody else’s. He is a marked man—a mark for contempt and scorn. He is like a wounded man, into whose wounds an irritable is always being rubbed, for the sake of keeping them open. If his final resting-stage is not the workhouse, it is not unlikely that he is made to wish it were.

To every question there are two sides, and though it certainly is a fact that nothing tries a man like long-continued failure, on the other hand, the successful man undoubtedly has to stand his trial, too. And, equally undoubtedly, a sharp trial it often is, and not seldom is the verdict, which his own conduct constrains us to return, anything but in his favour.

One reason why this is so is obvious—it is because success so frequently comes only after a course of failure. Failure is very far from being what some folks would have us believe it is—necessarily, a school for the successful. To carry oneself as a King, one must be born a King—that is, one must be habilitated to the atmosphere in which a King lives, and moves, and has his being; just as to bear success successfully one should be born successful. In the days of the original Grub Street, we are given to understand that authors were curiously cattie; because the material side of their lives was an uncertain side; because, when, after starving for twelve months, they found themselves seated at what, to them, was a feast, they were not in a condition, either mentally or physically, to conduct themselves in the fashion of men who were accustomed to feast every day of their lives. When a man, who has been practically a pauper for years, suddenly finds himself in possession of a considerable sum in ready cash, it is almost inevitable that he will not use it to the best advantage. The school in which he has been trained has not taught him how to do so. He is almost sure to either hoard or squander it.

A great deal of cheap abuse is thrown at the men who are said, in the days of their success, to forget the friends of the day of their struggle. It is well, in such cases, to make quite sure that the case is proved. When Jackson, who is still struggling, complains bitterly of the conduct of his whitew friend, Johnson, who has arrived, it is more than likely that, on enquiry, you will find that the fault is at least as much Jackson’s as Johnson’s. Jackson tells you that Johnson scarcely condescends to recognise him when he meets him in the street; but he does not tell you that he has gone out of his way to give Johnson to understand that he—Jackson—considers that Johnson has usurped the position which he—Jackson—ought to hold. One’s friends are frequently very candid critics. They tell Johnson that he will never succeed, and then, when he does succeed is spite of them, they expect to share the fruits of his success. Whatever share is may accord them, the betting is that they are dissatisfied, though, as a matter of right, they have no claim even to his recognition. It is certain that, if he had failed, they would have turned their back on him, pointing their fingers, and crying, "I told you so!"

It is curious, when a man shows signs of being likely to make a great and an exceptional success, how a sort of tail begins to attach itself to him, with or without his leave, and that this tail expects not considers itself entitled to expect, that his success will be also theirs. An actor, who has been a comparative if not a complete failure, was denouncing, in my bitter terms, the behaviour towards himself of another actor whose success had been phenomenal. Some of the words he used illustrate the peculiar point of view of such a tail. "I made a point of getting an engagement wherever he got an engagement. I never let slip a chance of seeing with him when I could. And now that he has a theatre of his own, not only has he never offered me a shop, but he scarcely seems to know me when we meet." This gentleman had a lively precedence of the other’s future; he intended to float it popularity on the stream of the other’s good fortune, and because the other declined to bear him with him he reviled. I heard the point more comically and more
 forcibly illustrated by a man who is an "operator" in the City. "I give you my word that whenever Larkins had a good thing on I always went in with him; I always backed his luck. Where he led I always followed, and now that he's a millionaire twice told he don't even ask me to his house to dinner."

That is a curious moment in which a man, who hitherto has been a failure, suddenly awakes to the fact that he has achieved success—a great success—at last. None, except those who have experienced it, know what a difference there is between having money in your pocket and having none. You begin to feel the pangs of hunger directly you have not a penny left with which to buy a loaf, and there is something you want in every shop you pass. So long as you have even only a few shillings remaining you are, comparatively, a King among men; but with the passing of the shillings there seems to pass something from your stature too. You become, and you feel you have become, so small a thing. When the man who for a considerable period of time has fluctuated between the possession of a few shillings and the possession of none at all suddenly finds himself in the position of the dazzlingly successful, is it strange if he loses his head, and with it his balance too? He has become, from much voyaging, a skilled navigator in the Sea of the Penniless People; he is not even yet in possession of a chart of the Sea of the Rarely Rich, so he flounders on the sandbanks and runs against the rocks.

I have sometimes wondered what I should do if I passed unexpectedly from the enjoyment of some forty pounds a year to the enjoyment of some four or—just by way of making the thing complete—forty thousand pounds a year. Should I go off my head? I should not be by any means surprised. Certainly the one thing would not be more surprising than the other. Dear me! what should I do if I held the lottery ticket which won the prizes of half a million? If I thrust my spade into the place of virgin ground which turned out to be something very like solid gold, should I go stark mad?

I once heard of a young man, a "junior" clerk in the City, who obtained—from what source, I believe, was never made clear—"information." On the strength of this "information" he succeeded in persuading certain confiding brokers to purchase for him "a large line" in a particular company's shares. For once in a way the information turned out to be all right, and in the course of a single day the younger—he was not much more than twenty-one—netted over a hundred thousand pounds. The thing affected him as, I fear, at his age such an accident might not improbably have affected me. The young gentleman went tearing off, there and then, as hard as he could tear, towards those proverbial quadrupeds the dogs. By now he has probably reached them. The thing happened some five years back. For over a twelvemonth he has been the inmate of an asylum for pauper lunatics. He was ruined by his success.

Well, one thing is sure and certain, the same hideous peril is not likely to threaten many of us. I feel a certain confidence that it is not likely to threaten me. So let us be thankful. It is indeed cause for thankfulness that our brains are not likely to be overturned by the overwhelming torrent of success which Dame Fortune precipitates in our direction. Ours is, for the most part, a surer hope. We are surely, and, one might add, safely anchored—is it not safely anchored!—to the ironbound coasts of failure. Failure in the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees.

Hence these tears!

IDENTIFICATION BY FINGER-MARKS.

A Blue Book recently issued contains the report of the Committee appointed by the Home Secretary to enquire into the best means of identifying habitual criminals. In one section of their report the members of the Committee earnestly recommend finger-prints, as treated by Mr. Galton, as a means that surpasses all others in the directness and the accuracy of the evidence they furnish. Concerning a suspected person and two sets of finger-prints, one procured before suspicion arose and the other subsequently obtained, Mr. Galton has said: "When a minute comparison shows their finger-prints to agree in all or nearly all particulars, the evidence thereby afforded that they were made by the same person far transcends in trustworthiness any other evidence that can ordinarily be obtained, and vastly exceeds all that can be derived from any number of ordinary anthropometric data. By itself it is amply sufficient to convict." The words quoted appear in italics in Mr. Galton’s book.
Though Mr. Galton is identified with the study of finger-prints, he tells us how others had discovered that the ridges on the skin of the bulbs of our fingers and thumbs formed distinct patterns, and that in some minute feature the pattern differed on the fingers of each individual. In a very interesting letter which appeared in "Nature" nearly fourteen years ago, Dr. H. Faulds, then in Tokio, tells how he was led to the study of finger-tips by observing on some ancient pottery in Japan finger-marks that had been made while the clay was soft. He remarked that in some individuals all the fingers of one hand bore a similar arrangement of lines, while the pattern was simply reversed on the other hand. He found that on the fingers of different individuals the patterns were not exactly alike in any two of the cases he examined. The difference may have been in some small particular, but it was not less real, unalterable, and peculiar to the individual on whom it appeared. No natural cause for these differences could be discovered. "Where the loops occur," he says, "the innermost lines may simply break off and end abruptly; they may end in self-returning loops, or, again, they may go on without breaks after turning round upon themselves. Some lines, also, branch or join like junctions in a railway map."

Mr. Galton has made the patterns formed by ridges in the skin the subject of close and systematic study for many years. He tells us that very nearly every pattern can be placed without hesitation under one of the three general heads — arches, loops, and whirs. These classes are named to indicate the prevailing form in the patterns each class includes. "Let no one despise the ridges on account of their smallness," Mr. Galton says, "for they are in some respects the most important of all anthropological data. They form patterns considerable in size and of a curious variety of shape... which are little worlds in themselves."

When a finger, or a finger-print, is closely examined under a lens of only moderate power, it is seen to abound in minute peculiarities. These are caused by the branchings of some of the ridges; the sudden appearance of new ones; the formation of rings, or ovals, like eyleslets; and the abrupt stoppage of ridges without any apparent cause.

It is in these countless little peculiarities even more than in the general character of the pattern, that the value of finger-prints as proof of identity lies. For these appearances, however minute, do not change in the smallest particular during life. A pattern may be traced on the fingers of the babe when born; it will be found the same on those fingers when he has grown to manhood, and may be imprinted from the fingers of the dead without change in the smallest point, though a hundred years should intervene between birth and death. The pattern grows together with the finger. Its proportions vary with fatness or leanness. They may be further affected by wear, gout, or age. But such changes appear in the pattern as a whole; never in the form or correlation of its constituent parts. The pattern may become altered in length or breadth by hard wear of a peculiar kind; but the number of ridges that concur in forming the pattern, their embracements, their archings, loops, and other minute characteristics, are not subject to change. They are indestructible with the finger.

Sir William J. Herschell was, as far as we can learn, the first to use finger-prints on an extended scale as proofs of identity. Writing, in 1880, a letter printed in "Nature," he gives us some very interesting — but all too short and scanty — notes of his personal experience. He bears testimony to the permanence of the patterns on the balls of fingers and thumbs. The finger-prints accepted and required as a signature for those who could not write. He says: "By comparison of the signatures of persons now living with their signatures made twenty years ago, I have proved that that much time at least makes no such material change as to affect the utility of the plan."

He had been taking sign-manuals by means of finger-marks for more than twenty years. His purpose was to make attempts at personation — or at repudiation of signatures — quite hopeless, and he declares that his plan was completely effectual whenever it was tried. "It is put a summary and absolute stop to the very idea of either personation or repudiation from the moment half-a-dozen men had made their marks and compared them together." Sir William says further: "The ease with which the signature is taken, and the hopelessness of either personation or repudiation are so great, that I sincerely believe the adoption of the practice in places and professions where such kinds of fraud are rife, is a substantial benefit to morality."

The fact that they render personation impossible is conclusive as to the infallibility
of finger-prints as proof of identity. The case of the Tichborne Claimant was much in men's minds when Sir William wrote, and it suggested a striking application of his test. "Supposing," he says, "that there existed such a thing as a finger-print of Roger Tichborne, the whole Orton imposture would have been exposed to the full satisfaction of the jury in a single sitting by requiring Orton to make his own mark for comparison." Dr. Faulds mentions two cases, in one of which finger-prints led to detection of a thief, and in the other to exoneration of people who might be reasonably suspected of a misdeed. In the first case greasy finger-marks on a glass revealed who had been drinking some rectified spirit. The pattern was unique, and, fortunately, the doctor had previously obtained a copy of it. They agreed with microscopic fidelity. Dental was useless, for of all the fingers tried only that of the accused could make a mark to correspond exactly with that on the glass. In the other case dirty finger-marks of a person climbing a white wall were negative evidence of an incontrovertible kind. No person engaged in the doctor's establishment couldpossibly produce the finger-marks that were in evidence. That was conclusive proof that not one of them was the offender. The finger-prints afford an incomparably surer criterion of identity than any other bodily feature. It may be assumed that there cannot be such a thing as an exact correspondence between two finger-marks made by different persons. Mr. Galton does not say that such an agreement is utterly impossible, but after elaborate and exact calculation he shows that the chance of its occurrence is represented by one against ten thousand million! Is not that enough to convince the most sceptical that finger-prints are as nearly as we can conceive infallible means of identification?

A WOMAN OF SICYON.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"Shall we sing again, O Arion? For I saw the grasses move yonder, and methinks that Pan himself is listening in the thickest."

The speaker, a girl of Sicyon, the city that bred the loveliest women in Greece, shook a drowsy bee from the folds of her long purple robe and fanned her flushed face softly with a plume of brown and green grasses. Her companion, a lad some years her junior, changed his recumbent posture to a kneeling attitude, and took up his cithara—rich with carvings, and gold, and silver, and scarlet colouring —and began a soft and mournful prelude:

"Shall we not praise thee on the reed, the reed; Shall we not praise thee who art lord indeed?"

Then the girl took up the chorus in her flute-like voice:

"Who art lord indeed!
Lord of the land, lord of each stream that ran
Among the reeds, the reeds that love thee, Pan.

"Lord of the flying hounds, the patient kine,
Lord of the singing reeds, and lord of mine. . . .
Lord of the satyrs hidden on the hill."

Arion stopped, and Laos took up the chorus again, but more softly:

"Lord of the Dryad-folk whose fortune fills
The valley and the hill,
And lord of Syrinx, lost but loving still."

There was a pause; then Laos rose with a cry and buried her face on Arion's breast, as the reeds and grasses parted to let two figures pass—one goat-hoofed and shaggy-limbed, with an odd twist of fun about the bearded lips, and an infinite sorrow in the brown eyes that had so long missed the smiles and frowns of Syrinx; the other a mere boy, with a garland of green leaves round his golden head, and a purple cloak cast loosely round him. In his hand he held a flute.

"They are gods," Laos moaned, clinging closer to Arion, "and we shall die for having looked on them."

Pan laughed till the parley in his garland shook and shivered.

"Poor maid, have no fear. We liked thy piping well, this shepherd of Olympus and I."

"We have come," said the other god softly, "to offer gifts. Behold what I, Hermes, have to give," and he drew out from the folds of his cloak a cithara of black polished wood, not painted or inlaid as was Arion's own, but redolent of some strange perfume.

At the same moment Pan held up his flute.

"Laos, daughter of Cerces, choose," he said.

"Mark well," Hermes said gravely, "love goes with the flute, and fame with the cithara. And love is a rose, maiden, and if it blows twice as do the roses of Pisaum, it does no more. And fame is a wind that sometimes no ears can hear, and sometimes it shakes the stars. Choose."

Laos stretched out her hands with a pretty air of mingled fear and eagerness.

"I choose flute, rose, and love," she
"Thou hast chosen," Hermes answered graciously, "and I say not thou hast chosen ill. Youth, what dost thou choose? I also have a flute to give."

"Nay, Lord Hermes," Arion said eagerly, "let me have the cithara, for the wind is sweet and strong, and the rose is sweet only for a day. Give me the fame, O Shepherd, and love I will win for myself."

"Boldly spoken," Hermes said, with his grave smile. "Yet say I not that thou hast chosen well. Years hence, perhaps, thou wilt find the wind too strong for thy bridge—and thou, maid, mayest find thy rose not sweet at all. And if the gifts prove ill, blame not the goat-god, nor the herald of Zeus; for to-day we give, indeed, but to-morrow we take back; for the gifts of gods are not to be withdrawn. Peace with ye."

"Peace—and pleasure!" Pan said, as he parted the reeds right and left, paining for a last look at Lais, whose lovely face was flushed with triumph. "Some day ye shall sing to me that song of Syrinx when Fate's hand is heavy on ye, and I shall surely hear and help."

"Love Lais," Arion said, as the reeds closed after the two gods, "shall we change our gifts? For the flute is not meet for the lips of modest maids, and if thou choosest, I will give thee up my cithara."

"Nay, nay," Lais said, laughing, "I will keep the flute, Arion, and mayhap I shall win with it as much fame as the shepherd gave thee with the cithara. Nay, hold me not, I will to the city, and some day I will take many hearts with my flute. Back, Arion; when we two are famous, we will speak together again. Go, play and praise Hermes on thy cithara, but I will go praise love's eyes and love's lips, and the doves and myrtles of love's mother. Ah, Ah, Aphrodite! be good to me henceforward."

She ran away, laughing merrily, and the south wind brought back to Arion the echo of her flying footsteps and her laughter.

"Thou wilt take me over yonder strip of sea, and land me on the island Cyprus, O captain?"

The Phoenician captain looked at the speaker with some disfavour; then his eyes fell on the gold chain about the stranger's neck and the jewels sparkling in the scented wood of his cithara, and his face relaxed into a smile.

"Be pleased to mount on deck, gracious lord. If the wind is favourable, and the storm be slow of coming, we shall make Cyprus ere sunset. My lord goes to worship at the shrine of Lady Venus, it may be."

"Nay, but I go to sing to Ion of Smyrna and his bride. There are others on board for Cyprus, as well as myself!" glancing at a pile of cushions placed by the bulwark—cushions of purple fringed with gold and silver.

"Ah, yes! The Lord Agathos goes also to worship at the shrine of Venus, and with him goes the fairest flute-player in Greece. Look; yonder she comes. Saw ye ever a comelier flute-girl?"

The cithara-player looked, and his lips grew pale under his golden beard, for the woman coming upon deck was his lost love, Lais—lost to him and to herself more utterly than ever; for her dress was the shameless dress of a Bacchante, and the roses of Venus were wound in her black hair. She threw herself on the purple cushions and looked at Arion—at first with idle curiosity, but presently with a quickened terror in her eyes; and presently she turned and said a word in the ear of the man who stood beside her, wearing a robe like hers, with a garland of vine-leaves instead of roses on his handsome head. He glanced at Arion enquiringly, and presently crossed the deck and laid his jewelled hand on the singer's shoulder.

"It is the will of my mistress Lais that thou come near and speak to her," he said languidly.

Arion shook his head. "I have naught to do with thy mistress Lais," he said. "I am but a singer bound for Cyprus, and I pray thee let me be."

"I pray thee stand aside," the captain said sharply in their ears. "The squall is on us. Look to the lady."

The Athenian went hurriedly back to Lais, and Arion stood still in his place, holding the bulwark with both hands to steady himself, as the wind changed its quarter, and whipped down upon the ship with a rattle of thunder and a lash of asty rain. It grew darker and darker, and wilder yet, but Arion kept his place, and saw that Lais and her lover retained theirs, though the rain drenched their light garments and tore the roses in Lais's hair snarled petal by petal.

"Old Oceanus is wrath with us," one of the Phoenician sailors shouted to another.

"We have one on board that he desires..."
for himself. My captain, is it the woman yonder?"

"In the name of all the devils," Agathos, the Athenian, cried, "stand back. I will put my knife through the throat of the first man who comes within a yard of my flute-girl."

"I also," Arion said, hurrying across the slippery deck, and taking his place at Lai's left hand.

"Thou also?" the captain cried, laughing. "Why, it is thou that old Father Ocean's daireth. Lay hands on him with the cithara, men, and leave him aboard."

"Ay," Lai's said, with a burst of wild laughter, "send him to play to the Shepherd of the Sea, good captain. Stay a moment," as the men closed round Arion. "Thou who didst love me once—who anon wouldst not speak with me—will thou sing for me, at this last of thy life? Wilt thou, Arion? Sing me a song of Aphrodite."

Arion lifted his cithara from the deck.

"I will sing for thee, but not that song, daughter of Coreseos," he said steadily.

"Give orders that no man lay hands on me till my song be done."

"Let no man touch him," Lai's said, looking sternly round. "Now sing to me."

Arion stood up on the poop and struck a few wild notes; then he sang:

"If I shall not praise thee on the reed, the reed—"

"No!" Lai's screamed. "Not that song, in the name of the Fates. Sing of me—sang a curse down upon me—but not that song."

"Thou didst promise, daughter of Coreseos, to hear me sing one song, and afterwards thou mayest do with me what thou wilt," Arion said coldly. "Make me shriek anon with thy tortures, if thou canst, but now, in the name of them that spin, and measure, and cut, I will sing this song—if the word of Lai's stands good."

"Sing thou on," Lai's said, pressing her hands to her bosom. "My word holds good."

So Arion sang, and as he sang the last line, "And lord of Syrinx, lost but loving still," he moved forward a step or two, and with the last word plunged into the sea. Then there arose a shadow and a shriek, and the sea-water parted to take the figure of Lai's, and the next moment her drowning head rose close to Arion's. He let his cithara go, and caught her lifted hands in his.

"Love Lai's! Grasp me firmer, sweet, and I will save thee."

"Save me for Agathos!" she gasped.

"Nay, for here on the sea I am thine wholly, Arion, but ahore I cannot trust myself. Kiss me swiftly, dear, and let me show thee how a flute-player and a woman of Sloyon can die."

She tore her hands from Arion's wild clasp, and clasped them over her eyes; and the next instant the singer saw her gilded robes whirled under by a great wave. And the irony of the Three who spin, and measure, and shear the thread, drove Arion ashore, safe and unhurt, his cithara clasped in the hands forlorn of Lai's till the Styx should be crossed.

AN ARCADIA OF THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

A land in which "there is nothing of what would be called crime" seems to be very Utopian in character to us. Arring inhabitants of Europe. This is, however, the description, and part of the official description too, which was furnished by an agent of the British Government, of an interesting nook in an unfrequented corner of the world.

The Arcadia of which I speak lies far away in the western South Pacific some fifteen to twenty degrees west of the Fiji and Friendly Islands, and seventeen hundred miles from Auckland by steamer, and it consists of a group of seven islands, extending over an ocean area two hundred miles square. They are on the verge of the tropics, the climate is pleasant and healthy, and the land extremely fertile. The seven islands—Mangala, Mauke, Mitiaro, Hervey Island, Aitutaki, and Rarotonga—are collectively known as Cook Islands.

Up to the last two or three years this little archipelago was one of the few spots which, although it had not escaped from the influence of his trail, was very little favoured by the presence of the white man. Nor indeed did the inhabitants appear over anxious to enjoy this favour, inasmuch as in 1888 the agent of the London Missionary Society was the only foreigner allowed to reside in some of the islands, while of one island it was remarked, in terms not encouraging to the enterprising white-face, that "two Portu-
The cause was soon apparent in the arrival of two chiefs known to be policemen. They heard the explanation, and after taking counsel together, decided to make no report, but invited the white men to join them in prayer, that they might be saved from temptation and sin in the future. They prayed for all natives and white men, for Queen Victoria, and for their own Ariki—native Kings and Queens—and governors. Then overturning and breaking up the tub, they told the white men and those in charge of it to depart in peace, and sin no more.

The Ariki, of which there are several, in some islands governs his or her own territory, and carries out or disregards at his or her pleasure, the laws passed by the General Council for that island. At Mangai, however, the chiefs really rule, and make or unmake the Ariki at their discretion. There the Ariki do not exercise any direct power; but, as they always represent old and illustrious families, their prestige is great. Their principal office is to communicate the will of the chief to the people. The judges, or magistrates, administer the laws, and the policemen give effect to their decisions. At Mangai, two Kings were ruling the same tribe; but one of them being found guilty of acting contrary to law, was publicly deposed. This involved the loss of his church membership also, which was regarded as much the more serious of the two punishments.

The old code of laws in the principal island, Raratonga, is an exceedingly quaint one, and was adopted by a council of Ariki in 1879. The first enactment provides that no one is allowed to make evil use of any of the Lord’s works—such as asking a sorcerer to find out the cause of sickness, or as to the discovery of a thief. For this offence a fine is enforced, and the culprit is referred to Leviticus xx. 6, and other texts.

Another enactment provides there shall be no trading on the Sabbath, that all avoidable work is prohibited, and the sacredness of the day is to be observed and recognised. No one is allowed to walk about from house to house while the people are in church, except to visit a sick friend, or to help to strengthen the house against a hurricane; or if a pig dies, to get it in and cook it; or if a canoe is carried out to sea, to recover it; or to cook food for those who come from sea or a journey; or to bring water if there is none in the house, and so on. A policeman, however,
may walk about, and if a vessel arrives on
the Sabbath a boat may go off to see if
her people require food or drink, which
may then be taken to them. Medicine
may be fetched; but if people travel need-
lessly from one place to another they are
to be fined five dollars.

The Bohemians, whose habits were not
of the most regular order, met but scant
encouragement; and only fishermen and
people for a proper cause were allowed to
go about at night. Any one who did so
after nine o'clock was required, by way of
penalty, to do five fathoms of road-mend-
ing.

With their primitive habits the natives
combine much courtesy of manner, and,
for South Sea Islanders, may be said to
have acquired no small degree of polish.
The law, with paternal kindliness, views
this quality with some favour, and, as far
as possible, discourages any tendency in a
contrary direction. Thus it is laid down that
when any feast is being held, and food and
things are brought, the things must not be
rushed. The wedding guest is exhorted to
sit quietly, "and when you have received
your share, go in peace. If you have no
share, do not rush, but rise up and go away
quietly. If you do otherwise the fine will
be five dollars, or its equivalent in goods,
labour, etc."

The code winds up by declaring card-
playing is not allowed in this land.

Not less quaint were the laws of the
island of Mangaiia, in which likewise the
prohibition of sorcery was the first provi-
sion. Card-playing was not allowed, and an
enactment provided that "if a man puts
his arm round a woman in the road at
night, and he has a torch in his hand, he
shall go free. If no torch, to be fined one
dollar cash, and nine dollars in trade."-
Presumably if the gay Mangaiian carried
a torch, the ladies would be sufficiently
warned to be able to keep out of his way.
That is, of course, if they chose.

Tattooing was not a practice which was
regarded with friendly eyes by the author-
ties. The man who tattooed love-marks on
a woman, or the woman who did them on
a man, was to be fined. Nor did the law
display any weakness in other questions of
sentiment. If a man cried after a dead
woman, and he and the woman were not
relations, or if he wore mourning for her,
he was fined fifteen dollars. A memo-
randum following the enactment, added:
"This is taken as a proof of guilt during
life." Hence it may be inferred that the
'intelligent native knows little and cares
less about the philosophy of Plato. On
the doctrine of Sabbath observance, how-
ever, he is firm, for no one was allowed to
go to another village on Sunday without
good cause, that is unless he was willing to
run the risk of being fined.

In this island, as, indeed, is the case
with the others, the police were so nu-
erous a body, and exercised such great
control, as to be almost pantomimic in
their absurdity. At Mangaiia they num-
bered one hundred and fifty-five, or about
one to every twelve of the population.

They were themselves under no authority,
and investigated charges upon which they
practically decided, as the judge generally
accepted their statements without question.

They were also the prosecutors, and, to
complete the system, police and the judges
alike depended for their pay upon the fines
they levied, which were divided weekly.
Such a system could not, of course, be
carried out without many evils, and very
cruel punishments were at one time the
practice. Some inflictions, again, were
decidedly curious. In Mangaiia, for ex-
ample, if a man quarrelled with his wife
and left her, or vice versa, the police "put
them in irons," as it was termed. That is
to say, they handcuffed the right arm of
one to the left arm of the other, and kept
them so, often for days, till their differences
were amicably arranged.

Naturally Europeans object to be
fettered by such paternal regulations, and
when, after the proclamation of British
protection, the traders found their way
to the Cook Islands, their ideas of the
fitness of things did not entirely coincide
with those of the inhabitants. The latter
were, on their side, somewhat alarmed by
the prospect of a European invasion, and
made some attempts to restrict it, if not
by directly refusing the right of residence,
by placing such burdens on their trade as
made it difficult for the white men properly
to negotiate their business. One white
trader who had offended against the native
laws was expelled, and the matter led to
much litigation and conference between the
native authorities and the representatives
of the British Crown. The manner in
which the peccant trader was expelled
was an amusing example of the "suvivit
in modo, fortiter in re." Never was a
banishment carried out in so affectionate
a style. In answer to his complaint, the
natives replied that they had not forcibly
expelled him, but had done so in the
gentlest manner possible. They showed the court of enquiry how they had led him off between two men, each with an arm round his neck and shoulders in the most-friendly manner. One of them, after thus putting him on board his boat, had cried over and sympathised with him. This the trader admitted, but added that he had to go for all that.

When, towards the close of the year 1890, a Resident was appointed to represent British interests in the islands, steps were promptly taken to amend the existing laws. The opening up of trade and the introduction of official life will, without doubt, have much influence on the quick-learning Cook Islander. Still it is sincerely to be hoped that the old simplicity of life and courtesy of manner will not desert him.

I have already spoken of the fertility of the soil, and the pleasantness of the climate. To these qualities these favoured islands may add the advantages of lovely scenery. From his home nearly two thousand miles away, the New Zealander has already cast his eyes upon them, and projected the idea of a direct line of steamers which shall carry him to a sunny resort during the cold winter of the south land, where he may wander amid gardens of cotton plants, coffee, tobacco, copra, arrowroot, fungus, oranges, limes, and bananas, for these and indeed all tropical fruits flourish luxuriantly in the Cook Islands. In Rarotonga coffee of excellent quality grows in wild thickets self-sown from the dropping seeds of trees planted by the missionaries more than thirty years ago. Since that time not a tree has been planted by the natives, but within the last two years more than forty acres have been planted by Europeans. All kinds of native food, such as taro, breadfruit, kumara, yams, bananas, and the indigenes" plantains, are fine and abundant. The products of temperate climates also do well, and maize flourishes, although it is not little cultivated, and is not eaten by the natives. The staple animal food consists of pigs and poultry, but other livestock does well in all the islands, a species of indigenous wire grass affording an excellent feed.

The universal occupation is agriculture. Nevertheless, many of the natives are skillful mechanics. They build capital whale-boats, and are capable of building vessels up to a hundred tons. They are also good sailors. Their houses are of rubble coral stone, smoothly plastered with the lime which they make from coral. In habits they are very cleanly, wherever water is obtainable, and in all cases keep their villages in excellent order. Furniture is not yet in popular use, but the house of the Ariki, which are two-storied, with balconies, having solid and thick walls, have their large and lofty rooms well furnished.

Almost universally the natives read and write in the native tongue, yet as the new regulations require that English only should be used in the schools, probably so long the native tongue will be superseded. Nevertheless, since the careful training of the missionaries has not succeeded in eradicating all the old principles deeply in the breast of the islander, the destruction of their old individuality and primitive habits may be more than the new European influence can accomplish. More regrettable than this contingency by far is the apparent tendency of the race to disappear, a tendency which has grown under, or been accentuated by the introduction of European influence. Let the philosopher explain why this should be so in a spot where all the conditions exist in an almost perfect degree for the nurture and growth of a race. A thousand places were it that the Cook Islands should become a met trading mart and plantation; and that its old race, courteous, intelligent, gentle, and industrious, should vanish from the face of the earth.

**DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.**

By MARGARET MOULLE.


**CHAPTER III.**

"And Mary Miller's Susan Hannah's took bad, is she?"

"Why, yes, And Mary in a fine way, and no mistake. There's all those children, and the baby not three weeks old till to-morrow."

"Is it catching, then — what Susan Hannah's took with?"

"From all I can make out, it's the same my Bill had. Last Wednesday was three months since he got over it. None of us took no harm from him, though Dr. Meredith he said it was just a chance. But you'll see all Mary's children will. She's that sort as never has no luck. Look at her husband!"

It was three days after Dr. Meredith's walk along the Hollow Holes. That bi
taken place on a Wednesday, and this was a Saturday.

The inhabitants of Mary Combe were possessed of very definite views on a great variety of subjects. Some of these “fixed ideas” were decidedly undesirable. To their eradication Mr. Howard, the hard-working and hard-working young Vicar, devoted most of his time on six days out of the seven, with a moderately satisfactory result only.

The weekday existence of Mary Combe was regarded by it as somewhat harassed by this his practical exhortation. Sundays, on the contrary, on which Mr. Howard tried to make his strongest stand and protest of all, were looked upon as islands of refuge in their stormy sea.

“Parson, he’s out of the way more, Sundays — took up with his sermons and that,” was the current explanation of the feeling of peace the day engendered; sermons being, to the mind of Mary Combe, institutions before which custom demanded silence, but in themselves wholly an abstract quantity with no bearing whatever on anything.

However, Mr. Howard’s time as Vicar of Mary Combe had as yet been limited, and some of the most cherished convictions were already tottering. And to give them their due, the people of Mary Combe were not worse than those in other places. The fixed ideas, also, were not all erroneous. Some were even praiseworthy. Among them was that which, from time immemorial, had set aside Saturday afternoon as an universal half-holiday. Of course, this is a fairly general institution; but the spirit of its observance differs greatly in different parts of England. In that corner of it which contained Mary Combe, there would seem to have been lingering traces of a livelier age, for the people devoted themselves to enjoying it with a vigour that would have astonished those imaginative pessimists for whom the dwellers in rural districts are only a heavy-hearted crowd, broken with the load of unremitting, ill-paid toil. The mothers set to work early, always, to “clean” their homes, their children, and themselves; and all with much the same measure of energy. This being accomplished, the men came home, and went through the same process as regarded themselves, some of them reappearing in a sort of foretaste of Sunday clothes, by way of emphasizing the occasion.

Then every one proceeded to enjoy whatever in his or her own eyes constituted relaxation—out of doors, if possible naturally.

The men worked in their gardens; as on their door-steps and took a contemplative pipe, possibly enhanced by conversation with a friend across the street. One or two went fishing, and some turned their hands to mechanical diversion—private cabinet-making, or the like, or it might be household mendings.

To this choice of occupations had lately been added one which had its origin in what was at first contemptuously condemned as “another of them fancies o’ parson’s.” Mr. Howard had divided a long narrow slip of land on a slope which rose on one side of the street into “allotments.” These, after the proper amount of distrust and disfavour had been bestowed, had become both popular and much sought after. And Saturday afternoons generally found several men at work there.

The young men and the maidens chose principally, the diversion of standing about in groups, each consisting exclusively of one sex, but each disposed, with curious coincidence, well within sight of the other and each, almost invariably, talking with rapidity and energy of the other’s proceedings. “Walkings out” were not practised on Saturday afternoons. The evening might find a few “couples” strolling up the Hollow Holes, but Sunday was the one customary occasion for this ceremony.

The women, that is to say the mothers of families, chose diversions varying with the age and number of the families in question. If these were no longer young enough to “get into mischief,” their guardians were wont to establish themselves comfortably, and hold long and earnest conversations on their worries across fences or walls, with another matron who willed the worries and the moments away with laconic sympathy. If, on the contrary, the family were young numerous, and irresponsible, their protector would generally prefer a door-step, this being a more commanding position, as far as keeping an eye on them went, and also providing the great advantage—if she sat down in the doorway itself—of forming a sort of prison of the room at her back, in which the more mischievous units of the family might be kept in semi-control.

In this case, the socially inclined friend sometimes sat modestly on what was left of the step, but more often leaned against the door-post, in an attitude the comfort of which is greater than might be believed.
The two women who were so hope- 
fully discussing the fate and circum- 
stances of their mutual friend, Mrs. Miller, were 
thus disposed in and against a house about 
half-way up the street of Mary Combe. 
From it almost all the “street” was visible 
—from its beginning, down by the common, 
to its ending in the lane bordered by elms 
that led up to the church. The scene, 
though no dimmest conception of the fact 
had even dimly presented itself at any time 
either to the two talkers or to any of their 
friends, was a sufficiently picturesque one. 
The irregularity of the outlines of the houses, 
their differing tints and colours, the breaks 
made between them by here and there a 
clump of trees, and here and there a larger 
bit of garden, or straggling bit of orchard, 
together with the soft green outline against 
the sky of the sloping ridge of field 
up opposite that formed the “allotments”, 
all 
made a whole of character and charm. To 
the right of the women as they sat, lower 
down the street, that to say, was the 
warm red brick of Dr. Meredith’s garden 
wall; to the left, nearer the elm trees, the 
pointed roof of Wilson’s carpentering shed 
cut into the blue of the sky. The whole 
was lit by the steady radiance of the 
April afternoon sun, which caught and 
brought out vividly every stray bit of 
colour in the dresses of the girls who were 
standing about in scattered knots, and the 
sunny hair of some of the children who 
might be described as being everywhere. 

Well within sight of the two women in 
question were their respective husbands, 
engaged on the allotments. And Mrs. 
Green, the woman who had begun the 
discussion, had, beyond Green, no family 
cares to vex her soul. Not that she had 
ever known any; on the contrary, as she 
herself expressed it, they “all laid in the 
churchyard.” This meant, when explained, 
that she had lost six children in years gone 
by; a loss which brought with it a certain 
dignity. Mrs. Green’s position was con- 
sidered far more worthy of respect, for 
instance, than that of Mrs. Allen, who had 
only “buried one.”

Though it is capable of a distinctly 
humorous aspect, the sort of sliding-scale 
of deference that is paid, among the poor, 
to those who have had heavy losses or 
deep trouble, possesses a curious half- 
hidden touch of something greater; it is 
a deference to, and respect for, the cause, 
and not the effect, that is the foundation 
of it.

From the statement that Mrs. Allen 
possessed nine little Allens to console her 
for the loss of that one in the past, it will 
be easily inferred that it was she who was 
sitting protectively on the door-step, not 
Mrs. Green who leaned carelessly again 
the door-post.

Both women had some work in their 
hands; Mrs. Green was knitting some 
sock, and the size and texture of which declared 
Green to be a man of stalwart proportions 
and strength; Mrs. Allen was engaged in 
mending a jacket, which was evidently the 
“Sunday wear” of one of the nine. Her 
work was much interrupted by glances 
constantly cast in one of three directions: 
first, into the street, where a detach- 
ment consisting of five of the eldest of her 
sons and daughters were playing just in front 
of the gate that led into the allotments; 
secondly, into the kitchen behind her, 
where two of a more tender age were busy 
immured; and lastly, to the tiny strip of 
garden that ran in front of the house. In 
the corner of this domain the oldest of the 
newest baby.

She broke off in her enumeration of Mrs. 
Miller’s disabilities, to reprieve the girl to 
the straitening cry the baby began to set up— 
a method of up-bringing of which the 
advantages are but dimly discerned by 
the recipient. Mrs. Allen found it is 
difficult to break off when started on any 
topic—even the daily exhausted one of 
reproof. Consequently it was seven 
quarters of an hour before an opportunity offered 
for Mrs. Green to reply.

“Ah, yes, poor thing!” she exclaimed 
at length, with a long-drawn sigh. She 
did not explain whether the pity of her 
speech was applied to Mrs. Miller or her 
husband, on the relations between whom some 
people held that there were two opinions; but 
Mrs. Allen evidently was not among such.

“Poor thing, indeed!” she replied with 
a vigorous stitch to the jacket, “if I was her 
and had him I don’t know what I shouldn’t 
do.”

“There’s a many says she was a good- 
looking sort of a woman when she first 
came to Mary Combe,” pursued Mrs. Green. 
She was in an intricate part of the narrative, 
and spoke half-abstracely, but 
still as one deeply interested in the topic.

“I’ve heard that myself,” responded 
Mrs. Allen. “There’s not much of it left 
to see nowadays. But the children have 
got a nice look with them. Thomas Ben-
jamin!” The last apparently wholly 
irrelevant ejaculation was spoken over
Mrs. Allen’s shoulder into the kitchen, whence a terrific scraping of chairs on the stone floor had proceeded. As the same scraping subsided instantly on the sound of Mrs. Allen’s voice, it is to be inferred that the words were the name of its creator. “If you don’t play pretty and quiet with Emily,” continued Mrs. Allen severely, “mother’ll have to come to you.” In the dead silence produced by this statement, Mrs. Allen turned cheerfully back to her work and her conversation as if no interruption had occurred. “Susan Hannah in particular,” she continued, “is a pleasant kind of girl in looks. It’s a thousand pities as she should be ill, and just heard of a place and all.”

“Have they had Dr. Meredith to her?”

“Yes, to be sure they have. Had him the first day she was took. And every day since; for I’ve seen him go on there with my own eyes, when he’s come out of Tom Wilson’s.”

The latter name seemed to suggest to Mrs. Green a wholly fresh train of thought.

“Aha!” she said, with a click of her knitting-needles, by way of emphasis; “she’s not long for this world, poor Jane Wilson ain’t.”

A confirmatory and comprehensive shake of the head from Mrs. Allen greeted this assertion. And a quick stitch or two at the jacket was accompanied by an equally quick sigh of sympathy.

“I was there day before yesterday,” she said a moment later; “I never saw a face with death in it plainer, never! And it’s not two years since Tom Wilson married her. She’s a good ten years younger than me, too,” Mrs. Allen added parenthetically.

“It seems young to go, don’t it?” responded Mrs. Green. With which words both women fell into a short silence.

It was broken by a vigorously shouted scolding from Mrs. Allen to her eldest son, who was preparing to execute gymnastics on the top bar of the allotment gate.

“Just you come down off that there this minute, Ted!” were the tersely emphatic concluding words of her reproof.

Ted obeyed, seeing that his mother’s eyes were fixed on him; and, having seen him safely on the ground again, Mrs. Allen returned to her work.

Meanwhile, it would appear that Mrs. Green had been casting about for a fresh subject of conversation, and had lighted upon the connecting link between the last two.

“Dr. Meredith, he’s up and down street all day long, as you may say,” she remarked tentatively. Her tone implied that she had a large reserve fund of interesting conversation in the topic she had started, but that before proceeding, she invited comment, so to speak, on her prelude.

And the comment was very ready.

“That he is!” responded Mrs. Allen, at once; “from mornin’ to night he’s at it. It’s only the other day—let me see, Wednesday it was, for I see Mr. Martin drive down on his way home from market in the afternoon as I said it in the evening—Wednesday it was, Dr. Meredith was up at Wilson’s after I’d cleared away our supper; and as he come past our door, I saw him; and I says then to Allen that the doctor looked like one as was pretty near wore out.”

“There’s been a lot of people ill lately,” said Mrs. Green. “And he sees to them, too. That’s where it is. Look how often he come to me in my rheumatism, and me upstairs three weeks and more! I quite believe you,” she added fervently, “and it’s the same tale everywhere. Why, I was in her house when he come in, Tuesday, to old Maria Reeves; and he looked just like a man as had done such a day’s work as he felt fit to drop. I ask him to sit down, taking it upon myself, Maria being so hard of sight and hearing; and he says, ‘No, thank you, Mrs. Green; I must be off to Farleigh.’ And that was seven o’clock in the evening, that was!”

Mrs. Green paused for breath.

“I can’t see, now, why he don’t get some one to help him,” pursued Mrs. Allen reflectively. “It’s what he ought to have, that I’m very sure. If he don’t do something of that he’ll be making himself ill with goin’ here and hurryin’ there, and never no time to his own, as you may say.”

“It’ll be a pity too,” prognosticated Mrs. Green, with a cheerful pleasure in her forebodings; “a terrible pity, such a good doctor as he is. But you’re right; that’s what he’ll do. And the next thing’ll be, we shan’t have no one.”

Mrs. Allen was just about to confirm this view of the future, and had, indeed, lifted her head to do so, when something wholly distracted her attention, and cut off her words.

“Lor!” she exclaimed excitedly, “now who ever’s that? Just you look there, Mrs. Green.”

The nearest group of young people was
only separated from the two by some fifty yards or so. It consisted of girls who a few moments earlier had been all engaged in unceasing chatter on some common interest, standing close together in order, presumably, each to obtain a better hearing. At this instant they were scattered and broken up, and were all staring at a stranger who had just accosted one of them.

The strange figure was that of a young man. He was tall and rather slight; so much was evident, as also was the fact that he was dressed in a suit of grey tweed, and carried a Gladstone bag in his hand.

"Lor!" responded Mrs. Green, who had not lost a moment in echoing Mrs. Allen’s adjuration. And if her vocabulary was circumscribed, her emotion was not. A stranger, that is to say a wholly unexpected stranger, was an event in Mary Combe. The advent of any of Mr. Howard’s friends, who were rather like angel visitants, was always known beforehand, the news of their expected arrival being wafted about the village by his faithful manservant and factotum in plenty of time, and their appearance was therefore met with a prepared and cultivated interest. The same principle held true of the few acquaintances who appeared as friends of their owners at any of the few farmhouses in or around the village. And it was far removed from the most adventurous walking tourist’s route. An unlooked-for appearance like this was necessarily, therefore, attended by a sort of thrill of excitement.

"Some one as has missed their way!" suggested Mrs. Green, with breathlessness arising from concentration upon the centre of her surprise.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Allen, who, with her work neglected on her knee, had turned herself, the better to obtain a view of the stranger. "You just listen to hear what he’s sayin’ to them girls."

"It’s my sister-law’s Emma he’s talking to," said Mrs. Green excitedly, before she obeyed this mandate.

"Will you tell me the way—I mean can you tell me please, if I shall find Dr. Meredith at his house?"

The voice that spoke was clear and full; pleasantly resonant, too. And its tones were very audible to the two listening women.

"Friend of the doctor’s!" exclaimed Mrs. Allen.

"Quite the gentleman!" was Mrs. Green’s simultaneous remark.

"My sister-law’s Emma," a blooming, dark-haired girl in a tightly-fitting red bodice, rose but inadequately to the occasion. Possibly the reserved criticism of her fellows embarrassed her; possibly the stranger’s waiting attitude deprived her of self-possession.

"Yon’s his house," was all she could find to say. "Yon, with the brick wall." She nodded her handsome black head sideways by way of explanation, and gave a sort of twitch to her apron.

"Thank you!" was the answer.

The young man paused a moment, and seemed to hesitate, before turning to pursue his walk in the direction indicated. The tiniest vestige of a flush was visible on his smooth face, but the shade of his straw hat’s brim effectually concealed it. The hat rested on a quantity of closely-cropped, dark, curly hair, and the eyes which followed the girl’s gestures were large and grey, with a self-possessed steadiness in them, behind which steadiness something inexplicable seemed to lurk; something that was a subtle mixture of defiance and keen enjoyment.

"Can you tell me if I should be likely to find him in at this time of day?" he added, repeating his former question.

He changed the Gladstone bag to his other hand as he spoke, as if he found it a trifle heavy. His boots were dusty with the dust of a long walk.

The deficient Emma was elbowed out of the way hurriedly by a little, fair girl, who looked boldly up into the man’s face. But before she could speak, a sharp, shrill scream cut through the air. It proceeded from Mrs. Allen’s house. With one consent, the strange man, the group of girls, and every one else who was within reach of the sound, turned in the direction from which it came.

The door-step was empty; both Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Green had disappeared, and from within the house came a succession of cries and exclamations, in which Mrs. Allen’s voice was discernible.

"What in the world is the matter!" said the young man. His words were probably more of an exclamation than a question, for, to judge from their faces, the girls were all much too occupied in forming alarming surmises on their own account to answer him.

"Come on!" said the dark-haired Emma briefly, starting off at a run.
towards the Allens' house. She was followed closely by all the girls, and at a little further distance by, first, the strange young man, and a large proportion of all the people in the street.

The foremost girls had just reached the door, when Mrs. Green, her knitting grasped confidently all in one hand, her clean apron awry, came out of it at a pace as near a run as she could manage.

"Go for Dr. Meredith, one of you, do! Em, Bess, any one—hurry! Mrs. Allen's Thomas Benjamin's swallowed something off the mantelpiece, and he's choking fearful! He's black in the face now; he'll choke himself to death if you don't hurry!"

But neither Bess nor Em started on their errand. As Mrs. Green began to speak, the strange young man had pushed his way gently but decidedly to the front, and broke in now upon her last words.

"I am a doctor," he said quickly. "I am come to be Dr. Meredith's assistant. Let me in, and I'll do my best for the child."

Mrs. Green fell back with a confused and incoherent exclamation of thanks, and the young man flung the Gladstone bag down on the garden path, and strode into the cottage. As his first proceeding was to shut the door behind him, the group of girls, augmented by this time into a little crowd, had to fall back upon themselves for excitement and interest. There was a moment or so of silent listening to what might be going on within, of which nothing could be heard or discerned save the sudden cessation of Mrs. Allen's cries and ejaculations.

And then one of the girls—it was the little fair-haired one who had faced him so audaciously when Mrs. Allen's first scream broke in on them—picked up, by way of giving point to the observations which were flying excitedly about with regard to the young man's statement of his business in Mary Oombe, the Gladstone bag from the path.

"This here's his luggage!" she said, in the voice of one who establishes with all confidence a prior claim to attention.

"And very like got his name on it!" added another girl.

The little crowd surged as near as the limits of the garden would allow them. But there was no inscription on the bag beyond the two initials "A. G." in small white letters, and the pioneer girl received scant credit for her discovery; and she put down the bag again with a feeling akin to the taste of the mythical apples of Sodom.

"Nice-looking sort o' chap!" "Pleasant spoken, too!" "And ready, all in a minute, like! 'I'm a doctor,' he says, and in he goes. 'Youngish, too!'"

These were the comments which circulated confusedly among the crowd. Their hope and expectation of seeing the object of this excitement come out again grew stronger as every moment passed by. It seemed like half an hour, but it really was only ten minutes or so, before the door reopened; the strange young man's hand was seen to be resting on it, and the strange young man's voice was heard saying:

"I'm sure he'll do now, my good woman. I should give him his tea and put him to bed."

With the last words the strange young man came out, followed by Mrs. Allen, whose face bore traces of considerable and tearful agitation, and in whose arms the newly recovered Thomas Benjamin was closely clasped.

The baby face, for it was only three years old, looked very white, and the little black-haired head formed a sharp contrast of colour. Thomas Benjamin's experiences had evidently been sharply painful to him, and very exhausting.

"The child was 'most gone!' said Mrs. Green, emphatically detailing the whole occurrence later on. "It was one of them glass balls as Allen got at the seaside last summer. Who'd have thought he could have reached it off the shelf, goodness only knows! But reached it he had, and swallowed it he had. Leastways, it had stuck in the child's throat, and there it would a' been now, and him a corpse, if it hadn't been for that young gentleman."

"Don't distress yourself about him," the young man said very gently as Mrs. Allen's long sobbing breaths of agitation threatened to overpower her again, "I do assure you he will be all right now, and if you like I will—"

But the young man's intention remained unspoken. The sound of a horse's footsteps clattered out sharply on the hard road behind them, and the crowd turned with the sound.

"Here's Dr. Meredith!" half-a-dozen voices exclaimed.

The young man, instead of following the example of the crowd, stooped suddenly
...walking in the sleep. Mechanically he brushed his hand before his eyes.

"Good evening!" he responded. His voice, like his face, was vacant and toneless.

Then there was a little pause. The sunlight streamed down on the white road, on the tired horse standing patiently with his head drooping a little, the saggy little crowd on the other side, and on the two figures facing each other. From the outskirts Mrs. Allen, still with Thomas Benjamin clasped to her heart, looked on interestedly.

The pause was broken again in an instant by Dr. Meredith. He gave an almost imperceptible start, with which he seemed to rouse himself from his bewildered dream, and then he spoke:

"I did not expect you to-day, as you say," he said in his ordinary voice; "but since you have arrived, pray come to my house. I am on my way there."

He caught the horse’s bridle over his arm and prepared to walk on. The young man placed himself at his side, and as he did so Dr. Meredith made some sort of commonplace remark about the weather. The young man answered it at some length.

By this time they were out of earshot of the people, and Dr. Meredith, first realising this by a glance, spoke no more. They walked in complete silence. And it was in silence that Dr. Meredith opened the gate and motioned to the young man to precede him.

He hastily threw the reins of his horse to the groom, who had seen his approach, and stood waiting, with an exemplar readiness compounded of mixed motives, in which curiosity bore a strong part, and then he made the stranger again precede him into the house, and into the sitting-room. Once there, he turned the key sharply in the door, and placing himself with his back to it, faced the young man, who was standing apparently waiting for him to speak.

"Now, then!" he said. "Perhaps you will tell me what this means, Althea?"
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY EMMÉ STUART.
Author of "Joan Peacoot," "A Woman of Forty," "Estell of Greyestone," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXII. DOLCE FAR NIENTE.

The next morning Dora woke up full of new joy and new enthusiasm. She had never before paid a visit alone with Forster, nor had she ever visited a spot so far removed from busy life. When she looked out from her turret window, she could see far beyond the glen to where the mountains rose towering towards the sky. It was quite early, but she was not over-tired with her journey, so dressing hastily she found her way out by a back door and hastened up the glen. The beauty and the wildness fascinated her, and as she followed the Rothery the music of nature made her heart bound with happiness.

When she reached the gate at the end of the glen she paused, still more enchanted, for now the mountain view was in sight. She could follow with her eyes the upland path miles upon its way, whilst lower down the valley wound round the foot of the treeless mountains, losing itself in the distance, now hidden by a slight haze.

"This is a place of beauty," thought Dora. "What a pity Forster did not marry the Princess! She would have been a delightful sister-in-law, but he never could fall in love with anybody, I don't believe he ever will."

She was just turning to retrace her steps when she found the Princess close beside her.

"I was just thinking of you, dear Princess," said Dora, speaking with the warm girlish enthusiasm which denotes young happiness. "I could not resist coming out early to see your beautiful glen. But you are an early bird too."

"I always take this walk before breakfast, but I did not expect to find you. Are you rested? I only need hardly ask that. Do you know if Mr. Bethune had a good night?"

"I don't know yet. Let's go back and see. I am so glad he wanted to come here, for I am sure he will get strong under your care. He is certainly very much changed by that horrid fever."

"We will take care of him, and make him well," said Penelope in a low voice.

"I feel so much older now, but you, dear Princess, you look just the same, only—yes, I think you are more beautiful. You don't look as grave as you did abroad."

Penelope laughed softly.

"I have been rather dull and lonely all this winter. You will cheer me up. In old days I was never lonely. It is a dreadful price to pay."

"For what? For getting married?"

"Yes."

"But I don't wonder you are dull. You want Philip back again, of course. Mother was talking about it the other day."

"What did she say? She was always good to me." Penelope walked on in front, for the path was narrow, so that Dora could not see her face.

"Mother was saying that she was so very sorry that Forster's illness had prevented Mr. Winskell from coming home to you."

"I knew he could not come back directly."

"Yes, of course you are very good, but—well, mother thinks Forster ought not to have persuaded your husband to go."

"He did quite right."

"That's what I said, Forster must have
been right. When I am married, if Forster wants my husband to go to the North Pole, I know I shall let him go, and I shall think it quite right."

"You are very fond of your brother, Dora!"

"I should think so! He was always good to me when I was a child. He can't help being good to people, and having an influence over them. How lovely the Palace looks from here!" #

Dora flipped about from one beauty to another. Her clear, happy voice woke the old echoes. It seemed to bring sunshine into Penzle's lonely soul. Besides, Dora was Forster's sister, and she was ready to open herself to her; as far as that is, as her pride allowed her to.

When she had heard of the possibility of Forster's visit, her heart had given a bound of pleasure, and then the weight of reality had fallen upon her. For one moment she had thought of saying no, she even wrote a letter saying that her father's condition prevented her receiving visitors. Then she tore it up, and let chance have its way. She would see him. A terrible, inexplicable loneliness had taken possession of her: a loneliness she hid carefully from her uncle, and which she tried to drown by working at many things. But she could no longer hide it from herself. She loved Forster; his very name made music to her in her lonely walks, and over and over again she acted the scene which had so nearly made him his promised wife. It might have been; nothing hindered it but the pride of the old family, the intense desire to save the Palace and the name of Winskell from ruin. Often and often now, as she saw the signs of wealth about her, she recognised the folly of her old pride. She was not proud now. Love had burnt it out of her. A cottage on her estate looked more like a palace than did her own stately mansion. Love might live there, but in her home love was gone. But then came the thought that she was loved. She sometimes believed it and sometimes she doubted it, but in either case it was pain, and the winter of her discontent had seemed very long.

Now she determined to cast away all thought, and to live in the present. She would be happy now, now if at no other time. Forster was here; he was under her roof. She would be happy.

At the entrance she paused, and turning round to Dora, she kissed her.

"I am so glad you have come. I must say it. You must tell me all that I must do to make your brother well. We shall cure him between us; of course we shall."

"Yes, of course. I'll run upstairs and see if he is rested."

"Breakfast is ready, so make haste. Here is my uncle."

Dora came back accompanied by Forster himself. He already looked brighter, and the summer sunshine which streamed in the open window, lighting up oak panel and shining floors, threw an enchanting glory over the whole party.

"You have come to recruit Mr. Bethune," said the Duke, "and I am sure that the Rothbery will take you hand, and speedily make you strong. Penelope and I have been lately planning a boat suitable for laziness and for an invalid. My niece is a first-rate captain."

"If Mr. Bethune prefers solitude, Jim Oldcorn shall steer him," said Penelope, smiling. She was appearing in a new light. Much of her pride was gone, for she loved, and love is a teacher whose lessons are quickly learnt. He touches the soul, and makes it burn with new warmth.

She was so lonely! and wanted to know what happiness was like. The ambition of all her girlhood seemed now so poor, so worthless, compared with such love as she felt herself capable of giving, and yet not to give. But, even as she went over the past story, she always arrived at the same conclusion: she could have done nothing else, nothing else.

Then the three planned out their day's idleness and pleasure, apparently feeling very fresh and very happy over the new task. They were none of them "used" to concerning this occupation. Dora was not more eager than the other two, but her eagerness served as the excuse; for, without a word to each other, Penelope and Forster felt that they were happy. They could not own it or discuss it. They only knew that each of them experienced a new life, a new joy which was entrancing, a joy they had not known previously to exist. When Forster had made her an offer, he had thought only of a wife in reference to his work. Now that there could be no question between them of working together, they understood what love might have been.

Dora, ignorant of all this—inevitable of understanding it even had she known it—made the intercourse perfect. Where was the danger when a third was always with them? Why not enjoy the present when the present was purely a passing
MARRIED TO ORDER.  [May 26, 1894.]

Forster talked a little about the colony. He often mentioned Phillip's name, but now and then it struck Dora as strange that Phillip should not be here himself, and that he should not be doing the honours. She once even remarked, as she took the oar from Penelope and declared she would row them alone, that it was a pity Mr. Winzekell could not see how well she rowed; but no one answered her remark except that Forster said "Yes."

Penelope was sitting near to him; her two hands were clasped on her lap, her cloak was thrown back, and the soft plumed hat she wore perfectly suited her style of beauty. Forster, sitting so as to be able to see her without turning his head, gazed at the picture. There was no harm in admiring her. Who could help it? He noted a new tenderness in her manner, he detected the often recurring blush; where was the old pride? Then he suddenly remembered that she was Phillip's wife, and his mind went back to the old grievance. What business had Phillip to give up so easily the treasure he had won? Had he had left her here alone and unprotected. Forster's conscience now soothed itself by the thought that every man is born to defend an injured woman, even if the man who is wronging her happens to be a close friend.

The idea that it is obligatory to become a knight errant is very dangerous and very subtle for a man of Forster's character. But he had voluntarily placed himself in the way of danger, and he resolutely put away all thought of the future. Forster had never loved before. The malady is less deadly if some slight attack has been previously experienced, but the risk is great when a man has passed his first early manhood without having had his affections called forth. The very purity of his past years makes his danger, if willfully neglected, all the greater.

This very afternoon, when the water of the lake reflected the gold and the blue of heaven, Forster felt that he should soon recover his former strength. He understood now that what he had wanted was the sight of the Princess. Everything else appeared insignificant in comparison to the knowledge that she was sitting close beside him, and that he could watch and learn by heart every line of her face.

But the life was simple enough. They landed at a rocky cave, where they had settled to drink tea. Penelope had ordered everything to be taken to this spot, whence a perfect, far-reaching view could be had. Dora was soon busy getting tea ready, begging the other two to sit down and talk, and to let her manage. What could be more delightful? Dora's presence took away the feeling of shyness, which might otherwise have made them both silent. Penelope thought, as she sat near Forster and listened to his talk, that she was perfectly happy. He was fond of discussing books, and he discovered that the Princess was far more cultivated than most women he had met, moreover she could form an opinion—a rare power in a woman.

Then followed the innocent fun of the picnic. Penzie's quick hands arranged the softest cushions for Forster, and Dora's talk was about the De La Cuys and the idleness of Ida's brother, and other home matters. There was nothing worth recording in all the talk, but to the two it seemed perfect, and when they walked down again to the boat, conscience was lulled to sleep as the water lapped against the "Sea-spray."

Dora rowed them back, and as she had her back towards them, they could look oftener at each other, pretending even then that there was nothing in it. Occasional, however, Forster placed his hand upon hers, and for a few seconds her fingers closed over his and she held his hand, as a child might do. Then to herself she said: "Where is my pride? How can I forget? But I can't help it. Only for a few days I can be happy, and I can know what it is
to be loved and to love. I did not know before, and how could I guess it?"

Suddenly she loosed her hand and turned her face away, so that Forster thought he had transgressed too far, and he became grave and sad. It was only when she stopped out of the boat that she placed her hand again on his, and this time the clasp was firmer, as if they both knew that resistance was useless.

When Penelope was dressing for dinner she selected her prettiest gown, and she knew that she did it to please Forster. When her maid left her she stood before the glass and gloried in her beauty. She was beautiful, and she saw it plainly and smiled. Was it her beauty that had made Forster love her? If so she was glad. Then all at once the candlelight flashed on her wedding-ring, and she blushed scarlet. She seized it and flung it angrily away from her.

"I am not his wife, except in the eyes of that stupid law," she exclaimed. "Oh! uncle, uncle, it was your doing. Why did you carry it out? Why, why?" Then she looked at her hand, free of all rings, and smiled. "Some day I must be free. I must; I am now really; but some day."

However, she slowly stooped and picked up the obnoxious circle, and, slipping it on again, she went down to dinner.

Very soon the conversation of the four sounded merrily in the old hall, and Dora’s joyous laugh was heard in the panelled dining-room.

"Fenkle, my dear, you look very well this evening," remarked the Duke, when the Princess rose to leave the table. "You see, Bethune’s society suits us both. We have been much moped all the winter."

"I am sure that I shall get quite strong here," said Forster, as he watched the last fold of Penelope’s dress sweep over the threshold.

SOME TRADITIONAL BELIEFS OF THE FRENCH CANADIANS.

Having their origin in the ancient traditions which formed a portion of the sacred inheritance bequeathed to the Canadian people by their French ancestors, their myths, tales, and superstitions live on with the glamour cast on them by the imagination of each succeeding generation. The French Canadians are a primitive people, simple in thought and belief, clinging closely to the customs of their forefathers. Among them civilisation has scarcely invaded the sanctity of earnest faith, or broken its spell. Many traditions are held in the Province of Quebec, and on the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, almost as firmly to-day as they were in the ancient days of faith. These myths have become as much a part of the people’s environment as storm and sunshine, sowing and harvest, and have been accepted with a conviction as simple. Among a people so credulous that the toothache is cured by a charm, that a medal is hung around a cow’s neck as an efficacious remedy for a cough, a Latin prayer fastened on a barn as a protection against fire or the invasion of thieves, where the dust collected from a dead woman’s coffin is supposed to relieve disease, it is no wonder that superstition had retained its hold.

The Canadian legends are grounded in the essential idea of the national life, and the result is genuine originality. These tales of the soil reflect the sublime pageants of Nature—the beauty of open skies; the mystery of gloomy, trackless woods; the wild, free life of forest and hillside; the pathos of human tragedy and comedy; these impart to them the strength and freshness of reality. Whimsical as are many of these ancient tales, they are distinguished by qualities of sentiment and imagination, quaint drollery, pure morality, and primitive philosophy, and all are seasoned by human sympathy.

The early French settlers brought with them from Old France rich stores of tales, songs, and legends which they have retained almost unimpaired; together with these they adopted innumerable superstitions from their Indian allies. In order to thoroughly ascertain the spirit and motives of these old superstitions, it is necessary to form some idea of the condition under which they took root in Canadian soil. In the early days, during the obstinate and gallant struggle made by the French against fortune, the very existence of the colony was a miracle, and faith was an essential condition of life. The rulers and guides of the settlers were the Jesuits, men who with a serene courage courted martyrdom, but were steeped to the hips in superstition. Upon the shoulders of the savage red man the yoke of Christianity sat lightly, merely substituting new superstitions for old ones. The aspect of this new country was wild and terrible. The great lakes, like vast inland seas; the majestic rivers; the rolling prairies; the pathless forests; were all rich
In suggestions of mystery. Is it strange that weird and poetic conceptions should find their origin in this limitless, unknown region; or that the popular imagination should people the sombre recesses of the forest with mystic denizens?

The early French missionaries ascribed a very diabolical influence to the sorcery practised by the children of the forest. Père Arnaud, who spent many years in Labrador, remarks: "By the Indian wizards' strength of will, the wigwam moves like a table turning, and replies by knocks and leaps to the questions asked of it. Eh bien! you can see there spirits-rapping and table-turning surpassed. The familiar spirits of these Pagan Indians can really serve their masters, and show them things more wonderful than you can conceive. Our great magnetisers would be astonished to see the facility with which these magnetisers manage the magnetic fluid, which I shall willingly term diabolical fluid."

A tradition of the Indian giant Outilkon, who was said to inhabit the mountains on the north side of the St. Lawrence, below Cacouna, still lingers in that vicinity. Outilkon was the genius of evil; as he claimed the soul of his victims, the sound of his voice caused death. The belief in this giant who devours man was common, with many variations, to almost all savage tribes. Another Indian deity, Gougon, was supposed to haunt the Island of Miozon, near the Baie de Châteaux. This monster, a woman of immense size, was provided with pockets sufficiently large to hold a ship; in these she kept her prey until she could devour it at her leisure.

Stories of an Indian witch, who once possessed immense influence among the Iroquois, are still common about Rivière Ouelle. She was called by the savages "Mashé Skoñéé," and by the French, "Dame aux Gisules," or, "Lady of the Iris." She was supposed to have sold herself to the devil, and by his aid to be able to work miracles. At the witching hour of night she descended on a shooting star or a pale ray of moonlight. In the marshes this sorceress gathered the iris flowers, with which she crowned herself when making her invocations to the Great Manitou. Under the shadow of huge rocks, amidst the foam of rushing cascades, or in the dense mists rising from the valley, she concealed herself to watch for little children, whom her song had power to fascinate. In order to torture her victims she invented atrocious torments. Assailed by a vague, formless terror, they perished in slow agonies of fear. It was only when the cries of these suffering beings became audible, that the Evil One would reveal his secrets to his worshipper. Tradition asserts that this strange being was ultimately captured and burnt by her Indian enemies.

It is claimed that the conquest of Canada by the English was predicted by an Indian witch years before the event actually happened. When a Canadian lumberman has the good fortune to kill a deer, he wraps himself at night in the skin, in order to keep off the witches. It is greatly to the credit of the French Canadians that, however sincere might be their belief in witchcraft, they never inflicted upon those accused of sorcery the cruelties practised by their neighbours of Anglo Saxon origin.

A savage was allowed to have no power over a baptised Christian, except when in a state of mortal sin. Different descriptions of magic were practised among the Indians. One species of wizard was called a medicine man, and professed to cure disease; another sort was termed an "adocé," that is one who has entered into a compact with the "Mahoumet." It is difficult to find the origin of this term, which the French colonists applied to the familiar spirits of the Indian sorcerers. A Canadian writer—Dr. J. C. Taché—offers the explanation that, considering the founder of Islamism the incarnation of all evil, the French applied his name, slightly altered, to these imps of darkness. Mahoumet was a species of goblin, who devoted himself to the service of his votary on the condition that the latter should offer him frequent sacrifices. He is described as a little man about two feet high, with a skin grey and shining like that of a lizard, and eyes that glowed like living coals. The adocés bound themselves by a solemn oath, and it was only the sacraments of baptism, confession, and absolution that could break the covenant. Treachery between the contracting parties was not rare, neither being deterred by any scrupulous delicacy from trying to outwit the other; but as the adocé was the slave of his tormentor, he usually got the worst of the bargain. The speeite often became visible to his adocé, counselled him, and when not restrained by the influence of a magic superior to his own, aided him in his difficulties. Feuds
between these wizards were of common occurrence; through the power of their respective Mahommetans they played each other many malicious tricks, but in the end the weaker invariably perished. Unless a wizard abandoned his evil practices he always died a violent death.

The word "Ignolée" designates both a custom and a song imported from France by our ancestors; during many years it flourished in Canada, though even in the most remote country districts it now appears to have fallen into disuse. M. Ampère, chairman of the "Comité de la langue, de l'histoire, et des arts de la France," observes, in allusion to this song, "A chorus which is perhaps the only actual fragment left of the Druidical epoch." The custom is said to date from the time of the Gauls, and is believed to have originated in the Druids' habit of going out on New Year's Eve to gather the mistletoe which clung to the oaks of their sacred forests, and the name was derived from the rejoicing cry uttered by the Pagan-priests as the hallowed plant fell beneath the golden sickle, "An gui, lan neuf." Christianity adopted the pagan rite and sanctified it by charity. In French Canada a party of men, called "las Ignoleux," proceeded on New Year's Eve from house to house collecting for the poor of the parish, or in some localities begging wax to make tapers for the altars, and singing a chorus in which the word "Ignolée" often occurred, the term assuming slightly differing forms according to the dialects of the various provinces of France from which the colonists had originally come, as "guillonée," "la guillonée," and "agullane." Troops of children preceded the procession shouting "La ignolée qui vient." When the Ignoleux reached the house they beat time upon the door with long sticks as they shouted the chorus, but they never entered until the master or mistress or their representatives invited them to partake of hospitality. The invitation being accepted, compliments of the season were exchanged, and the charitable donations were placed in a bag destined for that purpose. In begging for the poor, request was always made for a chine of pork with the tail attached, called "fiscignonée," or "la chignonée." In high good humour, the party, heralded by shouting children and barking dogs, then started for the next house. "Nous prendrons la fille adroite" is thought to be an allusion to the human sacrifices offered by the Druids.

The devil plays a prominent part in the legendary lore of French Canada, but he does not appear as Lucifer; the star of the morning, the strong angel who fell through pride, but as the devil of monkish legend, a crafty and material being. The grotesque and comic elements are very apparent in his composition. His malice can be gauged against by simple means, as the sign of the cross, or calling upon Heaven or the Virgin will effectually banish the fiend.

In the rural districts of Canada, Satan's company may be confidently expected at all occasions. The presence of a little child in the room betrays the appearance of his Satanic Majesty, as the little innocent is sure to bewail itself vigorously. He may be met at a dance in the guise of a handsome young man who excels all the rustic gallants in appearance. He wears gloves to conceal his claws; and, disregarding the trammels of conventionality, keeps his hat on his head to hide his horns. He selects the prettiest girl as his partner; but his choice usually falls upon a coquette who, by dancing during Lent, or indulgence in frivolous vanity, has exposed herself to temptation. In the midst of the gaiety a strange odour of brimstone becomes perceptible; a piercing cry is heard, the attractive revels is abruptly wafted out of the window, carping with him some useful domestic article, as the frying-pan or even the stove. If the girl should happen to wear a cross or a scapulary, she may escape with the scratch of a sharp claw. Canadian rustics never answer "entrez" when a knock is heard at the door; they invariably respond "ouvrez." This is founded upon an old legend of a young woman who replied "entrez" to such a summons, when the devil came in and carried her off.

When a priest is sent for to attend the sick, the devil is stimulated to his most lively activity, for then it is a question of the loss or gain of a soul. On such occasions a variety of the most unforeseen accidents are sure to happen. Priest persons guard against such contingencies. Notwithstanding his zeal and versatility, Satan is often outwitted by mortals, though his subtle devices show discrimination and knowledge of character.

The werewolf legend constitutes one of the worst of the traditional beliefs in French Canada. It is thought that one who suffers for seven years to partake of the communion will be turned into a "loup-garou." The "loup-garou" may appropriate the form of a hare, a fox, a wild cat, or even a
SOME TRADITIONAL BELIEFS.

Endowed with supernatural speed and strength, he roams at night through woods and desert places. A fierce creature, with appetites exaggerating those of the animal he resembles, his chief delight is in devouring little children. In order to regain his estate of lost humanity, it was necessary that the monster's blood should be shed; this kindly office being usually performed by a friend, a complete restoration was certain to follow the operation.

The Wandering Jew legend in various forms is popular in Canada. The souls of the lost and the spirits in purgatory occupy a prominent position in Canadian folklore. These haunting spirits are often supposed to return to the world, and are frequently detained on the scene of their past misdeeds in punishment for sin. A wrong could only be righted by the intervention of a living being. The evil spirits were unable to cross the blessed waters of the St. Lawrence without the help of a Christian.

The Auroras Borealis, called "les marionettes, les éclairons, les lustrions," are believed to be lost souls. The Canadians think that the sound of an instrument, or the sound of the human voice raised in song, will make "les éclairons" dance. It is a common habit for the country people to sing aloud, to keep away the evil spirits. Dire misfortune threatens the reckless being who adopts this method of amusing himself while the quivering lights flash across the sky. Unless the precaution of touching him with a consecrated palm is taken, he gradually becomes fascinated, loses control of his senses, and before morning dawns, his body lies stiff and stark in death, while his soul is wated away to join in the giddy whirl of the "marionettes."

Fireflies, known to the country people as "fléchets," are also supposed to be the souls of the lost. It is their prerogative to lead their followers to destruction. A simple charm will avert the malicious designs of these imps. If the object of their persecution can retain sufficient presence of mind to thrust either a needle or a sharp knife into the nearest fence, the firefly is obliged to stop short in his course. One of two things must then happen, either the will-o'-the-wisp will impale himself upon the sharp instrument and thus find deliverance, or else he will exhaust himself in frantic efforts to pass through the needle's eye, an achievement as difficult to the airy spirit as to the most substantial of mortals. In the meantime the traveller can seek shelter.

The "Lutin" is a tricky sprite, delighting in mischief. He turns the cream sour, throws things into disorder, and at night takes long rides on the farmer's best horses. A remedy for this exists. Lutin possesses orderly instincts, and is forced to leave everything exactly as he finds it. If the farmer scatters a quart of bran before the stable door, the intruder in entering will be forced to stop upon the bran, and the pressure of his footsteps will disarrange the grain. In scrupulous fulfilment of his obligation he must replace them one by one. While he is engaged in this tedious task the night passes, and when morning dawns Lutin is obliged to disappear.

The Canadian seafaring population entertain superstitions peculiar to themselves. There are certain fishes which the fisherfolk never touch, as for instance a kind of haddock, commonly called "Saint Peter's Fish," which legend declares was the first fish taken out of the net by the Apostle on the occasion of the miraculous draught of fishes. The back of the fish is said to bear, in black marks, the imprint of Saint Peter's fingers.

Canadian sailors professed to hear the plaintive accents of the spirit that bewailed itself in the vicinity of Cap Madeleine. For many years mysterious sounds were said to haunt Prince Edward's Island. Signs that rent asunder the heart,plaints that deeply moved the soul, sung by voices that had nothing human in them, were heard in Roman Catholic chapels during service. Some heard nothing, while others were affected to tears and faintness by this torrent of melody vibrating in tender modulations and beating against the rock, until it became lost in distant echoes. Many attempts to exorcise these uneasy spirits were made without success. The fishermen tell of weird flames which are seen dancing on the waves of the Baie de Châlons, and which they believe serve as a reminder to pray for the souls of those who have perished on that spot.

Sailors are firmly convinced that Admiral Walker, with his phantom fleet, appears in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. L'Amiral du Brouillard, or Admiral of the Fog, he is called. The sight always presses disaster for mariners; and many terrible shipwrecks that have taken place at Ille aux Œufs are believed to have been caused by this ghastly spectacle. The sea may be
smooth as a mirror. Suddenly the water becomes agitated, the waves rise mountains high. Then a vessel appears, vainly striving to make way against the raging billows. She is crowded by men in ancient uniforms. On the main deck stands the commanding officer, who points out the sombre heights of Cape Despair to the pilot; while a beautiful woman, distraught with terror, clings to his arm. The ship drives straight on to Cape Despair. Piercing cries are heard mingling with the noise of the tempest. Glimpses of white, agonized faces; of upraised, pleading hands; flash from the angry waters. Then, abruptly, the vision vanishes. The sunshine dazzles on a sea like a mirror, the waves ripple softly to the foot of Cape Despair.

A belief in mermaids is very general. In 1725 the pilot of a French ship called the “Marie de Grace,” in an affidavit signed by the captain of the same vessel, swore to having seen a mermaid off the Banks of Newfoundland. In 1782 Venant St. German of Repentigny, merchant and voyageur, swore before Judges Paust and Ogden of the King’s Bench, Montreal, to having seen a mermaid in Lake Superior. Returning from Michilimakinac to the Grand Portage, this trader arrived at the south end of the Pâté. A little after sunset, the evening being clear and fine, the deponent was returning from setting his nets. He perceived in the lake an animal the upper part of whose body resembled that of a human being. It was about the size of a seven-year-old child; the complexion was of a brownish hue, like that of a young negro; it had woolly hair. St. German, with three men who accompanied him and an old Indian woman to whom he had given a passage in his canoe, all examined this apparition attentively. The Canadian wished to obtain possession of this strange being, but the violent opposition of the old Indian woman prevented him from raising his gun, and the creature disappeared. The woman was indignant at his audacity in attempting to fire upon what she termed Manitou Nabil Nabola, the God of the Waters and Lakes, who could raise a tempest at any moment, and expressed her determination to fly the danger. The voyageur remained in his own camp. Two hours later a violent storm arose, which continued with unabated fury for three days. Many other voyageurs had seen the same apparition. It was the general belief among the Indian tribes that this island was the residence of the God of the Waters and Lakes.

The superstitious Canadian, believing himself to be in constant contention with evil influences, did not disdain to become himself the worker of magic spells; he believed sincerely in necromancy and magic, and made attempts to practise the black art. Most of the spells and charms in use among the Canadians were taken from “Le Petit Albert,” a small edition of “Albert-le-Grand,” as used in France. The chief objects in employing these incantations was to find concealed treasures, changing tin into silver, the conjuring of spirits from the other world; it was also attempted to control the devil.

CIRCULATING LIBRARIES.

VARIOUS hard things have been said of the circulating library system, and not without reason, perhaps; but surely the circulating library is justified by its subscribers. It is said that the growth of lending libraries tends to check the sale of books, and to encourage the circulation of a very inferior class of literature. The former charge is rather an imaginary one, for it is quite certain that in many cases the libraries tend to encourage rather than restrict the buying of books. Many subscribers borrow books that they could not afford to buy, and would certainly never dream of buying even were they unattainable through the libraries. The sale of some books may be slightly affected by the preference of so many readers for borrowing rather than buying; but against this might be set many considerations on the other side. On the whole it is very doubtful whether the library system does in any appreciable degree affect the purchase of books.

As to the circulation of a very inferior class of literature, it must be admitted that in this charge there is a considerable amount of truth. Many novels, for example, have no circulation at all save through the libraries. No one buys them, but they are useful in filling the library boxes—especially for country subscribers—and it is to be presumed that they get read occasionally. Were there no libraries such books would never be published at all; or, if printed, would drop still-born from the press, greatly to the gain of literature. But while admitting that the great lending libraries do put a good deal of rubbish into circulation, it must be remembered that they have fostered, and
Indeed created, a taste for reading in many quarters where books were but little known. The reading may be ill-directed, but it is at least better than no reading at all; and, the habit once formed, there is always the hope that the reader may find his way to the real pasture-grounds of literature, where genuine nutriment may be found and enjoyed.

The circulating library is practically the growth of modern times. It has been pointed out, it is true, that one Saint Pamphlius, Presbyter of Cæsarea, who died in the year 309, founded a library there which is said to have contained thirty thousand volumes, and that this collection, consisting of religious works, was made for the purpose of lending the books to religiously disposed people. Saint Jerome particularly mentions the lending of the books as the chief purpose of the library. But excepting this Cæsarean collection, there is no trace of a library in any way resembling the present day circulating library until we come to the seventeenth century.

The first germs of the present system may be found in the practice—not altogether unknown to medieval “stationers”—introduced by one or two book-sellers, of lending their wares to be read. From time immemorial booksellers’ shops have been the favourite resort of all touched with the love of letters; and in days gone by, when the art of advertising was practically unknown, it was only by frequenting the shops where books were sold that possible purchasers were able to learn what was going on in the publishing world, to know what new books were in course of publication, and to hear and exchange the latest literary gossip. These early book-lovers, one may be quite sure, would be certain to while away many a leisure hour by “sampling” the wares on their hosts’ counters, and would read, or at least dip into many volumes besides those they actually purchased for more leisurely consumption at home. And hence might arise, very naturally, the custom of formally lending out books to read for a monetary consideration.

Thus, at the end of Kirckman’s “Thracian Wonder,” published in 1661, the bookseller makes the following announcement: “If any gentleman please to repair to my house aforesaid, this place be furnished with all manner of English, or French histories, romances, or poetry, which are to be sold or read for reasonable consideration.” It is not quite clear from the last few words whether the books might be taken away to be read, or whether the reading was to be done in the bookseller’s shop. But that books might be taken home is evident from the remark of a character in Neville’s “Poor Scholar,” printed in 1662. “Step to a bookseller’s,” he says, “and give him this angel, which I’ll lend you, for the use of the many-language’d bibles lately publish’d, for a week. Their price is twelve pound. When you have got them to your study, invite your father to your chamber, show him your library, and tell him you are twelve pounds out of purse for those large volumes.” This was an ingenious way of getting round the “relieving officer,” but it is doubtful, after all, whether the lending system was put into practice to any great extent.

Mr. Pepys, however, took advantage of it. After selling in disgust the copy he had first purchased of Butler’s “Hudibras,” he wished to make another attempt to read the book which every one else was praising, and, being thriftily unwilling to buy another copy until he had had an opportunity of making himself better acquainted with its contents, he went to St. Paul’s Churchyard, which was then fairly crowded with book-shops, and there looked upon the second part of “Hudibras,” which he says, “I buy not, but borrow to read, to see if it be as good as the first, which the world cried so mightily up, though it hath not a good liking in me, though I had tried but twice or three times reading to bring myself to think it witty.”

The renewed attempt at an appreciation of the book seems to have been a little more successful than the earlier readings, for in less than a fortnight Mr. Pepys paid another visit to his bookseller’s, and bought, with several more serious works, both parts of “Hudibras”—“the book now in greatest fashion for drollery”—although he naïvely confessed that he still found it hard to see where the wit lay.

There are no further traces of a circulating library of any kind until we reach the next century, in the course of which the modern system was introduced into all the chief towns of the kingdom. One of the very first circulating libraries established in Great Britain was set up by Allan Ramsay in 1728 at Edinburgh, a city which has always been in the vanguard of intellectual progress. Plays and works of fiction seem to have formed the staple of Ramsay’s collection, and the circulation of so much “light” literature gave great
SOME TRADITIONAL BELIEFS.

[Ma7 20t 1801-

Black Hood. Endowed with paranormal qualities, these mysterious beings, known as the aux CEafs, are believed to have been caused by this ghastly specter. The sea may be disaster for mariners; and many terrible shipwrecks that have taken place at this spot.

The Wandering Jew legend in various versions is popular in Canada. The souls of those who have perished on the St. Lawrence without the help of a divine blessing are said to bear, in black marks, the imprint of the St. Lawrence without the help of a divine blessing. The evil spirits are frequently detained on the scene of their disaster for mariners; and many terrible shipwrecks that have taken place at this spot.

The Aurora Borealis, known to the country people as les mairons, les éclairons, les lustrions, is called. The sight always presages disaster for mariners; and many terrible shipwrecks that have taken place at this spot.

The Lutin, or Admiral of the Fog, he is said to bear, in black marks, the imprint of the St. Lawrence without the help of a divine blessing. The evil spirits are frequently detained on the scene of their disaster for mariners; and many terrible shipwrecks that have taken place at this spot.

The« Lutin » is a tricky sprite, delighting in devouring little children. In his « Auto-biography » Hutton says: “I was the first who opened a circulating library in Birmingham, in 1751, since which time many have started in the race.” He, too, has a word for the ladies; for he says: “As I hired out books, the fair sex did not neglect the shop. Some of them were so obliging as to show an inclination to share with me the troubles of the world.”

After Birmingham came Manchester, where a circulating library was established about 1757, and in the following year Liverpool followed suit. The latter, known in later days as the “Liverpool (Proprietary) Library,” was accustomed for many years to style itself, in annual reports and other documents, the “oldest circulating library in Europe”; but from what has been stated above, it is clear that this claim was without foundation in fact.

This Liverpool library was begun by a small club of men taking in the “Monthly Review” to read. This led to the purchase of other books and periodicals, and so to the foundation of a regular circulating library. Its first catalogue was issued in November, 1758, when it contained four hundred and fifty volumes, and was able to boast the support of one hundred and nine subscribers at five shillings each. The Rochdale Library was founded in 1770, and ten years later we hear of a very large one at Exeter, but the exact date of its establishment is unknown. By this time lending libraries were too common to be remarked, and all over the kingdom they were doing good service in enlarging the reading class, and creating a more general interest in literature.

The London Library was founded in 1840, and is now one of the finest and choicest collections in the world. Two years later Mr. Mudie established the subscription library that has made his name famous all over the world. There are many other large circulating libraries in London and the provinces, but Mudie’s remains the largest. Every year it circulates an enormous number of books, and supplies the wants of a vast army of readers, both in town and country. Books may come and books may go, but Mudie’s bids fair to go on for ever.
BEN MA CHREE.

[May 25, 1894.]

Over the mountain path her flying feet Carried her swiftly—up to Bradda Head, Where the great waves in angry thunder beat, To light the warning beacon blast she sped; Who, with a mocking demon in his eye, Sprang out to stop her on her diasy path? He, whose old passion, sunk to treachery, Had sold her wedded love to chains or death.

"Whither so fast?" he said, and laughed and seized The struggling hands in his relentless grasp. "You've done too long what you trapped robber pleased, Hear my words now, yield to my loving clasp. We need no blase, my pretty ones, to see, While the Hawk swoops upon her prey down there; The net is strong around the Ben ma Chree, And her doomed master sees no warning stare.

Vain were her frantic prayers, her struggles vain, As strong as merciless her ruffian foe; Her wild cry wailed, unheard, across the main. Where fearsome went the work of Captain Joe. No quick flame reddened from the beauteous moor, Silent the cutter stole across the waves, While bale and rumlet, hover upon the shore, Were piling fast and deep in rocky caves.

Sudden she ceased her panting, piteous plea; Sudden her little hands relaxed their strife; Her wild eyes softened, shyly, tenderly. Could that mask beauty be the skipper's wife, Who looked up smiling at his truant then, Who on his shoulder bent her golden head? "You know the secret, rarely guessed by men, We women love our masters," his mate cried.

Long afterwards, his ravings in his bands Told how she promised—would he let her go. To set a light to all those ready brands. As a last service done to Captain Joe. That she would leave him, leave him for his sake, And fly with him, far from the little isle; And—said the double traitor—"as she spoke She gave me sealing kiss and radiant smile." Together they two gained the dizzy height, Together lit the brazier on the heath, Together heard the claireau at the sight, Together watched the hurled stir beneath; Saw, as the cutter rounded by the Oaks that fall, The sloop glide swiftly o'er the darkening seas; Heard Captain Joe, with a triumphant laugh, Shout his "all well" up to his Ben Ma Chree.

"And," raved the crew, "'tis as I turned to claim Reward for all that I had staked and lost, With a wild cry on his—his hated name, A wild, shrill cry, that rang along the coast, She darted from my clasping arms in spring To the steep crag that juts above the sea. I strove to catch her garments fluttering. A flash, a shriek, and where was Ben ma Chree?"

Next day, when in and out the mighty cave The wails washed and gurgled at their will, Floating upon the green, translucent wave, Her blue eyes closed, her red lips sweet and still, With golden hair that, life-like, seemed to move With the long, heaving swell that made her bed, They found the woman who had died for love Drifting upon the tide that bore her—dead.

From the wretch crouched amidst the purple heather, Gibbering his bitter story o'er and o'er, With his cold fingers fiercely clench'd together Over a fragment of the dress she wore. They gathered all that she had dared and done, And knew that rescue or revenge were sought; For him—his lifelong punishment begun, And she—had paid the price of what she bought.

Joe seemed to take the story quiet like. When he came joyously back to hear it all, They say that men the sudden death-shots strike Stand straight and still a moment ere they fall;
He stood and heard the madman's fanatic tale; he stood beside his grave at Craigmeech there, with blazing eyes, and lips tight set and pale, and passed away, alone in his despair.

Alone, best let a man alone with death. I say his friends were right who let him pass. What means of comfort are but wasted breath? Well, it's all long ago, and so it was. He strode down to yon far quayside next day, where at her anchor swung the Ben na Chree, leapt aboard of her, waved his mate's way, and set sail, took helm, and bore away to sea.

Not far; the watchers saw him ratcheting back, and wondered what the stricken man would do; he made the cavern with his last short task, and to its hidden depths the cutter flew; and in a little while they saw Joe swim out from its shadow, gain the further shore, and make for Craigmeech. As they looked at him, up from the cavern rose a sullen roar, and smoke came eddying thickly from its mouth. Not long before the fishers got aloft. They found rent spars and rigging drifting south; they found the wreckage of the gallant boat, never to run a precious cargo more, never her turn of speed again to show. One in the blue sea, one beneath the moor, slept the two sisters, loves of Captain Joe.

He died; a grave, stern man, still in his prime. They say none ever saw him smile in life; he did in death, when 'neath the budding thyme they laid him, blessed at last, beside his wife; but still, when fishing where the caille lies, below the rocks, where roughest frets the sea, where the great granite arch stands steadfastly, the old men point the grave of Ben na Chree.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION.
A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

He had met her face to face in an Eastern bazaar; he had passed her in a sliptail as the drove, muffled in fur, they sped the horses across the Irkutsk; he had strayed across her searching for treasures in an old curiosity shop in Rome; and now they met, once more, on the downs of an English coast, as if the whole world were not wide enough to keep their different ways saunter—they who had wrecked their lives apart as completely as if no vow nor tie had ever bound them. Certainly, when he had come to this little bay, called St. Margaret's, girl in by the great white cliffs from the bustle and unrest of the world outside, he would have said that this was the very last place in which he would have expected to meet this wayward, willful, restless woman, who had been his wife till they had so wearied and chased each other that their bonds had become intolerable. So they had parted, she going her way and he his. There were no children. Their only child had died a few months old, and so, as it seemed to them, there was nothing to force them to keep up the appearance of union between them.

This afternoon, as he came over the downs from the lighthouse, and saw her, a red-cloaked figure against the background of snowly landscape, a savage exclamation broke from him. She passed him, careless, indifferent as always, apparently not even seeing him, though at the moment he and she were the only human figures visible on that wide waste of snow-covered downs.

He went down towards the Bay, where he was staying, his first impulse being to pack up and return to town again. But by the time he had reached the hotel he had changed his mind. Why should he run away from her? Why should he let her presence good him into flying this place, as he had done all the others where he had met her?

Town was disgustingly at the present moment—dense with fog. Here the sun was shining, and the skies were blue. He was very comfortable in his quarters; the dinners were excellent, the attention perfect. There was good fishing to be had, and there were some nice people in the house, who made time pass quickly—one or two pleasant men from town who could play a good game of billiards, and some pretty girls.

Yes; he was very comfortable where he was, and he certainly should not leave the place just because one of her confounded caprices had driven her into the same neighbourhood.

After dinner that evening he went into the drawing-room. He had fallen during the past week into the habit of doing so. When he first came he had spent his evenings chiefly between the billiard and smoking-rooms. The principal of the establishment, a handsome, kind-eyed woman, looked up with a little significant smile at another woman sitting near. But for once Carleton did not make his way to the side of the prettiest girl sitting in the house. She was at this moment sitting reading, or pretending to read, near the fire. He sat down by the principal, and after a while asked her a question about the lady he had met on the downs that afternoon.

"The Red Lady! We call her that because she seems so fond of the colour. Her name is the same as yours—Carleton. She came here in the autumn and took one of the bungalows on the cliffs. I think she must find it rather dull—people don't call, you know—"

Miss Carlisle stopped, colouring slightly. "Why not?" asked Carleton.
"Oh, I don't know. There is a little mystery about her. She told the Vicar when she came that she was separated from her husband, but gave no reason."

"I wonder she didn't keep that piece of information to herself," said Carleton grimly.

"She might have said she was in—India or Kasmir," said a bright, pretty widow, who for some feminine reason of her own did not care for Carleton.

"If a woman chooses to flaunt in the eyes of the world that she has no lawful guardian or protector, she must not be surprised at receiving some of its stones. The world is a cowardly bully, at the best," he said bitterly.

He himself never mentioned the fact that he was a married man. It opened up painful questions and surmises, and he did not feel inclined to be in a perpetual state of explanation to his fellow-creatures. Besides, as he lived as a bachelor, it was more convenient to be known as one.

He rose and walked over to the side of the pretty girl by the fireside. She was staying at the hotel with her mother, the lady between whom and Miss Carlisle had passed that smiling, amused glance.

She was a good little girl, docile and obedient, who thought as her mother told her, and whose present filial obedience suggested that willingness to be ruled later by her husband which Saint Paul lays down as the lawful attitude of the minds of wives towards their husbands. She would never expect to be treated on that absurd footing of intellectual and moral equality. She would never question the laws laid down for her guidance by her husband, nor show herself a distinct original personality, who failed to see that there should be one rule for the guidance of her husband's life, and another for her own.

As he looked into the flushing, delicate face, the lovely eyes raised with a smile to his, he thought that the lovely husband who won her would be a very happy man. What had possessed him to marry a clever woman? And he turned with a sense of restful refreshment to the girl beside him, whose ignorant and unintelligent mind was clad in such perfect physical beauty.

CHAPTER II.

The next morning he and Miss Hurst strolled off together down the bay. He talked, and she listened. She seemed absorbed in all that he said. She had never had such an admirer as this before; so hand-

some, so clever, and bearing so unmistakably in his manner and air, the stamp of a social world far above her own. For her father, now dead, had made his fortune as a linen-draper in Clapham, and it was Nature, not birth, that had given her and her mother the refinement they possessed. As she walked she listened to his voice rather than to his words, but she always managed to smile or nod in the right place, and looked distractingly pretty through it all.

It was a glorious morning. A rapid thaw had set in during the night, and the air was sunny and balmy as spring.

A tangle of seaweed left by the line of ebbing tide filled the air with salt, sweet sea-scent. Miss Hurst amused herself by gathering up the stranded sprays as they caught her fancy: crimson, yellow-tinted, sponges; deadman's fingers; and mermaid's purses. They passed the scarves and continued their walk along the beach. The tide was out, leaving bare chalk and rock between which gurgled up fresh-water streams flowing out to sea, and carrying with them myriads of tiny shells. The grey crows and the sea-gulls swooped down on seaweed-covered rocks and sunlit sea in search of food, careless of the presence of the two human beings strolling side by side on the beach.

"They say they can find some very rare sort of shell here sometimes in those fresh-water springs," said Miss Hurst.

"Cowries do you mean?"

"Yes. A man showed me one. He was quite pleased at having found it. I thought it was a very common little shell. I have seen heaps of them. A cousin of mine brought a lot from some place abroad."

She looked so pretty, as the sea-breezes ruffled her hair, and the sunshine lighted her eyes, that Carleton did not think it at all necessary to explain that her speech itself expressed the strangeness of such shells being found in this English bay.

"The man who found the cowrie used to spend hours poking in the old beach up there, hunting for fossils. But I tell you what I should love to find: a piece of amber. I have looked for some every day since I came."

"We must walk along the high-water mark," he said, smiling. "Let us go on a little farther and look."

Suddenly something in the drift of seaweed caught his eye. It was a fair-sized piece of amber. He picked it up, and gave it to her.
She was delighted with it, and profuse in her thanks. He could not help contrasting her with that other woman, who, if she had set her heart on finding a piece of amber, would not have been satisfied with her husband finding it for her. She would probably have gone on searching till she had found another piece herself. It was only a trifling thing, but it was typical of every act of her life.

"Suppose we go up and poke about in the old beach," said Miss Hurst, laughing. "We might find some fossils too."

She turned towards the cliff, but he stopped her. It was dangerous to walk under it after the hard frost. There might be a fall at any moment.

"What nonsense!" she said, with coquettish petulance. "I often walk close under them and nothing ever falls!"

"I would rather you didn't go!" he said earnestly. "Suppose anything did happen——"

His eyes said more than he knew, for she blushed scarlet, and turned away quickly, looking seawards but seeing nothing, for her eyes were dazed with a frightened gladness that had leaped into them.

He had caught a glimpse of it, and its light shone straight down into the heart whose workings he had wilfully kept dark even from himself, and he knew that it was full of the thought of this girl; that she was the one woman he desired—and she cared for him!

He looked away, dumb, stricken, confounded, with a mingled sense of triumph and sickening despair. He looked up the beach towards the cliffs, from whose peril he had carefully shielded her—and saw his wife.

About a year before there had been a fall of the chalk near to where they were standing. Some of the fallen blocks lay piled up at the foot of the cliff. Sitting on the old beach just beyond the fall, which had till that moment screened her from them, was his wife, a vivid, distinct figure in her red cap and cloak against the whiteness of the cliff. She leaned back, asleep apparently, for her eyes were closed. The sunlight fell full on her face, lighting it up clearly to him. Even where he stood, every sign showing the passing of time was fully seen. The round freshness of youth had vanished; the skin was sallow; the brow faintly lined with the mental activity of which he had so disapproved; and the lips were compressed and pale, as if with physical suffering. He had thought her handsome once, with a refined, intelligent beauty. But in his eyes there was no beauty left, and the woman by his side was young, lovely, and to be loved!

A rage of fierce hate swept over him. At the same instant there was a muffled sound. A few pieces of chalk slipping from the face of the cliff broke themselves to pieces on one of the larger boulders at the foot, without waking the sleeping woman. He saw and understood, with that mad, desperate despair and horror tearing all the while at his heartstrings.

The whole scene was over in an instant.

"What was that?" asked Miss Hurst, turning; but before she could see the sleeping, unconscious figure, Carlston had caught her round the waist, and was half dragging, half carrying her down the beach, towards the sea. A moment later there came a thundering, crashing roar of falling cliff, as the chalk, cracked by the frost, slid suddenly downwards, covering the site that lay already heaped up at its foot, and crumbling into innumerable fragments down the beach, almost overtaking the flying figures. But, though they were struck by some of the scattering fragments, they had time to reach a place of safety.

When Carlston, with Miss Hurst, breathless, exhausted with the race across the heavy shingle, clinging half-crying to his arm, looked back, he saw only tons of riven boulders piled up at the foot of the cliff, while the air was dim with the dust of the chalk crushed into powder by its weight of its own fall.

There was no other sight nor sound.

The red-cloaked figure had vanished from the scene—and from his life.

CHAPTER III.

No one saw him again for the rest of the day at the hotel under the cliff. He left the Bay in the afternoon without a word of farewell to any one.

He wandered up and down on the face of the earth, for more than a year.

Then suddenly, driven by the spirit that left him no peace night or day, he returned to England. When he reached England the same inexorable goading sent him down to St. Margaret's Bay. It was winter when he had last seen it; now it was spring. Easter had fallen late that year; and, though the weather being perfect, the hotel was crowded with visitors.

The principal was glad to see him, for he had been a favourite with her; but there was disapproval in the sweet honesty.
Charles Dickens.]  A SIMPLE SOLUTION. [May 30, 1864. 495

of her eyes, and he knew that it referred to his treatment of Miss Hurst. His abrupt departure must have seemed unjustifiable, after his conduct towards her. The memory of the girl-love he had so treacherously won, had been one of the black shadows that had dogged his path ever since.

Amongst the visitors he found several men he knew. The house was full of gaiety, the men were sociable, and the women gracious and willing to be amused. The English comfort and homeliness of the place was a luxury after the rough wanderings through which he had come. But there was no rest nor ease for him. The presence that had gone ever by his side, under burning sun in distant lands; in camps where men laid down to sleep at night with the chance of being frozen to death before the morning; in lonely far-off spots, where day and night watch was kept against treacherous savage foes, and the stealthy, cruel approach of wild beasts; in the sunshine, under the starlight, in heat and cold, alone, or in the company of his fellow-creatures, through all that time that presence had gone with him, invisible to all eyes, but ever awfully real to his consciousness: the figure of his wife as he had last seen her—wearied, helpless, unwarmed, under that terrible cliff.

If he had felt its haunting, invisible shadow before in those strange, unaccustomed scenes, where life went hand-in-hand with death, and men's brains were always on the alert against some secret foe, it was ten times more terrible here.

What devil of torment had driven him back to the place? He asked himself that as he sat at dinner, with the murmur of voices and laughter round him; with the softly shaded lamps lighting up the dinner-tables; with the quick, noiseless service of the waiters; with all the familiar, prosaic details of every-day life, which, perhaps, form one of the most intolerable elements in a great crime, falling on the remorse-haunted soul like the brutal laughter of jesting demons.

The dinner came to an end. The buzz and the laughter, and the clatter of familiar noises grew more intolerable.

The visitors broke up into couples or groups, and wandered into the drawing-room or billiard-room, or out of doors to see the moon rising.

Carleton left the house and walked towards the groyne. The other visitors did not seem inclined to quit the bay itself.

He soon passed them all, and, once beyond the breakwater, had the beach to himself. Even the voices died away, and there was only the roll of the loose shingle as his footsteps displaced it and the soft murmur of the incoming tide. The spring dusk grew luminous with moonlight.

He reached the fall of cliff lying still as he had last seen it. Then suddenly the invisible horror that had haunted his steps seemed to take bodily shape and presence. A few yards from him, a shadowy grey figure in the waxing moonlight, stood his wife. She was looking at him; her face pale, her eyes wide as if with a great wonder.

Was his brain really giving way at last under the pressure of that never-dying remorse?

"My God!" he cried, under his breath.

"So we are doomed to meet!"

It was a living voice—clear, mocking, and yet faintly tremulous as if with some powerfully suppressed feeling.

"You—are—alive; not—" he looked at the great fall of cliff, under which he had believed her to be lying, crushed out of life and all human shape; then at her again—still too dared to believe.

"No—did you think me dead?" Then, with a kind of listless indifference: "You are sorry, I suppose."

"I thought you had been killed by——" he pointed at the fallen blocks near which they stood.

She looked too, a strange grimness tightening her lips.

"I was very nearly. I escaped only by a miracle, I suppose you would call it, I am afraid that it was a pity for you." Then the half-mocking indifference vanished into something like curiosity. "Why did you connect me with that fall when no one else did? I was asleep there, and was awakened by the crash of tons of chalk falling about me. I had no consciousness of anything till I found that I was alive. I had been sitting under a projecting piece of the cliff which, luckily for me, did not give way. When I found myself alive, and not even buried, I crept out before any one came, not wishing to be made the heroine of a little local adventure. No one knew—but——" she looked at him anxiously again.

He told her; he could no more have kept back the horrible story than he could have prevented his feet returning to the spot. There was a strange dead silence when he ended.

Then she spoke.
CHAPTER IV.

For a week, though he tried to do so, he saw nothing of her. Then he met her once more.

He had gone for a walk on the downs towards the lighthouses. He went there every day, remembering that it was there that he had first seen her. He was returning when he saw her again.

On the edge of the cliff, the chief part having been carried away by successive falls of the chalk, stood the foundations of an old guard-house, built at the time of the Napoleon panic. She was sitting on the ruins of one of the grass-covered walls.

She rose as he came up. She was very white, and there was an indescribable change in her which startled him as with a bewildering sense of unrecognizability— as if he had never known her before.

"I have been thinking about it ever since I saw you," she said, in a tired voice.

"I have gone over every step of our married life, from the day when we, with our hearts full of modern scepticism, vowed to stand by each other for better or for worse, till the day when we broke those bonds so lightly and went our separate ways because we could see no reason why two persons, who no longer agreed nor loved, should go on living together when their very presence was irksome to each other. Marriage was only a human institution, and as such might be cast aside, when men and women were tired of it, or had outgrown it. And so, not believing in its moral obligations or sacred compulsion, we grew daily more careless of trying to please each other. We pulled apart at our letters, instead of trying to see whether we could not wear them more easily if we tried to keep step side by side; and then, when the straining became intolerable, we snapped them and went our separate ways. I have looked back over it all, and I see now that every selfish, wilful, careless step we took led steadily on—that horrible ending."

"You know — " he said hoarsely.

He had not told her of that other love.

"I can guess," her pale face flamed.

"But I gave you your freedom, I sent you into temptation."

That mad passion or infatuation of his for the younger and lovelier woman had been burnt out by the fire of remorse that had tortured him through those long wanderings. Even its memory seemed unbearable as it came between his now and this other woman who was speaking.

"And you can forgive me! Ah!" with a sharp revulsion of feeling. "You are already beginning to take the duty you speak of as a factor in your life. But—can that bridge the gulf we have made between us?"

"We can try," she said, under her breath, "if you will."

The murmur of the returning tide came up from the beach below. A faint breeze, sweet with the breath of new spring grass, stirred over the downs. The sun was passing westward to light up once more the darkness of a waiting world.

On all sides was a renewing, obedient to a law of Nature which commands that the old order should pass only that the new may obtain. Perhaps some such thought touched them, for suddenly a faint smile lighted their pale faces.

Perhaps the new and better love was already rising out of the old, which had once made them choose each other to better for worse, for he bent and they kissed each other.

THE ISLAND OF BARRA.

We were kept for hours rolling at anchor in a fog just outside Barra's port of Castle Rock; were we could make acquaintance with the island. And when we left the island, after a few wet days' sojourn in it, we were caught in a furious gale from the south-west, which gave us such a purr-molling as I for one, shall never forget. These two experiences were quite typical.

Here, on the extreme skirt of the Outer
Hebrides, one must not expect placid uniformity in the weather. Barra, or Barraie, as it used to be spelled, is less visited by tourists than the remote St. Kilda itself. The latter isle periodically during the summer sees boatloads of inquisitive—and often very seasick—holiday-makers. They arrive in hundreds. To be sure they do not stay very long, for it would not do to be caught in an Atlantic storm in St. Kilda’s unprotected little harbour. But, at any rate, the civilising influence of these travellers of passage must be taken into account. Barra, on the other hand, though some fifty miles nearer to the mainland, is not used by the steamship agents as a lure for tourists. The mail packet calls there regularly, and in so far the isle has the pull over St. Kilda.

Sir Donald Monro, High Dean of the Isles, who made a tour of the Hebrides in 1849, has left us an interesting little report upon Barra. His estimate of its dimensions is fairly correct, “being seven miles in length from the S.W. to the N.E., and fours in breadth from the S.E. to the N.W.” But it is not by any means regular in its outlines. The sea has driven extensive deep channels into its rocks; it has long, almost insulated headlands in its northern parts; and its archipelago of surrounding islets—the haunt of seals and gulls—tells of the time, long distant, no doubt, when these also were connected with it, making of it a main island of considerable size. It would be a tedious and rough day’s walk to tramp the entire coast-line of little Barra; yet, in fine weather, a memorable one withal. Its great north-west bay, from Crean Head to Scurry Point, has a sweep of about five miles of magnificent white sand, and back to back with it, facing the east, is another splendid sandy beach, the Traymore, or more commonly, the Cockle Bay. Sooner or later the Atlantic will force the sandy backbone of low hillocks which keeps the bay apart, and make Barra more regular in its configuration by giving it one more islet satellite in place of its extreme northern cape. At present, however, one may enjoy the most invigorating of blows on these superb sands. If you like cockles you may also have a surfet of them on this eastern bay. Sir Donald Monro was not unmindful of these dubious dainties. “This sand,” he writes, “is full of grate cockles... There is na faither and more profitable sands for cockles in all the world.” From the remains of the shells upon the strand, one may conjecture that the islanders have for centuries allowed their appetites to bear strong witness to the truth of Sir Donald’s words. Even now the handsome stout lady who keeps the little inn of Bayherivah, a mile to the south of the sands, will think her guest a man of taste if he regale some cockles for his evening meal. One or other of her bare-legged children will, on demand, be only too happy to set out for the bay in quest of them.

This reference to an inn must not beguile the reader into thinking that there is sumptuous accommodation in Barra, as there is in other hotels in remote parts of the Highlands in the season. There is, indeed, an hotel in Castle Bay—and very good it is, considering where it is. You may rely upon tender mutton in it, and a sufficiency of fish. But as the number of visitors to the isle does not ordinarily reach eight or ten in the year, it were unreasonable to expect to enjoy here the fruits of the efforts of an accomplished “chef.” It may happen, indeed, that not a single tourist sets foot on Barra in the twelvemonth. That explains, no doubt, why cigars are not to be bought in its stores any more than in its hotel. At Bayherivah an even worse misfortune than the dearth of cigars befell us. We ran out of tobacco, nor was there any in the inn, or in the pockets of the two or three men who visited the inn for gossip and ill-conditioned whisky. In our distress we quite disturbed the equanimity of our good landlady. She sent far and wide over North Barra on our behalf, and it was only after about a day that she could offer us rather less than a cubic inch of solid nicotine, which she had begged for us from the Roman Catholic priest of the district. Even of that we were mulcted in part, for the landlady’s son, a boy of fifteen, had taken a surreptitious bite from it.

Inland, Barra is noteworthy for its heather-clad dells and its rocky heights. Heaval, the summit of its hills, is nearly thirteen hundred feet above sea-level, and connected with it are several other hills nearly as high. From Heaval’s base a spacious reach of excellent grazing land slopes to the west, and one is at first surprised to see the number of horses, cattle, and sheep which here find pasture. At the seaward end of the incline are two or three knots of crofter’s cottages of the old kind, in which two or three hundred human souls find a healthy, if— to the
tourist's eye—rather dismal abode. These crofters are not imbued with any of the notions of Malthus. It is quite startling to see the crowds of children that troop from the midst of the wigwams to gaze upon the apparition of a stranger. They are, without exception, bare-legged and brown. They are also somewhat free in the expressions of the criticisms and amusement a visitor occasions in them. It is hardly to be wondered at. The Japanese are much more at home with tourists than are these dwellers in Barra.

Sir Donald, three centuries and a half ago, termed Barra "ame fertil and fruitful isle in cornes." He seems to have gone out of his way to pay the little land a high-flown compliment in this matter—at least if Barra may be judged on its present aspects. Doubtless, however, in the time of Edward the Sixth, more grain was grown here than now. Sheep rule the roost in Barra as elsewhere—together with deer—in the far north. The strips of rye and oats and barley, so cunningly embedded among the cottages by Castle Bay, do not look very happy, even after the sunlight of a phenomenal year. In an ordinary moist summer, one may fancy that it is here much as it is in the Faroes, where the betting is about even whether the corn can be got in before the autumnal storms are let loose upon the land. Of course, people in Barra who eat wheaten bread, do not rely upon their own little island for it. Both at Castle Bay and Bayervivh the white loaves we ate came from Glasgow. They did not, like wine and cheese, seem to have benefited by their voyage. But potatoes do well in the island undoubtedly. With these in abundance, and the generous sea always at hand with its fish, there need be no fear of starvation in Barra, even as there are few opportunities of acquiring wealth. Trees must not be expected in islands exposed to the salt winds and storms of the Atlantic. Yet on the east coast of Barra are two or three sheltered spots with thickets of alders crannied between the rocks, and cascades tumbling through their midst. In one of these, during our walks, we came upon a host of voluble starlings, who were making the most of their delightful discovery. At Bayervivh, our landlady one morning presented us with an apple as you or I might offer a fine amethyst to a friend. It was not at all a toothsome apple, but it had been grown in Barra—at least so the tradition ran, though subsequent minute investigation north, south, east, and west failed to discover a genuine apple-tree.

The Barra crofters are interesting, even as their abodes are picturesque. Many of them combine the pursuits of the ordinary crofter with that of the herring in the great fisheries on the east coast of Scotland. They rely a good deal upon the money they hope to bring home when the first of the autumnal storms warns them of the approaching winter. With them go their wives, if these are tolerably young and capable. The visitor to the island during July or August soon remarks the absence of its young women. Those who are left are not too prepossessing. They bear almost too, forcibly those indications of Spanish blood which have been noticed among the Habrideans as well as in certain coast towns of Ireland. The Spanish woman in youth is engaging enough, but grown old, under stress of a rather rough outdoor life, she has few physical charms. It is the same with these women of Barra. They are athletic figures, seen about the precipices of their ramshackle thatched abodes, with their great hands in their great sides; but they are not figures to inspire a poet who draws his inspiration solely from the beautiful. Their husbands, if at home, seem to the casual observer noteworthy mainly for the comparative plenitude of their attire, and the ease with which they lounge against the eaves of their houses in an attitude of supreme nonchalance, looking as if they defied laird and law combined to turn them off their traditional croft. In their address, too, they are bravely independent. A fine coast does not compel respect from them. Among their real virtues may be mentioned a distinct measure of temperance—at least in later years. Of old they were too fond of whiskey, and drank as much at funerals as the proverbial Irishman at a wake. But the priests have brought things to a better pass. The Barra man still goes to his last long home to the tune of the pipes, but his death does not involve a sequel of intoxications. From all accounts, it would, however, be as well if his grave were dug a little deeper than it generally is.

It is surprising to find that the majority of the Barra islanders are Catholics. This may or may not seem to buttress the idea that the people are of a southern and Catholic stock. More probably it goes to prove that the isle was neglected by the Protestant evangelizers of two or three centuries ago. Be that as it may, the
Roman Catholic church of Castle Bay is one of the most ornate religious buildings in the Western Isles. It stands on a conspicuous knoll, and competes for notice with the ruined castle on an islet in the harbour. This castle was referred to by Sir Donald Monro as "an eyrie or a height, callit Kiselin, pertaining to MacKnell of Barray." The McNells were for long lords of the isle. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century they even supplied other islands of the west with wives and husbands from their own domain. The like course might perhaps with advantage be followed in our own days; for certainly Barra has not for ages been so densely peopled as now. According to publicate, its population in 1764 was one thousand and ninety-seven. It is now reckoned at two thousand; and this, be it understood, though the land directly under cultivation is probably much less than it was a hundred years ago.

The visitor who comes to Barra caring little for sport will run some risk of finding his life dull. The walks and scrambles it offers to the fairly adventurous, though pleasant, cannot be varied very greatly in so small a land. True, the weather may be trusted to give considerable diversity to one's days. But to the pedestrian anxious to be afoot it will be a source of irritation rather than rapture to have a storm from the south-west succeed by a storm from the north-east, and the latter in its turn followed by a day of all-obliterating mist, thick enough to discomfort even the enterprising Hebridean midges. With the angler, however, it is different. He enjoys the excitement of testing the effect of these weather changes upon the spirits and appetites of the trout.

Yet, truth to tell, though there are plenty of fish in the Barra lakes, they are not satisfying fish. The larger ones—and they run to three pounds weight—do not resist capture as behoves a well-bred trout, and the smaller share with their big brethren in a common stigma of coarseness. Of the latter there are no lack in the pool near the Bayervivah inn. It is an attractive lovely upland lake, girdled by a road which sees but little traffic, and with the crimson bloom of the heather brightening the hillsides north and south. An artist would find endless material in its different bays, with the shaggy Highland cattle posing themselves against the characteristic background picturesquely, and perhaps aggressively. But he would do well to come hither provided with a very large umbrella. Squalls blow up from the Atlantic hither with astonishing abruptness, and seem to love to lash Loch an Dün—or the Mill of Loch—into a state of fury on very little provocation. There is, however, compensation in the deep blue of the sky afterwards, even though this is all too soon sullied by a second squall on the heels of the first. Besides, it is just when the Loch of the Mill is thus disturbed that its denizens show most curiosity in the flies you offer to their notice. The true angler ought to be indifferent to the weather so long as he enjoys sport.

In front of the Bayervivah inn is a mere ditch of a streamlet connecting the loch with an inlet of the sea. It is shallow, and a receptacle for broken pots and dishes, and the other degraded refuse of an establishment. There is a large flat stone by it, used for the ceremony of the great Sunday wash by the bare-legged children of the inn. It is quite engrossing to see them one by one bend the knee on this altar of cleanliness and devote themselves with laudable energy to soap and water. But it does not seem at all a likely place for a salmon. Yet herein, among the pots and pans, while we were at the inn, a salmon was seen, and in due course ruthlessly pitchforked and landed. We ate his steaks the next morning, and pitied him for his melancholy demise. In times of heavy rain, when the brook is flooded, of course many such innocent visitors may be expected.

There is little luxury in Barra, but great tranquillity, which is of itself a spiritual joy akin to luxury. One comes even to be glad that its scenic features are not of the startling kind. There is relief in quiet beauty after a surfeit upon the sublime. It is soothing, too, to be in a place that knows neither a daily nor a weekly newspaper, and that has no politics except domestic opinion. For a time one can almost welcome—for its novelty—a dinner of salted mutton, pitchforked salmon, and cockles imperfectly cleansed from the grit they seem to love to absorb into themselves.

But it is as well to time departure from the little isle somewhat shrewdly. It were unjust to linger here long enough to weary of Barra, and it were extremely unjust to leave it when the barometer lies low, and even ships' captains profess doubts as to the portents. A storm in the Minch between the Outer Hebrides and Oban is
not at all an agreeable experience. It was, however, ours.

For the first two hours there was wind and sunshine. The waves bowled at us from the south-west merrily enough, and if they made sea-sick the horses in our cargo, that was no great hardship. But as we left Barra's grey shapes farther behind us the wind increased and the sunshine went. Our captain, a grey-haired, mild old man, with a blue ribbon in his button-hole, expressed amazement at the downward course of the barometer. Rarely had he known an instrument in so melancholy a mood. Backed by the darkness in front of us, with Rum—that beautiful, mysterious, unfrequented land!—high to the north-east, it made him prepare for a bad time.

And a cruel bad time it was. Never have I seen a more furious bit of Atlantic than this off Ardmurcharn Point under stress of a south-west storm. It was no ordinary storm either. The chief officer reckoned the rate of the wind at times at eighty miles to the hour, which is hurricane speed. Anyway, it raised a memorable sea, and made us pray that our engines might not break down.

"Since I took to the water," exclaimed the grey-haired captain in astonishment, "I have not seen the Sound of Mull like this!"

There were episodes of private woe enough on board during this "coarse" passage, but personal affliction seemed a small matter in comparison with our sublime and awful surroundings.

**DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.**

**CHAPTER IV.**

The strange young man did not move one muscle at this address. Very coolly and very slowly he drew out a chair and sat down without speaking. Then he looked straight up at Dr. Meredith's face, and a scarcely repressed tremble round the lips was added to the dancing light in the eyes, which last was now an unmistakable daring defiance, as keen as it was evident.

"What is the meaning of what, Jim? I can't answer until I understand you, can I now?"

As she spoke Althea Godfrey tossed her straw hat on to the table, looked at it, and rubbed one hand through her short hair.

"I'm all dusty!" she exclaimed to herself. "Horribly dusty! Jim!" she added in a rather louder voice. "Jim, I've walked all the way from Fern Morton. And, Jim, I do hate country roads!"

Dr. Meredith had not moved an inch since his first adoption of his position against the door. He had stood absolutely motionless, staring with a gaze that is sure to be called transfixed at the figure opposite to him. Now he brushed his hat across his brow with much the same bewildered gesture that he had used in the street. He seemed to try to brush away some veil that hung across his senses, so as to make a desperate effort to see beyond it.

"It is you, I suppose!" he said vaguely. "I'm not dreaming; that I know for a fact. And I suppose I've not gone clean out of my senses since five o'clock."

"It's Althea Godfrey, if that's what you want to know," was the answer. "This be I all right, Jim. I'm not a tramp, as I'm not a burglar, and I'm not a lunatic."

There was an agressive cheeriness on unconcern about her voice and about the dancing eyes, which were still fixed on Dr. Meredith, which might have been intended—half in unconsciousness—to contradict and defy something which lay behind; something with which those daring laughing eyes would have dropped if their own eyes would have allowed; something with which the elaborately mantled pose of her figure was instinct; something which was faint, half-amused, half-daring shamefacedness.

"I shall be, though, directly," muttered Dr. Meredith.

Then he seemed to pull himself together. By a great effort he seemed to tear away the confusing veil from his senses. He squared his shoulders, and the look which he had never moved from the figure opposite to him grew direct and purposeful.

"Look here, Althea," he said, "I can only repeat my question, as you have given me no answer. What is the meaning of this?"

He spoke with an emphasis on each word, and little emphatic pauses between. The figure in the chair was turned towards him, and the grey, laughing eyes became aggressively demure.

"I'm very sorry," was the response; "but I can only repeat my answer. I can't tell you anything until you make your meaning plainer."

With the words its owner's shapely arm and hand were stretched out to the straw.
at the table, and Althea spun it sharply and deftly round like a teetotum.

"What is the meaning of this descent upon me—of your coming down here in that dress? Why did you do it? Does that convey itself to you, Althea?"

"Assuredly it does, Jim. I can always manage to give a plain answer to a plain question. This answer is very simple."

"Give it, then, please."

"Why in the world do you barricade that door so, Jim? Are there burglars in the house from whom you wish to preserve me? Tell me and then I'll tell you. You don't know how funny you look!"

There was a twinkle in the defiant dancing grey eyes which unconsciously appealed to Dr. Meredith so much as to make him lose his hold of the door-handle, and come a step or two into the room.

"Don't be so childish!" he said, discovering instantly with vexation what he had done. "Come to the point, Althea, pray!"

With a quick gesture, Althea folded her arms, and having thereby still more exaggerated her mannish pose, gazed up into her questioner's eyes, with the same defiance—defiance that, for the moment, quite quelled the struggling, half-hidden shamesealedness.

"I came because I chose, Jim. That's the answer."

"Because you chose?" echoed Dr. Meredith mechanically.

Then, leaving the door, he took two or three quick strides across the room. Under her eyelashes, Althea watched him covertly, apparently to see if he was coming to her side. Finding his steps passed her by, the grey eyes instantly became absorbed in an ostentatious survey of the details of the room.

"Because you chose?" he repeated blankly.

Althea leaned her two elbows on the table, rested her chin on her hands, and looked at Dr. Meredith across the corner of the table that was all that now separated them.

"I chose to come, because I meant to help you!" she said. "And I mean it still!" she added.

"To help me!" he said.

"To help you," she repeated. "Didn't you write to me on Wednesday, to say that you were so overworked you didn't know which way to turn?"

She paused.

"Yes," Dr. Meredith said slowly.

"Yes; I certainly did."

"Didn't you say—be honest, now, I've got your letter in my pocket—that you could not possibly go on as you were doing, and that at the same time you saw no prospect of getting any help, because the practice wouldn't stand it, at present."

Her voice had exchanged some of its defiance for confidence, as she went on; or rather, the confidence had been added to the defiance.

And Dr. Meredith stood before her, for the moment almost guiltily. Before he could speak, she spoke again.

"If it wasn't true; if you were working on my feelings only," she went on, "on your own head be it, Jim! But you wouldn't. And I believe it was quite true, from looking at you. You're looking tired and fagged—very fagged indeed," she added, with a pretty little movement of the chin resting in her hands. "I shall have to take you in hand, first of all. I wonder if you'll be as good a patient as that nice little fellow—"

"Althea!" Dr. Meredith's voice was very tense and sharp. "Althea! Don't, for goodness' sake, go on talking in this absurd manner! Collect yourself, pray, and let us consider what is the best thing to be done; the best course to take in this preposterous situation!"

"In what way?" she asked coolly. She was leaning back in her chair now, with one slightly clenched hand resting firmly on the table. A curious change had come over her with her last measured little sentence. Her personality was no longer that of the exaggerated young man, that hitherto she had seemed to be. She had become, all at once, very much herself; Althea Godfrey; and Althea Godfrey in her firmest and most deeded mood.

"The best thing to be done, to my mind," she added decisively, "is to consider where I had better go to find lodgings. There are decent rooms to be had somewhere, I suppose!" There was just a slight shade of anxiety in her voice as she spoke the last words.

"Lodgings!" exclaimed Dr. Meredith.

"Rooms! Are you mad, Althea? Upon my word, I think you must be."

"Why?"

The monosyllable was spoken very steadily. If the defiant light in her eyes wavered for a moment, the wavering was so slight as to be imperceptible.

"Why? Need you ask? Could any sane woman dream for a moment of staying here?"
"I am quite sane, and I intend, not only to talk of it, but to do it."

As she spoke, Althea lifted her head and looked steadily into Dr. Meredith's eyes with a light of resolution stronger even than the defiance, shining in her own.

He met her gaze equally steadily. For a long minute the two gazed at each other in perfect silence. Then Dr. Meredith made a half-choked inarticulate sound which was more expressive in its inarticulateness than any words could have been, and turning on his heel, stalked past Althea to the window, where he stood staring at the red-brick garden wall, as if the sight might help him to arrange the chaotic tumult of thought which was making his senses whirl. He felt like a man in a dream, a dream which had suddenly enveloped his senses at the moment when he pulled up in the street on his way home, and swept away everything else before it. The afternoon, the thoughts and incidents of his day's work, were all as wholly removed from him now as if they had taken place in another sphere. Nothing seemed real, and nothing seemed either possible or impossible, in the confused, dazed world in which he found himself.

As in a bad dream incident after incident, each more unreal and impossible than the last, seems to develop out of vagueness, so it was with him. First, he had been absolutely stunned, as it were, by the sight of Althea Godfrey at his side in the road; then his bewildered brain had had to try and realise the fact that she herself, in the flesh, was sitting at this moment here, in his presence, in his own room; and, lastly, he had been wholly carried off his feet by her statement as to her intentions.

The more he tried to arrange things in his mind, the more he tried to think of what was best and reasonable for him to say, or to do, the more the whole situation rose before him in an immensity of bewildered incredulity that took from him every shred of judgement, and every particle of concentration.

Three minutes passed, but they might, for all he knew, have been three hours, before the cause of all this bewilderment broke in upon it.

"Jim," Althea Godfrey said.

Mechanically, in the most instinctive answer to his name, Dr. Meredith turned round—half hoping, he did not know how or why, that the dream might have been a dream indeed, and that, turning, he should find it so. But he was doomed to realise the contrary at once.

"Look here," she continued, "I have not had this thing fairly out yet. Listen to me."

Dr. Meredith showing no signs of doing otherwise, the grey eyes which had inspected his face to discover whether he meant to obey or no, left it and fixed themselves on the wall just above his head.

"You must look at what I have to say reasonably," she went on. No answer, opposing or otherwise, came from him, yet she seemed to bring to an end her preparatory breaking of the ground, and to attack her argument determinedly.

"You cannot deny—you have not attempted to deny—that you are overworked, and must have help. I should like to know who is a more proper person to help you, than I; and who has a better right. As to my powers, you know all about them, and you've said often enough that you believed in them. I am better qualified than any ordinary assistant you could get, and I have had enough experience to make me useful. I am perfectly strong, physically; I have so worked whatever of my own at present; I acknowledge no claims on me greater than yours. In fact, here the grey eyes were suddenly brought down from their level to Dr. Meredith's face, "Jim, I cannot have you slave yourself to death while I can prevent it, and I do not mean to," then had been an odd softening in his trenchant tones with the last rather unexpected turn to her argument, and his grey eyes alone with something that was neither triumph nor defiance. "You as that, Jim, dear?" she added.

For Dr. Meredith, that tone in her voice and that altered something in her eyes seemed to make a way out of his dream. His face changed as if he touched something real, and something familiar, too, and took his stand on it.

"My dear girl," he said, coming, as he spoke, much nearer to the grey-clad young man, and resting his hand on the back of her chair, "don't think for one instant that I fail to understand what made you think of this wild plan; I do not, in truth, I know it was your love for me; and, Althea, I'm grateful to you with all my heart for the thought. But it's wholly out of the question that you should carry it into practice. You must see that, in your heart."

He paused, and she wheeled round in her chair towards him.
"But I do not see that. I wholly refuse to allow that it is so. If—" she hesitated and broke off, and all at once, for a moment, that suppressed shamesidedness asserted itself, and the grey eyes suddenly fell to the floor. It was but for a moment, though. Before the pause had lasted more than a second, they were raised, and it had gone into the background again. "If—" she began, in an odd uncertain tone. And then she broke off again. "You know as well as I do that it was the only thing to be done," she added, and the defiance in her tone was somehow not addressed to Dr. Meredith alone, but to herself also. You know that the people here would never have accepted, or believed in, a woman doctor, as such, even if it had been possible, which it was not, naturally, for me to come here and stay in—in my own person. If that's all, Jim, it is nothing; it's an affair of minds and not of yours, and entirely my private concern. Nothing more." She had spoken rapidly and hotly, and now she stopped abruptly. She paused a moment, and the corners of her spirited mouth relaxed a little. "And consider now," she went on, "how excellently I have begun. Consider what flying colours I came off with just now. The people who were frightening my little choking boy into fits took as kindly to your new assistant as if he had been friends with them all his life."

The recollection brought back to Althea's eyes the dancing, saucy light.

"There's my name, too, Jim!" she added gleefully. "Dr. Godfrey! It's as true as true!"

A feeling of keen delight in the success of the past hour, and also the success which she believed herself to be just attaining with Dr. Meredith now, was developing the mischievous enjoyment into excited triumph.

But, precisely as her eyes brightened, Dr. Meredith's darkened. The gentle, softened air which had first come to him when he moved towards her had lasted until now. He had been evidently waiting, prepared to expostulate again, gently and forbearingly as before.

But as he saw the excitement in her manner, all trace of gentleness and forbearance vanished from him. He took his hand from her chair, and moved abruptly away, a frown settling down into deep lines on his brow.

"It is not your private concern!" he said sharply. "It is mine also! You cannot suppose that it is anything but extremely painful to me—you don't for a moment imagine that I shall allow—"

Althea interrupted him. A sudden wave of hot colour had swept over her face, and her eyes were sparkling.

"Your permission is not asked, you see." The crisp impulsiveness of her voice seemed to suggest something behind of a highly inflammable nature. "And there's no occasion for you to give yourself any pain on my account, I assure you."

The hostility which had developed so suddenly in her tone—so suddenly indeed that it might have suggested, if Dr. Meredith's mental condition had not been far beyond the reach of suggestions, a sense of weakness within—acted upon his sorely perturbed mind much as a sudden draught of air acts upon a smouldering fire.

"That may be your opinion," he said hotly. "I'm sorry I can't agree with you! I don't want to put into words what I feel on the subject, because it wouldn't be pleasant to either of us. But that you should so far forget yourself—"

But again he was interrupted. That inflammable something within the gray-waistcoated breast which was heaving excitedly, now burst into open flame of the fiercest and hottest description. And Althea had sprung to her feet, with her head thrown back and her eyes flashing.

"Forgetting myself!" she cried. From the exceeding indignation of her voice it would have seemed that Dr. Meredith stood to answer, not only for his own speech, but as the personification of something that could not be too violently repulsed. "How dare you say such a thing as that, Jim! It is you who are forgetting yourself, I think!"

"Which only shows that you don't know what you're saying, as I hope to Heaven you don't know what you're doing!" he retorted hotly, the fire of his feeling burning hotter, as it seemed, by contact with her. "Now, look here, Althea, we'll have no more words about it. There's a train back to town from Fern Morton in about an hour's time, and you'll go back in it. And I hope, with all my soul, that by this time tomorrow you will be as sorry as I am that you were such a—such a—"

Dr. Meredith here became inarticulate, though by no means less vehement.

It is comparatively easy for a man—even for a man in Dr. Meredith's turbulent frame of mind—to issue commands, but their fulfilment is another matter.
Althea stood facing him for a moment, the colour coming and going in her face in great burning rushes, her eyes dilated and luminous, her features quivering.

Then, with a fiercely feminine gesture which sat most quaintly upon the slen- der masculine-looking figure, a sudden passion of defiance flamed up in her eyes, and she stamped her foot.

"I won't go!" she said. "I won't, I won't, Jim! And you can't make me!"

They stood confronting one another, Dr. Meredith with a kind of dazed, incredulous realisation of the undeniable truth of her last words struggling in his expression with his fiery indignation; his assistant crimson from brow to chin, her fierce, defiant eyes full of tears, immovable determination trembling in every line of her face, her fingers tearing desperately at a pocket-handkerchief that resembled a small sheet. And at this suspicious moment at the door of the room there came a tap, a low, persistent, confidential tap that Dr. Meredith knew too well.

"If you please, sir; if you please."

It was Mrs. French's voice, and its tone was urgent. An expression of despair mingled with the other expressions already contending for pre-eminence on Dr. Meredith's face, and he called out incoherently and hopelessly:

"All right, Mrs. French. By-and-by. Say I'm coming."

But Mrs. French was not to be thus disposed of.

"Yes, sir," she said. "But there's somebody come for you very particular—from two places, please, sir. And they say they're dying, sir!"

Mechanically, like a man moving in a nightmare, Dr. Meredith strode across the room to the door. His assistant, her face still alight with passionate feeling, had turned her head sharply on the woman's last words, and she stood now, her hand clenched on the back of a chair, listening intently.

Dr. Meredith unlocked the door, and opened it perhaps a quarter of an inch.

"Who is it?" he said roughly. "What is it?"

"It's from Mr. Marlitt's lodge. Sanders has taken a turn for the worse, sir. And would you go at once, please. And there's a groom from Orchard Court, sir, come just at the same minute. Little Miss Alice Mainwaring has fallen into the fire and burnt herself awful. And will you go there this minute, sir, too, please."

Dr. Meredith's endurance touched its limits. He took refuge in insincere helplessness.

"To both of them at once!" he said. "Yes, Mrs. French, of course I will. How could you suppose I should hesitate for a moment? It's absolutely impossible that I should leave Mary Combe this evening, but of course, one place more or less is of no consequence under the circumstances. Don't let any one be at all uneasy."

A conviction entered Mrs. French's mind at that moment, never afterwards to be completely uprooted, that hard words had told upon Dr. Meredith at last, as he was temporarily unaccountable for his speech. She was staring at the crack of the door with a face of horror and bewilderment when the door was suddenly and only opened from behind him, and the grey-old figure of the new assistant came to her relief.

"I'd better take the fresh case, of course!" the young man observed coldly to Dr. Meredith. "Where's the messenger, my good woman? He's brought a trap of some kind, I suppose!"

And with one glance at Dr. Meredith, a glance which buried at him defiance, determination, and triumph, that gentleman's assistant strode out of the room with a swaying step, and disappeared.

"Shall I tell the boy from Marlitt's you're coming, sir?"

With an reptitive before the force and directness of which Mrs. French retreated to the other side of the passage, Dr. Meredith broke into a discordant laugh.

"Oh yes, I suppose so!" he said recklessly.

"Things have arranged themselves, you see, Mrs. French. Tell him I'm coming."
MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESME STUART.
Author of "Joan Felthorpe," "A Woman of Forty," "Estella of Greyfriars," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII. IN SIGHT OF DANGER.

It is very easy to drift down a stream.
What is difficult is to seize an overhanging branch and to resist the current.

Forster and Penelope saw no reason to pause in that pleasant drifting; Forster, because he silenced his conscience with the idea that he was making up for Philip’s neglect, and Penelope, because she was carried away by the strength of this new joy. The luxury about her had weakened some of the old strength of purpose. Essex has many hidden snares, and those who have not been used to it from childhood fall more easily into these hidden pitfalls.

Outwardly all seemed very natural, very pleasant. Forster daily became stronger, and some of the old buoyancy apparently was returning to him. Dora became happier about him, and wrote letters to her mother full of delight about the place and of admiration for the Princess, who was, she said, so kind and considerate, that she was fast curing Forster of his weakness. She told Adela about the walks they took, and how Forster was getting so strong that they were proposing to ascend the great mountain, and were now only waiting for a suitable day.

Dora was young enough to be blinded by the outwardly easy intercourse, with which no stranger or onlooker could have found fault. She did not know that Penelope’s gentleness and softness were quite new to her. She could not guess when the four sat round the fire after dinner if the weather were chilly, or strolled slowly up the glen path on a warm moonlight evening, that her husband was living a life entirely new to him, and entirely foreign to his old ideas. They naturally separated into two couples; the Duke was amused with Dora’s simple light-heartedness and bright young enthusiasm, whilst Penelope and Forster, in low, soft tones, discussed many things in heaven and earth. Forster was the one whose voice was more usually heard, and Penelope listened, drinking in his ways and his ideas.

To some the life might have seemed monotonous, but that suggestion did not enter into the minds of Forster and Dora. At times Forster and Penelope were left alone for a little while, and then strange shyness descended upon them, and a dangerous silence enveloped them. But what could they say which all the world might not hear? Penelope would not think of the future. She wanted to live only in the present, she did not wish to look forward. Now was the moment when life could be enjoyed, now, and she grasped the moment, fearing only her inability to enjoy it enough.

Philip’s name was no longer mentioned between them; it was only the Duke who occasionally alluded to the absent master of the Palace—a master whom no one recognised, and whom no one wished to see. Dora, too, sometimes wondered what Philip was doing out there in the African colony; she even recalled Forster that only when he went back could Philip come home; but Forster merely replied that that was not a fast, for Philip was not really bound to remain.

"Mr. Winskell is so good I’m sure he won’t leave the sheep in the wilderness," said Dora, laughing. The brother and
sister were alone when she spoke thus. A reserve which Dora could not explain to herself made her chary of mentioning the absent husband to Penelope.

"I do not understand Philip," replied Forster, then he changed the conversation.

It was the day after this remark was made that, when the party met at breakfast, Penelope exclaimed:

"We have not waited in vain. To-day is quite perfect for our ascent. I will send a boy early to take up our provisions, and if you feel equal to it, Mr. Bethune, I think it will not be too hot."

"I am sure I shall enjoy it," said Forster, looking at the Duke. "You will come too?"

"I am afraid I can't come to-day, Penelope. Oldcorn has made me promise to go with him to the old plantation. There are trees to be marked. He is so seldom at liberty that I must go."

"That is disappointing," said Dora.

"But you must go all the same. Tomorrow we might row to the end of the lake, and the little steamer or the carriage might take us back."

For one moment Penelope wondered if they should wait for her uncle, then she decided that scruples were foolish. Dora would be with them, and Mrs. Grundy seldom had time to visit this glen. A few tourists would perhaps be found on the summit, but tourists were, in Penelope's eyes, hardly human beings. So the preparations were made, and Forster felt almost a boy again as he helped the Princess to pack some baskets. The lad was despatched with the mountain pony, and an hour later the three started up the glen. Dora flitted hither and thither, collecting flowers, hunting for rare forms. Conversation was almost impossible till the noisy Rothery was left behind, but the voices of nature spoke for them, using a thousand new terms of love.

Then they reached the gate, and paused. Dora had started off with Nero to pick some wild roses growing a little off the path. Forster leant on the gate to rest, for they had promised themselves to take everything very easily.

"It certainly is a perfect day, Princess," said Forster, and then he smiled to himself at the remembrance of his former objection to this name. Now it seemed the only title fit for this perfect woman.

Penzie noted his words, and her heart beat faster. How grand and noble he was, how handsome he looked now that he was so much stronger! How well they two could have understood all that was best in life!

"Yes," she said softly, as if thinking of something else; "it is a beautiful day. It only one could be sure of other beautiful days. It is the certainty that the fine days must pass away which is so saddening."

"But the remembrance of beauty can never be taken away. You have been very kind, Princess, to let me stay here, and to— to do me so much good."

"It's not good of me at all," she answered, blushing in spite of herself.

"Do you know," he continued, "that the thought of your loneliness oppressed me strongly in spite of myself. I blamed myself for having brought it about, at least—"

"You should not have done so."

"Then I noticed how little the one who should have cared for you dwelt upon it. Do you know that you caused the first quarrel between me and Philip?" This was the first time Forster had alluded to this subject.

"Oh! did you quarrel?" she asked hurriedly.

"Yes; I could not understand him. Knowing you, I was sure—"

"But you don't know me," answered Penzie, hurriedly, greatly longing to tell him the truth.

At this moment Nero came bounding back, and Dora soon followed him.

"I'm sure I've found it."

"Found what?" said Forster absently.

"The moonwork. It is very small, yet the cows have kindly spared it. I tell Mr. De Lucy I should find it, and he did not believe me. Oh, Penelope, you don't know how that man contradicts me! It really is the most disagreeable person I have ever met."

"I thought that he was a very superior individual."

"Yes, superior, but oh! I hate superior men."

"They spend much time in sparring, certainly," said Forster, walking on, and wishing that Dora had been at this moment anywhere, anywhere out of the Vale of the Rothery.

Then they began to climb the bare mountain side. The little path, seen far ahead, rose higher and higher, clogging, as it were, to the hillsides. Soft summer clouds floated lazily above them; and invisible larks added their song to the chorus of joy. Now and then the sheep, followed by several large lambs, rushed of frightened at nothing, and the lazy cow, headless of them, chewed the short grass.
As they rose higher among loose, grey boulders, partly covered with ferns or low grass, they could only walk in single file. They kept the grey wall ever in sight, but it seemed an endless pilgrimage to reach it.

Penelope remembered the day she had walked up there alone, and how Philip had come to her rescue. She tried to put away that remembrance, only conscious how much happier she was now than she had been that day.

At times Forster walked beside her, ready to give her a helping hand; now and then she actually accepted it, though help was quite unnecessary to this mountain maid.

At last they reached the gate and looked down into the great basin-like hollow, where the high tarn slept peacefully, and where above it rose the real summit. On either side of the tarn was the picturesque neck of land, by climbing up which the summit might be gained, but first they had to go down to the tarn, walking through long grass and marsh and algalble rivulets.

"You must take care of your footing," said Forster. "You might tumble here."

Then suddenly Dora called out:

"Look at this dearest little nest. It is all woven in with the dry grass, but the birds have long ago forsaken it."

The nest was a very slight fabric, and yet it was strong enough to resist the fearfully storms that so often sweep over the mountain tarns. It had once been a home, and love had built it. Penelope stooped down and examined it, replacing it gently where Dora had found it.

Then they proceeded, after stopping to gaze at the deep blue waters of the tarn. Now there was no fear of being stopped by any difficulty. Forster was beside her, and Penelope led the way, smiling happily as, now and then, her companion warned her of danger.

Dora was delighted at the stiff climb which awaited them, nor was she easily persuaded to be careful, though the danger of a false step was not to be lightly estimated.

However, nothing exciting occurred, and when they reached the spot where on a former occasion Penelope had been stopped, and where Philip had come to rescue her, she did not like the remembrance of it. There he had so tenderly helped her, and there his honest face had had a ray of hope in it. She hurried away from Forster's side for a minute, and without his knowing the reason, he felt the change in her. She would not accept his help, and she was silent for the rest of the climb. But when they reached the cairn, and when Dora exclaimed at the beauty of the scene, the feeling passed away. Forster's brightness returned, and all was again joyful.

"If only I could get our poor fellows here and make them admire all this beauty," said Forster, in spite of himself thinking of the colony. "The mind, however, is its own place, and they might not feel elevated even by the sight of these blue ranges."

"Well, I never heard you doubt before, Forster, that your dear fellows had not as sensitive feelings as our own," exclaimed Dora. "I am afraid doubt has entered your strong castle."

"I am afraid it has."

"At least, you do not doubt that you are hungry," said Penelope, smiling.

Then the boy was told to unpack the hamper, and the present was once more cloudless.

"Do you know, dear Princess, that you have quite enchanted us," remarked Dora, when the three sat quietly enjoying the peaks and their varying shadows. "Forster has not spoken of returning home, and this morning mother sent me a letter wishing to know when we proposed doing so. Adele adds that the De Lucys think of coming up here for a few days on their way to Scotland. Isn't that odd?"

"Yes," said Forster quickly, "we must be thinking of going away soon."

"Why must you? You are not strong enough yet to go back to— to Africa."

"If not there, at all events I have many friends who will be wanting me. I have forsaken them for a long time."

"Forster spoke warily. The old enthusiasm about his work seemed gone."

"You must wait, at all events, till the De Lucys come. They will go to the "Lake Hotel," I suppose. It is very comfortable there, I believe."

"I prefer our solitude," said Forster a little sadly, for however sweet their solitude had been, where was to be the end of it? To-day for the first time there came to him the feeling that there must be an end, and that there was something very weakening in this earthly paradise. He felt powerless to decide; he only knew that to be near Penelope was at present his heaven.

Outwardly they bandied merry words.
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"Mr. Winskell is so good Pm sure he won't like the sheep in the wilderness," said Dora. The brother and...
His costume was certainly extraordinary, and was something between that of a farmer and a peasant. The frizzan of his knee-breeches was dirty and patched, and his coat looked as if it had weathered many storms. But Dora was more attentive to his face than to his clothes. She saw that the old man was lame, and helped herself to crawl about with a stout stick. His deep-set eyes looked very cunning, peering out as they did from beneath shaggy eyebrows. The expression of his still hard-looking face was made up partly of cunning, and partly of malice.

The young girl was naturally courageous, but she felt a slight shudder as she hastily stood up, still holding a clump of fern roots in her hands.

"I've caught you theiving," he said with a low chuckle, but Dora was surprised to hear that though the voice was rough, the accent was that of an educated man.

"Who gave you leave, young miss, to take those ferns away?"

"The Princess, of course," answered Dora indignantly.

"Eh, the Princess, was it? but she has no power to give you leave. This land is mine, don't you know that?" he peered down upon it as if he were seeing his own name inscribed upon the damp moss; "the land is mine for all the proud Princess may think; mine, I tell you."

"Yours!" said Dora incredulously, not yet realizing the truth. "Yours, I thought all this hillside belonged to the Winakells. Besides, the Princess—"

"That's what she says. She's proud, proud as the old gentleman himself, so was her great-aunt. Ah, you thought this was hers, did you? Listen, young miss, I'll tell you a secret. Ah, ah!"

Dora was now more than a little alarmed at the old man's look. A sudden idea entered her head. "He is mad. What shall I do?" Then she looked at his crippled condition, and scolded herself for her cowardice. She had but to use her nimble feet, and the old man could never come near to her. She wished, however, to vindicate the Princess before she took to flight.

"I remember now that this wood does belong to the Princess. She said that it was hers, as we looked at it from the top of the mountain."

The old man chuckled again as if there were some joke in the words.

"She said that, did she, when she looked down on all this? She called it hers. Curse her pride. Come here, young miss; you look fit to keep a secret. Eh! listen. This wood isn't hers. It's mine, mine, the King of Rothery. Have not you heard of him? Ah, ah! I keep out of the way now. I don't like those grand doings up there; and those new pewter servants; but it's all mine."

"You are the King of Rothery? Are you her father?"

Dora's tone expressed the astonishment she felt.

"You don't believe it? Ah, ah! That is it, you think—I'm put away; but I prefer it. My son knew better than Penelope. He never would have been such a fool as she is. Penelope's a fool, I tell you."

Dora knew that the old King was considered to be somewhat "off his head." She was not, therefore, so much surprised as she otherwise would have been. It was no use arguing with a madman, however, so Dora tried to show proper humility, in spite of the shock she had received by finding out she was in the presence of Penelope's father.

"I am sorry I trespassed. I will go on at once," she said with dignity blended with humility.

But all this seemed wasted on the strange being in front of her.

"No; come along with me. I want you. Penelope won't believe me. Listen; who is that man who walked on with her? I saw him."

"That was my brother."

"That's the man Penelope should have married; but she didn't ask me. She thinks—hush!—she may hear us."

He looked round him and listened.

Dora blushed—though the gathering darkness hid her blushes—at the mention of such a strange thing, then, remembering the man's madness, she again tried to get away from him.

"I must go back to the Palace; they will be waiting for me."

"Ah!" laughed the King, as if Dora had made a joke, "waiting for you! Not a bit of it. Come with me; I want you. I'll show you a shorter way home. I know every stone and every stick in the Rothery Valley. Come, follow me, if you can."

Dora smiled at the last remark, for to follow a cripple, such as the one before her, presented no sort of difficulty. She considered a moment if it were best to follow him or to leave him. He seemed to divine her thoughts, for he turned round and peered at her in a most unpleasant manner.
Dora was beginning to be a little afraid of this strange King, when a new idea struck her.

"I will come to-morrow if that will suit you as well, sir."

"No, no; I want you now. Ah, you don't know," he said, beginning to walk on by the help of the low wall; "it's not often they let me alone. To-day, Jim has gone with that precious fool Greybarrow."

Dora resigned herself and followed. It seemed better to give in to the King's whim, whatever it might be, than to escape; but she could not help feeling a little nervous at being in this lonely wood alone with this mad, cunning old man.

"You like Penelope, don't you?" he asked, after a time of inaudible mutterings, as he painfully made his way along the side of the wood.

"Yes, of course I do," said Dora enthusiastically.

"Then tell her what a fool she has been. She won't believe me. Before my accident, when— you know, my son died. Well, before that time, she did not get it all her own way; no more did Greybarrow: But now— hush! Do you hear any one following us?"

Dora wished much that she could answer in the affirmative; but only the birds piped an occasional note, and the tiny streams tinkled their melodies in the near distance. The girl was feeling weary after her long climb up the mountain, and she began to wonder how soon she would be released.

"I don't hear anything; but it is getting late."

"Make haste, then," he said impatiently, as if Dora were leading the way. "Do you know that all these months I have been looking and looking for it? But my memory was gone; it was the cursed boat accident. I knew, and yet I didn't know; but to-day, to-day, when they left me alone, it came back to me. If I tell you, you'll remember. You are young, and you have not had time to be wicked. I may forget again, but I know it now. Keep close to the wall. Penelope was a fool. Ah, ah! You know that man, her husband? Husband, indeed! A mere nobody. I never thought Penelope would sink so low. She has got the pride of the devil in her. Eh! but so have I. Look, is that a broken stump? Stop, girl, and see if there's an old wasps' nest by the side."

Dora now felt really nervous, but what should she do? Where was this crazy old man leading her, and what was his object? She looked furtively behind her to see if she could see a way of escape.

"Stoop, girl!" shouted her companion impatiently, "and tell me if you can see the nest!"

Dora complied, and found what she was directed to find.

"Yes, sir; here it is."

"Good; now bend to the left and you will strike upon an old wall."

Dora followed closely, wondering what was to be the next move. Her only idea was how best to get away.

In a few moments they came to a thick-set plantation of old beeches, which looked as if no one had approached them for centuries. There was no real path near to them, only a track evidently made by the foot of one man.

The King found it difficult to get along, but he was not to be daunted. Every moment he looked back to see that Dora was following him.

At last they reached a low grey wall, built of massive blocks of stone, but appearing as if it had once been begun and never continued, for it ended abruptly, close to a deep ditch, where farms grew to luxuriant height. On the other side, the wall ran at right angles to the boundary wall, but the underwood was so thick that it could not be followed to its starting-point, in this direction at all events.

"It's here," said the old man, with a low laugh of intense satisfaction. "You must swear, girl, to tell no one but Penelope what you have seen, and to reveal the place to no one, not even to her. Swear!"

Dora laughed. She was tickled by the idea of having to swear to keep secret the existence of an old wall.

"I can't swear, indeed I can't, but you can take my word—a Bethune never breaks promises, never."

"I only tell you for fear that I may forget again. My memory is gone, but to-day I remembered, to-morrow it might be gone; strange, eh? Now, girl, swear."

"I promise never to tell any one where this wall is," said Dora, smiling. "Never to tell even the Princess—who must know very well, thought Dora."

"But you can tell her what you see. Now, come, don't mind the ditch."

Dora had no wish to descend into the deep, damp ditch, but she saw she was expected to do so. If only she could get rid of her companion it mattered not what she did, and soon she found herself by its side, whilst he began eagerly brushing
THE MOUNTAINS OF SKYE.

A MAN may go far in the holiday season to find an island so provocative as Skye of praise on the one hand, and condemnation on the other.

We gathered this much from the very beginning, as we sat to be slowly smoke-dried in the men's room at the "Sligachan Hotel" after a pretty smart soaking between Portree and the Coolins. Very varied were the remarks about the place that passed to and fro between the visitors, more or less established, who had just come in with their pipes from the dining-room.

There was one angler who said that in future he would spend his Augusts at

away the woods and the ferns from the face of the old wall.

"It's here. Where are my tools? It can't be done without them."

He put his hand into a big coat pocket, and drew out a chisel. His trembling fingers would hardly steady the handle, but with Dora's help the stone he was tampering with began to move. Then, by some trick of the old man's hand, it appeared to turn as if on a pivot, and a deep cavity was thus revealed.

Dora now began to take greater interest in the proceedings. The old man's words were not all mere fancy. He did wish to show her something, and no girl is above the romantic pleasure of a discovery.

"What is in there?" she asked eagerly.

The King thrust his hand in and drew out a long tin box, somewhat in the shape of a coffin.

"Now look, girl. Tell Penelope what you have seen. Ay, she didn't believe in her father, so she sold herself for gold. What a fool she was, when all the time there was plenty here; plenty, I tell you."

He opened the box, which was not locked, and Dora saw in the dim light that it was full of canvas bags and queer legal papers. The old man opened one of the bags, and his fingers lovingly handled each, for he took out a handful of gold pieces, and displayed them to the astonished girl.

"Penelope doesn't believe it," he muttered; "but it's true. There was gold enough, gold enough without her help; there's a fortune here, a fortune. The old Kings of Rothery weren't fools, I tell you, they laid by; and Penelope's great-aunt was a miser to the end of her life. But it was no use telling people. If the farmers knew you are rich they cheat you, and they never knew it; Greybarrow did not know it, no more did Penelope. Ah! Good Heaven! what fools women can be."

"It is getting very damp, sir. Hadn't we better return to the Palace?" said Dora, who began to feel that something sad and sordid lay underneath this mad miser's mutterings.

"Yes, you're right, girl; Oldcorn will come prying round. He doesn't know, but he guesses. Did I make you swear?"

"No, sir, but I promised. I don't want to say anything to any one. It does not concern me."

"You're not such a fool for your age. I liked your face when you were stealing my ferns. Everything here is mine. I'm the King of Rothery. Greybarrow wants to oust me, but he's not clever enough to do it. I let them play their little games. If they like to rebuild the old place without my help, so much the better for me. Eh, eh?"

He tried hastily to shove back the box, but Dora had to help him, and when all was finished the old man appeared weary.

"I must lean on your shoulder, girl, so. Now, could you find your way back alone?"

"No, sir, I do not think that I could, especially as it is getting so dusky."

"But I know it well, even though I'm— what do they say I am up there?" he added, lowering his voice.

"Nothing, sir. Shall we turn to the right or to the left? There are two paths here."

"Come to the left, and then I'll show you your road. I must go on alone. There's Oldcorn will be coming, and he's a wicked spy. He suspects something."

They walked on a little while in silence, then the King pointed to a path which went northward through the wood.

"Follow that path, girl—and remember your promise."

"Thank you, sir," answered Dora, her heart bounding with joy at her near release. "Wait a moment. That's your brother, you say. Well, then, I'll tell you something. Penelope's in love with him. She's caught. Eh, eh!" and the old man chuckled in a way which made Dora shiver.

Then he turned away, and began going as quickly as he could in the opposite direction, every now and then looking over his shoulder to see if Dora were watching him. For a few moments she did so, then, seized with a sudden overpowering fear, she ran on as fast as she could go, and as if evil beings were pursuing her.
home, fly-fishing in the domestic wash-tub. At least he would do that ere again travelling north to Prince Charlie's island in search of "fush." He was clearly an irascible little person; yet there did seem some sense in his wrath as he finished up his diatribe by pointing at two very muddy pairs of trousers hanging in front of the fire, and added:

"Ever since I've been in this hole, my garments there have either been getting drenched on my legs or shrinking before the peats in an attempt to dry. It's not good enough!"

This raised a laugh. Two or three other men, who were in temper akin to the angler, agreed with him. They candidly avowed that Skye was a much over-praised country.

Not so, however, a brace of gentlemen with the skin loose on their noses. One of these wore spectacles and a smile of pity for the men who were casting stones at Skye's fair fame. The other turned the leaves of a number of the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal.

The spectacled tourist of these two could at length bear it no longer.

"I tell you what," he interposed, "in my opinion, this is the most attractive spot in the British Isles. If any of you fellows had been with us on Scour Alasdair yesterday, you'd have thought so too. The mistake you make is in coming here to fish instead of to do some climbing. For rock work Sligachan is an A1 centre; for trout—well, I believe what they give us for breakfast here are caught with a net. No one seems to get anything worth getting." The other visitor, with a skinned nose nodded approval, and glanced casually at the palm of his right hand.

"How is it going?" enquired one of the calumniators of Skye, also looking at this man's palm.

"First rate," was the reply.

The gentleman, we ascertained later, had had an awkward slip among the granite crags of Scour Alasdair in descending. If he hadn't held on when he did, he would have broken his neck. As it was, he had a nasty gash from what palmists call the line of life to the base of his little finger. The misadventure had not in the least dulled his enthusiasm about the island of Flora Macdonald and Prince Charlie.

It was a pretty rough evening. One of the windows was open—for about fifteen minutes were adding to the thickness of the atmosphere—and periodically the wind billowed in upon us with a roar, and raised not only our hair but even the newspapers and parti-coloured flies—made for trout—on the table. The palmists among us looked up at each of the more furious of these gusts, and growled: "Nice, isn't it?" "What a charming place to be sure!" and the like sarcasms. To the anglers it seemed perfectly insulting. Nature should thus concoct a storm without, as it appeared, the accomplishment of a single raindrop. The storm that had drenched us—the newcomers—had long ago run off the hills into the burns, and in into the Sligachan River and to the sea.

But it is mere waste of breath to call at the tricks of the weather. We woke bed in a hurricane, and woke the next morning amid surroundings of sweet and perfect peace. Not quite perfect though, for the midges were soon abroad to share the engaging scene with us. Fascinated by the sunny outlook, I took my kodak to the riverside before the breakfast-tea rang. A particularly smart, liver-exploded Highland ox stood in toot-tos in an attitude against a background of big boulders, bustling stream, and dian mountain shape. But the ox was not to be caught. He gazed at the camera for a magnificent moment, then decamped vit a bellow to join his comrades and the ox farther down the valley. I, for my part, turned to re-enter the hotel, and then it was the first time saw the Ochillius, a Cooills, at close quarters.

Viewed from the Oban steamer as it approaches Skye, these mountains are scarcely sensational, though bold enough in their outlines. But from Sligachan they are much more suggestive. I saw Scurc Gillean—which, being interpreted, mass the Peak of the Young Man—this day with a slight veil of snow-white vapour about its black cone-crest. But the veil did not dissemble the fine crags of the summit, and a practised eye could judge that on a still nearer acquaintance these crags would develop into neat and daring little pinnacles and precipices, such as a man may worthily exercise himself upon as a preliminary for yet more perilous, and therefore yet more delightful. work in the Alps and elsewhere. Mr. Gibson, a well-known cragsman in the north, says in the "Scottish Mountaineering Journal" that in the matter of rock-climbing the Cooills may be more fitly compared with the Alps than our central Highlands with the Cooills. This seems a substantial..."
THE MOUNTAINS OF SKYE.

Charles Dickens.

compliment to the Skye mountains, considering that their height is only about three thousand feet above sea level.

Of course the Coolins are not all the mountains in Skye. The Quiraing in the north is an upland mass broken into pinnacles, with a character of its own as marked as that of the Coolins. The Needle Rock of the Quiraing would frighten crag-men and women who have already written Great Gable's Needle among their conquests. So, too, the Storr Mountain near the coast, with its isolated upstanding pinnacle, "the Old Man of Storr," must be mentioned with respect. Seen from the water, the Storr Rocks are as absorbing as anything in Skye. But they must all yield to the Coolins — this little circle of mountains embracing Loch Coruisk, their different summits connected by knife-blade edges and with precipices galore on all sides.

There was an American lady at breakfast in the hotel. She had driven over from Portree that morning. She hurried through her breakfast that she might hurry upon the shaggy little pony that awaited her outside, with a red-bearded and energetic gillie for its attendant. The gillie and pony were under contract to rush the American lady to Coruisk and back, including a boat trip to the southerly Prince Charlie's Cave, so that she might dine at Sligachan in the evening, and be again at Portree for the night in readiness for the five o'clock steamer to somewhere else the next morning.

"What like will it be?" echoed a gillie of whom, for talking's sake, we made enquiry as to the weather; "it'll be hot, air— whatever." And hot it was. The sun drew the perfume from the heather which mantles all the land of Skye, even as the day before the rain had made the walk from Portree odorous all the way with bog myrtle. The river sang lower and lower as the hours sped. Scour na Gillean to the west of Glen Sligachan became purple as the sky itself, and the streaks of greenery on Glamaig's clean-out sides cast of the glen were refreshing to behold.

We strolled hither and we strolled thither. From Glen Sligachan we lounged back to the hotel to lunch, and listen to the curses of the anglers, who had had a most wearing, profitless morning. Afterwards more strolling, with Scour na Gillean always in the foreground.

An irresistible burn with a cauldron in it —full of crystal clear water—compelled bathing. But the midges drove us out of the water, even as they had driven us into it. Never were there such unremitting plagues. They swarmed inquisitively about the pipe-bowl that was destined to slay or stupefy them; but they neither died nor lost their fiendish sensibility. And so we had to spend the beautiful evening hours just before dinneravelled like a Moslem lady.

It was a pleasant sight to see a score of gentle tourists groaning—and worse—in the face of the sunset sky of crimson and gold they had come forth from the inn to admire. Certain pretty countenances could hardly have been more disfigured by the attentions of mosquitoes than they were the next morning at breakfast, simply and solely by those despicable little winged atoms.

This day we extended our lounge to Coruisk itself, and were fain to admire the American lady's vigour in cramming such an excursion into her day's programme as a mere incident of it.

There were others bound for the same goal—a tan-coloured pedagogue and a lady with whom he had discussed Greek sculpture —with knowledge on both sides—over three or four successive meals. It seemed as if we might be blessed to witness the incubation of a young romance in their case. Each impressed the other clearly with a sense of congenial intellectuality. And so it had been contrived between them that the lady should ride to Coruisk on a sure-footed quadruped, and the gentleman should attend her on foot.

They promised soon to overtake us, who put our faith in our boots. But, as might be supposed, they did no such thing. It was expecting too much to expect them even to wish to do it, once they had the taste of such sweet untroubled communion upon their souls. Black Scour na Gillean, with the sun-gliss on the mica of granite; abrupt Marsco, with the bottle on its flank; and prodigious Blaven, whose rock precipices are matchless in Skye for their sublimity—these dumb comrades they could endure; but human forms and voices, hardly!

The river in the glen ran thinly on its stones, and there were no clouds to cast welcome shadows upon its water. One lunatic angler—he was very young—had come forth with his rod to do battle against midges and the clear, starved stream in combination. His enterprise was almost heroical. From our elevation we saw him below, knee-deep in the water, alternately
casting and sweeping his face longitudinally
with a maddened promptitude.

"And these be pleasure-seekers!" we
said in our pity as we tramped up the gien
in the hot, soft air, with the perspiration
guttering down our faces.

We admired Marco, as who would not,
seeing it under such fair conditions! From
the bothie on the mountain slope—
set near a pure spring, which makes a
pretty little bog for the tourist to traverse
—allured forth two bare-legged ladies to out
rushes in the valley. They were Highland
lasses of the unspoiled kind—simple and
shy, and unresting in their labour from
dawn to dewy eve. But, alas! they had no
English, or next to none. No matter if
they missed that accomplishment. If the
humble little cot with the thatch on it held
a living for them all the year round, they
had the wherewithal for entire contentment.

There is nothing finer in all Britain for
its long bulk of precipices, innocent of all
verdure, than Blaven. The rock swings
itself upward, nearly three thousand feet of
wall, from the glittering lake, green-rushed
and heather-banked. The wall is sternly
seamed; deep-cut, zigzagging crevices tear
it from top to bottom; yet a man must
have strong nerves to attempt to scale it.

Later we saw the monarch to even more
advantage when we had climbed the col of
Drumblain and stood a thousand feet above
the valley with Blaven facing us, but a
mile or so distant, and nothing between us
and its tremendous wall.

But, indeed, this was a day of sensa-
tional prospects. From Drumblain we saw
the Coolins as it were, from the centre of
their semicircle. Such a jagged, forbidding
curve of peaks—forbidding from one aspect
only, of course—one may hardly match
anywhere. Each mountain seemed to vie
with its neighbour in the sentences of
angle of its final crest. Their uniformity
of height was also a circumstance to wonder
at. Though the summit of one might be a
mere walking-stick of a crag shot up from
a convenient shoulder, the next one, spring-
ing perchance in a single glorious incline
from Corulak's waters, dressed its topmost
height so narrowly level with it that you
might almost have set a huge billiard-table
on the pair of crests and played the game
with confidence.

From Drumblain we took long reck-
less strides down the mountain side until
Corulak's sequestered water was reached.
We were certainly hours ahead of our
more intellectual friends.

As many people know, Scott has the
following among other lines on Loch
Corulak:

For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stones,
As if were here denied
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain side.

However, on this day the sun turned
the loch into a dazzling mirror, and we were
not awed at all. I have seen the Thames
by London Bridge look more thrilling. The
lonely pool was on its best behaviour, good
to bathe and dabble in, and so smooth that
we could have sent a paper boat from its
one shore to the opposite shore without
risk of shipwreck.

We did not cavil at this state of affairs.
The sublimes is all very well if it can be
enjoyed without great discomfort. To see
Corulak as Scott saw it means facing
divers hazards of storm and cloud, which
one is not always willing to encounter.
We found our pleasure in bathing, lazing
eating and drinking, smoking, and staring
at the Old Man of Skye, that alluring—but
not readily accessible—tooth of rock on the
very top of Scour Dearg. Perhaps in its
year half-a-dozen cragmen scale Scour
Dearg and his tooth—which is precipices
three hundred feet on one side and one
hundred feet on the other—and leave
their cards behind them for the eagles.
But it is no ordinary task.

Though we missed Corulak in its mad
moods, we returned to Sliochan in the
gloom and contentment. The mendacious
pedagogue and his lady friend had not
started, after all. They had spent the day
instead in a cool arbour, with intellectual
talk and the midges.

Corulak put us in the humour for
Scour na Gillies, and we plotted against
the mountain that night in the smoking-
room. But the weather suddenly comprised
against us in our turn, and for three
successive days we had to fish in default.
There was a spate, and everything dripped
in the smoking-room. The roar of the
river sounded at the dinner-table like the
playful tumbling of mountains against each
other by immemorial Titans.

The gentlemen with the pealed noses
went off in disgust on the third day of
continuous rain. They gave us some
advice as to the "reform which we
forgot with disgraceful celerity. Who
wants to profit by other people's experience
—whether in mountain-climbing or the
general pains and pleasures of existence!
On the fourth day, however, we started and all was auspicious. The Old Man of Storr soon showed in the north to tell us of our upward progress over the heather moorland to the base of the mountain proper.

Now, there are two or three routes to Scour na Gillean, but only one for untrained mountaineers. We chose the simplest.

Even that cost us trouble enough. We had our bearings correctly, and clambered over the huge boulders with sharp edges which represent the last stage but one of the ascent. Then we paused for an undue length of time to smoke and contemplate the mountain's head.

It is certainly a rugged and captivating head, this of Scour na Gillean. You have no idea of it until you are, so to speak, on its shoulders. Then, if you are of common flesh and blood, you gaze at it and admit to yourself that you wish you had been to the top and were safely back again. I can compare it to nothing but a huge house—say two hundred feet high—with walls just a little out of the perpendicular, and nicks and rifts and ledges here and there for the convenience of strong-headed persons who are determined to ascend it.

This is the easiest way of getting up. But there are other ways. While we smoked and assured ourselves that it must be much simpler than it looks—as it is, in fact—we also glanced out of the corners of our eyes at the black, isolated masses of rock which constitute "the pinnacle route" to the summit. They were really too much for our feelings, these pinnacles.

We went up hand-over-hand at length, by cracks and chimneys, by arm power and leg leverage, and in a few minutes we had our reward. We were on the mossy final boulder, with its broken flag string, its tiny cairn, and its tin box containing the names of those of our recent predecessors who prided themselves on their achievement.

It is a thrilling sort of perch. You can hardly help dangling your legs over a precipice if there are two or three persons on the top. The sense of height may nowhere be enjoyed to more perfection than here.

Now we could have borne this very well if the wind had not sprung up. This fact was quite disturbing to us. It almost affected our equilibrium, and there was no telling what it might not do if it veered and caught us strongly in our return from the Scour's head to his shoulders.

We therefore made but a brief stay on the summit, though long enough to appreciate the stern grandeur of Lotta Corrie, and the sensational surroundings of the different edges which link together the various peaks of the Coolins. Eagles we saw none, nor did we expect to see any. But we saw about half Skye, and marvelled at its treeslessness.

Long ere we were again on unsensational ground, Scour na Gillean had taken respectable rank in our minds among the other mountains we had climbed. I don't know which of us made the mistake, but we got so startlingly near the northern precipice of the summit that we had to clamber back and try again. But we were at the dinner-table that evening with no worse misadventure than peeled noses.

The next day the rain set in once more. The weather is certainly awkward in this attractive island. It must have been in a fit of weather pique that a tourist wrote in the visitors' book here the series of clever verses which his successors read with such mixed feelings:

**Land of cunning, crafty bodies,**
**Foos to all ungodly fun,**
**Those who sum up man's whole duty—**
**Heaven, hell, and number one.**

**Land of psalms and drowsy sermons,**
**Pawky wits and snuffy bores,**
**Faur-gaun chiefs so fond of Scotland,**
**That they leave it fast by scores!**

There is, however, the antidote for this poison on the same page:

**Land of chivalry and freedom,**
**Land of old historic fame,**
**May your noble sons and daughters**
**Long preserve their honoured name.**

Etc., etc.

Skye—like Scotland herself—has, since men peopled it, seen much that is creditable, and at least something discreditable to its inhabitants. The very names of the Coolins and their glens tell of the bloody deeds of the ancient chieftains of her clans. I suppose Flora Macdonald may well be set against these memories for Skye's redemption.

As for the Coolins, they are not to be remembered without a certain affection. I hope, ere long, to see more of them and their rugged charms.

LIZ.

A COMPLETE STORY.

"You are a good little thing, Cinderella!"

"Lor, Miss 'Olme, me! You should 'ear misels; you wouldn't think so then."

"I do hear 'misels,' very often, and I
am afraid she sometimes finds you very tiresome, but when you are older, Cinderella, you will understand that people judge others by what those others are to them, and I find you very good, though you may not be good in general. This shows that the more people you are good to, the better character you will get, whether you deserve it or not."

Cinderella looked puzzled. She was not amused to this sensation of groping in the dark, but at such times she felt that Miss Holme was not purposely puzzling her, but was talking to herself quite as much as she was speaking to her. Furthermore she considered all Miss Holme's sayings, dark or otherwise, as the utterances of the highest wisdom, worthy of much consideration, and, whenever they took the form of command or precept, to be carried out as faithfully as possible.

There was something, however, this little unfeathered London sparrow noted and did understand. The lodger had been out all day, she had returned with white face and heavy steps, and having given Cinderella a word of praise for her bustling welcome, had begun to talk in enigmas. Cinderella tilted her head on one side and looked at Miss Holme with a pair of bright sharp eyes, an attitude which gave her the appearance of an inquisitive little bird.

"You looks worn out," she said sympathetically.

"I am 'wore' out, and I have had no luck to-day, my dear."

"Never you mind, miss, that'll come in a lump, all at once, you see if it don't," said the child, nodding her head sagely.

"All things come to those who wait—if they don't die first. Ah, well, Cinderella, we will hope you are a faithful prophetess, and that the lump will come soon."

"'Corse it will, miss. Now you git yer tea, an' I'll come up presently and take away the things."

Cinderella—prison-born, gutter-bred, older at fifteen than many women who could number twice her years; ill fed, ill clad, ill housed; all her life sent from pillar to post, and from post to pillar; the very shuttlecock of fortune, exposed to every temptation under the sun, with no single safeguard to protect her except a wholesome fear of the law and her own natural instinct which made for right. A waif, a stray, consistently neglected by that society which would sternly vindicate the slightest dereliction from its laws, a helpless little human creature who all through its hapless babyhood and young childhood had never felt loving lips pressed on its tiny cheek, had never known what it was to be caressed and called by endearing names, but who had been buffeted and kicked and cursed. She had never been allowed to forget that she was born in gaol, and that her mother had deserted her at the age of ten, leaving her, a little wizened old woman, to get her living as best or as worst she could.

And what a living it had been! A meal for minding a baby, a halfpenny for running errands, an old frock or a shake-down in an overcrowded room in payment for a day's work, a few coppers for cleaning doorsteps, the shelter of an empty house, the selling of matches, the gleaming of garbage heaps in the markets! Then one day the child's luck turned, and, from being an industrious little "stepper" and faithful runner of errands, she got taken in as day-girl, and finally promoted to the post of maid-of-all-work in the poor lodging-house where Miss Holme found her.

In the slums where she had dwelt she had been known as "Liz," though whether she had a baptismal right to that or any other name is doubtful, but Miss Holme called her Cinderella, and told her the old fairy story, which so pleased and excited the child's fancy that she grew quite proud of her nickname.

Miss Holme was a revelation to Liz. She was sharp enough to know that the lodger had "come down" in the world; that she had not always lived in a bedrooming room, and fed upon weak tea, bread, and herrings, with an occasional launching out into other cheap delicacies. Miss Holme had not many clothes, but those she had were fine and dainty, the like of which Liz had never seen before; her hands and feet, too, were quite different from those of the other people Liz had known, and her voice, well, "it beat everythink, even the flute wot the man played outside the public-ouses."

The most remarkable thing about the lodger was her passion for soap and water. Liz at first regarded it as a species of harmless lunacy, but after a while, fired by both precept and example, Liz herself became a convert, and, like all converts, was so eaten up with zeal that her skin usually shone with soap and friction. It was wonderful, too, that things that Miss Holme did with a needle and thread to Liz's wardrobe; but the greatest wonder of all was that the lodger talked to her in a manner she had never heard before, and on
one never-to-be-forgotten occasion, Miss Holme had kissed her.

Liz could never remember being kissed before by any one older than herself. She grew quite red, and her eyes filled with unwopted tears as with quivering lips she ejaculated:

"Oh, Miss 'Olme!"

And then Miss Holme had patted her cheek, and said:

"You are lonely, and I am lonely, little Cinderella, which is a strong reason why we should be friends."

Liz noticed that the lodger’s eyes were wet, too. With inborn delicacy she child said nothing, but from that day the whole of her loving heart was given entirely to Miss Holme, given with the fervour and passion of a devotee.

Left alone, the lodger began her meal. Indeed, she was weary and faint as much with hunger as with fatigue. But the coarse food repelled her, and she soon left the table and seated herself before the fire.

She was only twenty-three, this girl, and already very weary of life. The battle was going hardly with her. Friendless and forlorn, the loneliness of her lot weighed upon her even more heavily than the failure of her hopes and ambition. For the last three years she had fought unaided, uncheered by word or thought. The few distant relatives she possessed ignored her, because she was not like them and because she was poor. Proud, sensitive, she resolved henceforth to tread her path alone, and alone she lived in the cruel whirlpool of London. She possessed just enough means to keep body and soul together, while she devoted all her strength to the art she loved so well.

Sometimes she got a story or an article accepted by a magazine or journal, and the proceeds made gala days for her, when she dreamed of success and of fame. But her writing was uncertain, sometimes morbid, the result of the unnatural, unhealthy, repressed life she was forced to lead. With no friend to whom she could reveal the burdens that oppressed her, she poured them out in all their bitterness on paper, and the world is only interested in success.

Then, by degrees, the power of writing left her. Her mind, overburdened with cares, with heartaickness, with a bitter sense of desolation, refused to work; her brain grew numb; and for hours she would sit staring helplessly at the blank sheets of paper which seemed to stare back at her in hideous mockery. She tried other things, teaching, companionship, anything; but want of training, inexperience, lack of interest pushed her out of the already over-crowded market.

At last she lost heart altogether. She did not realise it then, but afterwards she knew that the only thing which saved her from sinking into the dull apathy of despair was the love of the poor drudge whom she had named Cinderella.

Poor ignorant little waif that she was, she yet had in her some latent sense of refinement that kept her ignorance from being repulsive. The evil that she had seen seemed to have passed her by, leaving her unstained by its crimson hue. Such beautiful things as love, and trust, and faith, which had never been awakened in her heart before, sprung full-grown into life under the touch of Katherine Holmes’s hand, and by reason of that very love and faith and trust, the lodger felt that she was bound to fight on.

But it was dreary work, and she grew frightened at the thought of the long years which perhaps stretched before her. If she could but throw off the burden and lie down to sleep like a tired child!

"Ave yer done, miss! Lor', you ain’t eat much! Worn’t it cooked right?"

The shadow fall from the lodger’s face, and she turned with a smile to answer Liz, who stood by the table, a very picture of disappointment.

"It was cooked very nicely, Cinderella, but I am too tired to eat to-night, I think."

"‘Tis bad to be like that," said the child with quite a motherly air. "I am, sometimes, when I feel all bones, and every one on ‘em an ache. You’d better git to bed early; I only wishes as I could, too."

"Why can’t you?"

"Missis ‘as gone to the theatrer, and I’ve got to wait up for her. She do worrit, but she don’t go hout very often, I will say that for her."

"No, she does not go out often, as you say, and if she ‘worrits,’ I am afraid in turn she has a lot to ‘worrit’ her."

"She do, miss, she do indeed. All the lodgers ain’t like you, and it’s allus those as pays the wust and the most unregular as gives theirselves the most airs."

Miss Holme smiled. She was very tired, very heartaick and depressed, but she knew how to make Liz happy for a brief hour, and if you cannot be happy yourself, perhaps the next best thing is to make some one else happy.
"Suppose you take away my tea-things, Cinderella, wash them, and do everything downstairs you have to do, and then come back and wait here for Mrs. Blakey."

"Oh, miss, may I really?" cried Liz delightedly.

"Yes, really, and perhaps I will tell you a story," said Miss Holmes, and Liz hurried away all the more speedily to return.

The child interested the lodger, who was sincerely desirous of doing something to improve her condition and lessen her ignorance. But this was not easy, for there is nothing more difficult than for educated persons to make themselves understood by the very ignorant. What is to the one ordinary language and ideas is to the other hopelessly unintelligible, therefore to be mistrusted. Liz had no time to devote to learning in the ordinary way; such arts as reading or writing must for ever remain mysteries to her, but by dressing elementary principles in the garb of a simple story, Miss Holmes had done something towards awakening Liz’s intellectual and moral faculties.

The most terrible thing to combat was her extreme age. Apparently Liz had never been young. On her return, as she crouched close to the fender, this impression seemed to gain on Miss Holmes, making her feel years her visitor’s junior.

"What are your earliest recollections, Cinderella? I mean, what is the thing you can first remember?" she asked.

Liz puckered her brows in an endeavour to rescue something concrete from a chaos of nebulous impression, but the habit of sequential thought was new to her. Before she knew the lodger, things had simply floated through her brain without any order, and apparently by their own volition.

"I dunno," she said slowly. "It’s mostly the streets, and they allus seem cold, an’ wet, an’ dark, ‘cept where the publics was. We, mother an’ me, used to walk about beggin’ till she got coppers enough, then she went into a pub till the lot was gone again."

"You were not much worse off when she left you, than I,” the lodger said, repressing a shudder.

"Not a bit," said Liz, shaking her head, "an’ I didn’t get whacked so much. You see, miss, if I didn’t look miserable enough, she’d pinch me to make me cry, and that fetched the pennies out of people’s pockets. Some are orful soft when they see a kid cryin’.”

"What made you give up begging when you were left alone?" Miss Holmes enquired.

"I didn’t like it," said Liz. "It was just as’ard work as anything else, an’ I’d ad more than enuff on it. I’d rather do somethink real like,” she added.

"You are quite right, Cinderella; real work is a satisfaction in itself, but sham work is a miserable thing. I know ‘tis.”

Liz opened her eyes.

"I don’t think you know much about sham work, miss,” she said.

"Not of your sort, perhaps," said Miss Holmes sadly, "but there are as many kinds of sham work as there are of real work, Cinderella, and every one is tempted to do some occasionally. Now I will tell you the story I promised.”

Liz’s eyes sparkled with delight. A story from the lodger was to her the highest bliss, and for the next hour at least she was a happy child, led by a kindly hand through the fields of beautiful thought for fancy, put into language suited to her stunted intellectual growth.

It was late before Liz got to bed, and no sooner had she laid her weary little head on her hard pillow than she was asleep. She always slept that heavy sleep which comes to the young whose days are passed in hard physical toil; heavy, dreamless, so that when she was roused in the morning, it seemed to her that she had only been sleeping a few minutes.

But this night, even the few minutes seemed shorter than usual when she was awakened by a loud knocking, with which she had heard for some time before it thoroughly roused her. She started up in the little trundle bed and rubbed her eyes, which began to smart in a strange fashion. The kitchen was still dark; but the air was thick and pungent with hot smoke. In another moment the truth burst upon the child. The knocking was not her mistress rousing her, it was some one hammering at the street door without a moment’s cessation, and the smoke and heat told why only too plainly.

With a sob of terror Liz huddled on one or two of her poor garments, and opening the kitchen door, ran into a small room where her mistress slept, and which was situated between the kitchen and scullery. With lightning rapidity, she roused the woman and helped her into some clothing. As the pair approached the staircase they were driven back by the reeking smoke, which seemed to sear them with its hot breath.
"This way," her mistress cried, and seizing Liz by the arm she hastened back to the kitchen, and unbolting the area door they rushed up the steps into the street.

By this time the other inmates had been roused and were standing huddled together in a frightened knot on the opposite side of the road, as with bitter lamentations they watched the fire getting firm hold of the house which contained nearly all their worldly possessions.

"Where's Miss 'Olme?" cried Liz, as her eyes travelled over the group without finding the figure she sought.

"I don't know," said a man. "As I passed I banged on her door loud enough to wake the dead. She must have followed us down."

"Then where is she?" persisted the child shrilly.

No one knew.

With throbing heart Liz dashed wildly amongst the people, but Miss Holme was not there.

"She wouldn't 'ave gone off without knowing as every one was out," Liz said to herself; "she ain't that sort."

She ran up to a policeman who was keeping the crowd from the pathway in front of the burning house.

"There's a lady inside," she said; "second floor, back."

"No, there isn't, my girl, every one is down. Don't you frighten yourself," he added kindly to the excited little creature.

"There is, there is, I tell you. Let me go."

The man caught hold of her as she was darting past him. Quick as thought the old gutter instincts reasserted their supremacy, and turning her head, Liz fastened her teeth in the man's hand.

With an exclamation of pain he released his grasp, and before he could recover from his surprise she was up the steps and had disappeared into the house.

A cry of horror broke from the crowd.

The word went round that there was some one left in the place, and some men rushed to a neighbouring builder's yard for a ladder.

Meanwhile Liz fought her way almost inch by inch through the blinding smoke. She could see nothing, and all the blood in her body seemed to surge to her ears as she laboured heavily for her breath. As she passed a door on the first floor, an angry tongue of flame leaped out at her, luridly dividing the smoke for an instant. She avoided it and sped on her way with one thought filling her mind through it all. Miss Holme had been in the habit of locking her door, but as she was asleep before Liz left the room, it was possible she had not done so. "If she has, oh, what shall I do!" thought the child.

At last the door was reached, and grasping the handle, Liz found to her joy that it yielded to her touch. The room was full of smoke, so that she had to grope her way to the bed, on which, sure enough, she felt Miss Holme. Liz shook her violently without eliciting any response. Evidently she was quite insensible.

Somehow, she scarcely knew how, Liz managed to roll the lodger on to a blanket, which she roughly knotted together. With the corners as a purchase, she half dragged, half carried the inanimate form the few yards which separated this room from the one in front, for Liz knew that it was from the street alone that help could come. In this room the smoke was not so dense, and, as Liz flung up the window, a ringing cheer from the people below heralded the arrival of a long ladder. Eager hands placed it in position, and careless of the flames already darting from the lower windows, a policeman ascended to where the child stood.

"'Ere she is," Liz cried triumphantly; "take hold."

With some difficulty the man succeeded in balancing his burden.

"Wait, I'll be back again directly for you," he said, as he slowly began to descend.

Liz watched him for a second, then suddenly she heard an angry roar behind her, and felt an intolerable heat which scorched her flesh. The object of her love in safety, Liz lost her self-possession. With a cry of terror she sprang on to the window-sill. The policeman had just placed his load in the outstretched arms of those below, and was turning to reascend the ladder, unheeding the flames, which were by this time licking its range, when the child, glancing down into what seemed a pit of fire, lost her balance, and with a piteous cry, fell on to the stones beneath.

A few hours later Liz lay on a bed in a hospital ward.

"No, she wasn't in any pain," she said, "and was quite happy."

So happy she could not understand why Miss Holme looked so sorrowful, or the tall doctor at the foot of the bed so serious. Liz was rather astonished to find that she could not move her legs at all, and that her
hands were not very strong either, still she supposed they would come all right, because the big gentleman and the white-capped nurse looked as though they could do anything between them.

Meanwhile she lay quite still, and was very happy. Indeed, she was so clear and collected in her mind, and her voice sounded so strong, that Miss Holme had drawn this new doctor aside and asked him, as she had already asked the house surgeon, if he was sure nothing could be done. But he shook his head gently, and she returned to the bedside with her eyes full of tears.

"Why, you're cryin'! You ain't 'urt anywhere, are you?" asked Liz anxiously.

"No, dear, I am not hurt anywhere, thanks to your bravery; but, oh, little Cinderella, you are hurt—badly hurt!"

"Am I?" said the child wonderingly; "I don't feel it." Then after a pause she quietly asked: "Do you mean, miss, as I ain't goin' to git better?"

"I am afraid not, Cinderella," said the lodger, gently stroking the poor little rough hand she held in hers.

Liz was quiet for a moment, but no shade of fear crossed her face.

"Don't you trouble about it, Miss 'Olme. I don't mind—much," she said at last.

The doctor looked quickly at Miss Holme.

"Holme!" he said. "Is that your name?"

"Yes; Katherine Holme."

"Good heavens! I might have seen the likeness if I had looked at you before. For the last three years I have been searching all over England for you."

Miss Holme looked at him in astonishment.

"For me?" she said. "I do not know you."

"Did your mother never speak to you of an old friend of hers, a friend long before she met your father? We were boy and girl together, and then—well, circumstances parted us. She married, and I went to walk the hospital;" he finished abruptly.

"You must be Arthur Leslie," said the girl.

"Yes, I am Arthur Leslie. Your mother wrote to me shortly before she died, asking me to befriend her child. I was abroad at the time, and the letter was forwarded on from place to place till it was months old before it reached me. When I got back I hastened at once to

Dawlish, only to find your mother dead and you gone. I followed you up, till at last you disappeared, leaving no trace behind."

Liz had been listening intently to the conversation. She did not quite understand it all, but the fact that here apparently was a friend for Miss Holme was all she cared about. She turned her eyes towards the doctor.

"Are you goin' to be a friend to 'er?" she asked, with a sharp, business-like little air, which sat strangely upon her at such a time.

"Indeed I am, if she will let me," he answered earnestly.

"She's lonely, and often miserable. I shall go all the easier if I know there's some one to look arter 'er," pursued the child, with a return to the old-fashioned, motherly manner she often adopted towards the lodger.

"She need never be lonely any more, and, if it lies in my power to prevent it, she shall never be miserable either," he said, speaking to Liz, but looking at the other girl.

Miss Holme opened her lips to speak, but Liz had not finished yet.

"Is that a promise?" she asked.

"It is a most solemn promise, my dear," the doctor said, laying his hand on her shoulder. "I, too, am a lonely old man, and if my old friend's child will take a daughter's place in my heart, she will make me happier than I have been for many years."

"I know you quite well, Dr. Leslie, although I have never seen you before, and there is no one in the world to whom I could turn so readily as to yourself. I do not think it will be difficult for my mother's daughter to learn to love you. —I have been very unhappy since my mother died."

Miss Holme broke off, but as the two clasped hands across the dying child, Dr. Leslie's sympathetic face showed that he understood.

"That's all right," said Liz's. "Oh, my dear, I am that 'appy!"

She heaved a sigh as she spoke, and the nurse moved a little nearer. Miss Holme gave a half-frightened glance of enquiry at the doctor, who answered it by an almost imperceptible nod.

"Dear little Cinderella, how good you have always been to me," Miss Holme said in a broken voice.

"It won't make nothink, miss. I alse wanted to do something for you," Liz
said, looking at Miss Holme with eyes full of love. "If I 'dun't tumbled off the ladder I shouldn't 'ave been brought 'ere, and then you wouldn't 'a met 'im," she said after a pause.

"No," said Miss Holme. "All my good things I owe to you, dear child."

"Then I'm glad, I'm glad—glad—glad," and with the word still lingering in her throat Liz fell back dead.

THE LAND OF THE KING'S CHILDREN.

The beetling crag of purple mountain ranges guard the beautiful capital of classic Rajputana, "the land of the King's children" and the most ancient native dynasty of India. The romantic scenery which surrounds Jaipur makes an appropriate setting for the dramatic history built up through countless ages on this sacred soil, once trodden, according to Hindu tradition, by the footsteps of the gods, who descended to earth in the likeness of men and originated the royal Rajput race.

The monsoon has swept itself away, and the green robe of earth wears that transient freshness fated to vanish like the dews of dawn beneath the stress of sun and dust, as the last of the lingering clouds disappears on the northern horizon. Foaming streams swirl through the deep *nullahs?* which cleave the stony flanks of the rugged heights, and blue lakes gleam like sapphires from a wild moorland where flaxen plumes of pampas grass rustle in the balmy breezes. Red-legged cranes, wading in the shallow water, toss the sparkling drops over their soft grey plumage, and gorgeous peacocks sun themselves on a pale green carpet of springing corn. Antelopes bound lightly into the dark depths of the tiger-haunted jungle which clothes the lower spurs of the mountain chain; and a trading caravan, armed with the Rajput shield and spear, gives a touch of human life to the lonely landscape, as the horses and camels of the gaily-clad cavalcade relieve the monotony of the scene with scarlet trappings and jingling bells. The beauty of local costume becomes increasingly apparent as we approach Jaipur, and the brilliant garb of the martial-looking men and graceful women transports us in fancy to the palmy days of that historic past when the "City of Victory" reached the meridian of her splendour. Beauty of architecture and wealth of colour combine to render the capital of Rajputana one of the fairest cities in the East. Massive walls and lofty towers conceal the loveliness of the Interior edifices, and the fantastic line of rose-coloured palaces towering above the noble main street, known as the Ruby Chank, dawns upon the eye with the abruptness of a dramatic surprise. The deep flush which bathes the plastered and fretted stone is enhanced by the cloudless blue of the Indian sky, and forms the groundwork of elaborate Arabesque ornamentation in white chunam on every level surface. The Ruby Chank, forty yards in width, runs through the entire length of the town, crossed at right angles by the Amber Chank, another broad thoroughfare lined with buildings of fanciful architecture, and the Maharajah's Palace in the centre of the city covers about a seventh part of the total area.

The beautiful Audience Chamber of white marble, and the stately hall of the nobles supported by rows of polished columns, rise from two outer courts where sculptured fountains play amid clustering palms, and the Silver Palace, built round the central quadrangle, resembles some enchanted pile of fairyland. Rose and white balconies of chiselled embroidery, fragile as spun glass, swing like webs of lace between serial turrets, and the elaborate tracery of oriel windows shows the same delicacy of design and execution. Myriad slender shafts of blue-veined alabaster and rose-tinted stone surrounded by fretted arches carry out the prevailing idea of airy lightness, and the snowy cupolas above that sanctum sanctorum in the heart of the building known as "the Crown of the Palace," look as though a breath would blow them away like balls of thistledown into the blue vault of heaven. Priceless treasures are contained within the walls of the Maharajah's princely abode, and a volume of the Mahabharata, one of the two great epic poems of ancient India, is the gem of the historic collection. This curiously illuminated manuscript, written in Persian character, was executed by command of the Emperor Akbar, who paid a lac of rupees, a sum equivalent to forty thousand pounds sterling, to the scribe who accomplished the laborous task. Golden margins and brilliant colours glow with unfaded freshness, and the delicacy of the poetical calligraphy suggests the utmost refinement of culture. Antique portraits
on silver, copper, shell, and foil decorate the marble walls of the "Hall of Splendour," which forms a noble vestibule to the Shah Mahal, a glass pavilion glittering with crystal chandeliers multiplied by reflection in countless mirrors. Marble alcoves overlook a green pleasure shed by a plantation, where the scarlet stars of blooming poinsettias brighten the gloom of the banyan-trees which form a roof of verdure with interlacing boughs. Across the secluded enclosure another wing of the great palace contains a noble billiard-room, which appears a somewhat incongruous feature in the residence of an Indian prince.

The dining-rooms of the Maharajah and his five wives, though luxuriously furnished, display the usual combination of display and disorder which characterises native life. The ladies have evidently feasted on the floor, and the litter of rice, crumbs, and mysterious scraps of unknown and suspicious-looking articles of local consumption is a gradual accumulation from numerous banquettes eaten on the unswept carpets of richest velvet pile. The spacious gardens with their flowers and fountains, hedges of roses, and thickets of palm, are laid out with extraordinary care and taste on the borders of a broad blue tank, which ripples up to the marble steps and balustrades of a supplementary mansion, known as the Clond Palace, and occupied by a hundred dancing-girls, who belong to the Maharajah's household.

After a glance at the splendid stud of three hundred horses and the gold and silver carriages of State, we visit a cage of immense tigers caught in the Guh Forest, a deep gorge visible in the nearest mountain chain beneath the frowning bastions of Tiger Fort.

The great Temple of Ganesh, the elephant-headed god of wisdom, is the favourite shrine of the Rajput, but the presence of mosques and minarets perpetuates the Moslem influence exercised by the royal house of Delhi, and cemented by an alliance with the daughter of a Rajput Maharajah. The beautiful streets blaze with colour as brown forms, robed in every shade of red, blue, and violet, orange, yellow, and green, gather round fountain and fig-tree; or stroll down the sunny highway in the leisurely fashion of the East. Elephants, camels, and cows mingle with the picturesque throng, and the hungry bearing off innumerable soldiers, who dash past jingling accoutrements on spirited horses, maintains the character of this historic province, where equestrian skill is proverbial, and every man considers himself a warrior and a prince.

Beyond the splendid Saracen's pile of Hawh Mahal, the "Palace of the Winds," occupied by the mother of the monarch, a mounted troop with pennons flying on glittering spears, clatters along in a cloud of dust. An open broughs follows, drawn by prancing bay, and a portly-looking gentleman in frock-coat, pale blue turban, and lavender kids, who rolls back on the velvet cushion, is the divine "Child of the Sun," the haughty Maharajah of Jeypor, whose claim to supernatural origin is recognised by every subject of his realm. A stern, brown face, with full red lips and blazing black eyes, turns towards us for a moment as one lavender hand is laid on the royal brow in acknowledgment of our salutations, but English obtuseness fails to perceive the mystic halo of divinity which is supposed to encircle the Prince's turbaned head. The Royal pedigree may be traced back through a genealogy of one hundred and thirty-one names in a direct line to Kisa, the second son of Rams Chandra, the fifth Avatar of the god Vishnu, and traditionally begotten by the great luminary regarded in the infancy of the world as the ever-present god of India. The chivalrous deeds of Rams Chandra, the priestly hero of the Brahmans in his life as a divine incarnation, are sung in the noble Indian epic of the Rama Yana, which shares the fame of the Mahabharata. As Emperor of Delhi conferred upon the Maharajah of Jeypor the title of "One and a quarter," still proudly borne by his descendants. The curious appellations signified that in consequence of supernatural descent, this historic line exceeded the rest of human kind by the quarter or fourth part in the pedigree which represents the divine element. It was even considered a condensation when a Rajput Princess married one of the Great Moguls, and innumerable female children of Rajput race were annually put to death because no husbands of equal rank could be found for them.

In the early days of India the women were comparatively free and independent, even exercising uncontrolled choice in marriage. This power of selection was called "Swayamvara," and a tournament was arranged in order that the suitors might distinguish themselves in some feat of skill or courage, after which they awaited the decision of the damsel.
Professor Monier Williams states as a fact that through the heroic period of Indian history, and up to the beginning of the Christian era, women had many privileges from which they were subsequently excluded. They were not shut out from the light of heaven behind the folds of a purdah or the walls of a zenana, and Sanskrit dramas confirm the theory that the better classes received some education, and though speaking the provincial dialects among themselves, were addressed by the pundits in Sanskrit, and evidently understood the learned language perfectly. They appeared unveiled in public. The germ of the principle which prescribed female imprisonment in a zenana exists in the famous code of Manu, the mythical law-giver of the Brahmin caste, which declared him to be the grandson of Brahma; but the system of seclusion only became general after the Mohammedan conquest. Then; partly as a security from the tyranny of their conquerors, and partly from the example of Mohammedan customs; the Indian women of the higher classes were rigidly condemned to a perpetual cloistered enclosure. The first use that a Hindu made of his acquired wealth was to shut up the ladies of his household; but the custom obtained by slow degrees in Rajputana.

The present Maharajah, unfettered by the stereotyped ideas of the Indian past, has endowed his capital with an elaborate system of waterworks, a gas holder and a school of art, without detracting from the pictorial beauty of an Oriental city, rich in relics of bygone days and jealously conservative of all that upholds her native dignity. Brilliant bazaars with their artistic specialities of marble and glass mosaic, ebony inlaid with silver, and glittering spangle-work of coloured foil, surround the ruins of the great Hindu observatory, where gigantic azimuth circles and altitude pillars rise from weed-grown courts, in which Brahmin seers and astrologers of olden time worked out their mysterious problems, and cast the horoscopes of the heaven-born race beneath the open canopy of the star-spangled sky.

As we descend the Ruby Chank at sunset, the unearthly radiance which suffuses the magnificent street suggests the origin of its apposite name. A golden haze bathes earth and sky in a sea of glory, and the rose-red palaces absorb rather than reflect the glowing light, until the opaque solidity of each massive edifice appears fused into the crimson translucence of molten jewels, and the unfathomable depths of carmine splendour resemble the red heart of a fiery furnace.

As the pageant of colour fades away, and the purple veil of the brief Indian twilight falls over the city, the clank of chains drowns the mingled noises of the street, as crowds of fettered convicts, escorted by armed warders and mounted soldiers with heavy muskets, return from their daily toil to the great prison outside the walls. Though a few scowling and beetle-browed faces suggest infinite capacities of villany, a juncy air of reckless unconcern distinguishes the majority of the criminals, and from the contemptuous remarks "en passant," made with reference to the "Sahib-loc," and translated for our benefit by the guide, it appears that the Rajput even under the humiliation of imprisonment is still sustained by the proud consciousness of innate superiority to the common herd of men.

The heavy dew still sparkles on the palms and flowers of the great public gardens as we start for the ancient capital of Ambar, from which a medieval Maharajah removed his Court to Jeyapore. Peathy neem-trees border the road, and clumps of bristling cactus give a touch of barbaric fierceness to the rocky landscape. Slender minarets, known as "the Delhi Milestones," mark the seven miles which extend between the two cities, and the sacred landmarks erected for the pilgrims who visited the shrines of Ambar also commemorate the Rajput Sultana, who designed to bestow her hand upon the most powerful monarch of the East, herself a parvenu of mushroom stock when measured by the standard of Rajputana's historic dynasty, with a lineage lost in the mist of ages and old when the world was young.

The fortress-crowned heights contract until they form the walls of a deep ravine, and a vaulted gateway wrenched with moss-grown inscriptions, and encrusted with crumbling sculpture, marks the entrance to the ruined city. A stately elephant, provided by his Highness the Maharajah for the steep ascent to the Palace of Ambar, awaits our arrival; the turbanned mahout feeding his charge with lengths of sugarcane, and then swarming up the trunk to a seat on the huge head. The elephant kneels, and we mount by a flight of steps to the lofty howdah protected by a gilt railing. The swaying motion soon
ceases to be unpleasant, and though our peace of mind is at first disturbed by speculations upon the elephant's feelings when his head is prodded by a sharp goad, we are soon convinced that impenetrable thickness of skull opposes a surface of cast-iron to the weapon in the rider's hand. The road skirts the margin of a blue lake alive with man-eating alligators, whichrear their shark-like heads from the water or bask in the sun on the rocky shore. Brown figures are bathing in the shadowy creeks, apparently undisturbed by the presence of the gruesome monsters, or secure in the unquestionable native belief that the voracious "mugger," however numerous, will only attack solitary individuals, and invariably flee from mankind as a noun of multitude.

A curve in the winding valley discloses the magnificent palace on a precipitous hill which rises above the lake. The vast pile crowds the summit of the mountain with a diadem of towers and cupolas, and dominates the ruined temples, shrines, and streets, scattered through the numerous gorges of the riven crags. The four graceful kiosks of the Royal Zenza rise immediately above the mouldering city, protected by the castellated fortress on the crest of the heights, where a tall white minaret pricks the hot blue sky above the long line of loopholed battlements and frowning watch-towers. The saintly Bishop Heber, whose apostolic labours embraced an extensive range of Indian travel, expressed an opinion that the gorgeous Palace of Ambar, throned on the mountain and mirrored in the lake, formed a scene of transcendent beauty unrivalled in the whole peninsula. Crossing a stone bridge over the narrowing water, the elephant slowly mounts the steep ascendency, and through three majestic gateways of carven stone we reach a noble quadrangle paved with red and white tiles. The Dewan-I-Khas, or Audience Chamber, a beautiful pavilion of snowy marble, flanks "the abode of the men," an edifice rich in barbaric colour and elaborate sculpture, and entered by the finest door in the world. The Hall of Victory glows with brilliant arabesques of birds and flowers, sacred scrolls, and geometrical figures inlaid with coloured stones on panels of alabaster; and the marble bath-rooms, adorned with curious mythological paintings, manifest the same of Oriental luxury in beauty of architecture and ingenuity of construction. The richly-decorated corridors of the zenana convey round a magnificent central hall known as "The Alcove of Light." Glittering sheets of opalescent mica line the walls, and delicately-enamelled garlands of white and yellow jasmine encircle the oval mirror which reflects the many-coloured splendour of the work of the over-arched cupola. The aerial loveliness of this octagonal chamber suggests an evanescent creation of fragile frost-work, or a fabric woven by fairy hands from limpid moonlight and pealil mist. The Temple of Devi, which forms an integral part of the palatial pile, serves as a grim reminder of the barbarous atrocities which existed side by side with the culture and refinement of ancient India. In this famous sanctuary the daily morning and evening sacrifice is still offered at the shrine of an insatiable goddess, whose thirst for blood, though now performed appeased by the slaughter of an animal, formerly demanded a holocaust of human victims. The annual supply was provided by the Maharajahs of olden times from captives taken in battle, or from the numerous subjects who either in court or camp incurred the royal displeasure.

Ruined Ambar and prosperous Jeypur both demonstrate the complex religious associations of the reigning house. The bird's-eye view from the battlements commands the entire extent of the moulding and time-worn city, which lies in the hollow of the hills, where the spiral shrines and crumbling temples of Hindu worship alternate with the domes and minarets of desert mosques, and the marble tombs of Moslem saints. Weeds grow thickly in crevice and cranny, blue spears of aloe pass through broken pavements, and feathery grasses wave above overthrown pillars. Birds build their nests in cavernous cupola or sculptured niche, and the ancient city which enshrines a world of memories is only inhabited by Hindu fakirs and fanatical dervishes, who retain their faith in the occult virtues which the traditions of Brahmin and Mohammedan alike attribute to the forgotten sepulchres and neglected sanctuaries of royal Ambar.

The Glen of the Kings' Tombs, a continuation of the long ravine which pierces the shadowy mountains, and a royal burial-place from time immemorial, wears the same aspect of desolation and decay which characterises the ruined city. An unearthly hush broods over the scene, and the solemn silence remains unbroken even by the muttered "Mantra" of a ghrai
fakir or the nasal chant of a turbaned sheik.

The ancient Maharajas sleep undisturbed in the shadow of the everlasting hills, as though considered past praying for, or superior to the need of priestly intercession. In the tranquil beauty of the Indian evening we look for the last time on the towering palace silhouetted against the golden sky, which turns the blue lake into a sheet of flame. Birds fly home to roost, and the musical trill of the bulbul echoes from a banyan-tree in the cypress-shaded garden of the Royal Zama. The ceaseless use of the goad makes no apparent impression on the brain or the pace of the elephant, until the sight of the waiting carriage excites his sluggish mind, and he pursues the uneven tenor of his way with a joyous trumpeting. In the gathering darkness we jolt along the deserted road, past the invisible "milestones" of the vanquished Moguls, towards the distant row of glittering gaslights which shed the illumination of the nineteenth century over the historic capital of old-world Rajputans.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOUE.

CHAPTER V.

It was half-past ten on Sunday morning: a lovely, brilliant April morning. The four-cracked old bells of Mary Combe church were chiming, and producing thereby a sound which was even more discordantly quavering than their week-day efforts in connection with the clock. But Mary Combe was silent to the sound and respected it, with a respect that the newest bell-metal of the newest bell-founders could never have gained. There were lengthy traditions afoot in the place anent the age and dignity of the church bells, and a proposal made by Mr. Howard to renew them had met with unmeasured disfavour.

The people of Mary Combe were obeying the voice they respected and dully preparing themselves to go to church. For though, as has been said, a calm indifference to sermons was one of the characteristics of Mary Combe, another was the somewhat inconsistent conviction which dwelt in the minds of a large section of that community, that it was a duty to go and "sit under" them with weekly deference. A few individuals, who had a leaning towards slow progression, and much conversation on the way, were already wending their way in groups of twos and threes, which now and then, in the pursuit of a common interest, amalgamated with each other. In the midst of them, threading his way through them with a quick tread that was in odd contrast to their more contemplative gait, walked Dr. Meredith. That he was not going to church, his dress, which was his everyday suit of brown, testified to the eyes which scanned him as he passed. In Mary Combe as in wider spheres, a black coat and a high hat were, if your rank in life permitted you to purchase these articles, absolutely necessary to appear at church in. Even Mr. Sharpe, the somewhat struggling owner of Mary Combe's one shop, managed to produce these credentials. It was also well known and understood that Dr. Meredith was very nearly as busy on Sundays as on other days; therefore he was scarocly ever expected by his fellow pariahoners to join them.

Accordingly the speculation which his appearance originated this morning was not on whether he was or was not coming to church. It dealt with a different matter: whether he was or was not on his way to "Johnson's."

"He's there, I know for certain sure," affirmed Mrs. Green enigmatically, as Dr. Meredith passed her. Dressed in her irreplaceable "Sunday's best"--a gown of wiry black stuff and a bordered shawl--she was accompanying and conversing with a few select friends. "The young gentleman he took the rooms--them two front downstairs ones--last night. And what more likely now than that he's goin' up to see him, and how he likes it, for himself?"

This confused assortment of pronouns was accepted with a murmur of comprehending assent. And all the little group concentrated their attention on Dr. Meredith, who had distanced them by some yards now, and was proceeding rapidly along the street in front of them. In this their example was faithfully followed on either hand, and as the road rose slightly in the direction of the church, Dr. Meredith was in very literal truth the "cyanometer of neighbouring eyes" when he stopped, most satisfactorily in view, and knocked sharply and rapidly with his stick on the door of a house about half-way up the rise.

The house was a little low, substantial
cottage, with three windows on the ground floor. One of these windows had been enlarged a little, and the fact that it was to-day veiled by a substantial shutter, proclaimed that its position in the world was that of a shop-front. The other windows were both smothered in stiffly-starched white lace curtains, between which a few leaves of geraniums were visible.

There were two doors, one on each side of the shuttered window. In somewhat weather-worn lettering, on a strip of black board, over that on the left of the window, was this inscription: "F. Johnson, Baker and Corndeler." It was at the other, the private door of the establishment, that Dr. Meredith had knocked.

For a moment or two his knock was unanswered. He stood tapping one foot on the ground with his impatient movement, while the gratified church-goers came a few slow paces nearer to him. Then his patience seemed to give out, and he knocked again sharply. This time the knock was answered at once.

"Very sorry, sir, I'm sure," said a breathless, good-natured looking woman. "The baby was crying, sir, I didn't hear; and John, he always does lie a bit late, Sundays."

"Yes—"

Dr. Meredith paused, and a little flush mounted into his face.

"Is—my assistant in?" he said abruptly.

"Yes, sir; I'm wishful to do my best for the gentleman, sir. I hope he'll find himself satisfied, sir."

Without waiting for an answer, Mrs. Johnson then entered upon a hasty and somewhat confused explanation of the reasons why she had not been able to take away the young gentleman's breakfast things. The reasons consisted of the claims which the aforesaid baby was still mentioning in loud cries from the back; and with Dr. Meredith's quickly-spoken, "I'm sure it is all right, Mrs. Johnson. This door, I suppose?" she retreated rapidly to still the same.

Dr. Meredith knocked at a door on the right of the stone-flagged passage, and apparently received an answer, for he turned the handle and entered.

"Good morning!" he said shortly, and with the manner of a man who grudges even the civilities which his good breeding demands.

It was a small, square room, producing at first an effect of being furnished wholly starched curtains and a brilliantly crimson carpet, partly hidden by yellow oil-cloth strips. A horseshair sofa and "suite" of chairs draped in antimacassars asserted their presence later; and then a table with a green cloth, and a breakfast tray across one end, and a very stiff, uncomfortable arm-chair by the window, were seen to be the further details the room possessed.

In the very stiff, uncomfortable arm-chair was Dr. Meredith's assistant. The grey-clad figure was disposed at the most comfortable angle the chair allowed, and its possessor appeared to be absorbed in the enjoyment of a yellow-backed novel.

At the sound of the opening door, Althea Godfrey had looked up; at the sound of Dr. Meredith's "good morning," she had looked back at it and turned over a page; at the sound of his footsteps crossing the room, she laid it down slowly and looked at him.

"Good morning!" she responded; and then she promptly took up the book again.

It is a decidedly discomfiting experience to call upon a person who neither asks you to sit down, nor shows any immediate intention of holding any conversation with you. Dr. Meredith felt his position a little embarrassing; the more so, as he could not for the moment make up his mind what to do. He had come to a standstill on one of the yellow oilcloth strips near the window, and there he remained, holding his hat in his hand, and looking uncomfortable and decidedly at a loss.

His assistant turned over another page of the novel with a cracking deliberation. The sun streamed through the starched curtains hotly, falling short of the armchair, but falling full on Dr. Meredith. His much exercised mind hailed the sudden instinct to move out of the glare as an inspiration. He turned, and looked feebly about him for a chair. He found one, seated himself, and put his hat down all at once; and in silence he gazed grimly at the picture on the cover of the yellow novel—a representation of a man and woman feeling some resentment towards each other. At least, the expression depicted on their countenances led to that conclusion.

Five minutes went by thus. Dr. Meredith had made up his own mind, that is to say as far as his first step in the interview was concerned. For some instant no page of the novel had been turned.

"You have come to your senses, I suppose, Jim?"

"You have come to your senses, of course, Althea?"
The two questions were fired off—for the way in which they were asked admits of no better description—absolutely simultaneously. But not trace of a smile at the coincidence appeared on either of the two faces steadily staring at each other. Each was waiting for the other’s answer. None was forthcoming. Althea Godfrey closed her lips firmly. Dr. Meredith closed his slowly, and there was a pause, during which Dr. Meredith made a sidelong movement of impatience in his chair, and his assistant settled herself more comfortably in hers. She had laid the book on her knee, and she threw back her head now, and scanned the ceiling with an expression of coldly calm expectancy which would have chilled the battle armour of a Bonaparte. Dr. Meredith felt first many sizes too large for the room; and then furiously angry with himself for feeling so. He dragged his chair a little further away, and with a gesture that meant many things: “I am absolutely determined, Althea!” he said firmly.

“Indeed!” was the answer, given without one movement of the handsome head from its position.

“I have been looking out trains,” he added in a louder and slightly less firm tone.

“Indeed!”

“You will give up this lunatic plan, and be ready to leave here with me in time for the six-forty to town,”

“It is very evident that you have not come to your senses, Jim.”

Althea Godfrey moved her head and altered her position deliberately. As she spoke she sat very upright, her hands one on each arm of her chair.

“If you think,” she said, “that the hours that have elapsed since I saw you have changed my mind, Jim, you’re altogether mistaken. Here I am, and here I stay. I think I speak clearly!” she added, with a sarcastic inflexion in her voice.

“Quite!” he answered grimly, and then he paused and seemed for a moment to be somewhat dubiously casting about for words to go on with. “I shall be compelled,” he went on at length, in a voice that seemed to try and supply the place of confidence by extra volume, “to take stronger measures. I am sorry to say this, Althea.”

“What are they?” she said. “Do you contemplate taking me by my hair and personally dragging me out of Mary Combe? Do you think of urging on the populace to cast me forth as an impostor? Or do you think of summoning the arm of the law to remove me forcibly? All of these courses are open to you, Jim. Let me recommend a simultaneous trial of the three. It would make an excellent advertisement for you, you know, besides disposing of me.”

Dr. Meredith gazed and then choked in undignified and helpless wrath. His feelings were so far beyond the reach of any words that he could only, for some moments, sit staring at the upright figure opposite to him with a blankly vacant face which was growing a trifle pale with despair. At last he said, in a tone which held a curious mixture of aggressiveness and hopelessness:

“I do not intend, Althea, to leave this room until I have shown you the folly, the indescribable madness of this frame of mind on your part.”

Althea Godfrey leaned back in her chair and crossed her feet carelessly. A tiny smile twitched the corners of her mouth, and she said coolly:

“I shall be delighted to have you stay, Jim, as long as you wish. Pray do so. But if you imagine that your presence will have the smallest effect on my intention, you were never more mistaken in your life. You will not mind,” with a mischievous light in her eyes, “the fact that I have an engagement this morning, and must therefore leave you alone here. I am to be fetched to Orchard Court at twelve.”

Althea spoke with a quiet calmness that was not without a suspicion of triumph. The words had a curious effect on her listener. All at once the arguing, angry, determined Dr. Meredith seemed to disappear, and quite another personality took its place. They had suggested to him the fact that she had, on the night before, seen one of his patients, and for the moment everything else was swept away in keen professional cares and interests. His face was as eager as his voice as he moved his chair with a jerk a little nearer to her, and said:

“You saw the Mainwarings child, then?”

“Yes.”

“Much amiss?”

“The injuries are serious about the head and shoulders.”

“It'll go on all right, I suppose! You don't mean that it's so serious as that?”

“Oh, no. It'll pull through with care, all right. But it will be frightfully disfigured, poor mite, I'm afraid.”

“Disfigured!” Dr. Meredith's tone expressed compassionate concern. “That
poor, silly little Mrs. Mainwaring! what will she do! The child’s beauty has been the chief delight of her heart. Conscious, is it?"

"No."

"Much better not."

During this short colloquy Dr. Meredith’s changed personality seemed to have affected his assistant also, for she was as altered as he was. All her antagonistic attitude was in the background. She was interested, eager, and even cordial in voice and manner. She seemed to rely on his interest, and he to confide in her sympathy, as surely as if no difficulty or dissensions had ever been known between them. The two were for the moment one, resting securely on a common ground.

But the common ground was only a little tiny island in the sea of their contention. They stepped away from it, back into the deep water again with a unanimity that was almost ludicrous. Althea Godfrey resumed her coolly defiant resistance again instantly; Dr. Meredith became once again his irate, determined self.

She took up the yellow book as if it had been a weapon; she straightened himself as if to prepare for a charge. There was a little silence. Then she said airily:

"It must be getting on for twelve, now, I should think!"

"Do I understand then, Althea, that you are set upon following your own self-willed, senseless course?"

The question came sharply on her remark, but her answer followed more sharply yet.

"Without the adjective, Jim, you do! I intend to stay here and help you; with your goodwill or without it."

"If I refuse to accept your help?"

"You can’t! The whole place has heard of me as your assistant. Your own household have seen me in that capacity. You can’t refuse work to me without any reasons after that, and you equally cannot give your reasons!"

There was in her voice a half-mocking inflexion of triumph, which, together with the dreadful conviction that her words were true, exasperated Dr. Meredith’s inner self-control to a point beyond his power of restraint.

"I think," he said in a voice tremulous with the rage which he could no longer keep out of it, "I think, Althea, that if your convictions of duty and propriety are so diametrically opposed to mine, we are scarcely likely to make each other’s lives very happy."

"At this moment, we shouldn’t make a placid household, certainly!" she retorted, looking up as she spoke with the quietest nonchalance into his working, angry face.

"It’s not I!" she added demurely.

Fired to greater passion by the sight of her unassailable coolness, Dr. Meredith struck the top bar of the nearest chair with his clenched fist.

"It will be your doing if we part over this!" he cried almost fiercely.

"I beg your pardon, Jim; it will be yours, distinctly! I never alluded to the subject, whatever I may have thought of the prospect before me since I have had the pleasure of knowing you better," she added, with a quick flash of her spirited grey eyes, which were full upon him.

"Since you have so thoughtfully introduced it," she went on, "I may as well tell you at once that my views are precisely the same as yours."

"I am thankful to hear it," he said, looking hurriedly about him for his hat. This had somehow rolled behind a chair and established itself in a corner very difficult to get at.

His assistant’s eyes twinkled audaciously, while Dr. Meredith awkwardly and anxiously knelt down and proceeded to try to extricate it.

"Understand, Jim," she said, as he rose, crimson with wrath and stopping, his duty hat in his hand, "the fact of our unsuitability to each other is the only one under heaven on which our views possibly can agree."

Without a word, he unceremoniously put on his dusty property just as it was left the room, and left the house.

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HOME NOTES.

AND

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DUTCH STEW.—Have about two pounds of shin of beef and cut into three-inch squares, and set it on to stew with a pint and a half of cold water or stock, and a large slice of onion. When these begin to boil, add a teaspoonful of salt, less or more according to taste; also some long peppers, and simmer gently for one and a half hours. Prepare some young white-hearted cabbage, which has been parboiled; squeeze very dry in a colander, and lay with the beef. Let the stew cook for another hour, and serve. Those who like the spiced stews should add some mixed spices and a few bits of lean bacon to the above recipe.

SNOWDON TART.—Mix four ounces of cornflour with four ounces of flour, a teaspoonful of baking-powder, and a dessertspoonful of castor sugar. With the tips of the fingers rub this into three ounces of butter, and make into a dough with the yolk of an egg and a gill of milk. Roll out the paste and lay it on a greased plate, turning up the edge an inch high all the way round, and ornamenting it to taste. Prick the bottom well, and then bake in a quick oven. Nearly fill with stewed fruit, and before serving ornament the top with the white of an egg beaten to a stiff froth. This makes a pretty dish and is a change from ordinary fruit tart.

CAROLINA PUDDING.—Wash carefully three tablespoonfuls of rice, and put it on to boil with a quart of milk; sweeten to taste, and flavour it either with a bay-leaf or a stick of cinnamon. Let the rice cook gently beside the fire until the milk is all absorbed, then turn it out into a basin, removing the lemon rind or bay-leaves. Stir into it two well-beaten eggs and a dozen bleached and chopped almonds. Butter a mould and pour in the mixture, baking it in a quick oven for half an hour. Before removing it from the oven insert a knife, and if it comes out clean the pudding is cooked. Serve either plain or with wine sauce or cream.

CHEESE SALAD.—Salads are always popular, and any novelty in serving them is appreciated. Arrange the salad in a bowl, using lettuce, watercress, etc., and then make a good mayonnaise sauce. Take some soft new cheese and pound it in a mortar, moistening it by degrees with the mayonnaise. When thoroughly amalgamated, pour over the salad, garnish with tomatoes or radishes, and serve.

It is told of Daniel Drew, a well-known New York merchant, that, remaining one evening late in the office, and having occasion to use the safe, he permitted the cashier to go home, remarking that he would close the safe, and fix the combination on the word "door." But when the cashier undertook to open the safe in the morning, he found the lock refused to yield to the magic "door." He tried and tried again, but without success. Finally, happening to remember that Daniel's early education had been neglected, he attributed his ill-luck to poor orthography. He therefore tried the lock upon "dore"—still no success—and then upon "door," with no better fortune. Finally, becoming disgusted, he proceeded to the St. Nicholas, routed "Dan'l" out of a beautiful morning nap, and, as he stuck his nightcap out of the door, this colloquy ensued: "Mr. Drew, I can't open the safe on 'door.' You must have concluded to change the word." "Change the word! Notin' o' the kind, I shut it on 'door.' " "Are you sure, sir?" "Sure, sir! Of course I'm sure." "Well, perhaps, Mr. Drew, I don't spell the word right. How did you spell it?" "Spell it! Any fool can spell 'door'-d-o-a-r-e, doare, of course, sir. If you can't spell 'door,' sir, you're no cashier for me. Pack up your duds and go out of the 'door.' " And, shutting the door in the cashier's face, Daniel in a passion returned to his bed, and the clerk to the safe. Armed with the open sesame of "doare," however, the safe flew open without further trouble; and, when Daniel arrived, mollified by a good breakfast, he advised his cashier that he might keep his place, provided he would improve his time and "go to spellin'-skool in the evenin'." A CORRESPONDENT asks whether ants talk, and states that one day he saw a drove of small black ants moving apparently to new quarters, each carrying some of the household goods. Every time they met in the way they put their heads together as though they were chatting. To investigate the matter he killed one, and the eye-witnesses of the murder hastened away and laid their heads together with every ant they met. Then they immediately turned back and fled on another course, as if it had been said: "For the King's sake and for your safety, do not go there, for I have left a monster just behind, that is able to destroy us all at one blow." How, asks the writer, was the news communicated if not by speech?
The two questions were fired off— " for purposes of ventilation the upper part of windows is left slightly open, and through this, when the occupant of the chamber is plunged in slumber, the end of a bamboo wand is thrust, having attached thereto a small bag filled with a substance whose exhalation is powerfully narcotic. When the sleeper is thus put beyond all chances of interference, the operator, who, stripped to the skin, has taken the precaution to oil his person thoroughly, in case of possible attempt at capture, slips through the open window, and has time leisurely to help himself to whatever he wants. The influence of the opiate wearing off, the happy dreamer wakes to find morning light that his clothes and property have all vanished. It may be asked at such times: "Where are the servants?" and echo answers, "Where?"

A PROMINENT American lawyer tells of a compromise he once made on behalf of a certain railway company with an Erie County farmer whose wife had been killed at a railroad crossing. A few months after the terrible bereavement, the husband, who had sued the company for five thousand dollars' damages, came into the office and accepted a compromise of five hundred dollars. As he stuffed the wad of bills into his pocket, he turned to the lawyer and cheerily remarked: "Vail, dot's not so bad after all. I've got six hundred tollar and a good seal better wife as I had afore."

LITTLE PUDDINGS.—Take half a pint of soft bread-crumbs, and soak for half an hour in half a pint of warm milk, add half a tablespoonful of soft butter, a tablespoonful of cream, ditto sugar, a pinch of salt, a few currants, and a well-beaten egg. Flavour the pudding with nutmeg or cinnamon, and bake in small cups. Whilst baking, stir once or twice to prevent all the currants from settling at the bottom of the cups.

AMONG the strangest peculiarities of Tangier, Morocco, and one that at one forces itself on the newcomer, is the total absence of any kind of wheeled vehicle. In the entire city—which is an example of all the others in the empire—there is not even a donkey-cart, for the streets are much too narrow to admit of their use, and transportation of passengers and merchandise is effected upon the backs of donkeys, horses, mules, and camels, according to the weight and distance. There are but few streets into which a loaded camel could enter, and not more than two in which he could pass another loaded camel or horse. Some of the smaller streets are so narrow that even the panniers of a donkey would scrape upon either side, so that in the city itself the transportation devolves upon donkeys for the side streets, and upon horses and mules for the main thoroughfares.

This anecdote is told of that enormously wealthy man, the late Commodore Vanderbilt. At Saratoga, on one occasion, when sitting on the piazza of a hotel, a somewhat over-dressed lady approached and claimed his acquaintance. The Commodore rose and talked affably with her, while his wife and daughter sniffed the air with scorn. "Father," said the young lady, "the Commodore resumed his seat, "didn't you remember that vulgar Mrs. B—— is the woman who used to sell poultry on at home?" "Certainly," responded the old gentleman promptly; "and I remember your mother when she used to sell root-beer at three cents a glass over in Jersey, when I went up there from Staten Island peddling oysters out of my boat." As this homely reply was heard by a group surrounding the family, there was no further attempt at aristocratic airs on the part of the ladies during that season.

FRIED CHICKEN is a pleasant change from the usual "roast fowl." Prepare the bird as for roasting, cut it into joints, and remove the breastbone. Wipe each piece with a damp flannel, dredge it well with highly-seasoned flour, and fry in hot lard till brown and tender. Be careful the fat is not too hot, so that it will burn the fowl before it is cooked. Have a boiled cauliflower ready, place it on a dish, and pour a good brown gravy over. Arrange the fried chicken round, and over all scatter a little grated cheese. This is a very dainty dish, and one that may be made from the foreign fowls that we buy so cheaply in our large towns.
HOME NOTES.

KEMBLE in private life was courteous and hospitable, and his conversation was enriched by a wide range of classical and general knowledge; his grave, Cervantine humour is shown pleasantly in the following story. Kemble and a friend, having dined together, went to Drury Lane, the manager wishing to give his ultimate instructions for the night. As they entered the hall of the theatre, some grenadiers standing by the fireplace, seeing the manager, respectfully took off their hats; on which Kemble instantly borrowed a guinea of his friend, and with a wink gravely advanced and addressed the soldiers. "Soldiers," he said, in his grand declamatory manner, "when Cato led his army across the burning deserts of Libya, he found himself quite parched up with the intense drought—In plainer words, he was very dry. One of the soldiers, hearing this, stepped unperceived out of the ranks, and presently brought him some water in a steel cap. What do you think Cato said to the soldier? I'll tell you. 'Comrade,' said he, 'drink first yourself.' Now, I dare say Cato never in his life led braver men than I at present see before me; therefore, to follow so great an example, you drink that for me." So saying, he put the guinea into the hands of the sergeant, the soldiers shunting. "God bless your honour!" as Kemble and his friend retired to the dressing-room.

SCALLOPED TOMATOES.—This is a good way of cooking the popular vegetable, especially the foreign kind, which is becoming plentiful and cheap now. First scald the fruit so as to peel it easily, and cut it small. Line a pie-dish with breadcrumbs, then a layer of tomato, scatter pepper and salt over and some pieces of butter. Then put another layer of breadcrumbs and tomatoes, and so on till the dish is full. Scatter a little chopped parsley over the top, then a thick layer of bread-crumbs, strew bits of butter over, and bake.

"I AM here, gentlemen," explained the pickpocket to his fellow prisoners, "as the result of a moment of abstraction." "And I," said the incendiary, "because of an unfortunate habit of making light of things." "And I," chimed in the forger, "on account of a simple desire to make a name for myself." "And I," added the burglar, "through nothing but taking advantage of an opening which offered in a large mercantile establishment in town." But here the warden separated them.

EDISON, the great electrician, displayed an inventive imagination even in his earliest years, if we are to believe the story told of him by a writer in St. Nicholas. Astonished at the results of a goose sitting on a nest of eggs, the inventor thought to increase the brood by a device of his own. One day the boy was missed from his usual haunts. Messengers were sent in search of him, and found him curled up in a nest he had made in the barn. It was filled with goose and hen eggs, upon which he was sitting trying to hatch them! Edison was more successful in another youthful experiment which he made. His wanderings brought him, at seventeen years of age, to the Cincinnati Office of the Western Union Telegraph Company, where his devotion to electricity confirmed the nickname "Luny," which clung to him even until his fame was established. "We have the craziest chap in our office," said the telegraph manager to a Cincinnati editor; "he tries all sorts of queer things. I wouldn't be surprised if he should be great some day. Let me tell you his last prank. We had been annoyed for some time by cockroaches. They infested the sink. They don't now. 'Luny' settled them! He just ran two parallel wires round the sink, and charged one with negative and the other with positive electricity; bread crumbs were then scattered, and when Mr. Cockroach appeared and put his little feet on the wires, ashes were all that were left to tell the tale."

AUSTRALIAN BEEF AND DERBY SAUCE make a very good dish on a warm spring day, when any hot meats are objected to. Cut some pressed beef from a small tin into half-inch slices and serve with this sauce. Chop up finely a tablespoonful of parsley, a teaspoonful of eschalot, and two powdered anchovies. Mix these well with pepper and salt, and a little mustard. Whip up the yolk of an egg slightly, add two tablespoonfuls of oil to it by degrees. Beat all the ingredients well together until the sauce is thick and smooth.

Once when playing cards with the Lord Mayor, who was an enormously rich brewer, Bean Brummel, as he rose and coolly pocketed the money, said, "Thank you, sir; for the future I shall never drink any porter but yours." "I wish, sir," replied the brewer, "that every other rogue in London would tell me the same." It is needless to say that the Bean never tried to be funny at this gentleman's expense again.
"Our party," we read in "Across France in a Caravan," was to consist originally of Peggie, the collie James, and myself. Peggie was to do the cooking; James—well, James was to have certain undefined duties, which, now I come to think over it, after it is all finished, never were exactly defined; for the most part he enacted the rôle of distinguished passenger. But of course it would have been out of the question to have left him behind. One might as well have thought of leaving me. As for myself, I was to look after the horses when we had got them. I didn't know very much about horses, to tell the truth, at that time, except how to actually drive them, and perhaps take a stone out if it got into a shoe on the road; and when I had studied various books on horses and their ailments—the chief part of said books being devoted to the ailments—and had heard all that my more horsey friends had to tell me about them, I must own that I began to feel a little tremulous—and to revolve in my mind whether it wouldn't perhaps be better to get a traction-engine instead as being less delicate. And I was to make myself generally useful to Peggy—and, I suppose, to James.

Some years ago in Paris, some people were discussing the discoveries of Columbus in the presence of the late Lord Lytton, the British Ambassador. Colom, shal I explain, is the French for Columbus, and la colombe is the French for "the dove." "It is very singular," some one observed, "that a colombe discovered the old world, and le Colom discovered the new."

Freshleigh: "I hear that young Freshleigh has gone and married some obscure person without any family at all, don't you know?" Wiseleigh: "What, a misalliance?" Freshleigh: "No, that's not the name; a Miss Thompson or Tomkins, or something like that, I think."

Some absurd stories have been told of judges thinking aloud. The following story is told by one of the Registrars of the Court of Chancery of a great Chancellor: A barrister, whom he had not previously heard, was retained to argue before him. The counsel was a man of ability, but began in a very confused, floundering manner. Lord Chancellor: "What a fool the man is!" After a while he got more cool and collected. Lord Chancellor: "Ah! not such a fool as I thought." He quite recovered himself, and admirably. Lord Chancellor: "Is that I was the fool."

The turbaned Hindoo plastically immovable amid side-splitting jokes, or the oblique-eyed Celestial whose smile never strays beyond "childlike and bland" proportions, have, in spite of an apparent lack of boisterous mirth, a very real fund of humour of no mean quality. There is a very good story told in a Persian jest-book that is worth repeating. One of his neighbours went to a great dignitary and asked the loan of a rope. The great man went into his house, and after a little time had elapsed he returned to the would-be borrower and told him that the rope was in use in tying up the flour. "What do you mean?" said the neighbour. "How can a rope be used to bind up flour?" "A rope may be put to any use if I do not wish to lend it," retorted the other, which, whatever may be the Eastern ideas about such matters, according to Western lights was a very droll snub.

The mechanism of the leg and foot of a chicken or other bird that roosts on a limb is a marvel of design. It often seems strange that a bird will sit on a roost and sleep all night without falling off, but the explanation is perfectly simple. The tendons of the leg of a bird that roosts is so arranged that when the leg is bent at the knee its claws are bound to contract, and thus held with a sort of death-grip the limb road which they are placed. Put a chicken's foot on your wrist, and then make the bird sit down, and you will have a perfect illustration on your skin that you will remember for some time. By this singular arrangement, seen only in such birds as roost, they will rest comfortably and never think of holding on, for it is impossible for them to let go till they stand up.

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Kemble in private life was courteous and hospitable, and his oration was enriched by a wide range of eloquent and amusing speeches. It is needless to say that the Bean never tried to be funny at this gentleman's expense again.

One of the soldiers, hearing the intense drought—literally, he found himself quite parched up with thirst. He cut it small. Line a pie-dish with bread-crumbs and bake. Scald the fruit so as to peel it easily, and add some powdered pepper and salt over and some pieces of parsley over the top, then a thick layer of tomato sauce. Chop up finely a tablespoonful of anchovies. Mix these well with the sauce and bake. This is a good Australian Beef and Derby Sauce.

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CHAPTER XXXV. FALLEN LOW.

For some time after Dora left them, Forster and Penelope went on without speaking a word, without even looking at each other, but they were intensely conscious of each other's presence. They soon forgot all about Dora, realising only that they were walking alone through the wood with the mystery of evening enfolding them around. It was more than a mile that they had to go before reaching the end of the path. Here a low stile had to be climbed, and Forster paused as if he were anxious to prolong the enchantment of the place and moment.

"Dora is right," he said at last, "we must go. I have stayed here too long. Do you know that I have never dared to tell you what brought me here?"

"No," said Penelope in a low tone. She was wondering at herself and at her own incapacity to feel proud.

"When I was lying ill with that fever at the settlement, I could not get your face out of my mind. I was angry with Philip for leaving you, though I knew at the same time that I had urged him to do so. I argued that if he loved you as you should be loved, he could not have left you, and I told him so."

"What did he say?" asked Penelope quickly.

"He said nothing. His silence gave consent. Then I reminded him how he had sought you out, and how he had almost forced your consent to his suit."

"Did he answer?"

"Oh, he assented again. I was light-headed, perhaps, and said things which I had better have kept to myself. Philip only took refuge in silence. I urged him to come home with me, but he merely said that he must take my place. Tell me, Princess, what is the mystery of your—but I am taking a great liberty."

"Yes, but—but I would rather you knew it. I told Philip all the truth. I did not love him."

"But then, why—?"

"My uncle is bound to me with a love which is more to me than a father's love. He did everything for me when my own parents neglected me. He told me he would choose my husband. I agreed, and—he chose Philip."

Forster's whole face expressed surprise.

"You never loved him!"

"No, the law made me Philip's wife, that is all," and she raised her head proudly.

"But did Philip know it? Did he know you did not love him?"

"Yes, Philip knew it. He believes—"

"He never said a word."

"He cannot, I have never deceived him. He deceived himself. He has—"

"I never knew," murmured Forster, "I did not guess, I thought he was to blame, that—?"

Forster walked slowly along the narrow path, where but one person could walk, and he now saw all the tremendous danger he had run into. He felt he must be alone, so presently he paused again.

"Do you think Dora is coming back? I had forgotten her. It is getting dark. I must go back for her. I must go at once. You had better not wait for me."
There was a dull, aching puzzle of thought going on in Forster's mind. Philip was, then, not to blame. He felt almost sorry that his excuse was gone. On the other hand, Penelope Winskell was also a sufferer, and he loved her; but she was the slave of a principle, taught her by a proud, hard man. The Duke must have either gone against his conscience, or he must be devoid of all imagination. He had ruined two lives. All this passed through Forster's mind, as he strode back and once again reached the stile and plunged into the wood. He must be alone and think it out. "Philip" was the word that rang through his brain, as if the trees were calling it, and as if the evening breeze echoed it—"Philip."

If another had told him that he would ever court his friend's wife, and love her with a love that was strong and incompatible with honour, he would not have believed it. Now he viewed the bare, naked truth unmasked; he loved her, and he was wrongdoing Philip. Suddenly Penelope's words came back to him, bringing with them new temptations. She was Philip's wife only in name. The very thought filled him with despair. Could the law be somehow put away, and could two beings be thus saved from misery? To put against this was the other horrible thought that Penelope had vowed sacred vows, intending merely to benefit by Philip's money.

To a Bethune this was a revolting idea. Forster himself had always been above any covetous idea. He loved because he loved; poverty had no fears for him, but now he found himself loving a woman who had indeed stooped very low for money! On the other hand, it was impossible to think of Penelope and vulgar greed at the same moment. Her motive lay deeper, in a pride of the old house, a pride of family, a passionate rebellion against being swept away from the face of her own land, the land where she was bred and born, and where her ancestors had lived.

This was the strange puzzle which presented itself to him. For Penelope to remain in her present condition was, to him, a greater moral sin than it would be if she consented to give all up, and go far away with him. She was now taking Philip's money, she was deceiving the world, and she was deceiving herself; but what would the world say at the vulgar ending which Forster contemplated. They would hear that he had run away with his friend's wife. They would not know that by so doing he would be saving her from worse disgrace.

The law would relieve Philip of all obligation, and his money would revert to him. He would have suffered untold misery, but then what happiness could he expect in the future?

All at once there was a noise of breaking twigs. A man jumped across a narrow ditch and stood before him. Forster recognised Jim Oldcorn.

"Good evening, sir! You've cum a bit late to see the land. Oim late myself, br-awm seeking the master."

"I was looking for my sister; she stayed behind to pick some ferns," said Forster.

"The lady missed her way. She didn't mind what she was dressed. It's look the master. He's very difficult of mindin' ."

"You mean the King!"

"Ause, the King o' Bothery; he noo king o' his mind, he's a stupid baboon at times, with his imag' and money gettin'."

"There's been changes at the Palace," said Forster, hardly knowing what he said.

"So there be, gran' servists and the like; but it's unnatural. The King can't alter it. To be sure he cud turn 'im out: but, however, he takes to laufin' and says he cud be rich as any of them."

"His brain is turned, I fear, since the loss of his son!"

"That's it, sir. The law calls he mad, but he's cannily sharp at toimes. I mun tell ye his idea. He says he's gotten money hidden away, and he keeps looking and looking. Oh! 'is vairr crazy. I mun go on, sir, and seek him, for he gave me the slip to-day."

"If you see my sister, Oldcorn, perhaps you'll be good enough to set her on the right way. I ought to have met her before now."

Oldcorn assented, then adding that the King was sure to take another path than the one they were on, he plunged deeper into the wood and disappeared.

Forster now decided to go back to the spot where he had left Dora, and then to return to the Palace in case he had missed her.

He had not gone very far when he was suddenly aware of a strange, hobbling figure approaching him. He knew at once it must be the truant King, but he, too, was startled by the first sight of Penelope's father.

The old man looked more like an evil gnome than a gentleman of long descent, and certainly the idea of kingship was almost ludicrous in connection with the crippled figure attired in patched and dirty fustian.
Forster determined not to speak to him, unless he spoke first, so he courteously turned off the path to let the old man pass him.

But the King had other intentions; he peered at him with the evil look of some fictitious being, and suddenly seized his arm.

"Have you seen Oldcorn? Which way did he go?"

Forster took off his hat and answered quietly:

"Your servant took a path which crosses this one five or ten minutes farther back."

The King laughed immoderately, and rolled out a string of oaths which made Forster recoil. This was Penelope's father.

The thing seemed an impossibility.

"He'll be in a fine way. Ah! I've given him the slip. But I've had a young lady as my companion. Your sister. Hey! Don't be frightened. I've not done her any harm. She's a useful girl. Tell me, don't they say up there that I'm crazy?"

"Yes, sir," said Forster impatiently, for he was now really anxious about Dora.

"Don't believe a word of it. Crazy! Never was saner in my life. I've found it. Ah! I can laugh at them now. I can do you a good turn, too, for your sister's sake, because she's a useful girl, and she isn't silly or afraid. Listen."

"If you'll excuse me, sir, I must go on and find my sister. She is not accustomed to be alone in this wood."

"Hang your southern politeness! The girl's gone home, I tell you. She's gone to the Palace—my Palace. Eh! It's you I want. You are not here for nothing. Eh! No one comes here without some purpose."

"I came on a visit, sir. If you object—"

"I'm no one now, of course not. I'm mad—but I can see some things. You're in love with my girl. Oh, I've seen you. I know the soft ways of your fine gentleman. Penelope is caught this time; she's in love with you. Hang the girl, why did she marry that other fellow? Let him go—a mere tradesman. Do you think Penelope will ever care for him? Never, I know the Winskell pride."

"Excuse me, sir," put in Forster indignantly, "but you are speaking of my friend, one of the noblest men on earth."

"A man with no pedigree! Do you know what our pedigree can show! None of your bastard business. An old true pedigree, one that makes you south English nobility wince—and now it's lost, lost."

It seemed ridiculous to hear this tattered, crippled man boast of a pedigree, and yet it was true, the Winskells could put many kingly descents to shame.

"I despise pedigrees," exclaimed Forster angrily; "what does long descent mean, except to be more of gentleman than others who are less well born, and why does accident of birth make one free to be false and to counsel crime?"

Forster paused, he was his own accuser and his own judge.

"I must go on and find my sister," he added, calming down.

"Ah! you hot-tempered gentleman, so you wince, do you? You don't mind holding the rod and letting the fish dangle, but you won't bring it to land! You draw fine distinctions, so do the poachers here when they snare my game, but I'm even with them and with the thieves who steal my sheep. Look you, young man, they go and alter the mark on my lambs' ears, but they don't know I put another on 'em. Get along with you. A fine hero you make!"

Saying the King hobbled off, apparently in high displeasure, leaving his guest smarting under his words. It is truth, not falsehood, that offends.

Forster had fallen from his high pedestal, and now he knew it. All these past days, seeming so beautiful, so delicious, he had been false to his professions, but now his eyes were open. Even a selfish old man like this swearing King of Rothery saw through him.

He was suddenly stopped in the rush of assaulting thought by the sight of the disturbed earth, on which still lay a clump of uprooted ferns. Here Dora had stopped, and something had prevented her from finishing her work. He stooped down and noticed his own handkerchief lying there forgotten. Then another assailing thought struck him. He had brought Dora here, and he had allowed her to be in close contact with ideas far removed from all he had ever taught her. This thought seemed almost more terrible to him than even his own backsliding. Dora—whose mind was as pure as crystal, with no stain to be found in it—had been brought by him to witness his own sin. His sister! Ever since she could lips and toddle she had followed him, and believed in him.

"We must go," he said aloud, rising quickly, "we must go from this place of evil enchantment," but he added in a low voice, lulled by the sweet sound of the words, "My Princess, my Princess, cannot I take you with me?"
CHAPTER XXXVI.

Penelope, too, was living in a land of enchantment. She was sitting by the open window, with her hands crossed on her lap, gazing out into the gathering twilight, when she heard a knock at her door and Dora rushed in. Her dress was torn and muddy, her hair dishevelled, and her eyes looked troubled.

"So you have come back, dear. Where did your brother find you, Dora?"

"He didn't find me. Where is he?"

"He went to look for you, but he will guess you are safe. What is the matter, Dora?"

The girl sank on a low footstool near the Princess.

"Oh! dear Princess, I am glad I am back here again. I met your father in the wood."

Penelope looked a little disturbed.

"Did he frighten you? His mind is quite astray. Even Jim Oldcorn cannot always keep him in sight, now that he is better able to walk. You must not take any notice of his words."

"But I could not help it; and oh, Princess, he made me promise not to tell any one."

"To tell what?" said Penelope impatiently.

"Where all that gold is concealed."

The Princess laughed.

"That is an old cruse of his, dear. He fancies there is hidden treasure on the estate. As if uncle would not have known it! He is always——"

"But I saw it—yes, I saw it, Princess. It is not a dream. I am awake. See, I am really awake! But I must not tell you where it is—only I saw it, I may say that."

Penelope rose slowly from her chair and almost shook Dora. She held her arm firmly as if she would, as if she must know the truth.

"Dora, you are dreaming. It is false. We are poor, very poor. We have long been unable to—— till I married, I mean."

"Then perhaps it was your husband's money which the King had hidden, if he is not in his right mind; but, indeed, dear Princess, don't be angry with me; I saw it, indeed I did."

Dora felt quite confused by Penelope's excitement.

"Some brass coins he took you in with. The tradition is false, utterly false. If it had been true my uncle would long ago have found it out. Do you think he would have sacrificed his life, my life, for a falsehood? No, no, I did it for him, and for uncle."

Penelope, who was so seldom excited, now seemed to forget she was talking to a girl who knew nothing of her secret, and Dora was struck dumb with astonishment. After her past fright she still felt a little unnerved, and this seemed the last blow.

"I am very sorry I mentioned it, Penelope, I never guessed you would mind. Why should you? If it is true you will be richer for the discovery, and if it is not true, then some one ought to prevent the King hiding his own money away."

"Where is it?" asked Penelope, more quietly.

"I mustn't tell that. I promised, but——"

"And you expect me to believe it! Nonsense."

Dora stood up very straight and raised her head slightly. In spite of Forster's long striving after perfect equality, he had not quite made his sister forget she was a Bethune.

"I have never told a lie in my life," said the girl.

The words recalled Penelope at last to the duty of politeness.

"Forgive me. Yes, I do believe you saw something, but not gold, anything that is really of consequence."

"I saw gold, but of course I cannot tell how much it was, or whether the papers were important. I know the place where it is hidden, and I have promised not to show it. You know a promise is binding, isn't it?"

"No, a thousand times no, if we have made it under a wrong impression," said Penelope vehemently.

Dora shook her head.

"I made the promise, no one can release me but himself."

"You don't understand, Dora. My father has lost his senses. He is not responsible."

"Oh! I couldn't, I couldn't break my promise. What would Forster think of me? Ask him, he will tell you that I never have broken my word. He used to teach me when I was a child, that a Bethune had never been known to do such a thing."

A gong sounded through the Palace, and Dora started up.

"I must go and dress for dinner. I
am so untidy. Penelope, don't be angry with me. If I could tell you, you know I would do so."

"It is of no consequence," said Penelope, and then Dora disappeared as the maid came in with a message.

Before she went downstairs, Penelope looked at herself in the great pier glass. She knew she was beautiful; and now she cared about her beauty, because Forster loved her. But to-night she thought, was this really true about the hidden wealth? It could not be true; such things happened only in books, not in real life. But if it were true; if it turned out that she had sacrificed herself in vain—in vain! That would be too cruel of her father. Had he known all the time? She clenched her hands, feeling she could not forgive him. But perhaps it was not true. It was some childish play with which Dora had been taken in. Then again, suppose it were true! She could be free of Philip. She might—but how! Was there no way but with disgrace? Only the opinions of the world to fight against. Far away in some foreign country with Forster, who would care, or who would know! But how could she think of such a thing? She, a Princess, descended from a line of Kings, how could she stoop so low! What people said could not matter; for Forster's sake she would brave the world's displeasure. He would understand why she had acted as she had done.

He had left her suddenly this evening. Was he glad or sorry? He could not be sorry that his love was returned. But Philip was his friend, and Forster was so true.

Then she had to go downstairs, and to meet her uncle in the hall as if nothing had happened. Another discovery she made. She began to feel differently towards the man whom all her life long she had worshipped and obeyed. It was through him she was now so miserable—oh, so miserable! She cared now more for a human creature than for the honour of the old house. Was she false?

Forster was in late, and apologised for his tardy appearance. He and his sister compared notes about the wood paths, and Dora merely explained her late arrival by reason of her having missed her way.

The Duke, undisturbed by any unusual events, was as calm and as courteous as usual. He was quite punctilious about etiquette, now that he was able to gratify his fastidiousness. To see his niece beauti-

fully dressed, and becomingly waited upon, was a real pleasure to him.

After dinner the Princess came and sat in the drawing-room, and Dora played on the piano as she saw that Penelope was silent and did not care to talk.

Presently Penelope drew back the heavy curtain and looked out over the glen, now lighted by the pale, misty moonlight.

How was she to find out the truth of that discovery? How! She must know, but only Dora knew. How like her father in his crazy conceit to tell the stranger! Could there be any truth in it? The question appeared to her now one of immense magnitude. If she could rid herself of all her obligations to Philip, if she might be free to—to—she turned round suddenly to Dora, and called her softly.

Dora left the piano and came to her friend.

"Tell me again, dear. You saw the gold, and my father told you not to tell me where it is!"

"Yes, indeed it is true."

"I know I can believe all you say; but how can I believe my father? Dora, you don't know, you don't understand my strange life. You, who have always been happy with your own people."

"Poor Princess," said Dora gently; "you have had a lonely life."

"Lonely! Oh, yes, very lonely! My mother never cared for young people. She did not understand them. My father—you have seen him. When his mind was clear he was always eccentric, and my brother was the same. I was alone, quite alone, except for my dear uncle. He taught me, he trained my mind, and made me understand what I had to remember all my life long. I was a Princess by right of our ancient family. The honour of the house depended on me, for he saw that everywhere the property was going down in value, and that some day we should be beggars. He has often spoken to my father about it, but he only scoffed at him. Then we resolved, my uncle and myself, to bear the burden. He proved to me that I must do as he told me, and I think he is the only man I ever obeyed. But if all our self-sacrifice were useless, if all this time we were rich—Oh, you can't really understand it, Dora; but if it is so, I—I cannot forgive my father. Tell me where this money is hidden."

"I must not, indeed I must not, dear Princess," said Dora, much distressed. "Let
me ask the King about it, and see if he will release me from my promise."

Penelope shook her head.

"You could not find him now. He may have gone to the farm. I do not know where he is."

"I will go to the wood to-morrow; he may be there again," said Dora. "And I will ask him to let you see the place, but otherwise I must not, I must not."

Then Forster and the Duke came in, and the latter, knowing nothing of the strange complication, was as cheerful and as courteous as ever.

Forster saw that the Princess was rather silent and absorbed. This new mood in her made him forget his previous misgiving. He was now more absorbed by the one idea. How was he to save her from her miserable marriage? How could he rescue her from the power of this mad father? The King's words rang through his ears. The temptation seemed to grow stronger. To fly away, anywhere with her, to take her where life was less complicated, and where the world—he had never cared much for the world, so this was easy to him—should not touch them with its evil words and its scorn; that would be happiness.

The evening wore slowly away, and Dora, saying she was tired, went to bed earlier than usual. Penelope followed, but Forster stopped her for one moment as he lighted her candle.

"I met your father," he said, holding her hand, which now she did not even try to take away.

"You, too! Oh, what did he say?" she asked, blushing deeply.

"He was excited about—something or other. He knows that—that—"

"He knows nothing—nothing," said Penelope proudly.

"He has found out our secret," said Forster, forgetting prudence. "He knows that—"

"He might have made me free, once," she said slowly. "Now I must know, I must. Good night. To-morrow—"

"To-morrow we ought to leave you, Princess; I must take Dora home. But tell me, what shall I do afterwards? You must decide. Dearest, we were made for each other. Why did you let the miserable gold turn you away?"

"Because I was bound to do it," said Penelope slowly. "But surely there is some way out of all this. Good night. I hear uncle's step, and I must go and find my father."

"Where?"

"Somewhere. I must find him. He may be at the farm, or somewhere here. He must tell me before—before you go."

She hurried to her own room, and sending away her maid, she dressed herself in out-of-door attire. If Dora would not tell her, then her father must do so. But first she must wait till all the servants were gone to bed. State and modern civilization necessarily include a certain bondage; the eyes and ears about us must be thought about.

When silence reigned Penelope cautiously opened her door and went downstairs. She walked along the haunted passage and distinctly heard the footsteps following her. To-night she was afraid. For it was the first time in her life she almost turned back, then full of another idea she scorned the ghost and proceeded. "I must see my father, I must," she repeated. She went to the old wing and knocked at the King's door. No one was there. Then she resolved to go to the farm where he often slept and where Oldcorn had taken up his abode. She would, she must find him, and if it were true that they were rich, she would tell Philip that he must release her. The sin was not hers. A legal sin was one only in the eyes of the world, a thing not to be considered at all. Forster had asked her what he should do, and she would tell him. She had always loved him, she had loved none but him. Her uncle must answer for the rest.

More excited than she had ever been in her life before, she took the road to the farm. It was on the near outskirts of the wood they had gone through in the afternoon. She was almost sure to find her father there. That interview would finish this uncertainty, it must finish it. She could have gone blindfolded, but the moon was rising, and she could see the path like a pale track in the midst of gloom. On and on she went, till at last she reached the old cottage-like building called the farm. Great barns were built around it, and the wood threw its shadow over all the buildings.

She hurried to the door and tapped at the low window.

There was an answer. It was in her father's voice.

"Who wants me?"

"I do, let me see you for a few moments; I must."

She looked through the window, and saw the old man cowering over the fire. He often did not go to bed till daylight.
"Come in, then," he said sulkily.
"Where is Jim Oldcorn?" was her first question.
"In bed and asleep. Come in if you must."
"I must," she said, shutting the door behind her.

The King looked at her suspiciously and maliciously, then laughed as he pointed to a chair.
"What do you want me for, eh, girl?"
"I want to know if it is true?"
"What's true?"
"The gold you showed to that young girl—is it true we are rich, is that gold ours?"
"Ah! so you care to ask me now, do you? You never believed it in the old days. True, she saw it, didn't she tell you?"
"I know, but I don't believe it."
He laughed again.
"Then go your own way, and leave me to go mine. Out with you, I say," and with a volley of curses he pointed to the door. The mad fit was upon him. Penelope saw the evil gleam in his eyes. It was no use staying longer. The King was as obstinate as others of his race, and now he was barely answerable for his actions.
"It's not true," she said as she rose to go.
But the King only laughed.

LINCOLN'S INN.

A once popular distich neatly sums up the salient features of the four Inns of Court:

Gray's Inn for walks, Lincoln for a wall,
Inn for a garden, Middle for a hall;
and no one can approach Lincoln's Inn from the "Fields" without acknowledging the justice of the saying. There you have wall, nothing but wall, without any crannied hole or chink through which a modern Pyramus and Thisbe could converse. It is the garden wall of the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, and above it rise proudly the high-pitched roofs of the modern hall and library—creditable piles of red brick of which the builders have no cause to be ashamed. But they cover a good space of the old garden which was formerly one of the delights of the Inn; and it still looks green and pleasant, the still remaining stretch of green sward fringed with flowerbeds, where gaudy tulips and fragrant hyacinths show brightly in the spring sun-shine. And in that distant corner under the great wall, there has been some attempt at landscape gardening to hide the ugly uniformity of the brick enclosure. Would that it could be made to walk away, like the wall in Quince's interlude!

True, there is a gate in the wall, a proper, feasible, modern gateway, that offers to foot passengers a short cut to Chancery Lane. And it is from the side of the lane that Lincoln's Inn is best approached, beneath the fine old gateway that still remains as one of the landmarks of old London. The lane itself is fast changing its appearance. From behind the hoardings which have so long obstructed the narrow footway by Rolls Yard, has arisen a towering pile of offices. Big buildings are being pushed forward in all directions; huge printing-offices occupy the sites of old sponging-houses; and the old taverns, that once were the haunts of lawyers and clerks in chancery, are now the resort of newspaper men, reporters, and the myriad servants of the press. But Lincoln's Inn Gateway still holds its own, with its dark, grimy towers and gloomy flanking buildings, all of the fashion of an age when the defensive possibilities of a structure were not altogether lost sight of.

For when the gate was built in the reign of Henry the Seventh, people still remembered stout Sir John Fortescue, whose decision in "Thorpes case" was familiarly quoted even to our own days. Sir John, who had been of Lincoln's Inn, till he was made King's Serjeant, and who was afterwards Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor, for all his legal dignities and venerable years, laid about him lustily at Towton fight, and only joined his Royal mistress in her flight when the day was hopelessly lost. And long after the gate had settled on its foundations, we shall find a Queen's attorney having a brush with rebels, not only by writ, but "vi et armis."

But if the flanking towers are heavy and gloomy, the gateway itself is dignified and comely; with its date, 1518, and three handsome shields carved over the opening, old De Lacy's rampant lion on the left, with the arms of the reigning Tudor Monarch in the middle, and those of Sir Thomas Lovel on the other side—the last a great benefactor to the Inn, and liberal also to the church, of whom it is written:

All thine names of Holywell
Pray for the soul of Sir Thomas Lovel.

The chamber over the gate, tradition says, was once occupied by Oliver Crom-
and not a little deaf, would make believes to listen to the proceedings of other elderly gentlemen, who imparted a congenial dignity to all sorts of subjects, from the marriage of an interesting ward of court, to the infringement of a patent for a garden roller. As for where the Lord Chancellor sat, he might have to be hunted from court to court like a broody hen; but his favourite seat was certainly in Lincoln's Inn, which was always somehow or other affiliated to the equity side of the temple of justice. There are no more Vice-Chancellors; Chancery itself has been knocked out; the great building in the Strand has swallowed up our snug little courts, as the lean kine seck up the fat, yet still the Inn seems to carry on the same business under another name.

To-day the hall door is garnished with a programme of lectures in a "legal station" course, and through the windows can be seen the gingerbread canopy of a "de rigueur" for a seat of justice.

The new hall is still used as a kind of overflow court from the big building of something seems to be going on there to-day, judging from the number of people with bags and bundles of papers who are making their way along the garden path towards the hall. The garden itself is reserved for members of the "Society" who never use it. But it forms a convenient short cut to an entrance in Stone Buildings that abut upon Holborn, and a man of resolution, who knows the way, may pursue it unchallenged; but should he hesitate and falter, he will be politely turned back by a porter, who guards his grammar school, Betsy Trotwood guarded hers, or like the dons of Oxford, where undergraduates are concerned.

It is a wonderful garden that, if only for its history, which has been distilled from ancient records by painstaking archaeologists. As everybody knows, Lincoln's Inn takes its name from the Earl of Lincoln, one Henry De Lacy, who had his manor or residence there, where once the Black Friars had dwelt, in a house looking upon Holborn, with a fine garden which perhaps the good Benedictines had laboured to form. Anyhow, in De Lacy's time, which was that of the first Edward, the garden of his London house flourished, and brought him a good profit, while he was following his lord the King in the Welsh and Scottish wars. Fruits alone brought in a profit, handsome for those days, of some nine pounds a year, for apples, pears, cherries, walnuts, and the minor fruits of the garden.
cuttings of the vine were sold, and roses too, as buttonholes for the good citizens, if they had buttons in those days; there were pretty girls, anyhow, to wear them in their bosoms. Beans of sorts, onions, garlic, leeks, were cultivated, and it might have been one of De Lacy’s gardeners who introduced the leek into Wales. For the Earl of Lincoln’s Inn had acquired, by the King’s favour, a rich lordship in the vale of Clwyd, and there he built the strong castle of Denbigh, over whose ruined arch his mutilated effigy still presides “in his stately long robes.”

Some say that the Earl himself was something of a lawyer, and that he invited other gentlemen of the long robe to occupy a portion of this inn. But the Bishop of Chichester had something to say in the matter, for their town house occupied part of the site of Lincoln’s Inn. Chichester Rents and Bishop’s Court still preserve the memory of their former owner—narrow passages devoted to taverns, eating-houses, law-stationers, law-printers, and other trades more or less serviceable to the adjoining legal hive. Both these courts have common issue, by a sort of back door, to Lincoln’s Inn, and form a kind of run for lawyers’ clerks, who skip in and out of the legal Warren like rabbits. Indeed, there is altogether, and especially when the courts are sitting, a considerable stir and “come and go” about the old Inn. Barristers in wigs and gowns, others in everyday costume, whom gate-keepers and porters respectfully salute — now an Attorney-General hastening to his chambers, or a Q.C. in rustling silk. And with these a constant stream of vivacious lawyers’ clerks, who make the vaulted passages resound as they recount their exploits, perhaps with the Masters about costs, or with the governor about being late in the morning, for they all are given to cutting it fine, like Mr. Lowten of Pickwickian fame. Others, too, abrupt and absorbed, managing clerks, who consider themselves, and perhaps justly, as the men who really drive the legal machine, while all the others, wigs and gowns, usher and silk purses, are so many puppets:

The scales and maces dance before them!

Then there are the young legal exquisites of the day, such as would formerly have cast a lustre upon the dusty chambers of Mr. Serjeant Snubbin. But the last of the Serjeants has been marched off by the grimmest Serjeant of all. They were wide awake, those Serjeants, and sold their Inn and pocketed the proceeds with marvellous adroitness.

But the Serjeant, “dans son vivant,” was always a notable figure in Lincoln’s Inn, although strictly speaking, according to ancient usage, he had no status there; for on becoming a Serjeant a member quitted the society, which discharged him with a handsome breakfast, a purse of ten guineas, and a pair of Oxford gloves—the gloves of Woodstock were surely sold within living memory—rang him out to the ting-tang of the old chapel bell.

The bell, in its little pigeon-cote of a turret, has a history of its own. It was given to the Inn, it is said, by Dr. Donne, who was with the Earl of Essex at the taking of Cadiz, and brought home the bell, which had doubtless hung in some convent belfry or high church tower. And every now and then its ancient voice is heard, when some great lawyer has gone to his rest, as it did the other day for Lord Bowen, when the chapel was crowded with brethren of the robe and friends of the late Judge. The chapel itself is a plain but not uncomely building of Jacobean Gothic, the architect indeed having been no other than our old Welsh friend, Inigo Jones. It was consecrated in 1633, and Dr. Donne preached to a great concourse on the occasion. As Pennant wrote—who is a capital guide to eighteenth-century London—“it is built upon massy pillars and affords under its shelter an excellent walk.”

Under the chapel, indeed, was long a favourite promenade, for lawyers who were looking out for clients,

Or wait for customers between

The pillar rows in Lincoln’s Inn,

and for worshipful gentlemen like Mr. Samuel Pepys of the Admiralty, who reports having walked there at the time the new garden was being laid out. Yet it is a shivery, chilly kind of place—an open-air crypt indeed, with a handsome groined roof above, and gravestones underneath, flat slabs on which are recorded the names of ancient Benchers and once famous lawyers who sleep beneath. Of these the most generally known is William Pryne, who lost his ears or part of them for writing scandal about Queen Henrietta—a Star Chamber matter—but who lived to be as great a plague to Cromwell as he had been to Charles, and died long after the Restoration. A short and simple epitaph records his career, but the author
of “Hudibras” has given us a more ample one:

Here lies the corse of William Prynne,
A bencher once of Lincoln’s Inn,
Who restless ran through thick and thin.

But whilst he this hot humour tugs,
Death sang’d the remainder of his bags.

Another noted Lincoln’s Inn man of the period was Lord Shaftesbury, the Achitophel of Dryden’s “Hind and Panther,” one of the keenest intellects of the age, who from the woolpack just missed the axe of the executioner, and who died a fugitive, when a few years more life might have restored him to even higher dignities. Another earlier Lincolnite was Lord Chancellor Egerton, the founder of a powerful family. And the Moree, of whom was the famous Chancellor Sir Thomas, who lost his head in good earnest, had been of Lincoln’s Inn for generations. Philip Yorke, too, who held the seals so long that his wife made the gold-embroidered purses borne before the Chancellor into a splendid quilt or coverlid; and Lord Talbot, his successor, who kept up the ancient revels with great gusto. Lord Mansfield, the incorruptible, with many other great lawyers, hailed from Lincoln’s Inn, and are remembered in the blazoned windows of the chapel.

The newer part of the Inn has not, perhaps, much history to boast of. New Square, indeed, is only comparatively new, having been built in 1682 by Henry Serle, who is remembered in the adjoining Serle Street. The site was not definitely part of the Inn, having been known as Fecett’s Field, and once the jousting-ground of the Knights Templars from over the way. But it is handsomely if plainly built of good red brick, and the gateway in the corner leading into Carey Street is a pleasant, comely structure. People lived in the Inn in the early days of New Square, or Serle’s Court, as it was then called, and the first inhabitant was one Cavendish Weedon, who contrived the “pillar fountain and ornaments” that once occupied the centre of the grass-plat. There is no fountain now to rival that of the Temple with its pleasant, cooling stream.

Formerly, long ago, in Earl Henry’s time, there was a pond in Lincoln’s Inn, and the bailiff bought fry, and frogs, and eels for the great pike that lurked beneath its weedy banks. Where the new hall now stands was a coney-garth—a rabbit-warren, it seems, for the students of the Inn were forbidden to hunt there with bow, arrows, or darts. As to when the pond was filled up there is no evidence to show, and the rabbits have followed the great pike into the ewigkeit. But the sporting princi- palties of the law students and the young barristers of the Inns of Court have lasted to our own days. There was always a trink in managing these young gentlemen. They would wear long rapiers, and could hardly be persuaded to come into hall with only a dagger at their backs, which was exactly surely for their occasions, especially as there were plenty of carving-knives about. The doublet, too, would be of a richness and colour unsuited to the sober profession of the law. All kinds of sumptuary edicts were made and broken to restrain their extravagance. Nor would the young fellows always dance to the piping of their saxes. One Candlemas the junior barristers put out of commons, because they would not dance before the Judges who had come in to share in the revels. Though the coifed and ermined seniors could foot it bravely a occasion:

The judge to dance his brother serjeant calls;
And Chancellors and Benchers danced “a rondle” about the hall, like so many d Robinson Crusoe’s savages.

And if the law students of old were a trouble to their seniors, they were a terror to their more peaceable neighbours. “Oh, the mad days that I have spent!” cries Mr. Justice Shallow, as he recalls the adventures of his student days. And against such— the unthrifts of the Inns of Court—the parishioners of St. Clement’s keep watch and ward, while the recorder himself stands by St. Clement’s Church to see the latest hung out, and observe if he could meet with any of these outrageous scholars.

But the law students of to-day have these perhaps objectionable characteristics. No longer clustered together in inns and nests of chambers, they form no distinct element in the great mass of London life, and to be “reading for the bar” is compatible with the quietest domestic habits. It is only when dinners have to be eaten is hall that anything of the old verse of the law student manifests itself—and especially on a call-night, when perhaps an echo of the ancient joyous uproar may be heard. But there are no masts at the mess, and “arguing a short case of one point,” as the newly-fledged were urged to do, would be regarded as an indication of lunacy. But as the dinner-hour approaches the old Inn puts on an appearance of decorous festivity. Cats drive up and people hurry in from every quarter of the town. There are...
Swarthy Hindoos and yellow Chinamen, and perhaps a sable African among the crowd in which young, middle-aged, and even elderly students, men of every prime and race, as well as every age, are mingled in temporary fellowship. But the revels do not last long, and the Inn is soon left to its nightly repose; and if any of the old Benchers choose to walk out from under the crypt and pace up and down the garden walks in the moonlight, they will have the place to themselves, and may argue out their knotty points without fear of interruption, till cock-crow sends them all back to their narrow beds.

AIX-LES-BAINS OUT OF THE SEASON.

The blue Bourget lake, with its grey mountains, is a gracious introduction to the celebrated town of baths. The railway from Culoz skirts the water for miles. My fellow passengers—a curé with a red face and large ears, a market lady with a basket, and a couple of blue-breasted privates of the Army of the Republic—all crane their necks in the direction of the lake. Its sapphire tint in the shallows is good to see. The reeds here and there stand motionless; and, by the same token, the woolly clouds which lie against the sides of the mountains that girdle the lake seem as if they were glued to the rocks. There is, in fact, no wind. The one little fishing-boat a mile or so from the shore—seeking the lavaret, a toothsome fish—lies as steady as if it had ten cables holding it fast.

It is a morning such as Rousseau would have appreciated a hundred years ago. He loved Bourget and its neighbourhood; enjoyed here many of his characteristic escatases, and suffered also many of his less characteristic despondencies. But in some respects it is a morning wasted, for Aix-les-Bains, whose red roofs and white houses are now showing much above the lake's level, is as nearly empty as ever it is in those days. It is not the season, in short. What that means to a town of but six or seven thousand resident inhabitants may be guessed. Many parts of London are much the same to the observer and the unobservant alike in June and September, although June is the London season and September is not the season. But little Aix gets its population trebled or so during the fashionable visiting months. Hence, out of the season, one must expect to see villa after villa and hotels by the half-dozen shuttered and padlocked, and with no comfortable eddies of suggestive blue smoke from their shapely chimneys. It is rather a dismal sight, until one gets used to it.

Yet there are compensations in such a state of affairs. One misses the long array of gold-laced hotel porters outside the railway station, with their respective omnibuses, and one is almost glad to miss their confusing unanimous invitations. It is, moreover, a certainty that one's hotel bill will be about half what it would be in the season. Then the Casino is shut, and consequently the gaming tables are not open. This, too, may be pure gain, for though the spirit is often exceedingly strong in determining that its owner shall on no account risk his money at baccarat or aught else, the impetuous flesh quite as often insists that, "just for the fun of the thing, you know," there can be no harm in a little flutter. These little flutters are about the most expensive pastime going, and the dust and ashes they leave in the mouth are very disagreeable.

Two other compensations may be mentioned. There are people who run abroad in quest of fresh faces. They wish to get out of the eternal groove, and not to see for a week or two a single familiar acquaintance. Well, the odds are that when this is so they come plump against just the persons they wish least to see. It is especially likely to be so at Aix in the season; but out of the season the odds are overwhelming in the other direction. And lastly, if you are of a tender nature, you may in the season suffer a little, or more than a little, discomfort in beholding certain of the fashionable invalids who then come here to be patched and coddled into living another lively year or two. These picturesque yet unsettling wrecks of humanity go elsewhere when Aix's season is at an end. The commonplace peasants in blue blouses, and the white-capped women of the town are a deal better to see than these moribund millionaires and Princess of the blood.

At the hotel nearest the station I am welcomed as a gourmand; gazes a new potato in February. Season or no season this building is obliged to keep its doors open—I am compelled to suppose at a loss. I have the choice of all its bedrooms. Afterwards monsieur and madame wait upon me, for instructions about the evening dinner. Their courtesy is remarkable even for France—even for Southern France. But monsieur's shoulders lift pathetically when
he learns that I am a mere bird of passage, in his house one day and in Italy the next. Still, it is a land of philosophy, this district to some extent consecrated to Rousseau, and I am none the less welcome for being transitory a visitor.

In the meantime I have several hours of daylight on my hands. It is not the season, and therefore I cannot hope to find a steamer conveniently waiting by the lake to convey me to Hautecombe—that lonely Abbey which holds so much of the Royal dust of the House of Savoy. I have been up the hill of the Superga by Turin, and looked at the more modern tombs of this famous family, in company with the usual crowd of tourists. There I found the distant summits of the Alps more interesting than the cold vaults of the church. At Hautecombe, also, no doubt, the solitude and the lake, and the grey cloud-capped mountains would have been fully as impressive as the ancient mausoleums. But I cannot put it to the test.

The Grande Chartreuse is another "lion" of the district, though rather a remote one. In the season there are brakes and other public conveyances thither from Aix, with "reduced terms for a quantity." It is an enchanting excursion, but vexations for the horses. I read the bills about it still on the walls of the town. They are, however, relics of the past season; wholly obsolete, yet not to be superseded until a new influx of visitors makes it necessary to print new notices. If I wish to visit the Grande Chartreuse out of the season, I must either go on to Grenoble by train, or else enjoy a lengthy colloquy with a local livery stableman.

Again, having walked up the Avenue de la Gare, and found my way into the public gardens—one nursemaid and one child are the only associates of its statuary—I look to the south and see one of the highest of the mountains capped with a cross. This, too, is a favourite resort in the season. Thither there is a rack and pinion railway—vivid illustrations of which adorn the stations far and wide round Aix. But the rack and pinion railway has succeeded its functions. The snow is rather deep on the mountain-top. Indeed, there is snow in Aix itself, though I have not mentioned it earlier. The Aix snow looks quite out of place, and seems resolved to vanish as soon as possible. It has, in effect, disappeared in the little market square between the church, the great bath institution, and the so-called triumphal arch. Here five energetic young men were thumping clothes in the wash trough, which Aix's special facilities allow it to keep provided with warm water at no cost to any one. The steam of the hot springs disagrees with the snow. Yet is it much better elsewhere. The sea is in a state of slush. Nevertheless these touches of evanescent white go well with the red roofs and the garish green and gold of some of the villa façades, and the pallid blue of the Aix sky does the red roofs, the snow, and the dull mountains no less effectively.

There is nothing in the world to do but lounge aimlessly hither and thither, traipsing to the chapter of accidents for diversions. The shop-windows are not alluring. The book-sellers' one notices that in Tauchnitz volumes are those of last season. The tarts in the pastry-cooks' almost look as if they came under the same category. To enter a notable liqueur store, whence ex a portly flask of Benedictine and bottle of Chartreuse, both green and yellow, has travelled to England. The damsel who controls the shop—she is the shape of a Benedictine flask—seems surprised at the sight of a possible customer. She is, however, as thrifty as most Frenchwomen, declines to abandon the bird in the hand for a possible bird at present in the bush. In other words, she continues her knapsack even while she listens to my questions and makes her answers. Eventually we separate, "mutually desolated."

Thence I wander on to the portico of the "Etablissement Thermal." I may as well kill some time in going the round here for the baths, unlike the hotels and Cazes are open perennially. Nature, in her supply of hot water—temperature as hundred and seven degrees and one hundred and sixty-three degrees respectively—knows nothing of fashionable seasons. She is as generous in mid-winter as in mid-summer when the mere thought of entering a room full of torrid vapour is enough to raise the hair and bring beads of moisture to the skin. A woman appears to guide me. She sees at a glance that I am not a rick to either rheumatism or a skin disease, and therefore not likely to be a client. But she does her best with me notwithstanding. There seems no end to the various apartments, each with its arrangement of tubs for squirting water upon the patient in every conceivable direction. There are also large swimming baths, where the water is a pretty blue in colour. And there is an inhaling
room, which the fancy may easily picture in the season furnished with its complement of the sick and the valetudinarian, gasping and suffocating in the vapour for their lives’ sake. Daudet, in “Numa Roumezan,” has sketched these scenes for us with truth and vigour. The sight of the iron chairs in the empty chamber is, after “Numa Roumezan,” enough inspiration. There is also the hottest place of all, a natural cave in the superstructure, whence nature vomits an insufferable sulphurous air into the building proper. This dark hole, into which one peep suffices, is, my guide tells me with a yawn, called Hell. Its temperature is certainly too warm for any one not wholly divested of earthly instincts. As a crowning pleasure, I am offered a saucyful of the sulphur-tainted drinking water. This, however, I decline. Even curiosity cannot tempt me to nauseate myself with this vile rotten-egg flavour. I disappoint my companion by my abstinence. No matter. I hope I soothe her later when I find myself again at the classic portico, and acknowledge, while thanking her for her services.

From the baths I stroll into the outskirts of the town. I come to a gilded figure on a pedestal, with a few shrubs and plants round it, the whole enclosed by railings. This I learn is the “Eaux Vives Madonna.” The figure is laced with tarnished roses, and some rotting crutches decorate its pedestal. There is a notice: “One is begged not to touch the plants and flowers.” But the entire territory dedicated to the statue is scarcely three yards in diameter, so that it is difficult not to scoff a little at such a prohibition. Still, the enclosure is interesting. It reminds one that the poor and croudulose come to Aix to be healed of their ailments as well as the rich of all kinds. The latter, however, are less likely to acknowledge a miraculous agency in their cure. The Eaux Vives Madonna is all very well for the poor, but the average millionaire puts more faith in the fees he pays his medical adviser, and the particular person who perspires in massaging him.

Aix is growing fast. It seemed an anomaly this day that so many palatial hotels and villas should be shut up, and that yet the noise of masons should be heard on all sides. The placard “Terre à bâtir” was the most conspicuous object in the suburbs. And in every vineyard or meadow thus offered for sale, there was the diverting auxiliary notice prohibiting sportamen from seeking game thereon. To a ribald Englishman it seemed as reasonable to issue such an injunction in St. Paul’s Cathedral burying ground, as here on little fenced plots of ground cheek by jowl with hotels having their scores and hundreds of rooms. But it is a humorous way they have in France, where, it must be understood, a simple thrush or a melodious lark comes under the comprehensive heading of “game.”

When I had viewed Aix’s red roofs from several different standpoints, I returned in the fading light to the town. The church door was ajar, and I entered the building, which is unobtrusive and ugly enough. It was very gloomy inside, but I groped my way up the aisle until I touched a coffin. The coffin came upon me as a surprise, though in truth there was nothing about it to excite astonishment. The four large candles at its corners were unlit. A moment later I espied a single old woman on her knees, eyeing me through the rims of her fingers while she covered her face in prayer. It was a commonplace occurrence, I sat for a while in the deepening gloom, looking at the old woman and the coffin. The former began to pray audibly, though always with her eyes watching me through her fingers. I suppose the funeral was for the morrow. The deceased was doubtless a native, though he might well be one of the few visitors who some hitherto for that new life which not even the Aix waters can give.

But it was chilly in the church, and I soon had a surfeit of it and its couple of inmates. Another hour passed in the Grand Café of Aix with a cigar. The room would have held a couple of hundred people. There were just three persons in it besides myself and the waiter, and these four stared at me when I entered as if I had been something extraordinary. I asked the waiter for a beverage commonly drunk at Continental cafés where people of several nations consort. He shrugged his shoulders. It was impossible, he said. In the season it was of course exceedingly possible, he hastened to add, but with snow on the ground—oh, no!

And so at length in the twilight I returned to monsieur and madame at my hotel. The good people had made notable efforts to rejoice their guest. A private apartment with a crimson and gold wallpaper had been prepared for me; there was a cheerful log fire, and a dozen candles were lit in the large glass chandelier. This alone was enlivening. The dinner was
even more so. It was served with downright French taste. There was no one else in the building. All the cook's energies had been concentrated on this one eventful meal. That, at least, is how it was explained to me by monsieur, with a gratified smile, when he afterwards came to enquire about my digestion. Thus, for the sake of merely sensual comfort, it seemed to me that I had not done so much amiss to stop at Aix-les-Bains out of the season.

The next morning, however, I thought differently. I was called at five o'clock for the Turin express, which ought to have screamed into the station shortly before six o'clock. It was not a pleasant morning, even at Aix: cold and foggy, and of course dark to boot. The Aix station platform was moreover draughty in the extreme, and dull to a degree, in spite of the presence of two stout priests whose aspirations and luggage were directed towards Rome. We three, the priests and I, paced that miserable platform till half-past seven, waiting for the wretched express This was enough to put me out of humour with Aix; and the succeeding unexpected delays at Chambéry and Modane added to the bitterness with which I regretted this innocent little interlude in a journey. I was due, in fact, at Turin at about two, and reached it at seven. There had been a breakdown or something.

These misadventures are inevitable at times, and I must say, in conclusion, that I look forward to seeing more of Aix-les-Bains—"in" the season next time, when its Casino is in full swing, and one cannot walk up a street without beholding a Prince or a Grand Duke.

A MOST UNFORTunate AFFAIR.

A COMPLETE STORY.

It was really a most unfortunate affair, and I frankly confess that I was in some degree to blame. But, if I erred, have I not suffered for my indiscretion? If I am not actually to be pitied, at least I do not deserve the wholesale abuse of which I am the unhappy recipient. For instance, I have been called "a cruel, hard-hearted wretch," whereas my chief fault is, that I possess too soft and susceptible a heart, as the very conduct for which I am blamed plainly shows. I have also been accused of "callously trifling with the affections of two tender girls," but what are the facts of the case? Both Miss Mayne and Miss Westbrook—my "victims," as they have been called—are now married, and, I am told, happy; while I—I, the callous traitor, the gay deceiver—am still wearing my willow for them. For which of them? Upon my honour, I am as unable to answer that question even now, as I was in the brief and, on the whole, happy period during which I was engaged to both of them. The truth is, each of those charming girls appealed to an entirely different side of my character, and I loved them in turns, just as my gay or my gloomy side happened to be in the ascendant. In every respect they were as opposite as the Pole and Caroline was a dark-eyed, dark-haired, demure little thing, with a sweet voice and a caring manner; Lilian was tall and fair, with a great flow of high spirits and an intense love of "fun." Thus, while I was anxious or depressed, I was soothed by the gentle society of the former, and my much loved felt that I would gladly die for Caroline Mayne; but when the pendulum had swung to the other extreme and I was bent on enjoyment, I thoroughly appreciated the latter’s vivacity, and asked nothing better of Fate than permission to live for Lilian Westbrook. In short, I felt what I may call a sincere intermittent attachment to both, and could not bring myself to break with either. That the situation was awkward one admits, but I need hardly say that I did not place myself in it deliberately. Led astray by a too generous—and perhaps too general—adoration of beauty, I drifted into it, heedlessly but not heartlessly, as I think, the following truthful record excludes prove.

It is now nearly three years ago since I first met Caroline Mayne at the little riverside village of Barbelham, where I was staying to recruit my finances, which were in a sadly depleted condition. Certainly as a lying-by place—a kind of social backwater—Barbelham had its good points. It was quiet, far from the dinning crowd, cheap, and yet within easy reach of London, from which it was distant less than twenty miles. But it was a dreadfully dull little hole, and, as I do not fish, row, or play skittles, my time hung heavily upon my hands. In three days I had sunk into a state of acute melancholia, and I really believe I was just beginning to gibber, when, at the end of the week, I opportunely met an old acquaintance. This was Mrs. Mayne, the widow of a stockbroker, who, when I was a boy at home, lived within a few doors of me.
A MOST UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR

was reputed to be wealthy. After his death, however, his affairs were found to be in sad disorder, and his widow leaving the neighbourhood we had entirely lost sight of her until I met her by chance in the High Street of Barbelham, where, it appeared, she had settled down in a pretty cottage near the river. Thanks, as I subsequently learned, to the exertions of a Mr. Jagg, her husband's executor—of whom, as the novels say, more anon—enough had been saved from the wreck to support her and her daughter in comfort, and Barbelham had been their residence for the past eight years. Evidently the air agreed with Mrs. Mayne, for she hardly looked a day older; but had I to mention my name, and ask her if she had quite forgotten Frank Leigh, before she recognized me. When she did, however, she greeted me most cordially, and immediately released the bottled-up curiosity of eight years, overwhelming me with questions about former friends and acquaintances, so that I was forcibly reminded of the legend of the Flying Dutchman, and of the boat that weird barque sometimes sent to board passing ships with letters addressed to streets long pulled down, and anxious enquiries concerning people mouldering in their graves. For all the people of whom Mrs. Mayne spoke were dead to me. Some were ruined, some had disappeared, some had actually departed this life, and the rest had passed out of mine when I left home; but I told her all I knew, and when I knew nothing I invented something, which pleased her just as well. But, though I walked home with her, her curiosity was not nearly satisfied when we reached the cottage, so she asked me in to tea—and I met Caroline. I fell a victim at the first glance. You see, I was just in the mood to appreciate her charms, for of course while I was at Barbelham my gloomy side was uppermost. In Caroline's society I found the sedative best suited to my troubled spirits, and consequently I cultivated it assiduously. Almost every day I visited the cottage and idled away hours by her side, mooning about her like a Byron with liver complaint—a wild, reckless being, with a silent sorrow somewhere, whose sole hope of happiness she held in her hand. In this strain I talked to her, read her the most mournful poems in the language, and altogether thoroughly enjoyed myself in a melancholy kind of way, until one day, about a month after our first meeting, I unburdened my soul and begged her to be the cheerful sunbeam lighting my tangled path through the gloomy vale of life. And Caroline consented.

But Mrs. Mayne demurred. Though not positively objecting, she asked uncomfortable questions about my private means, which, I am bound to say, were far from satisfactory. I had three hundred pounds a year, my debts, and no occupation; so that, as she pointed out, I was scarcely in a position to set up a sunbeam of my own. However, I promised to work—a fact which plainly shows how much in earnest I was—and Mrs. Mayne at last consented to a conditional engagement, the chief condition being the approval of Mr. Jagg, who had assumed the management of all the widow's affairs, and acted, in a way, as Caroline's guardian. So Mr. Jagg was written to; but, as he had retired from business some time before and was travelling about on the Continent, his answer was long delayed—indeed, before it came, I had left Barbelham on business of the utmost importance.

We had been engaged about a fortnight, I think, when one evening on returning to my lodgings I found there a letter which had been forwarded from my London rooms. Tearing it open in some trepidation, for the handwriting was legal, and awakened gruesome memories of similar missives, I found that a cousin of my mother's—a wealthy old bachelor, Hughes-Norreys by name—was dead, and that I was requested to attend the funeral and the reading of the will on the Thursday of that week. As the very next day was Thursday, I had no time to lose; so I scribbled a hasty note for Caroline, in which I merely said I was called away on business; caught the first train to London; and early next morning was deposited at Copsyby, the nearest station to the Hughes-Norreys property. Little did I think, as I was jolted up the Manor Avenue in a ramshackle railway fly, that in a few hours I would be the acknowledged master of the fine old family mansion and the fine old family estate. Mr. Hughes-Norreys, though a relative, had been almost a stranger to me, and I had no reason to expect more than a trifling legacy. But, as it happened, he had quarrelled with all his other relatives in turn, a fate which I alone had escaped simply because I had never even been on quarrelling terms with him. And so it came about that, when the will was read, I found that he had left me all his property on condition that I assumed the name and
arms of the Hughes-Norreys family. My decision may easily be guessed. In a few days I had resigned the name of Leigh without a sigh, and blossomed forth as Francis Hughes-Norreys, Esquire, of Copsey Manor, in Derbyshire.

But it was as Frank Leigh and not as Mr. Hughes-Norreys that I returned to Barcelbour some weeks after the funeral. For the present, at least, I had decided to keep my good fortune a secret. I was always romantic, and I now desired to play the part of Lord of Burleigh in a little romance of real life. I would allow Caroline to marry me under the impression that she was taking me chiefly for worse; take her into Derbyshire for the honeymoon; show her Copsey Manor; and assure her that I was not the poor clerk she thought me, but lord of all the land for miles around. Then we would settle down, and live happily ever afterwards. Still, I was by no means unwilling to see a little more life first, especially now that I was so well-provided with the sinsews of war; and so, when Caroline told me that the long-expected answer had come and that Mr. Jagg insisted on a year's probation, I cheerfully consented. I had already obtained work in a lawyer's office, I said—a statement which was very near the truth, since I had much legal business to transact in connection with my succession—and I promised to be so industrious, that when Mr. Jagg returned to England in the following spring he would be compelled to abandon all opposition to our union. So we kissed and parted, Caroline praising me for my courage, but at the same time entreating me, for her sake, not to injure my health by overwork. And, for her sake, I promised that I would not.

Of the next few months I need only say that I kept my promise, and if I injured my health, it was not through overwork. On the whole, I thoroughly enjoyed myself; but there were days when I felt unstrung and depressed, and then I flew on the wings of love to Caroline to be petted, soothed, and gently rebuked for disobedience, for of course she attributed my paleness to too close an application to my duties. So the time sped away until Christmas arrived, and I went down into Derbyshire to spend the season at the Manor.

I now come to an incident which, I must confess, at the first blush looks rather awkward. I refer, of course, to my engagement to Miss Westbrook. In excuse, I can only plead that, at the time, my bright side was completely in the ascendant, and that Lilian was a girl well calculated to arouse the gayest emotions of my nature. Her society acted as a stimulant, in short, and it is a well-known fact that the practice of taking stimulants, once indulged in, rapidly grows upon one. Mrs. Westbrook, who was a widow with a family of three daughters, two of whom were still children, was my nearest neighbour; and, as she was very hospitable, I was often at her home, of which Lilian was the life and soul. It was impossible to meet her frequently and not come under the influence of her spells, and I am only human. Yet I protest that I was never intentionally false to Caroline, and to this day I can hardly see how it happened. All I know is, that one night, during a children's party the Westbrooks were giving, I found myself in the conservatory alone with Lilian; that I beat my head, and said I don't exactly know what—and that next moment Lilian was murmuring that it was all so very sudden, but perhaps I'd better ask mamma. That before I had time to realise the situation, it was all over, and I was engaged too deep!

Well, there was no help for it. Mamma evidently knew all about it before the end of the evening; for, when I took my leave, she blessed me effusively in an undertone and made an appointment for the next morning. By noon the following day I was Lilian's formally accepted suitor, and by the end of the week our engagement was known to the whole county, and congratulations began to pour in upon us. The wedding, however, was not to take place till the autumn owing to the absence of a certain Uncle John, who was travelling abroad, but was expected home in June. Without Uncle John the Westbrooks apparently could do nothing. Uncle John was to fix the date; Uncle John was to superintend the drawing up of settlements; Uncle John was to give the bride away, and propose her health at breakfast afterwards; in short, all the arrangements were to be left to him, and he had to be communicated with beforehand anything could be decided on. In due course the great man's answer came. Uncle John was graciously pleased to approve of the engagement, and ventured to suggest September as a suitable month for the ceremony.

You may be sure that I, for one, made no objection. September was eight months off, and in eight months anything might happen. At all events, I had time to turn...
about in, and to devise some means of escape from the very delicate position in which I had placed myself. But neither my mother-wit nor the chapter of accidents came to my aid; and when in April I accompanied the Westbrooks up to town for the season, I was as deeply engaged as ever. And, let me assure you, the successful carrying on of two engagements at the same time involves no inconsiderable mental strain—a strain which soon began to tell upon me. As a result, my temper became extremely variable. One day I was in the height of high spirits, and delighted to dance attendance upon Lilian; the next, I was in the most dismal depths of depression, and then my thoughts dwelt persistently on Caroline. The consequence was, I was never in one mood long enough to devise a consistent plan of campaign; for just as I was beginning to see my way to a rupture with the one, my mind changed, and I at once turned my attention to some scheme for breaking with the other. My situation, in fact, was precisely that of Captain Macheath in "The Beggar's Opera." It has also been compared to the position of a certain animal, which I shall not permit myself to name, between two bundles of hay.

But the crisis was now close at hand. One night towards the end of April Lilian informed me that she had some news for me, and then whispered four little words which nearly turned me into stone. Uncle John had come! He had arrived unexpectedly that afternoon and was staying with Mrs. Westbrook, who expected me to dine with her next day in order to make his acquaintance. I stammered out a few words expressive of my great delight; and soon afterwards I slipped away to think things over seriously at my chambers. What was to be done? Now that Uncle John had appeared upon the scene, events were likely to progress rapidly. Dreadful visions of discovery and enraged guardians; of breaches of promise, and possibly of breaches of the peace; floated before my eyes.

"Besides," I muttered, as I paced the room, "the time of Mr. Jagg's return is drawing near, and if I wait till then I'll find myself between the devil and the deep sea with a vengeance. At present I've only Uncle John to deal with, and, if I play my cards properly, I need never have anything at all to do with Mr. Jagg. But action, prompt action, is imperative. Caroline must go!" Here I wiped away a tear.

"Yes, it must be done! but how? that's the question. Ah, I think I have it. I'll tell her I've lost my situation, and consequently my future looks blacker than ever, that I love her too well to drag her down into poverty, and that for her sake we must part. Pitch it all very sentimentally, of course, and drag in 'In the Gloaming': 'It were best to leave thee thus, dear, best for you and'—unquestionably—'best for me.' But there must be no more vacillation. I must not leave myself time to change again; I'll catch the ten o'clock train to Barbelham to-morrow, get the business over, return to town by the five o'clock express, and be able to meet Uncle John with a clear conscience."

That was a melancholy journey down to Barbelham. As I thought of all the happy hours I had spent with Caroline, of her sweet sympathy and tender ways, my gloom steadily increased; and when I alighted at Barbelham station I verily believe I was the most miserable man on the face of this earth. I found her in the little rustic arbour near the lawn, where we had passed so many pleasant hours only the year before, and she was looking so fresh and pretty and was so glad to see me again, that I forgot the cold, calculating counsels of prudence, and greeted her with perhaps even more than my usual warmth. Then we sat down on the little seat, which was just wide enough to hold two, and almost unconsciously my arm stole round her waist and drew her gently towards me. Such is the force of habit.

"What have you been doing all this time?" asked Caroline after awhile. "You have not been down to see us for five Saturdays, and I have only had three little letters from you. But it's not your fault, I suppose; I know you're so much engaged."

"I am!" I replied with a groan. "Very much engaged indeed!"

"I thought so, when I saw you looking so pale and ill!" she exclaimed. "You've forgotten my orders, sir. You've been overdoing it."

"Yes," I sighed; "I'm afraid I've overdone it."

"It's shameful!" said Caroline warmly. "It oughtn't to be allowed! There ought to be a limit!"

"So there is," I answered drearily; "that's just the difficulty. They draw the line at one."

"At one!" repeated Caroline in some surprise. "Why, I thought you said six."

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"Six!" I cried with a shudder. "Heaven forbid!"

"Well, you certainly told me your hours were nine to six, and often later, and I'm sure it's far too much."

"I see," I said; "I was thinking of something else, Carrie. But never mind the office." I went on hastily, wishing to change the subject; "tell me about yourself. Have you any news?"

"Oh, yes. I was just going to tell you. There's a surprise in store for you."

"A surprise!" I exclaimed anxiously, for the words reminded me of the "surprise" Lilian had given me overnight. "I hope it's a pleasant one."

"I—I think so," replied Caroline shyly.

"Mr. Jagg has come."


"Yes, Mr. Jagg," said Carrie gaily. "I knew you'd be pleased."

"My joy is too deep for words," I answered grimly. "When did he come?"

"He arrived about an hour ago, and he's going back to town after lunch. He's indoors with mamma at present, talking business."

"No, he's not," interrupted a gruff voice; "wrong in both respects, my dear. He's in the garden, and he has no business here. At least, no doubt you think so."

Caroline blushed and drew away from me. I turned pale and started to my feet. Mr. Jagg stood still and chuckled.

"This—this is Frank," murmured Caroline.

"Oh, this is Frank, is it?" he replied, glancing curiously at me.

I returned the look with interest, and my heart went down into my boots. He was a tall, powerful-looking man, some fifty years of age, perhaps, but evidently still as strong as a bull; with a most determined mouth, a thick neck, and shaggy eyebrows overhanging a pair of stern, penetrating blue eyes. Altogether he was emphatically what is called an ugly customer, and I recognised at once that he was not a man to trifle with. I shuddered to think of what might happen if he suspected me of shuffling. He was not a man to be taken in by a cock-and-bull story about a lost situation, a black future, and a heroic determination not to drag the beloved object down into poverty. No, in dealing with Mr. Jagg, honesty would certainly be the best policy. I felt that instinctively, and with the utmost promptitude entirely reversed my plans. Lilian must be given up, not Caroline. After all, Uncle John was probably nothing more terrible than a pompous old busybody who liked to have a finger in every family pie, but whom it would be easy enough to trick in matters not connected with business, and even at the worst he was bound to be immeasurably less dreadful than Mr. Jagg. So, having decided on my course of action, I pulled myself together and endeavoured to meet Mr. Jagg up with an expression of manly candour.

"So this is Frank, is it?" he repeated, still looking critically at me.

"Yes, I am Frank Leigh," I said, smiling blandly. "I'm very glad to see you, Mr. Jagg. I can assure you I've been waiting most impatiently for your return."

"Been getting impatient, eh?" he chuckled. "Were you not tempted to get married before I came back?"

"I've often had half a mind to, Mr. Jagg," I answered laughingly, glad to have a chance of speaking the truth for once.

"And judging by what I saw just now, you're still of the same mind," he enquired.

"My feelings have never altered, sir, and never can," I returned without a blush.

"Well, well, we'll see. I must have a talk with you, Mr. Leigh, but not to-day, for I haven't time. I only just came out for a mouthful of fresh air while Mrs. Mayne was looking for a paper, and I must get indoors again. But to-morrow, eh? Was time will suit you best? You're in a lawyer's office, I think?"

"I was until quite recently; but I'm just come into a small fortune of five hundred a year," I said, for on this point I was absolutely necessary to deceive him. I did not dare to tell him of Cosely Manor and my change of name, for fear of his getting wind of Mr. Hughes-Norreys' engagement to Lilian Westbrook before it was broken off.

"Five hundred a year!" he exclaimed. "Well, that promises to clear the way wonderfully. Then I'll call on you at noon to-morrow—where?"

I gave him the address of my chambers, and he noted it down in a fat pocket-book. A few minutes later he went into the house, and I did not see him again until luncheon. Shortly after that the Barbelham family circle came for him and carried him off to the station.

For the rest of the afternoon I was fully occupied in satisfying Caroline's curiosity.
concerning my windfall, explaining why I had not told her of it before, and listening to her plans for spending our gigantic income. I must own, however, that I did not enjoy her society as much as usual, for I was troubled in my mind and wished to be alone to think, so that I was not sorry when half-past four arrived, and I had to start to catch my train to town. Of my journey up I need only say that it was every whit as dreary as my journey down, though I wore my rue with this slight difference: I mourned for Lilian instead of Caroline. But my feelings were exactly the same, my grief was as deep, my remorse was as sincere, and my recollections of our intercourse as bitterly sweet. Dear Lilian! Not until I was about to lose you did I realise how much of my happiness was bound up in you!

But I did not waver in my determination, for the face of Mr. Jagg was ever before me. However much it cost me, I was resolved to cut myself adrift from Lilian with as little delay as possible. Luckily she was a quick-tempered girl, and we had had occasional lovers' squabbles, any one of which might, with a little care, be fomented into a serious disagreement; and from a serious disagreement to a mutual agreement to part was a step. In the meantime, however, it behoved me to see that my manner underwent no alteration, and to act in all respects as if I expected shortly to become a member of the family. It was, therefore, in the character of Lilian's lover, eager to make her uncle's acquaintance, that I presented myself at the Westbrook's house to keep my dinner engagement, and was shown into the drawing-room by the servant, who announced, "Mr. Hughes-Norreys," and then retired, leaving me alone with a gentleman who was seated reading a paper at the other end of the room. As I looked at him a vague feeling of uneasiness stole over me, for his figure seemed strangely familiar to me, and as I advanced and he rose to meet me, vague suspicion gave place to dreadful certainty. Great heavens! it was Mr. Jagg! What evil chance had brought him to the Westbrook's house? and what — what would be the consequences? The mere thought of them made my blood run cold, and I turned to flee, but alas! I was too late, for he had recognised me, and, laying one huge hand on my shoulder, compelled me to stay.

"Pray do not run away before I have time to make your acquaintance, sir," he said, with grim politeness. "I think I have the honour of speaking to Mr. Hughes-Norreys, of Copseby Manor, in Derbyshire?"

I blushed to the roots of my hair, and stammered out a reluctant "Yes."

"And yet," he continued quietly, "unless my eyes deceive me, you are also Mr. Frank Leigh, late of Barbelham?"

It was useless to deny it. I hung my head and looked, I doubt not, the picture of convicted guilt.

"You have been engaged to my ward since last May, have you not, Mr. Leigh?" was his next enquiry.

I muttered something about a boyish infatuation, but he cut me short before I could complete a sentence.

"And I think you have been engaged to my niece, Miss Westbrook, since last January, Mr. Hughes-Norreys?"

His niece! Oh, what an unhappy fate was mine! He — Mr. Jagg — was Uncle John!

"Your niece, sir?" I cried. "Are you Mr. John Westbrook, then?"

"No, sir. One name's quite enough for a simple man like me. Plain John Jagg's good enough for me."

"But you said you were Miss Westbrook's uncle," I persisted.

"And so I am, sir. Her uncle and her mother's brother."

Mrs. Westbrook's brother! Somehow I had never thought of that. I had never heard him called anything but "Uncle John," and had taken it for granted — why, I know not — that he was Mrs. Westbrook's brother-in-law. I had never asked any questions about him, because when I was with Lilian we had always had something more interesting than Uncle John to talk about, but I now bitterly regretted my fatal lack of curiosity.

"And now, Mr. Hughes-Leigh," said Mr. Jagg, with savage humour, "I beg pardon, Mr. Leigh-Norreys — really, it is very confusing — I mean Hughes-Norreys, I'd like a few words with you. How fortunate it is that the two ladies to whom you are engaged happen to have the same guardian! It saves so much trouble. In one interview we can settle about both. You see, if I arrange my business with Mr. Hughes-Norreys to-night, I need not trouble to keep my appointment with Mr. Leigh to-morrow; and, between ourselves, Mr. Hughes-Norreys, the less I see of Mr. Leigh the better I'll be pleased."

I smiled a sickly smile and intimated that I was ready to listen to him.

"Very good, sir," he answered, leading the way to the door, "but not here, sir. We'll
go to the study, where we're not so likely to be disturbed. So come along, please."

Without a word I followed him out of the room, along the hall, and into the study. Arrived there, he seated himself in an elbow-chair in front of a writing-desk, while I collapsed into a seat opposite, and strove to assume an air of grave composure.

"Now, sir," he began sharply, "which of the ladies do you really hope to marry?"

I hesitated for a moment, but only for a moment. With a quickness of perception almost amounting to genius, I instantly divined the proper course to pursue, and for the second time that day completely altered my tactics in the very face of the enemy. Mr. Jagg was Carrie's guardian, but he was Lilian's uncle, and was likely to have her interests even more at heart. It was obviously the better plan to abandon Carolina, promising to make such pecuniary atonement as her guardian thought fit, and to lay myself, Copeby Manor, and my seven thousand a year at Lilian's feet. Before he had time to repeat his question, I was ready with my answer.

"'It is a painful question," I said sadly, "but I must be candid. I own that when I was young and thoughtless, I drifted into an engagement with Miss Mayne, but since I saw your niece she has reigned alone in my heart."

"And yet, only this morning," answered Mr. Jagg, "I heard Mr. Leigh state that his feelings for some one else had never altered, and never could. How do you account for that, Mr. Hughes-Norreys?"

"That—that was a flower of rhetoric," I muttered, turning very red.

"In plain English, a lie!" he suggested. I received this remark with the silence of contempt.

"It's my private opinion, Mr. Hughes-Norreys, that Mr. Leigh's a scoundrel, for, from what you say, I suppose I'm to understand that he declines to fulfil his engagement with my ward?"

I bowed to intimate that he evidently understood me perfectly.

"There is abundant proof of the engagement, you know," he resumed. "If this case came into court, the result would be very heavy damages, sir, to say nothing of the scandal and loss of reputation. If I were you, I'd advise Leigh to settle it out of court, Mr. Hughes-Norreys."

"Sly old fox!" I thought. "He doesn't want a scandal any more than I do. I knew he wouldn't allow Copeby Manor and seven thousand a year to go out of the family. Mr. Jagg," I continued slow-like, "my first engagement was an indiscretion I own, and all indiscretions must be paid sooner or later. I assure you I am not to do everything that is honourable."

"I'd like something more definite than that," he returned drily. "Our ideas of what is honourable seem to differ considerably.

"I leave it entirely to you, then," I said, scowling to notice his petty anger.

To my astonishment and disgust, he named—but no! my modesty forbids me to mention the value which he set upon me. Suffice it to say that I have had much higher opinion of myself ever since.

"Monstrous!" I cried, starting up. "It is really more than I am worth."

"I am well aware of that," he resumed sharply. "But we are not considering your value at present, but the value of the man Miss Mayne thought you were. In sum, I've named is the lowest I'll accept her behalf."

"Really, Mr. Jagg, I must say you've a wonderful eye for the Mayne chance," said, hoping to propitiate him, but I received my harmless little pleasantry with such a blood-curdling scowl that I fell off my chair.

"We'll have no tomfoolery, if you please," he rapped out. "That's my ultimatum, and you can accept it or reject as you like. If we have to bring an action the damages will probably come to ten times, and in addition you'll have the cost to pay."

As there was a certain amount of truth in what he said, I decided to capitulate and, after one more effort to beat him down, drew a cheque for the amount. Then Mr. Jagg, who, it appeared, had been a lawyer, drew up certain documents, and footman who came with a message concern-

"Well, that's over!" I said, facing myself back in my chair with a sigh of relief when we found ourselves alone again.

"I think we've arranged everything satisfactorily, Mr. Jagg."

"Not so fast, sir!" he exclaimed. "For I have satisfied me as a guardian, but you have yet to satisfy me as an uncle."

"There won't be much trouble about that, I imagine," I said confidently.

"You think not?" he enquired with a peculiar smile.

"Of course not! I am free now, and your niece need never know anything about
my little escape. There were no witnesses to our conversation, ha! ha! ha!"

"No," he said slowly, opening a drawer; "there are no witnesses, ho! ho! ho!"

"We're close-tiled," I added with a wink; "entirely by ourselves."

"Just so," I assented, taking something out of the drawer, "all by ourselves, aren't we?"

"As the poet says, 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.' And it really would be foolish to let Miss Westbrook know anything, for now that Miss Mayne's matter is settled, there is absolutely no one to come between us."

"Exactly; there's nobody to come between us," he repeated, placing himself between me and the door; and then I noticed that he grasped a vicious-looking horsewhip. I began to feel some uneasiness. "I trust, Mr. Jagg," I murmured, "that you have no objection to my marriage with your niece?"

"Objection!" he roared. "How do I know you haven't a wife already, or a doreen for that matter! And in any case do you think I'd allow a perfidious, sneaking little rascal like you to marry my niece, or even to come within a mile of her now that I've found you out? You know yourself, that when she hears of your conduct—and she'll hear of it before you're an hour older—she'll refuse to touch you with a pair of tongs. But I'm not so scrupulous, and I'll touch you to some purpose. I'll teach you to go about engaging yourself promiscuously, my fine fellow. 'T'll write my opinion of you pretty legibly before I've done with you!" And he made a frantic rush at me.

It pains me, pains me excessively, to have to refer to the disgusting scene that followed, and, for Mr. Jagg's sake, I touch on it as lightly as possible. It was shocking to see a man of his age dishonouring his grey hairs and behaving more like a wild beast than a human being. Such a sicken-ing display of the vilest passions that degrade human nature I have never witnessed before or since. It was not I whom he humiliated, but himself. Nay! he even gave me an opportunity of showing how immeasurably superior to him I was in true dignity, for I can say with honest pride that I never struck him a single blow in return. But it was a terrible exhibition of unbridled violence, and it pained me acutely. After the whip was broken, too, I grieve to say that he degraded himself still further by applying his boot to me like any coal-heaver, continuing the brutal sport until the servants rushed in thinking that murder was being done. Then, for the first time, he paused, ordered them to throw open the front door, and "personally conducted" me off the premises. As he propelled me through the hall, I caught a glimpse of Lilian's frightened face gazing down on us from the floor above, and I waved my hand in what I meant for a sublimely mournful gesture of farewell, but as it is impossible to look heroic on the top of another man's boot, I fear it did not impress her as I desired. The next moment I was soaring through the hall-door, and that was the last I ever saw of Lilian Westbrook.

Nor have I seen Caroline since the catastrophe. As soon as I was able to move, I went abroad on a protracted tour, from which I have only just returned—to find, alas! that the idols of my heart were as sickly as they were fair. Within a few months of their engagement to me, they had actually so completely forgotten me—not to say themselves—as to marry, the one a baronet, the other a rising barrister. Would that I could forget them as easily, but, go where I will, I am haunted by visions of the past, ghosts that will not be laid. Neither in excitement nor in solitude, the two great remedies of those who have a grief to gape with, can I find oblivion. If I seek distraction amidst the gaiety and glitter of society, I am constantly reminded of my lost Lilian; and if, in the vain hope of finding peace, I retire from the world to lead a quiet, studious life among my books, I miss the sweet companionship of Caroline at every turn. Mine is no ordinary case of broken heart, it is a compound fracture—and compound fractures take long to heal. Sometimes I even fear that the wound is mortal—I'm sure mortification set in long ago—and that I am doomed to fail as martyr to my constancy. In any case, I know that never again will I be the man I was before the occurrence of this most unfortunate affair.
Meredith's house, as he opened his own front door some ten minutes after he had banged Mrs. Johnson's behind him. "Dinner!" Dr. Meredith's voice gave Mrs. French what she described later, to her underling Jane, as "quite a turn." "Never!"

With this summary of his wishes he entered the sitting-room and shut the door sharply on her. She retreated to the kitchen, to prepare the meal, amid gloomy presages as to Dr. Meredith's future, for the usual time.

Dr. Meredith himself, meanwhile, flung his hat on the table and flung himself into an arm-chair with very much the same gesture.

Never in all his thirty-one years had life presented itself to him as such a mass of impossible complications as it did at the present moment. And perhaps they were the more insoluble because his life had run hitherto on such very simple lines.

He had spent his student years without anything special to mark either him or them; unless it were that he gave more work to his profession than most of his friends, both from a real love and enthusiasm for it, and a simple-hearted determination to get on so well as to rid his father—a country clergyman, and far from rich—of the burden of his maintenance as soon as might be. He had succeeded in his aim, and had scarcely become qualified before he got an appointment as house surgeon at the hospital where he had studied. A year or two later this was followed by the offer, obtained for him through personal interest, of an excellent assistantship to a doctor whose London practice was very large and somewhat renowned. This he held for the next few years, and then the practice, through the sudden death of the doctor in question, passed into other hands, and Meredith found himself temporarily "at a loose end."

He had saved money during those years, however, and determined to buy a practice for himself. A London practice was beyond his means, so he looked about for a country one; telling himself contentedly that, after all, the country presented a broader field, and more opportunity for working up a good connection.

The country practice was discovered in that at Mary Combe, which presented the two advantages of a low price and great possibilities in the form of a country connection that only needed working up. Here, therefore, some nine months before this April, Dr. Meredith had taken up his abode and set to work to make the most of the possibilities. He had more than one motive for the energy with which he attacked the position.

During the years of his assistantship, Dr. Meredith, being naturally of an extremely sociable disposition, had used as much and as often as his professional claims allowed, the entrée which one or two introductions had procured for him in the first place into a certain "set" consisting of a rather anomalous mixture of fashionable and intellectual people. He became, quickly enough, in the houses composing that "set" a decidedly popular person. A young good-looking man with an excellent manner who is spoken of as "likely to do well" finds many smiles waiting for him. Among these houses was that of Lady Carruthers. And here, one evening some two years before his leaving town for Mary Combe, he met Althea Godfrey for the first time. Like all her friends, Dr. Meredith had heard of Lady Carruthers's niece, "the lady doctor;" and like most of his own professional friends, Dr. Meredith held women doctors in abhorrence. He had listened to Miss Godfrey's name with a careless desire to be preserved from her acquaintance. But on this special evening, he chanced to be introduced to a girl whose name he failed to catch; a girl whose personality consisted for him in wonderful gray eyes, and the most charming manner he had ever known. It was not until Dr. Meredith had fallen in love with all the favour of a man who has never cared much for women before, that he found out who and what Althea Godfrey was.

But he was far too much in love to pay the smallest attention then to any such detail as Althea's profession. And he spent many terrible weeks of alternating hope and fear before that week came which brought his proposal and her acceptance. The months that followed had slipped by for him like a dream, in which the parting made necessary by his settling at Mary Combe was the first break.

He did not intend to claim Althea for his own until he could give her an income that should keep her far above cares and worries, and this incentive it was that formed so powerful a lever in the force with which he threw himself into the work before him.

The practice proved itself only too adaptable a tool for this same energy. It had been much neglected by its former possessor, and, as has been said, it afforded every chance...
of development. And developed it Dr. Meredith did; greatly aided therein by the personal popularity he very quickly gained.

Its limits extended so rapidly, that only three months had gone by when he first found himself in the midst of the overwork which had gone on increasing ever since, and which, through his expression of his feelings concerning it, to Althea, had been the cause of his present hopeless confusion.

His first proceeding, after having flung himself into the chair, was to use very strong language concerning his own conduct in writing the aforesaid complaint.

"And yet," he said, with a groan, "who could—who on earth could have dreamed that it would lead to this!"

He gave a long and heavy sigh, and kicked the footstool on the hearth-rug as far from him as his best force could send it. This seemed to afford him some slight ease; his face relaxed a little from the tension which held every feature in a hold of bewilderment, anger, and perplexity.

He was absolutely bewildered, in the first place, by the revelation which Althea's action had brought to him. Dr. Meredith had rather prided himself on his knowledge of women; not that he was by any means one of the cynical dissectors of feminine humanity, who so complacently flatter themselves that they have placed the whole sex under their pocket microscopes. His knowledge was founded on very simple lines.

He thought he knew human nature very fairly, and he had thought that women were but a part of the whole. He expected a certain set of characteristics from a woman—characteristics in which she might very likely fail, he thought, but to which he never dreamed of any addition. He himself, though perfectly strong, clever, and absolutely clear-headed and reliable, was not specially original.

The fact that a woman, and a woman whom he thought he knew intimately, could originate and carry out a scheme so unprecedented and so unconventional as that before him was a realisation that had overwhelmed him with amazement.

Following on his bewilderment came his anger. Dr. Meredith was proud, and he possessed the quality which is never so adequately described as by the word "masterfulness." To be defied was the one thing he could not brook; very few people in all his life had ever been bold enough to try the experiment of offering him defiance of any sort. And now, the woman whose every thought and feeling were, he had flattered himself, in perfect submission to his, had not only offered it, but was prepared to maintain it, and maintain it stoutly! The conviction that her will was every whit as strong as, if not stronger than his own; that, if not actually defeated, he had met a formidable equal; together with the hastily smothered but smarting sense of humiliation at not having carried his point, filled him with a heat of angry resentment such as he had never felt in all his life before.

But perhaps the most present source of agitation at this moment, and the heaviest pressure, was his perplexity. His feelings about the situation would keep; the question which must be decided now, this very hour, was—how was he to act in it? What was he to do? He would have given worlds, as he sat this Sunday morning in his sitting room, for a competent adviser; some one who could suggest to him some course of action. He felt absolutely incapable of originating one for himself.

Althea's presence in Mary Combe as his assistant was, he said to himself, impossible. He simply could not have her there. He could not have her going about in her man's dress doing his work with him, and generally settling down into her false position, as he angrily called it. As he thought it over indignantly, details came crowding into his mind; details such as the necessary introduction of Althea to his few friends in the neighbourhood; the terms of masculine equality that must necessarily be established between her and them; and the comments on her in her assumed character to which he should have to listen and acquiesce in.

The work itself Dr. Meredith did not mind for her. He had, after many an argument with Althea early in their engagement, become to a great extent converted from his first opinion of women doctors. In his case, as in some others, his feeling had taken its rise more in instinctive repugnance to the persons than comprehension of their position; and the repugnance being so forcibly overthrown for him in Althea's person, the sequence was not difficult. He had, in the course of time and of long discussion with her, both on the abstract subject and details of it, become so used now to the thought of her work, that it had even grown to be a natural and withal a delightful thing that he and she should have all their deepest interests on a common ground. So that, under other circumstances—if they had, for instance,
been married, and she had proposed to share his work—he could have very readily consented. It was the position in which she had placed herself that he fought against, and recollected from with all his force.

However, the more he sat and stared at the floor, the less he seemed able to think of any way by which to remove her from it. The only fact that he did grasp was that he never in his life had been so utterly at a loss. This reflection was useful, perhaps, as a beginning, but it could not be said to lead to anything. Neither could the heavy groan with which he rose and tried a change of position by walking to the window.

Althea was there, in Mary Combe; he must get her away at once; he could not by any known means get her away if she would not go. This was the circle of propositions round which his miserably bewildered brain revolved. He thought of a desperate appeal to her; he thought of a stern command; he thought of a compromise in the shape of a third expostulation; and he dismissed each thought in turn with the sensation of hopelessness which is the mental counterpart of the sensation of walking straight into a dead wall.

He knew in the bottom of his heart that he could do nothing; that Althea had been, and was still, too strong for him. He emphasized the anger with which this conviction filled him by the murder of an annoying bluebottle; but this brought him neither relief nor solution of the riddle.

He was rather hungry; in his haste to go and see Althea he had made a very "sketchy" breakfast, and partly from hunger, partly from absolute worry, his brain began mechanically to rehearse the questions that perplexed him, till they seemed like the buzzing of the dead bluebottle. He strode back to the arm-chair in utter desperation, but he had scarcely sat down when a thump as of a sharp object on the door panel, announced the arrival of Mr. French with the luncheon-tray.

Having no hand to spare, she was not to practise this compromise as to knocking and then to perform a sort of hasty conjuring trick on the latch with her right hand.

"If you please, sir!" she said breathlessly, in a voice which also contained tentative remembrance of their last meeting at the same time clattering down the stairs with a bang which mixed most of its contents together; "there's Bill Sims in the surgery, waitin' for you. Some stuff for his sister he wants; you told him to come to church, he says."

Dr. Meredith rose, and without a word strode down the room to the door communicating with the surgery, dashed it open with his foot and let it bang together behind him.

"Hang it all!" he muttered wrathfully. "One can't even be allowed to think out a thing in peace!"

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CHAPTER XXXVII. PROOF POSITIVE.
Penelope stepped into the dark wood feeling dazed and helpless. Even now she could not believe that this fortune had any foundation in fact. It was impossible that for so many years her father should have lived a life of sordid poverty and of parsimoniousness, when he knew that a word from him would bring hidden treasure to light. She looked back on the struggles of her uncle and of her mother, both of them determined not to sink down into the mean, sordid conditions of the existence lived by the King and his son, and the remembrance of those past struggles made tears start to her eyes.

"He could not have been so cruel as that," she said to herself; but the thought that her father had stooped to many a meanness, and many a miser's rage, prevented her from dismissing the idea as impossible. When she looked back at her own youth, her young ambition, her ignorance of life and of the power of love, her anger rose to its height. Had her father kept his secret till it was too late?

"No," she said again, "it is impossible. His mad fancy pleases itself in the thought that he has found hidden treasure, and he wishes to punish me for marrying beneath me. What would that matter, what would anything matter if—if I loved him?"

She was walking fast, heedless of the ruts, heedless, too, of the occasional logs and fallen trees lying in the path. But all at once she found herself at the stilte, and she paused. The mist was slowly dispersing, and the moon was scattering the fleecy clouds. A night-jar made itself heard, and a frightened hare crossed her path. She was looking towards the Palace, but she had to go down a green slope, and to cross the river, before she could reach the glen. The night was still, and the cool air had a calming influence on her nerves. As she looked across the valley, following with her eyes the path she must take, she was suddenly dismayed by seeing a figure walking quickly down the opposite slope, and making straight for the wood. The light was not strong enough to show more than that it was a human being moving swiftly, and coming on evidently with some set purpose.

Penelope was not in the least nervous. She had been brought up so close to nature that the fear of loneliness and darkness, which most women possess by nature, had never troubled her. Part of her nameless attraction lay in this want of feminine weakness. It was not an assumption of manly strength, but merely the absence of the weakness of the other sex. For this reason she was surprised at suddenly feeling a strange fear of the on-coming figure. Her heart beat fast, and she felt rooted to the spot, whilst her eyes remained fixed on the advancing form. Gradually she discerned that it was a woman, then as the figure grew nearer and nearer, walking unusually fast up the hill, Penelope uttered a little cry of surprise. It was Dora Bethune.

Dora! What could bring her here at this time of night? She must have been to bed, and have risen from it to come here. What folly! Was every one going mad? Still, Penelope felt possessed by the same strange and nameless fear. She half thought
that she would hide in the wood and let the girl pass her, but this, too, seemed senseless, and so, moving out of the shadow, she stood by the stile waiting for the girl's head to appear above the brow of the steep slope.

In a few moments Dora reached the top, and made straight towards Penelope. During the two minutes' walk which separated them, Penelope's heart beat even quicker than before, for Dora seemed to be entirely unconscious that another human being was near to her, and yet she must be able to see her. The next instant Penziz understood the true facts of the case. The young girl was walking in her sleep! The Princess did not realise this a moment too soon, but, having done so, she did not know how to act. She had read of such things, but she had never before come in contact with a case of sleep-walking. She must not wake her, that was all she knew. One moment more and she stepped quickly to one side, leaving Dora to reach the stile without interruption.

What was she doing? What ought Penelope to do? Then the truth flashed upon her. Dora had been so much frightened and impressed by the scene through which she had gone, that she was re-enacting it now. Another second, and Penziz's heart bounded for joy. She would follow her, and, if it were true, she would know.

In an instant she, too, had climbed over the stile, and was following Dora as noiselessly as she could. She noticed that the girl had put on her hat, but that she had not dressed herself fully. Her hair hung down her shoulders, and she had merely slipped on a dress and jacket over her nightdress. Penelope thought that she ought to turn her aside and lead her home. The girl might catch cold or harm herself; but the great wish to know the truth, and the curious chance which made it possible for her to find it out, prevented her from listening to the voice of prudence. Besides, she argued, an attempt to take Dora home might result only in awaking her, and would certainly frighten her. It was better to let her alone, and merely to follow her.

It was strange how surely and how unhesitatingly the girl walked on. She seemed to be able to see perfectly, though her eyes were shut, and she carefully avoided the fallen trunks and occasional holes with a precision difficult to understand and to believe.

Once or twice Penziz thought that she must be dreaming, and that she was following a ghostly phantom which was luring her on to some scene of danger. Her limbs trembled as she followed the figure, sure only of one thing, that, whatever happened, she must not lose sight of her. Another strange fact was that Dora when awake could not walk as fast as Penelope, but now the Princess found it difficult to follow her.

In this strange manner they both walked through the wood, till they reached an identical spot where Dora had been gathering ferns. Here the girl paused, the stooped down and seemed to be gathering up the poor roots, whose leaves were already beginning to wither. Seeing this, or appraising to do so, the girl threw them down again, and leaving the path, plunged into the wood.

Still Penelope followed, hardly able to still her beating heart, and full of certainty that now she was going to discover the secret.

Once, from the difficulty of following her through the thick brushwood, she lost sight of Dora, but pressing forward again caught sight of her cloak, and in the same time she noticed how heedless she was of the branches and brambles which impeded her and sadly tore her loose hair.

“I ought not to let her go on,” thought Penziz, but the wish to know, to make sure, was too strong within her, and still she followed. Again Dora turned suddenly, and, in doing so, found herself face to face with Penelope. The latter shrank back. The expression of the girl's face was strange, so unnatural, that her eyes were wide open, and she was talking to herself.

“It's here, it's here. You must go into this ditch. I can't swear, you know, but a Bethune never breaks a promise. Now let me help you. I can't believe it.”

“Dora,” said Penelope softly, “what is it?”

Dora did not appear to heed the question, but plunged knee-deep into the ditch, and Penelope kept close beside her. Then she stooped and parted the ferns and the brambles, and at last the Princess saw the old stone wall.

“It's here, here; the stone must be turned round—I want to tell her, but indeed I must not. I promised.” She tried to move the stone with her fingers till her very nails bled, then, as if guided by some invisible power, she plunged her head into the ditch and brought out a cistern evidently that which had been dropped there by the King.
"That's it; now—now I can do it," she muttered, and with quite an unnatural degree of skill she loosed the stone and disclosed the long-hidden box.

Penelope could no longer doubt that if there were any truth in the discovery, this was the place. But what could she do? She would have liked to draw Dora away, she even gently pulled her cloak, but the girl seemed endowed with a supernatural strength of purpose which nothing could frustrate.

"The gold is in these bags, and here are notes and papers. Do you say so. Is it true? The Princess doubts me. I never told a lie in my life. Forster, tell me, is it true? You always speak the truth."

Penzie shivered with a fear she had never before experienced. She saw the girl plunge her fingers into a canvas bag and finger the coin it contained. She even took some out, and the clink sounded hateful to the Princess. The accursed gold was here, really here, but—

"Dora," she said softly, overcome with fear and a strange misgiving, "put all this away and come with me."

Dora lifted her head as if she had heard a very, very distant sound, and as if she were suddenly startled. She began hastily putting back the gold piece by piece. By accident she dropped one of them into the ditch; then she fell on her knees and searched hurriedly for the missing coin. Penelope thought the search was hopeless, and that she must wake her or get her away by force, but in another moment Dora rose up with the lost coin in her hand, and very hastily she began to put everything back.

So far all was well.

Penzie heaved a sigh of relief to think that, at all events, she knew, and that she could by-and-by come here again by herself. But at this moment she saw that Dora was struggling to replace the stone, and that the task was almost beyond her strength. It had become wedged, and though the poor girl tore her hands over it, and even allowed Penelope to help her, it was all in vain, the secret door would not swing back.

What was to be done?

"Come away," said Penzie quickly.

"It is getting late; you must come home."

She took her hand firmly and tried to draw her away, but she was dealing with an unknown force.

"I must, I must hide it! Penelope must not know. I promised."

"Dora, Dora, come away."

It was in vain, for still the girl struggled with her hopeless task. Dawn was now overpowering the moonlight. Some early shepherd might pass that way, and Penzie, despairing, felt that soon she must wake the girl.

"Dora," she called, "Dora!" speaking louder.

Suddenly the stone seemed to move of itself, and slipped back into its right position just as Penzie had shaken her companion violently by the arm, and had managed to awake her from her strange sleep. As Dora slowly regained consciousness she uttered a sharp cry of fear and horror combined, and fell forward against Penelope.

"Where am I? What is it? Oh, Penzie, Penzie, what has happened?"

"You came here in your sleep, dear, don't be afraid. I am here with you. It is this stupid secret that haunted you."

Dora gazed round her, horror-struck at seeing where she was.

"Oh, Princess, you know! I have shown you! In my sleep, in my sleep! I did not know it! Why did you follow me?" and she burst into tears.

"Nonsense, dear, you could not help it. Come back now. Take my arm."

Dora silently did as she was told, and for some time the two painfully pushed their way through the tangled undergrowth. At last they came to the old path where lay the heap of withering ferns.

Here Dora paused and looked round again.

"Princess, Princess, why did you follow me? Oh, it was cruel of you! A Boethune never breaks a promise. What will Forster say! I—I—did it without—without—"

Then without any warning the girl fell down unconscious upon the ground. The fright and the strain of the strange episode had been too much for her.

Penelope, horrified, knelt down and tried to revive her. But there was no water at hand, and it was hopeless to think of carrying her.

"What shall I do?" she thought; then, after a few moments, she saw plainly that she must go and get help.

The girl was still, cold, and stiff, so this was no mere fainting fit. But what would Forster say? Was she, Penelope, doomed to hurt all those she loved?

However there was no help for it, she must run to the farm and get Jim Oldcorn to come and carry Dora home. In another
moment she was hastening towards the place she had left only two hours before.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. AN UNEXPECTED RETURN.

"When ah went 'sceul,' remarked Jim Oldcorn when, in the clear grey dawn, he had almost carried Dora up to her room, "ah mind oor caid misseis was taken wi' the fite loike this."

"Hush, Jim," said the Princess impatiently. "She is better now. Send Betty here and say nothing about it. Was my father asleep when I called you?"

"He akarat his head, but he cud'n't mak nothing of my pretendit business, so he turned round and fell to sleeping. It's sum'at like t' man to tak his own way."

"Well, that will do, Jim," said the Princess, impatiently waving him away as she began to apply restoratives; but it was some time before she and Betty could make Dora recollect where she was and what she had been doing.

When at last she recovered from her lethargy, they were glad enough to see her turn her face to the wall and fall asleep.

"I can't make head nor tail of this story," said Betty, as she put the room tidy and took away Dora's dress, all bedraggled and muddy.

"She walked in her sleep, and I am afraid I woke her," said Penelope. "Don't talk about it, Betty, to the other servants."

"As if I should, indeed! It's not much conversation these empty-headed girls get out of me, Miss Penelope—Mrs. Winakell, I mean. But you should be getting some rest too, ma'am, you're as white as a ghost. I'll stop here with the young lady. It's a bad night's work. There never will be any luck on the house as long as all these strangers keep plaguing us."

Penelope, leaving Betty in charge, walked away. She allowed her to make remarks which she would not have stood from anybody else, for Betty belonged to the old days of poverty before this miserable gold had come to ruin her life.

Having once more regained her own room, the bride, who yet was no bride, sat own utterly weare and spent. It was rue that she had brought Dora home usefily, but how could she truthfully account Forster for all this night's work! As x herself, she had seen the gold, she knew ow where to find it, but what could she st what belonged to her father, and he was pt likely to part with it. The root of all evil it certainly was. It was indeed cursed, doubly cursed.

What should she do next? Her uncle must be told, he had more power with her father than she had. Perhaps he could make the poor crazy brain understand the necessity there was of examining this secret hoard, and of at once placing it in some safe place. How much was there, and what was its value? Had she known of it sooner she might have married Forster, and she might have been happy now! All her self-sacrifice was wasted, utterly wasted. In this lay the bitterness of the knowledge and it was like the bitterness of death.

She was too restless to go to bed, so changed her dress and did away with the signs of all she had gone through. Sometimes Forster came down early. Perhaps she could meet him and explain something to him about Dora's misadventure. Perhaps Dora would not be able to leave the Palace and that would mean another few days of happiness for her—but afterwards! What was to happen?

When the September sun rose bright and clear over the dales and glens, Penelope pale but calm, sauntered out into the garden and began picking some late roses for the drawing-room. It was a perfect day, the mist was clearing away. Summer was not yet gone, but still seemed to be a favoured guest, to be made the most of and smiled upon. All nature spoke of love and of happiness, and Penelope knew that she, too, was living under its spell. Some day the winter would come, and she must forget the glory of this summer of life; but not yet, her heart cried out.

All at once she was conscious of footsteps. She knew they were Forster's footsteps and that he was near her. An angle of the Palace was hiding her, but he would come round, they would meet. She stood up with her hands full of roses, and when Forster came upon her she colour from them appeared to reflect itself upon her face. She herself was a dream of beauty, and he stood still almost speechless at the sight of her. He had meant to avoid her till necessity made him decide what was best for her—for both of them.

"Penelope," he said, conscious of using her Christian name without permission. Then he paused.

"I wanted to see you," she exclaimed.

"Dora is not well. She had rather a shock last night. My father alarmed her, and her mind dwelt upon the fright, I suppose, for quite late I saw her walking in her
sleep, where we left her last night in the wood."

"Dora did that! How strange! But you were there, too!" Forster was somewhat puzzled by these nocturnal walks.

"Yes, I had gone to see my father. He often sleeps at the farm. Perhaps it is safer not to mention it to Dora. Still, I do not think she can travel today."

"But, indeed, we must go—I must go," he said, knowing that he was living as if it were over a volcano. "My mother expects us, and now that you and the air of the Rothery Glen have made me so much better, I must not delay any longer. I must decide—"

"Yes, we must decide," said Penelope slowly, then she added: "but, indeed, Dora must be allowed rest. Unfortunately I woke her, and the shock was great."

"Shall I go and see her? Poor little girl!"

"No, she is asleep now. Betty has been sitting with her. Still, I am sure she will need rest. You must not go to-day."

They were both silent for a few minutes, but Forster slowly took a rose from her hands as if he were unconscious of the action.

"In some cases," he said after a time, beginning to walk down the drive by her side, "in some cases there is nothing but flight left for a man, even if he is brave."

Penelope raised her head slightly higher, as if the word flight was one she could not understand.

"My ancestors did not know the meaning of flight," she said coldly. "If you think that—" how could she explain this new discovery and the freedom she hoped to get from it?

"That what?"

"That one may never brave the displeasure of others, you hardly understand our Dale character."

They walked slowly on and on. The drive had turned and they were not visible from the house. Forster's resolutions, because they had been very feeble, began to melt away like morning dew; but outwardly he was calm, and exhibited no tell-tale emotion.

"You do not understand that since yesterday I have had to look at things from a new point of view. There is no longer any other way of avoiding the precipice."

They had now reached the gate of the drive which opened out upon the road. Across some green meadow lands one could see the beautiful lake shimmering beneath the rising mist. Some sparrows, which had been giving themselves a dust bath upon the high-road, flew quickly away. Overhead several swallows circled above the water, or darted with lightning speed after the buzzing flies. As they both gazed silently and almost aimlessly down the road, conscious of the presence of each other and of nothing else, Forster saw the dust fly upwards, and the sound of wheels was distinctly audible. Penelope, who hated the ordinary tourist, drew back a few steps and sheltered herself behind an evergreen oak which bordered the drive; but Forster did not move. A few seconds passed, then Penelope heard him exclaim in a tone of surprise:

"What is the matter? Won't you come home? It is breakfast-time." But instead of answering, Penelope remained silent and rooted to the spot, and it was another voice that called out, and another step that moved towards them.

"Forster! You here! Thank Heaven!"

It was Philip's voice.

From her hidden position Penelope saw everything, but she seemed spellbound, and could not come forward.

"Go round to the back," said Philip to the driver, using the tone of a master in his own home. This made her wince, and in another minute she saw the two meeting at the gate only a few steps from her.

"Philip!" said Forster, and paused.

"Yes, you are surprised. You don't know how glad I am to see you here. I have not stopped a moment on the way, I would not even telegraph. Where is Penelope? There is nothing the matter with her, I hope."

"No—no, she is here."

The spell was broken, and Penelope moved towards him, saying:

"Why did you not write? Is anything the matter?"

For a moment Philip looked at her, his glance seeming to search every line of her face, as if to find out the answer to the all important question; but he saw nothing new, only the old look of coldness. He heaved a little sigh.

"I am sorry, dear, that I startled you, but you see I came as quickly as a letter could arrive. I found that, after all, I could not keep away, because of—"

"Of what?" said Forster. He seemed scarcely to know what he was saying.

"You will think me ridiculous, but it was because of you. Three nights you
appeared to me and beckoned me to follow you. Of course it was a pure hallucination, a touch of fever, I suppose, but the impression was so strong there was no withstanding it. I thought you must be very ill, so I came."

"But I am much better, nearly well. Dora and I came here to—I mean I thought the Dale air would cure me, and it has. I'll go now and warn the Duke of your arrival."

Taking a side-walk, Forster disappeared, leaving the two together. He wished, most heartily, that he had not stayed so long, and he hoped Dora would be able to travel to-day. He felt that he was in a strange whirlpool, and he could hardly believe that he, Forster, Bethune, had fallen so low. What was he to do? How was he to act?

Circumstances seemed to spread themselves round him like a fine net, out of which he could not struggle. The sin had been originally planned by Penelope's uncle, and all the rest had followed, according to the inexorable laws of cause and effect.

As he hurried forward, as if in a dream, and with thick darkness surrounding him, Philip, his friend, was slowly walking with his wife.

"My darling," he said, drawing her arm into his, "my darling, are you at all glad to see me? I have hungered for this moment, but I fought against it because you told me to go." He raised her hand to his lips. It was cold and passive.

"Then Forster fell ill, he was very ill, and I had to give up a good deal of time to him. I could not think, I had just to do the next thing that had to be done. There were the men, too, to see after. They will do anything if they believe in you, and it was difficult when Forster was laid by to cheer them up. He has the gift of making everybody obey him willingly and joyfully, but with me it is otherwise; I could only appeal to his influence, but that helped us all. He was so unhappy about us, Penelope; I could not explain, and his noble nature could not understand our relationship to each other. Do you know that it fretted him all through his illness? He blamed himself for having taken me away. He is most good and noble! It was like him to come here to see you, darling."

"He came here to rest. He is going away to-day—or rather he was going, but Dora is not quite well."

"How fortunate I found him still here! But then, Penzie, there was time to think, and I reviewed all our life, and all the mistakes I had made, but still I felt very hopeful—yes, hopeful. I believed that time I should win you, my dearest; that all the past would be forgotten, and that out of the ashes of failure something work far more than mere passion would arise. I have come to live my life by your side, Penzie. When Forster appeared like that to me out there, I was not afraid. I recognised that he was right—he always is—and that I did wrong in leaving you. Now that he is well he will go back, but I shall stay. You are my first duty. For better for worse. Those words in the marriage service have no uncertain meaning."

Philip had spoken in a low voice, but quite calmly, now and then looking furtively at Penelope in order to see the effect his words had upon her. She still went on walking towards the house. To her, all the light of day and happiness of life seemed suddenly to be gone. Philip had come back. He was good, and kind, and grand in his ideas. He seemed now to tower over Forster, and it was almost if morally they had changed places, but she knew that she loved the one, and that she did not love the other. The chain she wore appeared to her too galling to be borne.

"I have a good deal to tell you, Philip, but now you must be tired. We will have all explanations till later, when the Bethunes have gone away."

Philip knew by the very tone of his voice that even his absence had not reconciled her to him. Was it quite hopeless? Anyhow, all was clear to him, his duty was to be near her. It was Forster who had first shown him that he was wrong to leave her alone, and he thanked him from the bottom of his heart.

When they entered the dining-room the Duke had already come downstairs.

"Well, Philip, this is a surprise! Why did you not write? You will find several improvements. But there are a few things waiting for your advice—and for your sanction."

"How is the King?" said Philip rather shyly.

"Better, much better, but he has not left off his wandering habits. Where is Bethune? Have you seen him? You must want your breakfast after such a long drive. You must have started very early. Penelope, my dear, you are pale to-day, what is the matter?"

The Duke always spoke in a different tone to his niece than that he used to any one
else, but to-day Penelope could not smile
back. Little by little this thought, thus
worded, was lodging itself in her brain:
"My uncle has ruined my life, he did it—
he did it. He meant well, but why did he
not know all the misery he would bring
about?"
"I am tired, uncle," she said aloud.
"Dora is not well. I—I was looking after
her."
"Not well! Then certainly they must
not go to-day. You must countermand the
carriage. Ah! here is Bethune himself.
Well, what news?"
Forster entered looking very grave and
troubled.
"Dora is not well at all. She won't say
anything but that she was frightened. She
began walking in her sleep, and then you
saved her from further fright, I think, Mrs.
Winskell."
"Shall I send for the doctor?" said
Penelope, feeling that all her troubles were
coming upon her at once. Then, realising
that for the present flowers must be strewn
over the precipice, she suddenly made an
effort to hide all gloomy ideas. "But I am
sure Dora will soon be well. It will only
make a few days' delay, and I shall have the
pleasure of your company a little longer."
She was by nature brave, and she now
acted up to her character.
Of course, Forster and Philip plunged
into the affairs of the settlement, such as
what each man was doing, how they were
managing their farms, and what prospects
there were of good returns for the money.
"You must go and see Jack when you
can tear yourself from the Rothery," said
Forster, trying to speak quite naturally,
but Penelope noted the effort he was
making over himself.
"Oh, you will explain everything better
than I can," answered Philip; "besides, I
shall not want to travel again for a long
time to come."
"And I must return to Africa as soon as
possible. How long can we trust them
alone, Philip?" and thus the talk con-
tinued.
Directly breakfast was over, Penelope
rose and left the two together. She felt
that she had much to do before she took
the great step upon which she was meditating.
She would show Philip that it had all
been a mistake, and restore him the money
he had given so willingly. First she must
see her father and make him realise the value
of the hidden treasure. His wicked avarice
had brought all this misfortune upon the
house of Rothery, and he must now do
what he could to make up for the evil he
had wrought.
She hurried along the old stone passage
haunted by the footsteps of a former
Winskell, and then, pushing open a swing
door, she entered the old wing, which by
the King's special orders had not been
repaired. His room was at the end, on the
ground floor, of one of the old turrets. Out
of his room one ascended some winding
stairs leading to the bare, desolate chambers,
and here, in this part of the Palace at least,
Penelope felt like her old self.

HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING.

INTERESTING books on mountaineering are
few and far between, partly because real
mountaineering experts are not numerous,
and partly because being a mountaineering
expert does not necessarily give the climber
the gift of being able to tell of what he has
done and seen in a readable fashion. But
in Mr. Conway's book* we have a volume
by an authority, and also one which is
eminently interesting and readable.
The points of the book which are most
generally interesting are those dealing with
the giant mountains and huge glaciers of the
Himalayas, and therefore we need
not follow him too closely throughout his
journey, the story of which he tells from
his departure from London on the fifth of
February, 1892. The party then consisted
of six members, "to wit, Mr. A. D.
McCormick, the well-known artist; his
friend and mine, Mr. J. H. Bondewash;
Mr. O. Eekenstein; Matthias Zurbriggen,
the Alpine guide of Macugnaga; Parbir
Thapa, a sepoy of the First Battalion of the
Fifth Gurkhas; and myself." At Abbotabad
the party was reinforced by the Honourable
C. G. Bruce, of the same regiment, and
four more Gurkhas. These Gurkhas were
throughout invaluable to the expedition;
looking upon every difficulty as a thing to
be overcome, and not shirked, and bearing
hardships and dangers without a murmur.
The mountains proper would be first en-
countered after leaving Gilgit, whither the
party set forth from Abbotabad on the
twenty-eighth of March, travelling by way
of the Vale of Kashmir, partly by Ekkas—
the ordinary one - horse, two-wheeled,
springless native vehicle—and partly by

* "Climbing and Exploration in Karakoram-Himalayas," by William Martin Conway, M.A.,
One other anecdote before we reach Gilgit and plunge into glaciers and pass which shows that the English rustic in his thickheadedness and general lack of information has his counterpart in the Valley of Kashmir. On approaching Gilgit a native was met and asked:

"Where does the Colonel Sahib live?"
"Don’t know."
"The Colonel Sahib—Durand Sahib!"
"Don’t know."
Being taken by the shoulders: "Salaam!" he said.
"The Colonel Sahib—where does he live?"
"Are you asleep?"
"Salaam!"
"Where are the tents of the sahibs—are English?"
"Salaam!"
"Ass of Gilgit! Where is the fort?"
"I have never seen a fort or sahib. Salaam! I know nothing."
From Gilgit the object was to explore the Nushik Pass which leads to Nagyr from Baltistan, and hence the real mountaineering commences. With incidents so thick as of course impossible to follow the path step by step, we can only pick them up from time to time. Their first glacier was the Bagrot glacier, which was found to be an advancing glacier, full of crevasses, seracs large and small, and so broken up as to appear to be by no means an easy highway to the upper regions. It was the first experience of some of the party of glacier walking. "They amused me by pulling one another, unintentionally, out of the steps, and exchanging mutual recriminations with utmost volubility." The Gunks were also taken out to practise step-cutting on the glacier, and to learn the use of the rope and of their climbing irons. They were easy to teach, and delighted the instructor by the free way in which they went along edges of ice and across deep slopes beside deep crevasses. They all worked with such vigour that they smashes two of the ice axes.

Further on, McCormick, Zurbriggen, and Conway loaded up a couple of codeshouldered burdens themselves, and started off for a high bivouac, as near as they could come to the head of the southern branch of the Kamar Valley. They made the bivouac at twelve thousand seven hundred and sixty feet, and the next day ascended to sixteen thousand two hundred and eighty feet, part of the time pushing their way, waist deep, through the snow. The descent had to be gone about with great care, the rocks being very steep, successive slabs set up on an end.
and divided from one another by narrow ledges. Although various plans and attempts had been made for crossing the pass to Nagyr, they had not been successful, and it was decided that Conway and Zurbriggen should make one final attempt before returning to Gilgit. They ascended to Windy Camp, which they had occupied before—twelve thousand six hundred and ten feet—and after surveys, Zurbriggen was satisfied that the peak would be ascended if one day of fine weather was granted to free it of the fresh snow, and two more for the climb; but the weather changed, and the snow and storm bade fair to drive them back. An effort, however, they determined to make, and left the camp at five o'clock.

"We crossed the glacier at the foot of the great icefall from the Emerald Pass, and in three-quarters of an hour we were close to the edge of a meadow from which our buttsre sprang. Zurbriggen and I had no more than set foot on the grass, when we beheld a huge avalanche-cloud descending over the whole width of the icefall, utterly enveloping both it and a small rock-rib and couloir beside it. Bruce and the Gurkhas were below the rib, and could only see up the couloir. They thought the avalanche was a small one confined to it, and so they turned back and ran towards the foot of the icefall. . . . We had no means of guessing the amount of solid snow and ice that there might be in the heart of the cloud. The rumble increased in loudness, and was soon a thunder that swallowed up our puny shouts, so that Bruce could not hear our warning. Zurbriggen and I cast ourselves upon our faces, and an ordinary strong wind reached us. Our companions were completely enveloped in it. They afterwards described to us how they raced away like wild men, jumping crevasses which they could not have cleared in cold blood. When the snow-dust enveloped them, the wind raised by it cast them headlong on the ice. This, however, was the worst. The snow peppered them all over, and soaked them to the skin; but the solid part of the avalanche was happily arrested in the midst of the icefall, and never came in sight."

After this the climb was resumed, and a height of fifteen thousand six hundred and eighty feet was reached, but snow falling heavily all night, and threatening, by means of avalanches, to cut off all retreat, the ascent was abandoned. Before the descent one of the Gurkhas, Amar Sing, nearly came to grief. Starting down after an ibex which had come down from higher up, killed by a falling rock, he tried to glissade, but making a mistake, he got into the icy trough of the avalanche, lost his footing, and came rattling down. Turning over on to his face, he clutched wildly at the ice. Fortunately, after descending about two hundred feet, he was tossed, by some bulge in the surface of the ice, into a heap of soft snow. But he continued his descent—in a gentler manner—and helped to find the body of the ibex.

The journey, on the restart from Gilgit, was to lead to Askole by way of Baltit, Nagyr, and the Hispar Pass, by innumerable mountains and glaciers. In the Samaiyar Valley glacier, in its ascent the party found everywhere accumulations of deep new snow, and not a peak approachable, while as the sunlight grew strong the slopes awoke and began to toss off their white mantles. "In particular a peak or rather a culminating portion of a long ridge west of the Samaiyar glacier sent down avalanches of all sizes, one after another; the growing of its butteires became continuous, and remained so for several hours." The camp on this night was at fifteen thousand one hundred and thirty feet.

Between Nagyr and Hopar they were surrounded by mountains, though clouds unfortunately veiled the summits of many of the highest peaks; but there was plenty to be seen. "We looked straight up the Bualtar glacier and could identify the flanks of the crown of Dirsan, the two Burchi peaks, and the Emerald Pass. The summit of the Emerald peak was never disclosed. Bound to the north-east we had before us, one above another, the many parallel ridges that cut up the country between Gujal and Hispar. Most interesting to us and most conspicuous was the long line of high snow-peaks which bound the Hispar Valley on the north, and under which we must go to reach the Hispar Pass. Behind them were the giants of Gujal; next, in clouded splendour, round to the left, came the wondrous mass of Hunza, and further round the nameless mountains of Budlas which we never beheld unclouded." Of these it was the Hispar Pass which was to be attacked, and which constituted the main difficulty of this route.

While among the precipices of Awkbasae—which divide the Shallihura from the Samaiyar Bar glacier—Roudedrush had a narrow escape. "After passing the narrow passage, I was about to tread on a broad
It was a glimpse into a world that knew him not. Grand, solemn, unutterably lonely—such, under the soft grey light, the great Hispar glacier revealed itself.

At the foot of the glacier were two well-marked paths—one leading immediately to and across it, the other being on the way to the Alps on the south bank. Conway party chose the latter.

Further investigation of the glacier took place. The second day of the crossing Conway started shortly after five a.m., and spent some hours on it, crossing over near to its centre.

“It is a wonderful sight—everywhere swollen into great stone-covered mounds, broken by a black, icy cliff here and there, and dotted with lakes. The thing is on such a vast a scale that it takes time to realise its immensity. There are several areas of snow and earthy surface which had evidently remained undisturbed by crevasses crossing for many years.... The white surface was one mounded grey expanse, more resembling the mid-Atlantic on a grey stormy day than anything else in the world. The stone avalanches that kept pouring down the slopes of the mounds were as unlike the breaking of waves.

At Haigutum, in the crown of the Hispar glacier, the party divided, most of them going their way to Askole by way of the Naishal, while Conway and his division went to try the Hispar Pass. The first night’s camp was pitched in a little meadow at the height of fourteen thousand one hundred feet, with a minimum temperature of twenty-eight degrees. The next day they began to enter the domain of snow, which, as they advanced, became thicker and thicker until the crevasses began to be bridged with it. The camp for the second night—Snowfield Camp—was at the height of fifteen thousand two hundred and forty feet, and the third day was spent in the camp, with a superb view spread out, with glaciers and peaks large and small.

“The ridge that runs from the Naishal to the Hispar Pass, rises in a mighty wall direct from the surface of the glacier, and it was this that was ever before our eyes during the day of our halt, it is draped from end to end in shining white. The whole face is swept from end to end by avalanches, and their furrows engrave all its slopes. There are many ice precipices and hanging glaciers. Falls of ice and snow were constantly taking place, and the boom and rattle of avalanches was almost continuous. The average height of the

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<th>(June 10, 1884.)</th>
<th>ALL THE YEAR ROUND.</th>
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| mass of ice which bridged a chasm, and over which the caravan went a few minutes before, when I heard what seemed to be a shrill whistle in Roudabush’s neighbourhood. I paused, and at that instant the mass of ice I was going to have stepped on cracked up and tumbled into the crevasse it had bridged, making thunder in its descent. I sent Roudabush’s coolie and a Gurkha to see what he wanted and to show him the route; they found him half-way down a crevasse into which he had been knocked by a sliding stone. He was caught with a shoulder against one side and a knee against the other, and was thus suspended about twenty feet above a rushing torrent of water, close to a moulin. He could not extricate himself, but they pulled him out by aid of the coolie’s long shawl. He lost his hat and stick, but was not hurt. He did not whistle, but shouted. I certainly heard no shout."

On the journey from Mir to Hispar, as the party was approaching the mouth of a deep narrow side nala, they encountered a mud avalanche. A noise like thunder was heard, and a vast black wave was seen advancing down the nala at a rapid pace. When they reached the edge of the nala the main mass of the stuff had gone by, and only a thick stream of mud, which gradually became more liquid, was rushing by; but before they could cross, another huge avalanche came sweeping down.

“It was a horrid sight. The weight of the mud rolled masses of rock down the gully, turning them over and over like so many pebbles, and they dammed back the muddy torrent and kept it moving slowly, but with accumulated volume. Each of the big rocks that formed the vanguard of this avalanche weighed many tons; the largest being about ten feet cubes. The stuff that followed them filled the nala to a width of about forty and a depth of about fifteen feet. The thing moved down at a rate of perhaps seven miles an hour. Three times did the nala yield a frightful off-spring of this kind, and each time it found a new exit into the main river below.”

Arrived at the Hispar glacier, when Mr. Conway could perceive the whole length and breadth of it, he found it a mighty one—far vaster than any glacier he had ever imagined. The last twenty miles were entirely covered with stones. The surface appeared to be level, and there were no tectonic faults to be surmounted. “There was where any visible trace of life or man.
HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING.

Charles Dickens.

Hill, the peak of the Biafo glacier, with its wonderful avenue of peaks which rise on both sides of the glacier for some fifteen miles, "one beyond the other, a series of spires, needle-sharp, walling about with precipices on which no snow can rest, and separated from one another by broken couloirs, wherein tottering masses of snow are for awhile caught till they fall in overwhelming masses on the slopes at their feet. The sigualles of Chamonix are wonderful, and possess a grace of outline all their own; but these needles outjut them in steepness, outnumber them in multitude, and trench them in size. The highest of them flings its royal summit more than twenty-three thousand feet into the air, and looks abroad over a field of mountains that finds no superior in the world." Down this glacier the road lay to Askole, which was duly reached. From here the party made a journey to the east, where the country is studded with huge peaks, with the object of making various ascents, returning to Askole, and then continuing the journey southwards.

Of these ascents the most space is given to that of Pioneer Peak. The start was made on the twenty-first of August, and the way lay at first over the seracs to the glacier, which is divided into three sections, and the first thing to be done was to find a way from the central division to the smooth level of the northern; to do this a short series of seracs had to be passed through, and a steep slope or broken ice wall surmounted. After an unsuccessful attempt—frustrated by a crevasse insufficiently bridged—it was determined to form the camp where they were, and leave the next stage of the advance until the next day. The camp was christened Serac Camp—eighteen thousand two hundred feet. The twenty-second was occupied by Zurbriggen and Bruce in endeavouring to find the way through to the plateau; others of the party were engaged in bringing up stores from a lower camp. On the twenty-third a start was made at six-thirty in magnificent weather, the way lying across hard-frozen snow. After crossing a series of snow bridges before the sun weakened them, the plateau was reached in forty minutes, and camp was formed—Lower Plateau Camp, nineteen thousand feet—and stores carried up from Serac Camp. In the morning the thermometer read twenty-four degrees; hung outside the tent at noon it registered no less than one hundred and three degrees; in the afternoon snow began to fall lightly, and the thermometer dropped to seventy degrees; while the minimum temperature at night was twenty-three degrees. The next day a long snow slope, hard as a board, had to be climbed, to the foot of the arete, but the climbing irons which were used obviated the necessity of cutting steps all the way up. As it was, the mountaineers walked
HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING.

and dined from one another by narrow passages. Soudebush had a narrow escape. "After passing the narrow passage, I was about to tread on a broad ledge. Althongh variau a plana and at-

The snow peppered them all over, and soaked them to the skin; but the solid icefall.  . . We had no means of guessing the amount of solid snow and ice that there was a small one confined to it, and so they turned back and ran towards the foot of the icefall.  . . We had no means of guessing the height of fifteen thousand six hundred feet. Beyond this first point ensued a difficult rock scramble, with steep slopes or walls of ice descending to the glacier below, and forcing the climbers to keep to the very centre of the ridge; and further on a steep face of mingled rock and ice had to be scrambled up, with the expectation of better things beyond. Unfortunately the ridge leading to the second peak was not of snow, but of hard ice covered with a thin layer of snow, where every step taken had to be cut through the snow into the ice. The time taken to traverse this ridge to the second peak—twenty-one thousand three hundred and fifty feet—was an hour and ten minutes. From here the white ridge lit up straight before them, and the ascent became altogether monotonous, and every step had to be heawn with the axe.

"Our advance was necessarily slow, and the terrible heat which the burning sun poured upon our heads did not add to its rapidity. There was plenty of air upon the actual ridge, and now and again a puff would come down upon and quicken us into a little life; but for the most part we were in the midst of aerial stagnation which made life intolerable. Such conditions dull the observing faculties. I heard the click, click, of Zurbriggen’s axe, making the long striding steps, and I mechanically struggled from one to the other. I was dimly conscious of a vast depth down below on the right, filled with tortured glacier and gaping crevasses of monstrous size." But gradually the slope became less steep, and to avoid a larger mass of cornice than usual they kept away to the right, and presently discovered that this cornice was the actual summit of the third peak on the ridge.

"We held the rope tight with all imaginable precaution whilst Zurbriggen climbed to the top. He found a firm place where all could cut out seats for themselves, and thus at two forty-five p.m. we entered upon well-earned repose." A stay was made until four, when they started on their downward way, and in a little more than half an hour had reached the rocks of the second peak. The descent was not made without a narrow escape from an accident. The party was in the following order: Harkbir, a Gurkha, was leading; Conway was second; Zurbriggen was last; Bruce and Amar Sing being some way off. Harkbir had no climbing irons, and the steps were half melted off.

"The time came when, as I expected, one gave way, and Harkbir went flying forwards. I was holding the rope tight, and was firm on my claws, and Zurbriggen had the rope tight behind me. The slope was very steep, but we easily held Harkbir. We were not descending straight down the slope, but traversing it diagonally. As soon, therefore, as Harkbir had fallen, he swung round with the rope, like a weight on the end of a pendulum, and came to rest, spread-eagled against the icy face. Now came the advantage of having a cool-headed and disciplined man to deal with. He did not lose his axe or become flustered, but went quietly to work, and after a time cut a hole for one foot, and another for the other; then he got on his legs and returned to the track, and we continued the descent. At the time, the whole incident seemed quite unexciting and ordinary, but I have often shivered since to think of it. The ice slope below us where the slip happened was fully two thousand feet long." The camp was safely reached, and that night, with a minimum temperature to ten degrees, was the last spent at the high altitude. From here a return was made to Askole, where we will leave Mr. Conway and his party, for the greater part of their work was done, and the remainder of their wanderings was over less interesting ground.

To those who take an interest in wild mountain work, or enjoy good descriptions of mountain scenery, Mr. Conway’s book will prove an unfailing source of pleasure, for there is hardly a dull page in it, while the illustrations are numerous and effective, being mostly from photographs, and giving
a good idea of the wildness and dignity of the various mountains and glaciers seen in the course of the journey.

THE FIFTEENTH OF JUNE OFF JAN MAYEN.

JAN MAYEN is an island of bare rock situated in the Arctic Ocean, within the Circle, latitude seventy-two, longitude fifteen west. It is well known to sealers, being accounted a favourite landmark for the assembling ground of the old "bladder" or crested seal, which has a fancy for more southern latitudes than its brethren. Other than this, however, it is of no importance, save to the myriads of sea-fowl that darken the sky at the approach of a stranger foot, and find a safe nesting in the crevices and crannies of its lonely sides.

April saw us far north in latitude eighty, among the old "saddlebacks," where we had some fortune; May took us to the whirling grounds in latitude seventy-eight, where we had none; and now June finds us in search of the bladders.

Every one knows that seals in the early spring bring forth their young on a pupping ground selected for that purpose. Millions and millions will thus come together, covering vast fields of ice, so wide that even the powerful long glass from the crow cannot circle them. Each species has its own ground, and there are no outsiders. Unity is the watchword of the seal.

After the pupping is over the seals betake themselves to a new ground for the purpose of basking in the sun and generally enjoying themselves after the wishes of seal nature. And to find this point, which seems vast on land, but is yet a very small speck indeed on the wide Arctic Ocean, is the one hope of the sealer.

Shortly after leaving the whaling grounds we were so fortunate as to cross the line of bladders from the north. Crossing their line means that we noticed now and then ranks of bobbing black heads ploughing steadily in one direction. And this direction duly noted, we shifted our course, and have now steered four hundred miles to half a point on the compass.

For several days we have not seen so much as a seal's head, but still we hold on our course, blindly as it were. We hope for the best; but we are anxious. More so than we might have been, had not a dense Arctic fog dropped suddenly and caused us to lie by for seventy-five hours.

It is the morning of the fifteenth. Thump! Thump! The stout "Narwhal" quivers from stem to stern, and my head beats a couple of dull notes upon the bulkhead. Again we strike something heavily. There is a hideous noise of grinding and scraping at the bow, which creeps slowly aft and then ceases.

"Some dunderhead on the bridge," say I; yaw, turn over, and try to catch a glimpse of the cabin clock. At this instant one of the watch begins to strike, and strikes seven bells. I must get up.

On deck a harpooner paces the bridge. This, then, is the fool who goes charging into ice. It is like him. He is not a favourite of mine, although he is in the specitioner's watch.

A light south-wester fills the staysails, and lays us over a little. The sea is rippled like a lake, and dotted with innumerable ice blocks far as the eye can see, and a soft wash, wafted from the largest, indicates the presence of a faint swell. A glorious sun pours from an almost Italian sky. Birds flash around us, like the insect life on a spring day in merry England. And away on the horizon, north, south, east, and west, is one sheet of glittering white, where the ice line meets its own reflection in the far sky.

We are threading our way through a field of open ice.

"Port a little!" sings out the man on the bridge.

"Ay, ay, sir!" and the wheel flies over.

"Steady!"

"Steady it is!"

And so we wind hither and thither, keeping our course as we best can.

"Well, Davidson," say I to the specitioner who comes forward from the forecastle to the break of the poop, "have you seen anything?"

"A swimmer or two, that's all, sir," says he in a tremendous sea voice. "But we're in amongst the right stuff now."

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"Twelve-foot ice, sir. You won't get bladders on less nor that. I've seen 'em up thirty foot."

"But we got the saddlebacks on thin ice, Davidson."

"Ay, to be sure; but saddles ain't bladders, ye see, sir. They're as different in their likenings as you and me." He takes a look round. "There's the wind a-going to fall off, and it'll be coal up as soon as the captain rises. And a blessing too! We'll
HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING. [June 16, 1880]

ridge is considerable, but there are few... were used obviated the necessity of cutting steps all the way up. As it was, the mountaineers walked

There is an instant commotion below. The shovels begin to work, and the slamming of iron doors is heard.

The captain turns to the mate.

"Any seals been seen?"

"Yes, sir; Davidson saw four in the morning watch."

"Did he take their course? How were they making?"

"Something like half a point more to the westward, sir."

"Keep that course, Mr. Cameron," says the captain; "there's the steward."

He descends for breakfast and we follow him. Coffee, fried ham, bread, butter, and ship's biscuit compose our fare, to which five of us sit down.

"How long will it take you to get steam up, Mr. Brown?" says the captain to the engineer—"chief," as he is called by the ship's company.

"Twenty minutes, sir," says he promptly, and keeps a forkful of ham under his nose, as he looks across the table expectantly. But the captain is not in a talkative frame, so the chief buries the ham and half the fork with it, and the conversation for the meal closes.

When we reach the deck once more, after our twenty minutes' rest, the wind has already slipped away. The seas lie like a sheet of pearl; a very shadow-glass for the feverish world. Mollies sweep around us, keeping a watchful eye on the cook's pipe. Here and there a great grey, yellow-beaked, yellow-legged burgo circles us with a dissonant croak. And far, far astern sit flocks of lovely snowbirds, showing on the broken water of our wake a fairy face of water-lilies.

Altoft, also, circling over the crow's-nest, are a score of sea-swallows. And over the starboard bow two or three boatswain birds are hovering.

The fireman is shovelling again; the furnace doors slam loudly, and an extra mass of smoke pours from the funnel.

Then a tremor runs through the ship, and the screw begins to turn with a long-drawn "whic-whooch" as it scoops up the water.

I step forward to the forepeak, where Mackintosh, a harpooner, is spying the horizon with the Perseus compass. The first is ascending the main ratlines to the crow. The ship vibrates soothingly to the action of the engines, and the water plashes merrily at our bow.

Looking ahead, I see the crystal surface of the ocean broken by an animal. A black something rises, and now it is a floe:

It swims across us, and as we near, dive; appearing again astern with the suddenness of a sunk bottle.

Many of these pretty little creatures we see sporting about at the ice-edges. And now in front of us are three black-and-white "roches" or little aukas. These are quaint little birds with a peculiarly pleasing note. They find a great difficulty in rising from the surface, for their wings are very small and fin-like. Yet I have seen flocks of them, when in full flight from Greenland to their feeding grounds, flying at nothing short of forty miles an hour.

They await our approach with few signs of fear, taking us to be a whale, no doubt; but when not more than twenty yards away they are seized with a sudden fright to rise, fail, and finally dive. Can they dive, too! And what a strange, beautiful effect they have! See them fall down, their wings going like fins, and their whole body, in fact the whole circle made by their pinions, of the bluest blue, making the sea seem colourless.

I am still watching them when there is a shout from the mast-head. Every eye looks up. I see the first leaning over the rim of the nest. And now he shout to the captain:

"Seals on the port bow, sir!"

"Seals!" says each, and there is a sort of choked huzzah from the deck.

"What do you make of them?" sings out the captain. And then: "Starboard a little! Steady as you go!" to the man at the wheel.

"Seems to be a big body of them, sir," cries the mate. "But they're a good bit off."

The captain signs to Mackintosh to take the bridge, and in a few moments he is going aloft up the ratlines.

The first sees him, hastily packs up the long glass, opens the lid of the nest, and tumbles out. He stands at the topgallant crossbar and waits.
A short conversation and they divide; the first descending with all rapidity, like a cat down a straight tree-trunk.

I await him on the half-deck.

"Yes, sir, we've hit 'em. In two hours we'll be working through the edge of them. And if the captain goes off a bit, for a patch under, we'll be drawing blood in the inside of an hour."

I really cannot help giving a slight huzza, and follow it by a hand over hand up the main-brace.

The first has gone forward, and the men who should be below are now all on deck, dressed in a strange variety of toggery. Some surround the mate, and others are fighting almost hastedly for the possession of the focas glasses.

The captain, after a long look, now shifts our course, and calls down:

"All hands ready for sealing!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" says the first, and immediately there is bedlam.

Every one hastens below, and the noise rising shortly through the main hatch is like the clatter of an army of young starlings whose respective parents have been taking a half-hour off.

Time slips past, and the fore-part is now crowded with men fully prepared and waiting. The boats, long since cleared of the whale tackle, are now furnished with seal clube, and provisions and water-cask in case of necessity in the lockers. Most of the men are in white canvas jumpers and wide half-trousers. Their towing-lines and long, curved finching-knives are at their middles. A dangerous-looking crowd they make of sixty men odd.

I am prepared also. My rifle and ammunition are lying on the engine-room top. I have a supply of tobacco, and my pockets are full of biscuits.

We are nearing the first patch of seals, and now little more than fifty yards separates us. There is no order from the crow's-nest to lower away, so the rifles take up a position at the bow.

They are now quite near. How the creatures stare! I count six of them, and notice one huge old male, or grandfather, as the men call these. Three of them rear up, and—

Bang! Bang!

We seem to have fired in two parties; and out of six seals we have only got three. The remainder slip off the ice-edge, raising wreaths of broken water. The grandfather I fired at remains; but I pride myself unnecessarily, for he has three bullets in him.

"Stop the engines!" bawls the captain.

"Lower away a quarter-boat and flinch those seals! Quick about it, too!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

The engines cease throbbing, and down drops the port quarter-boat with a splash as the falls are let go. The ice-block is astern, and the boat is now pulling swiftly towards it. In two minutes the seals are flinched and the boat is alongside. The falls are hooked on; the bell rings in the engine-room; there is a clank of machinery starting; the water begins to churn white round the propeller, and we are off.

I look over the taffrail, as the boat is being hauled up by every man that can lay hand on the ropes. A perfect cloud of birds hangs over the ice-block astern; a wheeling, darting, shrieking throng. Burgies and mollis fight thickly together, croaking and cackling with the excited fury of a French mob. Now and then a great tern swoops downward like a falcon into the midst of them, and engages on all sides, Or a full dozen at a time, when the battle rages indeed with surpassing madness.

But smaller and smaller grow the combatants, and now the noise of contest has passed away.

We are in the thick of the seals. On all sides we notice them as black specks on the gleaming ice-blocks. Some over the starboard chains are quite close to us.

"Stop the engines! Specitioner's watch lower away," calls down the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir!" in a chorus.

The orders are obeyed promptly. The starboard boats are slipped, and the men are scrambling over the side like monkeys.

"Come away, sir!" cries Davidson, in his deep, cheery voice.

"Right," say I. And in ten seconds I am in the foresheets.

The falls are unhooked. Davidson gives a push with his oar, and then, altogether, the six larch blades dip in the sea, and at each stroke gather a harvest of pearls out of the ocean's depths.

The other boat is waiting for its harpooner, and the steersman is beginning to swear volubly. Our men give way with a will, and the boat flies on like a torpedo.

"There goes the first's watch," says one of the men, as two boats drop from the davits, and soon after slip from under the shadow of her lines. But no one takes any heed. Two seals are ahead of us. Their heads hang over the edge, and they seem to be asleep.
The spectoneer unsheeps his ear, kneels opposite me, and takes up his rifle.

"Stop rowing, lads." And the ears are motionless.

The boat steadies. Our eye seeks the bead. Two reports sound as one, and the seals shot through the head lie as if they were still sleeping. The ears dip again, and the boat crashes against the ice. No time is lost in the finching. The blubbered skins are quickly aboard, and the men at the oars.

Two great striped grandfathers are the next. Mine is not shot dead, gives a spasmodic jerk, slips over the edge into the sea, and is lost.

Now we have a large patch in view. They seem to be late arrivals, and as such wide awake. There are something like twenty, packed almost like sheep in a pen. Their tails are cocking, and those inland a little are making for the edge. We shall not likely get more than a shot apiece.

As the rowers rest, one alarmed ancient tumbles off with a mighty splash. And then, with wild haste, the whole body pop into the sea, making the immediate circle like a boiling cauldron.

"Well, lads, that's good-bye," says Davidson, laying down his rifle and taking the stroke oar again. "We'll be a long time afore we fill up with them, boys."

The next are somewhat wakeful too; but the crew yell "Lie! lie! lie! lie! lie!" in deafening concord. Sufficient, one would think, to frighten the entire inhabitants of the Arctic Ocean. Not so, however; it has a good effect, seeming to bewildere, or mesmerise the creatures into a state of semi-quietness.

We get four out of six by this means, and are well pleased.

We are now approaching a round dozen of beauties, mostly all grandfathers. They have been some time on the ice. They see us; they stare at us, but they will not go so much as lift their heads.

"Now, sir," says Davidson to me, "shoot clean. No wouders; and we've that lot, and a full boat too."

"All right," say I, "mind your eye too."

"I'll do that, sir. And if so be you wounds first I'll have a pound o' bacy from ye."

"Done! And I'll have the bear's teeth in your chest."

"All right, sir. A pound o' cabin bacy, mind," and he chuckles deeply inside himself.

"Stop rowing." The men rest, and the boat glides on.

Davidson fires first. The heads rise at once. But the one shot lies still, so the others take courage from the fact, think it is all right, and sink again.

I take the next one, and the same thing happens, only there are now two lying quiet to ensure courage. The first one, however, that is wounded, we know is the signal for dispersal. So we take time, shooting alternately. And now the last seal is dead.

The finchers scramble on to the boat; and set to work with the quickness of experts. And one by one the heavy skins are thrown into the boat, sinking her lower and lower.

"That's the way to fill a boat," cries the spectoneer, stepping in. "Now, lads, for the ship!"

We have not been away an hour when we run alongside the "Narwhal" with whaler-like deftness. All save one man scramble on board. Only three skins are on deck. The switch tackle is set and ready; the hook is let down into the boat; two skins are attached. "Right!" cries the man. The winch rattles merrily, and up they come, falling flop on the half-deck.

They are unhitched, and the process repeated.

In eight minutes we are away again, with the cook and a fireman watching us jealously over the chains.

Thus the hours slip by, and the pile of skins rises steadily on the half-deck. No one has time to feel tired. We have made five journeys and are returning for the sixth time. It is eleven thirty a.m. At eleven forty-five I spring on deck, and for the sixth time the switch tackle empties our freight.

"Are you coming, sir?" cries Davidson, as he prepares to go over the side.

"Wait!" sing I. "I'm out of tobacco."

I plunge hastily down the companion, and seize a lump of the captain's that lies on the table. And now we are off for the seventh time.

But the fifteenth of June is drawing to a close. It is almost midnight. The fiery sun is low down on the rim of the horizon, tipping the sea. Sunset and sunrise commingling are sheeting the heavens in surpassing splendour. The water is ablaze with light. It seems as if the dome above us were the window of a vast volcano. The ice crystals gather in the mysteries of colour, and far off the glittering ice-field clothes itself in the melting glories of dreamland.

The "Narwhal" alone lies dark against
BRITISH SNAKElore.

**Superlative Ophiolatry.**

Superlative ophiolatry died in Britain with the Druids; a Druid himself, according to Davies's translation of Taliesin, Appendix 6, "... Druid... architect... prophet... serpent.—Gnadr." Perhaps the single direct survival of the worship is the belief in Cornwall and Wales that snakes meet in companies on Midsummer Eve, join their heads together, and, by hissing, form a kind of bubble round the head of one of them, and so continuing to hiss and blow on the said bubble, cause it to fall off at the tail, when it immediately hardens and resembles a glass ring. This ring, worn as an amulet, is supposed to confer prosperity, success in law matters, safety of person, and other advantages, on a lucky finder. Curiously enough, Pliny, Nat. Hist. Bk. 29, Ch. 12, gives a similar account of the origin of, and credulities connected with, this snake ring, or egg—anguinum ovum—amongst the people of the Galloway provinces, instructed by their Druids; adding that it is totally omitted by the Greek authors. He gives an account of one that he actually saw, but this really appears to have been the shell—marine or fossil—of the echinus marinus (sea-urchin), for Camden, "Britannia," 1695, p. 684, says of the real stones:

"They are small glass annulets, commonly about half as wide as our finger-rings, but much thicker; of a green colour usually, tho' some of them are blue, and others curiously variegated with all these sorts of colours, but still preserving the appearance of glass, whilst others again were composed of earth, and only glazed over." In fact he regards the Ovum Anguinum as the Insigne Druidi, or distinguishing mark of a Druid, quoting Anserinus, the bard, who sang, "Lively was the aspect of him, who, in his prowess, had snatched over the ford that involved ball, which casts its rays to a distance, the splendid product of the adder, shot forth by serpents."

The phrase, "snatched over the ford," again singularly connects the British and Gaulish superstitions, for Pliny remarks that it was necessary for the finder to put running water between the snakes and himself.

Examples of the grain are frequently found in ancient British tumuli; and, doubtless, symbolised the resurrection, for Mellyr, another bard, calls Bardsey "The holy island of the Glain, in which there is a fair representation of a resurrection."

There are offshoots of the original superstition. Richard Carew, in his "Survey of Cornwall," writes: "The country people have a persuasion that snakes here breathing upon a bauld wane produce a stone ring of blue colour, in which there appears the yellow figure of a snake, and that beast's bit and venom'd being given some water to drink, wherein this stone has been infused, will perfectly recover of the poison." Mr. Hunt, in his "Popular Romances of the West of England," says the country people now declare that it is not safe to venture on the Downs at Land's End without a milpore—possibly from millepore—which a correspondent of his affirms to be coralline limestone, the sections of the coral passing for entangled young snakes.

Apart from these, however, we have in Britain many strange credulities regarding the snake; strange in that the reptile is here insignificant in size, and comparatively weak in venom; though occasionally, withal, a suggestion of reverence may be observed in connection with it, a little due to vague traditional worship, and somewhat born of physical repugnance. In Sussex, they say these lines are written on the adder's belly:

If I could hear as well as see,  
No man or beast should pass by me.

A belief in the deafness of the adder is, or was, a vulgar error throughout the country; if, in truth, it was confined to the vulgar, for Randolph, in "The Muse's Looking-glass," 1638, act ii., scene 3, has, "How
they hold that goitre may be cured in the
following manner. Let a second person
hold the common snake by its head and
tail, and draw it slowly nine times across
the diseased neck; but, after every third
time, the creature must be allowed to rest
about awhile. It must afterwards be put
alive into a bottle, which should be tightly
corked and buried—the swelling will van
with the snake. Some say that the skin
should be killed, and its skin worn next
the neck. In other parts of Suffolk,
Snake’s Avel (skin) is worn inside the
for headache. Mr. Black, in his “Fast
Medicine,” states that an old man used to
sit on the steps of King’s College Chapel
Cambridge selling snake, sloughs (self-skin
skins) for the same complaint. In one
places, he goes on to say, it is used to
extracting thorns, but its virtue is repelling
not attractive. For instance, a sleep
bound on the wounded palm of the hand
would drive the thorn through to the back.

On the other hand, the old herbalists
believed in innumerable preventives and
cures. Viper’s Bugloss was said to be the
Devil’s Bit, Flower de Luce, St John’s
Wort, Hedge Mustard, Mithridate Mustard,
Tormentil or Septfoil, were all said to exp
venom; but the crowning virtue was
possessed by the crab-apple, according to a
recipe current before the Conquest, pres
erved in MS. Harl. 685, and translated
from the Anglo-Saxon by Cockynas is in
“Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starde,”
thus:

This (crab-apple) is the wort which
Wergule hight;
This sent the seal
Over whence;
Of other mischief
The malice to mend,
These nine can march on
Galact nine ugly poisons.
A worm sneaking came
To say and to slaughter;
Then took up Woden.
Nine wondrous twigs,
He smote then the adder
Till it flew in nine bits.
There ended it the crab-apple
And its venom, that never it
Should more in house come.

It may be gathered from the context that
the “nine ugly poisons” included snake
venom and other violent disorders of the
blood; the “nine wondrous twigs” being
Mugwort, Waybread, Steam (watercress),
Attorlothes, Nettle, Maythor, Wergul
Chervil, and Fennel.

In conclusion, these credulities may be
mentioned. When a dog or tame beast is
bitten by an adder, the wound should be
washed with milk from an Irish cow, to make
bleat the adders that have no ears!” There
are, too, many variants of the following
proverbial rhyme still current:

“If I could hear and thou couldst see,
There would none live but you and me.”

As the adder said to the blind-worm.

Here are two more errors, for the blind-
worm so called, has eyes, and is not
venomous. It has another name, slightly
more appropriate, slow-worm, but the
harmless bob-tailed creature, a link between
the lizard and snake, is better called long-
cripple in the West Country.

Near Leeds they say that when a snake
crosses the path rain is near; and in West
Sussex to kill the first snake you see in the
year gives you power over your enemies for a
twelve-month, or its skin hung up in the
house brings good luck to the tenant. In
Shropshire, the dragonfly is the supposed
harbinger of the adder, and is consequently
called the Ether’s Nild or Needle, and the
Ether’s Mon (man) in various parts of the
county. In the Isle of Wight they give the
insect the name snakestanger for a like
reason. A sickly-looking person with a
ravenous appetite is said to have a
“nanny-wiper” in his or her stomach, and
the only way to lure it forth, say the
Sussex people, is to fill a saucer with milk
and lie near it with the mouth open,
feigning sleep. The nanny-wiper will
shortly creep forth to drink the liquor,
and may then be killed. In the North
Country it is believed that if a native of
Ireland draw a ring round a toad or adder,
the creature cannot get out, and will die
there; but in the West Country, one
should make the sign of the cross within
the ring, and repeat the first two
verses of the sixty-eighth Psalm. Mr.
Hunt states that he once saw a snake
not yet dead within a circle, and
was told by a gardener that the creature
had been so charmed. Gerard, in his
“Herball,” follows Pliny in the idea that
the ash-tree is so obnoxious to the snake
that it will sooner pass through a circle of
fire than a ring of the leaves of that tree; but
Culpepper says, “The contrary to which is
the truth, as both my eyes are witness.”
At Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, at the
present time, a snake, however maimed, is
invariably hung securely over the bough of
the nearest tree, so that it may not escape,
for the belief lingers here, as in many parts
of the country, that the crawling thing
cannot die until sundown.

As a curative agent the snake, dead or
alive, is thought highly of. In Suffolk
a cure. A hair plucked from the tail of a living horse and immersed in water produces a water-snake—in Warwickshire they say a leech. The bride or groom whose path to the church the reptile crosses will be unhappy. The notion that snakes suck cows seems to be not entirely devoid of truth; and the old saw:

March win' (wind)

Wakes the other and blores the whin,

if not absolute fact, is sufficiently near for a figurative expression.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

BY MARGARET MOULE.


CHAPTER VII.

"You think I shall be about again come summer, sir? I'm picking up again wonderful now."

"Summer is almost here, Mrs. Wilson. It will be June in a day or two, you see."

"Bless me, sir, why so it is. The weeks do run by! It's only the other day, it seems, that I took that cold; just before you came to Mary Combe, and you've been here—"

"Four weeks exactly, Mrs. Wilson."

It was a lovely afternoon, and the sunlight was lying in great bands of yellow light across the Wilsons' kitchen. The window had a wide sill, full of flowering geraniums in pots, and just under it was a sofa—wide, old-fashioned, and comfortable. On the sofa lay Mrs. Wilson, and in a chair close to her, and facing her, was Dr. Meredith's assistant.

"The young doctor," which was the vague way in which, in preference to the more formal title of "Dr. Godfrey," Mary Combe insisted on distinguishing Dr. Meredith's assistant, had altered a good deal during those four weeks of which she spoke. No obvious alteration was perceptible; indeed, nothing which to the eyes that daily looked upon her in Mary Combe could be called alteration at all. For it was in expression alone that the change lay, and Mary Combe perceptions took no account of such trifles as expression.

The strong mouth that had been such a feature of Althea Godfrey's face had slightly changed its curves. There was the same strength about them still, but a tiny downward set of the corners had made it obstinate instead of firm, and self-willed instead of self-confident. The daring and mischievous glance characteristic of the defiance that had alone in her grey eyes had faded, leaving them still defiant enough, it is true, but rather sombre; and that eager impulsiveness of the whole face which had formed the leader half, so to speak, of its expression, was temporarily in abeyance, kept in hand by the other half, the calm, quiet self-possession. The slight figure was perhaps a trifle slighter, and seemed curiously, and yet not aggressively or exaggeratedly, at home in the grey clothes.

In eight minutes we are away again, with the words; a smile that was faintly reproduced on the thin face outlined against the red sofa chintz. Mrs. Wilson had come very near indeed to the shadow which lay before her. Her almost transparent hands, her hollow eyes, and burning cheeks told unmistakably the truth, even to unprofessional eyes. She lay quite still on her sofa for a moment after Dr. Godfrey had spoken, and her unnaturally bright eyes seemed to be wandering from the geraniums to the outlook above them. All at once she moved slightly and fixed them on the young doctor's face steadily.

"You do think I'm picking up?"

She half raised herself as she ended, as if by the gesture to get nearer to the face opposite her own, and read it truly.

There was a little pause. Over Althea's face passed a momentary look of uncertainty; and a reluctant, pitying expression came into the grey eyes. The next, the uncertainty was gone, and a steady resolution had taken its place.

"I am afraid not, Mrs. Wilson."

Very firmly the words were spoken, and very gently. Mrs. Wilson let herself fall back quite suddenly on her pillows.

"You don't think I'm better? You don't think I'm stronger?"

The words came in a hoarse and hollow voice.

Dr. Godfrey rose, and drawing her chair much nearer, laid her hand on Mrs. Wilson's thin fingers. They were clasped together and were trembling.

"I am afraid not," repeated the young doctor in the same firm voice, but even more gently than before. "I think it is best to tell you the real truth. I do not think you will be about again in the summer. I do not think you will ever be strong or well again."

Althea's face was full of a very great
tenderness; her steady voice was instinct with pity and sympathy. She watched Mrs. Wilson intently as she spoke the two brief sentences that contained so much, and she saw the quivering face alter as she watched it. But not as she had expected to see it alter. A look of relief came over it, and all the restless excitement was smoothed away by a contrasting stillness.

"Thank you, sir!" The answer came after a long pause. "I dare not ask you before, but I knew it was so; and I knew you'd tell me true."

Althea did not speak; she only laid her hand again with a reassuring pressure on the fingers that trembled far less now than in their uncertainty.

From outside came all the summer sounds; the cheery life of the village; the clatter of the children just let free from school; the chorus of birds in the elm-trees close by; and the stray note of a distant cuckoo.

"Twenty-three," said Mrs. Wilson, in a low voice; "that's all I am. It's young to die and leave it all. Does my husband know it?" she added. "Have you told Tom?"

"Yes," said the young doctor gently, "he knows."

Across Althea Godfrey's mind came the quick remembrance of an evening a week before, when poor Tom Wilson had met her, and stopped her with an anxious entreaty to be told "the truth about the misus." And she had, as tenderly as she might, dealt to him the bitter blow he had dreaded for months.

A long sigh of relief was the only answer.

"Him and me, we've been very happy," she said, in a low voice. Althea rose and took Mrs. Wilson's thin hand very tenderly in hers. "Good-bye," she said gently. "I think you'll like best to be left alone now."

"Good-bye," was the answer, "and thank you for telling me. Thank you ever so much."

Althea held the thin hand a moment longer, and then she laid it down and went out of the room into the summer sunlight. Her face was rather pale, and all its sterner curves were absorbed and lost for the moment in a great pity. The sombre defiance in her eyes was subdued by their tender, sorrowful gravity.

She turned sharply to her left as she came out, and set off at a quick pace up the hill to her own rooms in the Johnsons' house. She was thinking deeply as she walked, and she could hardly have defined what her thoughts were fixed on; she was half unconsciously living again through the just past sorrowful little scene, and the whole mystery of the current life was in her mind. The street, the sunlight, the cheery sounds around her as she walked, were all far away and indiscernible for the moment Mrs. Wilson's weak voice was the only sound she heard.

"Thea!"

The voice was close to her; the tone, though low, quick and hard.

Althea Godfrey lifted her eyes sharply. In that one instant they, and with them the whole face, had changed. The defense in her eyes asserted itself with intense harshness, and the downward set of the corners of her mouth was emphasized to aggressiveness.

"Well!" she said.

Dr. Meredith's expression was not as pleasant as that of his assistant; his physical appearance was much improved. He was not nearly so haggard, nor so thin, and the "driven" sort of look had left his face entirely. It was plain, in fact, that he no longer over-worked. But there was in his expression a sort of half-weight, half-cynical toleration which was new to it and seemed to influence everything. As this, as he faced Althea, intensified until it was quite as aggressive as her own obstinacy.

The cause of the alteration in him was not far to seek. For the past four weeks he had been to him the most difficult weeks he had experienced in all his life. In the first place he was now, at the end of these, quite as utterly unable to come to any conclusion regarding the crisis which had been their beginning, as he had been at that beginning itself. That thinking of the subject which had been interrupted on the Sunday of Althea's final ultimatum to him, had never yet been carried through to any practical end. Over and over had he begun it again. During long drives into the country, during lonely supper at sleepless nights, he had approached the whole difficulty afresh, not once nor twice, but countless times.

Each time he began he had resolved that this struggle should be rewarded by some light on the matter. But each time, severally, he had failed to find any; and, had, with a great and heavy despondency, relinquished the effort again.

Practically—and perhaps this was a sorer thorn in his side than even his perplexity—he had had to give in. His
had been literally obliged, as Althea had prophesied, to let her assume the position of his assistant. After her own definite public announcement of that position, and the assumption of its duties included in her attention to Mrs. Allen’s child and her visit to Orchard Court, there was no choice for him but to acknowledge her as such. And having done so, he could not, naturally, refuse to let her work. So, grudgingly and reluctantly enough, he had had to apportion her her share in his daily work, and to content himself in the leisure thus produced with chasing vainly and helplessly against the compulsion. To Althea herself he had attempted no further remonstrance whatever. Indeed, his intercourse with her during the past four weeks had been as slight as it was possible to make it. If Althea believed that he had meant the words in which he had so angrily broken off their engagement on that Sunday, she had every ground for her belief. His professional orders, expressed in the briefest of words, were the only conversation he bestowed upon her. If he saw her coming he would, if possible, avoid her; if he called at her door he would scarcely ever enter it, and if he passed her in the village during the day, it was with the greeting he would have bestowed on an acquaintance whom he desired to keep at the most careful arms’ length.

His whole attitude to her was one of semi-resigned, semi-cynical tolerance of an unavoidable ill; an attitude which naturally enough had left on his face the traces before alluded to.

Perhaps his feelings on the subject were enhanced a little by the fact that his assistant had become during these four weeks very popular in Mary Combe.

It had only needed a very few days to gain for Dr. Godfrey every one’s good word. The slight, grey-clad figure had been greeted with appreciative smiles and nods, even on that first Sunday of all, when Dr. Meredith’s assistant was met returning from Orchard Court.

The charm inherent in Althea Godfrey’s grey eyes and attractive face had been felt at once by man and women alike. Of the two, the women—possibly through that affinity of sex of which they never dreamed—were the more susceptible to it. But the men were loud enough and genuine enough in their praise of “the young chap’s straightforward ways,” which adjective conveyed the highest form of commendation known in Mary Combe.

Altogether, his assistant’s presence in Mary Combe was now a well-established and much-appreciated fact, and there were few days on which unwelcome proofs of this failed to present themselves for Dr. Meredith’s notice.

A small schoolchild danced up to Althea now as they stood there, and the smiling recognition with which it was dismissed lent an extra touch of acerbity to Dr. Meredith’s tone as he said shortly:

“Where have you come from?”

“Mrs. Wilson,” was the short reply.

“What do you want?”

His assistant spoke to Dr. Meredith in a voice that certainly did not err on the side of cordiality. It would have been difficult to realise that this was the same individual who had stood by Mrs. Wilson but ten minutes before.

“I’ve been to your rooms,” he answered with apparently irrelevant terseness. “Can you go to Stoke Vere this afternoon? I’m sent for to Fern Morton.”

“Stoke Vere?” repeated his assistant, carelessly enough. “Yes, I suppose I can. What is it?”

As she spoke Althea Godfrey was playing with a little stick she carried; balancing it, with a sort of ostentatious indifference, first on the palm of one hand and then on the other.

“What is it?” she repeated, somewhat sharply, as Dr. Meredith did not at once reply.

“Miss Swinton,” he said; “Rose Swinton.”

Althea Godfrey was in the act of transferring the stick from one hand to the other. She paused, sharply and suddenly; the stick dropped from her hands and fell with a little clatter into the dusty road. She raised the grey eyes which had till now been fixed on the knots in the stick to Dr. Meredith’s face. She scanned it with a quick, startled scrutiny—a scrutiny that she had never bestowed on it since her arrival in Mary Combe.

He was perfectly unconscious of the look, for he was staring over her shoulder, with an abstracted look in his eyes.

“Can you go at once?” he added, in a tone the sharpness of which had a slight ring of anxiety.

Althea Godfrey moved her eyes from his face as suddenly as she had raised them. Then she stooped and very deliberately picked up her stick; not raising her head again when she had done so, but keeping her eyes steadily fixed on the ground.
Althea's hands clenched suddenly round her stick. There was unusual feeling of some sort in the gesture, and also in her voice as she said even more slowly than she had spoken before:

"Yes, I'll go at once. What is wrong?"

"I don't know, that's the worst of it. The note was absurdly indefinite. However, you'll see."

Althea made a movement of assent without lifting her face, which was still fixed on the road.

"I'll send William with the cart to Johnson's for you at once, then," he added, and turned sharply away to carry out his words.

Althea meanwhile walked up the hill very rapidly, her face still bent on the ground.

Arrived at her own rooms she electrified Mrs. Johnson by refusing, with a brusqueness of manner the good woman had never before heard from her lodger, the afternoon tea which was standing waiting for her. On the daily preparation of this refreshment Althea had at her arrival insisted with some energy. The arrangement was difficult for Mrs. Johnson to grasp at first, and furthermore she had, as she said to Mrs. Green, "never known no gentleman so particular to his tea" as the young doctor. This fact made it the more difficult for her to grasp the circumstances now, and she decided slowly as from the shop she watched Dr. Godfrey spring quickly into the dog-cart, that something of grave moment indeed must have occurred.

The dog-cart was driven by William, Dr. Meredith's logacious and invaluable man. This loquacity was apt to reach its flood when he drove "the young doctor." He had a certain awe of his master which somewhat stunted his flow of words. But Dr. Godfrey was usually ready enough to listen to the monologue which constituted William's conversation, and the word or two which were all his listener was ever able to insert were construed by him into a gratifying encouragement.

This afternoon, sure of a sympathetic audience, he launched, in the first quarter of a mile, into one of his longest recitals. It lasted for some twenty minutes or so, and then a shock awaited William. He discovered that his usually ready listener had not been listening at all, as was proved by the wondering face turned to him when he ended with a question. Dr. Godfrey apologised abstractedly for this, and William relapsed into a silent and injured surprise, which lasted until they turned into the garden of Stoke Vere Rectory. It was still brighter and more flowery now on this May afternoon than it had been when Dr. Meredith had ridden over to see Mr. Swinton four weeks before.

The neat, middle-aged servant who opened the door in answer to Dr. Godfrey's ring, hesitated a moment at the sight of a strange face.

"I am Dr. Meredith's assistant," Dr. Godfrey said briefly. With a glance at the cart and William the maid's hesitation vanished.

"This way, please, sir," she said, and Dr. Godfrey followed her half-way down the long passage through which Rose Swinton herself had preceded Dr. Meredith on that evening four weeks before, and then up a short flight of stairs to a landing with two doors. The nearer of these the maid opened, and with the announcement: "The doctor, if you please, Miss Rose," stood back to let the young doctor go in.

Althea Godfrey entered a small, cheerful-looking room, with a modern imitation of an oak wainscot running round it for a dado. It was furnished conventionally enough, and chairs and tables alike were covered with the miscellaneous odds and ends of a girl's pursuits—raquetas, musetwork-things, seemed to spread themselves everywhere in unidy confusion. There was a large fire in the grate, warm May afternoon as it was, and in a basket-chair, drawn as close to the fire as possible, was Rose Swinton, with a shawl over her shoulders.

She was wearing a cotton dress which, though tumbled, was quite as smartly made as the blue serge in which she had received Dr. Meredith, and her pretty brown hair showed signs of having been very recently
twisted afresh into its elaborate coils and curls. Her face was flushed with a very bright colour, and her blue eyes shone with a feverish light.

With the very first movement of the door she had hastily raised herself from a crouching position, and turned her face towards it. Her eyes were therefore full on Dr. Godfrey at her entrance.

A flash of amazed incomprehension shot into them; Althea saw that. And she saw something more; something more was very visible in Rose Swinton’s eyes, and that something was keen disappointment.

“I don’t understand,” she said hesitatingly and almost curtly. “Is Dr. Meredith away?”

“I am Dr. Meredith’s assistant, and I have come in his place.”

Althea Godfrey spoke with a chilling precision which seemed to create then and there an atmosphere of antagonism between herself and the girl before her. But Rose Swinton seemed not to be aware of it. She stared steadily at Dr. Meredith’s assistant, which occupation absorbed her for several seconds.

“Won’t you sit down?” she said suddenly.

“Take that chair.”

“That chair” was a chair opposite to Rose Swinton, on the other side of the hearthrug. Althea obeyed mechanically, and a moment later the doctor and patient were face to face.

Althea Godfrey told herself that it was her professional duty to check off, one by one, the details of Rose Swinton’s appearance.

Rose Swinton, meanwhile, seemed to find her curiosity heightened by proximity, and calmly concluded her survey of the young doctor.

Complete as the process was in each case, it was, however, only momentary. Scarcely three seconds had really elapsed before Rose Swinton spoke.

“Is Dr. Meredith so very busy, then?” she said.

She had not known that the disappointment had been visible in her eyes. Still less did she know that her voice was instinct with it, in too strong a measure to let it be mistaken for a moment by the other for the petulance of ill-health.

Althea’s professional inspection had left traces on her face. Her expression had become very set, and that antagonism seemed to pervade every feature. Her voice was even more chillingly measured than before as she said with apparently unnecessary emphasis:

“Very busy? Oh, no, not specially so.”

“Oh!”

The interjection contained a variety of emotions, in which, perhaps, a decidedly mortified vanity was the strongest. Althea scrutinized her patient calmly and mercilessly with a covert gleam in her eyes, while Rose Swinton dragged her thick shawl more closely round her with an irritated gesture.

The movement, slight as it was, served to awake in Althea her professional instincts.

“Miss Swinton,” she said coldly and firmly, “I think we had better come to the point. May I ask you to tell me what is wrong with you?”

The curt professional tone was not without effect on Rose Swinton. She pulled herself languidly up in her chair, and looked at the young doctor with a half-concealed deference.

“I’m sure I can’t think,” she began in an aggrieved tone. “It was father who wrote to Dr. Meredith. He’s out now,” added Mr. Swinton’s daughter parenthetically.

“I’ve caught a cold, I think.”

“Can you account for it in any way?”

“No. Unless it was Thursday afternoon.”

“You were out in the rain?”

“I had some people to tennis; it rained — you know how it rained on Thursday; and Bob Wallis — do you know the Wallises? They are at Ringways — Bob Wallis is rather a good sort.”

“No.”

The monosyllable was very curt and clear.

“Well, he proposed that we should play just the same, for a lark, you know; and it really was a most awful lark. We were drenched.”

“Oh!” Althea’s eyebrows were raised sharply as she spoke, and her grey eyes beneath them were full of sarcasm. “I only hope, Miss Swinton, that the enjoyment you derived at the time may prove a compensation to you, for I do not think you will find the result give you much pleasure.”

Althea’s curt tone grew even more curt as she put to her patient a few searching technical questions.

“Can’t you do anything?” said the girl fretfully, when the questions were ended.

“It’s simply hateful to feel so seedy. I’m never seedy. And I must be all right tomorrow; I’m going over to the Wallis’s to lunch for a return match, and father wants me to take the choir practice in the evening, too.”

“You will not think of going out until
I give you leave. I will send you something directly I get back. And Dr. Meredith or I will see you to-morrow."

Althea made a movement as if she meant to rise from her chair; but Rose Swinton, who had been looking sullenly into the fire during the curly-expressed commands, turned her head sharply at the mention of Dr. Meredith's name, and Althea, scarcely knowing exactly why she did so, established herself again in it.

"You said Dr. Meredith was not very busy just now?"

"I did."

The answer was not an encouragement to pursue the subject, but Rose Swinton apparently ignored that circumstance.

"He has you to help him," she remarked.

"How long have you been here, Dr.— I did not catch your name!" she added indifferently.

"My name is Godfrey."

Althea had grown accustomed in the past four weeks to this half statement, and had made it quite calmly innumerable times. But at this moment she spoke the short syllables with an intense aggressiveness.

"I have been in Mary Combe four weeks," she added.

"Have you? Rose Swinton's tone was dry. She could not have explained the burning desire she suddenly felt to be disagreeable to Dr. Meredith's assistant. She "hated him" she said to herself. "A perfectly hateful young man" was the designation she had given Althea in her own mind.

"I wonder I have not heard Dr. Meredith speak of you," she continued.

"Have you seen Dr. Meredith since your arrival, then?"

The question was very blandly asked and the snappish tone of Rose Swinton, "No, I have not," was oddly incongruous.

There was a moment's pause, and then the pair of eyes each stared into the glowing fire.

They formed, indeed, a curious contrast as did the faces to which they belonged. In Althea Godfrey's, every feature was set and fixed. In Rose Swinton's were angry, uncontrolled irritation swept over the mobile, girlish face.

"You are a friend of Dr. Meredith? I suppose!"

"Have you any one to look after you?"

The two questions broke the pause simultaneously. A significant testimony to which was the stronger of the two individualities was given by the fact that the Swinton, after a moment's hesitation, did not repeat her decidedly inquisitive question but answered the other with a curt, sullen meekness.

"To take care of me!" she said. "Is of course, Emily looks after me. She showed you in. She has been here when I was a child. Didn't you know that I was alone here with father?" she said, in an aggrieved tone which arose from the reflection that she had certainly not been much discussed with the young lady.

"But I don't want taking care of!" she said angrily. "I tell you I shall be all right to-morrow!"

"That remains to be seen," said Althea composedly, rising meanwhile decided from her chair. "Good afternoon," she continued, with cold suavity.

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CHAPTER XXXIX. TROUBLED THOUGHTS.

When she knocked at her father's door, Penelope listened anxiously for his answer. Often, when he spent the night at the farm, he would come home early to the Palace, and busy himself in this solitary turret. No servants were allowed to come here, only Ooldcorn managed at times to tidy up the few things in the room, or to renew the woodstack piled up under the winding stairs. Very occasionally, too, Penelope was allowed to enter, but it was not often that she cared to penetrate the cheerless abode.

The room itself was octagon in shape, and contained a door leading out into a small shrubbery, and another door opening into a very dark, damp passage. Across this passage and some yards lower down was the partition door, and this could be, and generally was, locked from the inside.

After waiting some time Penelope was about to turn away, when she heard her father's stick and his lame shuffle along the passage floor. Presently he called out:

"What do you want?"

"It's me—Penelope. Open, please. I must see you, I must speak to you."

The King slowly drew back the bolt and Penelope followed him to the desolate room, which was known as his bedroom. A fire had been lately lighted on the hearth, and the flames shed some little comfort on the damp, dreary walls.

"Well, what do you want now?" said the old man, peering at her from under his shaggy brows.

Penelope raised her head.

"I have come to tell you that I have found your treasure, and that there must be an end of all this secrecy."

"Eh! You—the girl blabbed, then, did she?"

"No, she was so much excited that she walked there in her sleep, and I met her."

"It's mine," said the King angrily. "It's no business of yours—I won't have Greybarrow meddling with it. You didn't believe me. Ah! Well, it was your great-aunt that hid it. The story always went that she had done it, and that she would walk till it was discovered. Tell me, did you hear her footsteps just now?"

"But you knew it before, and you let me marry—for money," said Penelope, not hiding her indignation, and not answering the King's last remark.

"You and Greybarrow never consulted me, so you were caught in your own nets. What is it to me?"

He laughed till Penelope felt all the anger of which she was capable rising in her heart. Her father had let her sacrifice herself when he might have saved her.

"You don't care for anything; you don't care for me at all, so that you scramble your vile gold," she said passionately.

"That's a lie! I care more than you do for the honour of the house. You sold the honour for gold. Your great-aunt wouldn't have done it."

"We must give that money back to Philip Gillbanks. He is here, he has come back," said Penelope slowly and firmly.

There was as much obstinacy in the character of the daughter as there was in that of the father. The old man, who had been crouching over the fire, looked up quickly,
and the Princess knew that she had at last touched a chord which could vibrate. Her own happiness or sorrow did not move him in the least.

"Give back the money which is mine! Good Heaven! Penelope, are you mad?"

"No—listen, father. That money must be returned. I don't know how much it is, or how much Philip has spent on these repairs. It is a large sum, I know, but he must have every penny given back to him, because I—I shall prove to him that I was forced to marry him, and that when the debt is paid I shall leave him. Do you hear? Every penny must be returned."

"Good Heaven! Penelope, you're mad, mad!" he repeated in an excited tone. "You married to please Greybarrow and yourself. I never asked you to do it. As to giving the Winakells money to that upset, I won't do it."

Suddenly such a gleam of mad cunning came into his eyes as made Penelope shudder, accustomed as she was to his strange ways.

"Listen, Pennie, listen, girl. You've made a mistake. You love the other one. No Winakell could marry a tradesman. Curse him! Get rid of him, girl, and then—"

"When every penny is returned, then I will see what I can do, but till then—"

"Don't think it possible. Besides, how much is it? Oh, it's no use talking about that. I mustn't let the tenants know we are rich. It's bad enough as it is."

"I will have that money restored, father," she said, speaking slowly. "Don't you think that now, at last, I have a will as strong as yours? Don't you see that the law will make you return Philip's money if I choose to appeal to it?"

"The law! Hush, girl, keep away from the lawyers. Very devils they are, all of them. Keep away from them. Trust me. I'll see you are out of this scrape. But the gold, I can't give him that. There are other ways, other ways, child."

"There is no other way; I shall come here to-morrow evening and get your answer."

"Not here, Pennie, come to the farm. I hate this old place now you have spoiled it so much. Greybarrow is a fool. Penelope, don't tell him about the money. You shall be righted, girl, never fear; I'll do it. You don't believe in me, but that's Greybarrow's fault; he never believed in me. Oh! but who found the gold? He didn't. I believed the old legend; he didn't. I knew the Winakells never did anything without a purpose. That great-aunt of yours buried her money when her husband died. She did not want her second choice to enjoy it. She outwitted them all. Come, girl, don't tell any one, and you'll be safe."

He had now relapsed into muttering which Penelope hardly heeded. She turned away repeating once more:

"I shall come for your answer, father, to-morrow evening. If every penny is not returned to Philip Gilbanks, then I will find a way of forcing you to restore it."

When Penelope's pride was aroused, it was a terribly strong incentive to achievement. If she decided that something must be done, the old spirit of resistance till death was awakened within her and proved all-powerful.

So at least she thought as she moved away; but then she under-rated the power of the half-crazy man who was her father, and who in his own mind was still the true King of Rothery. Penelope now hurried away to see after Dora, whom she found still in bed, certainly better, though she was very pale, and had a strange, dull look in her eyes.

"You are better, dear; I am glad. Penelope had hidden all her strong excitement, and now spoke gently and kindly as she stopped down to kiss the young girl whose secret she had stolen.

"Yes, I feel tired and stupid, but Betsy has been very kind to me. Forster has been to see me, and he is very anxious to go away to-day. I must get up."

"You must be patient a little while longer, Dora."

"Penelope, I have been wanting to see you. I want to ask you about it—about last night."

"It is better that you should forget it all, dear; don't talk about it."

"But I must, Oh, Princess! I feel so wicked."

"You, my poor Dora, what a ridiculous idea! You wicked! That is impossible."

"Yes; I have broken my most solemn promise. Indeed, I meant to keep your father's secret, but—but I could not help it. Only, Princess, why did you follow me? Why didn't you lead me back before I reached the spot? You helped me to break my word."

Penelope blushed. The child's pure instincts contrasted vividly with her baser thoughts, and shamed her.

"Dora, my father had no right to make you give him such a promise. You can't.
I give you leave. I will send you something directly I get back. And Dr. Meredith or I will see you to-morrow."

Althea made a movement as if she meant to rise from her chair; but Rose Swinton, who had been looking sullenly into the fire during the curtly-expressed commands, turned her head sharply at the mention of Dr. Meredith's name, and Althea, scarcely knowing exactly why she did so, established herself again in it.

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"Have you? Rose Swinton's tone was dry. She could not have explained the burning desire she suddenly felt to be disagreeable to Dr. Meredith's assistant. She hated him she said to herself. "A perfectly hateful young man" was the designation she had given Althea in her own mind.

"I wonder I have not heard Dr. Meredith speak of you," she continued. "Have you seen Jh. Meredith one ear?"

The question was very unandly asked and the snappish tone of Rose Swinton. "No, I have not," was oddly incongnmi. There was a moment's pause, and then each pair of eyes each stared into the glow of the fire.

They formed, indeed, a curious contrast, as did the faces to which they belonged. In Althea Godfrey's, every feature was set and fixed. In Rose Swinton's, on the other hand, angry, uncontrolled irritation swept twill over the mobile, girlish face.

"You are a friend of Dr. Meredith's, suppose?)

"Have you any one to look after you?" The two questions broke the pause simultaneously. A significant testunon to which was the stronger of the two individualities was given by the fact that Swinton, after a moment's hesitation, did not repeat her decidedly inquisitive question, but answered the other with a certain sullen meekness.

"To take care of me?" she said. "Is, of course, Emily looks after me. She showed you in. She has been here and was a child. Didn't you know that I was alone here with father?" she added, in an aggrieved tone which arose from the reflection that she had certainly not been much discussed with the young doctor. "But I don't want taking care of me," said angrily. "I tell you I shall be right to-morrow!"

"That remains to be seen," said Althea composedly, rising meanwhile suddenly from her chair. "Good afternoon," continued, with cold suavity.

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sure, would not hear of it; besides, if your father has it, it is quite another thing getting hold of it. But really, who would have believed the old tradition was true after all?"

"This money is a hateful thing. I—I hate it."

The Duke smiled.

"You are tired and overcome, Penzie. When you are my age you will think poverty a far worse trial than riches. Take my word for it. The next thing is to show me the spot."

Penelope sighed. She felt herself shrink from the hateful gold. She did not wish ever to see it again.

"I will show you the place, and then——"

"Then I will see about getting hold of it. Really your father is not altogether accountable for his actions, he might have died without telling us the secret. It is most extraordinary."

The Duke began pacing the room. He felt more annoyed than he could show, because there were certain transactions which he remembered, and which he would be glad to think had never taken place. Even Philip was a fact he could have dispensed with, but then Philip was a fact, and as such must be accepted. After all the money might not be worth much. The King, however, was a very good judge, and Penelope had seen it. Yes, the luck had certainly turned, he thought, and the house of Rothery would one day be as rich and as famous as it deserved to be.

CHAPTER XL. SEEN THROUGH THE FOG.

It was to be an eventful day for several persons at the Palace. The afternoon was cold and dull, and a slight fog rose along the valley like a white veil lifted up a few yards from the earth. The autumn tints appeared to flush into existence, painted by an unseen artist. A slow drip, drip, came from the trees, but at present not one moan from the wind. A bird now and again chirped in a sad note, and the cattle grazed on unheeding, intent only on getting as much food as possible. In the Palace itself there was a strange stillness, as if some enchantment had fallen upon the place, or as if a doom were about to be accomplished. Nature has its moments of mystery, just as the human soul experiences its times of unreasoning horror.

All the bright joyousness of the first days of Forster's visit seemed to have fled away. Forster himself was walking in a great shadow. It had folded him in its cold grasp, and he was struggling to get out of it into the pure sunshine. He had meant to leave the Palace to-day—indeed, it was now his greatest wish to flee from the place that had brought him so near to the shadow of spiritual death—but Doras's sudden disposition had prevented this, and he was at this moment meditating whether he could leave her here alone. That, however, seemed impossible. His mother would not like it, and besides, it would look strange to leave Philip the first day of his arrival.

It seemed to Forster that as he went out, there was a red streak across the lying fog, something which dimmed his own sight. The air was oppressive; he could not breathe; he felt as if the waves were too small for him. Where was the ideal? Where his great love of humanity? It had all fled. He seemed to care no longer for anything, realising only three persons in the world—he himself and the wife that was no wife, and the friend who was thought he had betrayed. Forster had now no more false colours wherewith to paint his deeds.

Which way should he walk? What should he do? Man is weak, and easily led when passion has taken possession of him, and the higher the nature, the greater the battle. Still, the fortress built on a rock must be undermined before it can fall.

Suddenly the two friends found themselves together. Philip had been round the place to see several improvements which the Duke had begged him at once to inspect. He heard that Penelope was with Des, so he grudged the interruption less. His heart was still trusting in the work of time; he would not be hopeless for depression is the devil's friend. Hurrying round again to the front door he met Forster on the point of starting out.

"Has Penelope come down?" he asked, and the tone of his voice struck a chill into Forster's heart. "And where are you going?"

"No, I do not think she has returned, at least I have not seen her. I was going down to the lake to see after some tackle I left there; I want to pack it up."

"Can't Jim Oldcorn see about it for you? Or, better still, let us go down there together. It's so strange being here, I can't realise it yet; I can't realise my own identity. Do you know the feeling?"

"Yes besides, it's a beastly day. But
why should you come? You have so much
to do and to see here now."

"Philip turned and led the way down the
drive, taking the path towards the lake.
"No. The Duke is very kind, very, he
always has been, but—well, you see, Forster,
with the King I am still a stranger and a
foreigner. One could not foresee everything,
or indeed the ways and doings of such a
man. He is crazy, I believe."

"No doubt of it, both bad and mad."

"I would not say this to any one but
you, Forster, but you tried to—to—warn
me that there would be difficulties in such a
position as mine, and I was deaf and blind.
A man sees things more plainly after a time.
But I don't want to complain, even to you,
about the King; he is Penelope's father."

Forster walked on by Philip's side like a
man in a dream.

"Of course; but really he is not an
ordinary mortal. He frightened Dora out
of her wits, poor child. I want to take
her home. But you have not yet seen him,
have you?"

"Yes, just now, when I was prowling
round the place. The Duke was anxious I
should inspect the new stables—we met
face to face."

"Forster did not dare to look up at
Philip.

"Ah! What did he say?"

"One can't repeat the ravings of a
lunatic, said Philip, walking on rather fast,
"and his extravagance refutes itself; but I
wish some one had influence over him.
Jim Oldcorn is a most faithful follower,
but unfortunately he is a mere slave to his
master's wishes."

"Yes, a mere slave."

"Then, you see, I am not really master
here in any sense of the word. Why, that
eastern turret has not been touched or
repaired because the King burrows there.
It is barely safe, but he would not hear
of having it touched."

"Foolish old man!"

"Yet the King is sharp enough in some
ways. Well, heigh ho! Here is the short
cut to the water. Is the boat in good
condition? I used to dream of this lake out in
Africa."

Forster mentally heard the unspoken
words, "and of Penelope." A poisoned
arrow seemed to pierce him.

"I wanted to go home to-day, but Dora
can't travel," he said.

His words seemed to be jerked out, and
the former perfectly open intercourse
between them appeared dead. Did Philip
feel it, or was it only his own heart that
sang the dirge of the old friendship?

"Stay a little while longer with us," said
Philip, pausing suddenly, as if the simple
remark had an underlying significance. "A
few days will not hurt your people.
Forster, I want your help, your—company.
We must make the Palace more cheerful, or
that old man will bring the blue devils
about the place."

"But I must go as soon as possible."

"I owe so much to you, Forster; all my
wider views of life, all the best that is in
me——"

Philip talked dreamily. He seated him-
self in the boat and looked straight before
him, as if he were answering some one else
who had accused his friend. Then he
motioned Forster to come and sit beside
him, and, the chain guarding the boathouse
entrance being unloosed, in a few moments
the boat shot out silently upon the misty
water. All the beautiful views were
blotted out, only the near banks were
visible, traced out in blurred outline. A
wild water-fowl now and then skimmed
the water, breaking the strange silence that
surrounded them. Forster dreamily settled
himself in the boat; in their present
position the friends were face to face.
Philip fixed his eyes on Forster, but the
latter only glanced at the still, grey water.
He wondered why he had entered the boat,
for he had not meant to do it, nor had he
wished it. Philip's presence took away the
power of thought. He was only conscious
of the great gulf now lying between them,
and, moreover, while he felt that he must
do or say something, both his limbs and his
tongue seemed tied and bound. Why had
this thing happened? Forster groaned in-
wardly, but even to himself he could not
say, "I will give her up." On the contrary,
he thought: "It will be kinder, better for
both to be true. What can she do? But
why did I ever come here? I might have
killed the love if I had never seen her
again."}

Philip was only playing with the cars,
and did not go far from the banks. His
mind seemed far away, as if he hardly
knew where he was, or what he was doing.
Suddenly he paused and shipped the
cars.

"Forster, old fellow, look here. You know
that out there we had a difference, our first,
our only one. Have you forgiven me? Do
you understand that there are times in a
man's life when silence is his best advocate?
You know that it was not from want of
love or trust in you that I could not give in!"

"I know."

"It seemed to me to-day almost as if you still bore me a grudge—no, not that—but as if there were still a barrier between us. I could not bear that. You have so long been my leader, and a leader cannot turn against his disciple."

He laughed to hide his earnestness.

"Against you, Philip; who could?"

"No, I do not mean that exactly, but you thought me mistaken. You were right, oh, quite right, and I was a blind idiot, but then—once in the—"

He stopped, apparently unable to say more, and yet his eyes still appealed to his friend for sympathy.

Forster could not look up, but he echoed the laugh as he answered:

"You must not take a gloomy view of life."

"That's what I say to myself, and I have fought against despondency. Do you remember how, when we watched the struggles of some of our lads, we used to say that the spirit of evil was no myth? I did not guess then I should find out the truth of that by experience."

"You, Philip! No, no, any sight you have must be against a weaker foe than your own conscience."

"One doesn't really know oneself, much less other people. Even this morning, when I was full of hope, that old man, that poor demented being, called up the spirit of despair."

Forster's hand trembled.

"What did he say?"

"He—he—Forster, I should never be a diplomatist. He accused you of—of—but I gave him the lie direct."

"What did he say?" repeated Forster, summoning every spark of strength he possessed.

"I will not hurt your ears nor my lips by repeating it. I really think the man is possessed."

Philip seized the oars and swung the head of the boat homewards. The splash of the keel and the dip of the oars were alone audible in the great field of stillness. Forster was silent—what could he say? His lips tried to form some sentence meant to show Philip the hopelessness of the situation. Almost he resolved to tell him all, and then—but no, no, for Penelope's sake he could not.

Once again they entered the boathouse, and Philip spoke:

"We came for your fishing-tackle, and I was insane enough to forget all about it. Here it is."

He secured the boat, and hauled down Forster's rod from a shelf. As the two stepped out, Philip once more turned to his friend.

"Have I been an ass to mention such foolish things? Are you hurt, Forster? I'm ashamed of myself, but I think the truth is better than the old country. When you left me I really worked myself into a fever."

"You are the hero, Philip. You stay, you never forsook your post."

Forster spoke in a low voice—a voice full of despair, had his companion been able to interpret its tone.

"What nonsense! You certainly did not go till the doctor drove you away. Forget all I've said. I've been an awful fool, but the King has still a strange power about him. He hates strangers, and wishes me at the bottom of the lake."

"He can't get over his son's death."

"Yes, I know that's it. I said that to myself all the while he was telling his abominable stories. If he were not an old man, and Penelope's father, I would have knocked him down; as it was, I spoke plainly."

Philip's speech stung Forster to the quick. He did not know why these special words should rend the veil, but suddenly he was humbled to the dust. Still his lips were closed, and still the storm raged within him. Duty and passion can fight hard, but which path was he to follow now that he had got thus far? Should he go back or should he proceed?

Suddenly Philip laughed.

"Talking of all this rubbish I have left your rod behind! Don't wait for me, I'll run back for it."

Philip was gone before Forster could frame his next sentence, before he could decide what it should be. Still in a dream he walked on towards the Palace. The grey mist was lifting; all the leaves glistened with moisture and suspended raindrops. A very faint pale apricot streak broke through the grey sky, expanding into a long, indistinct line, and considerably relieving nature's look of utter dejection.

Forster had just reached the front door when he saw Penelope herself standing at the top of the steps. She had put on a long cloak and a great shawl hat, and, standing thus, she looked like a Gainborough picture, for there was a flash of
Forster raised his head a little.

"It was the curse of your life—and of other lives."

"Anyhow, it was part of my life. Then our increasing poverty, and the heart-breaking fear of being swept away off the face of this land, which our ancestors had owned, that made—my uncle act—as he did. I don't defend it now, but if he wanted another sacrifice from me I would make it again. Hard as it was—oh, very hard—I would not disappoint him."

"I know. Why do you repeat it?"

"But now it is altered, everything is changed. My father has found the treasure. It is true, true. Even uncle is convinced. There was a tradition of a hoard made by my great-aunt, and no one believed it but the King. He has found it, and we are free."

"Free?"

"Yes—Forster, don't you understand? This life of mine, this sham marriage, is over—it is over. We can pay back everything to Philip, to the uttermost farthing."

"Pay back to Philip!"

"Yes, and then—then I am free. Oh, the weight of the chain was too heavy. You know it."

"Free from Philip!" said Forster, as if he were speaking in a dream.

"Yes, we can pay him back. I was bound by that hateful money, bound, you know it. Oh, Forster, you have taught me that there is something better than family honour.

"You can pay back Philip, but the law, the world—have you considered?"

"Everything, and I do not care; I do not blame him, though he should not have married me without love. I did not deceive him. He thought it would come right—but, oh, I want to be free, because— I am very humble now, you know, because you have taught me what love is."

She was close to him now, and he took her hands in his.

"You have taught me what love is," he repeated in a low voice, "but, Penelope, there is a higher duty. I have been fighting the hardest battle a man can fight."

"I know what you would say," she interrupted him hurriedly, "but it is not true; Philip cannot, will not bind me. He shall not."

"Not Philip, but God."

"What is the use?" she went on. "You and I were mistaken, now I see it all; I was not alive then in those days, I did not
understand, I allowed my uncle to lead me, but now all is different."

"It is, I know, but, Penelope—hush—you—because—because I love you—that—"

Penelope gave a little low cry as she laid her head against him.

"Because you love me it will all be easy."

Down the side of the woody slope Philip had been coming, and at this moment he stood beside them. His eyes gazed at them as one gazes at some terrible phenomenon, and then the mist that had hidden him a moment before, closed round him again, and he was gone. He had said nothing, but he had given one look, not of anger, but of despair, a look which, as it happened, both saw, for they had started apart.

Then they were alone again, and Forster cried out in the bitterness of his soul:

"Penelope, because I love you, and because I love him, I cannot, I cannot do this thing. My sin is too heavy, I must go to him. Oh, my darling, he is more noble than I am."

Penelope looked into Forster's face, and that look told her what human suffering means: she understood that no sorrow is equal to the sorrow a man feels for his own lost honour.

In another instant he was gone, and the grey fog wrapped him around and hid him also from her sight. Penelope sat down on the wet bank and stared blankly at the fog.

After a time the last of the line of Rothery stood up and tried to walk a few steps towards home. Then suddenly the grey cloud about her seemed to be lifted, and swirled violently about her. Some invisible agents lashed the grey curling wreaths into thin whips-ords of stinging power, entangling her in their meshes, strangling her and choking her, till she threw out her arms for protection.

"What have I done?" she said, unconscious that she was alone. "What have I done?"

Then with a cry such as she had never before uttered, Penelope Winakell fell heavily to the ground, and Nero, coming close up to her, slowly licked her bare, motionless hands.

CHILDREN.

"Children," said the psalmist, "are an heritage of the Lord." We do not seem, some of us, to think so now. Many men's, and many women's, hands seem to be against the children. Legislation is needed to protect them, just as legislation is needed to save from destruction fish, birds, and beasts. They are bracketed with the animals—we have societies for the prevention of cruelty to both. Some of the nations, as nations, are using man and unnatural means to restrict, within a scanty limits as possible, the entrance of the children into the world. And we certain of our women are exclaiming again the shame and the ignominy of matrimony. They are telling us that it is not the best, right, it is the birth-wrong of women to they should have to bear children.

As a matter of plain fact, if children are an heritage of the Lord, they are a heritage which, not seldom, seems to come too soon. When the lord of the broad acres marries the lady of high degree, probably the deed for an heir is one of the chief causes of the union; and when the heir does come the father and the mother rejoice for its a son is born unto them. But when the ambitious young Jones marries the snob Miss Smith, their desire is only for companionship, that each should be a stay unto the other. So long as they have each other's society they are content. But when the coming event casts its shadows before, and the advent of a baby begins to loom upon the household, there is apt to come that rift within to lute which tends, if not to make the music altogether mute, at least to intrude into the harmony a discord. Let the sentimentalists say what they will, a baby is not an unmitigated blessing. In the case of the man with ten, or twenty, or thirty thousand pounds a year, the disadvantages connected with the appearance of the infantile stranger are reduced to a minimum. In the case of the poor man they too often obscure the whole horizon. And when the one is followed by other complications frequently ensue, which obliterates the whole lives of the man and woman, who, if there had been no children, would have been happy together to the end.

It is curious to observe how, in many households, the appearance of children is productive of disputes. There is greater difference of opinion between parents on the question of the management of their children than may be commonly supposed. The subject bristles with delicate points. Many a man, for instance, is jealous of his own child. Nor is his jealousy necessarily so absurd as might, at first sight, appear.
of Potter. Potter adores his wife. His wife used to adore him. Until the baby came he was everything to her. Now, Potter declares, he is nothing at all in his own home. The home is that baby's, not his. The baby's hours of sleeping must be respected, and the baby's hours of waking. When the baby is asleep, Potter is not expected to speak above a whisper; and when the baby is awake, he is required to exercise what his wife calls "patience." Potter's explanation of what his wife understands as "patience" is occasionally a little lurid. The other day dinner was half an hour late, owing to the baby having been "fractious." Just as the famishing Potter had served the soup, the baby woke up. Mrs. Potter could not sit still and hear that poor child cry. She was sure that nurse was shaking it. Would Potter let it come down? Potter declined; so his wife went up to see what was the matter with the child. When he had finished his soup he sent up to ask when she was coming back. She sent down a message to say that Mr. Potter must have a little patience. When, in solitary state, he had eaten his fish, he went up to enquire into the affair upon his own account. His enquiries took a form which induced his wife to return with him to table. Having returned, she read him a lecture on his want of patience, which, according to Potter, ended in something very like assault and battery. In consequence, husband and wife scarcely spoke to each other for a week. The happiness of Potter's household threatens to be poisoned by the baby.

The Jenkinsons have differed on a matter concerning the management of their baby, and although the quarrel seems farcical, yet there have been moments when it has approached to tragedy. Jenkinson has a theory that it not only does not do a baby harm to cry, but that it does it positive good—strengthens its lungs, he says. Mrs. Jenkinson differs in opinion from him entirely. In her judgement, as a mother, it is clear to her that to permit a helpless mite to cry, and to keep on crying without attempting to do anything to dry its tears, is to be guilty of conduct deserving the strongest reprobation. Owing to the divergence of opinion which exists between the couple upon this subject, the Jenkinsons have been more than once, and more than twice, on the verge of a judicial separation. Jenkinson says that in a "crèche," and in institutions of that kind, it is the custom when a baby wants to cry to let it. In conse-
is a hard question which I have sometimes to ask myself—which of the two shall give way?

Under the conditions which obtain in England, this question—which must, at some time or other, force itself upon every father and upon every mother—of the parent against the child, is a peculiarly complicated one. They order this matter differently in France. Beyond doubt, French parents exercise more self-denial for the sake of their children than is the case in England. There the thing is universal; here the thing is exceptional. A French father considers himself shamed if he is not able to give his daughter a “dot”; that is, in a pecuniary sense, to secure her future in life. The peasant strains every nerve to do this, and the artisan, the tradesman, the professional men, as well as the millionaire. The large majority of French parents, as they call it, “make little economies,” that is, live in comparative or in actual penury, in order that they may add franc to franc for the purpose of providing their daughter with a marriage portion. More, should they have a son as well as a daughter, they will draw their purse-strings, so far as they are themselves concerned, tighter still, and deny themselves even the smallest gratification, in the hope of being able to make the way smooth for him at starting. It is to be noted also, that in France, with parents and children, all things are in common. Seldom does a Gallic father treat himself to any indulgence which he does not share with his children, even with his babies.

It is not like that in England. Rare, indeed, is the English girl who goes with a dowry to her husband. The average father, when he has paid for her wedding and her trousseau, and a present or two, considers that he has done his duty towards her handsomely. Many a girl of decent family has to make a diplomatic appeal to her, more or less, distant relatives to help her with her trousseau. Many such an one, in fact, has to go to her husband with practically no trousseau at all. Men with six, and seven, and eight hundred a year, ay, and with twice and thrice as much, are not ashamed to tell the suitors who come wooing for their daughters, that they cannot afford to give anything with them. They consider that they have done all which can reasonably be expected of them when they insure their own lives.

If this thing were baldly stated and left there, it would seem as if parents in England were greater sinners than they actually are. There is something to be added, and that something goes no slight distance towards explaining the difference which exists in the national procedure. In France the children are bound; in England they are free—there is the gist of it. Across the Channel, marriage is purposely made as difficult of attainment as possible. No end of forms and formulæ have to be gone through before the knot can be tied. The end and aim of the law is to safeguard the parent; to rivet, tighten and tighten the bonds within which he confines his child. A child can do nothing of his or her own volition till he or she is married; and marriage is only to be achieved by precise obedience to parental wishes.

In England it is all the other way. The tendency of our legislation is towards, not only the freedom, but it would really seem also the license of the child. What holds the law in England give a parent over his offspring? He is compelled to keep them, he cannot compel their obedience in return. Under what, not seldom, are circumstances of great hardship, he can be compelled to pay their debts; he finds himself hard put to it when he endeavours to compel them not to incur them. Can he choose for them a trade or a profession; he can do nothing to compel them to embrace it. And though they do all the things which he had rather they left undone, the law will not aid him in one jot or one tittle in his endeavours to turn them from what he deems to be the error of their ways. As for marriage, is it not notorious that any one can marry any one else within twenty-four hours for something over a couple of guineas, and within three weeks—if poverty of pence compels them to wait so long—for something under half-a-sovereign? Are not our childrenailing themselves more and more of the opportunities offered by a convenient registrar? Unless one has witnessed such a ceremony at a registrar’s, one can have no notion of how quickly one can get married. No questions are asked, you pay your money, and there you are! What is the use of our forbidding Harriet to marry Musscn? She has only to step out one morning to post a letter, and to return in twenty minutes Mrs. Musscn. Better give the girl our consent and a square meal, so as to start her merrily on what we have every reason to believe will be her life of married misery.

It is this sense of insecurity which I fancy, has a good deal to do with the English
parental disregard for their children's future. How many couples, directly a child is born, put aside year after year, with religious persistence, a specified sum, with a view of accumulating a nest-egg, which shall be available for the little one when it shall have attained to riper years? I wonder! And, having wondered, I am inclined to ask why should they? Suppose, to take an illustration, a couple with one child to have five hundred a year. They feed and clothe the child, and give it a decent education, and so on, and then they spend what is left upon themselves. Why should not they? There is annually, let us say, when all the current necessary expenses have been met, a surplus sum which they devote to what may be called their own pleasures. Ought the child to come between them and their pleasures, and ought the sum which is spent on them to be set aside for the child? Why?

The thing ought to be made the subject of experiment. One would like to have, as an object lesson, six couples adopting one method and six couples adopting the other. Life is pretty hard. It is not often for most of us that relaxation comes to relieve the pressure. Are we deliberately to make up our minds to do without this occasional relaxation, and always to endure the continual pressure? If we do this, what will the child do for us? Remember that as a result, we shall be prematurely worn out and prematurely aged; what return may we expect from the one for whose sake we have incurred unnatural decrepitude?

The enquiry suggests many lines of speculation. To begin with, when are we going to present the child with the product of our accumulations? If it is a girl, upon her marriage? If so, who is to choose her husband, she or we? It must be borne in mind that in France the husband is invariably the parent's choice. How many girls are there in England who would permit their parents, on any terms, to choose for them their husbands—to say, peremptorily, this man you shall marry, that man you shall not?

Actually, it would be found that parents with us have very little to do with the choice of their daughters' husbands; if appearances are to be trusted they are likely to have still less. Young Muffson asks Harriet to marry him. If Harriet says yes—she will not hesitate to say yes or no, entirely on her own responsibility—there, in all probability, will be an end of it. The Greenings never in their wildest moments contemplated such a husband for Harriet, when they began to accumulate for her that nest-egg. Their idea of a husband was something altogether different; not that there is anything against young Muffson, only that he is without prospects, and a fool. Are their hardly economised savings to go towards the establishment of young Muffson, whom they positively—and with good reason—dislike? The heavens forebode. Yet what are they to do? Harriet will marry Muffson; she reproaches them because they will not give her their blessing on the instant! It is too late for them to spend their savings upon themselves to any advantage, even if they wished to; their time for enjoyment of that sort has long since gone. What good have they done to themselves or to any one by depriving themselves of the pleasures of life when they hungred for them, and were capable of their appreciation?

Or, supposing the child to be a boy, is the matter bettered then? Hardly. Boys hold themselves entitled to a freer hand in the choice of their mates even than their sisters. They merely mention in the home circle the fact that they are going to marry in a casual sort of way—not infrequently they forget to mention it at all till the thing is done. I have a friend who has five boys. By dint of exercising considerable self-denial, he has placed himself in a position which will enable him to start them in life with five hundred pounds apiece. He feels, not unreasonably, that they ought to have some practical training in any career which they might choose, before being entrusted with ready money. The result of this feeling, so far, has been somewhat disastrous. Not one of the lads seems to have any idea of what he would like to be, though they all unite in disliking to be anything which their father may suggest. The eldest has already been knocked about from pillar to post in the City—he hates the City. Finally he elected to try South Africa. His father shipped him out at his request to Johannesburg. The young gentleman has been there something near a year. Not long since he wrote to say that he had married a young lady in a store, as they both felt that it would be more comfortable and cheaper to keep house for two than for one. Would his father send over his money? What is the father to do? He is inclined to think—at this time of day—that after all it is better for parents not to deny themselves for the sake of their children, but when their time comes, to let them go out...
into the world, and to fend for themselves. He is beginning to suspect that just as it does boys good to have to rough it at boarding-school, so does young men good to have to rough it in the school of life. He doubts, in short, if the latter ever come to much until they have spent the money with which their mistakenly affectionate parents at the outset lined their pockets.

He is a clear-headed, broad-minded man, and he speaks from experience. I am not sure that he is not right. I am not sure that the average British parent is not justified in thinking of himself first and of his children second; if in his thoughts for himself he includes his wife, not impossibly his justification is complete. Let us give our children healthy frames; health is the chief requirement in the battle of life. Let us do our best to train them to become decent men and women, and to give them such an education as shall fit them to pit themselves against their fellows. It is doubtful if we can do much more.

The influence of the parent over the child has been, and still is, exaggerated. The proverbialist’s assertion, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” is all very well as a Sunday-school axiom, and in theory; in practice it is worth nothing at all. You may strive to train up a child to be, or to do, what you will; it will dree its own weird in the end, with total disregard of its early training. In good, sober truth the more strenuously you may endeavour to train a child to walk in any given direction, the more likely is it to move in a diametrically opposite one. The explanation is a perfectly simple one; it is merely an illustration of a natural law. When you unstring a bow it changes its shape; the more tightly it was strung, the greater the change. When the parental pressure is removed from the child the reaction comes, its natural tendencies will prevail; the stronger the pressure has been, the more pronounced will the reaction be.

No, go easy with the children. Let the bonds you bind them with be as little galling as they need be. Do not, if we can help it, let us regard them as subjects for experiments. Above all, do not let us cram down their throats our crochets, our theories. They are as much entitled to live their own lives as we are, though they are our children. Let them, in the natural and reasonable interpretation of the words, be not bound but free. There are certain things which we should strive to teach them—as to be honest, to be truthful, to know not fear. Courage is Heaven’s own gift to the child, who is to become the man. If only we all had courage—the courage which looks defeat and disaster, time and eternity, unflinchingly, smilingly in the face, and which endures to the end, we should need but little else.

But though we strive our best to teach the children, as it were, the rudiments, we may fail. Indeed—for in such a matter, why should there be any beating about the bush!—it is probable we shall. Young children, like the children of an older growth, are not so teachable as certain of the moral-mongers would wish us to believe. Nature has been before us. What she has put in no teaching will put out, and what she has not put in no teaching will supply. In spite of all the multitude of the preachers, the thing is sure. If we parents, knowing ourselves, look into our own lives, do we not know that it is sure? It is amusing to observe the dismay with which some parents realise that all their efforts to induce or to compel their children to move in certain grooves have been of none avail. They strive to make of them one thing, and lo! they have become another. Their resentment is occasionally tragically comic. These people seem to think that children are given them to do with as they will. They are mistaken. They had better, for their own sakes, learn that the idea is an erroneous one at the beginning instead of at the end.

Neither in their youth nor in their age are children unqualified blessings. They are the cause to us of terrible anxiety, of positive suffering, of bitter disappointment. We have to bear everything for them, and then, not infrequently, when their turn comes, they decline to bear anything for us. They are apt to be much harder on our failings than we were on theirs, to be our most merciless critics. And then to crown all, when old age comes, only too often, they leave us alone, giving us to understand that our ways are not as their ways, that our day is gone. These things apply to both rich and poor alike.

And yet, who that has had children would have been without them? Who has lost a child—though it be years and years since, and others have supplied its place—whose heart does not swell when his thoughts hark back, as now and then they will do, willy nilly, to the grave which holds it? If there are any such, they are of the sort who had better remain unnamed.
TREMAYNE’S MADNESS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

WILL TREMAYNE and I were college friends, thirty years ago. He kept in the rooms beneath mine, in the corner of the quaint old red-brick court of St. John’s, and I was one of the few men who knew him well. He was never very popular, for he was too reserved and exclusive, holding aloof from the rowing set—though he was perhaps the best oar in the first boat—and not sufficiently practical and definite in his aims and ideas for the reading men. Yet he was undoubtedly clever in a vague, erratic way, and to those who really knew him his manner was singularly charming, although his changes of mood were as capricious and sudden as a girl’s, and a chance word might at any time throw him into a dreamy melancholy, or, more rarely, into a white intensity of passion. It is more than twenty years now since I saw him laid in Lengthorne churchyard, and there can be no reason why I should not relate the strange events which spoiled and shortened his life.

How far, indeed, they were actual events, and how much was merely the vivid imaginings of a powerful but unbalanced intellect, I cannot say. I shall not attempt to explain or theorise, and from the simple statement of what I myself saw, and what Tremayne told me, each reader may draw his own conclusions.

At the end of my third year at Cambridge, as soon as we could get down after his Tripos, I went home with Tremayne. It was an unusually hot summer, I remember, and he had felt terribly the strain of the long, sultry days in the Senate House, with the air quivering with heat, and the silence only broken by the swish of the examiners’ gowns, as they marched slowly down the long rows of tables, and the irritating scratching of flying pens. It was a relief to get away into the country, to the Vicarage of the little, Midland village where Will lived with his uncle. We had a very quiet time there, fishing and rambling across country, and falling in love—both of us—with Kitty Maitland at the Hall. I am a prosaic old bachelor now, as dry as my breifs, but I too have lived in Arcadia and dreamed my dreams. They were never anything but dreams with me, and yet they have had more influence on my life than many realities.

One night, as we sat smoking in the garden, Tremayne, who had fallen into a dreamy mood, suddenly sprang up and said:

“Bob, you’ve never seen the old church by moonlight, have you? Let’s pay an evening call on the knights and dames in marble.”

“All right,” I said lazily; “get the keys.”

We strolled across the grass where the yew-trees cast strange black shadows over the mounds and tombstones, and up the aisle to the chapel, where, behind a carved oak screen, and under their canopies of marble, lay the effigies of two knights and a lady. The moonlight poured down on them in all the splendour of a cloudless night in June, and the flickering shadow of a branch outside played weirdly over the face of one gigantic figure carved in full armour.

“Queer-looking old chap, isn’t he?” said Will; “doesn’t look as if he’d stick at much. He was an awful brute in the old days, you know, when the ruin on the hill was his baronial hall. The villagers say he visits it once a year still. He would be buried standing up, and no one dared to disobey him, even when he was dead; so, down in the vault below, his coffin stands on end, with a hole in the lead where his skull looks out. I’ve seen it many a time.”

“How ghastly!” I said. “Who was he?”

“Oh, an ancient enemy of my forefathers. There’s an old monkish chronicle at the Vicarage, which tells how he and Gulielmus Tremagnus—same name as mine—fell out about some lady. My ancestor had the pull of him there, but the old blackguard got his revenge, for he put an arrow through him from behind a tree, soon after the
wedding. Let's go down and beard him in his vault, and tell him what we think of him."

"Don't be a fool, Tremayne!" I said; "what is the earthly good of going down there now?"

"Rubbish!" he answered, laughing; "I believe you're afraid."

"Oh, well then, if that's what you think," I said, "come on." and I took up a candle from the lectern, lighted it, and stood waiting.

He lifted a stone in the floor, and we went down a flight of stone steps, feeling our way along the chill, damp walls. The place was heavy with the peculiar unclean smell of mould and rottenness, thick with black darkness, and, cold as it was, the air felt hot and close. I felt that I ought not to have allowed him to go, still nervous and excitable from the strain of his examination, but the taunt of fear irritated me and made me carelees.

"Here you are, Bob," he said, stopping in front of a huge leaden coffin standing upright against the wall; "bring the candle along."

I held it high above my head, and peered into the darkness. The next moment I stepped back aghast, for through a jagged hole there leered out upon us a yellow skull, with what seemed to my fancy a malignant, fiendish grin. As I stood there looking into its eyeless sockets, Tremayne began to talk to it, at first in a dippant, mocking way; but gradually he got excited, and addressed it as if it were a living thing, taunting it with the evil it had done, and its present impotence. He seemed carried away by a freakish madness, snapped his fingers at the gristy thing, defiled it, and heaped insults on it.

"Tremayne," I gasped at last, "for Heaven's sake, come away. You're not yourself; come out of this foul air." As I clutched his arm, something—I suppose it was a bat—flew suddenly out from behind the skull, and knocked the candle out of my hand, and as we struggled up the steps through the pitchy darkness, a low, evil chuckle seemed to come from behind us.

"Did you see it?" he panted with dry lips and a drawn, ashen face, leaning heavily against the church door. "Did you see it? It was his soul, his devil's soul flew out."

"Nonsense, man," I said; "it was a bat or an owl. You are feverish and hysterical. Over-work has pulled your nerves to pieces. Come home and get to bed."

"But it laughed at me. Didn't you hear it laugh at me?"

"Why, Tremayne," I said, "you can imagine hearing anything in your state. A man's senses play him queer tricks when he's unstrung. Pull yourself together, and come away."

He was in a high fever by the time I got him home, and I sat by his bed for nights and nights, as he tossed and raved; but last he pulled through. We never mentioned that night again, and as soon as he was strong enough his uncle took him away to the south of France. I returned to the bridge, finished my law course, and settled down in chambers to wait for briefs, of somehow never met Tremayne again for years. But I heard from him occasionally of his engagement to Kitty Maitland, and heard, a little later, of her death—poor Kitty! It was a sad thing. She was only sixteen, and their engagement was hardly a month old, when she was drowned at night in the little river just below the mill. No one quite knew how it happened. I did not hear of it from Tremayne himself, for he broke down again, and hung himself of life and death for weeks. I think he never the same man again after that. Perhaps his brain was unsettled, morbid fancies grew on him, but it is hard to say.

One night, as I was sitting alone in my rooms, a telegram was brought up to me. It was from Tremayne, begging me to go to him at once. I had not heard of him since Kitty's death, and I felt at once that I must go. I did not know why, but a strange, chill sensation came over me, and the thought of that night in the church.

It was a heavy, sultry October evening when I stepped out of the train at Lathom, and the red moon loomed large and low through the rising mist, while little gusts of wind in the tree-tops foreboded a coming storm. Tremayne was there on the platform, but I hardly recognised him in the haggard, wild-eyed man who met me. The athlete who had stroked our college boat to the head of the river so short a time before.

"I'm glad you've come, Bob," he said, "you won't have very long to be with me, I think."

"Oh, I can stay a week if you like," I answered. "My clients are not so numerous as all that."

"I don't mean that," he said, "but not long to stay with you."
Why, Will, you have years before you yet," I replied. "You must not get these fancies into your head, old man. Others beside you have been hardly used by Fate, and lived to be happy enough."

"Perhaps so," he answered wearily; "my case is different. I have had my tasting, and Heaven only knows what my end will be like, but it will come soon."

"Will," I said, "it is worse than foolish to talk like this. It's a cowardly weakness to give way to such gloomy ideas."

But he only shook his head gloomily, and returned the same answer to all I said:

"Wait till you have heard my story."

And that evening he told it me. I cannot say how much of it is to be literally believed, how much is only the diseased imagination of an unbalanced brain. But it was an awful thing to hear, as he spoke in a low, rapid voice, with feverish energy, while the rising wind howled among the tossing trees, and the moon scudde through the driving black clouds.

"Bob," he said, "you remember that night in the church, don't you? When I was mad, and mocked at that cursed thing. Do you recollect how it laughed at me in the dark? I have seen it twice since then—twice in the open day—and each time it laughed the same hellish laugh. Don't interrupt me"—as I began to protest—"I tell you solemnly it has cursed my life, and its devilish revenge will be consummated very soon. I dare say you think I am mad now. I only wonder that I am not.

"It killed my darling. You may well start, but I know it as well as if my eyes had seen it. This is the night when, by some awful power, it leaves that vault, and goes back to the ruin where it lived its evil life five hundred years ago. It was a year ago to-night that Kitty died. I came back from the town early in the evening, and started for the Hall. When I got to the old wooden bridge—you know it, don't you?—where we used to fish below the mill-pool—I saw her leaning on the rail, watching the sunset on the water. She did not seem to hear me coming; I stood close behind her and said 'Kitty!'—and then, my God! I can see it now—the figure turned, and instead of my darling's flower face, I was looking straight into that yellow skull, with its fixed devil's grin. I heard it laugh at me, its hollow, chuckling laugh; you remember it, don't you, Bob?"

I nodded silently, and he went on:

"I don't know what happened then. I suppose I fainted. The next thing that I remember was looking round with a vague wonder at finding myself in the parlour at the mill, with the doctor and the miller's wife bending over me. I must have been unconscious some time, for it was quite dark then. I would not rest as they told me, but hurried as well as I could to the Hall. They told me that she had gone to the Vicarage. I went back, but she was not there. We searched for her in vain all the night, but in the morning I found her down by the river bank, just below the bridge, quite dead—my darling—quite dead.

"They said it was an accident, that the handrail was old and rotten, and must have given way as she leaned on it. But I know better, Bob. And I swear to you, whether you will believe it or not—on her little white throat were five livid marks, the print of a bony hand!"

"My dear Tremayne," I said, struggling to shake off the thrill of horror that came over me, "you are allowing your whole life to be distorted by the hideous fancies of one night. The fact is that, whenever your brain is over-worked and you are run down generally, the vivid impression of that ghastly thing comes before you. Those bruises might easily have been caused by the stones in the river. Now take my advice. Get the doctor to make you up something which will give you a sound night's rest, and to-morrow you must get right away from this place. Go to Algiers, or the Cape—anywhere quite away from here."

He shook his head gloomily.

"I shall be sleeping sound enough to-morrow, Bob," he said; "let me finish my story. I saw it again yesterday—hero, in this very room!"

Involuntarily I looked round with something of a start, for he was gazing with a wild, fixed stare behind me.

"You needn't be frightened," he said, with a cracking little laugh; "there's nothing there now. It was yesterday morning. I came in tired after a long walk, and as I opened the door I saw myself—as clearly as I see you now—leaning with arms on the mantelpiece, and head turned towards the mirror."

"Of course you saw yourself, Will," I said, "with a mirror opposite you. A man usually does."

"But a man does not see his own back, Bob; and he does not see what I did as I looked over its shoulder. The figure—my figure—never turned or moved, but through
the glass in the full sunlight, that devil looked out at me, with its fleshless jaws parted in their hollow grin. I did not faint then, but struck full at it with my stick, curing it as I struck. The mirror flew into fragments, and the thing was gone; but through the crash of the breaking glass I heard the echo of its hateful, jeering laugh.

He paused a moment; then his breath came hard and fast as he went on in a hurried whisper I could hardly catch:

"It is a year ago to-night, Bob, since Kitty died."

I argued with him for a long time. I told him it was a hallucination due to his nervous condition, and that in the morning he would laugh at these fancies. But it was no use; the same weary smile and shake of the head were all his answer, and at last we parted and went to bed.

I could not sleep, but lay listening to the growing storm, and starting up at every little sound that seemed to my excited mind to come from the next room, where Tremayne slept. Quite suddenly the wind dropped, and what seemed an endless silence followed—a dead stillness without a sound in the black darkness, except the monotonous ticking of my watch, which beat on my ear like the strokes of a hammer.

Then at last the storm burst, and every little detail of the room leaped out in the lurid blaze of the lightning. The thunder crashed and rolled among the hills, and the rain rattled like bullets on the tiles. Another lull, as the storm seemed gathering up all its force for a madder burst of fury, and then, through the horrible silence, came a wild shriek of terror.

I sprang up, seized a candle, and hurried out into the corridor. As I opened the door of his room, I staggered back, half blinded by a jagged flash, which cut through the murky blackness, and as the roar of the thunder rolled away, it rattled and rang like a mocking peal of infernal laughter. Tremayne was stretched across the bed, and on his face an expression of agonised horror, such as I hope never to see again. It was a terrible sight, but one thing was the strangest of all, and I turned faint and sick as I noticed it. I do not know what was the cause of it; whether it was a curious effect of electricity, or some peculiar effusion of blood, or perhaps something stranger still.

But I tell it as the exact and simple truth. When we raised him up, and his head fell back on the pillow, I saw on his throat five long black marks, like the grip of a skeleton hand.

THE EARLY DAYS OF PUBLIC CONCERTS.

Few, probably, of the thousands who frequent the numerous musical performances of the London Season know much of the early history of public concerts in this country, or remember Banister with much as being the first to initiate them. It is difficult to imagine a time when music entertainments were given in public-houses and the performers hired by the landlord At Court, or at the mansions of the nobility concerts might indeed be heard, but as John Hawkins complains in his "History of Music," the general public had little or no opportunity of listening to high-class music: "Half a dozen of fiddlers would scrape Selenger's—or St. Ledger's— "Bonfire of the Vanities"—or "John, Come Kiss Me," or Old or Simon the King, with divisions, till themselves and their audience were tired; six of which as many players on the harpsichord would, in the most harsh and discordant tones, grate forth 'Green Sleeves,' 'Yellow Stockings,' 'Gillian of Croydon,' or some such common dance tune, and the people thought it fair music."

To King Charles the Second we owe a great measure the revival of interest in music and the other arts, which it suffered a temporary eclipse during the years of the Commonwealth. That peace-loving monarch, following the example of the French Court in most things, possessed a band composed of twenty-four violins led by a certain Baltazar, who was born at Lübeck, and settled in England about the year 1656. He was the first great violinist that had been heard in this country at that date, and Evelyn tells us what he thought of his playing. In an entry in his diary for March the fourth, 1656-57, he says: "This night I was invited by Mr. Roger L'Estrange to hear the incomparable Laborde,—i.e., native of Lübeck—on the violin. His variety on a few notes and plains ground with that wonderful dexterity was admirable. Tho' a young man, yet so perfect and skilful that there was nothing, however cross and perplexed, brought to him by our artists which he did not play off at sight with ravishing sweetness and improvements, to the astonishment of our best masters. In sum he played on ye simple instrument a full concert, so as the rest flung down their instruments, acknowledging ye victory."

Many foreign musicians must now have been attracted to this country, for the same
writer informs us that he dined on a certain occasion—a few years later on—at Arundel House, and there heard “excellent music performed by the ablest masters, both French and English, on the organs, viola, harpsichord, and voices, as an exercise against the coming of ye queenes purposely composed for her chapell.”

John Banister, who succeeded Baltzar as leader of the King's band, was the son of one of the “waits” of the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and was sent by Charles the Second to further his musical instruction in France. On his return he was appointed to the band at a salary of forty pounds per annum, paid quarterly. Eventually, however, he lost this post for some remark adverse to the appointment of French musicians to the Royal band, and the ever-ready ear of Pepys picked up the talk in Court circles, “how the King's viollin Banister is mad that the King hath a Frenchman come to be chief of some part of the King's musique.” To his dismissal we perhaps owe the establishment of the series of public concerts given in London under his direction, the first of which took place on the thirtieth of December, 1672. The advertisement in the “London Gazette” ran as follows:

“These are to give notice that at Mr. John Banister’s house—now called the Musick School—over against the ‘George Tavern,’ in White Fryers, the present Monday, will be musick performed by excellent masters, beginning precisely at four of the clock in the afternoon, and every afternoon for the future, precisely at the same hour.”

In North’s “Manuscript Memoirs of Music,” according to Dr. Burney, we have a more minute account of these performances:

“Banister having procured a large room in White Fryers, near the Temple back gate, and erected an elevated box or gallery for the musicians, whose modesty required curtains, the rest of the room was filled with seats and small tables, alehouse fashion. One shilling, which was the price of admission, entitled the audience to call for what they pleased. There was very good music, for Banister found means to procure the best bands in London, and some voices to assist him. And there wanted no variety, for Banister, besides playing on the violin, did wonders on the flageolet to a thro’ base, and several other masters also played solos.”

Four years later these concerts were still advertised: “At the Academy in Little Lincoln's Inn Fieldes, will begin the first part of the Parley of Instruments composed by Mr. John Banister.” They would appear to have been held pretty regularly, almost up to the date of his death, which took place in October, 1679.

Another public benefactor as regards music was Thomas Britton, the celebrated “musical small-coalman,” who, coming up as a boy from Northamptonia to London, was apprenticed to a vendor of small-coal in St. John Street, Clerkenwell. Some years later we find him living in a house at the north-east corner of Jerusalem Passage, where now stands the “Bull's Head Inn.” In the stable attached to this house he established, in 1678, a musical club, which attained a speedy celebrity. Access to this abode of the Muses was gained by a ladder-like staircase from the outside. Ned Ward, his neighbour, had but a poor opinion of its situation: “His Hut wherein he dwells, which has long been honoured with such good Company, looks without as if some of his ancestors had happened to be Executors to old Snoring Diogenes, and that they had carefully transplanted the Athenian Tub into Clerkenwell; for his house is not much higher than a Canary Pipe, and the window of his State room but very little bigger than the bunghole of a cask.”

Concerts were held here on every Thursday for nearly forty years. At first there seems to have been no payment for admission, but after a time the yearly subscription came to be ten shillings, and coffee, according to Horace Walpole, was furnished at one penny a dish. Here Handel might have been heard playing as best he might on the primitive organ with its five stops; and Dr. Pepusch presided at the harpsichord—“a Rucker's virginal, thought the best in Europe”—while Banister played first violin.

Among the other distinguished amateurs and professors were to be found Woolaston the painter, and John Hughes the poet—beauty and fashion being represented by the Duchess of Queensberry. Thereby, in his Diary, tells us in June, 1712, that on his way home he “called at Mr. Britton's, the noted small-coalman, where we heard a noble concert of music, vocal and instrumental, the best in town, to which most foreigners of distinction, for the fancy of it, occasionally resort.” His friend the poet Hughes wrote the well-known lines under Woolaston's portrait of him:

Though mean thy rank, yet in thy humble cell
Did gentle peace and arts unpurchased dwell
Well pleased, Apollo thither led his train
And music warbled in her sweetest strain;
while "to arts ally'd" he continued to sell small soul till his death in 1714.

Music lovers, however, at this period were not entirely dependent on the enterprise of Britten. The concerts instituted by Talbot Young, in the first instance, at the sign of the "Dolphin and Crown," in St. Paul's Churchyard—then a celebrated haunt of musicians—soon attained a considerable amount of fame. In 1724 they were held at the "Castle Inn," in Paternoster Row, when, as Sir John Hawkins tells us, "auditors as well as performers were admitted subscribers, and tickets were delivered out to the members in rotation for the admission of ladies. Their fund enabling them, they hired second-rate singers from the operas, and many young persons of professions and trades that depended upon a numerous acquaintance were induced by motives of interest to become members of the 'Castle' Concert."

Italian opera was some time in gaining a footing in this country, and at the close of the seventeenth century Italian vocalists would seem to have been rare. An advertisement in the "London Gazette" for 1692 acquaints the public that "the Italian lady, that is lately come over—that is so famous for her singing—though it has been reported that she will sing no more in the Concert at York Buildings; yet this is to give notice that next Tuesday, January the tenth, she will sing there, and so continue during the season."

The following year we find Signor Terc calling attention to his "consort of music in Charles Street, in Covent Garden, about eight of the clock in the evening." The year 1710 is a famous one in the history of English music, for it not only saw the founding of the "Academy of Ancient Music," but witnessed the arrival of Handel, the forerunner of the many famous composers and performers, who were nowhere more at home than in this country. In the following year, "Rinaldo," his earliest opera, was produced. He was the first, moreover, to introduce organ concerts into England.

The Academy, which grew out of an association formed at the "Crown and Anchor Tavern" in the Strand, was for some time under the direction of Dr. Pepusch, the gentleman and boys of St. Paul's and the Chapel Royal taking part in the performances. During its rather chequered career it had the honour of performing Handel's "Esther," the members appearing dressed in character, and its success is said to have led the composer to consider the desirability of establishing oratorio performances at Covent Garden.

The Academy existed about eight years, and saw many secessions from its ranks during that rather extensive period. On one occasion Dr. Greene, in rivalry, opened the Apollo Room in the "Drunken Tavern," whereupon Handel, in his broken English, is reported to have said that "Protector Greene is gone to the tassel."

The programme of a concert given in Drury Lane in May, 1722, for the benefit of Signor Carbonelli—a celebrated violin player, brought over to this country by the Duke of Rutland—gives us some ideas of the performances in the days of George I. First the programme was divided into three Acts, the first of which consisted of "A New Concerto for Two Trumpets composed and performed by Grano and others," and a Concerto by Signor Carbonelli. In the Second Act was to be found "A Concerto with Two Hautbois and Two Flutes," as well as "A Concerto at the Base Violin by Pippo." The third part included "A Solo on the Arch-lute by Signor Vebar," and a "New Concerto at the Little Flute," with "A Concerto for Two Trumpets by Grano and others," in a way of finale. Each act likewise contained by way of variety, a song by Mrs. Barker, about whom history does not tell us much. As for Carbonelli, he was a favourite pupil of Corelli.

Towards the middle of the last century, lovers of al-fresco music were abundantly catered for at Ranelagh and Vauxhall. Ranelagh was opened for evening concerts in 1741 with Festing as leader of the band, and choruses from the oratorios were a special feature of these entertainments. He appeared one of the finest singers of the day, in the person of John Bear, for whom Handel composed some of his greatest arias, as in the "Messiah," "Israel in Egypt," and other works. Charles Dibdin considered him "taken altogether, as the best English singer." On the stage his fame was equalled that won on the concert platform, his favourite character being Macbeth in Gay's "Beggar's Opera."

The principal lady vocalist—who she excelled in oratorio—was Giulia Fausi. She was young and interesting in person, with a sweet, clear voice and a smooth, delicate style of singing, according to Dr. Burney. He also hints that this lady was not much given to application and diligence, and tells us that when she informed Handel that she was going to
study hard and was going to learn thorough-
pose, that great musician replied: “Ah—
vast may we not expect!”

Some years later on we find Tenducci,
the idol of the fashionable world, singing at
Ranelagh; one of his chief successes being
gained in Dr. Arne’s “Artaxerxes.” In
company with that composer he travelled to
Scotland and Ireland, and in London
especially is said to have received enormous
sums for his performances. Tenducci was
a friend of the Mozart family, and may
have heard the future author of “Don
Giovanni,” then but eight years old, play
at Ranelagh on the harpsichord and organ
several pieces of his own composition for
the benefit of a charity.

Walpole tells us in 1777 that it was the
fashion to go to Ranelagh two hours after
it is over. “You may not believe this, but
it was literal. The music ends at ten and
the company go at twelve.” This practice
led to the concert being commenced at a
later hour than before.

Ranelagh continued in existence until
the early years of the present century, but
succumbed to the rival attractions of
Vauxhall—the gardens of which seemed
such an earthly paradise to our ancestors.
Among the numberless associations of this
spot those connected with music and song
are not the least interesting. For these
gardens Dr. Arne, the author of “Rule
Britannia” and “Where the Bee Sucks,”
composed many a song, some excellently
interpreted by his wife; others, such as
“Under the Greenwood Tree” and “Blow,
Blow, the Wind of Winter,” being first heard
from the lips of Thomas Lowe, who, accord-
ing to Dibdin, excelled even Beard as a
singer of simple love songs.

Did space permit how much could be
said of its famous singers for nearly a
century: Joseph Vernon, the tenor; Miss
Poole, afterwards Mrs. Dickins, who played
Handel’s concertos at six and appeared at
Vauxhall at thirteen; Mrs. Bland, who
excelled in English ballad singing; and a
host of others, including Inceledon, Miss
Stephens and Madame Vestria.

Goldsmid praises the singers of his day,
and the excellent band: “the music, the
entertainments, but particularly the singing,
diffused that good humour among us which
constitutes the true happiness of society.”

But to return from the

... walks, orchestras, colonnades,
The lamps and trees, in mingled lights and shades,
which graced Vauxhall—or Spring Gardens
as they were long called—the more
serious side of music was by no means
neglected, as we gather from the estab-
lishment of the “Concerts of Ancient
Music,” the idea of which had been origi-

nally suggested by the Earl of Sandwich.
Its concerts were held in rooms in Tottenham
Street up to the end of the last century, and
for several years in the concert room of the
Opera House. Finally these concerts took
place permanently in Hanover Square. In
these time-honoured rooms—now a club—
Madame Catalani made her first appearance,
as also Miss Stephens, the future Countess
of Essex.

Mrs. Cornwall’s Rooms in Soho Square
succeeded Hickford’s Dancing School in the
Haymarket as a fashionable place for
concerts and other entertainments,
and the Hanover Square Rooms were for
some time carried on by Sir John Gallini,
the Court dancing master, in a similar
fashion. Masquenades, “festines,” assemblies,
and so forth allured with more serious
musical productions. The opening of these
rooms was attended by a concert given by
Charles Abel and John Christian Bach, who
continued for several years to entertain
the musical world here; while later on the
“Professional Concerts” were rivalled by
those of Salomon the violinist, at which
Haydn, in the closing years of the last
century, conducted his twelve “grand”
symphonies.

The Ancient Concerts were meanwhile
patronised by royalty, and George the
Third would constantly show his interest
in them by writing out the programmes
of the performances with his own hand.

He was often present at Hanover
Square, accompanied by Queen Charlotte,
and is said to have had a chamber
added to the side—to which he presented a
large gilt looking-glass—which was called
the “Queen’s Tea-Room.” The pieces
performed at the Ancient Concerts were
obliged to be at least five-and-twenty years
old, and all modern music was thus
rigorously excluded. At the close of the
last century, Mrs. Billington, who is said
to have been the finest singer of the age,
appeared at these concerts.

Sir Joshua
Reynolds has painted her as Saint Cecilia,
and for years her only rival was Madame
Mars, who won so much fame at the Handel
Festivals.

The Academy of Ancient Music closed
its career in 1792, but no dearth of
music was apparent. Harrison and Kaywett
had just set on foot the “Vocal Concerts,”
and a little later on Mrs. Billington, John
Braham, and Signor Naldi delighted audiences at Will's Rooms, while no one was more popular than Madame Catalani in Hanover Square.

In 1813 the Philharmonic Society, which still flourishes among us, was founded, and with its establishment we seem to reach the limit of the early days of concerts, and to enter a period familiar to many with its memories of Beethoven and Cherubini, Spohr, Mendelssohn, and Wagner—the last of whom conducted the Society's concerts in 1856.

**DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.**

**BY MARGARET MOULE.**

Author of "The Thirtieth Birthday," "Catherine Maitland's Burden," "Benefit of Clergy," "The Vicar's Aunt," etc., etc.

**CHAPTER VIII.**

"Is Dr. Meredith not in, then?"

Mrs. French stood with the handle of the front door of her master's house in her hand, staring blankly at her questioner. Only once had the slight, grey-clothed figure presented itself at that door since the day of Dr. Godfrey's arrival in Mary Combe. On that one solitary occasion it had been only an urgent necessity for summoning Dr. Meredith without delay that had led to his assistant's appearance at his house; and the appearance had been an appearance only, for the two had left together at once.

Mrs. French had, at first, rather marvelled at this circumstance. She had confidently expected that, as she phrased it, she should "have that there young doctor, mornin' noon and night, dancin' in and out on the clean doorstep." And she had grumbled accordingly, deeply and bitterly, in the dual solitude of the kitchen tea-table. But finding as the days went on that the sort of daily hornpipe that her imagination had described was not provided by Dr. Meredith's assistant, she grew more quarrel; and even began to acquiesce in the excellencies which all her friends who "dropped in" at Dr. Meredith's back door with the washing, the coal, or a message, as the case might be, had discovered in "the young doctor." And at the end of ten days she formulated in Dr. Godfrey's honour her very highest praise: namely, that he evidently was "a young man as kep' himself to himself."

As this appreciative estimate had remained undisturbed save by that one brief appearance, Mrs. French's calculations were much upset, when on this particular evening, at six o'clock, Dr. Godfrey appeared and not only enquired anxiously for Dr. Meredith, but displayed an almost apparent impatience for an answer.

"If he is not at home now, will you so good as to tell me when you expect him?"

Dr. Godfrey uttered this amplification of the question, though politely enough, quite shortly.

Its effect on Mrs. French was to make her loosen her hold of the door-hand and begin to wipe her hands energetically on her apron. The apron in question was a neat black alpaca one, for Mrs. French was always "dressed" long before this and her hands were spotless; but a gesture transcended details. It was her French comprehensive way of intimating that she was much occupied, and that no one who addressed her was trifling with articles of priceless value; namely, her thoughts.

"Dr. Meredith, did you say, sir?" he said at length. "You were wishing for him?"

Althea's impatient nod would have hurried any one else, but it was consumed lost on Mrs. French's massive perceptions.

"I don't know that he's out, sir," he continued, "but I can't say that he is. He came home an hour ago from somewhere, but he went somewhere else after; and I can't feel sure that he got back from there. I seem to think I heard him in the sorry talkin' to Alfred Johnson a while back; then I thought I heard the gate go for him just now. Howsoever, there must have been you comin' in, sir. I might go through to the surgery and ask Alfred there. He'll know if it was him went there."

Mrs. French paused at the end of this lucid statement to take breath. The worthy woman, being what she called "nearly sight," did not clearly see Althea's sharp, knitted brows. If she had, the remainder of her words might possibly have remained unuttered.

"Step inside, sir, if you please," she said, "while I go and ask Alfred what he thinks.

The invitation was one which Mrs. French gave, as a matter of obvious politeness, to every enquirer after Dr. Meredith. But though she knew no reason for the expectation, she did expect, vaguely, that it would be refused. She was the more surprised when Dr. Godfrey entered, without a word, and still without a word, pushed the sitting-room door, which was ajar, wider open, and took up a position within the doorway.
"Please tell Dr. Meredith, if he is in, that I am waiting for him here," she said, so firmly that Mrs. French's surprise was transmuted into deferential submission, and she turned and went, as fast as her dignity would let her, down the passage in the direction of the surgery door. The entrance through the sitting-room was fitted with a patent latch, and Dr. Meredith alone used it.

Left alone, Althea Godfrey's pose changed curiously, together with her face. The former grew suddenly very rigid, like that of a person who is prepared to meet a strain of some sort. The latter, which had been slightly flushed when she came up to the door, became very pale. But an instant later, in odd contrast to the pallor, a great wave of emotion rose on it, and infused into every feature a strong, sentient passion of some sort. Under this influence her sombre grey eyes burned brilliantly, and her set mouth changed into curves which she kept in control with evident difficulty, while her hand clenched and unclenched itself almost nervously.

Five minutes passed; minutes during which Alfred Johnson's thoughts and Mrs. French's vision together apparently succeeded in discovering what they were exercised upon. For at the expiration of that time, the door from the surgery into the sitting-room was opened with a quick click, and Dr. Meredith himself emerged from it.

"Well!" he said.

Althea, who was hidden from his sight by the other door, took two steps forward into the room, shut the door behind her, and turned sharply to him. At his voice all the new emotion in her face had intensified suddenly, and yet her pose, as she stood facing him, with one hand resting on the table, was curiously fixed and rigid.

He scanned her for an instant with apparently careless interest.

"Mrs. French said you wanted me," he said indifferently.

Then his face suddenly altered, and his manner too. Both were alive with a quick professional interest.

"You've come back from Stoke Vere, of course!" he exclaimed. "What about Rose Swinton?"

Althea did not answer immediately. She suddenly pulled out a chair and sat down on it, rather heavily. Dr. Meredith did not seem to notice the movement, but her pause he did notice.

"Well!" he said, almost sharply. "What's wrong? What did you think of her. Is it anything serious!"
speaking with a forcibleness that was a
trifle measured, and Althea broke sharply in
on his last words with another short laugh
that was both dry and harsh.

"Perfectly so! Thank you!" she said.

"Perfectly plain, you made it! You needn't
trouble to explain any further. I quite
understand, I assure you! You also under-
stand, I think."

Before Dr. Meredith had had time to
answer, Althea turned and walked rapidly
out of the room without another word or
look.

Dr. Meredith stood fixed to the spot
where she had left him for some three
minutes. Then he flung himself into the
chair she had sat in, and decided with a
sigh that was rather more like a groan, that
"Then's idiotic behaviour was going to turn
her brain now."

He might well groan, poor man! If any
one knowing the circumstances had asked
him what he meant to do, how he meant to
break up this untenable situation, he would
have confessed his utter inability to answer.
He would have said that there was nothing to
do; he might possibly have expressed
his utterly hopeless longing for some "deus
ex machina" to do what he could not hope
to do. He little dreamt that had he only
known how to listen he might this very day
have heard in the far distance the chariot
wheels of that same rescuing and approach-
ing deity. But being a mortal only, and
a man only, which is to be doubly a mortal as
far as the limits of intuition are concerned,
he neither listened nor heard.

He simply rose from his chair with a
strong word or two, and rang the bell
in a manner which threatened to pull
it down, and brought Mrs. French in,
panting for breath, to enquire the reason,
and thereupon to explain, in a somewhat
quivering manner, that the dinner was, as
yet, "nothing like ready, sir."

Althea Godfrey meanwhile had walked
rapidly through Dr. Meredith's garden, and
even more rapidly up the Mary Combe
street to her rooms. Not one pace did
she make; not one look did she give on
one side or the other; it was apparently
simply from the constraining force of habit
that she lifted her head to return the
cordial greetings tendered to her by the few
people she met; on she went unhesitatingly,
until she reached the Johnsons' house.

Mrs. Johnson dispensed with the necessity
of giving her lodger a latch-key by a very
simple process. She left the door always,
as she had explained very early in the
proceedings, "on the jar; so as you can:
in and out as you wish, sir."

It was "on the jar" now; rather wise
so, as if waiting for Althea's return. So
entered therefore without touching its
in the like silence entered her own room,
door of which also was slightly open. She
pulled it together behind her, and
apparently she did not realise the fact
she had not closed it; indeed, she seemed
to realise absolutely nothing as she
crossed the little room and flung herself
heavily into an arm-chair in the one
farthest from the window.

Exactly opposite to her own door, and
other side of the very narrow passage, was
another door, and this last was the entrance
to Mrs. Johnson's "best room." The
secrately worthy of its imposing name, he
was in reality nothing but a strip cut of
the shop, with a rather small back wall
looking out on what Mrs. Johnson called
a very dull prospect compared to that of
Mary Combe street: namely, that of bare
and flowery little bit of back garden.

But when circumstances in the face
of uncertain trade, and many small represen-
tatives of the house of Johnson, had info-
Mrs. Johnson to devote her best dowry
room to lodgers, she had decided, and
put the case before her husband that it
also had decided, that she must appropriate
this slip of a room for her own end; she
could not, she said trenchantly, "do
nothing but the kitchen for best." Was
upon Mr. Johnson, being a thoroughly
accommodating person, had removed the
several odds and ends of his stock-in-trade
which were characterised by his wife as
"lumber," and she had forthwith, having
rudily prepared it by many days of disas-
placed therein that selection of smartest
antiques, and china ornaments, which
were either too good for, or superfluous to
the lodger's room, and had consecrated
sanctum thus made to the very highest
days. Such an era had occurred on the
very afternoon, and in this wise.

Mrs. Green had had for two days indi-
vidual staying in her house who was rapidly
described by Mary Combe as "company from
London."

As a matter of fact, the mysterious entity
was Mr. Green's niece, a parlourmaid in
respective service in Kensington, who came
to Mary Combe about once in every two
years for her holiday. As several of
these occasions had taken place within
comparatively recent memory, it might have
been expected that Jane Chase's arti-
would have worn out its attendant excitement. But such was by no means the case. The halo caused to shine around the worthy young woman by the words "from London" never lessened; and during her stay she was, to the feminine population of Mary Combe, and to some of the sterner sex also, a much respected oracle, whom every one strove at once to consult and to honour.

Mrs. Johnson, as became Mrs. Green's "own cousin," took a prominent part in the last duty; and on this occasion had indeed gone so far as to give an invitation to the aunt and niece "to drink a cup of tea" at least a week before the latter had arrived. It had been duly accepted, and finally arranged to take place on this very evening.

The cup of tea had now been partaken of some two hours earlier, and the trio in Mrs. Johnson's best room were at present solacing their souls with social intercourse. In the heat of conversation, tea, and the weather, the little "best room" had become very oppressively hot, and Mrs. Johnson, who was sitting near the door, had pushed it, for the sake of coolness, slightly open.

Just before Althea's silent entrance into her own room, a sort of crisis had arrived in the conversation. Jane Chase, an alert, thin young woman of twenty-nine or thirty, with a good carriage, had discoursed to her two open-mouthed listeners of all the subjects her well-stored brain contained. She had lavished on them much authentic information, gathered by her from a society paper in the waste-paper basket of her mistress's drawing-room, concerning the private sentiments of the Royal Family about each other's actions; she had given a sketchy but terrifying outline of current Radical politics, as imparted to her through the medium of the sarcastic dinner-table conversation of a Conservative master; and she had held forth long and learnedly on the "very latest thing" in fashionable dress, kindly exemplifying the same by standing up, that her hearers might see on her own person this pink of modern perfection in attire. And to this climax had followed a pause—a pause during which Mrs. Green sat in proud enjoyment of her niece's powers as an entertainer, while Mrs. Johnson fixed on her chair, most anxious, both for the sake of self-respect and repayment, to find some topic of interest belonging to Mary Combe. Suddenly something seemed to strike her, and she said abruptly:

"You know I told you, Miss Chase, when we was havin' our tea, of my new lodger?"

Jane Chase gave a polite acquiescence.

"I told you," continued Mrs. Johnson, "that he was a 'sistant, but I don't think I said anything about our new doctor as he's 'sistant to."

"No!" said Miss Chase, endeavouring to infuse into her voice some of the graceful use of that monosyllable to callers. "No, you didn't, Mrs. Johnson."

Mrs. Johnson's eyes brightened. Here at least was a fresh topic. Then they darkened as quickly.

"Very like your aunt has told you all there is to say," she remarked dourly.

"That I've not!" said Mrs. Green energetically. "I ain't told Jane nothing! I don't never seem to think of nothing when she's here."

"Well, he's new since you was last in Mary Combe, Miss Chase; quite new our doctor is!" The possibilities of her subject were rapidly unfolding themselves to Mrs. Johnson's mind, and she was growing volubly enthusiastic. "You remember old Dr. Garraway?" she went on, in the tone of one who wishes to heighten her hearer's interest by ample detail; "you remember him, Miss Chase? He as might have let people die before he'd get to their houses, so slow he was, with his years, and nearly poisoned John Rowe with givin' him the wrong medicine long of being half asleep at the time. That was last time you was here, or just before?"

"Just before," said Miss Chase politely.

"Well, he died about a year ago; and it was a good thing for the parish he did. And it's about nine months now since our new doctor come; Dr. Meredith, his name is."

Mrs. Johnson's voice was of a penetrating tone, and as she spoke the last sentence she unconsciously raised it. The words floated distinctly across the passage into Althea's room.

Althea sat up in her chair half abstractedly, apparently roused by the name from whatever she had been dwelling on in her dark, lonely corner, and brushed her short hair impatiently from her forehead, as if she were trying to realise exactly what it was that had roused her.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Johnson; "and a real nice doctor he is; as different from the old one as light from darkness, and as pleasant when you send for him! But there, Mrs. Green, you can speak to that. You've seen more o' Dr. Meredith in illness nor me."
The rheumatic attack to which Mrs. Green had alluded in that memorable conversation with Mrs. Allen terminated by Thomas Benjamin's choking and Dr. Godfrey's appearance, was, so to speak, a standing dish in the feast of mental research which her conversation laid before her friends, and it needed only the slightest of invitations to make her press it on their attention.

At the welcome opening thus provided she grasped instantly, and for the next ten minutes the other two were entertained with a recital by no means succinct of how the attack had come on, developed, and decreased, together with Mrs. Green's conversation with Dr. Meredith on each of her visits in each stage of her sufferings.

Mrs. Johnson and Miss Chase listened with faces each in their way expressive of politely concealed longing for the end; and as soon as her friend, by the means of a breathless sigh, gave an intimation that the harrowing and instructive account was closed, Mrs. Johnson took up the word again.

"He's as nice as he can be, in illness or out of it!" she said sentimentally, "There's only one thing he wants, to my mind."

"And what is that?" asked Miss Chase.

Her interest in the conversation had quickened again. Possibly she thought that a ready encouragement might condense it slightly.

"He wants, and I've said it from the first, now, haven't I, Mrs. Green—I he wants to get married. Such a nice young man as him would be a deal better off, settled. I don't think nothin' at all of that Mrs. French of his! And him being a doctor seems to want it all the more, as you may say. Folk think a lot of him now, to be sure! but they'd think a lot more of his if he was married."

"Well, but isn't there any chance of it, if he's so attractive?" said Miss Chase with an air of extremely finished dictation.

Althea was leaning forward, one hand on the corner of the table, her ears strained to catch every word.

"There's them as say there is, and them as say there ain't!" responded Mrs. Johnson oracularly.

"But you holds that there is, yourself' put in Mrs. Green. Apparently they he often discussed the same subject, and she knew precisely what points to help her friend to make.

"Well, then, yes; that I do. And it not the only one, though. There's me than me seen him talking to Miss Rose Swinton, the day she picked them roses she was ridin' past his garden wall. And there's more than me see'd 'em get into the same carriage off Fern Morton station platform Christmas time. Set on her, he was by his ways."

Althea had risen. Her hand was groping the mantelpiece now with a force that shook that rickety structure.

"And a very nice and very pretty young lady he is; and a nice pair they'd make, said Mrs. Green with some favour. "I'm sure I hope we shall be having Miss Swinton here to live. They'd look well together, him and her."

Althea left her hold of the mantelpiece suddenly, walked to the door of the nursery and shut it. Then she walked straight through the door of communication into her bedroom, shut it and locked it, flinging herself on the ground with her head on a chair, broke into stormy sobs and tears.

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MARRIED TO ORDER.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESME STUART.

CHAPTER XII. HAUNTED.

Left all alone for what seemed many hours, Dora at last roused herself and sat up in bed. She tried to gather her ideas together and to reason on all she had gone through, but nothing would make itself clear to her.

"I will get up," she thought, "I feel better, and Forster will be glad to see me downstairs. I want to go home. I wonder if places are really enchanted? When I was young I used to read of such castles, and old nurse used to say it was all make-believe, but now I feel as if there were something in this old place unlike any other spot. I want to breathe fresh air. I wonder what Adela is doing? Going round to see the poor people and looking after mother. I wonder if the De Lucys are there still? I want to see them all again. I want to get away from that old man, that dreadful old King!"

Dora shuddered a little and then laughed at herself for being afraid. She looked at her watch, but she had forgotten to wind it up; and when she was dressed she knelt down by the window which looked out over the glen, of which nothing could now be seen but a white mist, and said her prayers.

"'Deliver us from evil,'" she said, and paused. What was evil? The evil one! Where was he? Dora had often felt puzzled about this very subject, but now the answer seemed to come to her. She thought: "Oh, that old King, he is evil; I can't bear the thought of him. He looks so — so — but he is Penelope's father; I must not even think such a thing. How stupid I am! 'For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory.' Over evil, I suppose; God can bring good out of evil. He can make that old King good." That idea seemed difficult to realise, but she rose from her knees feeling better. What had happened? No one seemed to be about. She walked slowly downstairs, and then paused on the landing. She thought she heard a call, very faint, and she paused to listen, but all was silent. Then she went down another flight and came at last into the main portion of the building. The fog, instead of clearing, had settled down again, denser, whiter, more mysterious than before. There could be no pleasure walk to-day. The great clock in the hall that belonged to old days, and was somewhat evil in appearance, pointed to the hour of two. It was then luncheon-time, so she made her way through silent rooms and passages to the dining-room.

She was relieved when she heard another step. It was that of the Duke. "Miss Dora! So you are better, I am glad to see. You were over-tired — over-excited, I hear. The luncheon is ready, but I can't imagine where the others are; I have been looking for Penelope and the gentlemen."

"She came to see me this morning, and since then I have been asleep. I am better; I think I am all right."

"Come, then, Miss Dora, we will not wait. You must be hungry."

The Duke rang the bell. The footman brought in the luncheon and retired, as the Duke had told him not to stay.

Dora felt shy and awkward, and wished some one else would come in. The vision
of the King and his quest still filled her
mind, and, as if the Duke could read her
thoughts, he began:

"You helped, I hear, to discover the
family treasure?"

"Oh, is it true? But the King did not
wish any one to know."

"It was always an old saying in the
family that money would be found when
the fortune of the Winskells was at a low
ebb. I interpreted it another way when
Penelope was married."

"Is the King angry with me?"
The Duke laughed.

"Who could be displeased with you,
Miss Dora? On the contrary you have
done us a great service. I have discovered
that the gold is really gold that glitters."

"We are poor and have no tradition
about hidden treasure. I am so sorry I
was not able to go to-day. We have been
here a long time. But in one way it was a
good thing, for it gave Forster another day
here. Oh, he is so much better. Mother
will be quite delighted when she sees him."

"And it enabled him to see his friend
Philip. Do you know that he came back
unexpectedly?"

"That is delightful. Where is he? I
must see him. He was so good to Forster.
He must come and stay with us, he and the
Princess."

"They will be charmed, I am sure. But
as to his present whereabouts, I do not
know. I gave him a rendezvous at twelve
o'clock, right at the head of the glen, but
he never turned up. I suppose he and
Penelope went off together, as is only
natural."

Dora again felt an inexpressible desire to
jump up and at once to start home, out of
this enchanted castle and wood; then,
presaging her hand to her head, she laughed
at herself.

"I believe I really did get a little crazy
last night; I have such odd ideas," she
thought.

"But where can Forster be?"

At this moment Forster opened the door,
and stood before them. Dora's quick glance
revealed to her a Forster she had never
seen before. His face was ash white, and
his lips were pressed firmly together. The
sight of her, however, appeared to recall
him to a more natural state.

"Ah, Dora, you are up! I am so glad.
Have you packed up? Because, if so, we
might leave here this afternoon."

"What nonsense, my dear fellow; come,
sit down and have some luncheon. Where
have you been? Everything is in disori

day. The servants have got hold of
story of the discovery and are all in a
state of the highest excitement. Where's
Philip? And why has not Penelope en-
in? They are out together, I conclude."

Forster sat down mechanically. But
who knew him so well, was utterly dis-
founded by his manner and by his look.
He might have seen a ghost, she thought;
but she was too much dazzled herself to pay
her thoughts alound.

"Has Philip been in? I have been
looking for him," was all he said.

"Why not spare yourself the trouble?
He and Penelope get over the ground in
marvellous way. You have eaten nothing.
I sent the servants away—because—but
is cold. Shall I ring for something hot?
Forster shook his head. Then he re-
counted Dora's frightened look, and he
made a great effort over himself.

"When you have finished, Dora, go
pack up your things. We can go to-
morrow—yes, the first thing to-morrow.
 want very much to speak to Philip. I
think I will go out again and find him."

"Come, eat your luncheon. Hell an-
up, never fear," said the Duke.

Dora rose and escaped. Something in
the matter, very much the matter, was
Forster. She did not know what, but she
must not trouble him with questions.
Creeping upstairs again into her lord-
chamber, she gazed out over the dense
fog, and then she forced herself to pitch
up her belongings. The hours thus
slowly away, till at last she felt stilled ti
want of air.

"Oh! I must go out," she said to her-
self. "I must go out. I can't stay in this
place any longer. I must be getting ner-
vous."

What will Adela say? I believe I am
quite superstitious."

She had got everything ready for de-
parture and looked round to see if she had
forgotten anything. The wish to go was
given her strength, and she only longed
now to find Forster and to tell him she
was quite ready to go. It felt chilly as she
stepped out of her room. She put on a
thick jacket, feeling that she would need
brave the fog and the damp than stay any
longer alone. In the hall the light was
fast fading, but the servants had not yet
brought any lamp. The front door stood
open as usual and the fog had crept up the
steps. It was almost impossible to see
more than an arm's length in front of one.

"It must have been just a sight.
as this when Philip first came here," said Dora to herself. "I remember his account of it so well, and how Jim Oldcorn found him. I wonder where they all are. Forster never goes away without telling me; and Penelope, no, well, she has her husband. I wonder if she is glad to see him, I—I wonder?"

Dora ran down the steps, determined to find her way up the glen. She knew the path so well that she could hardly lose herself. So she thought, but when she had passed round the house, she could not find the gate leading out of the garden, and suddenly, too, she felt seized with a strange new horror, never before experienced, a horror of she knew not what, unless it was a dread of meeting the King. His face seemed to peer at her from the fog, and when she looked there was nothing, though it seemed to her that just before the face had been there.

She hurried on, grooping for the gate, and after five minutes she found it and threw it open. Under the trees the fog appeared denser; it closed her in, but still she walked bravely on. She could breathe here, and felt that the strange feeling of enchantment and mystery was less. She wanted to call Forster, but even here she dared not do it, positively she dared not. She determined that she would go to the end of the path and then return, by that time the rest of the party must have come in. The voice of the Rothery seemed dull and sullen to-day, the usual honest roar was not heard.

Never before had Dora been brought face to face with the mysterious, and she rebelled against it. She felt years older than she had done previous to her meeting with the King, and she seemed to see him perpetually before her, counting over his gold.

"I am glad that we are not rich," she repeated to herself. "Money is a hateful thing. Forster always said so, he has never cared about it, But what can be the matter with him? And where has he gone?"

She bravely walked on and on, now and then nearing the Rothery, and at other times going away from its noise as the road wound round. She could only go very slowly, being afraid of losing her path, but the bank on one side kept her from wandering off in that direction, and she kept close to it.

On she went, having set the gate as her limit. She, too, had a determined will.

She thought she must soon be nearing the end, when something ran close beside her and made her start. It was Nero, who came back, not bounding as usual, but whining with his head down.

"Nero, Nero! Oh! your mistress is not far off; she will know where, Forster is. Come, Nero, lead me to her." She had found her voice, and called aloud:

"Princess, Princess, are you there? Where are you?"

The fog was lifting slightly. The end of the wood, thought Dora, must be close at hand. There was the gate, and there was some one leaning against it.

"Princess!" called Dora again, "Princess!"

Then the form moved, and Penelope herself came towards Dora.

"Is it you, child? I am glad. I—I was waiting here. I did not feel well, I think, but I walked to the gate, and I was waiting."

"Waiting for what? Oh, Princess! how cold your hand is. What is the matter? Why did you not come in to lunch?"

"Is it late, then? I was coming back. Let me lean on your shoulder. Let us go back, for uncle will be wondering at my absence."

"Oh, he said you must be with Mr. Winkell. I wanted Forster. He seemed so—so—strange when he came in."

"Did he find Philip? Tell me, Dora."

"I don't know. Yes, he said something about looking for him. We thought he was with you. Oh, I do hope he won't catch cold in this damp fog. What a horrid day! I suppose you don't mind it, though; do you, dear Princess? I have not seen you since early this morning. I was expecting you."

"Poor Dora, poor little Dora. I am so sorry."

"Oh, of course, you have been busy, but I wanted you to know that I was better. I really could have gone this afternoon, but I suppose Forster thought we should not get far; besides, in this fog it is not safe to drive all those miles to the station. The Duke said so."

"He could not go. He was looking for Philip, I think. Don't say anything more about it, child. We will come in, and everything will be as usual — just as usual."

"Why not? Only you know it is our last evening."
CHAPTER XLII. PUT TO THE TEST.

When the two entered the Palace the fog came right up to its very door. It looked like a thick substance capable of being cut through. Even when the door was shut close, the fog seemed to force an entrance into the dwelling, and partially dimmed the lamp suspended from the ceiling.

The Princess paused, and only then did Dora look up at her.

"Oh, Penelope! What is the matter? Your face is so pale! Did you see a ghost in the glen, or are you ill?"

"I was faint, I think—that's all. Come into the drawing-room."

She took hold of Dora's hand as if she did not want to let her go out of her sight. They passed the first drawing-room, which was not lighted up; in the big drawing-room, now so picturesquely furnished, the servants had already placed a lamp on its bracket, and the tea-table was drawn near the fire. Some great logs flamed up fitfully, and the andirons gleamed as the light fell on them. Though nothing was wanting to the room to make it a place of comfort, this evening it appeared very desolate. In the first place it was empty, and the silence seemed to be a conscious reality.

"There is no one here," said Dora, breaking the stillness. "Dear Princess, do go and lie down; you look really ill—you are worse than I am."

"No, no, it is nothing; I am very strong."

Then suddenly there was a sound of footsteps, and the Duke's voice sounded cheerfully across the first room. His perfect unconsciousness of anything unusual was startling even to Dora, who felt afraid, though she could not explain her own sense of evil foreboding.

"Penelope! Miss Dora! Ah! there you are. I am glad. What, ladies! You two have been out? It is not fit for any one to face this fog."

"We only went up the glen," said Dora, laughing a little nervously.

"Not for a last view of the scenery, Miss Dora. By the way, have you quite recovered from your headache?"

"Oh, yes. I am quite well again."

"So, Penzie, dear, you have had a walk in spite of the fog. Pour out the tea; I wonder the two gentlemen are not indoors. But perhaps they are in the library."

"I don't know," said Penzie absently, and then she walked to the tea-table, began quietly making tea, whilst Dora seated herself on a low chair near the fire. The Duke alone was as usual, though a trifle more excited, for he could not be thinking of the new discovery, though the Princess present he did not like to refer to.

"These fogs are very strange; they are down like a thick blanket, and even an oldest inhabitant gets lost. It was once such a night as this that Philip first discovered the Palace. Do you remember Princess?"

"Yes, just such a night—Dora, will you put some water into the tea-pot for me?"

"Jim Oldcorn often mentions it. A little thought that the lost stranger would build up the towers again. By the way, where can Philip have gone to?"

"I—I was—I have no idea. Was not with you?"

"No—but Forster! The two went together, of course. This must seem an insult to Africa's sunny clime. They hardly gallant to escape from us like this, and it seems to me impossible that they should be out walking for pleasure! Are the tea Mrs. Dora and I must find them. I want you in my room, Princess, where we have a few minutes to spare."

Very soon he rose to go. The silence of the ladies became apparent, but certain the weather was depressing. The Duke was, however, not at all depressed. He had viewed the treasure and his dream of the future was at last realised, not least a stranger, but through a true ancestor of house of Winakett. He looked back—

the long struggle as a man looks back a hideous nightmare. He felt that all events had never despaired, that no adverse circumstance had crushed him, that difficulty had haunted him. Now nothing but one obstacle lay in the path of honor and glory. Only one, but this was his own, brother, the King. That the male line was extinct with them was, of course, a sad fact, which nothing could alter, but, on the other hand, Penelope was a representation to be proud of. She was his child, his bring up, and he was satisfied with the result. He himself was made for a "grand seigneur," every instinct of the race was in him. He had meant to work out his own mission as well as here—for in his mind the two had never been separate—and he had done it. They had grown up in close union, and so they would always remain. But the King was a sore hindrance to any grand plan; he had the power of frustrating everything.
just because he was barely responsible, and yet he was not mad enough to be placed under legal restraint. But still he was the head of the family. Without him even this gold could not be used. Sooner or later the difficulty would have to be solved.

Penelope and he must confer together about it. As to her new idea about returning Philip's money, it was preposterous. It was not to be thought of, not for a moment. At times Penelope was a strange girl, but she had always obeyed him, always.

He paced up and down his room, and still his dreams became brighter. The fog outside made no difference to him; the curtains were drawn and the fire burned brightly. His mind had so long been centred on one object, that every other idea had become dwarfed. Now and then there came a vision of one other excitement which had formerly been a joy, and, as he walked on, he even brought back this past happiness to his mind, but, after a few moments' thought, he shook his head, though his lips were parted into a smile.

"It won't do," he said. "It won't do, the risk is too great. Before, it was neck or nothing; now it would be senseless, quite senseless to tempt a kind fate."

There was a knock at the door, and Penelope, a very pale Princess, stood before him.

"I thought I heard you talking to somebody, uncle, but you are alone. You wanted me?"

"Yes, yes, come in, child. I could not talk of it before that young Dora, for her strange experience has frightened her. All's well that ends well."

"You must certainly say nothing before Dora."

"No, no, of course not, but the girl is sharp-witted—a nice girl, very good and simple."

"You wanted me?" repeated Penelope, turning her head away towards the door, as if listening to something she heard outside.

"I want all your attention, child. How are we to persuade your father——?"

"To keep the gold, uncle! Oh, to keep it out of sight, anywhere. No, what am I saying?"

"My dear child, what is the matter?"

"Forgive me, dear uncle, I was listening to the sound of footsteps. Some one is coming, there are steps in the hall."

She turned quickly towards the door.

"Well, if the young men are come in they will soon find us out."

The Princess remembered that she must keep calm and appear as usual. She could make a strong effort over herself, and she made it. She stood quite still and turned her face towards her uncle.

"I met Jim Oldcorn just now, and he says that my father managed to get away from him to-day. He was angry about our finding out his secret."

"Ah! of course, he has not enough mind to reason calmly on the subject."

"But you know when he is angry——"

The steps came nearer and nearer, then paused at the door. Penelope could bear it no longer. She flung the door open and Forster stood before them, but Forster changed in such a strange manner, and so covered with mud and dripping with raindrops, that he was hardly recognisable.

"Mrs. Winskell," he said, and even his voice sounded changed, "I have not found Philip."

"Found Philip!" said the Duke, coming forward and laughing. "My dear Bethune, you don't mean to say you have been looking for Philip or for any one else in this thick fog? Philip has most likely been taken possession of by Oldcorn, though what the two can see in this fog would beat the finest intellect to imagine. When did you last see him?"

"I don't know," said Penelope, answering.

"I have been asleep, I think; I lost count of time."

"But you saw him, Bethune. He is very unsociable this first day of his return."

The Duke came towards the door, and looked at Forster with just a shade of displeasure at his strange wild manner and his extremely unkempt appearance.

"I saw him for a moment this morning in the glen. I have been looking for him ever since."

"But why should you? I will go and find Oldcorn. If any one knows where to find him, he will do so."

The Duke passed out of the room with the air of a man who is master, not only of himself, but of all events likely to occur. Since wealth had entered the old Palace the Duke had also entered upon a new phase of life.

Penelope and Forster were left alone in the old wainscoted room. A few hours had changed them. They were like Adam and Eve when the gate of Paradise was shut behind them. One of them could still
cast the blame on another creature, but the
other knew that he had fallen from his
high estate.

"I don't understand," said Penelope,
going towards the fire and seating herself
in the great arm-chair, because she felt strangely
weak, and did not wish to show any sign of
the emotion she had gone through. "Why
did you leave me in the glen — and
alone?"

"I have been looking for Philip," re-
peated Forster, sinking down into a chair,
without any wish or thought of hiding his
excitement.

"What is the use of it all? It is done,
but he knew it before."

"It is not too late," said Forster, starting
up; "there is a place of—repentence still.
You and I, Princess, we must face it, now
at once; Philip is a man in ten thousand.
I have been false to him, and he believed
in me. He called me his master, and I—
I—Princess, there is something-higher than
human love, something—but where can
he be? I have been by the lake and along
the mountain side; I have called him. Where
is he?"

"You forget that — that I—" Penelope
rose and stood in all her pride
and her now pale beauty against the
mantelpiece. "I have been sinned against."

"Yes, yes, I know, I see it all. Oh,
Princess, if all were changed, if I might
have altered everything; but in the eyes of
the world I should bring sorrow upon you.
I should bring nothing but evil, for sin
would follow us."

"When Philip comes back I will tell
him all," she said vehemently, "and then
he will judge."

"Philip would set you free, but his great
heart would break. He loves you, and I
—I love you; but if we did this thing I
should hate myself. No, no, there is yet
time; listen, my Princess, there is yet
time." He came towards her, and took hold
of her hands as he continued: "Love
is a gift, and yet may be a curse, but duty
is higher and grander. We have fallen,
both of us; but there is yet time. Philip
will forgive us. You have never known
him. I never did till too late. Don't let
Dora know. I brought her here—I have
led all those who love me into the wrong
way."

"Forster," she said eagerly, and then the
old Dale spirit burst forth. "Forster, love
is strongest. I can bear all the world's
sneers—"

Forster loosed her hands, and a grey look
of intense agony came over his features.
To struggle back to the path of duty does
not mean that one can force others to
follow.

"Princess, you are noble, and you must
be true to yourself. Oh, forgive me, I did
not resist the power that drew me here.
They think me good and true, and I shall
never be able to tell them the truth; never.
That is indeed shame."

"You have done nothing," said Penelope,
looking up at his drawn face.

"Who made Israel to sin," muttered
Forster; then, as if the idea of his guilt
scorched him, he said in his low, clear
voice: "Penelope, help me!"

That was the first word that touched her.
A human soul was crying to her for help in
his anguish.

He had seated himself in the chair
and hid his face. There was no room left for
passion in its earthly sense, the sense of
guilt was far greater than passion.

"How can I help you?" she said,
and she put her hand on his shoulder. He
started up.

"Don't touch me. I want all my
strength. Help me to go back, for I feel
as if I could never look Philip in the face
again."

"You?"

"Yes, I. All this time, ever since that
madness in Africa came upon me, I have
made light of him, and he—Penelope,
he is worthy of the best which life can
give him. Help me to make amends, if
that is possible."

He took her hand now, and she, being
a woman who loved, knew that the touch
was altered.

"I will tell Philip everything," she
answered, as if that was all she could
promise; "and if—he thinks best—"

"No, not like that; he has given you
everything and the noblest heart. I can
see his face now. That look of his haunts
me."

"Penelope!" The call came from the
Duke. "Where are you? I cannot find
Oldcorn, he is on the upland; some new
sheep-stealing has been going on. Well, I
don't doubt that Philip will turn up by
dinner-time."

The Duke returned to his easy-chair, and
Forster, leaving the two together, walked
away. He went straight before him, not
heeding what he passed or what he saw,
till almost by chance he found himself once
more in the drawing-room. Dora had
gone away, it was empty and silent, but at
When the two gentlemen entered the room, a thick fog seemed to force its way into the dwelling, and partially dimmed the firelight. They had grown up in close proximity to the natural beauty of the scenery; and they, too, were a sore hindrance to any grand purpose that might have been of their own. But the hall was a place of rest from the surface of the earth, and it was possible once again to see the blunted outlines of nature.

Forster stood eagerly looking out, looking only for one form and one face, when suddenly the space clear of fog was darkened by a figure. It came slowly forward, and Forster watched it as if fascinated. Then a face was thrust forward, a face which had already made him shudder. The King’s features looked more repellent than usual by being in close proximity to the light, and the expression of mad cunning seemed increased tenfold.

“Come out, come out, I want you.”

Forster’s first impulse was to obey, but as he mechanically hurried forward to the entrance some other motive made him pause at the hall door. Why should he go to this old man who had only fostered his own evil thoughts? But on the other hand he might have seen, so he hastily opened the big door.

A few paces away the King stood waiting for him.

“Is my girl there?” he asked in a somewhat uncertain tone. “She’s so cursed proud there’s no dealing with her.”

“No,” said Forster, “Mrs. Winskell is not there.”

“Oh! it’s Mrs. Winskell, is it? It was something else in the wood. Eh! Come, you need not be faint-hearted. She can do as others of her race; she can take the law into her own hands. Ay, and she would, too!”

Forster felt inclined to strike the old man down, then, strenuously clenching his fist, he said calmly:

“Have you seen Philip Winskell?”

“No, no; there is no such person as Philip Winskell! The devil take him. No Winskell was ever called Philip.”

“No, no; there is no such person as Philip Winskell! The devil take him. No Winskell was ever called Philip.”

“You have seen Philip, my friend!” said Forster angrily.

“Your friend indeed! And you make love to Penelope! Ah! that’s a joke. Don’t be angry, you fool, the game is yours.”

Then Forster turned on his heel and left the King alone.
being straightened, deepened, and widened, right up to the Bay or Harbour of Kiel, which is the Baltic terminus.

A glance at a good map will easily show the course of this newest of artificial waterways, which for nearly seven years the German Empire has been cutting through that land of old contencions and bitter memories, Schleswig-Holstein. It is but some sixty-one or sixty-two miles long, yet will cost at least ten millions sterling. The last bill of costs we saw was up to October, 1892, and the outlay till then was some five million eight hundred thousand pounds, while other two millions were then computed to finish the channel—a total of, say, one hundred and fifty-six and a half million marks. But estimates of such great works are, as we know, always exceeded, and numerous works have been deemed necessary in addition to the Canal.

Thus, as Grünsthal a great high-level bridge has been constructed to carry the railway over the Canal. Another high-level bridge at Levensau will cost about a quarter of a million sterling. At Kiel the harbour and quay accommodation is to be greatly extended, and in preparation of the expansion of trade which is hoped for, Stettin is spending some half million in enlarging and improving her harbour. On the North Sea, Bremen is spending a million and a half in deepening the Weser, and on other works, and a new deep harbour is being built at Cuxhaven at the mouth of the Elbe, but whether in aid or in rivalry of the Canal harbour of Brunsbüttel is not very clear.

Of other projects set afoot by the Baltic and North Sea Canal, we hear of none for enlarging the Canal between the Trave and the Elbe already begun; and another to connect Königsberg with a dock on the Gulf of Danzig, but these do not concern us just now.

The old Stecknitz Canal, between the Trave and the Elbe, was constructed by the Lübecker, who found it so good for their trade that they made a still bigger Canal to connect their town with the port of the Hamburger, the Alster. This aroused the jealousy of the Hamburger, who actually succeeded in compelling the Lübecker to fill up the ditch again. This of course, was in the proud old days of the Free Cities, when right was pretty much regulated by the might of the dollar.

And perhaps if Hamburg had not this Baltic and North Sea Canal would never have been constructed, for it certainly threatens the paramount position of Hamburg as the great entrepôt of German foreign and colonial trade. But it was not commercial considerations that determined the construction of the work. For the impetus we must go back to what Moltke said years ago—that in the event of a naval war Germany would have to begin by securing herself against the interference of her neighbours.

At present the two sea-boards of Germany are separated by the peninsula of Denmark. From the mouth of the Elbe round Denmark to Kiel is a voyage of about two days by steamer. By Canal it will be only about fifteen hours.

In effect, then, the Canal is designed to overcome the one great obstacle in the path of Germany as a great naval power—town Denmark. That obstacle has been overcome by engineering skill in preference to unprovoked war, and for this mankind may be grateful. Whether it will tend to the future peace of the world that the two great naval dockyards of Germany—Kiel and Wilhems- haven—should be brought within a few hours' journey of each other, is not a question for discussion here. It has been said that had the Canal been put forward as a purely commercial project, the capital would have been forthcoming except from Prussia, for whose vessels alone it will be profitable. But to a project for the security and honour of the Fatherland, the several members of the Empire could not refuse to contribute a fair share; and when the Emperor William the Second inaugurated the work in June, 1887, he declared it to be "for the honour of Germany, and for the good, the greatness, and the strength of the Empire."

To carry out this design, the Canal, for some sixty-one miles, will have a depth of water sufficient for the largest vessels in the German navy, which draw some fifty-thre
or fifty-four feet. For safe passage there must be three or four feet of water between the keel of such vessels and the bed of the waterway, which will be seventy feet wide—about the same as the Suez Canal—and have slightly sloping sides. The slope and the friable character of the material on the banks have both been adversely commented on by engineering critics, some of whom declare that not enough allowance has been made for the tremendous "wash" that must accompany a huge ironclad steaming in such a comparatively narrow channel.

Some of the engineering aspects may now be briefly referred to.

Beginning at the Brunebüttel—North Sea—end, the great difficulty was not in cutting through the marshy soil, but in building up the sustaining banks firm enough. To effect this the sandy soil excavated from the Grünenthal section had to be brought over. Then, about half-way, the watershed between the Baltic and the North Sea is reached, where, at Grünenthal, a great trench one hundred and forty feet had to be cut, and a bridge had to be built to carry the Holstein railway over the highest-masted vessel that could pass along.

Perhaps the most formidable difficulty encountered by the engineers was the Flemhude See—one of a series of natural lakes which have otherwise been utilised as basins and passing-places in the general line of the Canal. The Flemhude See, however, is some twenty-two feet above the level of the Canal, and the choice lay between draining and damming the lake. As to drain it meant to render barren a large surrounding tract of country, it was determined to cut it off by means of a huge dam. This, however, necessitated a deviation of the River Eider, for which an artificial channel had to be cut on the outer side of the dam, and a very curious thing in engineering is the result. At this point, for a considerable distance, a fresh-water canal runs parallel with the sea-canal, but about twenty feet above it and practically overhanging it. This is probably one of the most ingenious parts of the work, but there are some who say it is also the weakest, and who predict dreadful things if the huge dam should ever give way.

As the Baltic is approached, the old line of the Eider Canal is followed. This was a very devious line, and although it has been straightened a good deal, yet the curves are still considerable, and will necessitate extreme caution in the navigation of long warships and ocean-liners. Indeed, it is probable that the windings of this part of the Canal will necessitate the widening of the bed at no very distant day.

The Canal, as we have said, has no locks on its course, but only at its extremities. These, however, have added very materially to the cost of the undertaking. In the first place, the effect of the spring tides had to be guarded against—and what that means may be to some extent inferred from the statement that during these tides the water will sometimes rise fifteen feet above and sink ten feet below the ordinary levels, an extreme difference of, say, twenty-five feet. Then at the Baltic end, although there is little rise or fall of tide, the effect of the wind on the sea-level is very marked. If the wind blows from the east, the water in the Bay of Kiel will rise eight feet, and if from the west, it may fall to the same extent. Now, a full spring-tide, with a rise of fifteen feet at Brunebüttel, concurring with a strong west wind at Holtenau, might at a given moment cause a difference of twenty-three feet in the height of water between the two places. Of course, this is the possible extreme, but without that extreme the frequent differences must have caused a current so rapid in so narrow a channel as to be dangerous to navigation. Therefore a lock has been built at each end on concrete blocks, each lock five hundred feet long by eighty-three feet wide, and therefore capable of taking in the largest vessel afloat.

Apart from the naval requirements of the German Empire—and the Canal as we have said, will bring the two great Imperial dockyards within a few hours' steaming of each other—what are the potential advantages of the new waterway?

The avoidance of the danger and the saving of the time involved in the voyage of steamers round Cape Skagen and through the Sound or the Greater and Lesser Belt, is one. Roughly speaking, this circuit means about forty hours for steamers, and three or four days for sailers, whereas the passage through the Canal is expected to occupy not more than fifteen hours, under steam. About forty-five thousand vessels at present double Cape Skagen every year, and the Germans hope and expect that more than half of these will find it profitable to use the Canal; but that, we imagine, will depend largely on the dues to be imposed, and the expedition afforded. The saving of time will not be the only attraction, for according to German statistics, ninety-two German vessels have been
wrecked on the Danish coasts within five years, and with a loss of over seven hundred lives. Between 1858 and 1891, it is said, the record of wrecks on these coasts numbered over eight thousand, or about two hundred and fifty a year, or five a week.

The figures seem incredible, and we are unable to vouch for them; but they have been authoritatively stated.

As to the saving of time by avoiding the circumnavigation of Denmark, that, of course, will largely depend on the point of departure. For German vessels sailing from North Sea ports it will naturally be very great, and German coalowners expect that the Canal will give them the supply of the Baltic ports with coal, which at present they derive from England and Scotland. German coal will, no doubt, have an opportunity of competition in the Baltic, but questions of price and quality will determine the result more than transport facilities.

Vessels from the English Channel bound for the Baltic, and from the coast of France, will find an advantage in the Canal; but vessels from the north-east coast of England, and from Scotland, will derive no benefit. Hull ships might gain a trifle in time, although hardly enough to compensate for Canal dues; but Sunderland, Newcastle, Leith, Aberdeen, and Dundee ships would gain nothing. And it is from these ports that the greater portion of the British trade with the Baltic is conducted.

On this point a recent report of the British Consul at Copenhagen is of interest. He sets forth the Danish opinion that the Canal is being constructed for military purposes, and that the commercial importance of it is mythical. As against the dangers of the Cape Skagen route are cited the dangers of navigation in the Elbe during the winter months, and the frequent obstruction through ice. The Elbe difficulties, it is said, recur every year, whereas it is seldorn that both the Sound and the Great Belt are closed simultaneously by ice. Between 1871 and 1891 the Sound was closed again only during two winters. It was closed again in the severe winter of 1892-93, but Kiel was frozen up at the same time. The result is that the dangers of the Skaw route are very much exaggerated.

As to the question of distance saved, say between Dover and the island of Bornholm, which the Germans estimate at two hundred miles, by using the Canal instead of the Skaw route, a Danish critic thus comments:

"This converted into time, at a speed of from nine to ten miles an hour, shows a saving of about twenty hours, from which, however, has to be deducted nine to ten hours caused by using the Canal at reduced speed, the result being that from the more southerly point, Dover—under circumstances so favourable as to be hardly ever realised—there is a saving of about ten hours by using the Canal. From the coast of England, West Hartlepool, Newcastle, Sunderland, from which ports a very considerable part of the coal for the Baltic is exported, a German authority finds a voyage shortened by ninety miles, whereas—in the same calculation—no saving is effected by going through the Canal; on the contrary, the saving is in favour of the old route. Moreover, from Scotch ports, say Methil, Grangemouth, Burntisland, and Leith, from which the voyage is supposed to be forty miles shorter, and with less for a terminus even eighty-three miles the saving by going north of the Skaw is very considerable. It is evident that the must be the case as regards ships passing north of Scotland."

This is the Danish view, and, of course, the Danes are naturally prejudiced against the Canal, but it is our duty to present both sides of the question to our readers. In the whole the Danes seem to us to have the best of the argument, and it is likely they are about to spend a million sterling in improving and extending the harbour of Copenhagen.

As regards Copenhagen, vessels drawing over thirty feet of water can now go in and out free, at any hour of the day almost the whole year round, whereas Hamburg is seventy miles from the mouth of the Elbe, and Bremen fifty-six miles from the mouth of the Weser, both of which rivers are impassable during one half of the day on account of the tide—and are subject to frequent ice obstructions.

The commercial value, then, of the Baltic and North Sea Canal—except to Germany herself—is somewhat problematical. And as for Germany herself, it is doubtful if the commercial advantages to be derived will compensate for an outlay of ten millions on the Canal, but then with her the dominating consideration has been a military, or rather a naval one. But the work is a great engineering feat, which has aroused a great amount of enthusiasm in the Fatherland, which is being watched with interest by engineers, shipowners, and merchants everywhere, and which is so rapidly approaching..."
THE MAGNOLIA.

The great magnolia glimmered in the dusk,
The honeysuckle twined its fragrant leaves,
The chestnut pattered from its opening husk.
The long low thunder of the ebbing tide
Rose through the tamarisks that fringed the cliff,
And the white sail of a belated skiff
Glided athwart the sea line vague and wide.
The great magnolia’s heavy perfume crept
Through the still room; the darkness deepened down.
The lights went out where lay the fishing towns,
And grief and joy together paused and slept.
And from the mountain range’s mighty head,
Rose the young moon and silvered half the sea;
‘And does my darling wake to think of me?’
To the magnolia’s great white blooms I said.

TWO BLACK BAGS.

A COMPLETE STORY.

As I often say to my wife, when she blames me for forgetting her little commissions, it’s a queer thing, is the mind, and great is the force of habit. I never forget to do anything I’m in the habit of doing, but, as Tilly usually attends to the shopping herself, I’m not in the habit of calling at the butcher’s or the grocer’s on my way home from business, and, therefore—well, therefore I don’t call three times out of five that she tells me to.

Don’t I catch it? No; not over much, anyhow. For one thing we haven’t been married very long, and Tilly agrees that it’s only reasonable I should have time to learn to be more careful, and, for another, if it wasn’t for the hold a habit has on me, I doubt whether we should be married yet, or at least we shouldn’t be living in our own house with the furniture all bought at a large discount for cash.

I am a clerk in the service of a firm of colliery and quarry owners at Linton, and every Saturday morning I go out to Wasterby, a village some thirty miles off among the moors, to pay the quarrymen there their wages.

It’s an awkward sort of journey. I have to start by the first train in the morning, which leaves Linton at six, change at Drak, our junction with the main line, leave the main line again at Thurley, some ten miles further south, and do the rest of the distance in the brake van of a mineral train.

The money—nearly a hundred pounds, mostly in silver—I always carry in a little black leather bag, one of those bags you see by scores every day, which may contain anything from a packet of sandwiches and a clean collar to a dynamite bomb, and it’s my habit, when in the train, to put my bag on the rack facing me. I rarely keep it on the seat by my side, and I don’t like to put it up over my head.

If it has to go because the opposite rack is full I am always uneasy about it, fancying I shall forget it when I get out. I never have forgotten it yet, but one Saturday in November, 1893, I did something which might have been worse, I took the wrong bag when I left the train at Thurley.

It happened in this way. On the Friday night I went with Tilly to a party which broke up so late that I had only just time to change my clothes and get a sort of apology for a breakfast before catching my train. Consequently I slept all the way from Linton to Drak, and at Drak I stumbled, only half awake, into the first third class compartment I came to.

Three of the corner seats were occupied, and I took the fourth, though there was no room on the opposite rack for my bag. I couldn’t put it on the seat at my side either, because the man in the other corner had his legs up and I didn’t care to disturb him. I ought, of course, to have kept it on my knees, and on any other morning I dare say I should have done so, but it was rather heavy and I was very sleepy, so I just slung it up over my head, settled myself down, and dropped off again almost before the train was clear of the station.

I didn’t wake until we stopped at Thurley, and even then if I fancy I should have slept on if the two men at the far end of the compartment had not wanted to get out.

“What station is this?” I asked, sitting up and drawing my legs from across the door to let them pass. “Otterford, I suppose?”

“No. Thurley,” said one, and up I jumped in a hurry, took my bag, as I thought, from the rack opposite to me, and got down on to the platform just as the guard whistled the train away.

“You ran it a bit fine that time, mister,” remarked the man who had saved me from being carried past my destination. “I wonder if that other chap meant going on? He was as fast asleep as you.”
"Oh, he's all right," said his companion. "He's booked for London. I heard him say so when he got in. Good morning, governor."

"Good morning," I replied, and then, having thanked them for waking me, I made for the siding where my mineral train was waiting for me.

"You look tired this morning, Mr. Corner," said the brakesman as soon as we started on our somewhat slow and wearisome journey.

"I look what I feel, Jim," said I. "And I am as sleepy as an owl. I never went to bed last night."

Then lie down and have a sleep now, sir," suggested Jim. "Here's some sacks and a rug to cover you. If the jolting don't wake you, you may be sure I won't."

The good-natured fellow kept his word, and as I am one of those happily-constituted individuals who can sleep on or through anything, I felt much refreshed when we arrived at the Quarries after what Jim called "a roughish passage" over the uneven surface of the moorland line, which had been laid solely to serve the needs of our quarries and some neighbouring iron mines.

After I had had a wash and done full justice to a second breakfast at the "Miners' Arms," I felt ready to face my morning's work of making up the men's pay-sheets. While I was doing that the bag, which I fondly imagined to be mine, lay on the table before me, nor did any doubt as to its identity trouble me until I had finished my calculations and was ready to embody the results of them in sundry little heaps of gold and silver.

Then, as I felt in my pocket for my keys, my memory began to entertain a vague suspicion that that bag was somehow unfamiliar to it. I am by no means an observant man, and as I couldn't have set down categorically the characteristics which distinguished my bag from others of like make and shape, I felt rather than thought that the one in front of me did not possess those characteristics.

However, my key fitted the lock, and as I turned it, my suspicions vanished, but only to be replaced a moment later by an astounding certainty.

Instead of resting upon the familiar brown-paper packages of silver and little canvas bags of gold, my eyes were dazzled by a many-coloured iridescence which shone forth from the inside of that bag as soon as I opened it.

"Diamonds, by Jingo!" I cried as I started back amazed.

The bag fell over on its side, and half-a-dozen loose stones rolled out upon the table, where they lay sparkling gloriously in the wintry sunshine.

As soon as I recovered my self-possession I picked them up and put them back into the bag, the contents of which I then examined as well as I could without exposing them to the view of any one who might happen to look in at the office-window; for, though I had no reason to suppose the quarrymen were not honest, I thought it best to keep my discovery to myself.

The bag, I guessed, was probably the property of a jeweller's traveller; a traveller; in a large way of business, too, thought I, as I peered into it in the least exposed corner of the office, and found it almost full of what, little as I know about precious stones, I felt certain were valuable jewels.

But surely travellers in jewellery did not usually pack, or rather omit to pack, their samples in such an utterly careless fashion! Rings, brooches, bracelets, loose stones, at least one necklace, a gold watch and chain, some bank notes, and a considerable sum in sovereigns, were all mixed up together in a chaotic confusion which seemed at least inconsistent with business habits.

I began to doubt whether it was ever consistent with honest possession of, at all events, the contents of the bag on the part of my late fellow passenger—the man who was booked for London, and who had been asleep when I left the train at Thurley.

No doubt he was awake, and also aware of his loss by this time. What a state of mind he must be in, too—but, just as I was trying to realise his state of mind, a murmur of gruff voices, and a shuffling of heavy feet in the yard outside reminded me that it was time to pay the men.

What had I better do, I wondered! Borrow what I needed from the notes and gold in the bag that was not mine, or put the men off with fair words till Monday! They were a rough lot, though, and if I adopted the latter alternative there would probably be something very like a riot. It would be wiser, I thought, to pay them if I could get enough change to do it.

Hurriedly summoning the foreman and telling him that a mistake had been made in supplying me with money, I went down into the village, and, after some trouble, succeeded in collecting enough silver and copper to serve my purpose.
Then, with that precious bag out of sight between my feet, I paid the man, who were already grumbling at the delay, at the same time doing my best to rally them into a better humour, for I felt absurdly nervous, and was ready to credit the honest fellows with a capacity for crimes which were no doubt quite beyond the compass even of their imaginations.

As soon as I had finished my task I returned, per mineral train, to Thurley, and there I broke my journey. On calmly reviewing all the circumstances of the case in the seclusion of the brake-van, I had decided that the police, rather than the railway authorities, ought to be first informed of my mistake, and the inspector to whom I told my story agreed with me.

"I am very glad you came straight to me," said he, turning the contents of the bag out on his desk. "If you can hold your tongue for a week or two, it's just possible we may catch the gentleman who put this nice little lot together."

"You think they have been stolen, then," I asked.

"Think!" he repeated, smiling at my simplicity. "I know my boy. And when and where, too—though unfortunately not by whom. Run your eye over this."

"This" was a list of jewels and other valuables missing from Erlyingthorpe, Lord Yerbury's place near Drialingden, where, the inspector said, a well-planned robbery had been carried out on the Thursday evening.

"You seem to have nailed the lot," he went on; "but we may as well go through the articles seriatim."

We did so, and found there was nothing missing, except the money I had taken to pay the men.

"Our unknown friend hasn't even paid his travelling expenses out of the loose cash," commented the inspector, and then he suddenly changed his tone.

"Now, look here, young man," he went on, eyeing me keenly, "I'm not in charge of this case—yet—but if you'll do as I tell you, I hope I may be in the course of a few days. There's a tidy reward offered for the recovery of the property, as you see. That, I take it, you've earned already; but are you game to help me catch the man? There's a further reward for nabbing him, which, of course, I can't touch—officially—and don't particularly want. My aim is promotion. Do you understand?"

"I think so," said I; "and I am willing to help you all I can."

"Good," said the inspector, resuming his jocular manner. "Could you identify your fellow-sleepers, do you think?"

"I'm afraid not," I replied. "He had a beard, I know—"

"Which was very likely false," interrupted he; "but never mind. What we want to do is to get our friend to claim the property either in person or by deputy. He's sure to be a bit backward in coming forward, but he won't like to give up all that for the little bit of ready money there was in your bag, and if we have patience we may draw him."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" I asked.

"Nothing," he replied; "just literally nothing. Go home. Keep a still tongue in your head, and a sharp eye on the agony columns of the London papers, and wait till you hear from me. I'll take charge of these articles, and give you a receipt for them, but don't be surprised if you see them still advertised as missing."

A few days later the inspector set his trap. It took the shape of an advertisement which appeared in the—but no; perhaps I had better not give the name of the paper; according to Inspector Bland, it is the favourite journal of the criminal classes—begging the gentleman with whom "G. C." inadvertently exchanged bags to communicate with G. C. at the address he would find in G. C.'s pocket-book.

Personally, I didn't think our fish would be foolish enough to rise to this bait, but my friend the inspector was more hopeful.

"Lucky for us, Mr. Corner," said he, when I took advantage of my next visit to the quarries to call upon him, "there's always a sort of warp or twist in the mind of the habitual criminal which prevents him from believing in the honesty of other folks. Now, not a soul but you and I, and the chief constable knows these jewels are as good as back on Lady Yerbury's dressing-table, or wherewher else she's in the habit of leaving 'em lying about. Therefore the hue and cry after them's not likely to die away yet awhile, and there'll be a genuine ring about it which should persuade our unknown friend that you've got 'em and mean to convert 'em to your own use, as we say in the profession, but, being an amateur, don't know how to go about turning 'em into more cash than the reward comes to, and that, consequently, you are anxious to come to terms with him. See?"

I saw, but I was not convinced. Events, however, proved that the inspector was
right. For a month Lady Yerbury's diamonds were sought in vain, and for a month "G. C." continued to appeal to his late fellow traveller, also in vain, but at the end of that time his patience was rewarded by the appearance of an advertisement, telling him, if he really meant business, to write to "B. H." at a given address.

The letter I wrote at the dictation of Inspector Bland was more cautious than incriminating, but as it produced a reply which the inspector deemed satisfactory, it was followed by others less carefully worded, until at last I stood pledged to personally deliver, for a consideration of two thousand pounds, the stolen jewels to one Benjamin Hurst, whom I was to meet at a public-house in Chillingham.

Now, I don't pretend to be braver than the average man of peaceful and sedentary habits, and when I saw what sort of a house the "Spotted Dog" was, I began to wish I had refused to have anything to do with Inspector Bland's scheme.

The little company of disreputable-looking loafers hanging about the bar eyed me curiously as I entered, and when I asked the landlord if Mr. Hurst was in, one of them raised a general laugh by offering to carry my luggage up to him.

"No larks, Bill," said the landlord sternly. "Mary, show the gentleman Mr. Hurst's room."

I found Mr. Hurst a decidedly surly rascal. He began by grumbling at the hardness of the bargain I was driving with him, and swearing at his luck generally. Then, being perhaps emboldened by the conciliatory manner I thought it prudent to adopt, he tried to make better terms, offering me first five hundred pounds less, and finally insisting that he ought at least to be allowed to deduct from my two thousand pounds the sum I had used to pay the men.

Inspector Bland had allowed me a quarter of an hour for negotiations. At the end of that time he proposed to make a raid upon the house.

"And mind," he had said in his jocular way, "we don't find the property still in your hands, Mr. Corner. It would be a pretty kettle of fish if we had to prosecute you for unlawful possession, wouldn't it?"

In accordance with these instructions I haggled with Mr. Hurst a little while, and then allowed him to have his way, whereupon, having satisfied himself that the bag which I restored to him still contained his spoils, handed me one thousand nine hundred pounds in what afterwards turned out to be very creditable imitations of Bank of England notes.

"I suppose you don't want no receipt?" he growled.

"No, thank you," said I; "I think we may mutually dispense with that formality. Good morning."

I turned to leave the room: as I spoke, but before I could unlock the door, it was burst open from the outside, not, unfortunately for me, by the police, but by the man whom the landlord had called Bill, a powerful ruffian, who promptly knocked me down and knelt upon my chest.

"Quick, Ben, get out of this," he cried. "It's a plant. No, no. The window, you fool," he added, as Mr. Hurst, bag in hand, made for the door. "The police are in the bar already."

As Mr. Hurst opened the window, he cursed me with much volubility and bitterness, and as soon as he was outside on the leads he did worse.

"Stand clear, Bill," he cried, and his friend obeyed him. I scrambled to my feet, but immediately dropped again with a bullet from Hurst's revolver in my shoulder.

I am not at all sorry that Mr. Hurst fired at me—as Inspector Bland says, it was much easier to convict him of attempted murder than to prove he actually stole those jewels, and the inspector doubts, too, whether he would have got fifteen years if merely charged with receiving them. But I do wish he hadn't hit me.

However, even the pain my wound still gives me is not without its compensation. It prevents me from feeling any twinges of conscience when I reflect that my furniture cost Mr. Hurst his liberty, for Lord Yerbury took it for granted that he was the thief, and paid me the extra reward he had offered for his apprehension.

Inspector Bland won the promotion he coveted, and is now stationed at Lington. His wedding present was characteristic. It was a black bag, with my initials on either side in white letters about six inches long.

DR. MEREDITH'S ASSISTANT.

By MARGARET MOULPE.  

CHAPTER IX.

If Mr. French had had cause, four weeks earlier, to commend Dr. Godfrey for keeping himself to himself, that cause might have
been said, during the week that followed Mrs. Johnson's tea-party, to be doubled. For never, since Dr. Godfrey's first arrival, had the Mary Combe people come so little in contact with the slight grey-clad figure. It was not that it was invisible; on the contrary, it was to be seen up and down the street a dozen times a day as usual; but Dr. Godfrey's manner was at once abstracted and concentrated; abstracted apparently from Mary Combe scenes and interests altogether, and concentrated on something wholly different. The passing greetings received from "the young doctor" were not less cordial exactly, but they had lost all the life and light which had given them such attractiveness, and they were always more or less hurried.

It was understood that both Dr. Meredith and his assistant were very busy; and further, that all their leisure and thought were probably absorbed in anxious consultation over details of their daily work.

As regards the latter theory nothing could have been much further from the truth. During the whole course of that week Dr. Meredith and his assistant had only actually met once, and that when, by the merest misunderstanding, they had simultaneously visited the same case—one of Mrs. Allen's children. Whether it was by definite intention or not, it so happened that even the slight daily contact between his assistant and Dr. Meredith was avoided by the latter. All their necessary professional intercourse was managed, in one way and another, by deputy. The briefest of notes, sent down to Dr. Meredith's house, procured Dr. Godfrey what was needed in the way of daily directions; her prescriptions were sent to Alfred Johnson, to be conveyed through him to the surgery; and any doubts and difficulties she had were decided by her for herself, without the aid of any of the books she had sometimes borrowed from Dr. Meredith's medical library. It could scarcely have been any lack of definite intention, however, that made her, one day when she had intended to make a short cut over the common, turn back abruptly on seeing Dr. Meredith at the opposite end of it. And on the one occasion during that week when he called at the Johnsons' house to speak to her, she had sent out a polite but conclusive message to the effect that she was engaged and could not then see him—she was engaged only in perfectly unimportant letter-writing—and would be much obliged if he would call in the evening. He did call in the evening, but only to learn that Dr. Godfrey was out; unexpectedly detained, Mrs. Johnson said.

So much for the facts of the case as to the two doctors' constant intercourse.

As regards the first idea; namely, that there was plenty of work for the two; Mary Combe was not so wrong in its belief.

The weather, which had suddenly become unnaturally cold and wet for early June, seemed to favour the spread of an outbreak of measles, which crept about among the children so rapidly as to oblige the closing of the school. And the chilly damp seemed to affect the old people, too; there was a great deal of asthma and bronchitis. There were also two or three bad accidents about this time, and several chronic cases of serious illness needing much attention for the moment; among them Mrs. Wilson, whom Althea never failed to see and soothe every day. Altogether, Mary Combe had seldom known what old Peters, the parish clerk, characterised as "such a silin' haytime."

It was further rumoured in the village that Miss Rose Swinton at Stoke Vere was very ill—"lying between living and dying," the report said—and that Dr. Meredith spent more and more of his time at Stoke Vere with each successive day; and also that after every occasion on which he had been known to be at Stoke Vere Rectory he had returned looking harassed, oppressed, and keenly anxious.

Althea Godfrey had been the recipient of several enquiries for Miss Swinton when she came in to her rooms for a cup of tea at four o'clock on a cold afternoon at the end of the week. The questioners, even though Dr. Godfrey had met them with a qualified confession of ignorance, had been somewhat persistent, and possibly it was the weariness of this repetition, added to the personal fatigue attendant on a long, hard day's work, that gave her face the sort of pinched, wan look it wore.

She had set down her cup, empty, before she discovered, half hidden under the edge of the gigantic tray which Mrs. Johnson thought a necessary adjunct of tea, a note addressed to "Dr. Godfrey."

"From the Vicar," said Mrs. Johnson, hovering in, ostensibly with the hot water, but really to make the announcement. "His man brought it, sir; and he'll call on
his way back from Davidson's farm to see if there's an answer, sir."

Mr. Howard had been away from Mary Combe for the past three weeks; almost, in fact, ever since Dr. Godfrey's arrival. He always took his holiday early in the year. Being a bachelor, he had no one but himself to consult, and he liked to "get it off his mind, and settle down," he was wont to explain, with a sigh of relief, when he came back. This very original way of regarding a holiday was characteristic of the man, and it was possibly this originality that had attracted Dr. Meredith to Mr. Howard. From whatever reason, the two were very good friends, and whenever Mr. Howard could find a free evening, he was very wont to stroll down to Dr. Meredith's house and spend an hour.

Before his departure he had called, duly, on Dr. Meredith's assistant, but "the young doctor" had been out.

The note which Althea opened and read, while Mrs. Johnson placed the hot-water jug in a dozen tentative positions, was a brief, cordially-worded request that Dr. Godfrey would waive ceremony, and come up to the Rectory that evening for "a quiet smoke."

Althea twisted the note round and round hesitatingly. Her hesitation was wholly unconnected with her anomalous position. She had from the first accepted that position with a fearless facing of all its attendant difficulties. She had come to Mary Combe as Dr. Godfrey," well realising what she was undertaking. Mrs. Johnson watched her lodger enquiringly for a few moments, and then, seeing that there was evidently no hope of any information, went reluctantly away, unnoticed by Althea.

At length she gave a little weary sigh, wearily walked across the room to her writing materials, and sat down to write her answer. She wrote the date, and "Dear Mr. Howard" after it. Then she stopped short, threw down her pen with a reckless disregard for Mrs. Johnson's table-cloth, and pushed her short hair back from her brow with an impulsive movement that seemed to speak of an altered point of view. She sat staring at the opposite wall for some moments, with wide, doubtful grey eyes.

"I'll go," she said at length, in a low voice, to herself; "after all, anything's better than time to think."

Five hours later the grey-clad figure was comfortably established in a long basket-chair in Mr. Howard's library. "Library" was its courtesy title; but a matter of fact all his books were another room, and this was neither minor nor less than a smoking-room. It received its dignified name at the hands of his servants, Mr. Howard explained apologetically.

"I suppose," he said, with a smile, "I didn't think a smoking-room a dear possession. But I'm afraid all their intentions won't make this a clerical room.

He glanced round, with a little twinkle in the corners of his eyes and mouth, as he spoke, and Dr. Godfrey involuntarily followed his example. The two reselect one on each side of a rather large fireplace, in which a little crackling was a very welcome sight on this unnatural, cold, wet evening. Immediately opposite was a bookcase, it is true, but its upper shelves contained their private contents. The lower were the receptacle of a neatly arranged stock of fishing-tack and odds and ends. Against the wall at right angles was a small turning-table opposite to that, again, a table which was covered half with newspapers and with a pile of library books waiting to be mended.

"The boys are chiefly responsible for that!" he said, indicating the latter. "If you drop in here if they care to on three evenings of the week, and I found it difficult to entertain them; the latter has been a godsend!"

Mr. Howard's face was a pleasant always, and perhaps doubly so when he smiled.

"I should think the 'dropping in' there was not a godsend!" responded Dr. Godfrey with something like a rueful smile, and a faint but decided lessening of the wan weariness. "It's very good of you."

"I don't see it," was the quick answer. "If you come to that, it's very good of you and Meredith to work yourselves as you do; it's all the same idea! By the way," Mr. Howard turned his head so as to catch sight of the mantelpiece clock, "Meredith said he'd look in to-night, and he's probably late. Did he say anything to you about when he should turn up?"

Althea Godfrey had been idly scrutinising the fire during Mr. Howard's disclaimer. But as she alluded to Dr. Meredith's intentions, she turned sharply away from it, lifting her head with a quick, surprised gesture. All the wan weariness had
asserted itself again, and on it two tiny flushes of bright colour showed themselves with curious incongruity of effect.

"Is Dr. Meredith to be here to-night?"

She spoke in a strained voice, whose tones might have struck Mr. Howard as singular had he known her voice well enough to discriminate. But as he did not, he merely thought to himself that Dr. Godfrey was somewhat abrupt in manner, and possibly inclined to be aggrieved at having been kept in the dark about Dr. Meredith's movements.

"Yes, I asked him this morning to come. Didn't he mention it to you? Ah, there he is!"

It was a ring at the front-door bell which had given rise to Mr. Howard's assertion, and without waiting for any answer he rose, with a word of apology, and went out to let his guest in himself. Another instant and there was a cheery sound of greeting in the hall. At the sound of the fresh voice that shared in it, Althea Godfrey's white face became curiously hard and set, and as the little flow of conversation that succeeded the greeting drew nearer to the library door, her lips compressed themselves so tightly, that when Mr. Howard threw the door open in hospitable welcome, they had become one thin red line.

"Go in!" he exclaimed heartily; "go in, Meredith! I don't suppose I need introduce you to Godfrey, eh?"

The door happened to be on the further side of the fireplace, and at right angles to Althea's place. She therefore had time to see Dr. Meredith before she saw her. The great grey eyes rested covertly and scrutinisingly for a moment on Dr. Meredith's face.

It was rather pale, with some heavy, careworn lines about the mouth; his forehead was marked by a worried frown, and there was a look of intense anxiety in his eyes. His whole manner and bearing told of a pressing anxiety and worry.

Althea nodded carelessly from the basket-chair.

"Good evening!" she said indifferently.

"Good evening!" he responded. His glance rested for a moment only on his assistant, and then he turned to the fire, and began to make rather a parade of warming himself.

Mr. Howard, in his settled conviction that his two guests' cordial understanding needed no help from him, was occupied in finding a comfortable chair for Dr. Meredith.

"Here, Meredith!" he said, wheeling round the result of his search, "sit down and take what rest you may! You've been to and fro in the roads of Mary Combe this livelong day, now, haven't you?"

"More or less?" was the somewhat weary answer, as Dr. Meredith accepted the invitation. Mr. Howard had placed the chair between the other two chairs and immediately opposite the fire. His assistant, therefore, was on Dr. Meredith's left, and his host on his right.

Either by accident or design, Althea had, in sitting down again, contrived to push her basket-chair further back, so that while she herself could see the other two faces perfectly, her own was slightly shadowed by a projecting corner of the mantelshelf.

"What makes you so late, Meredith?"

Mr. Howard's question was put to Dr. Meredith after a brief interval, during which the latter had, at his host's invitation, filled and lit his pipe, and mixed himself some whisky and water from a tray on the small table behind him.

"I've only just got back from a longish drive," was the answer, given between the long puffs of smoke.

From the corner, his assistant was very keenly watching Dr. Meredith's face as he spoke. At the words, a quick change passed over her own, and her lips parted a little suddenly, and she bent her head almost imperceptibly forward as though waiting for the next words—yet, when they came, she started.

"I've been over at Stoke Vere for the last three hours."

This gratuitous and rather unprofessional information as to his proceedings came from Dr. Meredith with an impulsive force, which made it plain that the statement was one that summed up his thoughts at the moment, and that they were so engrossed in it as to make it an absolute necessity to him to speak of the subject to some one.

"Ah!" Mr. Howard turned to him with interest. "I was just going to ask you if you could give me news from there. How is Miss Swinton this evening?"

Althea Godfrey's lips were almost colourless now. Her eyes were riveted on Dr. Meredith's face, and were watching, so intently that no shade of it escaped her, the expression which was strengthening on it moment by moment. It was really only a deepening of the anxiety which it had worn on his entrance, but at Mr. Howard's question it spread from feature to feature,

"But Kar6aret Moul.

CBAPTBR IX.
until the whole face told of nothing else save intense, harassed responsibility and care.

"That's more than I can say, Howard," he said slowly. "I left her very low indeed."

Mr. Howard looked quickly round at him. Dr. Meredith's tone, in its mixture of weariness and worry, was enough to attract attention. Althea had thrown her hands behind her head some time before in a would-be careless pose. It was not possible, even had the other two been looking at her, for either of them to have seen that at Dr. Meredith's answer they had clasped so closely round the wickerwork of the chair that it was cutting deep purple lines into the flesh.

"You think so badly of her!" he said gravely.

Dr. Meredith made a little acquiescent gesture.

"If no change has taken place by the morning, it's a matter of hours," he said, in a grimly terse fashion.

"Hours!" The word came suddenly from Dr. Godfrey's corner. The voice which spoke it was rather strained, as if the speaker's throat were stiff and dry.

But Dr. Meredith did not seem to notice anything unusual about his assistant's voice. Indeed, he did not seem to be considering Dr. Godfrey at all. He stared straight before him into the fire as he responded, mechanically enough:

"Yes; hours!"

There was a little pause, and then he laid his pipe down and went on, speaking apparently impartially to either of the other two; so impartially, in fact, that it sounded more as if he were expressing his thoughts aloud than addressing any one:

"I'm beaten, I'm afraid! I've had a hard wrestle, too. And I've got to break it to that poor old chap to-morrow. He's as hopeful as a child, and has a childishly implicit faith in the nurse and me, though we've both done our best to undeceive him, I'm sure."

A quick sigh ended the speech, and then Dr. Meredith replaced his pipe in his mouth suddenly, and gave a furious whiff at it.

Althea Godfrey's hands were bruised in great dark lines, and she was biting her under-lip hard and fiercely. But she did not even seem to feel it or know it.

"Poor Swinton!" said Mr. Howard very sympathetically. "That girl is the light of his eyes, indeed. Poor, dear man!"

He stared also at the fire and gave a quick movement in his chair, and then lifting his head again, glanced at his guest.

"Meredith!" he said, "I beg your pardon, I'm sure. I didn't bring you here to recall to your mind, after a heavy day, all that's been distressing in it. I'm ashamed of my thoughtlessness. Let me assure you, Dr. Godfrey, that this is not a criterion of my friendly habits! Have some more whisky, Meredith! Help yourself please. Godfrey has refused a second glass. Won't you change your mind?" he added heartily to his younger guest. Then, as Dr. Godfrey answered him by lifting up an almost untouched tumbler, he turned himself invincibly towards the fire. "I picked up a really first-rate little dachshund when I was away, Meredith," he said. "The only cheering point in a most unsatisfactory holiday, the beast is. You must come and look at her when you've got ten minutes to spare. I know, though," he added, laughing, "that you don't share my dislike to holidays! You are not so lazy!"

A discussion ensued on holidays and holiday resorts generally; a discussion carried on principally through Mr. Howard's energetic desire to divert his guests' minds from Dr. Meredith's share in it was uncertain; at one time his contribution to the conversation was long and forcible, during the following quarter of an hour it consisted wholly of monosyllables thrown into Dr. Howard's remarks; and then he would seem to rose himself with a jerk, as it were, and again take his full share. And thus it went on for the rest of the evening.

As for Dr. Godfrey, the long basket-chair might almost as well have been empty, as far as its occupant's social efforts were concerned. A very few succinct answers, if directly appealed to by Mr. Howard, constituted the sum of Althea Godfrey's conversation for the rest of the evening; Only once did she show the slightest increase of interest.

The conversation had drifted along various erratic channels to a singular case of feminine self-sacrifice and heroism which had been lately recorded in the papers. Dr. Meredith and Mr. Howard were engaged in asserting, in a magnanimously masculine fashion, that women, on occasion, were capable of great things towards their own sex.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, Dr. Godfrey struck in with an enthusiastic denial of this fact; a quick, impulsive denial, in which self-sacrifice was mai-
tained to be an impossible virtue, and never practised between women. This was, however, abruptly cut short by the striking of half-past eleven. At the sound the slight figure lifted itself from the depths of the basket chair, and breaking off in the very middle of a sentence, Dr. Godfrey said something hasty and incoherent about keeping Mrs. Johnson about, and a "pleasant evening."

Mr. Howard received the excuses and adieux with many cordial regrets, and with a nodded farewell to Dr. Meredith, Althea Godfrey left the library, and let herself out at the front door.

The wet day had ended in a clearer evening; some of the heavier clouds had blown away at sunset, and though most of the sky was still dark, there were here and there great tracts of deep, midnight blue, with a few stars, whose far too clear shining betokened more rain.

A cold, damp wind blew across Althea's face as she stooped to latch behind her the gate of the Rectory drive. She took off her hat when she lifted her head again, and stood with her white forehead bared, as if the cool chill of the wind were grateful to it; her eyes fixed on the ground at her feet, and one hand resting on the top bar of the gate. All at once a touch on the gate itself made her start and quiver all over.

"Thea!" said Dr. Meredith, in a low voice, "it is you! I hoped I should catch you."

There was distinct relief in his voice; it was evident enough that he really greatly wished to see her, and speak to her, and was very glad to have the opportunity. But Althea's voice was curt in the extreme as she said:

"Well? What is it you want?"

"I want to speak to you."

"I see nothing to prevent you from doing so."

Althea had turned away from the gate with her first words, and Dr. Meredith had followed her example; they were thus perforce, so to speak, walking side by side.

There was a long stretch of lane reaching from the Vicarage and the church which stood almost in the same enclosure, to the first houses of the Mary Combe street. It was shaded by hedges, out of which grew elms whose branches, interlacing in the middle, made a dimness in the Church Lane on the brightest summer day.

To-night the dimness was almost darkness, and the two, though walking side by side, could scarcely see the outline of the other's figure, and could not discern a feature of the other's face.

If Dr. Meredith could have seen Althea's face at that moment, his next words might never have been said. It was set into the hardest of rigid lines, and there was a steelly glitter of determination in the great grey eyes.

"I've tried more than once to get at you to-day," he said, "but I couldn't find you in. I want some help from you, Thea, please."

The last word was spoken almost humbly, as if the speaker scarcely expected to get what he asked.

"You want help? What help?"

"Advice. Look here, Thea. I know you formally declined to have anything to do with the case, but I'm at my wits' end."

"Indeed!"

Apparently Dr. Meredith was too engrossed in his subject, and too anxious to gain his point, to notice the freezing indifference of her tone. At all events, he ignored it.

"Yes," he went on eagerly and hastily. "I needn't say that it's Rose Swinton I mean."

"You need not!" was the quick answer. It was scarcely audible, and seemed to come from between Althea's closed teeth.

"You see," he went on, "I've discovered a complication now, to-night, that I never dreamed of! And what's worse, I simply cannot get the fever under. I've been doing all I know, but if something can't be done in the next twenty-four hours, I don't see the glimmer of a chance for her! And yet I know and feel that she ought to be got through. The complication in itself isn't much. It's this."

He ran through a brief technical statement, during which his face grew more harassed than ever.

"Wait a minute," he added, as he finished, apparently not knowing in the least, in his anxiety, that he had had no response of any kind. "I'll just give you an idea of the treatment I've tried, and you'll be guided as to a suggestion."

He proceeded to give his assistant in a few clear words the necessary information.

"And so," he added, turning his anxious face towards hers in the darkness, "I really don't know what to be at. I am most anxious to know what you would advise."

Just as he spoke they emerged from the darkness of the Church Lane into the
Dr. Meredith waited, patiently and humbly enough, for a moment or two. He thought that she must be considering carefully what he had said.

"I shouldn't have thought," he said deprecatingly at length, "of bothering you with this, Thea, after what you said. But I really am indescribably anxious for a second opinion; and I rely on yours."

This last sentence was no adroit bit of flattery introduced to gain his end. It was the spontaneous announcement of an evident fact—a fact that had never passed Dr. Meredith's lips before.

An odd little flash shot into Althea's eyes, and she turned her head perhaps half an inch further from him. But it only seemed to intensify the rigidity of her features.

"I thought," he went on, with all his masculine imperception of his companion's absolute unapproachableness doubled by his keen anxiety, "I thought, Thea, that perhaps you would come over with me to Stoke Vere early to-morrow, and see for yourself what can be done. I've ordered Williams to be—"

His words were broken off by the suddenness of Althea's movement. She turned very sharply, and with her white face full on Dr. Meredith's she said, so slowly and distinctly that each word seemed to cut into the surrounding dimness:

"I entirely decline to give any opinion on the subject, and I wholly refuse to go to Stoke Vere."

"Thea!"

Dr. Meredith stood quite still in the middle of the street, and Althea followed his example, mechanically, apparently.

"Thea!" he repeated, his tone full of amazed, half-indignant injury, "what do you mean?"

"What I have said!" The response came in a voice lowered because of the surrounding houses, but all the more resolute because of its low tones.

"You absolutely refuse to talk over the case with me? You refuse me your help?"

"Most assuredly I refuse."

Still Dr. Meredith seemed unable to realise the words. He repeated, in a voice the surprise of which was almost pathetic in its absolute bewilderment and incomprehension:

"You mean that you refuse to go with me?"

"I emphatically refuse to have anything whatever to do with Miss Swinton as patient. Can I express myself more plainly?" she ended, with a sarcastic air in her bitter tone.

"But, Thea,—it might be a matter of life or death—there's no saying. I am helpless; I can't think why. I'm sure I ought to be brought round; but everything hitherto has failed in my hands. A weak brain, a fresh suggestion, may make all the difference to her—and to me. Thee, think of it—do think of it! I entreat you to help me."

Althea looked full and scrutinisingly into his face, and that flash that had come to her eyes developed into a glitter, from which a cold triumph seemed to spread over her whole face.

"It is of no moment to me whether it is a matter of life or death, whatever it may be to you! And once more, I will have nothing to do with it!"

So saying, she turned abruptly away, and walked on to the Johnsons' house with a steady, swinging step. Dr. Meredith standing motionless where she had left him stared almost vacantly after her.

It was about five minutes past eight the next morning, and Dr. Meredith was sitting at a hasty breakfast, while the dogcart was being made ready in the yard, when his sitting-room door was suddenly opened, to close again behind the slight grey-daubed figure of his assistant.

There were odd shadows under Althea Godfrey's eyes, and she was very pale.

"Jim!" she said, in a quick, hurried tone, "I've changed my mind; I'll go with you to Stoke Vere."

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"I want you formally to decline to have anything to do with the case, but I'm at my wits' end."

"You need not!" was the comment. It was set into the steely glitter of determination in the great depths of the basket chair, and break- off in the very middle of a sentence, mistaking the slight figure lifting itself from the ground towards hers in the darkness, "I really..."

"I've tried more than once to get at you..."

"Wait a minute," he added, as he ran through a brief technical statement.

"Incoherent incoherent about keeping off? Johnson..."

"Mr. Howard received the excuses and..."

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An odd little flash shot into Althea's eyes, her eyes developed into a glitter, from his face, and that flash that had come into the surrounding dimness : distinctly that each word seemed to cut in its rigid, white immobility, looked as if it might have been cut in stone.

It was about five minutes past eight when the sitting-room door was suddenly opened, and Althea followed Dr. Meredith, standing motionless where she had left him. His face, and that flash which a cold triumph seemed to spread over her whole face. 'What I have said!' The response came in a voice lowered because of the surprise of which was almost pathetic, 'I entirely decline to give any opinion on Dr. Meredith's she said, so slowly and with her white face full of it—do think of it! I entreat you.'

Thea, after what you said. Rut it only seemed to help me. "You absolutely refuse to talk over the case with me? You refuse me your help?" said Dr. Meredith, his voice full of feverish anxiety, 'I thought, Thea, that you meant 1 "

I really am indescribably anxious for a second opinion; and I rely on yours.'

That was no adroit bit of flattery introduced to gain his end. It was humble enough, for a moment or two. He sat to be "Of bothering you.

His words were broken off by the sudden rise of Althea in expectation of her answer. She stared idmost vacantly after her. Dr. Meredith stood quite still in the middle of the street, and Althea followed him to the Johnsons' house with this: 'Theal' he repeated, his tone full of the astonishment of his assistant. "Thea!" he exclaimed, "Thea!"

"Do help me." aid Althea, "I want to see my own what can be done. I've ordered Williams to be "Stoke Vere early to-morrow, and see for yourself what can be done. I've ordered Williams to be "Stoke Vere."

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